

Presentation of United World College in Mostar

UWC MOSTAR - MAKING A DIFFERENCE





Background

For 17 years already, United World College (UWC) in Mostar and the Foundation Education in Action (UWC Mostar's legal founder) have been the "Lighthouse for education" in the Western Balkans region. By opening its doors to students from Bosnia and Herzegovina and many other countries and teaching the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), and setting up a teacher training center for professional development of BiH teachers, actively attempting to influence the painfully slow educational reform process through a concrete example, UWC Mostar demonstrated that education has the power to rise beyond ethnic, religious and political divides with the aim of creating a sustainable and progressive post-conflict society.

UWC Mostar

UWC Mostar offers a practical demonstration of education that unites, inspires and engages students and the wider community to strive for a peaceful and sustainable future through active local partnerships.

Since inception in 2006 the College has been successful in achieving these core objectives:

- To provide the opportunity for future leaders in the Balkans to be educated within a fully ethnically integrated environment, alongside peers drawn from all ethnic backgrounds represented in the region.
- To create a unique environment in which young people drawn from across the world, as well as from the Balkans, are engaged in finding peaceful means to reconcile differences between diverse ethnic and national groups.
- To become the leading secondary school establishment in the Balkans, achieving world-class levels of academic excellence.

The College is unique throughout the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina in teaching students from different communities in the same classrooms, with the same teachers, in preparation for the same examinations. The College draws in a highly diverse group of students from throughout the world and across BiH. All students are selected in a rigorous process that is independent of political, ethnic, religious or financial background.

A heavy emphasis on community service provides students with direct exposure to the potentially devastating consequences of conflict between ethnic groups and nationalities.

65% of the students are international and the College has had students from over 90 countries since inception, with a particular emphasis on attracting students from (post)conflict zones, such as Israel, Palestine, Rwanda, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. 35% of the students are from BiH, with a particular focus on attracting a highly diverse group of students including those who come from communities that have been wholly segregated in ethnic "strongholds" as a result of the war. All students from BiH receive a needs-based scholarship to live and study in Mostar.

So far, nearly 1500 students have graduated from UWC and another 200 are currently enrolled. The College has already established an exceptionally strong academic record, with over 70% of students obtaining places at world-class universities around the globe.

UWC Mostar currently employs 19 local and 11 international teachers from Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, India, Italy, Iran, Poland, Serbia, The Netherlands and United Kingdom





UNITED IN DIVERSITY: ALL GENERATIONS 2006 - 2024

1477 STUDENTS FROM 95 COUNTRIES

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: 950

BIH STUDENTS: 527

Student enrollment

Students do not apply directly to UWC Mostar, but rather through a National Selection Committee in their own country. Scholarships are also disbursed through the National Committee. The NC system is one of the things that makes UWCs unique. There are national committees and selection contacts in 150 countries, so the majority of students can apply through this system. It is a unique system which enables students to be selected from within their own communities and cultures.

Countries that our current students and alumni come from:

Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Bhutan, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Great Britain, Greece, Greenland, Guatemala, Hong-Kong, Hungary, India, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, North Korea, Northern Ireland, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Somalia, Spain, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.



Challenging Preconceptions: Balkan Studies at UWC Mostar

Introduced in 2014, Balkan Studies asks first year students to explore the complex histories and recent pasts of the region we live in for two years. Students from the region act as hosts and translators, but are also challenged to engage the assumptions they've grown up with; students from outside the region are asked to move beyond the stereotypes they've arrived with, and to deepen their knowledge of history, politics, and culture of this place.

