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EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC

External Impact Assessment Report

2020–2025 Programme Cycle

Acknowledgements

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This report presents an external impact assessment of the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC for the programmatic cycle 2020-2025. The data for the impact assessment was collected between November 2025 and January 2026. It examines the extent to which The Programme contributes to intercommunal relations, civic attitudes, constructive citizenship and individual development among participating youth.

The EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC is funded through the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community as a reconciliation and confidence-building measure aimed at facilitating the reunification of Cyprus. Since 2006, the EU has allocated EUR 760 million to support projects primarily benefiting the Turkish Cypriot community. This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre (CPDC) and the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (Seed) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| CAS | Creativity, Activity, Service |
| CPDC | Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| GC | Greek Cypriot |
| GCc | Greek Cypriot community |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| IB / IBDP | International Baccalaureate / International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme |
| MEL | Monitoring, evaluation and learning |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| SCORE | Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index |
| SeeD | Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development |
| TC | Turkish Cypriot |
| TCc | Turkish Cypriot community |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| UN | United Nations |
| UWC | United World Colleges |
| YEA | Youth Engagement Activities |

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Executive Summary

The core finding of this assessment is that the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC is making a meaningful contribution to peacebuilding, youth development, and constructive citizenship in Cyprus. The Programme is not simply creating contact across the divide via an education-based intervention; it is helping to build stronger, more sustainable intercommunal ties while also strengthening young people's confidence and civic responsibility.

I feel that if I had studied at my high school, I probably would not be the person I am now. (SB5)

They provide tools and experiences that help us reflect on our perspectives and question our assumptions. In the context of Cyprus, this teaches us to listen to people on the other side and to consider everyone's stories and perspectives. (SCB2)

Cyprus remains a divided island. Greek Cypriots (GC) continue to live mainly in the south of the Green Line and Turkish Cypriots (TC) north of the Green Line. This division continues to shape young people's experiences, relationships, and opportunities for intercommunal engagement. Against this backdrop, the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC (hereafter: The Programme) was launched in 2019 as a partnership between the European Commission and United World Colleges International to do something simple yet profound: **bring young people from both communities together in meaningful, sustained, and transformative ways to equip Cypriot youth with the capacity to influence their future pathways and the island's prospects for peace.** Through two-year scholarship opportunities at UWC schools in Europe, short courses in Cyprus and beyond, and one-day workshops, The Programme has engaged more than 500 young people, each with their own story, hopes, and experiences of living on a divided island and of being and becoming in UWC contexts.

This report presents an external impact assessment of The Programme for the 2020–2025 cycle. It examines the beneficiaries' experiences against The Programme's broader objectives of enhancing constructive citizenship, deepening Social Proximity, strengthening Inclusive Civic Identity, and fostering mutual understanding between Cypriot communities. The assessment draws on a convergent mixed-methods design, combining **a survey with 162 respondents, with in-depth interviews with 63 beneficiaries, parents, and stakeholders.** This allows the study not only to assess patterns of change across key outcomes but also how this change has taken place, weaving beneficiaries' voices throughout the report to ensure their perspectives and lived experiences shape the analysis.

The evidence points to a clear and consistent pattern of positive intercommunal outcomes. Beneficiaries report exceptionally high levels of Positive Intergroup Feelings, including Social Proximity, Intercommunal Trust, and Social Tolerance towards the other community. These outcomes are stronger than those reported by parents across several outcome indicators and substantially higher than the 2017 benchmark comparisons used in the report. Qualitative accounts reinforce these findings. Participants repeatedly describe how The Programme humanised the "other" community, challenged inherited stereotypes, and enabled meaningful, durable friendships across the divide. **The findings also suggest that Intercommunal Contact is not superficial.** Participants frequently described as meaningful and deep, and as expected to continue beyond the immediate UWC experience. Importantly, Intergroup Contact is associated with stronger, more sustainable ties and broader civic outcomes, reinforcing The Programme's theory of change.

The Programme also appears to be strengthening civic attitudes and constructive citizenship. Beneficiaries report very high levels of Social Tolerance towards diverse groups, strong Peacebuilding Attitudes, and high Openness to Dialogue. Although Bicomunal Civic Engagement remains lower than Monocommunal Civic Engagement, constructive citizenship outcomes are moderate to strong overall. Beneficiaries demonstrate a strong sense of Civic Duty and encouraging levels of Civic Engagement and Civic Initiative-Taking for their age group.

One of the report's most important findings is that participation intensity matters, suggesting a multiplier effect when The Programme is experienced as a pathway rather than as a one-off intervention. Beneficiaries who participate in more UWC activities tend to report stronger civic responsibility, greater civic engagement, and a higher likelihood of initiating civic activity. Qualitative

evidence supports this pattern, showing that participants often leave The Programme with a stronger sense of responsibility, increased willingness to contribute to their communities, and, in some cases, concrete civic initiatives inspired by the UWC experience.

At the individual level, the findings are similarly strong. Beneficiaries report high levels of agency, moderate to high optimism about the future, strong growth mindset persistence, and substantial gains in psychosocial competencies and soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, empathy, planning, and facilitation. Participants describe both the scholarship pathway and the short courses as transformative experiences that shaped them academically, socially, and personally. For scholarship participants, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the wider UWC learning environment are associated with stronger critical thinking, independence, academic confidence, and preparedness for university. Short course participants similarly describe solid gains in open-mindedness, self-understanding, social confidence, and exposure to new possibilities for their futures. Overall, beneficiary satisfaction is very high, and there is strong endorsement of The Programme as supportive, motivating, impactful, and inclusive.

Yet, as with any initiative, The Programme is not without challenges. Scholarship students often mention the intensity of the IB workload, language barriers, and limited time for civic activities during demanding academic periods, with some feeling underprepared for the emotional and academic pressures they encountered. Still, the IB programme is **evaluated as both an enabler of transformative positive change in attitudes and competencies and a challenge in terms of the effort and capacity required.** The Programme has consistently implemented operational improvements over the years, particularly in outreach and communication. Still, practical barriers, including transportation and scheduling, access to more detailed information about The Programme, the demand for more follow-up and sustained engagement, and the desire and need to explore certain themes, shaped the participants' critical reflections.

Notwithstanding the depth and rigour of this impact assessment and the clear, positive, transformative change patterns observed, the findings must be interpreted with care. The absence of a baseline, the retrospective nature of the study, and the overlap between programme components limit the ability to draw firm causal conclusions. These limitations are compounded by the lack of scientific evaluation of the participants' starting points, motivations, or pre-existing attitudes before engaging with UWC. Even so, **the evidence consistently points in the same direction: The Programme is supporting the cultivation of a more open, connected, and capable generation of young people in Cyprus. There is no doubt this youth sees beyond the island's divisions and imagines a shared future with greater clarity and hope.**

This hope is not simply an outcome. It is a call to action for policymakers such as the EU, peacebuilders, and educational organisations, and for UWC itself, especially in contexts marked by division rooted in a history of conflict in and beyond Cyprus. The challenge now is to translate the insights The Programme has unlocked into wider opportunities to strengthen the structures that nurture such change.

The assessment points to a focused set of **recommendations for UWC and the European Union**, which are discussed in greater detail in Section 5. In summary, priority should be given to:

1. Consolidate The Programme as a connected developmental pathway

- The evidence suggests that lighter-touch programmes are effective at generating durable intercommunal ties, while more intensive participation appears to deepen broader civic and developmental gains. A more consolidated and integrated pathway model, in which activities across different pillars can become connected stages in a developmental journey, with onward referral from one pillar to the next, would help convert broad reach into deeper, more cumulative impact. More structured follow-up, such as reunions, alumni twinning and touchpoints, and opportunities for continued collaboration, would also help preserve relationships and extend The Programme's long-term civic and intercommunal value.

2. Convert contact into sustained civic action

- There is a significant correlation between Inter-Communal Contact, Civic Engagement, and Civic Initiative-Taking. This virtuous cycle would benefit from more structured opportunities to turn relationships into joint action by focusing on common denominators and shared interests, and by sufficiently resourcing civic participation efforts to ensure that they are not limited to charity work. Examples could include mentored social action labs, participatory budgeting for school-based, civic or programme-related initiatives¹, junior civic assemblies and civic incubators linked to peacebuilding and local problem-solving. Considering that programme intensity matters for civic outcomes, enhancing the bridge between contact and civic action would also help strengthen the impact of short courses.

3. Use alumni more deliberately as a strategic multiplier

- Alumni's potential is often underutilised and under-recognised, with limited opportunities to lead their own initiatives. Creating opportunities for alumni to design and lead their own initiatives would also tap into their lived experiences, creativity and leadership. Similarly, there is a need to enhance and expand interactions between alumni and [potential] beneficiaries, with greater emphasis on academic and emotional preparation, particularly for scholarship beneficiaries. Alumni could play a stronger role in pre-departure preparation, participant twinning, and showcasing achievement pathways. Efforts that engage and recognise alumni's civic contributions would reinforce both recruitment and civic and developmental outcomes.

4. Strengthen academic and psychosocial support during the scholarship experience

- The scholarship pathway would benefit from earlier identification of students struggling with workload or emotional adjustment through more proactive wellbeing monitoring, such as confidential check-ins, open forums, or pulse surveys. The goal is not to reduce ambition, but to better match ambition with readiness. Stronger support systems and protected intercommunal reflection moments could help students manage the tension between peace and civic oriented mission of the programme with the academic expectations. In parallel, university and career guidance could better reflect the range of pathways relevant to Cypriot students, especially European routes, while revisiting key information at application, selection, onboarding, and pre-departure stages can support retention.

5. Anchor impact more strongly through families

- The parent findings, especially lower trust among Turkish Cypriot parents, suggest that some participants may be progressing more quickly than their home environments. A stronger family and community interface around The Programme, such as alumni-family dialogues, can help prevent an inter-generational gap from widening inadvertently, and enhance the multiplier effects on families.

6. Strengthen targeted learning and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- The report highlights the value of developing a stronger MEL framework for The Programme. Building on this study, pre/post measurements, longitudinal comparisons, and a real baseline at the point of entry would allow future assessments to move beyond indicative patterns and generate firmer evidence of attributable change. Additional improvements could include a prospective beneficiary survey at the point of application to establish a more robust baseline that assesses motivations and pre-existing attitudes, and a parents-change module to capture the horizontal ripple effects of impact across households.

¹ <https://www.childfriendlycities.org/media/2746/file/EN%20-%20Child%20participatory%20budgeting.pdf> <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/social-innovation-match/case-study/youth-participatory-budgeting>

1. Introduction

1.1 General Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Funded by the European Union under the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC (hereafter: The Programme) has been implemented by UWC since 2019 to build mutual understanding between Cypriot communities, and, in so doing, contribute to cultivating a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable society in Cyprus. Through transformative educational experiences rooted in empathy and global citizenship, Cypriot youth are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values required to act as catalysts for peace, intercultural collaboration and mutual understanding. Building on these overarching objectives, The Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC identifies a set of expected outcomes that reflect how The Programme's influence is anticipated to manifest in practice:

- Enhanced **mutual understanding** between Cypriot communities.
- Enhanced engagement in **constructive citizenship** is defined by active contribution to peacebuilding, promotion of tolerance, and social transformation in Cypriot communities.
- Deepened commitment to **social proximity**, defined by emotional, relational, and cultural closeness and connectedness between individuals or Cypriot communities, which strengthens social cohesion, supports bringing down historical divides, and promotes inter-group understanding.
- Strengthened **civic identity**, defined by an inclusive Cypriot identity that transcends community boundaries and promotes shared identity.

1.2 About United World Colleges (UWC)

The United World Colleges (UWC) is an educational movement comprised of 18 schools and colleges, focusing mostly on students aged 16 to 19. In addition, UWC runs short programmes, called UWC Short Courses, across the world. The mission of the UWC is to use education as a force to unite people, nations, and cultures in the pursuit of peace and a sustainable future, guided by core values that encompass international and intercultural understanding, the celebration of diversity, personal responsibility and integrity, mutual responsibility and respect, compassion and service, respect for the environment, a sense of idealism, personal challenge and action, and leading through personal example.

The UWC programming is experiential, balancing high expectations within a rigorous academic programme and a rich, varied co-curricular programme in which students engage in creative, physical, and service-learning activities, both offered by UWC schools and initiated by students themselves. Experiential education at UWC thus extends beyond classroom learning to encompass meaningful participation in community life, encouraging initiative, collaboration, and social responsibility.

UWC's educational influence extends beyond its campuses. As a co-founder of the International Baccalaureate (IB), UWC has played a central role in shaping the IB curriculum, ensuring that **academic challenge is paired with global citizenship and intercultural understanding**. Today, UWC has 85,000 alumni worldwide. This network reflects the long-term impact of the UWC model.

1.3 About the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC

The EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth to study at the United World Colleges (UWC) aims to build mutual understanding between the Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) communities by providing bicomunal educational opportunities at UWC. Funded by the European Union and implemented by UWC, The Programme started in 2019 with six scholarship students from the communities attending UWC Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since then, The Programme has awarded 100+ EU-funded scholarships to Cypriot students to study the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), a two-year high school programme, at a UWC school in Europe (UWC Adriatic, UWC Maastricht, UWC Mostar, UWC Red Cross Nordic and UWC Robert Bosch College). The Programme also includes several youth engagement activities taking place in Cyprus, such as short courses, both

online and residential, and intercommunal workshops that bring together youth from Cyprus, Europe, and the Mediterranean region on subjects such as leadership, equality, and sustainability. By bringing together youth and families across the divide around a shared educational objective, the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC helps foster grassroots reconciliation, understanding, and trust among younger generations.

The Programme activities are offered across three pillars: scholarships, short courses, and youth engagement activities. These are elaborated further below.

1.3.1 Scholarship Programme to study at UWC

This is a two-year scholarship programme offered to Cypriot students from each community, enabling them to pursue the IBDP at UWC schools and colleges in bicomunal pairs or groups. The Programme aims to ensure equitable participation from both communities, maintaining a 50/50 balance between Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking beneficiaries. Each year, UWC Cyprus staff and volunteers implement a broad outreach campaign, ranging from school visits to radio and social media advertising, reaching thousands of Cypriot youth and their families annually. The 82 scholars considered in this assessment were selected among 443 eligible applicants, with selectivity increasing year on year.

To be eligible for consideration to study at UWC schools (Entry 2020-2023), applicants are required to meet a set of eligibility criteria (i.e. more objective assessment for screening), including age, nationality/residence, and education status. Applicants who meet these eligibility requirements are subsequently evaluated according to a set of UWC selection criteria (i.e., more subjective assessment for selection) through a three-stage process consisting of an application form, group workshops, and a personal interview. The final selection of scholars is based on overall performance across these three stages, ensuring that a fixed number of scholarships is allocated to each community.

Interviews with internal stakeholders have confirmed that although the selection criteria remain the same, the process has become much more refined. A very active volunteer community, including alumni, has been involved in the selection process, with volunteers observing and marking candidates in accordance with the UWC criteria. It is also important to note that the selection process is discussed with volunteers, with a specific focus on what went well and what did not, in an informal session held at the end of the actual selection process. Every year, there are refinements based on feedback, such as enhancing training materials for volunteer selectors and including psychologists in the final stage. Specifically, in 2025, two psychologists were involved throughout the third stage of the selection process (i.e. workshops and the interview), which was found to be exceptionally helpful. This is expected to be sustained.

Once students have been selected, an online meeting for parents and scholars takes place. Scholars currently studying in UWC schools are also invited to the meeting to provide space for new scholars and their parents to ask questions, including about safeguarding. New scholars are also paired with alumni who are expected to pass on information about their own experiences, schools, and courses. There is also an in-person onboarding preparation for new scholars, with alumni present. **To date, 46 scholarship recipients have completed UWC. Of these, 96% successfully obtained the IB Diploma, 87% have gone on to pursue university studies, while 11% is pursuing a gap year or mandatory military service.** Following UWC, more than half of the students pursue university in Europe.

1.3.2 UWC Short Courses

These are a series of online, hybrid, and residential intensive courses (lasting 10–25 days) that offer young people aged 13–20 opportunities to explore themes such as social entrepreneurship, peace, social justice, conflict resolution, sustainability, and climate action through experiential learning. The Programme facilitates participation in these courses in two ways: by organising the UWC Short Course *Diversity in Action*, which takes place in Cyprus once or twice a year, and by providing fully funded scholarships for beneficiaries to attend UWC short courses elsewhere in Europe.

Scholarships to attend the UWC Short Courses in Europe are offered to runner-up applicants to the scholarship programme who have demonstrated strong suitability for UWC education and performed well in the selection process but were not awarded full scholarships to attend UWC schools due to the limited number of available placements. The selection process ensures equitable representation, maintaining an equal (50/50) balance between Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking participants. The number of short course scholarships awarded each year is determined by the availability of funding, as course fees vary across programmes.

The eligibility criteria for UWC Short Courses in Cyprus are designed to ensure fair and inclusive participation while aligning with UWC's overall mission and values. All applicants are required to meet a set of eligibility criteria, which include being generally between 15 and 17 years of age at the time of participation (with rare exceptions for 14-year-olds) and possessing sufficient English proficiency, at least at an intermediate level, to successfully complete the course.

In addition to these requirements, applications are reviewed by The Programme team, which evaluates each applicant's motivation to join the UWC Short Course and their alignment with UWC values. This process identifies a pool of eligible and suitable candidates. When the number of suitable applicants exceeds the available spaces, factors such as geographic and gender diversity are considered to determine the final selection.

The selection of Cypriot participants aims to achieve balanced representation between the two Cypriot communities, maintaining, where possible, an approximately equal participation rate, though exact parity (50/50) is not mandatory. Typically, short courses reserve 33% of places for GC participants, 33% for TC participants, and 33% for international participants.



1.3.3 Youth Engagement Activities

These are bicomunal one-day in-person workshops covering themes such as redesigning spaces, portrait photography, presentation skills, entrepreneurship, sustainability, identity, writing, and self-expression. As of October 2025, 11 workshops have taken place, with a total of 203 participants. The eligibility and selection criteria are similar to those of the UWC Short Courses in Cyprus, and each workshop strives to achieve balanced participation across the communities.

The main purposes of each core programme (activity) and the total number of participants for each programme between 2020 and October 2025 are presented in Table 1.

Programme Types and Participation Overview (2020–2025)

EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC





1. UWC Scholarships

- Strengthen ties between GC and TC youth, and their connection to the EU.
- Foster intercommunal trust and dialogue through the UWC educational model.
- Inspire youth-led initiatives for leadership, collaboration, creativity, and a peaceful, sustainable future.

| Participation (counted participants) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| TC | GC | International | Total |
| 41 | 41 | 0 | 82 |



2. UWC Short Courses (Cyprus & Abroad)

- Promote international understanding through shared experiences rooted in tolerance and friendship.
- Foster intercultural dialogue.
- Encourage participants to explore course themes, engage with diverse peers, contribute to community service, and lead positive change in Cyprus.

| Participation (counted participants) | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|------------|
| A. Cyprus | | | |
| TC | GC | International | Total |
| 77 | 82 | 66 | 225 |
| B. Abroad | | | |
| TC | GC | International | Total |
| 15 | 15 | 0 | 30 |
|  Combined total: | | | 255 |



3. YEA / UWC Experience

- Various one-day youth engagement activities.

| Participation (counted participants) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| TC | GC | International | Total |
| 126 | 77 | 0 | 203 |



4. Youth Leadership Forum

- Foster skills for positive social change, including systems thinking, sustainability, and conflict resolution.
- Encourage participants to explore global systems, sustainable development, peace education, and modern leadership techniques.

| Participation (counted participants) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| TC | GC | International | Total |
| 49 | 45 | 10 | 104 |

Note: Totals reflect counted participations; some individuals participated in more than one activity.

Table 1: Purposes and total number of participants by programme.

Note: Because some participants took part in more than one programme activity, the unique number of participants is 468, of whom 392 are Cypriots.

Note: The number excludes scholarship applicants who took part in the bicomunal workshop stage (Stage 2 of the application process), as well as those involved in community and alumni activities like the annual Winter Get-together and mentorship programme.

