What Economics Means to Me

How does economics impact my life? When I enrolled in IB HL Economics I expected that answer to be, “it doesn’t”. That answer couldn’t have been further from the truth.

We’ve covered four topics in my economics class so far: microeconomics, macroeconomics, international economics, and developmental economics. From everyday choices to the decisions of world leaders, economics impacts my life greatly. So what does economics mean to me? It means everything because it influences the decisions I make, helps me better understand the world, and inspires my career choices.

In microeconomics and macroeconomics I learned how to better make decisions that benefit not only me but others around me. In microeconomics we covered the basics of supply and demand and I discovered the factors that motivate people to purchase items such as income or market size. Although most of this unit seemed obvious, learning how suppliers and demanders interact enlightened me. It gave me the ability to understand why in my father’s retail store most of the money is made through small purchases of snacks and soda pop, even though they are worth a small fraction of other items, such as chainsaws, which I thought would bring in more money. Travelers, his main customers, demanded food for long trips and so more of these commodities were bought.

Later on I learned about positive and negative externalities. Understanding graphically how car pollution or excessive plastic usage affects entire populations, including myself, taught me to be more conscience of the decisions I make from an environmental standpoint. Before our macroeconomics unit, words such as inflation or unemployment rates were meaningless. Economics not only taught me what these words such as inflation or current account balance, but the value of understanding them. Now, when I hear these words on the radio I can truly understand what is happening in America and how my family might be affected by the rise and fall in prices. After these two units the world of economics went from meaningless jargon to an impactful decision making process.

Through international economics I’ve come to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of the world. Before taking this class I associated economics solely with wealthy business men and the stock market. I understand that economics drives decisions made around the world, concerning everything from a country’s trade partners, to how countries run a deficit. I learned how American subsidization of cotton has made the clothes I wear cheap. I now understand how and why trade wars start, so when I listen to the news I can reflect on how these trade wars might affect my family, especially our business. The level of economic integration in the European Union suddenly made sense, both the benefits and drawbacks. As someone considering going to school in Europe, this is an important concept for me to grasp.

Most importantly, studying developmental economics greatly impacted my career choice. Before this unit I planned to become a lawyer but I wasn’t truly inspired to become one. Now I don’t plan to get a general law degree, but I am planning to earn an international law degree alongside an economics degree. Understanding economics is crucial because every decision by any person involves economics.
Developmental economics taught me why poorer countries struggle to provide for their citizens. Without economics, I never would have understood the importance of education, healthcare, or women empowerment on the health of a country and their economy. Economics inspired me to help the families in these countries to gain the developmental resources they need so that they can grow and prosper, instead of worrying about where the next meal will come from. Developmental economics showed me just how lucky I am to be growing up in a country that supports me with resources, despite coming from a low income family. I’m now inspired and impassioned to make a lasting impression on this world through economic concepts.

Economics means many things to me, but perhaps overall, economics means the freedom to choose and the freedom to help others through providing an education of economics.