



THE KOÇ SCHOOL

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# VOICE

1969-2019  
FIFTY YEARS  
OF THE  
VEHBI  
KOÇ  
FOUNDATION



THE KOÇ SCHOOL

# VOICE

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 Vehbi Koç Vakfı

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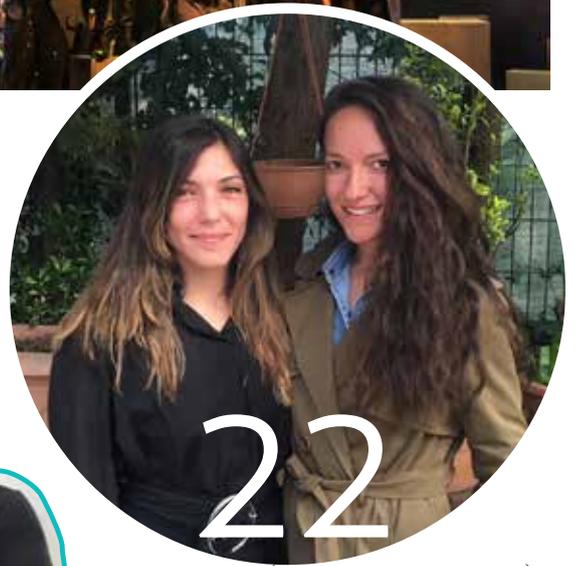
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Editorial | Professor Murat Günel, PhD

# Growth and change



**'Reading the parameters of the times accurately and basing decision-making processes on data is an essential need for our school to achieve growth and change.'**

**Dear Voice Readers,**

Greetings to The Koç School family on the occasion of the new edition of Voice, our annual magazine! We left behind a busy school year, when we reveled in the pleasure of moving forward on our path together and achieving multiple successes. It was a year filled with competitions, projects, ceremonies, fairs, gatherings, meetings and training programs blended with academic studies. Collective achievements emerged when the dedication of our students came together with our academic departments' studies and support departments' work.

For me, the 2018-2019 academic year was in many ways a time of getting acquainted with The Koç School. I wanted to make the most efficient use of this acquaintance period both for the school and myself. In addition to meeting internal and external stakeholders and understanding workflows, medium- and long-term organizational planning was also on my agenda. Since the first day I took office as General Director, one of the objectives that I found very important for our school ecosystem was to promote and foster diversity of voices, participation and wealth of different ideas. As we look back on the school year we left behind, I would like to share

some of the highlights with you:

The Institutional Planning and Evaluation Department was formed with the objective of strengthening and continuously improving the school culture and operation across a range of fields and scopes. This department will ensure that the way organizational plans and programs, processes, values and internal dynamics are positioned is analyzed, developed and structured if needed with respect to individual divisions, the organization as a whole and the educational ecosystem. We conducted surveys to evaluate the current situation of our school, identify the development areas and design and monitor the changes within the process. Reading the parameters of the times accurately and basing decision-making processes on data is an essential need for our school to achieve growth and change. The surveys will be a regular communication tool in our school so that each of our coworkers can make their voices heard and share their opinions.

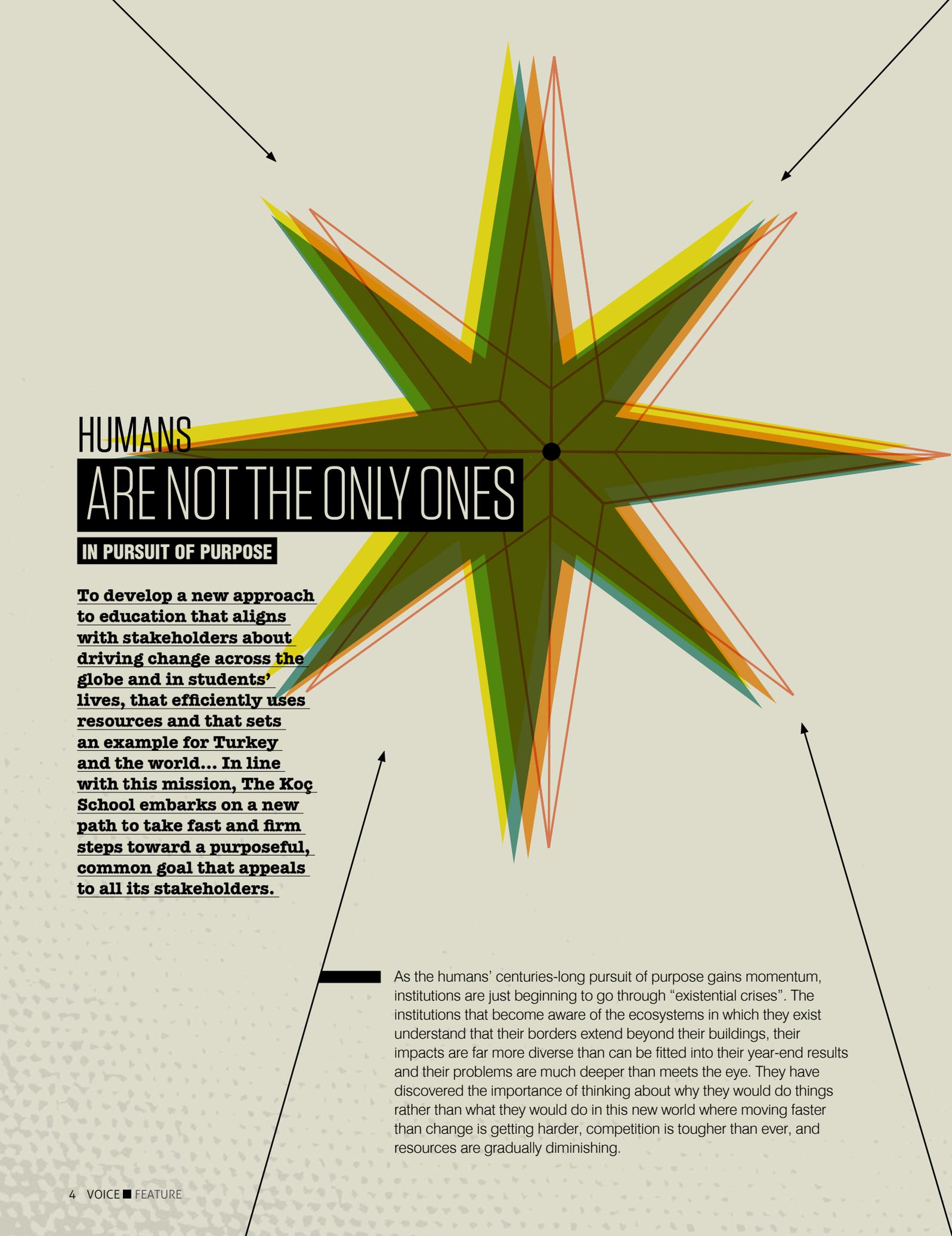
We launched the Design Thinking (DT) Program with the aim of looking at the problems we face every day from a fresh perspective to find lasting and effective solutions. This program equips the participants with the skills to think as designers and

adopt practical approaches to problems. As of June, 34 academic and administrative staff completed the three-month program. We have plans to repeat the DT workshops in the near future.

Defining our school's meaning and purpose in a manner to unite everyone around it, and making it visible was another activity that we started this year. We will be completing the first phase of the process which began in March with a survey among parents and students, through involving and representing all stakeholders including The Koç School Board of Directors in the days when this edition will be published. We also organized two workshops to promote collaboration between our teachers and employees in issues for which they seek solutions. As a result of these workshops, we implemented all the decisions reached by collective wisdom.

We will continue to learn from our past experiences, knowledge and values through strong collaborations, deep ties of trust and collective wisdom. I am confident that the upcoming academic year will again be productive and great with the efficiency and enlightenment we acquired from all the work we carried out this year.

I wish you all an enjoyable, sun-filled summer.



HUMANS

# ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES

## IN PURSUIT OF PURPOSE

**To develop a new approach to education that aligns with stakeholders about driving change across the globe and in students' lives, that efficiently uses resources and that sets an example for Turkey and the world... In line with this mission, The Koç School embarks on a new path to take fast and firm steps toward a purposeful, common goal that appeals to all its stakeholders.**

As the humans' centuries-long pursuit of purpose gains momentum, institutions are just beginning to go through "existential crises". The institutions that become aware of the ecosystems in which they exist understand that their borders extend beyond their buildings, their impacts are far more diverse than can be fitted into their year-end results and their problems are much deeper than meets the eye. They have discovered the importance of thinking about why they would do things rather than what they would do in this new world where moving faster than change is getting harder, competition is tougher than ever, and resources are gradually diminishing.

## Sustainable goals

Through a variety of studies on Meaning and Purpose, world-renowned institutions, such as Harvard, Stanford, and the University of California, draw attention to the healthy development of individuals and organizations that have the answers to the kind of change they want to make in life. Research indicates that the mortality risk of people who have a purpose in life and commit to sustainable goals is 15 percent lower than those who don't,<sup>1</sup> while the American College Health Association's report states that 30 percent of students feel too depressed to perform basic functions.<sup>2</sup> Another study suggests that the most common emotions among high school students in the US are boredom by 50 percent and fatigue by 42 percent.<sup>3</sup>

## What is success for?

William Damon, a professor of education at Stanford University, known for his work on the lives of young people and human development, says in his book, "The Path to Purpose" that students today have higher achievements than ever before and yet no idea about their "purpose".<sup>4</sup> Damon notes that according to the results of a study on 1,200 students between the ages of 12 and 26, if students find a meaningful purpose in their lives and feel that they are part of something bigger, they will gain instant benefits to last a lifetime.<sup>5</sup> However, only 17 percent of high school students say they have a goal.<sup>6</sup> In another study, Dacher Keltner of the University of California proves that having a meaningful purpose in life increases the motivation of students to overcome the challenges they face.<sup>7</sup>

## A purposeful common goal

The same can be said for institutions, too. Organizations that serve a greater purpose and set a meaningful, sustainable common goal for all their stakeholders show healthier growth than others.<sup>8</sup> With respect to educational institutions, which are responsible for raising future generations, this situation gains greater importance. Several studies concur that educational institutions with a meaningful, common goal for all stakeholders achieve more productive results than others.<sup>9</sup> A study by Paul Wagner and Lillian Benavente-McEnery points out that institutions failing to build a minimum common ground among the stakeholders regarding the purpose of education inevitably find themselves in a conceptual chaos.<sup>10</sup> Strike adds that this results in an inconsistent and fragile culture in educational institutions.<sup>11</sup>

## A new approach to education

Pursuing personal meaning and purpose and evolving into strong leaders that can drive the change they wish to see should be a key goal of every individual and particularly every student within The Koç School community, one of

the top education institutions in Turkey. This change needs to start with The Koç School as an institution. Therefore, we are embarking on a journey when the meaning and purpose of The Koç School will be redefined according to the needs of the next generation and a meaningful common purpose based on the school's DNA will take shape for all stakeholders. The goal is to develop a new approach to education that aligns with stakeholders about driving change across the globe and in students' lives, that efficiently uses resources and that sets an example for Turkey and the world.

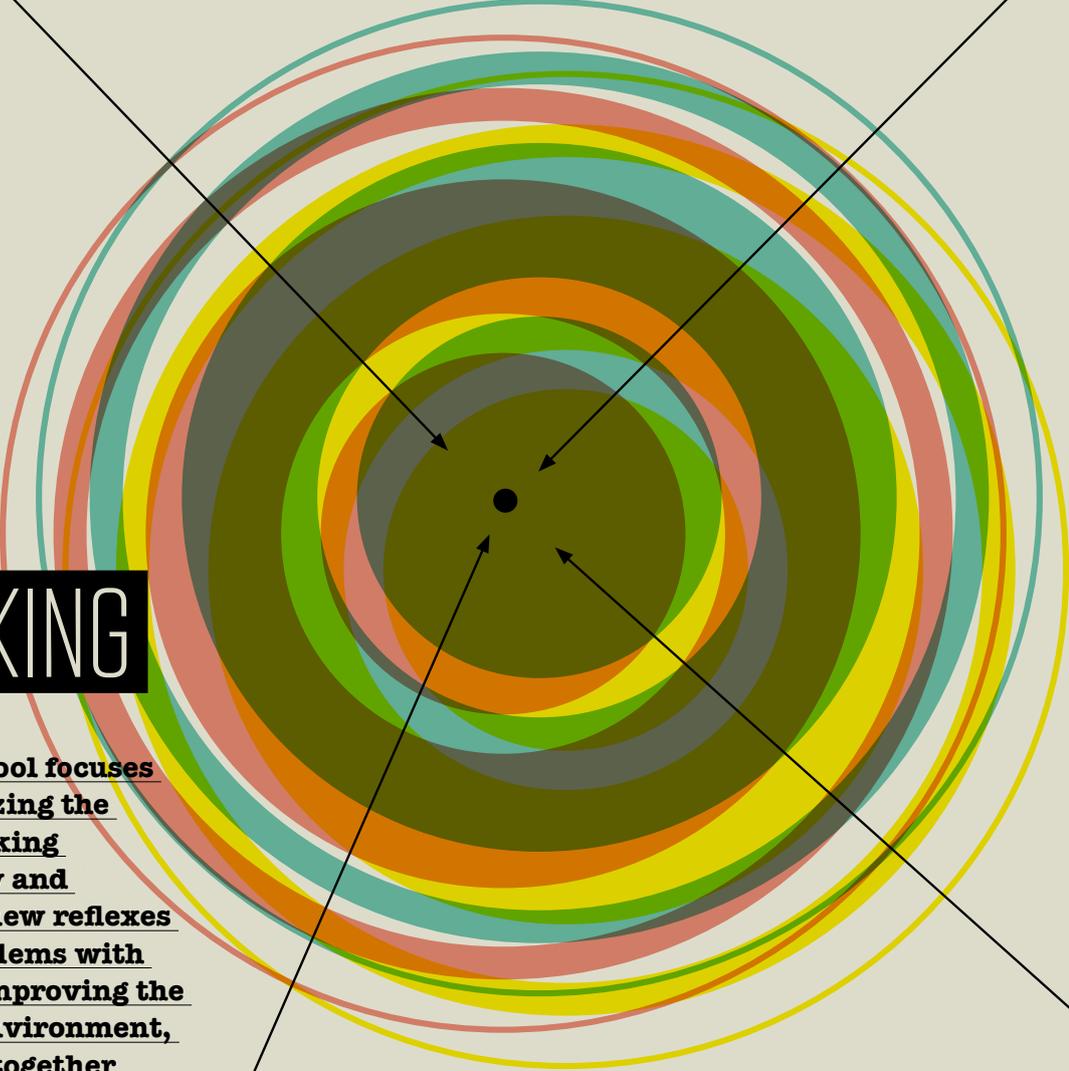
## Setting an example for the world

Several stakeholder groups, including The Koç School students, employees, Board members and alumni, along with world-renowned experts, will contribute to this process that will involve fast and firm steps. Everyone that is a part of The Koç School is regarded as a stakeholder in this journey, which is strongly motivated by the mission of raising the next generation as individuals who are aware of their inner strengths and skills, and who are well-equipped to use their inherent abilities to improve themselves and to make the world a better place. All hands are on deck to develop an exemplary education approach that will be built upon all the values of the school from the past to the present!

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# DESIGN THINKING

**The Koç School focuses on internalizing the Design Thinking methodology and developing new reflexes against problems with the goal of improving the education environment, established together with its stakeholders, primarily for students and ultimately for everyone.**

Albert Einstein said, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Just as the quote suggests, the Design Thinking methodology advocates the necessity of adopting a new approach to the problems we face every day. It paves the way for developing effective, creative and sustainable solutions to problems that lack permanent remedies despite chronic, well-intentioned efforts. Today, Design Thinking emerges as a rapidly spreading problem-solving tool in the world. Educational institutions are one of the best areas to apply this methodology. Creative solutions that can be developed against challenging and repetitive problems commonly observed in schools and classrooms have the potential of transforming both the education environment and life as a whole as the impact spreads from the schools to the community.

The Koç School aims to make this change happen in its approach to problems. The Koç School focuses on internalizing the Design Thinking methodology and developing new reflexes against problems with the goal of improving the education environment, established together with its stakeholders, primarily for students and ultimately for everyone. It embarks on a journey with this goal in mind to instill Design Thinking methodology and to develop new responses to problems.

**Albert Einstein said, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Just as the quote suggests, the Design Thinking methodology advocates the necessity of adopting a new approach to the problems we face every day.**

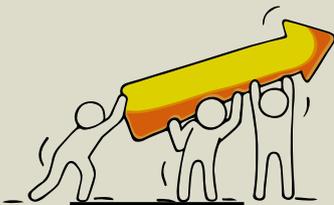
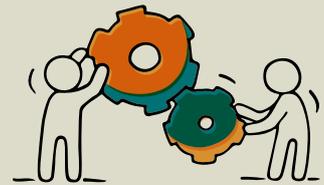
## DESIGN THINKING



Design Thinking is a methodology built on people-focused, collective problem solving techniques. Its aim is to discover new insights by using institutional archeology methods and taking a snapshot of the current situation to determine distance to the ultimate goal.

## TRANSFORMATION HOW?

In a world where finding rapid solutions is glorified, Design Thinking (DT) proposes to focus first on the problem itself. DT argues that we should seek to understand the underlying “root causes” of the problems, not the obvious symptoms in order to develop effective and lasting solutions.



### Collaborating

In contrast to the desire to create solutions on one’s own, Design Thinking prioritizes working, thinking and producing together. In Design Thinking, solutions are generated by involving all stakeholders of the problem in the process.