Beneficiaries and their families are provided with regular events, such as the Annual Winter Get-together, Onboarding, and Graduation, while alumni are supported by an alumni engagement programme that offers opportunities to continue supporting The Programme and to play a meaningful role in reconciliation and peace efforts in Cyprus. Several one-off initiatives have also been offered, including the United for Peace EU-UWC Youth Leadership Forum, a study visit to EU institutions in Brussels, a mentorship programme, and a project-based study visit of UWC Mostar students to Cyprus.

1.4 Chronology of The Programme

A total of six grant agreements were signed between the European Commission and UWC in 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025, respectively. The initial 3-year grant agreement signed in 2018 covered 6 scholarships to study at UWC, while the subsequent agreements included short courses and workshops in addition to scholarships to study at UWC.

- In line with the first 3-year agreement, the EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC started with the scholarship programme, providing the opportunity for selected Cypriot youth to study at UWC Colleges. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of Cypriot scholars awarded scholarships to study at UWC steadily increased from 6 (3TC, 3GC) in 2020, to 10 (5TC, 5GC) in 2021, 12 (6TC, 6GC) in 2022, 18 (9TC, 9GC) in 2023 and 18 (9TC, 9GC) annually from 2023 onward. The increase in scholarships is made possible through financial support from participating UWC schools, which complement and top up the EU scholarship funding.
- The Programme was extended in 2021 to cover short courses and workshops. The first two short courses took place online in July 2021 and February 2022, respectively. A total of four in-person short courses were held in Cyprus – July 2022, July 2023, July 2024, and July 2025. A hybrid short course – online with an in-person component in Cyprus – was also held in March/April 2024. An equal number of scholarships were awarded to Cypriots from each community to attend summer courses across various European cities. Participation in the summer short courses rose from 4 Cypriots in 2022 (Belgium and Germany) to 8 in 2023, 10 in 2024 (Belgium, Germany, Spain), before declining to 8 in the 2025 courses held in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, and Spain.
- A total of 11 youth engagement activities were organised between 2022 and 2025: 2 in 2022, 5 in 2023, and then 2 each in 2024 and 2025. Youth engagement activities were renamed as UWC Experience Workshops in 2025.
- The United for Peace EU-UWC Youth Leadership Forum was held in Cyprus in September 2024. This led to a significant increase in the number of youth reached in subsequent years, but it is not a recurring event.







A total of 82 scholarships were awarded between 2020 and 2025 to study at UWC colleges, and 30 scholarships to attend summer courses across European cities between 2022 and October 2025, as is indicated in Table 2 below:

Participation by Year and Programme Type (2020–2025)

EU Scholarship Programme for Cypriot Youth at UWC

| Total participants by year | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| 6 | 50 | 123 | 159 | 214 | 91 |

Overall total: **643**

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|---------------|-------|
| 2020  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2020–2022 cohort) | 3 | 3 | — | 6 |
| 2021  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2021–2023 cohort) | 5 | 5 | — | 10 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (online) | 12 | 14 | 14 | 40 |
| 2022  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2022–2024 cohort) | 6 | 6 | — | 12 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (online) | 12 | 10 | 8 | 30 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (residential) | 11 | 14 | 10 | 35 |
| | Short Course Abroad | 2 | 2 | — | 4 |
| | Youth Engagement Activities (2 events) | 23 | 19 | — | 42 |
| 2023  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2022–2025 cohort) | 9 | 9 | — | 18 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (residential) | 11 | 13 | 11 | 35 |
| | Short Course Abroad | 4 | 4 | — | 8 |
| | Youth Engagement Activities (5 events) | 61 | 38 | — | 99 |
| 2024  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2024–2026 cohort) | 9 | 9 | — | 18 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (residential) | 11 | 11 | 10 | 32 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (hybrid) | 10 | 8 | 4 | 22 |
| | Short Course Abroad | 5 | 5 | — | 10 |
| | Youth Leadership Forum (“United for Peace”) | 49 | 45 | 10 | 104 |
| | Youth Engagement Activities (2 events) | 20 | 8 | — | 28 |
| 2025  | Type of Programme | TC | GC | International | Total |
| | UWC Scholarships (2025–2027 cohort) | 9 | 9 | — | 18 |
| | Short Course Cyprus (residential) | 10 | 12 | 9 | 31 |
| | Short Course Abroad | 4 | 4 | — | 8 |
| | “UWC Experience” Workshops (2 events) (continuation of Youth Engagement) | 22 | 12 | — | 34 |

i Note: Totals reflect counted participations.

Table 2: Total number of participants by year and programme type.

1.5 Evaluation of Programme Activities

The Scholarship Programme has been evaluated internally through feedback from students, meetings and events in Cyprus, and discussions with UWC Cyprus, including programme staff, the board, and volunteer mentors. Students are required to submit a letter each year while enrolled in a UWC school or college. Starting in 2025, UWC Cyprus will use surveys to evaluate scholars' competencies and intercommunal engagement before and after the two-year programme.

Upon completion of short courses, participants complete a feedback form administered by the Short Course Development Initiative at UWC International since 2024, using a standardised template for all global UWC short courses.

Similarly, all participants at the one-day workshops are asked to provide feedback following the workshop.

1.6 Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

Key internal stakeholders include UWC International staff, UWC Cyprus staff, the UWC Cyprus volunteer board and UWC schools and colleges. Other stakeholders include the European Commission, civil society, youth groups, local schools, and teacher unions. Only external stakeholders from the European Commission participated in this study.

The main beneficiaries of The Programme are participants from the GC and TC communities, along with international students who participated in one of the bicommunal programme activities.² As indicated in Table 1, the total number of beneficiaries counted since 2020 is 643, of whom 567 are Cypriots. Indirect beneficiaries include participants' families, local schools and educators, wider communities in Cyprus, and the UWC alumni network. All beneficiaries and stakeholders, including their roles, levels of influence, and relationships to the project, are listed in Table 3 below.

² Participants' community is determined by their place of residence and education at the time of application.

- To what extent do beneficiaries' civic attitudes reflect peacebuilding values and social tolerance consistent with global citizenship?
- In what ways have constructive citizenship (e.g., civic duty, civic engagement) increased, and what ripple effects are observable at the school, family, and community levels?
- Are beneficiaries initiating, or planning to initiate, efforts aimed at improving social cohesion and everyday life with a sense of shared common good?

Individual level growth

- To what extent do beneficiaries report strengthened psychosocial competencies and soft skills, as well as a heightened sense of agency, optimism, and growth mindset persistence?
- How do participants assess their overall UWC experience, and does this differ across cohorts or participant types?

Given The Programme's theory of change, the study hypothesises that greater participation intensity (e.g., involvement in more UWC programmes and/or scholarship pathways) is associated with stronger intergroup relations and constructive citizenship outcomes.

2.5. Methodology

2.5.1. Research Framework at a Glance



Purpose of the Study

To provide an external impact assessment of the EU Programme for Cypriot youth at UWC for 2020–2025, examining programme reach, beneficiaries' experiences, and intended outcomes across intergroup relations, civic attitudes and behaviours, and individual development.



Core question: Is the programme's theory of change being realised in practice?



Why this Assessment Matters

- Informs programme learning and adaptation
- Strengthens the design and delivery of UWC Cyprus activities
- Supports accountability and reporting to stakeholders
- Provides a baseline-like snapshot for future longitudinal monitoring and evaluation

Research Design

Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed simultaneously, then integrated to generate complementary and mutually reinforcing evidence.



Quantitative Strand (Survey)

Total participants: N = 162

- 87 beneficiaries
- 75 parents / guardians

Beneficiary sample includes: 50 short course participants, 41 one-day event participants, 29 alumni scholars, 18 current scholars

Instrument: Structured online questionnaire (20–25 items)

Languages: English, Turkish, Greek

Benchmarking: Selected indicators compared with 2017 SCORE Index reference data

Qualitative Strand (Narratives of Change)

Total participants: N = 63

- 28 short course participants
- 21 scholarship alumni
- 6 current scholarship students
- 5 parents / guardians
- 3 internal stakeholders

31 semi-structured one-to-one interviews

10 focus group discussions (bicomunal and mono-communal)

1 gamified group activity with 28 participants

Data Analysis



A. Quantitative analysis

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA/MANCOVA were used to identify statistically significant subgroup differences (e.g. community, gender, participation intensity).



B. Qualitative analysis

A thematic approach was used, aligned with the study's core domains: intergroup, civic, and individual outcomes.



C. Integration

A joint display approach triangulated both strands to explain patterns and mechanisms behind observed changes.



Key Study Caveat

Findings are presented as indicative patterns rather than definitive proof of causality because the study is retrospective and there was no baseline or randomized control group.

2.5.2 Research Design & Sampling

This impact evaluation used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design that brought together qualitative and quantitative data collected simultaneously. This allowed the study to generate evidence that is both complementary and mutually reinforcing. The design enabled exploration of how change occurred through processes, mechanisms, and participants' perspectives, while also measuring the extent and distribution of change across beneficiary groups. Both strands were treated with equal importance, analysed separately and then brought together during interpretation to triangulate the findings and place them within The Programme's Theory of Change.

The qualitative component focused on the lived experiences of beneficiaries and stakeholders. It explored their narratives of change and the contextual factors that help explain how and why outcomes emerged. Data collection included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, supported by a gamified group activity that encouraged participation and deeper reflection. The quantitative component measured the prevalence and distribution of the key indicators in The Programme framework. These included intergroup relations, Social Tolerance, Civic Engagement, Sense of Agency, Civic Optimism and perceived gains in soft skills. The data also enabled comparisons across subgroups of participants.

The study combined both quantitative and qualitative strands to create a comprehensive sample. A total of 162 participants comprised the sample for the quantitative strand, with responses from 87 beneficiaries (31 GC, 52 TC, 4 other) and 75 parents or guardians (42 GC, 28 TC, 5 Other). Among the beneficiaries, the sample included 50 short course participants, 41 one-day event participants, 29 alumni scholars and 18 current scholars.

A total of 63 participants participated in the qualitative phase. This included 28 short course participants, 21 scholarship alumni, 6 current scholarship students, 5 parents or guardians and 3 internal stakeholders. Community representation in the qualitative sample included 21 GC and 39 TC participants. Fieldwork included 31 semi-structured one-to-one interviews and 10 FGDs (4 bicommunal, 3 GC monocommunal, 3 TC monocommunal), plus a gamified discussion with 28 participants.

Figures 1a and 1b illustrate the sample distribution for quantitative and qualitative components.

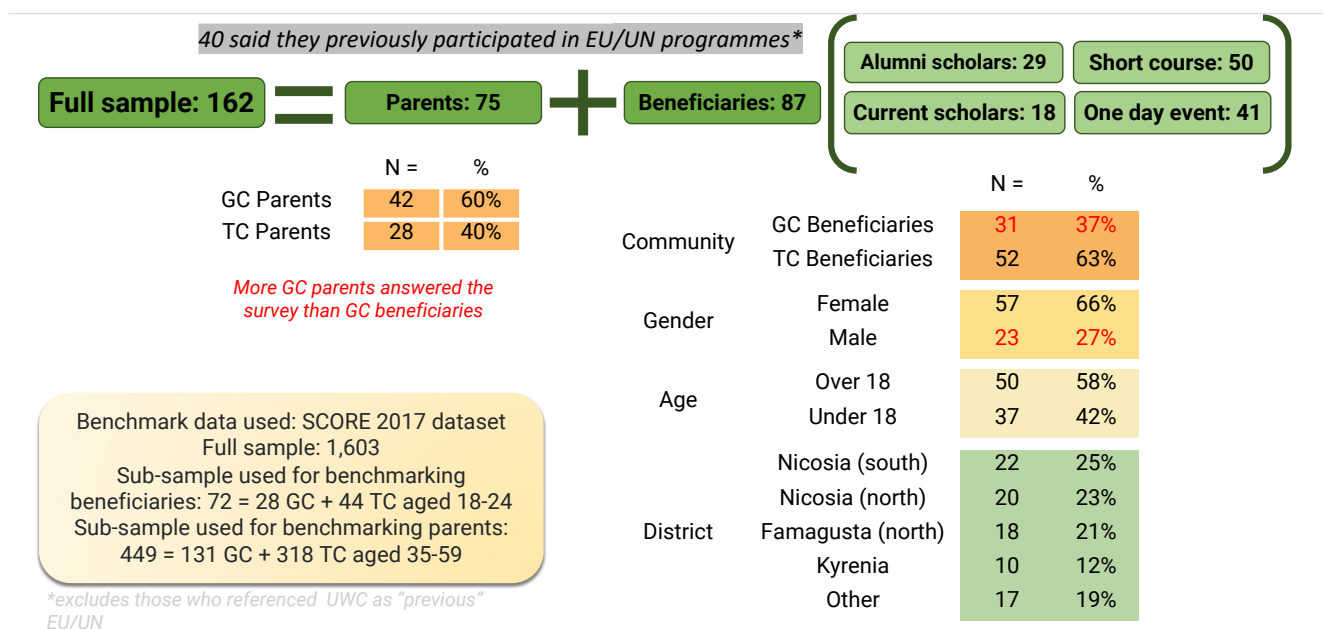


Figure 1a: Quantitative sample distribution.

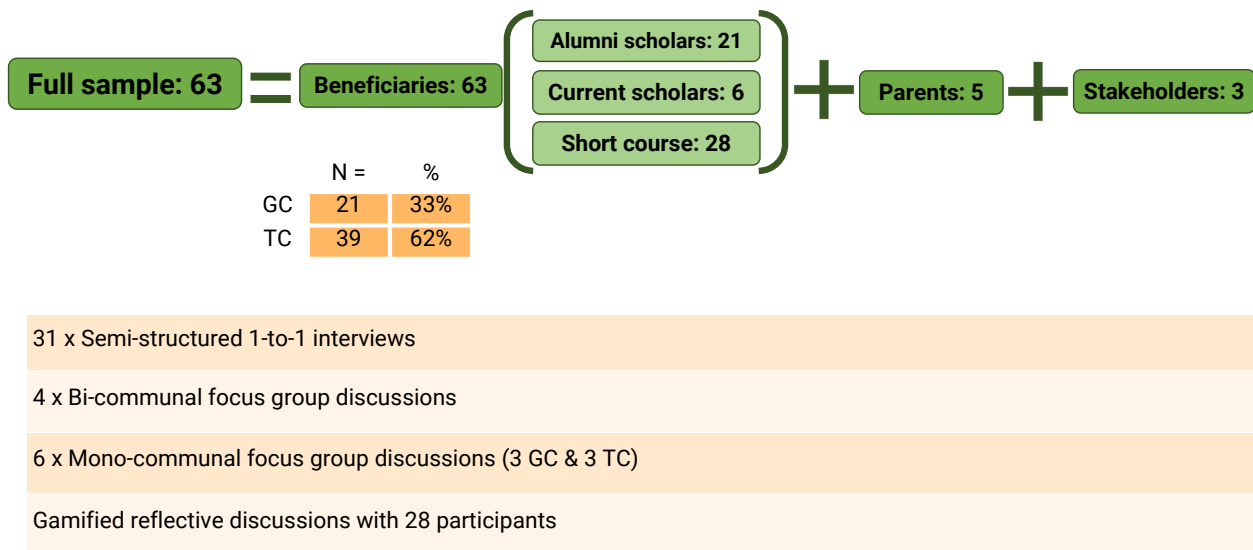


Figure 1b: Qualitative sample distribution.

2.5.3 Data Collection Process

Quantitative Instruments

The quantitative component relied on a structured online questionnaire designed to capture key constructs in The Programme framework, including intergroup relations, social tolerance, civic duty and engagement, agency, optimism and perceived gains in soft skills. The survey contained approximately 20 to 25 items and took under 30 minutes to complete. Skip logic was used to ensure that respondents only answered questions relevant to their experience.

The questionnaire was developed in English, Turkish and Greek, and each version was reviewed and piloted to ensure clarity and accessibility. The survey was administered electronically, allowing respondents to select their preferred language. Multiple attempts were made to encourage participation, and all data collection followed secure data-handling procedures. Selected indicators were later benchmarked against reference data to provide contextual comparison. Where possible, established and previously validated indicator scales were used to enable benchmarking against similar studies (e.g., the SCORE Index).

Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative component drew on semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides and a gamified group discussion activity. These tools were shaped by Outcome Harvesting principles and The Programme's Theory of Change. They included prompts on engagement pathways, learning and personal development, social and cultural effects and perceptions of programme quality and improvement. The guides combined shared indicators relevant to all participants with additional questions tailored to specific groups.

Interviews and group discussions were conducted in English, Turkish, or Greek, depending on participant preference, and both online and in person. All sessions were recorded with consent. The gamified activity was used to encourage participation and to help participants reflect more deeply on their experiences and the changes they observed.

2.5.4 Data Analysis

The analysis combined both qualitative and quantitative evidence to build a coherent understanding of programme outcomes and the pathways through which they emerged.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentage distributions, scaling survey items into indicators that can create metrics for abstract phenomena (e.g.,

peacebuilding attitudes, sense of agency), and providing such means for scales. These results were further explored through subgroup comparisons using ANOVA/MANCOVA³ analyses to identify statistically significant differences and avoid over-interpretation based on community background, scholarship status, gender, and level of participation. Correlation analyses were used to examine relationships among key constructs, including intercommunal contact, social ties, constructive citizenship, and participation intensity. Where sample sizes allowed, other basic inferential tests were applied to assess whether observed differences across groups were statistically meaningful. Quantitative analysis also introduced a benchmarking dataset using the SCORE 2017⁴ general population study. This dataset, with 1,603 respondents, collected 2 years before the start of The Programme, had similar comparable indicators. To improve the benchmarking process, two subsamples were extracted to align the age groups closer with the UWC beneficiaries and parents more closely. The subsample used for benchmarking beneficiaries was 18–24-year-olds and had 28 GC and 44 TC respondents. The subsample used for benchmarking parents was 35–59-year-olds and had 131 GC and 318 TC respondents. Summary tables and visualisations were prepared to support interpretation and comparison. These benchmark comparisons with selected indicators from the SCORE 2017 dataset were used to provide contextual reference points, while recognising that these ‘soft’ comparisons do not imply causal attribution.

Qualitative material was examined through a thematic approach guided by an a priori framework aligned with the four core domains of the study. Coding drew on both deductive categories from the framework and inductive insights that surfaced from participants’ accounts. The coded material was then organised into thematic summaries and matrices linked to the Theory of Change, allowing the team to identify recurring patterns, contextual explanations and illustrative examples that could be integrated with the survey findings.

The two strands were brought together during interpretation through a joint display approach that aligned thematic qualitative insights with quantitative indicators and subgroup patterns. This allowed the study to identify areas of convergence, explain variations and highlight mechanisms behind observed outcomes.

2.5.5 Research Ethics & Limitations

The study followed standard ethical procedures, including getting informed consent, providing clear and detailed information to participants, ensuring compliance with GDPR, securing data storage, and ensuring anonymity. For participants under 18, additional parental consent was obtained. These processes and all original correspondence were handled in close liaison with The Programme team, who kept record of the consent forms. Participation was entirely voluntary. All reporting was anonymised to protect confidentiality using codes (i.e. SB for scholarship beneficiaries, and SCB for short course beneficiaries) and, when needed, using Greek/Turkish Cypriots (i.e. GC participants/TC participants).

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The retrospective design, combined with the absence of a baseline or a randomised control group, limits the ability to draw firm causal conclusions. The sample size also reflects uneven reach and response rates across different cohorts, which may introduce bias, particularly in the representation of community groups and beneficiary types. In addition, the overlap among programme components, given that some beneficiaries participate in more than one type of activity, makes it difficult to attribute specific outcomes to individual activities. Benchmark comparisons with the 2017 SCORE dataset offer useful contextual reference points, but they cannot be used to infer causal effects. For these reasons, **the results are presented as indicative patterns and associations rather than definitive evidence of causality.**

³ ANOVA/MANCOVA is a statistical test to determine whether the mean scores of two or more groups are indistinguishable or if they are significantly different. In the present report, significant differences are only reported, where F is found to be larger than 20 and/or the effect size between two groups is above medium (Cohen’s D > 0.4).

