

# YOUR IMPACT

**BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON DONOR REPORT 2021-2023**



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# WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS



I am delighted to introduce the latest edition of Your Impact, acknowledging and celebrating the tremendous support from our alumni, donors and friends.

Having recently progressed into the role of Head of Development and Alumni Relations at Brunel University London, and as an alumnus myself, I am incredibly proud of what we continue to achieve through your support. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has generously contributed their time and money to help us achieve our goals.

This is a tough time for students, made more challenging by the cost-of-living crisis and other pressures that are impacting our community; however, this report will give you an insight into some of the fantastic activities and scholarships that contribute to uplifting our community across campus. On page 4, you can read about the success we had on our first Brunel Giving Day, supporting urgent needs at the University with a 36-hour fundraising drive. With your help, we were able to raise nearly £25,000 for academics at risk, to help students in crisis, promote diversity in Higher Education, and open a world of opportunities for our students overseas. Also featured in this report, you can read about a recent student mobility opportunity to Rosario, Colombia, highlighting the huge impact global opportunities funding can have on the student experience. Lastly, I'd like to thank Brunel donor and Alumni Advisory Board member, Jasmine During for sharing what inspires her to stay involved and support Brunel in a multitude of ways on Page 11. Personally, I love learning about what keeps our donors connected to Brunel and their motivations for supporting causes close to their hearts.

We know that with many of our supporters being alumni of Brunel, you hold a strong connection to your alma mater, having had positive student experiences yourself. As we look to the future, we want to ensure that future generations of students are empowered by life-changing opportunities that we create, and upon graduation, we have helped them reach the next step in their journey of fulfilling their dreams.

Thank you for your continued support, which means so much to Brunel and our talented students. I hope you enjoy reading about your incredible impact on the whole campus community and beyond.

Andrew Williams

Head of Development and Alumni Relations

*To make a donation  
to Brunel, please  
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# COST OF LIVING CRISIS: STUDENT HARDSHIP FUND PROVES MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Funded in part by your generous donations, the Brunel Student Hardship Fund is a partnership between Brunel University London and the Union of Brunel Students to support students through difficult financial circumstances that may have otherwise meant they had to abandon their education. In the past year, the rising cost of living has made it even tougher for many students on a fixed budget, and assistance has been required to meet increasingly costly short-term needs.

**Huw Harris, Advice and Wellbeing Manager, Union of Brunel Students, said:**

*“The cost of living crisis has affected students disproportionately, and is very difficult for students to make ends meet. As student maintenance loans are not lined up with inflation, students are faced with finding an extra £439 a month! The support that we’ve received from donations to the Student Hardship Fund has been astonishing and will help so many students make sure they finish their studies and get the absolute best experience they can have at Brunel. Thank you!”*

The Student Hardship Fund had a total of **41 successful applications** in the last academic year, with a total of **£12,910** awarded to students in hardship. When asked about the importance of these emergency funds, the recipients responded:

- 100% said funds supported them to resolve or alleviate their immediate financial hardship
- 43% said that the funds they received contributed to them not dropping out of Brunel
- 84% said they received support quickly enough to address their issue

*“I’m sincerely grateful for the help that I’ve received from the staff member who dealt with my case. The help I’ve received will alleviate my immediate need for now. Thank you ever so much.” - a recent Brunel Student Hardship Fund recipient*

All donations to the Student Hardship Fund go directly to students to provide emergency grants and allow them to confidently continue their studies at Brunel without financial worries. For more information, please visit **Brunel Student Hardship Fund - Brunel University**

# BRUNEL GIVES: YOU MADE BRUNEL'S FIRST GIVING DAY A HUGE SUCCESS!



Brunel University London's very first Giving Day took place this March, and we are thrilled to say it exceeded all our expectations! For 36 hours, we worked with students, staff, alumni and friends of Brunel for four vital funds that will impact current and future generations of our global campus community. In total, you helped raise a massive £24,000 from over 350 gifts in support of the Giving Day funds. Our thanks to everyone who made a difference by donating or spreading the word.

