



A Legacy of
Supporting
Excellence and
Opportunity in
Study Abroad

20-Year Impact Study
Comprehensive Report

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship



The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

May 2022





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Prepared by Evgenia Valuy and Yuli Shao, Research, Evaluation and Learning Unit, Institute of International Education

Foreword provided by Heidi Manley, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

All photos in this report depict Gilman Scholars.

Foreword

Heidi Manley

In July 2021, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona released a Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education. This statement emphasizes the U.S. Government's commitment to supporting global engagement for all Americans, including through study abroad, to develop the knowledge, skills – including linguistic skills – and relationships needed to contribute to America's continued prosperity and to global peace and security.

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program (Gilman Program) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship undergraduate study abroad scholarship program and directly supports the goals outlined in the Joint Statement of Principles by providing funding support to U.S. students of limited financial means, who reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, to pursue overseas study and internships.

This year we celebrate 20 years of the Gilman Program. This is a significant milestone for a program that has enabled over 41,000 exceptional American undergraduate students from all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and all U.S. territories to engage in international academic and internship experiences and gain global and cultural competencies to navigate the ever-changing landscapes of education, international business, and scientific discovery and innovation.

We commissioned a 20-year impact study to assess the impact of the Gilman Program over the past two decades. As the data demonstrates, the Gilman Program has been successful in providing global opportunities that open academic and professional doors, and benefit communities across the United States. Ninety-seven percent of Gilman Scholars completed their undergraduate degree or went onto graduate school and 65 percent graduated with a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Gilman Scholars used their experiences abroad to bring value back home, over 400 Gilman Scholars established new organizations or businesses, 89 percent returned to the United States with an increased desire to give back to their communities and 61 percent engaged in community service on a regular basis.

The U.S. Department of State strives to see more U.S. students – representing the full diversity of our country – study, research, and intern abroad to engage with the people of other countries and bring important perspectives to solving critical world issues. As evidenced by the numbers, the Gilman Program has advanced diversity and inclusion in study abroad – approximately 50% of Gilman Scholars are the first in their families to attend college; about 60% represent rural areas and small towns across all 50 U.S. states and its territories; and approximately 70% represent racial or ethnic minorities in the United States.

ECA supports study abroad opportunities for American students so the next generation of American leaders will have the skills and connections needed to work across borders to address our world's most pressing issues. As Secretary Antony Blinken has said, "International education enhances cultural and linguistic diversity, and helps develop cross-cultural communication skills, foreign language competencies, enhanced self-awareness and understanding of diverse perspectives."

This 20-year impact study of the Gilman Program showcases the Gilman Program's successes in impacting individuals, local communities and our broader society. We are grateful to all the participants in this program, to their hosts abroad, and to our U.S. higher education partners that have made this success possible.

We are gratified by the outcomes of the Gilman Program to date and will continue to work to ensure that the next 20 years of the program will make even greater contributions to international understanding and progress.

SINCE ITS
INCEPTION, THE
GILMAN PROGRAM
HAS HAD

More than
41,000
GILMAN SCHOLARS

— from over —

1,350
INSTITUTIONS

— from all —

50
STATES AND
U.S. TERRITORIES

— studied in over —

160
COUNTRIES

Gilman By the Numbers



More than

41,000

GILMAN ALUMNI HAVE STUDIED
OR INTERNEED ABROAD



SCHOLARSHIPS UP TO

\$5,000

Additional funding of up to
\$3,000 through the Gilman Program's
Critical Need Language Award

Gilman Alumni
represent over



1,350

DIVERSE HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

across the United States,
including community colleges



The Gilman Program has
received nearly

150,000

APPLICATIONS

illustrating the strong demand for the program

GILMAN ALUMNI HAIL FROM



**ALL 50
STATES**

Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and other U.S.
territories, representing both urban and rural areas



Gilman Alumni have served as
citizen ambassadors in over

160

COUNTRIES

Introduction

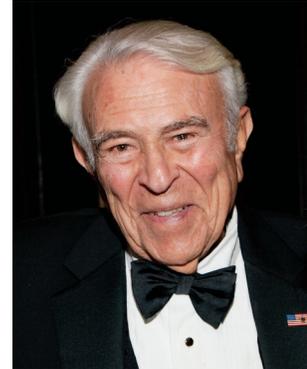
The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program (hereafter the Gilman Program), a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), established and funded by Congress, is an international education and diplomacy program designed for high-achieving American undergraduate students of limited financial means (Pell Grant recipients). The Institute of International Education (IIE) has supported its implementation since the program's inception in 2001.

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The Gilman Program enables students to study or intern abroad,¹ providing them with skills critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity. By assisting U.S. undergraduate students who have high financial need, the program has been successful in supporting students who have been historically underrepresented in education abroad, including first-generation college students racial or ethnic minority students; students with disabilities; students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs); students attending community colleges; and students from U.S. states with lower study abroad participation.

Since the inception of the Gilman Program in 2001, the program has received more than 150,000 applications and awarded more than 41,000 scholarships to American undergraduate students from all U.S. states and territories and from over 1,350 U.S. colleges and universities, who represented the United States abroad through participation in study abroad programs and internships in over 160 countries. As part of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Gilman Program, ECA, in collaboration with IIE, implemented an impact study to document the trajectories of Gilman Scholars who participated in the program.

The study aims to measure the impact that the Gilman Program has had on U.S. campuses and in communities at home and abroad, as well as on the personal and professional trajectories of the participants themselves. The study found evidence of the commitment of the U.S. government in ensuring that the next generation of global leaders — American students of all backgrounds — engages internationally to foster mutual understanding and to develop critical skills, supporting the U.S. national security and economic prosperity.



“Study abroad is a special experience for every student who participates. Living and learning in a vastly different environment of another nation not only exposes our students to alternate views but also adds an enriching social and cultural experience. It also provides our students with the opportunity to return home with a deeper understanding of their place in the world, encouraging them to be a contributor rather than a spectator in the international community.”

**THE LATE CONGRESSMAN
BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

¹For the purposes of this report, references to “study abroad” refer to both academic study and internships abroad.

Methodology: Measuring Gilman's Impact

IIE's Research, Evaluation and Learning (REL) unit used a mixed-methods approach to examine the outcomes of Gilman Scholars' experiences abroad and the impact of the Gilman Program across the United States and worldwide. REL used the following evaluation questions to guide the research and provide a useful framework for the impact study:

1

How has the Gilman Program advanced Scholars' overall competency, enhanced their careers, and contributed to their professional and personal growth?

2

As a result of studying abroad with the Gilman Program, have Gilman Scholars created impacts in their U.S. colleges, universities, organizations, and communities?

3

Have Gilman Scholars continued to serve as global ambassadors, contributing to mutual understanding and promoting sustainable international linkages in their professional and volunteer work?

SURVEY. In the fall of 2020, REL sent the Gilman Impact Survey to 23,733 Gilman Scholars who studied abroad between 2001 and 2019 and for whom an active email address could be determined. Of these recipients, 19% (4,394 respondents) responded to the survey, with 4,011 respondents fully completing the survey and 383 partially completing the survey. The partial respondents were included, as they completed more than half the survey questions.

