



**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 IN A NUTSHELL

Lack of access to education is a major issue affecting young refugees, internally displaced and persecuted people. They are five times more likely to be out of school than more fortunate young people.

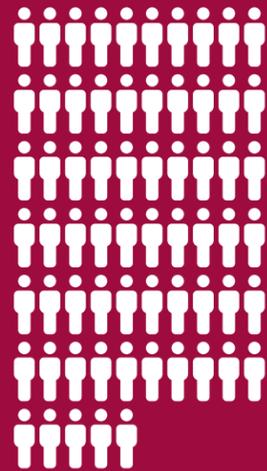
But refugee communities need future leaders with strong abilities, social consciousness and a drive for peace and reconciliation. We must therefore ensure that young refugees have access to quality secondary education. UWC wants to support this.

Our target is to provide one hundred scholarships per year for young refugees to attend one of the 17 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 for a more peaceful and just 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 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, UWC Costa Rica (2013), Brown University (2017).

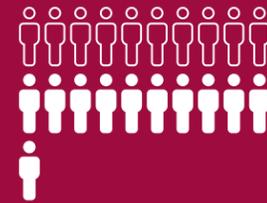
## REFUGEE CRISES IN NUMBERS



**65.3 MILLION FORCIBLY**  
displaced people worldwide



**21.3 MILLION REFUGEES**



**OVER 50% OF REFUGEES**  
are under the age of 18

## EDUCATION OF THE REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NUMBERS



**91% OF CHILDREN**  
**AROUND THE WORLD**  
attend primary school



**84% OF ADOLESCENTS**  
**AROUND THE WORLD**  
attend secondary school



**34% OF YOUTH**  
**AROUND THE WORLD**  
go to university



Only **50% OF REFUGEE CHILDREN** go to primary school



Only **22% OF REFUGEE ADOLESCENTS** receive a secondary education



Only **1% OF REFUGEE YOUTH** go to university

## THE REFUGEE SITUATION: THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

An unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world have been forced from home.

- Among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.
- This means one in every 113 people on earth is either an asylum-seeker, internally displaced or a refugee, according to the 2015 edition of UNHCR's Global Trends report.
- The vast majority of the world's refugees – nine out of 10 – are hosted in the global South, led by Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon.
- Half are children, and half come from just three war-torn countries – Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.

## 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:

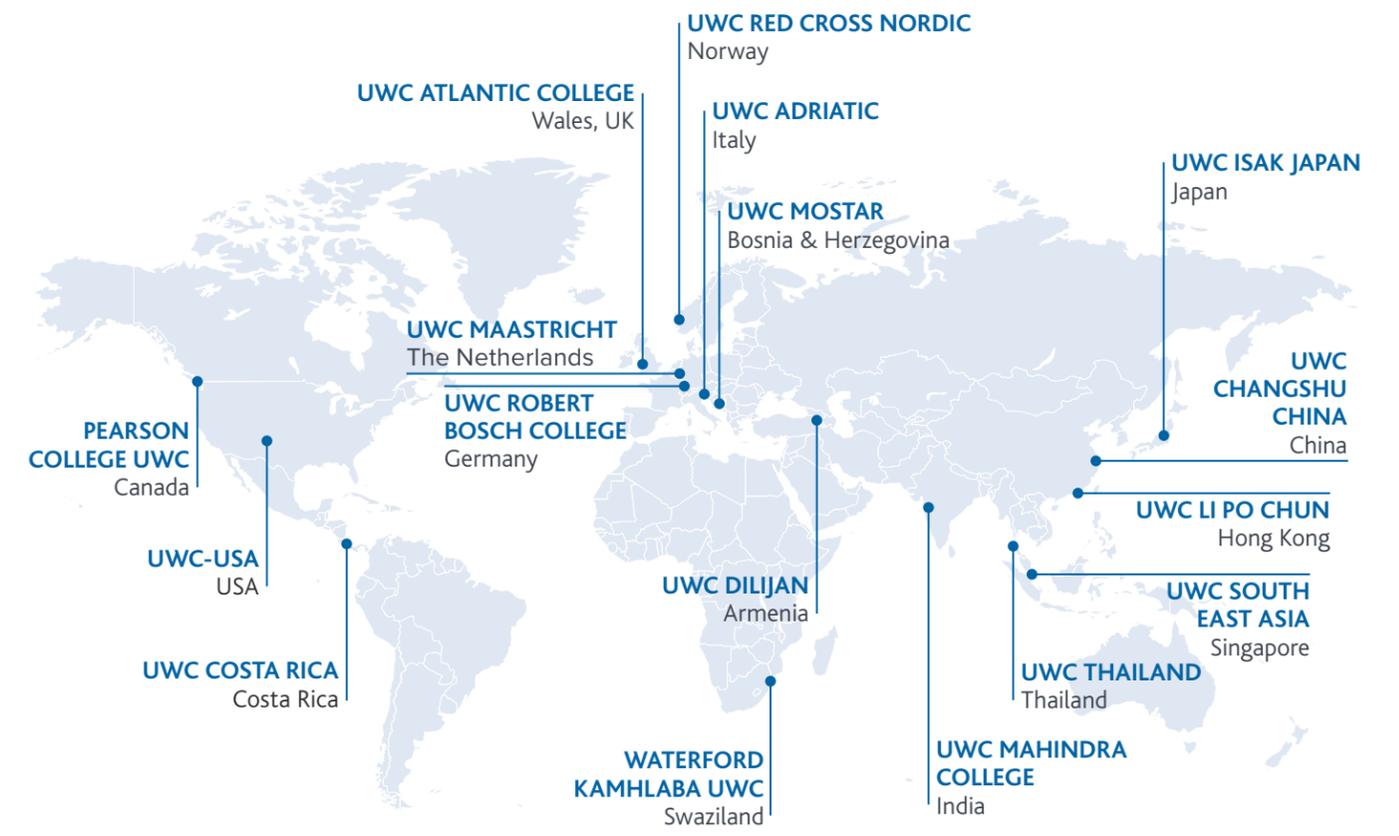
- 22 percent of adolescent refugees attend secondary school, compared to 84 percent globally.
- Fewer than one percent of refugees attend university, compared to 34 percent globally.



