

Nadjma de Ruiter

An unforgettable trip to New York and the UN,

It all started with the draw. Based on results, motivation and inquisitiveness a few students were chosen to participate in the unique program with the United Nations. And up to the present day I am honored to have participated in this program. It was a unique experience, something you don't get along so soon. But that was not the only thing, we were given the opportunity to join a few important people to New York. And that was something that not only gave me but also the others a feeling of pleasure, learning new things and especially experience.

Saturday 6 July finally, together with the other pupils who had followed the UN programme at the university, the Professor Alanna O'Malley, Former minister and former mayor of the Hague Jozias van Aartsen, international adviser Willem Post, Policy Officer Ministry of Foreign Affairs Martin Born and of course our own teachers we went to New York. Once arrived in the busy city, we were taken with taxis to the hotel. If something is exhausting in my life, it was the long waiting time in the hotel for the check-in. Even snails were compared to the people who checked us in, top athletes. But that long wait wasn't for nothing, because we got rooms that were beautiful even in the spirit of a rich ungrateful bastard. I was already a lot happier when I arrived in my room.

Still on the same day we have been in the Empire State Building. And what we had there was a beautiful view. Everywhere lightly and the wind passing through your hair area (in my case a headscarf). It was a really wonderful experience. I mean, you're not coming by using a few penny's the building inside. But now let's talk about the delicious food. I think I am beginning to understand that a large proportion of the population is overweight, I mean there was so much food that I myself was full of it and I have tapeworm haha. We had a great dinner on the first day. The restaurant we went to was on the 48th floor of the Marriott Marquis on Broadway, The View. Gradually I started to understand why the

restaurant was called the view, I mean we had a beautiful view. Until half an hour passed and we watched for a while against a big non-telling boring building (After all, it was a revolving restaurant so 'The View' you had was not forever). But beyond that it was a great evening of fun and abdominal pain from the many food.

The last 2 days passed so quickly that I just got dizzy. We've been to a baseball game which seemed super fun until the two teams started playing. I have never seen such a bad game in my whole life (even though I have no understanding of baseball but hey who cares). Even I could have done better, and I have two left legs. But let's talk further about the nicer things we've done.

We sailed by Ferry along the Statue of Liberty. There we also had a great view. That was super fun to do. Wherever we went to it is the 9/11 memorial. That was a unique experience. I found it quite sad to see all the names of the victims in the stone carved. It did do something with me.

On one of the last days we went to the UN building which was an even more unique experience. This was something you can't do easily and that's why I was happy to experience it. We have kept our presentations before we entered the real UN building. The Dutch ambassador of the UN was in front of us and gave us a brief review after our presentations. Then we got a short tour in the building and with this tour we ended this interesting experience.

Finally, we ate at one of the best restaurants, Tavern on the Green. That was one of the most beautiful evenings I've had in my entire life. All the lights that went on when it darkened, were super beautiful. But the most beautiful phenomenon were the fireflies. That was the first time of my life that I had seen them. When there was a weird kind of insect on my table, I was a little scared. But when he flew up and gave light, that feeling disappeared immediately. I just found out that they were fireflies. Together

with the conviviality, this evening was locked in my memory. And all these beautiful things together made the trip to New York an unforgettable trip.

To come back to the UN again. During this programme we have found out more about the UN. Not only about what they do, but also about what they have done. I think it is important that more people should be aware of the things the UN is doing and has done for the people. They deserve more respect and it would be fair if they got the attention they deserve. I think everyone should know what a footprint this organization can leave on the earth. And I hope that one day everyone will be cheering for the deeds that the UN has done. It will not be a day on which people will accuse the UN for the things they have not succeeded, but it will be a day when everyone will praise and thank the UN for the things they have succeeded. And I think this is the right way we should think about the UN.

