



CHEVENING

# CHEVENING'S IMPACT

Chevening Scholars promoting peace  
and stability in a changing world

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# Ministerial Foreword



## The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

Minister of State in the Foreign,  
Commonwealth & Development Office

**It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Chevening Scholarship programme's annual report for 2021-22. This report celebrates the diverse talent and achievements of Chevening Scholars and Alumni over the past year.**

Chevening welcomed over 1600 scholars to the UK in 2021 and saw a much anticipated return to in-person events, with the first full cohort gathering for more than two years. These gatherings bring together people with different perspectives from around the world, who share a hope that the world of tomorrow will be better than today.

The past year has been deeply difficult for many people around the world. I have great admiration for the courage shown by the many Chevening Scholars who have travelled from challenging contexts to embrace the opportunity to study in the UK.

We face many global challenges. Too many people are living in poverty without access to basic healthcare

or food security and we are witnessing the catastrophic impact of climate change.

The Chevening community of scholars and alumni is a beacon of hope. We know that scholars use their Chevening experience to create a lasting, positive impact around the world and there are inspiring stories of how they do this in this report.

The Chevening programme embodies values of openness, understanding and debate and provides an opportunity to forge connections across national divides. Britain is proud to work with our friends and partners around the world to create a better future for all of us. I hope all Chevening Scholars find strength and lifelong friendships within the network and also with the UK.

# Chevening in numbers

## 1643

scholars supported  
in total.

## 318

scholars were supported  
by Chevening Partners,  
making up **19%** of the  
cohort.

## 56,000

global Chevening alumni.

## 19

current or former  
heads of state or  
government officials.

## Over 1m

followers on social  
media, representing  
a **14.5%** growth.

## 19

scholars supported  
from Ukraine.



Scholars supported from all corners of the world.

## 51

events held

## 20

were held  
virtually

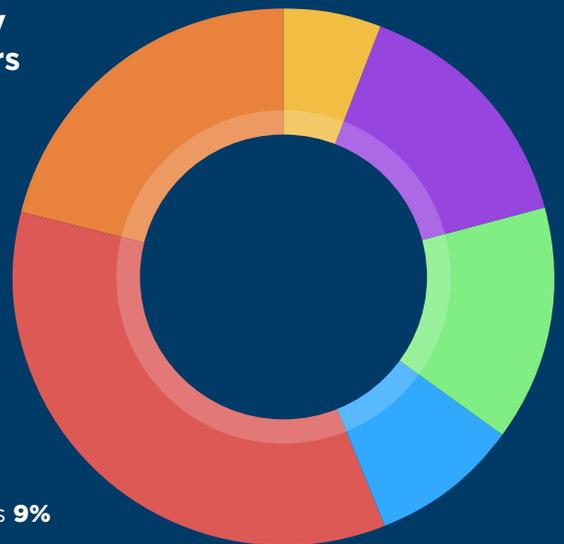
## 31

were held  
face-to-face

“It was an extremely enriching experience to meet and network with so many scholars from around the world! [It was a] wonderful event full of positive emotions. I enjoyed every second.”

Chevening Scholar,  
Orientation feedback

The wide range of  
courses studied by  
Chevening Scholars





## Cheveners promoting peace and stability in a changing world

In this next section, we'll be sharing inspiring stories of our scholars leveraging their Chevening experience to fulfil their potential as future leaders and promote healthier, safer places for people around the world to live, work, and thrive.

Cheveners promoting peace and stability in a changing world

# Promoting women's rights in Sri Lanka



There are currently estimated to be 218 million women around the world who don't have access to safe and effective contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancy.

That's 218 million women who are disempowered to make decisions about their own bodies.

Dakshitha Wickremarathne, a 2019 Chevening Alumnus, is using the knowledge, network, and skills he gained whilst studying for a master's degree in Public Policy at University College London, to advocate for a woman's right to choose.

## How have you used your Chevening Scholarship to advance women's rights?

Since graduating from my Chevening funded degree, I have been working as a

Consultant at the United Nations Foundation. I have directly implemented the skills and knowledge gained from my time studying in the UK with Chevening, as well as utilised the global network I built.

My role is as a Consultant for the Transition Management Team of Family Planning 2030, a global movement dedicated to advancing people's rights to access reproductive health services safely.

