



*“To solve the world’s  
biggest problems, invest  
in women and girls.”*

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Chair,  
UWC International Board

# EMPOWERING WOMEN AT UWC

Investing in girls' education for  
a more equitable and peaceful future







# ABOUT UWC

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.

18 UWC schools on four 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. These are complemented by the high academic standards delivered through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

Students are selected from more than 150 countries, including from very isolated places, through our unique national committee system.

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. More than 80% of national committee-selected students in their IB Diploma years receive either full or partial financial assistance, and over 5% of our students come from a refugee or displaced persons background.

UWC fosters a lifelong commitment to social responsibility. To date, it has inspired a worldwide network of almost 60,000 alumni, who have become changemakers working towards creating a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future in their communities around the world.

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# THE CHALLENGE

Education is a critical driver for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Yet, in most countries gender parity in education is far from being a reality, particularly in secondary education when girls' school attendance decreases dramatically.

**132 million girls** are out of school globally (UNICEF, 2020)  
of which

**34.3 million**  
are of primary school age

**30 million**  
are of lower-secondary school age

**67.4 million** are  
of upper-secondary  
school age



**34% of countries** still  
need to achieve gender parity  
in **primary education**.



**55% of countries** still  
need to achieve gender  
parity in **lower secondary  
education**.



**75% of countries**  
still need to  
achieve gender  
parity in **upper  
secondary  
education**.

Girls in **low-income countries** face additional barriers in accessing education as they progress through the school system (UNESCO, 2020).



For every 100 boys,  
**94 girls attend primary school**



For every 100 boys,  
**87 girls attend lower secondary school**



For every 100 boys,  
**80 girls attend upper secondary school**

**0%**

In at least 20 countries where data is available,  
almost **0% of poor and rural female students**  
complete upper secondary school



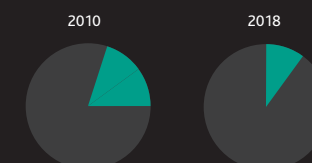
There are only about 7 refugee girls for every  
10 refugee boys enrolled in secondary education  
worldwide (UNHCR, 2019b).



2010-2020

While awareness around the importance of funding gender equality has risen steadily and overseas development assistance (ODA) targeting this issue has nearly doubled, girls' education has become less of a priority for donors (OECD, 2020):

**Only 10% of funding for gender equality went to education in 2018**  
VS 20% in 2010



The impact of **COVID-19**, like all crises, has not been gender neutral. **Women and girls have been disproportionately affected.**

By 2021

**around 435 million women and girls** will be living on less than \$1.90 a day — including **47 million women and girls** who will be pushed into poverty as a result of the pandemic (UN Women 2020).

**1.6 billion students** affected by school closures (UNESCO, 2020f) — girls have been more likely to sacrifice their time to learn, since in many societies women and girls take on the majority of unpaid domestic and childcare tasks.

**7.6 million girls** from pre-primary to secondary school are at risk of not returning to school as a result of COVID-19 (UNESCO, 2020d). **Secondary school girls face the highest risk.**

**50% of refugee girls** in secondary school may not return once schools reopen (UNHCR, 2020a).

# THE POTENTIAL

Higher levels of education for girls often means marrying and bearing children later in life (UNESCO, 2014), with girls who miss out on secondary or higher education being three times more likely to be married before the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2012).

Investing in girls' secondary education also leads to clear economic benefits. According to the World Bank, just one year of secondary education correlates with a 25% increase in a woman's wages later in life. These effects carry over from one generation to the next: for each additional year that a mother spends in education, an extra 0.32 years are added to the educational journey of the average child. Closing the gender gap in education would also add 0.5% to a country's per capita gross national product, benefiting both women and men (CGI, 2011).

When it comes to building a more peaceful future for all, a growing body of evidence shows that the participation of women in peace processes leads to resulting agreements that are more durable and better implemented (Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, 2018). Their involvement has been found to bring about a shift in dynamics and a broadening of the issues discussed — which in turn increases the chances of community buy in and addressing root causes. Their involvement has also been found to exert greater pressure on the parties to reach an agreement or go back to the negotiating table if the talks falter (UN Women, 2015).

