

Medical University of Lodz

**Around
The World**



MEDICAL
UNIVERSITY
OF LODZ

English Division



Thanks to this publication you will get to know our students better. You will also see how diverse and interesting the Medical University of Lodz community is.

Our University is chosen by candidates willing to pursue a degree who come not only from Poland, but also from Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, both Americas and Australia. Our students fare from around 70 countries, which is a source of great pride to us. Although they are from different backgrounds, they share a lot in common. One of the mutual dreams they all cherish is to become a doctor and help people. Our students become a part of the Medical University of Lodz and our city for six years. One wonders – what do they like doing in their spare time? Why have they decided to become doctors?

Start reading
if you want to find out!



Our students come from almost 70 countries



India - 106
Iran - 82
Ireland - 38
Lebanon - 35
Syria - 34
Norway - 33
Malaysia - 27
Zimbabwe - 27
Poland - 24
Egypt - 22
Canada - 21
Iraq - 20
Taiwan - 18
Germany - 16
Nigeria - 16
Türkiye - 15
Great Britain - 13
Pakistan - 12
Jordan - 11
Sweden - 11
Saudi Arabia - 10
Bangladesh - 7
United States of America - 7

The Sudan - 7
Republic of South Africa - 6
Azerbaijan - 5
Spain - 5
United Republic of Tanzania - 5
Ukraine - 5
Brazil - 4
Yemen - 4
Tunisia - 4
Algeria - 3
Cameroon - 3
South Korea - 3
Angola - 2
Republic of Belarus - 2
Dominica - 2
Ethiopia - 2
France - 2
Israel - 2
Namibia - 2
Niger - 2
Palestine - 2
Romania - 2
Switzerland - 2

Albania - 1
Australia - 1
Botswana - 1
China - 1
Cyprus - 1
Denmark - 1
Russian Federation - 1
The Gambia - 1
Ghana - 1
Georgia - 1
Hongkong - 1
Kenya - 1
Democratic Republic of the Congo - 1
Morocco - 1
Mauritius - 1
Nepal - 1
Portugal - 1
Swaziland (Kingdom of Eswatini) - 1
Vietnam - 1
Italy - 1
Zambia - 1
United Arab Emirates - 1

Introduction



Hello,

My name is Beata. I'm turning 12 this year and I suffer from a spine disease – scoliosis. It is my fifth stay at the sanatorium; this is where I go to school and take physical exercises. My mum visits me two times a week and she always brings pork chops and strawberry compote. She's worried that I'm so far away from home.

I share a room with other girls. There are eight of us. In the evenings we swap ghost stories which later prevent us from falling asleep. In the afternoons the teacher reads books to us. I like geography a lot, oftentimes I close my eyes and point randomly at the map. I stop by in numerous places in Azerbaijan, Morocco or Ireland. I wonder how the kids live in these countries; do they fall ill at all? What do they like playing? What do they like to eat? My favourite food is cheesecake (boiled, not baked!) with hot chocolate topping.

I don't know about you, but I hate being sick. Every time I return from the sanatorium I do exercises at home for hours on end, yet at school I'm exempted from PE. I keep coming back to rehabilitation, sometimes to hospital. In the future I want to be a traveller.

08.03.1989

My name is Beata. I'm 45 years old. Every day on my way to work I pass by people whose faces look differently than mine. Some have been shopping, some have been to the gym, others rush to catch the bus. All of them commute to the hospital on the other end of the city for their classes in a daytime, whereas in the evening they go home to cook their traditional dinners. I like the exotic smells issuing from dormitories and restaurants, the make-up and perfume of the Lebanese girls, the sound of foreign words and the faith in science.

That's what foreign students have brought to Łódź. They live among us, we meet them at swimming pools, in pubs and cinemas. I don't have to open the atlas any more or watch documentaries to get to know people from other cultures. At last I have become a traveller – and in my own country at that. I travel reading their stories about families, traditions and games. Reading transports me to different latitudes and longitudes and my childhood dream comes true.

You'll be reading about exceptional people – students studying medicine in English. They are assiduous in their efforts to reach one goal: to become doctors of medicine. If you are in a hospital now it is quite likely you see them in your room and in the corridors. They accompany the doctors as interns, learning from them. They speak to patients in English, sometimes in Polish. Trust them and give them a smile. They came to Łódź from afar and have lived here a long way from home, having become self-reliant at an early age. In a moment you'll start reading their stories. I wonder... who are you going to be when you grow up?

01.10.2022

Beata Ogrodowczyk

Student Coordinator from July 2008-January 2023



Home countries of our protagonists



AFRICA

- Algeria
- Nigeria
- Cameroon
- Zimbabwe

ASIA

- India
- Malaysia
- Syria
- Tajikistan

EUROPE

- Ireland
- Germany
- Poland

Alton Ajay Mathew • India



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

I think it is an interesting way for science and service to come together and I really enjoy learning about health, diseases and the human experience.

● Was it your dream job when you were a child?

I've had many interests, but I've really liked science from a young age, and medicine is a good path into a life of applied and tangible science.

Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

● I wanted to learn a new language and be able to stay in an EU country. Also, Lodz seemed like a good place for me to start anew.

● What was your favourite dish when you were a child?



Dosai with sambar and coconut chutney.

The *dosai* is a crispy, fermented rice batter pancake. We eat it with *sambar*, a lentil and tamarind curry with vegetables. The *coconut chutney* is a kind of sauce made of ground coconuts and green chillies.

I was quite a naughty child and I insisted on eating *dosai* with strawberry jam or plain sugar which was not a typical way to eat it. The *dosai* is a humble dish but takes me back to the days when we had a quick breakfast together as a family before heading to school.

What is a traditional sport in your country?

A traditional sport, now played all across India, is *kabaddi*. It is a contact team sport. There are seven players in each team. The aim of the game is for a player in offense, called "raider", to run into the opposing team's half of the court, touch as many of their defenders as possible, and return to his own half of the court, all without being tackled by the defenders.



All of this must be done in a single breath while loudly or quietly chanting "*kabaddi*". Points are scored for each player tagged by the raider, while the opposing team earns a point for stopping the raider. Players are taken out of the game if they are touched or tackled, but are brought back in for each point scored by their team.

Kabaddi

What is your favourite sport?

My favourite sport is badminton and it is interesting because it is said to have been modelled after an Indian sport called *poona*.

