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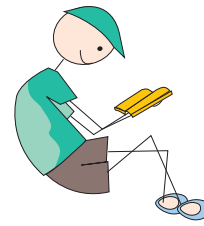
School®

2014

SPRING-SUMMER NEWS  
İLKBAHAR-YAZ HABERLERİ



# The Importance of Solid Character



All parents naturally want the best education for their children. As a father of two and an educator, I have had to consider my responsibility to prepare my children not only for the here and now but also for the future, when as adults they have to negotiate for themselves in a demanding world. At school too we keenly sense the responsibility for preparing children to move from dependence on parent and school to a fuller degree of independence.

When the time to move away from home arrives, it really does not matter whether or not your son can iron a shirt because it will take him no more than an evening to teach himself. But it does matter if he can apply what has been taught over the years. It will matter if he cannot manage his financial affairs, cannot judge between right and wrong and so on. Our role as educators and parents is to ensure that the long road from dependence to independence is reasonably smooth and is full of useful knowledge and skills along with a set of virtues that matter in the present and the future.



## Moral backbone

Many children, however, seem to be in trouble because they have never acquired a moral backbone. With only flimsy consciences, poor impulse control, underdeveloped moral sensitivity and misguided beliefs, they are greatly handicapped. Although the causes of moral decline are complex, one fact is undeniable – the moral atmosphere in which today's kids are being raised is toxic to solid character development for two main reasons. Firstly, a number of critical social factors that nurture moral character are slowly disintegrating – adult supervision, models of moral behaviour, spiritual or religious training, meaningful adult relationships, personalised schools, clear national values, community support, stability and adequate parenting. Secondly, our kids are being steadily bombarded with outside messages that go against the very values we are trying to instill. Both factors are contributing greatly to our kids' moral demise as well as their loss of innocence. Our challenge is even tougher because those incessant negative

messages come from a variety of sources to which our children have such easy access such as TV, films, computer games, which flaunt disrespect, materialism, vulgarity and the glorification of violence. Add to this the staggering internet influences. Shielding our children is impossible, so it is essential that we build 'moral backbone' – a deeply developed sense of right and wrong to stand against negative influences and give power to act with or without guidance.



## Start young

The best news is that moral substance can be learned and we need to start building it as early as possible when our children are toddlers! At that age they naturally do not have cognitive capacities to handle complex moral habits but they can acquire self control, a sense of being fair, showing respect, sharing and empathising. The mistake parents make is to wait until the so-called age of reason, age six or seven, to cultivate their moral capabilities. By doing this, parents' delay only increases children's potential for learning negative habits that erode moral growth and make it much harder for them to change. Achieving moral backbone can be achieved through consistently good modelling at school and nurtured in a school community with a strong set of traditional values. Naturally parents are the first moral modelers who can inspire the essential moral virtues of empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness. Family and the school community nurture a life long sense of decency in our children and help navigate them through the ethical challenges and pressures inevitably faced throughout life.

### John Lees

**Nationality:** British-Finnish

**Education:** BA, PgCE, M Ed

**Post:** Director of Teaching and Learning





## A Truly Canadian Game



Ice hockey in some form or other is actually thought to have derived from a ground based game in Britain or Europe. Others believe it is an ice adapted version of a game the natives of North America used to play, which has evolved in modern times into the game of Lacrosse. Some even suggest its method resembles golf. A rough-and- tumble ground game called Hurley in Britain is also thought to have inspired it. Whatever the source, through time and space, it evolved into a sport played on ice in an official fashion for the first time on March 3rd, 1875, in a small indoor ice rink on the McGill University campus in Montreal, Quebec - CANADA. Yes, ice hockey is truly a Canadian institution!

Many today see hockey as a barbaric sport that inspires only violence and that is too brutish to enjoy. Hockey is the only sport in which bare fisted fighting is permitted between stoppages of play. And yet the beauty and complexity of the game is illustrated in this subtle element. You will often see players who have fought each other also give each other a pat on the back for a good effort. This demonstrative level of mutual respect is present in no other sport. So what is the reason for it? The players police the game – as simple as that. Everyone is an official of the law, maintaining the integrity of the sport. When an individual gets out of hand, sure a referee will punish them by making them sit for two minutes and giving the opposing team a 5 against 4 player advantage; but this does not ensure that the perpetrator of the foul will be deterred from doing it again. What will deter him, is the threat of being “policed” by all the other players - who do not permit the game to be sullied, nor their fellow teammates to be injured by cheap fouls.



