Is it possible for students with different values to join together in effort on behalf of others?

How might this collaboration take place?

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Introduction

-Originally from Rome, Italy

-First 3 years of high school in Italian high school

-2 last years at International Baccalaureate (IB Diploma)---> global perspective, multiple languages

-Moved to the United States for college at 19

-First year in Boston, then transferred to NYU

-Majors: Creative Writing and Astrophysics

-Class of 2027 (graduating a year early)

-Currently on a semester abroad at NYU London

Can students with different values work together?

Challenges:

-Different preconceptions

-Hesitation to speak up

-Misunderstandings/language

-Pressure/comparisons

-Difficulty adapting

-Different ideas on how to work efficiently

Strategies to overcome challenges:

-Awareness of everyone's background

-Boundaries and respect

-Separate critique of ideas and critique of identity

-Curiosity over defensiveness + **practicing humility**

-University help

-Concrete shared goal

Example of different backgrounds: Italy vs United States

Italy:

-Focus on classical texts, from around the globe, theory, history, philosophical traditions

-Conservative culture, encouraged to keep controversy outside

-Memorization

-Less focus on participation, debates, creativity

United States:

-Focus on modern issues, individual voice. Lack of teaching on ancient history or global literatures unless specific for major

-Freedom of expression, encouraged to speak up

-Not focused on memorization

-Debates, participation, original thought

Effects?

International Students vs Domestic

-International students are exposed to the concept of “global”, so they adapt more easily

-Domestic students perceive international students as “different” and tend to stereotype —> International students isolate themselves

-Nationalities keep being a factor when choosing your social circle

-Working together vs. living together in the same environment

- “Significant numbers of international students in the U.S. report feeling alienated, with 88% reporting a decreased sense of belonging and 30% facing significant cultural barriers, according to a Stop AAPI Hate survey. A 2019 survey found 31% experienced discrimination based on nationality, and 41% struggled to form friendships with domestic peers”

Conclusion

- Universities' role in improving the situation —> no improvements if universities do not step up further in fixing the issue
- Universities are microcosm of society, if communication fails here, it fails everywhere
- If it succeeds here, it becomes a model for the future

Thank you!