What did you like to play when you were a child?

Mostly board games and badminton or hide-and-seek with friends.

How do you say 'good morning' and 'thank you' in your language?

அன்புடன் *Vanakkam* - greetings
நன்றி *Nandri* - thank you

Do you have your own alphabet?

Tamil is claimed to be the oldest living language in the world and it has a different alphabet.

Gutturaux	க ள்,	கீ ட்,	தூ ன்.
Palatals	ச ள்,	சீ ட்,	சூ ன்.
Cérébraux I.	ட ள்,	டீ ட்,	ண ன்.
Cérébraux II	த ள்,	தீ ட்,	ண ன்.
Dentals.	த ள்,	தீ ட்,	டு ன்.
Labiaux	ப ள்,	பீ ட்,	ம ன்.
Liquides.	ய ள்,	உ ள்,	ந ன்,
		ல ள்,	ட ள்.
Sibilants	ச ள்.		
Voyelles.	அ ள்,	ஆ ள்,	ஓ ள்,
	ஈ ள்,	உ ள்,	ஊ ள்,
	எ ள்,	ஏ ள்,	ஐ ள்,
	ஔ ள்,	ஓ ள்,	ஔ ள்.

Tamil alphabet




Alton Ajay Mathew • India

● **What surprising invention came out of your country?**

Chess, the number 0, badminton, the oldest written down music and yoga.

● **Who is the most famous person from your country?
What are they famous for?**

Mahatma Gandhi

– the freedom fighter with emphasis on non-violent philosophy, known as the "Father of the Nation".

Mahatma Gandhi



● **Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?**



Large Chola era temples in Tanjore



Ootacamund (Ooty)



The Nilgiri Hills

Chennai,
the entire city



– all in Tamil Nadu.

Anaita Kiyamova • Tajikistan



- Tatar and Tajik origins



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

There's nothing more fascinating for me than medicine, the human body and all the processes going on in it. I also want to be of true help to humankind and the environment I was brought up in. Most of my family members are doctors too, so there've always been lots of talks about health and medicine at home. I've always loved to listen to and be engaged in them. I believe medicine is the right path for me, as it will not only let me do the thing I love so much, but also keep me in a process of constant learning and improvement. And hopefully, I will be able to make my contribution to the health of humankind.

● Was it your dream job when you were a child?

Most of my childhood I really wanted to be an archaeologist. I was interested in the history of ancient Egypt, its architecture and mythology and dreamed of taking part in an archaeological dig, and someday becoming a new Howard Carter by discovering the tomb of an unknown pharaoh.

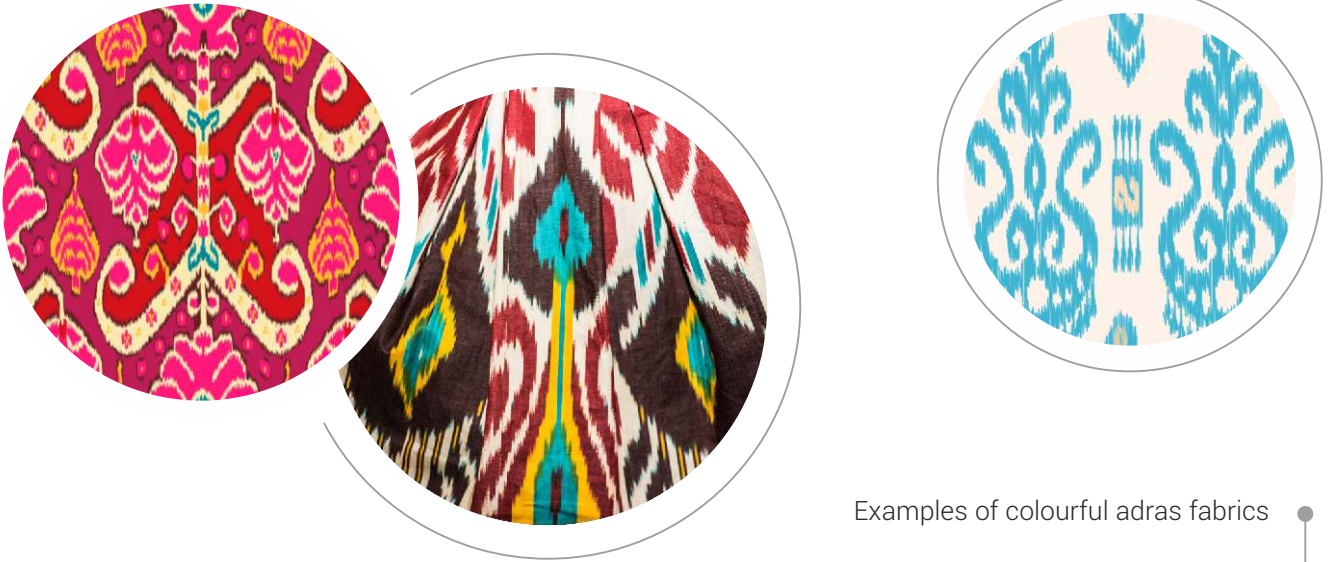
● Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

One of the main reasons was the high-quality education offered by the universities in Poland, which corresponds to the high standards of the EU. Moreover, studying in a foreign country gives you a wonderful unique experience and helps you grow in so many different ways and gives you an opportunity to connect and make friends with people from all around the world, many of whom will stay in your life for a long time.

Anaita Kiyamova • Tajikistan, Tatar and Tajik origins

What are some important customs in your country?

One of them is traditional Tajik dresses. Women in Tajikistan wear them on a daily basis. Nowadays another quite common practice is to use the traditional colourful fabric called **adras** in rather modern-styled clothes. I sometimes try to wear Tajik traditional elements in my daily outfits.



Examples of colourful adras fabrics



Anaita Kiyamova
in regional costumes

Anaita Kiyamova • Tajikistan, Tatar and Tajik origins

What are the traditional holidays in your country?

There's a New Year celebration, known as **Nowruz** (translated as "a new day"), which begins on 21 March, during the period of vernal equinox, and lasts for about 3-4 days. And International Women's Day, which is celebrated on 8 March, is a national holiday in Tajikistan.



New Year, i.e. Nowruz

What did you like to play when you were a child?

One of my favorite games as a child was hide-and-seek. Many of my cousins and I used to play it in our grandparents' backyard. There were a lot of perfect hiding places, and after twilight, the game was getting so much more fun.