Gilman Scholars from more recent years had a higher response rate, presumably since the program was more likely to have their active email addresses. More than half of the respondent population (51%) was from the past three years of the program (2016–2019). 37% of the respondent population studied abroad between 2011 and 2015, and 12% studied abroad between 2001 and 2010. The difference in response rates by program year may have limited REL's ability to speak to the impact of the Gilman Program in the earlier years. Nevertheless, considering that alumni from earlier years may have had more time to establish themselves and contribute to their professional fields and communities, this limitation is likely to underestimate the overall impact of the Gilman Program.



4,394

SCHOLARS
RESPONDED
TO THE GILMAN
IMPACT SURVEY

Terminology

- All data presented in the report are based on the respondent population. Throughout the report, respondents are referred to as "Gilman Scholars."
- For the purposes of this report, references to "study abroad" refer to both academic study and internships abroad.
- In this report, first-generation college students are defined as students whose parents did not complete a four-year college or university degree. For details, please visit the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation.



INTERVIEWS. REL interviewed 10 Gilman Scholars to gain a deeper understanding of Scholars' trajectories after their study abroad experience. The team selected diverse interview participants with a range of demographic characteristics and program experiences and representing different program years. Nine interviews were conducted using live video (i.e., Zoom), and one was conducted over the telephone.

ANALYSIS. REL analyzed quantitative data using SPSS data analysis software, primarily using descriptive statistics (means and frequencies) and some inferential statistics (chi-square test of independence, correlation, and regression). All quantitative findings are presented in aggregate, and responses were comparatively analyzed based on a variety of factors such as demographic details, socioeconomic status, and program information. The impact study also leveraged external data sources from *Open Doors*[®] and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to offer relevant comparison points to the impact data between the Gilman Scholars, all Pell Grant recipients, and all U.S. study abroad population.

Qualitative data were reviewed to identify salient themes across interviews and open-ended responses. The consolidated themes were used to substantiate quantitative findings, and four interviews are highlighted as profiles, with the participants' permission, throughout this report.



10

GILMAN SCHOLARS

were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of Scholars' trajectories after their study abroad experience

Impact Study Respondent Profile

REL deemed the respondent population representative of the Gilman Program population by gender, age, race and ethnicity, home institution type, academic standing, study abroad destination, and program duration.

DEMOGRAPHICS. About 95% of Gilman Scholars were 30 years or younger when studying abroad, and the average age was 22. 69% of Gilman Scholars self-identified as female, 28% identified as male, and 3% identified as nonbinary.

CURRENT LOCATION. Almost all Gilman Scholars (94%) resided in the United States. Less than one-tenth resided in their host country (2%) or other countries (4%).

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE. The vast majority of Gilman Scholars (83%) had never studied abroad prior to their Gilman-supported program. A quarter of Gilman Scholars have never travelled outside of the USA prior to the Gilman-supported study abroad program.



83%

OF GILMAN
SCHOLARS HAD
NEVER STUDIED
ABROAD PRIOR
TO THEIR GILMAN-
SUPPORTED
PROGRAM



All data presented in the report are based on the respondent population. Throughout the report, respondents are referred to as "Gilman Scholars."

GILMAN-SUPPORTED STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

PROGRAM GOAL. Almost all Gilman Scholars (92%) reported that academic study and coursework was their primary goal for studying abroad. Gilman Scholars also pursued credit-bearing internships and service learning abroad.

DESTINATION. Gilman Scholars were more likely to study in more diverse destinations than the overall U.S. study abroad population. Between 2001/02 and 2018/19, more than half (56%) of all U.S. study abroad students studied in Europe, according to *Open Doors* (IIE, 2020), compared to just 36% of Gilman Scholars.

Gilman Scholars who responded to the survey studied or interned in 117 countries, mainly Europe and Eurasia and East Asia and the Pacific. Japan (8%), Spain (8%), China (7%), South Korea (6%), and the United Kingdom (5%) were the most common destinations.

Gilman Scholar Study Abroad Destinations

Europe and Eurasia

36%

East Asia and the Pacific

31%

Western Hemisphere

16%

Africa

9%

Near East

6%

South and Central Asia

3%

DURATION. Gilman Scholars were more likely to study abroad for longer periods than the overall U.S. study abroad population. Between 2005/06 and 2018/19, 64% of Gilman Scholars had a mid-length or long-term experience, compared to only 40% of overall U.S. study abroad students, according to *Open Doors* (IIE, 2020).

49% of Gilman Scholars studied abroad for mid-length programs (one semester, or one or two quarters). 40% had short-term study abroad programs (summer, or eight weeks or less), and 11% studied abroad long term (one calendar or academic year).



92%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

reported that academic coursework was their primary goal for studying abroad



64%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

had a mid-length or long-term experience

Key Findings

► The Gilman Program positively impacts Scholars' academic and professional lives and strengthens their employability and personal growth.



97%

completed the degree or were continuing to pursue degree completion



96%

completed their degree with a GPA of 3.0 or higher

Life areas Gilman Scholars indicated were more successful as a result of their Gilman-supported study abroad experience:

89%

PERSONAL

87%

ACADEMIC

79%

PROFESSIONAL



92% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

credited their experience for increasing their desire to work in an intercultural or international field

As a result of the Gilman-supported study abroad experience

81%

increased their interests in pursuing further education

69%

increased their their desire to apply for other international fellowships

► Gilman Scholars, as global ambassadors, continue to engage in cross-cultural activities and advocate for study abroad across communities, serving as a strong force connecting people, cultures, and nations.

99%

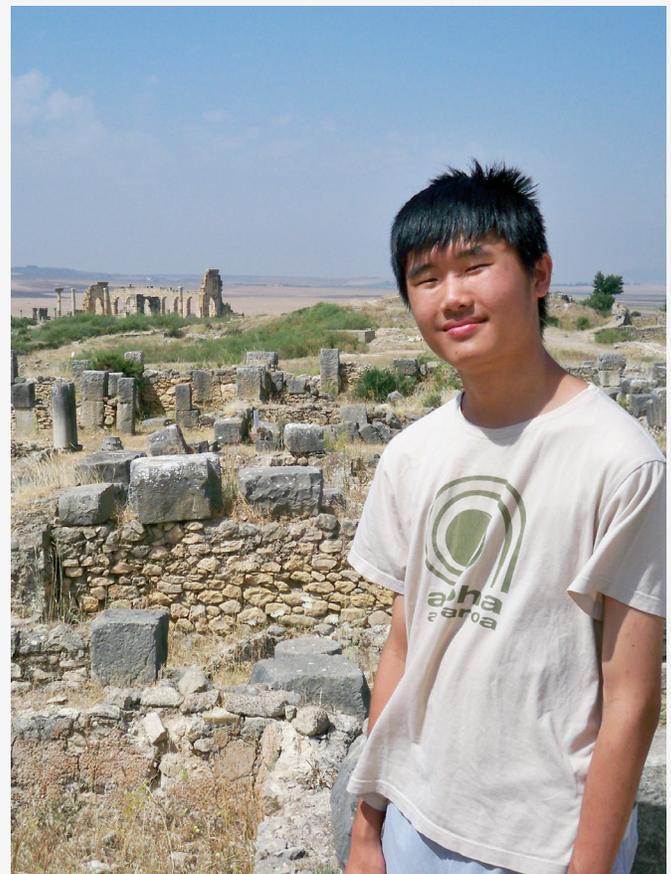
indicated that their Gilman-supported experience increased their knowledge of their host country and respect for the values of people from different cultures.

99%

encouraged others to study abroad, and 97% recommended the Gilman Program specifically.

75%

maintained their relationships with people from their host country, and 25% returned to their host country after their return to the United States.