Apart from the rough side of the game there is the graceful side of the sport which allows you to fly around on ice skates at thirty kilometers per hour, all the while attempting to visualize a combination of attack plans that might arise in concert with the other four gentlemen flying around at these speeds, or waiting for the pass, or to set up the eventual goal against rivals aiming to turn play the other way – all in the blink of an eye. Daftly zigging and zagging the flat rubber puck along the ice with deft moves of the stick blade, in and around players, flashes that become blurs, passes from one one player to the next... he shoots, he scores ...yells the commentator. Nothing is more exhilarating!

**During school year 2013-2014 Yazz Öztürk successfully formed a Student Ice Hockey Club on Saturdays.**

**Yasin Öztürk**

**Nationality:** Canadian - Turkish

**Education:** BA Certificate in Teaching

**Post:** English and Social Studies Teacher





# The Happiest Kids in the World: The Dutch!

According to Unicef's most recent Child Well Being in Rich Countries survey, Dutch kids ranked as the happiest kids in the world. Dutch kids led the way in three out of the five categories, namely- material well being, educational well being, behavior and risks.

## **Their Dutch parents are among the happiest people in the world.**

It doesn't come as a surprise that the happiest kids in the world have parents who are also among the happiest people in the world. According to United Nations' first World Happiness Report, the Netherlands ranks fourth as the happiest nation on earth. Happiness, measured as an indicator for social progress, was taken quite seriously. It doesn't take much brain to understand that in general happy parents equal happy kids.



## **Their Dutch mums don't get depressed.**

Dutch psychologist and journalist Ellen de Bruin has written a book entitled **"Dutch Women Don't Get Depressed"** illustrating the phenomenon. According to Ellen de Bruin, "Personal choice is key: in the Netherlands people are free to choose their life partners, their religion, we can pretty much say anything we like. The Netherlands is a very free country." Most of the mums in Holland work part-time. They have a good balance between work and spending time with their family.



## **Their Dutch Dads play a more equal role in child-rearing by also having part-time jobs and being more hands on.**

A New York Times article **"Working (Part-Time) in the 21st Century"** highlights the Dutch culture of part-time work. By 1996 the Dutch government gave part-time employees equal status to that of full timers, paving the way for a more balanced work-life reality for its citizens. Like their female counterparts, more and more Dutch dads are squeezing in a full-time job in just four days and dedicating one day a week with their kids. "Papa dag" (Daddy day) has become not only part of the Dutch vocabulary, but becoming more of a standard norm as one in three men are also opting for

part-time work. Dutch dads take their parenting seriously, playing a more balanced role in parenting.

Dutch kids feel no pressure to excel in school and have very little stress. They have no homework or have very little and thus have plenty of time to play after school.

Dutch elementary students under the age of ten usually do not have any homework and are simply encouraged to enjoy learning. Upon completion of primary school at the age of 12, Dutch pupils take a multiple choice CITO test which determines their relative intelligence level and heavily influences what corresponding high school they could attend.





Thus, Dutch high school students also do not face the notorious pressure of taking national attainment tests or ever attaining academic excellence. There is, for the most part, no formal competitive university application process.

**They can eat chocolate sprinkles, or slices of chocolate with butter on their white bread for breakfast. Every single morning. No kidding.**

A traditional Dutch breakfast, whether you are a child or an adult, actually often consists of a piece of white bread, butter and chocolate sprinkles. Their Dutch lunch, which often

includes a variation of a slice of bread with a piece of cheese, or a thin slice of ham, doesn't seem to be too much healthier either.

On a serious note, UNICEF concluded that Dutch children and teens reported eating breakfast with their family on a regular basis. In no other country do children have breakfast with their families as regularly as they do in the Netherlands. Not only is eating breakfast associated with better performance in school and decreased behavioral problems, but eating breakfast daily as a family creates opportune time for family bonding and fostering individual identity and growth.



**They have a right to express their own opinions.**

Dutch children are the type that are both seen AND heard. From the moment they can formulate an opinion, Dutch children are given a voice and Dutch parents intently listen.

**They have Oma day!**

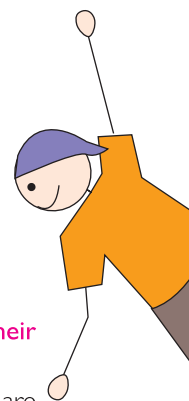
If you ever find yourself at the playground on a weekday, chances are you're also going to run into a Dutch Oma (grandmother) with her grandchildren. A lot of Dutch grandmothers take great pride in helping out their children, playing a pivotal role in their grandchildren's lives. By having regular, once a week childcare services from Oma, moms and dads can better attain their life-work balance. Having Oma around is great for a child's self-esteem.

