

Diversity
Empathy
Dreams
Learnings
2024-2025
Generosity
Belonging
Impact
Reciprocity
Opportunities
Change
Growth
Accountability
Leaders
Voices
Stories
Courage
Integrity
Passion

Of Our
Community

 UWC COSTA RICA

We are a **Costa Rican**
residential high
school & educational
foundation, part of
a global movement
for peace and
sustainability.

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The limited printed run of the 2024-2025 Impact Report uses responsibly sourced paper to provide a report aligned with the Sustainability Framework and Strategic Plan.

2024-2025

Impact Report

Find this document in Spanish and digital interactive formats at uwccostarica.org

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This document is designed and produced by the Development Area in collaboration with all College areas, as a transparency report and celebration of our community's efforts.

UWC Costa Rica © 2025



205 students from 64 nationalities arrive on campus.

Launch of partnership with Green Schools National Network and on-campus staff training.

Students train fellow teens at Liceo de Palmares on the Agents of Change methodology.

August 2024



Together we change

4th Annual Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Exhibition.

UWC Day Celebration: "Together We Change."

Spanish Ambassador visits campus.

Launch of AlumNights.

September 2024

March 2025

UWC Costa Rica Alum events in London and Amsterdam.

Student & staff community participate in Annual Mal País Residence Concert.



Davis United World College-Schools Institute

Google School for Leaders and 18 Davis-partners host a university fair on campus.

Participation in Community Action Weekend in Guadalupe and Conociendo Costa Rica: Heredia.

Students participate in the InterTOK AI+Tec 2024, hosted by IB Compass Foundation.

Annual Model United Nations & Science Fair events on campus with local high school guests.

October 2024

April 2025

3rd Edition of "Breaking the Stigma, One Cycle at a Time," a menstrual health and sustainability student-led project

African Thematic Week celebration.

First-year students host IN-JUST-ICE, an original play for the Annual Collaborative Theater Play.



TEDxUWCCR Youth

100 guests join the 3rd TEDxUWCCR Youth: "Amplifying the Voices of the Unheard"

Board Members explore New Campus trails for the Board Meeting

November 2024

May 2025

UWC Costa Rica co-hosts the Innovation for Impact Forum in New York with keynote of Kevin Ferreira van Leer '09.

101 Class of '25 students graduate & join the Global UWC Alum community.





GivingTuesday fundraising event enables big staff & student participation

European Union Ambassador to Costa Rica visits campus.

December 2024



UWC Costa Rica events in Boston and Washington, D.C.

Asian Thematic Week celebration.

The Class of '26 enjoy the Annual First-Year Camp.

January 2025

June & July 2025

UWC Costa Rica receive the “Bandera Azul Ecológica” recognition for a second year in a row.

Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Davis UWC Scholars Program at Wellesley College.

The Sustainability & Innovation Center hosts 13 programs and 457 guests on campus, including the Sustainability and Spanish Immersive Experience Short Course.

120 alums & guests from 11 generations and 43 nationalities gather at the 2025 Alum Reunion.



Dear UWC Costa Rica Community,

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate a community united by purpose, energized by hope, and strengthened by *generosity*.

Conflicts, injustices, and climate emergencies remind us daily that the kind of leadership our planet needs must be grounded in *empathy* and driven by a sense of shared *responsibility* and *accountability*. Each story featured in this report conveys a unique message about why our community matters and the crucial role of education. Together, **we** continue to bring our mission to life on campus and around the world.

Thanks to the trust and generosity of our donors, we took **significant steps in the construction of our new San Isidro campus**. We have completed 100% of the land movement and infrastructure phases. More than just a new home, this campus will enable us to **expand our scholarship program, deepen our connections with nature, and welcome more students** who will go on to make a difference in their communities.

We also reached a milestone that speaks to the long-term impact of your support: this year, we celebrated the graduation of our **1,500th alum**. In a community where **over 80% of students receive financial support**, this milestone fills us with significant pride, because attending UWC Costa Rica meant something different for each of them—perhaps taking flight for the very first time, or finding courage in a leap of faith by leaving their loved ones, or discovering knowledge and sharing it freely and without fear of oppression, or even breaking cycles of poverty through education. Each story is different, yet each carries forward the lessons, values, and friendships formed in Costa Rica, creating and inspiring ripples of positive impact.

Throughout the year, our community embodies the spirit of UWC in powerful ways. Join us in reading our 2024-2025 Impact Report and the powerful stories shared. These achievements remind us that collective effort and generosity can turn vision into measurable progress.

Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and belief in what we can achieve together.

With gratitude,

Susan Mullins (Board Chair), Mauricio Viales (Head of College), and Katy De La Garza (Deputy Head & Education Director)

205 students

during the 2024-2025 Academic Year



161 scholarships

provided to our students through National Committees, donors & partners

88%



International Baccalaureate Pass Rate (Worldwide: 81%)

125

Applications via the Costa Rican National Committee

- 23 students joined the movement (9 to Costa Rica)
- 9 students received full scholarships
- \$333k contributed to UWC (\$207k to UWC Costa Rica)



38%

in 78 full scholarships

42%

in 86 partial scholarships

33

Average IB points

(Worldwide: 33)

52%

Bilingual IB Diplomas

(Worldwide: 27%)

64 nationalities

across the student community

Afghanistan	Jamaica
Australia	Japan
Austria	Kenya
Bahamas	Kyrgyz Republic
Barbados	Lithuania
Belgium	Luxembourg
Belize	Mauritius
Bermuda	Mexico
Bhutan	Morocco
Bolivia	Myanmar
Botswana	Nepal
Brazil	Netherlands
Burkina Faso	Nicaragua
Canada	Nigeria
Cayman Islands	North Macedonia
Chile	Norway
China	Paraguay
Colombia	Peru
Costa Rica	Portugal
Democratic Republic of Congo	Russian Federation
Denmark	Serbia
Dominican Republic	Spain
Ecuador	Switzerland
Finland	Taiwan
France	Thailand
Germany	Trinidad and Tobago
Greece	Turkey
Guatemala	Uganda
Honduras	United Kingdom
India	USA
Israel	Venezuela
Italy	Vietnam

882

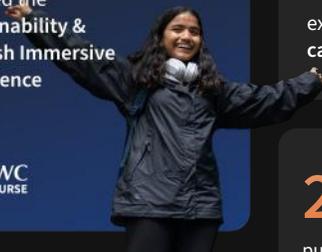
participants & students from public & private institutions involved in educational initiatives

45

Maximum points obtained

8 participants

from six nationalities enjoyed the Sustainability & Spanish Immersive Experience



7 provinces

explored on educational outings, camps & Community Action Week



23

public and private institutions & organizations impacted by co-curricular initiatives

6,960 hours

of positive social impact across 12 projects for Community Action Week

\$203,516

in sales by the Sustainability & Innovation Center

742

students & adults impacted by educational programs & rentals

41

CAS experiences developed & led by students

80

training hours for student leadership

(Residence Assistants & Wellness Ambassadors)

23

activities & strategic partners hosted by the Sustainability & Innovation Center

1,665

hours of student wellness support & individual attention



15 nationalities

across the staff community

50+ actions

for sustainability & environmental education

Obtained Bandera Azul sustainability recognition

for the second year in a row, with a 100/100 mark and two white star rating



Donated the infrastructure for the public road to the Santa Cecilia community



13

recycling & composting trainings

5,29 tons

of non-recyclable plastic re-utilized for construction materials via RESIN8

100%

of the infrastructure phase of the New Campus construction is completed



\$496,608

fundraised for the Scholarship Fund

8,446 m²

of hydro-seeding for slope protection & reforestation at the new campus

20 tons

of CO² diverted from the atmosphere by using RESIN8 pavers on our new campus

\$1,05M

fundraised for the New Campus Construction Fund

6 new scholarships unlocked!

3 full scholarships funded by donors, matched by the Dare to Dream 2 program

248

donors supported our mission. 48% gave for the first time!

27%

of monthly donors

40%

of all staff are donors!



34%

of all donors are proud alums!

\$13,6M

offered as university scholarships to Class of '25



Class of '25 Matriculation:

52 universities matriculated, in 10 countries

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Arizona State University | IE University | Sarah Lawrence College | University of Chicago |
| Barnard College | King's College London | School of the Art Institute of Chicago | University of Edinburgh |
| Brown University | Lake Forest College | Skidmore College | University of Florida |
| Cardiff University | Lewis & Clark College | Smith College | University of Oklahoma |
| Case Western Reserve University | Maastricht Science Program | SOAS University London | University of Richmond |
| Claremont McKenna College | Macalester College | St. Olaf College | University of Rochester |
| College of Idaho | Marist University | The University of Tampa | University of St. Thomas |
| Colorado College | Methodist University | Tufts University | University of Waterloo |
| Concordia College Moorhead | Middlebury College | Tulane University | Vanderbilt University |
| Florida Atlantic University | Nanyang University Singapore | UAL: Central Saint Martins | Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam |
| Franklin and Marshall College | Northwestern University | Universiteit Van Amsterdam | Williams College |
| Furman University | Norwegian University of Science and Technology | University College London | Worcester Polytechnic Institute |
| George Washington University | Queen's University Belfast | University of California, Berkeley | |
| Hamilton College | | | |

100%

participation from all alum classes!

61%

of students benefited from the Davis UWC Scholars Program



120

guests joined for the 2025 Alum Reunion, representing 43 countries & 11 classes

60+

university visits to campus

65 alums

attended seven international UWC Costa Rica events



BEYOND THE EQUATIONS



Before teaching at UWC Costa Rica, Eric taught in Milwaukee (United States). Once in UWC he noticed that some students struggled with language acquisition.

"I quickly learned that only about 10% of my students spoke English as their first language. In a subject like Physics, where we deal with complex mathematical concepts and scientific principles, I constantly face three separate diagnostic problems. Is the student struggling because their mathematical foundations aren't there? Is it the first time they're hearing these concepts explained in English? Or are they simply not grasping the science itself?"

When Physics teacher Eric Loría first stepped onto the UWC Costa Rica campus in August of 2024, he brought with him a wealth of passion for science and teaching. What he didn't anticipate was the profound transformation of his role, which led to him becoming the recipient of the 2025 Educator Award and also spearheading the development of the College's first comprehensive policy on Artificial Intelligence.



For many students, especially those coming from European systems, English can be a third or fourth language. This means Eric can't rely on the baseline comprehension assumed in other Costa Rican schools. "Every student is a different battle," he says. This reality sets a high bar, which made his selection for the Educator Award, voted on by the graduating class, a surprising and emotional validation.

Eric is clear about his personal standards: "They are very high. I want to give the students everything I know, every day. At the end of the year, I actually felt I had failed in many ways." By receiving the Educator Award he felt he hadn't served students perfectly, which forced him to step back. "It made me reflect. Maybe I am too hard on myself. Maybe I am not taking the time to see the small victories that happen throughout the year."



What the students clearly saw was that Room 14 was a space that transcended the IB curriculum. Eric's classroom became an informal refuge, a "second home."

"At some point, without ever needing to announce it, Room 14 became a space that filled itself. I don't know if that says more about the UWC community or something about me, but what matters is this: it became a place where people came to study, to talk, to teach each other, to film TikToks, to laugh, to watch movies at midnight, and just... **be.**"

Eric's relationship with students goes beyond being just a physics teacher; it has evolved into a symbiotic relationship in which they *learn from each other*.

"It's what they let me do; you can't force it. Naturally, they are learning from each other. **And I am learning from them too.** So, learning from each other, from nature, and for a lifetime, is something I take away from just being here at UWC, and that's what I've brought to the class. Those three things that make up this college."



Students are his greatest challenge and inspiration. Students actively seek to enroll in this subject, which motivates them to pursue further education. "That energy, that desire to learn, is amazing," he says. "But the biggest challenge is when they ask for more, and I don't have more resources. I have to stay up all night researching. **Their expectations are what keep me learning.**"

This drive to remain current led Eric to enroll in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Leadership Accelerator Course by International School Services. Recognizing AI as an emerging technology, Eric understood the necessity of addressing its challenges, particularly the lack of legislation and proper guidance.

