



Darussafaka Middle School

Name of the organisation :	Darussafaka Middle School	
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Type of organisation:

SME School University Public Authority
Training No Profit NGO

Other (Specify)

Fields of action :

SMEs Youth Universities Public Authorities
Equal opportunities X Schools X Unemployed

Other (Specify)

Description of the organisation

Darüşşafaka Schools, Turkey's first schools to have been established in 1873 by a non-governmental organization- Darüşşafaka Society, have been providing full-scholarship, boarding, and high-quality education to those talented but financially disadvantaged children with deceased fathers and/or mothers. Today, at Darüşşafaka, almost 1000 children from all over the country receive boarding education with a full scholarship from the 5th grade until high school graduation.

The Darüşşafaka Society was founded in 1863 by five young Ottoman intellectuals of those days. The Darüşşafaka Society, the oldest non-governmental organization in Turkey in the field of education, celebrates its 160th anniversary this year and continues its activities to deserve its name, meaning "home of compassion". Donations to the Darüşşafaka Society are used to cover not only the educational expenses of students of Darüşşafaka Schools but also all their needs, such as clothing, accommodation, nutrition, and health. The Darüşşafaka Society was initially founded to support the training and education of the needy and uneducated community.

Darüşşafaka Schools, which have altered educational content based on the needs of the time throughout their history, included telegraphy in their curriculum during the Ottoman Empire since the telegraph had become an important tool used by the Western nations in wars. Moreover, the Schools undertook the role of being a teacher academy to meet the then-arising needs for teachers following the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. Another characteristic of Darüşşafaka Schools is that it never compromises the quality of education. So much so that Darüşşafaka graduates between 1873 and 1884 were considered college graduates. As a result, by assessing the needs and expectations of today and designing the education of the future now, Darüşşafaka Schools started working for transformation and digitalization in education by taking necessary steps with a new strategic plan they created in 2015. In 1955 the School obtained a special status offering education in English. In 1971 Darüşşafaka began admitting female students. In 2012 amended its statutes and opened the doors of Darüşşafaka Schools to include students who have lost their mothers as well as fathers.

Today, Darüşşafaka Schools in Maslak, Istanbul, educates and trains almost 1000 students who are selected through an exam from all corners of Turkey. Students receive a high-quality education along with a foreign language curriculum. Students grow up as socially and culturally knowledgeable individuals. They are raised as modern, self-confident, curious, and socially responsible individuals that are lifelong learners and researchers and are committed to Atatürk's principles. At Darüşşafaka Schools, pupils come from 72 different cities across Turkey. 60% of the students are from outside Istanbul, while 40% are from Istanbul. The students from outside of Istanbul spend their weekends also at Darüşşafaka. There are 67 teachers in Middle School and 83 teachers in High School.

The academic program aims to prepare students for the future by developing their curious instincts and research skills and helping them become self-confident individuals. By equipping its students with complex problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, Darüşşafaka prepares them for the 21st Century. Darüşşafaka students participate in international programs such as AFS, Erasmus, and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. Darüşşafaka Robotics Club regularly participates in international competitions held in the US and other parts of the world.

At Darüşşafaka, there are more than 50 clubs, ranging from robotics and astronomy to Model United Nations, for students to discover and develop their talents. Students begin receiving instruction in playing a musical instrument and/or in sports in line with their abilities as soon as they set foot in Darüşşafaka. While the students enjoy on-campus activities on Saturdays, such as sports, music, chess, drama, and painting, they spend their Sundays off-campus by attending specifically organized events like theatre, museum visits, and ice skating. Darüşşafaka Schools continue to change lives through education by keeping its original mission of "equality of opportunity in education". This journey has improved the lives of thousands of children until today.

Experience of the organization in previous European projects

In 2004, when Turkey started to benefit from European Union projects, our school was one of the 70 schools in Turkey to receive support. Meltem Ceylan Alibeyoğlu was the coordinator of this first funded project. Below are the

EU projects that she has carried out within the school and their details:

01/09/2014-30/11/2016

Type: Erasmus+ project

School: Darüşşafaka High School

Project Title: "Women as Spiritus Movens toward Equality in the European Citizenship"

Project Number: 2014-1-ES01-KA201-003351_4

2) 01/10/2012 -01/07/2014

Type: Comenius School Partnerships project

School: Darüşşafaka Secondary School

Project Title: "Insight into The World of Journalism" with the number"

Project Number: 2012-1-DE3-COM06-27423-4

01/10/2012 -01/07/2014

Type: Gruntvig 2: Learning Partnerships project

School: Darüşşafaka High School

Project Title: "Student Inclusion and Student Retention"

Project Number: 2012 -1-GB2-GRU06-08453-6

4) October 2007-October 2009

Type: Comenius School Partnerships project

School: Darüşşafaka Secondary School

Project Title: "Get-In Europe By Cycling"

Project Number: TUR01-CO06-00793-1

The rest of the EU projects, which are Erasmus+ type, are as follows:

5)

Type: Erasmus + KA229

School: Darussafaka Secondary School

Project Title: "Students reaching out"

Project Number: 2015-1-NL01-KA219-008929_5

6) Type: Erasmus + KA229

School: Darussafaka Secondary School

Project Title: "Your Health is Your Wealth"

Project Number: 2018-1-SE01-KA229-039073_2

7) Type: Erasmus + KA229

School: Darussafaka Secondary School

Project Title: "Mind your health"

Project Number: 2020-1-DE03-KA229-077493_3

Experience and Expertise of the organization in the project's subject area

Our school's mission is defined as "Darüşşafaka Educational Institutions prepares children who do not have the opportunity for a good education, or who have lost their parents, for the 21st century with the qualified education it offers by providing equal opportunity in education." Equality of opportunity and quality education, which are also among the goals of sustainable development, are two crucial concepts also stated in our school's mission. One of our most important goals is to strengthen the lives of our students academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually through quality education and to ensure that they become balanced individuals in every respect.

