



# Trafigura Scholarships



*"Let them (the children of the privileged and powerful) share their experiences of an enthralling school life with the children of those who have to struggle for their existence."*

Kurt Hahn 1886–1974

# Your gift is *changing lives*

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*Thank you for making a difference in the lives of your scholars: Saifan Mahdi, Amirah Fadhlina and Irham Yunardi. Through the generosity of the Trafigura Foundation, Irham is embarking on his final year of the IB programme, Amirah has just started on the IB journey and Saifan has entered FIB, which will provide the foundation for the IB programme. It has been a pleasure to share in their stories of triumphs and the following account touches on some of the experiences they have had during Term One. UWCSEA is positively shaping the lives of these three, capable young people. The Trafigura Foundation gift has provided each of them with an opportunity they would not have been otherwise able to access, thank you.*

## **Saifan Mahdi**

Saifan, your newest scholar, still remembers vividly how he felt when he received news in class that he had received a scholarship to UWCSEA.

"I thought it was a joke at first. Were they pulling my leg? I was called to the principal's office, and she gave me a letter bearing the UWCSEA symbol, and it was then that I finally realized I had done it! After all the initial emotions of joy and anticipation of what was coming, I thought about how lucky I was that somebody out there was big-hearted enough to fund this scholarship. I had seen photos of the school from the school's website, and I knew that funding a scholarship like this was not cheap, not easy and required tons of effort. When I told my parents, they cried, overwhelmed by their joy."

The highlight of Saifan's first term at the College has been taking part in the recent 11-day FIB expedition to Northern Thailand, and he described it as "the best two weeks of the year!" The expedition was divided into two parts, one week of adventure followed by a week completing service work. Hiking up jungle covered mountains, rafting down the Nam River and



sleeping on the floor of thatched long houses were all part of the adventure experience.

Saifan together with his fellow students then spent the remainder of their trip building toilets for one of the Northern Hill Tribes. The Akha people, who make up the Hill Tribe, are refugees from Myanmar. Although they live in relative poverty, the villagers opened up their community to the students, and Saifan was humbled by their generosity. Not only did they cook for the group, they also shared their sleeping huts. Learning how to play 'takro,' a type of volleyball played using your feet, was a great way to break down barriers.

The first task in constructing the toilets was to make cement, but before the students could make cement they had to carry heavy, wet bags of sand up from a nearby river. Prior to this, Saifan had not realised how much sand is needed to make cement! It was back-breaking work, but also extremely rewarding.

Closer to home, Saifan is engaged in a number of Global Concern projects including Jakarta Street Kids and Tsunami Education Fund. In February, he will start spending time each week



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at Boys’ Town. Boys’ Town is one of the local services that UWCSEA supports. It provides care for boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, aged between 11 to 18 years of age. The students spend time with the boys running activities such as water polo, treasure hunts and music sessions.

Saifan was proud to represent Indonesia during UN Night. He and 25 other students performed an Indonesian dance called ‘Saman,’ or the ‘Thousand-Hand Dance.’ The performers remain seated and it involves them using their hands in synchronization with each other.

Saifan radiates real pleasure when he talks about how it feels to be a student at UWCSEA. He is being stimulated not only by his classes but also by all the opportunities that are available to him as a member of the UWCSEA global community. When asked to reflect on his experience to-date he said the following:

“Imagine that you woke everyday believing that you could make a difference in this world, and that’s how I feel since I came to UWCSEA.”



### **Amirah Fadhlina**

To Amirah, your Grade 11 scholar, UWCSEA feels like a second home and she was eager to get back to start the new academic year.

“Here in UWCSEA, I’ve found lots of new friends and people that are part of my life now. I am now a new person, I have more respect towards people, I am a more confident person, and here I really can feel the UWCSEA spirit and friendship is a very important aspect in UWCSEA.”

Having increased confidence has enabled Amirah to take on roles she would not have previously considered. As Chair of the Tsunami Education Fund (TEF), Amirah is gaining experience leading and addressing meetings. She acknowledges that these are extremely useful skills that she will use in any future career.

