

## ***Turkey's Education Diplomacy With Africa***

***Bahar Dilşa KAVALA<sup>1</sup>***

### **Abstract**

The 21st century has witnessed the appearance of new diplomacy practices and non-state players, which has enhanced engagement between societies and shaped state policies by taking into consideration the outlooks and contributions of multiple stakeholders. This article argues that education diplomacy – which can be defined as an approach to develop education policies and achieve educational goals through the involvement of diverse stakeholders – furthers developmental efforts within societies. Within the education diplomacy framework, the article reviews Turkey's recent opening to Africa and the role that education diplomacy can play as a tool in facilitating bilateral economic and humanitarian relations, as well as support of the developmental goals of African countries.

***Keywords:*** *Sub-Saharan Africa, Development, Public Diplomacy, Education Diplomacy, Turkey-Africa Relations*

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD Candidate, Istanbul Aydın University, Africa Application and Research Center, Associate Director, Email: baharkavala@aydin.edu.tr

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are witnessing changes in the landscape of diplomacy, where old and new practices co-exist. Although diplomacy – which is the “representation of a polity vis-à-vis a recognized other” – is still related to states’ relations with the outside world, new state-society links have been established at the global level thanks to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other non-state actors that are exploring new ways of using states’ diplomatic outreach while interacting with the external world. The study of diplomacy has primarily been concerned with developing typologies rather than theorizing, and the recent changes in the practice of diplomacy have so far been described using terms like para-diplomacy, catalytic diplomacy, triangular diplomacy, etc. (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2011).

The flexible public diplomacy approach has become the most preferred tool for establishing external relations with other countries and societies in the new century. This approach aims to establish mutual understanding between countries and societies through soft power elements as defined by Nye (2008), such as culture, education, sport, etc. (Signitzer & Wamser, 2006, as cited in Özkan, 2015). Besides states, the main actors of public diplomacy are universities, schools, opinion leaders, media and news agencies, domestic mass media, global business, private sector industry, pressure groups, and supra-state institutions (Özkan, 2015).

Although there is some academic debate as to whether ‘public diplomacy’ is code for ‘propaganda’ (Gregory, 2008) – and though certain cultural diplomacy organizations have tried to distance themselves from the term ‘public diplomacy’ due to discomfort with the advocacy roles and apparent diplomatic objectives implied by the term – ‘public diplomacy’ can also be considered a two-way street where a state or other actors try to enhance engagement between societies and shape states’ own policies, taking into consideration foreign public opinion through a process of mutual influence (Cull, 2010). The tools of public diplomacy, such as education activities, exchange programs, and trainings, offer considerable opportunities for countries to develop mutual understanding and long-term, permanent relations (Özkan, 2015).

Today, besides public and cultural diplomacy, various types of diplomacies are being heralded in the public sphere, such as health diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, science diplomacy, etc. Those approaches use diplomatic tools to realize a positive impact in their respective fields. Education diplomacy has been realized through international education movements such as ‘Education for All,’ which is a commitment by 164 governments to achieve (by 2015) six global goals relating to the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults by working together with development agencies, civil society, and the private sector.

The role played by education in the development of societies is widely recognized, and this article argues that education diplomacy offers an important contribution to bringing together all stakeholders in education cooperation between Turkey and Africa and that it contributes to the achievement of Africa's development goals by developing bilateral relations at various levels.

### **THE COURSE OF TURKEY-AFRICA RELATIONS IN THE LAST DECADE**

The "Opening to Africa Action Plan" of the late 1990s is widely recognized as the starting point of Turkey's interest towards Africa in the modern Republican era. The plan was prepared and launched in 1998 by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was aimed at developing relations with Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries in almost every field, but specifically with regard to economic relations (Altan, 2005).