### Taking needs into account

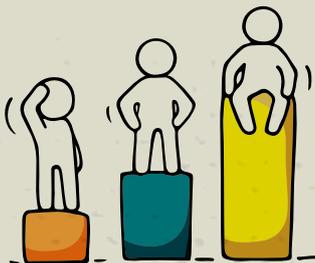
Design Thinking requires approaching problems by considering people’s needs and aspirations, not the goals and needs of institutions. DT believes that solutions can only be effective and lasting when they enable meaningful transformations in people’s lives.



### Daring to make mistakes

Design Thinking suggests that in today’s world where “perfection” is the goal and being faultless is applauded, we should not be afraid to make mistakes. DT regards mistakes as valuable development opportunities and proposes to fall and get back up as many times as necessary on the path toward a solution.

## OBJECTIVES



The Design Thinking Program aims for the participants, consisting of The Koç School teachers and administrative staff, to:

- Get acquainted with the Design Thinking methodology,
- Improve their creative self-confidence about finding solutions to problems,
- Develop cooperation and collaboration skills,
- Generate creative solutions to the problems in focus, and take the impact to the school through prototype design and testing process, and
- Develop a student-focused perspective and increase their motivation to create meaningful, sustainable, shared solutions.

# DESIGN THINKING

## WORKSHOPS

Workshops 1 / October 2018

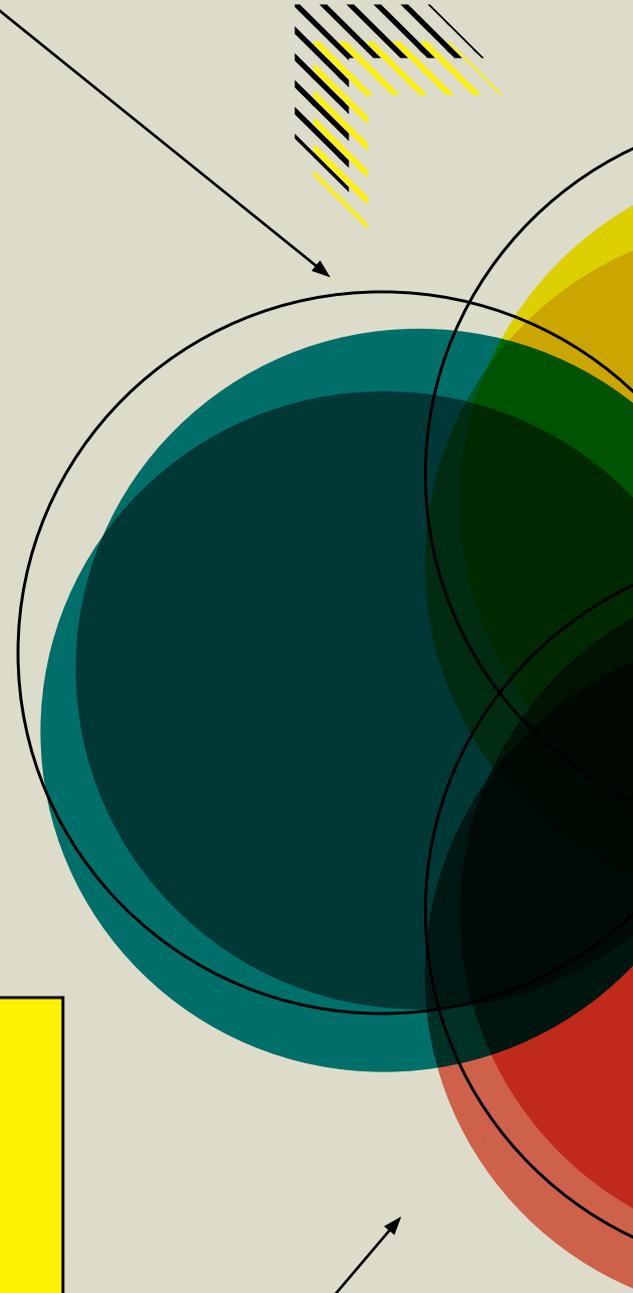
### RETHINKING THE STUDENTS'

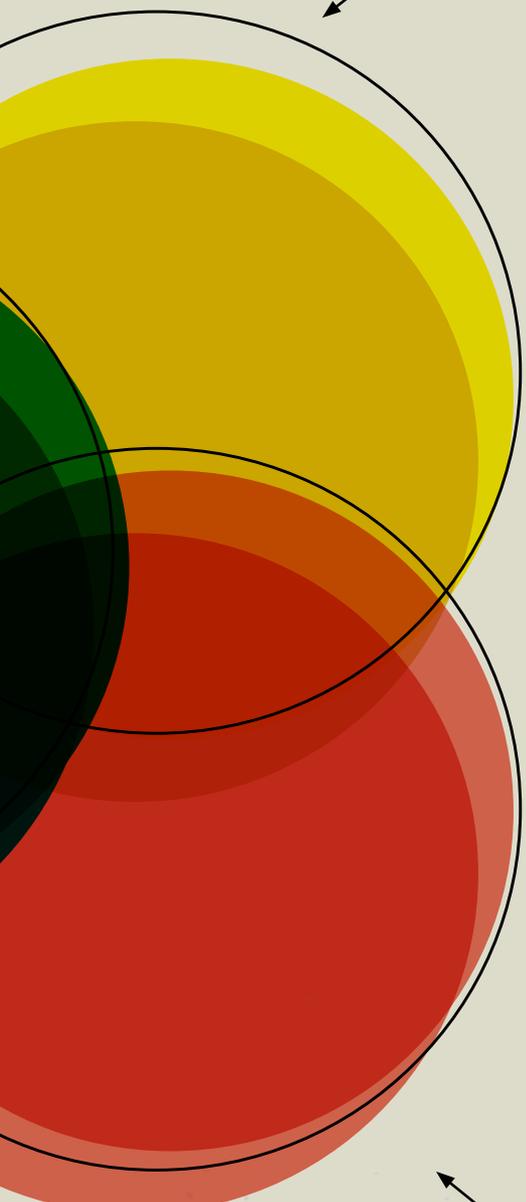
#### EXPERIENCE OF WAITING AT THE CAMPUS

- The first of the Design Thinking Workshops that aimed to solve the problems of The Koç School together was organized in October 2018.
- Over two days, creative solutions were generated by rethinking The Koç School students' experience of waiting at the campus after school hours.
- The solution to make the waiting time of the students more efficient and safer was implemented in The Koç School in January 2019.

#### Presentations

The Design Thinking Program, as a method for creative problem solving, was presented at the Suna Kıraç Library. The Koç School teachers and employees showed great interest in the voluntary activity. The presentation aimed to instill the skills to apply this method, which provides a guide in the work environments where challenging problems arise and new needs emerge. The participants also watched application presentations by Dr. Yeter Erol, Meryem Ertan, Ece Kahraman and Belgin Gökçen, DT Workshop representative teachers, about their projects and their impact on education.





Workshop 2 / March 2019

## BUILDING

# A STRONG COLLABORATION CULTURE

### AMONG EMPLOYEES

- The first long-term Design Thinking Program began in March 2019 with 34 faculty and staff.
- The program's focus was determined by the suggestions of the participants.
- The program, which included teaching the theory and carrying out field and group activities, was delivered in three weekends of two-day workshops.
- Creative solutions were generated about building a strong collaboration culture among The Koç School employees while the workshop also enabled Design Thinking methodology to be experienced.

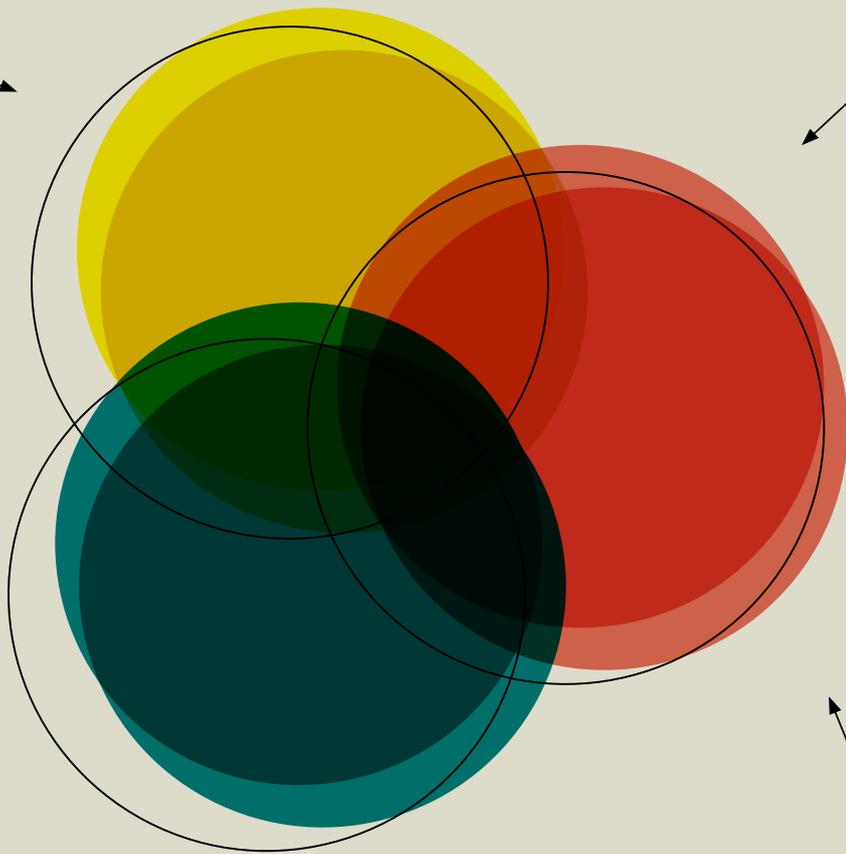
Workshops 3 and 4 / April and June 2019

## ACQUIRING

# DESIGN

### THINKING SKILLS

- Following the training programs in April and June 2019, the participants acquired Design Thinking skills and received their certificates.



## BEING A PART OF THE SOLUTION

**Güniz Yalınbaş** Philosophy Department Coordinator

I first found out about the DT Workshops in October 2018 through an activity about how the students (and the children of school employees) who needed to stay and wait at the school after the classes could use that time more efficiently. Planning a workshop to solve this problem was important to me. In addition to being a part of the solution, I voluntarily attended the workshop because I wanted to know more. Everyone in the group was able to express their ideas freely, great solutions were offered in each of the workshops, and the solutions were implemented in the next stage, so being a part of the solution made me very happy. Since I was impressed by this great experience, I requested to participate in the second workshop in March.

## THINKING LIKE A DESIGNER

**Dr. Yeter Erol** Biology Teacher

Thanks to the workshop I attended, I gained experience in a number of topics such as what Design Thinking means, why it is necessary for us teachers, how to approach problems by thinking like a designer and how it can be applied in education. Throughout the training, I also saw that this method encourages creative thinking, above all. In different groups, we worked on various problems that we might face in education and that seem difficult or even impossible to solve. Over a six-week period, we followed the stages of the method to find solutions to these problems. In the end, we were able to create prototypes that really work when used in a classroom environment.



## FALLING IN LOVE

# WITH THE PROBLEM

**Belgin Gökçen** Physical Education Teacher

Albert Einstein said, “Given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes understanding the problem and one minute resolving it.” With the design thinking methodology, my habit of finding solutions to the problems I face in my daily life changed. In the past, I used to focus directly on the solution. But now, when I face a problem, I immediately focus on the key elements and stakeholders of the problem. I concentrate on the question “Why?” with curiosity and enthusiasm. As used in the method, “I fall in love with the problem”. The Design Thinking methodology enables us to look at the problem from the eyes of the stakeholders and to reach collective wisdom, thus creating more effective, inclusive, sustainable and transformative solutions. Because of the comfort it has brought to my personal and professional life, I am glad that I have been a part of this process.

## DISCOVERING NEW PATHS

# BY DISRUPTING THE NORMS

**Meryem Ertan** Physics Teacher

Following the Design Thinking training, I now strive to accurately present different options and opportunities for the problems I encounter in my relationships with my students and my circle, and to learn methods to reach solutions that will benefit everyone. Offering alternative solutions to a particular problem, leaving the path that others follow, looking for answers to questions like “What is behind it?” and “What is needed?” all helped me to break out of the usual way of thinking. I learned to tolerate uncertainty, to ask the right questions with curiosity, to give myself permission to make mistakes, and to correctly identify obstacles before me. The Design Thinking method enabled me to discover new ways by collectively searching for solutions using the revelations and disrupting the habits and norms that we have.

## DESIGNING EMPATHETIC SOLUTIONS

# FOCUSED ON PEOPLE

**Ece Kahraman** English Teacher

In present day reality, we need more people-focused, replicable and sustainable innovations. Design Thinking helps me to divide the seemingly overwhelming problems in both my personal and professional life into smaller pieces and to really think about what is actually at the core. Before I learned about this method, I would do my best to think “out of the box.” But now, I am now trying to design people-focused and empathetic solutions for my circle and myself by focusing on each corner of the box instead of looking outside.



# STRENGTHENING THE KOÇ SCHOOL

**WHILE ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Berivan Mine Ferhanoğlu, the Director of Institutional Planning and Development, talks about the department, founded in early 2019 with the aim of strengthening the culture and function of The Koç School in various areas and scopes while ensuring constant development.**

## **When and how did your paths cross with The Koç School?**

I can say that I became acquainted with The Koç School as I shared what I have learned. Back when I was working at Koç Holding, I used to come to The Koç School on Career Days and share the advantages of my own profession and the paths that my classmates took with the students. But I have to admit that I wasn't really aware of how big the school was because I only saw part of the high school building. Our paths crossed again when I met with the school administration after my friends, who are parents of students here suggested that I should work with the students of The Koç School. I shared what I had done so far with Professor Murat Günel, whose meaningful vision really impressed me, and I started my new job with great excitement.

I wish to contribute to creating value as the highest priority for The Koç School, and in particular the students and employees. I am grateful to all my colleagues who have quickly made me feel at home and like a family again. Working at a Vehbi Koç Foundation school and being a part of Koç Group again is very special.

**‘The employees and teachers in the education sector are actually some of the most competent change managers in the world. They knowingly or without realizing adapt to these conditions.’**

**Please tell us about The Koç School’s Institutional Planning and Development Department and its activities. What is the philosophy of your department and what are your goals?**

This is a new department in our school and established in early 2019. It aims at strengthening the culture and function of The Koç School in various areas and scopes while ensuring constant development. Its mission is to ensure that organizational plans and programs, processes, values and internal dynamics are analyzed, developed and structured if needed, in the individual departments, across the organization and within the educational ecosystem. In other words, we can say that our mission is to regularly evaluate the needs of the school with a view to all stakeholders to sustain its development; to prioritize these needs strategically in line with the shared meaning and purpose of all stakeholders; to develop the processes to implement the strategic plan; and to build systems. The department looks at K12 as a whole with systematic thinking, values the importance of developing trust-based bonds that connect departments and employees, and aims to promote a participatory and collaborative development culture. This department also carries out projects that focus on being a school with meaning and purpose, and spreading the collaboration culture through Design Thinking Workshops, and conducts School Assessment Surveys.

**How and where will the Institutional Planning and Development Department be involved in the academic function of the school?**

The department aims to bring together the primary, middle and high school employees so that they can learn from one another, share their working practices with each other and meet even the most complex needs with creative solutions. The solutions found through collective wisdom directly affect academic processes and also contribute to development as a role model for students. Considering that the school is an organism of living things, the department can be thought of as a unit that regulates the appropriate oxygen level to ensure



the health and constant development of the organism, that enables the organs to communicate and engage with each other, and that provides a remedy whenever and wherever a function, an organ needs support. Most importantly, the department derives its power from all academic and other administrative departments and stakeholders. The department sometimes takes on a leadership role or provides up-to-date information, but mostly protects and facilitates with its umbrella function while keeping an eye on the changing world and the industry-specific development needs.

**Please tell us about your work with both corporate and non-governmental organizations throughout your career.**

The club activities that I carried out in my high school and university years continued after graduation as I went on to start non-governmental organizations. I am a Founding Board Member of the Butterfly Effect Association, which organizes the Sustainable Life Film Festival, with the 12<sup>th</sup> edition coming up soon. We measure the social impact of the festival every year to identify its multiplier effect. I am also a founding partner of the D-Cube Circular Economy Innovation Cooperative, which aims to spread circular models that need to replace the linear systems of today for a sustainable life. It is very valuable for young people

**'Institutional Planning and Development Department aims to bring together the primary, middle and high school employees so that they can learn from one another, share their working practices with each other and meet even the most complex needs with creative solutions'**



to develop themselves with this awareness as they prepare for their future careers. I volunteer as a facilitator at the NGO Association for Education Project run by the Teachers Academy Foundation. There is so much to do. Fortunately, a very strong generation continues to grow in safe hands. I am one of those people who see hope in the world because of the innovative, sensitive and competent young people that hold technology at their fingertips.

**Is the “Meaningful Works” project, which you started, one of these works? How was the idea for Meaningful Works born, what do you aim to achieve with this project, what are some of the targets you have already achieved, if any?**

In addition to teaching, I also organized workshops for Meaningful Works using the innovative and participatory methods, which I learned while in Sweden and believe to be very effective. I would like to emphasize that the things we will do with this social initiative that I started will not be limited to the possibilities offered to us. This is like wanting to go to Mersin but then heading to Izmir just because everyone else is doing it and the bus is going there. In reality, possibilities are endless when creativity is combined with knowledge and technology. Meaningful Works aims for especially university and high school students to get to know themselves better with their strengths and passions, to understand the social and environmental needs across the

world, and the generate their own solutions by assuming leadership where these two intersect. Meaningful Works served as a conduit for the birth of projects and initiatives that solve contemporary problems using 3D printing technologies. New sustainability initiatives are emerging.