"I took the course at 4 AM for a month straight," he laughs. The intensive, virtual training focused on building a coherent policy for AI use. What began as a plan for students quickly expanded into a project to create a unified Technology and AI Policy for the entire college, serving students and staff.

Eric began by surveying the community, asking about their usage, concerns, and understanding of the ethical and correct use of AI. "We realized it goes much further than academic honesty. It's about digital security, sharing private information, and ensuring every member of this college understands when it's appropriate to use AI and when it's not."

The policy is expected to be published and iterated upon during the 2025-2026 academic year, ensuring UWC Costa Rica leads the way in preparing the community for a more inclusive technological future.

For Eric, all these roles, teacher, mentor, and policy architect, are intrinsically linked. "I grew up as what you might call a 'Third Culture Kid.' I see myself reflected in these students. To be able to help them, and give them the tools and the freedom to learn the way they want to learn, is priceless." UWC, he concludes, is simply "**much more than a job. It's a home.**"



From Surkhet To Santa Ana:

A Journey Of Global Confidence



Deepa Sapkota '25's journey to UWC Costa Rica is a testament to resilience and community. Hailing from Surkhet, Nepal, Deepa, a proud member of the Class of 2025, is a Grieg Scholar whose personal history and future ambitions are an inspiration.

Her background, as she notes with gentle sincerity, *"a little different than others,"* Was shaped by the profound influence of the SOS Organization. Following the loss of her mother at a tender age of three, Deepa found a new home within the SOS family. This intentional family unit taught her not just to survive, but to thrive, instilling in her the core values of shared responsibility and unwavering love.

"Everything I learned in my life, from focusing on my education to believing in close kinship and sharing bonds with people, I learned it in SOS."





Her time at SOS served as her crucible, teaching her the importance of a stable community. Despite facing immense adversity at a young age, she experienced a meaningful childhood, promoting intellectual curiosity and emotional growth, thus laying the indispensable groundwork for her future global success.

The opportunity to join UWC Costa Rica represented a vast and exciting leap forward. Deepa admits she was initially overwhelmed. Having never traveled outside her home country before, the very thought of arriving at the humid, vibrant, and unfamiliar Costa Rica was daunting. She faced the classic fear of culture shock: the challenge of navigating new languages, customs, and a community comprising over 60 nations.

Yet, the moment she stepped onto campus, her fears began to melt away. She found that the UWC environment is built to embrace difference. The welcoming atmosphere—cultivated by her peers from distant corners of the world and her supportive teachers—made it easier for her to blend into the dynamic multicultural community. The campus became her new, expanded SOS family. The first moments filled with uncertainty were quickly replaced by a sense of shared experience, proving that community can be built anywhere, regardless of geography or background.

However, Deepa was concerned that her financial situation might limit her ability to truly experience Costa Rica beyond the safe limits of our campus, to connect with the local culture, serve the community, or travel around the country. This is where the Grieg Foundation scholarship proved to be genuinely transformative.

“Thanks to them (Grieg Foundation), I was able to immerse myself in the culture beyond UWC. They have really helped me build my confidence in this environment and grow intellectually and personally.”

This support allowed her to fully enjoy the cultural and intellectual immersion that UWC offers, extending beyond the academic program. Deepa participated in local service projects, traveled to various regions of Costa Rica to learn about its biodiversity, and experienced homestays with her Costa Rican Host Family. This allowed Deepa to go from being an international student in the country to becoming an active participant in Costa Rican life and traditions. This financial support not only provided her with an education but also a deep connection with other agents of change in action.



“The UWC experience has been one of the most transformative chapters of my life. From late-night conversations with my friends, to learning a dance for a performance, and even countless cups of coffee that kept me going through deadlines. Every moment has shaped my UWC journey.”



Through these interactions, Deepa gained a deeper understanding of the importance of community and the need to learn from each other around her. She grew both personally and intellectually, forging bonds that will last for a lifetime.

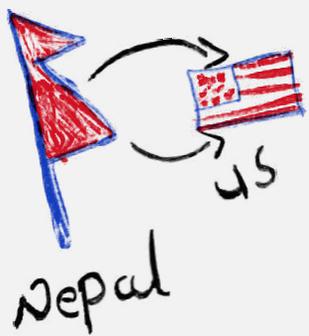
Deepa’s merit has awarded her a scholarship from **The Davis UWC Scholars Program**. She is enrolled at St. Olaf College in the United States, where she plans to study subjects related to children’s psychology and development. This choice is no coincidence; it directly reflects the values she received at SOS and reinforced at UWC. She dreams of pursuing fields that allow her to make a meaningful, people-centered impact, ensuring that the most vulnerable are visible, supported, and have the opportunity to enjoy a happy childhood, *just as she did*.

She is fully committed to carrying the UWC spirit forward. She dedicates herself to continuous learning, growing, and, most importantly, becoming an active, global agent of change.

“I will make sure to make this experience big,” signaling her commitment to leverage every lesson learned to better the world.

No matter where life takes her, Deepa pledges to remain part of the UWC community as an alum, dedicated to giving back and staying connected to the global family that fostered her transformation.

Deepa Sapkota's journey at UWC Costa Rica (which continues as an alum) was made possible by the support of the Grieg Foundation.



EXPANDING OUR MISSION

Last July, the campus was transformed into a dynamic, immersive space for short-term learning. The **Sustainability & Spanish Immersive Experience**, held from July 1 to July 15, 2025, was a key, two-fold initiative. It acts as an intensive expression of the College's mission **to connect people and nature for a sustainable future**, and it serves as an essential engine of **financial sustainability**. The revenue generated channels directly into the scholarship fund that supports our diverse, need-based student body.

For two weeks, the College welcomed an intentionally diverse cohort of eight participants from France, Germany, Nigeria, Poland, the USA, and Costa Rica to engage with challenging environmental and social concepts. The course was built on the principle of **Deep Ecology**, a concept designed to shatter the conventional human-centered worldview. The core goal was for participants to reimagine their relationship with nature, not merely as distant observers, but as **integral and interconnected beings** within the vast, complex global ecosystem.

Follow the Short Course Itinerary!

Day 1: Arrivals

Participants settle into their residences and share a space to get to know one another.

Day 2: The formal kick-off

Participants dive into the UWC ethos, prioritizing meaningful connections over simple introductions. Facilitators Julien, Tatiana, and Tiyamike established the values of collective learning and mutual support. The immersion quickly moves from the internal community to the external world.

Day 3: Learning from the host town, Santa Ana

This is a crucial exercise in **systems thinking** and local observation. Students walk the streets, visit the local market and supermarket, and analyze how the community's daily life intersects with sustainability practices. The afternoon is then filled with a burst of spontaneous cross-cultural connection, as some participants join local community members in friendly games of basketball and football. This is because the UWC mission becomes alive in shared human experiences that can unfold in any neighborhood court.

Day 5: Learning from the Indigenous Community of Quitirrisí.

This is a personal experience designed to provide each participant with the opportunity to learn directly from community members about their traditions, history, and way of life. This interaction sparks vital reflections on the significance of **cultural preservation and respect**, illustrating that **environmental sustainability is inextricably linked to the survival of indigenous knowledge**.

Day 6: Making Paca Digestora and Biofertilizers

Participants take part in a hands-on composting and planting activity in the campus's greenhouse, where they engage in the **act of nurturing the soil**, and also explore **regenerative practices through the preparation and use of biofertilizers**. They participate in the Paca Digestora, a project that UWC has been experimenting with, which involves a block of compressed organic waste. This specific activity resonates deeply with participants, illustrating the transformative potential of simple actions. As one participant shared:



The thematic focus of the course is broad, touching on **ecological interdependence, biodiversity, waste management, alternative economic models, food security, food traceability, and food sovereignty**. These concepts are not taught in abstract lecture halls but in the very places where they are lived.

The commitment to Deep Ecology requires participants to understand the human element within the ecosystem, particularly through the lens of those who have sustained it for generations.

"The compost session on campus worked best for me. It gave me a wider perspective on how much food humans waste each day, and how, in most cases, that food just ends up in the dumpster, contributing to the amount of trash at landfills. However, what we did was compost it. It took not that long to do and gave me such a new perspective on how much we can do for earth that doesn't even take us that long to do."

Hanna - USA



Day 7: Water Conservation

The participants visit **Naciente Palmichal in Acosta**, a rural sustainability project focused on water conservation and community development. Students learn firsthand about local efforts to protect critical natural resources, cultivating an appreciation for the tenacity of Costa Rica’s rural communities. Back on campus, the students balance Spanish lessons with hands-on learning, including a **biogester workshop** and the construction of “**pacas**” (natural digesters).

Days 9-11: Multi-day expedition to Monteverde.

The group travels to the pristine and world-renowned Monteverde cloud forest mountains. Nighttime visits to the frog sanctuary allow for the observation of local species, deepening an understanding of **biodiversity** in action. In complete hands-on activities, participants dive right into a comprehensive **permaculture workshop**, exploring sustainable farming and how to live in greater harmony with nature. The truly spectacular hanging bridges hike offers a shift in perspective: have you ever walked among clouds, looking down at the tree canopies? This is one of the highlight spaces that inspires reflections on the delicate balance of the natural world.

Days 11- 13: Organic Farming: from food systems to responsible consumption

Participants visit **Pinar del Río Farm**, an organic farm located in San Isidro de Heredia, and examine the challenges that food traceability and food sovereignty present for local producers. By experiencing and learning the complexity of **crop diversification**—a crucial practice for maintaining a resilient farm ecosystem—participants take action and build their own **compost pile from scratch**. An experience that connects academic concepts to real-world applications, supporting sustainable systems and addressing **waste management**.

Days 12-14: Más allá del Short Course

As the program draws to a close, the focus shifts to reflections on what comes next and how this experience can expand beyond the course. A visit to the Braulio Carrillo National Park becomes the stage for reflection amidst the sounds of the forest. In a final reflection circle, participants share how they show appreciation for the environment and for one another. And... the group also celebrates the completion of 36 hours of rigorous Spanish lessons.

Day 15: One last trip into Nature & Departures

On the last day of the course, participants visit La Paz Waterfalls Gardens near the stunning Poás Volcano region. The impact of the course does not end at the departure gate; it continues in the actions of each participant, who now also takes with them a bag full of skills and experiences.

The intentional socioeconomic diversity among participants, an essential part of the two-year UWC Costa Rica education program, also translates into the course. A cross-subsidized funding model ensures that applicants have access to financial assistance. The revenue from this course also serves as a source that supports the College Scholarship Fund and other programs. This engine of reciprocity and interconnectedness strengthens the institution’s commitment to continue offering diverse enrollment to youth based on their merit and not limit their opportunities due to their financial circumstances.

The Sustainability & Spanish Immersive Experience is therefore a fundamental tool for the College’s financial resilience, ensuring that UWC Costa Rica can continue to foster deep ecology, global change, and access to education for years to come.

Voices Of A Silent Majority In Latin America

Freddy García '25 (Venezuela) inspires us with a realistic and emotional TEDx talk about the voices of the silent majority in Latin America. He highlighted the challenges that millions of Latin American workers face daily, as well as the economic uncertainty they encounter.

Inspired by his dad, Freddy revealed that this silent majority is also the backbone of the region. Who, how, and what for... these were the three main questions that Freddy wanted to answer at the TEDxUWCCR Youth event, celebrated on our campus in November 2024.



Listen to his journey



Raised in Barcelona on the Caribbean coast of Venezuela, Freddy García '25 (Venezuela)'s education enabled him to see beyond the limits of his own reality.

Before coming to UWC Costa Rica, Freddy focused his energy and work on the neglect of social and mental health in teenagers, especially during the Pandemic.