**The Dutch government gives families money every month to help with expenses.**

We all know that raising children can be very expensive. According to USDA, a child born in 2012 to age 18 will cost parents approximately \$241,080. That's a lot of money!

Despite the looming economic crisis and various cuts in subsidies Dutch families still continue to get money from the Dutch government.

Families receive government subsidies and a child allowance to celebrate and support the notion of balanced work and child care.



**Özlem Özkan**

Nationality: Dutch-Turkish

Education: BEd, MSc

Post: Grade Teacher



# Finnish Education System – Why So Successful?

Recently the Finnish education system has received a lot of international attention due to the PISA results. PISA is an international study that was launched by the OECD in 1997. It aims to evaluate education systems worldwide every three years by assessing 15-year-olds' competencies in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science. To date over 70 countries and economies have participated in PISA. Finland, together with Korea, show mean scores well above any other OECD participants. (PISA 2009 at a Glance at <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/46660259.pdf>)



## Equity and quality in education

One of the basic principles of Finnish education is that all people must have equal access to high-quality education and training. The same opportunities to education should be available to all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, age, wealth or where they live. Following this principle, in Finland public education is free at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. The few private schools that exist play a very marginal role in the system.

Compulsory education starts in the year when a child turns seven and lasts nine years. Most of the children, however, have at least one year of pre school education before starting school. At school, instruction is usually given by the same class teacher in most subjects in the first six years and by subject specialists in the last three years. Primary education begins at seven which might be seen as a late starting age compared to many other European systems. On the contrary, it allows for different kinds of learning, giving enough time to learn through creative free play which in Finland is considered essential for child development.

In the study schedule, quality is more important than quantity. The minimum number of lessons per week varies from only 19 in the first grade to 30 in Grades 7-9, depending on the level and number of optional subjects taken.

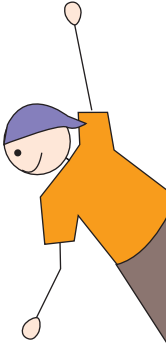
## Have a look at a class!

The school bell rings. It's half past eight in an early December morning when 26 students from Grade 4 rush into their classroom. The day starts with a Maths lesson. **"How much does Maria get back from 50 Euros if she buys a scarf for 15 Euros and two notebooks for 8 Euros each?"** The teacher reminds students to show the process of the calculations. A bit later a related picture is drawn on the board to help those who need more guidance. The teacher goes around the class, squatting down here and there helping those in need. After 45 minutes the bell rings again. The children soon disappear into the schoolyard. Some go for the swings and jungle gym in the playground, some play tag or football while others just enjoy the snow.

After the 15 minute break, freshened brains are ready for new challenges in the Finnish language lesson. After reading a text together the teacher challenges children to ponder; to reason and look for consequences: Why? What if? What would you do? There is no right or wrong while students freely express their ideas and opinions. Discussion is followed by a grammatical inspection of the main and subordinate clauses. Soon the school corridor is again full of students putting on their coats, outdoor pants and boots. There is a 15 minute outdoor break after every 45 minute lesson.

After an English language lesson and a warm lunch the afternoon starts with a Geography. During an eight week unit students have studied northern Europe, it's geomorphology, climate, vegetation, countries, cultures and sectors of industry. Lessons have included plenty of reading, text and picture analysis, mind mapping and discussion – sharing of experiences and ideas, learning from each others' insights. A lot of time is also used on the work book to confirm understanding of the main concepts and their interrelations as well as to practice expressing ideas in the written form. A little time has been used for projects or crafts and activity. Students have learned to read and comprehend texts without memorizing and now, when it is time to prepare for an end of the unit exam, they are not overwhelmed by the nearly 30 pages to be re-read.





The school day ends with two Physical Education lessons. Earlier in the autumn lessons have included athletics and orienteering in a nearby forest, but now students practice artistic gymnastics and ball games in the school's sport hall. The six lesson long school day finishes at 15:00. Some other days, school ends even earlier. Students leave for home, hobbies or the city library – most of them on their own and by bike. A few students stay at school for a tutorial lesson that is offered approximately once a week for those who struggle to keep up with the level of the class.

## Analysing the success

To understand the factors producing success in the education system we need to look also further than a classroom. In Finland, teacher education is among the best in the world, which reflects the occupation's appreciation in society. Teachers are recognised as keys to quality in education. All teachers have a Masters Degree; either in educational sciences or in their main field of study. There are no private universities and the competition for teacher education gets fierce. A high school graduate who wishes to get a place in the Department of Educational Sciences to become a primary school teacher, needs not only an excellent diploma, but also to pass a stiff academic entrance exam and psychological tests. The government wants to ensure that only those really motivated are included in the training process. After securing a place in the study programme, studies take four to six years and include many traineeships in different schools.

