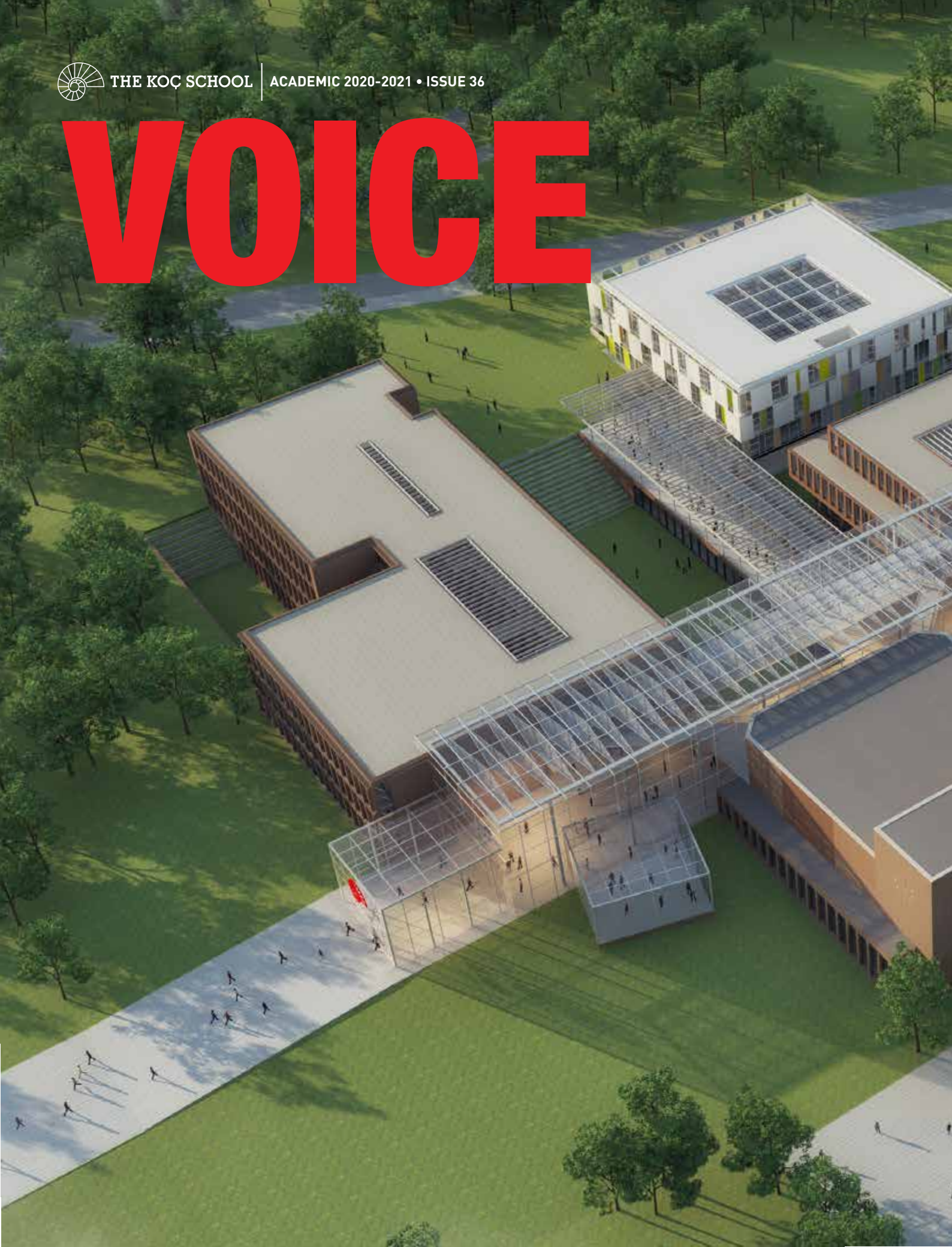




THE KOÇ SCHOOL

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VOICE





THE KOÇ SCHOOL

VOICE

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A portrait of Professor Murat Günel, PhD, a middle-aged man with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red tie with diagonal stripes. He is standing outdoors in a green, leafy environment. The text 'The Koç School of the Future' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

'The Koç School of the Future'

editorial | Professor Murat Günel, PhD

We teamed up with prominent local and international partners to design a new high school building that aligns with the requirements of the times. We look forward to welcoming our students to 'The Koç School of the Future' in the new academic year.

Dear Voice Readers,

We have almost reached the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. As I look back on the last one-and-a-half years, how we went through major adaptations, how we tackled the endless uncertainties, how we kept our focus on development and change in the face of challenges, and everything we experienced pass before my eyes. When I think of The Koç School family's stakeholders who fell ill, passed away, or whose lives changed fundamentally, I remember the days when we lovingly held on to each other in solidarity. In this process that we navigated together with our students, teachers, parents, employees, and partners, we saw that where there is collaboration, solidarity, and empathy, there is hope amidst the most demanding conditions, even when we have been apart for so long.

After introducing an emergency response plan in the early days of the pandemic, we launched the Digital Transformation Project last summer. As part of this project, we

defined various plans according to different scenarios and reviewed our technical infrastructure and processes. We updated our hybrid education system to allow our students to attend the classes at school or from their homes simultaneously. We also used this period to seize extensive development opportunities such as digitalizing academic content and increasing engagement in class, and brought them to life.

At The Koç School, we placed this question at the heart of our remote education approach: "How do we ensure the well-being of first the students, and then the teachers, employees, and parents?" With the schools opening remotely in September, we strived to make sure that the students learned their curriculum and developed cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

During these trying times, another topic on our agenda was the new high school building, which we had started to plan last summer. We decided to reconstruct

Blocks A and B of the high school buildings in line with our safety priorities and the requirements of this age. We teamed up with prominent local and international stakeholders to design the new school building and started construction with a groundbreaking ceremony on June 3, 2021. We hope to welcome our students to "The Koç School of the Future" in the new academic year.

In contrast to the previous year, we were much more prepared, and we experienced the culture of solidarity in every opportunity that came our way in the 2020-2021 academic year. We stepped out of our comfort zones to rediscover ourselves and rebuilt our strengths online in the absence of the physical facilities at our school. With the vaccine rollout picking up speed, I am even more hopeful about the days to come.

I hope you all enjoy the summer in health, and I look forward to seeing you at the school in September. I know that #WeWillHealTogether!

BUILDING TODAY **FOR TOMORROW**



The Koç School is in the process of a renovation that started in the 2020-2021 academic year, drawing from the strong Koç values and building on its legacy. The whole process, empowered by the school's deep-rooted history and inspired by its students, is taking place today to prepare for the future.



AN OUTWARD-LOOKING SPACE DESIGN AROUND A COURTYARD

CONSTRUCTION AREA

13.200 m²

- Connects existing structures with new buildings
- Responsive to evolving needs
- Accommodates growth strategies
- Brings the lush landscape design of the campus and the brightness of the sky visually and physically to the interior
- Takes the circulation out of the hallways and makes it a part of the dynamic school life
- Offers flexible spaces on different floors, indoor and outdoor areas for all users to work, relax, or perform (projects, exhibitions, and shows, etc.)
- Enhances the learning process, encourages discovery, and stimulates social interaction

FLOORS **Ground Floor +3**



STEP 1

ADAPTING TO UNCERTAINTIES AND EMBRACING CHANGE

The objective of the project that will upgrade The Koç School is to build an educational structure that enables experiential learning for the students, made possible with a unique structural configuration, spatial design, quality relationship with the surroundings, and technologies that contribute to the environmental sustainability principles.

The remote education processes that became a part of our lives with the pandemic gave rise to a need for upgrading the existing technical infrastructures and equipment to maintain the education quality. Even though it took a while for all the habits of the previous face-to-face education process to find their way to the online platforms, we were able to complete the infrastructure and technology enhancements. In this context, we integrated new digital tools into the ongoing Digital Transformation Project at the K12 level, adapted the curriculum to distance education, strived to meet the social and emotional needs of the students through engagement, invested in training the human resource, and worked hard to bring all of these to life. Adapting to uncertainties quickly, embracing change, developing, and renewing were no easy feat, and yet the spirit of solidarity and collaboration prevailed at The Koç School.



STEP 2

PREPARATIONS IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF THE KOÇ SCHOOL

With the renovation, the school aims for the students and teachers to spend their time in and outside the class in a safe and healthy learning environment that promotes maximum efficiency in the learning and teaching processes, fuels creativity, inspires, and motivates.

Starting the renovation work in some of the buildings at The Koç School was an essential step in this process. After consultations with experts, The Koç School Board of Directors passed a resolution in June 2020 to go ahead with earthquake reinforcement work in certain buildings and tear down the High School's Blocks A and B. All the operations were completed as planned in the summer, and the architectural work started on the new high school building, which will be influential on the future of The Koç School.



STEP 3

THE SCHOOL'S NORTH STAR REFLECTED IN THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Since 1988, The Koç School has focused on achieving well-rounded progress by maintaining a balance in the students' academic, social, and emotional development. This educational approach was the north star in every stage of the new high school building's design process.

In the design process of the new high school building, the top priority was to make sure that the values - the north star - of the school were reflected in the architecture. The high school blocks A and B blocks, which had witnessed important moments, presented a challenge in responding to the current and future needs of The Koç School community. Therefore, the reflections of the current educational approaches on the school architecture and the insights drawn from the needs analysis of the school stakeholders guided the design process.



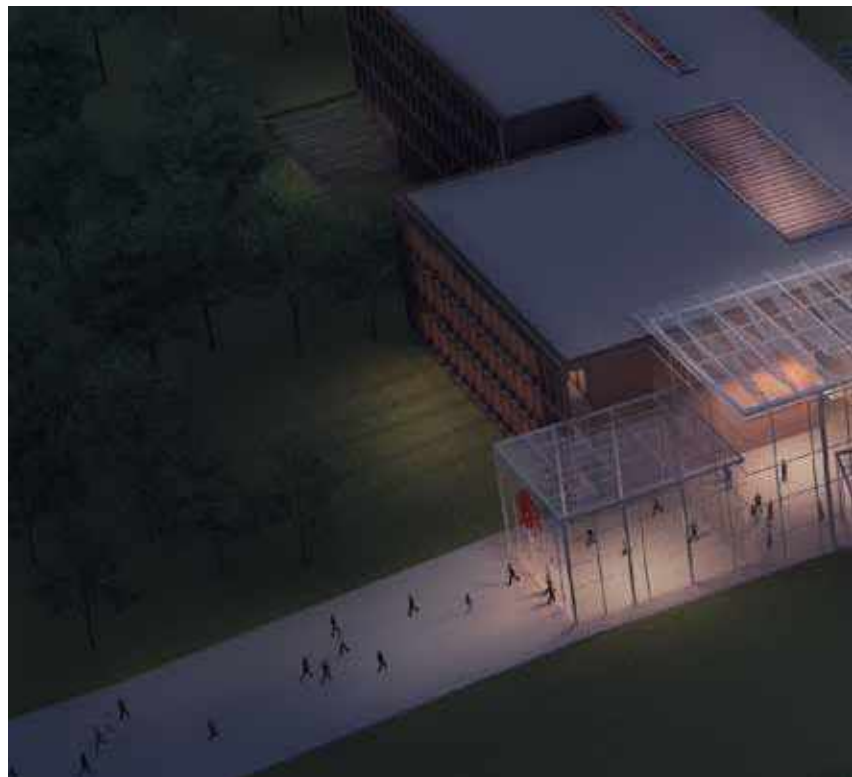


STEP 4

IS A SCHOOL ONLY A BUILDING?

The Koç School has developed its education philosophy to raise self-confident, socially sensitive, productive, and science-driven young people and build models for the education system. The new high school building of the future is shaped around these principles.

The elements addressed and reflected on the design for The Koç School's new spaces go far beyond the classrooms, common areas, and set times. Several dynamics such as creating a sense of belonging with the space, an architectural design functioning as a "Third Teacher" in the learning processes, campus integrity and development, environment and nature, and regulations are considered. For instance, peaceful and spacious areas to balance the fast flow of a day at school and common areas that promote movement and continuous interaction among the school community and with the school itself were integrated into the design.





STEP 5 SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



The Koç School aims to set an example for a sustainable future with its architecture and technology serving as the object of the education it provides.

The new building is much more than just an eco-friendly structure. It also acknowledges the social and environmental responsibility of The Koç School and aligns with the climate data and the conditions of the campus location. Powered by renewable energy sources, the building will positively impact the environment, address the evolution of the consumption culture, and offer an opportunity to raise the students' lifecycle awareness. In addition to the academic processes, The Koç School's diligence in ensuring that all operational practices related to the school's functioning comply with the applicable legislation also influenced the design processes.

The architectural drawings of the new high school building included here are sketches. The design continues to take shape with insights and by listening to the stakeholders.



STEP 6

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE KOÇ SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE



The groundbreaking ceremony of The Koç School's new high school building took place on June 3, 2021. Semahat Arsel, Chairwoman, Vehbi Koç Foundation and Board Member, Koç Holding, Çiğdem Simavi, İpek Kırac, Board Member, Koç Holding, İnan Kırac, Chairman, Kıraca Holding, Levent Çakıroğlu, CEO, Koç Holding, Tamer Haşimoğlu, Tourism, Food, and Retail Group President, Koç Holding, Cihan Özsönmez, General Manager, Vehbi Koç Foundation, and Professor Murat Günel, General Manager, The Koç School, and the school administration attended the ceremony.

İpek Kırac started with a quote from the speech that her mother Suna Kırac gave at the opening of The Koç School in 1988: "There are special days when putting one's emotions and thoughts into words is extremely difficult and even impossible. Today is such a day, as my mother used to say. Having the groundbreaking ceremony of The Koç High School on my mother's birthday is the greatest gift we could give her. For her, the first condition of education and this school was that it had to provide competitive and qualified educational content to prepare the students for the world. The mission of this school, which is very important to our country and us, is to raise students with a strong character, who are physically and mentally trained to the extent of their interests and capabilities, and take ownership of education in line with Atatürk's principles and reforms. As we build the physical structure of this school today, we fill it with the vision of Suna Kırac."

In his speech at the ceremony, Murat Günel said: "With the project, The Koç School aims for the students and teachers to spend their time in and outside the class in a safe and healthy learning environment that promotes maximum efficiency in the learning and teaching processes, fuels creativity, inspires, and motivates."

NEXT STEPS

- The project will be implemented in stages, starting with Blocks A and B (education blocks) that cover a total construction area of 13,100 m².
- A common architectural language will create a fusion between the retained structures such as the auditorium, Blocks E and F, laboratory and cafeteria buildings, and the new structures.
- The renovated education blocks will feature 65 technologically-equipped classrooms, each about 55-60 m².
- The classrooms and the offices of the teachers and the administrative staff will be positioned to ensure the required physical proximity and the necessary distance.
- The education block will feature a rich interior design, with all floors in a visual and physical relationship with one another, the campus, and the outside (landscape design and courtyards).
- The cafeteria, exhibition, project, accessible study areas, and student lockers included in the project will be the spaces that the students will use throughout the day.
- The courtyards between the campus blocks will be defined as open spaces where students can spend time during the breaks and also serve as areas for outdoor education activities.

On DB Architecture's relationship with The Koç School

At DB Architecture, we first worked professionally with VKV for The Koç School Swimming Pool and Science Building projects that we designed in 2012. We then made a voluntary contribution to drawing the application projects of Beykoz Koç Middle School, which the Foundation built as a grant school. We believe in the transformative power of architecture and are delighted to be a part of this project, which we see as a social responsibility. We are currently working on the high school renovation project of The Koç School. Our acquaintance with the school goes back a long time because we, Dilek and Bünyamin Derman, the founding partners of DB Architecture, are also the parents of The Koç School students for fifteen years. Our son graduated in 2015, and our daughter in 2020. Therefore, we see ourselves as a part of this family. The project creation process is a team effort. We want to note that in addition to our experiences, both as professionals and parents, the opinions of the teachers and the management, even the students and alumni contributed significantly to the development of our project. We sincerely hope that the educational spaces in our high school, which makes us proud with its students, will soon be ready. That day, we will be thrilled to have been a part of this effort along with everyone else who contributed.

Trung Le on the importance of a living campus

Homo sapiens have always shaped the world, deliberately and inadvertently, through the ways we have chosen to learn and live. How, then, should we learn and live now? This is the fundamental question of our time and the foundation of the future. It requires provocative questions and dynamic answers. To date, and too often, we humans have considered ourselves unaccountable -- to ourselves, to each other and to the wider world. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution upon us, we have the chance to recast ourselves as the inhabitants of a single living planet, and a biosphere of endless possibility. This, then, is the work of The Koç School -- to be the pioneer in transforming how we think about learning and living, so that together we can equip young people for their uncertain future, instead of our predictable past. We envision a living, thriving campus, and a civic tapestry in which learning occurs anywhere and everywhere, in adaptive, relational environments that are designed to amplify the essential characteristics of the global citizen of the future:

Not independent -- Interdependent.

Not apart -- a part.

Not revolution -- evolution.

This is our singular moment, and our collective responsibility.

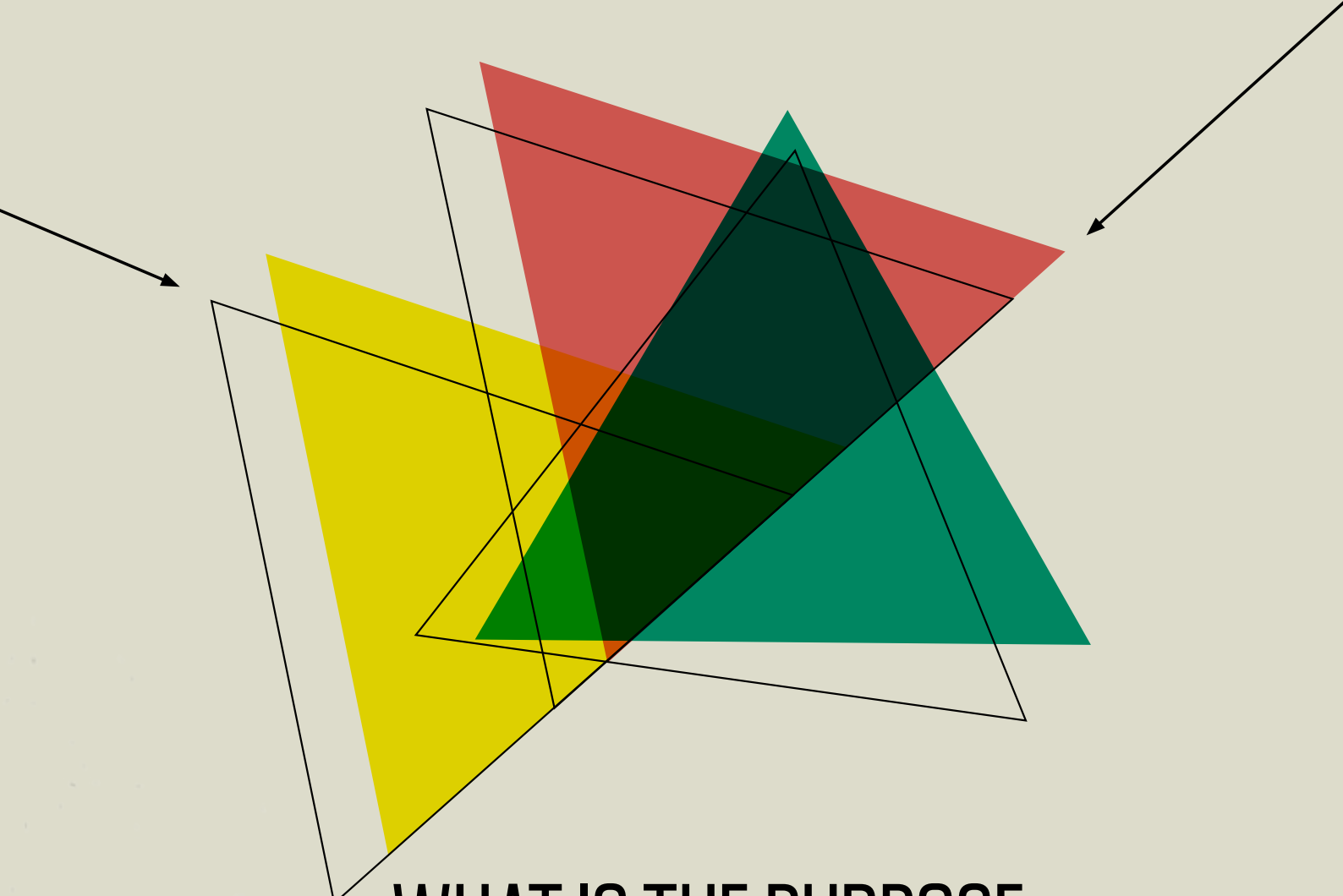
Now is when we come into the light of things and allow nature to be our guide.

Now is when we demonstrate a different way to learn and live, so that we can build a bold and better world ... by design.

