

British Council Schools Conference, Saudi Arabia

**Future-Ready Schools:
Developing Human Capability
and Skills**

Speakers Profile

**January 28 – 29, 2026
Kempinski Hotel, Yanbu**

Speaker Profile

Kathleen O'Hare OBE



Kathleen O'Hare has extensive involvement in education and skills.

From 2002 - 2018 she was Headteacher of two large post primary schools in Northern Ireland - St Cecilia's in Derry and Hazelwood Integrated College in North Belfast. She has a BA in History and an MA in History and Politics, as well as a Professional Qualification in Headship (PQH).

Kathleen is the former Vice-Chair of Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment CCEA (The Exam Board and Regulator). She also contributed to the Northern Ireland Curriculum by providing resources and teacher training for the Common Curriculum. Mrs O'Hare is a former member of Senate at Queens University Belfast and the Board of Belfast Metropolitan Further and Higher Education College where she was Vice-Chair and chair of the Curriculum, Quality and Engagement Committee. As the Chair of the Northern Ireland Skills Council, she liaises with government bodies across the UK and Ireland on direction and policy.

Since her retirement as a college principal, she has continued her services to education by working on international leadership and action research projects for the British Council in Taiwan, Brazil, Middle East, and Africa for the British Council. She is a recent member of the Department of Education Expert Panel on tackling educational underachievement, Fair Start and was also a panel member of the Teachers Regulation Agency in England and Wales.

She is a former Teacher of History and Politics and was involved in writing textbooks for the new shared curriculum which emerged in the early 1990s after the conflict in Northern Ireland. She is a Fellow of the International Peace School at Messines and was made Freeman of the City of London in 2011 in recognition of innovative cross community work. Recently she was awarded a fellowship of Belfast Metropolitan College as part of her services to education and skills.

Her leadership in education has been recognised by becoming UK Head teacher of the Year and Head teacher of the Year in Belfast through the Blackboard Awards. In January 2024, she was named in the Kings New Years Honours List.

Speaker Profile

Mina Patel



Mina Patel is Head of Research for the *Future of English* programme at the British Council. In this role, she leads a global research team investigating the evolving uses, roles, and status of English worldwide, and the implications for English language teaching and education policy.

With over 25 years of experience in English language teaching, training, and educational management, Mina has worked across diverse contexts including the UK, Greece, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. Her roles have spanned teaching, teacher training, materials development, and managing large-scale ELT projects. She has extensive experience collaborating with ministries of education across East Asia.

Mina is a frequent plenary speaker at national and international conferences on ELT-related topics and is co-author of *Future of English: Global Perspectives*. She has served as Conference Chair for the British Council's *New Directions in English Language Assessment* conferences in Latin America and South America.

Her academic interests include language assessment literacy, the impact of testing and assessment on education systems, and teacher development. Mina is currently completing a PhD at the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), University of Bedfordshire, UK. Her doctoral research is titled *Establishing a Language Assessment Literacy Framework for an Educational Organisation*.

Speaker Profile

Dr. Abdulrahman Alfuraih



Dr. Abdulrahman Alfuraih was a Teacher, Educational Supervisor, General Supervisor then the Head of English Department at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. The role included not only leading and managing English language development initiatives throughout the Kingdom, but also broader supervision programs to support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the nation strives to achieve and exceed the goals and aspirations defined in the Saudi Vision 2030.

Dr. Abdulrahman is an experienced Director-General with a history of over 25 years in the field of Education, he is a passionate educationalist with global presentation and representation experience. Following a distinguished career, he moved to the private sector, assuming senior executive leadership as Director General of International Education. He currently holds the position of Director General of Education at a highly regarded and leading educational company, where he provides strategic leadership and direction for the development, governance, and performance of all educational sectors.

Speaker Profile

Dr. Sahal Zain Yaseen



Dr. Sahal Zain Yaseen is a bilingual educational leader with over three decades of experience in founding, developing, and managing schools and educational organizations. Currently serving as General Manager at Al-Andalus Educational Company, he has held leadership positions such as Executive Principal, Principal, and Administrative Manager in prominent international schools across Jeddah. His career demonstrates a consistent commitment to academic excellence, innovative school leadership, and organizational growth.