We kicked off Giving Day with live music and doughnuts in the newly refurbished Locos social space, and we were thrilled with the enthusiastic response from students and staff on campus. Later, the Ealing Trailfinders student scholars organised a touch rugby tournament, both playing and donating to student funds. Finally, the Alumni team hosted an entertaining Sprint to the Finish interactive online quiz on all things Brunel as Giving Day drew to a close.

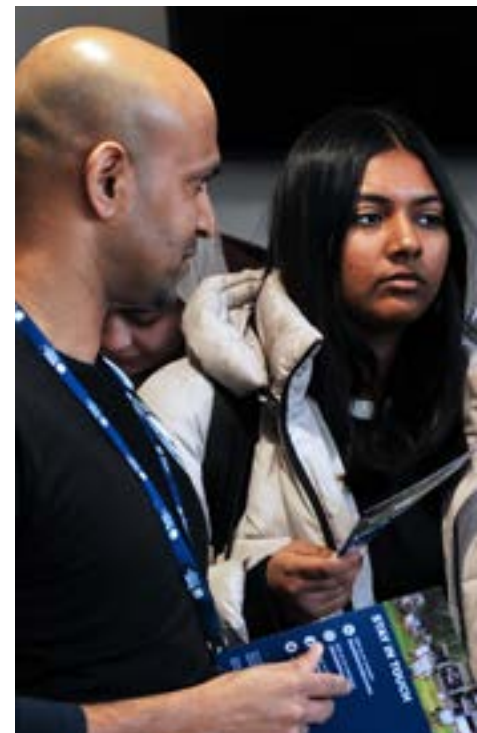
We are immensely grateful to our supporters, and Giving Day would not have been a success without your generosity. It was inspiring seeing the whole Brunel community come together to support these important causes:

- **Sanctuary Scholarships** – Helps provide a safe refuge and funding at Brunel for academics at risk from conflict in their home countries.
- **Global Opportunities** – Helps create opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to travel, undertake a short work placement overseas and fulfil their potential.
- **Student Hardship** – Helps provide emergency grants and ensure students don't abandon their education because of financial worries.
- **Brunel Annual Fund** – Enable us to fund every student who needs it, support excellence in teaching and research, & fund emerging opportunities for learning and discovery.

We are also happy to share that we exceeded our target of 200 new donors! If you donated for the very first time, thank you so much for helping us to achieve our goal. The money raised will go a long way in helping students and academics alike.

*"Being part of Brunel's Giving Day was simply a must. Young people have been through so much in recent years and to show them that they have support from everyone with these small acts of kindness, demonstrating that as a society, collectively, we all care, whomever and wherever we are, and despite all the challenges we are here, and we just want them to win!" - Brunel Giving Day supporter Jannette Brimm, from the SkillsSanctuary.*

**KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THE DATE OF OUR NEXT BRUNEL GIVING DAY, COMING IN SPRING 2024!**





# A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES: COLOMBIA TRIP IS LIFE CHANGING



In the early hours of July 16, 2023, a small group of students from the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences (CBASS) at Brunel University London stepped out of El Dorado International Airport into the chill of the Bogotá night and boarded a coach for the Universidad del Rosario, one of the top universities in Colombia. It was the final stage of a journey that had begun in early March with a briefing in a packed lecture theatre in Uxbridge about the Colombia summer school, the centrepiece of the CBASS mobility programme for 2022/23. Over the next three months, the original pool of over one hundred applicants had been whittled down to just fifteen multi-talented individuals (international students as well as home students and postgraduates as well as undergraduates), all of whom were awarded generous scholarships to cover the cost of participation.

Dr Sean Holmes, the outgoing Vice Dean International for CBASS, launched the summer school programme in 2016 in a bid to increase rates of outward mobility amongst Brunel students. 'For a variety of reasons, Brunel students have often been reluctant to take up year-long or even term-long exchange opportunities,' he explains. 'My vision was that we should offer short-term mobility opportunities in collaboration with our international partners and that in order to maximise uptake, we should attach merit-based scholarships to them.' In the summer before the pandemic, the College ran summer schools with three of its partners – Dalian University of Foreign Languages in China; Amity University in India; and the Universidad del Rosario in Colombia.