*"In order to create a more peaceful world, I think women should play a much greater role in governments and take decisions that don't lead to wars. I think that if women could be given opportunities to lead, they would put common agreement and compromise first, instead of favouring conflict. I think that what Burundian women need more than anything is better education and role models. They need to know that the world needs them and that they have a lot to discover out there."*

Chadia, Burundi, Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa, 2012-2014



*“Women are the heart  
and soul of communities  
everywhere and that gives  
them tremendous power.”*

HM Queen Noor of Jordan,  
President of UWC

## EMPOWERING WOMEN AT UWC

Women are powerful catalysts for change. They are needed as active participants, decision-makers and leaders at every level of society and in every part of the world if we want to build a truly equitable, sustainable and peaceful world.

Thanks to a network of over 4,000 volunteers around the world and strong local partnerships, UWC finds budding changemakers and future female leaders in the most disparate corners of the world. These young women are selected to attend UWC based on their potential, regardless of socioeconomic means. They receive financial assistance based on need, as well as other forms of support from in-country selection committees - many of whom are UWC alumni themselves.

At UWC schools and short courses, these young women learn alongside students from different genders and the most diverse backgrounds, and are empowered to become leaders that can go on to make a positive difference in the world and in their communities.

*“I was not going to be the definition of poverty and misfortune - I was going to be the definition of success, and the reward of the hardworking hands of my mother, a true African Queen. My mother encouraged me to apply [to UWC], but with my background I never expected being considered. From the prospects of a bleak future defined by poverty to a transformation of endless opportunities: for me this was a dream come true.”*

Tatenda, Zimbabwe, UWC Mostar, 2015-2017





## OUR APPROACH

### SEEK

*Identifying young women with the most potential, irrespective of their cultural or socioeconomic background*

For over 60 years, UWC has worked with its extensive network of national committees in over 150 countries and territories, as well as with governments, grassroots organisations and partners to seek passionate 15 and 16 year olds in every corner of the world - often in some of the most complex and challenging contexts. This is an age when young people's energy and idealism can be guided towards responsibility and lifelong action. This is a time when young women develop leadership willingness, social confidence and form the foundations needed to become impactful leaders.

Over 55% of the future changemakers that are selected to attend UWC year on year are consistently female. Beyond the drive to make a difference that we find so many young women

to possess, UWC's selection process is an essential part of our ability to be able to identify and nurture so many talented young women in some of the most hard-to-reach places. Embedded in the local culture and customs, the UWC national selection committees are uniquely placed to work with in-country education partners, teachers and parents to encourage them to support their girls to embark on this once-in-a-lifetime educational opportunity. Financially, over 80% of students selected through the national committee system receive full or partial financial support based on need.

### EDUCATE

*Equipping girls with the skills to become the leaders of tomorrow*

Once at UWC, boys and girls from diverse backgrounds, experiences and mindsets learn to live as one - exploring their differences, unpacking

the varying privileges they each enjoyed or lacked and working together to build a more equitable, sustainable and peaceful future. We believe that this convergence of perspectives benefits our entire student community. Boys grow into allies as girls become empowered to lead. Our students learn to question the norms of society, to critically engage with their learned comfort zones, and ultimately to return to their communities with fresh perspectives on how humanity needs to work together to tackle the problems we face today.

Along the way, they are equipped with the world's most recognised international diploma: the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. This far-reaching curriculum compels all students to cover the breadth of academia - including mathematics, at least one science, one humanity and one language. The IB Diploma thereby

propels more girls into a position to apply for STEM courses in higher education. Critical discussions around gender are also a core part of most UWC students' experiences, whether explored in a Language and Literature or Theory of Knowledge class on gender, or through their choice of Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) projects. These range from an all-girls coding club at UWC Changshu China to Kriya, a student-led initiative at UWC Mahindra College supporting underprivileged local women to develop their skills through outdoor activities and confidence building - alongside many more examples.