**Do you think working for an educational institution is different than other sectors?**

Educational institutions are changing much faster than other organizations. Students, parents, teachers, curriculum, exam systems, the conditions for the schools to keep up with the times, programs... They can even change as the same student returns from summer break. The employees and teachers in the education sector are actually some of the most competent change managers in the world. They knowingly or without realizing adapt to these conditions. What Darwin said about the survival of the fittest applies to schools as well. The schools that are able to recognize the requirements of the times early, that future-proof themselves and prepare their students for these will survive. What makes educational institutions special is this meaningful connection with future generations. Making sure that every effort spent under the roof of the school extends to next generations is as valuable as the taste of victory that the advanced human finds in search of meaning. This is why I believe that educational institutions are one of the most meaningful workplaces.

## THE CAREER OF

# BERİVAN MİNE FERHANOĞLU

I am from Ankara. After graduating from the School of Business Administration at Bilkent University, I started my career in 2003 at Koç Group as a Corporate Marketing Management Trainee. Then, I managed projects for children and youth, launched by the Corporate Communications and Information Group at Koç Holding. I took part in establishing one of the first Corporate Social Responsibility Departments in Turkey, and worked with the team at Vehbi Koç Foundation and headed the “Vocational High Schools, a Crucial Matter for the Nation” project. It was a project woven with the efforts of our managers, colleagues and more than 300 vocational high school coaches, and still proudly mentioned in the national and international arena in the league of sustainable projects, reflecting the Group’s approach to bringing knowledge and experience of the employees to the next generation. It is nice to hear that the project still continues and evolves.

I also took part in spreading the principles of Global Compact, which the late Mustafa V. Koç signed with Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General of the time, in 12 companies of the Koç Group. I found the opportunity to work with valuable teams from different sectors, functions and executive levels, to set comprehensive sustainability goals and to establish annual follow-up mechanisms. I served in the Strategic Planning Department of Koç Holding, working on the Group’s business development projects. I also represented Koç Holding in vocational training, technology and sustainability working groups of organizations such as TÜSİAD, YASED, and TBCSD.

In 2013, I went to Sweden to complete my master’s degree in Strategic Sustainability Leadership, which I believed to be very important for our world but was unable to launch in Turkey due to the conditions then. In this highly respected program recognized worldwide, in a leading country in sustainability, I studied the scientific foundations of sustainability and also focused on leader development and strategic planning. I wholeheartedly believe that strategic leadership is essential in order to identify the world’s top priority needs and to address them quickly. I had started to concentrate on education, which I believe is a priority area, when I was developing collaborations with universities for our graduate projects. I wrote my master’s thesis with three other colleagues on “leadership of change”.

After returning to Turkey, I began to share what I learned through my studies focused on change management, leadership and sustainability, and the intersection of these topics, by teaching MBA classes at universities. I can tell you that learning and sharing what I learn is the purpose of my life. This is why I enjoy being in learning environments, as well as creating and developing learning spaces. In addition to working with teachers and school administrations, I also serve in non-governmental organizations and social initiatives that share this purpose.



# A GLOBAL MOVEMENT: SEEKING A NEW PURPOSE

## IN COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Ayşe Yemişçigil Harvard Kennedy School, Warwick University PhD Candidate

**As the pursuit of purpose affects all institutions and individuals in a society, it also resonates with education. We are going through a global education reform, and as a pioneer of this trend, The Koç School is taking consistent steps to ensure healthy development of youth and the society in general.**

A school's purpose is generally considered to be contributing to the academic development of young people and ensuring that they become an efficient part of the workforce. But this traditional view is rapidly losing its validity. One of the most important reasons for this can be attributed to how the criteria of success in business, in the rapidly changing global economy are evolving. As the information taught in school quickly becomes outdated, it has been proven that being successful in business is correlated to developing high level of cognitive abilities as well as social and emotional skills.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, schools in the US are changing their curricula under the title of "character education" to instill and improve skills such as empathy, leadership, patience, consistency and service in students.<sup>2</sup> From an early age, the students are encouraged to question their values, purposes and what makes their lives meaningful.<sup>3</sup>

In line with these developments, social institutions around the world are beginning to accept that one of their main purposes is to make people "happy". For instance, governments are monitoring the psychological health of people, how well they feel, how their lives are going through surveys, and attempting to design policies according to these declarations.<sup>4</sup> The "Happiness movement" also resonates with education. In several countries, schools work with positive psychologists to redesign the student experience to improve happiness. The highlight of this effort is that happiness is not simply about feeling good in the moment, and leading a meaningful and purposeful life is one of the building blocks of psychological well-being.

As the pursuit of purpose affects all institutions and individuals in a society, it also resonates with education. We are going through a new, flourishing global education reform. The most important factor that brings momentum to this reform is the cooperation between institutions and all their stakeholders. As a pioneer of this global trend, The Koç School is taking patient and consistent steps to ensure healthy development of youth and the society in general.

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 **Vehbi Koç Vakfı**

# sebuka: are you defending these women?

**Aslı Karataş** says, “As a cis woman, what I can talk about best and what I have been most subjected to is gender-based discrimination against women. This is the area where sebuka excels.” This is the story of her fight against people who ask her if she is the defender of these women.

[www.sebuka.com](http://www.sebuka.com)

Almost everyone has probably seen the examples of sexist or even sex-blind regulations in law and come across their consequences in the news. At this point, it becomes a necessity to stop and think about discrimination in law. Lawyer Aslı Karataş (Class of 2008) started the platform sebuka (short for “Sen bu kadınların avukatı mısın?” in Turkish, meaning ‘are you defending these women?’) with the belief that this issue requires more attention. Aslı Karataş tells the story of sebuka, the product of women’s solidarity collective.



### What did you do after you graduated from The Koç School?

I studied law at Koç University. Then I did my internship in an office specializing on corporate law. If I would work in corporate law, I thought I'd better do it in our family firm and so I returned to my hometown, Gebze. Then, I earned a master's degree in Economics Law at Galatasaray University. In the meantime, I also got married and had a baby. Working in a male-dominated sector and then experiencing motherhood led to the birth of sebuka.

### How did the idea of founding sebuka come about?

I had been writing articles for the website of Dijital Topuklar (Digital Heels) for a while. Then, I participated as a speaker in a panel session titled "getting away from MANhood and closer to humanity" at the 2018 Digital Heels Summit. In both the panel session and also other events, I witnessed the stories of women who were inspired by Digital Heels and carved their own paths. Then I said to myself, why not? Almost all of my friends who know me well said, "This is the kind of initiative we would expect from you" when they heard about it. I thought, this must be what I invested in all this time. I felt that I was doing the right thing.

### What is the story of sebuka's name?

I was with a few friends and saying, I wish I could start a platform where I made all the rules. Being a lawyer, the technological aspect seemed overwhelming. I thought creating a website was rocket science. A computer engineer friend of mine really encouraged me and during our talks suggested that I should call it, "Are you defending these women?", which I loved. It tells exactly who I am, the reactions I get when I say what I want to say, and how a certain segment of the society looks at the women's movement. We were wondering what we should name the website and the brand since the slogan is too long, when Digital Heels founder Perihan Gürer said, "Don't worry about it, you can shorten it to something like 'sebuka'." These were all in Whatsapp messages, really unplanned and instant. So, the name 'sebuka' was born as the product of women's solidarity collective.

### What do you aim to achieve through sebuka?

I aim to build a training-consultancy network through sebuka. My priority is companies and maybe NGOs. Last March 8, we came across "women-friendly" advertisements that were quite damaging to the feminist movement. With the feminist movement gaining global attention, the brands seek to be a part of it without integrating the ideology into their infrastructure. There should be competent bodies in place that they can refer to. Companies should seek advice on whether their corporate identity aligns with gender equality. Similarly, writing codes of conduct based on gender equality in the workplace and reviewing the disciplinary regulations with this perspective are other important steps. Recruitment processes, human resources practices and communication

strategies should be open to review to determine whether they comply with national and international legislation pertaining to prevention of discrimination against women. The world is fast on track in this respect. Iceland now requires companies to become certified for the 'equal pay for equal work' policy. Turkey must catch up with this trend. On the other hand, workplace practices have always been based on male employees. Even the personal protective equipment (helmets, gloves, etc.) used in the workshops are designed with the male body in mind. We need to disrupt this perception. I intend to make sebuka function in this respect as well.

### Have you ever been criticized about sebuka?

Fortunately, the reactions have been positive for the most part. Finding resources that are easy to understand can be quite difficult in the sector. There are either academic sources or popular content that makes no sense as to their meaning or purpose. The content created by sebuka is at a middle point. One meaningful criticism I received was about the name of sebuka. A queer friend of mine said, "This is not just a woman's issue, this is a gender issue." Very true. We should not be talking only about women. For one, it is essential to talk about masculinity to achieve gender equality. This review reminded me of another statement. Bülent Somay argues that the expression "female murders" should be changed to "male murders" because in crimes committed with this motive, the victim may be a cis woman, transwoman or a gay male. And the commonality of these crimes is the fact that the perpetrators are male and that they can dare to kill because of the privilege they derive from their gender. Therefore, we shouldn't talk about gender equality without addressing masculinity. Even so, I don't see 'sebuka' as a name that overshadows the movement because what I know is about being a woman. As a cis woman, what I can talk about best and what I have been most subjected to is gender-based discrimination against women. This is the area where sebuka excels. Others can talk about the other issues.

### Do you think that your education at The Koç School influenced the birth of sebuka?

My education at The Koç School not only affected my career but also influenced every aspect of my life very positively. I often mention a book called "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, and I can say that I learned all I really need to know in high school". The Koç School instills critical thinking in people. You are only 13 and someone treats you as an individual so you expect to see it at every stage of your life. Thanks to the superior education you receive at The Koç School, you are a few steps ahead of many people in university and later on, in business life. It also returns in the form of self-confidence. Furthermore, many of your high school friends generally go on to take prominent positions, providing an important network of connections. As someone privileged enough to benefit from The Koç School's quality education, I feel rather indebted to the community. In fact, I can say that this drive facilitated the birth of sebuka.

**Ali Şayakçı saw a niche in the explorer yacht market and created Rock to challenge the norms in design and function.**

## **CHALLENGING THE NORMS**



Ali Şayakçı (Class of 1996), who has been interested in the yacht market while working in the mining industry, reached out to the Dutch design studio Vripack to bring his dream yacht to life, and went on to build it in two years at his company, Evadne Yachts, together with his team. Rock, designed to cross the oceans, stands out with its angular and masculine lines, and offers more interior and exterior space than those seen in similar sized yachts. Standing at 24 meters in length, it has the feeling of a 32-meter yacht. Ali Şayakçı, the creator of Rock, is rightfully proud of this international success that he and his team captured.



### **Please tell us about yourself.**

I graduated The Koç School in 1996 and then attended university in the UK. In 2004, I left the family business and started my first company to sell travertine and marble to the UK construction and building market and DIY stores. At the time, I was the only one doing this in Turkey. Then, I founded another company that sold raw natural stones to the Far East. During the 2008 financial crisis, I started, or rather I to start mining because the markets where I was selling had weakened in the aftermath. (The takeaway here is that every crisis created its own opportunities.) So I began mining actively in various locations across Turkey and continued to open new quarries to extract marble. In a short time, we became one of Turkey's leading companies in this field. For the last two years, I have been serving as the president of the World Natural Stone Association (WONASA).

### **What is the story of Rock, designed by Vripack and built by Evadne Yachts?**

I studied business administration at university and I focused more on strategy and marketing than finance, and improved myself in these areas. I saw the positive impact of my education both in mining and also in the yacht market. For years, I was researching the yacht

market and seeing a niche in terms of function and style in the explorer yacht market, which interested me greatly. I thought that the available models were lacking in the aesthetic and technical values that could be attained. We recreated the concept that I dreamed of and defined together with shipbuilding engineers and industrial designers in Turkey and put it on paper. Then I contacted Vripack, one of the best in the world and also the company that designed Caressa K, the boat of the late Mustafa V. Koç. We agreed to implement this project together.

### **How long did it take to build the yacht?**

My team and I built my dream yacht in about two years at Evadne Yachts, our yacht building company in Tuzla, and then we set out to exhibit it at the Cannes and Monaco shows in late summer 2018.

### **How was Rock received?**

We knew that we would be successful but we didn't expect to see such great interest. On the first guest day of the Cannes show, a Swiss technology entrepreneur and engineer bought Rock.

### **What are you currently working on?**

At Evadne Yachts, we continue to build and design other sizes of the Rock series. My projects involving natural resources, mining and marketing are also ongoing. I have also been a board member of The Koç School Alumni Association for many years.

# 360

degree

## SUPPORT FOR STUDY ABROAD



**Özge Kurt and Ayşe Su Dođru, who joined forces to provide international education consultancy services under the same roof, talk about what 360 Counseling offers...**

Özge Kurt (Class of 2002) and Ayşe Su Dođru (Class of 2007), who previously provided individual international education consultancy, met through The Koç School Alumni Association (KÖLMED) and founded a firm, 360 Counseling, to advise students who wish to study abroad. They chose 360 Counseling as the name of their firm because they can provide full support in all the aspects that make up an application file. They believe that “the best” university and department can be different for each student, and aim to inform parents and students as early and as comprehensively as possible.

360 Counseling'e ulaşmak için:  
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**We know that you at 360 Counseling provide consultancy to students in Turkey for study abroad. Please tell us how this idea came to life.**

We were already doing this individually. However, it was thanks to Nazan Erkmen, the former adviser of KÖLMED, that we came together. She knew that we were both in this line of work and said, "I must definitely introduce you!" We can't thank her enough for that. On the other hand, being Koç School graduates also played a major role in our decision to establish this firm. Having received the same education, we did not doubt that our goals, approaches

and methods would be in alignment. And once we started working together, we saw that our anticipation was right. You wouldn't believe the difference that two Koç School alumni can make when they join forces.

**What can you tell us about the consultancy services your firm provides?**

We manage the consulting process with a 360-degree approach, hence the name of the firm. We work with each student in a very detailed process, meaning that instead telling a student, "Don't forget to do this or that," we sit down with them for hours and come up with new ideas to create their files to match their goals.

Ideally, the students should come to us in the tenth grade. The process begins with the student deciding on the department he/she wants to attend, and then we focus on target-focused studies and extracurricular activities. In the eleventh grade, we begin preparations for tests like SAT or IELTS. The fact that we offer personal support is one of our differences. The twelfth grade is the year of sending the applications. But that year does not go without doing anything else. We work with the students to write their motivation letters as an important part of the application process.

**Which countries do you specialize in?**

We focus mainly on the US and the UK because these two are still the most demanded countries. But we also provide consultancy for other countries, such as Canada, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain, which are becoming increasingly popular.

**Is there a message you would like to give to Koç School students?**

As Koç School graduates, you have undoubtedly received the best education in Turkey. But being a graduate or a student of Koç School is not only about classroom education. Creating a community, receiving and gaining the same education, culture and experience are perhaps the most valuable things our school has given us. We are one of its best examples as people who met through KÖLMED and started to work together. Therefore, we recommend that students continue to adopt the identities they acquired through The Koç School after they graduate. We also look forward to seeing them all among us!

We have a message for our teachers as well. We are eternally grateful to all the teachers who taught us at The Koç School and who still continue to support us whether or not they still serve at the school. We love you.

# IN THE NAME OF INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM



What is **Murat Can Bilginçan**, who says his best years were at The Koç School, up to these days?

After graduating from The Koç School, Murat Can Bilginçan (Class of 2004) studied Economics at Yale University and then set out to travel the world. He talks about his time at The Koç School, his experiences at CNN Turk, his documentaries, the Independent Journalism course he taught at Koç University's Media and Visual Arts Department, and much more.

## What did you go on to do after graduating from The Koç School?

After high school, I went to the US where I graduated Yale University with a degree in economics. Then I went on a world trip with my backpack. Blogging and taking photos on that trip marked the beginning of journalism for me. During this period, I volunteered for a few months in an orphanage in Kenya. I found documents proving that despite the online donations, no projects were implemented. This dispute with them led me to investigative journalism.

## So, did you continue with journalism after that?

I worked as a management trainee in an automotive aftermarket factory in Germany for nine months, and even though it did not suit me, I wanted to try my luck and improve my German. After leaving that company, I wrote a feature film script.

## Please tell us about the film.

"Mzungu Sleeping" is based on what I witnessed in the orphanage in Kenya. I wrote script and submitted it to Sundance. My script was a semi-finalist at Sundance's Screenwriting Workshop. But it did not make the final shortlist and we were unable to find a producer. The project is still waiting on the shelf.

## How did your career evolve into journalism?

While doing my military service in Erzincan, I used to read "Radikal" daily newspaper during the eight-hour watch duty. I realized that I wanted to write things like the interviews I read and it was on the watch tower that I decided to become a journalist. In 2012, I received a job offer from CNN Turk and started working with Ridvan Akar, who was the News Director at the time. We were doing a political documentary show called "Hayatın Tanığı" ("Witness of Life"). Being involved in almost every stage of the show was a very good start.

Contact Murat Can Bilginçan at:  
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[twitter.com/bilginçan](https://twitter.com/bilginçan)

in journalism. We did several shows on topics such as the crisis in Ukraine, Turkish defense industry and Gezi protests, and I am still proud of the great work we produced.

