



WUSC  EUMC

WUSC'S

X

2019 - 2024

X

STRATEGY

X

We believe that young people's ideas, ideals, innovations, and power can change the world.

VISION

A better world for all young people.





WUSC

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Students of WUSC's skills for employment training
in Sri Lanka, 2015. © Lorenzo Moscia.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



When WUSC first began in the 1920s, our mission was to mobilize students, faculty members, and staff at Canadian universities to provide material relief to post-secondary students in post-war Europe.

Since then, we have evolved into a Canadian global development organization working in over 25 countries around the world to support the development needs of youth, their families, and their communities.

As the needs, challenges, and opportunities continue to change around us, so must we continue to evolve our mission and approach. WUSC's 2019 - 2024 Strategy is a forward-looking and aspirational document that articulates our vision for the next generation of our work.

This strategy was developed through a consultative process, first launched in 2017, which included a thorough review of the external and internal environment in which we work. Although this strategy presents an abbreviated path forward, it acknowledges the complexities and uncertainties of development work.

With this strategy, we intend to:

- ▶ Guide our programming, particularly within our three strategic themes: education, economic opportunities, and empowerment.
- ▶ Provide a foundation upon which we can measure and evaluate our progress and results.
- ▶ Inspire our community to help us achieve our ambitious goals for the next five years.

Over the years, WUSC has nurtured a vast network of individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses, and governments all committed to creating a better world for youth.

Our network of alumni, volunteers, and supporters reaches from coast to coast to coast, tens of thousands of Canadians who, together, have had a positive impact on millions of young lives around the world.

This network is the driving force behind our vision, our values, and our desire to continuously adapt and evolve our work so that, together, we can create the maximum positive impact for youth around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Eaton', written in a cursive style.

Chris Eaton
Executive Director



OUR VISION IS A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.

Our vision is a more **inclusive, equitable, and sustainable** world for youth. It is a world in which all young people, especially women and refugees, are empowered to secure a **good quality of life** for themselves, their families, and their communities.

WUSC considers the following conditions as key components of a person's quality of life:

- ▶ Ability to fulfill basic human needs (including food, water, housing)
- ▶ Ability to access fundamental services (including education, healthcare)
- ▶ Ability to secure a minimum standard of living (including access to and influence over resources, decent economic opportunities, and leisure opportunities)
- ▶ Ability to exercise one's universal rights and freedoms
- ▶ Safe, secure, and supportive environments (free from violence and abuse, and disaster resilient)
- ▶ Positive social relationships
- ▶ Individual perceptions of and satisfaction with well-being (sense of belonging, sense of purpose, sense of optimism, happiness)

Among refugees, we consider access to durable solutions as another important component of quality of life. We adopt the UNHCR definition of durable solutions:

- ▶ **Resettlement:** the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another country that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement.
- ▶ **Local integration:** the securing of a home in the country of asylum and integration into the local community.
- ▶ **Voluntary repatriation:** the free and voluntary return of a refugee to their country of origin in safety and dignity.

OUR MISSION:

We work with a diverse network of students, volunteers, institutions, governments, and businesses to improve education, economic, and empowerment opportunities for young people.

STRATEGIC THEMES:



EDUCATION

Access to and benefits from inclusive, quality education opportunities from primary to post-secondary.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Access to and benefits from fair, decent, and fulfilling employment; sustainable livelihoods; and inclusive economies.



EMPOWERMENT

Access to and benefits from inclusive leadership, civic engagement, and decision-making opportunities locally and globally.



DEFINITIONS

'Youth' is more of a social age than a developmental period. It is that transition period between the dependency of childhood and the responsibilities of adulthood.

'Empowerment' is both a goal in itself as well as a condition for the fulfillment of all dimensions of a person's quality of life.

THE CHALLENGES THAT DRIVE US

Poverty & inequality

Though global poverty has been declining, this reduction is uneven and has coincided with increasing inequalities.

Age discrimination

Most young people live in regions that are disproportionately affected by global challenges, where they are exposed to further exclusion, inequality, and vulnerability because of their age.

Displacement

The global displacement crisis has reached an all-time high. Among refugees, 52% are under the age of 18.¹

Gender barriers

Women face persistent gender-based barriers to their full social, political, and economic rights and participation.

Education

263 million school-aged children and youth are not in school.² For those children who are in school, the quality of education is not always conducive to learning.

