1. Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. **Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it**. (300 words)

The butterflies started to kick in as I waited behind the curtains, dressed in my mother’s traditional white *pepadun* embellished with chunky gold jewelry to match the other girls. This dress clearly didn’t fit me; I tried my best to hide the pins which held the extra fabric at my waist, but I was keen on sharing my mother’s traditional dance to my school on the one day where we could truly show off our culture: International Day. Every year, together with the girls in the close-knitted Indonesian community in Brunei, we would share one of our country’s many traditional dances. That year, it was from my mother’s tribe, so with my mom, we spent 4 weeks teaching the girls to perform our dance.

When I moved to Russia, the Indonesian community only consisted of 3 families. This didn’t stop us from creating a communal environment. My mom and I brought our traditional dance to my new school’s International Day. This time, I chose to perform a new dance, traditional to Papua so as to not limit my knowledge of the vast Indonesian culture to that of my mother’s. Every Tuesday after school, I practiced with my mom and her 2 Indonesian friends, and prepared costumes with make-do props consisting of a metal rod sawed from my mom’s broomstick with feathers attached on either end. The day I performed, I shared a taste of my home with Sakhalin for the first time.

Now in Oman, I immerse myself in the Indonesian community through our Indonesian Students Association. While my younger self made it a point to share my culture with those coming from international backgrounds, I now work on making an impact on the Indonesian community itself. I teach English weekly to Indonesian migrant workers, I teach Bahasa Indonesia to Indonesian children who are out of touch with their culture as a result of spending their whole lives outside. I organise online events and games to celebrate Indonesian Independence Day.

No matter where I go, I know there is one community I could guarantee I would feel home in: the Indonesian community.

*Hey Rachinta!*

*Wow! You have a very interesting background. Yet, while there are joys and benefits to living in so many different places, I’m sure there’s been a cost you’ve had to pay because you’ve had to move around so much. I’m guessing there’s a much more interesting story there than what you’ve told us here.*

*Right now, while your experience is interesting (in my mind you sound like a cosmopolitan, well-traveled woman!), this essay has yet to address the notion of community and your complex relationship with it.*

*To dig deeper, try reflecting on the following questions:*

*What does it mean to be a member of the Indonesian community? What does it take to belong to a community?*

*In this essay, you’re describing three different communities. The Indonesian diaspora in Brunei, Russia, and Oman. Are all Indonesian communities the same? Are they different in their own ways? Did you face challenges along the way?*

* *What did it take for you to find your sense of belonging in these three different but the same community?*

*Ultimately, I think this essay can be so, so much more. Given your background, there must be a rich tapestry of complex relationships and identity negotiation that you’ve experienced growing up in all these different places among all these different people. Let’s excavate those precious details!*

*--Anushka & Paul, ALL-in Essay Editors*