

Business and Innovation Award



Mustafa Özsoy
King's College London

Mustafa Özsoy earned his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the Middle East Technical University, where he laid the foundation for his entrepreneurial spirit. With diverse experiences across marketing departments in corporate firms and managing influencer accounts on social media, Mustafa demonstrated his versatility in the business world.

His passion for digital marketing led him to pursue a master's degree at King's College London, where he excelled and graduated with distinction, thanks to the prestigious Chevening Scholarship.

Currently, as the co-founder of SMILAB, Mustafa leverages his skills and knowledge to make a meaningful impact in the dental industry. With a blend of academic understanding and practical experience, he continues to contribute to the dynamic landscape of the health industries.

Science and Sustainability Award



Dr. Ahmet Acar
University of Manchester

Ahmet Acar is an expert in cancer biology. Ahmet's work has had an impact on advancing cancer research, establishing the first patient-derived organoid biobank in Turkey and contributing to the development of deep learning models for enhanced cancer diagnosis through digital pathology.

Completing the PhD at the University of Manchester was an enriching experience that significantly shaped Ahmet's journey. The diverse and inclusive atmosphere, coupled with opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, made Ahmet's time at the University of Manchester distinctive and impactful.

Ahmet now contributes to the broader scientific landscape by paving the way for more effective and personalised cancer treatments, thereby addressing critical challenges in healthcare and improving patient outcomes on a global scale.



Dr. Barış Alpaslan
University of Manchester

Dr. Barış Alpaslan is an Associate Professor of Economics specialised in Development Economics and a Director for the International Office at the Social Sciences University of Ankara. He is also a Vice President of the Committee of Experts on the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals at the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO. Besides, he has undertaken consultancy services for international organisations, such as the World Bank, African Development Bank, and International Centre for Migration Policy Development. All these roles have enabled him to take an active role in national development policy and planning processes, thereby improving the quality of life in many developing countries.

The journey towards extraordinary achievement often starts with a spark moment. Studying at the University of Manchester has enabled Barış to learn more about his research area on development economics and to build a rare combination of skills that is making a significant contribution to his current success in his academic career.

Dr. Barış Alpaslan is now taking his skills and expertise to international organisations and centers for international development around the world, advising governments on development policies.

Social Action Award



Dr. Duygu Çavdar Yağan
University of Bristol

Dr. Duygu Çavdar Yağan is an Education Specialist at the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and a researcher in Educational Psychology. Duygu has participated in many international projects to empower psychosocial support services for earthquake survivors in Turkey, support students' well-being and offer inclusive practices for children with special educational needs across Turkey. Her educational experiences in the UK provide a solid background in research skills and interdisciplinary work for her effective contribution to Turkey, particularly in mental health studies and the psychology of immigration. Duygu is now taking her expertise to advising postgraduate students who study abroad with sponsorship by the MoNE.



Dr. Nuriye Niğdelioğlu Happani
University of Wales (Prifysgol De Cymru)

UNHCR Project Coordinator Dr. Nuriye Niğdelioğlu Happani conducts activities to provide psychosocial and legal support for the problems refugees face, facilitate their access to relevant service mechanisms and strengthen the refugee community.

The multicultural structure of the United Kingdom and the quality international management education she received in the UK enabled her to be unbiased, a good team member and a successful manager in her work with refugees, asylum seekers and foreigners.

She will continue to work both academically and in collaboration with international organisations in the field of migration and refugees, advocating for the rights of people displaced from conflict zones around the world.

Lifetime Achievement Award



Prof. Dr. Pelin Gündeş Bakır
University of London
Imperial College London

Prof. Dr. Pelin Gündeş Bakır, a leading earthquake engineering expert, is an experienced politician advocating for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Turkey. She served as a Member of Parliament in the Turkish Grand Assembly (2011-2015) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2011-2014). Holder of Diploma and Masters degrees in civil engineering from Imperial College, a Ph.D. in structural engineering from ITU, and a law degree from the University of London, Pelin is a full Professor of Structural and Earthquake Engineering at ITU.

Having dedicated her life to mitigating earthquake hazards and protecting lives, in 2009, she was awarded the Feyzi Akkaya Scientific Activities Support Fund (FABED) 'Outstanding Scientist' award for her contributions to earthquake hazard mitigation in Turkey. Her UK education has contributed substantially to her political and professional career fostering confidence, perseverance, and resilience and equipping her with profound thinking abilities which distinguished her in a global context. Many law schools focus on memorisation, but the University of London teaches to use more parts of the brain and focus on argumentation, judging, and reasoning. The self-confidence and the analytical, graded, and deep-thinking skills she acquired from her UK education played a crucial role in navigating politics at the national and international levels, allowing her to impact over 80 million people in Turkey and convey her ideas to more than 800 million citizens of the Council of Europe member states.

In the Council of Europe, she was elected as a member of the Bureau of the 'European Democrats' which is a leadership position throughout Europe. Prof. Pelin Gündeş is now establishing her political party, aiming to lead by example and break gender barriers. A trailblazer, she shattered the glass ceiling for women in male-dominated, conservative, traditional societies, inspiring change from grassroots levels upward.