► The Gilman Program contributes to expanding and diversifying the U.S. study abroad population.

83% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

had never studied abroad prior to their Gilman-supported experience

66% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

believed that students like them did not typically study abroad

Self-identified diversity of Gilman Scholars



26%

FROM
MINORITY-SERVING
INSTITUTIONS



57%

FROM SMALL CITIES,
TOWNS, AND RURAL
COMMUNITIES

66% RACIAL OR ETHNIC MINORITIES

compared to 23% of U.S. study abroad participants

46%

FIRST-GENERATION
COLLEGE STUDENTS

24%

LGBTQIA+
INDIVIDUALS

14%

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



► Gilman Scholars transform their learnings from study abroad to action, positively impacting U.S. organizations and communities.

Gilman Scholars established more than

400 NEW ORGANIZATIONS
ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS



72%

reported making
improvements
to the places
where they work



89%

returned to the United
States with an increased
desire to give back to
their community

61%

engaged in volunteering work
or community service since their
Gilman-supported experience

27% assumed a leadership role in their home community, and **66%** reported increased respect and **57%** reported increased responsibility in their home community as a result of their Gilman-supported study abroad experience.





Gilman Program Leads to Global Opportunities and Success

CHAPTER 1

“Studying abroad as a Gilman scholar has made me more competitive in the job market, because employers tend to see study abroad experiences on a candidate’s resume as an asset to their business. They are impressed that the candidate is open to new experiences and has the maturity, confidence and independence to engage and work well with others.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2015, FRANCE

Gilman Program Leads to Global Opportunities and Success

The Gilman Program impacts Gilman Scholars' academic and professional lives and equips them with skills and qualities that closely relate to their employability and personal growth.

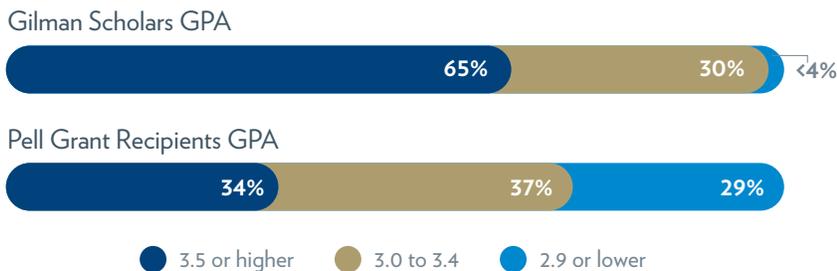
ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AND TRAJECTORIES

Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar paves the path to academic success for young Americans by providing the critical skills and experiences they need to succeed in the workplace or in academics. After returning from abroad, most Gilman Scholars (89%) completed the degree they were seeking during their Gilman experience; an additional 9% were working toward completion.

According to CASSIE² research findings, underrepresented minority students noted a positive change in their GPA after studying abroad at a greater magnitude than their nonminority counterparts, (Bell et al., 2020). This finding was substantiated by Gilman Scholars, who are from a more diverse and underrepresented background, and obtained a higher GPA than Pell Grant recipients overall, with 65% of Gilman Scholars obtaining a GPA of 3.5 points or higher compared to an average of 34% of all Pell Grant recipients (Bell et al., 2020).

Figure 1. Comparison of the Graduation GPA Between Gilman Scholars and Pell Grant Recipients

Gilman Scholars achieved high academic performance after their return home. Out of those who completed an undergraduate degree, % of Gilman Scholars and % of Pell Grant recipients (NCES, n.d.) graduated with a GPA of:



After returning from their Gilman experience

89%

SCHOLARS COMPLETED THE DEGREE THEY WERE SEEKING

9%

SCHOLARS WERE WORKING TOWARD COMPLETION

“After my summer abroad with Gilman, I returned to the U.S. with heightened purpose. I restructured my academic trajectory to make up necessary credits for my majors, raise my GPA, and prepare myself for a fall internship in Paris.”
GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2018, FRANCE

² CASSIE — the Consortium for Analysis of Student Success through International Education — is a national consortium and data project dedicated to improving research on the impact of international education interventions, including study abroad, foreign language learning, and Title VI programs.



Not only did Gilman Scholars complete their undergraduate degree with high academic performance, one out of four Gilman Scholars later obtained an advanced degree. This further exhibits the successful academic profile of Gilman Scholars who study abroad.

Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar increased students' interest in pursuing further education (81%) and their desire to apply for other international fellowships (69%). Many Gilman Scholars indicated that studying abroad with support from the Gilman Program exposed them to other international fellowships, and the experience served as an asset that helped them obtain these opportunities. As a result, 25% of Gilman Scholars engaged in another international exchange after Gilman, with 13% studying abroad for academic credit or a degree program, 6% for a not-for-credit program, and 5% in another international exchange fellowship or award, including other U.S. government programs such as the Boren Awards for International Study, the Fulbright Program, and the Critical Language Scholarship Program.



1 OF 4

GILMAN SCHOLARS
LATER OBTAINED
ADVANCED
DEGREES

Figure 2.
Gilman Scholars With
an Advanced Degree

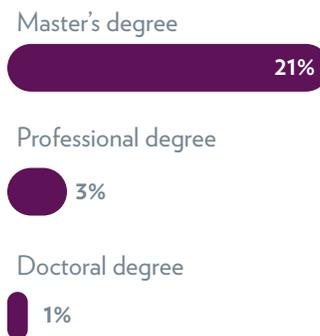
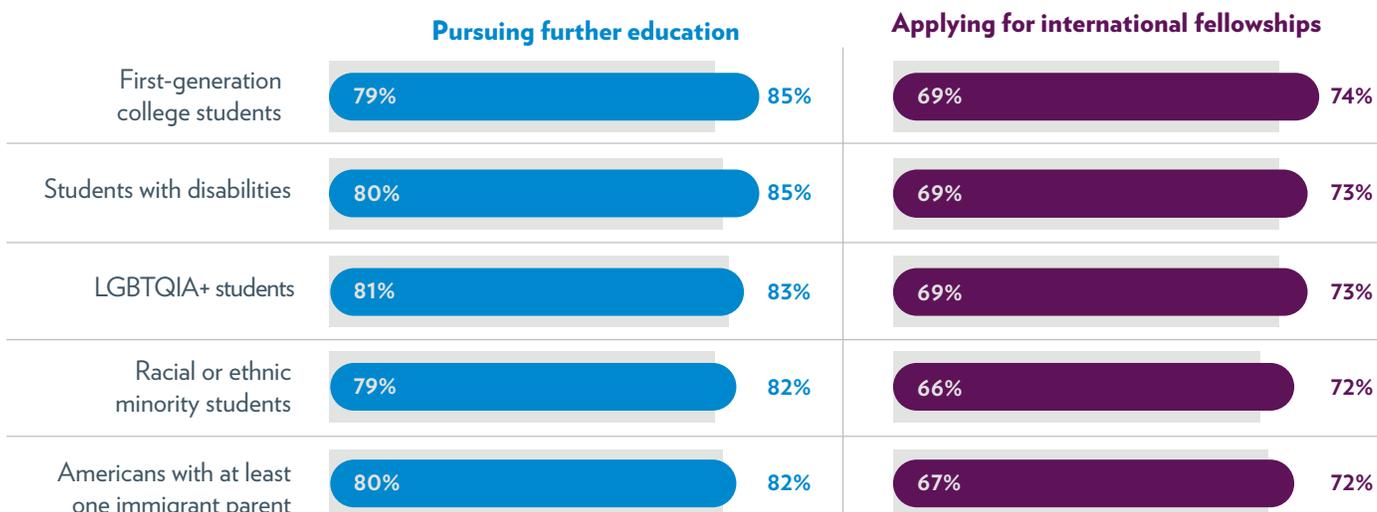


Figure 3. Impact on Gilman Scholars' Academic Pathways

Gilman Scholars from a minority demographic or socioeconomically disadvantaged background were more likely to indicate an increased interest in pursuing further education and applying for international fellowships compared to other students in the program.