### **What followed CNN Turk?**

I attended Columbia University School of Journalism on a scholarship for my master's degree in documentary production. As my studies continued, I joined the team of the famous Frontline documentary program of PBS. I was awarded a grant to make a documentary in the southeast. After briefly working at CNN America, I started my own production company, Mzungu Media.

### **So, you continued to make documentaries using the grant, right?**

I purchased equipment for the video shoots and editing. When we heard about the incidents at the poll stations in Yabanardı village of Diyarbakır during the referendum on April 16, 2017, we started to tell the story of polarization in the village through the eyes of children. The film titled "Karne" ("Report Card") will soon be streamed on BluTV.

### **What can you tell us about being a journalist in Turkey?**

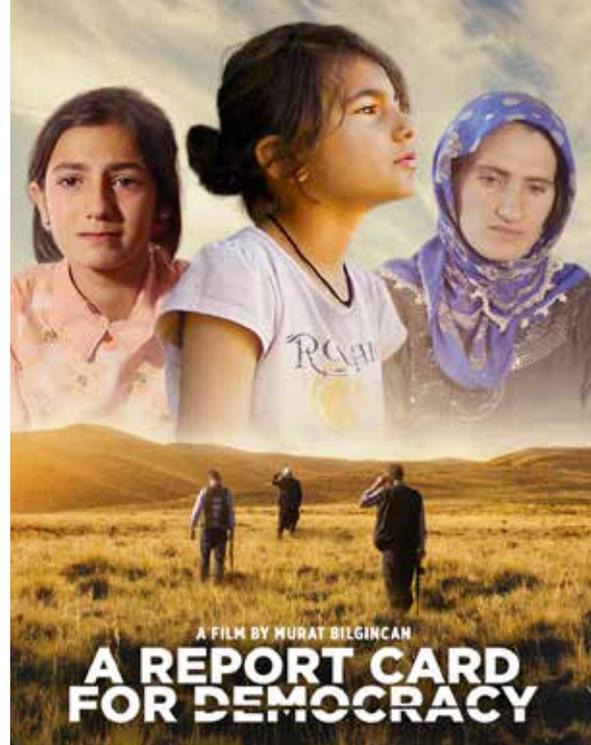
Today, journalism has become especially difficult, and not just in Turkey, all around the world. In other words, the internet and social media have many benefits but they can also be very damaging. Unfortunately, the media is one of the most affected sectors. Serious news, examples of investigative journalism and long articles do not create sufficient engagement because people do not click them. So, there is not enough demand in the world for the kind of work I want to do.

### **What is next for you?**

When I first graduated university, I had very high aspirations and dreams. Considering everything that I have experienced, they have somewhat changed. Frankly, I have lower expectations from the world, Turkey, and myself now. Unfortunately, the opportunities in my areas of interest are quite limited around the world and luck usually plays a much more important role than your talent, work and background. I would like to continue pursuing independent journalism and reaching the audiences that may be interested in my work. I also intend to spread the virus of true storytelling to new generations through the seminar I give at Koç University.

### **What do you remember the most when you look back on your high school years?**

We built a very solid foundation in high school. The most memorable days in my life were the three years I spent at The Koç School. I was a boarding student,



Watch the trailer of the documentary: [vimeo.com/murathilgincan/reportcardtrailer](https://vimeo.com/murathilgincan/reportcardtrailer)

and we had a very close group of friends. I took part in a variety of activities that helped me build my self-confidence. I don't know if it's still a thing done, but we would have "Talent Shows", which I presented. Now that I think of it, I probably developed my presentations skills back then. I was a delegate at the Model United Nations event, we would debate, hold discussions ... These are all skills that foster journalism. I don't think I would have been able to attend Yale University without the academic foundation I built at The Koç School. I could never forget the support of the International Studies Office at the time. On my first day at Yale, Fuat Savaş, from The Koç School's Class of 2001, welcomed me. I spent my first night in his room, and then I met many more Koç School graduates everywhere. One of them was Engin Yenidünya (Class of 1998). On my backpacking journey from Syria to Far East, he welcomed me to his house in Japan even though we had never met before. When I was in New York City for my master's studies and feeling rather lonely, I attended a Reunion there, and it was great meeting so many alumni. I really appreciate the environment of trust that The Koç School creates.

### **Did you ever consider your current profession back when you were in high school?**

In high school, my goal was to study in the best possible institution. I wanted liberal arts, which would allow me to take courses from different disciplines and experiment and expand my horizons... I did not have a specific field in mind but I wanted to build a foundation. The intellectual foundation that I was able to develop fosters my current career, the films I try to make and the magazine articles I attempt to write.

The Koç School undertakes a variety of activities to raise awareness and knowledge of its students and parents with the aim of contributing to the society's sexual health.

# DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS **UNDER SPOTLIGHT**



In the Turkish society, we take a rather traditional and conservative approach to sexuality, which is in fact a very complex phenomenon with biological, psychological, social, cultural, traditional, moral, religious, anthropological and political aspects. The first step toward healthy sexuality is to take an integrated approach to all the aspects involved. The Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation (TAP) carries out various activities to raise awareness and knowledge about sexuality to promote sexual health in the society,

The Koç School designed a project with Rayka Kumru (Class of 2008), a Sexologist and Sexuality Trainer, with the aim of making the sexual health trainings organized in partnership with TAP Foundation more comprehensive and focused on needs. In order to ensure that the training program at

The Koç School is best aligned with high school students, the project's first phase involved a survey conducted with 756 students, 93 teachers and 379 parents. This survey contributed significantly to identifying the needs related to sexual health attitudes and education. Based on the survey results, student focus groups were determined and the needs were identified more comprehensively.

## **Comprehensive Training Programs**

In the second phase of the project, the High School Principal, Vice Principals, Guidance Service and Boarding Officers attended trainings on basic topics of comprehensive sexual education. Instead of the traditional sexual health education model, these trainings aimed to integrate sexual health, relationships and communication of these issues into the school's fabric and to create a common language on gender equality.





### 4th Parenting Symposium

Considering that parents are an essential part of sexual health education, the school - primary, middle and high school - hosts a Parenting Symposium every other year to raise awareness and improve knowledge of parents. The theme of this year's congress, organized by the school's Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department, was "Generation Z: Sexual Development and Communication". Based on the World Health Organization's definition of sexual health as, "a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality," the objective

was to provide information suitable for all ages regarding a positive and respectful approach to sexual health, development and sexual relationships.

In the congress on December 8, 2018, topics such as sexual identity, age-appropriate communication to support sexual development, protection from sexual online content, prevention of unsolicited sexual behavior, and legal actions against sexuality-related issues were discussed. More than 800 participants attended the talks, workshops and events. The Koç School parents who participated

in the congress found answers to questions such as: "How should I communicate with my child in an age-appropriate manner to support their sexual development?", "How do I protect my child from online content that is not appropriate for their age?", "How can I be sure that my child has a healthy sexual relationship?", "How do I prevent my child from exposure to inappropriate behavior?", "What are a person's responsibilities about sexual behavior and the legal actions in Turkey pertaining to this issue?" "What is sexual identity?", "What should I know about the development periods of children and adolescents?"



### Accompanying My Child in Their Career Journey

Knowing that parents should be by their children's side in the career selection period, as in all other issues, The Koç School hosted parents of tenth-graders at a workshop. Assistant Professor Nevin Dölek, PhD, gave a presentation on "Accompanying My Child in Their Career Journey". In the second part of the workshop, parents were divided into four groups and worked on five scenarios prepared in advance.

# FROM THINKING TEACHER TO THINKING STUDENT



**Details of Öğretmen Ağı – The Koç School Meeting, the participating teachers' comments about the workshops, the objectives of the Facilitator Team, and the Workshop Executors' thoughts on the events...**

The first of the activities, which were planned at the 2018 Öğretmen Ağı (Teachers' Network) Change Ambassadors Summer Meeting at The Koç School, took place on November 3, 2018 with the title "Teacher to Teacher: From Thinking Teacher to Thinking Student". Change ambassadors Ezgi Temiz Çeliker and Gizem Ok Uluçay were the executors of the workshop, which was attended by 20 teachers from The Koç School and 20 teachers from other schools. After The Koç School General Director Professor Murat Günel's opening speech, Network Development Coordinator Sonel Balkan informed the participants about Öğretmen Ağı. In the workshop that continued with

activities to get acquainted and break the ice, the participating teachers found the opportunity to review their perceptions and beliefs about bias and learning in the "Thinking Triangle" activity, which included exercises to improve cognitive and emotional skills. The activity titled, "Don't Believe What You Read," they refreshed their knowledge about the fact that the perceptions of different age groups are not solely based on what they read, and the pedagogical details of this change process. In the "Basic Thinking Skills" part of the program, the reasons for why change is needed to develop classroom practices were discussed and examples were shared.



### **Ezgi Temiz Çeliker**

*Science Teacher*

We can say that the workshop is a prototype of the Thinking Skills Program. It is very broad in scope and based on practice. We designed a workshop that focused only on how much we think and our – as well as our children's – thinking practices. We also exchanged some of our experiences. Our goal is to ensure that these are reflected onto the classroom.

### **Gizem Ok Uluçay**

*Classroom Teacher*

We were already considering how we could expand the reach of what we were discussing in the "Thinking Skills" series. Professor Murat Günel suggested that we could hold this at The Koç School and lead the workshop. After thinking about the content, we designed the activities. I was very pleased with the participation, and the answers to the questions shaped the content of the session.

### **Sonel Balkan**

*Öğretmen Ağı*

*Development Coordinator*

Since we focus on the teachers, seeing their interest in our activities only makes us happy. We currently have 262 change ambassadors who have gone through the Teacher Networking processes, planned various activities and built local networks in their own cities. So far, we held more than 110 events.

### **Fulya Aydın**

*The Koç School Department Head - 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grades*

I think Öğretmen Ağı is a nice platform that enables teachers to combine their knowledge in a melting pot. The workshops that will allow us to share our experiences in a shared platform will strengthen us as teachers.

### **Günalp Turan**

*Öğretmen Ağı*

*Development Officer*

During the summer workshop, we spoke with Professor Murat Günel, General Director, The Koç School, about organizing these gatherings regularly. We are in the process of making these events at both The Koç School and also other schools more systematic. We hope to see workshop participants within Öğretmen Ağı.

### **Nilüfer Günergin**

*The Koç School Vice Principal - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade*

We are a pioneering school in terms of our mission & vision and also our profile. It is therefore a good decision to host some activities of an NGO like Öğretmen Ağı at The Koç School.

### **Mevlüt Altıntop**

*Math Teacher*

The workshop was quite effective. The fact that it was interactive particularly increased the impact of the meeting. We refreshed our knowledge with respect to how we should not be prejudiced against students' thinking skills.

### **Sonnur Özel**

*Measurement & Assessment Expert*

I always thought: What is it that guides a teacher toward professional development on their own? I find it very valuable to stimulate the need for change. I see this excitement in the teachers that attend Öğretmen Ağı – The Koç School Meeting.

## **We asked The Koç School General Director Professor Murat Günel...**



### **What are your thoughts about Öğretmen Ağı platform?**

Öğretmen Ağı is an organization established with the philosophy of empowering teachers as well as enhancing their professional reputation and alleviating their feelings of loneliness or weakness. We can also call it a professional organization where teachers feel good, develop and want to be a part of it. I was once in the network's Facilitator Team. The team's name in fact demonstrates the collective structure that was built to initiate engagement among teachers and to enable them to learn from each other.

### **What would you like to say about these meetings that you host at The Koç School?**

As someone who has worked with teachers in the field for all my professional life and focused on fostering the school, the teachers and the students and their well-being, I am well aware of how important and valuable Öğretmen Ağı is. On the other hand, I also believe that The Koç School, which does such a fantastic job with so many activities on its own, should strengthen its contact and ties with the outside as well. Why shouldn't Öğretmen Ağı be one way of reinforcing our ties with the outside? There is no coercion or expectation for this, either. People need to meet and engage with others to achieve multi-faceted and sustainable interaction. In recent years, we hosted Öğretmen Ağı summer camps at our school. But the contact of our teachers with the network was rather limited. We intend to deepen these relationships.

### **Considering the educational approach of The Koç School, what are your thoughts on disrupting the established norms?**

Disrupting the established norms and biases is no easy task. For all of us, learning and empowerment can only be possible through awareness. If we can evaluate our thinking within the framework of questions such as 'why we think how we think,' 'what is the motive behind the thinking,' 'where do I stand compared to the thoughts of others,' 'why do I do what I do,' and so on, we would be able to take the first step toward improvement. Asking ourselves what we do and why we do things, and then directing these questions at others will always enhance the reliability, validity and efficiency of our work.



**The twelfth-grader Yağmur Kahveci, winner of the gold medal in Biology at the 2018 TÜBİTAK National Science Olympiad...**

# GOLD MEDAL AT THE TÜBİTAK SCIENCE OLYMPIAD



The twelfth-grader Yağmur Kahveci won Gold Medal at the 2018 TÜBİTAK National Science Olympiad. Prior to this success, Yağmur Kahveci had talked about her study routine in an interview for the VKV 2018 Annual Report: At The Koç School, I'm the first and only student working for the Science Olympiad, so I don't have a team at school. But my biology teacher Elif Mollamehmetoğlu has been a great support. Actually, it would have been good to be part of a team, to study together, go to the training camps together and share experiences. The USA, China, and South Korea—the three most successful countries at the International Science Olympiad—all have large teams and big local tournaments. Many schools go out of their way to support the Science Olympiad. I hope that I will be successful this year and that this will motivate other students at Koç High School to participate. At the moment, I am reading a lot of new academic articles and books on molecular biology. I also like to read about cancer research, but because this year's competition also includes neurobiology, that's what I am focusing on. I read scientific articles published by the NCBI [National Center for Biotechnology Information] as well as articles that our instructors from TÜBİTAK give us. Because I was a replacement member of last year's national team, during the summer, I had the opportunity to work for 1.5 months at the lab of Professor Leyla Açık at Gazi University, who is also the head of TÜBİTAK's biology committee."\*

\*[http://www.vkv.org.tr/uploads/faaliyetraporlari/pdf/VKV2018\\_Faaliyet\\_Raporu.pdf](http://www.vkv.org.tr/uploads/faaliyetraporlari/pdf/VKV2018_Faaliyet_Raporu.pdf)

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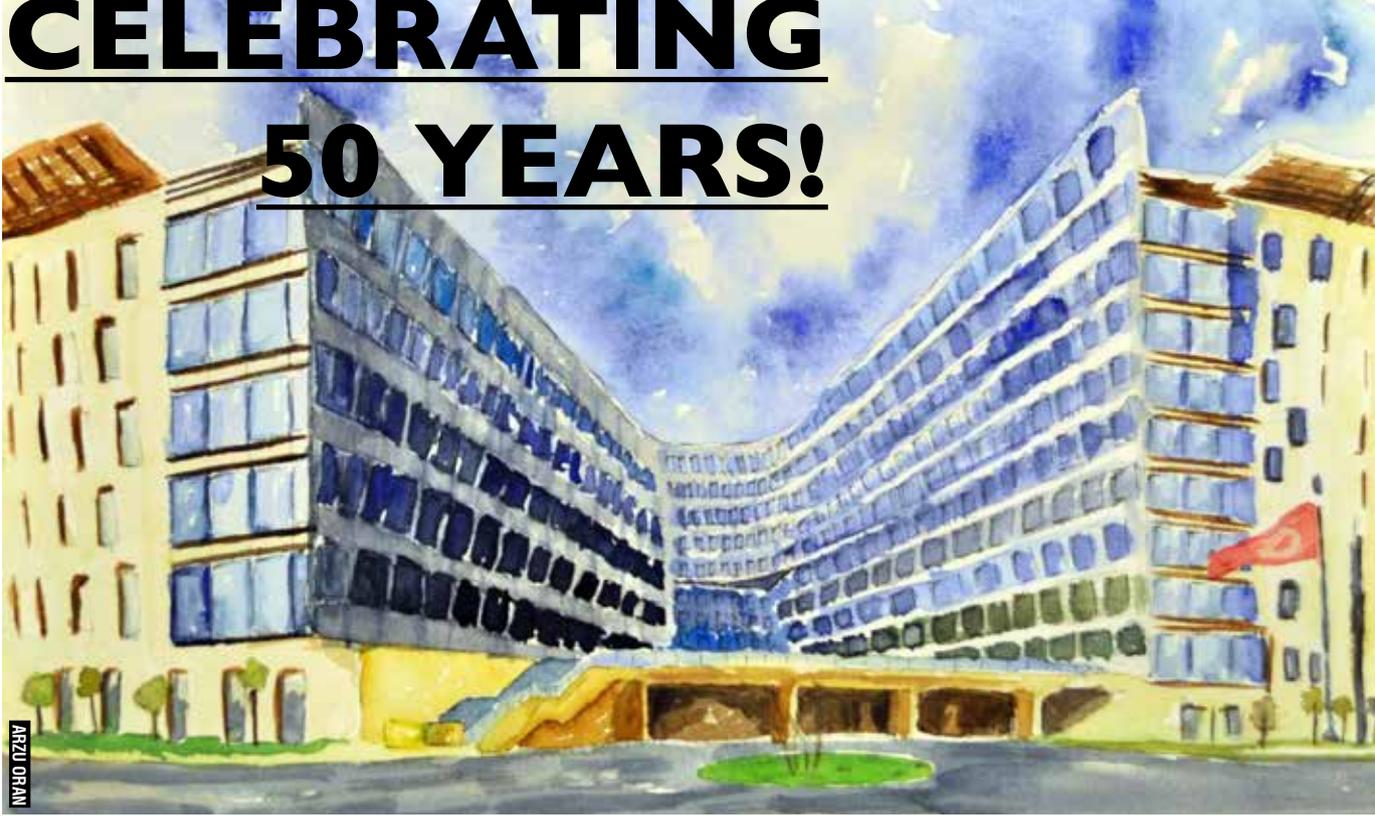
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VEHBI KOÇ FOUNDATION  
ENCYCLOPEDIA

# VEHBI KOÇ FOUNDATION

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!