### INSPIRE

*Generations of women inspiring other women to change the world*

Our female graduates have gone on to become political leaders, social entrepreneurs, human rights lawyers,

engineers, economists, scientists, educators, and much more. Importantly, 80% of UWC graduates return to the country from which they were selected at some point in their career. There, they apply the skills and perspectives gained at UWC to give back to their home communities, with many of our female graduates returning as role models helping to shift mindsets and inspiring other girls and women to follow their desired path.

Knowing that reducing gender inequality requires more women to be in charge - who can then help the next generation of women climb even higher - UWC recognises that governance and leadership structures need to reflect the change that we want to see in the world. The global UWC organisation is female led, with HM Queen Noor of Jordan as President of UWC and the majority-female UWC International Board chaired by Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro. As of the 2021 academic year, eight of UWC's 18 schools will be led by a female Head.



In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, **Sierra Leone's Education Minister and UWC Red Cross Nordic alumnus (2004-2006), David Sengeh**, tweeted:

*"Working from home? How did you join your last zoom call? As Minister, I started my last call feeding my 10 month old, then carried her on my back for the rest of the call. The presentations helped her sleep. I invite you to share with the world how you worked from home as a leader." He later commented: "Many women do this daily, but it is so normalised that we don't talk about it at all. If it was my wife who did it then this would not have been a viral tweet."*

When schools in Sierra Leone were forced to shut in March 2020 due to COVID-19, having learned from the earlier Ebola crisis his country went through, David was behind the package of measures put in place to ensure that children - and in particular girls - do not get left behind again.