PAB Architecture on the renovation

With remote education now a reality, we find the opportunity to rethink the school of the 21st century together. At PAB Architecture, we design educational spaces, knowing that the physical space acts as a catalyst for innovative education models. In imagining a living space that provides all stakeholders of the school with the opportunity for individualization and to be part of a collective spirit, we also value the importance of hearing the voices of all the school's stakeholders. We are aware that an inclusive, transparent, democratic, and non-hierarchical education model based on curiosity and exploration can only be possible with alternatives that offer freedom of choice to each stakeholder in spaces where this approach can prevail. We imagine a school as a holistic living space where education flows from the classroom to the hallways to the yards and turns into learning from one another and producing together in informal education environments. Knowing that The Koç School has a unique DNA, we dream of a school environment that embraces the vision and culture of the school and drives it forward. We are excited to make this dream a reality together with all the stakeholders of The Koç School.

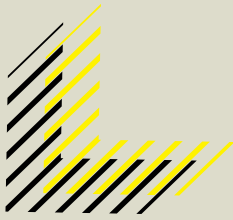
The building, designed by DB Architecture as the lead, with Trung Le/ThisIs180 as interior design consultants and PAB Architecture as the executor of the project, will be constructed by Ark Construction. Providing consultancy to ensure that the first steps of a connection-based and 'better' world are reflected in the design of an educational institution, Trung Le will make a meaningful contribution to the project.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A SCHOOL?

SEARCHING FOR A NEW MEANING AND PURPOSE

What we call purpose is our reason for being, or the motivation that gives direction to our life. So, what is the purpose of a school? Ayşe Yemişçigil, a lecturer & researcher working on meaning and purpose in the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, replied to this question and more.



We know that an aspect of your work concentrates on meaning and purpose. Lately, organizations, brands, and even individuals are discovering the importance of having a “purpose”. Tell us why purpose is so important. What does your work on this topic focus on?

What we call purpose is our reason for being, the motivation that gives direction to our life. In Turkish, purpose, which translates as “amaç” is not used for the same meaning. So, I first learned about a concept called “purpose in life” during my master’s studies. Having a purpose in life is in the literature as a descriptor of a person’s psychological well-being. Researchers have found that people that lack a purpose in life could be more prone to destructive behaviors such as addiction and alcohol consumption. When I saw this, everything I experienced during my university years suddenly made sense. And I knew that I was not alone because there were so many young people - and people in general - who lacked a purpose in life. I decided that I wanted to do my Ph.D. on this subject to understand it in-depth and teach it. In research for one of my Ph.D. courses, I found that people who felt purposeful were more active physically. On the other hand, new evidence pointed to many positive effects of feeling purposeful such as getting less sick, eating better, and living longer. Once I saw how purpose had a positive impact, I began to study the factors that affected purpose in my ensuing research. Since I thought that the greatest opportunity to drive purpose in the long term would be through education by shaping educational institutions and programs, I began to conduct research on university, high school, and leadership development programs. My research includes several studies that show that individuals who engage in intellectual and experiential programs for people to understand themselves and interpret their experiences feel more purposeful. In my current research, I am attempting to answer the questions of what we should do for such programs to contribute to the lives of people who need them most and how we could do it effectively.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE PROJECT

THAT THE KOÇ SCHOOL AND YOU ARE WORKING ON...

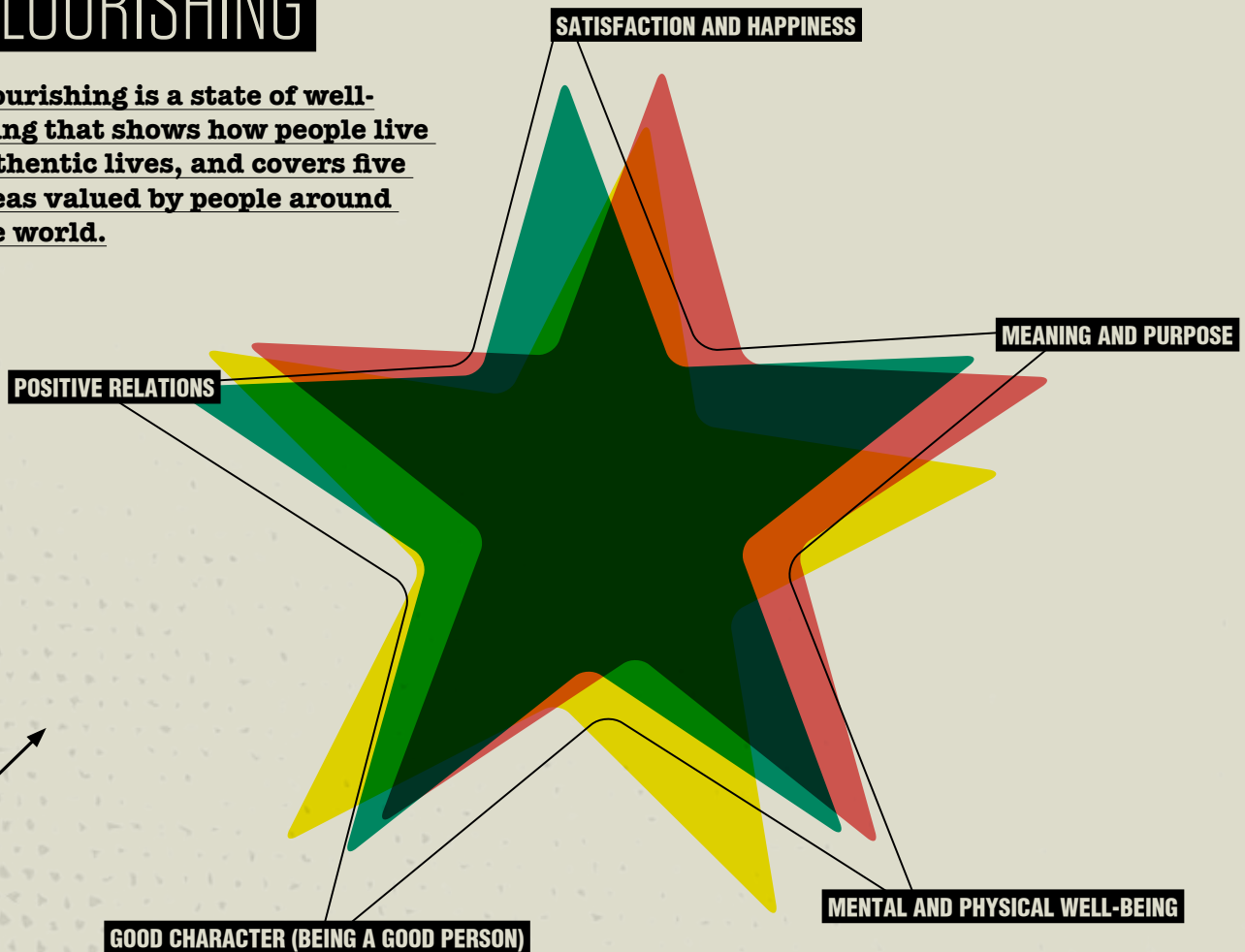
We had a very productive meeting with The Koç School and the Board of the Vehbi Koç Foundation, and we discussed meaning and purpose before the pandemic. At the end of that meeting, we had become convinced that research would be beneficial in terms of understanding purpose and meaning for all the stakeholders of the school, and particularly the students, and supporting them in their experiences. (I should note that as someone who was able to complete her university education thanks to a scholarship by the Vehbi Koç Foundation, supporting The Koç School and the Vehbi Koç Foundation community was especially meaningful to me.) The long-term plan with this project is to follow, understand and support the development process of the students from first grade through graduation and beyond in terms of meaning and purpose. In this process, we will identify how well the social and environmental factors are used at school and home as well as where opportunities lie. In the first step of our research, we will conduct a survey this fall to take a closer look at the experiences of high school students. Based on the results, we will shape what we will do next year. Currently, we are lacking in scientific knowledge about how to meet young people’s need for purposefulness. The data we will derive from this research will enable The Koç School to generate information that can be put into practice at school and help reimagine the curriculum or extracurricular activities. It will also contribute to universal knowledge and create change both in Turkey and around the world. We are starting a very meaningful and truly pioneering project. I am eternally grateful to the management and the project team for their vision and support.

Can you give us some examples of purpose-driven educational institutions and studies in the world?

In the academic sense, Dr. William Damon led the first purposefulness studies at Stanford University and his 2008 book “The Path to Purpose” marked a turning point. The studies began to show us that educational institutions do not sufficiently help young people for their purpose and that many young people do not get enough support from their schools and families at a time when they try to develop themselves and their identity. Yes, I say “we started” but what I actually mean is that this new movement had just started in the US and especially the West Coast. An example is Project Wayfinder, which was born at the Stanford Institute of Design. Wayfinder trains educators so that they can help their students with their purpose. They have developed an innovative curriculum and they provide support for its implementation. Since 2017, they have reached 50,000 students from 35 countries. Another is Future Project, which has supported more than 35,000 high school students in over 60 schools in the USA for finding their purpose through guides they call Dream Directors since 2011. One other is Global Citizen Year, which I work with and that helps high school graduates find their purpose by taking a gap year and going abroad for service and volunteering experiences while also supporting these experiences with a curriculum.

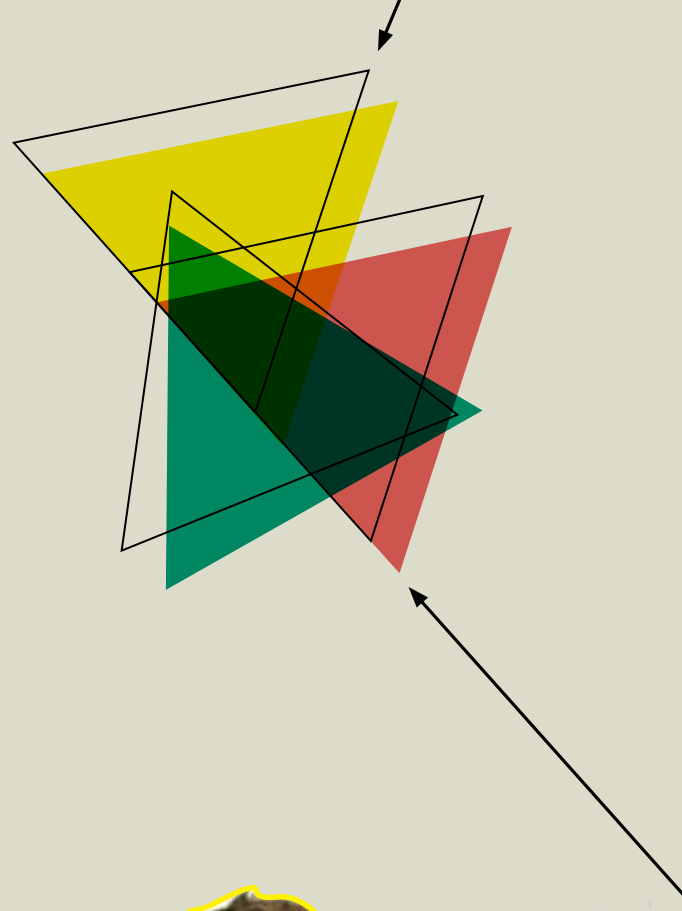
A WHOLISTIC APPROACH: FLOURISHING

Flourishing is a state of well-being that shows how people live authentic lives, and covers five areas valued by people around the world.



At The Koç School, the pandemic made us question ourselves: “What is the purpose of a school?” And we realized we now have a different answer to this question than what we would give previously. What do you think is the purpose of a school? Did this perception and approach change with the pandemic?

The fact that organizations and institutions have started to question their purposes in the last decade is a very interesting and parallel trend. Organizations are also seeking a purpose to attribute a meaning to their existence and guide their operations. To that end, they want to redefine their benefits to the society and their stakeholders because it is now clear that this the only way they can build meaningful relationships with their stakeholders and sustain their performance. As for the purpose of a school, Jonathan Beale, a researcher at Eton College, offers some good insights on this topic. Beale says that traditionally we think of a school as a structure that focuses on epistemic objectives, informs children and young people, and supports their mental development. However, recently, our view of human development and people’s well-being has become much more holistic. We do not simply reduce people to their mental capacities; instead, we try to see and develop their social and emotional capabilities. In line with this approach, I see the purpose of a school as supporting the holistic development of people and improving their social and emotional well-being and capabilities. The “flourishing” concept represents this holistic approach. UNESCO and positive psychology specialists say that flourishing should be the purpose of education. During the pandemic, it became a challenge to separate our social and emotional states and our well-being from the classrooms and workplaces. In this respect, I believe that the pandemic convinced us more about the need for this holistic approach.



ABOUT AYŞE YEMIŞÇIGİL

Ayşe Yemişçigil, born and raised in İzmir, graduated from Bornova Anatolian High School. She entered the Business Administration Department at Koç University on a Vehbi Koç Foundation Scholarship. Inspired by the Economics 101 course, she studied Economics as well to pursue a double major diploma. After graduation, she started to work for the ad agency Medina Turgul DDB’s strategy department where she discovered her interest in psychology and behavioral sciences with the joy she experienced while doing research and thinking about human behavior. She quit her job, applied for a Jean Monnet Scholarship, and was accepted to the newly opened M.Sc. Behavioral and Economic Science program at the University of Warwick. She later earned her Ph.D. diploma in behavioral sciences at the same school. In 2017, she and her husband moved to the USA, where she became a visiting student at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Following her post-doctoral work, Ayşe is currently a lecturer and researcher in the newly established The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard and working on meaning and purpose. She also teaches a leadership development course at Harvard University, helping students understand themselves and discover their life purpose.



The remote education processes that the pandemic entailed revealed that the existing technical infrastructure and equipment at The Koç School had to be upgraded to maintain and improve the education quality. Considering that time is needed for all face-to-face education habits to find their way to the online environment, the infrastructure and technology upgrades were completed as the first step. Meanwhile, the Digital Transformation Project encompassing K12 is ongoing as new digital tools are included in the system, curriculum is adapted to remote education, the social and emotional needs of the students are addressed through engagement, training of the human resource is reinforced, and significant effort goes into bringing the plans to life. Adapting to different scenarios and uncertainties quickly, embracing change, and working toward development and renewal were no easy feats in such trying times. Yet, the spirit of solidarity and collaboration prevailed at The Koç School.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN **REMOTE EDUCATION**



AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN REMOTE EDUCATION

LESSON PLANS MOVED TO ONLINE PLATFORMS

We engaged in extensive work on moving the lesson plans to digital platforms to ensure that The Koç School's educational standards are maintained in all online learning processes across the K12 system. In these activities, we considered:

- Active participation and engagement of the students in the online classes
- Effective feedback exchange on the digital platforms
- Ensuring the effectiveness of the courses with introduction, process, and assessment stages
- Encouraging the students to take responsibility for learning and making sure that they adhere to the requirements of the online learning environment.

HIGHER DIGITAL LITERACY LEVELS

We observed that remote education elevated the digital literacy levels of The Koç School students. The comprehensive and meaningful online tools applied to the learning environment and the proper and effective use of these tools by The Koç School teachers resulted in this improvement.

LEARNING ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

In observing and monitoring the online learning environment, the following were considered or carried out:

- Proceeding with continuous assessments
- Adopting process-based measurement and assessment
- In addition to the end-of-semester Progress Report, an Academic Progress Report was prepared to cover all exams and analyses.
- Through reports, the students received feedback from their teachers on their learning progress and reflected on their learning processes with the help of the Student Self-Assessment Forms.
- Regular Remote Education Surveys were conducted to seek the opinions of the students, teachers, and parents on the learning processes. The results of the surveys were considered in the decision-making mechanisms of the school management throughout the academic year.

THE CULTURE OF COLLABORATION AND LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

The evolution of The Koç School's culture of collaboration and learning from each other was among the highlights of this period. As a reflection of this culture, several events* took place.

- DESTEK (SUPPORT) 1&2 Project
- ELT Conference
- Digital Transformation Working Groups
- Exchanging Best Practices
- Teacher, parent, and student training programs/seminars
- The Learning Teachers Community
- K12 Curriculum Activities (English, Second Language, Life Sciences, Coding, and Learning Outdoors, etc.)

* More information on the events is available in the "From us" section.

REMOTE EDUCATION

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- The lesson plans, moved to Atlas Rubicon in the first semester, continued to be enriched on this platform.
- ATLAS Rubicon is a curriculum mapping tool used in The Koç School community to spread individual departments' best practices and strengths across the K12 structure.
- With advantages such as serving the K12 system as a whole, ensuring horizontal and vertical alignment, and contributing to the culture of learning from each other, the tool plays an important role in identifying the needs at The Koç School.
- An Academic Development Study was conducted.
- The Academic Development Study, which was launched in the second semester, will continue to improve the lesson plans and their functionality.
- Online training programs on the effective use of digital tools were provided.
- Sessions were held with experts to encourage interaction in remote language education. (Joe Dale)
- The School's LMS (Learning Management) system was integrated with remote education tools.
- A hybrid education infrastructure was installed in all classrooms and training programs were delivered to ensure effective use.
- The wireless internet infrastructure was expanded to cover the entire school so that the lessons could be held in the open areas as well.
- The internet bandwidth on the campus increased 2.5 times.
- The files stored on the servers were migrated to the cloud for easier remote access and collaborative work.
- The Koç School teachers used iPads and Apple Pens to contribute to an effective learning environment at home.
- The content of the school activities was updated to enable migration to the digital environment and all the activities took place online.
- Teacher training programs were delivered and technical support was provided to enhance asynchronous course content.
- The e-Library enabled access to online resources.
- In addition to printed resources, access to diverse online resources was offered.
- Administrative registration and application processes and parent meetings were moved online, using a software developed by The Koç School.
- Simultaneous translation was provided at each event for the international teachers of The Koç School.



Overseas College Guidance Office (OCGO) writes:

As virtual life prevailed worldwide due to the pandemic, education and extracurricular activities were also online in the last academic year. In keeping with tradition, the seniors continued to apply to many of the world's leading universities and were accepted to some top schools. This challenging process proved the resilience of our school community and once again revealed the incredible talent of our students who remained focused on their studies and pursued their extracurricular passions online despite staying at home.

We overcame the challenges

Even though we at OCGO were also affected by the restrictions that kept us from meeting in a physical setting or hosting guests from universities, we overcame the challenges. Instead of holding meetings in our offices, we connected with our students and parents via Skype, Zoom, and Google Meets. We finalized the university lists, held family meetings for important decisions, received the students' essays, gave them feedback, and assisted them with the financial aid forms.

The Koç School also pioneered a program, which allowed us to host guests from universities worldwide to meet with our students. In this context, we contacted five schools in Istanbul and brought together 100 universities with our students online. From September to November 2020, we organized weekly events Monday through Thursday. The presentations proved to be very valuable for the students, parents, counselors of participating schools, and universities from the USA, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Italy, and Germany.

The disadvantages of the admittance period

Saying that the admittance period was very challenging this year would be an understatement. With the SAT becoming optional, applications to discerning US universities rose significantly, with an average 17% increase in applications to top schools. For instance, New

York University (NYU) applications increased by 17%, with the applicant pool exceeding 100,000. Harvard University received 42% more applications, Tufts University 35%, and the University of Pennsylvania 34%. This shows that several universities received 10,000 more applications compared to the previous year. As a result, the admission rates at some US universities with the most selective processes fell more than ever this year. For example, Stanford's average admission rate was below 4%, Harvard's was 4.2%, and Columbia's 4.6%. Other leading universities such as UCL, Imperial, and King's College in the UK and the University of Toronto, McGill University, and the University of British Columbia in Canada saw similar increases in applications.

On the other hand, many families were affected financially by the pandemic and applied for scholarships, making the admissions process even more demanding and selective. The pandemic also impacted university budgets, with revenue losses due to the absence of students from the campus. To recap, it was a challenging year to enter universities abroad on scholarship.

Choices

The uncertainties regarding admissions, the impact of the pandemic on the families' financial status, the devaluation of the Turkish Lira against other currencies, and the visa sections operating more slowly were major concerns. Therefore, many of our students decided to apply to universities in multiple countries to compare the costs,

As a first in the school's history, the Class of 2021 received acceptance from eight Ivy League schools (Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Dartmouth, UPenn, Cornell, Columbia, and Brown) and Stanford and Oxford Universities. These and further acceptances from other leading international universities were crowned with prestigious scholarships. We are proud to note that the one-year scholarship amount granted to our students exceeded \$4 million.

quality, and admission conditions when the time came to choose.

With the cancellation of the IB exams and the grades determined outside the school, the International Baccalaureate program presented even further uncertainties in terms of the results. Some students with multiple applications have yet to receive their results.