After the Marmara earthquake in 1999 and the financial crisis in 2001, which delayed the implementation of Turkey's opening to Africa plan, the Under-secretariat of Foreign Trade prepared a "Strategy on the Development of Economic Relations with African Countries" in 2003. Under this strategy, Turkey's share of 1.5 per cent in African countries' total trade volume was to be increased to 3 per cent within three years through support for greater access of Turkish small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) to African markets and the increase of Turkish contracting companies' market share in Africa. Within the framework

of this strategy, high level official visits and trade missions to many SSA countries were organized; bilateral trade agreements were concluded with more than twenty SSA countries by the end of 2004; and the frequency of Joint Economic Commission meetings was increased. Turkish companies attended sixteen trade exhibitions in SSA, seven of which were Turkish export products exhibitions (Altan, 2005).

After the declaration of 2005 as the “Year of Africa” by the Turkish government, mutual high level official visits were organized and new economic and trade agreements were concluded between Turkey and African countries. Then-Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Ethiopia and South Africa in March 2005, and the African Union accorded observer status to Turkey in the same year.

Turkey became the 25<sup>th</sup> non-African member of the African Development Bank in 2008 and was declared a ‘strategic partner’ of the continent by the African Union. The ‘Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit’ was organized from August 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> in 2008 in Istanbul, and “The Istanbul Declaration on Turkey-Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future” as well as the “Cooperation Framework for Turkey-Africa Partnership” were adopted during this summit. Among other things, these documents declared “[t]he need to consolidate and further expand Africa-Turkey Partnership at all levels and in all fields and to establish between African countries and Turkey a long-term and stable partnership based on equality and mutual

benefit,” and the areas for cooperation were defined as follows: 1) inter-governmental cooperation; 2) trade and investment; 3) agriculture, agribusiness, rural development, water resources management, and SMEs; 4) health; 5) peace and security; 6) infrastructure, energy, and transport; 7) culture, tourism, and education; 8) media, information, and communication technology; and 9) the environment.

In 2014, the “Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit” was organized in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, with the participation of many African Heads of State and Government, and the “Declaration and Joint Implementation Plan for the Period of 2015-2019” was adopted at the summit. Under this plan, the total trade and investment volume between Turkey and Africa is intended to be expanded from USD 30 billion in 2013 to USD 50 billion by 2019. To reach this objective, cooperation in the fields of housing, finance, and banking was prioritized, as was the establishment of industrial zones.

This plan declared that “the relations between Turkey and Africa have reached the stage of a mutually reinforced Strategic Partnership building on both Parties policies,” and the areas for cooperation were redefined as follows: 1) institutional cooperation; 2) trade and investment; 3) agriculture, agribusiness, rural development, water resources management, and SMEs 4) health; 5) peace and security; 6) conflict resolution and mediation; 7) migration; 8) infrastructure, energy, mining, and transport; 9) culture, tourism, and education; 10)

media, information, and communication technologies; 11) the environment; and 12) youth and sport.

When we compare the declaration adopted at the end of the Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit with the previous one, we note that conflict resolution and mediation were added in addition to migration and youth and sport. This change reflects the strengthening of the security aspect in bilateral relations. Turkey has increasingly been interested in African conflict zones and has provided personnel and contributed financially to five of the nine UN missions in Africa – MONUSCO/DRC, UNAMID/Darfur, UNMISS/South Sudan, UNOCI/Cote d’Ivoire, and UNMIL/Liberia (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs). In November 2014, the Turkish Parliament voted for the deployment of peacekeeping troops to UN-approved EU missions in the Central African Republic and Mali. In the first half of 2014, the Turkish navy – which has the seventh highest number of vessels in the world – visited the ports of 28 African countries. Starting in 2009, Turkey has also contributed frigates to the multinational ‘Combined Task Force 151’ led by the U.S. for anti-piracy operations conducted in the Gulf of Aden (Shinn, 2015).

During this period, Turkey has not only developed its relations with the Africa Union but also with regional economic communities in Africa. The Turkish Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, was accredited to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2005. Turkey has also become a member of the Intergovernmental Authority

on Development's (IGAD) International Partners Forum. The Turkish Embassy in Daressalaam, Tanzania, was accredited to the East African Community (EAC) in 2010, and the Turkish Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia, has been accepted into the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (Numan Hazar, 2012, as cited in Karagül & Aslan, 2013).

