



"Building bridges between people and cultures through inspiring, quality education"

UWC Mostar Alumni Newsletter – First Issue - Spring 2025

Welcome to the UWC Mostar Alumni Newsletter! This publication serves as a platform to keep our vibrant alumni community connected, informed, and engaged. Each issue will showcase the journeys of our graduates, highlight meaningful initiatives, and provide opportunities for you to give back. We're committed to keeping you updated on the exciting developments happening at UWC Mostar and to strengthening our collective impact.

Reflections and Alumni Engagement



From Mostar into the World

Sofia Macero ('20-'22) - Currently a junior at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York,

Sofia is

double-majoring in Political Science and Global Studies, with a focus on international governance. After a semester abroad in New York City, she interned at the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. Additionally, she worked with the State Department on a project analyzing the rise of populism in the EU, and next summer will intern at Concordia, a global non-profit organization.

Giving Back

Inspired by the experience in the Balkans, Sofia has pursued her passion for refugees and migration, which began during their Project Week in Bihać with Save the Children. She has continued to engage with post-conflict issues, focusing on peacebuilding and genocide prevention. Sofia remains closely connected with the UWC community, volunteering with national committee in the selection process and mentoring Venezuelan students, including the 2024 alumna and the 2025 generation.

UWC's Lasting Impact

The lessons learned at UWC Mostar have profoundly shaped her journey. She gained a better understanding of political systems of post-conflict countries. From critical analysis to cultural openness, the values instilled—such as asking meaningful questions and embracing global interconnectedness—continue to guide her work and interactions today.



From Mostar into the World

Tarik Raljevic('17-'19) obtained a challenging yet rewarding Master's Degree in Mathematics from the University of Oxford. Currently based in Geneva, Switzerland, he is making waves as a Quantitative Analyst Graduate at Gunvor, applying mathematical models to energy trading.

Giving Back

Tarik strives to make a difference by supporting local students, whether through

Oxbridge application mentorship or joining maths classes and CAS sessions to share insights. What he learned in Mostar, is that small contributions can create ripples of positive change.

UWC's Lasting Impact

From late-night study sessions to deep discussions by the Neretva River, the sense of belonging and collaboration at UWC Mostar is unforgettable. The values of empathy, resilience, and teamwork guide Tarik's life today—both professionally and personally.



From Mostar into the World

Luc Thierry('21-'23) -Currently based in the United States, Luc is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in

Computer Science at the University of Oklahoma. With a passion for innovation, he is focused on leveraging technology, including artificial intelligence, to improve access to education in underserved communities. Luc's so far journey recently reached a milestone with an internship at Microsoft, refining both technical and leadership skills.

Giving Back

The lessons learned at UWC Mostar have fueled Luc's desire to give back. Whether it's through developing AI-based platforms to enhance online learning or mentoring younger students, he's committed to making a difference. The values of empathy, unity, and social responsibility continue to guide his work, serving as

a reminder of the transformative power of small acts of kindness and community service.

Long-Lasting Impact of UWC

UWC Mostar instilled in Luc a mindset that education is a universal right, not a privilege. The diverse community and the scholarship support he received allowed him to focus on his academic and personal growth. Late-night walks in Old Town and discussions with peers about global issues left a lasting imprint, shaping the belief that being a “global citizen” means recognizing shared humanity and working towards a more equitable future.

Alumni Engagement and Volunteering Opportunities



Building a Professional Network - Alumni in Their Field

We're excited to introduce a new initiative aimed at connecting alumni from diverse professional fields to share their experiences and advice. Each month, we spotlight a specific field, inviting alumni to engage with current students and peers in the same discipline.

How You Can Help:

- Offer mentoring and advice on career paths.
- Share your insights on industry trends and opportunities.
- Provide networking connections to students looking to break into your field.

This initiative not only helps students navigate their career paths but also strengthens the UWC Mostar alumni network. Below are highlights of alumni who joined us this January, February and March.



January - Engineer alumni

Alberto Crespo Iniesta (2007-2009) is the Director of Project Development at ENERGYNEST in Seville, Spain, where he helps industrial companies decarbonize and improve flexibility through thermal energy storage. After studying Industrial Engineering in Madrid and completing a Master's at the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, he focused on solar thermal energy and thermal storage. With an MBA and experience in both engineering and business strategy, Alberto works on shaping solutions for the renewable energy sector. He joined two physics classes of second-year students and shared his insights on the importance of thermal and electrical batteries in creating a decarbonized world. Outside of work, he enjoys acting and performing in theatre.