Economic opportunities

Youth represent 15.5% of the global labour force, with 70 million of these young workers living in extreme poverty. A further 70 million youth are unemployed.³

Empowerment

Young people experience exclusion from decision-making at the personal, family, community, and institutional levels. This stifles their creativity, silences their voices, and reduces their agency.

1. UNHCR. (2018). "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017."

2. UNESCO. (2016). "Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?" [Policy Paper 27]

3. ILO. (2017). "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future."



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



Families and communities have a more positive attitude toward the value of youth leadership and decision-making.



Governance systems are more equitable and inclusive.



Communities have strengthened capacities to foster more welcoming and inclusive societies.



All young people have improved agency to seize opportunities and influence decisions about their leadership and civic engagement.



Education systems are more equitable and inclusive.



Education and training institutions have strengthened capacities to offer quality, inclusive, and relevant education.

Catalytic changes

All young people, have greater access to and benefits from inclusive leadership, civic engagement, and decision-making opportunities locally and globally.

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND REFUGEES

EMPOWERMENT

All young people are better able to exercise their rights and participate in all aspects of their society's development.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

All young people have improved access to and influence over economic resources.

EDUCATION

All young people have strengthened knowledge, skills, and capacities.

All young people, have increased access to and benefits from inclusive, quality education opportunities.

All young people have increased access to and benefits from fair, decent, and fulfilling employment; sustainable livelihoods; and inclusive economies.

Sustainable, systemic changes



Families and communities have a more positive attitude toward the value of education for all youth.



All young people have increased agency to seize opportunities and influence decisions about their education.



Families and communities have more positive attitudes toward the economic participation and contributions of all youth.



All young people have increased agency to seize opportunities and influence decisions about their employment, livelihoods, and economies.



Training and service providers have strengthened capacities to offer relevant, inclusive, and quality employment-related skills training and services.



Market systems are more equitable and inclusive.



KEY ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

1 Working with and for youth, especially young women, is the most efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective way to tackle the roots of poverty.

2 A systems approach is the most effective way to promote transformative, culturally-appropriate, and sustainable change at scale.

3 The role of global development organizations should be temporary, acting as external facilitators alongside local actors for catalytic change.

4 Development challenges are universal and Canadian actors play an important role in addressing them.

5 Poverty and poor quality of life result from a lack of influence, opportunities, capacities, knowledge, and assets among poor and marginalized people.

6 Poverty and poor quality of life are best addressed by enabling young people, particularly women, to: develop their knowledge, capacities, and skills (education); have greater control over economic resources (economic opportunities); and exercise their rights and participate in all aspects of their society's development (empowerment).

7 Changes in the areas of education, economic opportunities, and empowerment are inter-connected, and are all needed to achieve a better world for youth.

A FOCUS ON YOUNG WOMEN

Across our programming, we invest significant resources to address the barriers that young women face, recognizing the additional marginalization they experience as well as the role of advancing gender equality in creating a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world.

A FOCUS ON YOUNG REFUGEES

We invest in education, economic opportunities, and empowerment as pathways to improve the availability and quality of durable solutions for young refugees.

Refugee students, selected for WUSC's Student Refugee Program, gather in Kakuma, Kenya to participate in trainings that better prepare them for life in Canada, 2016. © Lorenzo Moscia.



OUR PATH FORWARD

Young people must be at the centre of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Youth are a critical demographic whose decisions and actions affect social, political, and economic development.

WUSC is an organization that works with and for youth. The change we most want to contribute to together is: **improved quality of life for all young people.** To achieve this change, we focus our work on three key interconnected areas: **education, economic opportunities, and empowerment.**

WE PRIORITIZE INITIATIVES

THAT

IN EDUCATION:

- Ensure girls and young women have the support they need to succeed in school, particularly during critical transition periods.
- Provide education opportunities to youth in fragile and refugee contexts that they can carry with them, regardless of their durable solution.
- Improve the overall quality of education through greater sector coordination and enhanced teacher training.

IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

- Foster greater inclusion for youth in the workplace, at training centres, and by service providers.
- Facilitate positive changes in practices, perceptions, and collaboration within market systems.

IN EMPOWERMENT:

- Equip young people with greater confidence and life-skills to become stronger leaders.
- Provide platforms for youth-to-youth exchange and youth participation in local, national, and global conversations.
- Overcome discrimination and harassment in the home, school, workplace, and community.