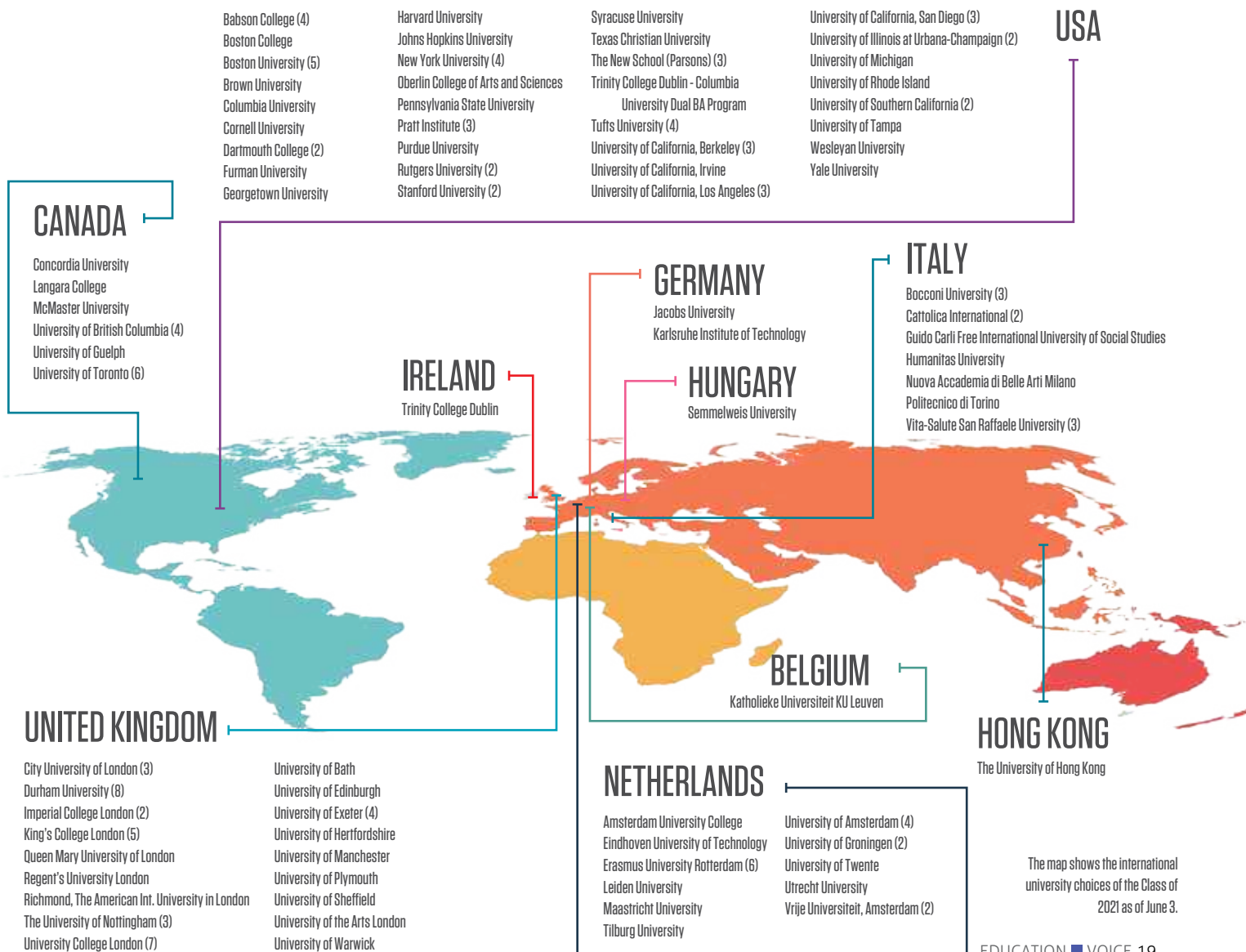
Considering the complexities in finalizing the decisions, we will have to wait until mid-September to see the definite choices of all the alumni. So far, 158 students have made tentative choices, while 15 students are still considering other options, including enrollment in a Turkish university. To date, 62 students have decided to study in the USA, 43 in the UK, 21 in the Netherlands,

14 in Canada, 12 in Italy, 2 in Germany, and 1 each in Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, and Hong Kong.

We will overcome this process

A heartfelt “Bravo” goes to all our students for their outstanding accomplishments. Our teachers also deserve our thanks for the detailed recommendation letters they worked hard to prepare, as does the school administration for all their support throughout the process. As different countries are opening with varying measures, we know that the coming months will be challenging. Obtaining a student visa and making travel plans will be more complicated than usual. But we will eventually navigate through this period, and our seniors will move forward with the next stage in their education, finally able to learn in physical school settings.

THE KOÇ SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVED ACCEPTANCE FROM THE TOP UNIVERSITIES OF THE WORLD AND MADE THEIR CHOICES!



OCGO IS READY FOR THE NEXT TERM!

The Koç School Overseas College Guidance Office (OCGO) prepares the high school students who intend to study abroad.

WHAT DOES OCGO DO?

- Brings vast knowledge about the countries that offer university education in English.
- In the last four years, the advisors started their own discovery programs, visited the Netherlands, Italy and France, and offered different options to students with up-to-date information.
- Even though the trips were put on hold due to the pandemic, the office proactively organized virtual visits via Zoom, enabling The Koç School students to learn about the top universities worldwide.
- The scope of the college guidance support extended in the previous years expanded with Sedef Gazioğlu joining the team this year. Starting in the second term, the office began to work one-on-one with sophomores in addition to the juniors, providing targeted college guidance.
- The office hosts meetings and workshops, engages personally to get to know the sophomores, juniors, and seniors, and provides guidance.

MEET THE TEAM AT OCGO



Asuman Okman

After studying in the USA throughout my education, I moved to Turkey in 1977. I served at the Naval Academy and in different sectors, including international banking. I then founded my English language school, where I advised English, TOEFL, SAT, and graduate students. My journey at The Koç School started 29 years ago as a study abroad advisor. In addition to providing guidance for international colleges, I also advise all students who intend to apply for scholarships abroad.

After my university education, I briefly worked in the finance sector. However, I found my calling in a people-focused career seven years ago and started as an assistant at The Koç School Overseas College Guidance Office. Development has an important place in my career, and getting to know the students and helping them in this exciting journey is my greatest motivation. My other responsibilities include: welcoming and hosting college representatives when they visit our school, holding workshops for the parents and the students, managing the SAT application processes and organizing the exam, coordinating the application documents, and managing the CIALFO online platform for submission to the relevant universities.

Hasan Kurt



Larry Turns



I have worked at The Koç School for 27 years. When I first arrived here in 1994, I had planned to start the Overseas College Guidance Program and then move on to other countries to experience the world. However, after working with the amazing students at The Koç School and developing a strong bond with this country and my family here, Turkey became my second home.

Didem Manecolo



I graduated from Robert College in 1990 and then studied communications at Boston University. After working and living in New York City for a year, I returned to Istanbul and started my career in advertising, which lasted seven years. Once I gave birth to my twins, I changed my career path and became a TOEFL teacher. Then, I joined The Koç School as a study abroad advisor. I have enjoyed working with diverse, bright, and engaging young minds for the last 16 years. I can't wait to meet my new students!

Aziz Çınar



I have worked for the Overseas College Guidance Office at The Koç School since 2007. I served as the application process coordinator and then worked as the IB/MEB Diploma Program and course selection advisor, SSD/SAT Center Advisor, summer school coordinator, early college advisor, and senior year advisor. In the 15 years I spent with the Overseas College Guidance Office team, I traveled to many countries, including the USA, Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands, visited university campuses, met with their officials, and attended international conferences.

Sedef Gazioğlu



I graduated from The Koç School in 2002 with an IB diploma. I completed my university studies at the Franklin & Marshall College in the USA with a double major in Business Management and Film & Media, and a minor in Spanish. For a year, I studied at the Saint Louis University's Madrid Campus and earned my master's degree in Marketing at the Instituto Europeo di Design. I was the first Turkish student to graduate from the University of George Washington Graduate School of Education and Human Development. I completed my second master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management in the same school. With a College Counseling Certificate from UCLA and a Certificate from the British Consulate General, I started my career as a study abroad advisor seven years ago at another private high school. I joined the OCGO team at the beginning of this academic year. I already know many students. In the transition period, I mainly worked with seniors for their UK applications this year.

CEM GÜVENTÜRK X THE KOÇ SCHOOL

A WORLD CHANGED WITH THE PANDEMIC

EXPRESSED THROUGH CARTOONS

The cartoonist Cem Güventürk drew a series of cartoons for The Koç School to depict a world evolving with technological developments and changing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The cartoons posted to The Koç School's Instagram account draw attention to how we discovered each other's different qualities during the pandemic. They also emphasize that we are longing for the days when we would get together again even if we have grown accustomed to doing everything remotely, and that so much has changed in our lives.

Cem Güventürk says he is delighted to connect with The Koç School students through this collaboration: "With the prolonged pandemic and the ongoing renovation at the school, there is a lot to talk about. Someone needs to say something but not sound too formal. We would rather hear such messages from someone who speaks our language. When I teamed up with The Koç School, I wanted to be the voice of both the students and the school. As a bridge between the school and the student, I tried to explain the challenges of the pandemic and how important elements in people's lives transform in such times. I applied my own language and even drew from my childhood. I think I recognized the students and the school well."



'To me, the mind is like a massive structure consisting of many doors. Daring to open each door knowing that something awaits you on the other side results in creating quality work.'



**Cem Güventürk
ON THE REQUIREMENTS
OF BEING A CARTOONIST**

Let's begin with how you started and proceeded to your professional career. How did you arrive at where you are now?

I was in high school when I developed an interest in comics. At the time, I was living in Izmir and had gone to a book signing event. The crowd, the people telling something with their drawings, all felt magical to me. I asked, "What are these people doing here?" to my friend, who said, "They are doing the same thing you are doing. They draw cartoons, publish them in comics magazines, and attend such signing events to meet with the readers." It was then that I realized a drawing could be valuable. So, I started to take my work to comics magazines. My drawings were quite amateurish, and so many magazines turned me down for too long. It was disappointing, but once I started working professionally, I figured out why I was turned down. In 2009, Penguen published my first cartoon on the amateurs page. I was working as a cartoon animator for a post-production company. Then, I completed my military service, and on my return in 2014, I got my own column in Penguen, the comics magazine. When Penguin shut down, I transferred to Uykusuz and Kafa magazines, which are pretty different in style. Since my cartoons are somewhere between the two, I still draw for both of these magazines and also collaborate with various brands. I was involved in the academy for a while, but I had to take a break from it. I was teaching experimental animation, character design, game graphics design, and exhibition and portfolio design.

You mentioned, "When I started working professionally, I understood why I was turned down before." What are some of the things that you realized in your professional life?

There is no course you can take or a school you can attend to work for a comics publication. It is entirely up to you to develop yourself, but I did not know it at the time. I felt rightfully rebellious, especially from 2007 to 2014, and I was thinking, "I am already a student of fine arts, I know how to draw, I can draw whatever I want, I express myself. So, why am I not in a magazine?" But I saw that there was a different system in comics magazines. Narration styles, forms, and drawing techniques were different. The more I studied, the more I understood this, and the more I learned, the more complex the process got. This is because analyzing the narration and expression techniques takes a long time, and you need to work on them. I realized this after I started at the magazine. One of my mentors told me: "You are trying to be one of the legs of the table. Don't. Try to be a beautiful vase on the table." I didn't understand what they meant at the time. I said to myself: "I will be the leg of the table." But the table had many legs. So, as I tried to be the only leg, I probably got into a rut. This approach was taking too long for me and what I was doing. Then, I started to think about how I could be a beautiful vase on a table and tried to create different things, using different narration and expression techniques, different colors, forms, and details. My mentor's advice was a milestone in my career. This is how I came this far.



HER ŞEY DEĞİŞİYOR...



SANIRLAR YİLE...

...GÜZÜNÜN YA ADIM ATTINIZ!
...YORGUNUM YA KENDİMİZİ...

...MESELA MUTFAK ROBOTLARI GERÇEK ROBOTLAR DEĞİL...



...ATMIYORMUŞ

...BİTİRİLMİŞ GÜMELLENİP...
...APRİLİ GEDİLE...



SALONDA ALINAN DEĞERLİ TÜRLÜ TELEVİZYONUN NERELİNE MİŞİM?



PEKİ GEÇENLERDE EVDE YİLEHİN UÇ BÖYÜLÜ FİLMİ?



Within all the variety, everyone finds something that they can identify with in your cartoons. Do you observe people to capture their reactions? Do your drawings reflect what you and others feel?

When you think about what and who to observe for the intended result, you take your spirit out of the work. If you don't pour your heart and soul, especially your amateur spirit, into what you do, it becomes incredibly artificial and forced. The reader feels it too. This is the curse of what we do. Observation is part of the process, of course, but I am not talking about sitting in a park and watching people. It could happen while you are chatting with a friend or simply reflecting and talking to yourself. An experience from your childhood or memory of an encounter with a friend may trigger something. Even if there are details you don't want to remember, you somehow bring them together, combine the good and the bad. Let me put it this way: To me, the mind is like a massive

structure consisting of many doors. Daring to open each door knowing that something awaits you on the other side results in creating quality work. Most people seek support because they are not good at opening the doors in their minds. Technically, support means providing direction for opening the doors in one's mind. What I do serves as a kind of therapy for me. It is comforting to know that someone can say something for you and that the reader thinks, "you said it better."

Having a professional job that also helps you heal by drawing without needing others sounds great...

It is like a hobby, therapy, and job, all wrapped up together. Therefore, I consider myself very fortunate.

Let's talk about your books.

I think "Stories" is the most mature and down-to-earth book that reflects me. When you work with a single-

...İLK BİLİŞAYARI?



...GEÇEN SEFERİ FİNAL GÖNEMİ?



HER ŞEY GÜMELLENİP, DEĞİŞİYOR



...BİZ BİLE...

...ZAMAN BİLE...



...GALİBA YAPMAMIZ GEREKEN;



...DÜNYANIN BU DEĞİŞİP GELKEN HALİNE AYAK YTDURUP TADINI ÇIKARTMAK.



frame cartoon, you have to say something very quickly and end it. I like the storytelling part of the job. Let's say I like it more.

Especially during the pandemic, we were left to our own devices, and we sought shelter in stories. I wanted to bring the stories together in an album. So, it became a book, thanks to Nayss Publishing. The fifth edition will be published soon.

Do you have plans to connect with your followers and cartoon fans through works in different disciplines?

I want to work in different disciplines; for instance, I would like to do a film. I have a project to bring my stories into an animated series, and we are currently working on it. I also want to open an exhibition that is entirely independent of cartoons and only focused on painting. Being a cartoonist has taught me a lot about being versatile because, in comics, anything can be your subject. This is why cartoons encompass different disciplines. In this context, my artistic production will not be limited to cartoons. I aspire to produce more, bring other disciplines into my work, and create in those domains as well.

Finally, what are your thoughts on the impact of the pandemic?

It has been tough. Justifiably, we look at the economic and social impact first, but it feels like we do not consider, address, and manage how the students are affected. I think this is the most critical issue in education. I remember that when I was a student if it rained and snowed a lot and the school was off, it would be a great deal. We would not go to the school, but we knew that it was for a day. During the pandemic, the picture changed, and the process became hard for the students, the administrators, and the schools. The first case was reported in March 2020, and all of a sudden, everything unfolded. At this point, all we are left with is hope. We hope that the vaccine rollout will cover all the people, and gradual normalization will be introduced, at least by reopening the schools while still implementing certain precautions. The efforts of the schools give me hope. Everyone is trying hard to get through this period as quickly as possible.

PARÇALARIMI
TOPLAMAMA
YARDIM
ETTİN DİYE
...



...KENDİMİ BIRAKTIĞIMDA
BENİ TUTMADIĞINI UNUTMUYCAM.

YENİ
TANIŞTIĞIMIZ
HER
İNSANA
KARŞI...



ACABA BU HALE
GELMEDEN ÖNCE
SEN KİMDİN?



SHARING IS GOOD!

Every step counts when nothing is expected in return. Especially when these steps reach places where they are truly needed, touch lives, are taken for good, and raise awareness... The Koç School and its students work all year and bring to life numerous projects, knowing that sharing is good.

Let the Future be Yours

Ekrem Armağan Karakaş, a junior at The Koç School, set off on a journey with his sibling to undertake a big, multipurpose project. He decided to interview successful people in their respective fields, publish them in a book, and help the children being treated in the hospital with much of the proceeds from the sales of this book. Fazıl Say, Filiz Sarper, Erhan Erkut, Azra Kohen, Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Murat Özyeğin, Fahir Atakoğlu, Selçuk Şirin, Mehmet Öz, Nasuh Mahruki, and Ufuk Tarhan supported the project. Following discussions with Professor Hale Ören, MD, head of the Pediatric Hematology Department at 9 Eylül University, the decision was made to allocate the proceeds from the book for the purchase of equipment urgently needed in the pediatric emergency department and delivering online training for the middle school students of the Aegean Contemporary Education Foundation (EÇEV). The book sold 600 in a month, and the newscaster İsmail Küçükkaya promoted it on his TV show “Çalar Saat” (Alarm Clock).

Please follow and support @geleceksizinolsun on Instagram.

PROJECTS

Don't Quarantine Dreams!

İdil Ece Alkan, a junior at The Koç School, and her friend Doğa Tekeli collaborated with the Association for Supporting Digital Transformation in Education and started the Don't Quarantine Dreams project to collect tablets. İdil Ece and Doğa formed a team of 25 people from The Koç School who worked actively with great motivation for the project. Each team member sent messages to their acquaintances, sometimes used their family connections, and grew this donation movement by shipping every tablet they collected to the school. They met with several associations and organizations, including TEGV. The refurbished tablets and nearly thirty new tablets were delivered to students in need in more than 40 schools in Tuzla.

You may donate an old or broken tablet by sending an email to hayallerkarantinadakalmasin@gmail.com.

STUDENT

STUDENT PROJECTS

New Year's Concert of the Music Box Project

Music Box, a project that started last year with concerts in February and March, continued its activities this year. Aiming to boost morale and extend support through music by giving concerts in nursing homes, children's care homes, and various foundations, Music Box did not let the pandemic hold them back from performing. Duru Kaya, a junior and project leader, planned the first event as the New Year's Concert of Music Box with students from the school radio. She reached out to several nursing homes in different cities to determine which ones had the technological system to broadcast the concert. Then, the radio link and concert date were shared with the residents of Kasev Foundation, Darüşşafaka Şenesenevler Residence for the Elderly, Nezih Nursing Home for the Elderly, A-dora Nursing Home, and Suadiye Nursing Home. Duru also contacted Kerim and Selim Altınok to extend the concert invitation to hundreds of visually impaired people. Ten students from the Music Box team played their favorite songs with various instruments and sang songs on New Year's Day.

Please follow Music Box on Instagram @musicbox.project.

Koç Interact Club İzmir Aid Campaign

The Koç High School Interact Club is a student community that works to mobilize the school at every opportunity for helping and sharing. In the spring of 2020, when the pandemic had just begun, the Club joined forces for the "Emergency Aid Package" project for LÖSEV. This year, they organized an aid campaign for the lives lost in the İzmir earthquake. As a club searching for solutions to social problems, they raised funds and essential supplies with the club members and the rest of the school to help the people in İzmir go through the hardships with minimal damage and resume their everyday lives.

Please follow and support the Koç High School Interact Club on Instagram @koc_interact Instagram.

Yaparsın Koçumm

İpek Ayhan, a sophomore at The Koç School, started the YouTube channel "Yaparsın Koçumm" in September 2020. So, what is the purpose of this channel, which means "you can do it"? It all started by asking how education would continue, as the first question that comes to mind with the pandemic. Once online education started, and the students were forced to stay at home, İpek began to hear the cries for help from her peers across Anatolia. So, she thought, "I will do my best to make education easier and accessible for my peers in any way I can." She took the first steps by enlisting eight of her friends to help her. She opened the channel "Yaparsın Koçumm" with the slogan "Remember, you can do it under any circumstance" and began to record summaries and detailed videos on the subject of each 10th-grade lesson they learned and broadcast them on the YouTube channel. Every week, İpek and her friends upload videos from every class. After a while, İpek also opened the Instagram page "Yaparsın Koçumm," where she answers unsolved questions and shares relevant notes via DM.

YAPARSIN KOÇUMM TEAM:

İpek Ayhan, Elif Lara Okyay, Ece Gürler, Burçe Hızarcıoğlu, İdil Ateş, Cansu Uluçay, Tuna Tasalı, Emre Efe Dağlı

Please follow the activities of Yaparsın Koçumm on Instagram @yaparsinkocumm.

STUDENT PROJECTS

Saplings Donated to TEMA on November 10 Atatürk Remembrance Day

Last year on November 10, the primary school students brought potted flowers or saplings instead of cut flowers as a nod to the great leader Atatürk's love of nature. The students then planted these flowers in a corner of the garden. Under the pandemic restrictions this year, the primary school students supported the Memorial Forest by donating saplings to TEMA.

Student Birthday Celebrations

On the birthdays of primary and middle school students, donations are made to the TEV foundation and the funds are used to support a university student with limited financial means.

Running for Charity with "Adım Adım"

This year, 16 high school students from The Koç School ran for charity in the Istanbul Marathon in October. Representing The Koç School Official Running Team, 12 high school students raised donations for TEGV and 4 students for AÇEV. With the donations raised during the 2020 Istanbul Marathon campaign, The Koç School ranked second among the corporate donors of TEGV.

Thebukalemun.com

Thebukalemun.com, a website created by a group of high school students, is a platform where the older classes help the younger classes by tutoring them online for free. Born from the idea that it can be challenging to follow the lessons online and that not everyone can have sufficient access to remote education during the pandemic, the platform accepts tutoring requests from students and also welcomes students who enjoy teaching and volunteer to help others.

If you would like to become a volunteer tutor, please visit thebukalemun.com or reach out to [@thebukalemun](https://www.instagram.com/thebukalemun) on Instagram.

Student Associations' Aid Campaigns

At The Koç School, middle and high school student associations voluntarily organize aid campaigns every semester to meet various needs. For instance, this year, the High School Student Association supported the victims of the Izmir earthquake, while the Middle School Student Association developed projects to help students without access to education due to the pandemic and lack of devices.

