Written Reflective Report

LiA Malaysia, Summer 2026

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Part I: Introduction

a. Context

Malaysia is not party to the 1951 UN Refugee convention and lacks domestic legal frameworks that recognise refugee status. Refugees have no formal or legal right to employment, public education, or statutory protection which leaves them vulnerable to arrest and detention. Oftentimes refugees solely wait to be allocated a new host-state, a process which can take decades- meaning schooling is likely to be interrupted for children who are subject to these conditions. Refugee children often only have access to informal tutoring centres which don't have the same formalised system or legitimacy as state schools. Fugee school is one of the few institutions that can offer refugee children access to a formal education and academic qualifications that provide them with opportunities that wouldn't otherwise be available.

While many students have a lived knowledge of global inequality, migration, and justice, they are rarely given the tools to articulate these insights clearly, critically, and confidently. Studying PPE (Politics, Philosophy, and Economics) has enabled me to have a knowledge of argument structures, formal logic, and debate, making me realise how important having this knowledge is, especially in a real-world context. These structures exist everywhere, from the news to everyday conversations. It is by knowing these structures that arguments can be deconstructed and therefore challenged, something especially relevant to students whose right to existence is constantly questioned.

b. LiA Project- 'Thinking Clearly, Speaking Confidently' Programme

My LiA thus consisted of a series of workshops for Years 7-9 across the span of 6 weeks which focused on familiarisng students with argument structures, discussion, debate, and expressing their opinions confidently. The 'Thinking Clearly, Speaking Confidently' Programme. This programme concluded with an MUN Style Youth Assembly event to showcase the skills that had been developed and honed over these six weeks. This event was the first of its kind to be run in the school and was planned, run, and organised by me-taking in advice and input from teachers in the school. It had been adapted based on the context and teacher feedback to fit a structure that would be the most beneficial for the students.

The MUN Style Youth Assembly event consisted of students being allocated teams-groups of four- in their respective year groups, each group representing a country. All groups would have four questions to answer, one person in each group required to answer one question. Each student would answer their question speaking into a microphone on a stage, representing a delegate for their assigned country. Year 7 & 8 answered questions on the topic of plastic pollution-this being especially relevant to Malaysia since it recently stopped accepting waste shipments from the United States. They were introduced to waste colonialism and how historical legacies shape the world we live in today. Year 9 explored a more complex topic-very personal and close to home-they explored immigration and refugee rights as the main topic of their debate. They were challenged to argue for and against arguments they may disagree with, this preparing and familiarizing them with arguments that may very well be made against or for them by politicians, in the news, or in real life.

Part II: The Societal Impact

a. Explanation & Limitations of The Data

To concretely measure the contributions of this project to the partner NGO-Fugee School, a survey was conducted with the students at the beginning and end of the programme. Both surveys contained the same questions, except for a few additional questions in the final survey. Both surveys contained the questions: 1. 'How much would you say you currently know about the topic of debating and forming arguments?', 2. 'I can form my own opinions easily. To what extent do you agree with this statement', and 3. 'I am able to share my opinions confidently. To what extent do you agree with this statement?'. The response to each question was coded

according to a 5-point scale. Each answer the students gave corresponded to a number value on a 5-point scale. For example, for a question such as 'How much would you say you currently know about the topic of debating and forming arguments?', the answer of. 'not a lot' would mean 1/5, 'a little bit' would mean 2/5, 'neutral' would mean 3/5, 'a good amount' would mean 4/5, and 'a lot' would mean 5/5. The final survey had the added question of 'These sessions were helpful and I learned more about debate and arguments. To what extent do you agree?', and 'What would you suggest as feedback for this course going forward?'. The results for each question per year group are down below, with summary statistics and tables at the end of each question.