I am currently focused on engaging with partners in nearly 70 countries to develop 'hubs' in Africa, the Asia Pacific region, and Latin America and the Caribbean, that will provide women and girls with the knowledge, resources, and medication they need to make their own decisions about their bodies.

**"I see the United Kingdom as a global leader in terms of gender equality, particularly sexual reproductive health and rights, and education."**

These locations were identified as being in greater need of improved access to modern contraceptives.

The impact of this work will not only be felt at an individual level, but also at national and international levels. The partnerships established will also provide technical capacity to governments. Governments who might not have the resources to develop policies and programmes will get the

technical capacity to develop better policies to ensure that women's rights are realised and recognised in those countries.

### What are your plans for the future?

In my spare time, I serve as a Board member of Women Deliver, a leading global organisation that drives political and financial investment into the lives of girls and women.

I have been able to increase my impact as a board member as a result of my Chevening experience. Women Deliver runs a Young Leaders programme which connects and supports young leaders who are working on issues related to sexual reproductive rights around the world. Following my Chevening experience, I promoted this Young Leaders programme to my connections in the UK and across the Chevening network. This has led to several of my contacts taking part in the programme, helping us to maximise our impact.

"I am able to face the challenges the whole organisation faces better, because of my Chevening experience."

Next on my list is tackling gendered online hate speech and cyber gender-based violence. In my spare time, I also work as an advisor to

### Dakshitha's key achievements

1

Co-founding the not-for-profit organisation, Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka (YAN), which works to improve access to contraception for women and girls with hearing disabilities.

2

Developing a sign language glossary on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for people living with hearing disabilities. This has been used in Sri Lanka and replicated around the world.

3

Contributing to the 'Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy' as a member of the Independent Accountability Panel, established by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

4

Appointed as a Board Member of Women Deliver, a leading global organisation that champions gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women.

'Search for Common Ground', an international NGO which is working with the British High Commission in Sri Lanka, funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund at the FCDO, to tackle this issue.

"I would say, because of Chevening, I was able to have more concrete relationships with colleagues from the British High Commission, specifically with Sarah Hulton OBE, the High Commissioner, and the political officers. So, people know me on a first-name basis right now simply because I received a Chevening Scholarship."

# 43%

of women around the world are disempowered to make their own informed decisions about sex and reproductive health care. UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 is trying to address this.

### The British High Commission in Sri Lanka is also benefitting from Dakshitha's network.

"Dakshitha is the current President of Sri Lanka's Chevening Alumni Association. He's a specialist in gender reform... He is very well connected because he has worked as a volunteer, he's worked in different organisations, and he's travelled a lot for work as well. He draws from his Chevening network and says: "Here's something this association did. Shall we see if we can localise it and replicate it here?"

### Chevening Officer in Sri Lanka

Cheveners promoting peace and stability in a changing world



# Supporting long-term resilience in Cuban residential development

The Chevening Alumni Programme Fund (CAPF) supports long-term relationships abroad by helping exceptional alumni with realistic and achievable ideas to action positive change.

'Our City, Our Space' is an example of one of the remarkable projects CAPF supported in 2021. Co-founders Gabriela Garcia and Leysi Rubio, 2018-19 Chevening Scholars, created the international forum to spark discussion, debate, and decision-making on the future of Cuban development. The aim? To provide resilient, sustainable living environments that meet the needs of Cuban people.

The four-day forum took place on 16-19 November 2021. It brought together over 400 participants, and 36 speakers from 14 different countries. The diversity of thought and different perspectives in the room resulted in fruitful and productive conversations about developing living environments that are resilient to the effects of climate change and support people to live safely and sustainably.

The event led to the launch of **Placemaking Cuba**, a significant milestone in the journey towards inclusive and sustainable communities in Cuba. Placemaking Cuba is a collaborative network of Cuban professionals, academics

and local people committed to actioning the results of discussions from the 'Our City, Our Space' forum.

**"Our aim is to raise the visibility of projects that promote resilient local development, to create inclusive and sustainable communities in this Caribbean Island."**

Since its launch in 2021, Placemaking Cuba has facilitated workshops around the country to raise the profile of placemaking initiatives that support safe, secure, sustainable living.

'Our City, Our Space' serves as an inspiring example of what can be achieved with new ideas, collaboration, and a determination to succeed. Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and local development policies, the forum provides a space for meaningful discussion on sustainable and inclusive urban development.