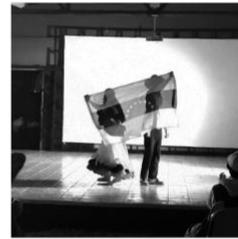
Once he was selected by the Venezuelan National Committee, Freddy had to overcome some visa challenges that became part of his journey to UWC Costa Rica. He finally arrived in Costa Rica a month and a half after the school year had already started. He had to adjust to his new environment quickly and always with a smile. But he did! After spending some weeks on campus, Freddy became an integral part of this diverse community.

He was elected and trained to be one of Tortuguero's Residence Assistants for the 2024-2025 academic year. On the Graduation Day, Freddy was awarded an Outstanding Leadership Award (OLA Award) for his contributions and active participation in the Residential & Wellness Area.

Due to financial constraints and country politics, Freddy was hosted by a Costa Rican family as part of the Host Families Program. Although he arrived later than other students in the country, he stayed longer. He had the opportunity to experience a great deal of Costa Rican culture up close, including important holidays and dates.

The desire to change the world, to make a difference, and to give visibility to silenced voices was the primary motivation for Freddy to participate in the inaugural TEDxUWCCR Youth event, held in November 2024.

Motivated by his father and driven by a strong determination to provide the best for his family, Freddy inspires us with an emotional TEDx talk about the **voices of the silent majority in Latin America**. He positions, front and center, the challenges that millions of Latin American workers face daily, as well as the economic uncertainty they encounter.



“It is in environments like these, UWC, that one can contemplate others' ways of living life, and others in the world can see my way of seeing life, and in an act of cultural change, those voices are amplified now.”

Resilience, Prioritizing Community and Collective Good, Resourcefulness and Creativity in Problem-Solving, Gratitude, and living with Simplicity and Purpose – five lessons that stood out from the silent majority.

That night, Freddy proudly carried his nation's flag, and a critical thinking that invited the audience to see these new generations of Latin American youth through the lens of hope, innovation, and possible dreams.

Standing in front of a packed audience, speaking in a foreign language to his own, and showing vulnerability was an incredible challenge for Freddy; yet, as a spokesperson for the silent majority, he leads by example and demonstrates the growth and resilience that come from his hard work.

Freddy not only stands out in TEDx, but he also acts like a proven Agent of Change. He was part of the **Agents of Change** team in Community Action Week (February 2025), visiting three high schools in Liberia and Santa Cruz, Guanacaste, and teaching around 150 teenagers about being a change-maker. Additionally, he attended the Colegio Bilingüe de Palmares, where 52 participants received his knowledge and passion for making a positive impact on the world.

“Now, after two years of this unforgettable experience, I can say that I can do a lot of things that I thought were almost impossible to do before”; recognized Freddy, “speaking English with confidence, sharing valuable ideas, thinking critically, and the most important thing, developing my purpose and cultivating my passion to serve humanity.”

This hunger to change the world was one of the key factors in Freddy receiving a Grieg scholarship.

“I will be forever grateful to UWC Costa Rica and the Grieg Foundation for all the things, academic, financial, and personal support that they have given to me in these two years.”

This is not the ending of Freddy's journey. He received five letters of acceptance from different universities offering him a full scholarship from **The Davis UWC Scholars Program** to study International Business in the United States.

He promises to return to UWC Costa Rica as a professional and serve the young leaders who will be part of the movement. Additionally, in the short term, he aspires to be part of the Venezuelan National Committee and one day become its Chair.



Freddy's journey is possible thanks to the generosity of





MULTIPLYING IMPACT

Binayak Raj Pande '17 (Nepal) is a living example of how lasting the UWC impact can be on a person. He arrived in Costa Rica nervous and filled with uncertainty, but with a suitcase full of dreams.

He is quick to point out that attending UWC Costa Rica would have been impossible without scholarship support, calling the experience the **“ULTIMATE CATALYST FOR HIS SUBSEQUENT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS.”**

He views UWC not merely as an education, but as a special place, *“a sort of dream world that has defined the ambitious, values-driven reality he now works to build globally.”*

After his two transformative years at UWC Costa Rica, he went to study at Northwestern University in Illinois (United States), with the support of **The Davis UWC Scholars Program**. There, he specialized in Economics and Cognitive Science.

Binayak’s journey is one of interdisciplinary innovation, the type of experiential learning UWC Costa Rica seeks to cultivate in every student. He proudly supports the Scholarship Fund as a recurring donor, firmly convinced that *more people should have the opportunity to become agents of change.*

Binayak’s reciprocity is a life-long journey as an alum, and a result of the collective support of UWC National Committees, as well as



Davis United World College Scholars
PROGRAM

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

You received a scholarship to attend UWC Costa Rica. How did that financial support impact your ability to attend and your overall experience?

There's no way I would have been able to attend without it. It would have been impossible. I've had the chance to live a life that feels like a dream in many ways, yet it also profoundly influences my reality. It was definitely the ultimate catalyst for everything else that happened in my life. The way I think about things I care about, the value I place on what I want to give, and the type of world I want to create really made me feel more ambitious because I saw this Special place. And then I went out in the world and realized the world wasn't as great as that. But having already experienced that, I can build a similar world. And I'll work the rest of my life to make that a reality.

What is one specific memory or tradition from your time at UWC Costa Rica that you still think about often?

*Wow. There are so many. I'm trying to come up with a good one. (He thinks for a while!) **Awareness.** Not necessarily a tradition, but being exposed to so many different people, from so many different backgrounds, at such a young age really taught us a lot. Different cultures show how people might perceive things differently from you, and that's **something I practice every day of my life.** That's made my life a lot easier because you're just so exposed to it. This significant aspect has definitely given me a major advantage in life, especially since my work is also international.*

Considering your diverse academic path, from Economics and Cognitive Science to Design Thinking, how did UWC Costa Rica's emphasis on intercultural understanding and critical thinking prepare you for such varied fields?

*Early exposure at a young age. As you age, learning becomes increasingly challenging. But if you're exposed to it at a young age, it can make a big difference. I also appreciate how UWC goes above and beyond to push for **unprecedented levels of inclusion.** It's a really powerful strength. It's also because there are various ways to connect with other people, beyond just class. It's about your leisure time and activities. It provides multiple ways to connect with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, a rare occurrence in the world. In UWC, people from various backgrounds constantly surround you, and they're very different from one another. Now, I am proactively searching for that in my work. My work is very global, and it has made me much more culturally aware of things. But it's not just the cultural side; UWC's socioeconomically diverse nature is equally important. In universities, you're exposed to cultural diversity at a similar level, but not to socioeconomic diversity, which really changes people's views.*

“IT IS MY MISSION TOO.”

We were so grateful to see you become a recurring donor to the Scholarship Fund. When we thanked you, you mentioned your giving is motivated by the impact UWC Costa Rica had on your life. Could you elaborate on that impact and why you feel compelled to give back now?

*I wouldn't have the confidence to be ambitious if it weren't for UWC Costa Rica. The confidence was not just my own, but also that of my classmates. I saw my firsties starting out shy, but they ended up discovering who they were and really living extraordinary lives. And that is one of the most inspiring things witnessed, and **MORE PEOPLE DESERVE TO SEE OTHERS FIND THEIR VOICE AND DISCOVER THEIR TRUE SELVES.** UWC was an amazing place where many people discovered themselves. And we'd live in a better world if more people could do that. So that's part of the donation mechanism and the idea behind it.*

What does being a recurring donor mean to you, as opposed to a one-time gift? What impact are you hoping your sustained contributions will have?

My entire life would not have been possible without the efforts of others, so the impact is that it's not necessarily about being seen. I don't know who donated money to fund my scholarship. I don't know those people, but I'm always gonna be grateful to them. And I hope that these things contribute to someone having an education who, in turn, passes it on to others. UWC has impacted me in a way that makes it the only reason I can afford to take care of myself. So, beginning to give back is helpful.

Why, specifically, is it essential to you to support UWC Costa Rica and its mission?

Because it is my mission too, and it's how I want to see the world. So it definitely doesn't feel like something that stopped after graduating for me.

Today, Binayak is an experienced professional known for navigating the complex intersection between technology and human-centered design, with a career spanning consulting, entrepreneurship, and product management. Convinced that his life would be different had he not been part of UWC Costa Rica, he is committed to collaboration, holistic thinking, and decisive action to spread the UWC mission throughout the world.



The Smile And Kindness Of Mery, The Beloved Tía Of UWC Costa Rica

For nearly two decades, Mery González, our beloved tía, has served UWC Costa Rica. As one of the College's longest-serving staff members, Mery has been a steady, kind presence in the life of every student, family, and staff member who has passed through the Santa Ana campus since its inception. Next April, after 19 years of service to UWC Costa Rica, and over 22 years of total service, starting with the SOS International School, Mery will retire. Her departure marks the end of an era, and her story is a powerful testament to the community, resilience, and compassion that define the UWC experience.

“When I started working here, there were far fewer people, and some classrooms weren't used during the day because there weren't enough students. When the change came (from SOS International School to UWC Costa Rica), we were told that UWC wanted to ‘buy the ship along with its crew.’ So, on the one hand, we were a little scared because we didn't know what to expect, but then it turned out to be nice. It was a different experience, with so many new people and students. The college was suddenly full, and it was nice.”



In those early days, the most significant constraint for Mery, a native Spanish speaker, was the sheer scale of the international presence. *“What scared me was the different languages—how was I going to communicate?”* she admits. Yet, the barrier quickly dissolved, replaced by a mutual understanding that transcended words.

Mery’s main task is to ensure that the campus is clean and feels welcoming. She reflects that she treats every day as an opportunity to contribute. *“Every day, I try to give everything I can. Sometimes my work is not seen so much, but it is also beautiful when the students show their appreciation.”* She remembers simple moments, like finding notes from students thanking her for her hard work. *“That is beautiful, when you know that they realize what you do. I always try to give my best, whatever the need is.”*

Mery is part of the 98 adults who make up a diverse staff in age groups and nationalities. UWC Costa Rica employs 53% of women and 47% men from 15 different countries. This is an effort that the college makes to maintain diversity among both students and staff, allowing us to continue our principle of learning from each other.

The Emotional Markers of a Shared Journey

Throughout her two decades, Mery has witnessed the College endure and transform. She recalls moments of uncertainty, but the moment that remains the most emotional marker in her tenure was the start of the pandemic.

“One thing that was an extreme change, or at least marked me a lot, was when the pandemic came,” she says, her voice catching with emotion. *“When they took us to a meeting in the library to tell us we were going home. I remember crying that day, which isn’t surprising since I’m a crybaby. I cried because I said, ‘And now what will happen?’ Everything felt so strange, so ugly. We didn’t know if the College was going to close.”*

Beyond the global disruptions, Mery’s most profound connection to the UWC mission comes through simple, daily interactions with students and staff; moments that confirm her integral role in the community’s well-being.

She fondly recalls an Asian student, who always came to chat with her. Following an accident that led to a campus rule prohibiting students from going barefoot, the student was tasked with filming a video for a project. Mery agreed to help, becoming an actress in the process. *“She needed me to help her with a video. She was going to run, and I was going to scold her for being barefoot.”* Mery still has the video, a cherished reminder of the personal, playful trust she built with the students.

Another memory that she remembered centers on a quiet boy who constantly studied in Classroom 10. *“He was always studying, all day and most days. He always told me to leave the door unlocked for him, you know, it is my job to lock up classrooms at the end of the day. It was a tragedy for him to tell me, in broken Spanish, ‘Por favor, Tía, no cierras la puerta (Please, Tía, don’t close the door).’”* When he graduated, Mery went to clean the classroom and found a note. *“It was thanking me,*



saying he would never forget me, thanking me for always leaving the door open, and for the greetings and the smiles. He said that by the time I read it, he would already be traveling.” Mery tears up, emphasizing, “I still have a picture of that note.”

A Family Legacy and Community Solidarity

Her family shares Mery’s commitment to UWC. Her son, Alejandro (Ale), has worked at the College for nine years. Mery proudly shares that her work doesn’t stop when she leaves campus. “We always arrive home and comment on some event that happened or things like that. We are always talking. We never detach from work; we keep commenting on it, and the family always asks.”