*Gray bars represent Scholars without such background.

GIVING BACK TO AMERICA

For many Gilman Scholars, the growing desire to give back to the United States drove them to pursue further education and other international or federal fellowships, and eventually to proceed into public service. When considering the profile of Gilman Scholars, this impact study demonstrates the value of the Gilman Program in helping to diversify the pool of individuals who go into public service.

GILMAN SCHOLAR PROFILE

Tatum James

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2019, SPAIN

After her Gilman experience, Tatum actively participated in multiple global programs with the intention of strengthening her knowledge of foreign affairs. She volunteered with Arizona State University's Global Launch, an intensive English program for more than 350 international students, and interned with the U.S. Department of State and EducationUSA Albania via the Virtual Student Federal Service Internship, where she virtually mentored and worked with Albanian high school students. Tatum continued her role as a "representative of the U.S." and a "future diplomat," spreading the values and culture of the United States, as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in North Macedonia and was accepted as a 2021 Rangel Fellow, a U.S. Department of State program that covers the cost of graduate school for outstanding candidates and provides a pathway into the foreign service.





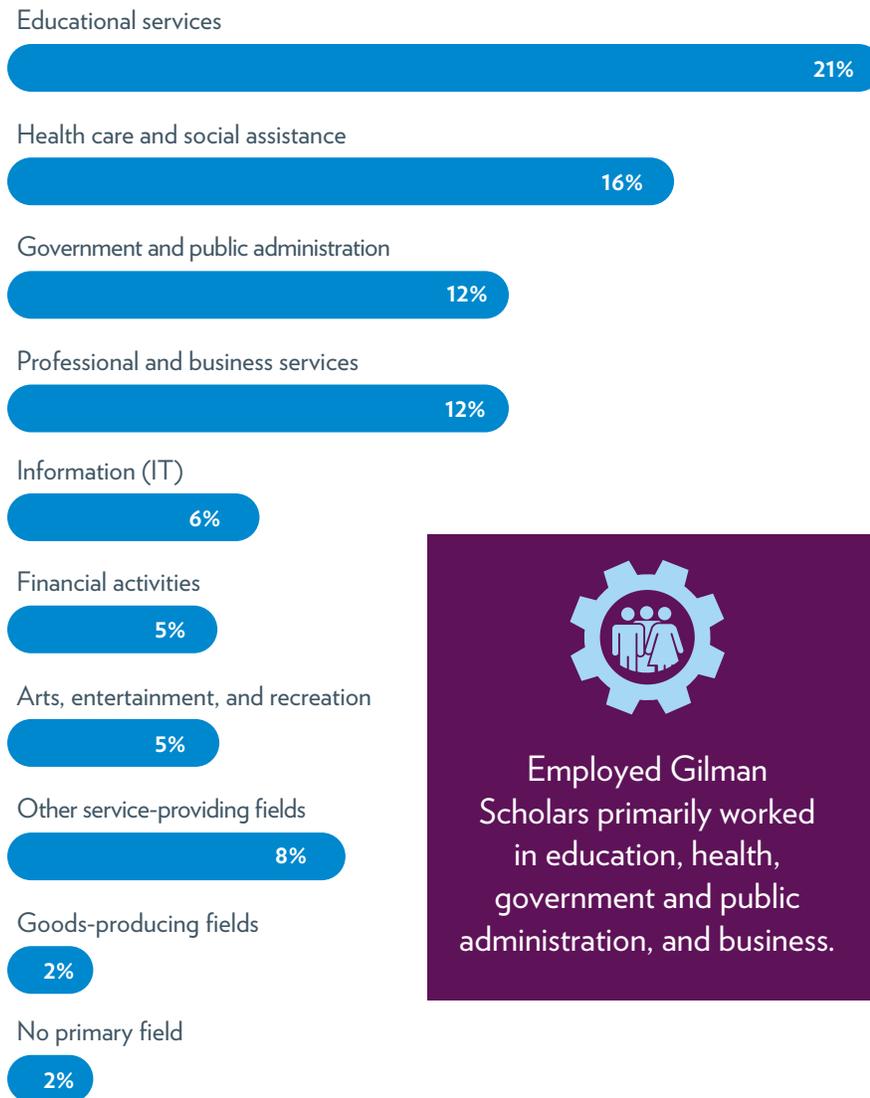
“Being a Gilman Scholar changed my entire life. Before, it was hard to believe in myself, being a first-generation college student with financial need. I felt like I did not have what it took to achieve my dreams, but Gilman opened that door for me. I learned about the State Department because of Gilman. I was invited to the Gilman Regional Career Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in May 2019 after my study abroad in Spain. There, I learned about the Foreign Service and fellowships like Rangel, Pickering, and Fulbright. I collaborated and shared ideas with a diverse group of hardworking and talented students also interested in international relations! Because of Gilman, I found my passion for public service, the Foreign Service, and won a Fulbright!”

TATUM JAMES

PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORIES

At the time of the Gilman Impact Study, the majority of scholars (84%) worked in fields such as education, health, and government, and articulated their inclination to serve the United States and their communities with action.

Figure 4. Gilman Scholars' Primary Field of Professional Work





 Employed Gilman Scholars primarily worked in education, health, government and public administration, and business.

“I didn’t have to apply for my current position, as my resume was pulled from a separate application pool by the hiring manager for this team and I was offered an interview because my of my Gilman experience in Brazil and my ability to speak Portuguese were highlighted on my resume and discussed in my [initial] interview.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2017, BRAZIL

Figure 5. Gilman Experience’s Impact on Gilman Scholars’ Professional Choices and Pathways

Gilman Scholars credited their Gilman experience with solidifying or reshaping their professional choices.



Increased their desire to work in a field that allows them to travel or work internationally



Promoted their desire to work in an intercultural or international field



Broadened the geographic locations where they were willing to work



Led them to seek a company or organization that values diversity and inclusion



Broadened the range of employers that they would consider working for

21ST-CENTURY CAREER READINESS

The U.S. Department of State encourages American students to study abroad to gain critical skills and knowledge to compete and lead in the 21st-century workforce and to succeed in a fast-changing world (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

Gilman Scholars widely reported that studying abroad increased or improved their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal competencies through living in a foreign country and interacting with local communities. These three domains of competencies complete a rounded critical 21st-century skill set (National Research Council, 2012), which includes such skills as knowledge, intellectual openness, work ethic, and teamwork ability. These skills contributed to Gilman Scholars' education success and employability.

Gilman Scholars develop valuable skills and traits from their experience abroad, such as the ability to cope with new situations, perseverance, and self-confidence. As a result, almost all Gilman Scholars reported that these benefits were useful for their personal (97%), academic (94%), and professional (90%) lives.