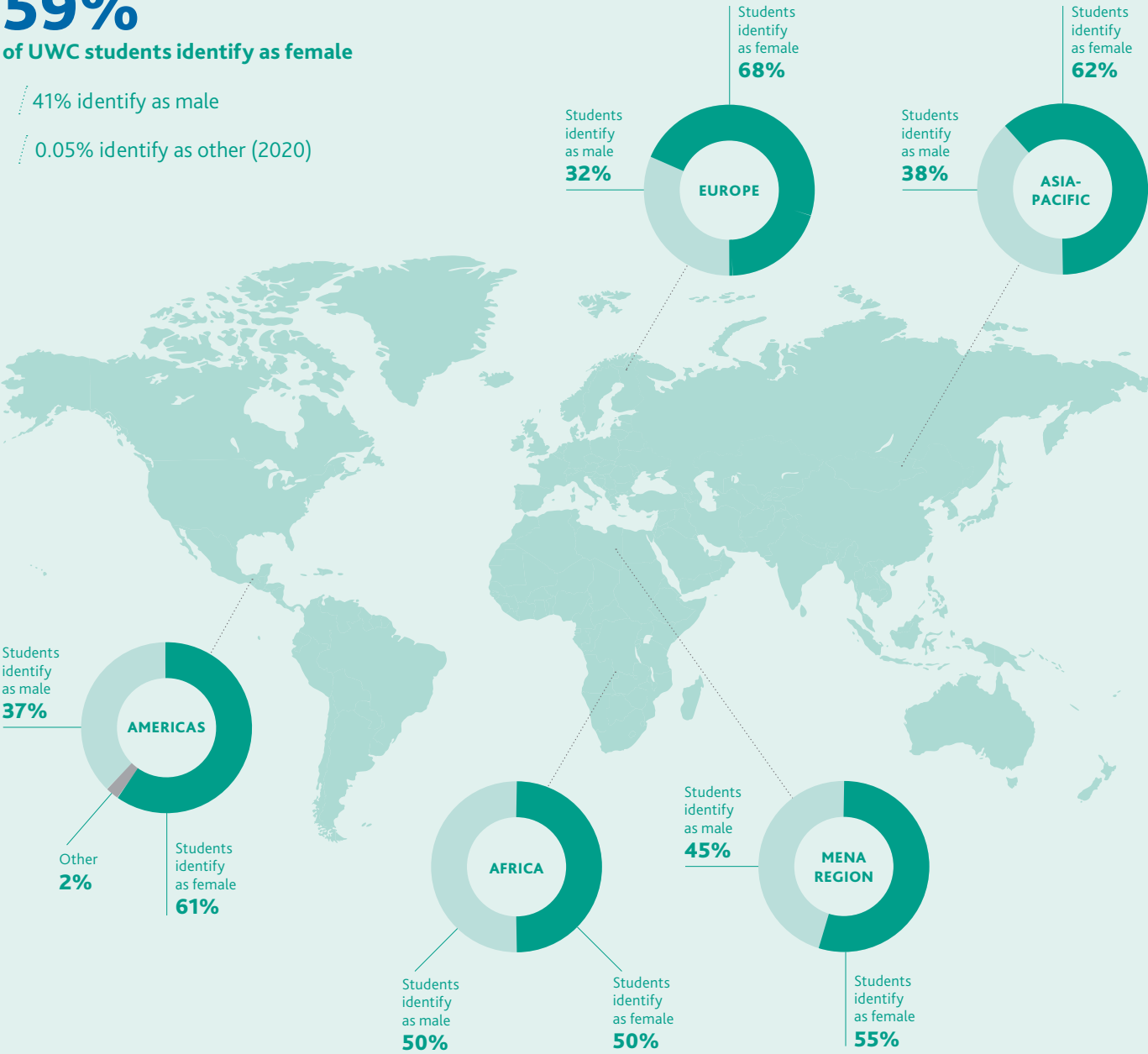


# OUR IMPACT

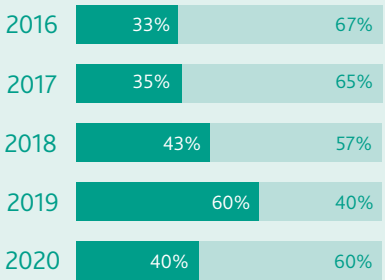
Based on data available as of April 2021

**59%**  
of UWC students identify as female

- 41% identify as male
- 0.05% identify as other (2020)



**44%** of refugee students identify as female, a figure that has increased steadily from year to year, particularly since the launch of the UWC Refugee Initiative in 2016. In 2020, this figure fell slightly due to the consequences of COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Gender data available for 147 out of 187 students (2016-2020)

**531**  
short course participants in 2019 identify as female

353 identify as male

Female Male



**UWC is not just about providing young women with access to quality secondary education. UWC students are inspired to take action.**

**They are empowered to empower other women in their UWC school community, and beyond.**



#### BRAVEGIRL CAMP

An annual student-led camp for 15–18-year-old Eswatini girls from urban areas with the goal of providing opportunities to future female leaders in the country. BraveGirl Camp aims to take a holistic approach to girls' empowerment, starting with a look at personal goals and health and moving towards a focus on the outside world of the media and the environment. Since 2017, 150 girls from 10 local schools have taken part in the BraveGirl camp. They spend a week away from home, free to speak their thoughts, discuss ideas that may be shunned in their communities and learn that, as women, they can and will overcome any prejudice they might face and create a better future for Swazi society.

*"Swaziland is a very patriarchal country... But with a whole new generation of women understanding themselves, that system is slowly crumbling and so are the issues that come with it."*  
Tinashe Mabaso, St Marks High School, BraveGirl 2018



#### KRIYĀ SHIVAJI

A student-led initiative supporting underprivileged local women to develop their skills through outdoor activities and confidence building, to overcome societal limitations in the outdoors. Currently, a group of 25-30 students from the local school in Paud are part of Kriya Shivaji.



#### ARUNI

Formerly known as Kruti, Aruni is one of the College's Akshara and student-led initiatives. Aruni aims to socially and economically empower women living in the neighbouring Mulshi Valley villages, in rural Maharashtra, by providing them with a platform to utilise and monetise their existing set of textiles skills, refine their stitching techniques and learn new skills along with engaging them in social awareness initiatives. The initiative started with a group of ten women from three villages and currently counts 40 women from Hadshi village in Kolvan.



#### AMAAVASYA

A local impact initiative that enables local communities, including men, to engage in a discourse around the stigma of menstruation, raising awareness about menstrual health, and enabling women to make informed choices regarding their menstrual practices. Currently, the students are working with self-help groups in 4 villages in Mulshi and Kolvan Valley.