How do you say 'good morning' and 'thank you' in your language?

Good morning - *soobh ba khayr*

Thank you - *tashakkoor* or *rahmat*

Субҳ ба хайр

ташаккур | раҳмат

Landscapes of Tajikistan



Hissar
fortress



Yashilkul Lake – ("green lake")
in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province
in the Pamir Mountains



Garm-Chashma
– a hot spring in the mountains
of the Ishkoshim Range
in Gorno-Badakhshan
Autonomous Province.

Chibundu Nzelibe • Nigeria



Why do you want to be a doctor?

I want to be able to help others by taking away their pain and suffering, to improve their quality of life. I also find medicine very fascinating, especially modern-day medicine and all the new inventions being used in the field

What is your favourite dish from your country?

It is **abacha** also known as African salad. It is made from cassava tubers that have been thinly sliced, washed and boiled. I can give you the recipe, but a lot of the ingredients are not available in Poland:



- Rinse *ugba* (seeds from the African oil bean tree) with warm water.
- Dissolve potash (potassium rich salt) in water and sieve. Stir the potash water with palm oil in a pot until it forms a yellowish paste.
- Place it on heat and add ground *ehu* (Jamaican nutmeg) pepper, crayfish and seasoning.
- Stir, then add crushed stock cubes, diced onions and *ugba*. Take it off the heat.
- Add the *ogiri* (flavouring made from fermented oil seeds) and mix, then add meat and fish.
- Add the *abacha* and mix, allowing the ingredients to blend.
- Add sliced *utazi* (a Nigerian vegetable) and salt to taste. Garnish with chopped garden egg leaves and sliced onions.

Abacha salad

Chibundu Nzelibe • Nigeria

Are there any popular traditional dances?

Atilogwu is a popular traditional youth dance from the Igbo ethnic group that focuses on vigorous body movement and often includes acrobatics.



Men from the Igbo ethnic group perform a traditional dance



Nigerian women at a folk festival

What's special about your culture?

Nigeria is a multicultural society, inhabited by over 250 ethnic groups with so many different languages and traditions. People in my country follow a more traditional than globalised culture.

What did you like to play when you were a child?

Hide and seek with my siblings and the neighbouring kids. I also spent a lot of time outside when I was a kid. We raced each other, we played hide and seek, we rolled around in Heelys and we would ride our scooters around our block. Now, I like playing basketball.



Who is the most famous person from your country?

Wizkid is one of the famous people, he's a musician.

Are there any surprising inventions that came from Nigeria?

Yes, the first solid-fuel rocket invented and launched by a 26-year-old man, **Shehu Saleh Balami**. He launched it in 2008.

Chibundu Nzelibe • Nigeria

● Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?

The most popular places to take holidays in are:



- Abuja (the capital of the country)
 1. A view of the business district
 2. A view of the National Mosque
 3. A catholic church
– the National Christian Centre



● Lagos city

Jabi Lake

Aso Rock ●

● How do you say "good morning", "thank you", and "how are you?" in your language?

Good morning – **Ụtụtụ oma**

Thank you – **Daalụ**

How are you? – **Kedu ka ị mere?**

In Igbo, one of the major Nigerian languages

Derrick Kang Etape • Cameroon



Why do you want to be a doctor?

I am really interested in medicine because it gives me a satisfying feeling when I become a part of someone's life during the hard moments and see the progress from worse to better.

Was it your dream job when you were a child?

The dream to become a medical doctor really came alive when I was in Zambia and did a first aid procedure for a little girl. I felt so satisfied. When I was younger I wanted to go into law.

Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

I chose Poland because my family is at the moment in Europe. So, it was easier to be closer to my family.



What was your favourite dish when you were a child?

Ndole – an aromatic Cameroonian spinach stew made of spinach and bitter leaves flavored with garlic, crayfish and sometimes with shrimps and beef. My older sister usually makes it at home.

—● Ndole

Derrick Kang Etape • Cameroon

What are some important customs in your country?

We greet strangers and make people feel welcomed. We speak only when someone speaks to us and we speak respectfully to elders.

What is your favourite tradition?

My favourite tradition is the way babies are welcomed into the community. From the time the baby is born, the whole community is really excited and waits for the baby to come from the hospital. Then they have a big party with lots of food and drinks. The child gets his or her name. We have a saying that the community raises the child.

We also had this unspoken tradition of what has to be done during the festive season such as Christmas, New Year, Easter and so on. The most exciting childhood memory comes from Christmas. About 3 months before Christmas, every household would get little chicks for us to nurse into full-grown chickens. Every little kid in my neighbourhood was excited about this. We sometimes compared which was bigger.

What did you like to play when you were a child?

I enjoyed playing football. I used to spend a lot of time outside. My friends and I would play football for hours.



What interesting invention came out of your country?

Arthur Zang is a Cameroonian famous for his device that does heart examinations. It allows health workers to do cardiological tests on the patients and send the results to heart specialists far away.



Who is the most famous person from your country? What are they famous for?

I think the most famous person is the football player **Samuel Eto'o**. He is famous for his football skills. He has won a lot of medals and competitions.

Could you recommend beautiful places in your country?

There are beautiful places like **Limbé** and **Yaounde** and they are already quite famous with tourists.

Yaounde



Limbé

Hadi Abou Samara • Syria



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

It has been my passion since I was young. It was my dream job when I was a child and it stayed that way. Especially, as I know that my country really needs doctors because of the political situation there.

● Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

Poland is one of the best countries in Europe to study medicine in English.

● What is your favourite food from your childhood?

Kibbeh that my grandmother made. *Kibbeh* is a kind of meatballs and it's very tasty.



● Kibbeh

Hadi Abou Samara • Syria

What are some important customs in your country?

One of the important customs is **Damascus traditional clothing**. These are beautiful outfits for men and women. Men wear a "kaftan", a kind of long shirt, and women wear long dresses with long sleeves. Both men and women wear head wraps.

What is your favourite tradition?

I think I like **arada shamiya** most. It is a Shami dance that is performed at weddings in the city of Damascus by a group of young men and women, accompanied by famous traditional Arada songs.

What did you like to play when you were a child?

I spent a lot of time outside as a child and we played football, we went swimming and cycling.

Who is the most famous person from your country?

Steve Jobs' father was Syrian. Steve Jobs was the co-founder of Apple.