The deep sense of support reinforces this connection she has felt from her colleagues, staff, and even the students. She remembers the exceptional support she received from the community when her mother passed away.

The international environment also fed a personal ambition. “I have always loved English,” she admits. “I have taken many English courses, but I am not that agile.” She confesses that the constant exposure made her regret not studying more, but she is inspired to continue learning: “Now that I leave, I will have more time. I will continue, even if it’s just with Duolingo. I have always liked it, and I will continue learning, even if it’s not to speak it perfectly, but to learn more words.”

The Bittersweet Farewell

As she prepares to retire, Mery is reflective. Her greatest pride, she says, is “leaving happy and proud to have spent all this time here, and that, I have never had a problem with anyone. I feel proud to have worked here all this time and to have shared with so many people.”

The transition is bittersweet. “I got so used to the place, the people, and even the work,” she notes. “It’s true that I will leave exhausted, but then I stop and think: What am I going to do now at home?” She knows what she will miss most: “The day-to-day here. Saying hello to everyone I greet every morning, and my colleagues. I will miss everything.”

But Mery is also looking forward to a new stage of tranquility: not having to rush in the mornings, spending more time on her home and garden, and most of all, traveling with her siblings, who are all already retired.

Her final message to the over 1,500 students she has seen pass through the campus, many of whom return as professionals and families, is simple: “Don’t stop dreaming. Keep going forward. Always fight for what you want.”

To the staff and colleagues she leaves behind, her message is one of enduring affection: “I will miss you all. I enjoyed every moment I spent with each of you, and I will carry it in my heart always. You were part of the wonderful years that I spent here. I will carry them all in my heart. I love every person who works here.”

Tía Mery has not only cleaned the classrooms; she has always shared her best attitude to make of every space one that is and feels welcoming, where everyone is treated with respect, and feels safe. Mery, the UWC Costa Rica community thanks you and you are what defines the heart of this community.



¿QUÉ FUE PRIMERO, EL HUEVO O LA GALLINA?





The Class of 2025 chose to express their two-year journey at their Graduation Ceremony in the form of a combined speech delivered live to over 600 audience members and over 1,000 watching on livestream in a testament to the community they built, where the final answer to the great paradox is not what came first, but the individuals who came *after*.

This is a transcript of the Class' Graduation speech, with minor adjustments made for style and flow.



Relive this moment

«¿Qué fue primero, el huevo o la gallina?». Esta paradoja surgió una y otra vez durante nuestro viaje por UWC. Y ahora, como grandes pensadores críticos, sabemos que el primer instinto de cualquier estudiante del IB y de UWC cuando se enfrenta a una pregunta es responder con otra pregunta. ¿Qué fue primero, el huevo o la gallina? Pero ¿y si preguntamos en su lugar? ¿Suponemos que el huevo es la causa de la gallina? Como cualquier metamorfosis en la naturaleza, la forma final no está separada de lo que vino antes. Siempre estuvo inscrita en el ADN. La metamorfosis no es cambio: es evolución. Es crecimiento, descubrimiento, reconocimiento, progreso. Eso es exactamente lo que nos ha ocurrido. La gente dice que en UWC cambiamos, pero eso no es exacto. Sí, el resultado es diferente del punto de partida —el huevo no es la gallina—, pero lo que somos ahora ya estaba dentro de nosotros. Simplemente estaba sin forma, esperando a ser descubierto. No cambiamos nuestros deseos interiores; los descubrimos. Les dimos forma, les dimos voz.

Just as each transformation takes on a different shape, our journey can also be likened to the waves of the ocean, which are constantly moving and changing, each one unique, so we will never see the same one twice. Some of them are big, some of them are small, and some of them may even break on the shore of the warm beach. Now, each one of us stands on that shore, looking at the immense horizon that awaits us, because life does not end here; rather, it is the beginning of what awaits us. These two years at UWC Costa Rica, we have learned that we are similar to these waves, because we have been shaped differently by every challenge faced, every tear of joy or sadness, every laugh at the coffee tables where we sit with our friends, every early morning talk, which shows that we are always changing, we are never static.

Ahora, no vemos un montón de gente calva y rara. Vemos a gente valiente que ha dado y ha aprendido. Ahora, no cantamos Imagine sólo porque sea una canción famosa. La cantamos porque hemos vivido cada una de sus palabras. Ahora, todos hablamos algo de español (o al menos lo suficiente para decir: “*Carne, pollo o vegetariano, por favor*”). Ahora, **todos defendemos algo**.

I remember the first weeks of the first year, when uncertainty consumed us, a similar feeling to when we met the sea for the first time, where we did not know what lay beyond that infinite landscape. We would look around and see new faces, who, without knowing it yet, would become our home, **a home away from home**.

Ahora recitamos poesía, bailamos y cantamos canciones que antes no conocíamos. Ahora no asentimos cuando estamos de acuerdo: chasqueamos los dedos. Ahora, vamos a todas partes con nuestras tazas en la mano, un hábito que será difícil de romper. Nos hemos probado trajes, maquillaje y peinados hasta encontrar el que nos sienta bien. Y, sin embargo, por muy diferentes que parezcamos, todos compartimos una cosa: **un nuevo par de gafas a través de las cuales vemos el mundo**. A través de estas nuevas gafas, no vemos países, vemos personas. **No vemos estereotipos, vemos complejidad y diversidad. No vemos generalizaciones, vemos individuos.**

It has been a difficult process for all of us; no one can deny it. Becoming those big waves has taken us two years, but we were shaped by the foam of shared laughter and the strength of each obstacle overcome together. Like that first day on the caf terrace, when we tried to remember the names of everyone at our table, especially the ones that were hard to pronounce and failed, but still laughed. Or the first time we got lost on campus trying to find our dorms, only to realize that



the real lesson was in the road and those who walked it with us.

Ahora no lloramos porque echamos de menos nuestro hogar. Lloramos porque tenemos miedo de que mañana extrañemos este hogar, esta familia. Ahora, somos lo que una vez fuimos sólo en potencia. La versión tangible de nuestras aspiraciones interiores. **Ahora somos nosotros mismos. Somos.**

Some days, we felt like breaking waves, crashing against the harshness of the world, teetering between exhaustion and perseverance. Like those endless early mornings before MOCKS, when sleep overcame us, but someone always brought coffee from the machines and words of encouragement. Or when we faced difficult times, we supported each other with silent hugs that said more than any words. On other days, we floated in the calm, embraced by the community we had built, in moonlit conversations, in afternoons of laughter after CAS chess, in nights of dancing and Latin dinners, where, no matter what ocean we came from, we were united by music and the joy of being together.

Now, as we say goodbye to this shore, we know that the ocean that awaits us is vast and unknown. But we are no longer the same waves that arrived here. **We are stronger, wiser, braver.** We carry with us the excitement of Thematic Weeks, the passionate debates in TOK class, and the cultural presentations that made us prouder than ever of our roots. Each of us carries with us the traces of the moments we've experienced, **the words that have inspired us, and the hugs that have sustained us.** And though the tide may take us in different directions, the echo of our laughter, our tears, and our dreams will always resonate in this sea that brought us together.

¿Qué fue primero, el huevo o la gallina? Quizá no sea la pregunta correcta. ¿Y si preguntamos en su lugar: **¿Cuál vino después?** Porque para eso, tenemos una respuesta: algo diferente vino después. No importa cómo empezamos. **Importa cómo terminamos y el viaje que nos trajo hasta aquí.** Importan las lágrimas por los engaños y los exámenes, las risas con nuestros compañeros de piso, los recuerdos de los días de piscina y las interminables reuniones de la comunidad. Importan los amigos increíbles que hicimos, los errores de los que aprendimos, las lecciones que llevamos. **Importa la empatía que hemos adquirido.**

Let us remain waves that are not afraid to change, embracing metamorphosis with courage. May each of us find our own rhythm, our own strength, knowing that, no matter the distance, we will always be part of the same ocean, because metamorphosis is not only a change, but a constant search.

Porque una cosa es cierta: el final nunca se parece al medio, y el medio nunca se parece al principio, and **the end is not an end, but a continuous transformation, where each step towards the horizon is, in reality, a return to ourselves, more complete, more conscious, and, above all, more human.**

By Ariana Pantin '25 (Nicaragua) & Maddalena Arisi '25 (Italy)

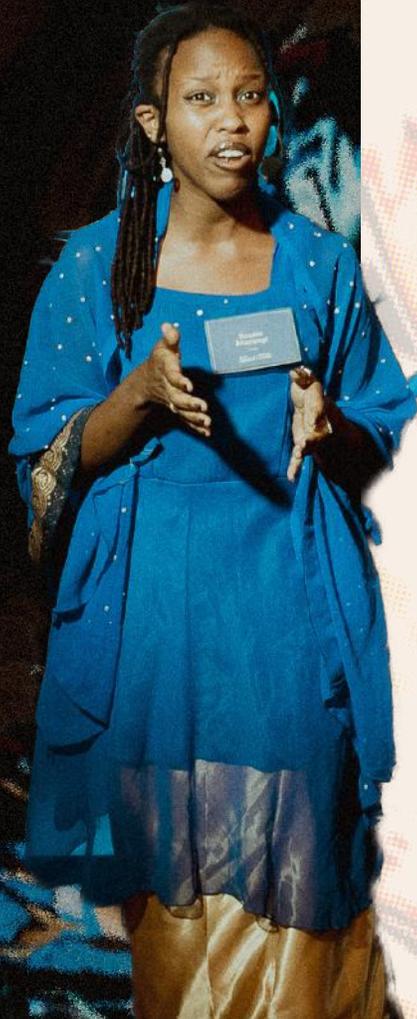


METAMORPHOSIS

By Bonita Murungi '25 (Uganda)

Edited with minor adjustments made for style and flow.

The convergence of cultures at UWC Costa Rica doesn't just reshape views, it encourages self-expression. This poem is a reflective ode to the tight-knit global community and cherished personal moments. Uganda's National Award Winner and published author Bonita Murungi '25 (Uganda), known among the community as a passionate storyteller, transforms simple timekeeping into a profound meditation on belonging, using the campus's unique rhythms to measure a transformation that is both wonderfully odd and enduringly human.



Do you hear it?

Can you feel it?

The tick-tock of the clock,

A sound that will never stop.

Tick. Tock. Tick.

Time check: 658 days, 15,792 hours. 22,740,480 minutes.

And out of all the time we have spent, infinite moments on this campus have etched their way into our minds and hearts for the entirety of our existence.

It's strange, isn't it?

How strangers find not-so-strange ways of meeting,

And form connections so deep, they wouldn't want to leave.

It's strange, isn't it?

That the people before you were merely faces

And now, transform into beings you'd cherish for as long as forever lasts.

Strangers to Friends to Family.

I have always thought that change is a strange concept. At least when I was 5, I associated it with the change of clothes after making mud cakes with my little brother in the sand. But arriving in the minibus in front of the blue gate with my heart hammering so loudly that it could probably be the construction around Santa Ana. I have come to understand that there is more to the surface. **We** had to modify our daily routine and decided to leave our homes to venture into the unknown that is UWC Costa Rica.

When we're young, we're told not to talk to strangers,

I'm glad that we didn't follow this rule.

And that our hearts are full from the people that are around us.

Strange friends. Strange family.

But it is one I am more than grateful to be a part of.