⁴ See SCORE Cyprus 2017 interactive data platform where the benchmarks were extracted from: <https://scoreforpeace.org/en/cyprus/score/2017/4/map?row=tn-2-0>

3. Findings

The findings begin with an exploration of participants' engagement trajectories, looking at how young people first discovered The Programme, what motivated them to take part, what they expected beforehand and how aware they were of The Programme's aims and activities. This section helps clarify the pathways through which participants entered The Programme and the factors that shaped their early engagement. Building on this foundation, the study then integrates qualitative insights and quantitative evidence to examine The Programme's impact across intergroup relations, civic attitudes and individual growth. The section concludes with a synthesis of The Programme's strengths and weaknesses, along with practical recommendations for improvement.

3.1 Participant Engagement Trajectory

Participant engagement followed a clear trajectory shaped by how individuals first encountered The Programme, what motivated them to join, and the expectations they carried into their initial involvement. Their pathways into The Programme were diverse. These ranged from informal peer recommendations to more structured institutional channels. Motivations to join The Programme were similarly varied. Participants described a mix of curiosity, personal ambition, and the appeal of new opportunities as key drivers for enrolment, with many holding tentative or incomplete expectations before joining The Programme. This reflects differing levels of familiarity with the purpose and the structure of The Programme. This variation in awareness, ranging from well-informed to largely uncertain, was important for understanding how participant engagement varied with The Programme from the outset.

3.1.1 Discovery Pathways

Encountering The Programme through an eclectic mix of discovery pathways was a common experience shared by the participants. These ranged from informal networks and family connections to more formal school-based channels. Although the qualitative interviews reveal that awareness of The Programme is shaped more by chance exposure than by systematic outreach, it is hard to determine precisely how discovery pathways evolved over the years in line with UWC communication. Interviews with stakeholders beyond the beneficiaries highlighted that outreach strategies were improved and sharpened, and thus anecdotal qualitative evidence from beneficiaries may be relevant for one cohort/year but less relevant to the next. Either way, it would be accurate to say that discovery pathways are diverse, and intentionality was enhanced as The Programme cycles grew roots and experience.

One of the scholarship beneficiaries (SB1) shares that she had heard about The Programme from her mother, who first learned about UWC watching a German cooking TV show where *"UWCers were helping out"* in one of the episodes set around Robert Bosch in Germany. She continues to describe that she learned about The Programme after her mother looked it up. Another shares *"my father heard about it on the radio ... then I heard it from a friend"* (SB3).

Others were introduced to The Programme through peers whose own UWC journeys were visible on social media or shared through personal conversations. As one participant explained, *"one of my basketball teammates got accepted to UWC Mostar, and that's how I learned about the existence of UWC because she was posting on social media"* (SB16), while another recalled seeing *"a story that someone put on the promotion post"* (SCB4). Social media was also mentioned frequently by parents, with UWC Parent 5 highlighting:

"We first learned about The Programme through social media. Some older students who attended afternoon activities with my daughter had been accepted into UWC and were posting about their experiences. There were no information sessions at my daughter's school, so we looked into it ourselves."

The role of friends in promoting The Programme was echoed also by those currently in the scholarship programme, with SB4 describing that they had a friend a year above them who shared

her journey, continuing “so we stayed connected, and that’s how I decided to actually apply. So, I learned through people” (SB4). The role of peers and shared UWC experiences was also emphasised by parents. UWC Parent 3, who is also a teacher, shares:

“We had students from our school who went to UWC.... When they came back to visit us, seeing their satisfaction and happiness made us very pleased. Watching them stand on their own feet at such a young age, at the high school level, and take on their responsibilities made us happy.... Within our own family, when we were thinking about our children’s education plans, I mentioned that there was such a scholarship programme. Later on, my daughter became very excited about it.”

School-based channels also played a role, particularly when counsellors or teachers actively circulated information; one participant first learned about UWC when their counsellor posted a brochure in an online class group. They explain, “That’s this opportunity. If any students want to join, they should; let’s support them. That’s where I first learned what UWC was.” (SB11).

3.1.2 Key Participation Motivators

Participants were driven to apply by a blend of academic ambition and personal aspiration, with the appeal of intercultural exposure and international experience playing a particularly striking role. For many, UWC represented an opportunity “too good to be true,” noting that the combination of full funding, international study, and alignment with their peace-oriented values made it feel like “an ideal opportunity” (SB19). Many stated this was an opportunity that felt almost unattainable in their local context. Combined with a strong desire for broader horizons, consistently expressed by those who felt geographically or socially constrained, this sense of limited possibility played a significant role in motivating their decision to apply to UWC programmes, which they saw as a gateway to new cultures, ideas, and opportunities. SB8 underlines:

“The international aspect attracted me a lot because I would learn about different people, cultures, and viewpoints. I thought it would be a really great opportunity for me. Especially at that age, I felt I wouldn’t easily find such an opportunity again. And since I was in Cyprus, I felt a bit confined.... So, I thought this could open many doors for me. That’s why I applied.”

This is echoed by SB11, who underlines, “I have always wished to study abroad, so when I saw the opportunity, I thought, ‘why not try?’” Yet another states, “It offers a new life, different cultures, and different people. It is an environment where everyone lives together. And I had always wanted something like that anyway” (SB10). But it was not only the international dimension that appealed to participants, a small number of whom saw UWC as an opportunity to get to know the ‘other’ community in Cyprus. SB4 makes this crystal clear by treating UWC “as an opportunity to get to know ... Greek/Turkish Cypriots and to meet at the green line”, emphasising they “never really got such an opportunity”. Yet another short course participant noted, “I’ve always been aware of Greek/Turkish speakers, but I had never gotten the chance to meet one. And seeing that this was bicomunal with international students as well was really interesting for me” (SCB4).

For short course participants, motivations are centred on personal development, social confidence, and the excitement of meeting new people. Those who identified as introverted or socially reserved saw The Programme as a structured opportunity to challenge themselves and build communication skills. One participant reflected:

“I was very introverted and did not enjoy talking much... I was a bit weak in socialising. I decided to join in order to improve myself in these areas.... I was also excited because I would be meeting people completely outside of school. Up until that point, I had only known people from my school. I wanted to meet different kinds of people, and that is what motivated me. (SCB2)”

Others were drawn by the promise of intercultural bonding and the novelty of a two-week immersive experience, with SCB3 revealing “it was mostly for the experience” that they applied initially and because they “love meeting new people and intercultural bonding”. Prior exposure to UWC’s values firsthand through short courses also played a decisive role for some applicants when applying for the scholarship programme. The emphasis on open-mindedness and collaborative learning has been particularly important in reinforcing their motivation to pursue the two-year scholarship programme, with SB3 noting:

“The factor that convinced me the most is the short course because I really liked the learning experience and the open-mindedness of the short course, and I realised it’s something fun to do.”

Academic motivations and the perceived advantages the EU Scholarship Programme offers for university pathways were also prominent, with the prospect of the Davis Scholarship⁵ further strengthening their interest. Trust in UWC’s reputation also surfaced as a subtle but meaningful motivator. As one participant put it simply, the organisation’s credibility made them feel they *“could trust The Programme to go and study”* (SB20). Together, these motivations reveal a consistent pattern: participants were seeking not just an educational opportunity, but a transformative experience that combined academic challenge, cultural exchange, and personal growth.

3.1.3 Pre-Programme Expectations

Participants entered The Programme with a wide spectrum of expectations, ranging from clearly defined academic goals to more open-ended hopes for cultural exposure, personal growth, and social connection. The vast majority of participants anticipated cultural and social learning opportunities, including deeper engagement with the bicomunal context of Cyprus, in particular perspectives not readily accessible within their own community or public-school environment, as SB15 articulates:

“I would also say one of my expectations was meeting Greek/Turkish-speaking Cypriots, because for me, this was the first time. So, I was super excited to chat, and I expected to learn more, so much more than I had already been taught at public school, for example, or by my family. And I did. I did learn so much.”

This is echoed by SB17, who states:

“My expectations actually were to learn more about Cyprus, which I was able to do throughout my school and through the UWC Cyprus Committee.... Being in a public school as a Greek/Turkish Cypriot, it is not that easy to find a different voice So, I was hoping that I could also connect with people and learn more about what I’m actually living in.... And also, another intention was genuinely just to meet [people] and explore cultures. If I were in the Cyprus bubble, I wouldn’t have been able to explore as much as UWC.”

SPB12 notes, *“beyond academic objectives, however, [most scholarship recipients] anticipated opportunities for social interaction, meeting new people, exposure to different cultures, and gaining novel experiences”*. And yet another scholarship programme beneficiary states, *“my biggest expectation was simply to meet new people, to see different cultures, and to live in a new place I didn’t know before”* (SB10). Meeting new people was also reiterated by short course beneficiaries, with SCB3 noting, *“my expectations were that I would meet quite a few people, that it would change me”*.

At the same time, many participants intentionally kept their expectations modest, often because they were advised not to arrive with overly high hopes. This cautious approach was rooted in a desire to avoid disappointment, particularly given The Programme’s reputation for being socially and academically intense. *“Everyone told me to come to UWC with no expectations because then if you have too high expectations you may get disappointed or anything”*, states SB16, *“I went in without any big expectations”*, says SB4, *“most scholarship recipients did not enter The Programme with particularly high expectations”*, adds SB12, *“I didn’t go with very big expectations because if I had gone with high expectations, I was worried that they might not be met”*, reiterates SB10. Yet even those who entered with limited expectations still anticipated meaningful social interaction, new friendships, and exposure to different cultures. Many echo SB10, who concludes, reflecting on their experiences, *“I can say that I found everything I had hoped for, and even more”*. It was common for participants to acknowledge that UWC programmes met their expectations.

Across all accounts, expectations were shaped less by detailed knowledge of The Programme and more by a desire for connection, cultural exploration, and personal development, with many ultimately finding that the experience exceeded what they had initially imagined.

⁵ The Davis UWC Scholars Programme, the largest privately funded, need-based international scholarship scheme in the world, helps UWC graduates study at designated U.S. universities.

3.1.4 Awareness of Programme Details

Participants entered The Programme with varying degrees of awareness about its aims, structure, and academic challenges. While many had a general understanding of UWC's peace-building ethos, its focus on intercultural connection and its emphasis on fostering relationships across divided communities, their grasp of The Programme's practical components, particularly the academic demands, was often incomplete. Students reflected:

"From the first moment they explained why it would be in Mostar ... I don't think the parallels with Cyprus were emphasised, but I think they were very obvious. So, I picked up on that. And so, I understood the objectives from there, like building bridges, as they say in Mostar, and joining people's opinions and origins together, and seeing how collaboration works between different types of people. (SB15)"

"Of course, I knew the objective was to build a sustainable future and strive towards peace... But I didn't think that we could go and interact and be friends with these people and just try to build something together. (SB4)"

At the same time, many participants acknowledged that their understanding was partial or uneven. Some were familiar with UWC's values but not with the academic framework, with SB12 noting that while they knew The Programme's ethos, they *"didn't really know what I was getting myself into"* academically and were unaware of what the IB entailed. Others were unclear about what participation alongside their Greek/Turkish Cypriot counterparts would involve, whether in terms of dialogue, workshops, or exposure to alternative historical narratives, as SB1 reiterates by noting, *"I was not very much aware of what it meant to be part of this specific scholarship and opportunity alongside our Greek/Turkish Cypriot counterparts. And what would that include in terms of conversation or workshops or, I don't know, learning our history in a different way, perhaps."*

Short course participants expressed even greater ambiguity, with some arriving unsure of The Programme's specific content or focus. One participant admitted that *"the overall idea and plan of the short course was not exactly clear,"* (SCB4) and that the advertised theme of diversity did not initially align with their expectations of the activities, noting *"It was called diversity in action, but I didn't think that we did anything much related to diversity"*. Yet, many found that The Programme's core objectives became evident through lived experience. Participants described forming meaningful friendships across communities and witnessing firsthand The Programme's success in fostering connection.

Overall, awareness of programme details prior to participation was often limited, shaped more by broad impressions of UWC's values than by concrete knowledge of its academic or structural components. However, even when initial understanding was incomplete, participants consistently recognised The Programme's objectives through their interactions and experiences once they joined. Participant narratives suggest some students experienced discovery as informal or incomplete; however, UWC Cyprus' outreach records indicate that information sessions/onboarding include IB, CAS, and programme aims. **This suggests an information absorption/retention issue rather than the absence of information or insufficient information. As such, solutions and improvements could focus less on adding information and more on ensuring that applicants and families absorb, retain and revisit the information at key decision points.**

3.2. Participant Outcomes and Programme Impact

3.2.1 Intercommunal relations

The study focused on investigating beneficiaries' own perceptions of change in their own attitudes and parents' perceptions of change in their children as a result of their UWC experience. It did not investigate the parents' own attitudinal change. Still, the combined quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrate that UWC programmes exert a substantial and multi-layered influence on intercommunal relations between Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) youth, as well as their parents. **Across all three dimensions, intercommunal Social Proximity, Intercommunal Trust, and Social Tolerance towards the other community, beneficiaries consistently report more positive attitudes and deeper cross-community engagement than *both* their parents and the 2017 benchmark populations. UWC beneficiary parents also report more positive attitudes compared to the 2017 benchmark, which points to a multiplier/ripple effect.** However, this is difficult to confirm in an

attributable way beyond the benchmark comparison because the study focused on investigating the impact on direct beneficiaries. Despite the limits of the evidence with regard to not having a direct baseline or a control group, or a dedicated parent-change module, the quantitative patterns are strongly reinforced by participants' narratives, which describe profound shifts in how they perceive, interact with, and relate to the other community.

Intercommunal Social Proximity

Quantitative findings indicate exceptionally high levels of Positive Intergroup Feelings among beneficiaries. Positive Intergroup Feelings is a composite made up of three indicators, namely, Intercommunal Social Proximity⁶, Intercommunal Trust⁷ and Social Tolerance towards the "other community"⁸. Figure 2a and 2b. illustrates the scores for the composite Positive Intergroup Feelings and its components on a 10-point scale, where 0 means the phenomena, the indicators are measuring is non-existent, and 10 means it is strong and prevalent.

When it comes to Positive Intergroup Feelings, both TC and GC beneficiaries report high scores, 9.2 and 8.9 out of 10, respectively. On the other hand, TC and GC parents report scores of 7.8 and 8.8 out of 10, respectively. Only the differences between TC and GC parents, along with the differences between TC beneficiaries and TC parents, are statistically significant.

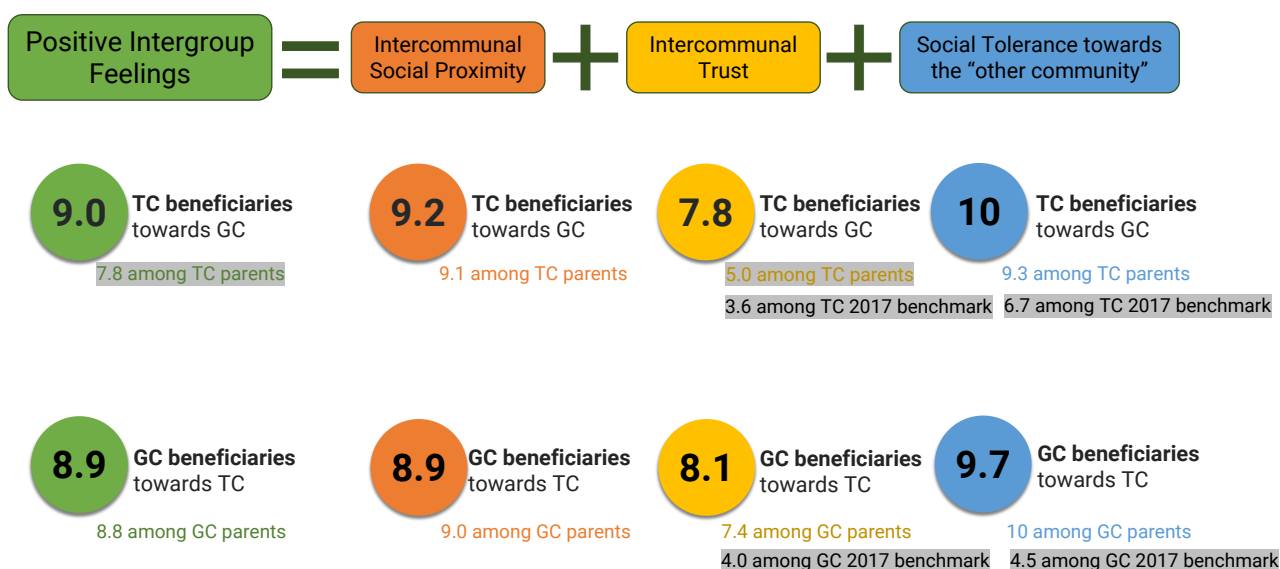


Figure 2a: Positive Intergroup Feelings of beneficiaries.

⁶ Social Proximity measures the extent to which respondents are open to accepting people across the divide as neighbours, classmates, colleagues, educators, close friends, romantic partners, bosses and presidents.

⁷ Intergroup Trust measures the extent to which respondents express no trust towards people across the divide, on a scale of 0 to 3, where 0 means not at all trust, and 3 means fully trust.

⁸ Social Tolerance measures the extent to which respondents would be willing to interact with and accept members of different social groups as part of their community (e.g. foreign workers, the LGBTQ+ community, Roma community, different religions, people across the divide etc.).

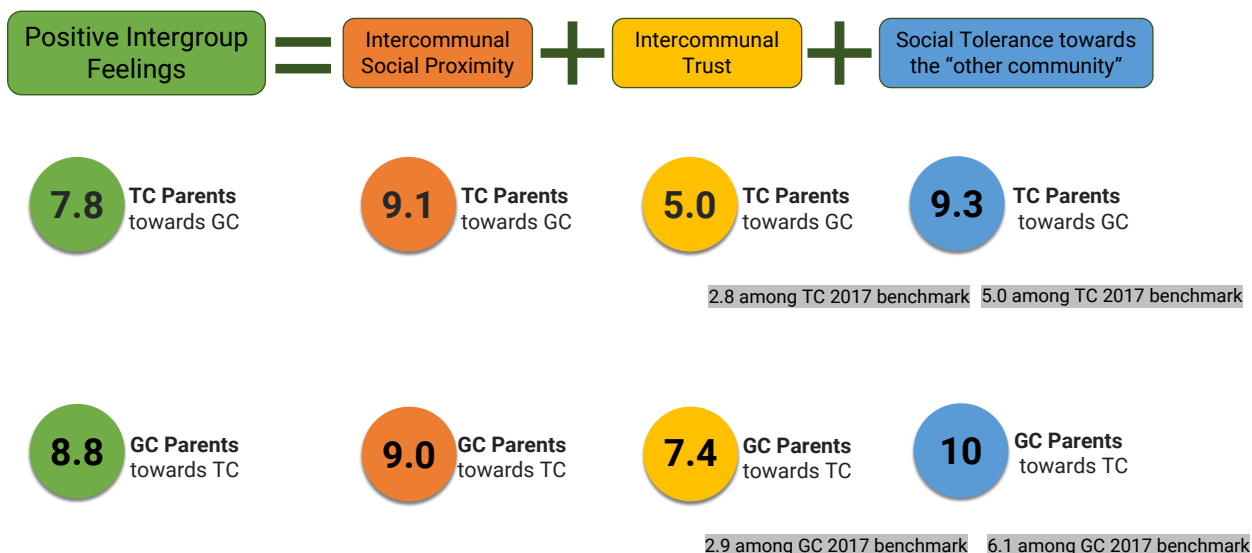


Figure 2b: Positive Intergroup Feelings of parents.