Alumni

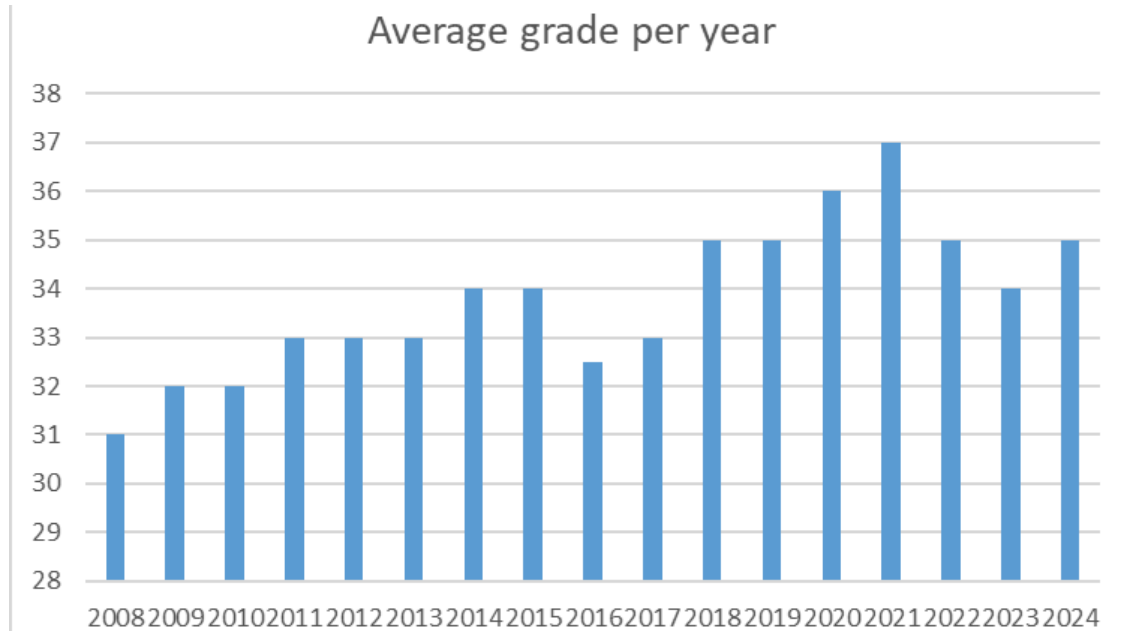
UWC Mostar community extends far beyond the student experience and we are excited to have 1477 alumni, who span 95 countries. UWC Mostar is committed to staying connected with our alumni and providing them with opportunities to connect with the college, each other and students in an impactful way.

Not only our alumni come back for the reunions, but many of them help making UWC experience possible for more young people through participating in alumni talks, career and orientation days, mentorship initiatives and alumni giving campaigns. Appreciating their experience in Mostar, they give back their time treasure and talent in different ways.