Om nog even terug te komen op de VN. Gedurende dit programma zijn we meer te weten gekomen over de VN. Niet alleen over wat ze doen, maar ook over wat ze hebben gedaan. Ik denk dat het belangrijk is dat meer mensen zich bewust moeten zijn van de dingen die de VN voor de mensen doet. Ze verdienen meer aanzien en het zou eerlijk zijn als ze de aandacht kregen die ze verdienen. Ik vind dat iedereen moet weten wat een voetafdruk deze organisatie op de aarde kan achterlaten. En ik hoop dat op een dag iedereen zal juichen voor de daden die de VN heeft verricht. Het zal geen dag worden waarop iedereen de VN de schuld zal geven en ze zullen kleineren voor de dingen die ze niet zijn gelukt, maar het zal een dag worden waarop iedereen de VN zal prijzen en bedanken voor de dingen die ze wel zijn gelukt. En ik denk dat dit de juiste manier is waarop we over de VN zullen en moeten denken.

And with this message I would like to end my report.

Kind regards,

Nadjma de Ruijter

Amatan-Noer Mahmood

To start off I want to say that the trip to New York completely exceeded my expectations. It was way better than I imagined it would be.

My favourite places that we went to were Roosevelt Island, Queens Museum, the United Nations building, the 9/11 memorial and the Unisphere. So almost all of it.

I had lots of fun, but it was also a big learning experience. For example, I had no idea that the Queens museum used to be the United Nations headquarters. In the museum we were also told many things about the United Nations and we were also shown some antiques and a model of New York. Then there is the Unisphere which stands outside the Queens museum. I really like what it symbolizes. It was fascinating to say the least.

Roosevelt Island was amazing on a whole other level. Although I was tired when we got there, my curiosity helped me walk all the way to the Roosevelt memorial.

It's fascinating to me when there is a reason or an explanation as to why something is the way it is, even if it's simple. For example, sir explained how the Roosevelt memorial was placed in such a way that it would be exactly opposite the United Nations headquarter. That's why even the fact that they thought out where to put the memorial shows it wasn't meaningless.

Also, something else that I was very interested in on Roosevelt Island was the sanatorium. I'm a psychology nerd, so every time I see something slightly related to psychology all my attention goes to that something. I wanted to go inside but quickly realized that that wasn't possible and also, we came there to see the memorial not to go inside a sanatorium.

Mr. Willem Post also told us about how when he was younger, people were able to admire the American president and how our generation can't. It really made me appreciate past presidents like Roosevelt even more because he cared for the people of his country more than money and power. In today's world you can't really say that any president thinks like that anymore. This also ties into what we learned at the United Nations headquarters. There, we were able to see how much money was earned daily just on ammunition. It was about 37 million dollars when we were there, and the guide said that the number would continue to grow as the day went on. That really just shows that people prioritize money over human lives. Because why would they ban weapons if they're gaining money because of them, right?

Last but not least we also went to the 9/11 memorial. It was the most moving out of all the places we had been. It was beautiful but, knowing what had happened there really made me sad. It's even sadder to think that terrorist attacks still happen. What really makes me ashamed is the fact that people think that this is what Muslims do and therefore think that all Muslims are a threat to society. The truth actually is that no Muslim is a threat to society, because the terrorists who claim to be Muslims are not Muslims. They can say that they are, as much as they want to, but a real Muslim knows not to hurt anyone physically or mentally. This is also why the UN is so appealing to me because the people that support it aren't close minded people who think that Muslims are a threat to society and I'm glad that such people still exist.

Overall, the whole trip was great. I am very appreciative of the fact that I was chosen to do this project along with so many other very smart and deserving students. I will forever remember the whole project and the trip.

Noer Mahmood

I'm sorry it's very long, I am very bad at summarizing my thoughts.

Sofia Ahmed

The United Nations and you

I participated with a project that took place at the university of Leiden in The Hague, it's called: The United Nations and you. I took a couple of courses at the university together with other students from other schools to learn about the United Nations.

Whilst following these courses I learned what the United Nations is and what it does for the youth. These courses were given by Alanna O'Malley the chair of United Nations studies in Peace and Justice.

I really liked the courses because I learned how the member states of the United Nations debate by being one of the member states (Russia).

And I also took a course about public speaking which really helped me, because I usually get nervous when I have to present something. This course also prepared me for the presentation that I had to give in New York. This presentation was about what I thought the United Nations could mean for the youth.

We went on a trip to New York to give our presentation and of course sightseeing was a part of the schedule.

During the trip we had to walk a lot, that's why I was so tired, and my feet hurt. But I still liked it because of the incredible view that I saw when we went to Roosevelt Island. And I also liked the night view of the Empire State building.

