

I remember running to catch my coach to Cambridge City Centre in hectic Central London, only to find myself 15 minutes late. As expected the bus delayed its departure time due to a very "londonary" reason; heavy traffic! It was also a day of Eid; A day where Muslims celebrate the festival marking the culmination of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and commemorating the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham (PBUH). The day also brings family members, friends, and neighbours together and allows everyone to have a lovely time. Unfortunately for me that means sacrificing the day for the sake of a greater good.

Known as Article 26, the foundation works closely with the universities to provide financial support for students who have been in The UK for many years but have no access to tuition fee loans from Student Finance England funding. The conference was entirely personal and missing it was not an option. So despite against the odds, I found myself in the city centre of Cambridge. The sights of the historical building were simply breath-taking. I sought help from local people for direction to Newnham College; Venue for the Conference. I still figuring out why I found people of Cambridge to be so much nicer than Londoners. Maybe that's because I needed a break?

Greeting and speaking to people on the street made me appreciate the importance of high community spirit. As I walked past several colleges, I felt the importance of preserving these great historical sights and other things that make The University of Cambridge so prestige. At the same time, I was quite disappointed to see a lack of diversity in the student population. Nonetheless,

I arrived at Newnham College potter's lodge where I was given keys to my room. After a few hours refreshing myself after a unique journey and exploring new surroundings, I met other Article 26 conference attendees. It was good knowing people that came from different parts of the country in order to participate the conference. We spent some time in getting to know each other. Before dinner, we played icebreakers and more games which allowed us to become more connected.

The second day was packed with loads of workshops that were aimed to enhance the university student experience. Out of all activities, I particularly

loved 'Building Confidence & Developing Presentation Skills' workshop, as it highlighted my strengths and weaknesses in public speaking. I found the role play to be quite useful, in terms of presenting an unknown topic to a larger audience, especially with little preparation time. Everyone enjoyed and contributed in workshops. In the evening, we had a tour of Cambridge city led by a student who observed the whole conference as part of her final year dissertation. She gave us the brief history of Newnham College and facts about other colleges within the university. This was followed by a meal at a restaurant near the Trinity College. By now all attendees got to know each other well. The food and service from the restaurant were awesome. We took the opportunity to take several group photos that will remind us of the fantastic time we spent together. Reflecting upon that night made me realise the importance of engagement with fellow students and the negligence of that in our busy lives.

On a personal level, the trip has great inspired me in not just to work harder to achieve goals but also to become an educator so that other potential young people who may be less privileged in life can study at these great institutions.



(Day 2 –The coordinator Professor Jessica welcoming the participants)