The streets of Damascus
- tea sellers in traditional costumes



Trade in Damascus
- hijab, a Muslim head scarf



A Syrian wedding
in a refugee camp in Turkey
(due to political situation in Syria)

How do you say 'good morning' and 'thank you' in your language?

Good morning - *sabah el khair*

صباح الخير

Thank you - *shokran*

شكراً لك

The most important cities of Syria



Aleppo Citadel



Mosque in Damascus (capital of Syria)

Julia Resch • Germany



Why do you want to be a doctor?

I want to become a doctor because I am fascinated by how easily medicine can change people's lives. I want to help people return to their normal lives and help to cure people's diseases. I want other people to have the same experience I had some years ago. Health is man's most valuable asset.

Was it your dream job when you were a child?

When I was younger I had a lot of dreams. I always wanted to become a judge but my sickness and experience with the disease and medical treatment changed my mind.

What are the traditional holidays in your country?

Traditionally we celebrate very similar holidays to Polish people since most of our population is Christian as well.

What is your favourite tradition?

My favourite 'tradition' besides all the Christian holidays like **Christmas** is definitely **Carnival**. Since I am from a city close to Cologne, so the Carnival is very big in my region and we celebrate it for at least 5 days.

Christmas market, Koblenz



Carnival in Cologne



Julia Resch • Germany

● Did you spend a lot of time outside when you were a child?

Yes, I never was home when I was a child. My mum always had to look for me and my friends in the forest.

● What surprising invention/tradition/product came out of your country?

Coffee filter - invented in 1908 in Dresden, Germany by a housewife who was looking for a way to make the coffee less bitter. A very useful object during my studies so far!



● Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?

Come visit my hometown Koblenz! It's located on 2 rivers, the Rhein and the Mosel and we have a beautiful landscape! You will find a lot of vineyards and cute little villages along the river.

● Koblenz - view of the Ehrenbreitstein fortress



View of Koblenz from Balduin Bridge



● The Moselle River wine region



St. Basilica Castor in Koblenz

● How do you say "good morning", "thank you", and "how are you?" in German?

Good morning – **Guten Morgen**

Thank you – **Danke schön**

How are you? – **Wie geht es Dir?**

Karolina Oderkiewicz • Poland



4th year student of 6 MD studies in Polish,
local IFSMA project coordinator,
NoHate foundation administrator,
member of SSS in General and Oncological Surgery club.



● Where are you from and what is your origin?

I am from Poland. I am Polish. I have lived in Poland since I was born.

● Why would you like to become a doctor?

I love biology and the science of the human body. I have always been curious about how the body functions and how various diseases can be cured.

● Did you dream of becoming a doctor as a child?

I always wanted to be a veterinarian. It was only after high school that I realized that I wanted to help people and support them throughout the treatment process.

● Please share your favourite recipe from your country or from your childhood.

My favourite recipe is my grandmother's **apple cake**. I associate this cake with family gatherings at my grandparents' house. The whole family would come together and spend time at the table. My grandmother was the master of making this cake. Now my aunt and mother bake it.



Here's the recipe:

- Add 1 cup each of sugar, flour and semolina to a bowl.
- To this add 1 teaspoon of baking powder and mix everything.
- Peel and grate 8-10 apples.
- Spread 1 cup of loose ingredients from the bowl on a buttered and grated baking tray.
- Use half of the grated apples to sprinkle on the baking sheet.
- Then sprinkle another cup of loose ingredients.
- Top with the remaining apples.
- Give the last cup of loose ingredients on top and grate a cube of butter (not margarine).
- Put in the oven and bake for about 45-50 minutes at 180 degrees.

What are some important customs in your country?

I think a lot of the customs in my country are related to the church, at least in my family: sharing a wafer on Christmas Eve, going to the midnight mass, and blessing food on Easter. When I'm in my home town I always try to follow the traditions I know from my childhood. Unfortunately, since I've started living in Łódź it's sometimes hard to find the time to do so.

Blessing of food at Easter



Christmas Eve



National holiday in folk costumes



Wet Monday

What is special about your culture?

For me, what is special is that we are very respectful of our history. **National holidays** are always celebrated in a lofty and solemn way. I am incredibly proud that we can unite and celebrate such important events.

What are the traditional feasts in your country?

I don't know if it is still celebrated in other countries, but **Lany Poniedziałek** (Wet Monday) comes to mind. It is the Monday after Easter Sunday, when everyone douses strangers with water. A great water battle takes place on that day and of course you can buy all sorts of water guns in stores.

What is your favourite tradition? Please describe.

My favourite tradition is spending time with my family on holidays. About 30 people come to my house every **Christmas**. It's very noisy, we sing old and new carols, eat traditional meals and tell funny stories. Everyone is eagerly waiting for Santa Claus, but getting a gift is not so easy. To get it, everyone has to sing a song.



● Are there any popular traditional dances?

We have several, but they are not popular among young people. There are traditional dance groups that dance various dances such as the *krakowiak*, *mazurek* and *oberek*. At the end of elementary and high school everyone danced the **polonez**. I remember it very fondly.

● Polonez - traditional Polish dance

● What is your favourite sport?

I love horseback riding and swimming. I grew up in the countryside, so as a child I spent every free moment after school in the backyard with my neighbourhood friends. We played a lot of soccer, volleyball and hide-and-seek. As I got older, bike trips were something we did most often. In my childhood, we played board games a lot with my cousins. We especially liked Monopoly and playing cards.

● What surprising invention or product came out of your country?

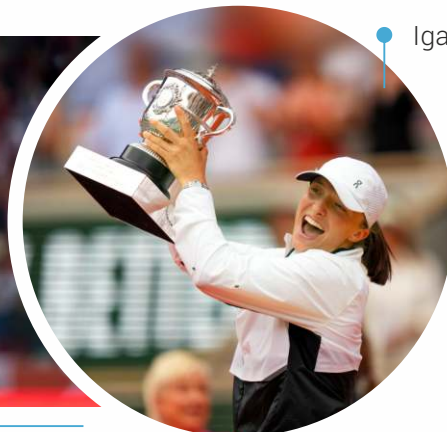
Not everyone knows about it, but adrenaline was discovered by a Polish doctor. Also, the bullet-proof vest is the invention of a Pole.

● Who is the most famous person from your country? What are they famous for?