Beneficiaries consistently score high across all three *composite indicators*, *Social Proximity*, *Intercommunal Trust* and *Social Tolerance towards the "other community"*. However, the pattern with parents is more nuanced, especially when it comes to *Intercommunal Trust*. TC parents report significantly lower trust at 5.0 out of 10 compared to TC beneficiaries (7.8/10), GC beneficiaries (8.1/10) and GC parents (7.4/10). This shows that while there are functional coexistence and tolerance, it is cautious and not deep for TC parents, especially compared to their children. This points to an intergenerational gap between TC beneficiaries and TC parents, where the former reports significantly more *Positive Intergroup Feelings* (trust in particular). The same intergenerational gap is not observed between GC beneficiaries and GC parents. It could indicate that the effect of The Programme on GC parents was greater, or that the GC beneficiaries were more likely to come from households with more positive intergroup attitudes, and TC beneficiaries come from more socio-politically diverse households. Although the interpretation of why we are seeing this intergenerational gap is speculative, the evidence clearly shows that the gap exists. Nonetheless, compared to the benchmark from 2017, both beneficiary and parent groups score notably higher. This indicates that the trends and patterns are moving in a positive direction, even if they are moving at different rates or starting from different benchmarks.

Overall, findings about intergroup feelings are highly positive and encouraging across all groups, especially when we consider that both TC and GC beneficiaries, along with their parents, exceed (more than double) the 2017 benchmark levels. Yet, as there is no baseline for the beneficiaries before they joined The Programme, these are indicative and interpretive findings rather than conclusive.

These quantitative patterns closely mirror the qualitative accounts. Participants described significant shifts in their attitudes, particularly in how they perceived the "other side" (SB22) of the Cypriot divide. Many entered The Programme carrying narratives shaped by school curricula, family histories, or broader societal discourses, which often portrayed the other community through a lens of distance or suspicion. SB22 explained:

"They taught us that the other side, okay, they are enemies and everything because of the history classes... But as I moved forward, I realised that... we are the same people. Why should this be like that? Why are we in that state of enmity and everything? So, it really changed my view, how I was seeing the other side and everything."

Others described how their schooling had presented Greek/Turkish Cypriots as an abstract, dehumanised collective rather than as individuals. SB14 reflected:

"We would always be taught to just view the people across the communal divide as, like, a bit dehumanised... So... meeting and actually getting to meet and engage with people and have developed friendships with people across the divide obviously just humanises them and just makes it so much clearer how we're, like, basically the same people just speaking different languages."

Short course participants expressed similar experiences. SCB3 noted, “You learn that other people are humans too... they’re also 17-year-olds like you with the same goals, with the same vision.” Even those who said their views had not changed because they already held inclusive attitudes prior to UWC participation, emphasised that they “got many more contacts and connections with people through UWC” (SB12), recognising how unusual such contact is for many young people in the south, where “there’s a lot of hatred towards the north” (SB12). SB4 added, “My Greek/Turkish Cypriot co-year, we became such good friends.”

The depth of these relationships is further reflected in Figure 3, which shows that both GC and TC beneficiaries maintain regular communication with peers across the divide, with the majority engaging at least monthly and substantial proportions communicating weekly or daily. Scholars and non-scholars show similar patterns, indicating that the effect is not limited to long-term programme participants. Although male beneficiaries report more frequent contact than female beneficiaries, overall contact levels remain high across all groups. This gender difference in contact may be due to two factors. The first is a sampling factor. Although analytical tests were run to confirm that differences are statistically significant to avoid over-interpretation, there are twice as many females in the sample as males. The second factor can be attributed to traditional gender norms in Cyprus, such as young girls having more household duties than their male peers, having stricter curfews, needing chaperones to be out after dark, and similar.

While there is **no difference in the frequency of intercommunal contact** between GC and TC beneficiaries, as well as scholars and non scholars, **male beneficiaries report more frequent communication** with people from across the divide compared to female beneficiaries. This can be linked to traditional gender norms.

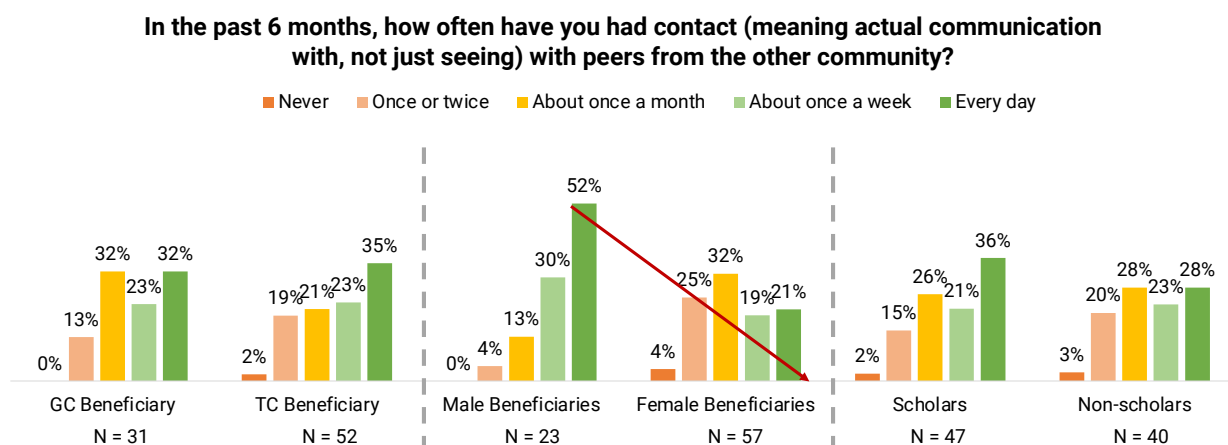
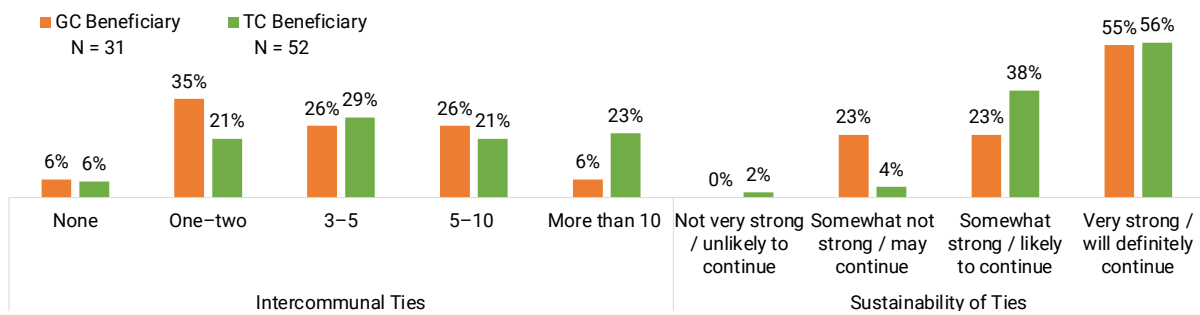


Figure 3: Comparison of Intercommunal Contact by community, gender and participation.

Beyond Intercommunal Contact, meaningful and sustainable Intercommunal Ties are also evident. Figure 4a and 4b show that both GC and TC beneficiaries overwhelmingly describe their cross-community friendships as “somewhat strong” or “very strong,” with more than half expecting these relationships to continue. Scholars and non-scholars maintain comparable numbers of meaningful ties, suggesting that UWC experiences create durable social bridges regardless of activity type.

How many meaningful ties (people you regularly communicate with or/and feel connected to) do you have across the divide?

How would you describe your friendships or collaborations with other UWC participants from the other community?

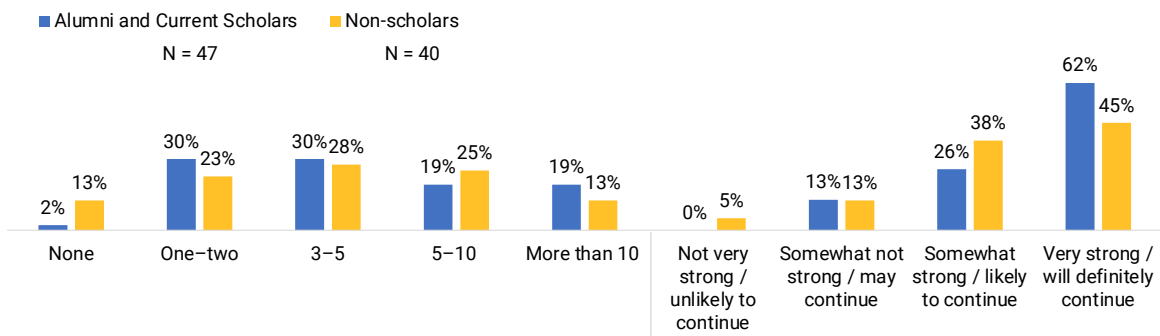


TC beneficiaries have slightly more ties across the divide but the difference is not notable. There are no gender differences in the number of intercommunal ties nor in the sustainability of the ties.

Figure 4a: Comparison of Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) beneficiaries

How many meaningful ties (people you regularly communicate with or/and feel connected to) do you have across the divide?

How would you describe your friendships or collaborations with other UWC participants from the other community?



There are no significant differences between scholars and non-scholars in the number of intercommunal ties nor in the sustainability of the ties.

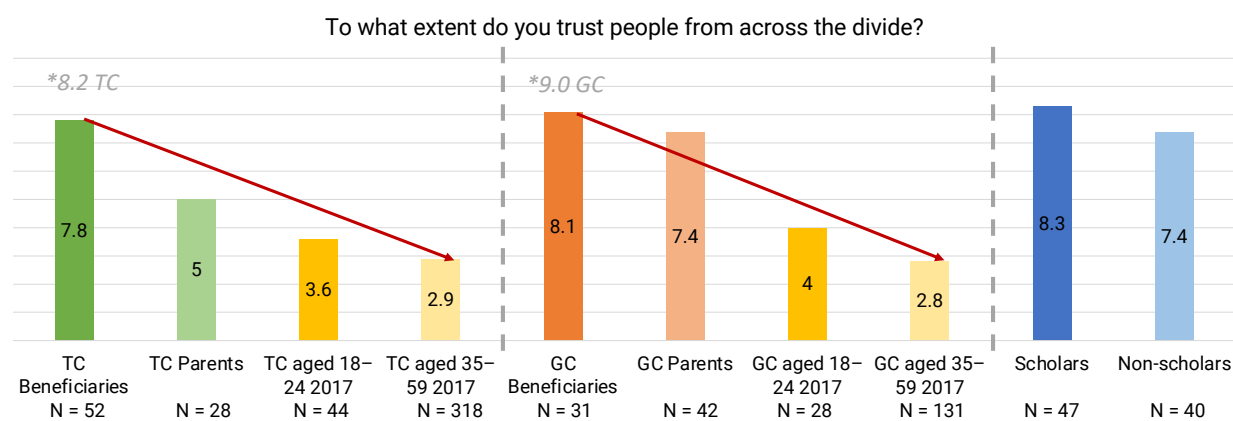
Figure 4b: Comparison of alumni and current scholars, and non-scholars.

SB14 described this vividly: *“one of my best friends... is from across the divide in Cyprus, and I speak to her, like, basically every single day... we’ve developed a pretty deep and meaningful connection.”* They continued, *“We just saw each other facing the same challenges of, like, missing home... being lost... overly excited... overwhelmed.”*

Intercommunal Trust

Trust is the dimension where UWC beneficiaries show the most dramatic improvement relative to their parents and to the benchmark. As illustrated in Figure 5, TC beneficiaries report a trust score of 7.8 (8.2 for 18+), compared to 5.0 among TC parents and just 3.6 among the 2017 TC youth benchmark. GC beneficiaries report 8.1 (9.0 for 18+), compared to 7.4 among GC parents and 4.0 among the 2017 GC youth benchmark. As such, not only do the beneficiaries show more than double the trust levels of their 2017 peers, but parents also notably surpass the 2017 benchmarks.

TC beneficiaries show higher trust than their parents; GC beneficiaries differ only slightly from theirs.
 Trust levels are **much higher compared to the 2017 benchmark.**
All other differences are too small to interpret.



* TC/GC beneficiaries include under + over 18, all beneficiaries. The sub-sample for benchmarking from the 2017 data set covering 18-24 year olds. Asterisks scores exclude under 18 year old beneficiaries from the mean scores to be more accurate.

Figure 5: Intergroup Trust.

Qualitative evidence helps explain this change. Many participants described entering UWC with internalised narratives portraying the other community as hostile or fundamentally different, often reinforced by history lessons or family stories. Through structured dialogue, shared experiences, and everyday interactions, these assumptions were challenged. SB1 reflected on realising that their families “went through the same things... just on different sides of Cyprus,” which helped them understand that “being a Cypriot is being a Cypriot.” Participants described how trust developed through shared vulnerability, particularly during the early stages of The Programme when they navigated homesickness, confusion, and excitement together. These experiences created a sense of mutual support that extended beyond The Programme environment.

Social Tolerance towards the Other Community

Social tolerance emerges as the strongest of the three composite indicators for Intergroup Positive Feelings. As shown above in Figures 2a and 2b, TC beneficiaries report a perfect score of 10 out of 10, and GC beneficiaries 9.7. TC parents similarly report 9.3, and GC parents 10 out of 10. The decimal differences for Social Tolerance towards the “other community” are negligible and statistically insignificant. Notably, they all surpass both 2017 benchmarks (TC youth benchmark 6.7; GC youth benchmark 4.5; TC parent benchmark 5.0 and GC parent benchmark 6.1).

Qualitative accounts reveal how this tolerance developed. Participants described becoming more open-minded, more willing to engage with differing viewpoints, and more capable of modifying their opinions. SCB3 explained that “before I went, I was very opinionated... but now I can modify it, and I can improve it.” Others described learning to listen to opposing perspectives rather than dismissing them. SCB2 reflected that they had previously “brushed them off without much thought” until UWC taught them to “respect and value their beliefs and perspectives.”

Even participants who reported no change in their attitudes towards the other community emphasised that they gained a deeper understanding and more meaningful contact, reinforcing their existing inclusive views. These shifts in tolerance are closely connected to the high levels of Social Proximity and trust observed in the quantitative data, as interpersonal contact and dialogue sustained a more nuanced understanding of the other community.

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that UWC programmes have a powerful and consistent impact on intercommunal relations. Beneficiaries exhibit exceptionally high Social Proximity, supported by frequent and meaningful Intercommunal Contact; substantially elevated trust, far exceeding both parental and benchmark levels; and very high Social Tolerance, reflecting openness to differing perspectives and rejection of inherited stereotypes. Qualitative accounts provide rich insight into the mechanisms behind these changes: humanising encounters, shared experiences, structured intercultural dialogue, and the formation of durable friendships across the divide. The convergence

between quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that UWC programmes play a significant role in fostering more connected, trusting, and tolerant relationships between GC and TC youth.

Associations between contact, ties, and constructive citizenship

Correlation analysis indicates that more frequent Intercommunal Contact is associated with having a greater number of Intercommunal Ties and higher perceived sustainability of those ties, as Figure 6 reveals. In other words, contact is not only causing less friction, but it is meaningful and transformative. More frequent contact is also associated with stronger constructive citizenship and civic initiative. These patterns align with The Programme’s theory of change and point to mutually reinforcing relationships (i.e. virtuous cycles) between contact and civic outcomes.

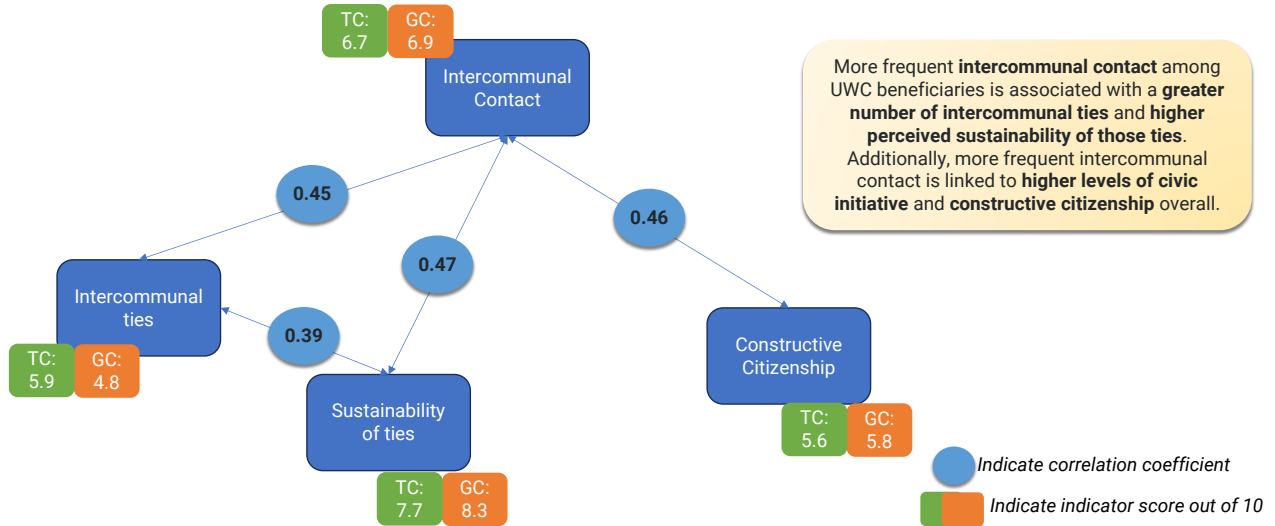
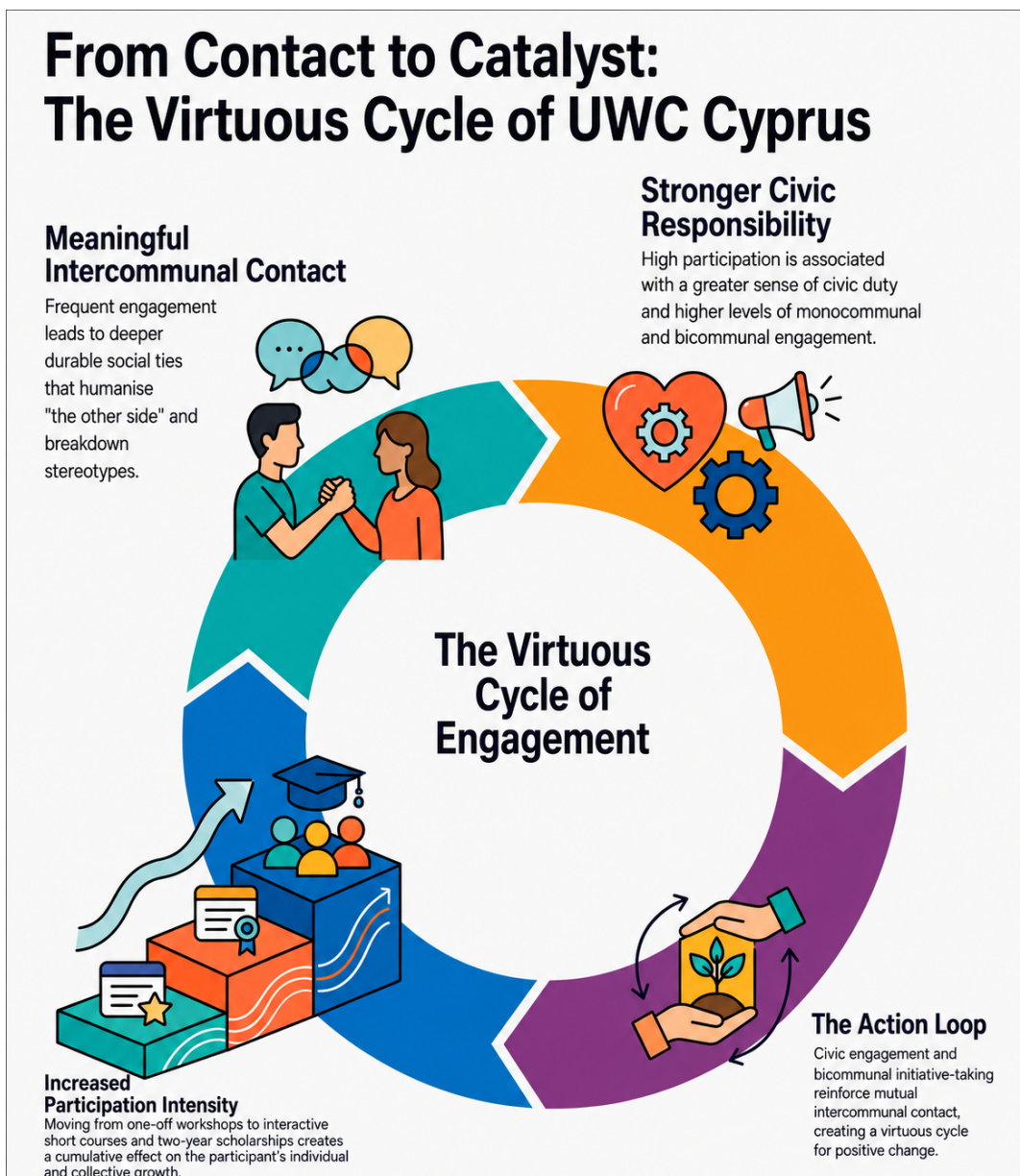


Figure 6: Correlation network between Intercommunal Contact, Frequency and Sustainability of Intercommunal Ties.