Books, as well as reading in general, are highly valued in the Finnish society. Reading is a common hobby. Parents read books even to toddlers. Newspapers are subscribed to by nearly every home. One factor worth appreciation is the widespread net of public libraries. There is a free library in every town, cities have one for every suburb. Library buses go around the rural areas making sure all citizens have at least equal possibilities to benefit from free sources of books, magazines and music. Libraries are a modern expression of an old phenomena - from very early history Finnish people have been recorded as people who appreciate wisdom over wealth or strength.

In Finland, questioning and criticism are allowed both in the classroom and in the society in general. The media is free and no-one is untouchable. Freedom of opinion and speech are highly valued – and used – and are considered the rights of every citizen. Even though the teacher is the one who sets and watches the means and borders of learning and behavior in a classroom, students have the right to express their ideas and take part in the decision making. From a young age children learn that their

opinions matter and are worth voicing. This creates a motivating ground for learning.



The Finnish educational system has also its challenges. It has been said not to give enough support for the especially gifted while concentrating on providing everyone a high level. While no one is left behind, no one is encouraged to get very much ahead of the others. This again reflects the general aim of working for equity in society.

See more at

[http://www.oph.fi/download/146428\\_Finnish\\_Education\\_in\\_a\\_Nutshell.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/download/146428_Finnish_Education_in_a_Nutshell.pdf)

**Heli Nokelainen**

Nationality: Finnish

Education: M Ed

Post: Finnish Heritage Programme



# Benefits of Dance Education in Child Development

Modern education programs aim to support children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development by various art and sports activities in addition to the regular academic curriculum. In order to raise creative, confident, productive and assertive individuals in society, children's art education needs to be as strong as their academic education. Starting at a young age, dance education is most effective and beneficial in the forming of self sufficient individuals.



## Benefits in Physical Development

- ♦ Dance is a physical act and children who regularly receive dance education are observed over time to be more physically healthy.
- ♦ Children have a better posture due to the techniques they have learned in dance lessons. They are less likely to have muscle and spine problems, because they will have better and stronger muscle structure.
- ♦ They have strong and fit bodies. Dancing helps in weight losing processes when it is supported with a healthy and age appropriate diet in overweight children.
- ♦ Their physical strength improves.
- ♦ They have more flexible bodies
- ♦ Their body balance and coordination skills improve.

## Benefits in Cognitive and Emotional Development

- ♦ Dance is a good activity for attention and concentration. Kids learn to pay better attention while following and applying specific moves sequenced in order in choreography.
- ♦ Dance supports the development of kinesthetic intelligence that is related to the skills for operating the body as a whole, using various body parts in an integrated, effective, aesthetic and fast way to achieve intended goals.
- ♦ Kids express themselves more easily.
- ♦ Kids' perception of rhythm improves.

## Benefits in Social Development

- ♦ Children become confident and happy individuals.
- ♦ They form friendships during group lessons and enjoy doing activities together with peers sharing the same interest and hobby.
- ♦ Dance improves their communication skills.
- ♦ Children overcome their shyness and become more assertive.
- ♦ Children relax and clear their minds of stressful and tiring academic tasks, thereby their academic performance increases.
- ♦ Children become creative, confident individuals, who know to act in context appropriate ways and who appreciate the arts.

In short, children who receive dance education, show better performance in physical, social and psychological developmental skills. In addition, depending on the persistency of their dance education they become individuals, who are at peace with their bodies and can dance in social environments later on in adulthood.



**Deniz Uzunöner**

**Nationality:** Turkish

**Education:** BA, PgCE

**Post:** Dance Teacher





# Global Citizenship

When we hear the words 'global citizen' we are immediately assailed with a variety of images and ideas such as nations, cultures, and acceptance. In the Global Citizenship classes at Istanbul International School, the teachers are presented with a wide variety of topics under the heading of 'Global Citizenship'. In the first semester there are three main topics of study: Law and Crime, Disabilities, and Beliefs.

Teachers - Mariah Hagadone, Ewen MacDonald, and Vildan Oğuz - aim at having students associate and connect what we present and study to everyday life. For example, students learn about laws and the reasons and ramifications behind having laws. When presented with the opportunity to 'create school laws', students suddenly find themselves in disagreement with their peers about the importance or even relevance of having such a law. A good thing, because, it is not only important to learn the basics about where laws come from, how they are implemented, et cetera; but also how we deal with disagreement and differences. By crafting their arguments into skilled discussions, students are to voice their concerns and collaborate at the same time.