Robert Lewandowski is probably one of the most recognized Polish soccer players these days. I think people who are interested in sports will also recognize Iga Świątek, because recently her tennis triumphs have been publicised all over the world.



● Robert Lewandowski



● Iga Świątek



● Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not popular among tourists?

It seems to me that not many tourists visit Mazury. It's a place with lots of lakes and forests, so people who want a break from the hustle and bustle of the city will like it. It is an excellent place to go with friends for a weekend at a lake house.

Mara Cornils • Germany



● **Why did you want to be a doctor?**
I wanted to be a doctor because I was fascinated with Forensic Medicine.

- **Was it your dream job when you were a child?**
As a child I wanted to be a witch (I read a lot of "Harry Potter"), a pottery maker, an equestrian, a filmmaker and an archaeologist. I might still become one of those things, who knows?
- **What is your favourite food from your childhood?**
It was and still is my mum's potato salad. She makes it when I come back home. You have to try it, it's really delicious.

Northern German Potato Salad

You need:

- potatoes (we use 1kg for 4 people but we eat a lot)
- cornichons (1 big jar or as many as you like)
- onions (1-2)
- (vegan) mayonnaise (1 big jar)
- Greek yoghurt/soy yoghurt (2 big jars)
- salt and pepper
- mustard (if you like)

1. peel potatoes, cut into bite-sized cubes and boil
2. mix mayo, yoghurt, chopped onions and half of the cornichons together
3. mix in some of the cornichon juice
4. add salt, pepper and mustard as you like
5. let potatoes cool down and add them
6. top off with some leftover cornichons and you're done!

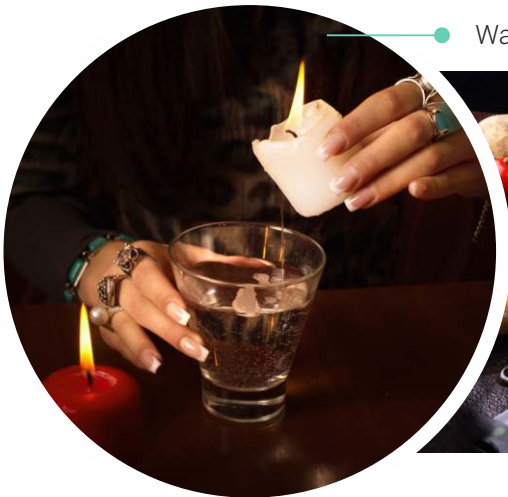
Enjoy!



What are some important customs in your country?

When it is someone's birthday, you can NOT wish them happy birthday or make them open presents before their actual birthday, it will bring bad luck to the birthday person.

For New Year's Eve, we pour molten lead (now it's mostly wax or tin) into cold water and based on the shadow of the structure that is created by the pour, you can predict the future for the next year. There is also an old comedy sketch "Dinner for One" that runs on TV all day and is a traditional thing to watch on New Year's Eve.



Wax pouring tradition



Raclette



And talking about New Year's Eve, a popular custom is to make **raclette**. Do you know what it is? You have a tabletop grill with small plates and everybody puts on their little plate potatoes, meat, red pepper, and other things with cheese on top. Then we grill it, the cheese melts and it's delicious.

What did you like to play when you were a child?

We played ludo a lot, and common games like Memory. I would also make up stories with my mum and grandma and make up different voices.

And what was your favourite fairy tale when you were a child?

I liked **brothers Grimm's fairy tales** like *Red Riding Hood*, *Hansel and Gretel*, or *Rumpelstiltskin*. I also liked *Struwelpeter*. It is a collection of 10 stories about children who behave in a careless way and experience drastic consequences. These stories are very popular in Germany and are supposed to keep children from being careless.

A Stenau (German town, where the Grimm brothers spent their childhood) house with murals depicting scenes from their fairy tales



A scene from Heinrich Hoffmann's „Struwelpeter“ (Slovenly Peter) on a stamp

What surprising inventions come from your country?



Automobile
- Karl Benz & Friedrich Daimler (1886)



Christmas tree - (1415)



Gummy bears - Hans Riegel (1922)



Toothpaste
- Ottomar von Mayenburg (1907)

Melek Sidi Benali • Algeria



Why do you want to be a doctor?

Honestly, it started as a desire to help my mother, because she is constantly sick and doesn't like hospitals and I wanted to help her by becoming a doctor. Later, I fell in love with the human body and everything from anatomy to physiology and the million and one ways that can go wrong. Not only that, but I also hope to implement Chinese medicine teachings and therapy methods in the western world, since not so many people know about the Eastern methods of diagnosis and treatment.

Was it your dream job when you were a child?

I have always wanted to help, so when I was young I wanted to become a vet. Then, after an incident happened with my cat, I thought I might be better at helping people.

What is your favourite food from your country?



My favourite recipe is **reshta** (re-so-ta). It is traditionally made during religious festivities, as well as weddings, and big events. It is made of semolina, which turns into *reshta*, a spaghetti-like pasta. Then, the topping can vary from place to place. The toppings that we usually add are separately cooked chicken, white radish, and chickpea. The preparation of *reshta* is a family job. It can't be prepared alone because it takes time and a lot of hands to prepare it. Starting with preparing the semolina dough through kneading the dough until it becomes soft to using the pasta machine and letting the dough dry a bit on white sheets spread across the room, to turning it into *reshta* that looks like spaghetti.

Melek Sidi Benali • Algeria

Since the **reshta** is made during celebrations mostly, the ambiance felt during its making is the most beautiful and sacred feeling ever. And ever since we emigrated from Algeria in 2013, preparing the **reshta** nowadays with my small family brings about many beautiful memories of every celebration in the past, and it makes me a bit homesick.

● What are some important customs in your country?

The most important and very interesting customs are the ones connected with weddings. It takes about a year for all the customs to be followed and all of them have to be carried out. There are three official meetings of the girl and the boy's families. First, the boy asks for the girl's hand. Then the girl's family investigates the boy, asking around the neighbours, friends and other relatives if there's no dangerous background. At the second meeting, the girl's family gives the conditions of marriage and when **mahr** is agreed on. It is the 'price' that is paid by the groom to the bride at the Islamic marriage. The **mahr** is given to the girl at the third meeting. Then they start preparing the place where they are going to live. Around two weeks before the wedding the bride's family start preparing treats. Two days before the wedding the bride's family have a small wedding just for her relatives. One day before the wedding, the bride goes to the hammam. And the groom also has a separate special hammam treatment with his family and friends. On the evening before the wedding, there is a **henna party for the bride**. On the official wedding day, the groom's sister and aunt pick up the bride and her family from her house and take her to the wedding venue in a long cortege. Before exiting her home, the bride-to-be is served a glass of orange blossom water and a cube of sugar, as a wish for a sweet life.