Vehbi Koç Foundation, supporting Turkey's rapid development with investments in education, healthcare and culture since 1969, celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Students of The Koç School, a Vehbi Koç Foundation institution, rolled up their sleeves to tell the story of half a century of shining a light on Turkey's future with examples of 'best practices'. The result was a compilation of colorful designs.

### **In the Footsteps of Vehbi Koç, The Onus is on Us**

Vehbi Koç, who devoted his life to leading the changing and evolving Turkey toward the future through art, science, technology and industrialization, was remembered by The Koç School students on February 25, the anniversary of his passing. At the ceremony, the life and success story of Vehbi Koç, the founder of The Koç School, was once again celebrated. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Vehbi Koç Foundation, the Vehbi Koç Commemoration Ceremony was held in a wider scope in the primary and middle schools. The students focused on Vehbi Koç and Vehbi Koç Foundation as a whole to create the project titled "In the Footsteps of Vehbi Koç, The Onus is on Us". The design, titled "The Rooms of Vehbi Koç", featuring individual pieces to enable the students to get to know the Vehbi Koç Foundation better and each shaped around a different concept, was on display for a week.

## Vehbi Koç Foundation Encyclopedia

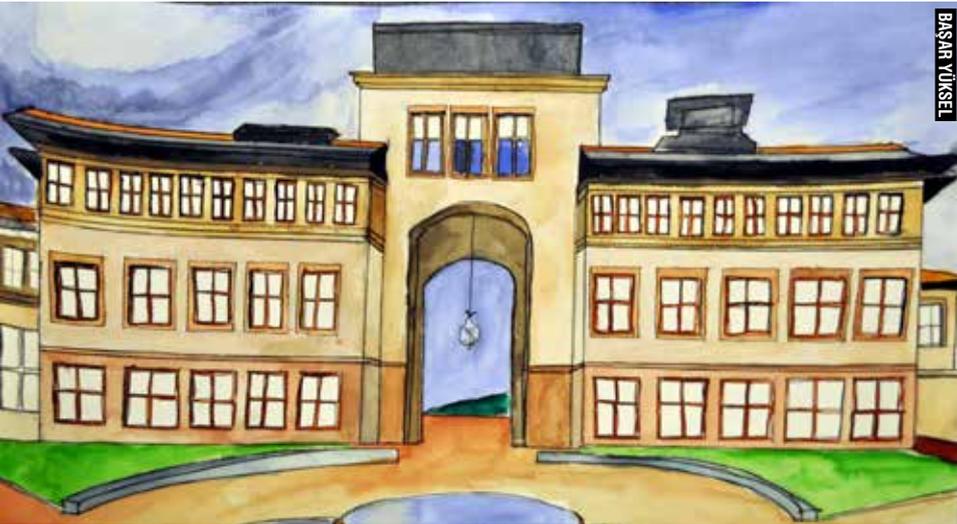
Vehbi Koç Foundation, launched to revive the old but almost forgotten “waqf” tradition and as the first private foundation of the Republic of Turkey, was established by Vehbi Koç on January 17, 1969. Vehbi Koç Foundation, which began to operate in fundamental areas of life such as education, healthcare and culture to serve the modern and developing Turkey, became an example for the philanthropists from the start. The “Vehbi Koç Foundation Encyclopedia” prepared to mark the the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vehbi Koç Foundation, which serves the society through a wide range of projects as well as institutions operating in these fields, offers a comprehensive source of information on foundation-related individuals, organizations, events, projects, awards, scholarship, venues, publications and philanthropy terminology. The continually updated digital version of the encyclopedia is available at [encyclopedia.vkv.org.tr](http://encyclopedia.vkv.org.tr).



ATA YIĞIT GÜNEY



DEFNE TEPEMET



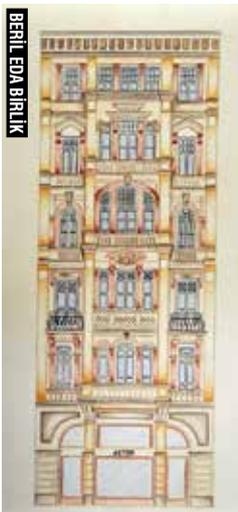
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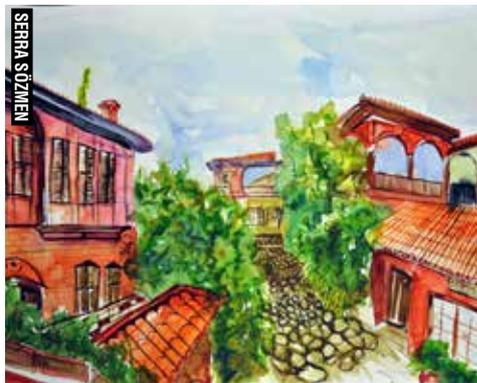
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PRIMARY SCHOOL GROUP WORK

# LIVING IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



## '21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology and Turkey'

The high school students (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) in the First Robotics Club previously competed in the annual First Robotics Competition (FRC) organized by the FIRST Foundation (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) with the aim of raising the interest of young people in the field of science and technology. This year a different approach was preferred, and the club's students from The Koç School and Robert College organized a joint conference. Assoc. Professor Özlem Beyarslan, a math professor at Boğaziçi University, Didem Ünlü, a columnist for Dünya daily economy newspaper, Kürşat Ceylan, cofounder of Wewalk, and Şevval Aygül and Murat Gür, alumni of Sultans of Turkey, spoke at the conference "21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology and Turkey". After the speeches on robotics, STEM and social innovation, the conference continued with workshops.

## How well do we know the emergency response decision support systems?

IB Computer Science 12<sup>th</sup> grade students met with Hakan Kılınç, PhD, Cyber Security and R&D Departments Manager at Netaş, to learn more about the emergency response decision support systems, one of their exam topics. During the meeting, the development processes of software and hardware infrastructures to ensure information flow and coordination between satellites, GSM operators, air and land vehicles and related institutions in disaster situations were discussed. Furthermore, technical information exchange infrastructure between geographic information systems, image and audio processing systems was explained with real-life examples.



## 'Women in Science and Technology' with posters

The posters prepared by high school prep students with the aim of supporting the activities of the Women in Science Working Group as part of the theme "Women in Science and Technology" were exhibited in the school hallways to raise awareness on this issue. The students were able to improve visual design principles, research techniques, effective presentation preparation and public speaking skills, thanks to the works they created using advanced Adobe Photoshop techniques that they learned in the computer course.



## Safe Internet Week

Various activities took place during the Safe Internet Week, which was organized by the Information Technologies Department to promote the importance of internet security and protection against illegal use and harmful content. Professor Selçuk Özdemir gave a presentation on "Data Security and Technology Addiction" and talked about the positive aspects of the internet, the details of safe internet use globally and people's responsibilities in terms of protecting their own security. The Safe Internet Week was celebrated in primary and middle schools with the survey "Are we E-Social or A-Social?", secure internet posters, and activities titled "Protecting My Digital Footprint" and "Stop-Think-Post".

## Code Week

In the EU Code Week, which aims to make coding and digital literacy fun and appealing for all, students worked on various coding platforms in IT classes with the slogan "Teams Code". During the week, students from different levels assumed the role of the trainer in the common area and earned points for their teams, while they also found the opportunity to display and share their creativity, problem solving, cognitive and algorithmic skills.



## Personalized snowflakes

The snowflake designs, entirely created by high school prep students from planning and design to production and packaging using a 3D printer were presented as gifts to teachers and all employees of the school. The new year gifts, each one unique and special, were highly appreciated.



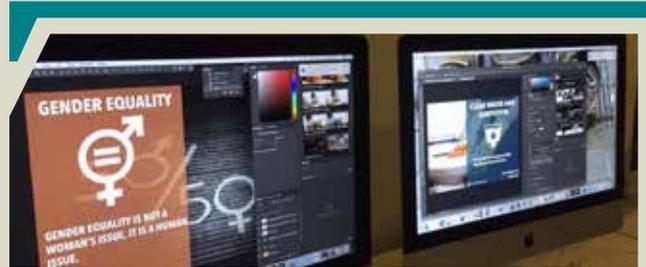
## On artificial intelligence

Bilgeadam Technical Training Consultant Selin Özenç was one of the guests in the talks organized by IT Department students. The session titled “Artificial Intelligence and its Future”, attended by high school students, provide an informative discussion about the place and importance of artificial intelligence in computer sciences, where it is used and what kinds of benefits it delivers.

Didem Ün Ateş, Senior Director, AI Customer & Partner Engagement, Business Applications Group, Cloud & AI at Microsoft (based in London, UK) addressed The Koç School students and talked about the latest developments in artificial intelligence in her presentation “Artificial Intelligence and You” and potential career opportunities. During the event, examples of the latest artificial intelligence applications were examined and the students had a great time in the Artificial Intelligence Lab, which they accessed from their computers.

## Bilge Kunduz Award

In the Bilge Kunduz (Wise Beaver) international challenge that aims to promote informatics and computational thinking, The Koç School students scored high points: Kuzey Kantarcıoğlu (8<sup>th</sup> grade) scored 111 points, Emre Emon (7<sup>th</sup> grade) 95 points, Vahit Işık Keskin (6<sup>th</sup> grade) 119 points, and Efe Yatgın (5<sup>th</sup> grade) 123 points, respectively. In the challenge, in which approximately 70,000 students take part, the students answer 15 questions scored according to their degree of difficulty. The results are evaluated over 135 points.



## For sustainable development...

In the Information Technologies course, the high school prep students focused on the 17 sustainable development goals that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) set for 2030, and shared the designs they created with the entire school. The posters they made by using graphic design skills in line with the aim of Information Technologies course helped to raise awareness even more.

## Message to year 2031

The twelfth-graders shared their thoughts and predictions about the technological world of the future on the posters “Life in the Future: Our Message to Koç 2031” they made in the IT course. They sent messages about how they see the world today and how they make sense of the future to the students who will start kindergarten in 2019 and graduate from The Koç School in 2031. The automated emails will be delivered in 2031.

## TEAMS 2019



18 teams, 144 students and 15 teachers from 10 schools came together for TEAMS 2019 (Test of Engineering Aptitude in Math and Science), hosted by The Koç School's Science Department. In the first stage, the students answered multiple choice questions in teams, and in the second stage they designed a solution to a problem. The task, which was defined as completing a rescue process in three minutes by designing a tool to save a bear that falls into a well, ended successfully with creative designs. The event also provided a common ground for the students to develop their interdisciplinary skills.



### The reality of the new world: Autonomous vehicles

IB ITGS 12<sup>th</sup> grade students met with Berzah Ozan, R&D manager, autonomous vehicles, at Ford, to learn more about autonomous vehicles, one of their course topics. During the meeting, several different aspects such as current use of autonomous vehicles, their future position and the changes they will bring to social life as they spread were discussed. The in-depth talk also focused on technical equipment and technological infrastructures, the impact of artificial intelligence on autonomous vehicles, ethical approaches to decision making mechanisms and the complexities they will create.

### Cooperation for the Robotic Hand Project

The Robotel Project (Robotic Hand), which was launched last year with inspiration from the e-NABLE movement, is helping a young refugee without a hand in cooperation with the Association of Refugees (MülteciDer) this year. In this project, led by eleventh-grader Doğa Cambaz, Robotel Club students communicate with the children in need, take measurements, build teams for design, printing and adjustment, and then secure funds from sponsors to make robotic hands with 3D design training.



'All the world's a stage,' said the great William Shakespeare, who conquered our hearts with his genius, and emphasized that art and life are one and the same. Plays, musicals, operas and more that change our lives and improve us are brought to life by The Koç School students on The Koç School stage...

# FROM THE KOÇ SCHOOL STAGE

## Sevgi Gönül Art Night

Sevgi Gönül was once again remembered with art at the 16<sup>th</sup> Sevgi Gönül Art Night. In the "street" themed night that involved several disciplines of art, the works of students from different classes were exhibited. Before the musical performance, the guests had the opportunity to visit the exhibition area, designed in the same theme, and see the students' ceramics, photographs, paintings and installations.





### **'The Threepenny Opera'**

The Koç School Theater Group played "The Threepenny Opera" twice for the entire Koç School family to see and captivated the audience with their performance.



### **'Stone Age'**

The Koç School's Middle School Drama Group performed the musical "Stone Age".



### **'The Love For Three Oranges'**

In a drama-focused talk with Mark Hill, middle school students listened to the artist and then satisfied their curiosity in the Q & A section. The English Club students then performed the play "The Love for Three Oranges", which they staged, in English.



# ZÜMRÜDÜANKA\*

The Koç School's High School NASA Club won first prize in Grade 9 small group category in the National Space Society (NSS) Space Settlement Design Contest, which received 2,691 entries involving 12,899 students. Koç School's Grade 11 had won first prize in the contest last year. For the previous 25 years, the contest was administered by NASA Ames Research Center. This year, the NSS took over administration at NASA's invitation and simultaneously made the contest a cloud based digital system using the Award Force contest software. The ninth-graders Yağmur Yetkin, Asya Ülger, Eli Morhayim, Barkın Tunçer and Şeniz Ayça Firtına, who make up the NASA Club, will receive their prize during the NSS 38<sup>th</sup> annual International Space Development Conference (ISDC) in Arlington, VA June 6-9.



\*Zümürdüanka: The Phoenix

**‘Exploration is part of our nature. We started as nomads, and we are still nomads. We have wandered long enough on the shores of cosmic oceans. We are finally ready to set sail for the stars.’**



### **The beginning of the story**

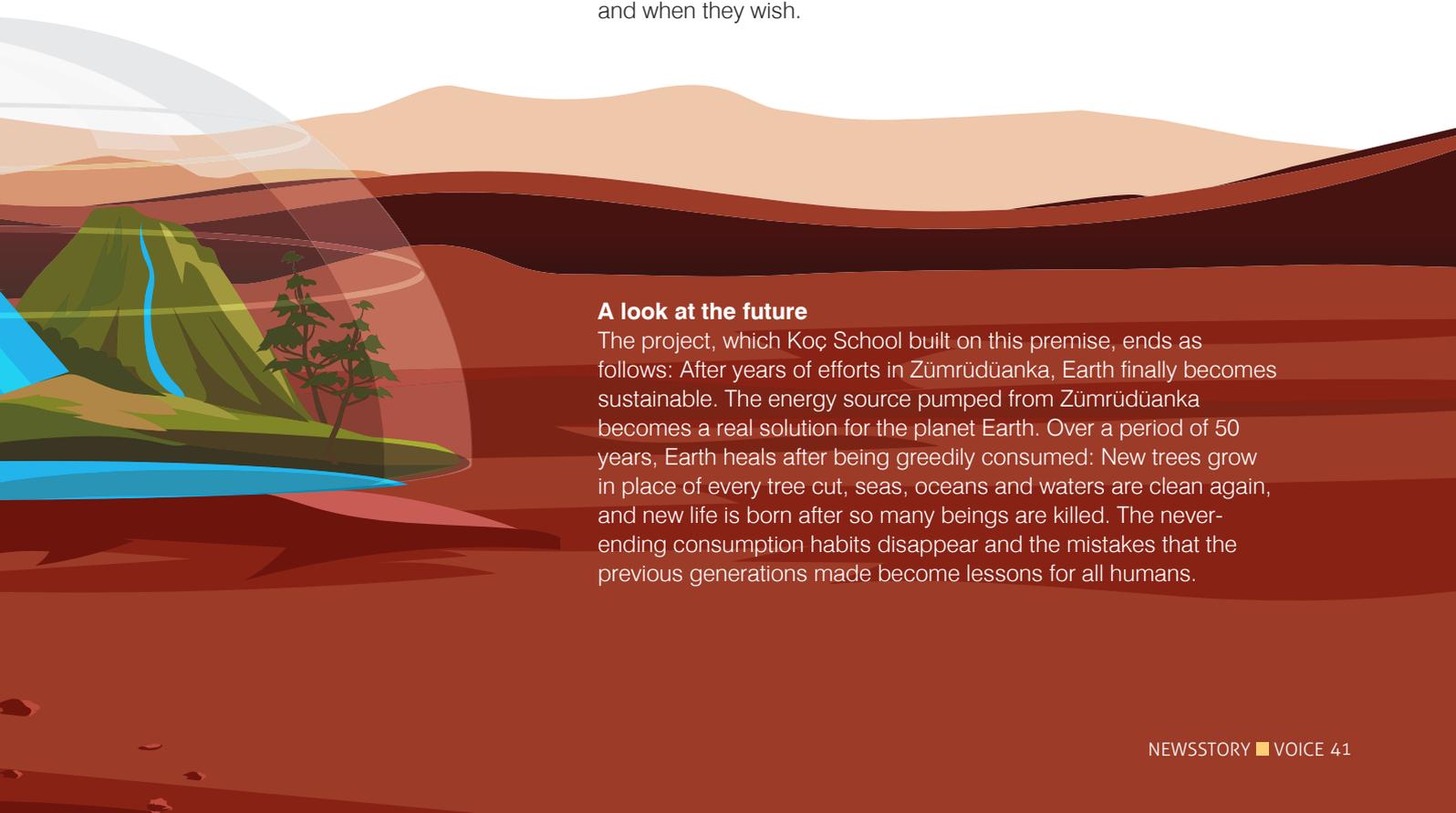
For hundreds of years, we have been consuming almost everything we discover, forgetting that it can have consequences. What we leave behind as we consume pollutes the atmosphere, nature, oceans and so much more. We have long been getting signals that nature will take its revenge on us when the time comes. So, we need to find the answer to this question: “If there is no chance left to survive on earth, how do we live in space and under which conditions?” Koç School students participated in the NSS Space Settlement Design Contest with their project called “Zümrüdüanka” to find the answer.