Turkey's enhanced relations with Africa can also be recognized in the number of high-level bilateral visits between Turkey and Africa and the number of new Turkish embassies recently opened on the continent. Then-President Abdullah Gül paid visits to Senegal in 2008; Kenya and Tanzania in 2009; the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Nigeria in 2010; and Ghana and Gabon in 2011. Then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Ethiopia in 2005, 2007, and 2015; Sudan in 2006; Somalia in 2011 and 2015; South Africa in 2011; Gabon, Niger, and Senegal in January 2013; Equatorial Guinea in 2014; Djibouti in 2015; and the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Guinea, Nigeria, and Ghana in 2016. On the other hand, the Presidents of Kenya, Niger, Cameroon, Ghana, Somalia, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Benin, Zanzibar, Nigeria, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritania, Djibouti, Senegal, and Sudan have visited Turkey ("Yurt Dışı Ziyaretler").

It has also been observed that the number of diplomatic missions between Turkey and Africa have been mutually increased. While Turkey had twelve embassies in Africa in 2002, the number of Turkish embassies in Africa has reached thirty-nine as of 2015. In 2013, with



the opening of the Turkish embassy in Asmara, Eritrea, Turkey became the first country in the world to have ambassadorial representation in all countries of the Horn of Africa (Özkan & Orakçı, 2015). Most African countries with diplomatic representation in Ankara responded to Turkey's new policy only after 2005 (Wheeler, 2011). While South Africa was the only SSA country to have had an embassy in Turkey in 1997, today thirty-two African countries maintain diplomatic missions in Ankara.

Turkey's recent foreign policy towards Africa can be divided into three periods. The adoption of the "Opening to Africa Action Plan" in 1998 until the declaration of 2005 as the "Year of Africa" is considered the first period, during which Turkey concentrated on developing diplomatic infrastructure with Africa. The second period runs from 2005 until 2011, during which Turkey increased its efforts to further relations with Africa and established new embassies in Africa. During this second period and as a result of those efforts, Turkey was declared a strategic partner by the African Union. From 2011 to the present, the third period of relations has been marked by Turkey's active engagement in the Somali food crisis (Özkan et al., 2015).

Turkey's increased focus on Africa can be explained by various factors. From the geo-strategic point of view, it is claimed that the "Great Middle East and North Africa Project" proposed by the U.S. government under by President George W. Bush – with its emphasis on responsible and transparent governance and democracy – attracted the

interest of Turkey in the region. The increase in South-South trade and the demand for raw materials in emerging Turkish and other Asian economies, as well as the global economic recession in Western markets and Turkey's export-oriented economic strategy, are all claimed to be economics-based, external explications (Aybar, 2006; Karagül et al., 2013). Breaking Turkey's perceived isolation and receiving support for major international politics issues (such as Cyprus) in international forums like the United Nations have also been important drivers of Turkey's new policy towards Africa. The newly emerging Anatolian bourgeoisie that forms the major economic and political basis of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is also seen as one of the actors encouraging the AKP to open up to new markets (Bacık & Afacan, 2013).

Apart from these drivers, Turkey's increasing interest in the African continent is also explained by the reorientation of Turkish foreign policy within global politics as crafted by the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (Aras, 2009). Having "compatible global relations" in foreign policy was considered as one of the basic components of Turkey's new foreign policy (Davutoğlu 2009, as cited in Özkan, 2010), which also explains how Turkey's opening to Africa was not a directional change away from Western world but part of a newly developing, multidimensional foreign policy (Özkan, 2010; Özkan, 2012).

