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What's the difference between an Arab, a Chinese, a Russian and a Brazilian? Don't worry, it's not the start of a bad joke. As a matter of fact, it is a question I have been asking myself since my first day at ELTI.

If you were to ask that question to specialists, a Sociologist would answer that it's their culture. A scientist would say it's their genetic disparity, and an Anthropologist would say they differ by their ancestors' culture.

My first international experience dates back to 2008 when I was just seven. I went on a trip with my family to Disney world in Florida.

The trip was overwhelming, the cities, the people, the different culture. However, a fact stuck to me: When going through the Customs and Border Patrol, I felt such a tense environment. The cops on duty were serious and tense. At the age of Seven I could not tell exactly what was going on, but I knew something was not right. In my mind the whole world was built around love, and little did I know that those officers were risking their lives to avoid the two things that when combined, transform into the biggest danger ever known. Extremism and hate. It was a patriotic feeling of bravery that prompted them to stay in such a frightening environment. But why did that change me?

There is no doubt my biggest international experience has been the ELTI. I had been to various places around the world and had had experiences with several diverse cultures,

however, for a short time. This time I am having the chance to experience all of those fully.

Brazilians, Colombians, Americans, Chinese, Arabs and many more. I am having the opportunity to get to individually know each culture and experience a tiny bit of them. I had the chance to understand and live a small part of the Chinese New Year, and even learn a little bit of mandarin with the help of my classmates: James and Lily. I had the opportunity to learn a little bit about the Arab and the Russian government, also from two of my classmates: Ali and Anna. At this point you are probably thinking that I will continue to talk about how we are different, and how our cultures are so varied, and how we have so many differences. Instead, I will be the one to tell you how they could not be more similar. People raised in different parts of the globe that went to different schools, had different childhoods, have different views on religion and politics, eat different types of food, surely can't be similar...right?

If we stop dividing people in groups and start looking at everything we have in common as human beings, it gets clearer. We observe animals in the wilderness, notice several patterns and often see them as the same. Or have you ever distinguished two cows by their diet or their country of origin?

When we look at each other we fail to see the billion similarities between us, humans.

We focus so much on our differences that we forget what we all are.

No longer them. But us, we humans. We who wake up to go to school or work. We who feel sad, angry, mad who like laughing. We who have fallen in love, we who have had our hearts broken. We who love spending time with family, we who lost that special

someone. We who get stressed when we have too many things to do. We who want change.

We live as humans. We spend our whole lives looking for success and happiness. We spend our whole lives looking for acceptance, recognition...we want to be heard. We look for love and true friendships. Of course, we may fight for different things, some of us believe in a more conservative society, others a more liberal society. Some of us don't like our country's government, and some of us are proud of it. But at the end of the day we all are fighting for what we believe to be a better world. People that try to spread their beliefs or religions through chaos and fear are not us, and that is the only place where we draw the line. We don't draw the line on the place of the globe we come from or the color of our skin. We don't draw the line on different beliefs, but on the radicalness and hate some people try to spread.

And now I know that no matter what country I go, I can relate to people and make friends that will last forever. I no longer look at people as different, instead, I always try to look for something in common.

So, what I learned from everything I experienced, is that maybe there is more that we share than we think, and maybe one day we can live together where we all share the same thing. Not the country or the hate for Mondays, but the hope that love can bring us together, and that one day we will not have to worry about hate or segregation. The border agents will not experience fear every workday. People will be able to express what they feel without fear and help build a better place. Maybe we can go back to the start where we were all the same. Before we were separated because of our skin color,

before we were divided because of our Country, before we were separated because of fortune. We were all the same, and we can still reconnect through respect and love.