There are a few limitations to the results. It should be considered that these statements may not directly translate to their number alternatives and thus, some nuance may be lost. Additionally, student attendance was not consistent across the 6 weeks meaning that, the students that answered the initial survey did not exactly match the students that responded to the final one. This survey is also dependent on self-analysis of students. Despite these limitations this data is still useful for comparison of perceived change by students over the course of the programme. For summary statistics see the tables below.

b. The Data – Question 1: Pre & Post Comparison Per Year

Year 7

For Question 1: 'How much would you say you currently know about debate and the topic of debating & forming arguments?' Year 7 had 17 responses in the first survey, with 15 responses in the final survey. The demographic was 70.6% male & 29.4% female initially and, 60% male and 40% female in the end survey.

Before the sessions the answers for Question 1 were as follows:

- 9/17 (52.9%) put 2/5
- 5/17 (29.4%) put 3/5
- 2/17 (11.8%) put 4/5
- 1/17 (5.9%) put 5/5

The <u>overall</u> mean was **2.71/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 1 were as follows:

- 10/15 (66.7%) put 3/5
- 5/15 (33.3%) put 4/5

The overall mean is **3.33/5.** A **+0.63- point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 noticeably increased.There are no 1-2 responses in the final survey, whereas 52.9% of the initial group selected 2/5.

- Pre: 3/17 chose 4 or 5 = **17.6%**
- Post: 5/15 chose 4 or 5. = **33.3%**

There was a change of **+15.7 percentage points**.

Year 8

For Question 1: 'How much would you say you currently know about debate and the topic of debating & forming arguments?' Year 8 had 9 responses initially and 15 responses in the final survey. The demographics were initially 55.6% male & 44.4% female, and ended up as 33.3% male and 66.7% female.

Before the sessions, the answers were as follows:

- 3/9 (33.3%) put 2/5
- 4/9 (44.4%) put 3/5
- 2/9 (22.2%) put 4/5

The overall mean was **2.89/5.**

After the sessions, the answer for Question 1 were as follows:

- 3/15 (20.0%) put 3/5
- 11/15 (73.3%) put 4/5
- 1/15 (6.7%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.87/5**, representing a **+0.98-point increase.**

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 noticeably increased. Before the sessions, only 22.2% of students selected 4 or 5, compared with 80.0% after the sessions.

- Pre: 2/9 chose 4 or 5 =**22.2%**
- Post: 12/15 chose 4 or 5 = **80.0%**

There was a change of **+57.8 percentage points**.

Year 9

For Question 1: 'How much would you say you currently know about debate and the topic of debating & forming arguments?' Year 9 had 13 responses initially and 13 responses in the final survey- though these were not necessarily the same students. The demographics were initially 61.5% male & 38.5% female and ended up as, 53.8% male and 46.2% female.

Before the sessions, the answers were as follows:

- 1/13 (7.7%) put 1/5
- 2/13 (15.4%) put 2/5
- 5/13 (38.5%) put 3/5
- 4/13 (30.8%) put 4/5
- 1/13 (7.7%) put 5/5

The <u>overall</u> mean was **3.15/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 1 were as follows:

- 1/13 (7.7%) put 3/5
- 11/13 (84.6%) put 4/5
- 1/13 (7.7%) put 5/5

The <u>overall</u> mean was **4.00/5**, representing.a **+0.85-point increase.**

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 noticeably increased. Before the sessions 38.5% of students selected 4 or 5 compared with 92.3% after the sessions.

- Pre: 5/13 chose 4 or 5=**38.5%**
- Post: 12/13 chose 4 or 5= **92.3%**

There was a change of **+53.8 percentage points.**

QUESTION 1 TABLE 1.1

Year group	Pre mean	Post mean	Mean change	Pre 4–5	Post 4–5	Change
Year 7	2.71/5	3.33/5	**+0.63**	17.6%	33.3%	**+15.7 pp**
Year 8	2.89/5	3.87/5	**+0.98**	22.2%	80.0%	**+57.8 pp**
Year 9	3.15/5	4.00/5	**+0.85**	38.5%	92.3%	**+53.8 pp**
Overall	**2.90/5**	**3.72/5**	**+0.82**	**25.6%**	**67.4%**	**+41.8 pp**

c. The Data – Question 2: Pre & Post Comparison Per Year

Year 7

For Question 2: 'I can form my own opinions easily.' Year 7 had 17 responses in the first survey, with 15 responses in the final survey. The demographic was 70.6% male & 29.4% female initially and, 60% male and 40% female in the end survey.