Furthermore, not only are receiving and giving constructive criticisms a necessary and valuable skill, but also is the understanding and compassion for people in different positions, such as those with disabilities. From the Disability Unit, we cover a range of disabilities and how people with a disability might feel or like to be approached for assistance. In the course of this year's study we even have had a very brave student speak and be questioned about how his hearing impairment has impacted his life and studies. This led to a greater understanding for his peers in how they approached and addressed him. Students have also been given the opportunity to visit and learn sign language from a nearby school for the hearing impaired. The consequent experience will most likely be remembered for many years to come.

The importance of working together as a collective team effort was constantly stressed throughout the program. Students were placed in designated mixed grade-level groups in the hopes that the exposure to new people from different backgrounds and ages would enhance their experience and appreciation of being a 'global citizen'.

In addition, students were presented with guest speakers which kept the material relevant and authentic. Speakers from the Uskudar Police Homicide Unit thrilled us all when they gave a very interesting and insightful account of their job. One lucky student even got officially finger-printed from a fake crime scene. In the Disabilities Unit, we were all astounded to learn from guest speaker Mehmet Çelenk that the blind do indeed play football. In the Beliefs Unit, students got to question and ponder Christian guest

speaker Melih Ekener's description of Protestant Christianity; and we are all looking forward to Islamic guest speaker Hakan Yeşilora. Guest speakers allow students to see into someone else's life from the comfort of their own shoes. In this way, the insights into other peoples' lives can help foster empathy, acknowledgement, and intellect in our students.

The global citizenship class is exactly what its name implies: a global citizen. We aim at learning about the necessary ideas and values required to be a global citizen where one day the student can take matters into their own hands or as the famous Mahatma Gandhi and slogan from my very own alma mater said, ***"Be the change you wish to see in the world."***



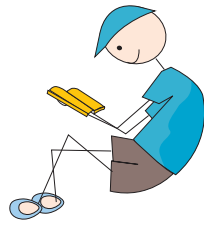
Students at Topkapı Palace as part of the Beliefs Unit on Islam

**Mariah Hagadone**

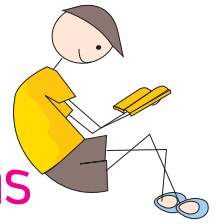
**Nationality:** American

**Education:** BA, Certificate in Teaching

**Post:** English and Science Teacher



# Raising an Emotionally Competent Child & Recognizing Your Child's Negative Emotions



Emotion is the generic term for subjective, conscious experiences characterized primarily by psycho physiological expressions, biological reactions, and mental states. It is often the driving force behind motivation, both positive and negative.

*“Emotions are quick and dirty response profiles that evolved to promote species survival with two primary adaptive functions: self-regulation and communicative functions that serve to regulate interpersonal interactions (Aseo, 2009)”.*

The physiology of emotion is closely linked to arousal of the nervous system with various states and strengths of arousal relating, apparently, to particular emotions. Hormones and neurotransmitters such as dopamine, noradrenaline, serotonin, oxytocin and cortisol influence the arousal of emotions.

Cognition is an important aspect of emotion, particularly the interpretation of events. For example, the experience of fear usually occurs in response to a threat. The cognition of danger and subsequent arousal of the nervous system (e.g. rapid heartbeat and breathing, sweating, muscle tension) is an integral component to the subsequent interpretation and labeling of that arousal as an emotional state.

## Basic Discrete Emotions

- **Positive affect** (Happiness & Joy) → in response to appraisals of positive stimuli
- **Anger & Frustration** → in response to appraisals of goal blockage or unfairness
- **Sadness** → in response to appraisals of goal unattainment or loss
- **Fear & Anxiety** → in response to appraisals of threat

## Social Emotions

- **Pride** → in response to appraisals of positive feedback for performance
- **Shame, Embarrassment, Guilt** → in response to appraisals of negative feedback for performance



Anger & Frustration



Sadness



Anger



Anxiety



Scared

## Emergence and the development of emotional expressions with maturation

### Between 2 weeks to 2 months

- Positive affect (Happiness & Joy)
- Anger & Frustration
- Sadness

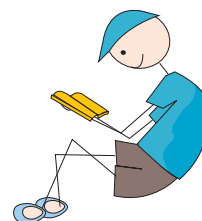
### At 9 months

- Fear & Anxiety

### At 2 Years

- Pride
- Shame
- Guilt
- Jealousy





**Emotional Competence can be assessed by looking at a few factors such as:**

- Age and context appropriate expression of emotions
- Emotional Regulation
- Understanding emotions
- Empathy
- Adaptive coping with negative emotions
- Awareness of emotions
- Emotional communication within relationships

Emotional regulation is “the set of processes involved in initiating, maintaining and modulating emotional responsiveness, both positive and negative (Grolnick et al, 1996, 2005)”. It means the various conscious skills and unconscious processes a person uses, and the competences a person engages, to monitor and manage their experience and expression of emotion, and responses to emotion.