In parallel to Turkey's Opening to Africa and Strategic Partnership policies, Turkey's economic involvement in Africa has deepened. In 1998, Turkey's trade volume was USD 2.9 billion with North Africa and USD 581 million with SSA; in 2005, trade volumes with each sub-region rose to USD 4.1 billion and USD 2.7 billion, respectively; in 2011, USD 10 billion and USD 7 billion, respectively; and as of 2015, USD 11.5 billion and USD 6 billion, respectively. Turkey's investments in Africa have reached USD 6 billion and contracting services undertaken in Africa so far have reached USD 54 billion. Turkish Airlines has expanded its flight network to SSA countries to benefit from growing economic relations – and this expansion in turns has its own facilitating impact on the further increase in economic relations. While Turkish Airlines was flying to six destinations in five SSA countries in 2011 (Genç & Tekin, 2014), Turkish Airlines' Africa network now encompasses forty-eight destinations in thirty-one African countries, with the addition of Port Louis, Mauritius, and Antananarivo, Madagascar, in December 2015 (“Turkish Airlines again expands”). Turkish Airlines' increasing services have also facilitated tourism relations. While the number of people coming from Africa to Turkey for short-term visits/tourism was sixty thousand, this number almost doubled to 111 thousand in 2013. The number of Turkish citizens visiting Africa has also exceeded 116 thousand people.

## **ENHANCING RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND AFRICA AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY EDUCATION**

Although Turkey's economic relations with Africa gained momentum in the last decade and increased especially in terms of trade, investments, and contracting services, Africa's part in Turkey's overall foreign economic relations is still not at a considerable level. Despite the increase in the trade volume between Turkey and Africa, the part of African countries in Turkey's overall foreign trade has not changed considerably but instead fluctuated between 4 and 5 per cent in the last decade. This article argues that closer education relations through education diplomacy efforts could have a catalyzing effect on the development of economic relations and could increase the effectiveness of Turkey's humanitarian efforts as well.

The number of international students in Turkey has increased significantly in line with the global increase in international student mobility, and this number has more than doubled to 48 thousand between 2000 and 2013. According to the Council of Higher Education's statistics, 80 per cent of those students conduct their studies in public universities, whereas 20 per cent are hosted at foundation universities. 34 per cent of international students in Turkey are studying social sciences, business administration, and law, followed by human sciences, literature, and education at 21 per cent. On the list of top twenty countries from which Turkey received international students in 2013/2014, there are only two countries from Africa: Nigeria (11<sup>th</sup>) and

Somalia (20<sup>th</sup>) (T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı, - Ministry of Development, 2015).

Higher education scholarships granted to African students have become a considerable component of Turkey's aid towards the continent. Turkey's official scholarships granted from public sources have been restructured under the 'Türkiye Scholarships' program, and they are coordinated by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) as of 2012. According to the figures provided by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey granted 1079 scholarships to African students in the 2014/2015 academic year, whereas the total number of African students granted Turkish scholarships between 1991 and 2013 was 3254. 5437 students from African countries are pursuing their studies at Turkish higher education institutions, and Turkish universities are hosting 116 visiting professors and research assistants from those countries ("Turkey-Africa relations").

Scholarships are going to students from nearly all SSA countries, though some of them are better represented than others. In 2011, the Turkish government and private charities arranged scholarships for more than 350 Somalis, to study in Turkey, Sudan, and Egypt. 10 Djibouti students received scholarships from Turkey for the 2012/2013 academic year and 16 in 2013/2014; Sudan received 22 in 2013/2014; and Nigeria received 12 in 2012/2013. Nigerian students were offered 55 scholarships by Turkey between 2008 and 2011, and Kenyan

students were offered 20 annually. It has also been claimed that there were 70 Mozambican students studying in Turkey on scholarships in 2015 (Shinn, 2015).

The aim of scholarships is officially expressed as strengthening relations between countries and transferring experience gained by international students in the host country to their home countries (T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2015). In a study conducted with students from Somalia, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Guinea, Burundi, and Ethiopia, students expressed that they wanted to come to Turkey because of the underdeveloped status of their home countries, and they aimed to return to their countries and serve their own people after the completion of their studies in Turkey (Gündüz, 2012). In addition to supporting the developmental efforts of African countries, the increase in the number of African students studying in Turkey and the diversification of the fields in which scholarships are provided could accelerate economic relations between Turkey and Africa.