#### FEMALE EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Following the research that shows secondary education to represent a crucial step forward for women - especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) - the School aims to offer at least five girls from the MENA region a place at UWC Maastricht every year. The ultimate goal is to empower these young women and help them participate more actively in politics, achieve greater economic freedoms, encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills and attain a greater freedom of choice.



#### UWC'S CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE COMMITMENT

Between 2011 and 2016, as a commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative, UWC provided 100 scholarships for young women from 27 conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, including Rwanda, South Sudan, Pakistan and the Palestinian Camps in Lebanon. These young women subsequently went on to study at top-level universities, predominantly in the US. Many of them have become social innovators, mentors for other women and are making a difference for themselves and their home communities. In 2016, after completing this commitment, we launched the UWC Refugee Initiative to continue to identify, educate and develop a network of globally aware female leaders who have the potential to become inspiring role models for future generations of girls and women in conflict affected countries.



#### GOMAKEADIFFERENCE

A grant scheme allowing current students across all UWC schools to run projects that put the UWC ideals into practice, GoMakeADifference has supported a number of women empowerment projects since its inception in 2001. Examples include:

**"Save Village Teens Tororo"** was developed to fight teenage pregnancies, marriages and early child-parenthood in rural parts of Tororo, Uganda.

**"Give Back Strength"** was developed to teach women from the suburbs of Niamey in Nigeria suffering from obstetric fistula how to sew African print dresses and sell these to local people.

**"A Second Chance"** aimed to enhance the rehabilitation facilities at the South Camp Correctional Centre in Kingston, Jamaica, which houses female juvenile inmates. By donating sewing machines and encouraging the women at the center to learn new skills, the project sought to help the inmates find a job after they leave prison.



# OUR ALUMNAE



## DOROTHY DIX

Zimbabwe, UWC Red Cross Nordic (1996-1998)

Today the CEO and Co-Founder of Creating Better Futures, a charity helping orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe, Dorothy Dix was born into poverty in rural Zimbabwe herself. She was raised by a single mother who struggled to pay Dorothy's school fees and relied on handouts throughout Dorothy's childhood. Then, after showing potential at a local school in Zimbabwe, a generous international sponsor gave Dorothy the opportunity to study at UWC Red Cross Nordic at age 16.

"When I arrived, it was a total culture shock. But the atmosphere at UWC, and the brilliant friends I made, helped me settle into this entirely different climate, country, and culture. And it was UWC's emphasis on individual action and social change that inspired me to think about my place in the world, and how I could make a difference back home. Growing up in Zimbabwe I always knew that things could be better. I had personally experienced that through a stranger's kindness. They unleashed my potential when contributing to my education. Why couldn't others do the same for young people in my community?

My UWC education played a key role in setting out my idealistic vision for my charity - one where every child in rural

Zimbabwe would grow up to achieve their potential and every community would be free from poverty. I believed if I could just change one child's life, my life would be complete. I looked back on my experiences at UWC - moving thousands of miles from home to study, having the opportunity to speak at the United Nations - as proof that change was possible. I knew ideals could become reality."

And they did indeed become reality. Dorothy's leadership at Creating Better Futures has lifted 5,000 children and their communities out of poverty by providing education, health, feeding and development programmes. Looking back on her choice to focus on the empowerment of young people like the girl she once was, Dorothy says: "Educate or empower a disadvantaged young person, and you change their life. Your financial support might give a teenage girl the security to afford school, and escape a child marriage. Empowering young people gives them their lives back. Everything is possible for a healthy, happy and financially secure young person. I was so fortunate to receive the support I did as a girl. Every child deserves the same opportunities I was given by supporters of UWC."



## UFRA MIR

Kashmir, India, UWC Mahindra College (2005-2007)

After graduating from UWC Mahindra College as the first Kashmiri to attend UWC, Ufra has gone on to become the first and only peace-psychologist from Kashmir (India) and South Asia. Working at the intersection of psychology, education and peacebuilding, Ufra explains: "My work is aimed at impacting individuals, communities and systems - to help them heal and cope positively with the ramifications of living in any conflict situation or zone; building more resilience, empathy and space for positive peacebuilding in the process."