SCHOOL PROJECTS

ÇRPD

With the entire education system shifting to online platforms due to the pandemic, the guidance activities also needed digital tools to adapt to the remote learning process. The Online Guidance and Psychological Counseling (ÇRPD) Meetings were organized in March through June in cooperation with The Koç School and İde Schools. These meetings provided a platform for discussions on how to reach students more effectively in class/group activities, involve them in the process, and encourage them to express their emotions and thoughts easily during the remote education period. All participants contributed their input voluntarily to the discussions on ÇRPD, which focused on how guidance could be provided on digital platforms.

ELT

The Koç School hosted an online conference open to all English teachers at elementary and middle schools across Turkey. Nearly 1,000 English teachers from kindergarten, primary, middle, and high schools throughout Turkey registered for The Koç School ELT Conference on October 24, 2020. The attendees benefited from the experiences and insights of expert speakers such as Joe Dale, Russell Stannard, and Shelly Sanchez Terrell, and found the opportunity to explore new best practices and different applications.

D.E.S.T.E.K. and D.E.S.T.E.K. 2

The D.E.S.T.E.K Project is a platform where The Koç School teachers voluntarily share their knowledge and experiences with teachers and prospective teachers across Turkey. The first phase of the project took place in December 2020, and the second phase, D.E.S.T.E.K 2.0, in April 2021. The presentations and workshops as part of the project, which aims to contribute to the future of Turkey through professional solidarity and with social responsibility awareness, were free and open to all branch teachers who seek to create more engagement in their classes, as well as teachers and prospective teachers on all levels. More than 1,500 teachers and future teachers participated in each stage of the project, named "Technology and Education Talks for More Engaging Classrooms".

Helping Hand Campaign

The Koç School has organized the Helping Hand Campaign for 23 years to contribute to the education and learning expenses of children in need with the regular monthly contributions of the employees. The financial support raised last year and this year amounted to TL 43,300 and TL 65,750, respectively.

If you wish to be included in the Helping Hand Campaign, please contact the High School Vice Principal's Office at the beginning of the new academic year.

TAMER KÖŞELİ X THE KOÇ SCHOOL
TO COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY

THE KOÇ SCHOOL ALUMNI DATABASE

More than 5,000 alumni of The Koç School, founded in 1988, make up a special community of people with different professions and experiences, living in various countries across the world and aiming to make a difference in life since their school days. The Koç School Alumni Database is currently in the process of implementation for The Koç School alumni, who always demonstrate their commitment to their school, both at alumni meetings and also at student events that they attend during the academic year to contribute with their experiences. The Koç School alumni will now be able to find out the latest developments about their school and communicate more effectively. The system will also enable them to register on the school's website and update their information anytime. A surprise gift awaits the alumni who register and submit their address details!

The Koç School collaborated with the graphic designer Tamer Köşeli for this surprise. "The project developed to highlight the iconic structures and symbols of The Koç School called for designing these symbols to meet specific criteria. The symbols had to be perceived even in small dimensions while the illustrations needed to be unique to The Koç School. This is why I designed the symbols in a simple, bold, and authentic style that allowed for different applications," says Köşeli.





Tamer Köşeli ON DESIGNING AND HIS DESIGNS

You were born in Switzerland, studied fashion and industrial design at Anadolu University, and set up your studio in 2010. Did you initially plan to study graphic design? How did the courses you took contribute to the trajectory of your career?

Yes, I initially aimed for graphic design but in the end, I got there indirectly. I started with fashion design and while studying at the department, my focus was mostly on the graphic elements of my collections. I realized that I wanted more and decided to do a double major in industrial design. In the first elective graphic design course I took, I realized that my passion was graphic design and illustration. Even though I later shifted my direction, I still try to reflect my training and experience on each project.

Since you set up your studio, you worked with major clients. How do collaborations with global or international brands influence your practice?

Working with international clients is an entirely different experience. In this sense I have been very fortunate. You feel that you and your work are valued, which in turn gives you self-confidence, and you focus more on your work and put more effort into delivering a better job. There are some brands and clients with this ethical approach in Turkey as well but not many.

Most people would know you for Symbolcities, the personal project you started in 2013. What is the latest status of that project? Did you complete it, or do you still have city images on your mind that you want to express through symbols? Are there other projects in the pipeline?

You are right to ask about the status because it is still in progress. I started the project because I could not find great designs that I would like to give as gifts to my friends visiting Istanbul. It later became a project where I would work five days a week designing the unique landmarks of the cities I visited. I enjoyed it a lot and also learned from it because I was sharing fun facts about each building as well. I then used the illustrations to create postcards and prints, which are currently sold at numerous stores in Turkey and abroad. I had to take an indefinite break from the project due my current workload. We will see what the future has in store for me.

Today's world is filled with an overabundance of stimuli. What influences your practice of expression through color and shape combinations?

The idea of expressing things with simplicity among all the complexity that surrounds us is very appealing to me. Combining a few colors and basic geometric shapes in different styles to create a design is like solving a puzzle and making a whole from multiple pieces.

Among your works, are there any that have a "special place" for you?

The pictograms I designed for the Olympic Games website, app, and building are very special to me. It was a project that I thoroughly enjoyed and also felt very anxious. There are such amazing pictograms designed before me that I tried very hard to keep up with them. For years after the project was completed, I could not muster up the courage to share the works, just in case I would notice a mistake or some part in the pictograms that I didn't like. I kept going back and looking at the files for a few years and I was finally ready to share them because I felt confident. It was a project I had wanted to do since my childhood.

Do you have an aspiration for your works to be used for years to come, like the works of İhap Hulusi, the pioneer of graphic arts in Turkey?

It may sound strange, but I think people always want to be remembered. I too hope that my work will be used and remembered for years to come.

What are your thoughts on digitalization of art? Can we expect to see your NFT works soon?

When it comes to NFT, I am more excited about the democratization of art and blockchain technology than the works that have emerged as NFT. It is true that blockchain use is increasing with many people wanting to sell their works as NFT, and this is harmful to the environment. We are already damaging nature as it is and I do not want to be a part of it. If we can minimize its environmental impact, I could consider NFT.



TANER ARDALI THE KOÇ SCHOOL

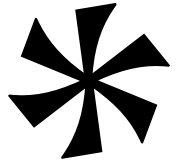
BRINGING THE PAST TO PRESENT DAY

A CORPORATE TYPEFACE FOR THE KOÇ SCHOOL

The Koç School typeface was created in collaboration with the typeface designer Taner Ardali, who has a background in advertising as a creative director working with local and international brands for many years. Inspired by the school's architecture, the typeface will be used in communications as an element of the brand identity and play a key role in strengthening the corporate culture and driving it forward. The Koç School typeface takes the past to the present day.

Taner Ardali says a great idea and design was born out of his collaboration with The Koç School. "The most challenging part of the design process is to combine different elements in a melting pot. We had to see the columns, which signified The Koç School's deep heritage, in the typeface as the foundational idea. So, we decided to design a typeface with the anatomy of Roman Capitalis Monumentalis, a Latin monumental script from antiquity. We achieved a unique typeface, in which the iconic columns of The Koç School were represented in the vertical bodies of the letterforms, enhanced with all-over innovative details. We designed a two-column version of each letterform that has a vertical body. In integrating the columns into the characters, we created smooth lines over the curves between the claws and the body to align with the font's "clawed" anatomy. We also benefited from Opentype to activate-deactivate these alternative characters easily, ensuring ergonomics for users of the typeface. The Koç School is among a handful of educational institutions with its proprietary typeface, and thanks to the school's visionary approach to the design process, I had an incredible experience."

'Letters represent the sounds we make when we speak. In other words, each letter is a conversion tool between the ear and the eye. Typefaces enable us to involve emotions in this process through design.'



Taner Ardali
ON DESIGNING TYPEFACES

As a designer, did you always dream of specializing in typefaces? When you were in the advertising world, were you already hooked on typefaces?

My interest in typefaces began at university, but you would not expect it to become a valued field in Turkey back then. At the time, my goal was to work for a good ad agency and rise in the advertising sector. Indeed, I was already hooked on typefaces while I was in the advertising world, but I could not set aside time for typeface design due to my busy work schedule. When I was in the advertising sector, I was a typeface user and not a designer. Having a user's perspective proved to be a valuable resource for me as a typeface designer.

When it comes to design, colors and shapes/images are usually more prominent than typefaces (especially in Turkey). Are we beginning to understand that typefaces are an essential element of design? Or are we still lacking in this respect?

Good designers know how to create a balance between typography and other elements. They bring the typography to the forefront or keep it in the background as needed. The typefaces serve as the voice of the characters. In Turkey, the market in general and the clients seem to understand better the importance of typefaces than the designers do. The idea that typefaces are a representative element of a brand or an organization is beginning to gain recognition.

You are deeply passionate about letterforms. What do letters mean to you? Do you think that typefaces reflect emotions, or do we just use letters to communicate information?

We all knew but seemed to have forgotten that letters

represent the sounds we make when we speak. In other words, each letter is a conversion tool between the ear and the eye. Typefaces enable us to involve emotions in this process through design. Information is present, independent of the typefaces. But the letterforms that convey information can include emotion. This communication can, at times, be expressed subconsciously or vocally at others.

What motivates you when designing a typeface?

Letterforms sometimes include visual codes that can convey information, independent of my involvement. When designing a letterform, my motivation comes from the new emotions that a specific letter evokes and unveiling a new structure.

Do your interactions or everyday experiences influence your designs and the names you give to your typefaces? How do you name your typefaces?

I do not have a consistent method I follow in naming. I listen to my inner voice sometimes. I generally prefer names that I feel become the typeface and represent its design phonetically.

If you were to create a unique typeface for a book on the latest pandemic, what would your must-haves be in the design?

Assuming that I would design a typeface for a book cover, it is hard to describe it in words, but I would definitely try to capture a style to reflect a sense of uncertainty and difficulty. Apart from the normal anatomy, a deconstructive approach would be better. In addition, I would want to highlight a feeling of being overwhelmed by making it harder to read the cover without dissuading the reader from reading the book.

KOC CAPITALS IS THE
MODERATE CON-
TRAST ROMAN BASED
TYPEFACE DESIGNED
FOR KOÇ SCHOOL.



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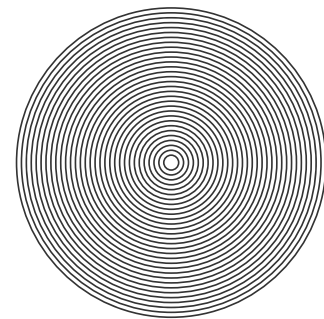
**For more on Taner
Ardali's works, please
visit: tanerardali.com**



THE HEALING POWER --- OF ART

In the face of the psychosocial consequences of a pandemic that inevitably eroded the public realm and shared experiences, art plays a healing role with its power to start creating again.





SADBERK HANIM MUSEUM

As the world prepares to leave behind an unprecedented period of hardships, the ongoing impact and destruction of the pandemic clearly show that humanity should heal from the devastation it has caused. This is where art comes into play, standing next to us as the best practice to undertake this task.

With its production and perception, art continues to play an essential role in grasping, processing, and expressing the emotional states and challenges brought about by the pandemic. Art achieves this by providing new forms of expression and enabling elaborations and abstractions.

During the pandemic, art institutions did not hesitate to take steps in line with this mission and brought art to the masses by taking works of art to publicly accessible digital channels to share its healing power. The online exhibitions and events, which became singular meeting points for artists and art audiences, turned into spaces to recreate public life, build a sense of community, and provide a place for humans to exist socially during the pandemic when the homes became the central locations.

Sadberk Hanım Museum, Arter, and Meşher, art institutions under the umbrella of the Vehbi Koç Foundation, continued their activities with online exhibitions and events throughout the pandemic. Their ingrained belief in the essential role of art in the development of humanity and their efforts and commitment to ensure that this role takes deep roots in life helped them persevere through this period.

Sadberk Hanım Museum, which has hosted visitors since June 30, 2020, presents the **“Motif” exhibition, open to visits from November 9, 2020 to October 31, 2021, with both physical and 360° virtual tour options.** Celebrating its 40th anniversary as Turkey’s first private museum, Sadberk Hanım Museum curated the “Motif” exhibition entirely from its own collections, bringing together works of art decorated with motifs that can inspire different disciplines by emphasizing the intercultural interactions. Browsing through nearly 500 motifs in the exhibition, it becomes clear how closely connected Turkey is to both East and West, with Anatolia at its center. The online version of the exhibition, created through an intensive process led by Prof. Turgut Saner, features informative documents, videos, and name tags about the works of art. **In addition to “Motif”, the museum’s “Harmony of Line and Colour” and “Skill of the Hand Delight of the Eye “ exhibitions were also made publicly accessible online via the Google Arts & Culture page during the pandemic.**

Life and power
Wheel of fortune motifs



VISIT SADBERK HANIM MUSEUM: sadberkhanimmuzesi.org.tr

Meşher continues to present the exhibitions “**Preserving the Past: A Selection from the Sadberk Hanım Museum**” and “**Alexis Gritchenko: The Constantinople Years**” online. The objective of the exhibition “Preserving the Past: A Selection from the Sadberk Hanım Museum”, curated by the museum director Hülya Bilgi, and available at Meşher’s Beyoğlu location until August 1, is to mark the 40th anniversary of the museum and bring important pieces from the Anatolian Civilizations collections to the viewers. Meşher’s third exhibition “Preserving the Past”, accompanied by a special book, can be viewed on a virtual tour, which enables moving between the floors where the works are placed.

The exhibition “Alexis Gritchenko - The Constantinople Years” was hosted in the Beyoğlu building from September 1 to November 1, 2020. The exhibition is still available online for those who missed these dates or wish to view it again. “The Constantinople Years” exhibition focuses on the artist, art critic, and author Alexis Gritchenko’s stay in Istanbul from 1919 to 1921 and features more than one hundred of his paintings in different techniques. The exhibition book, edited by Ayşenur Güler and Vita Susak and published by the Vehbi Koç Foundation, includes information on the artist’s works with a close look at his time in Istanbul.

Figurine
Marble
Early Bronze Age, mid third millennium BCE
Western Anatolia



Alexis Gritchenko
Galata, April 1920
Watercolor and charcoal pencil on paper

VISIT MEŞHER: mesher.org

David Tudor and Composers Inside
Electronics, Inc.
Rainforest V (variation 3)
Photo Credit: Orhan Cem Çetin



Altan Gürman
Composition No. 7
1967
Cellulose Paint on Cardboard, 72x102 cm
Photo Credit: Hadiye Cangöke

Arter, founded in 2010, is a sustainable, vibrant cultural hub, offering a broad range of programs accessible to everyone. In addition to the new exhibitions opened during the pandemic, Arter also hosted online events. As the guided tours, seminars, interpretation activities and workshops continued online as part of the Learning Program, the second edition of the New & Newest Music Festival on the Event Program took place on digital platforms this year. Welcoming visitors at its Dolapdere building since 2019, Arter presented the online exhibition “**Altan Gürman: A Pioneer in Turkish Contemporary Art**” via Google Arts & Culture during the pandemic. The online exhibition offers a closer look into the artist’s output between 1965 and 1976 in the context of global art history discussions and in relation to the social perspective of his time. Altan Gürman only began to be recognized as a leader and cornerstone of contemporary art in Turkey in the art historiography of the 2000s, and his output over eleven years is exhibited alongside a selection from the archive, which can be viewed on Google Arts & Culture.

The online exhibition **Experiencing Sound, Sculpture and Silence: A Walk Through the Rainforest V (variation 3)**, curated by Melih Fereli, the Founding Director of Arter, designed by David Tudor, and developed by Composers Inside Electronics, Inc. brings “Rainforest V (variation 3)” to the audiences via Google Arts & Culture. The online exhibition offers a close look into the history of the Rainforest, its details, and the installation process of this interactive work at Arter. Along with the online exhibition, the installation itself can be viewed at Arter from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm Tuesday through Saturday.

VISIT ARTER: arter.org.tr

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VEHBI KOÇ VAKFI
ANSİKLOPEDİSİ

 **Vehbi Koç Vakfı**

EXHIBITING THE MEMORY OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

A talk with Aslı Özdoğuran '12 on her journey from The Koç School to Chicago and back to Turkey, from Arter to BAS and the solidarity network Omuz, which she supports...



After graduating from The Koç School, Aslı Özdoğuran '12 completed her undergraduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on a partial scholarship, earning her Cross-disciplinary Contemporary Arts diploma in 2016 and Cross-disciplinary Visual and Critical Arts diploma in 2017. She worked as an assistant to the artist Michael Rakowitz while living in Chicago. She set up Rakowitz's retrospective exhibitions in several cities, including Istanbul, Chicago, London, and Dubai. Relocating to New York City in 2018, she interned at the SculptureCenter as a Curatorial Research Assistant. On her return to Turkey, she worked as the Workshop Supervisor in Arter's Learning Program until May 2021. Effective 2021, she became the executive of BAS. In our talk with Aslı Özdoğuran, we focus on her work at BAS and the importance of the connection between arts and latest developments.

How does the meeting of contemporary artistic production with all involved parties' everyday experiences and imagination make a difference? How did Arter's Learning Program achieve this?

The artistic production of the present day does not quite allow for encyclopedic description. Most exhibitions invite the visitor to interact. What I mean here is not only about a physical interaction but also making a connection between the actual events and the exhibitions because interpreting them in the context of the sociopolitical environment and recognizing that our reactions are part of the artwork itself are also ways of engagement. Arter's Learning Program, which I served as the workshop supervisor until this May, supports the creative process, opens up a space to ask questions, invites visitors to view the exhibitions from different perspectives, and hosts workshops where the participants can interpret what they see with a hands-on approach. I believe that such events disrupt the inaccessibility of the artist and contemporary arts. This is essential for a museum.

Please tell us more about BAS.

BAS, a not-for-profit space that Banu Cennetoğlu started, is focused on collecting, exhibiting, producing, and distributing artists' publications through various collaborations since 2006. Yasemin Nur and Seçil Yersel made it possible for BAS to continue from 2016 to 2019. Effective January 2021, the artist Marina Papazyan and I became the executives of BAS, which serves as the memory of artistic production in the 2000s with the books collected and published. The BAS Collection includes more than 1,000 artists' books, magazines,

and other printed materials. An artist's book refers to a publication that features the works that an artist produces, and it differs from monographs or other editions in this respect. Neither Marina nor I am art historians, but we both find it exciting to see productions spanning periods together and working with archives. We often discuss what it means to be an independent art space today because the government does not support art spaces and even discourages them. Unlike corporate-supported art spaces, independent initiatives come to life through individual efforts, and sustaining them can become an issue, especially if you are selective about which sponsorships to accept. Therefore, I am excited about being a part of a space that could survive since 2006. We look forward to the days when the pandemic will end, and we will host further research, reading groups, exhibitions, and talks at BAS.

How did your education at The Koç School contribute to the expertise you built?

I want to be careful about how I answer this question. I learned so much at The Koç School, and the 12-year education certainly had a significant impact on the person I am today. Benefiting from an education that emphasized the importance of having a career as much as social life was instrumental in developing people relations and connections with social networks. An education that promotes analytical thinking and subjectivity opened many doors in my field, as you can guess. On the other hand, there were also times when I had to unlearn what I learned at school. We should keep in mind that the perception of reality that The Koç School creates is quite different from what is out there. In this respect, I can liken the campus to an island in terms of its location and social status. High school years are when some fundamentals concepts are instilled, and a class consciousness begins to take shape. I can't help but dream of an education system where such subjects were discussed openly and what we learned about society went beyond social responsibility projects within hierarchical structures. On the other hand, I remember some of my teachers fondly every day for sowing the seeds of this awareness.

What do you have in the pipeline for the near future?

I want to look back on this year as a time when I focused on my artistic practice and activating BAS. As of now, there is no exhibition on the horizon.

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,” says Picasso. And yet, we can often capture art in everyday life with the help of contemporary arts.

How would you respond to Picasso from the present artistic environment?

I do not put art on a pedestal with this approach. One can't help but wonder how Picasso drew “Guernica” by isolating himself from everyday life. There is, of course, a difference

between what is “everyday” and what is “up-to-date”. If we are talking about isolating ourselves from the routines and staying away from the to-do lists that we need to cross off every day and looking at the bigger picture, I agree with Picasso. Sometimes, seeing things becomes problematic if we stand too close to them. At this point, art gives us the luxury of standing at any distance, and today, this is probably more valid than ever.



To support Omuz, volunteer, or share your ideas and suggestions:
www.omuz.org
omuz.iletisim@gmail.com

What would you like to say about engaging in artistic production during the pandemic?

The pandemic's impact on the economy is evident in every aspect. Let's think about this in the context of arts and artistic production. After all, we cannot talk about a creative ecosystem without mentioning the often-ignored laborers (exhibition installation teams, gallery assistants, editors, translators, and more). The pandemic has been very challenging for art workers who are currently quite vulnerable without government support and working for meager pay. Exhibitions are postponed, galleries are closing down for good, and promises are put on hold. I want to take this opportunity to talk about a solidarity network that I support. Omuz was born in April 2020 as an emergency response to this situation. To quote from its website, “Omuz is a solidarity network—initiated by a group of people working in the arts and culture who believe in the urgency of unreciprocated resource sharing and cooperation—which will only be sustainable through the support of others. Omuz was established to respond to the economic precarities and inequalities, which became acutely visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to strengthen the network of solidarity. Omuz is a sharing network among those working and producing in the arts, bringing together those who want to receive financial support with those who want to give support.” Omuz is not an association or a foundation, and it does not have a bank account of its own. It only acts as an intermediary between those who want to receive support and those who want to give support. Artists, art workers, curators, writers, gallery workers and art handlers residing in Turkey, primarily those whose income or basic needs have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic can apply to Omuz.



