UWC Refugee Initiative:
Supporting 100 young refugees per year to become tomorrow’s changemakers

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela
Honorary President, UWC
THE UWC REFUGEE INITIATIVE

Young refugees, internally displaced and persecuted people are five times more likely to be out of school than other young people.

Refugee communities need educated future leaders with strong abilities, a sense of social consciousness and a drive for peace and reconciliation. To achieve this, we must ensure that young refugees have access to quality secondary education.

UWC is committed to support young refugees on this journey. Our target is to provide one hundred scholarships per year for young refugees to attend one of the 18 UWC schools and colleges worldwide.

We know that young refugees have outstanding talent. They have proven extraordinary resilience in dealing with their challenging circumstances. We want to support them with a world-class education which will enable them to become change-makers who will be much needed for the rebuilding of their post-conflict communities and for a (more) peaceful future.

“I was born and raised in a refugee camp at the end of the world, in a forgotten and impossible to reach corner of the great African desert. Yet, UWC put in the time and the effort to reach that part of the world, and now here I am.”

*Bachir Abeid from the Smara refugee camp in Algeria, he was selected to attend UWC Costa Rica (2011-2013) and then went on to Brown University (2017).*
REFUGEE CRISIS IN NUMBERS

68.5 MILLION FORCIBLY displaced people worldwide

25.4 MILLION REFUGEES

OVER 50% OF REFUGEES are under the age of 18

EDUCATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NUMBERS

92% OF CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD attend primary school

84% OF ADOLESCENTS AROUND THE WORLD attend secondary school

37% OF YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD go to university

61% OF REFUGEE CHILDREN go to primary school

Only 23% OF REFUGEE ADOLESCENTS receive a secondary education

Fewer than 1% OF REFUGEE YOUTH go to university
THE REFUGEE SITUATION: THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

An unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world have been forced from their homes.

- Among them are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.
- This means that the number of forcibly displaced people in the world is now greater than the population of the United Kingdom, and amounts to one in every 110 people on Earth being either an asylum-seeker, internally displaced or a refugee.
- 85 percent of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries, led by Turkey, Pakistan and Uganda.
- Over half come from just three war-torn countries: Syria, Afghanistan and South Sudan.

REFUGEES FACE MAJOR BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Lack of access to education is a major issue affecting young refugees, internally displaced and persecuted people. This situation is exacerbated by the time refugees reach secondary school age:

- 23 percent of adolescent refugees attend secondary school, compared to 84 percent globally.
- Fewer than one percent of refugees attend university, compared to 37 percent globally.
Founded in 1962, UWC (United World Colleges) is a global education movement that makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

To achieve this, 18 UWC schools and colleges on 4 continents deliver a challenging and transformational educational experience to a deliberately diverse group of young people to inspire them to become agents of positive change. UWC places a high value on experiential learning, in areas such as social justice, sustainability, intercultural dialogue, community service and physical challenge, which complement high academic standards delivered through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

Students are selected within their own culture through our unique national committee system in 155 countries. In line with the belief that education should be independent of a student’s socioeconomic means, selections take place on a need-blind admissions basis and 80% of students in their IB Diploma years receive either full or partial financial assistance. As a result, students come from very diverse backgrounds, including the most marginalised.

UWC fosters a lifelong commitment to social responsibility and, to date, it has inspired a worldwide network of more than 60,000 alumni, who believe it is possible to take action and are making a difference locally, nationally and internationally.
UWC PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISRUPTED LIVES AND EDUCATIONAL PASTS

UWC has for many years educated refugees from conflict hotspots such as Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Western Sahara, Tibet and Colombia.

Currently around 50 UWC scholars per year come from a refugee background and benefit from full scholarship provision at our residential institutions. These refugee students are integrated into a vibrant community of 3,750 students from over 150 different countries and even more cultural backgrounds.

UWC schools cater to the specific needs of students who have had their education disrupted due to displacement, as well as specific psychological and welfare needs for students who have experienced various forms of trauma, often over prolonged periods. We strive to create a tight-knit, family community for all of our students, especially those from refugee backgrounds, in order to establish a “home away from home” environment for those who may be studying at great distances from their true homes. Pastoral care and support is an important element of UWC education – as well as providing each student with the freedom to not only be defined by their past.

