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From: Erin Arnett [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 24 February 2017 1:12 PM
To: White Paper
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: White Paper submission

Dear White Paper team:

My name is Erin and I've been volunteering at Oaktree for six months. Since working here, I have thought and learnt more about foreign policy than I ever had before in my life. I'm not an expert on foreign policy, but I have been strongly encouraged to participate in the White Paper campaign to let you all know what matters to me. I like the idea of being able to contribute my thoughts and have my voice heard, so thank you for this opportunity.

I got involved with Oaktree largely because I liked the idea of getting involved in a good cause: fighting poverty. I can also empathise with people who live close to the poverty line or come from a low-income household. Something that always interested me was climate change, and I believe that we should place the condition of our planet towards the very top of our priority list.

A few years ago, I saw a quote on social media that always resonated with me. That was: 'if you think the economy is more important than the environment, try holding your breath whilst counting your money.' From a purely selfish perspective, a healthy planet is what allows us to survive and to do what we do. From a compassionate perspective, a healthy planet helps to sustain all life that inhabits it and basically allows it to function in peace. It's a sobering truth that planet Earth would be better off without us, the human race.

This is why the Paris Agreement was such a momentous feat. It was a wonderful thought that so many nations were coming together to think about what they could really do to combat climate change. This issue is so big that we literally need to converse with the rest of the world to find a solution. The thought that President Trump, who represents the second-largest gas emitter in the world (the US, of course), is set to pull out of the Agreement makes my blood boil (almost as much as the Earth is going to boil if he follows through). As global citizens, we cannot afford to skimp on climate change. We only have so long before this is going to take an irreversible toll on our planet.

As aforementioned, I also empathise with those coming from poverty or a low-income household. I strongly dislike the inherent judgement that comes with the territory of poverty and the tendency to distribute blame where there sometimes isn't any to speak of. Sometimes it is someone's choices that leads them to where they are. But usually, it's a complex web of psychological, socioeconomic or lifestyle factors that dictate such circumstances. Sometimes, poverty is simply thrust upon people who have no control over the situation--such as children.

I don't know much about refugees, but I can only imagine that their experience of poverty is significantly worse than ours. Many of them come from developing countries that are poorly governed and financed, and consequently these people do not have the power to lift themselves out of poverty. They come to developed countries such as ours seeking refuge, which--when you think about it--is a continuation of the cycle of our limited aid budget. We do little to help these people, and then they come to us for help (which we still sometimes refuse to give). We can build on the idea of being global citizens (in terms helping the future of our planet) by also extending a hand to our fellow human beings. Surely one of our national values should be that of generosity. It's even in our national anthem: 'for those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share'.

Erin Arnett
Copywriter

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