In addition to the academic field with the quality education it offers, our school cares about our students' social-emotional development and raises them with a holistic understanding. Our school guides our students to understand, express and manage their emotions; to strive to understand those around them; to create and maintain meaningful relationships with others by improving their skills in this area, and to make better decisions. Since we are a boarding school, building a culture of living together is even more critical based on trust. In this context, various

programs are implemented:

A. As of the 2021-22 academic year, CASEL's social-emotional development model has been integrated into our school's behavior development program. This model is the framework for all activities. Within the scope of CASEL's model, which consists of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making competencies, all academic staff in middle school, high school, and living homes have been trained. The alignment of other programs within the school with this framework is also monitored. In order to develop many competencies, especially empathy, it is essential to act holistically, and it is ensured that these competencies are spread over time and integrated into different learning environments (lessons, studies, clubs, etc.). This area is also one of the priorities of our school's strategic plan. We received training on the Lions Social Emotional Learning Program in August 2023, and we are currently implementing this program within the school through our teachers in high school classes.

B. Our school is also implementing the "Movement at School" project, which aims to increase movement in school environments starting from the 2021-22 academic year. Within the scope of the program, in cooperation with the BOMOVU Association, curriculum development studies are carried out with our volunteer teachers to transfer movement and play to learning environments. The concepts of inclusive and democratic education are among the fundamental principles worked on in the movement school program. The work is transferred to different courses, and learning environments from middle school to high school through our teachers, and feedback is received. Experiences and good practices are disseminated throughout the school. The feedback we receive from our students and teachers is that the "Movement at School" program contributes positively to our students' different competencies and skills, such as empathy and relationship skills.

C. Philosophy for Children (P4C) is one of the leading progressive teaching methods in many countries. A systematic effort was made to use P4C as a learning method in our school, especially after the pandemic. Through a P4C expert graduate, our teachers are provided with practitioner training every year, and teachers who receive this pedagogy are encouraged to use P4C as a method in their lessons. Students' realization of their thoughts and efforts to understand others support the development of many skills necessary for a democratic society, including listening, respect for the feelings and thoughts of others, and enriching and developing their ideas with the ideas of others.

D. Starting from the 2022-23 academic year and continuing until February 2024, "Peace Language - Nonviolent Communication" training has been initiated at our school. Developed by Marshall Rosenberg, "Nonviolent Communication" offers an important tool, especially for the culture of democracy. It involves listening to and understanding all parties in conflict with empathy, creating a basis for cooperation by establishing connections, and producing common solutions where everyone's needs are considered. The first training, conducted by our project consultant expert, was completed in January 2023, and all middle school, high school, and life houses academic staff and administrative staff (approximately 250 people) participated. As of the second semester, it will be transferred to classroom applications.

Contributions that can be provided to the project

Both our institution's people who will take part in the project and our institution's past and present knowledge and experience will be utilized, good example experiences will be shared with project partners, and the practices to be created within the scope of the project will be transferred to our school environments. From time to time, we can get contributions when needed from the Lions Quest Program managers, Ashoka Turkey and Boğaziçi University Peace Education and Research Center, with whom we are in contact regarding Social Emotional Learning and project content.

Reasons of involvement in the project

For our students from 72 different provinces who receive boarding education at our school, Darüşşafaka is not only a school but also a living space. "Darüşşafaka" means "home of compassion." It is a priority for our students to learn the art of living together in a positive school climate and to develop skills such as interpersonal understanding, listening, empathy, self-management, conflict resolution, etc. Our institution, which knows these priorities, cares that our students become balanced individuals academically, socially, and emotionally with quality education and follows innovations in this regard.

We also care about increasing the competencies of our school teachers. We want to improve our teachers' competencies in social-emotional learning areas, which are also the key to academic success, but we encounter limited trainings and resources in this regard in Turkey. We need to implement social emotional learning, empathy, emotional intelligence skills in different lessons at different grade levels, and measurement tools that we can see the

effects of these implementation. We wanted to take part in this project because we know that we can only fulfil all these needs with a team with a broad vision, different perspectives and experiences.

Contact Person's Experience and Expertise

All of the activities mentioned above, such as "Behavior Development Program," "Movement at School", "P4C", and "Peace Language," are carried out under the coordination of R&D Coordinator Meltem Ceylan Alibeyođlu, who is also the contact person of this project, by working with the relevant units. Alibeyođlu is a mathematics teacher and has been working at Darüşşafaka Educational Institutions for 23 years. Over the years, she has worked in positions such as PYP Coordinator, European Project Coordinator, and Middle School Academic Coordinator, as well as teaching. She works in interdisciplinary fields. She is a drama leader. She works in the fields of children's rights, sustainability, environmental education, and systems thinking and also works as a part-time lecturer at universities. Currently, she is also working on her doctoral thesis in environmental education at Bođaziçi University. As Research&Development Coordinator, Meltem Ceylan is responsible for curriculum development, strategic planning and adaptation of new approaches in education to school environments.