Before the sessions the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 13/17 (76.5%) put 3/5

- 2/17 (11.8%) put 4/5
- 2/17 (11.8%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.35/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 9/15 (60.0%) put 3/5
- 5/15 (33.3%) put 4/5
- 1/15 (6.7%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.47/5.** A **+0.12-point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 increased.

- Pre: 4/17 chose 4 or 5 = **23.5%**
- Post: 6/15 chose 4 or 5 = **40.0%**

There was a change of **+16.5 percentage points**.

Year 8

For Question 2: 'I can form my own opinions easily.' Year 8 had 9 responses initially and 15 responses in the final survey. The demographics were initially 55.6% male & 44.4% female and ended up as 33.3% male and 66.7% female.

Before the sessions, the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 1/9 (11.1%) put 2/5
- 5/9 (55.6%) put 3/5
- 3/9 (33.3%) put 4/5

The overall mean was **3.22/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 1/15 (6.7%) put 1/5

- 8/15 (53.3%) put 3/5
- 4/15 (26.7%) put 4/5
- 2/15 (13.3%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.40/5.** A **+0.18-point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 increased.

- Pre: 3/9 chose 4 or 5 = **33.3%**
- Post: 6/15 chose 4 or 5 = **40.0%**

There was a change of **+6.7 percentage points**.

Year 9

For Question 2: 'I can form my own opinions easily.' Year 9 had 13 responses initially and 13 responses in the final survey. The demographics were initially 61.5% male & 38.5% female and ended up as 53.8% male and 46.2% female.

Before the sessions, the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 9/13 (69.2%) put 3/5
- 3/13 (23.1%) put 4/5
- 1/13 (7.7%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.38/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 2 were as follows:

- 1/13 (7.7%) put 1/5
- 1/13 (7.7%) put 3/5
- 8/13 (61.5%) put 4/5
- 3/13 (23.1%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.92/5.** A **+0.54-point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 noticeably increased.

- Pre: 4/13 chose 4 or 5 = **30.8%**
- Post: 11/13 chose 4 or 5 = **84.6%**

There was a change of **+53.8 percentage points**.

QUESTION 2 TABLE 2.1

Year group	Pre mean	Post mean	Mean change	Pre 4–5	Post 4–5	Change
Year 7	3.35/5	3.47/5	**+0.12**	23.5%	40.0%	**+16.5 pp**
Year 8	3.22/5	3.40/5	**+0.18**	33.3%	40.0%	**+6.7 pp**
Year 9	3.38/5	3.92/5	**+0.54**	30.8%	84.6%	**+53.8 pp**
Overall	**3.33/5**	**3.58/5**	**+0.25**	**28.2%**	**53.5%**	**+25.3 pp**

d. The Data – Question 3: Pre & Post Comparison Per Year

Year 7

For Question 3: 'I am able to share my opinions confidently.' Year 7 had 17 responses in the first survey, with 15 responses in the final survey. The demographic was 70.6% male & 29.4% female initially and, 60% male and 40% female in the end survey.

Before the sessions the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 12/17 (70.6%) put 3/5
- 3/17 (17.6%) put 4/5
- 2/17 (11.8%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.41/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 8/15 (53.3%) put 3/5
- 6/15 (40.0%) put 4/5
- 1/15 (6.7%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.53/5.** A **+0.12-point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 increased.

- Pre: 5/17 chose 4 or 5 = **29.4%**
- Post: 7/15 chose 4 or 5 = **46.7%**

There was a change of **+17.3 percentage points**.

Year 8

For Question 3: 'I am able to share my opinions confidently.' Year 8 had 9 responses initially and 15 responses in the final survey. The demographics were initially 55.6% male & 44.4% female, and ended up as 33.3% male and 66.7% female.