Change is awfully scary. How can I explain to anyone else that our tongues have adopted the UWC Costa Rica effect of the word "pookie"? Quite certain that this never belonged in my vocabulary until we came here. So, yes, pookie, change is odd. But it holds stories of what is yet to come. I often ask myself questions that begin with the word **'where.'**

Where else are we going to listen to the tunes played in caf as we made lines for dinner? Where else are you going to be surrounded by people attending "surprise" birthdays? Where else are we going to see sunsets upon a football

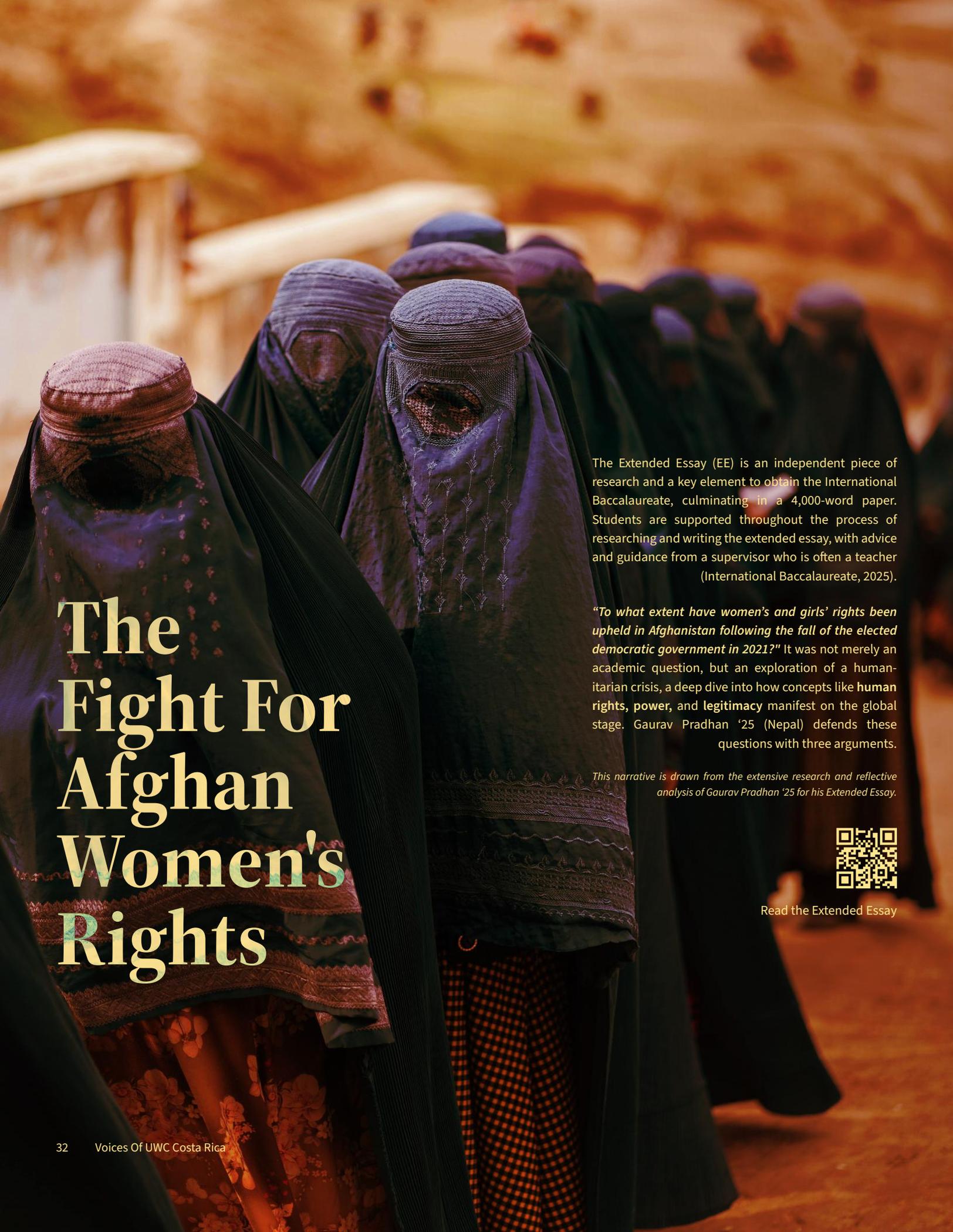
field? Where else are we going to have our own school plays directed by our resident theatre kids? Where else are we going to march to celebrate womanhood, 8M. Where else will we be seated in chairs, watching cultural shows with stickers at the end?

Where? *Where* else will carne or pollo be asked of us as options? **Where** else will you see Steven's vast bow tie collection and shorts combo? Where else will feel like a home away from home when this one has embedded itself into our souls?

In the words of Dr. Facilier in Princess and the Frog, this is **Transformation Central**. No person comes out of this place the same way that they came.

So I'll ask you again.

**Do you hear it?
Can you feel it?
The tick-tock of
the clock,
A sound that will
never stop.
Tick. Tock. Tick.**



The Fight For Afghan Women's Rights

The Extended Essay (EE) is an independent piece of research and a key element to obtain the International Baccalaureate, culminating in a 4,000-word paper. Students are supported throughout the process of researching and writing the extended essay, with advice and guidance from a supervisor who is often a teacher (International Baccalaureate, 2025).

“To what extent have women’s and girls’ rights been upheld in Afghanistan following the fall of the elected democratic government in 2021?” It was not merely an academic question, but an exploration of a humanitarian crisis, a deep dive into how concepts like human rights, power, and legitimacy manifest on the global stage. Gaurav Pradhan '25 (Nepal) defends these questions with three arguments.

This narrative is drawn from the extensive research and reflective analysis of Gaurav Pradhan '25 for his Extended Essay.



Read the Extended Essay

The Retreat from Education

The restrictions placed by the regime on girls' schooling were identified not just as policy shifts, but as a systemic denial of **human rights and equality**. It provided a clear illustration of how power structures were deliberately used to determine access to opportunities.

"I used the Dependency Theory to highlight how economically disadvantaged groups become reliant on others while reinforcing cycles of exploitation".

The exclusion of half the population from educational pathways was seen as more than an injustice; it was a societal detriment, described by Gaurav as the cornerstone of socio-economic development, the removal of which would inevitably lead to increased rates of **child marriage, domestic violence, and maternal mortality**.

The Ban on Employment

Banning women from most professional roles demonstrated a brutal political calculus of **power and legitimacy** used to enforce control.

Restricted Access to Healthcare

Restrictions on women's access to healthcare, including the dismissal of female health workers and limits on women seeing male doctors, highlight failures in protecting human rights and undermine human security, with consequences such as rising **maternal mortality and denial of reproductive rights**. **Feminism** provides insight into how women's bodies become political battlegrounds, reinforcing **patriarchal dominance** and restricting women's agency over their own health.

Nuance and the Global Stage

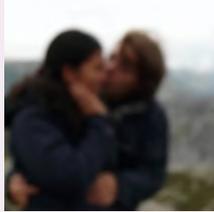
A crucial element of the analysis was the effort to avoid a one-dimensional narrative. Gaurav used **cultural relativism** to explore the regime's perspective, striving to understand their claim to legitimacy rooted in their strict interpretation of **Sharia law**. This approach *"presented multiple perspectives instead of focusing solely on the Taliban's illegitimate movements."*

The project also examined the **role of international actors**, the United Nations, and the European Union, whose intervention efforts raised complex questions of legitimacy and sovereignty. The application of **liberalism** highlighted the theoretical emphasis on cooperation and collective action to uphold human rights, even as the global community's limited ability to reverse the crisis remained a critical observation.



The EE proved to be quite comprehensive, and I gained many valuable insights and learned a great deal throughout the process. It has made me a better learner, communicator, and global thinker as I have delved deeper into the vast connections and complexities of this topic. Initially, I thought 4,000 words would be a lot, but I quickly realized I had exceeded the word count. The close connection of the topic to my passion kept me dedicated, and I gained deeper insights into the subjects.

International Baccalaureate. (2025, March 06). What is the extended essay. <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/dp-core/extended-essay/what-is-the-extended-essay/>



Alexis, Sondre & Elena:

A Love Story Born In Costa Rica



The Alum Reunion weekend always brings a surge of energy to our campus. It is a space to reconnect with peers and meet new ones. From Friday, July 18, to Monday, July 21, the Reunion 2025 welcomed 120 alums and family members representing 11 generations and 43 different nationalities.

Amidst the hugs, laughter, and memories, we met some alums who share a much more special bond. Alexis Lanza '08 (Belize) and Sondre Skarsten '09 (Norway) met on campus back in 2007. Their story is a beautiful testament to the enduring, borderless bonds forged on campus, an unexpected romance born of shared classes, late-night chats, and a mutual commitment to global citizenship. At Reunion, they stopped for five minutes to reflect on the incredible 16-year journey that had taken them from neighboring dorm rooms to marriage and parenthood.

A "One-Month" Pact

Sondre arrived in Costa Rica the year after Alexis, who was part of the inaugural class of UWC Costa Rica. Their social circles initially overlapped when a mutual friend became Alexis's roommate, quickly merging their "Caribbean kids" group with Sondre's friends. *"We were hanging out all the time,"* Alexis recalls. Yet, despite the closeness, they didn't officially start dating until graduation was just one month away. *"It was not meant to be a long-term thing,"* Sondre admits. *"It was meant to be. Let's date until the end of the academic year, and then let's see how it goes."* Their philosophy was clear: enjoy a great memory, then move on. But that initial pact was quickly tested.

The first extension came with a planned Central American road trip up to Belize, prompting them to say, *"Let's not break up until after Belize."* This was quickly followed by Alexis's first-ever visit to Norway that same summer. With every milestone, the relationship survived, fueled by a commitment to take it *"day by day."* They never focused on forever; they focused on the next time they would see each other.

Their individual academic goals demanded a practical approach to their relationship. Both prioritized education, a philosophy that led to years of long-distance. Alexis studied Biology in North Carolina, while Sondre pursued Psychology in Florida. They managed to live together for one year after completing their undergraduate degrees, but the reality of academic life soon intervened. Both were accepted into separate PhD programs in different states.

At that point, nearing their mid-twenties, they faced the brutal truth that many aspiring academics confront: geography makes sustained commitment almost impossible. *"We decided, okay, maybe this has run its course,"* Sondre explains, noting the lack of a natural pathway to keep them together. They decided to end the relationship, prioritizing their professional futures, but with the mutual agreement to remain friends, a necessity given their shared circle of UWC friends. They would spend the next five years apart, dating other people, yet never entirely breaking that essential UWC connection.

Despite the physical distance, their commitment to remaining close friends meant they were always a part of each other's lives. The defining factor, they realized, was the enduring knowledge of one another generated during those transformative UWC years. During a trip five years after their separation, a conversation crystallized their future. They openly discussed what they truly wanted from life and what kind of partner they were searching for. *"We knew all the flaws about each other. We knew all the drawbacks, and nobody's perfect,"* Alexis says.

The realization was powerful: despite the time apart, they still recognized in each other the person they wanted to build a family with. *"We said, yeah, let's just do this,"* Sondre recalls. Their eventual marriage was supposed to take place at the UWC Costa Rica campus, but then the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. However, all the plans were postponed, and they fulfilled their promise after the lockdown. It was the inevitable conclusion of a friendship too strong to be contained by distance or academic paths.

In December 2023, their baby Elena arrived.

UWC's Enduring Legacy

Now, as they raise their daughter Elena, they reflect on UWC's impact, which goes far beyond their marriage. *"Even though UWCers end up spread all over the world, and we see each other infrequently, these friends are like family, and no matter how much time passes, we can pick up right where we left off,"* Alexis shares. The friendships, they worry, are like family; no matter how much time passes, they pick up right where they left off.

A deep sense of nostalgia and a strong sense of necessity drove the decision to attend the Reunion and return to campus again. *"This is why we came,"* Sondre explained. *"There was no way we were not going to show UWC to Elena."* For Alexis, walking through the gates again has a strange feeling: *"It felt like everything had changed, but nothing had changed. It just felt like we're right back there. The breeze, the trees, the birds, the wind. And then it faded, and it's almost like you just stepped right back into the routine."* The true magic of UWC, they discovered, is not just in the walls, but in the enduring, life-defining human connections they found here.



LEADING BY EXAMPLE: BALD FOR A CAUSE & TAKING A LEAP OF FAITH

Hugs, laughs, tears, and many, many haircuts. **Bald for a Cause** has become a tradition in UWC Costa Rica. Every year, many first-year students and some staff members shave their heads to donate their hair to the **Fundación Metamorfosis**. This partnership enables Fundación Metamorfosis to collect all the hair and create wigs, strand by strand, for individuals undergoing cancer treatment who are **experiencing hair loss**.