## Understanding Emotions and Empathy

Understanding of one’s own emotions and others is linked with cognitive maturation (the development of theory of mind). Sympathy is feeling for others whereas empathy is feeling with others. Empathic distress and a helping / prosocial behavior can usually be seen with empathic children.

**Phases of Empathy are:**

- Emotion contagion
- Introjection of the other person into ourselves – to walk in their shoes
- Resonance between the imagined feelings of the other person and our own invoked feelings
- Resolution – helping / prosocial behavior (problem solving skills)

## Adaptive Coping with Negative Emotions

Children adapt and cope with negative emotions by expressing them in culturally, socially and context appropriate ways. Cultural rules and



Empathy

socialization practices define the way of this emotional expression. Preschoolers learn how to introduce disparities between their internal emotional experience and their external expressive behavior. Therefore, they learn how to mask their negative emotions very early. The following examples are not a new experience for many parents and teachers.

→ **Katy (2.5 years):** “I love Bubba!” (said while she pinches her baby brother)

→ **Joey (3 years):** “Mary did it!” (with an expression of indignation at being accused of throwing Mary’s crayons into the toilet, which he had in fact done just minutes before)

→ **Marina (5 years):** “When my mummy gets mad I show my sorry feeling face, then she is not so mad.”



Nervous Smile (masking of anxiety & fear)

## How can you recognize your child’s Negative Emotions?

**Sadness** → crying, not talking, refusing to eat, doesn’t engage in play

**Anger & Frustration** → shouting, yelling, temper tantrums, aggressive behavior, biting, hitting, and throwing objects, crying

**Fears & Worries** → crying, shouting, nervous smile, sweating, shaking, stuttering, having nightmares, enuresis (bed wetting)

**Jealousy & Conflicts with the sibling(s)** → fight, competition, verbal and physical aggression, sharing, borders

**Funda Baysal**

**Nationality:** Turkish

**Education:** BEd, MEd

**Post:** Counselor

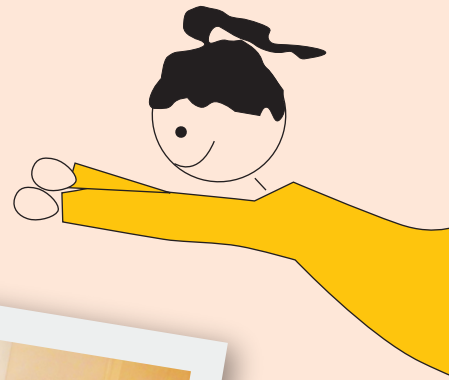
**Handan Özen**

**Nationality:** Turkish

**Education:** BA, PgCE, MA

**Post:** Counselor





## Moments to Remember!



Arts and Crafts



Awards



Concerts



Concerts



Concerts



Cultural Festivals



Cultural Festivals



Cultural Festivals





Excursions



Excursions



Excursions



Excursions



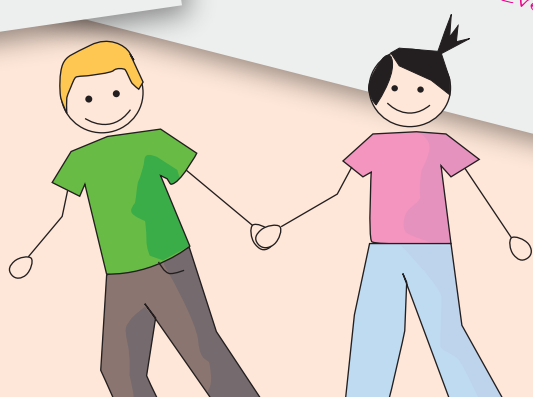
School Events



School Events



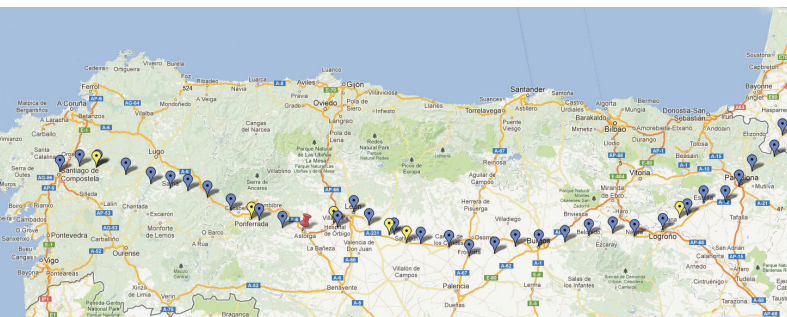
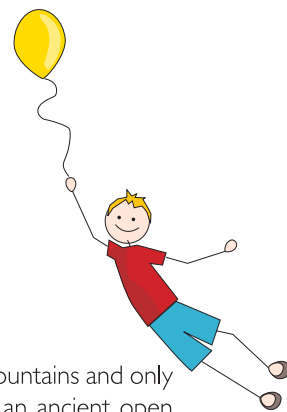
School Events