Over the course of their two-week stay in Colombia, our students took part in a cultural immersion programme, most of which was delivered at the Universidad del Rosario's seventeenth-century campus in downtown Bogotá. Carefully designed and delivered with a passion that knew no bounds, it encompassed Spanish classes, lectures on Colombian art, music and literature, dance classes, and a coffee-tasting experience. A trip to the recently completed North Campus, which is located in a vast green space outside Bogotá, gave students the opportunity to

take a cooking class in the laboratories attached to UR STEAM, a pedagogical initiative that foregrounds experiential learning as the key to developing business solutions. The programme also included visits to:

- **The Museo del Oro**, a repository of pre-Columbian gold artefacts
- **The Museo Nacional de Colombia**
- **The Museo Botero**, which houses one of the most important art collections in Latin America
- **The Jardín Botánico de Bogotá José Celestino Mutis**, Colombia's largest botanical garden

For the students who participated in the Colombia Summer School, it was a transformative experience. 'It completely changed my perspective on life,' reflected Erika Shradha, a student on the MA in International Journalism, at the end of the trip. 'I left the UK with a clear plan for life, but I'm not so sure anymore,' she added. 'I want to know and travel and be surprised and shocked again and again. I am ready to jump into the unknown now.' Nazifa Shikdar, a student on the MSc in International Business expressed similar sentiments. 'This experience has been a journey of self-discovery, an odyssey that has invited me to embrace the unknown with an open heart', she noted in her blog. 'Colombia has touched my soul and changed me in ways I could never have anticipated. It has inspired me to become a storyteller of our shared human experience.'

It was no less transformative for the Brunel staff who accompanied the students on their journey. 'For me, it was an incredibly emotional experience and a



salutary reminder that we need to decolonise our approach to international partnerships and move beyond our fixation with league tables,' recalls Dr Sean Holmes. 'Rosario may sit below Brunel in the international rankings, but in all kinds of ways, it is years ahead of us.' Heather Carr, the College Activity and Support Manager for CBASS and the leader of the group that travelled to Bogotá in July, is similarly positive in her appraisal of the summer school. 'The students and I have received a life-changing gift through this mobility project,' she says. 'Everywhere you look at Rosario there is love and pride and community. Our Colombian colleagues have an incredible drive to make education accessible, and we are genuinely privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from their good practice. The summer school has had a huge impact on students, supporting their growth, helping them to see past limitations and driving positive change.'

Short mobilities of this type also are important in terms of strengthening the ties between Brunel and its overseas partners. Colleagues at the Universidad del Rosario, both the academics who deliver the programme and the professional services staff who organise it, enjoy working with our students and view the summer school as a mutually beneficial

activity. 'For our staff community, this is a great opportunity to get involved with another culture,' explains Natalia Maria Sanchez Vivares, Coordinator of International Programs at the Universidad del Rosario. 'This allows them to see how wonderful diversity is and to dream bigger.'

As we emerge from the pandemic, the greatest challenge to the long-term viability of the summer school programme is financial, and the College remains committed to covering all the costs that attach to it. 'We feel that it would be wrong in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, to ask our students to pay for the privilege of taking part in mobility activities,' Dr Holmes explains. *'That's why the support we receive from the Global Opportunities Fund is so important, and we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the alumni who have contributed to it.'*



**To find out more, please visit [Brunel Global Opportunities Fund - Brunel University](#)**





# SPORTS SCHOLARSHIPS LEADS TO SUCCESS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Our sports scholarships headline our elite student sport package offering funding and on-campus support to our very best student athletes. Competitive athletes coming to study at Brunel can receive sports scholarships to help with competition expenses, accommodation, mentoring and receive free use of our sports facilities. With your generous donations, our programmes benefit those students from a world-class performance level competing at an international level through to English Schools Champions.