### **Project**

Taking into consideration what could happen in the future, the students wrote the rest of the story while envisioning that mother nature might give humans a second chance. In the project, humans set foot on another planet for the first time, taking the next step in the ongoing, endless journey to explore the universe. The use of fossil fuels is banned, and scientists from all over the world strive to make Earth an ecologically sustainable planet. After completing their education on Earth, miners and scientists continue their life in the compound called Zümrüdüanka (Phoenix), which makes it possible for them to live in Mars’ orbit. Miners use a space elevator to extract uranium, which is found at a depth of 70 meters beneath the surface of Mars and will be the main energy source. Zümrüdüanka is home to a total of 1,000 people from different cultures and nationalities. Since there are people from all over the world, English is the most commonly used international language in this compound. Every two weeks, special celebrations are organized for a specific country so that people do not feel distant to or homesick for their culture. Artistic events are also offered for socializing and entertainment purposes. Those who work in Zümrüdüanka are allowed to retire if and when they wish.

### **A look at the future**

The project, which Koç School built on this premise, ends as follows: After years of efforts in Zümrüdüanka, Earth finally becomes sustainable. The energy source pumped from Zümrüdüanka becomes a real solution for the planet Earth. Over a period of 50 years, Earth heals after being greedily consumed: New trees grow in place of every tree cut, seas, oceans and waters are clean again, and new life is born after so many beings are killed. The never-ending consumption habits disappear and the mistakes that the previous generations made become lessons for all humans.



Despite increased competition for the world's leading universities The Koç School seniors were incredibly successful in terms of admissions. Once again they had record breaking offers and earned full or substantial financial assistance to major institutions. Overseas College Guidance Office (OCGO) reports...

# HATS OFF TO KOC SCHOOL SENIORS

We left behind another extraordinary year for The Koç School seniors in terms of overseas admissions. Seniors applied in record numbers to overseas universities and were incredibly successful despite staggering admit rates among the world's most selective universities.

In terms of overall numbers, a total of 149 students of 208 Seniors sent applications outside of Turkey and to date 140 students have made firm commitments to universities abroad yet another twenty students are still finalizing their university choice. We will not know the exact percentage of students that will study abroad as some of the students will wait to see their Turkish university results before making their final decision. However, we estimate at this point approximately 70% will study abroad, the highest percentage of the class in the history of the school to choose higher education options outside of Turkey. In terms of for The Koç School seniors' choices, 54 have decided to attend a US university, 39 to the UK, 16 to Holland, 12 to Canada and 9 to Italy and one each to Switzerland, Belgium and Qatar.

## **Receiving scholarship**

With costs increasing and economic trends on

the downturn, scholarships have become more important for The Koç School students and our seniors once again had record breaking offers and earned a total of USD 1,691,182 scholarship dollars and received full or substantial financial assistance to major institutions such as Harvard University, Yale University, Dartmouth College, Davidson College and Johns Hopkins University. Receiving major scholarships from Canadian universities and public universities in the United States is rare but one student from The Koç School was awarded the Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship from the University of British Columbia which is a four-year full scholarship as did another student who was one of a handful of students from around the world to receive the Lester Pearson International Scholarship at the University of Toronto. We also had a student receive the prestigious Wells Scholarship from the University of Indiana, the first year the university included international students in the competition and a Koç School student was one of only two international students offered the full four-year award. Another student was offered the prestigious Morehead-Cain Scholarship at UNC Chapel Hill, however, he preferred to attend another university instead.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OVERSEAS 2019

## ACCEPTANCE RESULTS

US universities were as popular as always. We had a total of 14 acceptances in the senior class to Ivy League universities;

- **Boston University (12)** with a 18% admit rate
- **The University of Southern California (9)** with a 11% admit rate
- **Harvard University (3)** the most in the school's history, with a 4.5% admit rate
- **Yale University (3)** with a 5.9% admit rate
- **Cornell University (2)** including a full scholarship to their medical school in Qatar
- **University of Pennsylvania (2)** with a 7.44% admit rate
- **Brown University (2)** with a 6.6% admit rate
- **Princeton University (1)** with a 5.77% admit rate
- **Dartmouth College (1)** with a 7.9% admit rate
- **University of Chicago (1)** with a 5.9% admit rate
- **Duke University (1)** with a 7.4% admit rate
- **Northwestern University (5)** with a 8.9% admit rate
- **NYU (5)** with a 16% admit rate

**Strong interest in Canadian universities**

We also continued to have strong interest in top Canadian universities: One student will attend University of British Columbia (14 admitted), one will attend University of Toronto (21 admitted) and one will attend McGill University (12 admitted). One will go to Queens University and one, to the University of Guelph.

Other top universities in the US such as; UCLA, UC Berkeley and Emory University, University of California at Santa Barbara, Johns Hopkins University, Tufts University, Georgia Tech and Georgetown University to which three Koç students were admitted and one will attend.

70 students applied to the UK universities

We continue to see increased interest in the UK. Koç seniors have offers from top UK universities;

- **University of Oxford (1)**
- **Imperial College (1)**
- **University College London (9)**
- **Kings College London (6)**
- **London School of Economics (3)**
- **University of St. Andrews (2)**
- **Durham University (2)**
- **University of Nottingham (5)**
- **University of Warwick (2)**
- **University of Bath (2)**
- **The University of Manchester (2)**

**Business and Engineering, top choices of profession for Koç School students**

Business and Engineering remain high interest professions for many Koç School students who will go on to study at leading universities for engineering such as

- **Purdue University (1)**
- **University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (1)**
- **Politecnico di Torino in Italy (1)**
- **Babson College which is a leading university for entrepreneurship (1)**
- **Universita Bocconi in Italy (3)**

Art and Design remains a strong interest for many Koç students

Koç School Seniors will be attending the leading art and design institutions in the UK, Canada, USA and Italy, among them being;

- **Pratt Institute**
- **Parsons School of Design**
- **School of Art Institute of Chicago**
- **Rhode Island School of Design**
- **Syracuse University for areas like architecture, design and film. Similarly, we will have students attending**
- **Architectural Association School of Architecture, Central St. Martin's, Camberwell College of Arts, London College of Fashion in the UK**
- **NABA, Milano and Rome University of Fine Arts, Rome in Italy**

**Interest in Europe in general is on the rise**

There is a particular interest in English language programs at top European universities. For example, sixteen students have elected to attend Dutch universities, including four to Delft University of Technology, one of the world's leading universities in science, technology and engineering. The list of schools students will be attending is as follows:

- **Delft University of Technology**
- **Utrecht University**
- **Eindhoven University of Technology**
- **Groningen University**
- **Tilburg University**
- **The Hague University of Applied Science and Erasmus University Rotterdam**
- **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium**
- **Ecole Hoteliere Lausanne**

## Peggy Templeton Strong Award winner Joan Liu remembers her time at **The Koç School**



Joan Liu, who worked at The Koç School in 2005 and 2006, says that she follows in the footsteps of Asuman Okman and Larry Turns who were the recipients of the award in 2011 and 2017, respectively. Joan, who currently works as a College Counselor at the United World College in Singapore, has fond memories of her time at The Koç School, and she stresses that OCGO's influence and leadership in the larger college counseling community in Turkey has been highly valuable. Joan describes how OCGO mentored her: "The Koç School Overseas College Guidance Office is one of the best college counseling offices in the world. When I first began working at The Koç School in 2005, there were many robust systems in place, and the OCGO mentored me and taught me the ins and outs of successfully guiding the students to colleges and universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. I witnessed OCGO's influence and leadership in the larger college counseling community in Turkey. Larry Turns and Asuman Okman were a cornerstone and compass to all Istanbul counselors, often guiding conversations and setting a tone of collaboration

in the group. As a result, I saw for myself the power of united advocacy for Turkish students that raised the visibility of Turkey in the eyes of many admissions officers from overseas.

The Koç School's OCGO distinguishes itself from many other college counseling offices around the world through its expertise regarding financial aid. Given that less than 1% of the 4,000 schools in the US offer scholarships and financial aid to international students, it takes considerable skill, advocacy, and guidance for a college counselor to help scholarship students find viable opportunities for study in the US. Koç has been successful in this regard for several decades. I remember one day, when a family came into the OCGO, in tears. They were overwhelmed with joy. This family's daughter had just been admitted with a full scholarship to Connecticut College. After they left, Larry said to me, 'Where you can really make a difference is with students who need financial aid.' I will never forget those words."



## Ringling in the **new academic year**

All employees of The Koç School were informed about the "Law on Protection of Personal Data" prior to the start of the new academic year. After the informative presentation by Lawyer Susen Aklan, they found the opportunity to meet and mingle in a more comfortable setting at the "Welcome to the Academic Year Picnic".

## Immortal ideas

On November 10, The Koç School's primary, middle and high school students commemorated Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, on the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his passing and showed once again that they are taking ownership of his legacy and following in his footsteps. The ceremonies on November 10 continued with student activities. The program in the high school included a talk with writer Sinan Meydan about "Atatürk, Leader of the Century," while the middle and primary school students attended a concert by Boğaziçi Youth Choir.



## Full festival joy

April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day was celebrated in a festive spirit. Minikoç Fest Week, which coincides with this national holiday, aimed to bring more joy to the young children in full festival spirit. During the ceremony on April 23, primary school student clubs delivered stage performances. Primary School Rhythm Group's performance with marching band and melodica energized the participants. Following the ceremony, Minikoç Fest Week was the scene of a variety of activities such as Young Gourmets, Creative Workshop, Digital Art, Secret Garden, Origami and Ceramic Workshops. The Garage Sale Donation Campaign, as an example of a student initiative, also saw great interest.

## In the light of biotechnological advancements

Those who have read Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" would probably have an idea about the outcomes of possible biotechnological advancements awaiting us in the future. The Koç School Science Academy Club, which aims to shed light on studies in this field, continues to organize workshops. The first of the Biotechnology Workshops focused on GMO detection and nano-drugs, and ended with a talk on "Biotechnological Developments and the DNA Chip". In the second workshop, students interested in the effects of mutant genes in cancer and genome sequencing techniques met with Dr. Batu Erman, a professor of Molecular Biology and Genome Engineering at Sabancı University.

### What are we most curious about?

Science Festival 2019, organized with the aim of sparking the students' interest in science and enhancing their knowledge, was again filled with experiments, activities, games, exhibitions and workshops. The festival opened with a speech by Professor Münci Kalaycıoğlu, the renowned surgeon and organ transplantation specialist. The event included a range of socio-scientific activities, such as fossil hunting, blood type testing, M&M rainbow experiment, optical illusion, snow making, crushing a soda can, the microbes in our hands, splitting a flower into its parts, walking on eggs, and making a wind cart. The festival, which also featured debates and science teacher performances, was completed with very rich content.



## Visiting Turkish universities

The Turkish University Education Counseling Department organized visits to a number of universities for high school students to support them in the process of making their higher education choices. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade students visited Koç University, eleventh-graders Bilgi University and ninth-graders Boğaziçi University, respectively. The students were given extensive campus tours as part of the visit programs and informed about the schools and departments of each university.



## Science for All

Young Guru Academy (YGA) launched a Science Mobilization effort with the mission of instilling the love of science in children and bringing the latest technologies to the country's most underserved regions to contribute to raising self-confident, free-thinking individuals who can create authentic projects. The YGA Ambassadors at The Koç School took action as part of this mobilization effort and purchased 88 Entry Sets and 88 Discovery Sets with the aim of turning the difficult and boring perception of science into love. Young Guru Academy, founded in 2000 in Turkey, is an international not-for-profit organization and carries out a variety of projects in partnership with The Koç School.



## From sports and music to dance and painting

A group of 12 students from The Koç School's 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades came together with students of Nazmi Zehra İyibilir Middle School in Muğla for the Anatolian Education Project. The project was conducted under the supervision of counseling teachers Ali Bağçeci and Öznur Altıntaş, and advisor student İris Çağlayan. After the supplementary workshops that Koç School students organized for Nazmi Zehra İyibilir Middle School students, shows and exhibitions in different disciplines from sports and music to dance and painting were presented to parents and teachers. In addition to enabling students to explore their interests and talents, the Anadolu Education Project, which contributes to the process of recognizing themselves, was an excellent experience for both The Koç School and Nazmi Zehra İyibilir Middle School students.

## Creative approaches

The Middle School Destination Imagination (DI) Club has great fun while creating and draws a lot of attention with their heart-warming projects, colorful performances and achievements. The club students, who also call themselves the DI Rebels, joined forces with Haçiko (Association for the Protection of Animals from Despair and Negligence) and asked for the support of their friends to build their dog kennel project, which aims to provide a warm and dry environment for stray dogs. They also had an unforgettable experience when they participated in the DI Turkish Journey to Imagination ICC 2018 Istanbul instant mission challenge prior to the DI Izmir Tournament. The 28 students and five teachers of The Koç School, who participated in the tournament in Kuşadası, proudly represented their school teams with the solutions they found to the problems they chose as a team. Alp Dinçkoç, Aliye Derya Demir, Arda Deniz Altınok, Arya Selin Ergin, Barış Falay, Barış İnandıoğlu and Kutlu Tortop won the honor award in the DI Creative Process Video Contest where primary and middle school students from around the world competed with their creative videos.



## Protecting the values of the Republic

The Koç School students, who always uphold the values of the Republic, celebrated October 29, the Republic Day, with several events throughout the week. Primary and middle school students took part in competitions, exhibitions, activities and other performances. After the official ceremony on October 29, Def Dance Academy delivered dance performances for primary and middle school students, and then the high schoolers.





## The joy of making wishes **come true**

Dilek Ağacı (Wish Tree), an annual social aid project carried out under the responsibility of The Koç School middle school students, continued in 2018. In keeping with the tradition, two schools, Tuzla Rotary Regional Foundation Primary and Middle School for the Hearing Impaired, and Vala Gedik Special Education Vocational School, were selected this year. The wishes of 340 students were collected in about one and a half months, and sorted by classes, and then, the gifts were boxed. In the last phase of the project, The Koç School students went to each school and delivered the gifts personally.



## Finance meets technology

FinTech Forum, organized by Koç FinTech Club of the Business Administration and Economics Department, focused on creating opportunities for students to get acquainted with this field while emphasizing the positive contribution of using financial technologies to Turkey's economic and social development. Prominent figures from finance and technology sectors attended the conference. Hüsnü Özyeğin, Founder - FIBA Holding, Michael Joseph, Chairman - Kenya Airways, Hakan Ateş, General Manager - Denizbank, Ege Cansen, economy writer, Professor Aziz Akgül, who launched the Grameen Microfinance Program in Turkey, Orkun Saitoğlu, COO - Iyzico, and Serdar Turan, Managing Editor at Harvard Business Review Turkey, were among the speakers.

## A new tradition is born

A new activity has been launched to promote integration of the boarding students by getting to know each other more closely and to reinforce values such as acting together and team spirit. The first Game of Dorms, organized by the Boarding Department at The Koç School, was highly popular this year, with plans to repeat it in the years that follow. 12 teams, each consisting of six members, participated in the competition. The teams designed their own banners before the competition and collected points in 11 different games. Most of the games were created by boarding teachers in workshops.



## Applied understanding of engineering

The first part of the Highschool BEST Engineering Competition (HBEC), organized by the students of the Engineering Club of Yıldız Technical University, to enable students to learn teamwork, put academic knowledge into practice and develop an applied understanding of engineering was held at The Koç School. Following the first stage, in which the participating schools selected their own winners, the champions of the top 10 high schools in Istanbul are now competing at Yıldız Technical University to become the "Best High School Engineer". Team Sectio Aurea (Berat Çelik, Eren Berke Sağlam, İrem Işık and Maya Oral), the winner of The Koç School, qualified to compete in HBEC 2019 at Yıldız Technical University.



## Improving English speaking skills

The sixth edition of Grade 8 Speech Contest, aimed to improve public English speaking skills took place. In the contest, each class voted for its own winner.

The students spoke in English for five minutes on a topic of their choosing, and the judges including Middle School Principal Tümay Dovan, Vice Principal Koray Öztoprak and high school English Department teachers Ann Sumner and Emma Donaldson named Eda Özdoğan the winner of contest, with Lal Koyuncu in second and Emir Sabri Şen in third place.



## Experiencing the art of 'ebru' in Science Workshop

Lale Kibar, an IB Exam Specialist and a "Galileo certified" physics teacher certified by the International Astronomical Union, was invited to the Science Workshop by Koç Science Academy Club. In the workshop titled "Painting with Surface Tension Force", she addressed high school students. During the workshop, the topic of "Surface Tension Force" from the "Importance of Water for Living Creatures" chapter in biology curriculum was explained through 'ebru' (the art of marbling). Thanks to the ebru making system set up in the Science Workshop, the students created their own individual works.



