

Final Reflection

Throughout my time as a Laidlaw scholar at UCL, I have had the privilege of engaging with diverse communities, developing my research and teaching skills, and reflecting on what it means to be an ethical leader and a global citizen. Each stage of the programme, from the residential trip, the research project in the first summer, the Laidlaw Scholar's conference, the Ethical Leadership Training with Oxford, to the LiA project challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, navigate complex ethical considerations, and respond to the unique needs of those I worked with.

During my first summer, I undertook a research project reviewing the role of dopamine as a transdiagnostic substrate in psychomotor retardation across movement and psychiatric disorders. This required the synthesis of a strong argument on the basis of multiple lines of evidence, such as clinical features, neuroimaging, cognitive neuroscience and trial results from dopaminergic medications. Initially, I found it overwhelming to locate and synthesise all the literature. Through developing a system using citation software and systematic note-taking, I learned the importance of organisation, time management, and coordinating effectively with collaborators. This project strengthened my analytical skills as I evaluated study quality, identified trends and gaps, and drew evidence-based conclusions. Presenting findings to co-authors and receiving constructive feedback taught me to remain open-minded and reflective, which are traits I view as essential for ethical leadership. This experience also helped me realise that leading ethically involves honesty, transparency, and collaboration, ensuring each contributor's perspective is valued and the final work represents rigorous and responsible scholarship. One year later, I am grateful and proud to say that the paper has now been accepted for publication with an academic journal.

My LiA project offered a complementary perspective on leadership, particularly in cross-cultural and educational contexts. Initially, I volunteered with icandance, a UK-based organisation providing dance sessions for children with disabilities and special needs. While I was unable to document the rehearsals as planned due to health reasons, observing the

sessions offered rich insights into therapeutic pedagogy. Within this framework, dancers led parts of the session themselves, exploring movement and self-expression. This challenged my assumption that therapeutic dance requires structured instruction and highlighted that ethical leadership can mean facilitating rather than directing.

After returning home, I worked with Stepping Stones China, supporting migrant workers' children and children with special needs in English, socio-emotional learning, and crafts. My teaching activities at Stepping Stones reinforced lessons in ethical leadership. In English lessons, I used movies, songs, and interactive games to make learning engaging and practical. Socio-emotional learning sessions addressed topics such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and empathy, with role play and acting allowing children to apply skills in real-life scenarios. Craft sessions, particularly with non-verbal children, highlighted the importance of patience, consistency, and meeting each child where they are. Small gestures, shared cues, and modelling behaviour helped build trust and rapport, demonstrating that leadership is as much about creating safe, supportive environments as it is about achieving objectives.

These experiences deepened my understanding of ethical leadership. I have learned that leadership requires empathy, patience, adaptability, and active listening while remaining accountable to others. Ethical leadership also means prioritising the well-being of those you serve, being transparent and honest, and balancing individual needs with the goals of a group. On a more personal level, the LiA summer experience reminded me of the importance of prioritising my own health, recognising my limits, and making difficult decisions when necessary. Navigating unforeseen challenges, such as stepping back from planned projects due to health reasons, taught me to be adaptable and resilient, and made me realise that taking care of myself is essential in order to support others effectively.

To me, being a global citizen means approaching new environments with curiosity, humility, and cultural sensitivity. It also means recognising systemic inequalities and taking

meaningful action to contribute positively, whether through research or teaching. Engaging with children in both China and the UK, and observing how cultural values shape educational and therapeutic approaches, increased my awareness of global challenges and the responsibility to respond thoughtfully and ethically.

Looking forward, I hope to continue developing as a good and ethical leader by reflecting regularly on my actions, seeking feedback, prioritising empathy and patience, and remaining adaptable in the face of challenges. These skills are particularly valuable for my aspirations as a mental health professional, where understanding individual needs, responding with sensitivity, and fostering trust are central to effective practice. By integrating these lessons into future research, therapeutic work, and collaborative projects, I will be better equipped to create inclusive and supportive environments for clients, and promote initiatives for mental health and well-being with compassion, accountability, and cultural sensitivity.

Overall, the Laidlaw Scholar programme has been transformative. From navigating complex research projects to supporting under-served children across cultures, I have gained a clearer understanding of my values, leadership style, and responsibilities as a global citizen.