A henna tattoo on the bride's hands



On her way out, the bride is covered in **hayek** (an old ottoman garment), walking under her father's right arm to the vehicle. When she arrives at the venue, the groom's mother and close relatives serve the bride with milk and dates. The milk symbolises a white heart and the dates sweet life. The groom's family, relatives and friends attend. But only representatives of the bride's family and close relatives come. The weddings are separated, as the women's side and the men's side are separated. Then, towards the end of the wedding, the men come and the groom takes his place next to the bride. The bride can wear multiple traditional outfits during the wedding. The traditional outfit is worn initially, and then the bride changes to the well-known white dress. The next day both families meet for lunch. They spend the afternoon opening the gifts and chit-chatting about the wedding.

● Traditional wedding attire

What is your favourite tradition?

Eid-El-Fitr - I love it the most because it happens after an entire month of fasting. We start preparing for it one week before. We usually buy new clothes and prepare the sweets at home. Then, starting from the night before Eid, we start singing **takbeerat** (to say repeatedly **Allahu Akbar** with a rhythm) until the sermon of **Eid** starts. On the morning of **Eid**, we wake up for **Fajr** (dawn prayer), wear our new prayer clothes, and head to the mosque for the Eid prayer and sermon. After the prayer is over, we congratulate our loved ones on this blessed day. Then, the men of the neighbourhood gather around and deliver their congratulations as well. Then, soon after, the children wear their new Eid clothes and go out with their parents to visit other relatives while the elderly stay home and accept guests as well. During those two days of Eid that beautiful charm and harmony are so special, that they can never be forgotten!



Muslims praying at dawn

On the way to the mosque



Traditional sweets served during Eid-El-Fitr

What did you like to play when you were a child?

There are a couple of games I used to play as a child. Some of these were very famous in school, such as **krida**. It is a game of 5 stones, played between 2-4 people. The stones have to be medium-sized, and round-shaped. The game starts by scattering those stones randomly in a small square space. Then you take one stone, throw it in the air, and before it comes back to you, you have to hold one more stone in your hand from the scattered collection, then catch the stone you threw before it lands. The game gets harder as you progress through the game. In round 2, you have to throw one stone, and collect two stones from the scattered collection. In the last round, you have to throw one stone in the air, and collect all the remaining scattered stones. You win by not letting any stone fall from your hand.

Another game that I used to love to play is the pretending game. When I was around eight years old, up until I was ten, I used to imitate the acting from the Turkish series, and play several roles with my two siblings.

Melek Sidi Benali • Algeria

● Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?

Algeria in general is now known among tourists. But there are so many places that can show the history and true traditions of Algeria. Such as **Hamamat (thermal baths)**, **the Sahara**, **Tassili**, many beaches along the coast, Numidian ruins in Constantine, Roman ruins in Tipaza along with other beautiful cities on the coast.

● Hot springs in Guelma



● The Sahara



National Park
Tassili Wan Ahjar



Roman ruins in Tipaza



● Numidian ruins
in Constantine



● Algiers, the capital of Algeria

How do you say 'good morning', 'thank you' and 'how are you?' in your language?

Good morning - *sabah-Eh-kheyr* صباح الخير

Thank you - *ya'tik saha* or *merci* (on French)

How are you? - *weshrak/ki?*

Michelle Myam • Nigeria



Why do you want to be a doctor?

I have always loved to help out. Being a doctor would give me opportunities to help people who need it. Health is really important to people therefore this job can fulfill my dreams of making a difference. Even my childhood dream was to be a doctor.

What was your favourite food from your country?

It is **jollof rice**. I think I had it for the first time as a little kid. It's a very famous dish in Nigeria, Africa and people all over the world cook it now. Of course, *jollof* rice from Nigeria is the best.

Can you share a recipe?

Of course! My mum cooks the best *jollof* rice so here you are:

Jollof rice

- You'll need rice, fresh tomatoes or tomato paste, chicken, beef (or no meat if you're a vegetarian), onions, vegetable oil, spices to taste: bouillon cubes, salt, thyme, ginger, garlic, curry, and pepper are my personal favourites.

And here's what you do:

- blend tomatoes and onions
- boil chicken or beef to get some stock (adds to the flavour)
- heat vegetable oil in a pot then pour in blended vegetables and fry for some time
- add chicken or beef stock and let boil while you wash parboiled rice
- add rice into your pot, add spices to taste, let the rice cook

You can cook beef, chicken, or fish however you like it and enjoy it with your rice.



Jollof rice



● **What are your favourite Nigerian customs and traditions?**

One of the customs I follow is **greeting everyone**. When I came to Poland I thought it was strange that people in the streets or on buses didn't smile at me when I greeted them. In my country, it is very normal to greet everyone, especially those who may seem older. And everyone smiles back.

My favourite tradition is **the Calabar festival**. Calabar is the capital city of Cross River State in Nigeria. This festival is famous for being one of the biggest street parties in Africa. During the festival, participants showcase different performances in beautiful colourful costumes. I have never been to one physically but it was always fun watching it on television.



Diverse colours of the Nigerian Calabar carnival



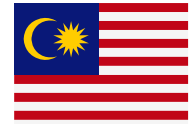
● **How do you say "good morning" and "thank you" in your language?**

Good morning - **u nder ve**
Thank you - **msughu**

} in Tiv, one of the Nigerian languages

Nishanth Somasundram • Malaysia

- Indian origin



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

I have always wanted to promote improvement and challenge myself to bring humanity to a higher level which further will allow me to develop my confidence and communication level.

● Was it your dream job when you were a child?

The doctor wasn't my first option as a child. I didn't know who I wanted to be until I completed secondary school. Growing up, I always wanted to be like my sister in everything as she inspired me a lot.

● Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

I've always dreamed about living abroad and pursuing my degree in another country was the best opportunity given to me. Universities in Poland were well recognized for their reputation and high standard of knowledge in my home country.

● What is a traditional sport in your country?