Before the sessions, the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 2/9 (22.2%) put 2/5
- 5/9 (55.6%) put 3/5
- 2/9 (22.2%) put 4/5

The overall mean was **3.00/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 1/15 (6.7%) put 2/5
- 8/15 (53.3%) put 3/5
- 4/15 (26.7%) put 4/5
- 2/15 (13.3%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.47/5.** A **+0.47-point increase**.

The proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 increased.

- Pre: 2/9 chose 4 or 5 = **22.2%**
- Post: 6/15 chose 4 or 5 = **40.0%**

There was a change of **+17.8 percentage points**.

Year 9

For Question 3: 'I am able to share my opinions confidently.' Year 9 had 13 responses initially and 13 responses in the final survey. The demographics were initially 61.5% male & 38.5% female, and ended up as 53.8% male and 46.2% female.

Before the sessions, the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 4/13 (30.8%) put 3/5
- 5/13 (38.5%) put 4/5
- 4/13 (30.8%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **4.00/5.**

After the sessions the answers for Question 3 were as follows:

- 1/13 (7.7%) put 1/5
- 2/13 (15.4%) put 3/5
- 6/13 (46.2%) put 4/5
- 4/13 (30.8%) put 5/5

The overall mean was **3.92/5.** A **−0.08-point decrease**. The mean therefore remained broadly stable, with only a small decrease of 0.08 points. This should also be considered alongside the

fact that Year 9 students already reported relatively high confidence in sharing their opinions before the sessions.

However, the proportion rating themselves 4 or 5 increased slightly.

- Pre: 9/13 chose 4 or 5 = **69.2%**
- Post: 10/13 chose 4 or 5 = **76.9%**

There was a change of **+7.7 percentage points**.

QUESTION 3 TABLE 3.1

Year group	Pre mean	Post mean	Mean change	Pre 4–5	Post 4–5	Change
Year 7	3.41/5	3.53/5	**+0.12**	29.4%	46.7%	**+17.3 pp**
Year 8	3.00/5	3.47/5	**+0.47**	22.2%	40.0%	**+17.8 pp**
Year 9	4.00/5	3.92/5	**−0.08**	69.2%	76.9%	**+7.7 pp**
Overall	**3.51/5**	**3.63/5**	**+0.12**	**41.0%**	**53.5%**	**+12.5 pp**

e. *Final Survey- Additional Questions*

There was an additional question in the final survey. Question 4 was, '**These sessions were helpful and I learned more about debate and arguments**', the results for all three years can be found in the table below. **79.5%** of respondents rated the sessions **4 or 5 out of 5**, with an overall mean of **3.98/5**. The qualitative feedback was also consistently positive, with students commonly describing the sessions as useful, helpful or beneficial and requesting **more or longer sessions**.

QUESTION 4 TABLE 4.1

Year Group	Responses	1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5	Mean	Rated 4–5
Year 7	16	0	0	3 (18.8%)	9 (56.3%)	4 (25.0%)	**4.06/5**	**81.3%**
Year 8	15	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (13.3%)	7 (46.7%)	4 (26.7%)	**3.80/5**	**73.3%**
Year 9	13	1 (7.7%)	0	1 (7.7%)	6 (46.2%)	5 (38.5%)	**4.08/5**	**84.6%**
Total	**44**	**2 (4.5%)**	**1 (2.3%)**	**6 (13.6%)**	**22 (50.0%)**	**13 (29.5%)**	**3.98/5**	**79.5%**

QUESTION 5 TABLE 5.1

Year Group	Students describing sessions as useful/helpful/beneficial	Main suggestion for improvement
Year 7	14 responses	More / longer sessions
Year 8	11 responses	More sessions
Year 9	13 responses	More sessions
Total	**38 responses**	**More / longer sessions**

f. Overall Results & Conclusion

This programme, 'Thinking Clearly, Speaking Confidently', aimed to address a number of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 4: Quality Education was supported, in particular target 4.1 (free, equitable, and quality primary/secondary school education) and target 4.7 (education for sustainable development and global citizenship). This programme addressed this goal by equipping students with critical thinking, persuasion, and debate skills-all essential to progression in the global sphere. By utilising interactive workshops and enabling these communication skills to develop- individuals from marginalised background were equipped with the skills to represent and speak for themselves adequately in modern society.