# THE UNITED WORLD COLLEGES

UWC (United World Colleges) is a global movement with the mission to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

Founded in 1962, UWC now has 17 schools worldwide where students from over 150 different countries learn and live together.



# UWC SHIFTS THE EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM

The UWC educational ethos combines rigorous academic standards with experiential learning in areas such as social justice, sustainability, entrepreneurship, intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution. We focus on developing strong empathy and leadership skills through a focus on community service and physical challenge. By doing so, we prepare and empower change-makers and future civic leaders.

The UWC curriculum for 16-18 year olds is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), the most recognised international high school diploma granting students access to universities worldwide.

The majority of those studying for the IBDP at a UWC school are residential students, allowing their UWC experience to be focused around building a close school community where young people don't only learn but also live together. We strive to create a learning environment that promotes our diverse community of cultures, all while instilling the values of peace and understanding to benefit the future of our world for years to come.

All of this makes a UWC education truly life-changing.



## Mai Aljounde, Syria

Background: Mai is a student who grew up in Syria, but fled the country just before things began taking a turn for the worst. "Everything was normal before the revolution – my mum was a teacher and my dad worked for an oil company and as a designer, artist and shopkeeper. My younger brother and I had a regular life. But my mum was involved in demonstrations against the government. She was arrested twice, and then people kept telling her that she'd be taken again. Eventually a friend said: 'Leave Syria right now, because they want you.' In one night, we had to pack up and escape. It was awful and upsetting. I had my friends and my life there, and it was all taken away."

### UWC: UWC Atlantic College, UK (2017)

Her path to UWC: Mai and her family eventually ended up in Lebanon, where the refugee situation is rough for those entering the country. Racially-charged violence is a normal circumstance that refugees face, but when Mai was accepted to UWC Atlantic, she knew her fortunes were destined to change. "My education was suffering. I was a good student but I'd missed almost two years of school. I felt so empty and lost. But then a friend of the family saw a Facebook page for Atlantic College. I applied and couldn't believe it when I was accepted. I was screaming in the streets and hugging my father. If I'd stayed in Lebanon, I would not have even gone to school. And if we'd stayed in Syria, my mother could have been killed. I can't imagine life without education. We need to help more people. And I will help in any way I can."





## UWC EDUCATION IS DELIVERED TO AN EXCEPTIONALLY DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS INDEPENDENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC MEANS

UWC finds talent and future change-makers in the most improbable places and through a unique admissions system. A network of mostly volunteer-run national committees in over 155 countries worldwide promotes and selects students from all parts of the world and a most diverse range of communities. Our national committee volunteers understand the local education and cultural context, guaranteeing the diversity and suitability of applicants. This enables UWC to identify students from conflict hotspots and post-conflict regions.