WE NEED **FEMALE DOMINANCE** **IN NEWS REPORTING**

A delightful chat
with Ece Üner '99
on news reporting,
life, The Koç School,
Turkey and the
world...

Almost all of us know her from the TV screens as the anchor of primetime news. Ece Üner '99 has made a name for herself and gained quite a following with her newscasting style and occasional passionate commentary that resonates with the conscience of the viewers. After graduating from The Koç School, Ece Üner studied History and Sociology at Koç University and then French language at the Sorbonne University. As a reporter for NTV, she interviewed several top-level politicians and then worked at CNN Turk and later Haber Turk. She currently hosts primetime news on Show TV. We spoke with Ece Üner about news reporting and anchoring, her work, and books.

You were a reporter before becoming a news anchor. Which do you think is more exciting, telling the news story in a studio or being on site?

Both. Why do you go to a great restaurant? For good food. News reporting is like that: the reporters, camera people, and editors are the cooks in the kitchen. They cook the food, and the newscasters generally present it. However, some newscasters do more, especially if they have a background in reporting. They get involved with the content, and if we continue with the allegory, they monitor the food as it cooks. In other words, they participate in every stage of the news production process; so, they serve the food to the viewer. In a sense, newscasters engage with the viewer. Like a waiter observing if the customer enjoys the food, newscasters can determine whether the viewers like the news content and how it is presented. In this respect, both are exciting and should go hand in hand.

We occasionally hear/see you react to some news stories. As you present a news story, you also share your opinion. It seems like the viewers/society gain a different perspective or awareness about that story with your commentary. What are your thoughts on this?

How you approach news reporting is essential. I am neither the most beautiful woman nor the greatest newscaster in Turkey. So, how do I make a difference? If I'm in that seat, I should be the voice of those who are not heard and speak up about people's fight for their rights, for their jobs and getting paid, and the pursuit of merit and justice. I need to make the voice of the people, the ordinary citizens, be heard. This is my mission. I believe that it works in terms of raising awareness and developing different perspectives. I get a lot of positive feedback, which I appreciate.

There seems to be male dominance in news reporting. How does it feel to be a courageous woman with a strong attitude in such an environment?

I don't think such domination applies anymore. We now live in a world where women are at the forefront with their intelligence, conscience, intuition, and insight. Women are versatile and very resilient with high emotional and social intelligence. They are practical, quick, and focused on solutions. Being a woman is a massive challenge in Turkey today. During the financial crisis of 2008, many companies managed by women were able to survive, and we saw female presidents and prime ministers navigate their countries successfully through the pandemic. The vice-president of the United States of America is a woman. Today, women are contributing to the world economy more than the growth rate of some major countries. We need a woman's perspective, heart, touch, and words to come out of these strange and challenging times. If you think about the computational fluid dynamics principles, there is a need for female dominance in news reporting, like in all fields.

Let's talk about your new book. What do you tell the reader in "Dignity - Living Boldly in Strange Times"??

For one, there are dozens of references and books, wrapped up and layered like matryoshka dolls in a single book. This is a book of surprises, like a surprise candy. Every day, I report so many stories of indignity about the troubles of the people on the street, their struggles for justice and merit in the face of double

standards. The video "you've been hurt" that went viral in 2020 was never about entertainment and fun. It served as a mirror that reflected the situation of ordinary citizens. Yes, ordinary citizens felt "hurt" by what they saw and experienced! What I wrote is both an overview of the history and a look into our moods as we witness history unfold today. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar said, "Turkey does not give its children the opportunity to get involved in anything else but themselves." Sadly, it does not. As part of my job, I see and present dozens of news stories every day and witness people on the street feeling hurt. This is where dignity comes into play as people seek justice, merit, or jobs.

When the dignity of a person on the street is hurt, that person is hurt. This is where I draw the line. I can't stomach people getting "hurt," and I comment on these issues. As someone who studied sociology, I present my findings based on these observations. You could call it sociological analysis with dark humor. This book tells us about ourselves. And in doing so, it sometimes makes us laugh out loud or smile bitterly, and at times it makes us think. The book is about the human condition, both in Turkey and also across the world. Things that cannot be explained any other way are best told with dark humor.

How did your education at The Koç School contribute to the competence you developed in your career?

My education at The Koç School has always been essential in everything I did. The Koç School helped me recognize myself. Ms. Sibel, my Turkish language and literature teacher in middle and high school, had a significant influence on me. I am not sure if she is still at the school, but I would love to see and chat with her. Thanks to her encouragement, I found a way of freely playing with words, believing in their magic, and understanding the power of words in changing and transforming the world. Jacques Ellul said, "If you want to save the world, you need to save the printed word first." Thanks to Ms. Sibel, I fell in love with words and expressions and believed in their power. If I can speak well today and touch people with my words, I owe it in large part to my education at The Koç School and the extraordinary teaching style of Ms. Sibel.

The Koç School is where I learned to recognize my strengths and development areas, the importance of not memorizing, logic and math, philosophy, reasoning, altruism, empathy, and "seeing" others. The school also taught me so much about Turkey and the world and people in these geographies. In addition to teaching me how to become a global citizen, the school also helped me adapt to the dynamics of my country. There is an often-quoted saying by Darwin: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, not the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." Thanks to The Koç School, we have become individuals with high adaptability to diverse conditions and situations. We all strive to make a difference in our respective fields and work toward becoming extraordinary people.

What other projects (new books, maybe) do you have lined up?

I am about to start working on a new book inspired by George Orwell's "Animal Farm." It can be described as a children's book or a book on politics, depending on the lens you use to look at it.

* "Haysiyet - Tuhaf Zamanlarda Cesurca Yaşamak" - published in Turkish



A career dedicated to exploring the body-mind connection...

A PSYCHIATRIST WITH A PASSION

The London-based psychiatrist Esra Çağlar '98 works with children and adolescents and is also an adult psychoanalyst. Here is the story of a Koç School alumna who specializes in mental health.

How did you decide to specialize in psychiatry?

The year I was interning at Istanbul Faculty of Medicine, a suicide bomb attack happened on a bus in front of the school. At that moment, I was standing with my friend right across the road from the scene. We had our white coats on. I thought a lot about that shocking incident. I saw how a person with a damaged spirit trapped in misery could turn into a destructive body. Couldn't anyone help that person? The same year, there was an earthquake. Again, I thought about traumas and the human spirit. As an intern in a clinical setting, I listened to the patients talk about their journeys and observed their relationships with their bodies. I was still a student at Istanbul Faculty of Medicine when I had psychiatry and neurology training at the medical schools of Harvard University and Northwestern University and attended academic courses. After graduating from medical school, I took Dr. Talat Parman's advice and came to the UK, where a more holistic approach is adopted. The next day I found myself at the Tavistock

Clinic, located close to the house where Freud spent the final years of his life. I did my psychiatry residency and then specialized in child and adolescent psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience in London. I focused on eating disorders for a while and worked at private practices on anxiety, depression, and trauma. I also addressed neural variability, which I often saw in my clinic. Meanwhile, I worked toward a specialty in psychoanalysis at the Institute of Psychoanalysis in London and became an adult psychoanalyst.

What are you up to these days?

I have my own practice as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and I currently work with children, adolescents, and adults. My lifelong interest in body-mind connection continues academically. I also work with trauma-victim children and adolescents under the care of the Başlangıç Association in Turkey.

What does the Başlangıç Association do? How did you get involved in the association's work?

Başlangıç Association helps trauma-victim children. In Turkey, there are very few adolescent psychiatry inpatient clinics. The association's work includes developing trauma treatment protocols for these

children, setting up clinics, and training and supporting healthcare professionals and caregivers. Dr. Menekşe Alpay, a psychiatrist at the Harvard Medicine School, contacted me about four years ago. She was my role model when I was studying medicine. She told me she had founded the Başlangıç Association with two of her classmates from medical school, Dr. Berna Hocaoğlu and Dr. Petek Uzuner. She explained what they aimed to do and asked me if I would join them as a child and adolescent psychiatrist. I accepted without a second thought.

Please tell us about the work you do with the Association.

My colleagues and I started by visiting the homes where adolescent mothers stayed. I wanted to see the babies of these teen moms. It did not make sense to me that mothers and babies stayed in separate houses, and I felt sad about it. The project later changed in this respect. Since then, one of our most important goals has been to unite mothers and their babies and ensure that each baby develops a secure bond for as long as possible. We built a solid relationship of trust with the institution within 2-3 years. We repeatedly informed everyone involved, from the managers to the professionals, caregivers, and even the security personnel, about the importance of forming a bond. Then, Dr. Beril Bayrak Burcu, a Boston-based pediatrician specializing in early childhood and parent-infant mental health, joined us. Eventually, the infants were moved to stay with their mothers, and the baby home went through a fantastic transformation. We still work to make sure that children who live in the baby home can stay with the same caregiver until they are 4. For the 0-4 age group, we also try to make sure that each child receives Theraplay and Montessori Education. We organize training programs on trauma treatment for children and adolescents and also host regular workshops. Most recently, we gave training on mental health crises as part of the EU-funded Wise Mind project. The training content will be published as a guide and distributed to institutes in European Union states. We also hold monthly case meetings regarding the homes where adolescent mothers stay with their babies. There is a beautiful sense of solidarity and a trust-based relationship.

Why do you think supporting children in this manner is important and how do you feel about engaging in such activities?

These children exist. And they will continue to exist even if we ignore their needs, wishes, and pains. I have endless respect for the employees of the institution. They care and work hard with good intentions. Unfortunately, the ratio of employees to children is very low, and this is the biggest issue. The job is tough because you need to be open and brave. Science, knowledge, and peer support drive me. This project strengthens my connection to my profession and nourishes my conscience. There are some things in life that you need to focus on and address, even if you feel scared or hurt. The positive outcome of the collective effort of everyone involved in this project is much greater than that of a group. It becomes the driver of improvement within the institution we help.

You have a very busy schedule. How do you find the time for charity work?

I became a physician to help people. And I have been involved in charity work for as long as I can remember because of my family. My grandfather was a successful businessman, but he lived a modest life and always worked with associations. I met Türkan Saylan at a young age and became a part of that community. My mother worked for the Association for the Development of Village Children for years. My family taught me to respect nature, feeling that we are a part of it, and help people with humility and discipline.

How did your education at The Koç School contribute to your competence in all these areas?

I was 15 when I discovered the autobiography of a girl with cystic fibrosis. Back then, people with this hereditary lung disease had a life expectancy of nearly 20 years, like the book's author. So, I did my term paper on lungs. My biology teacher, Hans Estrin, had found sheep's lungs and stayed at school for the weekend to accompany me as I did my first dissection. The following year, my biology teacher, Lale Tanrıver, took me to a class at medical school. Last month, I corresponded with Ayten Açıkada, a PE teacher at The Koç School for many years, and she told me all about the importance of exercise and a balanced diet in middle age. She says I should never stop exercising. Not long ago, my history teacher, Serap Benibol, came to visit us in London. As we were saying goodbye, she told my son, "Look, if they don't teach you Turkish history, come to me. I will teach you.". With teachers who approach their students with such care and attention, both at school and beyond, education will undoubtedly contribute to an individual's life.

Over the years, you learn to identify what is yours, keep what is good for you, let go of the rest, be compassionate, love, recognize what you see, and respect and accept others. But at school, I learned to have realistic dreams and to commit.

Humans are born out of a relationship (parents) into a relationship (parent-baby). As long as the baby feels secure, spiritual integrity develops within the physical integrity. I mean, a safe connection is essential for someone to understand you, empathize with what you are going through, and believe in you. Experiencing this in a family is as important as having it continue at school. I feel that I experienced this at The Koç School. Teachers need to pay attention to the interests of the students and get to know them.

What is next in your plans?

I am pretty busy with my work in my practice and the association's projects. I always come back to the body-mind connection. We can think of the body as a sensory organ. From a developmental perspective, I find the evolution and variability of the mind and what factors affect it fascinating. I read, ponder, and write about this topic. I hope these will become a part of clinical projects one day.

Pelin Kıvrak '07 and her story from The Koç School to Harvard University, from Museum of Innocence back to Harvard University, and to many more stories waiting to be written...

OUR LOSSES MAKE US WHO WE ARE

Pelin Kıvrak studied Comparative Literature at Harvard University and also took courses in art history, Roman languages, and creative writing. Armed with years of experience as the editor of The Koç School's weekly newspaper "TAWA," she became the art editor of The Harvard Independent, the weekly newspaper on the Harvard undergraduate campus. After completing her undergraduate degree, she worked as an assistant at the Museum of Innocence in Çukurcuma, Istanbul, for a year and contributed to the museum's establishment. She then started her Ph.D. in philosophy at Yale University's Department of Comparative Literature. In 2017, she took a one-year sabbatical from her doctoral studies and published her first story book titled "Hiçlikte İhtimal Var" (There is Possibility in Nothingness). In 2019, she completed her dissertation on the philosophical implications of the cosmopolitanism concept in the works representing immigrant, refugee, and diaspora lives. She is currently a postdoctoral scholar at Harvard University's Center for the Humanities. Pelin Kıvrak '07 told Voice about her story from The Koç School to Harvard University and what she has been up to lately.



What have you been up to lately?

After defending my Ph.D. dissertation in December 2019, I returned to Harvard to start a new academic research related to my thesis. I generally work on the representation of individuals and communities that have been denied their basic human rights and systematically oppressed for political, economic, or gender-related reasons, and chosen art to make their voices heard. Currently, I am conducting a research at Harvard University on how migration and refugee experiences in the 21st century reflect on contemporary art and literature. I hope to make use of this research in turning my dissertation into a book. For the last two years, I have worked on my new story book. I am also a senior research associate, contributing to the works that my artist friend Refik Anadol and his team create in his Los Angeles studio.

Let's talk about your 2017 Yaşar Nabi Nayır Story Award-winner book "Hiçlikte İhtimal Var". According to a review, you take the reader on a rough journey "to save the stories doomed to be boiled down to generalizations in the cauldron of history." Is it fair to say that the book focuses on existential crises?

Yaşar Kemal, the great novelist and an inspiration for me, once questioned in an article, "How does the world still stand if it is such a bad place?" I penned my story book at a time when peace, politics, capital, and leadership kept getting increasingly worse every day. In a way, I wanted to answer Yaşar Kemal's question with "thanks to stories and possibilities". If the world still stands despite its complexities, it is thanks to stories and the tellers of those stories. It is in my world, at least. This is because I believe that the likelihood of art healing us is greater than the possibility of our losses pulling us down to nothingness. I do not necessarily choose existential crises as the focus in constructing my stories; however, many of my characters search for a possibility to hold on to in the bottomless pits of poverty, despair, and loneliness, and this probably guides the reader into existential thoughts.

In one meaning, the word "character" comes from "engraved mark" in ancient Greek. You can interpret this as carving a shapeless raw material with a sharp knife and sculpting it into a recognizable figure to arrive at character. I believe that our losses make us who we are rather than the things that bring us closer to our reality and essence, that shape and carve us. I wanted to describe my characters with their attitudes toward the things they lost and let go of.

Let's go back to the time before you wrote the book, please tell us about your starting point.

Since early 2016, I have traveled frequently for my doctoral research. I met many people on these travels, read much, and listened to countless stories. In the meantime, terrible injustices, crimes against humanity, hate crimes, persecution, and gender discrimination rose to extreme levels in Turkey and worldwide. As I reflected on everything happening globally and its impact on my world, I found myself searching for something. I revisited my journals and read the character analyzes or descriptions of places with a new perspective. As I read the journal entries, I did not have an academic concern; I wanted to find glimpses of humanity and hope. In a way, I needed to believe that everything would be okay. And for me, being okay could be possible if I thought that stories were powerful enough to bring people closer. I wrote "Hiçlikte İhtimal Var" ("There is Possibility in Nothingness") with this mindset.

Who are some of the authors that have influenced you?

I feel like everything I read or watch adds something to my

writing, even if I do not agree with or like it. But some of the books that I visit over and over since my youth are: Hamlet by Shakespeare, Emotional Education by Flaubert, Anna Karenina by Tolstoy, Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë, The Black Book by Orhan Pamuk, Yenişehir'de bir Öğle Vakti (One Noon in Yenişehir) by Sevgi Soysal, short stories of Gogol and Chekhov, and One Hundred Years Of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Did your education at The Koç School contribute to your literary skills?

Absolutely. I have been very fortunate because my family has always supported my relationship with multiple artistic disciplines and literature since my childhood. But I always felt that this support grew exponentially at The Koç School. Given that I was involved in the newspaper and magazine publishing activities and Turkish Literature was the best department of the school, I felt encouraged to consider writing and academics as a career. I believe that I still carry the influences of all my literature teachers and remember their advice. Particularly, my teacher Didem Gürzap is very special to me.

Are there new books you're working on?

Yes, I am currently working on my second storybook, which will consist of the stories of nine different lead characters, connecting with one another in unexpected ways. I plan to complete the first draft by the end of this year. And of course, I plan to go back to my primary profession and turn my doctoral dissertation titled "Imperfect Cosmopolitans" into a book. But it will probably spread over the next two years.

"Language is the house of being. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home," says Heidegger. What do you think about it?

Frankly, the first question that I thought of when I heard this quote was, "What guardians would Heidegger place at the gates of the house of language if he were alive now?" As you know, the philosopher's perspective on phenomenology and language is directly related to the disruption and destruction of the world wars in the first half of the twentieth century. In the years when people lost their lives in masses due to the most tragic events of recent history, and the ones that survived lived with the anxiety of losing or hiding their culture and identities, Heidegger - even though his personal life was so flawed - like many other thinkers, tried to point to the practical and symbolic importance of language. In an age when artificial intelligence can form logical sentences and memory is stored in machines, we should rethink this quote, which defines the functionality, proximity, individuality, uniqueness, and unifying power of language with a single metaphor.

POPULAR IN THE WORLD, POPULAR AT THE KOÇ SCHOOL:

ESPORTS

KOÇ ESPORTS PLATFORM, CREATED IN JANUARY, PROVIDES A MEETING PLACE WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS CAN GET TOGETHER IN A FUN ENVIRONMENT, EVEN IF IT IS ONLINE, AT A TIME WHEN THE KOÇ SCHOOL TEAMS CANNOT COMPETE FACE-TO-FACE, AND REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDLY COMPETITION.



EVENTS

FIFA21 Tournament: The first event of the Koç eSports platform was an online football tournament. Eighty-one middle and high school students of The Koç School competed with a fair play spirit in the FIFA21 tournament, which took place on January 18 through January 24 with the support of the Physical Education Department. Kerem Er '19, who directed the tournament, was also the commentator together with Dursun Efe Genç '19 of the games broadcast live on Twitch. 12th grader Emir Akdemir won the championship title of the tournament.

April 23 Special Game: The Student-Teacher Football Match, a classic April 23 event organized by the Physical Education Department, was moved to the online platform this year. On April 22, middle school teachers and students played football in teams of 5 on The Koç School's Twitch platform. Kerem Er '19 was the commentator of the exciting game, which ended with the students' team winning.

May 19 Special Game: On the occasion of the May 19 Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, separate ceremonies were held at the middle school and high school while the traditional Student-Teacher Football Matches took place online this year. In the friendly games, which both ended with the students winning, friendship was the real winner like the matches on the grass field.

WHAT IS ESPORTS? HOW WILL THE FUTURE OF ESPORTS TAKE SHAPE?



Kerem Er '19 explains...

Please tell us about esports.

Esports is an exciting and intriguing industry. When I asked people about the meaning of esports, they would say, "it is the sport of the future", but I saw that esports was already here! It continues to grow and expand very rapidly. Development of the esports ecosystem in one year is equal to 10 years in the development of a regular sport! This is why I like saying that it is intriguing.

Is it a real sport?

We could say it is definitely a sport because it involves some serious competition. There are specific criteria for becoming an esports player. For instance, you cannot become an e-athlete if you are past 24 because your reflexes slow down. So, you should be careful with your diet and sleep.

How is the interest in esports?

I am a sophomore at the Department of Sports Management at Bilgi University. One of the topics we frequently discuss with our teachers and friends in the lessons is esports games. Only 7% of the esports fans are interested in games such as FIFA, NBA 2K, and Formula 1, which are like the digital versions of these sports disciplines. On the other hand, interest in games like LOL, Dota2, CS GO, Fortnite, which are not digital sports, is 93%! Considering that the biggest sponsorship deals go to this huge slice, we will inevitably see such games in the future!

What are your thoughts on the future of esports?

The Olympic Games used to be one of the most popular topics. In late April, the International Olympic Committee announced that it would hold an "Olympic

Virtual Series" before the Olympic Games this year. Esports does not need the Olympic Games to continue its growth and expansion! However, the interest in the Olympic Games is declining every year. So, the Olympic Games need esports, even if they do not seem enthusiastic about it. Sponsors are an essential factor in the esports economy, and some of these are global brands. As long as these brands exist and the next generation wants to consume everything faster, esports will continue to develop and gain more popularity by the year.

