

## **Reflections on Ethical Leadership and Global Citizenship**

When I first joined the Laidlaw programme, I imagined leadership in fairly conventional terms: setting direction, motivating others, and ensuring goals were met. My Leadership in Action project with *Solidarity Sports*, however, reshaped that view. Over six weeks supporting children who had experienced complex trauma, I learned that good leadership is less about authority and more about building trust, showing integrity, and creating environments in which others can flourish.

### **How I have developed as a good and ethical leader**

At *Solidarity Sports*, I quickly realised that ethical leadership required putting the children's wellbeing first. This meant being attentive not only to the activities we ran - football, arts and crafts, drama, or residential trips - but also to the emotional context in which they took place. Trauma often surfaced unpredictably, and I had to balance enthusiasm with sensitivity.

Safeguarding training and hands-on experience taught me that patience, consistency, and empathy are central to leadership. When a child struggled, the right response was not to push but to listen and adapt. Ethical leadership, I discovered, lies in respecting others' vulnerabilities and acting in their best interests—even when that means slowing down or changing plans.

I also saw how important it is to lead by example. Children closely observed how I responded to frustration, celebrated effort, or handled setbacks. By modelling calmness, encouragement, and fairness, I saw them mirror these behaviours with each other. That, to me, was leadership in its most ethical form—helping kindness and respect take root.

### **What being a global citizen means to me**

Though my project was UK-based, the children I worked with reflected London's global character, coming from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. I saw how diversity enriches communities but also intersects with challenges such as displacement and inequality.

Being a global citizen, to me, means recognising responsibilities that extend beyond our own circles or borders. It is about listening, adapting across cultures, and treating each individual with dignity. The Laidlaw programme deepened my sense of global citizenship not as a theoretical idea but as a lived responsibility - beginning with how we treat those directly in front of us.

### **Strategies to continue developing as an ethical leader**

This experience has been formative, but it is only a starting point. To continue developing as an ethical leader, I will:

1. **Practise reflective leadership** - building on the habit of journaling and discussing challenges with mentors to stay mindful of the ethical dimensions of my decisions.
2. **Commit to lifelong learning in safeguarding and inclusivity** - continuing training to ensure I can support others responsibly in future leadership roles.
3. **Foster empathy through service** - engaging with communities through volunteering, keeping leadership grounded in humility and empathy rather than ambition alone.

The Laidlaw programme has reshaped my understanding of leadership and citizenship. I now see leadership less as directing from the front and more as walking alongside others, ensuring they feel safe, valued, and empowered. And I see global citizenship not as a distant aspiration but as something expressed through everyday choices to act with empathy, fairness, and respect.

These lessons will stay with me far beyond this scholarship, shaping not only my leadership but also the kind of person I aspire to be.