## **One of our current Sports Scholars shares the impact of your support on their sporting success:**

Name: **Samuel Allen**

Sport: **Fencing**

Course: **Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences**

Year of Study: **2nd**

Which country are you from: **Great Britain**

### **Why did you choose to study at Brunel and why would you recommend Brunel to others?**

*I chose Brunel due to both academic and sporting endeavours. Academically, the course opens opportunities to multiple future career options, and the staff are helpful and flexible when balancing my student athlete lifestyle. In terms of sport, the scholar opportunity provided financial aid as well as daily training improvements such as free access to the gym, weekly sports massage, sports spa and parking on campus, all of which I used frequently. When speaking to friends attending other universities, they did not have access to facilities even close to what I did making Brunel a superior sporting choice.*

### **What scholarship have you received?**

*Gold Scholarship*

### **What have been the benefits of receiving this scholarship support, financial and otherwise?**

*Scholarship support has enabled me to train and recover more effectively and professionally compared to almost anybody else in my sport nationally providing an advantage. The financial aid has primarily been used on international travel which is the biggest cost I face on a yearly basis, making any support a big help.*

### **What has the scholarship allowed you to achieve during your studies that you otherwise wouldn't have been able to?**

*My scholarship has enabled me to timetable my training and recovery more effectively, using*

*time between and after studies to complete both academic and sporting tasks that I may have had to cram somewhere else in my week.*

### **What are your goals for the future?**

*Complete my degree to a high standard. Be successful on the under 20 international circuit, including European and World Championships. Qualify for senior European and World Championships as well as Olympic games in the future.*

### **As part of the Sports Scholarship Programme, we ask our sports scholar cohort to complete a short survey on the programme at the end of each academic year. Some of the key findings are outlined below:**

- 100% value the support they received from the sports scholarship programme
- 96% agree that the sports scholarship support has benefitted their own training and competition performance
- 93% agreed that competing for Brunel in BUCS fixtures compliments their training and competitions
- Travel was the area where sports scholars spent most of their sports scholarship funding
- Course (32%) and Sports Facilities (25%) were the main reasons why sports scholars chose Brunel University London
- 96% are satisfied with the support they received from the Sports Scholarship Programme
- 96% would recommend Brunel and the sports scholarship programme to prospective students

To find out more about our sports scholarship programme, please visit **Brunel Sports Scholarships - Brunel University**

# INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK BOOSTED BY GENEROUS PARTNERSHIPS

Brunel is currently in our sixth year of the Brunel 2030 strategy: A University for a Changing World. A key priority within Brunel 2030 is the pursuit of 'Global Impact' – to expand our already significant global reach, further raising our reputation as one of the world's pre-eminent international universities. Brunel University London is now the UK's joint first most international university, according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024. The rankings also place Brunel as the equal 4th most international university in the world, based on its 'International Outlook': its proportions of international staff and students and its international research collaboration.

We are extremely proud of our partnership with the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), which is now approaching seven years. In November, Brunel reported our successful application to the CSC for five Shared Scholarships. Since then, we have secured a further five British Council Scholarships for Women in STEM (BC WIS). With a focus on enabling women from eligible countries to study STEM courses across our College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences (CEDPS) and College of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (CHMLS), our target region for the 23/24 academic year is the 'Americas' (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela). Our current 2022-23 cohort of six BC WIS scholars from 'East Asia' are in the final term of their respective courses and will be graduating in September 2023. Past students have expressed the profound impact of this support:

*"Without the scholarship, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to reside in this amazing country, step out of my comfort zone, and develop myself as an individual and as a professional" - 21/22 BCWIS scholar*

*"It was a dream to study in the UK, without this fully funded scholarship I would not have been able to ... it was a dream come true!" - 21/22 BCWIS scholar*

Brunel has also come forward to support Afghan students impacted by and experiencing financial hardship as a consequence of political changes in their country. In partnership with the British Council, we have awarded six Warm Welcome Scholarships across undergraduate, masters, and PhD programmes.

The Chevening Scholarship is an international scholarship funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office that allows overseas students with leadership qualities to study at universities in the United Kingdom. In 2022/23 we hosted nineteen Chevening Scholars, and we will be hosting ten during the upcoming academic year, coming from as far afield as Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria and Jamaica.

Lastly, Brunel will be providing a one-year placement for a PhD student awarded a Commonwealth Split-site PhD Scholarship. She will be undertaking research in Human Genetics.