Impact of improved skills on lives of Scholars from their Gilman experience

97%

PERSONAL

94%

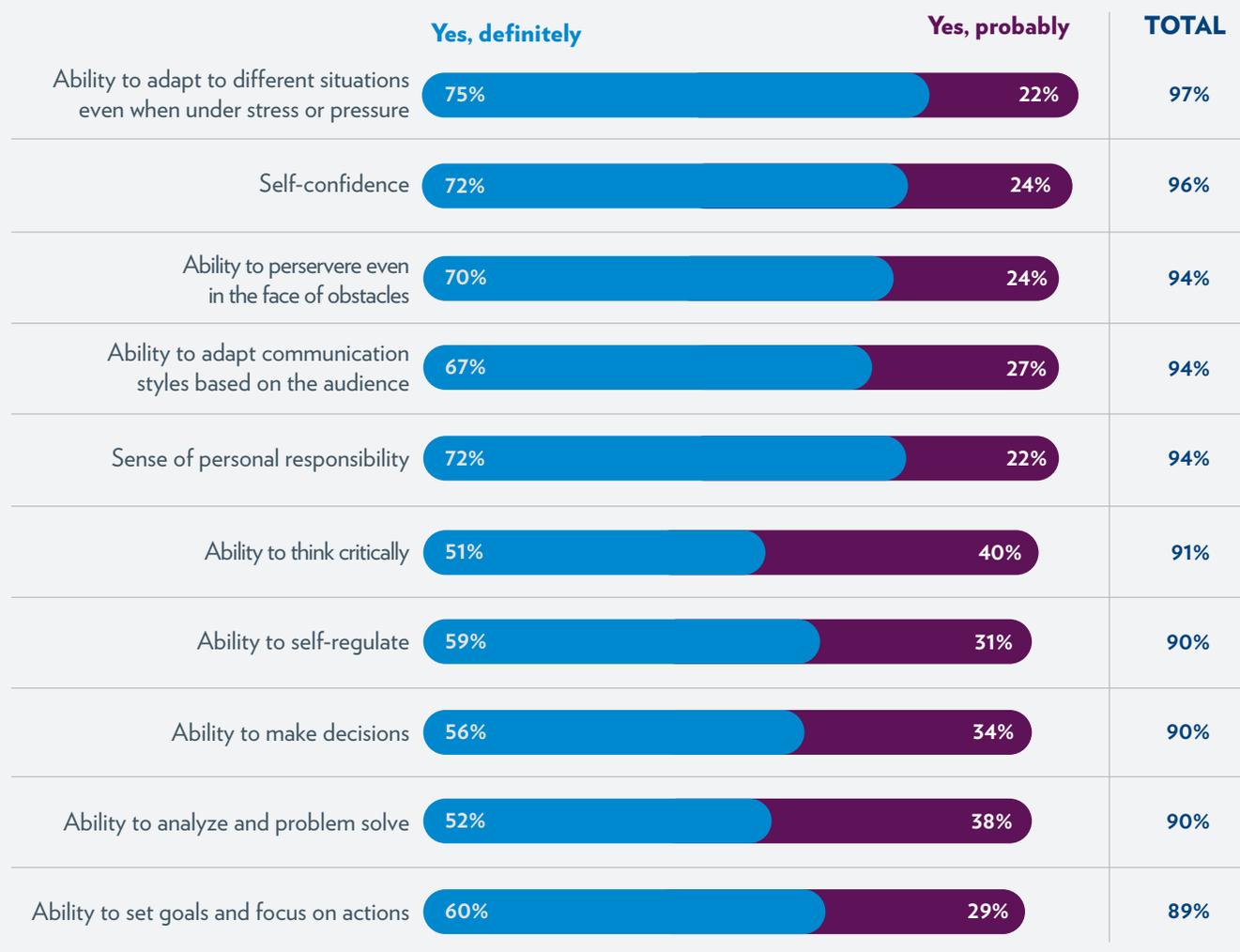
ACADEMIC

90%

PROFESSIONAL

Figure 6. Top 10 Most Improved Skills as a Result of Studying Abroad as a Gilman Scholar

Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar increased or improved Gilman Scholars':





IMPACT ON PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Gilman Scholars indicated that their academic (87%) and professional lives (79%) were more successful as a result of their Gilman experience. This positive influence was more prominent due for the Scholars’ demographic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and coming from traditionally marginalized groups.

Figure 7. Gilman Experience Positively Affected Gilman Scholars’ Professional Lives

Aspects of a Gilman Scholar’s professional life that were positively affected by their Gilman experience:



65% of Gilman Scholars indicated that their prior international exposure benefited their current job or studies, and 50% particularly emphasized the benefits of their experience in their host country.

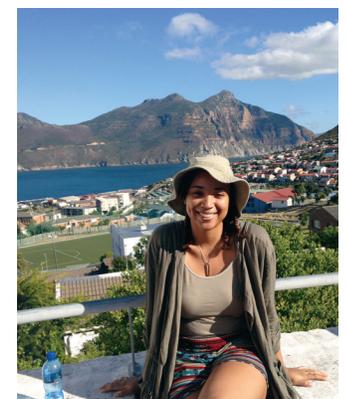
Gilman Scholars also reported that being a Gilman Scholar made them more competitive when applying for new professional or academic opportunities, and 30% believed that being a Gilman Scholar contributed to a job offer. Most Gilman Scholars (83%) mentioned studying abroad during their job search, with 67% indicating the experience on their resumes and 31% mentioning it in interviews.

“My Gilman opportunity gave me the edge I needed to apply for my Boren opportunity in Mozambique and my Boren opportunity gave me the push to start grad school. Now I have a job. I work as an economist for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and my jobs during my undergrad degree helped me gain those skills. Furthermore, all of the opportunities I gained after being a Gilman Scholar seem interconnected.”

**GILMAN SCHOLAR,
2016, PORTUGAL**

65%

of Gilman Scholars indicated that their prior international exposure benefited their current job or studies





THE TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT OF THE GILMAN PROGRAM

Beyond the positive impacts on their professional life, most Gilman Scholars (89%) indicated that they have a more successful personal life because of their experience studying abroad. Gilman Scholars returned to the United States with improved skills, increased independence and self-awareness, heightened global competencies, and clear visions of their identity and aspirations. The professional and personal growth of being a Gilman Scholar transmitted beyond the program duration, and for many, the Gilman experience was the turning point that triggered transformations in their lives for years to come.

Interacting with people from different countries and cultures allowed Gilman Scholars to observe how the United States was perceived abroad and to gain a deeper understanding about their own country, culture, and roots. Two-thirds (66%) of Gilman Scholars indicated that their Gilman experience increased their appreciation of U.S. culture. This increased appreciation allowed Gilman Scholars to develop a stronger work ethic that benefited their current work and studies and catalyzed their pursuits in public service.

“My experience humbled me as a person. I was able to gain more appreciation for my own culture but also yearned to learn about other cultures in all aspects.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2011, JORDAN



89%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

indicated that they have a more successful personal life because of their Gilman experience



My Bubbles Milk Tea

友誼
長存



Gilman Scholars as Global Ambassadors

CHAPTER 2

“After returning to the USA and graduating, I was employed at a company that communicated regularly with their Japanese subsidiary. I was able to aid in communications.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2009, JAPAN

Gilman Scholars as Global Ambassadors

Studying abroad with support from the Gilman Program contributed to Gilman Scholars' global competency and worldview. This section looks at how, since their return to the United States, Gilman Scholars have continued to engage in cross-culture activities, advocate for study abroad across communities, and serve as a strong force connecting people, cultures, and nations.

