

ISSUE NO.11 / 2022

THE MANTA

Pulse

THE UWC THAILAND COMMUNITY

INTERACTIVE E-MAGAZINE



Welcome to a new year at UWC Thailand

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer break and is feeling refreshed and excited for the academic year ahead. It's heartwarming to see so many new and returning community members on campus and be together again, celebrating a new school year and new opportunities for learning and connecting with one another. With so many exciting projects being rolled out, this year promises to be nothing short of incredible!

[Learn more about UWC Thailand](#)



FIRST DAY VIBES!



CAMPUS UPDATE

Over the summer break, our maintenance team worked tirelessly to upgrade our campus for the start of the new academic year. These are highlights of the improvements...

COVERED COURT

We have added an extra covering to the external, multi-use court to support court conditions during the rain and to protect our players from the glare of the sun. This will ensure that the students can use this beautiful space for sport all year round!



GRASS AREA IN FRONT OF BOARDING



The area in front of the boarding house has been levelled out, and new grass put down. The last piece of the fence separating the school and boarding house was removed, so there is now a clear flow between the two campus spaces.

BOARDING HOUSE FRONT DOOR AND FOYER

The front door of the boarding house now faces the school, which provides a welcoming environment for all students, staff members, parents and guests. It's worth seeing, so if you are on campus, pop over to see this transformation!



DESIGN LAB EXTENSION

Maximising space for both hands-on building and technological design has revolutionised this space. Students are very excited about this change as the remodelled space allows for additional creativity and active learning.



View [more photos](#) of the upgrades 

GRADE 1

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



[View our video of the day.](#)



Every Thursday, students from Mini Mantas to grade 5 enjoy time outside the classroom and partake in service activities. The aim is to interact with the natural environment and deepen their understanding of their units of inquiry. This visit to the Khao Phra Thaeo National Park was the year's first outing. Students explored, learned about their environment, and had fun interacting with the natural world around them!



Glenda, Suj, Michelle, Kate, Yulia, Bee, May, Tong

PARENTS' MINDFULNESS WALK

Our first Mindfulness Walk of the year was a real success! A friendly and adventurous parent group joined us for the walk in the nearby Khao Phra Thaeo National Park. It was a wonderful way for our community to take advantage of our local environment and to get to know one another. Research has shown that taking time in nature daily, connecting with others in small groups, and walking can positively contribute to our physical and mental health. We enjoyed some short mindful practices along the path. Our next Wellbeing Walk will be Thursday, 15 September, from 8:30 am - 9:30 am.

RUBBER PROJECT

by Kru Geoff



Last semester, grade 11 students undertook their IB 'group 4 project'. The project is a component of the IB science programme where students from all science disciplines collaborate in groups on an investigative project, intending to foster an appreciation for how scientists collaborate in the real world. Using our local environment as inspiration, we decided to make the project an investigation into the Phuket rubber production process.

Students went on a guided tour of the local agricultural research and development centre, where they learnt about the various stages of the rubber production process, from the propagation and cultivation of the rubber trees to the collection of the liquid latex and, finally, the processing of latex into rubber sheets. Once back at school in the laboratory, students set about making their own rubber from liquid latex, formic acid and various additives.



The next stage was to test the rubber products by stretching, heating and deforming the rubber to measure its physical characteristics. Using their findings, students were tasked with designing a product based on the properties of their natural rubber product.

In addition, students had the opportunity to research the environmental and societal impacts of the rubber farming industry here in Phuket.

The students did an amazing job and produced some excellent short films, which can be viewed [HERE](#) 

See more [photographs of the rubber project](#) 



ARRIVAL OF THE NEW GRADE 11s



A week before classes started, our grade 11s had an amazing orientation week. Day students were invited to stay at the boarding house to partake in all activities. They had the chance to spend time together and bond as a unit while hiking in the beautiful national park behind our school, doing yoga, and engaging in many different games and group activities. Orientation finished with a fun 3-day camp at UWC Thailand's Outdoor Education Centre at The Playyard.



[Click here to view more photographs of the grade 11 orientation week](#) 

MEET SOME OF OUR UWC THAILAND NATIONAL COMMITTEE SELECTED STUDENTS

Students join us here at UWC Thailand from all over the world! In grade 11, specifically, our student body more than doubles each year with the arrival of our students selected to attend our school through the National Committee selections process. A highly competitive process, National Committee students reflect the 'cream of the crop' from their respective countries of origin and they are selected based on their commitment to the ideals of the UWC movement and their promise as aspiring leaders! Get to know a few of our newest grade 11 National Committee students in the profiles below.



Alexandra Mastrogianni

comes to us from Athens, Greece

I look forward to meeting other students from different backgrounds and countries, making lifelong friendships, and gaining a better understanding of the world.

I'm also very excited about the skills I will develop by living abroad and doing the IB programme.



Fren Chuensuwonkul

comes to us from Chiang Mai, Thailand

Contributing to UWC's mission is what I am really excited about. I want to use this life-changing opportunity to improve my soft and hard skills, be more aware of global issues and adapt to new environments. I think UWC will make me a lifelong learner by making me never stop improving myself, discover new aspects of the world around me, be open-minded to new ideas and become a global citizen.



