

International Exchange Alumni Newsletter

Issue 4, Spring 2015

U.S. Embassy, Ankara – Public Affairs

Welcome to the International Exchange Alumni Newsletter of the US Embassy, Ankara. Here you will learn about the success stories of your fellow alumni, information about Embassy programs and events, and training and job opportunities offered exclusively to our alumni. Have an idea for an alumni project or event? Have a success story or useful tip you want to share? Write to the Alumni Coordination Office at usaturkeyalumni@state.gov



Turkey's U.S. Exchange Programs Alumni Association Organizes Its First Event

Turkey's U.S. Exchange Programs (USEP) Alumni Association organized its first event at the Turkish American Association on Friday, February 27 in Ankara. Around eighty alumni and thirty possible future U.S. exchange program nominees from various Turkish educational, governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the networking opportunity. U.S. diplomats and staff from the Embassy and representatives from the Fulbright Commission also attended.

USEP Alumni Association President Murat Doğru gave welcoming remarks, saying: "Exchange programs have been taking place for 75 years between Turkey and the U.S. Thousands of people from Turkey participated in these programs. We are happy tonight to have our alumni at our new, modern and central headquarters. Our alumni are enthusiastic to work together and network each other."

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief Lawrence Mandel noted "Tonight I met and talked to Turkish alumni and learned that they even studied in places in the U.S. that I always wanted to but was unable to visit yet. This indicates how deep and diverse U.S. exchange programs are."

This event provided a platform for alumni to connect with other U.S. Exchange alumni, learn more about the exchange program opportunities from American and Turkish officials, and meet potential partners in personal or professional endeavors.



Humphrey Alumni Association celebrates its Twentieth Anniversary

Humphrey Alumni Association held a traditional annual dinner on Friday, March 6 at a local hotel in Ankara. Around forty Humphrey Alumni and several Embassy employees attended.

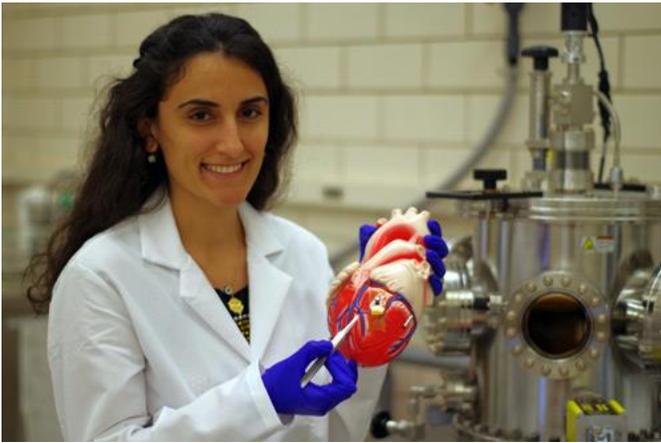
The program started with brief remarks from Humphrey Alumni Association President Ayşegül Çerçi, U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Jonathan Henick, Turkey Fulbright Commission Deputy Executive Director Seher Türkyılmaz-Sinclair and First Turkish Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow Aykut Pekcan.

The program continued with the demonstration of the new designed [website of the association](#) and its main features. At the end of the program, the participants celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Humphrey Alumni Association with a cake-cutting ceremony.



U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Lawrence Mandel Meets with Several Alumni in Mardin

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief Lawrence Mandel visited Mardin and met with a group of International Visitor Leadership Alumni for a coffee at a local hotel on Saturday, March 21, 2004. Mr. Mandel had a chance to hear about their U.S. experiences and show his support for the Exchange programs.



Canan Dagdeviren, a 2010 Fulbright alumna, is selected as a ‘Junior Fellow’ to Society of Fellow at Harvard University

Canan Dağdeviren received the Fulbright Doctorate Grant in 2009 and completed her Ph.D. degree in Material Science and Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is currently a Post-Doctoral Associate under the supervision of Prof. Robert Langer at MIT.

She has published 18 research papers, is the inventor of one patent application, and holds over 30 prestigious awards. She has recently been selected as a Junior Fellow of Harvard by the Society of Fellows at Harvard University, and is the first scientist from Turkey to be named as a Junior Fellow. In addition to this, she is on the “Forbes 30 under 30 in Science” list.

