

Inspiring Story: Murat Germen

Architect, Photographer, Artist
Fulbright Alumnus, 1988-1989

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FULBRIGHT
Türkiye



Spring
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Newsletter



Fulbright Türkiye Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

From the Executive Director

Welcome to this Spring edition of our Commission's newsletter! As another academic year wraps up, we're happy to be able to share with you once again updates and information from the Commission, stories by current grantees, and news about our alumni. As I often say, Fulbright really is all about the Fellows, and I can't think of a better opportunity than this year, the 75th anniversary of the Turkish Fulbright Commission, to take special note of the thousands of grantees whose lives have been touched by this program. In celebration of this milestone, the Commission has been holding a number of events—with more yet to come. Over the past few months, I've had the pleasure of hosting several regional gatherings for Fulbright alumni in Bursa, Antalya, and Eskişehir, as well as being part of a larger day-long alumni event in Ankara. As you'll see later in this Newsletter, the last of these events included a reception held at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador, and featured a special concert by one of our own alumni. Overall, it's been truly delightful to meet with groups of alumni from all different programs (did you know that we currently manage 10 different grant categories for Turkish students, scholars, teachers, artists, and professionals and 8 different grants for U.S. citizens?). It's also been wonderful to meet with alumni from all years, ranging from recent returnees to individuals who went abroad during the early decades of the program. Seeing them all together is a reminder of the bond that exists between all Fulbrighters—a common desire for excellence in learning, researching, teaching, and practice; natural curiosity; and a sincere interest in sharing cross-cultural experiences. Our next local alumni gathering will be in Izmir on June 5, and keep your eyes open for messages from our Alumni Coordinator about other up-coming events this fall.

While highlighting the Fellows, we can never forget the tremendous work being done on a daily basis by our dedicated Commission staff. With this in mind, I'm very happy to also celebrate these unsung heroes on the pages of this Newsletter, as you'll see in pictures from some of our recent holiday parties together.

Finally, I encourage you to read through all the highly entertaining accounts by our current grantees, both American and Turkish, and our usual Newsletter features, like the Inspiring Story, which this time around features a fascinating interview with photographer, architect, and artist, Murat Germen.

Wishing you all a safe, healthy, and relaxing summer.



Prof. Ersel Aydınli

An Inspiring Story

Exploring the World Through Murat Germen's Multifaceted Lens: A Journey of Influence and Evolution

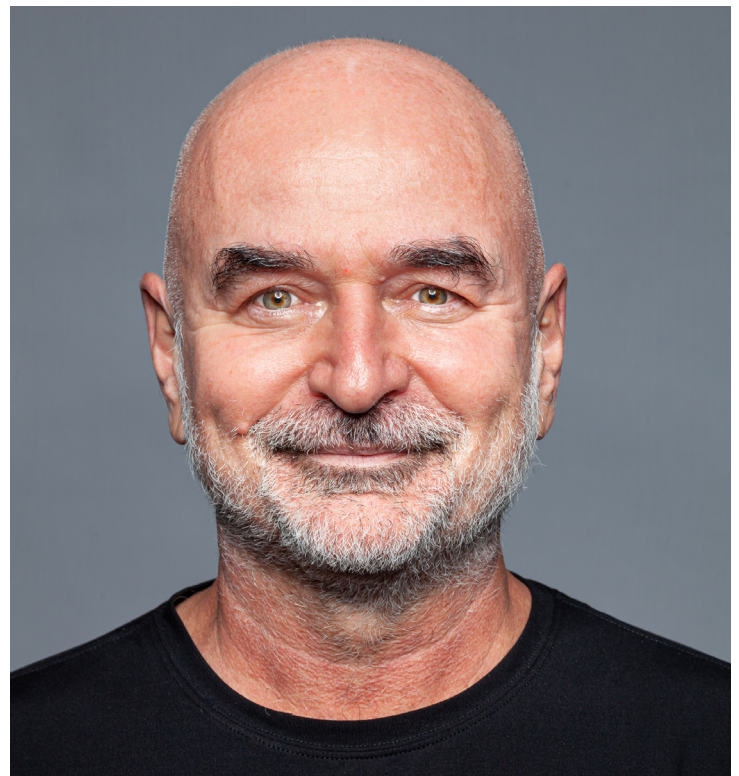
Embark on a captivating journey through the life and career of Murat Germen, an acclaimed photographer whose work breaks barriers and changes perspectives. With a rich family history, including ties to Nazım Hikmet, Germen's upbringing was shaped by diverse cultural influences, from literary figures to military leaders, fostering his unique perspective from an early age.

Murat Germen's educational journey began in Ankara, where he developed a deep appreciation for arts and sciences. Graduating as the top student from Istanbul Technical University, he received recognition, including the prestigious AIAA Henry Awards gold medal for academic excellence. Despite early success in architecture, Germen's path shifted towards photography, driven by a desire for independence and creative expression.

Germen's Fulbright experience at MIT was transformative, guiding him under esteemed architect Jody Gibbs and instilling lasting values of integrity, collaboration, and humility. Transitioning from architecture to photography, Germen fused his creative vision with a dedication to social and environmental advocacy.

Today, as an esteemed instructor at Sabancı University, Germen guides students to embrace opportunities and confront challenges boldly. He captures urban landscapes and societal narratives through his photography, sparking discussions and inspiring change.

Join us as we explore Murat Germen's journey, discovering how his heritage, creativity, and activism shape his remarkable work. For more on Murat's story, turn to page 18



News from the Commission

Dirty Santa

At our New Year staff gathering, we added a dash of festive fun with a spirited game of Dirty Santa. The excitement was palpable as everyone eagerly participated in the gift exchange. The room buzzed with laughter and friendly banter with each steal and swap. The game added an extra layer of enjoyment to our festivities, creating unforgettable memories and strengthening the bonds within our team.

Pictured: Ankara Commission Staff members and Istanbul Commission Staff on screen



March 8 Women's Day

In honor of International Women's Day on March 8th, our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli, continued the annual tradition of supporting the Darüşşafaka Society. This year, in recognition of the importance of Equality of Opportunity in Education, a donation was made for every female staff member at The Turkish Fulbright Commission.



Bayram Celebration

The staff gathered over video conferencing between the two offices to joyfully share their plans and wishes for Eid/Bayram. Boxes of chocolates added to the festive atmosphere and brought smiles all around!



Visit of Our Finance Officer to Fulbright Spain

Pictured: From left to right, Noemi Pons, Financial Manager of the Fulbright Spain, İmge Su Karakuş, Finance Officer of the Fulbright Türkiye, Alberto Lopez San Miguel, Executive Director of the Fulbright Spain

Ms. İmge Su Karakuş, Finance Officer of the Fulbright Türkiye, visited the Spanish Fulbright Commission in their office in Madrid on April 10-11, 2024, and held productive meetings with each program to share best administrative practices and exchange ideas, furthering friendly ties between the two Commissions.



Professional Development – Bulgarian Fulbright Commission

Pictured: Group photo, Fulbright Staff Training in Sofia, Bulgaria

Duygu Kimençe, Turkish Programs Officer, and Leyla Akşin, American Programs Officer, participated in the staff training organized by the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission from 13-15 March 2024. The intense training hosted Fulbright Commission staff from 23 European countries. ECA and IIE representatives were also present. The three-day event provided

ample opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices, network with European counterparts, and realize the extent of the Fulbright community. Cultural activities

introduced everyone to Bulgarian traditions and the capital city, Sofia. Heartfelt thanks to the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission for an excellent organization.



RE-ENTRY & NETWORKING MEETING

We were delighted to host the annual "Re-Entry and Networking Meeting" on February 23, 2024, in İstanbul, dedicated to our esteemed Turkish Alumni who recently completed their Fulbright

grant programs and returned to Türkiye. The gathering aimed to ease the transition for our homecoming grantees and foster connections among grantees and alumni from various Fulbright

programs. Through discussions on career planning and community engagement, attendees explored ways to leverage their Fulbright experiences for societal impact.



This year, 46 alumni representing diverse Fulbright programs including Postdoctoral Programs, Visiting Scholar Programs, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, Ph.D. Grants, Master's Grants, Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Programs, Teaching

Excellence and Achievement Grants, and Community College Initiative Programs participated in the meeting. The event commenced with a warm welcome from our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli emphasizing the Fulbright community's significance

and the potential of grantees to effect positive change. John Thomas McCarthy, Chairman of the Board, Turkish Fulbright Commission, and Chairman, ING Bank A.S., also extended greetings to the attendees.



Pictured: Prof. Ersel Aydınli's Executive Director, Turkish Fulbright Commission welcoming remarks

Pictured: John Thomas McCarthy, Chairman of the Board, Turkish Fulbright Commission, and Chairman, ING Bank A.S. opening speech

Ms. Seval Sir, İstanbul Office Director, initiated an icebreaker activity and moderated a panel discussion featuring distinguished panelists: Assoc. Prof. Berna Zengin Arslan, Prof. Emre Selçuk, Ms.

Göksu Ayçıl Altınok, and Assist. Prof. Ezgi Elçi. The panel delved into the theme of life post-Fulbright grant, with panelists generously sharing their insights and personal experiences.

Following a networking lunch, Dr. Ümit Yazman, a Hubert H. Humphrey Program Fellow and Psychiatrist, delivered a discussion on "Career and Life Journey, Goals, Choices," followed by an interactive Q&A session.



Pictured far left: Meeting participants during the activities

Pictured left and below left: Panelists: Assoc. Prof. Berna Zengin Arslan, Prof. Emre Selçuk, Ms. Göksu Ayçıl Altınok and Assist. Prof. Ezgi Elçi

Pictured below: Dr. Ümit Yazman during his speech on career and life after Fulbright



Representatives from the Fulbright Associations also played an integral role in the meeting. Ms. Ayşegül Çerçi discussed the objectives and activities of the Humphrey Alumni Association, while Ms. Aygün Çatak presented on the Fulbright Alumni Association, inviting all participants to join. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Kağan Kadioğlu concluded the formal proceedings by outlining future activities planned by the Türkiye Fulbright Association.



Pictured (L-R): Alumni Associations; Ayşegül Çerçi, Aygün Çatak and Prof. Yusuf Kağan Kadioğlu

The day culminated in a reception graciously hosted by Executive Director Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınli and U.S. Consul General Ms. Julie Eadeh at the U.S. Consul General's Residence, where members of the Commission's Board, current Turkish and American grantees, alumni, and Commission staff mingled and celebrated the Fulbright spirit of international exchange and collaboration.



Pictured right: Prof. Ersel Aydınli and U.S. Consul General Ms. Julie Eadeh's speech during the reception at the residence of the U.S. Consul General

Pictured below left and below right: Members of the Commission's Board, current Turkish and American grantees, alumni, and Commission staff networking



Mr. Vincent Pickett's Visit to the İstanbul Branch Office

On April 15, 2024, we hosted our American and Turkish grantees and alumni from various grant categories in our İstanbul office. Mr. Vincent Pickett, Branch Chief of the Fulbright Multi-Regional Programs/ Outreach at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs within the U.S. Department of State and Mr. Barış Raphael Mendoza, the Education Coordinator at

the US Consulate General in İstanbul, also visited our office and attended our meeting. Mr. Pickett acquired valuable

insights and feedback from the grantees and alumni to further enhance the Fulbright Program's initiatives.

Pictured (L-R): 2021-2022 Assoc. Prof. Pınar Büyükbacı, Senior Scholar alumna, 2021-2022 Ecem Mutlu, FLTA alumna, Mr. Barış Mendoza, Education Coordinator at the İstanbul U.S. Consulate General, Ms. Adela Foo, U.S. Student Researcher, 2019-2020 Mr. Kerem Aydas, Community College Initiative Program alumnus, 2022-2023 Mr. Ege Taşar-Master's alumnus, Mr. Vincent Pickett, Mr. David James Meza, U.S. Student Researcher, Ms. Caitlin Elizabeth Mims, Greece-Türkiye Joint Research Award recipient, Assoc. Prof. Somayeh Asadi, U.S. Senior Researcher, and Dr. Patrick Charles Lewis, Postdoctoral Award grantee



REACs Visit İstanbul Office

Pictured: From left to right, Seval Sir, Senior Education Adviser and İstanbul Office Director, Gordana Mirchikj, Regional Manager East, Central and Southern Europe and Giselle M. Dubinsky Regional Manager of North America, Central America and the Caribbean

During the morning of April 24, 2024, we were delighted to welcome Ms. Gordana Mirchikj, the Regional Manager of East, Central, and Southern Europe, along with Ms. Giselle M. Dubinsky, the Regional Manager of North and Central America and the Caribbean, at our İstanbul office. The day was characterized by exchanging informative insights and sharing best practices.



European Executive Directors' Annual Meeting in Madrid

Pictured: Prof. Ersel Aydınli (fourth row, third from right) with the European Executive Directors



Our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli, participated in the annual European Fulbright Executive Directors meeting, which took place in Madrid, Spain from April 17 to 19, 2024. The event convened at the Casa de América, where EDs deliberated on the future trajectory of Fulbright, engaging in conversations about contemporary challenges and exploring potential solutions. The gathering featured presentations highlighting diverse areas and best practices, including a talk by Dr. Aydınli in which he shared the results of an on-going study by the Turkish Fulbright Commission measuring the impact of the Fulbright program.



Board Transitions

Zeynep Öçgüder, who served as our alternate member of the Board of Directors for years, has completed her term, and we bid farewell to her.

Pictured (L-R): İmge Su Karakuş, Prof. Ersel Aydınlı, Zeynep Öçgüder, Duygu Kimence, Leyla Akşin



Staff Transitions

Pictured: Ms. Simge Aldı



Ms. Simge Aldı, the American Programs Assistant, holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from Gazi University and is a licensed lawyer. Throughout her journey, Simge served as a project assistant for a circular economy project funded by both the EU and Türkiye, aiming to drive Türkiye towards a more sustainable future, with the pivotal outcome being the development of the National Strategy and Action Plan. Additionally, she completed a traineeship at the Delegation of the EU to Türkiye, broadening her understanding of international relations and communication dynamics. Simge is eager to leverage her legal knowledge across diverse fields.