## Big inventions by little ones

Have you ever wondered what the great inventors invented when they were young? Primary school students rolled up their sleeves to find the answer to this question. Second-graders sought the answer in Curiosity and Science Fair, Invention Workshop and Futuristic Living Space, and also exhibited their own inventions. The third-graders, who once again proved that their creativity knows no bounds, answered the questions about their inventions. The "Nostalgia Corner," prepared by Grades 3 and 4 offered a journey into the history of science and technology. The Memory game provided information about scientists and their inventions. After receiving their badges as a memento of the Invention Workshop, the students expressed their wishes and offered suggestions for next year.



## Which professions require which skills?

Career Day, which took place with the participation of professional guests, all experts in their respective fields, was filled with talks and Q & A sessions about what kind of skills and abilities different professions require. The event that Çağlar İşçioğlu (Industrial Engineer) opened continued with speeches by Professor Tuncer Süzer (Neurosurgeon) and Raysa Büyükbahar (Rays'up Nutrition). During the day-long workshops, the following speakers informed the middle school students about their fields of expertise: Neşe Kohen, digital media-marketing; Ahmet Feridun Öztop, law; Sedat Analı, advertising; Nesrin Otuzoğlu, landscape design; Gülgün Tekindur, human resources; Berta Moreno, psychology; Serap Sağlamer, physiotherapy; Serdar Kılıç, sports events; and Raysa Büyükbahar, nutrition.

## A book for the future



Middle school students took action to build a library for Urfa Birecik Karşıyaka School, where 25 students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades learn in the same space. The books were personalized with the notes that The Koç School students wrote, making the donations even more meaningful.



## Different stories from life

Koç School hosted many prominent figures during the 21<sup>st</sup> Book Week, which was filled with activities for all levels from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as student-writer meetings, drama performances, talks and workshops. Book Week, which was celebrated with the theme “Different Stories from Life” this year was opened by Zülfü Livaneli, the guest of honor. Livaneli addressed the students in a sincere talk about his love of reading, his books, films and music. Before the ceremony, Livaneli gave an interview to the editorial group of the middle school literature magazine and answered all the questions that the students directed at him. He discussed the concepts of peace, freedom, humanity, gender equality and compassion for all living things, his inspirations, and the arts that enrich his life. Livaneli delighted the audience with his candid attitude, warm conversation and oratory skills. Other guests of the week included Aydın Ilgaz, Arnold Lobel, Gökçe Akgül, Şiirsel Taş, Tan Oral, Işık Ögütçü, Akgün Akova, Çiğdem Odabaşı, Nuh Bektaş, Çağdaş Yüksel, Hikmet Temel Akarsu, Betül Avunç, Aslı Eti, Alp Gökalp, Özge Özdemir, İlkay Marangoz, Bade Baran, and Aslı Özcan.

## Where does peace stand in the world of innovations?



Koç Forum 2019, organized by the European Youth Parliament (EYP) Club, hosted 250 high school students. During the four-day Koç Forum 2019, with the main theme of “Peace in the Innovative World: Development of Border and Violation Concepts”, economic and social issues such as human rights, women’s rights, gender equality and justice were discussed in detail by eleven different committees.

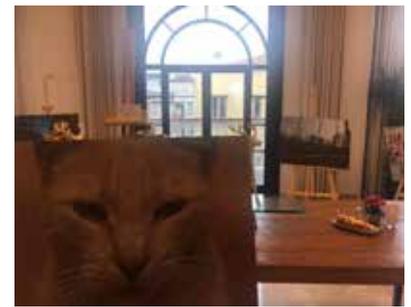
## Class of 2019 visited Koç Holding

In keeping with tradition, the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students visited Koç Holding. During their visit, they attended a panel session on Koç Holding’s fields of operation, the activities of Vehbi Koç Foundation, Koç University, academic career and new approaches in human resources. In the panel session that Koç Holding Corporate and Foreign Relations Director Oya Ünlü Kızıl moderated, Vehbi Koç Foundation General Director Erdal Yıldırım, Koç University School of Economics and Administrative Sciences Dean Zeynep Gürhan Canlı, Koç Holding Human Resources Director Özgür Burak Akkol took the floor. After the panel session, the students asked the speakers about the importance of university and profession selection, the impact of artificial intelligence on future business lines, changes in the work environment based on the characteristics of generation Y, scholarship opportunities and the recruitment process.



## Inter-school exhibition at KoçPera

The Koç School 11<sup>th</sup> grade students Hande Durmaz and Yasmin Eskinazi held an inter-school photography exhibition at KoçPera with the support of the Alumni Association. The exhibition, which a volunteer group of art-loving students helped to prepare, featured 38 photographs by students from Cağaloğlu High School, Hisar Schools, Lycée Galatasaray, Üsküdar American College, İstanbul High School for Boys and Kabataş High School for Boys. In the exhibition, which drew great interest, the photographs were also displayed on large screen.



## Live@Koç before winter break

At Live@Koç, the annual arts event that takes place in the last week before winter break, students competed in the categories of solo vocals, solo instruments, dance, composition, group music, caricature and drama. The middle school students who were presented awards by the jury members after demonstrating their talents in the show, started their semester break by receiving their report cards in the classrooms.



## Dream professions

The 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual Professions Day opened with a panel session and continued with individual meetings. Based on the high school students' request, an expert and a university student in one of the 29 professions met with a Koç School student in separate booths. The students who had the opportunity to engage with more than 80 speakers were able to get detailed information about the professions they were curious about.



## Mathematics festival

Math Week, which took place in a festival mood, was celebrated by the Mathematics Department of Middle School with creative and educational activities. Software developer, educator and writer Zafer Demirkol delivered the opening speech. The “Artificial Intelligence” themed Math Week included a variety of activities such as a talk with Professor Metin Arık of Boğaziçi University, 24 different math competitions throughout the week, 15 entertaining math events, the traditional Donut Day, the proceeds of which go to Nesin Mathematics Village, Building Pasta Bridges, Mystery of the Pascal Triangle, Math Hunting, and Decoding. The activities at The Koç School were posted to NASA’s website\* as part of the Pi Day celebrations.

\*[jpl.nasa.gov/edu/share/pi-day-whats-going-round](http://jpl.nasa.gov/edu/share/pi-day-whats-going-round)

## The general problems of the African continent addressed



The Koç School Model United Nations Program (MUNDP) was held in the high school in the last week of February in 2019 as is the case every year. The conference addressed the problems of the African continent, which stays on the agenda with poverty rates despite demonstrating growth in the last decade. The development committees, formed for the conference, focused on the most important social, political and economic issues in the region. The conference, highly acclaimed as a prestigious event in Turkey and Europe, has so far hosted nearly 40 schools and close to 1,000 delegates from eight countries so.

## Observing the ecosystem on site

The fifth-graders visited the Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden where they were informed about the concept of ecosystem and the relationships between different organisms that it houses by observing it on site. These observations helped to raise the awareness of the students about plant biodiversity as they learned that living things are in constant exchange both with each other and also their environment in order to survive. They also saw how the exchange between juniper (the tree) and fieldfare (the bird) played a role in spreading the seeds of junipers. They found the opportunity to explore different motifs of nature, the effects of climate on plants and the scientific studies conducted in the garden as they roamed among the plant collections. They received information about endemic and endangered plants. In this open-air museum visit, where plants live and flourish, the students also had the chance to prepare for the topics to be covered in the “Living World and Life” unit.



## Advice about universities

The 15<sup>th</sup> National University Fair, organized by the PDR Department, brought together high school students. In the fair, students of all levels received detailed information about universities from the representatives of the relevant institutions.

## Compassion at the center of human perception

The values that Mustafa V. Koç, who devoted his life to the bright future of this country, always upheld are kept alive through the Mustafa V. Koç Opinion and Story Writing Contest. The theme of the third edition of the contest, organized by the Turkish Department, was determined as "compassion", as a central concept of Mustafa V. Koç's "human" perception. Prominent literary figures Feyza Hepçilingirler and Ayla Çınaroğlu along with Koç Middle School Turkish Teacher Hakan Karakullukçu served on the Selection Committee of the contest, in which stories submitted by students of middle schools in Istanbul and think pieces by The Koç School students competed. Defne Irmak Tülümen, a student at the Private Alev Middle School, who won the Istanbul-wide story competition, received her award from Caroline Koç, a Board member at Koç Holding. The Koç School student, Eda Özdoğan, winner of the first prize in think piece writing, was presented her award by Professor Murat Günel, General Director of The Koç School.



## Teaching makes all professions possible

The Koç School celebrated Teachers Day with various activities for teachers. This year's primary and middle school ceremony committee followed the motto, "Teaching, the profession that makes all professions possible," and organized a series of both educational and entertaining talks and a workshop for teachers. The week's activities included: "Conscious Awareness" with Ferda Alakuş and Aslı Morova; "Home and Office Decoration with Feng Shui" with Ceren Sakin; "I Control Stress" with Dila Ertemli; "Football Talk" with Altan Tanrikulu; "The Myths of Nutrition Debunked" with İlker Çağlayan; "Fashion and Styling" with Sonya Saylan; "Let's Get Pretty" with Ebru Türkmen; "On Medical Aesthetics" with Dr. Emre Çiçek; "Nutrition Recommendations for Wellness" with Dietitian Müge Ülker; "Robots, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and More" with Tansu Yeğen; "What Our Breath, Our Life Force Tells Us" with Pınar Karaali; and "Defense Techniques Workshop" with Burak Değer Biçer. The Koç School Teachers' Day Dinner and Service Awards Ceremony took place at Divan Asia Hotel with the participation of over 500 guests. The 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> year of service awards of 50 employees were presented by the General Director Professor Murat Günel.

## Voting matters

The fourth grade students (Deniz Özüdođru, Ada Tařan, Ada İrem Özçelik, Mavi Rüzgar Falay, Dođa Duman), who were candidates for the Presidency of Primary School Student Council, declared their election promises to their friends. After the speeches of the candidates who shared their ideas ranging from sports tournaments and special breakfasts to tent night and dance activities with their friends, the importance of voting and the steps to follow in the election were explained to the primary school students.



## Gift Book Project

As part of the Vehbi Koç Foundation's support for education extends to the schools, which were built in various regions of Turkey and later handed over to the Ministry of Education, with the principle of "build, transfer, be responsible", The Koç School continues to enrich the libraries of the schools with the Gift Book Project. This year, within the scope of the social responsibility project carried out in collaboration with Mobile Bookstore Pafin, the library of the Koç Beylikdüzü School in Istanbul was supported. Pafin was parked in the yard of the The Koç School for a week and opened to students and teachers. At the end of the week, books were donated to Beylikdüzü Koç Middle School library in return for 10 percent of the book purchases by students. In the second leg of the project, which aims to instill the joy of reading in students and to promote reading as a pleasurable activity among the students and their peers, all books collected as donations were delivered to Beylikdüzü Koç Middle School Library. The same day, the students who received their books also had the opportunity to visit Pafin and listen to a talk by the children's book writer Fatih Erdoğan. The project aims to raise awareness among students about values such as cooperation, solidarity and sharing by building a bridge through the love of reading.

## Recycling at education level



Electronic waste is one of the most damaging types of pollution for the environment. Therefore, utmost care should be taken to recycle electronic waste, like all other wastes, through the right disposal channels. With this awareness and within the scope of environment-sensitive practices of The Koç School Facility Directorate, waste bins were placed in the foyer areas for electrical and electronic wastes from school and home use. The waste will be delivered to licensed companies under the control of the Ministry of Environment for recycling and proper disposal without damaging the environment. The proceeds will be used toward the expenses of scholarship students.



## 'Wildlife in our Garden'

High school students met with Ahmet Emre Kütükçü, Turkey Wildlife Rescue Consultant from the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) at Suna Kıraç Library. In his presentation "Wildlife in our Garden", Ahmet Emre Kütükçü talked about the precautions that we should take to meet the shelter and feeding needs of wild creatures that we do not encounter during the day but are active at night.

## Deepening geography knowledge

The 11<sup>th</sup> grade TM (Turkish - Math) students organized a Tourism Fair as part of their Geography class performance assignments. In this second event, the students found the opportunity to deepen their geography knowledge about the regions they selected and to improve their presentation and marketing skills. Different regions were introduced in the best manner in the event where students acted as potential tourism agencies and students and teachers visiting the fair were potential tourists.



## TEDxKoçSchool: Seasons

The second TEDxKoçSchool event at The Koç School took place with the theme, "Seasons" this year. The Koç School hosted guest speakers Ali Sabancı, Board Member at Esas Holding; Esra Ezmeci, Public Relations Specialist and Psychologist; Emre Alattin Keskin (Evrensel Kamil); Tülin Akın, Founding Partner of Tabit Akıllı Tarım Teknolojileri AŞ; Youtuber Oğuzhan Uğur (BaBaLa TV); and Professor Levent Kurnaz of Boğaziçi University.

## Is balance a must?

We need balance to get back up if we fall or as we walk on a slippery surface. Sometimes the small white dot on black, and sometimes the black dot on white... Do all creatures in nature seek balance? Or is the nature itself balance? Is it like night and day, two sides of the scale, no more and no less, hot or cold? So, is balance a must? Who determines the laws, the rules of balance? Is there no way out? The 12<sup>th</sup> Suna Kıraç Short Story Contest for High Schools was born with these questions and the theme "Balance". The Selection Committee consisting of literary figures Behçet Çelik, Nüket Esen and Hande Gündüz, named the winning students who received their awards at a ceremony on May 15. In the Istanbul-wide contest, İbrahim Emir Güney from Kartal Anatolian Imam Hatip High School won first prize with his story "Duel", Selin Su Belen from Istanbul Erkek High School won second prize with her story "Escape" and Simra Kaytan from TEV İnanç Türkeş Private High School won third prize with her story "Dolmuş". Eda Naz Gökdemir from The top three winners from The Koç School were Eda Naz Gökdemir with her story "All In Place", Ceren Dide Türk with her story "An Istanbul Gentleman", and Esin Göğüş with her story "Decline", respectively.





## TAWA's Peace Forest

The team of TAWA, a student run magazine, started the TAWA Peace Forest as a social responsibility effort to raise awareness about the environment. The saplings acquired as a result of the "Buy a sapling" campaign were planted in the school grounds by the donors, students and teachers.

## Infinite learning for teachers

Unlimited Learning Course, which was launched last year as a new learning experience for students, was introduced for teachers this year. With the Unlimited Learning for Teachers program, which enables teachers to learn from each other and share information, the teachers came together with their peers to exchange their experience and expertise in science, education, culture, health, arts, sports, philosophy, technology, hobbies, travel, and other professional experiences in the fields of their choosing. The first of the events based on the philosophy of being a part of the learners community, learning together and from each other, was conducted by Güleser Benian Küçükvardar on "A Drama Activity on Communication".

## Readings by leaders

The Koç School hosted the 28<sup>th</sup> Author-Book Gathering, organized by the Tuzla District National Education Directorate. The opening speech at the Readings by Executives event was delivered by Tuzla District National Education Branch Director Soner Can, and brought together more than 50 school principals and academicians with academician and writer Professor Deniz Ülke Arıboğan. The writer talked about her book "Duvar: Tarih Geri Dönüyor" (Wall: History is Back) in which she adopts a political psychology perspective. She then answered questions about her book.



## Ideas of future leaders

The Koç School hosted The World Scholar's Cup (WSC) Istanbul Round, attended by over 1,000 students from Turkey and abroad. Successfully organizing such a comprehensive and large event, The Koç School proudly collected most of the medals and trophies. The Koç School students passed the global qualifiers and returned home from the WSC 2018 Champions League with success. Kuzey Kantarcıoğlu won the first prize in essay writing among 1,200 students worldwide. WSC aims to enable students to express their ideas in a global environment as leaders of the future using 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.



## IB Visual Arts Exhibition

The IB Visual Arts Exhibition, which presented the works that the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have been working on for two years, was on display for a week in the Science Building foyer. The students were rightfully proud of their work, which included all the stages of setting up a successful the exhibition from the beginning to the end as well as preparing the presentation, flyers, and curation of the works. The exhibition featured the works of Erbaş, Deniz Sertel, Gün Bölükbaşı, Şeyma Kaya, Zeynep Şahin, Bora Sever, Selin Nisa Açikel, Selina Beycan, Yasemin Ersöz, and Zeynep Biga Akgöl.



## Sharing diverse education strategies

The Autumn Teachers Symposium, which has since 1996 enabled sharing and learning of new ideas, teaching methods and other successful educational experiences by bringing together the educators of private bilingual teaching institutions, was held at Robert College. The following The Koç School members gave presentations during the symposium: Aygün Çatak, Christina Anghelina and Jesus Cadenas, Duygu Şaşmaz and Ece Kahraman, Öykü Dulun, Öznur Altıntaş and Elif Kara Öztürk, Serkan Koça and Özgür Sezgin, Engin Şahin, Sema Çağlar and Fulya Aydın, İnci Pehlivan and Hatice Kaman, Yücel Ülgen Duysak, and Alper Yemenicigil and Derya Şenol.

## In memoriam: Gerry Shields

We are sad to report that Gerry Shields, who served as an adviser at The Koç School from 1991 to 1992 and as General Director from 1992 to 1996 has passed away. In an interview he gave for The Koç School's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, Gerry Shields had said: "My experiences have shown me that The Koç School students are polite, well-balanced, determined, respectful, energetic and generally hard-working, well-groomed and caring."



## Rookie All Star Prize

The Koç School FRC Club RAMs 7729 Team won the Rookie All Star award in the FIRST Robotic Competition's Central Missouri Regionals organized with the theme "Destination: Deep Space" and qualified for the Houston World Championship. Sertan Alp Akgöl, Defne Özkan, Yalcın Tür, Doğa Duvenci and Demir Can Erkıralp participated in the competition, representing High School FRC Club RAMs 7729 team.

