

Changing My Life's Trajectory: My Journey with TU Delft

I completed the last year of my bachelor's degree in Istanbul at a time when everything was uncertain about the world. The world was, in simplest terms, "different". It was as if the world we knew was buried in the past, and dreams about the future seemed to be at risk due to the pandemic. While awaiting the outcome of my master's application for TU Delft, I remember feeling anxious, doubtful, and losing hope at some moments, thinking that the midst of a pandemic could possibly be the worst time to dream about moving to the Netherlands to pursue a master's degree. Thankfully, the pandemic did not turn out to be an obstacle in front of my dreams. Not only did I receive an acceptance letter from TU Delft, but I also received the incredibly generous Justus & Louise van Effen scholarship that enabled me to spend two of the most remarkable years of my life.

Given my lack of financial resources, I would have never been able to study at TU Delft without a scholarship. I simply wouldn't have been able to afford it. That is why I will always be incredibly thankful for this opportunity that opened so many doors for me. Thanks to this generous scholarship, I was able to focus on my studies without the added burden of financial stress. This allowed me to fully immerse myself in my coursework, as well as participate in various extracurricular activities. During my time at TU Delft, I met so many incredibly talented, self-confident, and passionate people who inspired me to become the person that I am today. TU Delft was much more than an educational space for me. In my second year, I had the chance to serve on the faculty council of my faculty. I also worked as a student assistant for several departments and learned so much about how a university functions as a whole. What I remember about TU Delft is that every academic and non-academic staff member I met was deeply passionate about their field of work. In retrospect, I think one of the biggest gifts TU Delft gave me is showing me the importance of doing what you are passionate about in life. Realizing my passion for open science, I chose to write my master's thesis on this topic, which resulted in a body of work that I am incredibly proud of now. My experiences at TU Delft ultimately made me realize that I wanted to work in education, which is exactly what I am going to be doing in my career very soon, as I take on the role of a project manager at Eindhoven University of Technology.

As I think about the incredible opportunity that this scholarship gave me, I also think about the concept of social equity. The world is filled with so many young adults with great aspirations, work ethic, ideals, and potential. However, many of these people do not always get the chance to pursue their dreams simply because of their background, lack of resources, or lack of opportunity. Unfortunately, opportunity, or the lack of it, separates us. I dream of a future where this is not the case anymore. I dream of a future where there is enough space for people with potential and aspirations. I dream of a future where people with similar work ethic and goals can all run together, work together, and create together. What I also know is that this dream will not come to life without action and effort. To me, this scholarship represents the effort and action for progress toward a more equitable world. This scholarship held my hand and helped me jump over an invisible barrier. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank the Justus &

Louise van Effen foundation for being a part of history on the path to erasing invisible barriers and glass ceilings that stop people who have less opportunity and less privilege from chasing their dreams. Thank you for showing me and many young adults all around the world that our dreams are valid, no matter where we come from.

As I think about the legacy of Justus and Louise van Effen, who envisioned that technological advancements can greatly address societal issues, I think about my responsibilities as a TU Delft graduate, an engineer, a young adult, and a global citizen. I recognize the vision that we need to rely on science and technology to make the world a better place. As I left TU Delft with a cum laude degree, I promised myself that I would carry this vision for the rest of my life.

Three years into the pandemic, there are times when I still feel doubtful about the future of the world. However, I no longer doubt myself. I want to express my gratitude to TU Delft for being a part of my growth over the last years of my life.

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