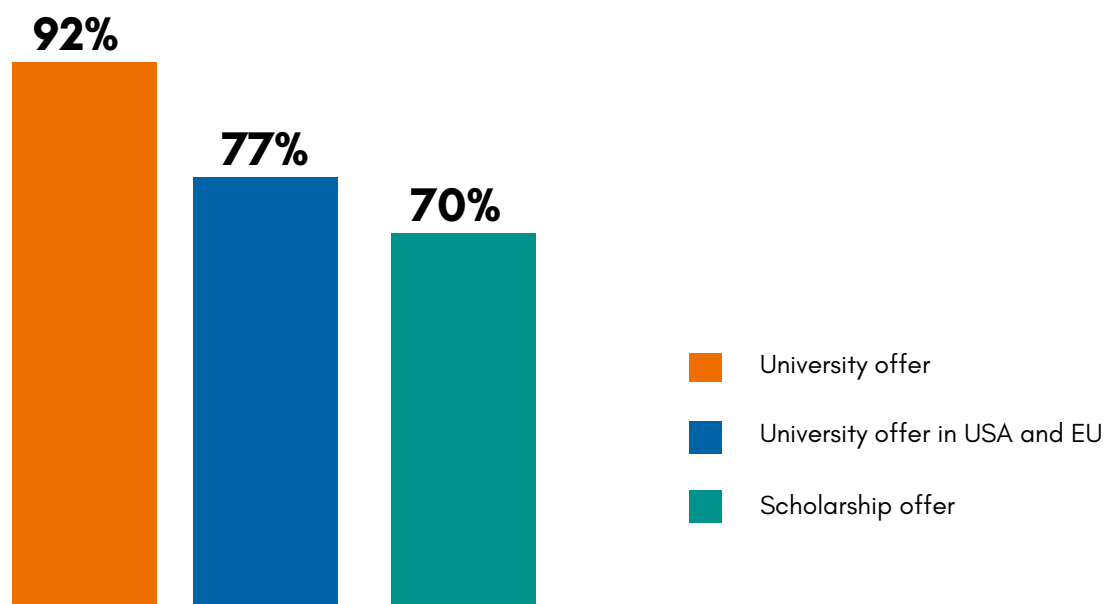
Academic results

UWC Mostar has been an IB World School since opening in 2006. The IB Diploma Programme is designed as an academically challenging and balanced programme of education that prepares students for success at university and life beyond. The programme is normally taught over two years and has gained recognition and respect from the world's leading universities. UWC Mostar is proud of its' students achieving excellent academic results, with a passing rate traditionally higher than the world IB average.



University offers

Nearly 100% of UWC Mostar graduates choose to attend institutions of higher education all around the world, either directly after UWC or after a "gap year." Our students are privileged to have several designated UWC scholarship opportunities available to them. These include: the Shelby Davis-UWC Scholarship Program, which funds admitted UWC graduates to study at 90 designated colleges and universities across the United States; several UWC-specific scholarship opportunities at Canadian universities such as Quest, Simon Fraser, Trent, York, U. Toronto, and U. Victoria; and UWC scholarships at King's College and University College London.



Serving the community

SCIENCE LAB

Offering experimental classes for high school students from Mostar, who do not have access to labs and equipment in their own schools.

LOS ROSALES

- Kindergarten: Children aged 3 to 5. Students play different games with the children and help the educators in providing daily care
- Classrooms: Children here are aged 11-15, facing different disabilities such as autism and with special needs
- Creative Workshops: Designed for teenagers and adults. Through the activities, students help their proteges improve their physical coordination by doing creative work with wood and dry flowers.

HOME FOR THE ELDERLY

This activity involves spending time with elderly people who are far away from their families or have no family at all. Thursday afternoon means the arrival of their UWC friends. Together they dance, sing, play chess or simply talk about life.

PEER SUPPORT

In this CAS students use their own experiences to help each other.

There are different types of peer support, but all have the aim to bring together people with shared experiences to support each other, to provide a space where you feel accepted and understood, treat everyone's experiences as being equally important.

VEDRI OSMJEH

Volunteering in Association for children with special needs and their parents. UWC Mostar students deliver creative workshops and engage with the children in daily activities.



Serving the community

RADOBOLJA KINDERGARTEN

Students encourage children to learn English, develop their creativity by playing games and teach them new and interesting words and expressions.

PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students create useful learning processes for children with special needs in different areas.

They organize English classes and have regular creative sessions with them where they explore art and make puzzles.

Alongside, they play their favorite games and have great sing along.

DJEČIJI DOM ORPHANAGE

Students help the children with homework and entertain them with different games and activities. Each student has his/her own child to take care of and they usually develop a strong friendship.

