



# Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship Impact Assessment 2020 -2021

Submitted to: Mahindra & Mahindra Limited

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## Executive Summary

On behalf of Mahindra and Mahindra Limited, DevInsights conducted a research study to assess the impact of the scholarship aid provided to students studying at MUWCI for the financial year 2020-21 under the Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship Programme.

The Mahindra Group has been contributing to a need based scholarships programme which is given to deserving students admitted to Mahindra UWC College, India. The programme is known as Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarships and the scholars are called the Mahindra Scholae Mundi scholars.

The approach of the study for impact assessment was purely qualitative, i.e., the study followed a **Cross-sectional design using qualitative tools**. A single questionnaire, comprising entirely of qualitative questions, was developed and administered among the students (beneficiaries). Apart from the beneficiaries, one in-depth semi-structured interview was also administered with the program implementation representatives, via telephonic mode.

The aid provided through this programme has shaped and empowered deserving students from the marginalized sections of society to obtain equal opportunities to display their talents and attain their potential. The Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship programme has been instrumental in providing them with the platform they lacked and has opened the doorways of opportunity for them. Mahindra United World College, India, not only focuses on academic achievements but also shapes the young minds of the future with its highly creative curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities.

### About Mahindra UWC College, India

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Mahindra United World College is part of the UWC Global Education movement, which has a mission to unite People, Nations and Cultures through education for world peace and an sustainable future. The Mahindra Group has contributed to the scholarship scheme with an objective of endowing deserving students admitted to Mahindra UWC College, India with need-based scholarships. The Scholarship Programme is known as Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarships and the scholars are called the Mahindra Scholae Mundi scholars.

The endowment interest in the past was allotted equally in the Entry Year between students, from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented parts of India, bearing in mind considerations of diversity, and from the perspective of financial background.

### 1. Objective of the Study

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This study was undertaken in order to assess the impact of the Mahindra Group's generous contribution to the need-based scholarships given to deserving students who are admitted to Mahindra UWC College. In order to execute the study, the DevInsights research team conducted interviews with the recipients of these scholarships to understand the impact of the scholarship grant as well as the kind of benefits that were extended to them.

## 2. Scope of the Study & Methodology

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The method used for impact assessment of the grant was the Qualitative Interview method. A suitable sample size was decided on the basis of the scope of assessment study. The target respondents were selected and approached for the interviews. Study tools were designed to align with the objectives of the proposed impact assessment. The impact assessment study thus followed a **Cross sectional design** using qualitative tools. A single questionnaire comprising of qualitative questions was developed to administer among the students (beneficiaries). Additionally, a separate, in-depth semi-structured interview was also administered with the program implementation representatives.

The interviews tool was administered via telephonic mode and all the respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study. The respondents were given assurance of confidentiality about the insights and information shared by them, as well as an undertaking that these would be used solely for the purpose of this research study.

Key research questions were framed and a qualitative tool developed based on these, to guide and steer the interview. A sample of 5 students was selected for the study, out of which 3 students were administered with semi-structure study tools, along with two members from the program implementation team.

In terms of methodology, the information gathered through the in-depth interviews was first transcribed, followed by direct content analysis and interpretations. The narrative of findings, or inferences, were drawn based on the information gathered in tandem with the enumerators' own observations (directed content and semantics). The insights presented below capture the key areas of impact of the scholarship received by the students and how it has made a life-changing difference for them.

## 3. Findings

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### 3.1 Selection Process and Criteria for Awarding the Scholarship

The process of applying and getting selected starts with the UWC National Committee. The role of the UWC National Committee is critical in view of the aim of the UWC colleges to attract a geographically diverse cohort on their campuses. There are around 162 UWC National Committees spread across the globe with the primary responsibility to nominate students who would be a good fit within the UWC values and environment.

The National Committees identify and nominate students who, they feel, would fit into the ethos and environment of any of the UWCs. These shortlisted students lists are sent to MUWCI, where the final decision about whether or not to accept them for enrolment rests with MUWCI.

**The selection and application process for the Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship Program is as follows:**

Students are required to first send in their primary applications. Then the candidates are required to write a few essays on various topics and answer a series of questions. This is followed by group discussions and debates among the candidates. Additionally, they are required to participate in a group activity where they work collectively. Finally, an extensive and holistic round of interviews are conducted for the shortlisted candidates. These rounds of the selection process are meant to evaluate their 'out-of-the-box' thinking, creativity and personality, along with their academic acumen.

**Their qualities such as team work, thought process, logical thinking, and creativity are evaluated through various kinds of tests and games.** Before COVID-19 the students used to get an opportunity to come directly to the campus for a two-day event where they participated in group activities and individual interviews with the assessors.