On the afternoon of the event, a powerful sense of community is palpable. Not only is it an act of kindness, but it is also a way to break down societal stereotypes about hair looks and perceptions of what baldness means.

María Paula Ureña '26 (Costa Rica) has had long hair for a significant part of her life; in fact, it has been an integral part of her identity. Although she was used to donating her long hair, she had never dared to cut it as short as Bald for a Cause requires.

“Right now, I see going bald as a symbol of love, caring for others, and empathy. I felt really fresh, confident, and powerful, but after all, I felt elated.”

It is precisely in student-led community events like this one, of solidarity and empathy, that the mission of UWC Costa Rica comes alive. Small acts of kindness raise awareness and bring happiness to someone going through a difficult time. It is surprising to walk around campus the day after this event. The faces are the same, yet it is almost impossible not to greet students and staff with a look of shock and surprise at how their new hairstyle has changed. However, this is also an exercise in checking prejudice, fostering empathetic discourse, and cultivating admiration. Challenging the norms of what *normal hairstyles* should look like is part of the equation, serving as a reminder of the diversity that exists on campus.



María Paula's leadership is possible thanks to the generosity of Leonor Blum, as well as



This testimony from María Paula exemplifies the leadership skills UWC Costa Rica instills. Students undergo essential transformations that cultivate abilities and passions. Students become change-makers who understand that small actions can have a significant impact. María Paula acknowledged that this event made a significant difference in her life as she realized that *“UWC Costa Rica is a family that helps you to know people who will be with you for the rest of your life, and it has been one of the best experiences I have ever had.”*

María Paula comes from a rural area called Palmichal de Acosta, in Costa Rica. Her mother, María, plays a fundamental role in María Paula’s story as María herself is a migrant from Nicaragua who moved to Costa Rica at a young age.

“My family has been one of the pillars that has inspired me to get where I am and fight for my dreams and aspirations for the future. I won’t be able to be here without the support of my mom, my dad, and Juan Carlos.”

Living in a rural area meant that María Paula’s chances of excelling outside her hometown were limited. The only option she had was attending the university in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. However, being selected to receive the Blum Scholarship to attend UWC Costa Rica means she now has a chance of immense opportunities ahead of her.

“This is something I could not imagine before, but now I know it is a possibility.”



While the academic rigor of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and learning to navigate her life on campus in a foreign language have not been easy, critical thinking, open-mindedness, communication, and a care for others are some of the attributes of the IB that María Paula reflects on.

“This opportunity is not just a gift for me, it is for all my family. Without it, I wouldn’t be able to live this experience, and I wouldn’t be able to enjoy the benefits that this experience will allow me to have in the future.”

She is a front-line witness to the transformative effect that UWC has on the lives of its students, as she sees the example of her sister Luz, who studied at UWC Robert Bosch and is now studying at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and also believes that education has the power to change destinies for the better.

During the summer of 2025, María Paula had the opportunity to participate in a short course at UWC Adriatic and sponsored by **Patagonia Education Partners**. Over the course of two weeks, she strengthened her leadership skills and shared them with 40 students from other UWCs.

This was her first time taking a plane and leaving Costa Rica. She recognized that these two weeks helped her reignite her purpose in UWC Costa Rica and embrace her second year with a more focused attitude.

This opportunity not only opened her eyes but also redirected her future pathway. Being in Venice made her aware of the city’s rich architectural history and the efforts to preserve its historical spaces through renovation. Now she is interested in studying architecture, but also aims to obtain a double degree in environmental studies.

María Paulas’s journey in UWC Costa Rica has represented a universe of new opportunities for her. By choosing to shave her head, she not only donated her hair but also embodied the values that UWC seeks to instill: leadership, empathy, and the courage to break barriers. Her act of confidence and love brings a tangible gift to a stranger while simultaneously opening a world of new possibilities for herself.

LOCAL LEADERS



Listen to their stories





GLOBAL CHANGE- MAKERS

María Paula & Leontina are proud Class of '26 UWC Costa Rica scholars

THE BUS STOP QUESTION THAT LAUNCHED A GLOBAL CHANGE-MAKER



Leontina Trajkoska '26 (North Macedonia), who grew up in Skopje, the capital city, was waiting at a bus stop with two of her friends when they asked her, “*Leontina, why don't you apply to UWC?*”. That simple question sparked her curiosity to learn more about the movement, mission, and values.

“I thought to myself, ‘You know what? I just like to try and apply.’ I was not sure what the outcome would be, so let's see. And that is how it started.”

After experiencing rather challenging visa issues and an 18-hour journey, Leontina arrived at UWC Costa Rica in late September 2024.

At home, Leontina left behind her family in the SOS Children's Village, where she lived following the death of her parents.

“It was definitely a new system, a new situation where you have to get accustomed to new people. But I'm very thankful for all the support they (SOS Children's Village) have given me, and I don't think I would be here today if that didn't happen to me then.”

Her life before attending UWC Costa Rica was a typical high school experience. She participated in various activities, including swimming, community service, music, art, cultural exchanges, and volleyball. She has also demonstrated academic excellence, earning top marks in all subjects at both school and high school.

With the support of a CVG-sponsored scholarship, Leontina can connect with friends from all continents around the world. “*I never thought of taking subjects that were never offered in my old school, like Global Politics.*”

Leontina's impact is possible thanks to the generosity of



“MAKE CENTS, MAKE SENSE”

Being in Costa Rica opened the opportunity for Leontina to transform her passions into action, lifting others; this was her main reason for participating in the UWC initiative **GoMakeADifference** with her project, *Make Cents, Make Sense*.

Leontina's project focuses on providing financial education workshops to vulnerable youth. She first undertook this project in North Macedonia, where it had a profoundly positive impact on her peers.

“It was very spontaneous because it started first at home, because there was a call for a grant in social impact, and how you can use the skills you have to impact your community. And when I saw the positive impact, I thought that it was a good idea to do it here in Costa Rica.”

Grounded in the principle of turning pain into purpose, Leontina recognized a critical gap: young people leaving care systems, such as SOS Children's Village, often lack the financial literacy tools to avoid crippling debt and falling into fraudulent schemes. Her solution? Interactive workshops to provide essential and agile financial literacy skills.

Leontina's project is one of the 23 winning projects out of the more than 100 applications received. She received \$1,500 to expand the impact of "Make Cents, Make Sense" further.

Supported by the Co-curricular Program, Leontina executed this project at the local SOS Children's Village near campus, in Santa Ana, making the connections to her background even stronger and more special.

The training sessions focus on personal budgeting, savings, responsible money use, renting negotiations, and fraud prevention, empowering participants to reclaim control over their financial futures. As one participant shared, *"Nobody had explained this to us before,"* underscoring the vital need this project addresses.

Over 30 UWC Costa Rica peers of Leontina got behind the project. They volunteered as co-facilitators and mentors, directly working with 15 local youth in Costa Rica, and dozens more in North Macedonia, making the project a great success that reached over 100 youth across two nations. At the end of the Santa Ana

training, one unexpected outcome brought great fun to the program: a friendly football match among peers that promoted community integration and personal gratitude.

Leontina reflects that this project tested her resilience, forcing her to see roadblocks as launchpads for practical solutions. She navigated the demands of international collaboration, established critical external partnerships, and guided diverse teams through cultural challenges.

“This project not only demonstrates her ability to identify needs and propose innovative solutions, but also reflects the core values of UWC: promoting peace and sustainability through action,” - Luis Abarca, Co-Curricular Director of UWC Costa Rica.

Leontina's vision extends far beyond the campus. This story made national news and was described as a significant project that enables the transformation of realities through experiences. She is already coordinating with SOS International to scale the model globally. Ultimately, she plans to convert the initiative into a digital platform that offers financial literacy, mentorship, and access to remote work opportunities, leaving a lasting legacy of resilience and self-determination, born at UWC Costa Rica.





Community Day. August 2024



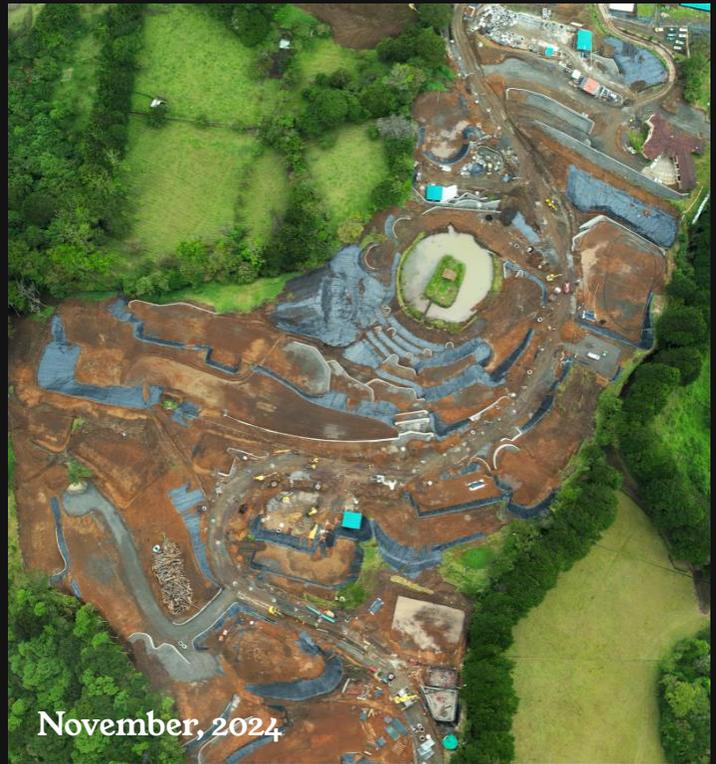
New Campus Year-In-Review

August, 2024	Infrastructure phase kicks off!	
August, 2024	Student-led Agents of Change training with students from the Technical & Professional High School of San Isidro	
October, 2024	Visit to the Chilean factory producing the certified wood and define the architecture for the buildings.	
December, 2024	Staff members experience the New Campus firsthand to explore the opportunities it will offer.	
February, 2025	Installation of RESIN8™ pavers along the internal roads.	
February, 2025	Visit of the Canadian Ambassador to Costa Rica, who joins students during the Community Action Week project at Santa Cecilia Elementary School.	
April, 2025	Meet with the Municipal Council and members of the San Isidro community to strengthen collaboration and identify shared needs.	
June, 2025	100% of the infrastructure and public road work is completed.	
June, 2025	5.29 tons of non-recyclable materials from the construction site re-utilized via RESIN8	

September, 2024	Students participate in carrying the Torch of Independence and the Annual Independence Day Parade in San Isidro.	
September, 2024	The Construction Committee meets with students and staff to exchange perspectives and finalize building layouts.	
November, 2024	Earth movement 100% completed.	
January, 2025	Global UWC Alums and Families visit the construction site.	
March, 2025	Board Members visit community members in San Isidro de Heredia, exploring its history, and experience local traditions firsthand.	
May, 2025	Leveling and waterproofing of the pond located at the heart of the New Campus is completed.	
July, 2025	120 Alums and guests tour the New Campus construction site, trails, and participate in a community event in San Isidro.	



August, 2024



November, 2024



March, 2025



July, 2025

Earth movement & infrastructure progress through the 2024-2025 academic year.

Advancing The Vision For The New Campus

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

The dream of building a new campus began almost a decade ago. Since its opening in 2006, Santa Ana has been home to UWC Costa Rica, in a campus inherited from SOS Villages and adapted over the years to serve the UWC experience. As the College evolved, so did our ambition and our commitment to expand our impact and make UWC's innovative educational model more accessible to all.

After a comprehensive evaluation of around 100 properties across Costa Rica, we found the ideal location in the community of San Isidro de Heredia, a place that brings together the natural beauty and the rich social, political, and cultural history of the country, offering students unique opportunities for learning and connection.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo, along with other key donors and partners, in 2020, we acquired a total of **50 hectares** of land to dedicate **80%** of the property to forest regeneration and conservation. In January 2024, we began the earth movements and construction process that is turning the dream of a new campus into a reality.