How did it feel to volunteer for The Koç School's esports projects?

In May 2020, I applied for Başakşehir Football Club's Professional Football Management Certificate Program. Among the 400 applications, I was one of the 25 selected applicants and the only university student in the program. In the last stage of the program, we were asked to prepare a mini-thesis. They told us that they would select 2-3 people as interns based on the results. Among the 40 thesis topics, I chose esports. I completed my thesis on "Sponsorships and Advertisements in Esports" with Başakşehir's Esports Coordinator as my adviser in June 2020. The thesis helped me gain a heightened awareness about the esports industry, and I wanted to develop a project. When I saw that The Koç School did not have an inter-high school tournament, I reached out to Coach Nuri and told him that I had a project on esports. We organized an unforgettable tournament with 81 students. Volunteering at these events was an incredible feeling, and being the commentator was a priceless experience. I also take great pride in adding value to my alma mater with this contribution.

**On the work approach, purpose and goals
of the Human Resources Department at
The Koç School...**

THE KOÇ SCHOOL **PLACES PEOPLE AT ITS CORE!**



The Human Resources Department at The Koç School aims to meet the common goals by embracing an approach that places the people at the center, makes life easier for the employees, and invests in employee development programs. With deep respect for The Koç School's heritage, the department is committed to improving in every aspect and contributing to the development journey of the Vehbi Koç Foundation, which envisions a modern and developing society. With a diverse faculty and experienced administrative staff, we move forward with confident steps on the path to enriching the learning environment.

HUMAN RESOURCES AT THE KOÇ SCHOOL

TO DATE

- Following the strategic planning work of more than a year, we focused on process planning, efficiency analysis, and business development efforts and took a step to renew the human resources processes with the infrastructure improvements in line with the digital transformation at The Koç School.
- As we went through a period when we deeply felt the impact of the pandemic, we kept our focus on the employee touchpoints and aimed to improve the employee experience.

TODAY

- Our analyses continue as we work to create human resources practices that keep up with the dynamics of the age, focus on people, integrate with Koç Holding's Human Resources practices, and align with the sector and The Koç School culture.

TOMORROW

- The current human resources system software will be renewed to accommodate our ways of working in integration with the new program.
- With the new software, a Leave Management, Training and Development, Personnel Affairs Management, Organizational Management, Recruitment and Employee Portal will be deployed.
- The Human Resources Partner system will be rolled out with a "Focus: People" approach. As a result, the Human Resources Department will have business partners in the roles of strategic partner, change representative, employee champion, and administrative expert in the primary school, middle school, and high school.
- To achieve continuous improvement in employee experience and internal communication processes, The Koç School's employee experience and workflow models in human resources processes will be mapped. This will allow us to build standard flow models for each stage of employment at the school from recruitment to exit.
- Representatives and action groups will be assigned to human resources projects, which are considered to suit The Koç School and to have the potential to create development opportunities, and an integrated system that keeps up with the times will be established.



To say #TheKoçSchoolTogether...

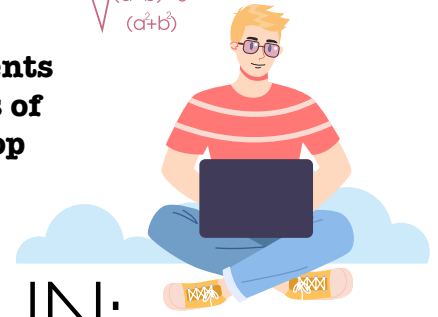
Pınar Alkoç

The Koç School Human Resources
Manager

We are delighted to be a part of the efforts to say #TheKoçSchoolTogether as we accompany every step of the change process with our approach of developing, listening more, understanding better, supporting, and building together. My greatest wish is to grow stronger together as we move forward on our development journey with the same commitment and trust.

$$\sqrt{(a+b)^2 - 6}$$
$$(a^2 + b)$$

Throughout The Koç School Math Week, students use their mathematical knowledge in a series of unexpected situations and games and develop their problem-solving and thinking skills while having fun.



MAKING LEARNING FUN: THE KOÇ SCHOOL MATH WEEK

$$D=b^2-4ac$$

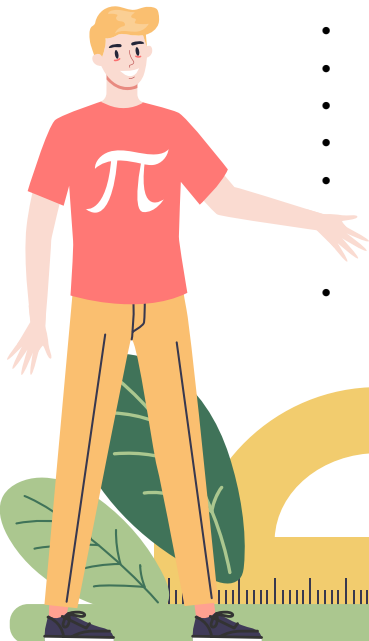
About

Koç Math Week is a week dedicated to integrating the element of fun into learning math in middle school.

Math Week Events

- Mind exercises with Train Your Brain
- Journey through guesses with Questmate
- Running in the streets in Street Math
- School tour with Math Hunters
- Activities that challenge the mind with What is Next
- The Math Master and other fun competitions
- Interdisciplinary activities with Pattern Day
- Museum visits
- Workshops for learning and having fun
- Online Challenges where students can solve puzzles and have fun with their families at home
- Surprise guests who brought a different touch to the program

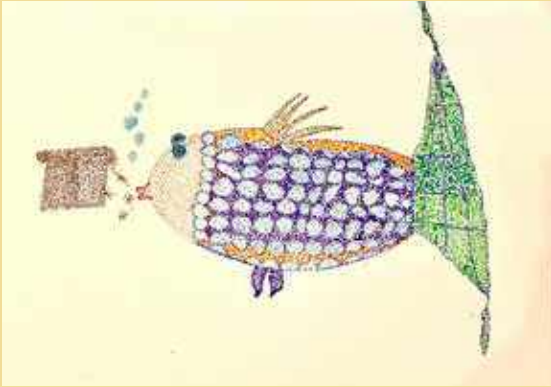
$$\sqrt{2} \cdot \sqrt{3} = \sqrt{6}$$



Throughout the week, each student participates in at least one activity.

8th Math Week

In the 8th Koç School Math Week, the dynamic spirit of the previous years continued online this year with exciting competitions, workshops, esteemed guests, and various events. Serkan Yürekli, a member of the Turkish Brain Team and a committee member of the International Mind Sports Federation, gave the keynote address of the 8th Koç School Mathematics Week. In an inspiring speech, Serkan Yürekli gave examples from daily life in line with this year's theme "Math for All" and introduced the students to several games he designed. The Koç School Math Week welcomed eminent guests. The students found the opportunity to chat with Simon Singh, the author of "The Simpsons and the Mathematical Secrets," Kjartan Poskitt, the British author of several books, including "The Knowledge" series, and TV presenter, Eser Saraçoğlu with the "World Tales and Origami Workshop," and Ivar Ekeland, the author of "The Cat in Numberland". The guests provided inspiring answers to the students' compelling questions. The competitions, an essential part of Math Week, also caused quite an excitement. What's Next, Math Hunters, Questimate, Train Your Brain, and Street Math were some of the memorable competitions that the students enjoyed throughout the week.



Examining the dot

It all started with a dot, and then the dot grew and pulled each of us into a different story. On September 15, International Dot Day, Primary School and Kindergarten students read Peter H. Reynolds' cult book "The Dot," which tells Vashti's adventure that starts with a small dot on a piece of paper. Primary School students of all grades created new designs using their imaginations as prompted by the book that has inspired countless children and adults worldwide.

Back to school



Development Fest, organized as part of the Back to School activities for the 2020-2021 academic year, took place online on August 25-26. More than 400 academic and administrative staff participated in 39 different sessions on psychosocial empowerment, technological empowerment, and professional development under the overarching theme of "Empowerment and resilience against uncertainties" delivered by academics, experts, and teachers of the Information Technologies Department. Our academic and administrative staff who took part in the training programs felt tired but content after a complete program because they shared the pleasure of preparing for the new term with lots of information that would benefit our students. As part of the Development Fest, Joe Dale, the independent language consultant, former SSAT Lead Practitioner, a well-known expert in language learning, and the creator of #mfltwitterati, delivered a series of online sessions on digital tools that can be used across K12 levels for language education in particular. On August 31, students reunited with The Koç School on digital platforms. The Koç School was fully prepared to welcome its students digitally and physically to the campus after a summer of preparations. Middle and high school students and teachers started the year with ceremonies on the morning of August 31.

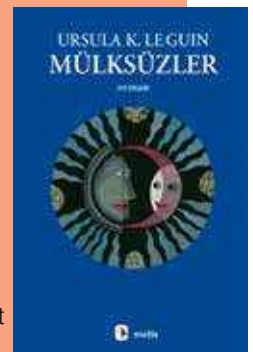


The Math Challenge fever

The "Online Math Challenge - Koç Questimate" competition organized for the second time by the Middle School Math Department stirred great excitement. Streamed live on The Koç School's YouTube channel on Tuesday, September 22, the competition consisted of 10 math estimation questions. The competition was moderated by our Middle School math teachers and Koray Öztoprak, the Middle School Dean. Our students and their parents showed immense interest in the event, and our teachers further spiced up the competition with their presentations after each question.

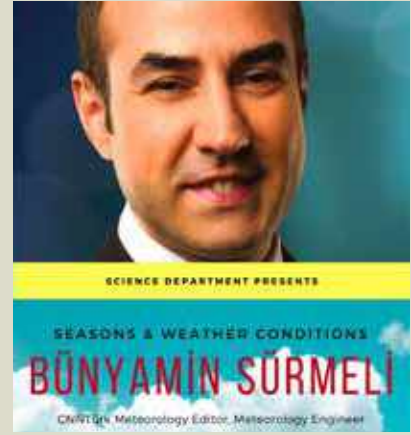
A close glimpse at utopias

Examining Ursula K. Le Guin's novel "The Dispossessed" as part of their Turkish class, our Grade 12 IB students discussed their opinions with Dr. Engin Kılıç, coordinator of Turkish language classes and instructor of Modern Turkish Literature, Communication Skills, Literature and Politics at Sabancı University. In the interview that took place on September 7, they discussed the definition and historical development of utopia, the relation and differences between theoretical and fictional utopia, as well as dystopia and utopia, and utopian topics addressed in Turkish Literature. The interview was quite fruitful, and our students enjoyed the opportunity to question the topic of utopia in depth.



We celebrated the 97th anniversary of our Republic with Zülfü Livaneli

Various activities about Republic Day were integrated into the curriculum throughout the week in the Primary, Middle, and High schools to mark this important day. We celebrated the 97th anniversary of our Republic on October 29 with an online ceremony together with The Koç School students, parents, teachers, and employees. Following the opening speech and the National Anthem, the ceremony continued with an interview on the Republic with the renowned musician, writer, and director Zülfü Livaneli and ended with the choir singing a Zülfü Livaneli song and the high school students' dance performance.



The reasons, effects and consequences of climate change

As part of the Middle School Science Department activities and to reinforce the objectives of Seasons and Climate unit, CNN Türk Meteorology Editor and Meteorology Engineer Bünyamin Sürmeli joined us in an online panel. Our students were keenly interested in the talk that touched upon the weather events, weather forecasts, and the reasons, effects, and consequences of climate change.

The Outstanding Achievement Award in Education by the University of Chicago



Overseas College Guidance Coordinator Didem Manecolo was presented the Outstanding Achievement Award in Education by the University of Chicago. This distinguished award which has existed for more than three decades is given after the students, accepted to the University of Chicago nominate an educator whose guidance has helped them along the path toward academic and intellectual growth and the evaluations process. Didem Manecolo was nominated by Ceren Dide Türk '20 who got accepted with a full scholarship.

What do we know about COVID-19?

On October 22, an online COVID-19 seminar was given by Infectious Diseases Expert Assoc. Prof. Süda Tekin from the Koç University Hospital and our occupational physician Dr. Erman Kırımlı to The Koç School parents and employees. The topics were implementations at the school, and also differences between the common cold, influenza and COVID-19.



Is it possible to be ready for the future?

What awaits us in the future? Which strategies can we use to succeed when faced with current rapid change and progress? How can we prepare ourselves for the digital technologies of the future? Our



high school students learned the answers to these questions from Selin Vural, an expert on Strategy and Exponential Organizations. Ms. Vural is an architect and businesswoman who is part of a wide network of futurist thinkers and contributes to the spread of futurist mentality, scenarios laid out within the futurist thinking community, and presentation of the research reports. She gave a talk to our students and answered their questions in the online event titled "Exponential Future Technologies and Being Ready for The Future" that took place on October 8.

We are Zero Waste Certified!

The Koç School met the requirements for the Zero Waste Certification of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and received the Zero Waste Certificate valid until April 2025 after passing all the inspections. The Koç School embraces a zero-waste approach and works towards reducing the quantity of waste, recycling waste by sorting it at the source, creating added value for the economy by increasing the recycling rate, raising environmental awareness across the school, and preventing waste.

A project to reduce viral infections

Eren Berke Sağlam and Berat Çelik, two seniors in the IB program, participated in the 2020 HackYourStartup Hackathon organized by San Francisco and Istanbul-based international mentoring startup Mentorloops on September 5-8. The duo won first prize in the Life Sciences categories, which received the highest number of startup ideas worldwide. Eren Berke and Berat, who are given a place to develop their projects at the Mentorloops Incubation Center as the award, will receive mentoring support from angel investors and CEOs throughout the process to open up to the international market with their ideas. Eren Berke and Berat's project focuses on reducing viral infections by automatically tracking human contact during the pandemic. For this purpose, automated and manual data is collected from the users, and through machine learning, a self-developing network algorithm is integrated into a wearable bracelet.



Justice for animals in nature

On October 7, our third graders had an interview with the president of the "Justice for Animals Association" Attorney Hülya Yalçın, and Vice President Attorney Barış Karlı. In the talk, our students met with the directors of the association, who shared information on the protection of animal rights, ways to protect them, and show our love. Our students learned new information on animal species such as sea creatures, insects, farm animals, cats, and dogs.



Our school is clean!

Within the scope of the "My School is Clean" certification process in accordance with the "Cooperation Protocol for Improvement of Hygiene Conditions in Educational Institutions and Prevention of Infection" carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and the Turkish Standards



Institute (TSE), an authorized inspection was held in October with the purpose of on-site inspection of the practices and regulations in our school. After the inspection, in which all the measures and practices we have taken in the COVID-19 process were examined in detail, The Koç School was awarded with the "My School is Clean" certificate on October 14.

Coding by learning and having fun

On the occasion of European Code Week (October 10-25), an initiative that aims to make coding and digital literacy appealing for everyone, various activities were held at The Koç School's Primary and Middle schools. This year, the theme of the European Code Week was "Brain, Artificial Intelligence and Elon Musk's crazy project Neuralink." On Tuesday, October 13, Dr. Kerem Dündar gave a presentation titled "Brain in the Changing World." At the end of the school day, the Twin Science team gave our students a fun learning experience through an Artificial Intelligence competition. The students who competed in coding activities in the Computer Technologies and Software lessons as House Teams, had a great time and won the Code Week gifts, including the Artificial Intelligence themed books of renowned IT specialists.



Obstacles are for finding new ways

First graders came together with Özge Bahar Sunar, the author of the book "Hedgehog and Exhibition" on October 21, 2020. In the online event, whose motto was "Obstacles are not for giving up, but for finding new ways," the young students used sign language to create the slogan together.

With great respect and longing...



The Great Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was commemorated by The Koç School students, teachers, staff, and parents with respect, love, and great longing in the online ceremonies organized by the Primary, Middle, and High schools on the 82nd anniversary of his passing. The primary school observed Atatürk Week through various author activities based on Atatürk's love of nature and animals. A talk was held with Ata Özdemirci, the author of the National Geographic Kids book "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk" on November 9 and with Ömür Kurt, the author of "The Deer and the Walking Mansion" on November 11. The talks focused on Atatürk's unknown sides and the authors' comments on them. The online ceremony started after the screening of the short movie titled "Atatürk's Love of Nature and Animals." Next, Primary School Student Council President Ali Derin Çelikkilek gave a speech on this special day. In a talk with İpek Çalışlar, the author of "Atatürk: His Childhood and School Years" shared detailed information on Atatürk's childhood and school life. Our students had the chance to ask the authors questions. The Middle School's November 10 Ceremony's guest of honor was Özden İnönü Toker, the daughter of İsmet İnönü, the second president of the Republic of Turkey. For the High School students, an online ceremony was held, where our Grade 11 students had a video interview with the journalist and author Oktay Ekşi and focused on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's revolutions.

Joy of Giving

This year, The Koç School joined #PaylaşmaGünü, the Turkish version of #GivingTuesday, celebrated on December 1, as a collective generosity movement marked for the first time in Turkey.

In this context, we gathered information about the currently active charities/donation campaigns within our school, encouraged our stakeholders to help, and celebrated charitable giving and volunteerism.



Computational thinking

The "Wise Beaver International Informatics and Computational Thinking Activity" took place online on November 12. A total of 184 students from our Primary and Middle schools participated in the event. Each student was evaluated at the international level at the end of the activity and earned a certificate of online participation.



Bilge Kunduz
Uluslararası Enformatik ve
Bilgi İşlemsel Düşünme Etkinliği

About parenting during the pandemic

The Parent Academy Seminars, organized to support the healthy upbringing of our students and contribute to their development, continued in the 2020-2021 academic year. Our guest in the first seminar of the semester on November 5 was Ayşe Bilge Selçuk, a professor of psychology at Koç University, and director of Koç University's Children and Family Laboratory. Professor Selçuk shared valuable information, drawing from the experiences of working parents, at home or the offices during the pandemic.





Observing new approaches in history

Students from 11 IB participated in the History Day, an interactive online event organized by the Institute of Historical Research and the School of Advanced Study University of London on November 19. At the event, students, researchers, and history buffs from the UK and all around the world explored the library, museum, archive, and history collections, attended three different sessions, and observed new approaches.

'I Love My Teacher'

The Primary School celebrated Teachers' Day on November 24 with a ceremony organized by the English Department. The program began with the video titled "Atatürk-Fevziye Teacher" and focused on how the headteacher Atatürk valued education and teachers. Following the dramatization explaining the transition between the blackboard and the computer screen, the students said "If I Was a Teacher..." and told the audience what they would do if they were teachers and sang "I Love My Teacher."

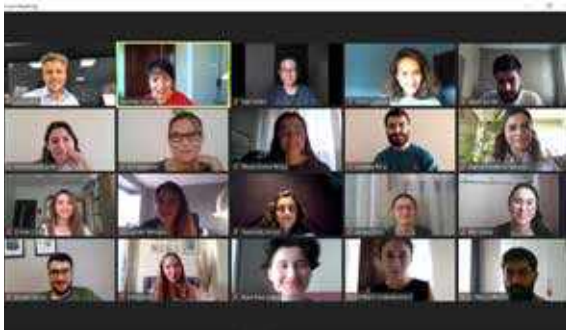


The school is outdoors!

As part of global action and observed worldwide on November 5 to encourage learning and playing outdoors, Outdoor Classroom Day was celebrated in Primary School with various activities. The day's program was built on the rationale that learning outdoors is good for the children's health and helps them develop a stronger bond with nature. Our students spent this day playing in the yard, learning and discovering our campus.

A Virtual Tour in the Republic Museum

On November 4, our Primary School's third and fourth graders had a virtual tour to the Republic Museum in Ankara. The director of the museum, Bahar Çakırhan, and our Grade 4 student Derin Ferah were the guides of the visit in Turkey's first child-friendly museum located in the building used as the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in the first years of the republic. The tour was aimed at teaching our students about the circumstances of the period and the personal characteristics of Atatürk. At the end of the tour, the students did the "3-2-1 Bridge" activity via the Padlet application. Our students and teachers wrote three thoughts, two words, and one question regarding this tour on the virtual board and evaluated their experience.



The Koç School was a guest at Leadership Lab

Murat Günel, General Director, The Koç School, and Berivan Mine Ferhanoğlu, Director, Institutional Planning and Evaluation Department, were the guests of the Koç University Leadership Lab on October 23 and shared their experiences at The Koç School. They discussed Leadership projects that will include the school administration and students and boost the cooperation between The Koç School and Koç University and research possibilities.

Developing renewable energy technologies

The “Inspiring Gatherings” seminars, organized by The Koç School Middle School’s Guidance and Counseling Department to help our students set goals, introduce them to role models, and write success stories, continued this academic year. The first one of this academic year’s “Inspiring Gatherings” for our Middle School students took place on November 11 with the participation of Cihan Özalevli. He is an expert in the development of renewable energy technologies.



Raising awareness to earthquakes and tsunamis

At the online panel organized by the Science Department of The Koç School’s Middle School on November 12, geological engineer Prof. Şükrü Ersoy, a member of faculty at the Yıldız Technical University, shared important information on earthquakes, tsunamis and precautions. This online panel, which drew attention to the underlying causes, impacts of tsunamis, and related precautions, was attended by many students.