Sepak takraw (kick volleyball). A lot of young people play it.

● How do you play this sport?

It's a team sport played with a plastic or rattan ball between two teams of two to four players on a court. There's a net, like in volleyball, but the players kick the ball with their feet instead of hitting it with their hands. There should be two teams of three players. Sometimes, it can be played by only two players or four players per team. One of the players should stand at the back, they're known as a *tekong* or the "server". The other two players are in the front, one on the left, the tosser, and the other on the right, the striker.



Sepak takraw - kick volleyball

● **Do you play this sport?**

Sometimes. But my favourite sport is badminton. You play it in Poland, too.

● **What did you like to play when you were a child?**

One of the games was **chop tiang** which is known as the row of poles game. Four people have to hold to their nearest pole and the 5th person, the attacker, should stand in the middle trying to touch the pole quickly when the exchange of poles happens among them. If you fail to reach the pole before the attacker, you are the next attacker.

I also liked to play hide and seek and freeze tag.

● **What are some important customs in your country?**

There are a few. For example, we shake hands with the right hand. We also use the right hand to eat and pass food as we think that the left hand is unclean. Another one is that when we give a present to someone we can wrap it in paper of any colour apart from black or white. Also, we can't wear black clothes to happy events.

● **Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?**

Tanjung Rhu Beach, Langkawi - a beach resort offering a lot of water activities and quite well-known for parasailing.



● **How do you say "good morning", "thank you", and "how are you?" in your language?**

Good morning - **selamat pagi**

Thank you - **terima kasih**

How are you? - **apa khabar?**

Ozzychukwu Zimako • Nigeria



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

I love helping people, especially kids and it honestly seems like such a genuinely fulfilling and interesting job. When I was a child, I wanted to be a doctor or a teacher, and later a dentist and an interior designer.

● What are some important Nigerian customs and traditions?

Greeting in Nigeria is in order of seniority. When greeting someone significantly older, it is a sign of respect to lower your gaze and bow your head. We also have traditional weddings. One of the most beautiful parts of the traditional **Nigerian wedding** is that brides get to choose from so many wonderful colours and fabrics. In the Yoruba tribe, one of the three main tribes, the bride wears an **aso oke** in the colour of her choice, which is a thick fabric that typically has a detailed design and beads. The pieces consist of **iro** and **buba**, which is a top with sleeves that broaden at the wrist, and an ankle-length wrap skirt. The groom wears a **buba**, which is a top with matching pants. He is covered in an **agbada**, which is similar to an oversize robe with open sleeves. His look is topped off with a **fila**, a hat specific to Yoruba attire. The female guests wear **aso ebis**, which are very decorative and elaborate dresses.

● Traditional Nigerian wedding attire



Another tradition is money spraying - a gesture used in Nigerian culture to show your happiness for someone. It is done at baby showers, graduations, weddings, and even celebrations of death. It's similar to showering your loved ones with blessings.



Wedding guests in formal attire



Eyo Festival in Lagos

What are traditional festivals in your country?

The most famous is the **Eyo Festival**. It is usually celebrated in May in Lagos. There are colourful traditional masquerades - dancers wearing traditional costumes and there are various local dance arts.

Another one is the **New Yam Festival**. It is a sort of unification festival, bringing together the various tribes that celebrate it, especially the Igbo people. Celebrated at the end of the rainy season in August, the new yam festival features certain rituals performed to thank the various deities of the various tribes that celebrate it for a successful farming year, and to kick off another farming year.



What is a traditional sport in your country?

Dambe - traditional boxing. It's very popular in the northern part of the country. The main rules of *dambe* are very strict and obligatory to follow. The players have one of their fists wrapped in a bandage, while the other wrist remains free. The action takes place in a sand-filled circle. If one of the players steps out of this circle, he will be immediately disqualified. It equates to defeat. This traditional kind of sport has faced great competition since the introduction of western sports in Nigeria.

Dambe - traditional boxing in Nigeria

Ozzychukwu Zimako • Nigeria

Another game, **ayo**, is a Yoruba board game. To play this game you should be very clever and quick. The game usually requires two skilled players who try to get more seeds.

There are twelve holes in the game: six on each side. There are four seeds in each hole. The players are allowed thirty seconds to get the seeds. They take them from one hole and put one seed in each hole going anti-clockwise. When there are four seeds in the hole after the round, they can take all four. The one who gets more seeds than the opponent is the winner.



Ayo - a Yoruba board game

What are the traditional dishes in your country?



Yam and egg sauce



Fufu and egusi soup



Jollof rice and plantain

How do you say "good morning" and "thank you" in your language?

Good morning - **Ụtụtụ oma**

Thank you - **Daalụ**

In Igbo, one of the major Nigerian languages

Paidamoyo Cleopatra Chiota



• Zimbabwe



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

I'd love to become a doctor because medicine is fascinating. Becoming a doctor means I get to learn everything there is about the human body, from how the heart pumps blood through medical drugs that take away the pain to exploring everything that I don't see with the naked eye. Another reason is the thought of being impactful in my own way and sacrificing my own time to help someone else in need.

● Why did you choose Poland for your studies?

Poland has good medical universities that are internationally recognised and the fees are affordable.

● What is your favourite food from your childhood? **Sadza.** The recipe is very simple.

- Put mealie-meal in a pot. Add cold water to make paste. Put the pot on the hot stove and add boiling water and stir at the same time. Keep stirring until it starts boiling. Cover the pot, reduce heat and let it simmer for 15 minutes. Then, add more mealie-meal bit by bit and as we say it in our vernacular, *mona sadza* (mix). Be sure to do it well. When it's just about to reach the consistency you want, cover it and let it simmer for 5 minutes. Your *sadza* is ready. Serve with vegetables, meat, milk etc.



● Sadza

Paidamoyo Cleopatra Chiota • Zimbabwe

● **Are there any popular traditional dances?**

There are about 12 important traditional dances in Zimbabwe, two of them - the *jerusalema* dance and the *muchongoyo* - are regarded as the most important and distinctive dances of Zimbabwe. *Muchongoyo* is my favourite.



Traditional Zimbabwean ethnic dance

● **What did you like to play when you were a child?**

I loved to play *mahumbwe* (playing house) when we would pretend to be grown-ups, cooking meals using mud and plants and going to our imaginary jobs. My friends and I would play *pada* and *ma flawu* (hopscotch and dodgeball) which are popular childhood games in Zimbabwe.

