



## Benjamin Niyontwari

My name is Benjamin Niyontwari, I am seventeen. I am from Rwanda and lived there until I was six years old.

When political problems arose in the country, my family and I had to run for the safety of our lives. I lost my parents during a war, but I have endured the grief of losing them. I saw other children also losing their parents, husbands and wives being separated.

I lost the most important thing in my life, my family. Since then I was raised by different adoptive parents and lived without a permanent residence. I had to adapt to changes, and to different communities, because it is by adaptation that we create strong and united communities.

However, I was always maltreated by my adoptive parents and restricted in school attendance, mostly due to economic circumstances. But I never gave up on the idea of going to school because I know that it was the only way that could help me and my adoptive family escape from our economic situation.

Sometimes the memories of children sobbing and heartbroken, and people losing things they dedicated their entire lives to achieve, lead me to conclude that all is vanity. There is nothing that a man gains from daily toils of his life, a generation goes and another comes but the world

changes in its own way. I always feel distressed when I see people, especially children, suffering, yet I do not have much to sustain them. I also feel distressed to see societies in conflict, yet I am incapable of helping them to unite.

Nevertheless, I always believed that forgiveness, education, equality, peace and love are the keys to building societies that support each other. I survived fatal times and my mission in life is not merely to survive, but to change everything that destroys and breaks peoples' hearts, to stop wars and conflicts, and create unity in societies.

The opportunity to participate in the UWC short course is the first step towards achieving that.

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## ERAJ UZOQOV

My name is Eraj and I am 18 years old. I grew up in a poor developing country in Central Asia. When I was a child, I spent summers with my grandmother, in a village. In the neighborhood, there lived a very poor family. In this family, there was a young boy my age, named Sharif. Sharif's family couldn't afford the toys the other boys in our village had, therefore nobody usually played with him. As I did not know him well, I thought that poor people were boring, talentless and uneducated.

On a sunny summer day, when I was six years old, I was hanging around in the garden. While I was climbing a tree, I noticed Sharif working on something. My curiosity pushed me to call his name and ask him what he was doing. He was very happy to see me and called me around. When I went, I was surprised. A boy my age was carving wooden toys, like swords, soldiers and helicopters. Noticing my interest, he took me to an attic in their house, where he had created his own wooden "army". After a while, we became good friends, and spent a lot of time playing together. His father was working in construction, and one Sunday, on his day off, he taught us to build a treehouse. Sharif's mother used to tell us interesting stories and tales. The friendship that arose when I was six, is still present and will last forever.

Sharif and his family taught me a very important lesson for the rest of my life. I learned that knowing someone does not have money does not reveal anything about them. People like this family will teach you a lot, and may even become one of your very close friends. Since this life-changing lesson, I always try to talk to people, to learn from them, and to help them.

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Helping people is something that sets my heart on fire! During my time at school, I have been involved in many volunteering activities like teaching young children in orphanages, helping them with activities and bringing happiness to their lives.

UWC's Short Course in Swaziland is a unique opportunity to expand my world vision, to meet new people and help them. Despite the poverty, Africa is a continent with very rich culture, history and unique traditions. I strongly believe that during the course in Swaziland, I will improve my skills and gain the experience that will assist me to serve people and help them to have better life. I strongly believe that I will get to know many more interesting people, like Sharif's family, who are struggling economically, but are very wealthy in their knowledge, skills, and in their sense of humanity. I strongly believe that I can contribute my part in helping people in the world to achieving a better life, by talking to them, getting to know their problems and assisting them to the best extent of my capabilities.

Despite the lesson that I have learned, the reality is that my family is from a newly formed post-Soviet country. Although the economy is gradually improving, I am writing this letter with a huge hope that you can help me financially so I am able to meet new people, learn a significant amount, and increase my capability to helping people through development work. In this way, you can help me, help others.