# SPOTLIGHT ON: BRUNEL SUPPORTER JASMINE DURING

**Could you introduce yourself? What did you study at Brunel, and what is your current job and company?**

*Hey! I'm Jasmine, and I studied the BSc (Honours) Psychology and Sociology Thin Sandwich course at Brunel – graduating in 2014. I currently manage a range of employability, youth voice, and personal development programmes at the multi-award winning social enterprise, 2-3 Degrees.*

**How would you say Brunel helped you to get where you are today?**

*Brunel has impacted my life in so many amazing ways. From securing a paid market research internship in my first year through the fantastic Professional Development Centre, to the bursary that I received to support my unpaid placement. All of the above empowered me to explore a variety of career paths while gaining essential and transferable skills along the way.*

*Without the confidence gained through joining societies and work experiences secured, I may have said no to some truly amazing future opportunities.*

*The people who supported and lifted me up during my time at Brunel – staff and fellow students alike, contributed profoundly to my success.*

**How have you stayed involved with Brunel since graduation?**

*Since graduating in 2014, I volunteered as a panel member for the 'Psychology Uncovered – Student Speed Networking' events (2019 & 2020) whereby I provided insights into alternative careers that a Psychology degree could lead to. I also participated in the 2020 London Telephone Campaign, supporting a wonderful psychology student.*

*In 2021, I was invited back to Brunel as a Guest Speaker for the 'Campus Catch-Up – Psychology' virtual event in which I delivered a presentation to*

*psychology students exploring my university journey, the influence of a placement year, challenges and barriers I faced to find 'my path', and then shared tips and guidance for gaining the most from your degree.*

*I now proudly sit on the first-ever Brunel Alumni Advisory Board with nine incredible members, which is an absolute honour.*

**What inspires you to continue your support for Brunel today?**

*Spending over a decade supporting young people has shown me the importance of having positive role models and giving back as often as you can. I'll never forget how taken aback I was when a Brunel student personally thanked me for donating to scholarship funds during my presentation.*

*Being fortunate enough to have positive experiences with Brunel staff also inspired me to continue supporting the university.*

*A special shout-out to the staff within the Development and Alumni Relations team, who are absolutely fantastic!*

**What other causes do you support?**

*I mainly give one-off donations on platforms such as JustGiving and used to give monthly to Kwanda before they sadly closed down this year.*

**What do you find most rewarding about donating your time, money or expertise to organisations that are important to you?**

*Giving back to communities that I belong to or have been inspired by is very important to me.*

*Not everyone has a great time at university for a range of reasons, but if my donation can remove the financial barriers for a student, that would mean a lot to me. I love a good full-circle moment, so being in a position to help others when I once also received that support is wonderful.*



*'Takes one to teach one' is something I heard a lot growing up, though there are various versions of the phrase. To me, it simply means taking your lived experience and passing on wisdom to ensure someone else can thrive.*

**If you could give one piece of advice to other alumni about staying involved with Brunel, what would that be?**

*My advice would be to speak to the Development and Alumni Relations team about the range of ways you can get involved, as I am sure you'll find one that is perfect for you.*

*With so many uncertainties young people and students are facing right now, being able to lessen their burdens or inspire them as they consider their next steps is the most wonderful feeling.*

**As someone who has been on the journey and knows Brunel best, your voice is extremely powerful!**

**Is there anything else you would like to share?**

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to use my voice and hopefully inspire more supporters. Keep up the great work Brunel!*

# DONOR ROLL 2021-2023

Organisations – A very special thank you to The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators, a Livery Company of the City of London, for their support of the Brunel Water Conservators Bursaries. Their support enables two UK students to study MSc Water Engineering and MSc Sustainability, Entrepreneurship and Design.

Our thanks to the Wolfson Foundation for their support of the Wolfson Phenotyping & Cell Sorting Laboratory, currently under development.

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# HOW DOES THE ANNUAL FUND SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS?

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## SCHOLARSHIPS

Supporting talented students who may otherwise not be able to attend university



## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

For students unable to afford the cost from their own resources



## HARDSHIP FUNDS

For students facing unexpected or emergency circumstances

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### Get in touch with our alumni team

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