ALUMNI TALK

Hilary Johnson

"Human Centered Design for Sustainability, Equity, and Life."

Gain invaluable insights into the world of engineering, innovation, and making a difference.

Don't miss out!

- 2009-2011 alumna
- Mechanical Engineer and Human Centered Designer

DATE & TIME:

JANUARY 30, 16:30

<https://www.hilaryannajohnson.com/>

email: hilaryj@mit.edu

Alumna Hilary Johnson (2009-2011) gave an Alumni Talk, sharing her journey from Mostar to a successful career as a mechanical engineer and human-centered designer. One of her impressive inventions is an adaptive centrifugal pump designed to enhance energy efficiency and reliability in critical infrastructure systems, such as clean and wastewater transportation. Hilary, always happy to assist in any way, currently builds satellites, primarily for NASA, and is planning next steps in her career!

The talk on human centered design was very inspiring to our students. Many second-year students joined the talk, as they are preparing to design their journey after leaving their Mostar home.

“Design can be related to devices, hardware, software, but it can also be used for an experience, life decision, how you arrange your room...it is an amazing process of inspiration, ideation and implementation.”



ALUMNI TALK

Marta Santiváñez

The Debate Surrounding Immigration in the United Kingdom

Stay informed on global issues and learn from experienced alumna who will share her perspective on the world of politics and international affairs.

- 2013-2015 alumna
- Journalist specializing in migration and politics (BBC)

SPANISH ROOM

14TH FEB. 11:05AM

<https://muckrack.com/marta-santivanez>

February - Global Politics

Marta Santiváñez (2013-2015), a BBC producer and journalist, shared her insights on the UK's migration debate. Drawing from her career covering migration and her personal experience as an immigrant, she offered a unique perspective on the topic.

Marta discussed how public opinions on migration are often influenced by misinformation and stressed the need for accurate reporting to challenge these misconceptions. Marta also provided valuable advice on how journalists can sift through news to distinguish fact from sensationalism, emphasizing the importance of responsible journalism and picking the right news outlets.

Her talk was a reminder of the media's role in shaping public opinion and the importance of balanced, thoughtful reporting. We are grateful for her insights and look forward to more engaging alumni discussions like this one.

Global Politics teacher Dženan hosted in his class alumni from generation 2015-2017, Loup Malleviale, who gave an engaging presentation on French foreign policy and its involvement in Syria following the potential fall of President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Loup, who studied International Economics and Development at Paris-Dauphine University in Paris, worked at the French Ministry for Armed Forces and the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs. His dive into Syria's geopolitical intricacies, supported by his extensive knowledge of international governance, left our second year Global Politics students with much to think about in terms of the future of Syria and the broader Middle Eastern political landscape.

Laila Hadžimerović (2015-2017) is currently based in London and works for the International Crisis group. She joined professor Parissa's two Global Politics classes of first-year students and talked about the role of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the construction of democratic peace in post-conflict society. She represented a critical approach to it and students were very engaged with questions for her. She also advised them about pursuing academic career in politics. It was a useful and meaningful experience judging by student feedback. Thank you Laila and good luck!

