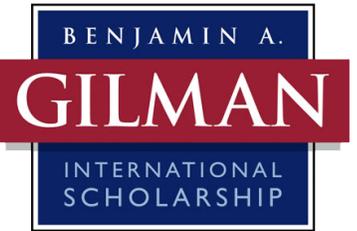


JOHN SPANGLER, INDIA, 2008

George Washington University
West Virginia



I spent many hot afternoons at the local temple watching politicians and paupers, and would return to my host family's modest house in the afternoon for communal meals and lots of laughs. I developed many bonds and life skills that I have carried with me. Additionally, seeing cases of diseases that I can only read about in text books and being able to discuss them with local populations was an invaluable experience.

Upon graduation, I took a one-year job working for a study abroad program in India. By spending more time in India I was able to increase my Tamil language skills, more fully understand an Indian world lens, and help other students to take advantage of their time abroad. Studying and working in India for over a year would not have been possible without the initial study abroad support from the Gilman Scholarship.

This international experience helped me to secure my current position as a health policy assistant

in the Office of Global Affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and continues to inform my work.

After eighteen years on my parents' farm and two years walking the halls of power in Washington, DC, I was ready for an experience unlike any I had previously known. I wanted to go far away, learn something completely foreign and totally immerse myself in a culture. I had to go to India.

As an International Affairs student concentrating on international development and global public health, India was the perfect mix of power, people and circumstance to peak my interest.

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FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

When I returned from studying abroad, I presented the Gilman Scholarship and my experience in India to a local Upward Bound program, which seeks to enroll low-income, at-risk youth into post-secondary education. I found this to be incredibly

rewarding, because it helped to transform the students' idea of college from "extra years of school" to an extraordinary opportunity – even better, an obtainable extraordinary opportunity. I gave an overview of study abroad, why I choose

India, what I did while I was there (daily life and culture), how this enhanced my academic experience and coursework in the United States, and what options they have for studying abroad.