Her PZT MEH invention has enabled her to introduce a novel approach to energy harvesting from an intrinsic, continuous source of biological (cardiac) motion, with important clinical relevance to implantable cardiovascular devices. She has filed patents for this invention, and hopes to help commercialize this technology in the near future through entrepreneurial collaboration between the University of Illinois and University of Arizona. Qualified Suppliers to the Medical Device Industry (Qmed) ranked her technology as number one out of the top five MedTech breakthroughs of this year, following Google’s glucose-reading contact lens, which ranked second.

Dr. Dağdeviren’s work has received wide media coverage from the prestigious information outlets such as the Smithsonian, Popular Mechanics, CBS News, LA Times, BBC News, New Scientist, and Medical Daily.



Dr. Canan Dagdeviren Shares her Scientific Journey at Ankara Science High School and Hacettepe University

The U.S. Embassy invited Dr. Canan Dağdeviren to Ankara to meet students, teachers and academicians at Ankara Science High School and Hacettepe University on Wednesday, April 8, 2015. The purpose of her program was to highlight the importance of women in science and encourage young girls to pursue careers in science.

During her program, Dr. Dağdeviren shared her journey as a scientist, including her Fulbright experience, showed a movie about her scientific experiments, and conducted Q&A sessions.

CANAN DAĞDEVIREN INTERVIEW



[Please click on the photo to watch video]

NOTE: We would like to highlight the accomplishments of our alumni, help them to engage with the larger community, and organize collaborative programs. Please share your success story with us at usturkeyalumni@state.gov or 0312 457 7204.



Alumni share their U.S. exchange experiences through web stories and video clips

[Please click on the photo to watch video]

Fatma Kara, an alumna of Study of the U.S Institute for Student Leaders Program on Social Entrepreneurship Participant, shares her experience.



Best Practice: How to Use the International Exchange Alumni Website for networking

V. Kubilay Karabina participated in International Visitor Leadership Program on ‘U.S. Agricultural Trade and Food Safety’ in 2013. Upon his return to Turkey, he registered to the International Exchange Alumni (IEA) website.

When he was tasked to participate in the 2014 ‘Black Sea Grain’ Conference, in Odessa, Ukraine by the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture, he was a bit worried due to deteriorating security conditions in Ukraine and also a lack of contacts in Odessa.

He remembered that the IEA website offers a great networking opportunity. He searched the alumni directory and retrieved a list of alumni who live in Odessa. He contacted Ivan Kavelerov, a Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program alumnus, via e-mail. . Ivan hosted Kubilay and provided very valuable information especially about the secure areas in Ukraine to do business. Kubilay noted: “Our purpose was to find a trustworthy harbor in an instable region. Ivan hosted me and my colleague, and told us everything about the city. Before going to Odessa, we thought there was security vulnerability like eastern Ukraine. By taking us to the secure neighborhoods of the city, Ivan persuaded us that some parts of Ukraine had no security issues at all. As a result, we learned where we could successfully do agricultural business in Ukraine”.

2015 Alumni Small Grants Program and Winners

U.S. Embassy Alumni Programs Office has organized the 2015 Alumni Small Grants Program. Its main objective is to support innovative, small-scale, cutting-edge projects developed and implemented by U.S. Department of State exchange alumni, especially in women's empowerment, workers' rights, migrants, refugees and migration, freedom of expression, and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation.

Yasemin Eda Erdal, a Young Turkey and Young America (YTYA) Program alumna, was awarded a grant to support "**Capacity Building for Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Effectiveness project**". The training and networking event took place on May 4 at Yasar University in Izmir for twenty entrepreneurial leaders from techno parks, technology transfer offices, start-ups, and incubators. An American YTYA alumna/entrepreneur from the Silicon Valley will give follow-up web training.

Elif Karşlı, a Fulbright alumna, was awarded a grant to support her project called "**Building Bridges in Education: Syrian Children and Families in Turkey's School System**". The Recipient will implement a home-school partnership model for Syrian immigrant students to create a safe and effective educational environment in Turkey. The project includes classroom observations, focus group teacher conversations, and bilingual family workshops.