This project also contributed to SDG Impact Goal 10- reduced inequalities- by establishing an avenue that enables refugee students to voice their concerns within domestic and global structures, speaking confidently for themselves and their opinions. By strengthening this resilience in discursive structures, this programme also supported SDG Impact Goal 16: peace, justice, and strong institutions, promoting more egalitarian communities.

Overall, the findings suggest positive perceived change in students' self-reported debate knowledge, independent opinion formation, and confidence in expressing their views over the course of the programme.

The strongest improvement was in knowledge of debate and argument formation, with the overall mean increasing from 2.90/5 to 3.72/5 and the proportion rating themselves 4-5 increasing from 25.6% to 67.4%.

Students also reported improvements in forming their own opinions and sharing them confidently, with overall mean scores increasing from 3.33 to 3.58 and from 3.51 to 3.63 respectively.

The final survey further supports these findings: 79.5% students rated the sessions 4 or 5 out of 5 for being helpful and improving their learning while qualitative feedback was consistently positive, with students frequently requesting more or longer sessions.

Overall, the results indicate that the programme successfully supported the development of debate, critical thinking and communication skills among the students. However, as the surveys were based on self-reported responses and the number of respondents varied between surveys, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of positive perceived change rather than definitive proof of causal impact.

Part III: Ethical Leadership Application

There were a number of actions taken to ensure my impact was ethical and considerate of cultural nuances, ambiguity and friction that would be present in an unfamiliar sphere.