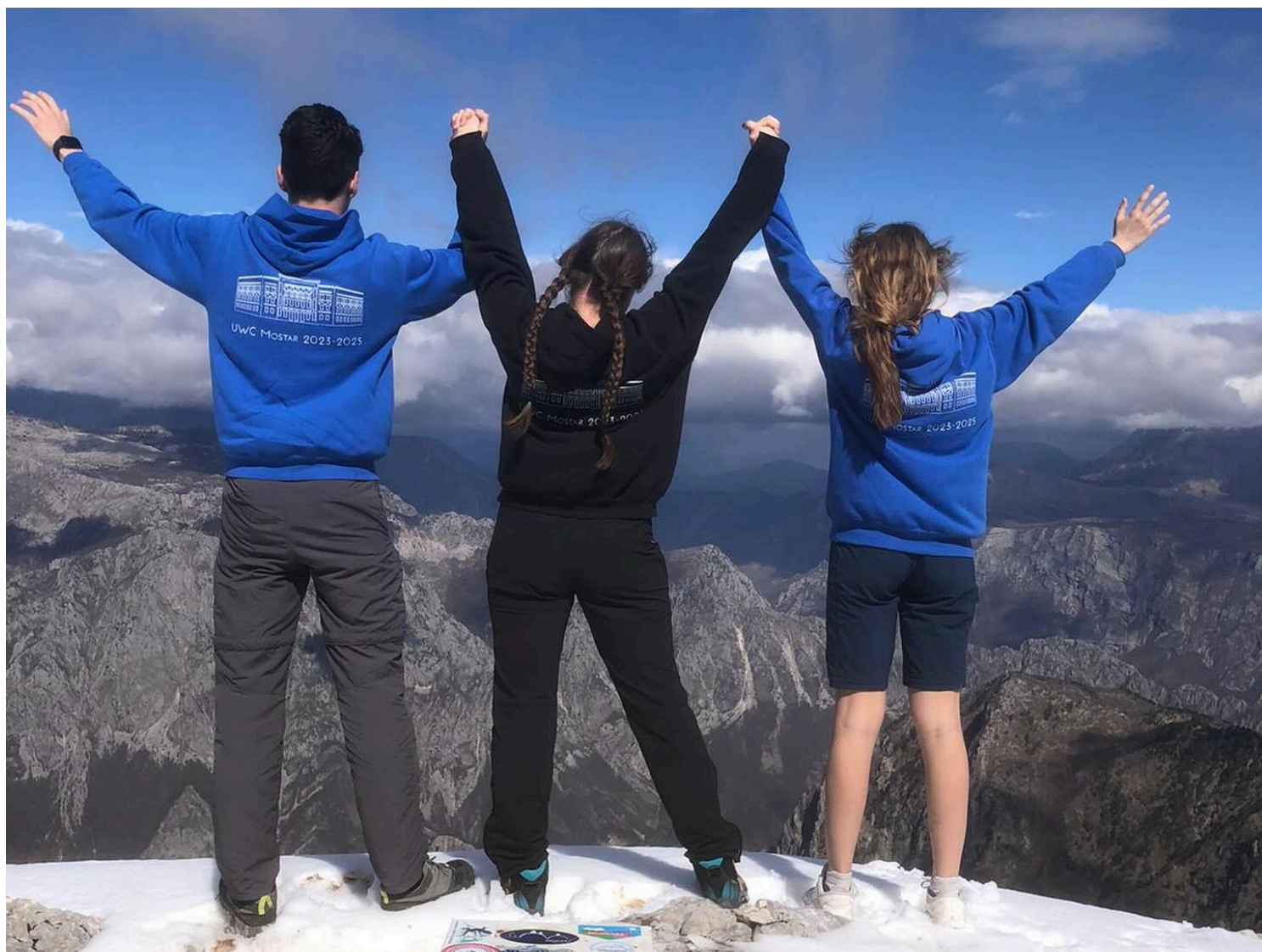
ENGLISH CONVERSATIONAL CLASSES

The weekly gathering with Mostar teenagers for simply talking in English. English language buddies help students in Mostar high schools to develop their English skills while connecting with their peers from around the world.

These are not a tutoring sessions but a chance to make friends and have fun while speaking in English.

DOG SHELTER

Students go to the animal shelter and help out with cleaning and taking care of the dogs and other animals. They also hold different fundraising events to collect money for things like veterinary care, food and rent.



Impact on wider community

UWC Mostar is initiating or partnering on almost all major events happening in the city of Mostar, organized by the City or by local or international individuals and organizations. In this part, we will mention only the ones that the College is most famous for. There are numerous other initiatives that directly or indirectly involve students, teachers and other staff of UWC Mostar, engaging all citizens equally beyond the imposed ethnic lines.

