

# FOUNDATION EDUCATION IN ACTION

## Message from the Chairwoman



**N**o doubt we greet every year a very special group of young people and their teachers and the staff of the UWC. We thank them for their work during their years in the Mostar United World College. You make this place and schools what it is. And you do it in very demanding circumstances and with limited material resources.

We also thank the city of Mostar and the society around us for hosting the United World College as of the community and we place even greater goals for the future to come.

We also place great hope on our graduating students: take all you have learnt here with you, study further, determine goals for yourself and find the way to make them true.

If there is one comment I wish each and everyone always will remember it is this: what you concentrate and focus on, that you will get more.

If you concentrate on the problems, you will for sure have more of them. If you concentrate and focus on solutions, you will find them.

Other way to express it may be:

you will get what you want.

Sounds simple but requires lots of careful analysis and concentration. In particular, it requires the courage to choose among the many options you will have. You cannot concentrate on everything.

When closing this school year, you also heard very wise words from Guillermo Verdirame, the chairman of the Endowment for UWCiM. He encouraged you to focus on your immediate surroundings. You should know your local neighbors in your home villages and other places. You should make sure that you will not only feel at home amongst the international highly educated global elite that you through your education are by definition now part of.

Global and local understanding must both be part of your daily lives should you wish to find solutions of the major issues and deep divisions of our time.

For me there have been two books this year that I was recommended to read and I would recommend further: Thank you for being late by great writer and journalist Thomas Friedman and The Second Machine

Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies by two MIT professors Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee.

And finally, never think it is about you only. The focus must always be broader. Love yourself to love others. In Finnish education that has become recognized as a great education model world-wide one focus area is child-centered learning combined with social skills. Children are encouraged to be independent and look for solutions themselves. Simultaneously they are encouraged to recognize the needs of others and to help when they can.

One word I have learnt through Finnish education and research on it. That is compassion. When I asked for definition I was given this one by our leading professor of early childhood education: Compassion is empathy with action.

In the words of a great journalist Peter Maass who reported on the Bosnian war in 1990s: Love Thy Neighbor.

**Dr Pilvi Torsti,**  
**Chairwoman of the Board of the**  
**Foundation Education in Action**