# THE KOÇ SCHOOL PARENTS UNITE

**Parents, as an important stakeholder group of The Koç School, participated in several events throughout the year and attended meetings to stay up-to-date and informed. They also played a lead role in the Parent - Teacher Association elections.**

## **Parent orientation meeting**

Primary School Parent Orientation Meeting took place on October 13. Parents were provided with detailed information about the school in the group presentations. The two-part program started in the morning with the parents meeting the student/class representatives. After the introductory film, a meeting game, department presentations and activities, the program ended with a tour of the school and a speech by the Parent - Teacher Association.

## **Second grade parents meeting**

The meeting organized specially for the parents of second-graders aimed to refresh their general knowledge about the school. The parents who met the teachers and got acquainted with the departments learned more about the curriculum of their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children.

## **Info meeting**

In a meeting held with the parents and students of high school prep classes in the first week of school, detailed information was provided about boarding and high school English prep department. In addition to giving general information, all the teachers introduced themselves individually and also answered the parents' questions.

## **Parent - Teacher Association elections**

The Koç School primary, middle and high schools' Parent - Teacher Association members were elected. According to the results of the elections for the primary and middle schools on September 28, the parents to serve in the 2018-2019 academic year were named. Parent - Teacher Association elections for the high school were on September 12. In addition to the members of the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board, 39 volunteer parents were elected and invited to the High School Parent - Teacher Association meetings.

## **Koç Bazaar 2018**

Koç Bazaar, the annual New Year charity event, was once again organized in collaboration with the members of The Koç School Primary, Middle and High School Parent - Teacher Association. The parents found the opportunity to meet members of The Koç School Alumni Association, the school administration and the Parent -Teacher Association.





## A chance encounter in Hong Kong

Larry Turns, the International University Education Counseling Office Director at The Koç School, and Doğuş Mordeniz (Class of 2017), currently studying at Harvard University, chanced upon each other in Hong Kong, and immortalized this happy encounter with a photo.



## Being a Koç School alumnus...

Canan Ayhan (Class of 1992), one of the first alumni of The Koç School, worked for many years in her family business that operated in the field of tourism and car rental under international franchises. As she was searching for a new field of business, she saw the rapid rise of the housing sector, and the need and opportunities that the luxury real estate sector still offered despite the decline in 2019. Following conversations with Özgür Günel, a broker with Remax Cadde, she decided on a new path. Speaking about real estate brokerage, which she currently carries out, Canan Ayhan says: "First, we conduct a needs analysis to make sure that we are on the right path. We do not let the buyer or seller waste time and drown in details, and we take care of them. By setting accurate targets and with the right marketing approach, we create happy results for both buyers and sellers. In other words, we deliver their dream house." She believes that being a Koç School alumnus is a privilege and adds that she is not only a one of the first graduates but also the mother of the first "grandchild" to graduate from her school: "My daughter Zeynep Açıık (Class of 2020) is the first child of an alumnus to enter The Koç School. Our beloved principal Jale Onur, who is a cornerstone of our school, had said 'A granddaughter is coming!' to express her happiness. And now, the first grandchild will graduate, and I am rightfully proud of it."

Contact Canan Ayhan at:  
Mobile: 0532 351 8782  
Email: [canan@remax-cadde-ist.com](mailto:canan@remax-cadde-ist.com)

## KÖLMED met with high school prep students

Dilek Örs '93, Nazlı Zerin Falay '99 and Tolga Pozam '97, representing The Koç School Alumni Association (KÖLMED) Board of Directors, came together with the high school prep students. At the end of the meeting that provided information about KÖLMED, the students posed with the t-shirts presented by the Association.



## Deniz Özbay wins Math Prize

Deniz Özbay '18 won the Benjamin F. Barge Mathematical Prize at the Lafayette College where she is currently studying. The annual prize recognizes excellence in mathematics and is awarded to first-year students or sophomores after a competition that requires finding a solution to original questions.

## In memoriam

Toros Çağlar from the Class of 1998 passed away on October 23, 2018. Our condolences and deepest sympathies to his grieving family, loved ones and friends.

## Digital music



The international Hour of Code event of this year was themed “Creativity; What will you create?” Kerem Demirayak (Class of 2014) was one of the guests of the event where the importance of coding in different art disciplines such as music, dance and painting was highlighted. Kerem Demirayak met with middle school students and talked about digital music and his successful works in this field, as well as his “Character Live” presentation, education, the instruments and programs he uses to make digital music. Kerem also discussed the level that music reached with the advances in technology and the opportunities that the digital medium offers. The students found the opportunity to try their hands at creating digital music during the entertaining presentation.



## Startups for Silicon Valley

TÜSİAD Silicon Valley Network Startup Committee Member Buğrahan Çiğdemoğlu (Class of 2013) organized the first pilot Mentorship Program with Sayan Gömel, Sena Zorlu and Tutkun Şen. Sayan Gömel, head of the Startup Committee, opened the program, which followed with the guest speaker Alexander Levy, whose latest startup received more than \$50 million in seed funding. Levy gave a presentation on the future of artificial intelligence in various industries. Following the opening, entrepreneurs and mentors were divided into predefined working groups, while Buğrahan Çiğdemoğlu served as team captain of the biotechnology working group. Oğuzhan Atay (Class of 2007), one of the individuals selected for the program, is the founder of the prenatal low-cost genetic analysis initiative BillionToOne in the biotechnology group. On the other hand, Selim Önal (Class of 2004) serves as the team captain in the advanced messaging services working group.



## Alumni meet students

In the Alumni Panel Session, organized by the National University Education Counseling Office, the alumni and students of The Koç School came together. Melis Akdoğan '18, Naz Özkaya '18, Orçun Fatetorbay '17, Özgür Özdemir '18 and Yasemin Utkueri '17 shared their knowledge and experiences about the process of preparation for the university exams with the 12th grade students who wanted to attend universities in Turkey. The panel session focused on practice exams, actual exams, question-solving strategies, balancing classes and extracurricular activities, and choosing a profession and university.



## Three Koç School Alumni in TÜSİAD management

Three Koç School alumni bring their skills in the fields production, added value and foreign trade to the management of the Turkish Industry & Business Association (TÜSİAD): Murat Özyeğin (Class of 1994), Government Relations - Leader of Energy & Environment Roundtable; Batu Aksoy (Class of 1994), Leader of Development Policies Roundtable, and Öget Kantarcı (Class of 1995), Digital Transformation Roundtable. TÜSİAD, founded in 1971 to represent the Turkish business world, is a voluntary, independent, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting welfare through private enterprise.

## ‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step’

Motorsports are loved by many people of all ages and Oğuzhan İlaslan (Class of 2013) is one of them. For him, this passion goes back to his childhood. His father, who spent long hours behind the wheel for work, and İsmail Yıldız, who as their neighbor when he was a child restored a 1978 Pontiac Firebird in his garage, reinforced his interest in motorsports. Even though he had to put his dream on shelf for a while during his high school years, the passion just kept intensifying. Oğuzhan talks about how his life changed when he watched the 2015 Bosphorus Rally while he was studying American Culture and Literature at Dokuz Eylül University, “I was absolutely sure that I had to be in those cars. As a pilot or co-pilot, it wouldn’t matter. I met Yiğit Timur in that race. He encouraged me and told me everything I needed to know to get started. Except for my family, Yiğit is my biggest source of motivation and still my idol.” His story continued with racing in the Ege Asal Challenge in Izmir, winning the silver medal, beginning to work at Toksport WRT as an executive assistant, participating in Turkish Motorsports Federation’s (TOSFED) competition “TOSFED is Looking for Its Star”, and enjoying every second behind the wheel. Speaking about those days, Oğuzhan İlaslan says, “This was exactly what I had in mind when I decided to sit in the driver’s seat of a racing car. I had no budget, no sponsor, no car, no target. But I still decided to take the first step.” Listening to him talk, it’s quite likely that the time it took for him to leave Toksport was quite pleasant. Oğuzhan İlaslan, who currently teaches corporate and academic English, says that he wants to race at least in one of the Aegean, Bosphorus or Kocaeli Rallies if he gets a positive response from the sponsors, and adds: “I am still at the very beginning and I have no intention of throwing in the towel. I will continue to work for my dream, no matter what. Every step on this challenging path is a different adventure for me. I am completely focused on my goal. For all of this, I owe a debt of gratitude to my family, The Koç School, all my teachers, and above all to this community that taught me to be human.”



## Hand in hand with the alumni in and out of the school

The Koç School always creates opportunities to get together with its graduates at a variety of events both in and out of the school. In addition to the alumni events organized in London, Boston and New York City in the early months of 2019, a panel session was held in April as part of KoçTalks where Professor Murat Günel, General Director of The Koç School, addressed the alumni. Günel talked about the various activities carried out in the school in the 2018-2019 academic year, as well as the “Meaning and Purpose” study and the accomplishments of graduates and students. The reunions at The Koç School take place each June to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the relevant classes. In May, the classes came together with representatives of the school administration at a workshop at Koç Pera to discuss the design and improvement of the Reunion event. As an institution that always values the importance of listening to the voice of the alumni, their school experiences and suggestions, The Koç School will strive to collaborate with them and conceive activities together for transparent communication, up-to-date information flow and the design of traditional events.



### Ungan Sak (Class of 2018)

“The educational approach of Murat Günel, the new General Director of my beloved high school, who I just had the opportunity to meet during a KÖLMED talk, made me feel that the winds of change that I had long been waiting for have finally started to blow. This dynamic management approach of The Koç School, which embraces everyone and strives to listen to everyone’s – especially the students’ – voice, with the awareness that the students, teachers, alumni and all employees all make up a whole, and understanding that a trouble anywhere in this organism would affect this unity, is an indicator of positive change.”

### Nazlı Zerin Falay (Class of 1999)

“We can’t wait for the reunion at The Koç School this year, which will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our graduation. As the entire class, we started talking about the reunion months before the event. Wondering about the content and time, etc., we held a workshop on May 10 upon the invitation of the school. My classmates and I once again understood the emotional meaning of this reunion and the importance of returning to our school 20 years later. We would like to thank our school and the school administration for shaping this reunion, which is so important to us, according to our suggestions and ideas. As the classes of 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009, we will return to school on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and remember our days at school.”



# What is KÖLMED up to?

“  
Have other  
event  
suggestions?  
Let us know!  
iletisim@kocozel.com  
”

Social Gatherings, Tasting Events, Workshops, Bonfire, Summer Party, as well as the annual New Year reunion, the oldest and most important event organized by KÖLMED (The Koç School Alumni Association) since 2000 are all held at KoçPera with the participation of The Koç School alumni in a colorful atmosphere. In the summer months, tours are organized to visit various locations in Istanbul and social gatherings take place at KoçPera Terrace. Tasting Events and Workshops offered in partnership with various brands and companies also draw considerable attention. In 2018, 51 events in total were held at KoçPera and Koç Group Sports Club. The Bonfire series at Koç Group Sports Club included events such as brunches and servings of mulled wine & sausage while guests were also offered the opportunity to take golf lessons. In the summer of 2019, picnics will be organized with The Koç School alumni and their families.

**Industry events:** The Networking Events, organized together with Koç University Alumni Association, give The Koç School alumni the opportunity to be informed about the latest developments and trends in different industries. The panel sessions, with speakers selected among The Koç School alumni, bring together leaders from various industries with The Koç School graduates, and provide an environment to share information and build networks.

**KoçTalks:** KoçPera Talks, aiming to bring together a wide range of experts in their respective fields with The Koç School alumni, offer discussions on a wealth of topics including arts, gastronomy, parenting, wellness and coaching. The guest of the latest talk was Professor Murat Günel, the General Director of The Koç School.

**Commencement:** KÖLMED takes active part in The Koç School commencement rehearsals and ceremonies. The mission, vision and goals of the association are promoted at the booths set up in the school and in talks with the new graduates.

**Culture and Arts Events:** Every year, exhibitions and venues that create a buzz in Istanbul's cultural and artistic life are visited. Art Walk tours enhance life with art and movement. The events and venues visited together with art-loving graduates so far include Istanbul Biennial, Design Biennial, Istanbul Modern, Mixer, Pera Museum, Arter, Yapı Kredi Culture & Arts, Mamut Art and ANAMED exhibitions.



## A new venue for The Koç School alumni

Koç Group Sports Club, formerly Yapı Kredi Korusu, offers a new meeting point for The Koç School alumni! KÖLMED members can benefit from the venue with their families and friends. All you need to do to benefit from the walking paths and jogging tracks, tennis courts and private lessons, basketball and volleyball courts, football fields, yoga and pilates classes, ceramic and ebru (marbling) workshops, ballet and aikido, children's playgrounds, summer and winter sports camps for kids, a picnic area, cafes and restaurants that Koç Group Sports Club offers is to become a member of KÖLMED and pay your annual fees. You can take advantage of the discount offers at Koç Group Sports Club by submitting your online membership card at [mobilepass.kocozel.com](http://mobilepass.kocozel.com).

# 2019-2020 Board of Directors



Dilek Uzunoğlu Örs '93 (President), Duygu Yenil '96 (Vice President), Ali Şayakçı '96 (Treasurer), Tolga Pozam '97 (Secretary), Sercan Vahittin Dede '07, Ece Yılmaz '10, Başak Fezyioğlu '13, Mehmet Can Atacık '96, Pelin Keskinioğlu '96, Alpar Hacıoğlu '95, Hande Vatandost '00, Özge Nurten Kurt '02, Gökçe Gümüş '06, Derin Şenerdem '06, Fırat Selvi '96, Alkım Aytaman '93, Ferhat Tarık Alp '00, Zeliha Deniz Günay '07

**Supervisory Board:** Zeynep Yazgan Akıalp '93, Can Övünç Cireli '95, Ayşe Yorgancıoğlu '98, Ercan Cihandide '95, Ethem Kamanlı '95, Merve İşeri Uzunoğlu '07

You can contact KÖLMED Board of Directors through Secretary General Nazlı Zerin Falay '99.

## Stay connected

The KÖLMED family continues to grow! The Association communicates with 4,577 graduates and 1,570 KÖLMED members via the website, [kolmed.kocozel.com](http://kolmed.kocozel.com), mailings, social media accounts and "Voice" magazine. You can update your profile, pay your membership and annual fees, and make donations by logging in to [kolmed.kocozel.com](http://kolmed.kocozel.com).

## Venues

### KoçPera

Address: Tom Tom Mah. İstiklal Cad. Merkez Han  
Floors 5 & 6 No.181 Beyoğlu/İstanbul  
Phone: 0212 393 6131-32  
Email: [nazli.zerin@kocpera.com](mailto:nazli.zerin@kocpera.com)

### Koç Group Sports Club

Address: Kuzguncuk Mah. Kuşbakışı Cad. 16/1-1  
Üsküdar/İstanbul  
Phone: 0216 343 3676  
Email: [iletisim@kocozel.com](mailto:iletisim@kocozel.com)



## From KÖLMED President...

Dilek Uzunoğlu Örs '93

### Dear Alumni and Association Members,

The Board of Directors to serve in the 2019-2020 period was elected at our General Assembly meeting on January 13, 2019. I would like to thank the 2017-2018 Board Members for their efforts to successfully complete the previous period and wish success to my newly elected friends.

In the 2017-2018 period, the Association prioritized topics such as scholarships, events, communications, economic enterprise and resource development activities, concluded the term successfully. As in the previous periods, we continued to support our successful graduates, with limited financial means, studying at reputable Turkish and international universities on full scholarship. The scholarship support determined systematically according to specific criteria amounted to TL 93,000 in 2017 and TL 142,000 in 2018. We organized 32 events with 1,015 participants in 2017 and 51 events with 1,696 participants in 2018.

The historical Merkez Han is where the late Vehbi Koç started his business in Istanbul and the building that he bequeathed to the Foundation to be used for educational and social purposes. The fifth and sixth floors of Merkez Han, allocated to The Koç School Alumni Association and Koç University Alumni Association by VKV, play an important role in bringing together the KÖLMED management, members and alumni. We highly value the contributions of all our graduates to our association as we move toward becoming a community. If you wish to be a part of our growth process, which began with KoçPera and now continues with the addition of Koç Group Sports Club, our alternative meeting point, please send your suggestions to [iletisim@kocozel.com](mailto:iletisim@kocozel.com). I am confident that we will have a successful period with the selfless work of all my friends on the Board of Directors and your contributions.

We at the Alumni Association of The Koç School, one of the most successful educational institutions in Turkey, are aware of our huge potential. With every new class that graduates, our social and professional network is expanding. As we continue to grow with the addition of new members, we will be happy to see you join this great family at events that unite our graduates.

With warm regards,

## Connect, follow, share!

[kocozel.com](http://kocozel.com) / [kolmed.kocozel.com](http://kolmed.kocozel.com) / [mobilepass.kocozel.com](http://mobilepass.kocozel.com)

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

[kocozellisellerdernegi](https://www.facebook.com/kocozellisellerdernegi)

[koclisimeszun](https://www.tumblr.com/koclisimeszun)

## A friendly reminder!

Sign up at [kolmed.kocozel.com](http://kolmed.kocozel.com) to become a member and benefit from the privileges of KoçPera and Koç Group Sports Club as well as special 25% discount\*!

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



KOÇ HOLDİNG, FORBES'UN  
“**DÜNYANIN EN İYİ İŞVERENLERİ**”  
LİSTESİNDE TÜRKİYE'DEN İLK  
100'E GİREN TEK ŞİRKET OLDU.

 | içinde Koç var.