Mr. Yaseen holds a Doctorate in Education in Educational Management and Leadership from Harris University, along with a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Akron. His foundation in Islamic Studies, coupled with extensive professional memberships—including the American Counselling Association and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists—enriches his leadership perspective. Fluent in Arabic and English, with strong public speaking and community engagement skills, he has also contributed significantly to charitable and educational initiatives both locally and internationally.

Speaker Profile

Dr. G. M. Nizam Uddin

Dr. G. M. Nizam Uddin is a highly accomplished international school leader with over two decades of senior K–12 leadership experience across South Asia and the Middle East. He currently serves as Principal and CEO of Bangladesh International School Dammam (BISD), leading a multicultural, internationally benchmarked school aligned with Cambridge and IB educational frameworks, operating under the Saudi Ministry of Education.

Widely recognised for his expertise in strategic school transformation, leadership development, curriculum innovation, and data-informed improvement, Dr. Nizam Uddin has led across IB (PYP, MYP, DP), Cambridge (IGCSE & A Levels), and Pearson Edexcel programmes. His leadership places strong emphasis on teacher professional development, instructional leadership, safeguarding, wellbeing, and effective governance.

He has successfully founded, led, and transformed multiple large international schools, overseeing curriculum transitions, accreditation and authorisation processes, campus development, enrolment growth, and financial sustainability. Under his leadership, schools have achieved outstanding national and global academic outcomes, with graduates progressing to leading universities worldwide, including MIT, Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, and McGill.

A PhD holder in Education, Dr. Nizam Uddin is a Master Trainer for the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers & Trainers (CIDTT) and has delivered leadership and teacher training across Asia, Europe, the USA, and the MENA region. He has contributed to over 50 international conferences, training programmes, and policy dialogues, including those organised by the British Council, Cambridge International, and the IB.

His professional interests include future-ready leadership, human capability development, digital transformation, AI in education, and aligning school improvement with national priorities such as Saudi Vision 2030. A strong advocate for schools as learning organisations, he champions innovation, collaboration, and continuous professional growth.

At this conference, Dr. Nizam Uddin brings a practitioner's perspective on building resilient school systems, empowering teachers and middle leaders, leveraging technology responsibly, and preparing learners with the skills, character, and adaptability needed for a rapidly changing world.

Speaker Profile

Professor Othman Z. Barnawi



Othman Z. Barnawi is a professor of Language, Society, and Education at the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes, Saudi Arabia. He is the founding editor of *Global South Perspectives on TESOL* (Book Series published by Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group). He is also a co-founding editor of *Southern Studies in Education* (Book Series published by Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group). His research interests include the intersection(s) of language and political economy, social and education policy studies, time and temporality in multilingual and multicultural education, Global South studies, and international/transnational education. His recent books are *Decolonial Temporality and Writing Education* (Multilingual Matters, 2025), *Transnational Assessment Practices in the Age of Metrics* (Routledge, 2023), *International TESOL Teachers in a Multi-Englishes Community: Mobility, On-the-Ground Realities and the Limits of Negotiability* (Multilingual Matters, 2022), *TESOL Teacher Education in a Transnational World: Turning Challenges into Innovative Prospects* (Routledge, 2022), and *TESOL and the cult of speed in the age of neoliberal mobility* (Routledge, 2020). His works appear in leading peer-reviewed journals such as *Language and Education*, *Critical Studies in Education*, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford University Press), *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *Applied Linguistics Review*, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, and *British Journal of Educational Studies*.

Speaker Profile

Mr. Uzair Ahmed



Uzair Ahmad is the Director of the Prep-English Program at King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (KFUPM). With over 15 years of experience in education, he specializes in TESOL, curriculum development, and teacher training. Uzair is committed to enhancing English language teaching through innovative practices and evidence-based approaches, and he works closely with faculty and stakeholders to strengthen student outcomes across the program.

Speaker Profile

Mr. Adam. D. Smith



Adam D. Smith serves as the Director of English Language Programs for the Continuing Education Center at Prince Sultan University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Previously, he worked with defense contractors in Dammam on projects for the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, in South Korea teaching general English and exam preparation, and in the United States as the leader of a sales team. He holds master's degrees in writing and instructional design and has recently been admitted into the doctoral program at the University of the Cumberlands in Kentucky, USA, for Educational Leadership.