

"I believe in service leadership"



Astou Diouf from Senegal is part of the first cohort of Mastercard Foundation Scholars studying at the Sciences Po campus in Reims. Astou plans one day to start a business in the agri-food industry in Africa.

You are nearing the end of your first year at Sciences Po. What were your first impressions? Did your experience change over the course of the year?

I arrived in a totally new environment and like any newcomer, I had to adapt to the social norms and take care of all the administrative procedures required to get set up here. At first, I was in that exciting phase of discovery of Reims and its beautiful buildings, and I was impressed by the cultural diversity inside and outside Sciences Po. Then as time went by, I had trouble adapting to the climate and keeping up with the coursework, what with the fairly abrupt transition from high school to university. But thanks to very effective academic support and guidance, I gained experience and maturity.

In Senegal, you took part in a summer camp focused on developing leadership and entrepreneurship skills. What qualities do you think a leader or entrepreneur needs today?

To a certain extent, the essential qualities of an entrepreneur or a leader are complementary. They centre on being able to identify the needs of your community and to respond effectively. It's not a matter of individual action where the aim is to show off your own skills but of collective action that requires the active participation of each member of the community. I believe in service leadership and that's the basis of my desire to help the needy through practical and impactful involvement.

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