The infographic below illustrates the virtuous cycle in a more visual way:



3.2.2 Civic Attitudes and Constructive Citizenship

Social Tolerance towards Diverse Groups

Across all measures, beneficiaries report very high levels of Social Tolerance towards diverse groups, with most scores falling above 8 out of 10. As shown in Table 4, both GC and TC beneficiaries demonstrate consistently strong acceptance of a wide range of social groups, including people of different skin colour, LGBTQI+ individuals, immigrants, and people with disabilities. Notable differences are highlighted in the table (shades and boxes). These differences reveal that beneficiaries are more tolerant than their parents, towards some groups, particularly towards refugees and asylum seekers. Further, Scholars are more tolerant than non-scholars. This suggests that longer or more intensive engagement with UWC programming may contribute to deeper shifts in attitudes towards groups, reinforcing the idea that programme duration and depth of exposure may play a meaningful role in shaping social attitudes.

Social Tolerance

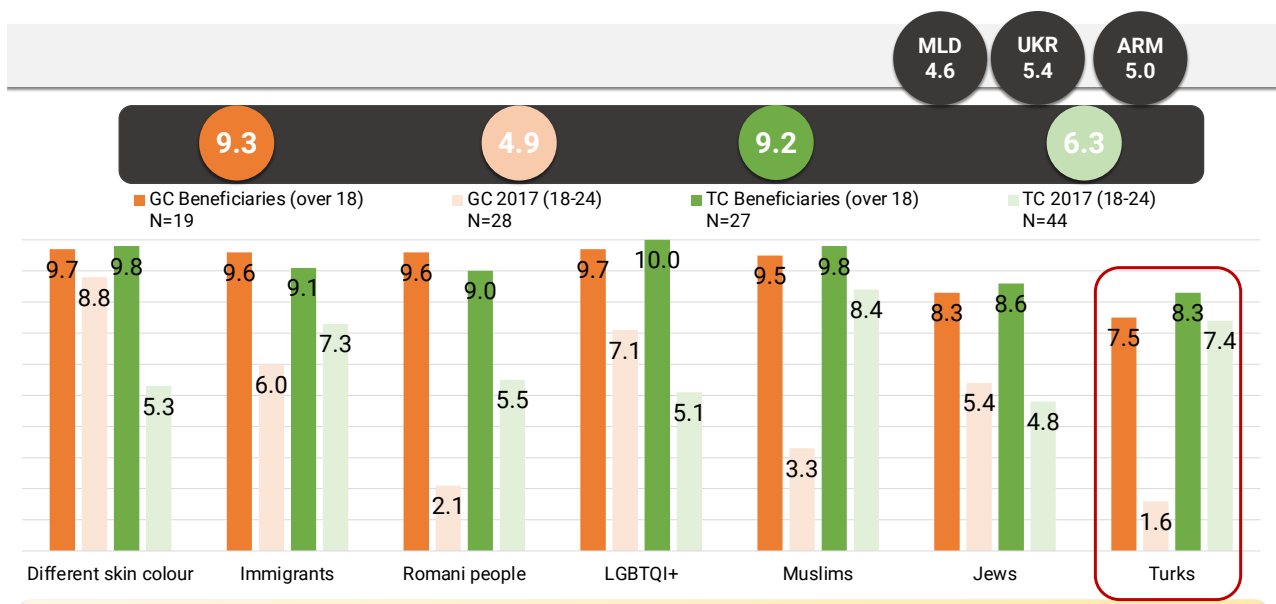
Towards all groups

| Towards: | Towards all groups | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.3 | 8.8 | 9.6 | 9.0 |
| | GC Beneficiaries N=31 | GC Parents N=42 | TC Beneficiaries N=52 | TC Parents N=28 | Scholars N=47 | Non-Scholars N=40 |
| Turks | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.1 | 8.3 | 8.5 | 7.7 |
| Greeks | 10 | 10 | 9 | 8.3 | 9.6 | 9 |
| Refugees or Asylum Seekers | 9.4 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 7.4 | 9.2 | 7.6 |
| People with different skin colour | 9.7 | 10 | 9.8 | 8.6 | 10 | 9.2 |
| Immigrants | 9.4 | 9.0 | 9.2 | 8.0 | 9.7 | 8.7 |
| Romani people | 9.7 | 8.2 | 9.3 | 8.9 | 9.6 | 9.3 |
| LGBTQI+ | 9.8 | 9.7 | 9.9 | 9.3 | 9.9 | 9.9 |
| People with disabilities | 9.7 | 10 | 10 | 9.3 | 10 | 9.5 |
| Muslims | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.1 | 9.9 | 8.9 |
| Christians | 10 | 10 | 9.7 | 9.1 | 10 | 9.6 |
| Jews | 8.5 | 9.5 | 8.8 | 8.1 | 8.7 | 8.1 |

Table 4: Social tolerance towards all groups.

Overall, Social Tolerance scores are high, but still, there is some room for improvement when it comes to tolerance towards Turkish nationals (from Turkey) and Jews. These lower scores suggest that certain stereotype domains remain more resistant to change, even among highly tolerant youth. This pattern indicates that targeted educational or dialogue-based interventions may be needed to address these more persistent biases.

Figure 7 below matches the Social Tolerance indicator to the SCORE 2017 benchmark, both in terms of mean scores overall as well as on the item level for different groups. To make the match closer to the benchmark sampling, only beneficiaries older than 18 are used in the analysis illustrated in the Figure. UWC Beneficiary scores are substantially higher than those observed in the 2017 benchmark populations, indicating a marked generational shift towards more inclusive attitudes.



Compared to the benchmark from 2017, beneficiaries are notably more tolerant towards all groups. Lowest scores of tolerance are towards Turks. This points to the need to break down stereotypes towards this group in a more thoughtful and targeted way.

* Christians, Greeks, Refugees or Asylum seekers, People with disabilities were not measured in 2017, thus not included in the chart.

Figure 7: Social Tolerance benchmarked.

Peacebuilding Attitudes and Openness to Dialogue

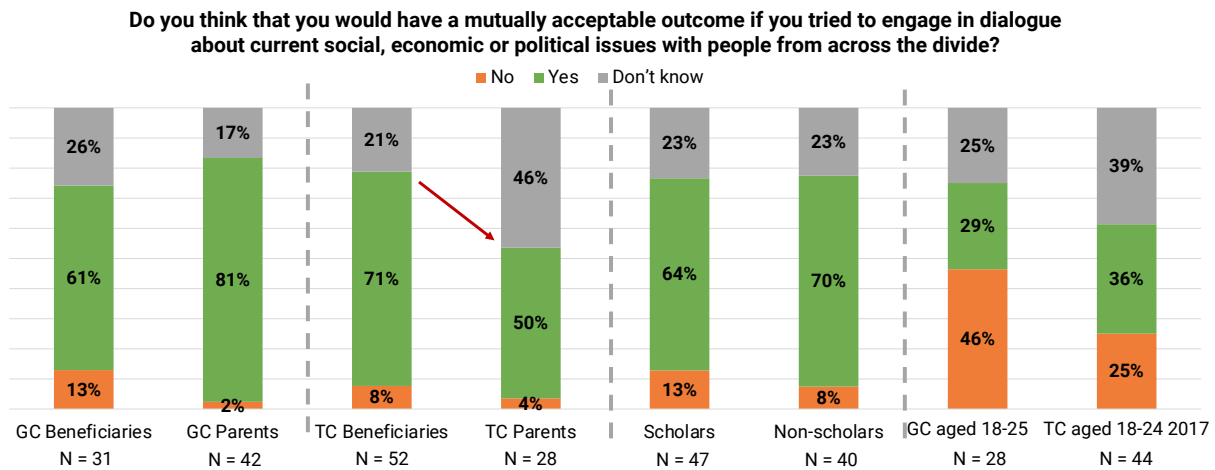
Indicators of Peacebuilding Attitudes (e.g., conflict perspective-taking, pluralism, and inclusive belonging) are strong across beneficiary groups. While direct benchmarking was not available for these indicators, results suggest consistent alignment with UWC values. Table 5 below unpacks the indicator that measures Peacebuilding Attitudes. There are no statistically significant differences between GC and TC beneficiaries. They generally score high on Heritage Pluralism, Intergroup Commonality, Inclusive Belonging, and Historical Multi-Perspectivity, with scores typically falling above 8 out of 10. These consistently strong scores suggest that participants not only endorse pluralistic and inclusive principles but also reject rigid or exclusionary narratives. This is further reflected in the very low levels of Historical Absolutism across all beneficiary groups, indicating a willingness to acknowledge multiple perspectives on Cyprus's past. Although relatively lower, Conflict Perspective-Taking also shows solid endorsement, with beneficiaries reporting frequent reflection on how different communities may have experienced the island's conflict. Still, there is some room for improvement in Historical Absolutism and Conflict Perspective-Taking. More specifically, while GC participants score higher on Historical Absolutism, an undesirable indicator, TC participants score lower on Conflict Perspective-Taking, a desirable indicator. Reducing Historical Absolutism below a score of 1 out of 10 and Conflict Perspective-Taking above a score of 7.5 out of 10 could be set as an MEL target for the future cycles, which could be achieved through more critical engagement around critical historical thinking that highlights the subjective nature of history, which could often be thought to be objective and factual. These could involve pedagogical approaches and learning activities (e.g. essays, exercises, performances, musicals and documentaries), around multi-perspectivity, source analysis, disciplinary history, error-based learning and case studies of disputed events, as well as post-colonial and constructivist schools of thought calibrated for beneficiaries' age group.

| | GC Beneficiaries N=31 | TC Beneficiaries N=52 | Scholars N=47 | Non-Scholars N=40 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Heritage Pluralism <i>Cultural and historical heritage of different religions and groups enrich Cyprus and should be protected.</i> | 9.2 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.0 |
| Intergroup Commonality <i>Across all ethnic groups and communities in Cyprus, there are more things that unite us than separate us.</i> | 9.5 | 8.5 | 8.3 | 9.2 |
| Inclusive belonging <i>All people living in Cyprus can belong here and can call it home no matter their ethnic, racial, religious backgrounds or language they speak.</i> | 8.1 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 8.3 |
| Historical Multi-perspectivity <i>There are many factors to the history of Cyprus, and many perspectives to how and why the island had been divided</i> | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.4 |
| Historical Absolutism <i>There is only one historical narrative that reflects the truth, and accepting it is necessary for society to move forward.</i> | 2.9 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 3.3 |
| Conflict Perspective-Taking <i>I often think how members of different communities might have experienced the violent conflict in Cyprus between 1950s and 1970s.</i> | 7.1 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 6.9 |

Table 5: Peacebuilding Attitudes.

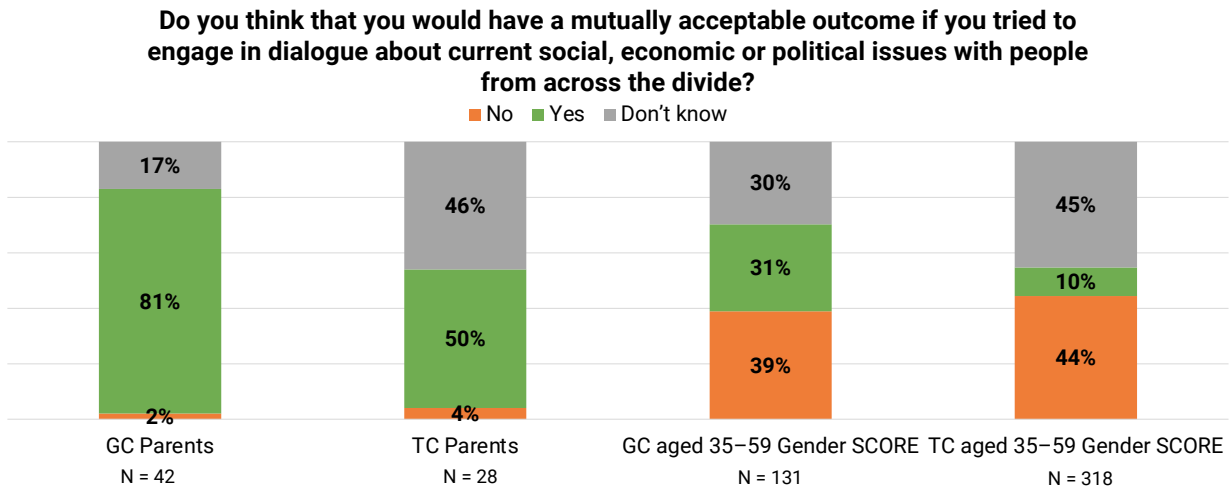
Differences between scholars and non-scholars are more nuanced. Scholars score comparatively lower both on Intergroup Commonality and on Historical Absolutism than non-scholars. This suggests that extended participation and international exposure may trigger critical reflection and/or scepticism towards Intergroup Commonality, while positively challenging and transforming their perspectives on the subjectivity of historical narratives. Yet, scholars still score high on Intergroup Commonality, and this is not necessarily a problematic finding.

Openness to dialogue, closely related to Peacebuilding Attitudes, is almost equally high among beneficiaries, scholars, and non-scholars. Figure 8 below shows that while TC Beneficiaries are more optimistic about inter-group dialogue than their parents, both GC and TC beneficiaries, as well as parents, are more likely to believe they could reach a mutually acceptable outcome through dialogue compared to benchmarked respondents in the 2017 SCORE study.



TC Beneficiaries are more optimistic about inter-group dialogue than their parents. **Both GC and TC beneficiaries** are more likely to believe they would reach a mutually acceptable outcome, compared to respondents in the 2017 SCORE study. There are no other meaningful differences between groups.

Figure 8: Openness to Dialogue by group and beneficiary benchmark.



Both GC and TC parents are more likely to believe they would reach a mutually acceptable outcome, compared to respondents in the 2017 SCORE

Figure 9: Openness to Dialogue benchmarking parents.

A similar trend appears among parents, as illustrated in Figure 9 below, where both GC and TC parents express greater openness to dialogue than adults in the 2017 SCORE sample. GC parents, in particular, report very high confidence in dialogue, while TC parents show more uncertainty but still outperform the 2017 benchmark. These patterns suggest that while beneficiaries demonstrate the strongest attitudes overall, parents also reflect more openness compared to 2017, pointing to a wider generational and contextual shift.

Qualitative findings provide more in-depth evidence, suggesting The Programme expanded participants' openness to cultural difference and strengthened their comfort engaging with people whose backgrounds, worldviews, and ways of thinking differed from their own. Many explained that living and working in a highly diverse environment normalised differences and helped them understand it as something natural rather than threatening. As one student put it, collaborating daily with peers from many countries taught them that "people from different countries can have different ways of thinking... and this is a very natural thing" (SB10).

This shift in perspective made it easier for them to adapt to similar international environments later on, suggesting that The Programme cultivated a generalised tolerance that extended well beyond the UWC setting. Participants described learning to navigate conversations where people approached issues from different cultural or ideological standpoints, and they increasingly saw these differences as enriching rather than divisive. Through these interactions, many developed a more flexible

understanding of identity and belonging. SB15, for example, reflected on how their sense of who counts as “Cypriot” expanded during The Programme, challenging the narrow definitions they had inherited from institutions in the south or north. This widening of identity boundaries reflects a deeper shift towards embracing diversity as part of one’s social world.

Participants also described feeling an equal sense of closeness and sincerity with peers from different backgrounds, suggesting that their capacity for connection was no longer limited by communal or cultural lines. This broader openness to diversity echoed across many accounts. Short course participants described meeting people with different goals and mindsets as socially transformative. SCB3 noted that the experience *“helped me socially a lot because I met so many people who have so many goals and are so open-minded. So, it inspired me a lot.”* Others described becoming more open-minded and more capable of engaging constructively with differing viewpoints, with SB12 explaining that firsthand exposure to different cultures helped them *“understand people better and also consider and take into consideration their opinion and other different perspectives.”* SB11 explained, *“I became more receptive to people disagreeing with my truths or what I believed was right...”* SB8 similarly reflected on learning to listen to every side during debates:

“Definitely becoming open-minded because when there are many debates, I learned to listen to every side and try to understand everyone in some way. Now I tend to take everyone’s input into account before making a decision.”

Participants also described becoming more receptive to having their ideas challenged, including assumptions shaped by national narratives.

Short course participants described similar transformations, with SCB3 noting that before attending, they were *“very opinionated,”* but afterwards found they could modify and improve their views. SCB1 described the experience as one that *“pushed me to move further forward and transformed me into what we would describe as a more open-minded person,”* emphasising how meeting people from different countries helped them reflect on their values and understand themselves better.

Alongside this broader Social Tolerance, as was detailed in the section sub-titled ‘Intercommunal Social Proximity’, participants described substantial growth in their willingness and ability to engage in dialogue across differences, including politically sensitive or emotionally charged topics. Many entered The Programme with inherited anxieties, biases, or discomfort about interacting with the *“other side”* of the Cypriot divide. Through structured dialogue, shared living, and everyday interactions, these barriers softened, with participants describing that they became more comfortable with disagreement and more willing to engage in difficult conversations. SB16 explained that they had previously avoided conflict but learned that *“it’s okay to disagree... and you don’t need to agree always... and you can learn from that.”*

These shifts were reinforced by structured opportunities to practice dialogue, active listening, and conflict resolution. SCB2 described how The Programme encouraged them to reflect on their assumptions and engage constructively:

“They provide tools and experiences that help us reflect on our own perspectives and question our assumptions... They place great importance on active listening... In the context of Cyprus, this teaches us to listen to people from the other side and to consider everyone’s stories and perspectives.”

Friendship across the divide made dialogue feel natural and grounded in trust. SB10 recalled initially feeling uneasy when visiting the other side, urging their parents, *“don’t speak loudly... people will hear you,”* but explained that after forming friendships, they now walk there confidently, knowing places and communities that feel familiar. Short course participants described similar transformations, with SCB1 explaining that after The Programme, they no longer saw Cyprus as two separate sides but as a shared cultural space where they felt *“the same level of closeness and sincerity”* with friends from both communities.

Taken together, these results indicate two conclusions: a. The Programme has a positive impact on peacebuilding outcomes, and this impact extends across different levels of engagement. The Programme has a positive impact on broader peace outcomes in Cyprus, directly on the beneficiaries themselves, as well as indirectly on their parents.

Constructive Citizenship: Civic Engagement, Civic Initiative-Taking and Civic Duty

The quantitative data indicate that beneficiaries demonstrate moderate-to-strong levels of constructive citizenship, with overall scores floating around 5–6 out of 10. Constructive citizenship is a composite of four indicators: Monocommunal Civic Engagement, Bicommunal Civic Engagement, Civic Initiative-Taking and Civic Duty. It balances constructive civic behaviour (i.e. action) with constructive civic attitudes (i.e. responsibility and duty). Scores for this composite need to be interpreted carefully because not all its components are normative, meaning that a score of 10 is not always desirable. For instance, a score of 10 out of 10 is not desirable neither for civic engagement nor Civic Initiative-Taking, because it is not possible for respondents to engage in or initiate all of the different civic activities from petitions to demonstrations, NGO activities to municipal events all of the time. In fact, that may be symptomatic of a deeply fractured social contract and disruptive of academic and economic endeavours. On the other hand, Civic Duty, which measures sense of responsibility and agency, is a normative indicator, where 10 out of 10 is desirable. It was not possible to benchmark constructive citizenship or its components in the SCORE 2017 study, as there were no sufficiently matching proxy indicators. Instead, we use SCORE studies from other countries to help contextualise and interpret it better.