GLOBAL COMPETENCY

Growth in global competencies better prepared Gilman Scholars working in diverse fields to collaborate with international partners and steered them to a life of continuous cross-cultural engagement as global citizens.

The international experience gained through support from the Gilman Program sharpened Scholars' global competencies in the long-term. Gilman Scholars have an improved ability to recognize bias and critically assess news sources as they follow media coverage on their host country or region after their return to the United States. This has advanced their media literacy, a competency critical to national security and prosperity, along with their knowledge of their host country and its role vis-à-vis the United States and the global community.



“The experience increased my cultural competence and understanding of how global issues impact people and places in other countries.”
GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2009, THAILAND

Figure 8. Gilman Scholars' Intercultural Competency Improvements

Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar increased or improved:



99%

Knowledge of the culture and society of their host country



99%

Respect for the values of people from different cultures



92%

Ability to explain complex global issues to other people



90%

Knowledge of the government and politics of their host country



87%

Ability to recognize bias and critically assess news sources



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

One of the goals of the Gilman Program is to encourage students to study languages,³ especially critical-need languages that U.S. Department of State has deemed important to national security and economic prosperity.

Seventy-four percent of Gilman Scholars studied a language while abroad, either formally (61%) or informally (18%), 45% of which were critical-need languages. The Critical Need Language Award offered by the Gilman Program, which provides up to \$3,000 in additional funding support, served as a great incentive for students to study critical need languages while abroad, leading to positive engagement with the Gilman Scholar's host communities.

Most Gilman Scholars (89%) improved their ability to communicate in the primary foreign language they studied while abroad, preparing them for a globalized workforce; most found their foreign language skills useful for their personal and professional lives.

The international experience gained through support from the Gilman Program positively affected Gilman Scholars' desire (91%) and ability (82%) to learn foreign languages, cultivating a sense of lifelong learning and further enhancing their global competency. Most of those who studied a language during their overseas program (86%) sustained their language learning after their return home, primarily by independent study (64%), seeking language partners (47%), and taking classes at a university (40%). Gilman Scholars continued a habit of language study beyond their study abroad experience and applied these language skills in various academic and professional fields.

³ As of August 2019, the U.S. Department of State considers the following as critical-need languages: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bahasa Indonesian, Bangla, Chinese (Mandarin), Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu.s.

Life impact of acquired foreign language skills

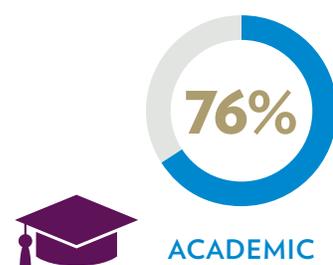


Figure 9. Top Foreign Languages Studied by Gilman Scholars

LANGUAGE	PERCENTAGE
Spanish	25%
Chinese (Mandarin)*	11%
Japanese*	11%
Arabic*	8%
French	7%
Korean*	7%

*Critical-need languages defined by the U.S. Department of State

“Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar significantly impacted my career trajectory. I applied for a corporate job in Silicon Valley and was told that they were considering eight other candidates, all of which had more experience than me, but they ended up going with me because of my ability to speak, read, and write Korean and my ability to learn the industry through self-study. I have been promoted once a year for the last three years largely because of my ability to take on a leadership role in a department that requires global cooperation and leadership.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2017, SOUTH KOREA

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The impact of the Gilman Program was extended beyond the United States via Gilman Scholars' interactions with people around the world, fostering empathy and mutual understanding among different people, nations, and cultures.

Gilman Scholars shared that people in their host community changed their attitude toward the United States because of interacting with them. This positive change was perceived across all world regions where Gilman Scholars were hosted.

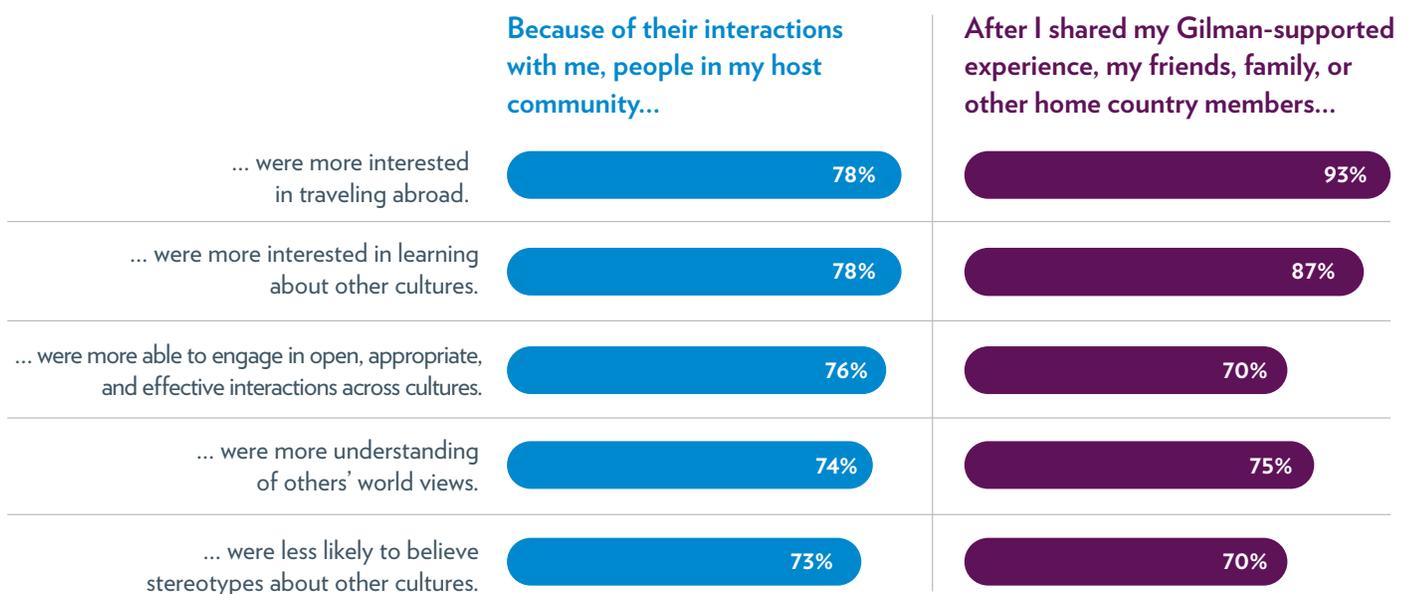
Gilman Scholars with longer program duration were more likely to indicate their host community members felt more positively about the United States due to their influence. 72% of Gilman Scholars who participated in the long-term study abroad program (academic or calendar year) reported such change, compared to 65% of Gilman Scholars with mid-length programs (one semester) and 62% of those with short-term programs (summer, eight weeks or less).

Around a quarter of Gilman Scholars (22%) took on new activities to bridge gaps between people from different countries following their overseas experience, further deepening the mutual understanding across nations in their role as citizen ambassadors. These activities mainly included supporting exchange programs at their home institutions and engaging in cultural sharing events in their communities.



who participated in lone-term study abroad reported that their host community members felt more positively about the United States

Figure 10. Perceived Impact on Host and Home Community Members Reported by Gilman Scholars



SUSTAINED INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

Ninety-four percent of Gilman Scholars remained engaged with their host country following their Gilman Program. Gilman Scholars on any length of program developed long-lasting, meaningful connections with their host country and actively engaged in global activities, as shown in the graph below. This finding is particularly valuable because the Gilman Program supports short-term programs to accommodate undergraduate students who have professional or family responsibilities that make it challenging to be away from home for extended periods of time.