UWC happened to Ufra very "serendipitously", after seeing the advertisement in a newspaper: "It was at UWC that I received my first training in conflict resolution skills, along with taking psychology for the first time. It was also where I started asking myself bigger questions about my identity as a Kashmiri Muslim girl. I felt privileged, having received a generous full scholarship to study there. I wanted to take these experiences back to my own community and into the wider world. It was a difficult but transformative journey and I left as an idealistic changemaker and future leader."

Ufra has received various recognitions and awards locally and internationally. Among the challenges and achievements Ufra speaks about in

her daily work, much of it comes back to her position as a Kashmiri woman: "As a woman in Kashmir, I have to be mindful of where I go, who I meet, when I schedule my meetings - all of this impacts one's space to create, explore and experiment. In a place that has its set standards for anyone, especially women, choosing to live life on your terms, with dignity, is a daily challenge. But I'm a dreamer operating from a place of passion, and the need to serve and contribute meaningfully to society. It's been difficult to keep my passion, profession and purpose in life as one; but in order to set an example, one has to be an example, and it is therefore also relevant that my work with youth, children and women inspires me the most. Despite many difficulties, you see some of these women on roads protesting for their rights; other times, they are striving to earn a livelihood through creative ways. Their resilience, their will to choose to survive and continue to dream, is one of the most revolutionary things I see on a daily basis. Their courage inspires me to go on despite daily challenges. I carry their struggles, pain, hopes and hearts in my heart."



 **UWC**  
MAHINDRA COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTTINGHAM (UK)  
LUTHER COLLEGE (USA)

PEACE-PSYCHOLOGIST,  
FOUNDING EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
PEACE-PSYCHOLOGY  
AND PAIGAAM  
(KASHMIR, INDIA)

ZIMBABWE

 **UWC**  
RED CROSS NORDIC

UNIVERSITY OF  
READING (UK)

CEO AND CO-FOUNDER  
OF CREATING  
BETTER FUTURES  
(ZIMBABWE)





**SUSAN MCDADE**  
Canada, Pearson College UWC  
(1981-1983)

"In my experience, the participation of women in drafting, preparing and implementing public policy is that you basically get better policies. You get policies that cast a broader eye to social groups, and which approach the problem differently."

Susan's (Pearson College UWC, 1981-1983) experience stems from an almost 30 year career in the United Nations, culminating in her position as Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Bureau for Management Services at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With a particular focus on gender and development, Susan has also led advocacy campaigns against domestic violence, and has supported women in development throughout her career. Today, Susan has taken on a coaching role that is largely focused on supporting other women in the UN to navigate leadership and to balance such a full-on career with other life choices.

"When I joined the UN in the early 1990s, around six of the senior most country level positions out of 140 were filled by women. On many occasions I led male-only teams, and there were many tough times where men would speak down to me and overtly demonstrate that they were not prepared to accept female leadership.

So in this climate, I was extremely lucky to have access to senior women who mentored me and pushed with me for there to be greater gender equality at the highest levels of leadership. So, just as these senior women helped me, it's my turn to give back as someone who reached those top levels."

In addition to these challenges, it was Susan's experiences of trying to balance an all-consuming international career with being a single mother which shaped her views on the empowerment of future female leaders the most: "Women's rights cannot be seen as the prerogative of women. It has to be the prerogative of society, because if you just talk about the importance of bringing women along, you're missing the point - it's about bringing the whole of society along. I for one could not have had my success without a male nanny who supported me for 11 years. So if there's one lesson in that, it's that if we want to follow the ample global evidence that shows you get better functioning institutions, better policies and better working environments by having both men and women in leadership positions - then we need to be prepared to support each other to that end. Nobody can do it alone."