Raidul Islam

comes to us from Chattogram, Bangladesh

I am eager to become an adaptable, compassionate and competent adult. I want to become knowledgeable about intercultural understanding and actively involve myself in global issues. I also anticipate completing the rigorous IBDP successfully. Forming a lasting friendships with individuals with diverse ideas will be a tremendous accomplishment. I'm interested in learning about diversity, which goes beyond the flags' hues and patterns. I want to see myself among the change-makers and one step closer to a united world.

REFLECTIONS ON ORIENTATION

FORTRESS

A National Committee student from Nigeria, Fortress is part of the UWC Thailand class of 2022.

How has it been to lead a group of new grade 11 students as they arrive on UWC Thailand campus?

Personally, it's been an awesome experience. One of the reasons I joined the orientation team was so I'd have the opportunity to get to see the new grade 11s go through all the various stages of their first few weeks. The excitement, homesickness, sadness, and all the other bittersweet moments that come with the realisation of being in a place like this. I also wanted to help them realise that through everything, there will always be people here to support and care for them. They'd quite literally never have to go through it alone.

How was the grade 11 orientation? Any favourite moments?

Orientation week was draining if I'm being honest! One of our goals was to cram as many potentially "new" experiences as we could into the four days, and we wanted them full, reflective, and tired at the end of each day. But on some level, I think we forgot that the orientation team would be right there with them through it all, and so we'd be just as tired as they were.

My favourite moment was definitely the river walk in the national park. It was cool to see so many people take that first tentative step out of their comfort zones and try something new. Some of them enjoyed it, and some didn't, but at least they tried it.



What does it mean to you to be part of the UWC movement and a school leader?

The UWC movement means many things to me. It means family, friendship, laughter, and above all else, it means responsibility. A responsibility for using the education I receive here to make a real difference in the world around me, and this movement has shown me that I am capable of doing great things. If I could distil the UWC movement into a single sentence, I'd have to borrow the words of the Dalai Lama:

“If you think you're too small to make a difference, try spending the night in a room with a mosquito.”

Being a leader in a place like this means three simple things to me: having the integrity to tell the truth, the charisma to make people listen, and perhaps most importantly, the courage to act on it because that's the only way things will ever get better through conscious and intentional action by the people we trust to lead us.

REFLECTIONS ON ORIENTATION

ANDREA

Andrea is a school-based admissions day student originally from Italy and joins our UWC Thailand class of 2023.

How has it been to start grade 11 with a cohort of new students from around the world?

Before coming to orientation, I was excited to meet new people. The first couple of days were overwhelming, but after the third day, I started to enjoy meeting my classmates, learning about new cultures, and bonding with people from different backgrounds.



Tommi, Andrea & Steven

How was the grade 11 orientation and camp? Any favourite moments?

Camp and orientation were really fun. We did multiple activities that helped bond the class and create new friendships. My favourite moment was probably the hide and seek at night because it was an adrenaline rush and something different. Personally, I enjoyed camp more than orientation because I felt like the students connected better with each other because we were more comfortable with one another. Apart from all the activities we did, I enjoyed the free day on Thursday when we all got to relax and hang out together. I also really liked the hike, especially going in the water.

What does being part of the UWC movement mean to you?

Being part of the UWC movement is special because it helps people who never would have been friends before bond with one another. Joining a school that genuinely cares about the environment and being part of a movement that encourages us to take meaningful action to make the world a better place is incredible!

ALUMNI UPDATE



ELISA

UWC Thailand class of 2021

During my time at UWC Thailand, I was given the opportunity to participate in countless activities, from running the MUN CCA to volunteering with street dogs. As I participated in these activities during the IB programme, I developed time management skills to split time between education, extra-curricular, and personal life.

Luckily, I could transfer these skills to university, where I continued activities outside of education. This gave me the opportunity to apply and be accepted to the Bachelor Honors Class at Erasmus School of Economics.

Without UWC's opportunity to explore passions outside of education, I wouldn't have been able to showcase and talk about my unique and enjoyable past experiences, which led me to become the person I am today.

MOONLIT MELODIES UPDATE



MARSELA, GRADE 11

How was your journey to UWC Thailand?

The National Committee (NC) selection process was challenging but enjoyable, with many new and fun experiences. I was notified directly by UWC Thailand that I had been selected. My first reaction was, "What?". I was in shock. The first person I told was my sister. We both cried, and she said, "Wow, Marsela, you got accepted!"

I was unsure how to start planning my move. "How do I get out of here? How do I get a visa? Girls are not allowed to leave..." UWC Thailand supported us every step of the way and made it a reality.

How do you feel after leaving your country?

It was tough to leave. I thought I could not leave my family in such a terrible situation. But my parents said, "We are going to be ok. You have to study to pursue your dreams". It was hard to leave them behind, but I made it because they were so supportive. They said, "You have to go; there is no other choice".

My father said, "I am going to make sure that you go to a good school and get to Thailand". He took me to Pakistan because women are not allowed to travel alone. He was with me the whole time. When I was worried about the visa, my father would say, "Be optimistic! It's going to happen; you are going to make it. Believe in me".