Pictured: Farewell to Ayşe Kevser Arslan (second from left)



Ms. Ayşe Kevser Arslan, Placement Officer and Turkish Programs Assistant was bid farewell from her role as she is due to pursue her PhD studies in Finland!

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Our Commission Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Turkish Fulbright Commission, which was established by a binational agreement signed between Türkiye and the United States in 1949. Since its foundation, our commission has funded nearly 6000 Turkish and American graduate students, faculty members, teachers, artists and professionals, who successfully completed their respective programs.

75TH ANNIVERSARY ALUMNI MEETINGS

Within the framework of the 75th Anniversary of our Commission, our Executive Director Prof. Ersel Aydınli meets

with our alumni living in various cities. The first of these meetings was held in Bursa. The meeting started with pleasant

conversations and continued with a delicious lunch. Great memories were refreshed and new friendships were forged.



Pictured above (L-R): Mr. Yigit Can Sezgin, Mr. Metin Gültekin, Prof. Ersel Aydınli, Dr. Umut Muharrem Salihoğlu, Ms. Merve Unutmaz, Prof. Mine Sibel Gürün, Ms. Neslihan Tekman, Prof. Gökhan Özkan, Prof. Julie Mathews Aydınli, Mr. Selçuk Genç and Ms. Zeynep Selin Dürer



The Second of the 75th-anniversary alumni meetings took place in Antalya. This meeting too, was filled with

joyful conversations and created an opportunity for our alumni to meet each other.

Pictured below left (L-R): Assist. Prof. Bilge Bingöl, Assoc. Prof. Sezgi Saraç, Assoc. Prof. Gülay Yılmaz Diko, Prof. Ersel Aydınli, Prof. Kani Işık, Mr. Ferhat Bayık, Mr. Berkant Coşgel



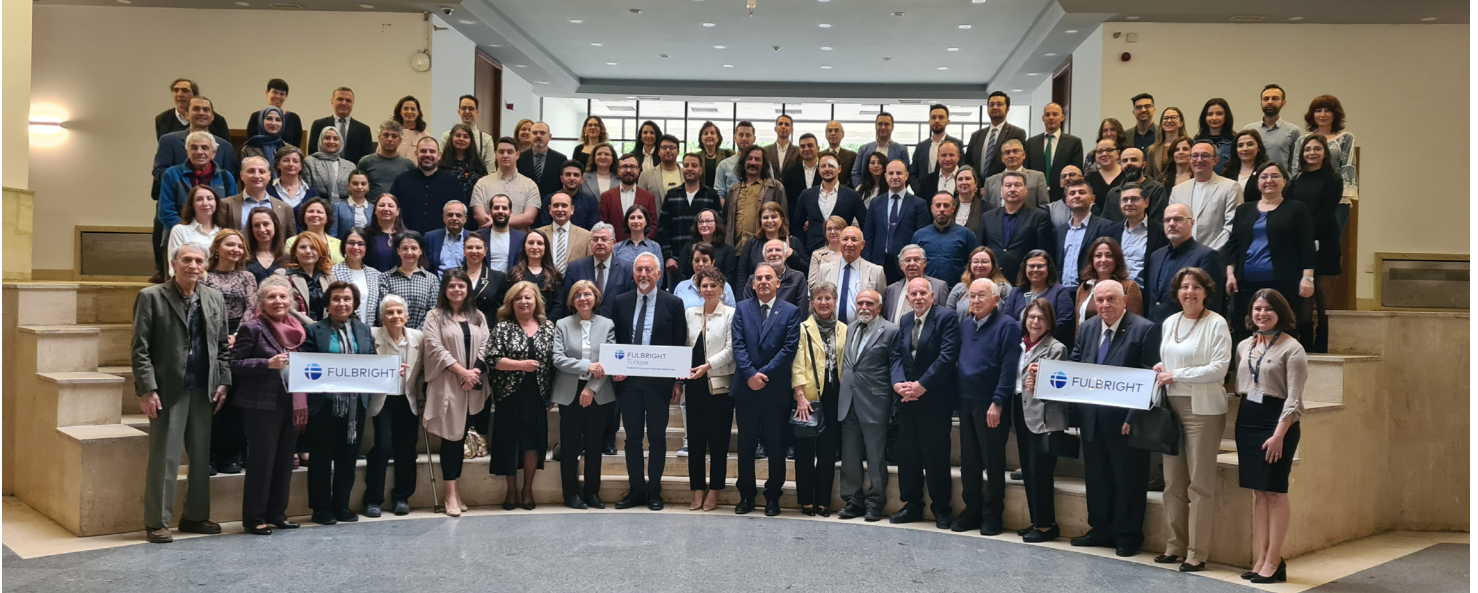
Fulbright Türkiye 75th Anniversary Meeting in Ankara

As part of celebrating its 75th year, our Commission staff, together with the leaders of our alumni associations, organised an anniversary meeting in Ankara on May 3. The meeting opened

with a welcome speech by our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli. He underlined the uninterrupted continuity of the commission, the importance of people to people connections, and the contribution

of our alumni with their presence to all kinds of Commission's activities.

Pictured below: Group photo of our Ankara Alumni



His opening remarks were followed by a video showing a compilation of documents and photos from the Commission's archives, including the foundation and early years of the Commission as well as alumni testimonies, records, and photos of their experiences in their host countries,

together with some humorous moments from their grant periods.

After a group photo, our event kicked off with the first panel entitled "Fulbright Memories and Experiences". This session, which was hosted by the President of the

Türkiye Fulbright Association, Prof. Yusuf Kağan Kadioğlu, included four of our senior alumni who received Fulbright grants in the 1960s and 1970s.

Prof. Ömür Bakırer, 1962-63 Master's & 1986-87 Researcher Programs Alumna, Retired faculty member at Middle East Technical University, Department of Architecture

Prof. Turgut Önder, 1975-76 Doctoral & 1988-89 Researcher Programs Alumnus, Retired faculty member at Middle East Technical University, Department of Mathematics

Prof. Figen Ünlü Erkoç, 1976-77 Doctoral Program Alumna, Faculty member at Başkent University, Department of Biomedical Engineering

Amb. Hüseyin Lazip Diriöz, 1978-79 Master's Program Alumnus, Retired Ambassador



Pictured: Prof. Ersel Aydınli's opening remarks



Pictured: Prof. Yusuf Kağan Kadioğlu with the first panelists



Pictured (L-R): Amb. Hüseyin L. Diriöz, Prof. Figen Ünlü Erkoç, Prof. Turgut Önder and Prof. Ömür Bakırer

The memories shared by our senior alumni and the experiences they had during their grant periods were listened to with great interest by the audience, even sometimes leading to emotional moments. This panel was followed by a short break, during which our guest alumni had the chance to meet with old friends and become acquainted with new ones.

Pictured: Alumni gathering during the short break



The second panel, titled “Türkiye-United States Relations through the Fulbright Program”, and hosted by the President of the Fulbright Alumni Association, Ms. Aygün Çatak, welcomed four “newly returning alumni” panelists, all of whom had received Fulbright grants in the past few years.

Assist. Prof. Çağın Ararat, 2022-23 Senior Scholar Program Alumnus, Faculty Member at Bilkent University, Department of Industrial Engineering.

Ms. Zeynep Maden, 2022-23 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program Alumna, English Language Instructor at Çankırı Karatekin University

Assist. Prof. Mahmut Emin Çelik, 2020-21 Postdoctoral Program Alumnus, Faculty member at Gazi University, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Ms. Rabia Hilal Şener, 2021-22 Master’s Program Alumna, Associate at Esin

Attorney Partnership

This time, our panelist alumni talked about their experiences during their respective grant periods and commented on the significance of Türkiye-U.S. relations through Fulbright grants. They also shared the effects of the time they spent in the United States and the benefits they gained, on both personal and professional levels.



Pictured: Ms. Aygün Çatak with the second panelists

Pictured (L-R): Ms. Rabia Hilal Şener, Assist. Prof. Mahmut Emin Çelik, Ms. Zeynep Maden and Assist. Prof. Çağın Ararat



These two panels were then followed by an Award Ceremony organised by our three alumni associations. The Humphrey Alumni Association presented its award to its founder and the first member, Dr. Yakup Aykut Pekcan (1980-1981, H. Humphrey Fellowship alumnus of Personnel Management to American University). The Fulbright Alumni Association presented its *Lifelong Success Award* to Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu (1972-1973, Master’s grant and 1984-1985 Senior Researcher alumnus) for his achievements and successful career in the field of Law. Finally, the Türkiye Fulbright Association presented its *Successful Woman Entrepreneur Award* to Dr. Ece Aynur Onur (2008-2009 Master’s Grant

alumna of Anthropology to Indiana University), honoring her decision to change her career in order to take up dry

farming in her hometown of Burdur, and her acclaimed success on this new path, despite many challenges faced.



Pictured: Dr. Yakup Pekcan with with the president of Humphrey Alumni Association Ece Saraoğlu



Pictured: Ms. Aygün Çatak with Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu’s reward





Pictured: Dr. Ece Aynur Onur with the president of Türkiye Fulbright Association, Prof. Yusuf Kağan Kadioğlu

Pictured: Group photo after the award ceremony



The meeting came to an end with the closing remarks of Prof. Ersel Aydınli, in

which he thanked the panelists, presidents of the associations and the attending

alumni for helping to make this an unforgettable event.

The meeting was followed by an evening reception, which took place at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador. The evening started with a piano concert by our 2012-2013 Master's Grant alumna, Melis Soyarslan, accompanied on guitar by her spouse Tunç Ataç. The reception provided a perfect opportunity for alumni to connect and reconnect with each other as well as building new networks with distinguished guests from diverse sectors.



Pictured above left and right: The U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey L. Flake and Prof. Ersel Aydınli during their opening speeches

Pictured left, right and below left: Ms. Melis Soyarslan and her spouse Tunç Ataç during their mini concert with large audience



Pictured left: Group photo after the concert

Pictured right: Ms. Melis Soyarslan and Tunç Ataç with Mr. Jeffrey L. Flake and Prof. Ersel Aydınli



Prof. İpek Gürkaynak: 1968-1969 Master's Student of Social Psychology to Kansas University

Was there anyone or was there a chain of events that led you in choosing psychology?

There was no one who guided me toward psychology, but I was influenced by one particular person. The daughter of one of my mother's close friends was studying psychology at METU. Her name was Işık. I was in high school. When we visited them, she would invite me to her room. But we wouldn't chat at all; she would be studying. I used to browse her books. While I was looking at them she used to say, "Take that book, I don't need it; bring it back in a few days". Actually, I had already made my decision; I was going to study English Language and Literature at Ankara University. But thanks to Işık, psychology gradually started to become my favorite.

In the 1960s there were two exams when entering the university. One was the central exam which you would have to take if you wanted to go to faculties such as "Law", "Political Science", "Language, History and Geography" and the like. The other one was the exam for the departments of METU. I decided to take both exams. For the central exam, my first choice was English Language and Literature at Ankara University. For the METU exam, I chose Psychology. I was successful in both of these exams. After thinking long and hard, I chose Psychology. When I entered METU in 1964 the name of the department was Social Sciences. The students would study together for the first two years and then were separated into Psychology or Sociology for the next two years.

How did you hear about Fulbright Scholarships and how did you decide to apply?

At one point you face the question: What am I going to do after graduation? We had incredible professors at the Social Science Department of Middle East Technical University between 1964-1968; the years I was there. One of my professors, Mübeccel Kiray, said to me one day, "You will go abroad, do your doctorate, come back, we will work together". I asked, "Yes, but where will I do my Ph.D.?" She said, "America! For psychology, America!". Prof. Kiray herself had received her own Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Chicago. Then I said, "I can't go to America. First of all I am the only child of my family; secondly, where will I find the money to go there?" Then Mübeccel Hanım explained to me the concept of scholarship, and told me about Fulbright scholarships. After doing some research about Fulbright, I applied.

Fulbright asked me to name three universities that I wanted to go to. My dream was Stanford. When I was told that I won the scholarship I learned that I was to go to the University of Kansas. I was so surprised; where is KU, where is Lawrence? The day after I received the news that I won the scholarship, I came across an American professor on campus; I told him the news! When he asked where I was going, I said "Kansas University; where is Kansas?" He said, "Sorry, it's in the middle of nowhere".

But I am glad I was sent to KU for many reasons. Since Lawrence is a nice small college town, I never "got lost" in a foreign country, and made great friends. There were incredible professors in the Psychology Department. When I was there, Fritz Heider, the world's foremost social psychologist had just retired leaving a great legacy. Moreover, the University of Kansas was where a new field called Ecological Psychology was created. Roger Barker and Herbert F. Wright who'd developed the concept and methods of Ecological Psychology, were there. Ecological Psychology was an oasis, a new horizon for me; it took individuals out of the laboratory and studied them in their natural environment through non-disruptive methods developed by Barker and Wright.

After I returned to Türkiye and started teaching at Ankara University, I taught Ecological Psychology courses and supervised many theses where various methods of ecological psychology were utilized. Ecological Psychology is also the origin of today's Environmental Psychology.

A very personal reason that I am very happy to have been sent to KU by Fulbright is that I met (my now husband) Mehmet there; we have been married for 51 years now. Mehmet is from Biga, had done his master's thesis with Heider, and was working on his Ph.D in Social Psychology. So if we hadn't met at KU our paths would probably never have crossed. Mehmet has always supported me in my professional life; he both encouraged me to go for the things I wanted to do and also made my life easier so that I could do them.

In short, I can say that Fulbright was instrumental in a fulfilling life for me!

What would be your advice to young people and young academics?

Academic work is very valuable provided that you are also a researcher. It is very important to go beyond teaching, beyond giving exams, and grading papers. If your



field allows it, make an effort to know the life outside the walls of the university, and also contribute to it. I guess this would be my most internalized advice to young academics. I can also request attention to the following points:

Do not despair when you feel you are digging a hole with a needle. Know that there are others with needles in their hands digging at the same hole.

