

When reflecting on the two years of being a Laidlaw Scholar in Research and Leadership in Durham University, I am amazed by the number of experiences, learning opportunities, and additional skills I have honed and sharpened. Now, being near the end of this short but long journey, I can say that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and one that I will look fondly back on in future years. I have grown so much thanks to Laidlaw and will sorely miss the people I have worked with. Overall, my experience as a Laidlaw Scholar has been amazing and I have learnt to be more of a global citizen by being conscious but still open minded and welcoming of new cultures and perspectives. Now let me recount all the amazing opportunities I have been given in my time as a Laidlaw Scholar.

### **Leadership Residential Weekend at Peat Rigg**

As the first experience I ever had as a Laidlaw Scholar, I still distinctly remember the nerves I felt about meeting new people. Despite trying my hardest in the application and in the interview, I thought that being accepted was honestly just a stroke of luck. So, I was very nervous when meeting my fellow cohort. But starting from the bus ride to Yorkshire to the last goodbyes being said, I had such a good time learning and bonding with my fellow cohort! Everyone was so kind, supportive, and ambitious and I felt very welcomed. In addition to all the skills I have learnt in the camp, such as stronger communication skills, it was an amazing opportunity to get to know everyone and to live out the values of what being a Laidlaw Scholar meant.

### **Summer I: Research!**

Although there were some hiccups in my research project such as having to apply for a new research project, working with Dr Sol Gamsu was such a dream and amazing for my professional development. In the research portion of my scholarship, I was required to collect, clean, and analyze a large data set with 15,000+ datapoints within 6 weeks. Despite the additional challenge of having no prior experience with coding, I proactively taught myself the R language and built off these foundational skills to apply specific research methods such as Social Network Analysis and running community detections algorithms. Knowing that I had set goals and the overall real responsibility to manage, execute, and deliver results where people relied on me allowed me to push myself past my limits. As a result, I was able to complete my research project to a high academic quality and my research supervisor asked me to stay on the project beyond my scholarship requirements to publish the research.

### **Laidlaw Conference in LSE**

The conference was an excellent opportunity to get closer to my fellow cohort, get to know more Laidlaw Scholars on an international level which was absolutely phenomenal, and of course come together to celebrate all the brilliant research and LiA experiences. A highlight that I will remember for a long time to come was during the final celebratory dinner where I was incredibly lucky to be seated next to none other than the CEO of Laidlaw Foundation Susanna Kempe. The conversation we had during dinner was very insightful and I was very inspired by her mindset and her life experiences that led her to this position.

## **Summer II: LiA in Tokyo**

In the leadership portion of my Laidlaw Scholarship in Research and Leadership, I was invited to work with an international NGO called YouMeWe in Tokyo Japan and granted a stipend of £3000+. To raise awareness for YouMeWe's ethos, I was tasked with directing, organizing, and running a TEDx event. However, given the short time notice, running the TEDx event in six weeks was not very feasible. To overcome this, I proposed a more realistic, but still fast-paced deadline that would pave the way for a successful TEDx event in the upcoming year. To do this, I kickstarted the logistical effort of running the event by creating and managing different teams such as licensing, curation, translation, logistics, venue and more. For example, I established new speaker relationships, created onboarding documents for incoming team members, and now act with an advisory role so the event can still run smoothly despite having less input from me. This resulted in a successful TEDx license, venue confirmation, and strong relationships with confirmed speakers and shortlisted candidates. This demonstrates my resilience as despite a substandard timeframe, I was able create a framework that would allow the TEDx event to run smoothly.

## **Time as Durham Laidlaw Scholars Organization (DLSO) President**

Since the Laidlaw Foundation has given me so many valuable experiences that have developed me both professionally and personally, I wanted to give back and let as many people know so that they can also experience it for themselves. I have been blessed with the opportunity to also have been DLSO President for two consecutive years.