

FINAL REFLECTIONS

WHAT LEADERSHIP MEANS TO ME NOW.

Leadership, to me, now encompasses **many facets that once felt unintuitive and unfamiliar**. It is about collaboration, communication, creativity, and experimentation — aspects I never fully appreciated until I experienced them firsthand through the programme.

At its core, leadership is the ability to bring people together and **ground your team while also allowing yourself to be grounded by others**. It's a dynamic and **sybiotic** relationship, where influence flows in both directions, and the leader isn't just a figurehead, but someone who learns from those they lead. Leadership is also about taking **initiative** when your expertise and courage are needed, but equally recognising when it's **time to step back** and let others lead with their own knowledge and strengths. **Perception and calibration are thus, key.**

Moreover, leadership isn't confined to just strategic and efficient decision-making. It's about **understanding and navigating the complexities of different dynamics, expectations, goals, and skills**. Every situation presents a new set of variables to consider, and effective leadership involves unpacking these elements, adapting, and finding the best course of action.

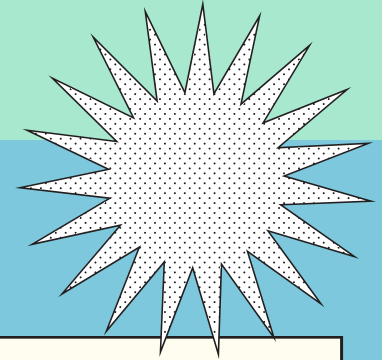
Leadership, ultimately, is a **constant balancing exercise**. It requires the ability to continuously adjust, reflect, and grow, both personally and within the team context. It's about balancing confidence with humility, knowing when to act and when to let others lead, and **maintaining a sense of your own purpose while being open to new ideas and approaches**.

MY DEVELOPMENT AS A LEADER

My development as a leader has been a **journey from blind idealism and a top-down perspective to a deeper understanding of leadership as a bottom-up, collaborative exercise**. Initially, I viewed leadership as solely about providing direction and making decisive calls. However, over time, I've come to realise that effective leadership is ultimately about **adaptability, teamwork, and the ability to identify and navigate nuances**.

Through my experiences, I have learned that leadership is not about having all the answers but about **creating an environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute, problem-solve, and grow together**. This shift has been integral to my growth as a leader, allowing me to embrace complexity rather than shy away from it. I've let go of rigid expectations and instead focused on building trust, enabling others to shine, and fostering an open dialogue where different perspectives can thrive.

At the heart of this transformation is the understanding that leadership is a dynamic process, requiring constant adjustment and reflection. Effective leadership is not about certainty but about creating the right conditions for a team to succeed. It's about balancing the need for initiative with the importance of listening, providing structure without stifling creativity, and holding a clear vision while remaining adaptable in the face of challenges. This approach has allowed me to **move beyond traditional, limiting leadership archetypes and develop a more inclusive and collaborative style**.



FUTURE IMPACT

The Laidlaw Undergraduate Scholars programme has provided me with invaluable experiences that will shape my future both personally and professionally. I've learned that **leadership extends beyond boardrooms — it's essential in everyday life, such as when navigating hiking trails in the Albanian Alps**, where decision-making and teamwork are critical.

My experience at the European Commission sharpened my ability to contribute meaningfully in diverse environments, build strong relationships, and tackle complex issues. These skills will be instrumental in **future collaborative and cross-cultural settings**, enabling me to engage effectively with others and address multifaceted challenges. Independent research further enhanced my **technical expertise**, but equally important was the growth I experienced while traveling with a group for four weeks. This journey taught me **flexibility, adaptability, and the value of diverse perspectives**, which will be vital as I face future challenges and opportunities in both academic and professional contexts. Most importantly, the project taught me how to **work in a team that prioritises collaboration and empowerment**.

Leaving the programme, I carry a **well-rounded skillset** that combines leadership, adaptability, and technical expertise. These skills will empower me to take initiative in diverse settings, foster collaboration, and approach problems with an open and critical mindset. As I move forward, I will apply these lessons in various professional environments, where I can **drive positive and sustainable change**, work effectively with others, and continue to develop both personally and professionally.



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