Baris Ogretmen

I just finished a project about the UN and just come from a Trip to New York.

Because of this experience I would like to share what I liked about the lessons and what I thought about everything I have learned and done.

It started when I was approached by my school dean about participating in lessons about the UN. This seemed interesting to me and because of that I decided to join this project. In these lessons we have talked about what the UN is doing for us and especially how they handle most of their situations. We have also discussed issues some big problems the UN is currently discussing. I was happy that we had several lessons with different themes. It made it easier to process everything that we have learned and kept me waiting for it every week.

Although some topics weren't really interesting to me, I understood why we discussed them and to be honest it changed my opinions on some things. For example, I am more aware of the climate change problems and know that the UN does his best to prevent it. So, the lessons were interesting and informative about the UN. But it also helped me out with some basic skills like giving a speech. We got some amazing help with how to stand and how to act while giving a speech. This was helpful for this project, but will surely be helpful in the future as well.

I don't have any negative word about New York. We had free time, we have seen some amazing things and buildings and we had lots of fun. It was an honor to visit the Dutch ambassador and to visit the UN.

I want to thank the organization and everybody that was involved in this project.

Baris Ogretmen

Lucas Kleefman

De dag waar ik zo lang op had gewacht, zaterdag 6 juli, brak eindelijk aan. Mijn wekker ging om 5 uur 's ochtends en ik kon niet wachten om naar Schiphol te gaan. Na een goede bak koffie, hadden we een hele fijne vlucht. 12 uurtjes later kwamen in Manhattan aan en alles leek wel nep te zijn. Die dag gingen we gelijk naar Times Square en hebben we daar op de achtenveertigste verdieping van het Marriott Marquis hotel gedineerd, wat trouwens ongelooflijk hoog was. Later die avond gingen we naar het Empire State Building, wat nóg hoger was dan dat restaurant, namelijk 83 verdiepingen hoog. De volgende dag gingen we ontbijten bij een restaurantje tegenover het hotel, en zijn we

daarna snel Hash Browns gaan halen bij de McDonald's, want we waren natuurlijk in New York. Verder zijn we die dag naar Queens gegaan, en hebben we daar het Queens Museum bezocht, waar een hele grote maquette was te bewonderen van de plattegrond van New York, en ik kan u verzekeren dat die maquette veel indruk heeft gemaakt op mij. Later zijn we naar een wedstrijd van de New York Mets gegaan en hebben we een enorme lunch gegeten. De volgende dag stond helemaal in het teken van de Verenigde Naties, de organisatie waar deze reis omheen draaide. Als eerst gingen we naar de Permanente Vertegenwoordiging van Nederland bij de Verenigde Naties, en hebben we gepraat met Karel van Oosterom, de Permanent Vertegenwoordiger. We hebben onze speeches voorgedragen en hebben daarop veel en nuttige feedback gekregen en al om al was dit deel van de dag heel inspirerend en zeer interessant. Na dit gesprek met meneer van Oosterom (of zoals wij hem mochten noemen, Karel), zijn we naar het hoofdkantoor van de Verenigde Naties geweest en hebben we daar een rondleiding gehad. Het was echt heel indrukwekkend voor mij om dit gebouw te zien, en de ruimte waar vele beslissingen over de wereld waar wij in leven te zien. Kortom, een dag die niemand had willen missen. In de avond hebben wij gegeten bij Tavern on the Green, waar ik overigens de beste steak heb gegeten die ik in mijn leven heb gegeten. De volgende dag was het al zover, de laatste dag van onze reis naar New York. We zijn die dag naar de Highline geweest en hebben een bezoek gedaan aan Hudson Yards en The Vessel. Daarna hebben we gegeten op een pier aan de Hudson, en zijn we daarna naar het hotel gegaan. Vanuit daar pakte we de taxi richting het vliegveld, en dat was alweer onze reis. Ik kan u vertellen dat ik echt verliefd ben geworden op deze stad, en ik er zeker weer terug wil komen. Het feit dat ik bij het hoofdkantoor van de Verenigde Naties in New York ben geweest is nog steeds ongelooflijk en het was dan ook een hele grote eer.

