

AN *initiative* FROM WOMEN, FOR *women*



THE FEMALE EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

A network of professional women committed to helping girls from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) get an international education at United World College (UWC) in Maastricht. Let's talk to Sandra van den Tillaard and Charlotte Groven, working for UWC Maastricht and founders of this valuable initiative. Also, three network members and ambassadors of this cause share why they are supporting this initiative and why you should too!



SANDRA VAN DEN TILLAARD

United World College (UWC) Maastricht

United World College (UWC) Maastricht
enthusiastic leader; wants to start a dialogue with others to enable
education to contribute to peace and a sustainable future

Our students, who come from all over the world, go through an intensive educational programme that not only covers standard subjects like math or English. There is also a focus on social entrepreneurship and global issues, for example. "We use education for peace and a sustainable future. Through education and guidance, we help students - and therefore also these girls - to see that they can make a difference," Sandra van den Tillaard (Director of Advancement) and Charlotte Groven (Fundraiser) of UWC Maastricht tell us. "After completing their education, they take the knowledge and experience they gain at UWC back home and apply it. They become changemakers, and their families and surroundings also benefit from their experience and skills."

special events

More than 40 businesswomen now support this noble cause. They come together in a network: the Female Empowerment Network. "The women meet regularly at events where networking, exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge are central. From inspiring lectures to informal drinks, every meeting looks different. Getting to know the MENA students who go to UWC Maastricht thanks to this project is also on the agenda. You can imagine we can learn a lot from them. Even though they are still young, they often have already experienced a lot. They have a completely different view of our world which can lead to other insights," says Sandra.



CHARLOTTE GROVEN



United World College (UWC) Maastricht

passionate community builder
dedicated to making education accessible to children worldwide so they can
grow into caring global citizens

MENA-regio

"Especially in those countries, going to school can really go a long way. Education acts as a social vaccine against, for example, human trafficking, disease or exploitation. When the girls return to their home countries, we create a ripple effect. After all, their local community can also share in the knowledge gained in Maastricht!" Sandra and Charlotte do not hide their enthusiasm. "Actually, everyone benefits from this project. Not only the girls and their families, but also the women in the network - and ultimately you and me, too! Only if we ensure a more equal distribution of knowledge and opportunities will we create a truly better world - for everyone!"

At UWC Maastricht, the world comes together! Getting to know each other is the first step towards peace and sustainability. The Female Empowerment Network (including members Marguerite Soeteman-Reijnen, Astrid Pinckaers and Marjoleine De Boorder) brings people closer together - girls from the MENA region and professional women who support the project privately or through their businesses.

Do you also want to participate in this network? You can! For more info, visit: uwcmastricht.nl/femaleempowerment



‘EDUCATION FOR GIRLS: THE BEGINNING OF CHANGE’

MARGUERITE
SOETEMAN-REIJNEN



**ambassador Female Empowerment Network
and Executive Board Aon Holdings**

director and supervisor, passionate and driven
national and international advocate of women's rights and equality
recipient of the Ambassador J. William Middendorf II Award (2021)
honorary doctorate RAI University India (2022)



“At UWC, students from various countries, regions and socioeconomic backgrounds and religions live together on campus. Whatever your background, whether you have royal blood or live in a refugee camp, everyone gets the same treatment. The rooms are basic, so are the facilities; but that is not what it is all about. UWC is a melting pot where students learn at an early age to bridge differences and connect with each other. This creates more mutual understanding. In times of crisis, we need that. In my job, I deal with diversity, equity and equality. By supporting UWC and therefore the Female Empowerment Network, we are building on these core values. Education is the route to growth. Don't keep knowledge to yourself, empower boys and girls and let them be part of it. By doing so, we can really take a step towards a better world.”



ASTRID PINCKAERS

ambassador Female Empowerment Network
owner Ricoh Document Center Zuid / AV Center Zuid
entrepreneur
thinks in opportunities
is convinced that dignity, freedom of choice and inclusivity
increases everyone's welfare

"What example can you set for other women? That question was at the center of a UWC Female Empowerment Network meeting. I was immediately won over. Inclusiveness is something I embrace completely, as well as the benefits of UWC's many-faceted internationality. I am convinced that education is the beginning of change. The girls educated through UWC go back to their native soil to apply and spread the knowledge they have gained. Wonderful! I also realize it might only be a drop in the ocean. However, if everyone does their bit, together we can move closer towards a better world. By joining the Female Empowerment Network, you contribute to UWC's scholarship fund, but you can also offer traineeships and internships. Women could show more sisterhood among themselves. We can contribute to that through this network."



MARJOLEINE DE BOORDER

ambassador Female Empowerment Network
lawyer and mediator at De Boorder Familie- en Erfrecht
Advocaten & Mediator
entrepreneur, founder and advocate, a true mediator and
bridge builder who takes charge and makes decisions
champion for the financial independence of women

"In my work, I regularly meet women in the middle of a divorce who, while married, did not give enough thought to how they would go on if they ended up on their own. Their education or work experience is often out of date, limiting their chances of financial independence. Fortunately, there is a social safety net in the Netherlands. In many countries below the equator, that safety net does not exist. I find girls from those countries who take a step forward by attending a UWC college incredibly brave. Through the Female Empowerment Project, these young women can move closer towards self-reliance and independence. That totally resonates with my personal mission. The mix of nationalities on campus creates a cosmopolitan atmosphere and interconnectedness. I feel the same about the Female Empowerment Network. We are like-minded women who share a passion to help other women get ahead in the world. That makes me very happy." •