Where did you learn English?

There aren't any good English or international schools in Afghanistan, so I went to a Turkish school. I learnt English by watching movies and tutoring myself.

How has your experience been at UWC Thailand?

I have been here for one month, and it is incredible! The community of diverse people and cultures representing different nationalities are inspiring. My classmates, our peers and teachers here in Thailand are so lovely. I have made many friends from Bulgaria, Thailand, the United States of America, Nepal, Spain, Italy and Germany. Everyone is so different. Kru Jon, my Theory of Knowledge (TOK) teacher, is so energetic, and I wonder how he has so much energy.

What do you hope for this year?

I want to get good grades and improve my communication skills. There are so many opportunities to learn. I want to lead a co-curricular activity next semester.

How has the scholarship changed your life?

There are not many opportunities for girls to study in Afghanistan. I thought I was destined to stay in Afghanistan and become a housewife. When I got the scholarship, I could see a new path where I could make something of myself and be able to offer the same opportunity I have received to others.

There are so few opportunities in Afghanistan. When I see the children here, I think about my childhood and how different it was. Playing outside was so dangerous. You never knew when there would be an explosion. I have two little sisters and am constantly wondering what they're doing and if they are safe.

How will the scholarship impact your family or community?

There are not many good doctors in Afghanistan. My goal is to become a surgeon, so I can help my family and my community by building hospitals in Afghanistan to help everyone get access to the care they need.

What message do you want to send to the UWC Thailand community?

Thank you so much. When I saw the Moonlit Melodies fundraising post on UWC Thailand's Instagram feed, I cried and thought, "Wow, they are doing this for us!". Until this amazing opportunity, I had no hope for a better future. But, right now, I am living the best days of my life.

If you wish to discuss sponsorship opportunities here at UWC Thailand, please contact Nicki, our Chief Advancement Officer: nicki.robertson@uwcthailand.ac.th or go to the [support us page](#) on our website.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UWCSEA

How was your journey to UWC Thailand?

Joining the UWC movement has been my dream since I was in grade 7. When I heard that a student from my school got into UWC ISAK Japan, it became my dream. I was constantly researching it and writing about UWC. United World College. I loved these three words.

The application was challenging but such a great opportunity. Just from the application process, you can tell that UWC is special. I have filled in many application forms, but this one was unique. It made me think about myself and what I truly wanted. I learned so much from the application and interview process.



HAMIDA, GRADE 11

When I received the confirmation that I would be joining UWC Thailand and that I would be sponsored by UWCSEA, I couldn't believe it. I read the email many times, thinking, "Is this real?" When it finally sunk in, I screamed, and my whole family came and congratulated me. We danced, cried, laughed and sang!

How do you feel after leaving your country?

During the breaks at school, I listen to my national anthem, and I cry. I never want to forget where I come from. I love my country so much. A couple of days ago, I was in the school library when I saw some children playing together. They looked so happy. It made me think about my own country, my sisters and nieces, and my childhood experience, which was nothing like theirs. It is too dangerous to go out and play in Afghanistan. Why is it so unfair?

In addition, if you are a girl, you must keep quiet and stay in your home. Because of your gender, you cannot experience happiness. You cannot enjoy your childhood. It makes me cry thinking about all the people back home who ensure this daily. Here in Phuket, there are so many beautiful things. In Afghanistan, there are marks of explosions everywhere.

How has your experience been at UWC Thailand?

During the last month, I have experienced so many new things. I met people from different countries, each with their own culture. I have attended classes and am experiencing what it's like to receive a real education. I have been dreaming about attending school, and finally, here I am! I love every teacher, every student and all the UWC Thailand staff.

What do you hope for this year?

I want to make the most of every moment. I want to make as many friends as possible and hear their stories. Many countries in the world need help, and as I want to be a politician, I want to use the knowledge I gain here to help others.

How has the scholarship changed your life?

I always dreamt that one day I would be accepted into a UWC. Growing up, I had it all planned out. But as things worsened in Afghanistan, I started to doubt if it would ever come true. I worked hard during the application process. When I was awarded the scholarship, my dreams, hopes and goals returned, and I felt hopeful again.

Will it impact your family or community?

This opportunity is not only for me. It's for my whole family and community. I will share what I learn with everyone back home.

I recently spoke with a friend who is looking for information about UWC. I run an organisation in Afghanistan where I share my experiences, information about UWC and other opportunities, and we have 8,000 followers. I want to help as many people as I can achieve their dreams.

What message do you want to send to the UWC Thailand community?

You have changed my life. I will make the most of this opportunity. I will use the knowledge I gain here to benefit not only the UWC Thailand community and UWCSEA community, but also my community back home in Afghanistan! Thank you!



PEACE

BEGINS WITH US

UWC Day is the annual global celebration of the UWC mission and values, which takes place on 21 September every year, to coincide with the UN International Day of Peace. Each year, UWC Day is celebrated by thousands of people worldwide, including students and staff at UWC schools and colleges, national committees, UWC alumni and friends.

Make a difference! Join us as we celebrate UWC Day!



UWC DAY

21 SEPTEMBER 2022