Figure 11. Gilman Scholars' Global Engagement Since Their Gilman Experience

Did you engage in any of the following since studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar?

ALL GILMAN SCHOLARS	GILMAN SCHOLARS WITH CERTAIN PROGRAM DURATION		
	Short-term	Mid-length	Long-term
75%	Maintained relationships with people from their host country 69%	78%	88%
67%	Followed media coverage on the country or region where they studied 61%	68%	80%
67%	Kept up an active interest in the culture of their host country 63%	67%	79%
25%	Returned to their host country after coming back to the United States 17%	27%	47%
9%	Hosted someone from a different country 5%	10%	18%

Gilman Scholars who maintained relationships with people from their host country remained in contact with their friends (95%), colleagues (46%), and students from higher education institutions (31%). 16% of them kept in contact with other people, such as high school students, their host families, and teaching faculty from their host institutions.

With the passage of time, there was an increased likelihood that Gilman Scholars would return to their host country: 44% of Gilman Scholars who studied abroad from 2001 to 2010 returned to their host country, compared to an average of 25% of all Gilman Scholars who participated in the impact study. Gilman Scholars returned to their host country for both personal and professional reasons, including vacations, visiting friends, and conducting research and other work-related activities. 8% returned to their host country for another international exchange.

Gilman Scholars' study abroad activities also affected their engagement with their host country after they returned home. Eighty-one percent of Gilman Scholars who lived with people from their host country during their overseas experience reported maintaining relationships after their return, compared to 65% of those who lived only with American people while abroad. Gilman Scholars who studied a language while abroad were more likely to sustain their relationships with people from their host country. These findings offer insights for future international scholarship programming and development.

Figure 12. Nature of Gilman Scholars' Relationship with People from Their Host Country



GILMAN SCHOLAR PROFILE

Michelle Strucke

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2005, EGYPT

U.S. DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

SENIOR POLICY MANAGER
AT OXFAM AMERICA

VICE CHAIR OF VIRGINIA
COUNCIL ON WOMEN



In 2005, Michelle decided to challenge herself and study abroad in a country where she did not share any cultural ties. She arrived in Egypt four years after 9/11 with misconceptions that were soon dispelled.

“When I first got off the plane in Egypt, I laughed at how divergent my stereotyped view was of the vibrant and developed country before my eyes. There, I learned so much about kindness, generosity, hospitality, and humor. Egyptians I encountered made space for me and helped me grow into a kinder, more generous person.”

Influenced by her initial overseas experience supported by the Gilman Program, Michelle returned to Egypt for her graduate studies, pursuing a master’s degree in human rights and completing a human rights-focused internship. Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar allowed Michelle to learn “what it meant to be seen as American,” to learn and think about the stakes that other people face, and to learn about the nuances of a different culture. She returned to the United States with a strong desire to be an ally to people around the world and with heightened self-awareness, political sensitivity, and cultural sensitivity that she was able to apply in her work at Islamic Relief USA and Oxfam America. Her competency also contributed to improved organizational partnerships for Islamic Relief USA and support for Oxfam America to break down silos around the role of faith-based actors in humanitarian leadership.

Michelle says that her life since going to Egypt as a Gilman Scholar has been a “cross-cultural life.” Having come from a low-income family with little knowledge about the world beyond her home state of New Jersey, Michelle grew into a global ambassador and international advocate. She has found her calling in bridging cultures and understanding her role as an ally to underrepresented communities.



“I’ve spent much of my life and career representing and amplifying positive contributions from diverse communities in the Middle East and across the world, and a big part of that stems directly from the lessons I learned as a Gilman Scholar, the hospitality I experienced, and the deeper insights I gained about our interconnected humanity.”

MICHELLE STRUCKE



“It was a life-changing experience that catalyzed all my future jobs. I wouldn’t be doing anything I’m doing now without that scholarship.”

MICHELLE STRUCKE





PROMOTING STUDY ABROAD

On returning to the United States, Gilman alumni inspire other American students to gain valuable international skills through Follow-on Service Projects, championing study abroad to their peers at home. In fact, most Gilman Scholars encouraged their friends (98%), colleagues (81%), family members (81%), university students (93%), and high school students (82%) to study abroad.

Gilman Scholars expressed a strong sense of duty to give back to their communities and create better lives for people who share similar backgrounds with them. Most Gilman Scholars encouraged people who were economically disadvantaged (92%) and who were racial or ethnic minorities (90%) to study abroad.

97% of Gilman Scholars specifically recommended the Gilman Program to others, including university students (85%), their friends (75%), high school students (46%), and family members (45%). Since the inception of the role of Gilman Alumni Ambassador, which selects and trains Gilman alumni to serve as official program representatives, the program has had approximately 230 ambassadors in total, expanding the reach of the Gilman Program across American institutions and communities.

Figure 13. Perceived Impact on Study Abroad Population Reported by Gilman Scholars

As a result of Gilman Scholars' influence:



OF GILMAN SCHOLARS' HOME
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
WERE MORE INTERESTED IN
STUDYING ABROAD



OF GILMAN SCHOLARS'
HOST COMMUNITY
MEMBERS WERE MORE
INTERESTED IN STUDYING
IN THE UNITED STATES



PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN AN
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED
BY 51% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS
RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY

GILMAN ALUMNI AND LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

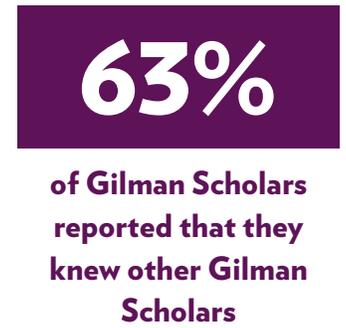
The Gilman Program offers robust programming for Gilman alumni that strengthens the U.S. Department of State’s connection with alumni; promotes careers across sectors; creates networks of Americans linked to U.S. foreign policy goals; and provides substantive career development opportunities.

The Gilman Program works continuously to build engagement among Gilman alumni, including through in-person and virtual workshops that connect students to each other and to career development, especially in fields with strategic importance to the United States, such as public health, cyber security, and entrepreneurship and innovation. The Gilman Program also supports the Gilman Scholar Network, an online community that offers the means to connect with other Gilman Scholars and supports Scholars in expanding their professional connections through networking events.

Regardless of when Gilman Scholars studied abroad, meeting and forming relationships with other Gilman Scholars contributed to a more successful professional life, emphasizing the value of the programmatic efforts in supporting alumni engagement for Gilman Scholars after their return home. Beyond individual impact, the Gilman Program provided a platform for a group of globally engaged U.S. citizens, sharing similar backgrounds and experiences, to connect with and support each other, cultivating a culture of helping and giving back.



Figure 14. Relationships with Other Gilman Scholars



The nature of Gilman Scholars’ relationships was:







Gilman Program Benefits Organizations and Communities

CHAPTER 3

“As I work at the diversity and inclusion office of a large medical institution, I ensure that global perspectives are considered when planning inclusive activities.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2018, JAPAN

Gilman Program Benefits Organizations and Communities

The Gilman Program extended its impact beyond individual growth as Gilman Scholars transformed their learning into action, evidenced through changes and improvements they reported across U.S. organizations and communities.