● **Who is the most famous person from your country?**

Strive Masiyiwa, a London-based Zimbabwean billionaire businessman and philanthropist.

● **Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?**

● Victoria Falls



Hwange National Park

● **How do you say "good morning", "thank you" and "how are you?" in your language?**

Good morning - *mamuka sei*

Thank you - *maita nasa*

How are you? - *wadii, urisei*

Sekinat Shobowale • Ireland



- Nigerian origins



● Why do you want to be a doctor?

I want to be a doctor because I can help people and make a difference in their lives. I also believe that health is wealth and it's really important that we take care of our bodies. When I was a child I wanted to be a doctor but also a singer and a basketball player. I still love playing basketball. As for music, I play the ukulele and violin and I like singing karaoke.

● What was your favourite food from your childhood?

My favourite dish from my childhood was **catfish stew** and boiled rice. My mum taught me how to make it and now she says I make it better than she does. When I make this dish I use fish fillets as it makes it a lot easier.

- Wash the fish, put it into a bowl and add salt. Then make the tomato sauce: add 2 cans of tomatoes, two medium size onions quartered, 1 red bell pepper and two bonnet peppers (optional for a very spicy soup). Blend this and leave to the side. Add oil to the pot and heat it. Sauté some chopped onions in the pot (optional). Add the blended mixture to the pot and add 2 Nigerian Maggi cubes. Stir the sauce and allow it to boil. Once it starts to boil, add the prepared fish and reduce the heat. Allow the sauce to simmer until the fish is soft. Prepare some boiled rice while waiting for the fish to cook. Serve the sauce on top of the boiled rice.



Stewed catfish in tomato sauce

Sekinat Shobowale • from Ireland, Nigerian origins

What are your favourite Nigerian customs and traditions?

I like the traditional wedding, spraying money at parties, greeting your elders, and using your right hand to give things as a sign of respect. My favourite tradition is African parties with a lot of dancing and people spraying money on the person who is celebrating.



Traditional wedding in Nigeria

What is special about your culture?

I think that young Nigerians are very respectful to their elders due to this culture that has been instilled in us and also it is very common for children to take care of their parents in their old age and not put them in nursing homes as is seen in some European countries.

What games did you play when you were a child?

When I was a child I played basketball, football and rounders. Rounders is a game similar to baseball. It's played mainly in Britain and Ireland. There are two teams, one team is batting, which means hitting the ball with the bat and running four bases, and the other one is on the field. If the batting team fail to hit the ball three times, they run to the bases anyway. The other team is trying to stop them from making it to the home base. They have to catch the ball and touch it to the base a batter is running to. The team with the highest number of home runs wins.

National Women Football League in Ireland



Rounders ball



County Tipperary in Ireland



Olumo Rock in Nigeria



Portroe quarry in Tipperary, Ireland



Could you recommend beautiful places in your country which are not famous among tourists?

- In Nigeria **The Olumo Rock**,
- in Ireland I think **Portroe Quarry in Tipperary** is worth visiting.

My Dears,

Let me tell you a story of a rubber bear.



Long time ago a little bear named **Tiny Stevie** got ill and found himself in a hospital. His parents worried about him.

- I feel as if I ran out of steam completely – said Tiny Stevie. And on that very day he made up his mind to start looking for something that will reinvigorate him again.
- But how do I find it if I am bedridden in a hospital and can't go outside? – thought the little bear. – Perhaps I'll start looking here?

Then a doctor entered Tiny Stevie's room and, with a smile on his face, said - **Vanakkam!**

- Oh, but what is it? What does it mean? – Tiny Stevie pricked up his ears and felt a swarm of butterflies in his stomach as his curiosity mounted. He took a long time asking doctor **Alton** about his native India, about the customs of his country, about the elephants... and the monkeys, too!

The following days were filled with conversations with other young doctors.

- **Soobh ba khayr** – greeted him doctor **Anaita** from Tajikistan every morning as she entered the room.
- **Ututu oma** – cried out doctor **Chibundu** from Nigeria as she brought him the aromatic ndole stew from Cameroon, prepared by doctor **Derrick**. Tiny Stevie felt that with every spoonful his tummy filled up not only with food, but also with the stamina of all the people surrounding him and eagerly sharing their stories with him. He loved the moments when doctor **Hadi** from Syria put on the traditional Damascus outfit especially for him and sang one of the old folk songs every day. Tiny Stevie felt all the new facts resonate deeply. Moreover, in the afternoons doctors **Julia** from Germany and **Karolina** from Poland called by him and brought fresh, cinnamon-smelling apple cake which they took in turns to bake. Also doctor **Mara** from Germany visited at that time, telling him about the gummy bears invented by Mr. Hans Riegel. Tiny Stevie marveled over the fact that there were other rubber bears in the world and that they were different from those he knew. And maybe that's when he started to dream about travelling the world to experience all these wonders first hand.

He wanted to visit Algeria, doctor **Melek's** home country, stunning with beauty of nature and friendliness of the people. He was anxious to go to Nigeria with doctors **Michelle** and **Ozzychukwu**, longing to take part in the Calabar carnival and Eyo festival in Lagos. He dreamt to play the Malaysian kick volleyball with doctor **Nishanth** and dance the muchongoyo traditional dance in Zimbabwe with doctor **Paidamoyo**. He would also visit doctor **Sekinat** in Ireland as he has never played ball with a stick before. He felt overwhelmed with lust for life when many other doctors outlined in their stories a world he hasn't known so far.

And you know what? The meetings with young doctors charged Tiny Stevie with so much energy that he recovered completely and has been travelling the world ever since. He 's been here and there – I know it full well as I met him on a trip to Japan, where he wanted to feast his eyes upon the cherry blossom.

May you, my Dears, get to know different people and their countries and – just like Tiny Stevie – learn foreign languages and customs so that this experience fills you with energy and curiosity of the world.



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This project
would not have been possible
without the support of:



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Translation and editing: **Paweł Bulski**

Graphic design: **Iwona Kasperkowicz-Nowak**

Cooperation:

Aleksandra Dastych

Agnieszka Dejda

Aleksandra Hibner

Joanna Wieremiejewicz-Podkościelna

Professor Sebastian Kłosek

Piotr Dolata

Medical University of Lodz
2023



MEDICAL
UNIVERSITY
OF LODZ