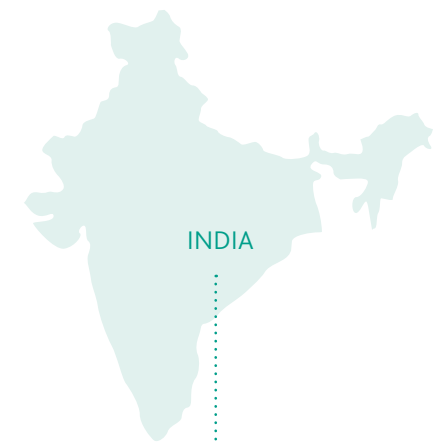
**VRINDA SHUKLA**  
India, UWC Mahindra College  
(2005-2007)

Vrinda has been an officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS) since 2014. She is currently serving in Noida, Delhi, where she is in charge of the safety and well being of women and children. As an IPS officer, Vrinda has launched several initiatives to control child begging and extend educational opportunities to children in slum clusters, alongside helping young rape victims recover from their trauma and protecting women from domestic violence.

Asked why the empowerment of women is such an important focus of her work, Vrinda reflected: "Women, as default creators and nurturers of life, are pivotal to the strength and character of the entire family, and the community at large. Hence, the education and empowerment of women and girls is a necessity to take any society, country, and the world forward. In India things are changing rapidly for women, the most significant changes being their increasing labour force participation, political participation, and the rising level of education attainment. Yet crimes like dowry deaths, honour killings, rapes recur with regularity. I desire to work on bridging the gap between the many centuries in which India lives all at once. I wish to ease the access of Government services for women and design policies and programmes that are customised to the requirements of

local women and children, which can enable them to improve their lot to the best of their abilities."

Looking back at the journey that brought her to where she is today, Vrinda shared: "There is no substitute and no short cut for perseverance and an empowering education. UWC enabled me to receive a world class school and college education. It opened up the eyes of a small town girl to the whole world and it made me certain that I wanted to work on India's development challenges in whatever humble capacity I could. But it has not always been easy. After a UWC education one is imbued with a die hard idealism for how the world ought to be. Yet there is so much suffering in the real world, the scale of the problems so staggering, and there are so many impediments to effecting change that one can easily turn into a cynic or simply give up. So this has been my principal challenge - keeping my idealism intact. And I am therefore proud to say that my idealism remains as pristine as it was when I graduated from UWC. That I believe is my greatest contribution to my profession and my country."



**UWC**  
MAHINDRA COLLEGE

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY  
(USA)

LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE (UK)

OFFICER IN THE INDIAN  
POLICE SERVICE (IPS)





**LYDIAH KEMUNTO BOSIRE**  
Kenya, UWC Atlantic (1996-1998)

Lydiah was born and raised in Kisii, Kenya, "in a small town best known for its high fertility rate and land squabbles, at a time when the most powerful people I knew were donors from western countries." Her path after UWC took her to Cornell University and the University of Oxford, alongside working for the World Bank and the UN, where among other projects she helped launch the 'Every Woman Every Child' global strategy of the UN Secretary-General.

Reflecting on her educational journey, Lydiah shared: "I started as a girl from rural Kenya who wore a patched school uniform in elementary school. When I was awarded a scholarship to attend UWC, it transformed my life. At UWC I was catapulted into a world where for the first time, in the middle of all the differences swirling around me, I belonged."

The opportunity to study at UWC was life-altering in every possible way, not least because it grounded in me the idea that I had a role in creating change. There was a casual boldness in the idealistic air of UWC: global understanding was something we could tackle before dinner on any given Wednesday. That idea was transformational. It meant that when I was at Cornell and my cousins in Kenya were dying of HIV/AIDS, I started a global youth/AIDS advocacy platform,

because I could. I took advantage of all the opportunities around me, and along the way, made lasting connections."

Following her career at the UN and World Bank, Lydiah is today the founder and CEO of 8B Education Investments, a financial technology company facilitating financing for African students in global universities. Speaking about this transition, Lydiah says, "when I thought about where I could 10x my impact, the answer was in financing education. At scale, the impact of providing end-to-end support to Africa's globally mobile students will be enormous: In the short term, the students will provide an opportunity for problem-solving across differences, and bring diversity into global talent pools. In the medium term, they will provide the workforce to steer the African continent to prosperity, for none of the SDGs can be implemented on the continent without the highest engagement of African talent. In the long run, as they access global spaces of influence, a critical mass of African graduates from global universities will shatter long-held stereotypes and create a new narrative for the continent, and at last, people will have to start being comfortable with the idea of African excellence."



