



# IMPACT REPORT

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**UWS** EDUCATE THE FUTURE  
CHANGE THE FUTURE

# GLOBAL EDUCATION CONTEXT

**The world is facing an education crisis.**

Globally, a staggering 244 million children are not enrolled in formal education, and more than half of all children are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10. The Covid-19 pandemic presented the worst shock to education and learning in a century, fuelling increased absenteeism and dropout and significantly impacting student outcomes around the world.

**Children in low-middle income countries continue to face multiple barriers to accessing education.**

Across the Asian and African continents there remain large pockets of out of school children, particularly among rural and indigenous populations, cultural and linguistic minorities, and children with disabilities. Common barriers include geographical isolation, social exclusion, and chronic underinvestment in rural services.

**Even once children reach the classroom, poor education quality creates more barriers to learning.**

Low investment in state education systems has led to chronic shortages of qualified teachers in many low income countries. Where schools do exist, class sizes are large and rote learning the norm, in turn fuelling dropout as children do not see the value of attending school. The 'quality gap' usually mirrors wider urban-rural inequalities, with many government teachers preferring to remain in wealthier urban areas.

**The importance of addressing this education crisis cannot be overstated.**

Education is one of the most powerful tools through which economically and socially marginalized children and adults can lift themselves out of poverty. It must be a global priority.

## WHY EDUCATION?

EDUCATED MOTHERS ARE

**50%**

MORE LIKELY TO IMMUNISE  
THEIR CHILDREN

*\*UNESCO 2023*

KEEPING GIRLS IN  
SCHOOL CAN REDUCE  
CHILD MARRIAGE RATES  
BY MORE THAN

**60%**

*\*UNESCO 2014*

EVERY YEAR OF  
EDUCATION INCREASES A  
CHILD'S FUTURE EARNING  
POTENTIAL BY

**10%**

*\*PSACHAROPOULOS  
AND PATRINOS, 2004*

**UWS**  
**EDUCATE THE FUTURE**  
**CHANGE THE FUTURE**

UWS is an international non-profit that was established in 2008 to give children in remote and marginalized regions access to quality, inclusive education. We collaborate with partners, communities and governments to establish schools, train teachers and strengthen education systems.

Currently, UWS is operating in rural areas of Nepal, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Madagascar to deliver quality schooling and embed education in communities for generations to come.



# OUR APPROACH

**Our five ‘pillars’ of education delivery reflect a multi-dimensional approach in line with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.**



## ACCESS

Whether we're building schools or training teachers, shaping curriculums or strengthening infrastructure, our goal is to give every child sustainable access to a high-quality education.



## QUALITY

Education systems are only as good as their teachers. UWS trains teachers to deliver an interactive curriculum that inspires students to become active, lifelong learners.



## INCLUSION

Inclusive systems ensure every child feels safe and included whilst learning. We influence governments and communities to endorse practices that reduce barriers to and within education.



## STRENGTHENED SYSTEMS

By sharing our work, innovations and best practice with national bodies, we give communities the platform to assert influence over the standards set for policy, curriculum and infrastructure.



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Our projects build capacity not dependency. So, whether we're improving health and wellbeing, creating new job opportunities, or increasing communities' resilience, we make sure local voices are at the centre of everything we do.

“In the future, there will be many opportunities here for people who have studied. I want to be one of them. I would like to learn to speak French and travel to different cities. I will make every effort to achieve these goals.”

**-Vonjy, Madagascar**

# STUDENT ACCESS TO EDUCATION

In the countries where UWS works, the majority of the many out of school children are in rural areas. Since 2008, UWS has been supporting these children to access quality learning.

## # OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (PRIMARY AGE)

**253 K**

CAMBODIA  
(UNESCO, 2022)

**7.8 M\***

MYANMAR  
(OHCHR, 2022)

**105 K**

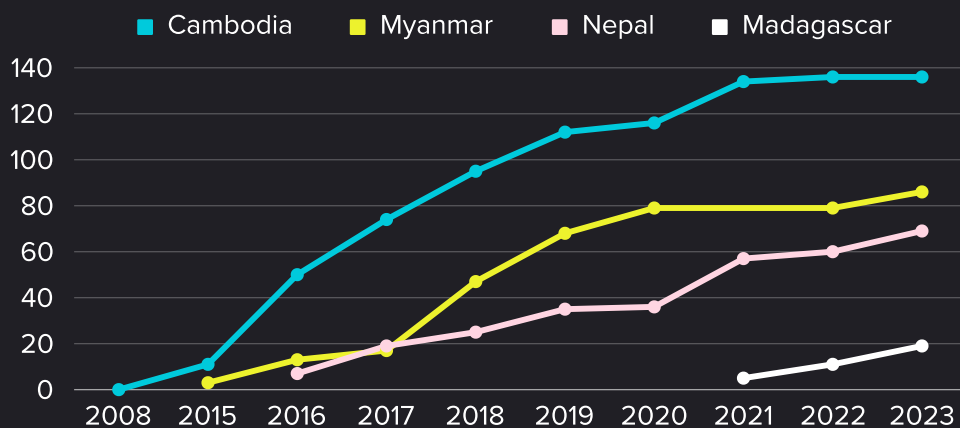
NEPAL  
(UNESCO, 2023)

**921 K**

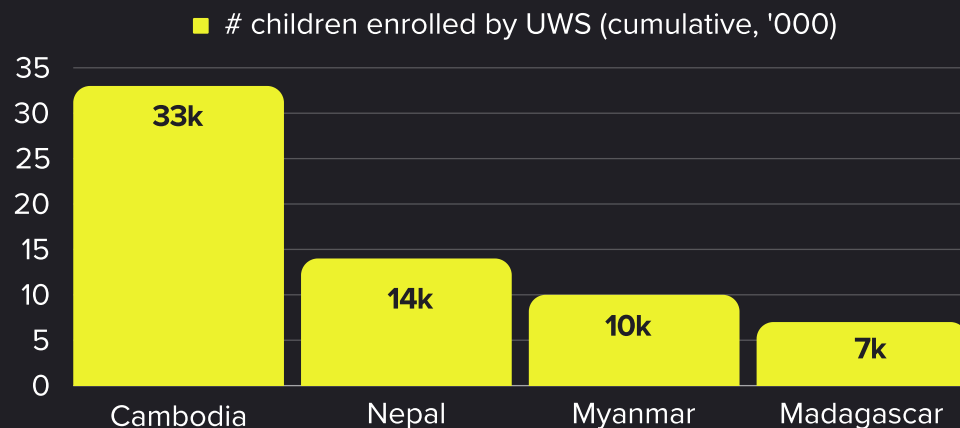
MADAGASCAR  
(UNESCO, 2023)

\* ONLY COMBINED PRIMARY &  
SECONDARY LEVEL DATA AVAILABLE

## NEW UWS SCHOOLS (CUMULATIVE)



## TOTAL UWS ENROLLMENTS (CUMULATIVE, 2008-2023)



**311**

NEW UWS SCHOOLS  
ESTABLISHED

**64k**

STUDENTS ENROLLED  
SINCE 2008

**24k**

STUDENTS  
CURRENTLY  
LEARNING WITH UWS



# QUALITY TEACHING FORCE

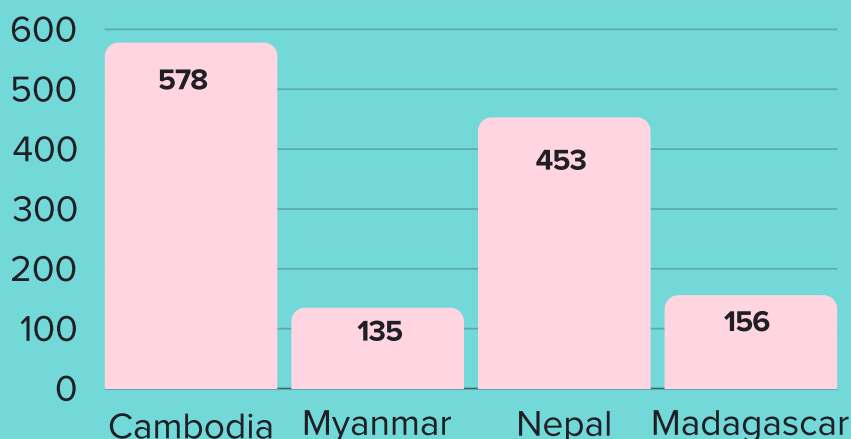
Globally, 44 million teachers need to be recruited and trained to meet universal education needs by 2030.

