

Deliverable 5: End-of-Programme Reflection

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Introduction

When I think back on my time as a Laidlaw Scholar, I see two summers that feel like two halves of a single story. In the first, I was immersed in research—learning how to set a plan, wrestle with complex data, and adapt when things didn't go the way I expected. In the second, I was immersed in lived experience abroad—diving into coral sites, sitting in classrooms, and working alongside a team of passionate conservationists. Together, these summers taught me that leadership is not something abstract; it's a practice that takes shape differently depending on where you are and who you are with.

This reflection captures the full arc of my Laidlaw journey—research, leadership development, the Oxford Character Project, global symposiums, and finally, my Leadership-in-Action project in Indonesia. Each piece contributed to how I now understand myself as a leader: not as someone who always needs to be at the front, but as someone who can build platforms, connect across cultures, and carry responsibility with humility.

Summer 1: Research and the Foundations of Leadership

My research project focused on climate change education and its impact on students' attitudes and behaviors. At first glance, it was a purely academic exercise: literature reviews, survey data, methodology. But as I went deeper, I realized that doing research is itself an act of leadership.

- ❖ Strategic planning and goal-setting gave me structure. Breaking a big project into milestones taught me how to lead myself and others through long-term goals.
- ❖ Coordination and communication mattered as much as the research itself. Regular check-ins with supervisors, advisors, and cohort peers built collaboration into the process.
- ❖ Problem-solving and adaptability became daily practices. Data collection issues or scope changes forced me to think critically and act decisively.
- ❖ Decision-making and accountability reminded me that every choice—methodological or interpretive—carries weight.

The process grew my ability to see the bigger picture while staying grounded in details. It also gave me my first taste of what visionary thinking feels like: seeing research not just as academic work but as something that could have real-world impact.

Summer 2: Leadership-in-Action in Indonesia

If my first summer was about learning the structure of leadership, my second was about learning its texture. Partnering with Diverseas, an NGO in Indonesia, I shifted from theory to practice. My six weeks abroad pushed me to see leadership through presence, humility, and storytelling.

- ❖ In **Week 1**, I faced fears underwater and realized that leadership sometimes begins with courage, not expertise.
- ❖ In **Week 2**, I leaned into creativity, using social media to communicate conservation to younger audiences.
- ❖ In **Week 3**, I sat in workshops with teachers and saw how participatory education turns learners into leaders.
- ❖ In **Week 4**, I supported Amanda as she inspired high school students, learning how powerful representation can be.
- ❖ In **Week 5**, I brought joy into coral site monitoring, turning documentation into a collective team effort.
- ❖ In **Week 6**, I closed the loop by editing content and writing reflections, realizing that leadership also means leaving something behind for others.

What stood out most were the conversations I had when people realized I wasn't in Bali for tourism, but for a university leadership program. For many Indonesians, this was extraordinary—they told me how rare it was to see such opportunities in their own universities. Those conversations grounded me in gratitude and responsibility. I was reminded not to take my access for granted, and to carry the lessons forward with integrity.

Leadership Training and the Oxford Character Project

Outside the summers, the Laidlaw leadership curriculum shaped me in quieter but equally powerful ways. The leadership workshops with my cohort helped me practice communication, reflection, and collaboration in a peer setting. It was a space of both fun and growth—where I felt supported to test new ideas and approaches.

The Oxford Character Project was a unique piece of the journey. The breakout discussions with scholars from across the world were some of the most memorable moments. I was struck by how differently people approached ethical leadership depending on their cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. Those conversations stretched my thinking, and they reminded me that being a leader is as much about listening and learning as it is about directing.

Symposiums and Global Networking

The symposiums were milestones of pride and inspiration. Presenting my research at the first symposium felt like a rite of passage: it was my first time showcasing an undergraduate research output to a scholarly audience. I remember feeling proud not just of my own work, but of my peers—their projects were innovative and deeply meaningful.

The LiA symposium will be another step: a chance to share not just data but lived experience, and to show how leadership can be tested in practice abroad. These events have taught me the value of academic community—the energy of being in a room where everyone is striving toward knowledge and impact in their own way.

Lessons Across the Journey

Looking across two summers and countless moments in between, I see patterns in the leadership traits I've worked hardest to develop:

- ❖ **Curiosity:** asking questions even when unsure, and learning across cultures.
- ❖ **Bravery:** diving into the ocean, speaking up despite language barriers, and taking initiative in new spaces.
- ❖ **Integrity:** being mindful of how I represent others' stories, and recognizing my own privilege.
- ❖ **Resilience:** adapting to challenges, from loneliness during remote weeks to technical obstacles in research and fieldwork.
- ❖ **Global citizenship:** seeing my education not as an isolated achievement but as something connected to communities around the world.

Conclusion: Carrying It Forward

The Laidlaw Programme has been a journey of discovery, humility, and growth. I entered as an undergraduate researcher curious about climate politics. I leave with a deeper sense of leadership grounded in global citizenship, ethical responsibility, and the belief that small acts of presence can have as much impact as grand gestures.

As I look forward, I want to keep building at the intersection of **environmental ethics, education, and storytelling**. I want to create opportunities where others can access the kinds of transformative experiences that I was privileged to have. Most of all, I want to hold onto the lesson that leadership is not about taking up space—it's about creating space.