### **The role of education in facilitating bilateral trade relations**

Turkey's trade volume with the African continent was USD 3.7 billion in 2003, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), and it has increased by five times and arrived at USD 17 billion in 2015. While there has been an increase in the overall trade with Africa, Africa's part in Turkey's global trade has only increased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. North Africa represents 66 per cent of Turkey's trade volume with the continent, whereas SSA represents 34 per cent. Five North African

countries and two SSA countries (South Africa and Nigeria) account for 76 per cent of all of Turkey's trade volume with the African continent. There are five countries (four North African and one SSA) with which Turkey's trade volume is above USD 1 billion. There are two countries (Tunisia and Nigeria) where Turkey's trade volume is between USD 500 million and 1 billion. There are only 13 SSA countries where trade with Turkey is above USD 100 million.

In addition to some structural problems, such as high customs duties in African countries for Turkish goods and high logistics costs, communication problems also play a part in hindering efforts for building partnerships and permanent commercial relations. In addition to English, French, Arabic, and Portuguese, an estimated 2,100 languages are spoken in Africa across its 54 countries. Language barriers may become an issue for Turkish SMEs in both their search for partners and any commercial disputes that may arise, hindering the establishment of permanent trade relations with Africa. At the same time, African students pursuing their studies in Turkey, both in foundation universities and public universities via 'Türkiye scholarships,' are learning Turkish language and culture, and they have a lot to offer for developing bilateral relations.

However, Mr. Tamer Taşkın, Coordinating Chairman of the Turkey-Africa Business Councils in DEİK, confirms the fact that, unfortunately, Turkish and African companies do not currently benefit from the potential provided by African students in Turkey (email to the

author, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Turkish companies should be able to make contacts with those students while they are still continuing their education in Turkey and offer them internships or part-time employment, which would provide opportunities to get to know each other. African students would also obtain professional experience that could allow them to be the future partners for the Turkish business community and contribute to the developmental efforts of their countries by increasing trade relations. If education diplomacy efforts included Turkish private sector organizations in efforts to develop education-based relations with Africa, the distance between the Turkish private sector and international students from African countries in Turkey could be closed.

### **The role of education in facilitating Turkish investments and contracting services in Africa**

The role that international students from African countries in Turkey can play is not limited to the development of relations in trade. Turkish investments and contracting relations with Africa are increasing, and African students can also facilitate those relations, as confirmed by Mrs. Çiğdem Çınar, Deputy Secretary General of the Turkish Contractors Association, whose members' business volume encompasses almost 90 per cent of all international contracting projects undertaken by Turkish companies (email to the author, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016),.

Turkey's actual investments in Africa are estimated at USD 6 billion, up from very low levels in 2003. Whereas 35 projects amounting to



USD 643 million were undertaken by Turkish contracting companies in 2013, in 2013 the figure rose to 50 projects amounting to USD 3 billion. The total value of 1150 projects undertaken in Africa has so far reached USD 55 billion. These projects represent 21 per cent of Turkey's total volume of global contracting projects, North Africa's portion being 19 per cent of that amount ("Turkey-Africa relations").

The difficulty of hiring a qualified workforce from local sources is one of the biggest problems encountered by Turkish companies doing business in Africa. Often they must bring technical employees from abroad, but again, they are facing difficulties, since most African countries want to promote local employment. In that case, they need to train the local workforce. Ethiopia is one SSA country where Turkish industrial investments are highly concentrated. 238 companies with Turkish capital have been established in Ethiopia so far, and investments from those companies worth USD 1.5 billion have been authorized. These companies have committed to employing 32 thousand people locally for their investments (DEİK, 2014). There are important steps to be taken within the framework of education diplomacy to solve the problems associated with local employment, which might actually be a more cost-effective solution.