Elçin Cavlan, a YTYA alumna and board member of the Federation of Women Associations of Turkey, was awarded a grant to support her project called "**Far from Home: Empowering Syrian Female Refugees in Gaziantep**". The Recipient will provide information and services to Syrian female refugees in Gaziantep to prevent early / forced marriages and polygamy. Her organization plans to reach out 1000 vulnerable Syrian refugee women and girls living outside of the camps through Assistance Service Points at the Gaziantep Municipality. Along with the Municipality and a local NGO, they will train 200 refugee women and girls. They will also organize two community events including storytelling, movies, and theatre to highlight key messages aimed at empowering these women.

Remziye Tural, an IVLP (International Visitor Leadership Program) alumna and President of Batman Women Solidarity Association, was awarded a grant to support her project called "**Women in Batman**". The recipient will train 20 women on sewing and design with the intention of sensitizing women about gender equality in Batman and helping them find a job in a textile factory.

Ahmet Katiksiz, an IVLP alumnus, was awarded a grant to support his project called "**Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Innovation for youth of the KOP region**". Fifty students from each university (KTO Karatay, Aksaray, Necmettin Erbakan, Karamanoglu Mehmetbey, Nigde and Konya Selçuk Universities) in the KOP region (Konya, Karaman, Aksaray and Nigde) will attend workshops and seminars about entrepreneurship and innovation. They will learn how to develop innovative project ideas and find out about the Turkish government's grant and exchange opportunities.

Ezgi Kocak, a YTYA alumna and Substitute Board Member of Association for Supporting Women Candidates, was awarded a grant to support her project called "**Increasing Women's Participation and Representation in the Parliament in 25th Legislative Term**". She will hold advocacy meetings with all political parties and for a "gender sensitive politics watch" committee, composed of academics, civil society members, and other to develop a "gender sensitive advocacy and election campaign.

Nesrin Oruc Erturk, a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program alumna, was awarded a Grant to support her project called "**Educate and Empower Girls to Stand up against Violence**". In a pilot school chosen from Balçova District of İzmir approximately 100 girls and their teachers will be trained by experts from the field on what domestic violence is and what can be done.

News about Alumni Projects



2002 Fulbright Alumna Nilüfer Ovalıođlu Completes Her Project Called “Crossing: A Theatre Project for Mardin”

Nilüfer Ovalıođlu, a 2002 Fulbright Alumna, completed a theatre project to bring opportunities to the youth of Mardin. Her play ‘Crossing’ highlights the importance of cultural diversity and tolerance. In collaboration with Mardin Artuklu University’s Storytelling and Theatre Association, Ovalıođlu conducted weekly workshops to collect stories of everyday life in Mardin, which eventually became the subject of her theatrical sketches. The stories helped to reveal the genuine challenges faced by the people of Mardin, beyond gender, race, language, and politics.

Five female and six male university students aged between 21 and 30 took roles in the play, which consists of personal monologues. As a part of the Mardin International Theater Festival for Children and Youth events, the play was performed in the downtown Mardin, Nusaybin, Midyat and Kızıltepe and was well-received by thousands of spectators.

Exchange Program Announcements

Atlas Corps Professional Fellowship

The U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce a special opportunity for emerging civil society leaders to participate in a 6-18 month professional fellowship in the United States.

Keep in Touch

International Exchange Alumni

International Exchange Alumni Website: a place where past and present U.S. government-sponsored exchange program participants find tools to advance their communities and our world. Benefits of joining: alumni directory, job center, grants, events, research tools. View benefits here:

<https://alumni.state.gov/about-international-exchange-alumni/benefits-joining>

Register to become a member of International Exchange Alumni Website here: <https://alumni.state.gov/>

ExchangesConnect Web Site

ExchangesConnect is an international online community managed by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that connects potential, current, and former exchange program participants so they can discuss application processes, programs, and living abroad.

[Facebook](#)

Get connected with international exchanges!

[Twitter](#)

ExchangesConnect is the online community from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State.

[YouTube](#)

With YouTube individuals are able to document their personal experiences with other cultures and share it with online viewers.

[Tumblr](#)

International Exchange Alumni on Tumblr.