THE UWC REFUGEE INITIATIVE

“We believe in creating opportunity for those who want to have a genuine positive impact. In this day and age I believe we need to educate global citizens who want to engage in discourse and who really want to make a difference. That’s our brand of international education and that is where the real strength of UWC lies.” Jens Waltermann, Executive Director, UWC International

The UWC Refugee Initiative is rooted in our commitment to make education a force for peace – and to support students from marginalised backgrounds to become change-makers for a better future.

In light of the dramatic escalation in the number of young displaced people fleeing conflict, persecution of environmental disaster, combined with the need for future post-conflict leadership, there is an urgent need to further increase the number of refugee students being granted access to a world-class education at a UWC school or college.

Knowing UWC’s powerful impact on the future trajectories of refugees and displaced young people, we are committed to providing 100 scholarships per year for refugee students.

Our vision is that the UWC Refugee Initiative will inspire and enable young refugee leaders to become catalysts for change. A UWC education will equip young refugees with the skills and awareness necessary to address the political, economic and social inequalities and the ethnic or religious tensions that their communities face, and will foster an entrepreneurial mindset. They will, in turn, become the changemakers and messengers of hope so urgently needed, both by their peers today and for the rebuilding of their post-conflict societies in the future.
Christine Meling, South Sudan

Originally from South Sudan but grew up in a UN refugee camp in northern Uganda when her family was displaced by civil war

UWC: UWC Red Cross Nordic, Norway (2006)
University: Luther College (2010)
Awards: Clinton Global Initiative University Outstanding Commitment Award (2010)
Project: After graduating from UWC, Christine returned to her home village where she oversaw the production of school uniforms for low income families. She was awarded a CGI U Outstanding Commitment Award grant of $5,000 to fund her project titled “sewing for the next generation”.

“My project will allow women and children to avoid spending excess time and money to travel for the same product; encourage school attendance; and reduce the costs of families sending their children to school.”
UWC’S UNIQUE ADMISSIONS SYSTEM

How students are selected

• Students can apply through their local national committee, with locations in over 155 countries.

• In war-torn countries like Syria, the selection process is conducted mostly online to ensure accessibility and safety.

• UWC works in co-operation with the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, SOS Children Villages and other organisations to access and select students who can benefit from the Refugee Initiative.

How students are nominated to a UWC

• Following the application process, accepted students will be placed in one of the 18 UWC schools.

• Special consideration is taken with each student to ensure their placement location makes the most sense for their personal, familial, or social circumstances.

Academic & Pastoral support

• Completing the UWC programme is a demanding process, so preparing and supporting students for their time at UWC is an important role of the national committees. Preparatory pre-IB years and summer programmes are also run by the schools.

• Support is given to students who require assistance in developing the language skills required to effectively integrate into their new communities and to follow an academic programme in English.

• All colleges have a pastoral care system in place to aid students who have experienced traumatic events throughout their lives or disrupted educations. This includes dedicated student counsellors, link parents and peer listeners.

Ruddy Ndina, Democratic Republic of Congo

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo but then forced to flee the country due to the civil war. He and his family lived in the Mpaka refugee camp in Swaziland for seven years before he won a scholarship to attend UWC.

UWC: Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa, Swaziland (2009-2012)
University: University of British Columbia (2018)
Awards: Recipient of the Donald Wehrung International Scholarship Award to study Civil Engineering at the University of British Columbia; 2016 recipient of the “Faces of Today Award” at Canada’s largest annual Student Leadership Conference (SLC)

“My story is about empowerment and the trickling effect of UWC generosity in helping refugee students overcome their challenges and pursue a better life, just like every other ‘normal’ person. Poor leadership has created millions of refugees globally, however, effective investment in education is the kind of leadership required to un-plague the world from this refugee crisis.”
UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organisation mandated to provide protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and others of concern and to find solutions for them. As part of its actions to meet these protection and solutions responsibilities, it is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR leads international action to protect people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. UNHCR delivers life-saving assistance like shelter, food and water, help safeguard fundamental human rights, and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place to call home where they can build a better future. UNHCR is also mandated to prevent and reduce statelessness and we work to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality. As part of its actions to meet these protection and solutions responsibilities, UNHCR considers it a priority to ensure that refugee students are included in national education systems and that they have access to educational opportunities at all levels, including secondary education.

