

Anonymous

Black, Asian, Arab, Chinese, White, Mixed, Unknown, Other. People of all sorts, backgrounds, experiences and beliefs crossed paths with me in September 2017 when we all found ourselves shaking our knees on the first day of university adventure in the Great Hall on City's campus. I took an empty seat between two girls, one from France, the other one from Malaysia. Who would have known that it would take me less than 5 minutes to meet two people from different continents who respect each other regardless of ethnicity. The lack of tolerance is a growing trend among



European nations, which only calls for a change that should be brought about by my generation. Generation of people, who were given an opportunity to realize that shallow factors, which supposedly divide us, in a matter of fact only accentuate the similarities between us. Fortunately, I cannot say that Cass changed my point of view in this matter as my parents raised me as an open – minded person, nonetheless what I wish would be the #change here is the mind-set of my nation.

I come from a homogenous country, which up to this day does not guarantee, in practice, a right to respect for people of different colours. As absurd as it may sound for the member country of European Union that is the case in Poland, where accidents with racial background are nothing darnedest anymore. Poles are very often biased and distanced to people, who are 'different' regardless of what this signifies. This is furthermore escalated by the migrants' crises occurring in the EU, which disunites people. Poland's position towards refugees leaves much to be desired and further discussions on this topic only create more unnecessary fuss instead of bringing any good to people in need. Nevertheless, Poland is not the only country that should combat these spreading views, which hamper economic progress, as Hungary, France or Italy stand by its side. Becoming more tolerant whether if it is towards people of different religions, beliefs or skin colour is unquestionably a great change in the customs, however it can be argued that the economic and social progress depends on it almost entirely. Although it is very high – spirited, I believe that once people start treating others with respect they deserve, life would become more pleasant for everyone.

Throughout my studies at Cass Business School, I have had a chance to live and work with people of various backgrounds from all parts of the world, which gave me a first hand insight into how our 'worlds' intersect. One could definitely tell there were differences in how we behaved in different situations and interacted with each other. What I managed to observe was Maria Majchrzak 2 that these differences did not result from the part of the world we came from, yet more probably from the uniqueness of each individual with different preferences and experiences. Throughout this time I realized the irrationality of judging people by their origin, rather than what really shapes us – surrounding society, actions we undertake and curiosity of the world. I would even risk a statement that judging people by their origin is not acceptable anymore; especially in a multicultural community that Cass creates.

Unfortunately, the healthy 'environment' created by the university sounds like utopia, when nationalistic beliefs are only increasing among the European societies. The great impact that Cass has is gathering people of so many backgrounds in one place to show that the differences among us should not signify difficulties, but instead diversity, which provides significant improvements in every sphere of life. This sense of belonging to a global community triggered my desire to enrich my knowledge about cultures, utterly different than European and thus I applied for an exchange programme with University of Hong Kong. Becoming familiar with another way of life will definitely enrich my education and will further propel my urge to transform my country, once my perspective gets wider. Perhaps Cass Business School did not change me in particular, but it definitely altered my attitude towards tolerance and desire to bring change, because "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

If I were to consider how my life changed between September 2017 and who I am now, I would have to emphasize the substantial change in my perception of people with different backgrounds. Although I was always trying not to judge people too early and I know that appearances can be deceptive. I believe that until I really got to meet people of so many ethnicities, only then I understood that the real change I want to see is within the society we live in. I have heard many stories of lack of tolerance, both in my home country and abroad and let this be my manifest against actions that hurt people without any righteous reasons basing on shallow prejudices of close – minded people. Since I began my studies there were a lot of changes in my life, yet none of them was as important as growing a deep interest in tolerance for me to have a longitudinal effect on who I am in the future. I believe that my major change was becoming a knowledgeable and mature adult that possesses required tools and skills to combat the world in all its imperfections, because we are the people who will form the future and hopefully, will change it to a more tolerant place to live in. As Barack Obama once said, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”