### **The role of education in facilitating Turkey's humanitarian activities and development aid in Africa**

In the last decade, Turkey has also expanded its development assistance and humanitarian aid towards Africa (to the tune of USD 240 million

in 2012), and the continent became the second region after Asia in 2012 in terms of those receiving the most official development aid from Turkey. Somalia was among the top 10 countries benefiting from Turkey's official development aid in 2012 and 2013, and it has become the success story of this process, which has made Turkey's humanitarian aid impact in Africa more visible (Haşimi, 2014). Humanitarianism has become the main approach and official discourse since the beginning of Turkey's involvement in Somalia during the 2011 food security crises. This humanitarian approach has included a development aid aspect in addition to emergency aid, which helped Turkey become a leading international figure in Somalia, with a high sensitivity towards the country shown by the general Turkish public, the ruling and opposition parties, and the NGO community. Turkey's developmental and humanitarian projects have so far resulted in approximately USD 500 million aid to Somalia (Özkan et al., 2015).

Turkey's humanitarian approach has mainly been implemented through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), which maintains overseas coordination offices in 48 countries, 14 of them being in Africa. TİKA coordinates development projects in 26 African countries. In 2013, Africa was the largest beneficiary of assistance from TİKA and ranked first at 33.7 per cent of TİKA's total aid disbursement, with 525 projects in the areas of water and sanitation, health, administrative and civil infrastructure, economic infrastructure, agriculture and livestock, production sectors, education, and other

social infrastructure and services (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, 2013).

The health sector has become one of the pioneering areas of Turkey's humanitarian aid. Turkey has concluded bilateral agreements in healthcare with almost 20 African countries. 21,600 patients have received operations under the 'Africa Cataract Project,' which was implemented in four African countries: Niger, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The Turkish-Sudanese Research and Training Hospital was constructed and completed by TİKA in Nyala in 2014; and Digfer Hospital, the biggest hospital in Mogadishu, was opened in January 2015 during the visit of President Erdoğan. Turkey has also contributed to the Education Hospital in Juba, South Sudan, and the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ("Turkey-Africa relations").

The Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), which acts as a humanitarian agency in more than one hundred countries, has also been active in certain SSA countries. Red Crescent has supported a refugee camp for 15,000 people in Somalia (Özkan et al., 2015); opened a modern pharmacy at a hospital in N'Djamena, Chad; established a field hospital in Darfur, Sudan, in 2006; and organized a large national aid campaign for Somalia in 2011 (Shinn, 2015).

An important link between the education and humanitarian sectors was asserted during the meeting on 'Education Diplomacy with Africa' organized by Istanbul Aydın University's Africa Application and

Research Center (AFRİKAM) on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. It was claimed that there is a considerable need for local manpower with regard to Red Crescent's activities. The scholarships provided by YTB and the language education activities of the Yunus Emre Institute are considered highly crucial for increasing the Turkish-speaking local manpower capacity in Africa, which would aid the humanitarian activities carried out by Turkish actors.

### **THE ROLE OF EDUCATION DIPLOMACY IN ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS IN AFRICA**

There are some critical sustainability challenges that affect the African continent's development efforts, such as the impacts of climate change; deforestation; the over-exploitation of resources; the deterioration of marine and coastal ecosystems and water quality issues; problems of poverty; food insecurity; wars and violence; HIV/AIDS, environmentally related diseases; drought; and water purity and sanitation (GUNI, IAU & AAU, 2011). Except for Mauritius, the Seychelles, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya – which are considered countries with high human development, according to the 2015 UNDP Human Development Index – and 10 other African countries with medium human development, most African countries are qualified as the countries with low human development (UNDP, 2015). In order to overcome threats to development and benefit from development opportunities and rich natural resources in a sustainable way, enhancing human capacity and skills is essential for Africa.

The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, headed by Jacques Delors, emphasized that education can help to “foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war” (UNESCO, 1996, p. 13). Human capacity building is considered one of the most important challenges for the sustainable development of countries in the South. For that reason, higher education is considered a significant factor in the development process of Africa, and the African Union has started an initiative to revitalize higher education in Africa to support the continent’s development efforts (GUNI, IAU & AAU, 2011).

