

The rocket alarm went off eleven times where I live in southern Israel, fifteen kilometers away from the Gaza strip early this May. “Boom!” every bombing sound I heard might take one’s life away. Overall, this conflict took away twenty-seven people’s lives, including a pregnant woman with her fourteen-month-old baby. Until I experienced the life-threatening rocket attacks, I did not realize that my life is immensely different from the people living in Gaza strip. Whenever the sirens sounded, I could easily go into the shelter and wait for the bombing to end. However, fifteen kilometers away the people of Gaza do not have a bunker to hide. Ironically, we stand on the same continent, breathe the same air, and feel the same wind, but our lives differ from each other. When I enjoy the sunshine by the Mediterranean sea, the people from Gaza can only watch the beach from a distance. When I use electricity for twenty-four hours, they only have it for four hours a day. When I sleep safe and sound in my bed, they have to worry if the rockets are going to fall down without any alert. Everything that I take for granted is a tremendous luxury to them. I realized that freedom is likened to the air — only when you suffocate will you appreciate the value of it.

Growing up in a big city and pursuing college degree in the capital city of the world, I used to be well-protected in a bubble. Soon, I realized I was stuck in a utopia imagination. I decided to burst from it and was ready to experience the reality. I appreciate my decision about getting out from school. I was glad to be on the road, to learn beyond textbooks, and to see the true life in the world. Two years of traveling heightened my awareness of how cruel the world is. Some people were born with a silver spoon, but some have to worry about the next meal. Some people take rain for granted, but some do not even have drinkable water. Some people complain about the results of elections, but some live with autocratic governments.

We are living in an era where dynamics lead us to any possibilities. Nowadays, different fields are getting more and more connected to each other. For instance, to what extent should government interfere in technology and media without monopolising control. Economy growth and environmental concerns are also highly influenced by one country’s method of development. During my time of traveling, I realized that I still lack knowledge which may cause bias in my understanding of the world. Also, focusing on one specific area is not enough for me to widen my knowledge of the world — I am curious about the world. Hence, studying in University College Freiburg with Governance major fulfills my learning desire. I am applying for this scholarship for my passion in learning more about the world.

Working as an intern from government to social enterprises, and volunteering from non-profit organizations to non-governmental organizations, plus traveling between well-developed and developing countries, I have seen the distinctions between different social hierarchies. Listening to diverse insights, making the most of all opportunities, and not limiting nor ignorancing myself are the most valuable lessons I have learned from my previous experiences, which make me suitable for this scholarship.

Passion is not that hard to have, but it is hard to keep one continuing. Studying is not only a great start for me to follow my passion, but also an important milestone for me to be educated

Yuping Ding

as a global citizen. Hence, I believe this scholarship will be an invaluable asset for me to keep my passion going on!