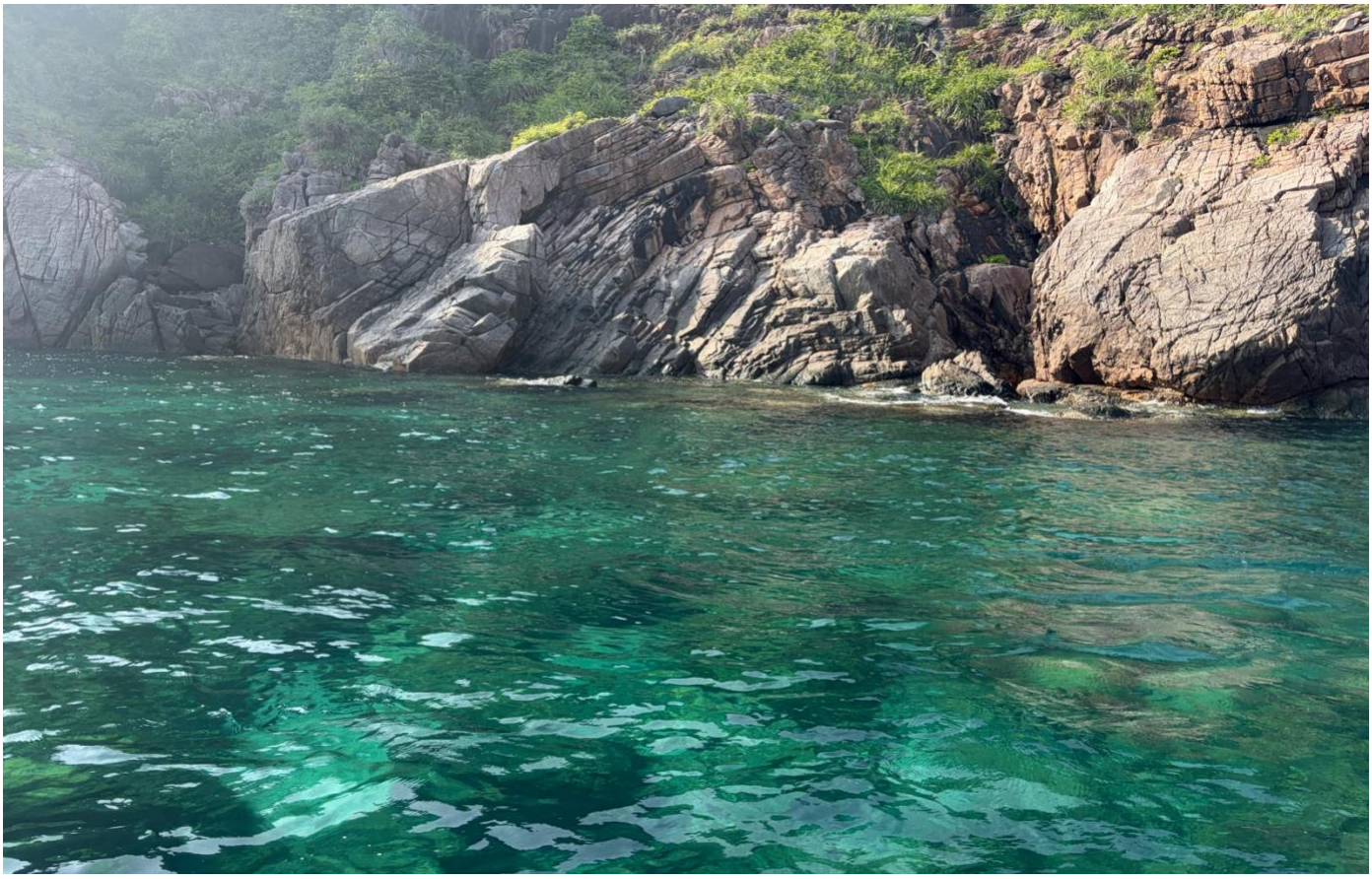
Firstly, I entered the sphere with an open mind- aware that my original plans wouldn't necessarily remain consistent and would be subject to change under conditions that may be different than I expected. I took feedback and input on my sessions before implementing them from pre-existing teachers and staff that knew the students and context much better than I. I ensured I constantly asked questions, being extra mindful to immerse myself in the context I was in. My initial plan was to start the programme in the first week, but I quickly decided to take this week to shadow lessons, ensuring that these sessions were tailored to the students and as helpful as possible. Taking this week out to shadow was one of the most important decisions I made in

my LiA and had a pivotal impact on the implementation of these sessions. I learnt from the social studies teacher-whose lessons I would be covering- what worked best with the students. I found out that the students were interested in anything to do with pop culture & current events and football-especially in the context of the World Cup. Students loved real world examples-seeing how these skills are useful and present in daily life. I learnt that the worksheets I prepared for students needed to be easy enough that they felt they were able to do it but not too easy that it posed no challenge for them. I took in this information and adapted my lesson plans accordingly understanding what would interest them and keep them engaged throughout. Simultaneously, I also had an insight into what they were learning in their Social Studies classes, being able to incorporate aspects of this in the examples I used in my sessions-connecting new information to information that was already familiar, and relevant, to them.

It had also been revealed to me in an in-depth talk with the welfare lead of the school that the students were apprehensive to new people and new things-meaning my week of shadowing also allowed students to become familiar with my face before I had my first session. I didn't come into the first session as a completely new person but as someone they were familiar with - enabling more students to feel comfortable and engage with my sessions. This talk with the welfare lead had also informed me of the current context of the school. I learnt that this was the first year the school had implemented uniforms and followed a formalised academic curriculum. Prior to 2026, the school had better reflected a less formal tutoring centre-similar to the other academic opportunities that refugees had access to in Malaysia. This newfound change had been difficult for some students and understandably so. Added change during a time that is already rife with it for students of their age would always be uncomfortable. This was an important factor to consider in the delivery of my sessions. I had observed while shadowing that complete silence was not fully enforced in classrooms during teaching. I was extra careful to not expect silence in my sessions and to not reprimand any students for low-level talking- understanding the context I was in.