Do not rely on cliches, proverbs, etc.; most of them are not true! Do not do something just in pretense; if you cannot do it the way it needs or deserves to be done, it is better that you do not do it at all.

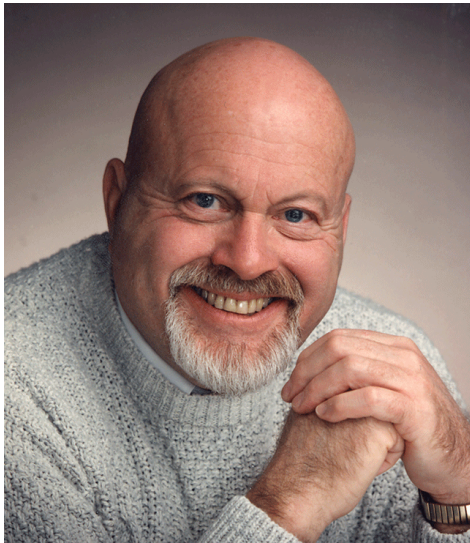
Do not discriminate in your words, in your deeds, even in your thoughts; remember that all discrimination and prejudice are ingrained by the society in which you grow up. Therefore, do not ever think that you are free of all prejudice; try to analyze what is in you, try having and sharing "aha experiences".

We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of Fulbright Türkiye. What advice would you like to give to applicants?

Oh, the advice giver again! OK, here it goes: Don't be frightened by the thorny path leading to your goals. Be eager to overcome difficulties, even ask for them. I hope, through Fulbright, your life will be more fulfilling than it would have been otherwise. Mine was; therefore, Fulbright is very dear to me.

Full interview will be released in a separate publication.





Prof. Lewis Goldberg: 1974-1975 Senior Lecturer of Psychology to Istanbul University

him screwdrivers and other tools and we would talk about Psychology, and we would talk about life, and mostly about life. He was tremendously influential in my own career and we were really good friends. He got me my first job at Stanford University, he took me to my first convention, the American Psychological Association Convention, and he got me my second job as well.

When you were in Istanbul, how was it back then for you?

Everybody was very open and welcoming. On that score, you couldn't think of a better place in the world. I taught at Istanbul University and people there were warm and sweet and kind and helpful. I had an office in a former auditorium. It was an enormous office. I remember spending so much of my time walking around Istanbul in those days, I mean, it was just a fantastic city.

After returning back to the USA, has your Fulbright experience made an impact in your profession and career?

When I returned, people said that I was more creative than before as a scientist. People have remarked about it. There is a tiny bit of scientific evidence that going away for a prolonged period of time does, in fact, increase one's creativity. So, of the four years that I spent outside of the United States, the Turkish Fulbright experience was the most extraordinary and the most memorable. Which is not to downplay the other three, because they were also extraordinary.

Are you happy with the path you have chosen professionally?

Oh, sure. I'm 92 years old and I still work as a personality psychologist.

There are lots of young people at the beginning of their career and their lives. What would be your advice to young people and young academics?

I would give advice to throw away their cell phone. That would be the advice I would give to young people. Stay off of social media. That seems to be an epidemic now in our society. People are getting too much information from sources that they don't know, and that can be maladaptive. In terms of career, I have two or three pieces of advice. The first one is, find what you think

is the most important scientific problem in your field and work on it. You may not solve it, but spend some of your time working on what you consider to be the most important problems. And then, also at the same time, the other half of your working life, work on other problems that are more tractable, because obviously you need to. You need to publish some things quickly so that you can advance your career. Shortly, devote half your time to tractable problems and half of the time to the most important problem, which is unlikely to give you instant gratification. That's one piece of advice.

The other one has to do with going away. The natural tendency of people is to stay put. People tend to live in the same place they were born and raised. My advice for academics is, don't stay put! Spend as many years as you can in other cultures, in other societies. Expand your life space as much as possible. When you face resistance, overcome it, and go places and stay there as long as you can.

To end up, I should point out to people the extraordinarily wonderful resource that is Fulbright. Fulbright provides not only money for people to come to the United States and work in our universities, but provides money for students, for faculty members, and for people primarily associated with academia. I have a friend who I met during my Fulbright year in Türkiye, Tom Brosnahan, who became the most extraordinary publisher of travel guides to Türkiye.

This year, we are celebrating our 75th anniversary of the Turkish Fulbright Commission. What would be your advice to prospective Fulbrighters?

Do it! If you can apply, the Fulbright people will help you. If you apply to a particular place and it isn't possible when you want to go, they might suggest other places. My experience in Türkiye was a great example of that. They'll work with you. Not everybody who applies is going to get a Fulbright grant. But if you have the opportunity, for God's sakes, go ahead and apply. That's my advice.

Full interview will be released in a separate publication.

How did you decide to do Psychology?

My university experience was at Harvard College and it was absolutely extraordinary. I majored in so-called Social Relations, which was a blend of Anthropology, Sociology, a smidgen of Social Psychology, and Personality Psychology. That was a college major at that time that allowed you to have as much freedom as possible in terms of what you take. So, I ended up taking introductory everything. I had no depth in anything. But I did have a very wide experience of taking introductory courses in a wide variety of fields. I strongly recommend that, because coming from high school to college, you don't know most of the topics that are taught in college, and by taking introductory courses, you learn something about them and get some idea of whether you might like to pursue them or not.

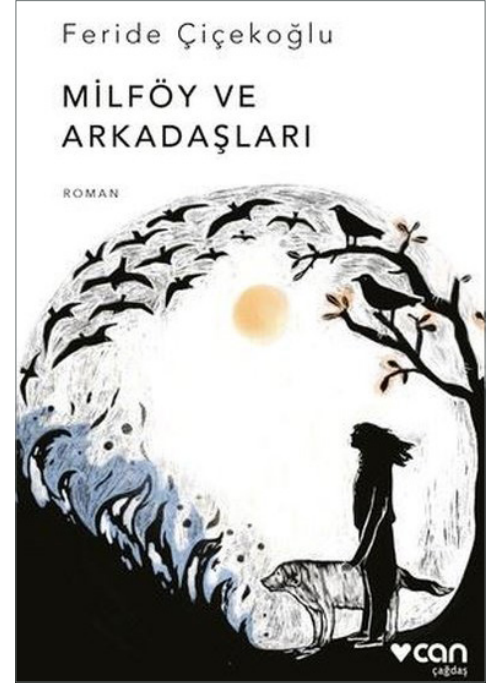
When my junior year at Harvard came, I still didn't know what I wanted to do. At the time, I heard about this field called Psychology, and I thought, "Gee, they teach you about people, and wouldn't it be great to know a lot about people no matter what you want to do later?" So, I applied to graduate schools in Psychology and I was accepted to the Psychology program at the University of Michigan.

I was tremendously fortunate in that my first year there, as I met a person who was about to become the department chairman. His name was E. Lowell Kelly, and his house turned out to be rather close to our apartment. I took a seminar from him and I was tremendously impressed. I ended up walking over to his house reasonably often. He was building a ship, a sailing ship, in his basement. I had no idea how he was going to get it out. I would come over and hand

News from the Alumni

Prof. Feride Çiçekođlu's book gets published

Our 1973-1974 Ph.D. Grant alumna, Prof. Dr. Feride Çiçekođlu has recently published her new book "Milföy ve Arkadařları," after her renowned book *Uçurtmayı Vurmasınlar (Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite)*. In this novel, Prof. Çiçekođlu tells us the story of the "adoption" of a dog called Milföy, who was abandoned in the forest, while questioning the relationship between humans, animals, and nature through Milföy's eyes. The book, which is also finely illustrated, shows how humans build walls around them with their own hands.



Atakan Ekiz: one of the ten EMBO Installation Grant recipients in 2024



Assist. Prof. Atakan Ekiz, 2010-2011 Ph.D. Grant alumnus became one of the ten EMBO Installation Grant recipients in 2024. With this support, he will investigate the roles of noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs) in cancer progression and immunoevasion. lncRNAs are a diverse group of genes with largely unexplored functions and the human genome consists of thousands of them waiting to be studied. This project will be conducted by trainees and scientists at the Izmir Institute of Technology.

Assoc. Prof. Nur Yigitoglu Aptoula, one of the Outstanding Young Scientists

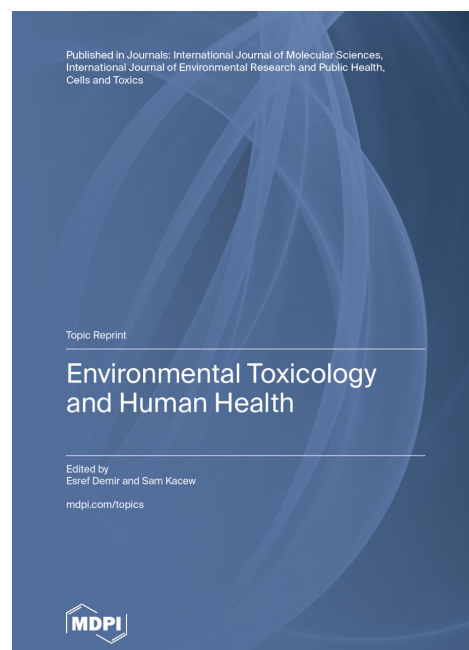
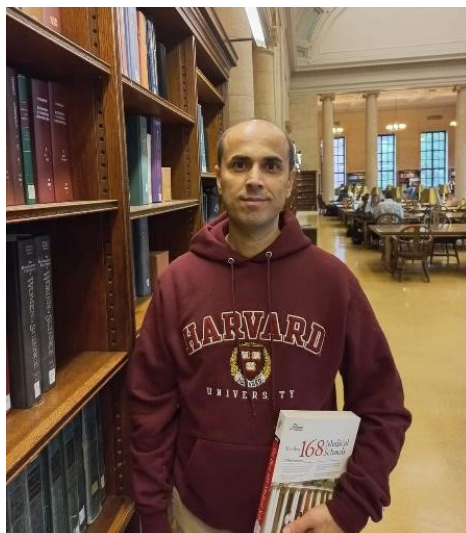
Our 2006-2007 Master's Grant alumna and jury member Assoc. Prof. Nur Yiđitođlu Aptoula received the 2023

Outstanding Young Scientists Award (GEBİP) in the category of Social Sciences from the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA). Assoc. Prof. Aptoula is currently a faculty member in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Bođaziçi University. Her proposed research for the TÜBA GEBİP award is collecting text types specific to different disciplines. Based on the findings of this analysis, the project aims to develop research-based materials for teachers who will provide writing education in different disciplines at Turkish universities and for graduate students who will receive this education.



Prof. Eşref Demir's co-edited book was published

Our 2022-2023 Senior Scholar alumnus has co-edited the new book *Environmental Toxicology and Human Health*. This book focuses on environmental pollutants including heavy metals, pesticides, nanoparticles, micro-nanoplastics, indoor air pollutants, pharmaceuticals, and industrial toxicants with effects on human health, risk assessment, and the relationship between various diseases and environmental pollutants. This book aims to present a comprehensive overview of different studies carried out with in vivo and in vitro model organisms and the potential risk of environmental pollutants exposure to human health.



Savanna Lim: one of the 2024 Fulbright Ambassadors

Savanna Lim, our 2021-2022 ETA alumna became one of the Fulbright Ambassadors of this year. Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors who are selected annually, come from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, states, fields of study, and institutions. They represent the program's rich diversity and play a key role in

increasing knowledge about Fulbright opportunities. They provide testimonials about their Fulbright experiences at conferences, campus presentations, and special events throughout the United States. They offer application tips in written articles, video and podcast interviews, and webinars to assist potential applicants, sharing what a Fulbright grant is really like, along with how to address the challenges of living abroad successfully and how best to meet the Fulbright Program's ultimate goal—to increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and the people of other countries.



Dr. Polat Göktaş is an Associate Editorial Board member at Fulbright Chronicles

Our 2017-2018 Visiting Student Researcher alumnus Dr. Polat Göktaş became a member of the Associate Editorial Board at Fulbright Chronicles (FC), a quarterly periodical established and edited by alumni of the global Fulbright program. FC is a space for Fulbrighters to share

their important work with a broad audience. It encourages Fulbrighters to write easily accessible articles that explore how their Fulbright experience contributed to knowledge and cross-cultural understanding. The articles also address contemporary issues that affect the Fulbright program and its global community. Dr. Göktaş's contribution titled "Bridging Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare: A Fulbright Journey in Three Continents" can also be accessed in the October 2023 issue of the Fulbright Chronicles.



Dr. Duygu Tüntaş's contribution to the exhibition "Ankara: Along the Borders"

Our 2015-2016 Visiting Student Researcher Grant alumna Dr. Duygu Tüntaş contributed her photographic work to the exhibition "Ankara: Along the Borders" in January 2024. The exhibition brought together the works produced during the guest artist program "Ankara: Italian

Perspectives in the Capital," organized in collaboration with Bilkent University and the Embassy of Italy in Ankara in 2022. Parallel to the exhibition, the publication, *Ankara, Along the Borders: A Visual Exploration of Ongoing Urban Transformations*, was also compiled.

