Adam Bushey, South Africa, 2002

Le Moyne College
New York

It was from thought provoking conversations, my own limited financial means, and my yearning to someday be able to help those most in need that made me want to study abroad in South Africa. Receiving the Gilman International Scholarship was the only way I was afforded the opportunity to study abroad and work as a volunteer coordinator during the United Nations' Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

In South Africa, I befriended Africans, learned Zulu, and partook in ceremonies and traditional weddings. I slept in mud homes, and was the first White person ever to enter many of my new friends' homes. I volunteered every other day for three months at a destitute high school that lacked books and a sewage system. Helping these kids was the pinnacle of my study abroad experience. I was awed by both their humility and pride. Even in their poverty, hunger, and other disadvantages, they still evinced good manners, respect, and a will to succeed. It was an incredibly maturing and humbling experience that shaped my resolve to assist those in the world most in need.

I now work for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Democracy Specialist. After graduating from State University of New York, Buffalo's Law School with honors, I was hired to the agency through the prestigious U.S. Presidential Management Fellowship program. The biggest contributing factor to helping me attain my current job at USAID was my South Africa study abroad experience through the Gilman Scholarship Program. At USAID, I have worked on issues related to counter-insurgency, civilian-military operations, Rule of Law (ROL), anti-corruption, and legislative strengthening worldwide. I support activities to improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of governing institutions, systems and processes, as well as assisting with civilian-military operations.

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During my 2010 deployment to Afghanistan with the Army, I coordinated the infantry brigade's ROL and governance efforts to: offer Afghans meaningful access to fair, efficient, and transparent justice; and help increase the Afghan government's legitimacy and improve its perceptions among Afghans by promoting a functional and efficient judicial system. I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service during my ten-month deployment.

Follow-on Service Project

My Follow-on Service Project included speaking at college forums about the importance of studying abroad. I encouraged the audience to study in non-traditional destinations by talking about my experience in South Africa. In addition, I gave a presentation about Africa to the students I tutored at an afterschool program through AmeriCorps. I wanted the students to realize that even under financial constraints, it is possible to receive a higher education degree and even study abroad through programs such as the Gilman Scholarship.