

UWC RCN Foundation Year – an introduction

Deliberate diversity is at the heart of the UWC Educational Model and is a guiding principle for selection to UWC Red Cross Nordic. We strongly believe that bringing together young people from different backgrounds – cultural, political and social – for a shared educational experience is mutually beneficial to all, given that we create arenas where all take part on the same terms. Our aim for the students is that they shall learn and grow in all fields during their time here: be it in the residential, academic or extra-academic areas.

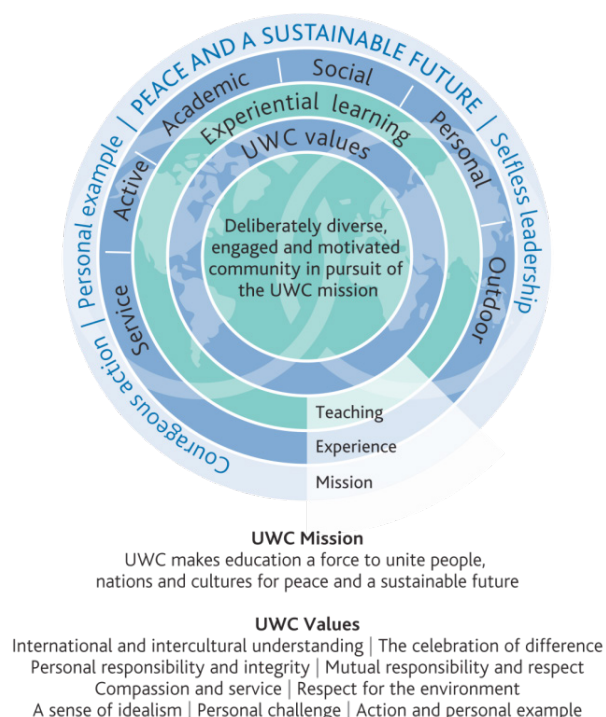
Every year some students arrive at UWC RCN linguistically and academically unprepared to manage the demands of the two year IB Diploma Programme. These students are identified early by the Academic Support Team and invited to attend the UWC RCN 3-week Summer Course (in advance of the start of the academic year), which gives them exposure to and lessons in English, helps orient them to their new environment, provides them with a supportive network of friends and introduces them to UWC values, expectations and activities.

At the end of the Summer Course the Academic Support Team meets to discuss first year students who would benefit from a Foundation Year and consults with the Education Staff. These students are approached and invited to join the programme – and their National Committees are informed.

The Foundation Year is a tailor-made course focused on English language development, study skills, and foundation in Maths, Science, Humanities and IT – alongside a holistic approach as expressed in the UWC Educational Model through extra-curricular challenges and our residential programme, emphasizing trust and a sense of belonging. The participants will take our UWC Red Cross Nordic Foundation Diploma – and this will be awarded at the end of the course. The main aims are to build confidence, nurture participation in our deliberately diverse student community, and prepare students for the demands of the two year IB Diploma or course certificates.

Each student will be given a tailor-made timetable and individual tuition with more appropriate challenges, organised / supervised by the Learning Support Team.

In terms of measuring value, all UWC RCN students sit the Cognitive Abilities Test in their first month at the College, enabling a quantitative measurement of the educational value of the two year IB Diploma Programme (as compared to normal distribution within this large database); this also applies to Foundation Year students and is one of the planned RCN key progress indicators. The students will also be invited to take the test again at the start of the IB Diploma. The IB Diploma Coordinator would be directly responsible for monitoring students' progress, evaluation and reporting.



Our aim is to deliver a Foundation Year which helps to increase our support of young people from marginalized backgrounds.

We strive to put in place full protection measures / support of each student for the Foundation Year followed by two year IB Diploma Programme at UWC RCN and further 3 to 4 years of study at university with focus on supporting the circle of prosperity: home, health, education and income – and creating a better future for themselves and their families. UWC RCN has extensive experience over 20 years of supporting students from refugee and other marginalized backgrounds and creating an inclusive educational environment. Our close partnership with the Red Cross Rehabilitation Centre, with which we share our campus, enables us to address physical constraints that participants may arrive with.

The Foundation Year serves as a competence and confidence-building launch pad towards achieving the IB Diploma / certificate courses and entry to tertiary education.

To date, some of the students who have participated in a Foundation Year programme (inception in 2014) have come to us through the 'Survivors of Conflict' programme, and the coordinator of this programme together with the Learning Support Coordinator have overseen the construction and implementation of the students' academic timetables.

Students from the following countries have participated in the Foundation Year since 2014:

- 2014-5 Argentina, Iraq, El Salvador
- 2015-6: Western Sahara, Niger, Cambodia, Vietnam
- 2016-7: Thailand, Western Sahara, Cambodia, Iraq, Nepal
- 2017-8: Western Sahara, Cambodia, Argentina

Academic Support Team
November 2017