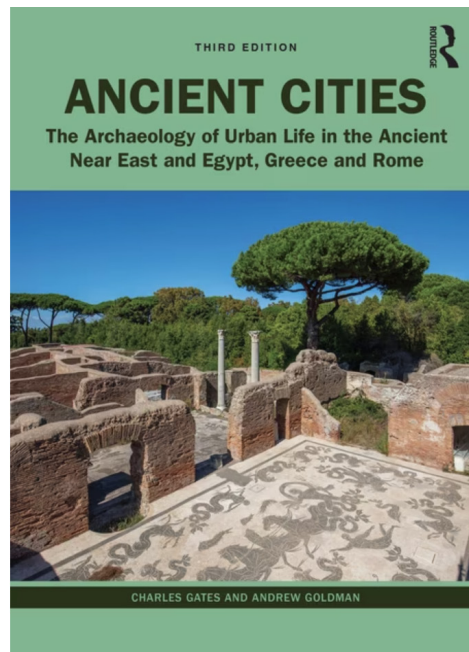


Prof. Andrew Goldman and our staff member Neslihan Tekman collaborated on the book *Ancient Cities, Third Edition*

Prof. Andrew Goldman, our 1995-1996 Student Researcher alumnus, joined the main author Assoc. Prof. Charles Gates and illustrator Neslihan Tekman for the third edition of the book *Ancient Cities*. As in the previous editions, the book surveys the cities of the Ancient Near East, Egypt, and the Greek, Etruscan, and

Roman worlds from the perspectives of archaeology and architectural history, bringing to life the physical world of ancient city dwellers by concentrating on archaeological evidence. Prof. Goldman updated and revised the third edition's chapters on Greek cities in South Italy and Sicily, the Etruscans, the

development of the capital city, Rome, during the Republic as well as the Empire, and the end of the ancient city, while our Alumni Affairs and Archives Specialist Neslihan Tekman simultaneously added new illustrations to her 350 line drawings which were previously published in the earlier editions.



Murat Germe

Could you talk about yourself and your childhood regarding your family culture?

I have quite an interesting familial background, actually. Both on my mother's side and my father's side, there are a lot of special people. The first I would like to mention is Nazım Hikmet, who is known as the most famous Turkish poet, and whose work has been translated into 20-plus languages. My grandma was his sister and my mother is his niece. I never got to meet him. He died in 1963. I was born in 1965. He was abroad and died in Russia. So, there was not any way I could meet him. My grandmother looked very much like him, as I saw some old photos, especially when he was at the end of his fifties and the beginning of his sixties. He died when he was 61 due to a heart attack. I am very proud of being his grandnephew. Other than Nazım Hikmet, there is a lot of mixture in my family, especially on my mother's side. If you go back six generations, there is this Serbian man who happened to be the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army when they were fighting against the Russians during the Crimean War. He was called Omar Pasha (Ömer Lütfi Paşa) in the Ottoman Empire and his original name was Michel Lattas. When you come closer to the present, I have Polish (Mustafa Celâleddin Pasha or Konstanty Borzęcki as his original name) and German (Mehmed Ali Pasha or Ludwig Karl Friedrich Detroit as his original name) backgrounds. They were all foreign and converted to Ottoman nationality to become high-rank soldiers. So, I can say I have a very multicultural background. This is why I feel like I'm a citizen of the world. My father's side also has some interesting people. One of them is my grandfather (Ahmet Murat Germe) whom I never saw, unfortunately, because he died early. He was the very first governor of Ankara. So, he was one of the favorite guys of Atatürk. Both my first name and my middle name, Seyda, are my maternal and paternal grandfathers' names, and I carry them with honor. So, there is this loaded family. And this gives you some sort of responsibility. I should be a decent guy. I should try to be, at least.

Who was the most influential and what was that influence?

This is a very important question. Unfortunately, I cannot cite all the people who inspired me, but Nazım Hikmet is an important figure because he fought for other people's rights. He came from a very aristocratic family. So, he did not need a particular struggle to step up in society. We happen to see such people. At the start they claim to be socialists or anarchists. Once they get known and gain more power, they turn 180 degrees in the reverse direction and do not keep their promises. Nazım Hikmet was certainly not that kind of



a person. He is a great inspiration to me. Another influential character for me is Atatürk. I'm not a Kemalist but I respect him so much. He's—in my view—an important figure in the history of the world, not only in Türkiye, because in his very short period of life, he did so much. Looking at the quality of people we have at the moment, the achievement is unbelievable. Trying to resurrect a sick empire and then fighting for independence, and

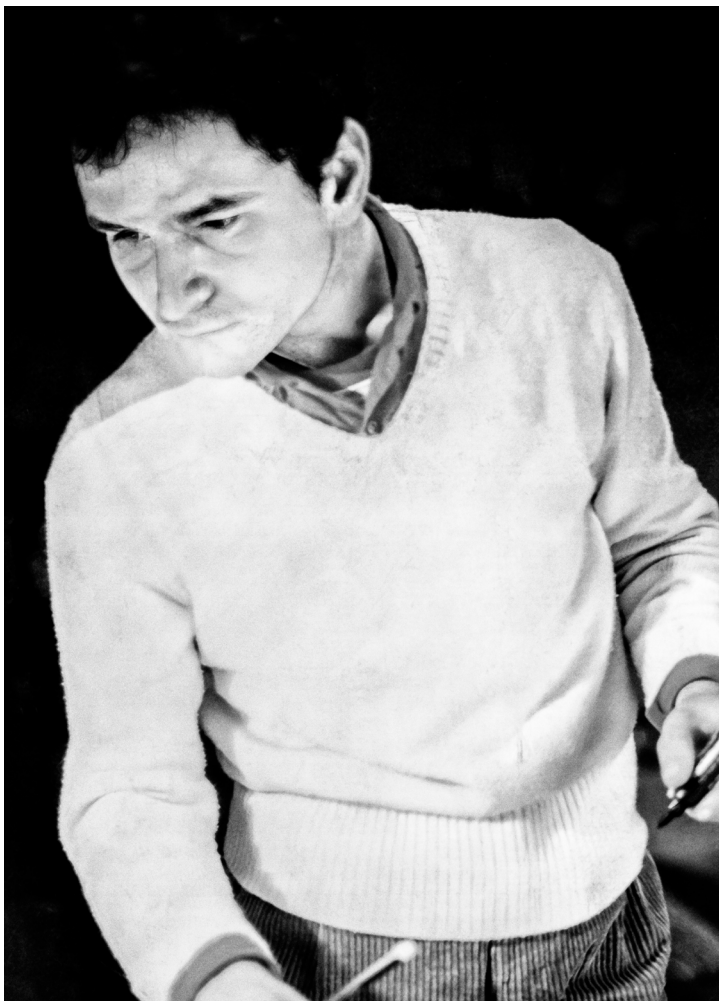


kicking three imperialists out of our lands is an amazing achievement and I respect what he did. In short, I am inspired by and respect people who fight for independence and their rights and do whatever is necessary to get their rights back. Malcolm X is also another inspiring figure.

Could you talk about your education background? How did your career develop? What were your special interests?

Let me start from the beginning. I was born in Ankara and my family is not from Ankara as they were on duty. For the first two years of my primary education, I was in Ankara. We lived in Sıhhiye, and I attended a great school there named Sarar İlkokulu (elementary school). At the age of seven, we went back to Istanbul, and I attended Bahariye Primary School, which is in Kadıköy. I always loved Kadıköy. I loved being in it because it was the most open-minded place you can live in Istanbul. It's still so. I attended St Joseph, the French High School, which was very close to my primary school and to my house. I was very lucky, as I could just walk to my primary school or high school. At St Joseph, I started as a relatively successful student. I skipped one of the prep years. You were supposed to do two prep years back then. I did only one and I took an exam and passed the second one. Then I became a volleyball player and was a little less serious, educationally. I was more interested in becoming a good volleyball player than

"If you intervene in a particular city at a very large scale, that's not very appropriate because all parts of the city are different. They have different demands and they have different populations. This is why I loved the specific local solution-making to specific problems."



Pictured: Murat Germen when he was a student at Istanbul Technical University

maintaining a good GPA. We were quite lucky as team members. The coach, Bülent Meriç, was a very good coach at the time. He was not an easy guy at all, but, during the seven years I was at St Joseph, we were always the champion of Türkiye and even had the title of the Second of the World in the High School World Championships.

During my high school years, I was interested in collecting stuff. I had a stamp collection that I kept. They probably became quite valuable because I'm talking about 40-plus years ago. Interestingly, I never smoked, but, at one point I remember myself collecting cigarette boxes because some of them were very special aesthetically. There were special shapes, beautiful logos, and designs. I was a collector out of interest. I never wanted to become an investor as a collector because when you invest you lose your intimate relationship with what you're collecting. What you collect becomes a commodity, and you follow its value through time. I collected stuff because I was passionate. I'll probably leave them to my kid.

After graduating from St Joseph, I attended Istanbul Technical University. My father was a city planner. City planning was on my list of choices in our bizarre university exam system in Türkiye. So I entered the City and Regional Planning Department of Istanbul Technical University (ITU). It was certainly a very decent education. It concentrated more on very local interventions to the city. If you intervene in a particular city at a very large scale, that's not very appropriate because all parts of the city are different. They have different demands and they have different populations. This is why I loved the specific local solution-making to specific problems.

"I am a little bit—maybe more than a little bit—of a free-minded person. Independence is quite important to me. I do not mention this as a big deal, it's just my preference."

Why architecture?

My family separated when I was eight months old so I was living at mom's house. But I would go to my father's once in a while, and sometimes I would go or stay a month or maybe some shorter visits. At the time he used to live in Ankara, he was a city planner. He taught at Middle East Technical University. He would sometimes take me to the beautiful campus of METU. I really enjoyed the time I spent there because there were some really cool people, my father's friends. Some of them were architects, some of them were restoration architects, some of them were planners and sometimes we would go to their houses for dinner and for other purposes. Sometimes we would go for a hike. There was always great talk, always fantastic music, and very high-quality people, so I said maybe I should become an architect. They seem like they are cool people. I think it was a great decision to make because even though I don't do architecture now, to me architecture is one of the best educations one can get. There's unfortunately this tendency to separate engineering from creativity. They think engineers can't be creative, and creative people can't really do science. I don't believe so. I think it's possible to join both. I think architectural education somehow lays the ground for this, because, you have to design a great building, but it has to stand, right? Usually, structural engineers find a solution for this. But I'm always responsible when I pass a particular duty on to somebody else. I want to make it as ready as possible so that other people don't have a hard time. Some architects design such fun, impossible shapes that structural engineers have to make work. And I felt like I shouldn't be like that. I should give them a particular volume that they'll also enjoy working on. I know a lot of architects who do different things in life. One became a painter; another became a stylist and I know people who are in the movie sector. It really gives you this substantial ground that you can do anything with.

You were also awarded the AIAA Henry Awards gold medal for your academic excellence. Having such an amazing award given to you for the excellence that you have portrayed, what made you change your mind about architecture?

I am a little bit—maybe more than a little bit—of a free-minded person. Independence is quite important to me. I do not mention this as a big deal, it's just my preference. So, when you do city planning and/



Pictured: Murat Germen with Jody Gibbs during construction workshop at MIT, Department of Architecture





Pictured: Murat Germen working in the field for Cappadox Festival 2024 at Mokissos ruins in Cappadocia (Photo credit: Gaye Gönülal)

or architecture, there's always big money involved. Imagine a doctor, when you go to a doctor, you never tell a doctor how to operate on you or how to cure you. You, in a very humble way, kindly ask the doctor to find a solution for your problem. In architecture or city planning, this is not the case. You are educated as a specialist, but your clients never take you as such. They have a defined agenda and they have very clear demands and they start to guide you. I'm not a very guidable guy. Sometimes I call this the ROM of my body. You cannot change that. You can change RAM, but ROM stays put. So, this is why I said maybe I should turn my best hobby into the center of my life because my options when I came back to Türkiye were designing shopping malls, residences, or skyscrapers. I don't like skyscrapers at all. Manhattan in New York City has a high-rise character and you cannot complain as this is the norm in NYC. Maybe Hong Kong, too. But, most of the other cities do not need skyscrapers. Most of them are half-vacant buildings, they never get full. That's a fact. It's overbuilding. You don't need them. Now there are these co-working spaces where you can hire a room or even a part of a desk, not a flat in a skyscraper. I am very happy about this development. I was in one of them lately. I took my students there (CoBAC Workspace). We need humbleness in the world, not over-consumption. So, I said no, this is not what I'm born for. I thought, why don't I reduce scale so that I feel more comfortable, more independent? I also don't have a desire for non-stop growth and becoming very rich. I'm not interested in richness, luxury, vanity, etc. Of course, I have to have enough means to live as I want, but I never dreamed of earning more than I need. This is why I always keep the scale small.

By the way, there are these groups of people now in Türkiye who have intentions of taking design services to people who cannot afford these services. They make a living otherwise. But they help people who do not have access to decent design services. For instance, there's this group whose name is Herkes için Mimarlık, which translates to Architecture for All. They did great stuff after the earthquake. There's another association called Mekanda Adalet Derneği. The English name is the Center for Spatial Justice. They recently started this place called Postane, and they're graduates of our school, Sabancı University. I really respect what they do. So if at the time there were such groups when I came back to Türkiye, I would probably join one of them and continue to be an architect.

What are some of your achievements that you can tell us?

Maybe I can express my feelings about the pathway I chose, instead of adding to the destruction - of course, I am also a consumer, and I'm

"One particular advantage of photography is that I can attract people's attention to particular global problems by creating works of documentary nature. In certain cases, you just do it to enjoy, to satisfy yourself. But, in others, which happens to be more documentary works, you work on what bugs you, and what bothers you, and you eagerly share it with people."

trying to be careful about my level of consumption. Maybe not to the extreme point, but I think I'm doing my part in a way. For instance, seven families, including ours, came together and started this farm where we do real organic farming. We are still in the city, but the farm is close, a two-hour driving distance from Istanbul. It's at this place called Kerpe, which is a coastal town of Kandira that belongs to Kocaeli. Taking the upper northern Marmara Highway takes about 2 hours to go there. There we have solar panels for electricity, which on cloudy days becomes problematic. The water comes from the ground. So we are in a stealth mode to preserve energy and water. When we go back to the city where we have limitless electricity or relatively limitless water, we still keep the same attitude. I'm very careful about conserving water. We collect domestic non-chemical wastewater and use it in the toilet or sometimes water the plants depending on the contamination level of the water. I turn all possible lamps down or all of our light bulbs are LED so they consume less energy. I have a four-legged daughter. She's a golden retriever. I love her so much. Of course, we need poop bags for her. What I do is there's already a lot of plastic coming in, like wrap papers or plastic bags, I reuse them so we don't buy extra plastic bags for this purpose. This summarizes the way I am trying to live, and this is why I am happy with the path I chose I can keep myself small because I am already ready to become small and more independent. I think I made the right decision.

