



TOP 10 FINALIST

Nurten Akkuş

TURKEY

In a Turkish county suffering from poor socioeconomic and educational conditions, Nurten founded its first kindergarten. Before this, children had never gone to school and were very poorly socialised. The conditions were tough - mud everywhere - but she stuck to her philosophy: “nothing is impossible”.

She worked round the clock to prepare the school for her students. She found materials, painted and cleaned, created a playpark, and areas for sport, hobbies and recreation.

Her students went from hardly being able to introduce themselves to strangers to becoming literate and numerate. Their rate of knowledge and skill acquisition increased from 20% to 90%. Their behaviour disorders decreased. Participation in social events increased by 95%. And 100% of families were satisfied with their progress. Although the school is in a disadvantaged county, it has won national awards.

To remedy the low level of family participation in children’s education, she pioneered the project, “Daddy, Tell Me A Story”. This led to fathers’ participation in education, both in her county and Turkey as a whole. As a result of seeing their fathers in class, the children’s motivation and engagement with education increased dramatically. The father-child relationship in Turkey developed as a result, leading to overall improvements in childhood experiences. Her project was the subject of research by universities and Nurten was chosen by the Sabancı Foundation as “Turkey’s Changemaker”.

She has also run projects with UNICEF and the Turkish Ministry of National Education, as well as charitable foundations, non-governmental organizations, municipalities and foundations. She was chosen as “Teacher of the Year in Turkey” by public vote in 2015 and 2016. In 2017, she was chosen for “Turkey’s 30 Women Leaving a Mark on the Future”.

SUBJECT:

Pre-School Education



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