The foundation of our admissions process is rooted in the search for students who have the potential to change the world around them. UWC students come together from very diverse backgrounds, including the most marginalised because access to a UWC education is provided independent of socio-economic means. UWC offers one of the world's most comprehensive scholarship programmes with over 70% of residential students receiving full or partial scholarships and selection through UWC's national committee system being needs blind.

### Joseph Kaifala, Sierra Leone

After surviving Sierra Leonean civil wars, Joseph lived as a refugee in Guinea.

**UWC:** UWC Red Cross Nordic, Norway (2004)

**University:** Syracuse University, Vermont Law School: International Affairs and French, along with a masters in International Relations and a Certificate of International and Comparative Law

**Project:** At UWC Joseph continued to support the children in his home country and launched the initiative "Save the Future Generation". Over ten years later, the initiative is thriving and supported by each new intake of students. "A small organization established to help the children I left behind in a war-ravaged country has now become a tool for UWC students to shape the lives of people in need in other places around the world."

**Projects today:** Founder of Jeneba Project and the Memory Project: Jeneba Project seeks to reconstruct the education systems of the Mano River Union countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. Memory Project creates an oral history of the Sierra Leonean civil war, preserving the memories of those affected and to prevent such events from happening again. Author of *Free Slaves, Freetown, and the Sierra Leonean Civil War*.



# UWC PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISRUPTED LIVES AND EDUCATION

UWC has experience educating students with refugee backgrounds. For many years, UWC has educated refugees from conflict hotspots such as Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Western Sahara, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Tibet, Colombia and Guatemala.

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 assimilated among 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.

We know the impact a UWC education can have on young people: many of our alumni from refugee backgrounds have experienced their time at a UWC school as transformational and of critical importance for their lives.

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 equip cohorts of young leaders from refugee backgrounds, with the skills and awareness necessary to be catalysts for change. We believe we can better equip them to address the wider issues facing them, their communities and their continent, such as poverty, political, economic, and social inequalities and religious or ethnic tensions, and to foster an entrepreneurial mindset.



### 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)

**Recognition:** 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 150 countries.
- In war-torn countries like Syria, the selection process is conducted mostly online to ensure accessibility and safety.
- UWC works in close co-operation with the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, SOS Children Villages and other organisations to access and select students who can benefit from this exciting programme.

### How students are nominated to a UWC

- Following the application process, accepted students will be placed in one of the 17 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.

### Educational preparation

- 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 and special preparatory programmes run by the schools.

### Language support

- 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.

### Pastoral care

- All colleges have a pastoral care system in place to aid students who have experienced traumatic events throughout their lives.

## WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH STRONG PARTNERS: UWC PARTNERSHIP WITH UNHCR

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.

### 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 (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)

"At UWC I developed academically and socially. My meaningful engagement experience was participating in the Mpaka Refugee Camp Community Service Project. This project was very close to my heart, especially because I once lived in that refugee camp and I could directly relate to some of the kids' pains and struggles. They generally viewed me as a 'big brother' and I was excited to inspire a deeper sense of appreciation for academics and leadership development."





## BEYOND UWC: PATHWAYS TO UNIVERSITY

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.

"The commitment of the Davis-UWC Scholars and their desire to make a positive impact is impressive. They populate all corners of the Macalester campus, from the sports field to the stage, the lecture hall to the lab, and academic clubs to social committees. Our scholars also take great pride in being active in the community – often here at Macalester and at their own homes, as well as beyond both of these familiar bounds and out in the world at large. From these students' presence, through discussions and shared perspectives, Macalester as a whole benefits." Kathleen M. Murray, Provost, Macalester College.

### Tara Hermez, Lebanon

**UWC:** UWC Costa Rica (2009)

**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 the opportunity to access secondary education at a UWC school through 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](http://www.uwc.org)
- Other donation options include:
  - Giving directly to a UWC school
  - Donating through the UWC national committee in your country of choice

## 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.

Please contact us to find out more:

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# THANK YOU

We thank all our global partners who are supporting the UWC Refugee Initiative and who have worked with us in 2017, including:



UWC makes education a  
force to unite people, nations  
and cultures for peace  
and a sustainable future.

## **UWC Mission**