What are the best works that you have achieved?

To me, the whole thing works as an entity. So I wouldn't pick up one and put it in a higher position. They are the stepping stones that form



Pictured: Murat Germen's solo exhibition Istanbul Then and Now at Aga Khan Museum, Toronto 2016

"To me, the whole thing works as an entity. So I wouldn't pick up one and put it in a higher position. They are the stepping stones that form a particular stairway going up or down. It doesn't matter because they take you somewhere. I'm trying to make it parallel to my stance in general in life."

a particular stairway going up or down. It doesn't matter because they take you somewhere. I'm trying to make it parallel to my stance in general in life. Maybe some people have not seen this or they have not looked at One particular advantage of photography is that I can attract people's attention to particular global problems by creating works of documentary nature. In certain cases, you just do it to enjoy, to satisfy yourself. But, in others, which happens to be more documentary works, you work on what bugs you, and what bothers you, and you eagerly share it with people. Maybe some people have not seen this or have not looked at it from my point of view. I call this CSI documentation because there is a particular sort of crime going on in over-urbanization. That's usually called an urban crime. Some of them have already been built and so the damage is done, but at least, the photos enable me to say "Hey, this is the documentation of the crime as precedent. Don't do it again."

Which one would be your proudest one?

My intention for my work is to exhibit publicly more than I have been able to do so far. For instance, one of the exhibitions I loved very much was exhibited in Beşiktaş Square. That was during a festival called Photo Istanbul in the year 2014. The work was shown on large transportation containers in Beşiktaş Square for about a month and a half. Instead of a few people or tens of people in a gallery or hundreds or thousands of people at a museum; ten thousand and maybe even in certain times of a day such as the rush hour, a hundred thousand people saw the work in Beşiktaş. They took selfies in front of it. They posted it on social media. It was, I think, one of the best interactions so far. The other was an exhibition on the hydroelectric power plants in Türkiye and the damage they cause to nature. My wife and I traveled maybe half of Türkiye to go to different locations where hydroelectric



*Pictured: Murat Germen's solo exhibition **Fezeyan** at Ferda Art Platform (Copyright, Murat Germen)*

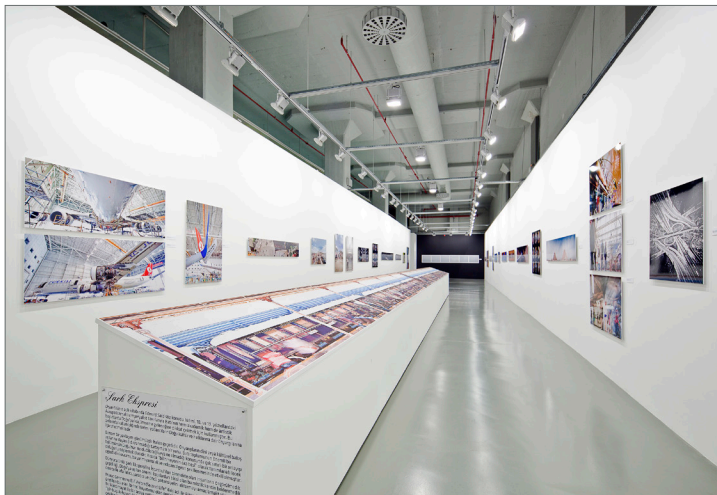
power plants were too many and they turned white waters into stagnant bodies of water where other types of insects were born and damaged the local flora. When you disrupt the system, the fauna is also badly influenced. It was the year 2015 and it was exhibited at this gallery called Milli Reasürans Galerisi in Teşvikiye. The press had a very rich palette and many different types of newspapers of different political tendencies. I interviewed ten different newspapers. Two universities and four high schools held classes in the gallery. It was probably the most interactive exhibition with one small addition. I had very simple prints in order to avoid lavishness that would create a distraction. They were the opposite of the "untouchable precious artwork" sort of thing. I also left white spaces on the prints and I hung separate pieces of blank white paper. They were supposed to write on these papers. They were expected to interact and there was a lot of interaction. I guess in that sense it is probably the best exhibition with plenty of interaction with people.

How did you decide to apply for the Fulbright Program?

I started the university in 1983, I graduated in 1987. Then in the second year of my university education or the beginning of my third year, I saw a Fulbright poster and thought it would be a good idea to follow that. I changed my strategy because I have the potential to work hard, but I'm also a practical guy in the sense that if I don't have a particular aim that will require a high GPA, I would like to get the top grades from the courses I loved, and for all the other courses, I would just study enough to pass. But when I saw the Fulbright poster, it very clearly stated that GPA was important. So then I started to work hard. The last two years of my ITU education, I worked really hard. This hard work made me graduate as the top graduating student from ITU.

Could you talk about your Fulbright experience? What did you do there? What did you expect and what did you find?

Actually, Fulbright was Fulbright and MIT was MIT. To tell the truth, I was not expecting much. I sort of knew what I was going to face. I was feeling very good and very excited. This gave me a feeling of responsibility because I was offered a great opportunity and it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I just took it very seriously, worked hard, and to tell the truth, I didn't do outings very frequently. I didn't have a nightlife that I preserved at all times. Of course, I went from Türkiye, I liked socializing. But especially the first two years, I basically did not socialize very much because MIT was a highly demanding school to attend. Fortunately, I did another exchange within the exchange and I represented MIT at UC Berkeley for a semester. So there was this exchange of UC Berkeley and MIT students. That was



*Pictured: Murat Germen's solo exhibition, **Yol** at Istanbul Modern, 2010*



a great experience. UC Berkeley was quite different than MIT in many ways. I found what I was looking for: a great combination of creativity and engineering.

Did you meet any people who became important to you?

I should mention one man. I can easily call him my life mentor. There is this architect whose name is Jody Gibbs. We lost him recently. He's this hard-core socialist architect. At MIT, in between two semesters, there is this period called the Independent Activities Period (IAP). There are a lot of postings, and I saw this great poster about a 'Hands-on Construction Workshop'. I thought it was a great opportunity because we always design and draw but we never build anything. To know about materials and processes, you need to construct something. I attended this workshop. And I'm glad I did because Jody was an amazing guy. We worked on a fantastic structure together, which stood very strong. We tried different construction types. Then, when I graduated, I found that architecture jobs were very scarce. I went to two offices in Boston where MIT was. They were ready to accept me for a year because practical training is for one year. But I did not like the job because I asked them, "Hey, I've come, but what shall I be doing?" And they just said, CAD work, construction drawings, and I thought this was very boring. So, I immediately called Jody and said, "Hey, Jody, I graduated. Can you offer me a job for a year?" And he said, "I cannot pay you much, but I'll give you food and accommodation and \$900 pocket money", which at the time, was not bad at all. So I could even save about \$100 a month. We did amazing stuff together. He was a guy who always designed for the needy.

We did a design for Hispanics. We did design for a Native American tribe. So I got to know a Native American tribe called Tohono O'odham. I still remember the name which means "the people of the desert." We designed an elder's center for them. Jody sent me to Tucson Public Library in Arizona. He said, we are going to do a building for these guys, so study them very carefully. I went to the library back and forth for a month. It was like the continuation of school in a way. I prepared 20 large sheets about who they were and the sort of architecture they had. It was an unforgettable experience. Jody was a very dear guy. This happened thanks to my Fulbright scholarship because this is how I got to know him.

Thinking retrospectively, how has the Fulbright program affected your career and contributed to the person you are now today?

It helped me to generate certain concepts or believe in certain concepts that I really value. For instance, loyalty, integrity, teamwork, collaboration, meritocracy, honesty, and humbleness. It gave me enough self-confidence to look for these in my life as much as possible. Obviously, you always fail in certain things, but at least keep the failures to the minimum and keep your integrity. That is what I care about.

What makes you happy and what inspires you in your job?

What makes me happy is the fact that I made the right decision. I found something that I am happy with. To tell the truth, one of my

"It [Fulbright] helped me to generate certain concepts or believe in certain concepts that I really value. For instance, loyalty, integrity, teamwork, collaboration, meritocracy, honesty, and humbleness. It gave me enough self-confidence to look for these in my life as much as possible."



Pictured: Murat Germen's solo exhibition at Antalya Culture and Art Museum, 2020

deep failings is that I am not a crisis manager. I get paralyzed. I am not good at solving crises. So, I said, maybe this is another reason why I did not do city planning or architecture because they are all about crisis solving or crisis management. At least I was able to find my weakness and just eliminate it. When you reduce the scale, you can eliminate or decrease crises too. When crises happen on the small scale I work, they happen to be manageable since they involve only myself. I think if you are content with yourself, you generate enough peace and mutual respect with people whom you collaborate with. This includes also my life partner, my wife. Everybody values love a lot, but I value respect more than love. When you respect something or somebody, you automatically love this something and somebody because respect is the ground for love. When I respect, I love.

You are also teaching at Sabanci University, so you are surrounded by students, and you know the student perspective as well. Do you have any advice for students and scholars who want to apply for Fulbright?

I always pass the incoming opportunities to all my students and I have thought about this and found just one thing: Just do it!



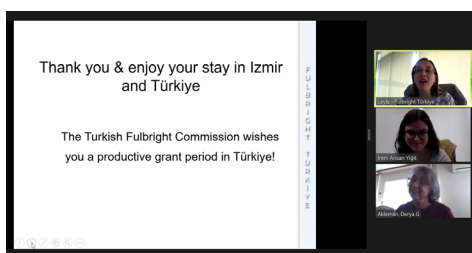
American Programs

American Programs welcomed Distinguished Scholar Prof. Mehmet Alper Şahiner, Seton Hall University, NJ, and Senior Researcher Dr. Derya Güven Akleman, Texas A&M University, TX in December 2023. In Türkiye, Prof. Şahiner specializes in material science and is affiliated with Gebze Technical University, and Dr. Akleman works in biostatistics and is affiliated with Ege University School of Medicine. We wish both our grantees a productive grant period. With the beginning of the spring semester, Senior Lecturer Dr. Christopher Walsh, and Turkish Universities Master's Program Renewal Grantees Amna Ahmad, Jane Bragdon,

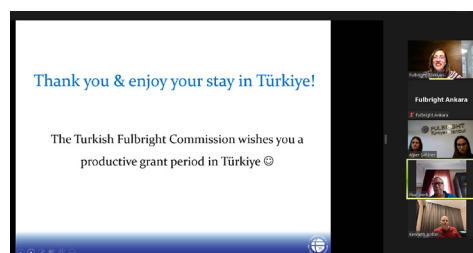
and Laurel Jarombek have completed their grant periods. Dr. Walsh, who was hosted by Başkent University in Ankara, returned to the U.S. while our new Fulbright Master's Program alumni continued their studies in Istanbul, working towards their degrees. Congratulations to all our brand-new alumni for successfully completing their Fulbright grants!

On February 1st we welcomed Senior Lecturer Prof. Kenneth Ardon, Senior Researchers Dr. Paul Work, and Dr. Somayeh Asadi. Prof. Ardon is teaching Economics at Middle East Technical University in Ankara. Dr. Work, who

specializes in coastal engineering is researching at Izmir Institute of Technology, and Dr. Asadi, an energy engineer, at Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul. Our Greece -Türkiye Joint Award Grantee Caitlin Mims, who arrived from Greece to continue her research on Middle Byzantine amulets, is affiliated with Marmara University in Istanbul. All grantees were introduced to Türkiye and their grant with an online initial orientation program. Istanbul grantees attended the online orientation program from our Istanbul Office. We wish all our grantees success during this semester.



Pictured: 2023-2024 Senior Researcher Dr. Derya Akleman being hosted online!



Pictured: 2023-2024 Spring Semester incoming grantees during their online initial orientation.



Pictured: 2023-2024 Greece – Türkiye Joint Award Grantee Caitlin Mims (left) and Senior Researcher Dr. Somayeh Asadi visiting our Istanbul Office on 2 February 2024

Mid-Year Progress Meeting

U.S. Scholar and Student grantees came together in Istanbul on January 12, 2024, for the Mid-Year Progress Meeting. We had the whole day to enjoy discussions

around the diverse research topics presented by the grantees. Executive Director Prof. Aydınlı addressed the group and referring to the 75th anniversary of the Turkish Fulbright Commission noted that this was a great cause for celebration, emphasizing the importance of Fulbright in bilateral Türkiye-U.S. relations. On a more personal level, Prof. Aydınlı pointed

out that everyone who came to Türkiye has benefitted, given that Türkiye is the type of country that rewards and advises grantees to turn their Türkiye experience into a lifelong companionship. Mr. Marvin E. Alfaro, Cultural Attaché from the U.S. Consulate General Istanbul also joined us in the afternoon. We thank our grantees for their participation and engagement.



Pictured: 2023-2024 U.S. Scholar / Student Mid-Year Progress Meeting, 12 January 2024, Istanbul



Pictured: Prof. Ersel Aydınlı and Mr. Marvin Alfaro sharing their views during the 2023-2024 U.S. Scholar / Student Mid-Year Progress Meeting



Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting



We came together with our ETA grantees in Ankara at the Fulbright Commission's Ankara Office on February 16, 2024. The meeting was organized in the form of workshops, designed to receive grantee feedback. ETAs placed all over Türkiye came together to discuss their various experiences in their host universities and cities. Many useful suggestions came out of the discussions, which will provide valuable



input to Program improvement. During the meeting, we hosted Dr. Nur Akkuş-Çakır, a former Fulbright FLTA grantee to hold a session on designing game-enhanced language teaching and English Language Fellow (ELF) Annelise Marshall, placed at Gazi University, who talked to the ETAs about career development and using Fulbright experience in job searches. Executive Director Prof. Ersel Aydınlı addressed the ETAs, noting the developmental nature of the ETA Program, emphasizing how the Program is designed to ultimately contribute to good long-term

relations between Turkish and American societies. Ms. Gabrielle M. Price, Public Diplomacy Officer from the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, also pointed out that people-to-people ties are the backbone of overall bilateral relations, and talked about the important role of ETAs in contributing to shaping strategies.