UWS has an innovative, dual-track model to address nationwide shortages of qualified teaching staff in all countries of operation:

- We recruit and train teachers from within the communities we serve to create local employment opportunities, ensure education provision is contextually relevant, and build local capacity for education delivery.
- We collaborate with education authorities to allocate government-funded teachers to each UWS school. This supports compliant curriculum delivery, while helping to strengthen the national education workforce.

Both community and government teachers benefit from rigorous UWS training. Our cascade training approach focuses on national curricula, with an additional emphasis on classroom culture, lesson facilitation, classroom interaction, and student wellbeing and safety (in line with World Bank standards).

## # TEACHERS WORKING IN UWS SCHOOLS (DATA AS OF DECEMBER 2023)



*“The lack of adequate, competent and motivated teachers in schools poses a major further challenge in terms of improving the quality of learning.”*

**Government National  
Education Sector Plan,  
Nepal**

**91%**

AVERAGE UWS  
TEACHER  
ATTENDANCE IN  
2023

**74%**

AVERAGE GOV  
TEACHER ATTENDANCE  
IN COUNTRIES OF  
OPERATION

**100%**

OF UWS TEACHERS  
RECEIVED TRAINING  
IN 2023

After just one year of teacher training in Madagascar, lesson observations and evaluations by education authorities concluded that UWS teachers in the area were performing at a higher level than other teachers in the same district.

# THE IMPACT OF QUALITY

Investing in the quality of education has significant impact across numerous indicators including student attendance, performance and retention.

In 2023...

**87%**

OF UWS STUDENTS IN  
NEPAL & MADAGASCAR  
PASSED NATIONAL  
ANNUAL EXAMS

The national passing rate for the CEPE exam in Madagascar (final primary grade exam) was 76% at the national level, and 100% in UWS schools.

**92%**

WAS AVERAGE  
STUDENT  
ATTENDANCE ACROSS  
UWS SCHOOLS

c.75% is the national average net attendance rate in our countries of operation.

## CASE STUDY: A MODEL FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN NEPAL

UWS' contribution to strengthening education quality and teaching capacity in rural Nepal has even received formal recognition from the Government.

**71**

UWS NEPAL COMMUNITY TEACHERS HAVE HAD FORMAL TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS APPROVED

This includes a commitment by the local government to pay their full salary after five years i.e., at the point of their school transitioning to the national education system (currently, 50% salary is being paid by UWS and 50% by respective local governments - a signal of their support).

**5**

UWS NEPAL SCHOOLS ARE NOW RECOGNIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS 'MODEL' SCHOOLS'

The concept of 'model schools' was introduced by the Nepalese government in 2016 to provide a limited number of demonstration sites in each region for quality teaching and learning. 5 UWS schools are now recognized as model schools, with UWS students beating national averages for learning achievement across Maths, English and Science.



# INCLUSION: EDUCATION FOR ALL



**40%** of the global population cannot access education in a language they speak or understand.

UWS works in some of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world: there are 27 languages spoken in Cambodia, 120 in Myanmar, 18 in Madagascar and 122 in Nepal.

Inclusive education systems require multilingual approaches. UWS employs local teachers who speak children's mother language and can help students to learn their national languages.

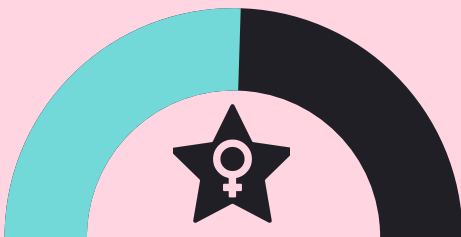


In 2020, UWS won the prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for our work with ethnic-minority children in Myanmar.

*"This project is an excellent example of how dedication, partnership and commitment can help in the battle against illiteracy and in the protection of indigenous languages, traditions and culture."*

Matthew Lodge, UK Ambassador to UNESCO

## GENDER-RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS



**51:49 (Boy:Girl)**

Average gender ratio across UWS schools in 2023

UWS is proud to have achieved gender parity in student enrolment across our schools.