Change never comes easy but with the support and strength of the 56,000+ Chevening Alumni network, Gabriela and Leysi were able to overcome



one significant challenge of facilitating the 'Our City, Our Space' forum: the global pandemic. Forcing them to move to an online model, they called on the support of their networks to help run and promote the event, which resulted in a greater number of attendees and richer dialogue.

We're looking forward to following the success of Gabriela and Leysi as they continue driving positive change in Cuban urban development.

Cheveners promoting peace and stability in a changing world

# Scholars advocate for increased environmental protection

Chevening Scholars are committed to taking action to tackle climate change, a key priority of governments around the world. Below, we share a snapshot of just some of the work of our incredible community.



## Natalia Shepel

- 📍 2021 Chevening Alumna from Ukraine.
- 📍 MSc Oceanography from the University of Southampton.

Natalia's work focusses on addressing the impact of human activity on damaged ecosystems.

"We need to do something [to tackle climate change]. We can't just have ideas... [we need] to actually do something that will make a difference."

During her time studying in the UK, Natalia attended COP26 in Glasgow.

"Together with other Chevening Scholars, we took part in some of the events across the conference. It was a great opportunity to network, and meet executives and

different people who work for governments around the world, as well as for NGOs and INGOs as well."

She's now leveraging her Chevening experience to advance her career goals. Natalia has secured a traineeship at **Ocean Infinity**, a company whose mission is to find cleaner and safer ways of exploring our seas. Natalia's traineeship will include a month-long expedition spent on a vessel off the coast of Scotland undertaking environmental and archaeological research using marine technology!

Despite the challenges Ukrainian scholars have faced over the last year, we're thankful that Natalia has felt supported by her university and across the Chevening community to continue her studies:

**"I think the Chevening staff and scholars are like my family here; they're people that you can really rely on in in difficult situations."**

In future, she hopes to rebuild the education system in Ukraine to ensure that universities, and the work of researchers and scientists into climate adaptation is not lost.

Read Natalia's full story at [Chevening.org/saving-our-seas](https://www.chevening.org/saving-our-seas)

### The British High Commission in Vietnam is also benefitting from Chevening

“Vietnam is highly vulnerable to climate change, so we’ve spent the last couple of years encouraging people passionate about conservation, biodiversity, and climate adaptation to apply for Chevening. We’ve now got a network of people [who have been awarded a Chevening Scholarship], and when they’re back [from the UK], we’ll be able to bring them together to work with one another to find solutions to these issues. Some are from government ministries, others are from civil society organisations, and so helping them to build institutional ties will be something that we can facilitate.”

**Marcus Winsley, Deputy British Ambassador to Vietnam**

### Thu Nguyen, 2021 Chevening Alumna from Vietnam

**Msc Environment and Development, Lancaster University**

“My master’s degree in Environment and Development from Lancaster University provided me with a new network of technical experts and international scholars with the same interests in energy and climate change. Together, we will reduce greenhouse emissions.”





Cheveners promoting peace and stability in a changing world

## Enhancing cyber security through the Chevening Western Balkans Fellowship

As governments and organisations around the world increasingly rely on technology to run day-to-day activities, cyber security is vital in protecting data, safeguarding infrastructure, and providing reliable services.

Mirza Nikšić is a 2019 Chevening Alumnus, now working as Head of the Technical Department at Canton Sarajevo Ministry of Interior (MoI). We find out more about how he is leveraging his Chevening experience to support his career in withstanding cyber security threats.

### How have you leveraged your Chevening Fellowship to increase cyber resilience?

I wanted to take part in the Chevening Western Balkans Fellowship to learn more about different aspects of cyber security. I was particularly impressed by the wide range of

topics - from psychology to law - that the fellowship at Cranfield University covered. I gained a promotion shortly after my time on the fellowship and now work at the MoI.

Part of my current role involves working closely with the Criminal Investigation Department on wide ranging security issues.

“I am responsible for the way in which we handle data, which impacts the security of wider society. The broad education that fellows receive on the Chevening Western Balkans Fellowship is really spot on.”



### Mirza Nikšić

Head, Technical Department,  
Canton Sarajevo Ministry  
of Interior

# 50%

the number of countries around the world that are aware but lacking national cybersecurity plans. UN SDG 9 is trying to address this.

## What has been your biggest achievement so far?

On one particular case with the Criminal Investigation Department, I was able to draw upon my Chevening network to access a specialist police unit in the UK.