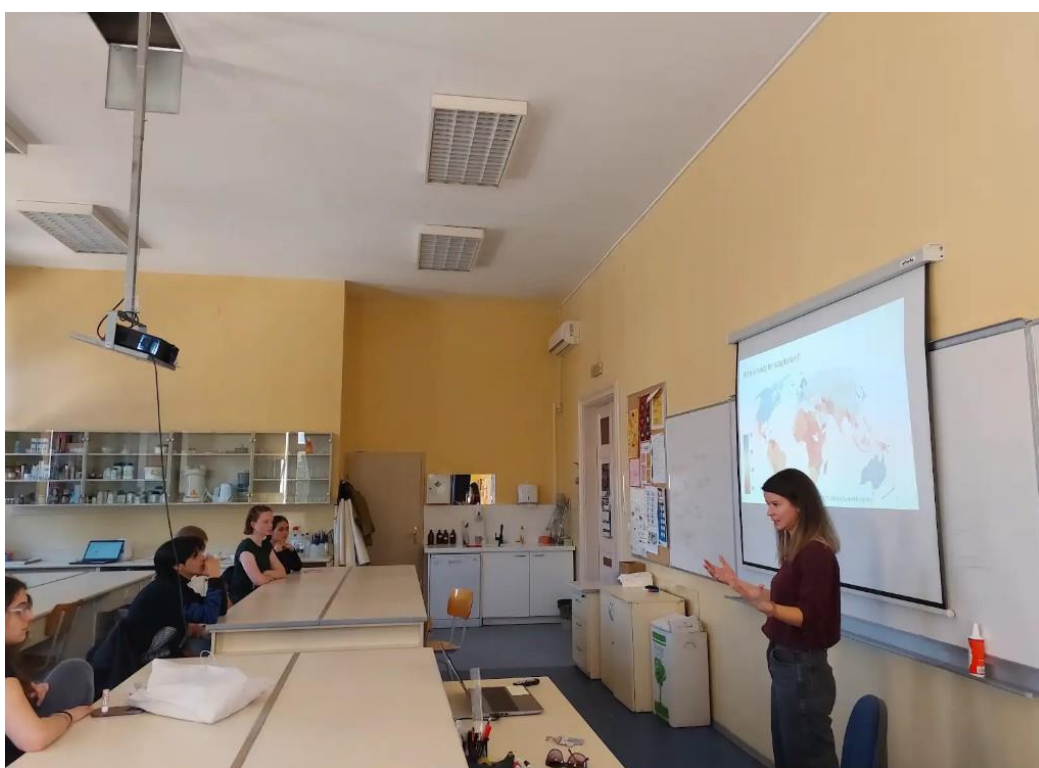
Elma Oručević (2007-2009) joined Dženan Hakalović's Global Politics class of first year students. As the class was investigating topics such as Global governance, International law, Interdependence, and the significance of regional international organizations as political actors that join efforts in solving some of the biggest challenges nowadays (climate change, human rights, migration etc.), Elma's seven year long experience in EU Parliament served as a rich perspective. She also worked in the California State Senate and it was particularly interesting for students to hear her stance on the differences between EU and US political environments, dynamics, and information flow.

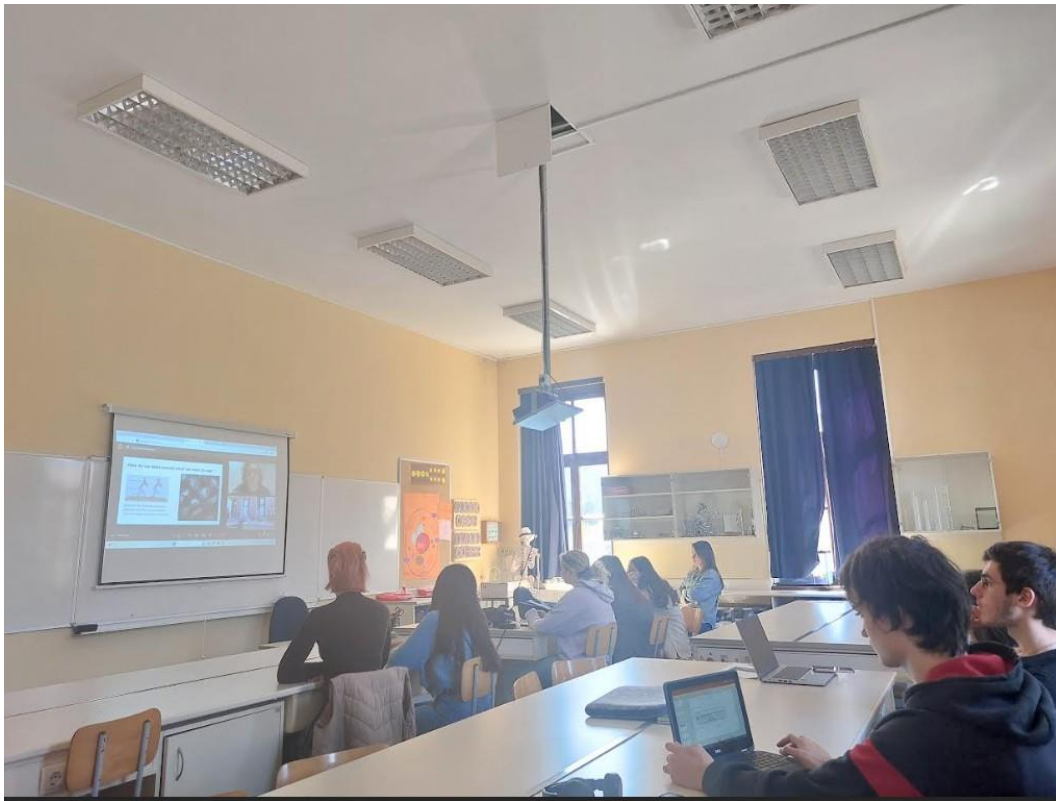


Marina Andrijevic (2009-2011), a distinguished research scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), decided to visit her old home in person. Her work focuses on integrating social science perspectives—particularly governance and gender equality—into climate change scenarios.