However, we recognize that girls face many additional barriers to attending and thriving in the classroom. That is why we work with students, parents, teachers and entire communities to help all children feel safe and included; to challenge gender stereotypes; and to equip girls with knowledge of their bodies and rights.

Across UWS countries of operation, the average gender ratio in schools nationally is 0.97.

**7,000+**

GIRLS WILL RECEIVE TARGETED INTERVENTIONS THROUGH UWS' 3-YEAR INCLUSION PROJECT (2023-2026)

**1,000+**

PEOPLE ATTENDED UWS ADVOCACY EVENTS ON ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN CAMBODIA IN DEC 2023

**163**

UWS GIRLS' CLUBS AND MOTHERS' GROUPS ARE ENGAGING WOMEN AND GIRLS' AROUND KEY ISSUES AND THEIR RIGHTS

**100%**

OF UWS SCHOOLS HAVE ACCESS TO WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE FACILITIES, ADDRESSING COMMON BARRIERS FACED BY GIRLS

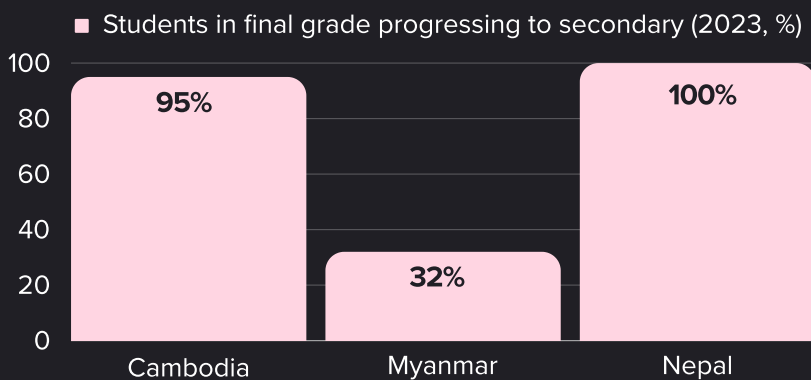


# STUDENT RETENTION & PROGRESSION

1/3

of the world's out-of-school children have attended school in the past but were forced to dropout. UWS works with teachers, parents and communities to identify students and provide tailored interventions to maximise student pathways and opportunities.

## % UWS STUDENTS IN FINAL GRADE PROGRESSING TO SECONDARY EDUCATION



*\*UWS progression data not yet available for Madagascar*

*\*\*Myanmar is a fragile, conflict-affected context where higher school dropout rates are expected*



97.5%

OF UWS STUDENTS IN CAMBODIA AND NEPAL WHO COMPLETED THE HIGHEST GRADE PROGRESSED TO SECONDARY SCHOOLING OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

## SHRISTI'S STORY, NEPAL

Born into a farming family nestled high in the eastern Nepalese Himalayas, Shristi\* knew hardship from a young age. As a young girl, her days were filled with household chores, looking after her younger siblings and cooking over smoky ovens. Like many girls in her village, she expected she would marry around the age of 14.

This all changed when Shristi stepped through the doors of UWS Gurase School. Throughout her school journey, Shristi's dreams for her future frequently evolved. She always had a different answer when asked what she wanted to do after school - from a becoming a politician to training as a teacher. Each shift in her ambition was a testament to her education, broadening her perspectives and instilling in her the belief that she could choose her own future. Without UWS, Shristi's life would likely have unfolded within the confines of household chores and family responsibilities.

Shristi finds herself on a scholarship, pursuing her secondary education after successfully completing her education at UWS Gurase School. Her ambition now? To finish her education and train to become a civil engineer.

Shristi's story shows that with access to quality education and the right opportunities in life, societal constraints can be overcome and dreams can be pursued. Because when we educate the future, we change the future.

*\*name changed in line with UWS child protection and safeguarding policy*





# SCHOOL TRANSITION

## A SECTOR-LEADING SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

**UWS has signed agreements with government education Ministries and offices at national and regional levels in all countries of operation.**

Before opening a UWS school, both communities and authorities commit to a gradual phase-over of school financing and operation to the national education system, typically over 5-7 years.

This gradual 'transition' is managed carefully by UWS to ensure capacity and funding are in place, and student and teacher outcomes are maintained. This is a key driver of UWS' capacity strengthening activities.