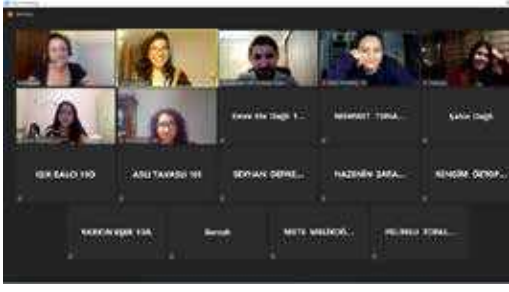


Interdisciplinary study of pattern

The Pattern Day, which was observed as an interdisciplinary activity in Middle School on November 9-13, and provided different learning experiences for our students, was integrated into various activities and lessons. Our students became acquainted with various pattern-related topics.

Alumni share their experiences

In December, we hosted The Koç School alumni currently studying in prestigious universities in Turkey, Canada, the USA, and the UK in online gatherings. The talks centered on high school life, college experiences, choice of courses, and professions and gave our students a chance to hear directly from the alumni on their experiences in different fields.



Shining in artificial intelligence ethics

Ecem Yılmazhaliloğlu, a senior at The Koç School, was named among 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics-2021. The list recognizes people who work in this field and have a reputation in AI, such as professors of universities like Columbia and Berkeley, United Nations experts, scientists working in multinational companies such as Google, company founders, and CEOs.





Mapping Gender in the Near East

On December 9 and 10, a group of our students from Grade 11 IB participated in the online workshop "Mapping Gender in the Near East: What's New and What's Ahead in Ottoman and Turkish Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies," organized by the Orient-Institut Istanbul and Center of Excellence for Gender and Women Studies with the cooperation of Koç University Anatolian Civilizations Research Center (ANAMED) and Istanbul Sweden Research Institute. The workshop brought together an interdisciplinary group of academics working in humanities and social sciences. Participating students described the event as mind-opening and said they realized how the "women's" issue has repercussions much more significant than the apparent ones. Moreover, they saw it as a global and historical issue and learned about comparative studies of the relations between women's movements throughout generations and geographies have shown.

Journey to the universe of fictional characters

Fourth graders met with Nilay Dalyan, the author of "Let's Go to the North Pole," and had the chance to discuss the book's contributions to environmental awareness and climate change. The second graders came together with Özge Lokmanhekim, the author of "The Most Beautiful Country in the World," in an interactive reading workshop. They learned about the importance of reading books and researching before writing a book and the exciting characteristics of animals and countries. Another event took place with Ece Zeber, the illustrator of "Book Repairman Toprak," and our kindergarteners, who watched how the cute characters in the books are drawn and tried to draw their dream pictures by following practical tips.



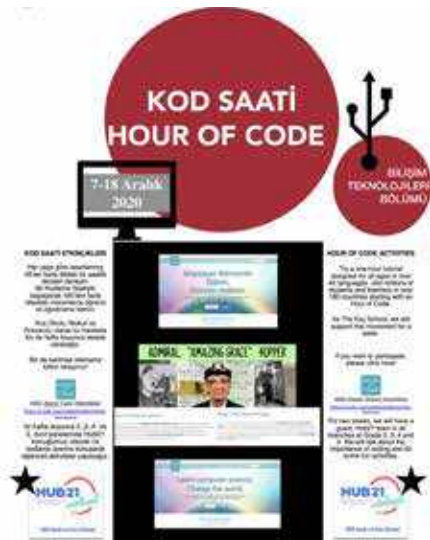
What is academic honesty?

Academic Honesty Panel was held on December 17 to raise awareness among our middle school students about Academic Honesty. On the panel, answers to questions such as what plagiarism is, how it is defined, and why academic honesty is important were addressed.



Raising awareness by humor

Middle School Eco Team Club engages in various projects to emphasize the effects of human activities on the ecosystem and raise awareness on the need to change our lifestyles. The club organized an online panel in cooperation with the Visual Arts Department to raise awareness on these issues. Our students learned about the intricacies of cartoon drawing and experienced drawing together in the panel titled "Cartoon Workshop" by the cartoonist-sculptor Erdil Yaşaroğlu.



Coding while having fun

Hour of Code activity takes place worldwide every year in December and is supported by renowned information technology companies. Like every year, our Primary and Middle School students did a series of activities as part of the Hour of Code this year. In addition to online activities, Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 talked to Hub21, who visited their classes to speak to them on the importance of coding and conducted fun activities.

Award to inventors of great designs

Primary School Lego Club students represented our school on December 19 in the FII Jr. Competition, hosted by the Bahçeşehir College Dragos Campus. They presented their work from this season to the committee of observers. As a result, our students won the “Inventors of Great Designs Award” for the model they built as a team, their problem of focus, and explanations that reflected the solution perfectly. We congratulate our students Arda Sabri Tiryaki, Mira Başaran, and Alper Arısoy who were led by our teacher Gülçin Tekiz.



#ReThink school

Murat Günel, General Director, The Koç School, Pınar Gökbayrak, Master Architect from PAB Architecture, and Şirin Piya Giyik, Agent of Change, were the guests of the second part of online panel series “Connections” that Seçil Kınay, Board Member of the Teachers Network and Special Projects Director at the Vehbi Koç Foundation moderated. In the session broadcast on December 10, the speakers shared their views and suggestions on new possibilities on future learning environments, opportunities for schools to provide inclusive education, and alternative learning environments both inside and outside the school.



Finding about careers from professionals

Career Day, organized by the Middle School Guidance Department every year to address our eighth graders, took place in online gatherings this semester due to distance education. In the online Career Day gatherings, organized to give students a chance to diversify their dreams about their future and think more about their careers, colorful professionals from different backgrounds shared their experiences and told their life stories. The inspiring talks continued in the gatherings as our students learned about different lines of work such as interior architecture, pastry, aviation, and R&D engineering.

First place in TÜBİTAK competition

LP student San Tayga Buluşan won first prize in the TÜBİTAK Middle School Students Research Projects Competition in the Cultural Heritage category following the regional and nationwide finals. Tayga entered the competition during the very intense LGS (high school entrance exam) preparation period.





The Koç School Open House Days were organized online

Organized annually to introduce The Koç School values, educational approach and system to prospective parents, The Koç School Open House Days took place online this year on January 9 and February 21. Primary School, Middle School, and High School presentations were also included in the event's program.

Responsibility for learning

Our High School Chemistry Department hosted Alan November at the department meetings on January 13. Alan November, an international leader in educational technology, a teacher, the founder of an educational technology company named November Learning, and an academic at Harvard University, works on "ensuring that students take responsibility for learning."



Understanding the nature

Primary School students celebrated "Mother Earth" Day through various projects. They once again remembered the importance of soil, the effects of global warming on soil and plants, the damage of wasting food, the quantity of wheat needed to make one loaf of bread, and the underlying hard work. Fourth graders became aware of the consequences of an apple or one slice of pizza put in the trash. Third graders contemplated possible soil problems caused by global warming. Second graders baked their bread using traditional methods. Finally, first graders discussed what they could do for arid land, and as a solution, they created seed balls.



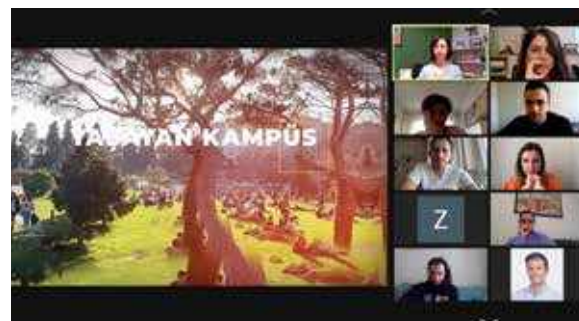
All We Need Is Love Orchestra

The High School's "All We Need Is Love" Orchestra took away all the fatigue of the semester with the power of music with the song "Ebruli" they performed at the closing of the term.



University meetings

The Turkish University Fair is organized annually by the Counseling Department for high school students to learn more about the universities they will choose and plan their future. This year, the university meetings spread throughout December due to the pandemic. In December, meetings with Koç University, Sabancı University, Boğaziçi University, METU, Bilkent University, Bahçeşehir University, Yeditepe University, Özyeğin University, and Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University were held. The Koç School alumni who also attended the meetings, shared their higher education experiences with the students. Meetings with various universities continued throughout the academic year.



Don't Throw Away, Donate

To support the "Sustainable Development Goals" of the United Nations within the framework of the K12 integrity, The Koç School launched the "Don't Throw Away, Donate" Project. This is a project that started with the cooperation of TEGV and TÜBİSAD in 2017. The project's mission can be summarized in the words of Suna Kırac, "The prerequisite for seeing brighter faces in Turkey's future is to educate our children in the best way." The project's goals include supporting the Sustainable Environmental Policy and the basic education of children with the income obtained from recycling e-waste, contributing to making use of devices within TEGV.



Take a break on the screen, get out with your dreams

The Primary School Student Council, which predicts that the time we spend in front of the screen has increased significantly due to the pandemic, invites us to stay away from the screen as much as possible with the project "Take a Break from the Screen, Get Out with Your Dreams." Considering that the students can give each other new ideas by sharing their interests, activities they enjoy doing, and their hobbies, the Student Council aims to bring together the students' inspiring videos every Monday.



Notice it, Move it

The Middle School Science Department and Eco Team Club implemented the project "Human Activities and Effects on the Balance in the Ecosystem" to raise awareness about the impact of human activities on the ecosystem and review and rearrange our lifestyle. An argumentation study was conducted with our students over the documentaries and articles in Science lessons during Book Week. In the classes, "how we can contribute to the improvement of nature together" was questioned, and opinions and action suggestions were considered.

Having empathy

"Empathy" was on the agenda of the 23rd Book Week in Primary School. In this interdisciplinary event, various activities were carried as part of the program and in the lessons. The concept of empathy, which is addressed in Visual Arts lessons from kindergarten to 4th grade, gained dimension with the works of our children. Our kindergarten students designed statuettes after reading books. Our first graders designed socks inspired by the book "The Giraffe in Short Socks" and the second graders a suitcase by reading the book "The Traveler Cloud and the Little Red Suitcase." Our third graders asked, "How can we empathize with nature?" They sought an answer to the question with the pictures they made, inspired by nature's beauty and colors. On the other hand, the fourth graders examined the paintings of the born-blind artist, Eşref Armağan, and researched how blind people make art. They then drew their self-portraits. The Department of English discussed the importance of respect for differences and empathy in Book Characters Costume Day. Counseling Department organized online sessions for parents with experts: "Stories and Tales in the Development of Child Mentality," "Selection of High Quality Children's Books," "Parenting and Books in a Changing World," and "How to Raise Book-Friendly Children Who Love Reading and Writing?"





Visit to the Solar House

On January 20, our third and fourth graders visited the Koç School's Solar House with Tufan Dokumacı, Technical Services Manager and Health & Safety Expert. Our students found out how solar panels work and meet 1/3 of our school's electrical energy needs.

The importance of healthy nutrition

To raise awareness about nutrition, the third graders met with Ayça Ilica Murat, a dietician at the American Hospital and the school to discuss "Healthy and Balanced Nutrition." Our dietician shared her knowledge and experiences on the importance of a balanced and healthy nutrition, the content of foods, and the benefits of consuming vegetables and fruits in the right season.



Inspiring athlete

National athlete İbrahim Çolak, the 2019 World Champion in Artistic Gymnastics Championships and the winner of Mustafa Koç Sports Award, was invited to meet the students and have a talk about his inspirations and values. During the online meeting on January 13, İbrahim Çolak shared how he started his sports life, who inspired him, and how he faced the difficulties he experienced.

Chess achievement

The Koç School students received good results in every category in the delightful and exciting Istanbul Inter-Schools Online Chess Tournament. The Primary School Team came second in the Tuzla region, Middle School, and High School Teams first in the same region, presenting The Koç School with trophies.



Sharing across cultures

Various programs have been organized for the last five years to support The Koç School students to become global citizens and bring them together with other students from countries such as India, Ethiopia, and Thailand. Although travel programs were canceled due to pandemic restrictions, we collaborated with MindVISA to hold a 12-week online program that brings our students together with the students of Pathways Noida, one of India's top IB schools. In the first six weeks, world-renowned instructors in the fields of art, music, dance, and sports inspired students to share across cultures. In the second half, students prepared their own projects by working in multicultural teams.

When mathematics and poetry meet

As Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı said, "Poetry is the art of forming beautiful shapes with words." and of course Mathematics is the world of shapes... So why not build a colorful wall with Poetry with Math bricks? The Middle School Mathematics Department joined the 23rd Book Week this year by combining mathematics and literature. In a Mathematics Poetry Competition, students were asked to write their own mathematical poems using the mathematical terms they learned during the year.



Academic Marathon



In the International Academic Marathon Final, held online on January 31, 601 teams from 26 countries worked on 17 subjects. The Koç School's high school students, who competed in Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Psychology fields, were awarded individual prizes for their accomplishments in each field while winning the first prize as The Koç School Team in Chemistry and Psychology.

Academic Marathon is a new initiative that discovers the students' potential through a riveting and challenging competition activity. It embodies a spirit similar to that of an actual marathon and elevates the students' academic learning to a whole new level. The Academic Marathon is not just about a championship but also about expanding the students' boundaries in academic education and discovering their potential.

Experiencing multiculturalism, empathy and universality

Students from The Koç School Middle and High schools came together with the middle and high school students of Escoles Ibn Mucana School in Portugal on February 18 in the "History and Culture Day" event. Students briefly introduced themselves and their schools during the online event and then held a "Q&A" session where they asked each other questions. Moderated by the students, the event aims for students to gain experience in multiculturalism, empathy, and universality.

Online art exhibition

The IB Fine Arts Exhibition was held online this year on February 17. Over 100 people from Turkey and other countries visited the exhibition. Our students created impressive works with their online practices. Each worked on a theme that had a special meaning for them.



Majanda campaign

Following the Book Week, the popular "Majanda" planners were sent to the students of Beyazıt Ford Otosan Koç Primary School. Yıldırım Karakiya, one of the creators of Majanda, met a group of third and fourth graders and shared tips for the improvement of self-management skills and impacts of using a customized planner on time management.

To develop East Asia and Pacific

Held online this year on February 19 and 21, MUNDP completed its 21st year by hosting approximately 800 participants from over 60 schools and 25 different countries. In MUNDP, whose theme was East Asia and Pacific this year, various issues and problems focused on developing this region, which covers 37 countries and 2.3 billion people, were discussed. 15 different committees addressed industrialization, nature and pollution, human rights violations, attitudes towards refugees, and similar issues as some of the most significant problems in the region. They searched for solutions to these problems for three days. There were debates on the policies of different states from the East Asia and Pacific region, which experienced sudden changes in these issues in the past few years.

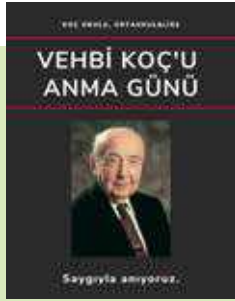


ATIK PİL TOPLAMA MALZEMELERİ



Waste Battery Collection Project

The "Waste Battery Collection Project" was launched on February 22 as part of the "Sustainable Development Goals" efforts. The project aims to raise awareness about the environmental damage caused by waste batteries, informed use of batteries, and their disposal. A presentation on batteries and the collection of waste batteries was made to primary school students. Various class activities are planned to ensure the sustainability of education and awareness efforts. With the start of face-to-face education, we expect our students to bring waste batteries to school by observing safety precautions. We also recommend students who stay home and get online education in the hybrid process find the nearest waste battery collection bins in their neighborhood.

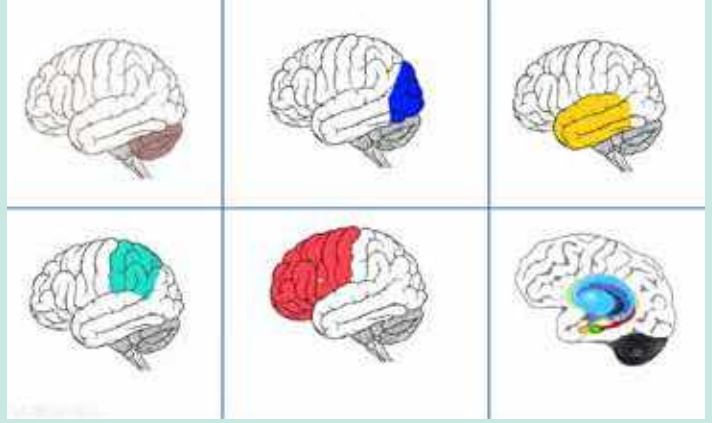


Vehbi Koç Commemoration Day

On the 25th anniversary of the passing of the founder of the Koç Group, the late Mr. Vehbi Koç was commemorated in ceremonies in Primary, Middle, and High schools. Author Nevzat Basım joined the Primary School Ceremony while the General Manager of Vehbi Koç Foundation, Cihan Özönmez, was with us in the Middle and High School Ceremony to tell us about Vehbi Koç's values. Turkish Education Foundation's Istanbul Anatolian Side Branch Chairperson Seda Ekincioglu Oral informed our Primary School students on Vehbi Koç and Turkish Education Foundation, which was established in 1967 with a great campaign under Vehbi Koç's leadership.

Do Not Undermine Plans!

On February 24, fourth graders attended the seminar "Do Not Undermine Plans" and learned from Psychologist Selin Alpanda. Students were informed on how to improve planning and organization skills much needed for the fifth grade and did various exercises.



Social Sciences Workshop

The Koç School students participated in the Inter-High School TEVİTÖL Social Sciences Workshop, which is organized every year under the moderation of students and with the contribution of expert academicians in different workshops this year as they had done last year. Our students expanded their awareness in social sciences while discussing social incidents and reinforcing the new concepts they learned in the workshops held online this year, on January 30. Expert academicians provided guidance on this year's theme of "Wave." The students found the opportunity to consider different perspectives and compare resources by accessing resources related to their topics in various workshops such as Literature, International Affairs, Politics, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Law, Psychology, and Economics.



Are there things we don't see but still believe?

Fourth graders came together with Tuğçe Büyükuşurlu, the author of "Prince of Desert and Ice," the book they read in their semester break, in the Thinking Experiments and Child Philosophy Workshop organized online on February 22-23. In the event, the accuracy of information was discussed with questions such as "Are there things we don't see but still believe?", "Can't a person believe what he doesn't see?", "How many people's confirmation does it take for us to believe that something exists?", "Who do we believe?", "Is everything our mother says true, even if it's not her area of expertise?", "Does the fact that we do not know about something mean that it doesn't exist?", "How do we separate the joke from the truth?"

25 liters water experiment

Another project The Koç School has been conducting to support United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals is the "25 Liters Water Experiment Project." Different types of activities continue in Primary, Middle, and High schools to raise awareness about responsible water consumption. Participants of the project calculate their daily water footprint and set the target of using 25 liters of water per day without limiting daily activities.

#idcwomenintech



The list of women who strive for the technology industry in Turkey has been announced by IDC. Işıl Yenidoğan Dağ, The Koç School Information and Education Technologies Manager, is also in the list.

A day with your feelings

Başar Yüksel, a senior at The Koç School, was recognized with an honorable mention at the "Athens International Monthly Art Film Festival" with his short movie "A Day With Your Emotions" he wrote and directed. Başar wanted to express how talking to each other and sharing emotions could affect other people during this period when we all stayed at home. Başar's short film aims to give hope to the audience and shows the importance of communication in these difficult times we are going through, using the film lessons he took in the IB program and his observations.



Out of the circle

Launched by the Middle School Information Technologies Department to build a bridge between Primary and Middle School students, "Out of the Circle" talks are monthly events that address various technology topics. In the first talk of the series on March 10, two of our middle school students discussed what they did with "Coding" beside their lessons, home assignments, and daily routines, inspired their younger friends in primary school, and answered their questions.



What should I be when I grow up?

The "What Should I Be When I Grow Up?" project, managed by the Primary School Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department, aims to raise career awareness among fourth graders. Throughout the semester, various activities will be carried out to enable the students to understand what they can be in the future and reach their full potential to help them develop "a positive sense of self" and make the best choices in the future by learning about professions. In this context, an online seminar titled "Career Awareness in Children and the Role of Parents" was organized on March 15 for our Grade 4 parents by our Counselor Berkay Dinç Çakır. On March 25, our graduate Industrial and Environmental Engineer, Ethem Kamanlı '95, spoke about his profession to the students.



The success after a three-stage selection process

Beril Eda Birlik, senior at The Koç School, was recently selected as a Morehead-Cain Scholar, the first merit scholarship program established in the first public university in the United States, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Eda has been offered a full scholarship to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but what makes the scholarship so special is that the program provides Eda four summer enrichment experiences including an outdoor leadership program, civic collaboration, independent research opportunities, professional work, and also a research grant and the chance to study abroad for a term.



Destination imagination

The Koç School Middle School Destination Imagination teams have been working intensively since October in the fields of Fine Arts, Engineering and Social Responsibility and completing all challenges successfully. They have recently ranked among the top 10 teams in Turkey and three of our teams have qualified for the "Global Finals."