Pictured above: The 2023-2024 ETA cohort came together for the Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting held in Ankara

Pictured above left: 2023-2024 ETAs pictured during the workshops

2023-2024 Distinguished Scholar Prof. Dr. Mehmet Alper Şahiner's Research Activities

Fulbright Türkiye is excited to host a Distinguished Scholar grantee for the first time this academic year. Prof. Şahiner, who will be in Türkiye for 6 months has visited and collaborated with various institutions. On February 14, 2024, Prof. Şahiner visited the Laser Technology Research and Applications Center (LATARUM) at Kocaeli University. Prof. Şahiner was joined by researchers from Gebze Technical University. The director of LATARUM, Prof. Ersin Kayahan, provided detailed information about the Center's history and highly advanced technological applications for academia and industry.

We had the opportunity to host Prof. Şahiner in Ankara when he came to Bilkent

University to give an invited seminar at the Physics Department on March 20, 2024. Prof. Şahiner was given a detailed tour of the Bilkent University Nanotechnology Center (UNAM) and had all-day meetings with the Physics Department faculty. Prof.

Şahiner also met with Associate Provost Prof. Dr. Mustafa Pınar, a Fulbright alumnus. While in Ankara, Prof. Şahiner had a chance to visit Anıtkabir and pay his respect to Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Türkiye.



Pictured (L-R): Dr. Mehmet Sezer, Prof. Ersin Kayahan, Prof. M. Alper Şahiner, graduate students Seda Kol and Fatmanur Kocaman Kabil.

We would like to congratulate Prof. Şahiner who has submitted a research proposal to conduct X-ray Absorption spectroscopy experiments on Solid Oxide Fuel Cell Materials at the Brookhaven National Laboratory NSLS-II in New York with collaborators from Gebze Technical University. The proposal has been accepted with good ratings and the research project experiments are expected to start in July 2024 at the NSLS-II.

Pictured left: Poster announcing 2023-2024 Distinguished Scholar Prof. Şahiner's Seminar at Bilkent University, Department of Physics

Pictured right: 2023-2024 Distinguished Scholar Prof. Şahiner on his visit to Anıtkabir



Conferences and Seminars Attended / Hosted by Grantees:

Mediterranean Research Seminar



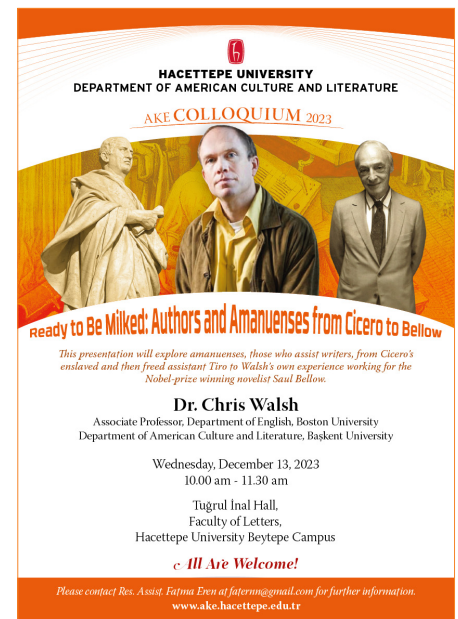
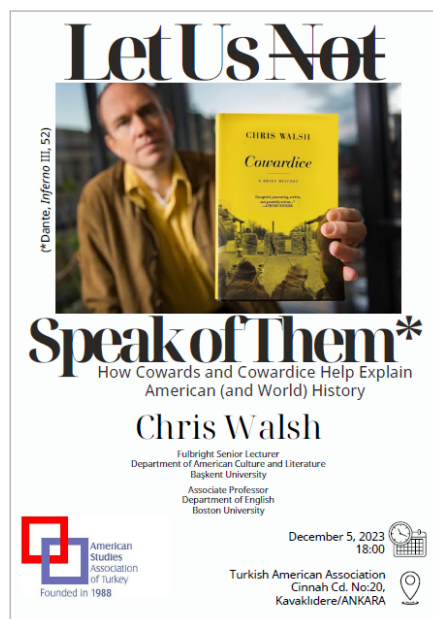
2023-2024 Postdoctoral Grantee Dr. Patrick Lewis and Student Researcher David Meza had the opportunity to attend the first Fulbright-sponsored 4-day Mediterranean research seminar in Alicante, Spain, hosted between November 16-19, 2023. Both grantees described the seminar as a very beneficial professional experience. We thank the U.S. – Spain Fulbright Commission for hosting the event and providing the opportunity for our grantees to attend.

Pictured: 2023-2024 Student Researcher David Meza during his poster presentation.

2023-2024 Senior Lecturer Dr. Christopher Walsh Hosted Two Very-Well Attended Events

Senior Lecturer Dr. Christopher Walsh talked about his book "Cowardice" at the seminar organized at the Turkish American Association Center on December 5, 2023. The seminar, which was both very thought-provoking and entertaining, was attended by the Fulbright Commission's American Programs team as well.

During a colloquium at Hacettepe University, a big crowd turned up to be part of an intriguing talk by Dr. Walsh, which in his own words proved to be a fun event.



Pictured: Posters of events hosted by 2023-2024 Senior Lecturer Dr. Christopher Walsh



2024 Fulbright Seminar on the European Union and NATO



Pictured: 2023-2024 Master's Program Renewal Grantee Amna Ahmad during the visit to the European Court of Justice

Hosted by the Fulbright Brussels in Commission and sponsored by the Turkish Fulbright Commission, 2023-2024 Turkish Programs Master's Program Renewal Grantee Amna Ahmad attended the annual Fulbright Seminar on the European Union and NATO. The Seminar, held 20-24 February 2024, presented the opportunity to Fulbright grantees from across Europe to attend. During the Seminar grantees explored the structure and function of the EU and NATO and learned how these institutions affect their academic, professional, and personal lives. Here are Amna's comments about the event:

"It was an invaluable experience, from meeting Prime Minister Luc Frieden to U.S. Ambassador to NATO Julianne Smiths, to represent Fulbright Türkiye at this year's seminar. As migration and displacement continue to be a critical issue across the EU and Türkiye, I got to engage with speakers about ongoing challenges such as at the European Commission and future policy implications. We also visited the European Court of Justice, European Parliament, U.S. Mission to the EU, and NATO headquarters. It was amazing to see women in such demanding positions yet paving the way for future generations of women (and hopefully more women of color) to be a part of the change that is needed in upholding inclusive values in these institutions."



Pictured: 2024 EU-NATO Seminar attended by 2023-2024 Master's Program Renewal Grantee Amna Ahmad (fifth from left, front row)



Pictured right: 2023-2024 Master's Program Renewal Grantee Amna (third from right, front row) during the visit to NATO hosted by Nicola de Santis, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Head of the Engagements Section (5th from left, front row)

Seminar at Izmir Institute of Technology

2023-2024 Senior Researcher Dr. Paul Work gave a seminar to the Civil Engineering Department at Izmir Institute of Technology on February 21, 2024. Dr. Work reported the room being full and receiving a bunch of questions afterward! Congratulations to Dr. Work for hosting a successful seminar!

Pictured: 2023-2024 Senior Researcher Dr. Paul Work hosting a seminar at Izmir Institute of Technology



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Intercountry Travel Grant

Prof. Natalia Ermasova from Governors State University, IL, and 2023-2024 Fulbright U.S. Scholar to Hungary visited Başkent University, Ankara, Department of Management in the framework of the Fulbright Intercountry Travel grant that allows U.S. Scholar Fulbright Grantees in participating European countries to establish connections with fellow scholars, colleagues, and institutions in their academic field in Türkiye. During Prof. Ermasova's visit from 12-14 November 2023, seminars were organized at Başkent University addressing U.S. migration

policies and transformative leadership. The seminar on migration provided a platform for discussing migration-related issues experienced by Türkiye and the U.S. and allowed for a comparative analysis. The transformational leadership seminar looked at methods of development of personal leadership skills and contributed to the level of understanding of management students on this topic. This visit also provided an opportunity to explore future collaboration between all parties.

Pictured: Intercountry Travel Grant awardee Prof. Natalia Ermasova (2nd from left) visiting Başkent University



Make it Live! A Specialist Visit to Yaşar University

Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Dede from Hartford University visited Yaşar University in Izmir as a Fulbright Specialist within the framework of the project "Make it Live: Develop a Career in the Music Business." Mehmet Dede, an award-winning music curator, festival producer, and tour promoter was hosted by the Music and Business Administration Departments of Yaşar University.

arts management experience in the U.S. with Turkish students, professionals, and academics in the number of events he participated in. One of the highlights was a radio podcast hosted by RADYU, Yaşar University radio on 21 November 2023. The Podcast can be found here:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/yaar-niversitesi/episodes/Do--Mehmet-Dede-ile-Mzik-Yneticilii-ve-New-York-zerine-e2c7d9j/a-aakvbp8>



During this student-centered Project held between 13 November – 15 December 2023, the Specialist addressed various aspects of entrepreneurship, management, and organization of different events, providing valuable insight into the changing landscape in music, arts, and more. Given that the U.S. music industry is the largest in the world, Mehmet Dede shared his performing

Pictured: Specialist Mehmet Dede (pictured left) during a Radio Podcast at RADYU, the Yaşar University radio

Site-visit to Sivas by American Programs

Pictured: 2023-2024 ETA Laura McDowell (left) and American Programs Officer Leyla Akşin during a site visit to Sivas

American Programs Officer Leyla Akşin visited Sivas on 19 January 2024 and met with 2023-2024 ETA Laura McDowell at a café on the campus of Sivas Cumhuriyet University, where Laura is placed. The two enjoyed a chat about Laura's experience in Sivas and at the School of Foreign Languages over a nice meal and cup of coffee.



Site Visit to Kayseri

İrem Arıcan Yiğit, who in the capacity of Acting Advising Coordinator visited Kayseri in the framework of our extensive outreach activities, found the opportunity to get together with 2023-2024 ETA grantee Nicolas Fay placed at Erciyes University. İrem—who is also assisting American Programs this academic year—and Nicolas

enjoyed a long chat about teaching, the host city and university experience, food, impressions on Türkiye, and so on while sharing a tray of “mantı,” the signature food of Kayseri. Nicolas was officially introduced to Kayseri mantı on this occasion and İrem’s visit was very productive!

Pictured: İrem Arıcan Yiğit (left) and 2023-2024 ETA Nicolas Fay in Kayseri



FY22 Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award (DDRA) Grantee Ashley Cercone is wrapping up her grant period in Türkiye

“With the onset of COVID, my research came to a screeching halt, but finally, this past May, I returned to my second home, Türkiye, under the auspices of a Fulbright Hays DDRA fellowship. Since arriving in Ankara, I have been intensively learning about geology, examining Early Bronze Age pottery (3000-2000 BCE) from the archaeological site of Küllüoba in Eskişehir, and collaborating with scholars from Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi’s Geological Engineering Department and Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi’s Archaeology Department. As part of my doctoral research, I have made thin and thick sections to be studied under the microscope, as well as crushed and powdered samples for mineralogical and chemical analyses. Through these various methods, I aimed to learn about the raw resources, like clay, rocks, and plants, potters used to make ceramics, and with what technologies, such as molds or the potter’s wheel.

To learn about the raw resources that would have been available to potters in the past, in August 2023, I completed a geological survey of Eskişehir using a new digital documentation system, and with the aid of archaeologists from the Küllüoba Excavations and geologists from ODTÜ. During this survey, we collected clay, rock, soil, and mudbrick samples to be compared to my ceramic pieces from Küllüoba. While these samples were primarily taken for laboratory analyses, I was inspired to experiment with them outside the lab. Every Monday night, I work with a local potter to create ceramics using the raw resources I collected in Eskişehir. Most notably, we have made several glazes and slips using crushed rocks and clay.

Although my final results are unavailable, I have been extremely fortunate to share my preliminary ones twice in Türkiye. I gave a presentation to the Küllüoba Excavation team in August and at the 43rd International Excavation, Research and Archaeometry Symposium, which was held at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University in October. Since it is becoming increasingly difficult for archaeologists in Türkiye to travel to international conferences, I believe it is pivotal for me to share my results while I am still in Türkiye.

While most of my time is spent in ODTÜ’s Clay Mineralogy Laboratory, I have been lucky to explore cities outside of Ankara,

newly renovated museums and sites, and archaeological excavations over the weekends. Over the past few months, I have visited the recently reopened Archaeology Museum in Istanbul, the Underwater Archaeology Museum in Bodrum, and the Roman Baths in Yozgat. I additionally visited the cities of Amasra, Adana, Yozgat, Şanlıurfa, and Gaziantep, as well as called to see recent discoveries at the archaeological site of Ulucak Höyük in İzmir, which coincided with the second annual Menemen Çömlek Festivali. Of all, I have been fortunate to learn how modern-day çini is made from potters in Istanbul and receive a private tour of the newly excavated site of Karahantepe.”



Pictured: FY22 DDRA Grantee Ashley Cercone presenting her findings



Pictured: Ashley Cercone at the Pottery Festival in Menemen

Turkish Programs

Initial Orientations for the 2024-2025 Academic Year Grants

The orientations for the newly selected candidates from all categories continued during the winter and early spring of 2024.

We met with our 2024-2025 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program cohort on January 5, 2024, for an in-person orientation followed by lunch.

Pictured: 2024-2025 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program nominees at the Initial Orientation held at the Commission's Head Office in Ankara



The FLTA Orientation was followed by a meeting with the 2024-2025 Postdoctoral Program candidates on March 7, 2024, Visiting Student Researcher (VSR) Program candidates on March 8, 2024, and Community College Initiative (CCI) Program candidates on March 22, 2024, in Ankara while a virtual orientation was organized with the Visiting Scholar Program candidates on April 4, 2024.