**AOIFE FLEMING & JULE SCHNAKENBERG**  
Ireland/Brazil and Germany, UWC Maastricht (2014-2016)

Aoife is also the Dutch Youth Representative to the UN on sustainable development

Aoife and Jule were recently recognised by the Basel Peace Office for their work on the World's Youth for Climate Justice (WYCJ) campaign. Their aim is to put human rights at the heart of the climate crisis by bringing the issue to the world's highest court - the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. They have already secured support from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, alongside the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment - among others.

"Our hope is that once this issue reaches the ICJ, they will interpret the existing state obligations - such as the right to food, the right to clean water, the right to an education - in a way that will motivate states to take the commitments that they undertook as part of The Paris Agreement seriously. For example, that states have the obligation to continue ensuring that children have a right to education despite the effects of climate change. As the world's highest court, they carry the most authority on legal opinion. We believe this could be a big next step in developing and shaping international law around



climate change and in bridging the gap between human rights and climate change."

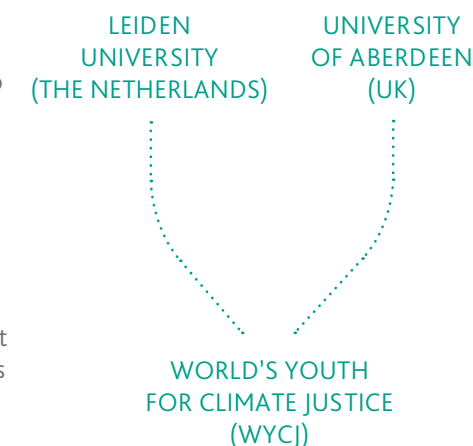
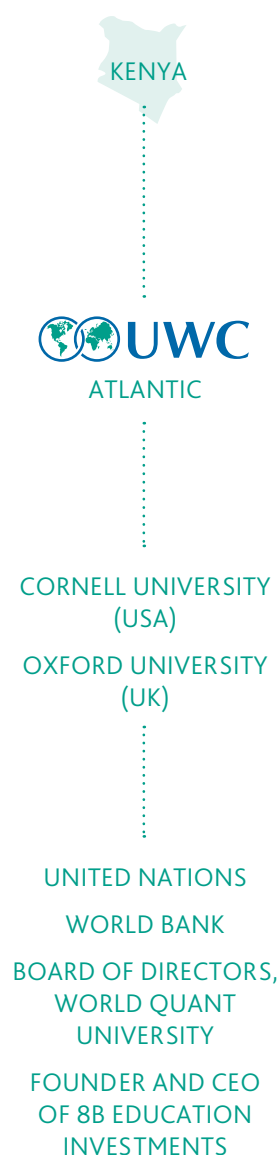
Looking back at how Aoife and Jule's UWC education's fuelled their interest in climate justice and in this particular campaign, much of it boiled down to the passionate people they were surrounded by at UWC, as Jule explained: "For me, climate change had been an issue I had been involved in since I was quite young. But what I found difficult back then was always feeling like I was the only one in my hometown who cared. That's why UWC seemed like such a great next step - being full of people who also wanted to make a difference and who were already taking action in their own communities."

It was also at UWC that the scope of their climate activism broadened, as Aoife shared, "Learning about how climate change impacts inequalities, access to food, conflicts and more, just shows how it's an issue that transcends so many other issues. That is why our campaign's focus on human rights is so vital, in order to try and show to people that tackling climate change is not an economic or political choice - it's a human necessity."



LEIDEN UNIVERSITY (THE NETHERLANDS) UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN (UK)

WORLD'S YOUTH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE (WYCJ)







## JOIN US IN EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN

We thank our global partners and current supporters, and invite all other like-minded organisations who want to have an active role in empowering girls around the world to get in touch.

With your help, we can educate more and more ethical female leaders, who will become changemakers and role models to millions of young women aspiring to make a difference in the world.





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