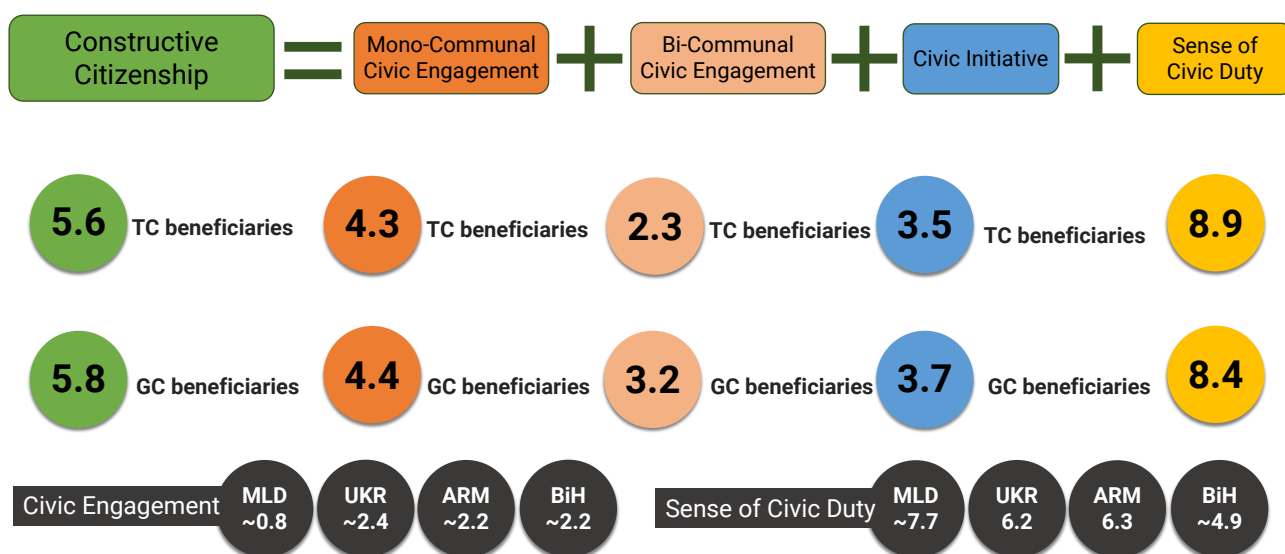
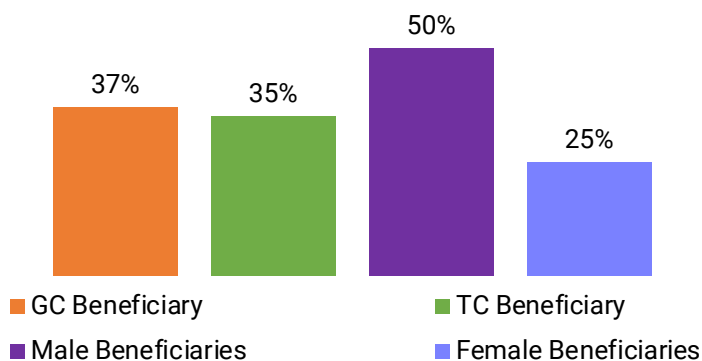


Figure 10. Constructive Citizenship.

The strongest component across all groups is a sense of Civic Duty, which consistently exceeds 8 out of 10, suggesting that participants feel a strong personal responsibility to the future of Cyprus and contribute positively to society even when their actual levels of civic action vary. Figure 10 above shows that Monocommunal Civic Engagement is generally stronger than Bicommunal Civic Engagement for both GC and TC beneficiaries. This is not surprising given that there are often more opportunities for civic engagement locally, closer to respondents' city/town of residence. Moreover, Bicommunal Engagement often requires some level of "commute", and the age group of participants, along with weak public transport infrastructure, means "accessibility" of bicommunal engagement opportunities is more limited. There are no significant differences between groups when it comes to Monocommunal Civic Engagement, Civic Initiative-Taking and sense of Civic Duty; however, TC beneficiaries report slightly higher Bicommunal Civic Engagement. Still, approximately four in ten beneficiaries report having initiated or co-initiated a civic activity. Given the relatively young age of participants (i.e. high school students or recent high school graduates), Civic Initiative-Taking scores are relatively high, and levels of youth-led action are admirable. It is further encouraging to see that civic engagement and Civic Duty scores among UWC beneficiaries surpass the benchmarking scores in various countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina⁹.

⁹ For more details on these studies and data sources, please visit: <https://scoreforpeace.org/>

For any activities you participated in mono-communally or bi-communally, have you personally initiated or co-initiated any of them? (% "Yes")



While there is no difference in civic initiative taking between **GC** and **TC beneficiaries**, **male beneficiaries** are more likely to report initiating or co-initiating activities.

| For any activity you participated in, what was it mainly about? (% "Yes") | 1 activity N=49 | 2 activities N=25 | 3 activities N=13 |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mono-Communal Civic Engagement: Gender Equality | 33% | 44% | 77% |
| Bi-Communal Civic Engagement: Human rights and inclusion | 43% | 76% | 77% |
| Bi-Communal Civic Engagement: Gender Equality | 14% | 40% | 54% |

Sense of Civic Responsibility



Beneficiaries who participate in **more UWC activities** are more likely to **engage in and initiate civic activities**, both mono- and bi-communal. They also report a higher **sense of civic responsibility**. **Nearly 4 in one beneficiaries report having initiated a civic activity themselves.**

Figure 11. & 12. Civic Initiative-Taking by group, and Civic Engagement by participation intensity.

Unpacking constructive citizenship reveals two other interesting findings. First, male beneficiaries are twice as likely to report that they have personally initiated or co-initiated civic activities as females. However, there are also twice as many females (N = 57) in the sample as males (N = 23), thus, while this seems to be statistically notable, it is important not to over-interpret, given the small size of the sample. The second interesting finding is that the data also show that, unlike Peacebuilding Attitudes, programme intensity matters for constructive citizenship. Beneficiaries who participate in more UWC activities are more likely to engage in civic activities, especially gender equality and human rights related causes, more likely to report higher civic responsibility, and more likely to have initiated civic activities themselves.

These patterns are reinforced by the correlation relationships illustrated in Figure 13, which maps a "virtuous cycle" between different forms of civic engagement and participation in EU/UN programmes. The statistically significant correlations are illustrated in blue bubbles, while the score for each group is illustrated in coloured boxes adjacent to the indicator nodes. Participation in EU/UN programmes is moderately associated with Monocommunal Civic Engagement, which in turn is strongly associated with Bicommunal Civic Engagement. Bi-communal engagement is strongly linked to Civic Initiative-Taking, and Civic Initiative-Taking is moderately associated with Intercommunal Contact. These relationships suggest that engagement in one domain reinforces engagement in others, creating a

cumulative effect, and that participation in EU/UN programmes positively influences this virtuous cycle. Although correlations indicated in grey bubbles, such as those between Monocommunal Civic Engagement, Civic Initiative-Taking, and Intercommunal Contact, are weaker but still point towards interconnected forms of participation.

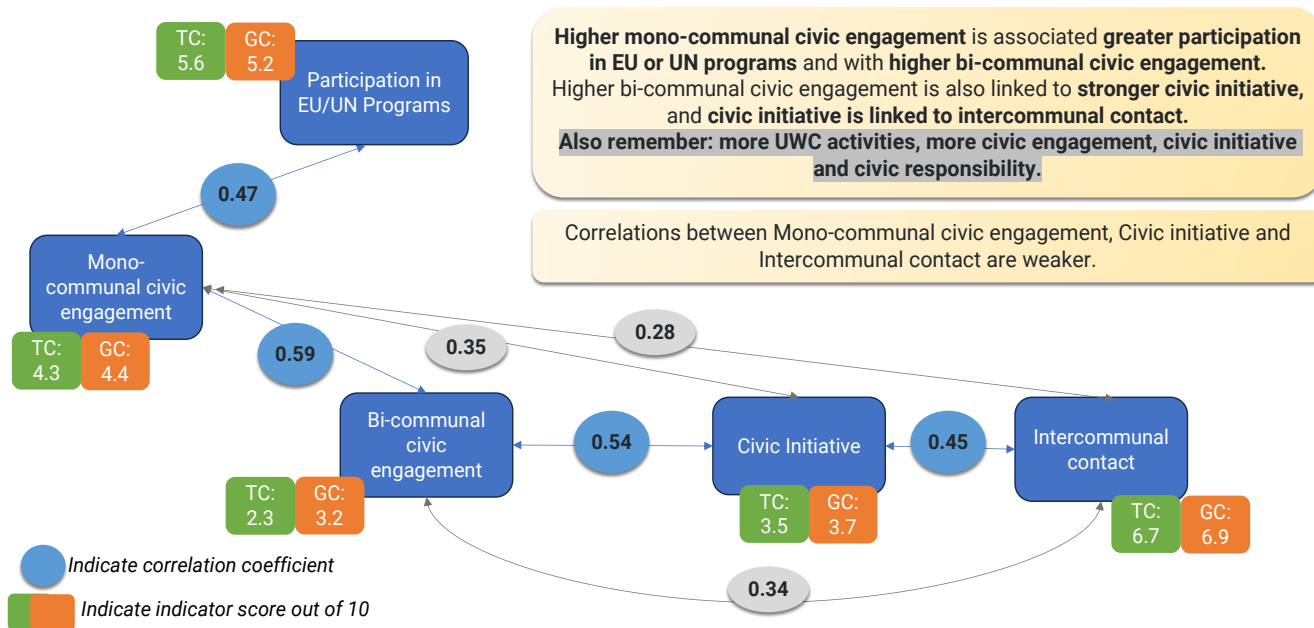


Figure 13. Virtuous cycle between programming & Constructive Citizenship

Qualitative findings support the quantitative evidence. Participants described developing a heightened sense of civic awareness and social responsibility through their involvement in The Programme, even if their capacity to act varied. For some, the experience sparked new ideas and a deeper appreciation for the role of education in shaping social change. SB1 reflected that although they had not yet acted on their ideas, they now saw "a lot more value in education" and understood "the pivotal role that it plays," signalling a shift towards a more engaged and reflective civic mindset.

Others translated their learning into concrete initiatives, applying skills gained through UWC to community-focused projects in their universities or local contexts. Participants highlighted The Programme's influence on their ability to design, implement, and sustain collaborative activities. SB11 described successfully presenting a project at university, explaining that their capacity to "bring together different communities" and manage diverse perspectives stemmed directly from the project-based learning they experienced at UWC. They emphasised that learning these skills "at a very early age" had a lasting impact on the kinds of initiatives they now felt equipped to lead. While academic demands sometimes limited the extent of participants' engagement, many still found ways to contribute through ongoing social service. Some volunteered in elderly care, supported charitable events, or participated in community maintenance activities. Others engaged in tutoring programmes for underprivileged youth, including girls from conflict-affected regions, helping them develop English skills and confidence. These experiences reflected a commitment to service that participants viewed as an extension of The Programme's ethos, even when balanced against heavy academic workloads.

Short course participants also demonstrated strong civic initiative, often forming cross-community groups to continue The Programme's work in Cyprus. SCB2 described how, after a two-day programme that UWC co-organised, a group of GC and TC youth "decided to take the initiative ourselves" to bring young people "from all communities in Cyprus" together through workshops: "We worked with a few Greek Cypriot friends and a few Turkish Cypriot friends. It's not about achieving everything perfectly right now, but our main aim is to bring people together through workshops."

Their approach mirrored UWC's experiential pedagogy: rather than lecturing about the Cyprus issue, they created spaces for youth to meet, interact, and explore perspectives through examples from

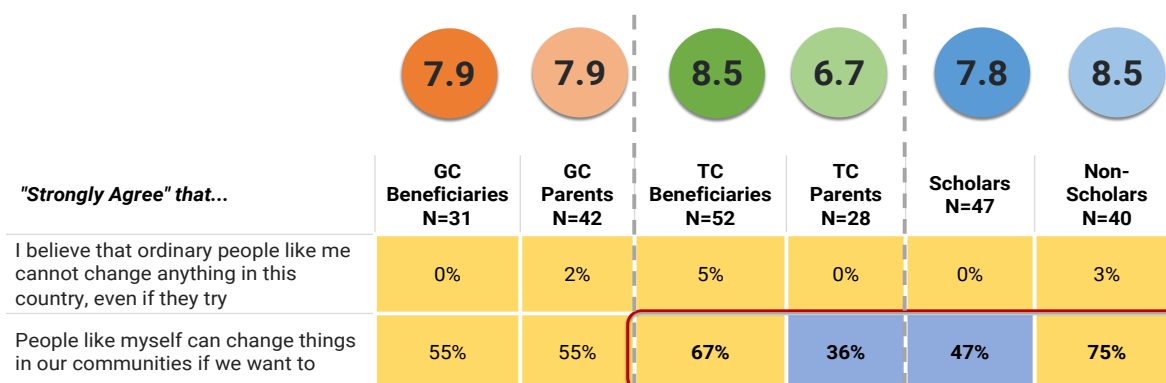
other contexts. Their aim was to foster meaningful encounters that challenge assumptions and build trust. SCB2 continues:

“Instead of giving a history lesson, the idea is simply for them to meet, interact, and experience each other’s perspectives, to mix the two communities while learning a bit and having fun. We are trying to do something similar to how UWC teaches indirectly, guiding participants to learn through experience rather than direct instruction.”

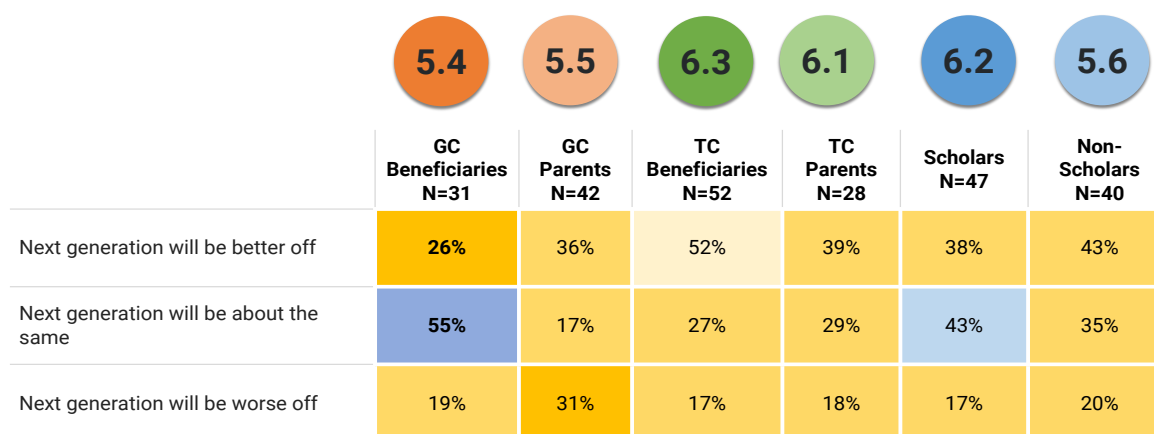
Across accounts, participants described emerging from UWC programmes with a stronger sense of agency, a clearer understanding of their potential role in society, and a commitment to contributing to their communities. Even when action was limited by competing responsibilities, The Programme clearly instilled a civic orientation that participants expected to carry forward into their future lives.

3.2.3 Individual level growth

Beneficiaries report strong individual level growth across several psychosocial dimensions and soft skills. As shown in the tables below, Sense of Agency among beneficiaries is high, with TC beneficiaries demonstrating greater confidence in their ability to drive community change (8.5) than their parents (6.7), and non-scholars (8.5) reporting higher agency than scholars (7.8). Civic Optimism, where 0 means that respondents consistently think the new generations are worse off and 10 means that they consistently think every new generation is better off, is moderate at around the mid-point of 5. Interestingly, there are no generational differences, and beneficiaries score very similarly to their parents. Yet, Turkish Cypriots are more likely to be optimistic about the prospects of the next generation, while GC beneficiaries are more likely to believe the next generation will be about the same rather than better off, indicating a comparatively more cautious outlook.



Compared to their parents, TC beneficiaries are more confident in their ability to drive community change, as are non-scholars compared to scholars



GC beneficiaries are more likely than other groups to believe that the next generation will be about the same rather than better off.

Table 6& 7: Sense of Agency & Civic Optimism

Growth mindset persistence, ongoing effort, resilience and willingness to keep trying and continue learning, is also strong, ranging between 7 and 9 out of 10. Table 8 shows high agreement with statements reflecting perseverance and willingness to take risks among both GC and TC beneficiaries, with no notable differences between the two groups.

| "Somewhat" + "Strongly Agree" that... | GC Beneficiaries N=31 | TC Beneficiaries N=52 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am willing to take a certain amount of risk to achieve real success | 94% | 98% |
| I often stick to familiar ways of solving problems rather than trying new approaches | 36% | 31% |
| I prefer to focus on tasks I already know how to do well rather than unknown and challenging one | 16% | 37% |
| When I face challenges, I believe I can get better if I keep trying | 90% | 98% |
| When I struggle with something, I see it as a sign that I need to try harder, not that I lack talent | 81% | 92% |

There is **no statistically significant difference between GC and TC** beneficiaries in terms of growth mindset persistence; however, TC beneficiaries are slightly more likely to focus on tasks they already know



Table 8: Growth mindset persistence unpacked.

However, there are notable differences between respondents with different intensities of UWC participation. Figure 14 shows higher levels among scholars and among beneficiaries who participated in more activities, with those engaging in three activities reporting the highest scores. This suggests that more engagement with UWC programming helps build stronger Growth Mindset Persistence skills among participants.

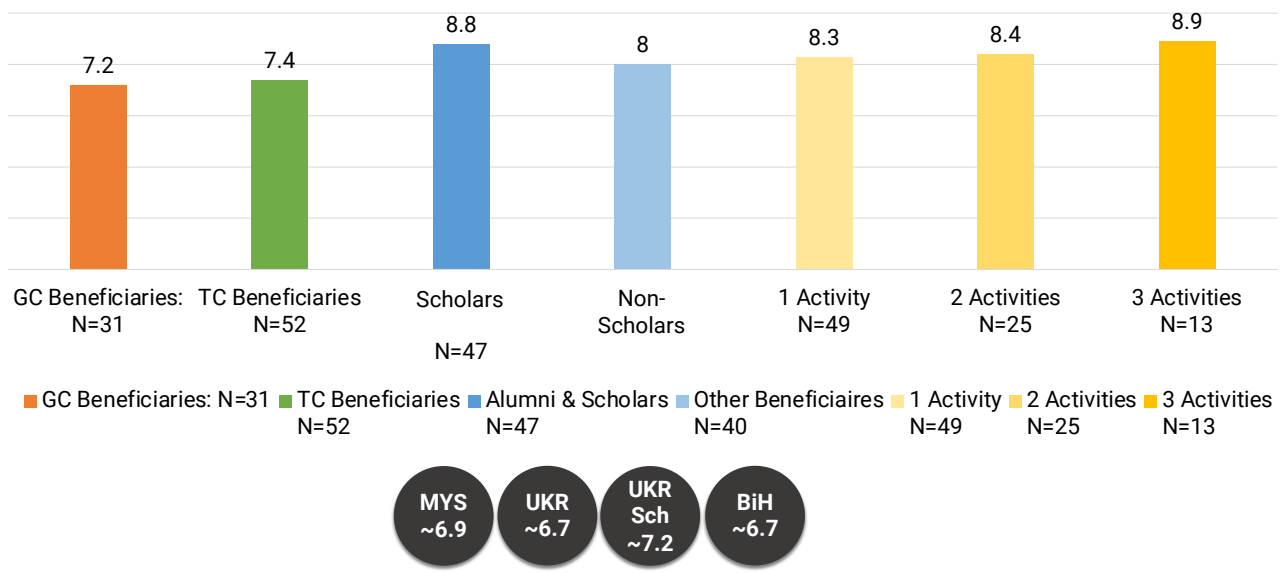


Figure 14: Growth Mindset Persistence compared across participant groups.