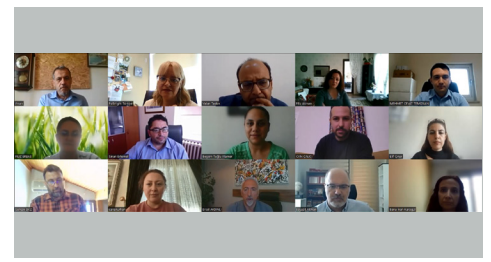
Pictured: 2024-2025 Postdoctoral Program grantees at the Initial Orientation held at the Commission's Head Office in Ankara



Pictured: 2024-2025 Visiting Student Researcher (VSR) Program grantees at the Initial Orientation held at the Commission's Head Office in Ankara



Pictured: 2024-2025 Community College Initiative (CCI) Program grantees at the Initial Orientation held at the Commission's Head Office in Ankara



Pictured: 2024-2025 Visiting Scholar Program candidates at the virtual Initial Orientation

Application Period for the 2025 - 2026 Grants

The deadline for application for the 2025-2026 Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program is **June 26, 2024**.

Please visit the Commission's official website for more information:

www.fulbright.org.tr



Stories from Our Turkish Fulbright Grantees

"A Trip to Guatemala"

İlayda Onaran

**2022-2023 Master's Program
Grantee**

*Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul /
Northeastern University*

I remember my personal statement writing period when applying for the Fulbright scholarship. Back then, I mentioned how I love traveling and exploring natural beauties. The reason behind my application for the Fulbright journey was to expand my knowledge of renewable energy systems for protecting nature, the environment, and preserving it for the future. I am fortunate to have been selected as a Fulbright recipient back in 2022, and I have almost completed my 1.5 years in the USA. While pursuing my master's degree in Boston, nothing kept me away from traveling around and being in the most natural places in the world I wouldn't have imagined being.

My urge to travel to natural places led me to visit Guatemala during last year's spring break. It was my first solo backpacking trip in Central America. I booked my first overnight

hiking trip without any doubts right after I got my tickets. Hiking for 6 hours, covering 8 kilometers on Volcano Acatenango, which stands at an elevation of 3976 meters, and staying overnight to witness the Volcán de Fuego was one of the most memorable and thrilling experiences of my life. I wouldn't have imagined myself hiking for that long and staying overnight in the forest, but I am

glad that I did. I thank myself for this amazing experience. I encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone and create meaningful memories. As you can see from the pictures below, I witnessed one of the most beautiful natural events. Witnessing volcanic activity with my own eyes made me feel fortunate. It made everything even more mind-blowing and unreal. I am grateful that my path crossed with Fulbright, and this journey gives me the chance to connect even more with nature in extreme ways. Lastly, I want to tell everyone to 'Keep Exploring'.



Pictured: İlayda at Volcán de Acetanango, at 3550 meters



"Hi!"

Aydın Kaan Şenel

**2023-2024 Master's Program
Grantee**

*Boğaziçi University, Istanbul / University
of Wisconsin-Madison*



My name is Aydın Kaan Şenel. I am a first-year master's student in the Educational Policy Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Currently, I am studying the interaction between education policy and child well-being, and education in emergencies from a qualitative perspective and child's standpoint.

As a person who has a psychology and philosophy background and quantitative research skills, I had concerns about both changing my department and research orientation at the same time. However, during the six months that I have had in my graduate program so far, I learned that pursuing a degree is fundamentally about learning and becoming. I found myself here surrounded by an international atmosphere, an exceptional advisor and department, and an incredible cohort who walked me through exploring different ways of looking at problems and doing science. During my time here, I had a chance to meet people from over 50 countries, I had a chance to visit New York City to see my fellow Fulbright friends and visit Atlanta thanks to the Fulbright Enrichment Program. As a master's student, for the first time in my life, I had a chance to work as a teaching

assistant, and as a person who dreams about becoming an academician, this was an invaluable experience.

This photo is from our department's (Educational Policy Studies) annual conference on education policy. Although I have not collected data for my master's thesis yet, I had a chance to present a review titled Understanding Turkish Education System within Neoliberal and Neoconservative Frameworks in the Education Transformation: Beyond the Global North Perspective Panel Session. After completing my master's degree here, my aim is to continue with the PhD. Although being a grad student away from home comes with some challenges, I think it is an experience full of learning – not only about the world and issues you are interested in but also about yourself. Thank you for the Fulbright Program for offering this opportunity of learning and discovering.

Pictured: Aydın Kaan presenting his review at the 2024 EPS Conference: Advocacy, Education Policy, Social Transformation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

"We are a Fulbright Family"

Asiye Doğan Uçar

2023-2024 Visiting Student
Researcher (VSR) Program
Grantee

Erciyes University, Kayseri / University of
Texas at San Antonio

Pictured: Asiye (first from the right) with her husband and daughter on New Year's Eve in San Antonio, Texas

Coming towards the end of my Visiting Student Researcher Grant period, I often find myself looking back and reflecting on this amazing journey I took with my family, my husband Emre, and our daughter, Zeynep. We have been fortunate to experience a multitude of enriching opportunities that have not only bolstered my professional and academic development as a language teaching

researcher but have also profoundly impacted the lives of my family members. The Fulbright grant has served as a catalyst for personal growth and exploration for each of us.

For my husband, the grant has opened doors to a language course that has not only enhanced his linguistic abilities but has also facilitated his integration into the cultural landscape of our new home, San Antonio, TX. He has also been able to get a job enabling him to be involved in various social and professional interactions. Similarly, our daughter, currently navigating the challenges and joys of eighth grade in a new educational system, has benefited immensely from her year abroad. In addition to the academic benefits, the grant has given her a chance to enter a new social environment, fostering friendships and connections that have enriched her middle school experience. As she prepares for the transition to high school, she feels ready to explore other opportunities that would have seemed beyond her reach earlier.

When I look at this photo, I see us not only entering a new year but also entering a new chapter in our lives. We look forward to carrying the memories made and connections forged during this transformative period with us as we embark on that next chapter of our lives, forever grateful for the support and opportunities afforded to us by this invaluable grant.



"American Association for Applied Linguistics Annual Conference 2024: Connecting with Fellow Scholars in the United States"

Büşra Elmaderesi

2023-2024 Foreign Language
Teaching Assistant (FLTA)
Program Grantee

TED University, Ankara / Michigan State
University

I am delighted to announce that I am filled with pride for having the opportunity to present at the "Graduate Research Roundtable" during the AAAL 24th Annual Conference in Houston, Texas. It was an enriching experience to connect with fellow graduate scholars from across the globe, especially those who are researcher-teachers in the United States. I have established a deep interest in conducting research and sharing insights about Turkish Second Language (L2) acquisition since I teach Turkish as a Foreign Language at Michigan State University.

In line with my curiosity, I participated in an academic conference where I gave a short presentation entitled "Enhancing Language Learning in Less Commonly Taught Languages Classrooms: A Case Study of Technology Implementation in Turkish Instruction." Although my research is still in the planning phase, I received valuable feedback from

fellow scholars who joined my roundtable session, guiding me on how to develop a well-structured research framework for exploring technology enhancement among Turkish learners in the US context.

Prior to the conference, I connected with two other Turkish Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs), Damla Aydın from the University of Washington, Seattle, and Esmâ Masca from the University of Oregon, Eugene. It's noteworthy that this year's AAAL 24th Annual Conference saw a significant representation of Turkish FLTAs presenting at the roundtable. Despite being cultural ambassadors, it was an immensely fruitful platform where the three of us were recognized as Turkish Fulbrighters, showcasing our dedication to scholarly endeavors. As our esteemed first leader remarks, "Turkish people are hardworking and intelligent," and indeed, we displayed a very scholarly excellence.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University for their support in covering my travel expenses and providing funding opportunities (\$500), without which my conference attendance would not have been possible. I highly recommend that future Turkish Foreign Language Teaching Assistants

(FLTAs) pursue conference opportunities and seek funding support. I am immensely grateful for the encouragement of my Fulbright program supervisor, Danielle Steider, and the director of the Asian Studies Center, Siddhart Chandra, who facilitated my participation in the conference without any expense.



Pictured: Büşra (first from the left) with FLTA grantee Damla Aydın, Fulbright alumna Assoc. Prof. Aysel Sarıcaoğlu Aygan, and FLTA grantee Esmâ Masca



"My Fulbright Academic Journey at Princeton"

Arzu Kurt

2023-2024 Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program Grantee

Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu / Princeton University

Pictured: The first group meeting (front row: l-r) Dr. Arzu Kurt, Eden Michaels, Tak-San Ho, Shaojun Gui, Katie Finneran (back row: l-r) Amr Sobeh, Peyman Azodi, Yiyu Chen, Katerina Kaneche, Benjamin Lienhard, Michael Kasprzak and Prof. Herschel Rabitz in the Frick Chemistry Laboratory

As a Fulbright Scholar, joining Professor Rabitz's research group at Princeton University has been a transformative experience, opening up a world of possibilities for me in the field of quantum computing. Our diverse and talented team, as captured in the group photo, is united by a shared passion for harnessing the power of quantum mechanics to solve real-world problems. Together, we are exploring the potential of quantum algorithms to revolutionize complex networks and

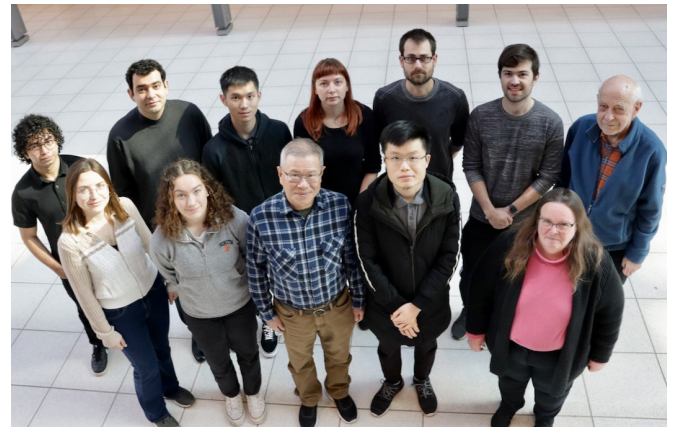
optimize transport efficiency as well as controlling the many-body systems.

Joining Professor Rabitz's research group has been an enriching experience, as it has exposed me to a wide range of cutting-edge research areas beyond my primary focus on quantum computing. The group's diverse expertise in physical chemistry and systems biology has broadened my understanding of the principles governing the control of quantum phenomena and the development of algorithms to guide experiments. One of the most exciting aspects of our work is the opportunity to test our algorithms on real quantum hardware devices. This allows us to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical implementation. The collaborative spirit within our group is truly remarkable, fostering an intellectually stimulating environment that drives innovation and growth.

Under Professor Rabitz's visionary leadership, we are not only conducting groundbreaking research but also acquiring valuable skills that will shape our future careers. The mentorship and support of my colleagues have been instrumental in

my development as a researcher. Being part of this group has provided me with incredible opportunities for professional growth.

As I continue my journey at Princeton, I am filled with excitement for the future, knowing that our work has the potential to revolutionize industries, from drug discovery to materials science and beyond. The bonds I have formed with my colleagues immortalized in this group photo, will last a lifetime. The impact of our work will continue to resonate long after my time here ends. This experience has been a quantum leap forward in my academic career, and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such groundbreaking research alongside the brilliant minds captured in this image.



"Looking for a Needle in a Haystack"

Egemen Yilgür

2023-2024 Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program Grantee

Yeditepe University, İstanbul / Library of Congress

When I applied for the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program to research at the John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress, I aimed to fill gaps in the historiography of Ottoman informal settlements. These settlements have been one of the most overlooked aspects of our modernization history. Apart from my recent publications, few studies mention the presence of shantytowns or tin-can neighborhoods in Ottoman cities. My previous studies in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul and Sofia and oral history interviews revealed that informal urbanization became a significant urban issue for the Ottoman administration in the last quarter of the 19th century.

Following the suggestions of pioneer historical anthropologists, such as

Peter Burke, I assumed there could be relevant information in documents created by observers, including diplomats and travelers. The sense of routines could easily blind the locals, but outsiders could notice and document what was missed by the former, even if in a biased manner. My initial assumptions were correct, and documents of American



Pictured: Library of Congress

diplomats, newspapers published by the Levantines in the Ottoman Empire, and rare books, including testimonies of travelers, provided constructive evidence. The Library of Congress, the most extensive library in the US, gave me great opportunities to reach such sources.

Being involved in the scholarly community of the John W. Kluge Center was a great privilege that made my research more accessible. I was looking for a needle in a haystack and may not have found anything. Still, it would be great to have a Fulbright experience in D.C. and meet new colleagues

and current and former Fulbrighters attending the regular events organized by the NCAC Fulbright Association. After six months, which seemed like a decade, I have gained in-depth knowledge of my research topic. I feel fortunate to have been a Fulbrighter and part of the Kluge alum community.

"Exploring Educational Frontiers: My Fulbright TEA Journey at UW-Madison"

Özcan Çiçek

2022-2023 Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program Grantee

Bergama Mualla Ersezgin Ortaokulu, Izmir / University of Wisconsin-Madison

Pictured: "Field Experience in VAHS, Presentation Day, at the of program, Certification Ceremony with 21 colleagues from 17 countries"

My time at the University of Wisconsin, Madison as a participant in the Fulbright TEA program was truly transformative. The program offered a diverse array of courses and educational opportunities that broadened my pedagogical horizons and enriched my professional growth.

The Fulbright TEA program courses covered a wide range of topics, including Media Literacy, Technology, Language Pedagogy, and Contemporary Issues in Education. These sessions provided invaluable insights into innovative teaching methods, cutting-edge educational technologies, and the latest trends in pedagogy. Additionally, engaging in Cultural Programs and activities allowed me to immerse myself in the vibrant cultural tapestry of Madison, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

One of the highlights of my TEA experience was the field experience at Verona Area High School (VAHS). Collaborating with colleagues from Slovakia and Uzbekistan, we had the opportunity to share aspects of our respective cultures and education systems with students at VAHS. I shared insights into our education system, highlighting innovative approaches and projects aimed at promoting 21st-century skills and environmental awareness.