Year 1 Biology students had the opportunity to hear Marina present her research on why gender equality is crucial for addressing climate change and gained insight into the intersection of social science and environmental policy. The visit was a powerful reminder of the role our alumni play in advancing both scientific and social progress.

Bruno Stojčić (2015-2017), one of the members of UWC Mostar's Alumni Collective as of 2021, contributed as a guest speaker in Biology class of first-year students. He talked about his path into cell biology research after UWC, specifically focusing on his ongoing PhD research in Stockholm, Sweden focusing on super-resolution microscopy of membrane proteins





Announcement for Alumni in NYC

We are excited to announce two incredible events for UWC alumni in New York City.

The UWC Innovation for Impact Forum will take place on Saturday, May 10, 2025, at The New York Historical Society. This global gathering will bring together 350 attendees from across the UWC community to celebrate initiatives reflecting UWC's values of sustainability, peace, and global citizenship.

Moreover, the 4th edition of the NYC UWC Gala will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at the International House in New York City. This elegant event offers a unique opportunity to support UWC's mission, with tables available for \$30,000, seating 10 people (\$3,000 per seat). All funds raised will go directly to scholarships and UWC's endowment. If you're in NYC or know alumni or potential donors who might be interested, please consider attending or spreading the word!

Confirm your participation by emailing Marta Escanuela, Engagement Officer at UWCI, at events@uwcio.uwc.org. We look forward to seeing you there!

Other Engagement Opportunities

Mentoring

Becoming a mentor is an incredibly rewarding way to give back to the community that shaped you. Whether you're a recent graduate or an experienced professional, your guidance can significantly impact a student's career trajectory.

Mentor Program Opportunities:

- ♦ Career advice, CV reviews, and interview tips.
- ♦ Guidance on pursuing higher education and specific career fields.
- ♦ Offering professional insights and networking connections.

Annual time commitment: Approx. 10 hours

UWC Mostar 20th Anniversary Celebration (Throughout the year 2026)

We are thrilled to announce that UWC Mostar will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2026! Plans are already underway for a series of exciting events throughout the year, and we invite you to be part of this celebration.

How You Can Get Involved:

- ♦ Join the working group to help organize the anniversary celebrations.
- ♦ Suggest ideas for events, initiatives, or collaborations.
- ♦ Contribute time or resources to make this milestone even more special.

Annual time commitment: Approx. 10-20 hours

Alumni Reunion: June 27-29, 2025

We're excited to invite all alumni to this year's in-person reunion in Mostar! This year's focus will be on the classes of 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2020, but alumni from all generations are welcome to join. We encourage you to reconnect, reminisce, and make new memories with fellow UWC Mostar alumni.

How You Can Help:

- ♦ Help organize and spread the word to ensure a great turnout from your class.
- ♦ Volunteer to assist with the reunion logistics.

Annual time commitment: Approx. 10-20 hours



Come into the light!

Please send us updates if you have not already – it can be a short video, an email update, even a phone call ! We want to be aware of your current situation, personal or professional trajectories, or just any news! We are continuously gathering updates which helps us not only track the incredible paths our alumni take after graduation, but also to highlight the diverse successes and contributions of our community.

Annual time commitment: Approx. 1 hours

Contact Us

For more information or to get involved in any of the initiatives mentioned above, please contact us at alumni@uwcmostar.ba. You can also reach out directly to our

Endowment and Alumni Officer, Matea Dugandžić, at

matea.dugandzic@uwcmostar.ba.

Stay connected with UWC Mostar—We're stronger together.

EUR1 Campaign: Be a part of something bigger

What EUR1 does:

- ♦ It helps students from all walks of life gain access to life-changing education.

- ♦ It helps build bridges across cultures, just as UWC Mostar did for you.
- ♦ It shows you care about the future of UWC Mostar and its mission.

When potential donors see that alumni, believe in the school, they are more likely to contribute as well. Your EUR1 isn't just a donation; it's a powerful sign of solidarity. Thank you to all alumni who have signed up for monthly recurring donations or larger one-off contributions. Every cent raised will be tripled due to two matching schemes, doubling the impact of your generosity.

It only takes a minute to sign up and make your monthly donation.



UWC Mostar & Booking.com

Use the [UWC Mostar micropage](#) on Booking.com when reserving accommodation for your trip, Booking.com will automatically donate a small percentage of the amount to our school, more specifically, to the travel fund for scholarships students coming to study at UWC Mostar.

It's a really easy way to make a meaningful contribution, so please encourage parents, family and friends to use it!



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