

My mother was called a "cursed girl." During her eighteenth year, her mother, brother, and sister all died in separate accidents. Believing my mother was indeed "cursed," her father decided to trade her to a suitor. Having been born into the marginalized Uyghur minority family of Northwest China, she had few options, but was determined not to yield to this arranged marriage. She escaped to a city, worked part-time, attended nursing school, and married a man she chose. Pregnant at twenty-four, she discovered through an ultrasound examination that the baby was a girl. Due to China's strict one-child policy, many people tried to persuade her to abort. However, she insisted on protecting her unwelcomed girl, who was later born weak and sick. Again, her co-workers kindly offered to "take care of it." A second time, my mother saved her baby's life.

I was that baby, born almost deaf and with other health conditions that required multiple surgeries. The lack of welfare support for children with newborn diseases placed hardships on my family. However, I was already lucky. In the obstetrical department where my mother still works, at least 30 women seek abortions each month due to the sex or health of their fetuses. While growing up, I began to understand that their decisions, and similar significant choices, were not easy. Social forces, public policies and economic standards, merge to shape life directions, especially in a developing country.

My awareness soon grew into a passionate commitment. During my gap year, I volunteered as a math teacher both in Tibet and my mother's native Uyghur minority area. Half Uyghur myself, the gender discrimination, ethnic conflicts and severe poverty in these regions profoundly affected me. They reminded me of my mother's struggles and motivated me to help the women and children there. I comprehended the deeper complexity of the social problems in developing areas and cultivated a desire for finding solutions.

During my freshman year at Ohio Wesleyan, I enrolled in Global Issues with Dr. Sean Kay, establishing an academic interest in international social problems. My final policy memo on North Korea combined International Relation classroom theories with an earlier six-month exchange experience in South Korea. Shortly after the class ended, I visited North Korea. My itinerary and activities were strictly controlled by the government officials, yet I was shocked to see many extremely malnourished children and women working in the fields. Having heard reports of widespread hunger and poor living conditions in North Korea, I wondered if there could be an even greater degree of famine and poverty that the government was not allowing me to see. The living environment and evidence of totalitarian control I saw on this tour increased my firm resolve to study international humanitarian affairs and development policy.

With this trip fresh in mind, I decided to seek for further education and a career in international development, by taking multidisciplinary courses and declaring a triple major in Economics, International Studies, and East Asian Studies. A focus on quantitative courses, including statistics and upper-level economics, formed the core of my analytical grounding. At the same time, community service and campus involvement provided opportunities to sharpen my communication and leadership skills, especially as a volunteer teacher at Linden Public school, a teaching assistant for OWU's Foreign Language Program, and a student tutor in the Economics Department.

Studying abroad in Japan my junior year gave me the chance to apply what I had learned. My three internships there offered me hands-on experience with domestic policies and international affairs. In Kyoto, I worked with local immigrants, minorities, and children suffering from cerebral palsy, and studied Japanese welfare policy regarding their care. The success of such programs in affluent Japan revealed that excellent health and welfare policies could be life changing; this insight propelled me to want to help create similar policies in developing areas. My third internship, at the Japan Forum on International Relationships, a think tank organization, offered the opportunity to

assist many regional leaders and research fellows in international affairs and policy-making. Using my trilingual ability, I translated documents and recorded diplomatic roundtable meetings. Employing statistical and modeling skills, I helped gather and analyze data. My outreach experiences in Asia and America provided me with a comprehensive perspective during various symposia. This intensive internship anchored my decision to study and work in international development in the future.

My next educational goal is to obtain an MSc degree in Development Management. I am drawn to the interdisciplinary approach, diverse faculty, and the rich resources of the various research centers of LSE. I intend to concentrate in International Development, reinforcing my quantitative skills and aiming to improve economic conditions and welfare systems in developing countries. I plan to study economic development policy, public finance and social budgeting, particularly income redistribution and welfare care for children and those with disabilities in the developing world. Specifically I wish to research how transfer payment policy affects family decisions and related designation of welfare programs in these regions. In addition, I am interested in the topic of gender and ethnicity inequity and economic development in a cross-cultural perspective. After looking at the course inventory and the faculty research areas, I know the International Development Department of LSE is the ideal place for me to explore those problems and move toward my goals.

The LSE can provide a cosmopolitan environment and the kinds of potential employment opportunities I am seeking. I plan to utilize the London area to gain more practical experiences and apply for the internship program at the Asian Development Bank after my first year of graduate study. Ideally, I will start my career working for a multinational organization or humanitarian nonprofit. My long-term professional goal is to become an international development consultant, using my economics background, analytical ability and field experiences to help organizations and governments improve policies and mechanisms.

This summer, I returned home and visited my mother at work. Even now, so many years later, there are women facing similar life and death choices my mother had to make. How policies alter people's decisions and lives is an ongoing discussion around the world. My childhood experiences directed me towards this course of study and career path. Through the education I have pursued to this point and the further experience I would gain in the LSE, I will carry forward a strong capacity and deep commitment to serve people in developing areas.