For the culminating task of the program, I developed a multi-disciplinary project titled 'Keep it Clean, Keep it Green,' integrating themes of nature, environment, media literacy, and technology. This project not only showcased my creativity and passion for education but also served as a springboard for international collaboration through Erasmus+ and eTwinning initiatives.

The final presentations, where all participants shared their projects, were a testament to the collective creativity and dedication of the TEA cohort. It was inspiring to witness the diverse range of projects aimed at enhancing teaching excellence and fostering global citizenship.

In summary, my experience in Madison has been enlightening, exposing me to the community's vibrant spirit, prioritization of personal well-being, celebration of diversity, and the ongoing efforts to combat inequalities faced by marginalized groups. This experience has broadened my perspective on life and society. The Fulbright TEA Program's commitment to enhancing teaching excellence aligns perfectly with my career goals, as I've always been dedicated to improving my teaching practices. The opportunity to learn from and collaborate with esteemed educators worldwide was truly inspiring.



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Advising Program

Outreach Activities for Fulbright Grants

In December, the **Master's Grant and Ph.D. Grant** opened for applications. On the first day it opened, we organized a brief introduction webinar. It went so well that for the first time, we decided to organize another six webinars and two Instagram Q&A sessions. Students and alumni from undergraduate and graduate levels interested in pursuing their graduate studies in the US showed massive

interest in the webinars and sessions. The application deadline was March 18, 2024.

For this grant, we also organized four "How to Write an Effective Statement of Purpose" webinars to help applicants who have questions and need guidance about writing a statement of purpose for their grant application.

The **Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program** was announced on December 29, right before the New Year. We conducted the evaluation process in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Education. English teachers from Istanbul and Ankara were eligible to apply for this year's grant. There was great interest in the grant, and for the first time, we organized two webinars

to inform English teachers who teach at middle and high schools about the TEA grant. The application deadline for this grant was March 15, 2024.

Pictured: Ecem Mutlu presenting the TEA webinar

As a part of our new outreach plan, we also introduced Fulbright Grants in Türkiye to US scholars and students. We organized five webinars to different US universities to talk about various Fulbright grant opportunities in Türkiye and what our beautiful country can offer to those interested in studying, teaching, and researching here!

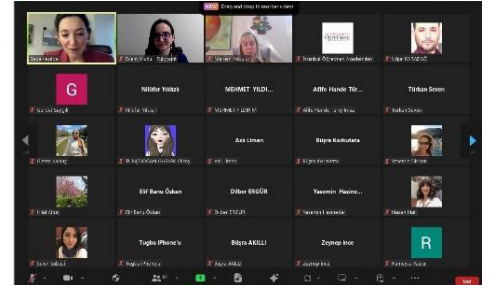
webinars. It was an amazing opportunity for both the webinar participants and for us to hear about our grantees' and alumni's Turkish Fulbright experience!

We talked about Fulbright grants in Türkiye and about Türkiye itself to Ohio State University, University of Arizona, University of North Carolina, San Diego

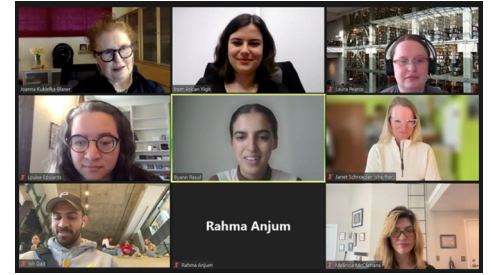
Pictured: İrem Arıcan Yiğit informing US scholars and students about the Fulbright Grants in Türkiye



Pictured: Seval Sır presenting the Master's & Ph.D. Grants webinar



State University, and Georgetown University. For some universities listed here, we represented the Turkish Fulbright Commission in the Fulbright Weeks they organize virtually.



The **Fulbright / Kennedy Center Fellowship for Performing Arts and Sciences** was open for applications for the first time this year. This grant opportunity was offered to a few Commissions, including the Turkish Fulbright Commission. We were thrilled to be one of the countries. The announcements were sent to universities, State Operas and Ballets, and State Theatres. Artists, scientists, and researchers showed great enthusiasm for this grant. Applications closed on March 15, 2024.

Online Advising Sessions are routinely carried out three times a week.

Both offices carried out document attestation of transcripts and diplomas on an appointment basis.

Outreach for Universities

Since COVID-19, we have conducted outreach activities online through university webinars. We started 2024 fresh and visited most of the institutions in person! We were so excited to meet the students and university representatives again. We aim to engage with as many students and researchers as possible!

For the outreach activities of the **Master's Grant and Ph.D. Grant**, we conducted 35 in-person visits to universities across Türkiye to inform the students about the Student Core Program grants. In addition to face-to-face seminars, 11 online webinars were organized for different universities.



Pictured: Seval Sır at Anadolu University



Pictured: Ecem Mutlu at Dokuz Eylül University

In the seminar and webinars we organized, we also invited and hosted alumni at our presentations. They shared their Fulbright experience with our prospective grantees.



Pictured above left: Doğa Demirhan at Bilkent University



Pictured below left: Müslüme Demir at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University



Pictured above right: Melike Sayoğlu at Erciyes University



Pictured below right: Mustafa Muhammet Öztürk at METU

Kırıkkale University II. Project Workshop

Ms. İrem Arıcan Yiğit attended the Kırıkkale University II Project Workshop, representing the Turkish Fulbright Commission and informing Kırıkkale University students and scholars about different Fulbright grants. The interest and attendance were satisfactory, and we left Kırıkkale with big smiles on our faces, hoping for future collaborations.

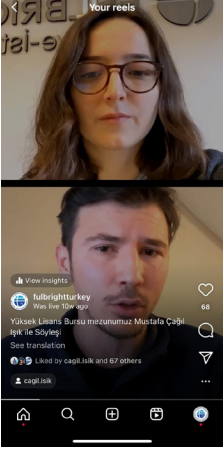
Pictured: İrem Arıcan Yiğit at Kırıkkale University II. Project Workshop



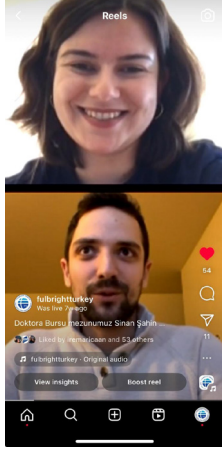
Instagram Live Interviews

Five live interviews were arranged with Master's and Ph.D. grant alumni from different fields. Our alumni shared their experiences with the application process, interviews, selecting a US university, and

their lives and studies in the US. A total of 8,448 participants viewed these sessions and asked questions about the grants, the Fulbright experience, and studying in the US.



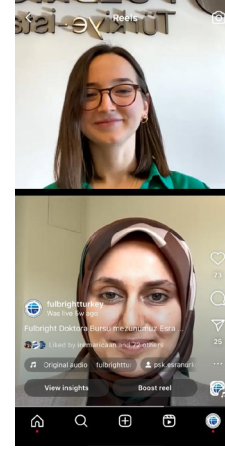
With Master's alumnus Mr. Mustafa Çağıl Işık



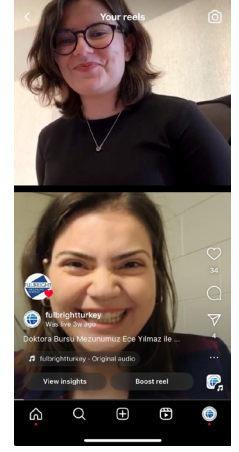
With Ph.D. alumnus Mr. Sinan Şahin Candan



With Master's alumna Ms. Fatmanur Banu Hayır



With Ph.D. alumna Ms. Esra Nur Küçük



With Ph.D. alumna Ms. Ece Yılmaz



EducationUSA Activities

In İzmir our advising team convened with other EducationUSA advisors across various cities in Türkiye, to exchange practices and enhance the strategic plan for the upcoming year. Ms. Gordana Mirchikj, Regional Manager for East, Central, and Southern Europe (REAC), participated in this session to offer her insights on Turkish students studying in the United States and their significance to U.S. higher education institutions.

Pictured: Left to right: Barış Mendoza, Marvin Alfaro, Seval Sir, Nathaniel Davis, İrem Arıcan Yiğit, Gordana Mirchikj, Aryani Manning, Tuba Bada, Naz Etçioğlu, Güldenur Collins and Deniz Can



Study in the USA Presentation at Saint Benoît High School

Our advisors in the Istanbul office, Ms. Seval Sir and Ms. Ecem Mutlu, gave a presentation to students who are in their sophomore year at Saint Benoît High School. Ms. Sir and Ms. Mutlu talked about the application process of U.S. universities

and the steps the students need to take for a stronger application. Around 160 students participated in the event. After our presentation, the students and their parents shared their questions with us.

Pictured: Education Adviser, Ms. Ecem Mutlu on stage



Study Abroad Fairs

Ms. İrem Arıcan Yiğit represented the Turkish Fulbright Commission and Education USA in Ankara at the Akare and IEFT Fairs in March while Ms. Seval Sır and Ms. Ecem Mutlu took part at the Istanbul Akare and IEFT Fairs.

had a chance to present to those interested in studying in the US and applying for Fulbright grants in Ankara and İstanbul.

Approximately 1,000 brochures, flyers, and promotional materials were distributed to the fair attendees.

There were 180 attendees at the Istanbul booths and 265 at the Ankara Fairs. We also

Pictured far right: İrem Arıcan Yiğit at the Ankara Akare and IEFT Fairs

Pictured below and right: Seval Sır and Ecem Mutlu at the Istanbul Akare and IEFT Fairs



Eurie Eurasia Education Summit

From February 27th to 29th, our colleague, Ms. Seval Sır, represented our Istanbul Office at the prestigious Eurie Eurasia Education Summit held at the Lütfi Kırdar Convention Centre. This annual summit is renowned for its enriching exhibition and conference,

fostering invaluable connections and collaboration opportunities for all attendees. Ms. Sır had the privilege of engaging with numerous participants, effectively showcasing our Fulbright Grant Programs to an eager audience.

Webinars and Social Media Events

In order to apply for our grants, applicants are required to show a valid English exam result like TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE. Therefore, to help applicants understand what is expected from them in these exams to

get a higher score, we organized webinars with TOEFL, IELTS, and PTE Türkiye representatives where they informed applicants about the content and expectations of the exams.

Social Media Video Interviews

We love hearing about our grantees' and alumni's Fulbright experiences in Türkiye and the United States. We believe their reflections will help future applicants who are considering applying for our grants. Therefore, we started an interview series

for Turkish and American grantees and alumni. They shared how they applied for the grants, their motivation, and how their Fulbright experience contributed to their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Pictured: Ana Vombergar, 2023-2024 ETA, Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University

Pictured: Çağdaş Pamukçu, 2022-2023 TEA, University of Northern Colorado

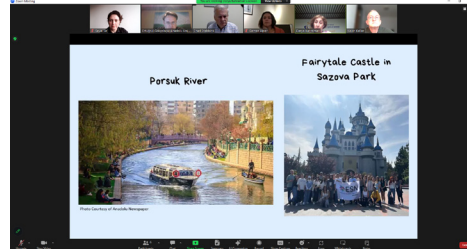


Turkish and U.S. Higher Education Institutions Meeting

Since December 2023, we have worked on a collaborative project named 'Fostering Global Adaptation via Cultural Exchange Initiatives: Bridging Borders, Building Bonds.' The project is purpose-driven to promote diversity and amplify student potential at Anadolu University

and Missouri Southern State University. This initiative entails the hosting and support of students from the U.S. and Türkiye. It aims to create a harmonious cross-cultural exchange, offering them opportunities for academic advancement and personal growth.

Pictured left: Anadolu University International Office Representatives presenting Eskişehir and Anadolu University



Pictured right: Missouri Southern State University Institute of International Studies Representatives presenting Missouri and their university



U.S. Higher Education Officials Visits

On March 20, we hosted Prof. Insa Blanke from Loyola University Chicago School of Law at our Istanbul office. She visited us to share what their Law programs offer to international students and better understand the needs of Turkish students considering applying for LL.M. degrees in the US.



On February 26, Eddie West, Assistant Dean of International Strategy and Programs at San Diego State University, visited our office in Istanbul. He informed us about the admission processes of both the undergraduate and graduate programs and the opportunities these programs offer to international students.

Pictured: Eddie West, Asst. Dean of International Strategy & Programs from San Diego State University at our Istanbul Office

In addition, in late March and early April, Westcliff University, Webster University, Troy University and Madison College representatives visited us at our office in Istanbul. We enjoyed hearing about the life of an international student and the opportunities they provide to their students.



Pictured: Prof. Insa Blanke, Executive Director of International LL.M. and S.J.D. Programs at Loyola University Chicago School of Law with our Education Advisers, Seval Sir and Ecem Mutlu



Pictured: Taner Pasin, Business Development Representative, Türkiye & Ms. Blerina Polovina, Webster University Director of International Admission & Business Development

Pictured: Ecem Mutlu, Education Adviser, Stephanie Belmas Director/Associate Dean of Madison College, Geoff Bradshaw, Associate VP President of Global Strategy of Madison College, Giselle M. Dubinsky Regional Manager of North America, Central America and the Caribbean, Seval Sir, Senior Education Adviser and Istanbul Office Director and Gordana Mirchikj, Regional Manager East, Central and Southern Europe



Pictured: Mr. Lance Noe, Troy University ESL Programs Director



For 75 years, the Turkish Fulbright Commission has promoted and fostered the goals of the Fulbright Program and will continue to do so by keeping its doors wide open for the best and the brightest for many years to come.

**Happy 75th Anniversary
Fulbright Türkiye!**



FULBRIGHT Türkiye

THE TURKISH FULBRIGHT COMMISSION

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