There is a clear consensus among beneficiaries and parents that UWC participation has helped strengthen a wide range of soft skills. Across the broader set of soft skills, Table 9 below shows 11 soft skills. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 meant that they (or their children) did not improve these skills through their UWC experience, and 5 meant that they improved them significantly. Both beneficiaries and parents reported substantial strengthening across all 11 interpersonal skills, from communication and leadership to problem-solving and empathy. GC parents tend to rate improvements greater than GC beneficiaries in several skills, while among TC respondents, this difference appears mainly in facilitation and group moderation. Overall, GC and TC beneficiaries report similar overall gains in interpersonal skills.

| | GC Beneficiaries (n = 31) | GC Parents (n = 42) | TC Beneficiaries (n = 52) | TC Parents (n = 28) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Communication and Public Speaking | 7.5 | 8.2 | 8.4 | 7.8 |
| Teamwork and Collaboration | 6.9 | 8.3 | 7.4 | 8.1 |
| Leadership and Initiative-taking | 7.7 | 8.3 | 7.5 | 7.9 |
| Problem-solving and Critical Thinking | 7.9 | 8.3 | 7.8 | 7.9 |
| Conflict Resolution and Mediation | 7.8 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 7.5 |
| Empathy and Understanding Others` Perspectives | 8.5 | 8.2 | 8.2 | 7.8 |
| Growth Mindset and Learning from Challenges | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.2 |
| Responsibility-taking and Accountability | 8.3 | 7.6 | 7.9 | 7.5 |
| Creativity and Innovation | 6.9 | 8.1 | 7.5 | 7.6 |
| Planning and Organisation | 7.4 | 8.6 | 7.4 | 8.3 |
| Facilitation and Group Moderation | 7.4 | 8.5 | 7.1 | 8.1 |

Overall, there is strong perception among both beneficiaries and parents that numerous soft skills, from planning and organisation, to facilitation and leadership, were strengthened through UWC participation. GC parents are more likely than beneficiaries to believe that their children improved certain skills through the program. For TC parents, this difference is observed only in facilitation and group moderation skills.

Table 9: Reported gains across 11 soft skills

It is encouraging to see that programme exposure and participation intensity are associated with stronger psychosocial development outcomes. Those respondents who have extended experiences in UWC activities report stronger soft-skill gains, which indicates that return on investment continues with the intensity of participation. Scholars report higher competency gains than non-scholars, particularly in conflict resolution and mediation, while beneficiaries who participated in more activities report greater improvements in facilitation and group moderation.

| | Scholars N=47 | Non-Scholars N=40 | 1 activity N=49 | 2 activities N=25 | 3 activities N=13 |
|--|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Psychosocial Competences Strengthened through UWC (overall 11 skills) | 8.4 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 7.9 | 8.9 |
| Skills Strengthened: Conflict Resolution and Mediation | 8.6 | 6.9 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 9.4 |
| Skills Strengthened: Facilitation and Group Moderation | 7.6 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 6.8 | 9.2 |

Scholars are more likely to report competency gains, especially in **conflict resolution and mediation skills**, while beneficiaries who participated in more activities are also more likely to report improvements in **facilitation and group moderation skills**.

Table 10: Psychosocial competencies across participant groups.

Participants consistently described the UWC programmes, particularly the scholarship programme, as offering transformative academic and social experiences that marked a clear departure from the traditional, memorisation-based education systems in both the northern and southern parts of Cyprus. Many emphasised that, for the first time, they were encouraged to think critically, engage actively with material, and develop a deeper understanding of what they were learning, as one beneficiary explained: *“In UWC, I actually learned how to learn and how to learn actively and remember things”* (SPB1).

The IB programme was repeatedly cited as **academically demanding but profoundly beneficial**, equipping students with strong writing, analytical, public speaking, and research skills that eased their transition into university. SB10 reflected: *“Doing the IB was really difficult, but I am very happy that I did it.... Right now, I do not struggle much at university. There is not much that I find difficult.”*

This was echoed again by SB10, who added, *“We studied IB, and since IB is really a difficult and challenging programme, I think it prepared me very well for university. It improved my English a lot. It also greatly improved my academic performance.”* Several students described entering higher education with confidence, particularly in English-medium environments, with one noting, *“I feel that if I had studied at my high school, I probably would not be the person I am now. And I do this in English, which is not my native language”* (SB5). SB14 similarly underlined the difference in educational approach:

“I think the way UWC and maybe the IB programme approach education is very different from what I’ve been used to. We do a lot more group work in classes.... There is a lot more cooperation between students to just learn about things, and there’s a focus on areas outside the IB subjects.”

Talking about academic gains, SB15 agreed:

“So, yeah, academically, I would say definitely.... It definitely helped me come into university with confidence in my English speaking and writing. I ended up choosing a social science programme in university, which I don’t think I would have done finishing public school in Cyprus because there isn’t really anthropology, sociology, or any of those human subjects.”

SB12 added: *“Just having more chances to, like, think outside the box and also improve and develop my critical thinking skills because that’s something UWC focuses on.”*

Academic gains were also emphasised by participants who attended short courses, with SCB3 noting, *“it’s more interactive, so it helped me think out of the box and more critically, which is very important now”*.

Beyond academic gains, participants described profound personal development during their engagement with UWC, emphasising increased independence, confidence, open-mindedness, and the acquisition of practical life skills. A recurring theme was the sense of responsibility that came with being treated *“as adults”* (SB1), even at a young age. Students described learning to manage their own time, navigate complex social environments, and take ownership of their decisions. SB4 described this transition as: *“It was just this leap forward, moving away from my family... and trying to integrate into a new environment and just get into the rhythm of taking care of myself and organising my time and organising my activities.”*

Exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives played a central role in shaping participants’ personal growth. Many described becoming more open-minded and more capable of engaging constructively with differing viewpoints. SB12 explained that first-hand exposure to different cultures helped them *“understand people better and also consider and take into consideration their opinion and other different perspectives.”* SB8 described a clear evolution in their ability to engage with differing opinions: *“Definitely becoming open-minded because when there are many debates, I learned to listen to every side and try to understand everyone in some way. Now I tend to take everyone’s input into account before making a decision.”*

This shift was echoed by participants who recognised that The Programme helped them challenge previously held assumptions, including national narratives. SB11 noted: *“I think I used to have the attitude ‘my country, what I know is more correct’, but by confronting people, discussing and challenging my ideas, I learned how much I can change and how much we can learn from each other.”*

Building personal confidence emerged as another significant outcome. Students described gaining self-belief through academic challenges, social interactions, and the experience of living away from home. Some became more confident discussing global issues, while others became more active in their communities after realising they could *“stand up for what I believe”* (SCB4). For many, the transition to a new environment and the distance from family accelerated their personal maturity.



Participants also described substantial social development, shaped by the highly diverse and communal environments of both the scholarship programme and the short courses. Living and studying alongside peers from different cultural, ideological, and national backgrounds required them to adapt, collaborate, and communicate across differences. Some described being *“forced to be social”* (SB16) through shared living arrangements, which pushed them beyond their comfort zones

and helped them become more open, confident, and socially agile. SB10 described becoming “*more outgoing, open, and social*” through constant interaction in a community of nearly 200 students.

The Programme also provided structured opportunities to develop leadership, conflict resolution, and communication skills. Students frequently referenced situations in which they had to navigate disagreements, including politically charged tensions between GC and TC peers. SCB2 explained:

Once friendships are formed, people may begin to question the biases they previously held.... They provide tools and experiences that help us reflect on our own perspectives and question our assumptions.... If we want to do something for peace, they encourage us to try it. They also place great importance on active listening.... In the context of Cyprus, this teaches us to listen to people from the other side and to consider everyone’s stories and perspectives.

Others described gaining a deeper understanding of the lived realities of peers from the other community. SB7 recounted:

“Thanks to the Scholarship Programme, we had the opportunity to get to know the other community more closely. For example, one of them told me that they did not know I was unable to fly from Larnaca because of my citizenship; it was the first time they had heard about this. This surprised me greatly. I wondered how they could be unaware of such a significant issue. They were unaware of one of the biggest realities of my life.”



Short course participants emphasised that The Programme had a particularly strong impact on their social and personal development, often describing the experience as transformative. SCB4 explained:

“It changed the way I saw my future. I wanted to go into science, but after the short course, I now want to go more into design, creative work, and politics. I think that influenced me personally a lot.... I made new friends, and they made it really easy to socialise by putting us into groups and putting one international, one Turkish Cypriot, and one Greek Cypriot into one room. So, they made it very easy for us to socialise. By the first night, we were all like friends. And personally, I’ve learned much about myself, about my country, and about the people around me.”

Another short course participant agreed, describing the environment as unlike anything they had experienced before:

“From the very first day, as soon as I met my friends, it turned out to be a truly different environment. I realised that I had never before been surrounded by people like this or exposed to such ideas.... It pushed me to move further forward and transformed me into what we would describe as a more open-minded

person.... One of the most valuable aspects of UWC was that it enabled me to meet people from different countries.... The Programme taught us many things; it helped us to understand ourselves better, to reflect on the moral values through which we want to develop ourselves, and to discover for ourselves what we stand for and what we should defend." (SCB1)

Across both the scholarship programme and the short courses, participants strongly believed that UWC's impact extended far beyond academics. They described becoming more reflective, resilient, open-minded, and socially engaged individuals. Many characterised the experience as life-changing, emphasising that it shaped them "in every area," combining rigorous academic preparation with intensive social learning and intercultural engagement.

3.3 UWC Experience

The survey data show that beneficiaries rate their overall UWC experience very positively. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is totally unpleasant and 10 is totally stimulating and positive, beneficiaries rate their overall UWC experience at 8.2.



Figure 15: Overall rating of UWC experience by beneficiaries.

Overall, both parents and beneficiaries strongly affirm their positive experiences. Table 11 below compares beneficiary and parent scores for various adjectives describing their UWC experience. There are no notable differences between GC and TC participants, except that GC beneficiaries are more likely to find their experience *less well-organised and more confusing*. Beneficiaries most frequently describe their experience as *supportive, motivating, impactful, and inclusive*. Negative descriptors such as *confusing, disorganised, excluding, demotivating, ineffective, or unresponsive* receive extremely low endorsement, all below 1.5 and often close to zero. Parents' ratings mirror this pattern, with high scores for *impactful, well-organised, motivating, and inclusive*, and negligible endorsement of negative descriptors.

| BENEFICIARY | | PARENT | |
|--|------------|---|-----|
| UWC Experience: Supportive | 8.5 | Child's UWC Experience: Impactful | 8.0 |
| UWC Experience: Motivating | 8.3 | Child's UWC Experience: Well-Organized | 7.9 |
| UWC Experience: Impactful | 8.3 | Child's UWC Experience: Motivating [GC: 7.4 & TC 8.6] | 7.9 |
| UWC Experience: Inclusive | 8.2 | Child's UWC Experience: Inclusive [GC: 8.6 & TC 6.8] | 7.7 |
| UWC Experience: Life Changing | 7.4 | Child's UWC Experience: Supportive | 7.2 |
| UWC Experience: Well-Organized [GC: 5.8 & TC 7.3] | 6.7 | Child's UWC Experience: Life Changing | 7.2 |
| UWC Experience: Confusing [GC: 2.3 & TC 0.8] | 1.4 | Child's UWC Experience: Excluding | 0.3 |
| UWC Experience: Disorganised | 0.6 | Child's UWC Experience: Confusing | 0.3 |
| UWC Experience: Excluding | 0.3 | Child's UWC Experience: Disorganised | 0.1 |
| UWC Experience: Demotivating | 0.3 | Child's UWC Experience: Unresponsive | 0.1 |
| UWC Experience: Ineffective | 0.1 | Child's UWC Experience: Ineffective | 0.1 |
| UWC Experience: Unresponsive | 0.0 | Child's UWC Experience: Demotivating | 0.0 |

Table 11a: UWC experience.

Differences emerge when comparing scholars and non-scholars. Table 11a shows that scholars are more likely to describe the experience as life-changing (83% compared to 63% among non-scholars), yet less likely to rate it as well-organised (47% compared to 90%). This suggests that scholarship pathways may deepen the transformative impact of participation while simultaneously exposing students to more operational challenges or higher expectations regarding programme structure. GC and TC beneficiaries also differ in their perceptions of organisation: Table 11b shows that 73% of TC beneficiaries rate The Programme as well-organised compared to 58% of GC beneficiaries, a pattern consistent with the broader beneficiary scores presented in Table 11a.

| | GC Beneficiaries N=31 | TC Beneficiaries N=52 | Scholars N=47 | Non-Scholars N=40 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| UWC Experience: Well-Organised | 58% | 73% | 47% | 90% |
| UWC Experience: Life-changing | 77% | 71% | 83% | 63% |

Both TC and GC beneficiaries rate their UWC experience positively, with no difference between groups.

Scholars, compared to non-scholars, are less likely to rate it as well-organised but more likely to consider it life-changing

Table 11b: UWC experience.

Barriers to participation show strong consistency across groups. Figure 16 illustrates that transportation or distance, and timing or scheduling are the two most frequently cited barriers for nearly all respondent categories.

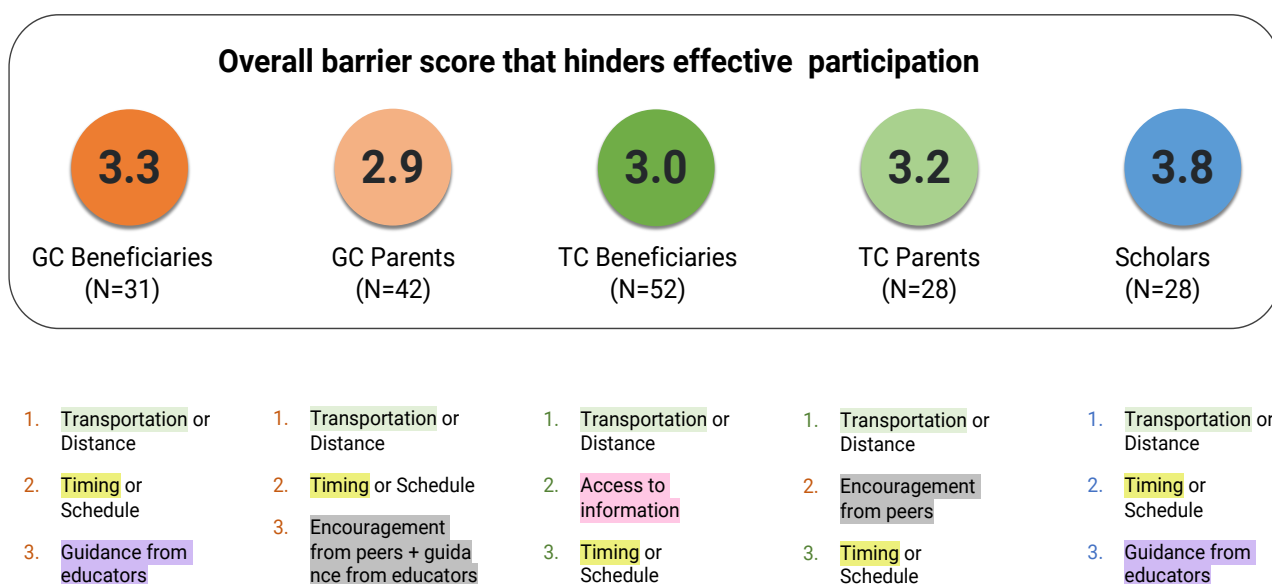


Figure 16: Top barriers to participation reported by beneficiaries, parents, and scholars.

GC beneficiaries additionally highlight the need for guidance from educators, while TC beneficiaries emphasise access to information as a barrier that hindered their effective participation. GC and TC Parents' perspectives align closely, almost mirroring each other. Scholars report the highest overall barrier score at 3.8, as shown in Figure 16, again pointing to the greater logistical and informational demands placed on this group.

Qualitative findings provide further evidence of the UWC experience, detailing the strengths of The Programme as well as areas for improvement.

3.3.1 Strengths of The Programme

Participants consistently highlighted The Programme's strengths across academic, social, and intercultural dimensions, noting that both the 2-year scholarship programme and the short courses offered high-quality, thoughtfully designed experiences, though in distinct ways. Many described the IB as academically rigorous yet transformative, praising its emphasis on independent learning, critical

thinking, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Contrasting this with their previous schooling, SB21 notes, while their high school “spoon-fed” information, IB required them to “learn by yourself”.

The Programme’s locations were also seen as a strength. Being placed in settings such as Mostar allowed participants to observe other post-conflict societies and draw parallels with Cyprus, which they found both educational and hopeful. As one student put it, seeing how communities coexist despite their recent conflicted past offered “some hope and some more understanding about different conflicts” (SB16).

Participants described residential mentors, counsellors, tutors, and peers as readily available sources of guidance, creating an environment where “there was always someone to talk to” (SB8). Many spoke with affection about forming friendships “from all over the world,” (SB10) creating a sense of belonging that extended far beyond the two-year programme, with SB10 continuing: “Wherever I go, there is someone I know. Wherever I go, there is someone I can see. And there are people I would want to go and visit.”

Short course participants highlighted a different but complementary set of strengths. They described the short courses as exceptionally well-designed, carefully planned, and delivered with a high level of quality. The learning environment was consistently described as relaxed, non-competitive, and emotionally safe, where “the connections you form are a lot different than school connections because you connect on a deeper level, I’d say with people from UWC” (SCB3), with SC1 underlying that:

“Short courses somehow have a quality of reducing stress. I am not exactly sure how; they create a very different learning atmosphere. Many different topics are covered, yet they are always addressed in a relaxed way, without rushing and without putting students under intense pressure. The environment feels more natural and comfortable.”

SC2 agrees that the environment is special:

“They also make sure never to embarrass anyone or approach people with biases in a judgmental or accusatory way. Even if someone has prejudices, they are never shamed for them. I think people feel much more comfortable. When they don’t feel judged, they are able to reflect inwardly and question themselves.”

The non-formal education methods of interactive workshops, discussions, team-based activities, and creative exercises were widely praised for fostering empathy, critical thinking, and deeper understanding rather than memorisation, with some stressing “the method of teaching is the biggest strength... it teaches you to think a lot differently. I’d say that’s the biggest plus” (SCB2). This is a point also echoed by SC1, who underlines:

“Informal Education is also very significant. Their courses are not structured like traditional classes, nor are they based strictly on textbooks or rigid materials; instead, they are delivered in a much more creative and interactive way. This is extremely important.”

Across programme types, participants consistently highlighted the quality of teaching, the diversity of peers, the supportive environment, and the transformative social experiences as core strengths. Yet the nature of these strengths differed: the scholarship programme offered long-term academic rigour, structured support, and deep intercultural immersion, while the short courses provided an intensive, low-pressure, highly relational environment that fostered rapid personal growth and cross-community connection.

3.3.2 Areas for Improvement

Despite The Programme’s strong reputation and transformative potential, participants identified several structural, academic, and experiential challenges that shaped their overall experience. These



challenges were not uniform across the scholarship programme and short courses, but together they highlight areas where programme design, communication, and support systems could be strengthened.

2-Year Scholarship Programme

Participants often described their IB experience as intense and, for some, overwhelming; at the same time, many also identified it as a key mechanism of transformation, strengthening academic confidence, critical thinking, independence, English-medium learning, and university readiness. The most consistently cited challenge was the intensity of the IB curriculum, which many students found overwhelming. Participants described a heavy content load, constant assignments, and a demanding academic schedule that left little room for rest or socialisation, as reiterated by SB9: *"The reality is that everyone at this school is so busy." Everyone is already occupied with their own work and schedule.... Our schedule is so intense that no one really has much free time to be very close or social.*

SB12 adds that not being fluent in English significantly increases the challenge. She notes, *"it's just 10 times more difficult for someone who doesn't speak English"*. Several noted that teachers sometimes underestimated the cumulative pressure students were under, with SB8 noting:

"The education system was very, very different, and it challenged me a lot.... The assignments were very heavy. Sometimes there were just too many of them. When they piled up, it felt like we couldn't keep up. And sometimes the teachers didn't really understand us. They would say, 'You have to do it. You can do it. Those before you did it, and so can you.'"