TEF is a Global Concern (GC) that Amirah feels strongly about, as it supports children that were orphaned by the 2004 tsunami that devastated Banda Aceh, where she is from. Fund raising plans this year include running a movie night to celebrate Valentine’s Day. In addition, Amirah recently joined Peace for Kids GC, which works with children who have suffered the effects of Agent Orange, which was used in the Vietnam War.



The progress Amirah has made in her English since last year is also helping her to feel more confident about her academic work. She rates English, Indonesian and Geography as her favourite subjects—English because the class is fun and Amirah has such a good relationship with her teacher; Indonesian as “you feel like you are home” and Geography since the subject really interests her and she is achieving good results.

Amirah is a natural performer. Most recently, she took part in an International Evening that showcased African and South American cultures. It was impressive to see how well Amirah mastered the energetic and complex dances from Brazil, Costa Rica, Haiti and Uruguay. For relaxation, she plays the guitar and sings and even has her own YouTube channel which she uses to upload songs and videos. Seventy-five subscribers have already signed on to Amirah’s channel!

Amirah embraces all that UWCSEA has to offer. She summed up by saying,

“Through UWCSEA, I know my world better, and I became more aware of things that happen in society. UWCSEA is a window that shows you everything that you might have never seen before, and it gives you new experiences that you have never done before. UWCSEA has changed us into a better people and into individuals that are concerned about people and community.”



## Irham Yunardi

Although Irham is in Grade 12 and therefore has an extremely heavy academic load, he has continued to be active in all aspects of UWCSEA life. His interests are varied and span a range of College activities and services, for example he is a member of the Rainforest Nursery Global Concern and the Senior Singers choir, he plays badminton and has performed in UN Night and two International Evenings.

Irham reflects that he has overcome a number of things that would previously have been quite challenging for him and has had successes across the spectrum of the UWCSEA education programme. In Grade 11, Irham started studying Business for the first time. He admits that in the beginning he struggled, given he had no background in the subject and was unfamiliar with the terminology and concepts. However, with support from his teacher and peers, he has gained real confidence in the subject and now rates it as his favourite subject.

Most recently, he completed a 1,500 word analysis on Singapore Airline's plan to establish a budget airline called *Scoot*. His interest was sparked when he learnt that Singapore Airlines, which is a five star airline, planned to diversify their services to attract a different market. Even though Irham is relatively new to Business, he said that he has always had an interest in the aviation industry.

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Another very different but equally satisfying challenge was learning how to do the Viennese Waltz for UN Night. Irham described it as an amazing experience.

"It was a challenge for me because I never learnt to dance before. To learn a hard dance such as the Viennese Waltz in just 5–6 weeks and to perform on a stage [in front of an audience] of approximately 600 people for 3 times, it was one of the best experiences in my UWCSEA life. I accomplished something I never thought I would be able to do."

Irham said that the most important thing UWCSEA has taught him has been leadership skills. Prior to coming to the College, he had not held any leadership roles, nor did he expect to. Through the leadership experience he has had since being in the school, he has acquired leadership skills.

"I've now realised more of how hard it is to be a leader because there are times when things you've decided do not go your way."

During the October break, Irham had the opportunity to put these skills into practise. Together with a group of eight friends, he completed a service project for a village in Tagaytay, Philippines. The students painted the doors of the villagers' houses.

"It was an amazing experience because I built on the cooperation skills and leadership skills which I gained in UWCSEA and applied it into a real situation."

Irham concluded by saying,

"The UWCSEA experience has been a thrilling and an eye-opening journey for me. I have gained knowledge and experience like never before. But life is not just about gaining knowledge. UWCSEA has taught me that what matters in life is not about gaining the knowledge and experience, what matters more is how you apply that knowledge and experience in your daily life so that it benefits you and your community."

**Thank you. Your gift is making a difference.**

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