

JUBILEE EVENT CELEBRATING 100 YEARS



WUS History – founding year 1920 in Vienna, Austria

After the destructive years of World War I, four women met in early 1920 in Vienna, Austria, to discuss the desperate situation of students at the University of Vienna. These four women laid the foundation for the organisation named "European Student Relief," which sought to address the gap in humanitarian aid toward the education needs of university students across Europe. As activities expanded to address the education needs of students in Asia and Africa, the organisation was renamed "International Student Relief." Later, recognizing the critical role of the broader university community in advancing its activities, the organisation was once again renamed "World University Service."

WUS achieved worldwide recognition throughout the second half of the 20th century, particularly for its support in the democratisation and anti-colonial processes in Latin America and Africa, especially in overcoming apartheid in South Africa and Namibia.

1988 The Lima Declaration

The activities of the World University Service (WUS) are based on the "Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and autonomy of tertiary educational institutions" adopted 1988 in Peru by the General Assembly of WUS. This declaration was a response to the increasing global repression against the right of academic freedom. It mainly refers to the principle that every person has a right to education, which is the starting point (and pre-condition) for claiming other human rights. Hence, the main focus of the educational work of the World University Service is, among other human rights, to value the human right to quality education. Thus, the projects of the World University Service can be categorised into the "Decade of Human Rights" of the United Nations and the UNESCO project "Culture of Peace".

The WUS Global Network

Our global network of students, academics, volunteers, and other development agents spans several decades, geographies, and areas of expertise. Many WUS alumni have made important contributions in the field of education, human rights, and global development, including Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Executive Director of UN Women, and former representative of WUS South Africa) and The Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau (former Prime Minister of Canada, and WUS 1957 International Seminar participant).

In honour of the centennial, WUS will also be launching an interactive website that tells the story of WUS through the histories of our network of education and development experts.

In 2020 WUS will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

World University Service (WUS) is a global network of non-profit organisations working in over 50 countries to meet the educational needs of youth affected by crises. We work with students, schools, governments, and businesses to develop innovative solutions for more inclusive education systems. Taking a human rights-based approach, our work intersects with many other facets of development, including governance, economics, and the environment.