These challenges are further exacerbated by limited English proficiency, which participants and parents underline is partially caused by the selection criteria:

"My child did not attend a private school, and their English was not very strong. They told us that the gap could be closed, but that did not really happen. They struggled greatly to follow the lessons. First, our child told us about the difficulties, and afterwards, the school contacted us."

SB6 agrees, *"We were told that English level would not be a determining factor for admission. Naturally, when this is said, people apply. But once they arrive, they may struggle significantly, because the IB programme genuinely requires a very strong command of English"*. Internal stakeholders have highlighted in interviews that *The Programme began with English proficiency not being a requirement. Still, the Cyprus team has realised over time that a lack of English proficiency can be a significant obstacle, with its impact varying from scholar to scholar. Although it is no longer within the eligibility criteria, it was decided to take this into consideration during the selection process. It was emphasised that there are cases where students with exceptional academic backgrounds with limited English proficiency have excelled, but this is not always the case.*

The participants also emphasised that the academic pressures of the IB can at times overshadow The Programme's reconciliation mission, reducing the time and energy available for intercommunal engagement. While The Programme emphasises peacebuilding, dialogue, and intercultural understanding, the IB's workload often leaves little time for meaningful engagement with these goals. Students described feeling torn between the idealism promoted by The Programme and the realities of academic pressure. Participants mentioned struggling to reconcile The Programme's aspirations with the constraints of daily life, with SB22 asserting, *"I don't think it's that pink flowers"*. *"We might do something like celebrate Cyprus Day together or go out. But other than that, the reality is that everyone at this school is so busy"* says SB9.

Another challenge highlighted was the strong institutional bias towards U.S. universities. Participants described university counselling as overwhelmingly U.S. focused, with little knowledge of European systems, entrance exams, or alternative pathways. This created barriers for students with specific career goals, in particular medicine, dentistry, and other fields requiring structured European routes. Some sought external counselling, noting that many students lack the resources to do so, with SB21 noting:

"I did not do anything with the school counselling because I knew that they didn't know much about Europe, opportunities in Europe, and they were also, like, more focused on the U.S., and they had, like, so many, like, students to take care of, and it was basically one person doing all of this, so I got outside

counselling for that. But a lot of people don't have the opportunity to do that, and maybe they do have it, but they think that the school will be enough, and I think that was also lacking."

It was emphasised by scholarship participants and alumni that their awareness of the IB programme was limited to none when they applied, with SB21 emphasising:

"They promote a lot of the UWC values, and this is what you're getting yourself into, in terms of the personal connections that you're going to make, and learning outside of class, and all the focus and all that. But they don't talk a lot about the IB programme itself, and it is a big part of the life that you get in those two years."

The need to enhance programme awareness is a point also noted by SB4, who states *"the awareness about it, I think could be improved"*, which SB7 agrees with, *"they did not talk much about the challenging aspects of The Programme. If the more difficult aspects had also been explained in greater detail, people could have made a more informed decision"*.

Short Courses

Although all participants widely praised short courses, several interconnected challenges within the short course model were highlighted as limiting the depth of learning, the continuity of relationships, and overall participant engagement.

A major concern was the lack of structured follow-up once the courses ended. Participants noted that alums are mostly engaged when they receive occasional emails, which they underlined is not sufficient to sustain the momentum of the two-week experience. Several suggested organising reunions to help participants *"not to forget the intense experiences of the two-week course even 30 days later..."* (SCB1). Another concern reiterated by participants was the limited breadth of topics, which they felt prevented deeper exploration. They note that sessions often raised awareness but did not equip participants with the tools to become change advocates capable of developing practical solutions to issues of concern. Bringing in expert speakers to guide more advanced discussions was one of the recommendations made, along with *"allow deeper exploration and provide additional resources"* (SCB1).

3.4 Participants' Suggestions for Improvement

Participants offered a wide range of suggestions to strengthen the UWC experience and ensure it better supports students before, during, and after their time at UWC. Their recommendations are centred on improving pre-departure preparation, enhancing outreach and visibility, refining the selection process, and strengthening communication and support structures.

A strong theme that emerged from the interviews was the need for better pre-departure preparation. Many participants felt that students were sent abroad without adequate grounding in intercultural dialogue, emotional resilience, or the realities of boarding school life. Several emphasised the value of creating common spaces and opportunities for bonding before departure, noting that early relationships can become crucial sources of support once students arrive at their schools. Others recommended workshops, peace conferences, or structured briefings to help students learn how to navigate sensitive conversations and approach cross-community interactions constructively.

Alum involvement was seen as particularly valuable, with participants suggesting pre-departure meetings where graduates could offer realistic insights into the challenges ahead, including the emotional impact of leaving home the intensity of the IB, and the pressures of adapting to a new environment. Interviews with internal stakeholders confirmed this is indeed being implemented with increased focus in the last two years. Many felt that current information sessions tend to idealise the experience and should instead present a more balanced and honest picture. SB21 underlies, *"there must be much more focus on IB, and just giving people a reality check of like, this is not for everyone, and it might not be for you either"*. There are several suggestions:

So maybe doing presentations... for UWC in general because some people need to experience those one or two weeks of UWC before they're sold on The Programme.... I think also maybe presentations to parents would be helpful. You know, maybe go to the schools in the afternoon and tell the teachers to

tell parents, "Oh, if your kid is interested, come to the parents' presentation," because parents' concerns are very different from children's. (SB19)

"I think it would be nice for us to have at least people who go to this UWC and to that UWC to have a meet-up before, and also a graduate to be there as well, or more to tell them what is going to happen.... Just to make sure everyone knows how it can get tough sometimes, because I think we tend to idealise this whole concept of UWC a lot and we don't talk about how tough it can get, so I think it has to be a bit more realistic... So, I think it has to be a bit more informative overall. (SB1)"

Several participants focused on refining the selection process. Some suggested incorporating questions or workshops to reveal applicants' attitudes towards conflict and intercultural engagement and to assess applicants' openness, curiosity, and willingness to engage meaningfully across divides. Others emphasised the importance of considering family structure, emotional readiness, and financial capacity, noting that students who are deeply attached to their families or whose families cannot support post-scholarship pathways may face significant challenges abroad. They noted that students who are highly dependent on their families may struggle with the emotional distance and the demands of adapting to a new environment. Those whose families lack the financial capacity to support them beyond the scholarship period may also encounter serious difficulties, particularly when unexpected expenses or transitional phases arise.

Participants also recommended improvements to communication and support structures, with SB11 suggesting a direct link between the alumni and current students through a study portal:

"Something could be created using alumni or currently active students. We could create a study portal. Students who want to apply could ask former students directly, especially about the application process. There is an information session, but not everyone may be able to attend. So, in that sense, there could be a stronger communication network between prospective students and current students or alumni."

Participants also emphasised the need for more consistent mechanisms through which students could express their concerns and experiences, with SB8 suggesting that having "a survey or an open forum... more frequently" would allow The Programme to genuinely understand how students feel and create a space where they can "speak freely and say what they want".

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Headlines

- **The Programme is delivering meaningful peacebuilding value:** It builds trust, social proximity, tolerance and durable relationships across the divide.
- **The model works across formats, but depth matters:** Short courses and workshops create meaningful entry points; scholarships and repeated participation deepen civic and developmental outcomes.
- **The Programme is not only changing attitudes; it is building agency:** Beneficiaries report stronger civic duty, openness to dialogue, initiative-taking, soft skills, confidence and persistence.
- **The Programme's strongest pathway also carries the greatest strain:** The scholarship pathway is transformative, but IB intensity, English-language demands, emotional readiness and university counselling need stronger support.
- **The next phase should move from impact generation to impact consolidation:** This means pathway design, alum activation, family/community anchoring, stronger follow-up and better MEL.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that The Programme is closely aligned with its intended theory of change and is generating strong positive outcomes across the three core domains examined in the study: intergroup relations, civic attitudes and constructive citizenship, and individual level growth. **The evidence shows that The Programme is doing more than creating short-term educational opportunities. It is fostering meaningful intercommunal relationships, strengthening tolerance and dialogue, building civic responsibility, and supporting the development of more confident, reflective, and capable young people.**

The strongest findings relate to intercommunal outcomes. Beneficiaries report high levels of closeness, trust, and tolerance towards the other community, rooted in lived encounters, sustained interaction, and relationships that often continue beyond The Programme itself. Beneficiaries consistently outperform both parents and the 2017 benchmark groups on Positive Intergroup Feelings, especially Intercommunal Trust. This is particularly notable among Turkish Cypriot beneficiaries, whose trust scores are substantially higher than those of Turkish Cypriot parents and more than double the 2017 youth benchmark, pointing to an important intergenerational shift. **The Programme is therefore not merely creating contact but helping to produce deeper and more durable social ties across the island.** It appears particularly effective in helping participants move beyond inherited distance, fear, and abstraction towards a more human, relational, and shared understanding of Cyprus.

The Programme's effects are not limited to one format. Scholars and non-scholars show similarly strong patterns in the frequency, strength, and expected sustainability of intercommunal ties, suggesting that short courses, workshops, and lighter-touch pathways can also produce meaningful relationship outcomes. This matters strategically because UWC's programming in Cyprus does not depend solely on the scholarship track to generate peacebuilding value. At the same time, deeper or more sustained participation matters for some outcomes, especially wider Social Tolerance and psychosocial development, where scholars tend to score more positively than non-scholars. Taken together, these points suggest a model in which broad-access programmes serve as effective entry points, while longer and more intensive pathways deepen attitudinal and developmental change.

The Programme also demonstrates important value in cultivating constructive citizenship and broader, inclusive attitudes. Beneficiaries show strong Civic Duty, high Openness To Dialogue, and very Positive Feelings towards diverse groups, comparing favourably not only to parents but also to other post-conflict or transitional contexts. Bicomunal Civic Engagement remains less developed than Monocommunal Civic Engagement, likely reflecting structural barriers such as limited transportation and fewer physical meeting spaces. Yet the findings suggest that The Programme is laying important foundations for future peace-oriented action. This is especially significant because higher participation

intensity is associated with stronger civic engagement, initiative, and Intercommunal Contact. **The Programme is therefore not only changing attitudes; it is strengthening the conditions under which civic participation and peacebuilding action can emerge.**

The data strongly support The Programme's theory of change around participation intensity and virtuous cycles. Beneficiaries who participate in more UWC activities are more likely to report stronger civic responsibility, greater civic engagement, and higher civic initiative. Correlation analysis also shows that Intercommunal Contact is associated with stronger ties and that civic engagement, bicomunal engagement, civic initiative, and contact reinforce one another. **This is one of the most important analytical findings in the report: The Programme's components are not operating as isolated activities but appear to work cumulatively.**

The Programme also performs strongly at the individual level. Beneficiaries report high agency, moderate to high optimism, strong persistence, and substantial gains in soft skills and psychosocial competencies. This suggests that The Programme is not only producing peace-related and civic outcomes but also building the personal capacities that make those outcomes more sustainable over time. As with constructive citizenship, dosage also matters for individual level growth. Scholars and those with greater participation intensity often report stronger gains, especially in conflict resolution, facilitation, and broader psychosocial development. This reinforces the conclusion that the longer and deeper the engagement, the stronger the civic and developmental returns appear to be.

At the level of programme experience, the overall picture is very positive. Beneficiaries rate the UWC experience highly, and The Programme is widely seen as supportive, motivating, impactful, and inclusive. However, the evidence also points to operational strain. Scholars are more likely than non-scholars to describe The Programme as life-changing but also identify more room for improvement in organisational aspects. They report the highest overall barrier score, with transportation, scheduling, educator guidance, and access to information emerging as recurring barriers. These challenges may intensify with greater exposure and longer engagement, especially as scholars participate over a 2–3-year period. Practical logistical solutions could help minimise these barriers, even if they cannot eliminate them fully.

The assessment also shows that The Programme's transformative potential can be further leveraged. Participants identify structural and operational challenges, especially within the scholarship pathway. The scholarship programme appears to be the most intensive and potentially transformative strand, but it also carries the greatest risks. The qualitative findings point to a tension between the peacebuilding and personal development promise through which The Programme is often understood and the lived reality of the IB's academic intensity, English-language demands, and highly U.S.-oriented university counselling. Challenges also include insufficient preparation for the academic and emotional realities of the IB, limited clarity around the full demands of The Programme before departure, and insufficient structured channels for ongoing feedback and support. In the short course model, the main gaps relate to continuity after the course ends and the limited depth of follow-up engagement. These challenges do not undermine The Programme's value, but they indicate where improvement is needed if The Programme is to deepen and sustain its impact.

The study's limitations mean that these findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than causal. However, the convergence between the quantitative and qualitative evidence is strong. Taken together, the results support a clear overall conclusion: **The Programme is a meaningful and credible peace-oriented investment in Cyprus's youth, with demonstrable value in building relationships across the divide, nurturing inclusive civic dispositions, and expanding participants' confidence, agency, and life horizons.** The next phase of programme development should focus on protecting these strengths while addressing the practical weaknesses that participants themselves have identified.

Recommendations

The recommendations are summarised in the infographic below and detailed further down. They follow directly from the assessment findings and focus on protecting what is working while strengthening the operational conditions needed to sustain and scale these outcomes.

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| <p>1</p>  | <p>1. Consolidate the Programme as a connected developmental pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link scholarships, short courses, workshops and youth activities as connected stages rather than stand-alone interventions.• Preserve broad-access formats while continuing to invest in deeper, higher-intensity formats.• Build stronger follow-up after short courses through alumni touchpoints, reunions and continued collaboration. |
| <p>2</p>  | <p>2. Convert intercommunal contact into sustained civic action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create more structured opportunities for bicomunal civic action, such as alumni-led projects, micro-grants and social action labs.• Use alumni more deliberately in outreach, mentoring, progression between activities and post-programme action. |
| <p>3</p>  | <p>3. Strengthen preparation and support for scholarship participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve readiness through pre-departure preparation, expectation management and stronger English-language support.• Strengthen academic and pastoral support during the scholarship experience.• Broaden university and career guidance beyond a mainly US-focused model, including European pathways. |
| <p>4</p>  | <p>4. Anchor impact through families, alumni and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a stronger family and community interface through parent briefings, bicomunal family events and alumni-family dialogue.• Reduce operational and logistical barriers such as transport, scheduling, information gaps and access constraints. |
| <p>5</p>  | <p>5. Strengthen targeted learning and MEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address more resilient bias domains through targeted dialogue and reflection.• Strengthen monitoring and evaluation with clearer baselines, pre/post measurement and more longitudinal tracking.• Add practical MEL improvements such as scholar check-ins, gender-sensitive monitoring and a parent-change module. |

1. Consolidate The Programme as a connected developmental pathway

- The findings show that participation intensity is associated with stronger civic and developmental gains. UWC Cyprus should design more intentional progression routes across activities. Short courses, workshops, youth engagement activities, and scholarships should be treated as connected stages in a developmental pathway, with structured follow-up and onward referral from one level of engagement to the next. This would help convert broad reach into deeper and more cumulative impact.
- The evidence suggests that lighter-touch programmes are already effective at generating durable intercommunal ties. At the same time, more intensive participation appears to deepen broader

tolerance and developmental gains. As such, the scholarship and short course models generate different but complementary strengths. This means The Programme should avoid an either/or choice between breadth and depth. Instead, it should preserve short courses and youth engagement activities as effective access points while continuing to invest in scholarships and other sustained formats as mechanisms for depth.

- Short courses are often experienced as highly transformative, but their momentum tends to wane once the course ends. Participants also suggest that deeper thematic follow-up, including expert input and more practical pathways to action, could further strengthen the short course model. Further, adopting more structured follow-up, such as reunions, alumni twinning and touchpoints, and opportunities for continued collaboration, and accessible re-engagement opportunities for short course and one-day event participants would help preserve relationships and extend The Programme's long-term civic and intercommunal value.

2. Convert contact into sustained civic action

- The Programme is strongest in building contact, trust, and tolerance, but there is room to strengthen Bicomunal Civic Engagement and Civic Initiative-Taking. Given the significant correlation between Inter-Communal Contact, Civic Engagement, and Civic Initiative-Taking, the next strategic step should be to create more structured opportunities for participants to turn relationships into joint action. These could include mentored social action labs, participatory budgeting initiatives, junior civic assemblies and civic incubators linked to peacebuilding and local problem-solving that focus on common denominators and shared interests.

3. Use alumni more deliberately as a strategic multiplier

- Participants often discover The Programme through peers, and repeated engagement deepens impact. Alumni are, therefore, not just an aftercare group; they are a strategic delivery asset. Efforts that promote alumni's continued engagement and recognise their civic contributions would reinforce both recruitment and civic and developmental outcomes. UWC Cyprus should make more structured use of alumni in outreach, preparation, mentoring, progression between programmes, and post-programme civic action. For example, alumni could play a stronger role in pre-departure preparation via participant twinning and showcasing achievement pathways. This would strengthen continuity, credibility, and The Programme's ability to translate individual transformation into wider ripple effects.

4. Strengthen academic and psychosocial support during the scholarship experience

- The scholarship strand should be strengthened through more systematic pre-departure preparation, clearer communication of academic and emotional realities, and stronger English-readiness support. This could include realistic briefings on IB workload, boarding school life, intercultural dialogue, and adaptation challenges, as well as opportunities for bicomunal bonding before departure. Key information should be revisited repeatedly at application, selection, onboarding, and pre-departure stages to support retention. Participant accounts suggest that earlier relationship-building and clearer preparation would improve readiness, resilience, and transition support. The goal is not to reduce ambition, but to better match ambition with readiness.
- The scholarship pathway would also benefit from earlier identification of students struggling with workload or emotional adjustment, through more proactive wellbeing monitoring (e.g. open forums, or pulse surveys) and, where appropriate, communication with families. The findings suggest that the gap between The Programme's peace-oriented mission and the intensity of the IB experience can create tension. Stronger support systems and protected intercommunal reflection could help students manage that tension and sustain meaningful engagement beyond academic survival.
- Further, counselling should better reflect the range of pathways relevant to Cypriot students, especially European routes and fields such as medicine and dentistry. More diversified guidance would improve programme fit and help students make informed long-term decisions aligned with their aspirations and family realities.

5. Anchor impact more strongly through families

- The parent findings, especially lower trust among Turkish Cypriot parents, suggest that intergenerational gaps may be widening. A stronger family and community interface can help prevent this gap and maximise the multiplier effects of The Programme. UWC Cyprus should develop more deliberate family- and community-facing components, including parent briefings, bicomunal family events, alumni-family dialogues, or educator/school-facing dissemination. The aim would be to improve social anchoring for participants' gains and reduce the risk that The Programme's effects remain confined to individual beneficiaries or regress over time.
- Transportation, scheduling, educator guidance, access to information, and peer encouragement repeatedly emerge as barriers, and scholars report the highest overall barrier burden. Greater attention to transport support, timing, school partnerships, information channels, and participant guidance would likely improve reach, retention, and fairness of access, especially for participants who are less socially connected to The Programme at entry.

6. Strengthen targeted learning and MEL

- The report points to the value of more robust longitudinal monitoring and a real baseline at the point of entry for beneficiaries. Building on this study, pre/post measurement and more rigorous longitudinal comparison strategies would allow future assessments to move beyond indicative patterns and generate firmer evidence on attributable change. The MEL framework would also benefit from a prospective beneficiary survey at the point of application to assess motivations and pre-existing attitudes, and a parents-change module that assesses whether and how parents' attitudes shift through their child's participation to capture the horizontal ripple effects of impact across households.
- Although overall tolerance is very high, lower scores relating to Turkish nationals and Jews indicate that not all forms of prejudice shift equally, especially given current conflict dynamics in the region. UWC Cyprus should complement its broad ethos of inclusion with more targeted content and dialogue on these categories. This could be embedded in short course curricula, workshops, and alumni programming through issue-specific reflection, perspective-taking, and facilitated dialogue rather than assuming generalised diversity exposure alone will be sufficient.
- **Other MEL components could include** monitoring gendered patterns in Civic Engagement and Civic Initiative-Taking before designing targeted support.



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