

Grand Opening of UWC Changshu, China

Welcome from the UWC International Board

It is a privilege and a pleasure, on behalf of the International Board, to welcome UWC Changshu, China into the worldwide UWC movement as its 15th institution.

Kurt Hahn founded Atlantic College in Wales in 1962. Since then his passion to make international education a force to unite people and nations for peace has inspired the creation of 14 other UWC colleges and schools in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Swaziland, the USA and now China.

Although the establishment of every UWC was an exciting adventure in which inspiration and determination overcame many obstacles, the emergence of UWC Changshu is a uniquely moving story. Mark Jiapeng Wang had his life of disability transformed by attending UWC Red Cross Nordic on a scholarship in 1998. Ever since then he has devoted much of his extraordinary energy and charm to founding a UWC in China. Despite some false starts, the perseverance of Mark and his team has won through and today, thanks to the outstanding support of the City of Changshu, we can celebrate the opening of a magnificent new campus where the first cohort of pupils is already hard at work. I congratulate all those involved on a magnificent achievement.

The success of the UWC movement over half a century has inspired educators around the world to adopt many of its features. Pupils at all UWCs study for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, an international qualification that UWC helped to design. Atlantic College was one of the ten member schools of the International Schools Association that created the International Baccalaureate Organization in Geneva in 1963. In 1969 UWC pupils sat for the first IB diploma examinations. Today they are taken in over 2,000 schools worldwide and have become the gold standard for university entrance.

Similarly, UWC's emphasis on education for peace and sustainable development, its commitment to community service and its celebration of diversity have stimulated other schools to espouse similar aims. The UWC movement should rejoice at this, for imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Our challenge is to continue to be the pacesetters in making education a force to unite peoples, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

UWC Changshu, China has a vital role to play in meeting that challenge. It will fulfill UWC's aim of deliberate diversity by bringing children from around the world to experience life in the world's most populous country and one of its oldest civilisations. It will also bring together youngsters from every part of China to live and study together in a boarding environment.

My fellow members of the UWC International Board join me in congratulating you on a magnificent achievement. We wish you success in bringing the UWC Changshu to its full capacity and assure you of our enthusiastic support.

Sir John Daniel, O.C.

Chair

UWC International Board