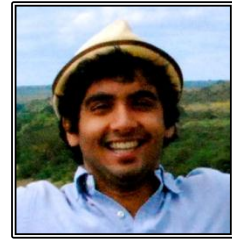


Gilman Alumni Representative

Naveed Nanjee

South Africa, Spring 2010
Vanderbilt University



During my study abroad I was able to take advantage of a diverse range of opportunities because of the Gilman Scholarship. I summated Africa's roof, Mt. Kilimanjaro; was able to experience a home-stay in a township, help start a sustainable consulting firm; started a swap-shop in a township; and hosted a radio show at 3 AM to name a few. All of these experiences academically enhanced my career plans by furthering my study in Sustainable Development. Interning at the Sustainability Institute provided an opportunity to further my creativity and passion for sustainable development both professionally and academically. Because of this experience I was able to draft several business proposals to retrofit one of the largest business parks in the Western Cape in South Africa. My Gilman Follow-on Project was to continue my service work with the community of Manenberg and build the service-learning project I started the summer prior. During my study abroad I blogged about all my various experiences and this blog was a great way to spread the word about the opportunities of the Gilman Scholarship.

The community of Manenberg has a tremendous education problem that has expanded beyond the transformation capabilities of the community organizing that is currently underway. My project was to continue engaging with the community of Manenberg, and I did so by teaching 7th grade at Manenberg Primary. Teaching 7th grade in Manenberg has been a challenge due to the wide range of academic levels, from students who understand the literacy curriculum to those who simply cannot read. As the learners in grade seven graduate from Manenberg primary and enter into high school, they tend to be recruited by junior gangs, and are encouraged to drop of school. This continues the cycle of violence in the communities. Literacy development has the power to change the future of Manenberg, because literacy has intangible and multifaceted benefits in addition to achieving in school. The program I have been teaching in incorporates themes of self-empowerment, and struggle, which is relevant to the community.



At the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak!

In addition I have implemented a program called "Let's Talk about Varsity," where the learners are introduced to the local colleges and universities as well as the different career paths available at different colleges and universities. This introduction is followed up with discussions at home with the parents of the learners. Finally the program is concluded with a visit to a local university. I worked with the University of Stellenbosch, my host institution while in South Africa, to bring the kids at Manenberg Primary to the university for a tour and lecture about life in the university with one of my professors. This program hopes to instill a sense of hope with tangible goal to attend a university.



Because of the Gilman Scholarship I was able to study abroad, and my experiences in the communities I engaged with were life changing. I am even more passionate to pursue a career in Sustainable Development. Due to my experience abroad I am applying for the U.S. Student Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Indonesia.

Naveed and his 7th grade class at Manenberg primary