Festival for Children with Special Needs is UWC Mostar's annual project. So far, it has been organized five times and gathered over 1,500 children from Mostar and the Herzegovina region over the years. Socializing between children with disabilities and the local community are rare, which directly contributes to the marginalization of this already neglected social category. Therefore, this unique event on the territory of Herzegovina has been extremely well accepted by the local community.

Researchers' Night aims at bringing science, research and innovation closer to all people, in a fun and educational way. The College has been organizing the event for several years in the city of Mostar, under the auspices of OXFAM BiH and supported by the European program Horizon 2020, the Federal and Cantonal ministries of education and the City of Mostar. It enables transfer of scientists' knowledge to younger generations in an informal environment, contributing in that way to the demystification of science.

Model United Nations (MUN) UWC Mostar has pioneered the MUN concept in Mostar and the whole country. The UWC Mostar Model United Nations Conferences bring together high school students from all over the country, region and beyond. They learn about the work of international organizations and debate the most controversial issues of today. This event is a striking opportunity for the College to cooperate with Bosnia's young people in working to improve the society they live in.

UWC Mostar's **Winter Art Festival** contributes to Mostar's cultural scene and displays a variety of students' talents through public theatre performances, concerts and poetry nights organized on various public stages throughout the City of Mostar.

Street Arts Festival - UWC Mostar has won local and national praise and recognition for this remarkable initiative. The festival engages young people from all parts of the city, public and private, in a cooperative artistic adventure that aims to bring back to life the public spaces of Mostar, which have not yet recovered their pre-war liveliness and social purpose. The leading role in organization of Street arts festival has been handed over to the Youth council of City of Mostar.

Bridging cultures short course is an annual event that brings together 30 high school students from the region to a 8-10 day intensive summer programme in Mostar. For the past two years, the project has been organized in cooperation with high schools and CSOs from the Western Balkans. This project approaches the topic of multicultural understanding from the perspectives of various disciplines: anthropology, international relations, arts and literature, psychology, and others. It is coordinated by UWC Mostar staff and facilitated by UWC alumni.

Organized two times thus far by UWC Mostar students, **Bald for a cause** is an initiative to help the organization for children fighting cancer by donating hair to make wigs. Besides donating hair, student organize cookies selling and a donation stand. The collected funds are donated to the the association of breast cancer patients that supports them and their families during and after treatment. Bald for a cause event is a result of cooperation between UWC Mostar and Secondary Polytechnic school in Mostar.

UWC Day, celebrated every year on September 21st is a unique public display of the students' cultures and traditions called 'Around the World in 80 Days'. In those 80 minutes, the Mostar community can visit the stands of every country currently represented at the school, taste some delicious food / drinks or simply chat with students and staff and learn interesting facts about the countries they come from.

For the last two years, UWC Mostar has been a partner in organizing **Mostar half marathon** and the humanitarian race and one of the organizations with the highest number of participants. On the latest edition of Mostar half marathon, UWC Mostar was represented by 29 students and 3 staff members at the starting line, a many volunteers who supported, cheered and spread positive energy among all participants.

In cooperation with Transfuziologija KBC Mostar, a **blood donation action** has been organized two times in the current school year. Saving up to three lives with their donations our students and staff are looking forward to continuing this cooperation in the future. This cooperation was initiated by one of the UWC Mostar students.

Student residences

Unlike most UWCs, UWC Mostar does not have a distinct, walled-off campus — the city is our campus. Important part of our story is our physical presence in different parts of a still divided city, with our academic and residential facilities scattered around and integrated within the local neighborhoods. Since 2006 that has been achieved through renting of buildings for school residences, at great financial cost for our school. In the recent couple of years UWC Mostar has been working very hard on finding the financial means to purchase and equip residential premises that could provide our students with a more appropriate setting for their own day-to-day needs.

Students live in four residences in different parts of Mostar, two of which are owned by UWC Mostar. Students share rooms with one to three other UWC Mostar students of the same sex, according to the UWC standard practice. The College policy ensures that, wherever possible, students share rooms with students from different ethnicities and nationalities.

