

Mountbatten Cultural Diversity

A recent TV commercial for HSBC International Banking features a business savvy seven year old utilising her international network of pre-teen peers to develop her roadside lemonade stall into a global enterprise. The advert shows her liaising with young business partners in India and France to create a successful international supply chain. Whenever I see this commercial, I think of Mountbatten alumni. I know that this is exactly how many of you operate, using international networks you developed in New York or London to help you succeed in business.

Working in admissions for the past 7 years, I have witnessed a significant increase in the cultural diversity of programme participants. This had always been our goal - running marketing campaigns across Western Europe, Scandinavia, South Africa and other parts of the world. Having admissions officers recruit from all corners of the globe has also helped cultivate an international pool of Mountbatten applicants.

This summer, New York programme participants processed J1 visas in 18 different countries and this weekend, they will come together as they move into their shared accommodation in Newport, New Jersey and begin an international adventure as a group of strangers in a foreign land. This special journey, designed to give them a unique insight into American life and US culture, actually gives them so much more. Living amongst such a diverse cultural group will provide an invaluable education into different ways of life, customs and values. An new intern from Ireland might move in with a Brit, a Slovakian, and two Indian girls, for instance.

On a small scale, this results in life-enhancing personal relationships and an individual appreciation of different cultures . On a larger scale, Mountbatten's global citizens are successfully bridging the gap between nations and fostering cross cultural understanding that will ultimately combat prejudice, intolerance and discrimination so prevalent in today's society.

Therefore, I encourage you to stay in touch with your international peers, not only for the sake of global business and world peace, but also to ensure you have a place to rest your head when you finally decide to take that trip to Italy, Africa, Australia or Thailand. The benefits of taking part in a truly international programme like ours are endless! – **Vikki Hedges**