I had also spoken with teachers constantly, making sure I was aware and understood-as much as I could- about the refugee experience in Malaysia. Seeing how a lack of legal frameworks manifested itself in practice-and what that truly meant for a refugee in Malaysia allowed me to more deeply understand the refugee experience. Refugees have no legal right to education, employment, or even to drive a car in Malaysia. Through asking questions, making sure I was always learning more, I better understood what circumstances the students were facing, and the cultural and legal context of the place I was in.

Furthermore, to combat unfamiliarity and ambiguity-I ensured that I travelled to multiple places in Malaysia, whilst asking local residents about Malaysia's history and trajectory to current day. I had gone during Merdeka Month ('Freedom Month') and learnt of the politics that surrounded Borneo and mainland Malaysia. I discovered the colonial legacies Malaysia still faces today, alongside an attempt to learn a bit of Malay here and there. I went to networking events, learning about the political climate of Malaysia through Malaysian friends who could give me first hand accounts. All in all, ethical leadership in practice was exhibited by, a willingness to learn, ask questions, and a drive to understand the context I have entered-especially as someone from the outside. (Some photos below!)



Part IV: The Research Connection

To connect how this year's LiA was aided by efforts of Laidlaw's first year summer ('Summer 1'), we must first outline what 'Summer 1' consisted of. Laidlaw's first year summer project consisted of conducting a research project, writing a paper, on the impact of extra-curricular delivery on academic attainment. Through the research we conducted, we concluded that extra-curricular activities aid in closing the gap of academic attainment-specifically in schools in Oxfordshire. Given these results, I conducted an extra-curricular programme designed to bridge any gap of academic attainment, proving the relevance and connection of first year's summer to this one-even if it was in a drastically different context. Moreover, 'Summer 1' consisted of conducting interviews and measuring change- which made me realise the importance of quantitative *as well as* qualitative data. This was particularly important for my LiA-especially in measuring impact. From this experience in 'Summer 1', this summer I prioritised conducting surveys before and after the programme to ensure any impact was measurable in some sense. Writing our report also greatly prepared me for this report. With my final Laidlaw report in mind, I ensured I took notes and planned accordingly.

And, although things didn't always go to plan this summer, Laidlaw's 'Summer 1' had prepared me for this. Funnily enough, the differences of how things were planned vs how they manifested in reality was similar to first year summer. I had equipped the skills of problem-solving and shifting to managing circumstances quickly in first year when things didn't go according to plan- these skills being especially useful in a different and changing context of my LiA. I constantly adapted my plans- even almost fully adapting my final MUN Youth Assembly Style session according to students and teacher input. I didn't panic if things didn't go as expected and instead allowed for flexibility in my initial plans- research summer 1 having prepared me for this.

There is always a gap between theory and reality, whether big or small, and though this can be seen as a difference between Laidlaw 'Summer 1' and my LiA- it was actually a similarity. 'Summer 1' had equipped me with the skills necessary to adapt and implement my LiA in practice.

Part V: Conclusion

To conclude, my LiA challenged and strengthened my skills of problem-solving, communication, and adapting to new environments- bridging the gap between theory and reality. Working with Fugee opened my eyes to the realities many refugees face-seeing it in person was a whole other experience. I saw firsthand what a lived reality of being a refugee looked like and the impact of institutional frameworks on the individual who is dependent on them. Fugee's impact and goals of providing every individual with the right to an education really resonated with me as an individual that has had many opportunities that the vast majority of the world has not been afforded. Through the privileges I have been awarded, it is my duty to help those that have not been awarded the same ones. My LiA forced me to adapt, implement leadership under chasing contexts and be open to change in the process. To problem solve. To be adaptable in any situation because more times than not-things don't go to plan. Leadership can mean helping create the conditions in which people are able to exercise their own voice.

And it is through working with Fugee to ensure that marginalised communities can and should have a voice I have realised:

to have a voice is a privilege. To give others a voice is a duty.

Summer 2026 LiA in KL with Fugee School,

Fatima Waris