The 'transition' approach is mutually beneficial; it safeguards education for future generations, enables UWS to scale into new areas responsibly, and integrates learning and expertise into the national education system.

# 74

**UWS SCHOOLS HAVE  
TRANSITIONED TO  
THEIR NATIONAL  
EDUCATION SYSTEM**

# 50+

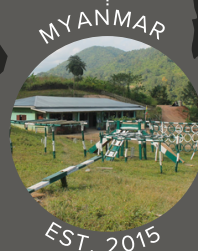
**UWS SCHOOLS ARE  
PLANNED TO  
TRANSITION IN 2024**



**19**  
SCHOOLS OPENED



**70**  
SCHOOLS OPENED  
**13**  
SCHOOLS  
TRANSITIONED



**84**  
SCHOOLS OPENED  
**21**  
SCHOOLS  
TRANSITIONED



**136**  
SCHOOLS OPENED  
**40**  
SCHOOLS  
TRANSITIONED



# 2024 TRANSITION STRATEGY

## ACTIVITY DETAILS

### Development of multi-year objectives and targets for school transition

Setting phased, tangible targets for transition is a key focus of the programmes and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) teams through the first two quarters of this year, ensuring schools only transition when financing and capacity are in place to safeguard student outcomes.

One of the main aims is to ensure that interventions that UWS has developed (such as girls' clubs and mothers' groups) are able to continue beyond transition - and, ideally, are adopted in other government schools.

The plan will aim to achieve this through work with community and government stakeholders to build local capacity to implement these interventions in UWS schools post-transition.

### Improvements to post-transition school monitoring, evaluation and engagement

Key to this approach is the development of a global MEAL tool for planning and evaluating transition. The new tool will ensure robust data collection on each school's readiness to transition, while allowing their progress post-transition to be monitored more effectively. Careful evaluation of data on post-transition schools will enable UWS to develop an appropriate intervention and response to any schools that are under-performing.

### Government advocacy and support

UWS continues to invest in government engagement and advocacy to inform national education planning processes in all countries of operation.

Sharing learnings and insight from UWS schools with government agencies is key to the effective ownership and long-term sustainability of transition initiatives, while integrating community-centred lessons and expertise into government education systems.



# SPOTLIGHT ON UWS MADAGASCAR

**UWS' newest country of operation has one of the highest rates of learning poverty in the world.**

Madagascar is the world's fifth largest island, yet c.80% of the population live in multidimensional poverty, exacerbated by climate shocks including extreme drought and cyclones. Decades of underinvestment in public services have resulted in a national education crisis, with as many as 1 in 3 children out of school, while 97% of primary students in the country are below proficiency in reading ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

**In September 2021, UWS launched a pilot project to support out of school children in the highly remote Andavadoaka region, where this education crisis is most acute.**

The pilot found that the UWS model is highly effective in tackling the extreme shortage of schools and teachers in the region. It also highlighted the significant underdevelopment of state infrastructure in comparison to UWS' previous countries of operation, demonstrating a need for support at the local government level to strengthen teaching quality and wider education delivery.

**Despite the challenges, UWS has been able to rapidly scale in Andavadoaka - after just two years we are operating 19 schools serving more than 6,400 students.**

To address the urgent need for training of teaching staff in the country, we have also opened our first regional teacher training hub offering a sustainable, replicable model for capacity strengthening of both UWS and government teachers.

## UWS MADAGASCAR IN NUMBERS

**6,494**

CHILDREN  
ENROLLED IN UWS  
SCHOOLS SINCE 2021

**19**

NEW UWS SCHOOLS  
OPENED WITH SUPPORT  
OF COMMUNITY AND  
GOVERNMENT

**156**

TEACHERS  
RECEIVING REGULAR  
TRAINING & SUPPORT



**With such vast need and demand for quality education, as well as strong support from the Government, there is huge potential for UWS to scale and become a key partner in addressing Madagascar's education crisis.**

Our journey to scale is well underway - following the launch of the new school year in late 2023, student numbers across UWS schools in Madagascar are already exceeding targets. Enrolment rates have been exceeded by as much as 50% in some communities, with some families even relocating to give their children a UWS education.



# UWS

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CHANGE THE FUTURE**



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