Student residences are designed to create a comfortable environment and enable sharing experiences. Sharing a room does not simply mean “living next to each other,” but “living together.” The college pays close attention to students’ adjustment to a new environment. Therefore, the residential life team is always present to support students’ needs.

Mejdan residence

Mejdan is opened in 2014. and is the first residence owned by our school. It is settled in the east side of the city, near the famous Old Bridge. It even has a stunning beach right next to it! The 37 students have access to the beautiful terrace from which they can enjoy the view over the Old Town.



Mejdan has a small community and therefore really strong relationship between the students. They often make movie nights in the common room, the largest of all the residences. Not only it is situated in the Old Town, but it is also only 10 minutes away from the school. Most of the rooms have four beds, and they are all equipped with ACs.

Šantić residence

Second UWC Mostar owned residence Šantić opened its doors in 2020. Šantić residence is internationally recognized and awarded first environmentally conscious building in Mostar. Located in the close vicinity of the school, the residence hosts 56 students in 14 bedrooms.

In addition to student rooms, housefellow apartments, joint and study rooms, it includes a large theater space. Piet Hein Eek, a Dutch designer who introduced the concept of recycled materials in design has designed the furniture for the residence.



Endowment "Bridge to the Future"

The UWC Mostar Endowment "Bridge to the Future" was established in October 2013. The objective of the Foundation Board was to create an endowment to secure permanent funding for the College through the creation of a permanent capital base. The endowment is managed by Fleur Meijs (UWC Mostar Board member) and Adriaan de Mol van Otterloo (alumnus of UWC Adriatic and Board member of UWC Mostar Foundation) with the oversight of an independent Board and Investment Committee consisting of UWC alumni.

Bridge to the Future has established governance structures that ensure that the best-in-class stewardship of donor capital is put in place:

- Separate charity from the College set up to safeguard the assets and capital in the endowment fund
- Separate Board of Trustees and Investment Committee composed of senior, experienced and independent figures
- Focus on core principles of integrity, transparency, endurance and accountability
- Regulated as an UK Charity with the resultant strong governance and risk management frameworks
- Annual audited accounts produced
- Regular communication and reporting to donors to show performance of the endowment

Bridge to the Future funds scholarships for students to attend UWC Mostar. The endowment has been set up as a charity in the UK to ensure good governance and best-in-class stewardship of donor funds. The capital of the endowment is invested and the income and capital gains are used to distribute to UWC Mostar to cover scholarships.

In the last 2022-23 financial year, the endowment fund benefited from EUR 950k of additional donations. The investment performance was reasonable with a 10% increase, but due to the increased school fee as a result of inflation, it is challenging to achieve the overall long-term investment objective of 5% on top of inflation. The total value of the fund increased to EUR 21.3mln.

One endowment to provide funding for a scholarship at UWC Mostar every year into perpetuity "costs" €250,000. Scholarships have been increasing year on year with the growth of the endowment fund.

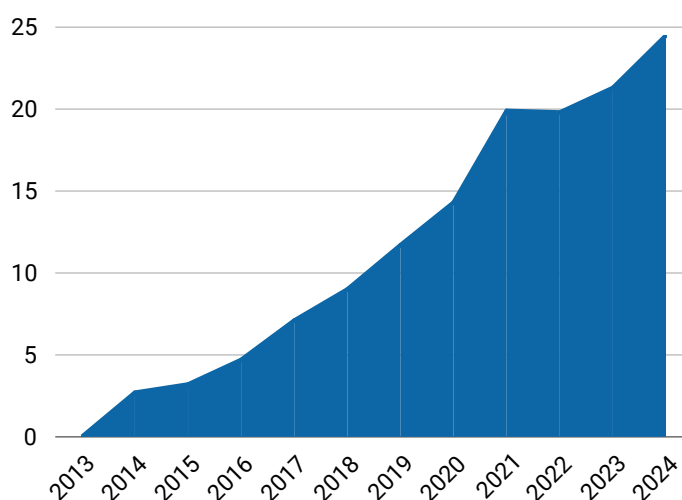
The number of scholarships is dependent on the return on the investments and is determined each year by the Board of Trustees. Currently, 48 UWC Mostar students receives a scholarship from the Endowment "Bridge to the future".