I helped to facilitate and organise coordination between the Sarajevo Police Department and one department of the Metropolitan police service for a case that we were working on. I used all of my Chevening network and it was incredibly helpful.

I'm also well connected to the Chevening Cyber Security network. Fellows from across the Western Balkans region have stayed in contact following

their fellowship and we've also begun forging connections with Chevening Cyber Security fellowship alumni in India, to discuss common issues, challenges and share opportunities.

I'm using the knowledge and networks gained from my fellowship to support with the development of a new security unit for Police Officers in my department.

I'm recommending hardware, software, and the additional necessities that a cyber department should have. The fellowship is helping me because I know which equipment or software is going to be most useful.

## What are your plans for the future?

Working in cyber security and trying to make progress in this field can be challenging. There is often a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of cyber security, and attracting investment in it can be difficult.

I'm nevertheless determined to see cyber security in Bosnia go from strength to strength. If we can withstand cyber security threats, we can achieve positive change across the country.

"Here in the Western Balkans, we knew we needed to do more to engage with professionals working in cyber security. That's why we have the Chevening Cyber Security Fellowship as well as the standard Chevening scheme. We go out and target people across all the countries here who might benefit from the Chevening Fellowship. It provides us with a great network to hopefully be able to do more to protect the security of Europe."

**Dominic Otway**  
British Deputy  
Ambassador to Serbia

# What does our community say?

## Our scholars

66



“Chevening has provided me with tremendous opportunities. Not only am I attending a world-class educational institution in the UK, but I also have the chance to explore UK culture, the lifestyle, and expand my network.”

Chevening Scholar,  
Cambodia

“Being a Chevening Scholar is a life-changing experience. It’s much more than just pursuing further study. Chevening has allowed me to experience UK culture, gain knowledge in social science and technological innovation, and the best part? I’ve been able to connect with amazing and talented people from 140+ countries.”

Chevening Scholar, Indonesia



# What does our community say?

## Our partners

66



**“We partner with Chevening to develop leaders for Brazil in some of the best universities in the world. Our joint scholarships programme benefits students committed to Brazil and who want to lead societal change in vital areas such as education, public policy, public health and sustainability.”**

LeMann Foundation



**“Our Chevening partnership brings exceptional scholars to the University of Leeds... By partnering with Chevening, we are able to increase knowledge and opportunity for international scholars, who are then able to take this knowledge back to their own country and act as worldwide ambassadors for the UK and the University of Leeds.”**

The University of Leeds

**“The Bseisu-Chevening partnership focuses on empowering young scholars from the Levant region. Against the odds and coming from disadvantaged communities, we feel it is our obligation to support such outstanding young women and men in their pursuit of knowledge.**

**Our partnership with Chevening enables us to reach more of these talented individuals and provide them with high-quality educational opportunities at top institutions.”**

The Bseisu Foundation



# What does our community say?

## Our partner-sponsored scholars

66



**“I have increased my confidence... while also contributing to the development of the BBC with my unique background.”**

Alex Vasque talking about his experiences on the BBC internship



**“I have an amazing relationship [with my sponsor]. I am so grateful; you won't regret this investment. I will make you proud and raise the flag for the University of Sussex.”**

Wadi Ben Hirki is from Nigeria, studying for an MSc in International Education and Development at her co-sponsor institution, the University of Sussex.



Watch video testimonials about the positive impact of investment into Chevening Scholars at:  
[Chevening.org/partners](https://www.chevening.org/partners).

# Summary



## Naomi Rayner

Head of the Scholarships Unit,  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Chevening Scholars, Fellows, and Alumni use the skills and knowledge they gain while studying in the UK to promote better lives and safer places for people around the world to live, work, and thrive.**

We are incredibly proud of their achievements, as we are of all the Chevening Scholars, Fellows and Alumni whom we did not have space to highlight in this report.

I want to extend a special thanks to our Chevening Partners for their generous support, which includes providing valuable life experience through mentoring and work placements.

The 2021-2022 Chevening cohort was supported by 47

university and 63 corporate or public-sector partnerships. 1 in 5 scholars was supported by a partner in 2021. Partners help the Chevening programme to reach further and have greater impact.

We are incredibly grateful for your support, and I hope we can continue to work together to provide more life-changing opportunities for outstanding professionals in future.



CHEVENING

[chevening.org](http://chevening.org)