With regard to the actual award of the scholarship, the scholarship offered to the students is need-based, and every qualifying student is required to submit their financial documentation. These financial documents submitted by the students are then scrutinized, reviewed and assessed by the Chief Financial Officer, who is also the financial consultant of the committee. Based on the assessment by the Chief Financial Officer, MUWCI ensures that the scholarship is awarded to only those who actually need it in view of their financial stats, in order to pursue their studies. The entire process takes up to five or six months to complete. During this time period, the students receive guidance from the MUWCI about the entire process. Despite the ongoing pandemic, the process of the students' selection and screening for admission and scholarship has not been impacted. The entire selection process continues to be carried out smoothly online.

### 3.2 Impact of Scholae Mundi Scholarships on the Education, Career and Life of Students

Attending Mahindra UWC College has definitive advantages, especially in terms of further studies, opportunities and career advancement.

#### 3.2.1 Positive Impact on Education

With regard to pursuing higher studies, the two year scholarship programme at Mahindra UWC College opens doors of opportunities for these students – irrespective of whether they have received full or partial scholarship - to apply to universities and state colleges in the USA.

**The students get the opportunity to apply to as many as 164 partner universities in the USA,** which in turn, also offer scholarships to these students. Thus, essentially, the scholarship that these students receive at the Mahindra UWC College students has a leverage effect for another four years, which creates a pathway for the students to continue to receive funding for their studies, and sometimes, a full scholarship at the US universities.

#### 3.2.2 Positive Impact on Career Path

The environment and curriculum at MUWCI campus provides the students with both encouragement and opportunities to realise their potential, in terms of higher studies in other universities as well as career avenues. The academic programme at MUWCI, despite being extremely challenging, also allows students to explore their respective subject areas in-depth, and to experience pre-college studies. The course structure of the programme has a completely holistic approach to learning, rather than a concentrated, one-dimensional focus on academics.

**The academically rigorous programme and study environment at MUWCI encourages students to pursue the fields and subjects of their interest, in addition to the mainstream subjects.** The curriculum encourages peer-to-peer learning through numerous class debates and discussions, thus facilitating a healthy and synergetic exchange of ideas. In addition, there are a number of clubs and extracurricular activities to ensure the students' holistic development. The favourable student-teacher ratio, at around 1:10, also allows for a personal connect and meaningful interaction between the teachers and students and facilitates an environment wherein the teachers can pay attention to their students and their needs, as well providing mental and emotional support to them.

### 3.2.3 Financial Support to Students

Students who qualify for the scholarship usually come from low-income family backgrounds, or else, either have a single parent or just one earning member in the family. Hence, getting a partially or fully funded scholarship definitely eases the financial burden on the students and their families.

**The scholarship programme has enabled talented and deserving students to concentrate and give their best efforts to their studies without having to worry about getting a part-time job to support their education or repay education loans.** The scholarship students do not have to worry about other expenses, such as food, accommodation, etc., either, since all of these requirements are taken care of by MUWCI. Additionally, the scholarship programme gives the students the option to pursue higher studies, rather than immediately taking up a full-time job in order to repay the loan they might have had to raise for their studies in the absence of the MUWCI scholarship programme. The scholarship programme, along with its subsequent opportunities, has broadened the students' horizons in terms of both, career opportunities and higher education.

The MUWCI scholarship programme also offers additional support to students, such as career guidance and counselling from the faculty. Usually, around 30 per cent students return to their home country – a trend that is more pronounced in the case of students from lower middle income economies. However, many students choose to study further in the US and find their space in spheres such as finance and banking services, educational and health services, anthropology, gender studies, etc. The students who have graduated continue their engagement with MUWCI through donations to the college, volunteering to judge various events and panels and as guest speakers.

## 4. Conclusion

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The Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship Programme has hugely benefited students who have enrolled and graduated from Mahindra United World College. The scholarship programme besides acting as a catalyst for deserving students from economically weaker backgrounds to achieve their dreams, also allowed them to pursue their studies without any external stress factors. They were able to study without being worried about the financial burden or a part-time job they would have to take up had they gone into another institution where scholarship might not have been an option. They were thus able to concentrate on their studies and enhancing their knowledge and skills. The scholarship students under the programme umbrella were also given opportunities to enrol in State universities in the US for further studies with the proviso of equivalent financial grants. Thus, MUWCI, by granting them this opportunity, opened doors to a brighter future for them.

## 5. Recommendations

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There should be a mechanism in place that would allow Mahindra United World College to monitor the students who have been the recipient of the scholarship. The mechanism will assist in assessing their career and educational trajectory and how the Mahindra Scholae Mundi Scholarship Programme benefitted these students. Currently, MUWCI is working towards formally setting up a tracking mechanism for scholarship students after they graduate from MUWCI, to trace their career paths. The Guidance Office is kept informed about the graduated students through their LinkedIn profiles. However, a stronger alumni network in place would help current students in terms of guidance and peer relations and prospective students in terms of the application process.