Tot slot wil ik de organisatoren van de reis, en iedereen die deze reis heeft mogelijk gemaakt enorm bedanken. Ik ben zoveel wijzer geworden door dit hele proces en heb geweldige mensen leren kennen. Dankuwel.

Kyara

I want to tell something about the trip to New York. I had so much fun every day, I don't even know where to start. I'll try to give a resume of the trip, but we've done and saw so many things in just a couple of days, I don't know if I can give a resume.

The first day, the day of our arrival, was a bit of an orientation day. We got to see the area around our hotel, which includes the Empire State Building and Times Square. One of the highlights of that day was dinner in The View Restaurant & Lounge. Having dinner there was a great opportunity to see more of the city.

We went to Queens on the second day. We saw Unisphere, a huge monument in the beautiful Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Next to Unisphere was the Queens Museum, where we were able to learn about Queens. After we visited the museum, we went to a baseball game. The game was not the most exciting game ever, but it was a nice experience. We ended the day in a beautiful restaurant called the Tavern on the Green. The food was delicious and not just the restaurant, but the location was beautiful as well.

The UN was the main focus on the third day. We went to the building of the UN and gave our presentation to Mr. van Oosterom, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands at the United Nations. We got to see the General Assembly, also an important part of the UN. We learned a lot of things about the UN on this day, which was pretty exciting because we got the chance to go to places which are normally not allowed for the public. It was also nice that we got to see things we talked about in the classes before we went on this trip.

Last but not least, the day of our departure. Before we could take the plane and go home, we still had about half a day left. We filled that up by going to Hudson Yards. There was a nice statuary and a big mall. We got tickets for the statuary, so we got to go to the top of it and see the view of Manhattan. Before going to the airport, we had lunch on a historic lightship, The Frying Pan. Afterwards it was time to go home.

It was really nice that we, almost every day, ended with a commonly dinner. Dinner was a perfect moment to discuss the things we did on that day and talk about what we liked the most.

It was an amazing trip, from the beginning till the end and I'm really happy that I could be a part of this great initiative! I want to thank everyone who made sure we could have this wonderful trip! I want to thank the other students and supervisors as well for making this a pleasant trip!

Ghani den Hertog

Hi!

I'm one of the students from the Edith Stein College that was a part of the previous course of the Van Aartsen Honours Program.

Now, I am the kind of guy that really isn't the best when it comes to describing any event, I often refrain from stating my opinion on these things. As a result, I'll keep this review of my time spent short and to the point. I'll also be assuming that the program next year will be mostly similar.

To start off, if they lure you in with the promise of a free trip to New York, be warned that you don't have to pay money for the trip, but you will have to spend a portion of your time preparing a project of some form that you will eventually have to present to the Dutch UN ambassador. If the thought of doing any amount of homework nauseates you, turn away. I myself felt utterly scammed when I was told that I had to do homework.

Otherwise, the workshop was great. We learnt public speaking skills and we learnt a great deal about the UN, about the problems they are trying to address and why some are more difficult to solve than others. For example, we learnt about the cataclysmic prediction that the world will face a crisis in around a decade should nothing be done about climate change. Despite the heavy subjects, the spirit there was inspiring and optimistic.

The presentation of our projects, which was mostly speeches, it was in a encouraging environment and everyone was friendly and supportive. The material presented in the workshop is something everyone can engage in and learn from. When we presented our projects to the Dutch permanent UN

mission in the New York headquarters, the ambassador Karel van Oosterom had some very insightful comments and took the time to analyse and answer all the students' questions.

When asked about the program, most students will talk about the trip itself, for good reason. I won't talk too much about our stay and the legendary places we visited. The food and locales are for you to explore, but I will say that it exceeded all my expectations, everything from the humongous American burgers to the UN headquarters. I recommend learning by listening and asking as many questions as you can to the people travelling with you, from the Dutch ex-minister of foreign affairs to a university professor. Because their knowledge and experience when it comes to politics and the UN.

Should you join the program? Yes.

- Ghani den Hertog

Ilyaas Nanhekhan

I want to thank everyone who gave me this opportunity and made sure that my dream became reality the lessons were very interesting and informative. I didn't have any clue about the United Nations so I didn't know what to expect, but overall it was a very amazing experience. I hope that many other children will get the same opportunity that I got.