Developing education relations between Turkey and Africa will not only enhance bilateral economic relations but also support the developmental goals of Africa. This development dimension of relations in the field of education is increasingly becoming a concern. During the Working Luncheon on Education Diplomacy with Africa organized by AFRİKAM and DEİK, Ambassadors from African countries claimed that the selection of African students for scholarships to study in Turkey was not always in line with the national development priorities of African countries, or in areas that are of strategic importance to those countries. Most African countries have National Development Plans that identify critical areas for skills development, particularly in key areas such as construction and medicine. In order to organize education for African students in Turkey so as to best support Africa in achieving its development goals, such national plans should

be examined and scholarship granting bodies should match the critical areas in which they grant scholarships with skills shortages in Africa and areas of academic strength in Turkey (AFRIKAM, 2015).

When we go through the national development plans of SSA countries in which Turkey maintains diplomatic representation, the following key areas (as shown in Table 1) are identified as providing the potential to support the development efforts of Africa through scholarships for education in Turkey: 1) agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries; 2) civil engineering; 3) electronics; 4) energy systems engineering; 5) food engineering; 6) information and communication technology; 7) logistics and transportation; 8) medicine; 9) metallurgy, mining and metallurgical engineering; 10) textile engineering; and 11) tourism.

### **AREAS OF COOPERATION IN EDUCATION THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED THROUGH EDUCATION DIPLOMACY**

The following are identified as the most common problems encountered by students from Africa in Turkey: 1) learning a new language and communication problems; 2) lack of information for applications to Turkish scholarships; 3) delays in getting visas for travel, especially for the citizens of African countries where there is no Turkish diplomatic representation; 4) crowded dormitories; 5) inadequate welcome information and orientation programs; 6) complicated bureaucratic processes; 7) lack of English speaking officials; and 8) insufficient TÖMER education programs for Turkish language instruction (Gündüz, 2012).

These problems should be addressed within education diplomacy forums that can bring together various stakeholders in education relations between Turkey and Africa. There is a need to establish a multi-stakeholder mechanism in Turkey for following up on problems in existing education relations and developing solutions accordingly. Already existing Joint Economic Commission mechanisms can be expanded so as to include universities and other non-state actors that could play a role in developing education relations, and they can be used as one forum for education diplomacy with Africa. This forum could be used to establish mechanisms for accelerating mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications, which is also an important component of ensuring that African students studying in Turkey practice the valuable skills they earned during their studies in a way that furthers progress on the development goals of their countries.

Scholarships provided by Turkey to African students should take into consideration the developmental goals of each African country as identified in their national development plans or strategies, and African students pursuing their studies in Turkey should also be provided greater opportunities to connect with the Turkish business community, so as to benefit from internship or part-time employment within the context of projects to be developed by universities and private sector organizations.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Africa Application and Research Center (AFRİKAM), (2015), *Final Report of the Working Luncheon on Education Diplomacy with Africa*. Istanbul: Istanbul Aydın University.
- [2] Altan, C. (2005). Afrika ülkeleriyle ekonomik ve ticari ilişkilerimiz. *Uluslararası Ekonomik Sorunlar Dergisi*, 17, 1-20.
- [3] Aybar, S. (2006, February 1). Yeni Türk-Afrika ekonomik ilişkileri ve eski engelleyici söylem: Afro-pesimizim. In *Türk Asya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi*. Retrieved on [February, 2016], from [http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/4093/yeni\\_turk-afrika\\_ekonomik\\_iliskileri\\_ve\\_eski\\_engelleyici\\_soylem\\_afro-pesimizim](http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/4093/yeni_turk-afrika_ekonomik_iliskileri_ve_eski_engelleyici_soylem_afro-pesimizim).
- [4] Bacık, G., & Afacan, I. (2013). Turkey discovers Sub-Saharan Africa: The critical role of agents in the construction of Turkish foreign-policy discourse. *Turkish Studies*, 14(3), 483-502. doi: 10.1080/14683849.2013.832040.
- [5] Cull, N. J. (2010). Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(1), 11-17. doi: 10.1057/pb.2010.4