in this way because of the building of a bridge reinforced with iron over the river Sil to facilitate the crossing of the river to pilgrims.

In the XII century King Fernando II of León placed this flourishing settlement under the custody of the Order of the Temple. The Knights Templar used the site of a primitive Roman fortress to build a castle in which they settled and which, at the same time, protected the passing pilgrims on the Way of St. James, in their road to Santiago de Compostela.

This favoured demographic growth and led to the commercial development of the area. However, the Templars were only able to enjoy the use of their fortress for about twenty years before the order was disbanded and its properties confiscated.

The historic quarter of the city is at the foot of the Castle, with entry along the Calle del Reloj (Clock Street).

The end of this street leads into a traditional site of commercial activity, the Plaza de la Encina. The Basilica de la Encina is the most relevant building on this site and was built in Renaissance style in the XVI century.

It is worth visiting the Museum of El Bierzo, located on this street, in the building which was formerly the city prison.



Ponferrada is completely surrounded by mountains and only a few kilometres away from Las Médulas, an ancient open mine which has caused the landscape to be of an unusual reddish color. They used to be the most important gold mine in the Roman Empire and have now been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The spectacular landscape of Las Médulas is the result of a Roman mining technique that was a type of hydraulic mining and involved undermining a mountain with large quantities of water. At least seven long aqueducts tapped the streams of the La Cabrera district (where the rainfall in the mountains is relatively high) at a range of altitudes. The same aqueducts were used to cleanse the extensive gold deposits.



This area and its surroundings offer also many opportunities for outdoor activities. There are many easily accessible hiking and cycling routes nearby, both on and off-road, including the 330 kilometer long La Mirada Circular which circles the whole El Bierzo valley.

As the capital of El Bierzo, Ponferrada is a magnificent shop window for the region's main gastronomical recipes including a very special sort of home produced peppers, as well as pears, apples, chestnuts, cherries and local Bierzo wines.

**Maria Garcia Rojo**

**Nationality:** Spanish

**Education:** BA, Certificate in Spanish Language Teaching

**Post:** Spanish Language Teacher







# My hometown

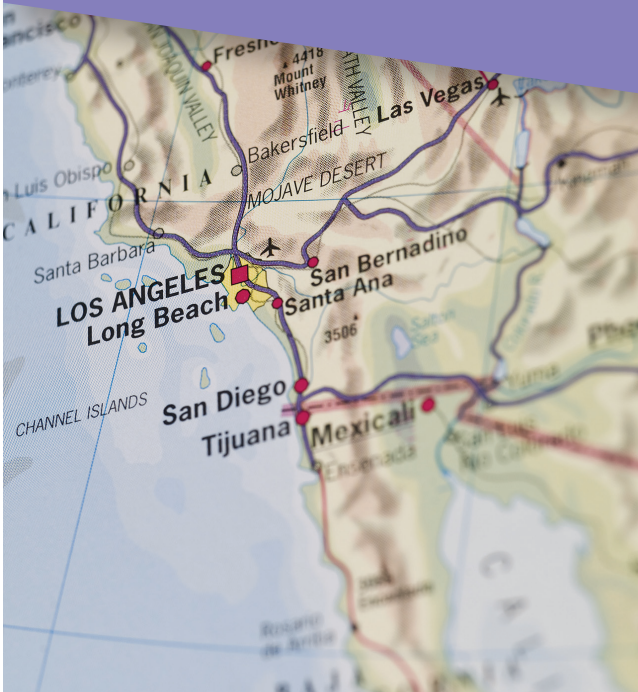
TIJUANA, MEXICO.

I was born in a city named Guadalajara in the center west of Mexico, but when I was one year old my family decided to move to Tijuana. I grew up there and had part of my education there. Tijuana, often called "TJ", is my hometown.