OUR FIVE-YEAR GOALS

1 **EXPAND DURABLE SOLUTIONS**

Significantly increase the number of refugee youth accessing durable solutions through our education, economic opportunities, and empowerment programming. For example, we will build upon our unique higher education pathway approach to pilot new employment pathways to resettlement with Canadian partners.

2 **REACH MORE GIRLS IN CRISES**

Grow our girls' education programming to reach more of the most marginalized girls and young women in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including refugees and girls living with disabilities. In particular, we will work harder to understand the many factors that impact girls' access to education and how they intersect to amplify marginalization and exclusion.

3 **PROMOTE MORE INCLUSIVE POLICIES**

Enhance our capacity to translate program evidence into broader influence on the policies that affect young people's lives for greater scale and more sustainable impact. In particular, we will listen to and amplify the voices of youth to increase their participation in decision-making and governance processes.

4 **LEVERAGE NEW TOOLS & RESOURCES**

Engage new actors to bring the latest advancements in technology, philanthropy, and finance to bear on global development problems. For example, we will promote solutions that improve access to digital and blended learning opportunities for marginalized youth or that integrate innovative finance actors into our inclusive economic opportunities programming.

Young students in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya meet with a community mobilizer on girls' education - a future participant of WUSC's Student Refugee Program, 2016.

© Lorenzo Moscia



Canadian and Bolivian youth leaders gather in Bolivia for the 71st International Seminar in 2017, supported by WUSC and CECI's Unitererra program.

© Cécile Robert



5 **FACILITATE PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE**

Create spaces for youth-to-youth exchange in support of global development solutions, such as refugee resettlement and youth leadership. In particular, we will continue to invest in the growth of our campus-based Local Committee membership and continue to innovate in our offering of the International Seminar.

6 **MOBILIZE VOLUNTEERS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Continue to be a leader in the provision of high-quality, rewarding, and safe international volunteer opportunities for Canadians who seek to contribute their time and skills to global development. In particular, we will strive to reduce the barriers to accessing these opportunities among individuals who are typically excluded from international volunteering.

7 **STRENGTHEN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

Deepen our collaboration with like-minded partners, while also building new partnerships with innovative, mission-aligned organizations. In particular, we will continue to provide new and relevant opportunities for our network of Canadian universities, colleges, and CEGEPs to engage in our programming.

Youth participants of our inclusive and market-responsive training program pilots in Sri Lanka, 2015.

© Lorenzo Moscia



PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

OUR PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH



PARTNERS & RESOURCES

- Civil society organizations
- Governments
- Private sector
- Universities, colleges, and CEGEPs
- Development agents
- Donors and investors
- Volunteers, alumni, and Local Committees
- Staff



PRINCIPLES

- Contextual relevance
- Inclusivity
- Sustainability
- Scale
- Quality

STRATEGIES

- Capacity-building
- Facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Policy influence
- Communications for scale and social marketing
- Model-testing and the business case development
- Knowledge generation, dissemination, and learning

WE TAKE A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO PROMOTE TRANSFORMATIVE, CULTURALLY-APPROPRIATE, AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE AT SCALE.

Systems change aims to bring about lasting change by altering underlying structures and supporting mechanisms that make the system operate in a particular way. These can include policies, routines, relationships, resources, power structures, social norms, and values. A systems approach provides a framework to establish an in-depth understanding of power relations, as well as the intersections between multiple relations of power, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender.

Employees of a WUSC partner in the textile industry in Sri Lanka, 2017. © MAS

PROGRAMMING **PRINCIPLES**

Contextual Relevance

We adapt interventions to local realities and ongoing changes to deliver the most relevant, effective, and timely solutions to overcome the root causes of poverty.

Inclusivity

We take an intersectional approach to enable broader inclusion through our programs and better ensure no one is left behind.

Sustainability

We design and implement our initiatives so that their benefits have a long-lasting impact and can be carried forward by local actors.

Scale

We influence change at a scale that is commensurate with the scale of the challenges youth face.

Quality

We strive for quality in all that we do by grounding our work in evidence and learning to make the greatest possible contribution toward a better world for youth.



Youth attend a training on the importance of recognizing and treating mental health issues at the Akeri Secondary School in Tanzania 2015. © Beth White and Kayla Wemp





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world for youth.

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us online at www.wusc.ca to learn how
you can help provide youth and other
marginalized people with life-changing
education, economic opportunities, and
empowerment.

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