- [6] Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu (DEİK). (2014). DEİK Ülke Özel Yayınları: Afrika, 63.
- [7] Genç, S., & Tekin, O. (2014). Turkey's increased engagement in Africa: The potential, limits and future perspectives of relations. *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies*, 7(1), 87-115.
- [8] Gregory, B. (2008). Public diplomacy: Sunrise of an academic field. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 274-290. doi: 10.1177/0002716207311723.
- [9] GUNI, IAU, & AAU. (2011). *The promotion of sustainable development by higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Survey report*.
- [10] Gündüz, O. (2012). Uluslararası burslu öğrencilerin Türkiye'de eğitim görme beklentileri ve kariyer hedefleri: Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Toplulukları Başkanlığı uzmanlık tezi.
- [11] Haşimi, C. (2014). Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy and development cooperation. *Insight Turkey*, 16(1), 127-145.

- [12] The Istanbul declaration on Africa-Turkey partnership: Solidarity and partnership for a common future. (2008). In *ISS Resource Centre*. Retrieved on January 12, 2016, from <https://www.issafrika.org/uploads/TURKEYAFRIDECAUG08.PDF>.
- [13] Karagül, S. & Aslan, İ. (2013). Türkiye'nin Afrika açılım politikası: Tarihsel arka plan, stratejik ortaklık ve geleceği. *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika*, 9(35), 21-55.
- [14] Nye, Jr., J. S. (2008). Public dipomacy and soft power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, 94-109. doi: 10.1177/0002716207311699.
- [15] Özkan, A. (2015). Strategic practices of public diplomacy policies in educational field and Turkey's potential for cultural diplomacy. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 176, 35-43. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.441.
- [16] Özkan, M. (2012). A new actor or passer-by? The political economy of Turkey's engagement with Africa. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 14(1), 113-133. doi: 10.1080/19448953.2012.656968.

- [17] Özkan, M. (2010). What drives Turkey's involvement in Africa? *Review of African Political Economy*, 37(126), 533-540. doi: 10.1080/03056244.2010.530952.
- [18] Özkan, M., & Orakçı, S. (2015). Viewpoint: Turkey as a "political" actor in Africa – an assessment of Turkish involvement in Somalia. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9(2), 343–352. doi: 10.1080/17531055.2015.1042629.
- [19] Yurt dışı ziyaretler. (n.d.). In *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*. Retrieved on [2016], from [www.tccb.gov.tr/receptayyiperdogan/yurtdisiziyaretler/](http://www.tccb.gov.tr/receptayyiperdogan/yurtdisiziyaretler/).
- [20] Sending, O. J., Pouliot, V., & Neumann, I. B. (2011). The future of diplomacy: Changing practices, evolving relationships. *International Journal*, 66(3), 527-542.
- [21] Shinn, D. (2015). *Turkey's engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting alliances and strategic diversification*. London: Chatham House.
- [22] T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı: Kalkınma Araştırmaları Merkezi. (2015) *Yükseköğretimin uluslararasılaşması çerçevesinde Türk üniversitelerinin uluslararası öğrenciler için çekim merkezi haline getirilmesi: Araştırma projesi raporu*. Ankara: Türk Cumhuriyeti.

- [23] Turkey-Africa relations. (n.d.). In *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved on [date needed], from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>.
- [24] Turkish Airlines again expands its network. (2015, December 15). In *Turkish Airlines*. Retrieved on [2016], from <http://www.turkishairlines.com/en-int/corporate/press-room/press-releases/press-release-detail/turkish-airlines-again-expands-its-network-661>.
- [25] Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. (2013). *Annual Report 2013*. Ankara: Government of the Republic of Turkey.
- [26] United Nations Development Program. (2015). *Human development report 2015: Work for human development*. New York: United Nations.
- [27] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (1996). *Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century – Learning: The treasure within*. Paris: UNESCO.
- [28] Wheeler, T. (2011). Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 18(1), 43-62. doi: 10.1080/10220461.2011.564426.