The UNHCR-UWC Cooperation Agreement is aimed at providing a comprehensive framework for the safe and secure access of 100 refugees and IDPs to UWC secondary education schools and colleges through a comprehensive scholarship programme during the next three years, in addition to the 50 refugees currently accepted annually. UNHCR will also help UWC develop its refugee programmes by providing non-financial support to UWC’s Refugee Initiative, including authoritative guidance on refugee policy, technical advice, and information on complementary pathways to protection and solutions for refugee and IDP scholars, seeking to study at UWC schools. UNHCR will also support UWC in promoting this initiative among national and local stakeholders as well as to provide guidance to refugee and internally displaced communities towards UWC selections.
Access to secondary education at a UWC school means access to world leading tertiary education. UWC graduates go on to study at many of the world’s leading universities and improve their communities through their personal and professional example and action.

With more than 55 years at the forefront of intercultural secondary education, UWC has established unparalleled partnerships with universities and higher education, including many exclusive full scholarship programs for UWC graduates. In the US, the Davis-UWC Scholars Program provides scholarship support to any UWC graduate offered a place to study at one of 94 selected partner US colleges and universities. Shelby Davis, a long time UWC patron, and Phil Geier, former UWC-USA Head, created the Davis-UWC Scholars Program to advance international and cross-cultural understanding on US college campuses and ultimately throughout the world.

Since its inception in 2000, the program has provided scholarships to over 7,600 scholars from over 150 countries and is the largest international scholarship program for undergraduates in the world. Currently, under this program, 2,400 UWC graduates are enrolled in 94 US colleges and universities.

Beyond University, UWC counts over 60,000 alumni making their mark on the world. Through their professional and voluntary engagement UWC alumni are committed to addressing conflict and injustice by working for change, leveraging public policy and politics, addressing human rights abuse, working towards peace and conflict resolution and promoting sustainability. Many UWC alumni are entrepreneurs, others are working in science and healthcare helping to eradicate infectious diseases and pioneer new cures.

One common thread among all UWC alumni is the compelling force instilled in them to give back and make a positive difference in their communities.

**Tara Hermez, Lebanon**

**University: American University Beirut, University College London (2016)**

**Project:** After graduating from UWC Costa Rica, Tara moved back to Lebanon, where she worked as a volunteer in a refugee camp on a project providing Palestinian refugees between the age of 8-16 with skills which they lacked in the classroom, in order to empower them. Most of the students had not graduated from high school, while some had already been child soldier recruits.

“My interest to work with refugees sparked while I was at UWC. UWC taught me that when you give people tools to fight ignorance and poverty, you enable them to advance. Education is not a privilege, it is the key to building bridges in divided societies like Lebanon’s. For me, this is my struggle. This work is where my passion really lies.”
HOW TO SUPPORT THE UWC REFUGEE INITIATIVE

UWC seeks to provide 100 young refugees each year with the opportunity to access secondary education at a UWC school by providing full scholarships.

Each scholarship is valued at $75,000, therefore $7.5 million is needed to support 100 scholars. The funds, which are designated in their entirety to all-inclusive bursaries, cover the full education programme, board and lodging, travel and visa support, co-curricular activities, educational materials and student welfare over two years.

With your support we can educate the next generation of ethical leaders from among the most marginalised groups of today’s world, who in turn will become role models for the millions of young refugees aspiring to make a difference to their world.

Become a Supporter

- Through the UWC website, it is easy to donate directly to the refugee initiative by credit card, cheque, or bank transfer: www.uwc.org

- Other donation options include:
  - Giving directly to a UWC school
  - Donating through the UWC national committee in your country of choice

Please contact us to find out more:

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Become a UWC Funding Partner

- UWC strives to create strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations in order to foster sustainable funding and develop regional representation of students across our schools. We would be delighted if you joined this group of committed supporters.

Become a UWC University Partner

- UWC strives to create a pathway from secondary education to university that sets our students up for success as they continue their education beyond UWC. Since 2000, over 7,000 university scholarships have been provided to UWC graduates exclusively through our partnerships.

- UWC is looking to broaden its university opportunities worldwide for our graduates and welcomes introductions and enquiries from higher educational organisations around the world.
THANK YOU

We thank all our global partners who are supporting the UWC Refugee Initiative:
UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

UWC Mission