All internal roads, parking spaces, and sidewalks are now complete across the New Campus. We had the exciting opportunity to collaborate with PEDREGAL, a Costa Rican company that promotes the circular economy through RESIN8™, a construction material made from recycled plastics that helps reduce pollution. Each RESIN8™ paver contains **48.7 grams** of recycled plastic. Over **10,800 m²** of pavers have already been installed across the internal roads, which represents a total of **526,106 grams** of recycled plastic and prevents more than **20 tons** of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere.

In addition, as part of our waste management strategy, we delivered **5.29 tons** of plastic, including slope coverings, piping, and other non-recyclable materials, to the RESIN8™ processing facility. This effort ensures that a significant portion of construction waste is reused and that the construction process aligns with our vision of a sustainable campus.

Internal Roads & RESIN8™

2025

08

09

10

11

12

01

Earth Movement & Infrastructure Project

This year marked an exciting chapter in the construction of our New Campus as we reached two major milestones that set the stage for the next construction phases. The earth movement phase was completed in October 2024, after months of transforming the construction site by moving more than **83,000 m³** of soil, building **1,262 linear meters** of retaining walls, and preparing **1.1 km** of internal roads. Building on this progress, the infrastructure phase was fully completed in June 2025, ten months after its official start. This stage included the development of essential systems such as water and electricity, as well as the foundations of future signature spaces of the New Campus, like the lake and the soccer field that our community will soon enjoy.

Beneath the surface, extensive excavation made possible a comprehensive network of underground pipelines that, although unseen, are vital to ensuring the campus operates in a sustainable, safe, and efficient way. Above ground, significant progress was made in shaping and waterproofing the lake and its natural stage. Beyond becoming the heart of our new campus, the lake also serves a crucial environmental role as part of the storm drainage system, collecting rainwater from all across the campus and gradually releasing it into the nearby creek.

Hydroseeding

Once the earth movements were complete, it became important to encourage vegetation growth and prevent erosion on the slopes of the construction site. We decided to test the hydroseeding technique, even on slopes with no direct access to water. Hydroseeding involves spraying a mixture of grass seeds, mulch, stabilizing additives, fertilizer, and water onto a prepared surface to help plants grow in challenging areas. After **62 days**, the technique proved successful. Plants have sprouted, and the slopes are now visibly green, offering an exciting glimpse of how our new home will look once it is full of life.





To learn more about sustainable building practices and the use of wood as the primary construction material, in October of 2024, we visited Ingelam, a leading Chilean company in the design, manufacturing, and assembly of construction-grade laminated wood. Later, in May 2025, we signed the contract with Ingelam and placed the order for more than 3,400 m³ of Glued Laminated Timber (GLT) that will not only characterize the buildings of the New Campus, but will also capture more than 4,000 tons of CO₂.

Construction in Wood

02

03

04

As we prepare for the next phase of building construction, we have begun a transition from the previous project management team, CVG Construction Management, to the newly selected team, ICC Construction Project Management. This step ensures continuity and aligns with the scale and complexity of the upcoming construction phases.

As our period of collaboration with CVG Construction Management comes to a close, we want to express our sincere gratitude. CVG has supported us through key processes, including site selection, pre-construction, earth movements, and the infrastructure project. We deeply appreciate their commitment and guidance throughout these efforts. Together, we have laid a solid foundation for what will become an inspiring home for future generations of global change-makers.

Project Management Team Transition

05

06

07

Main Access Road

In June 2025, the expansion and construction of the main public access road to our New Campus was completed, marking a key accomplishment for both UWC Costa Rica and the San Isidro community. The work began with pipe installation and well construction for rainwater management and culminated in paving, roadside rest areas, sidewalks with tactile guiding tiles for visually impaired pedestrians, signage, road markings, and final site cleaning.

Throughout the construction process, the UWC Costa Rica team maintained close communication with neighboring residents, keeping them informed and promptly attending to all inquiries and requests. This collaborative approach ensured that the completed project on Las Caricias Road also included the construction of access ramps for several nearby homes.



The Community Integration Program

The move to our new campus in San Isidro de Heredia isn't just a construction project—it's the deepening of our commitment to the UWC principle of "learning from each other." As we transition from Santa Ana, our focus has been on ensuring that the new campus will be an active, beneficial, and integrated member of the San Isidro community.

Our comprehensive Community Integration Program is the roadmap for building these enduring relationships.



Our integration journey began with a six-month intensive program (January–July 2023) led by consultant Alfredo Bermúdez. The main objective was simple: **to learn, reach out, and collaborate.** This involved a rigorous process of mapping the socio-economic, cultural, and historic landscape of San Isidro, followed by perception surveys and interviews with local leaders.

When we met with local organization representatives, key areas for collaboration emerged clearly:

- **Creating spaces for youth exchange:** Focus areas include leadership, social entrepreneurship, environmental education, and cultural or sports exchanges.
- **Professional and Job Opportunities:** Providing professional development for teachers and creating job opportunities for local workers.

Based on these findings and established connections with partners like the Colegio Técnico Profesional (CTP), the organization Matzú, and the Organic Farmers Collective (CAZ), we quickly identified "quick wins" for immediate impact. These included environmental education at the Santa Cecilia Elementary School and joint activities with the CTP, such as extending our Agents of Change (AoC) program, Model United Nations (MUN), and sports exchanges.

Weaving Our Future: Deepening Roots In San Isidro

A white flag with the UWC Costa Rica logo and text, flying in front of a large Gothic-style building. The logo features two globes. The text on the flag reads "UWC COSTA RICA".

UWC
COSTA RICA

What Does Community Mean?

Our annual Community Action Week is a cornerstone of the UWC experience, and this year, it served as a powerful opportunity to deepen our connections within San Isidro, focusing on meaningful intergenerational exchange and shared purpose.

Weaving Generations Together at the Geriatric Center

In collaboration with Matzú, a local organization dedicated to environmental, social, and urban work, this marked the second year of service at the Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles Geriatric Center. Our work was focused on two main areas:

- **Accessibility and Environment:** Continuing the construction of accessibility paths to allow residents to safely walk among the garden areas.
- **Interaction and Joy:** Engaging directly with the residents through music, games, and shared activities, fostering genuine human connection.

Engagement at Santa Cecilia Elementary School

The Santa Cecilia Elementary School is the closest educational institution to our new campus, making it a natural and vital partner for positive action. Our engagement aims to be meaningful and sustained, focusing on themes of diversity and environmental wellness through simple, educational, and playful exchanges.

During Community Action Week, a group of 22 UWC students led educational activities for students in grades K-6. They connected their lessons to the school's existing curriculum in various subjects, including English, Math, Science, Social Studies, French, and Spanish, strengthening the relationship between the two schools.



Watch Nayana '26 (India)'s video for Community Action Week as an Impact & Accountability Manager



“For me, community is all about relationships. Friendships, connections with people who know things that I don’t know.” –Canada’s Ambassador to Costa Rica



“Community is when a bunch of people work together to create something that they can all enjoy.” –Tommy '26 (Israel)



“Here in Costa Rica, we see community as something that exists when there is understanding among people and they help each other. Peace, religion, food, health, unity of the people.” –Oscar, Resident of the Geriatric Home.



Tangible Impact and Transparent Accountability

While building relationships is inherently intangible, our commitment is visible in concrete ways. The **reconstruction of the public street** leading to the new campus is a lasting infrastructural improvement for all residents. Furthermore, we donated and installed a new outer structure for the **Santa Cecilia Elementary School Greenhouse**. Next year, this greenhouse will become a thriving educational space focused on food systems, in collaboration with the CAZ and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)'s Club 4S.

Working with Local Government

As construction began, **accountability and transparency** became paramount. We finalized a **Memo-randum of Understanding (MOU)** with the **San Isidro Municipality** to formalize agreements and ensure complete openness. Our team has regularly attended municipal council meetings to provide updates on construction, environmental projects, and to directly address community concerns. This close collaboration is vital for future joint projects.

Real-time coordination through in-person meetings and digital platforms has ensured that the construction process aligns with the community's needs, an effort that ensured the road project included necessary **access ramps for neighboring homes**.



Weaving Generations Together

A UWC education is defined by action, and this year, our values manifested through sustained community projects and profound intergenerational exchanges.

Community Action

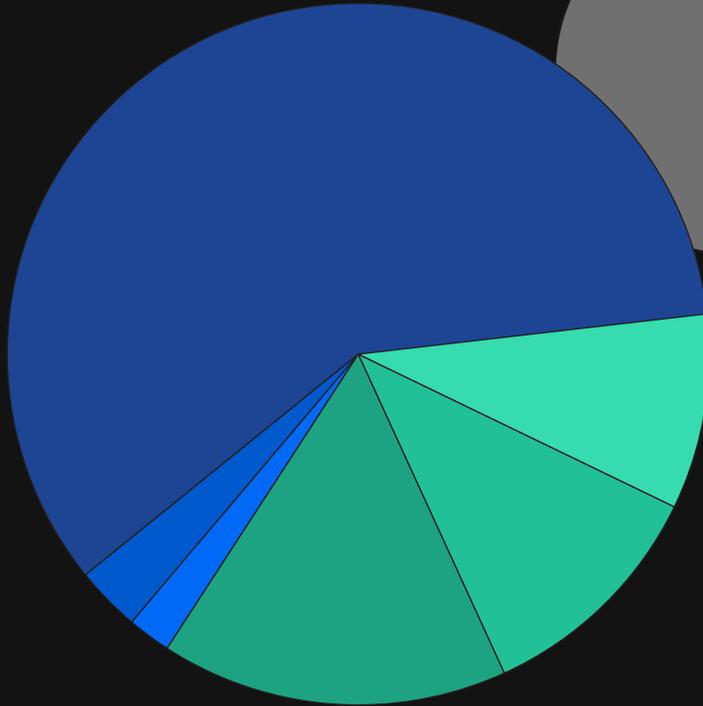
- **Community Action Day (November 2024):** Dedicated time spent connecting and working with children from the Santa Cecilia community.
- **Community Action Week:** This saw students collaborating with Matzú at the Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles Geriatric Center, focusing on building accessible garden paths and sharing joy through music and games with residents. Other teams worked at the Santa Cecilia Elementary School, leading playful and educational activities across subjects like English, Math, and Science for grades K-6.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** A crucial river clean-up was conducted in collaboration with Matzú, reinforcing our shared commitment to the local ecology.

Key Milestones

- **Board of Trustees Visit (March 2025):** The Board spent a day focused entirely on community engagement, beginning with a cultural tour led by a local guide and sharing lunch with key community collaborators to strengthen partnerships.
- **Alum Reunion (July 2025):** Alums engaged with the Santa Cecilia community through a vibrant dance performance by a local folklore group and a warm "cafecito" with community leaders on the new campus site.



Financial Results



Total Revenue: \$5,775,944

Total Expenses: \$6,345,959

Expenses deliberately exceeded revenues this year due to strategic foundational investments in IT infrastructure, critical campus maintenance, and initial costs for the new San Isidro campus.

This temporary deficit is a calculated investment for growth, not a recurring shortfall. Our financial model remains robust with advance tuition payments ensuring steady cash flow.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for the new, larger campus by focusing on updated tuition models, improved fundraising, and stable student growth to ensure long-term financial health.

Fundraising Highlights

Earned Revenue

Tuition from Families	\$3,511,962	61%
Bank Interests and other income	\$146,562	3%
Outreach Programs and Rentals	\$113,370	2%
Sub-Total Earned Revenue	\$3,771,893	65%

47%

were first-time donors

51%

returned to support the College

248

donors supported our mission



Contributed Revenue

Income from National Committees	\$898,943	16%
UWC Network Donations	\$608,500	11%
Fundraising	\$496,608	9%
Sub-Total Contributed Revenue	\$2,004,051	35%

\$496,608

raised to expand access and opportunity through scholarships

40%

of staff contributed, reinforcing our shared values

22%

of current families gave to the scholarship fund

Total Expenses

Educational Programs	\$4,430,589	70%
Administrative	\$477,369	7.5%
Maintenance	\$443,826	7%
Admissions	\$349,760	5.5%
Development	\$269,172	4%
UWC International Fee	\$199,121	3%
Utilities and Insurance	\$176,121	3%

6 new scholarships unlocked!

