



Blog: Ethical Leadership & Global Citizenship



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My time as a Laidlaw Scholar has been a dynamic one. Two years is not enough to become the perfect leader you may envision for yourself, but it is enough time to progress, learn and deepen your understanding of what leadership is. Two summers of Laidlaw and a multitude of LEAD days have led me to where I am now, content with my progression as a person and leader.

Particular LEAD days deepened my understanding. During the London Business School's masterclass with Daniel Effron, we discussed the psychology of unethical behaviour and "ethical blind spots". The idea that sometimes, good people do bad things without knowing, without being aware of any wrongdoing. I think that everyone can find examples of ethical blind spots at some point in their lives. How do we prevent even more? From what I've learned it's a matter of self-reflection, of accepting and knowing that we are susceptible to blind-spots and then taking preventative actions. A good example of such is to look to case studies (as we did with Daniel Effron), analyse them, seek the opinions of others and increase awareness of the possible ethical implications of certain decisions/actions. The more we are all aware of our susceptibility to ethical blind spots the more we can minimize their occurrence and impact. To be a leader is to take on the responsibility of inspiring and instilling a mindset that will challenge the *status quo*. I know I now have a recipe on hand detailing the key ingredients the world needs: More empathy, less judgement, more humanity, less greed, more compassion, less indifference.

When I joined Laidlaw, I had a surface level understanding of all of this. I understood the leader I wanted to be, but it is through Laidlaw that I have lived it. The summers are critical in enacting leadership. My first summer was a research-based project, my second summer was an immersive, volunteering experience in a Zambian school. My lab experience taught me practical skills, resourcefulness, critical thinking, and teamwork but my Zambian experience taught me empathy, humility and how rewarding a life of service to others is.

Regarding Global Citizenship, my Leadership-In-Action project taught me an abundance about understanding our place in the world, understanding that our identities transcend our geography and borders and that we are all human. Viewing yourself as a global citizen is not a direct abandonment of our countries or ethnicities. However, as global citizens there is an added veneer of global responsibility – understanding inter-connectedness, interdependence, global issues and advocacy. Living and working with the children in Sables Nua primary school in Kabwe, Zambia helped me understand the need for ethical leadership and global responsibility. Kabwe has been labelled “The world’s most toxic town”; It is the northern capital of the Zambian Central Province and is known for its mines... the terrible legacy of Zambia’s lead mines. To this day, people still live on toxic soil – lead-polluted homes, schools, fields and roads (as noted in the Human Rights Watch 2019 report). Many of the children in Sables Nua come from the “nearby” (a one/ two hour walk) compound called Makululu. It is an area of informal settlement, where access to public services is extremely poor. There are no safe levels of lead in the bloodstream. It is estimated that >95% of the children who live near the former lead mine have elevated lead levels and about half of the children need immediate medical intervention. This is a global justice issue, an issue of global poverty and inequality. An issue that has gone on for many, many years and is only beginning to be addressed and highlighted over the past few years. These children are more than a “few years” old. The LiA experience was a stark reminder of inequality on a global scale but also a motivator to behave as a global citizenship in daily life.

As a whole, I’m incredibly grateful to have had the Laidlaw programme guide my experience of ethical leadership and global citizenship and I think I have made a positive contribution to society in enacting these values. I hope to continue learning and growing in my understanding of what makes an ethical, globally conscious leader.

Natotela Sana (Thank you in Bemba)

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