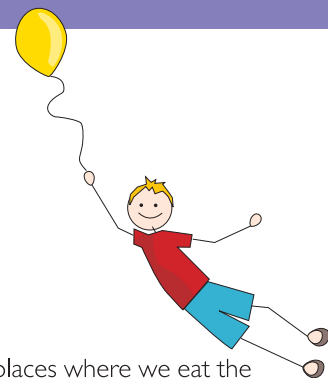
I am sure you have heard about Tijuana - usually my city is used in Hollywood movies but I personally don't like the way that they have always shown the worst part of the city, because there are many beautiful places as well.

At the end of the day, nothing is like in the movies, and I am always proud to say I am from Tijuana, "The corner of Mexico", "The door to Latin-America", "Where the homeland begins".

Tijuana is the westernmost city in Mexico and has the biggest border in the world with San Diego California. My city is the most visited border city in the globe; sharing an approximate 24-kilometre-long border with its sister city San Diego, with over fifty million people annually crossing the border between these two cities. This metropolitan crossing makes the San Ysidro Port of Entry the busiest land-border crossing in the world. It is estimated that the two border crossing stations between the cities proper of San Diego and Tijuana account for 300,000 daily border crossings alone.







My hometown is one of the biggest cities in Mexico. The population is five million, and the economy is one of the strongest in Mexico. Due to its position and its big territory, Mexico has almost all of the ecosystems in the world but Tijuana has a Mediterranean climate.

When I close my eyes and think about my city, I see the Pacific Ocean with its big blue whales, the big and sandy beaches everywhere, the best weather-never too cold, never too hot, houses not apartments, wide streets, churches and the sound of the bell in the morning on Sundays, smiling faces, warm people, fun people with their laughter and myths, football in the street, football in the parks, mariachi and banda, music and colors everywhere, historical ruins, desert and cactuses, canyons, valleys, space and more space, and smelling freedom with a touch of spice.

Mexico is known to have one of the richest kitchens in the world and Tijuana has a variety of good dishes. It is the city which gives the world the "Caesar Salad". Of course there



are thousands of "Taquerias" the places where we eat the famous "Tacos". For me nothing is better than TJ tacos. Also the biggest, most delicious and cheapest lobsters that I have ever eaten are all along the Baja California peninsula, which is where TJ is located. Many foreign people just go there to have dinner and I would easily fly 15 hours there just for dinner too.



Latin America starts in Tijuana and ends at the end of the continent in Chile. Tijuana is the meeting point of two ways of life. There are people who are going out and in every day. We are so used to crossing the border in both directions as easy as it is here in Istanbul to cross the bridge between Europe and Asia, although sometimes a traffic queue can take between fifteen minutes to three hours. Many people there can't imagine their life any other way.

I consider myself lucky for growing up in this city. I would never change that because I had the opportunity to understand two different countries. Two systems, two histories, two languages and two cultures my whole life and I like to keep the better of these two. The contrast and importance has made me appreciate the fine line that exists between two different cultures.

**Alba Madrigal**

**Nationality:** Mexican

**Education:** BSc, Certificate in Spanish Language Teaching

**Post:** Spanish Language Teacher





## Moments to Remember!



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



Sports



# Investing in The Future



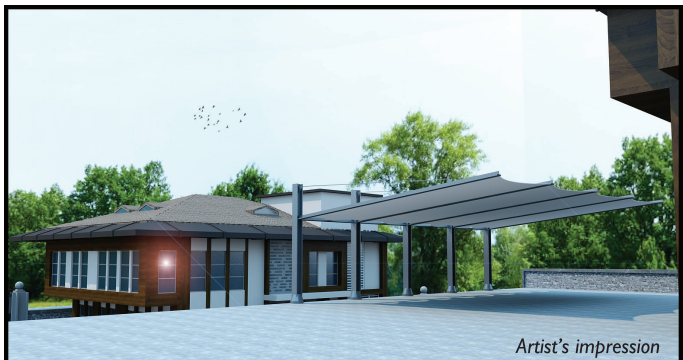
Co Founders / Kurucular: Dr. Mustafa Karadeniz and Mr. John Lees

## Additional School Building

In the school year 2014-2015, İstanbul International School will open its additional new building in Küplüce, Büyük Çamlıca, a short distance from the current campus. The new building will house the Middle School and the developing High School programme. The current building will continue as the Primary School.

## Ek Okul Binası

İstanbul International School yeni ek binasını eğitim ve öğretime 2014-2015 Akademik Yılı'nda, şu an kullanılan yerleşkeye çok yakın olan Küplüce Büyük Çamlıca'da açacaktır. Yeni bina ortaokulumuzu ve gelişmekte olan lise programımızı barındıracaktır. Halen kullanılan bina ilkokul olarak hizmete devam edecektir.





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