More information on the fund, scholarships and donating:

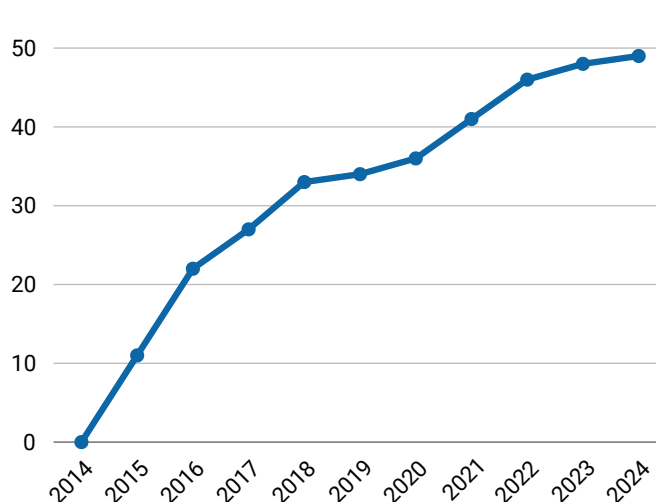


SCAN ME

Value of fund in € millions



Number of students



Evaluation of progress

In order to get an objective external evaluation of how much UWC Mostar has been able to achieve impact in such a society, an independent academic study was conducted in the school year 2016/17.

Respondents interviewed for the Impact Study stated that UWC contributed to:

- less xenophobia and more tolerance towards diversity.
- more possibilities for locals to experience life in an multicultural environment.
- increased cooperation between teachers who are now working together on seminars, competitions, and professional development projects, especially because UWC Mostar financed physics competitions for students who study under both curricula.
- Restoration of Gymnasium Mostar, teaching both Bosniaks and Croats according to two separate curricula, offered to host UWC Mostar on the top floor of the building, with the hope of bringing international education and values and intercultural understanding to the local students.
- City of Mostar hosting other organisations which carry out activities and enhance the quality of living
- less interference of politics into the separation of curricula in Gymnasium Mostar
- more people coming to live and study in Mostar

The impact study concludes with the following statement: **"In the end, it is important to emphasize the general impression of how the UWC Mostar teachers and students are almost the only one with their activities who actively work on building bridges between people and institutions in this divided town. With their initiative, hard work persistence but also patience, tolerance, openness and empathy, they are the ones who have the courage to promote basic human values enclosed in the name of the school through school and extracurricular activism and volunteering."**

Work continuing

Within a fairly short period of operation, the College has been outstandingly successful at achieving its objectives and there is a significant potential for the College to develop even further by:

- Acting as a "lighthouse" for other secondary schools in the region by demonstrating that full integration of ethnic groups is practical, achievable and beneficial
- Continue providing teacher training opportunities for teachers in BiH and the region
- becoming the leader secondary school in the region, attracting potential future leaders across the Balkans and educating them in a fully integrated environment built on principles of mutual respect and tolerance for people of different backgrounds
- Acting as an agent of change in the local community in Mostar through the implementation of grassroots projects.

How to support UWC Mostar?

UWC Mostar has been operating with a low-cost model and continues to show excellent academic results, offers a wide range of non-academic programmes and continues fulfilling its mission of building bridges between people and cultures through inspiring, quality education.

Continuing support is needed to maintain the progress, particularly in the following strategic areas:

- grow the Endowment fund "Bridge to the future" and provide more scholarships for students
- renovate and build student residences in the City of Mostar
- improve and equip school and outdoor facilities
- implement community programmes and teacher training programmes



For more information on how to support UWC Mostar :



UWVOC

MOSTAR