20-21 SCIENCE FESTIVAL
The Science Paper/Grant Projects

WHAT
Messy Experiments
Hands-on Activities
Scientific Talks
Debates
Workshops

WHEN
Monday, March 1
Tuesday, March 2
Wednesday, March 3
Thursday, March 4
Friday, March 5

WHERE
Zoom Meetings

WHO
Prof. Dr. Hakan Öngüç
Prof. Dr. Erkan Özgüç
Cemil Cihan Özalevli
Eda Erdoğan
Gülşahar Coşkun
Ahmet Ali Çelikoğlu
Ahmet Ali Çelikoğlu
Eda Erdoğan
Gülşahar Coşkun
Ahmet Ali Çelikoğlu

Thank: TÜRKÜSİTEP | Be Curious - Discover - Learn

Science is everywhere

Organized for the third time this year by the Middle School Science Department, Science Fest took place in the week of March 1-4 with online sessions and the participation of esteemed guests. The participation of the parents and the students in the activities with the slogan "Science is Everywhere" revived the Science Fest. The festival program featured instant experiment competitions, debates, presentations of academicians from Koç University, Sabancı University and Harvard University, and an online workshop with Özyeğin University. As the students competed in the Trivia game with the theme "Curiosity," our alumni were inspired by the speeches that Cemil Cihan Özalevli and Eda Erdoğan gave.

Books and libraries together

March 29 - April 4 Library Week was celebrated in the Primary and Middle schools. The students attended talks and activities, meeting with guests such as writers, illustrators and storytellers at every grade level. The middle school students showed great interest in the talk on "Extraordinary Libraries and Their Applications" held with İstanbul Bilgi University Library Reference & Public Relations Team Manager Abdullah Turan on April 1.

SIRA DIŞI KÜTÜPHANELER VE UYGULAMALARI

Abdullah Turan
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Kütüphane ve e-Kaynaklar Referans & Hatkıla İlişkiler Takım Yöneticisi

1 NİSAN 2021, PERŞEMBE / 10.45

How to use our brains more actively?

İLKOKUL MATEMATİK VE BEYİN FARKINDALIĞI HAFTASI

17 MART 2021 ÇARŞAMBA

BELİN ALPANDA
09:30-10:00 "BİR BEYİNİN YOLCULUĞU"

YEM. İZMİRLİ
10:30-11:00
PROF. DR. İŞİL AKSAN KURNAZ
"BEYİNİMİZ"

İ.Y.E. A. BİRLİKLER
12:15-12:45
İŞİL AKSAN
"DANCIĞI BEYİNLERİMİZ İÇİN BEYİN SAĞLIĞI"

ANNE BEYİNİ YERİNE DİŞİLE

HAFTA BÜYÜKLERİNİN MATEMATİK VE BEYİN FARKINDALIĞI HAFTASI İÇİN ÇOCUKLARININ VE EBEVEYNLERİNİN ÇOCUKLARININ BEYİN SAĞLIĞI VE GELİŞİMİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİNE DİKKATİNİZİ ÇAĞIRIYORUZ!

During Math and Brain Awareness Week held between March 15-21 in Primary School, distinguished speakers participated in the activities and discussed interesting topics. In a talk with Psychologist Selin Alpanda about Brain Awareness, students learned about the parts of the brain and their functions. They gained insights into how to use their brains more actively and make them stronger. Prof. Işıl Aksan Kurnaz shared information and her experiences about topics ranging from the functions of the brain to neurons, from different intelligence areas of the brain to the organs it effects in a talk on "Our Brain."

The opportunity to understand the importance of scientific thinking

In the “Curiosity and Science Fair” held on March 22-26, the primary school students had the opportunity to understand the importance of scientific thinking. Different topics were discussed in the activity, which aimed to develop skills such as question preparation, observation, data collection and recording, interpretation, evaluation, and ethical use of information with the presentation of distinguished guests. The students saw how important bees and pollination were for the continuation of life in an exciting presentation by Ali Kurmuş ‘19 in the panel session “Frontiers of the World.” Later, with Erkan Karabiyik’s presentation, they grasped the necessity of keeping water and air clean and increasing the number of plants with nectar to protect the bees. In a talk with expert biologist Tuğçe Ağba Sevencan, the students gained detailed information on many topics ranging from the content of botany to unusual plants and the relation of botany with other fields such as medicinal plants.



Curiosity is in focus at TEDxKoçSchool



The theme of this year’s online TEDxKoçSchool event was “Distance”. Eminent guests spoke on topics such as “Defining Change,” “Unsung Heroes,” “Seasons,” and “Give Voice.” The speakers of the conference includes Mert Firat, Rayka Kumru, Hüsamettin Koçan, Aslı Pasinli, Emrah Aydın, and Eda Erdoğan, who shared information and opinions in their areas of expertise. The event broadened the students’ horizons like the previous years’ organizations did.

Setting professional targets

The 28th Career Day, when different professions are introduced to high school students was held on April 13-15. 25 academics, 17 experts, and 10 university students were hosted as the guests of the event, where The Koç School alumni were also present. The keynote speakers of the event were Işıl Yenidoğan Dağ and Prof. Hasan Dağ. The Career Day contributed to the students’ setting professional targets and making healthy choices.

April 23 celebrations

April 23 National Sovereignty and Children’s Day was celebrated with enthusiasm throughout the April 19-23 week with various online activities in the Primary School. The works prepared by the students with great effort were exhibited online in the Visual Arts Department End of Year Exhibition. Moreover, the students did an enjoyable interview with the opening guest of the exhibition, Ayşe Topçuoğulları. Within the scope of April 23 National Sovereignty and Children’s Day activities, the third and fourth graders acted as scientists who have contributed immensely to humanity and worked in the fields of science and math in their English, Math, and Science lessons. The screenwriter of Kral Şakir cartoons Haluk Can Dizdaroğlu was the Grade 4 students’ guest for an interview and the screening of the short film “They Were Once Children,” which presented the students’ research studies. Saffet Emre Tonguç, a writer, historian, and professional guide, was another guest who addressed the students’ curiosity and answered their questions. Within the scope of activities, Middle School Math Department organized an “Online Rebus Contest.” The participants had great fun in a contest where the contestants combined letters, numbers, and pictures to depict words or phrases. This special day was also celebrated with the participation of Cem Bölükbaşı, an exemplary sportsman who has realized his childhood dreams.





I Love My Planet

Our third and fourth graders met with Önder Kantarcı, the editor of the book "I Love My Planet" on April 7. Kantarcı shared images to draw attention to the inequality in access to clean water, the main source of life, and climate change. He used striking numerical data to describe that the extinction of living species is an irreversible loss and that the extinction of one species leads to results that affect the entire planet.



Embracing Change Whilst Navigating the IB Journey

The 16th IB Day was hosted online with the theme "Embracing the Change Whilst Navigating the IB Journey" by TED Ankara College Foundation High School on April 17. 23 teachers from The Koç School participated in the conference, which brought together all IB school leaders, teachers, and academics working with International Baccalaureate Programs. Our student Zeynep Karahasan and our alumnus Ali Kurmuş '19 contributed to the conference with their presentations titled "How did the skills and profiles you have developed through the IB program help you adapt to change?"

PODCAST 22

Our seventh graders started a podcast series in the Middle School as one of the latest trends in sharing information. Podcast22, where two students chat about different topics can be reached via Moodle. The topics addressed so far include how to use social media safely, online education process, the new normal, and COVID-19.



3rd place in NSS Space Settlement

Our Grade 10 students won third place in the world with their project titled Horus-1 in the NSS Space Settlement contest in which 6,862 students from 22 countries participated with 1,619 projects. The winners have been invited to The International Space Development Conference which is planned for 2022.



Life in space

Scratch HUBCup 2021, organized by EducatHUB throughout Turkey, was held with the theme "Life in Space." The Koç School team won first place in the Primary School category in the tournament where thousands of 8-14-year-old students from all around Turkey rolled up their sleeves to come up with solutions for problems we can face while living in space.



Student & Teacher Meet-Ups

The Middle School adopted a new practice, drawing from the fact that the teachers and students are not communicating as frequently and closely due to pandemic as they did during face-to-face education. Having prioritized talking to students about their areas of improvement, appreciating their strengths, enabling self-assessment and setting targets, the Middle School held "Student & Teacher Meet-Ups" in the second semester instead of holding "Parent & Teacher Meetings." In this context, the students came together with their teachers in an online environment and had feedback talks in April.

May 19 celebrations

This year, to mark the 102nd anniversary of May 19, the Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, online ceremonies and events were organized in the Primary, Middle and High schools. In Primary School, a talk on "From Commemorating to Understanding Atatürk" was held with İlkur Güntürkün, author of the books "Childhood is Beautiful" and "Plane Tree and the Walking Mansion." Before the talk, the students listened to the May 19 Marching Song our choir, which includes the primary and middle school students, sang and then the celebration messages our national athletes sent them. The middle school students met with the national gymnast Göksu Uçtaş Şanslı. The high school students also commemorated our founder in a ceremony held on May 19.



Koç Tech Day

Koç Tech Day was held online on May 21 in collaboration with the High School Artificial Intelligence Team and Computer Education Department. "Artificial Intelligence" was the theme of Koç Tech Day '21. Academic Dr. Tamer Uçar from Bahçeşehir University Artificial Intelligence Engineering Department and Pinar Köse Kulacız, the Manager of the Data and Artificial Intelligence Unit at Arçelik shared valuable information with the students. The informative presentation by the students Yalçın Tür ve Deniz Kavi from the High School Artificial Intelligence Team and the "Escape Room" competition were popular among students.

Turkey's top three are Koç School students

Our High School Math teams won the top three places in the International Purple Comet Math Meet competition, which was led by the famous mathematician Titu Andreescu, who prepared the Mathematics Olympics. The All Stars team came first, the Infinite Mind Splitter team second, and BJK Nisay team third in the competition.



Time travel to human past

Evolutionary biologist Prof. Andrew Berry from Harvard University came together with our high school students in an online event on May 25. The eminent scientist answered the questions of the students after his speech on “Ancient DNA: A molecular time machine for travel into the human past.”



Handling resistance

The theme of the 14th Suna Kıraç Inter High Schools Contest was “Resistance”. High school students from many schools in Istanbul showed interest in the competition. Some of the writers of the stories, submitted to the competition addressed resistance in the worlds they constructed in their imaginations, while some penned their objections to “othering” and the walls of gender, oppression, injustice, and poverty. The selected stories that were original enough to be called experimental, approached problems from different perspectives, tried to give voice to marginalized groups, were included in the competition book.



Create, Participate, Share, Compete, Learn

The 12th ICT Week, celebrated each year with the motto “Create, Participate, Share, Compete, Learn,” took place on May 3-7 this year with the theme “Artificial Intelligence and Art.” During the week, “digital art” was discussed in all grade levels of the primary and middle school by combining technology and art and online activities were held with the theme “digital art and coding.” The guest of the opening ceremony of the ICT Week at the Middle School was world renowned digital artist Refik Anadol, who gave a presentation on “Artificial Intelligence and Art.” The guests in the Techno Conversations event were Garage Atlas team with their presentation “The New Virtual: XR” and young software developer-entrepreneur Elif Eda Güneş with her presentation “Butterfly Effect.”

What we notice in life

The Koç School Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department launched a podcast series to ensure that the parents can access all the posts on current issues whenever they want. This is the first time that such an application is implemented an educational institution in Turkey. The first podcast was on “What We Notice in Life.”

JMUNDP '21

On May 21-23, The Koç School Middle School JMUN Club (12 students and 2 teachers) participated in the "Achieving Prosperity in a Time of Chaos" themed JMUNDP conference organized by The Koç School high school students every year. Around 45 schools and 370 students from three countries participated in the conference. The students worked in different committees throughout the conference, discussed the global problems with the other delegates and came up with diverse solutions.



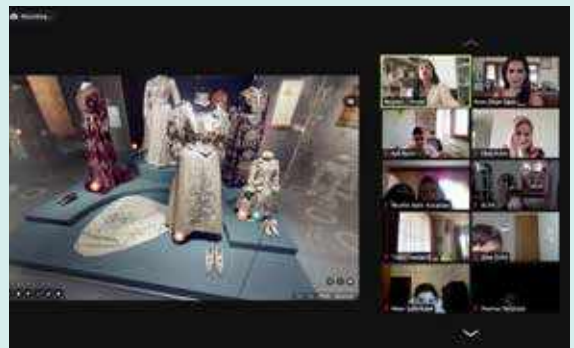
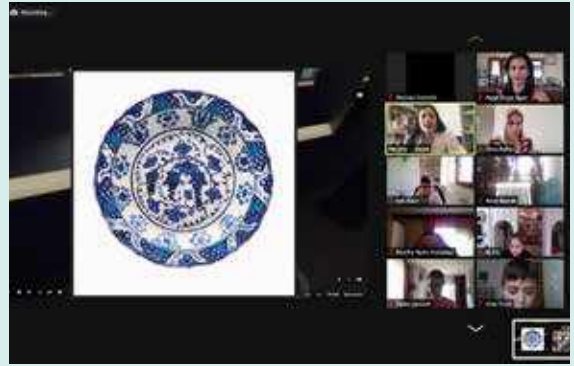
The Koç Holding panel



The annual visit to the Koç Holding by the seniors was online this year on May 31. In the panel moderated by Oya Ünlü Kızıl, Corporate Communications and External Affairs Director, Koç Holding, the students listened to Cihan Özsonmez, General Manager, VKV, Prof. Umran Inan, President, Koç University, and Önder Korkmaz, Human Resources Coordinator, Koç Holding, and asked them questions.

'Preserving the Past'

The exhibition tour that the fourth graders take at the Sadberk Hanım Museum every year took place on May 26 as an online event. The students saw the "Meşher-Preserving the Past: A Selection from Sadberk Hanım Museum" exhibition. At this exhibition, organized by Sadberk Hanım Museum and Meşher, both Vehbi Koç Foundation institutions, the students found out that "Mazi," as in the Turkish name of the exhibition, means "the past" and getting to know the artifacts belonging to the past means to learn one's own culture.





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Courage for bright tomorrows

Organized to commemorate Mr. Mustafa V. Koç, who is always etched in our memories as one of the luminaries of our age, and who worked hard for the betterment of this country, Mustafa Koç Story Writing Contest took place this year with the theme of "Courage." The awards of the contest, which was open to seventh and eighth graders from all middle schools in Istanbul, were presented to the winners at a ceremony on May 3.

What happens when the seas are polluted?

Third graders came together with TURMEPA instructors on May 27 as part of the Environment Week activities and attended the Sea Creatures Drawing Workshop. They learned the benefits of the seas, the sea creatures, and their characteristics, and found out that one of every two breaths we take comes from the seas. The instructors explained what happens when the seas are polluted and what the divers find during seafloor cleaning, which led the students to think about how we can protect life in the sea. In the "Let's make the earth happy, let's draw happy!" part of the workshop, they drew pictures to express what they learned.

Learning by discovering out in the open air

On May 20, Outdoor Classroom Day, various activities took place at The Koç School. First graders carried out "1 Parkour 1 Problem" and liquid measurement activities in their outdoor math lesson. Second graders observed animals living on the streets and spent time in the garden by placing the food and water bowls they designed using recycled materials in their gardens for stray animals. Third and fourth graders made a list of the activities and examples of the games that can be carried out or played in the garden or on the balcony by brain storming. At the end of the day, they drew pictures of nature, spent time with their pets, made designs out of plants, observed plants and living creatures, and rode their bicycles in the garden.



What is KÖLMED up to?

We left behind one and a half years living under restrictions as the pandemic took hold of the entire world and Turkey. As our lives changed in almost every aspect, so did KÖLMED's events, with face-to-face meetings put on hold. In 2020, we were unable to meet in physical settings, which is why KÖLMED moved many of its events to digital platforms to connect with The Koç School alumni, build a sense of unity, and uplift our moods.

AlumniLive: We hosted experts in their respective fields on IGTV broadcasts. Ayşe Draz '97, Ceren Bingöl '97, Duygu Şar '01, and Murat Günel, General Director, The Koç School, and the teachers Ayten and Taner Açıkada, who retired this year were among the guests. In 2021, Özden Bayraktar '94, Can Kaymakoğlu '10, Sinan Dursuoğlu '03, and Zeynep Meydanoğlu '01 joined our broadcasts.



ArtWalkOnline: We visited Hilal Polat's exhibition, "As Ancient As Desire" in the Mixer Gallery.



Alumni News: The accomplishments of The Koç School alumni were posted to KÖLMED's social media pages.



KoçConnect: In talks that addressed The Koç School alumni, the guests discussed various topics. Professor Esra Alıçavuşoğlu talked about the relationship between contemporary art and fashion. Cenk Girginol's talk was on coffee culture, and Şant Manukyan's on cryptocurrency investment. Aslı Karataş '08, Attorney at Law, spoke about gender roles in fairytales and Saba Kuseyrioğlu about olive oil and sour pomegranate sauce production.



Alumni Recommendations: At a time when we all tried to stay at home, The Koç School alumni, who engage in literature, theater, and music shared the works in their respective fields that they found worthy of following on KÖLMED's social media channels.

Alumni Meet Future Alumni:

An online event was organized together with the alumni to motivate and boost the morale of the Class of 2020, who went through challenging times, had to attend school online, spend their final year of high school away from each other and their teachers, and did not have a commencement.



Reunions: The 2020 and 2021 reunions took place online, bringing together alumni celebrating the 10th, 15th, 20th, and 25th anniversaries of their graduations.



Toss Shop Online: Our online shop kolmed.dukkan.im opened in July 2020.



2020-2021 Board of Directors

You can contact KÖLMED Board of Directors through Secretary General Beril Güngör Karadağ (beril.gungor@kocpera.com).

Easy access to KÖLMED!

Visit www.kocozel.com to contact KÖLMED, become a member, and register for all events. You can also pay your membership fees, make donations, and update your communication preferences on the website.

For all your questions, please write to: iletisim@kocozel.com

Visit Toss Shop for The Koç School merchandise: kolmed.dukkan.im

Venues

KoçPera

Address: Tom Tom Mah. İstiklal Cad.
Merkez Han Kat: 5&6 No.181 Beyoğlu/İstanbul
Phone: +90 212 393 6131-32
Email: beril.gungor@kocpera.com

Koç Group Sports Club

Address: Kuzguncuk Mah. Kuşbakışı Cad.
16/1-1 Üsküdar/İstanbul
Phone: +90 216 343 3676
Email: iletisim@kocozel.com

Pandemic restrictions may apply for admittance to venues.



The Alumni Association President's Letter

KÖLMED President
Pelin Keskinöglü '96

Dear Alumni,

I hope you and your families are well in these unprecedented times. As we navigated through a pandemic that upended life as we know it, we did and still do strive to adapt our association's activities and ways of working to the current conditions.

The events that we hosted at KoçPera and the Koç Group Sports Club, our two main venues, are replaced by online meetings and talks. More than 1,000 alumni participated in 11 online events in 2020 and 15 as of June 2021. These events uplifted our mood and gave us an opportunity to come together, albeit remotely, learn, connect, and meet fellow alumni with whom we shared the same hallways at different times. We are in the process of introducing more programs.

Every year, we would get a chance to meet the graduating class at rehearsals and commencements. The Class of 2020 had an extraordinary year unlike any other class. So we organized a Zoom meeting to show our solidarity with them. We will host a similar event for the Class of 2021.

The need for support was probably never felt as seriously as this year. Therefore, we extended merit scholarships to young graduates with the help of our alumni. The support since June 2020 amounted to TL 110,000 in funds and 11 international (Europe) and domestic flight tickets for 47 scholars. At a time when our fundraising activities were severely restricted due to the pandemic, donations and membership fee payments of our alumni made it possible for our association to extend this support. I want to thank our members again for giving selflessly.

Even though we had announced the planned General Assembly to our members, the pandemic measures and the latest regulations required us to postpone the meeting to a later date. We believe in diversity and having different voices among us and invite all the alumni, who have been association members for at least three years, to run for a place on the new Board of Directors. We are preparing for the General Assembly as soon as the conditions allow, and we will inform you of the developments.

This period emphasized the importance of being a community and empowering one another. We have utmost faith that we will emerge from these trying times as an even stronger and more connected community.

Looking forward to reuniting in healthier days,

Stay connected with KÖLMED!

Follow us to stay in the know about the latest events and view the announcements, job listings or notifications concerning KÖLMED and The Koç School alumni. You can also access the posts of the members and share your own posts.

[kocschoolalumni](https://www.instagram.com/kocschoolalumni)

[kocozelliselerdernegi](https://www.facebook.com/kocozelliselerdernegi) closed group
[kocozellisemesunladernegi](https://www.facebook.com/kocozellisemesunladernegi)

[kolmed](https://www.linkedin.com/company/kolmed) The Koç School Alumni Association (closed group)

A friendly reminder!

Sign up at kocozel.com to become a KÖLMED member and benefit from the privileges of KoçPera and Koç Group Sports Club as well as a special 25% discount*!

*Association members should have paid the relevant year's fees to qualify for the 25% discount.

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Koç Topluluğu

Bu Yıl Da En Fazla Ödülün Sahibi!

Dünyanın önde gelen şirketlerinden Kincentric’in “Türkiye’nin En İyi İş Yerleri” araştırmasında 40 farklı sektör, 350 şirket arasından seçilen 24 şirketten 20’si Koç Topluluğu şirketleri oldu!

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