Daream

3 full scholarships funded by donors, matched by the Dare to Dream 2 program

34%

of donors were alums

The class of 2012 led alum giving with the highest participation!

Strategic Plan Results

The Year 3 Strategic Plan Report highlights our team's achievements and progress toward long-term goals. This report outlines the outcomes in each strategic area and sets our priorities for the upcoming period, ensuring a clear path toward achieving the vision of the strategic plan.

Vision of Strategic Plan 2022-2027

We aspire to be an educational reference through an innovative model aligned with our Sustainability Framework. We built a new home, a sustainable campus, that allows us to create a student-centered environment and connect with our mission. We promote a balanced lifestyle and development opportunities for our staff. We reaffirmed our commitment to our region, offering more study opportunities to young people around the world. We aspire to greater institutional maturity through increased operational efficiency and the promotion of wellness within our community through an integrated decision-making model.



SL1 | Cultivating a Holistic, Experiential, and Sustainability-Based Educational Model

Working towards a more integrated educational model through partnership with Green Schools National Network (GSNN).

Staff participated in a professional development program led by the Green Schools National Network (GSNN), strengthening our shared understanding of sustainability and College-wide transformation. Developed three key deliverables: a Portrait of a Graduate, a Report on Findings, Insights, and Opportunities, and a User's Guide to the proposed educational model. These tools were then validated with the education teams in preparation for the implementation of a pilot centered on a common learning theme.

Safeguarding & Student Wellbeing

Defined and shared clear procedures for reporting safeguarding cases and produced a staff manual for duty. Revised the Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, and welcome materials for incoming students. Residential Life was strengthened with the addition of full-time Residence Coordinators, the separation of wellness and residential roles, and the recruitment of a Student Affairs Coordinator, thereby enhancing student leadership, community, and wellbeing programs.

Student Agency & Leadership

Students continued to lead initiatives, such as Thematic Weeks and Agents of Change (AoC), which included three implementation sessions, leader training, and follow-up meetings. Students participated in competitions like Young Aurora and Go Make a Difference. Launched a student intranet and project submission portal on behalf of the Student Council, along with a Student Leadership Journey guideline. Student voice was prioritized through focus groups that informed decisions on the Cafeteria, Orientation, and campus culture.

What is next for Year 4?

The College plans to develop an integrated education model via cross-program planning and a Food Systems pilot across all eight areas, with clear actions and assessment tools. To improve campus life, it will revise adult roles, strengthen safeguarding by updating policies, providing training, and clarifying adult-student relationship structures. Student agency will be evaluated through CAS, Agents of Change, Student Council, Wellness Ambassadors, and projects. The new Student Affairs Coordinator will play a key role in enhancing student leadership, team collaboration, and communication.



SL2 | Managing a Responsible Transition to the New Campus

Community Engagement Projects

Maintained transparency and trust through weekly updates and meetings with neighbors, municipal authorities, and local representatives, and amplified visibility via media coverage highlighting UWC's mission, scholarship opportunities, and campus developments. The greenhouse at Santa Cecilia School was repaired, and student programming was launched in partnership with the CAZ Agroecological Collective. CAS service was expanded to include local institutions such as Matzú, the Geriatric Center, and Santa Cecilia School.

New Campus Development

Secured municipal construction permits and achieved 100% completion of the infrastructure phase, including internal roads and approximately 600 meters (2,000 feet) of public road with asphalt surfacing. Safer pathways, enhanced signage, and improved public access were delivered, benefiting both the community and the institution. Previously defined strategies for the new campus construction were reviewed and finalized to ensure alignment with the College's mission, vision, and values. A new project management company was welcomed to oversee the construction phase.

Transition Framework

Transition goals were embedded into departmental plans to ensure alignment. Staff engagement through workshops and site visits reinforced collaboration and values, while transparent communication steward trust with the community.

Operations Plan for the new campus

Materials and systems were evaluated to reduce maintenance needs and establish preventive routines. Electrical systems were reviewed to align with evolving educational and operational requirements. Safety measures were assessed and improved, and water-efficient irrigation and resource management strategies were implemented to strengthen environmental stewardship.

Human Resources Transition Plan

A seven-year staff forecast was developed in alignment with enrollment projections and operational needs. A comprehensive adult profile for San Isidro staff was created, grounded in institutional principles and GSNN standards. Addressed challenges in coordination, change management, and budget alignment while strengthening transparency, staff engagement, and community relationships to foster an adaptive institutional culture.

What is next for Year 4?

Consolidate the San Isidro campus transition plan focusing on operational readiness, staff management, and community engagement. Prioritize integration, coherence, and documentation. Monitor construction progress and planning. Strengthen communication and documentation systems. Promote community involvement through collaborative initiatives with faculty, staff, and students.



SL3 | Develop and implement a Human Resources strategy to enable work-life balance.

Compensation and Benefits strategy:

The seven-year personnel projection was finalized in coordination with the Finance Area, ensuring the compensation strategy aligned with long-term financial sustainability. An investment was secured to strengthen the Residential Life and Wellness structure for 2025–2026, reinforcing staff stability and support systems. Reinstated teacher salary scale conditions that had been temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

Strengthened leadership and organizational culture

The leadership development program You Leader for Directors and Coordinators (25 positions), in partnership with Great Place to Work, was successfully launched and is now in advanced execution.

Foundations for Performance Evaluation Established

The pilot cycle was expanded to include evaluations with directors and their teams, demonstrating the College's capacity to implement a structured feedback process. A performance evaluation methodology focused on the employee's continuous learning journey was established, developed with Board of Trustees Mentors to ensure feedback serves as a strategic roadmap for talent growth aligned with institutional objectives. The employee profile was finalized, collaboratively designed, and aligned with the graduate profile, completing the first preparation cycle and laying the foundation for performance evaluation software and mission-driven recruitment.

What is next for Year 4?

Next steps include finalizing the compensation plan and benefits package, using the employee profile to speed up performance system implementation, and comparing climate survey results to develop targeted actions.



SL4 | Alignment of the Financial Model

Secured key pledge payments, completed the sale of the Santa Ana property, and launched two new matching challenges through the Dare to Dream 2 program. Increased visibility and engagement across new and existing audiences, achieving a 75% increase in online engagement and a record in outreach through newsletters, national and international press, and social media. New platforms for students and staff enhanced internal communication, while creative storytelling effectively amplified UWC Costa Rica's mission both locally and globally.

The Outreach and Innovation division generated over \$203,516 in revenue, expanding partnerships with universities such as Macalester College and securing UWC International accreditation for short courses. These initiatives diversified programs, strengthened leadership development, and increased visibility for UWC Costa Rica as a hub for experiential education.



What is next for Year 4?

Key priorities include launching a planned giving program, building the major gifts pipeline with ten new Latin American and Caribbean scholarships, and securing campaign funds for construction. New matching opportunities will mobilize alums, families, and partners. The Marketing and Communications Strategy will boost recruitment, philanthropy, and sales to promote the College's mission. Outreach will strengthen international partnerships and financial sustainability through mission-aligned collaborations. We will expand successful short courses with International Office accreditation and prepare to pilot and launch the Sustainability and Innovation Center. This phase will focus on three strategic programs: Experience Lab for international audiences, Leadership Hub for local engagement, and the Global Impact Academy for lifelong learning.



SL5 | Advancing Governance, Efficiency, and Sustainability

Governance and Decision-Making

Refined its governance and decision-making approach. The integration of new leadership, including the Education Director, broadened perspectives on aligning governance with sustainability. Surveys and focus groups were prepared to ensure the community contributed to shaping more effective decision-making processes.

Process Optimization and Systems Integration

Advanced a management platforms by successfully establishing Monday.com as the central tool for strategic planning, annual planning, and operational requests across departments. A new intranet was launched to enhance community-wide communication. A comprehensive Student Academic Life Information

System, including ManageBac, OpenApply, and Schools-Buddy, was adopted with external support to integrate teaching, learning, admissions, and student life management, improving efficiency and service quality. Work also began on defining a document management system aligned with ISO standards to strengthen institutional policies and procedures.

Sustainability and Environmental Management

Earned the Bandera Azul Ecológica distinction for a second consecutive year, recognizing its sustained commitment to sustainability and community collaboration. Participated in a movement-wide initiative, in partnership with Arcadis, to standardize environmental monitoring across all UWC Colleges, contributing data on water, energy, mobility, circularity, food, and biodiversity. Shared sustainability KPIs were established to guide reduction targets and collective environmental goals. Locally, partnerships with organizations such as Fondo Agua Tica/Fundecor created opportunities for collaboration on environmental services and water protection at the San Isidro campus.

What is next for Year 4?

Efforts will focus on standardizing policies and procedures under ISO frameworks but now under the scope of the SL2. We will continue aligning all information systems for efficiency and security, and advancing environmental management through more efficient information monitoring and systematization.



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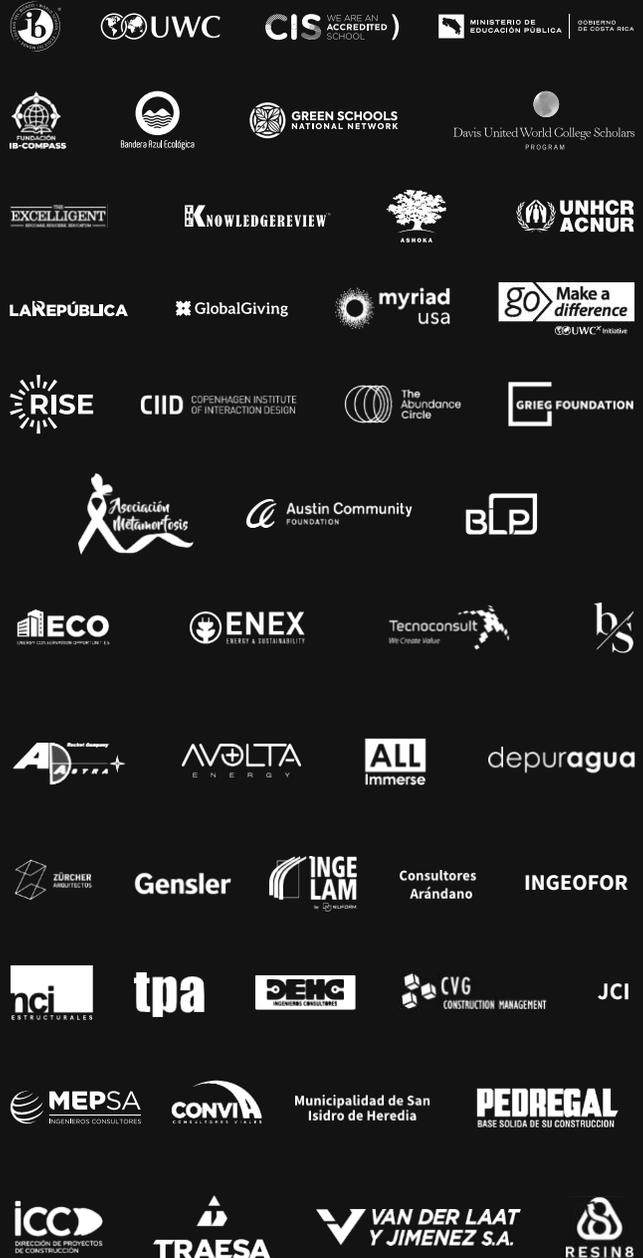
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The impacts of global, regional, and local crises continue to influence every interaction, emphasizing the crucial need for *adaptable and compassionate leaders*.

Education plays a vital role in developing informed and responsible citizens who understand the complex relationships between nature, climate, well-being, and equity.

By investing in the **UWC Costa Rica education**, we are expanding a network filled with compassion and passion, empowering individuals to shape our own future and the future of our communities.

To the community that empowers future leaders: thank you!



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