



My day at Future AS5ET – 22 September 2017

By Mairéad Reid

Attending the Future AS5et conference on the 22nd of September was, without a doubt, one of the single most useful and worthwhile experiences of my life. I applied without a slightest hope that I would be chosen, but I am beyond overjoyed that I decided to do so regardless. The event was in Edinburgh, and I arrived armed with pen, paper, and not a faintest clue of what to expect. Thankfully I was greeted by my wonderful chaperone for the event as soon as I arrived, who immediately put me at ease. I then mingled with some of the people there my own age, which was super interesting to me because I knew no one, and got the opportunity to meet plenty new friends. I could already tell that this was going to be an amazing day, and my feeling was definitely proven correct.

The first amazing speech was from Chelsea Cameron, one of the most inspirational young ladies of our time, telling us about how she has managed to overcome the adverse conditions that she was raised in to follow her dreams. This was followed by another inspirational speech from Jayne-Anne Gadhia, who really roused up all into wanting to smash into finance. She told of her struggles to get where she is today, and definitely affected us all strongly.

Nicola Sturgeon then gave some striking words about what she has had to overcome as a woman in today's society, and how she has managed to rise to the most important position in Scotland. Regardless of politics, she has to be one of the most important role model for young ladies today, and I'm sure that she inspired many of the people in the audience to pursue a career in politics. There was then a Q&A panel with Ms Sturgeon, Ms Cameron and Ms Gadhia, who all gave very enlightening responses to the questions that the audience had posed, about topics from motivation to the pay gap.

There was then a break, in which I was given the amazing opportunity to interview both Ms Gadhia and Ms Sturgeon. Definitely the highlight of my day, it was fantastic to speak to them one-on-one and hear their views on the most important issues of today, such as mental health issues and poverty attainment gaps. This experience really truly impacted how I view the world, and has led to me becoming seriously motivated to do my very best, and to throw my all into everything that I do.

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Following this experience was a talk on what asset management is, and how different people have broken into this field. Whilst this admittedly doesn't sound the most interesting on paper, it was a truly invigorating experience, with actors and interactive segments. I hadn't ever even considered going into the finance sector until then, but now it seems like a real option for me and the hundreds of others in the audience.

There was then an electrifying speech from Ross Jennings, a piper that aims to pipe in every country in the world. This talk really helped to demonstrate that we can do whatever we want, and that if we work hard enough we can do anything. He was an amazing stage personality, and I'm sure has had a massive impact on us all.

Following this were two mini-sessions. The first of these was a speed-networking session, where we got to meet many different people from different sectors, to find out how they managed to get where they were today. The answer from all of them was roughly the same – hard work and determination. The second session was on how to get into the workplace, with tips and tricks on everything from attire, interview skills, and CV planning, which has been immensely useful.

Then with a blur it was the end of the day, with closing remarks from Mary Duffy as a summation of all the lessons we had all learned. The day absolutely flew by, and by the time I was on the train home, the whole thing hadn't quite sunk in. Overall, I would definitely say that it was an incredible learning experience for all of us there. This conference was one of a kind, and I cannot wait to see how it has impacted the people that were there. One thing is for sure – there are most definitely more empowered young people in Scotland today for having attended.