ESTABLISHING NEW ORGANIZATIONS

Since studying abroad with support from the Gilman Program, one-tenth of Gilman Scholars (11%) established more than 400 new organizations, companies, or other ventures across various sectors.

164 Gilman Scholars who resided in the United States (5%) established a formal organization,⁴ creating more than 1,000 jobs for the U.S. economy, creating sustainable impact on the country, and strengthening diplomacy for its people.

Figure 15. Sectors of the Organizations Established by Gilman Scholars

SECTOR	PERCENTAGE
Educational services	25%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	14%
Professional and business services	9%
Health care and social assistance	7%
Accommodation and food services	3%
Financial activities	3%
Government and public administration	3%
Other sectors	33%



Nicholas Jones | Gilman Scholar in Costa Rica, 2014

Cofounder and Former Board of Directors Member of Care About Climate (CAC)

CAC was founded in 2014 to build momentum for climate action through international cooperation leading up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris. Since its inception, CAC has continued to build a global cooperation platform designed to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement through volunteer-led programming. The organization also strives to create pathways for global youth to contextualize their local and individualized experiences within the climate crisis, and use those experiences to advocate at the national and international level.



Charlotte Marshall | Gilman Scholar in Ghana, 2008

Co-Founder of the Reveal Research

Reveal Research is a forward-thinking, women-led and Black-owned research/insights consulting firm, comprised of an interdisciplinary team of researchers, strategists and data scientists. Reveal Research turns consumer data into leads, insights, and strategy to optimize business marketing, advertising, and growth, and is on a mission to use data and research to create limitless growth for black-owned businesses.

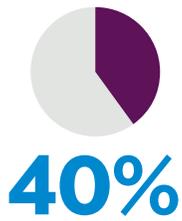
⁴ Formal organizations are organizations with an employer identification number (EIN).



IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONS

Gilman’s value and long-lasting impact is reflected not only in new organizations created by Gilman Scholars but also in the continuous improvements Gilman Scholars have made at U.S. organizations where they work or volunteer.

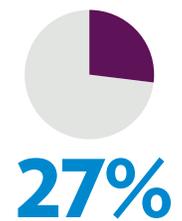
72% of Gilman Scholars reported making improvements to organizations where they work, volunteer, or intern as a result of studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar. Such organizations include and are not limited to for-profit organizations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or higher education institutions.



40% of Gilman Scholars helped their organizations better support diversity and inclusion, mainly through serving on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committees, providing DEI training, implementing inclusive recruitment efforts or policies, and advocating increased attention to relevant issues through their daily work and interactions with colleagues.



38% of Gilman Scholars improved their organizations’ access to knowledge or resources based on the varied needs of the organizations or institutions. Many, either as a student or staff member, improved U.S. institutions’ study abroad resources and students’ knowledge of international exchange opportunities through workshops and events where they shared their Gilman experience. Some were able to leverage the foreign language skills they advanced while abroad to provide translation support for their organization.



27% of Gilman Scholars improved their organizations’ networking and partnership building, leveraging the expanded global networks they developed during their Gilman experience, as well as their strengthened interpersonal skills and global competency.

Other improvements Gilman Scholars made to their organizations included facilitating international exchanges (17%), improving the organizational vision and mission (16%), expanding the global reach of the organization (14%), and shifting the organizational focus to a more international perspective (12%). Gilman Scholars from earlier cohorts, who have been in the workforce for a longer period of time, were more likely to improve their organizations through the various means outlined previously, indicating that Scholars further in their careers may have greater opportunity to promote such change. This finding may speak to sustained growth and impact as more Gilman Scholars move further into their careers.



11%
OF GILMAN SCHOLARS
ESTABLISHED
MORE THAN
400
NEW ORGANIZATIONS,
COMPANIES AND
OTHER VENTURES

5%
GILMAN SCHOLARS
ESTABLISHED
A FORMAL
ORGANIZATION

creating
more than

1,000
JOBS FOR THE
U.S. ECONOMY

GILMAN SCHOLAR PROFILE

Manuel Retana

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2015,
UNITED KINGDOM

ENGINEER AT NASA



As a first-generation Mexican American and the first person in his family to graduate from college, Manuel studied and interned abroad at the University of Bristol in 2015. His times studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar greatly influenced his academic trajectory and professional life, as he was motivated to pursue doctoral studies after working with his British peers. Manuel's overseas experience was also recognized when he was hired at NASA and quickly received a raise based on his experience with the University of Bristol and Airbus Corporation while abroad as a Gilman Scholar.

More importantly, it was the increased global competency and gained skills from his time abroad that continued to benefit his professional life and drove him to make a greater impact at NASA. For example, while working with international partners from Russia, Canada, the European Union, and England, Manuel's Gilman experience enabled him to effectively approach and interact with his international partners. Manuel was also committed to expanding the global reach of NASA by pushing the organization "to work with nontraditional partners in both Latin America and possibly Africa."

In addition to his efforts to improve NASA's global mission, Manuel also devoted his time in a volunteer capacity to supporting diversity recruitment and, where he was actively involved in recruiting minority and female students for the internship program at NASA. The desire to help his organization and university better support diversity and inclusion originated from his early observations of the lack of minorities and women in the engineering field. Ever since then, he has been passionate about changing the representation within the field.

Manuel has also volunteered his time to improve access to resources at NASA by translating materials into Spanish, which has helped increase an understanding of space among Hispanic communities.

As a Gilman Alumni Ambassador, Manuel continued to share his story and his passion through outreach events in both Mexico and the United States, with the hope to encourage more students from disadvantaged backgrounds to go to college and study abroad.



I [translate NASA materials into Spanish] on my own, but I'm happy because I see the impact. I see people being able to be more engaged, and I think that's part of our mission. I'm a civil servant and I work for the government, so part of our job is to serve the public."

MANUEL RETANA





COMMUNITY LEADERS

Twenty-eight percent of Gilman Scholars who resided in the United States held a leadership role in their home community at the time of the survey. Most Gilman Scholars indicated the overseas opportunity provided through the Gilman Program improved their ability to influence others in their home and professional communities (84%) and their ability to communicate confidently and clearly (90%). The improvements in leadership skills significantly contributed to Gilman Scholars assuming a leadership role in their home community.

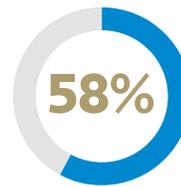
This positive effect on their U.S. community was more evident for Gilman Scholars who were racial or ethnic minorities or first-generation college students, as they were more likely to indicate an improved ability to influence others in their home and professional communities.

Figure 16. Gilman Program's Effect on Gilman Scholars' Lives in Their Home Community in the United States

Being a Gilman Scholar positively affected the home community life of Gilman Scholars who resided in the United States.



RESPECT RECEIVED



LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY



ORGANIZATION OR INITIATION OF NEW PROJECTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Studying abroad with support from the Gilman Program increased Gilman Scholars' desire to give back to their community (89%) and work with disadvantaged communities (81%). This desire originated from Gilman Scholars — students who do not typically study abroad and could not do so without the support of the Gilman Program — being recognized for their excellence and receiving the support they need to succeed in life. For many, gratitude for their overseas experience was elevated into a calling to serve their country and communities. This again highlighted the generosity of Gilman Scholars and further elucidated the type of student profile the Gilman Program attracts and the type of excellence the program supports.

In the past year, 61% of Gilman Scholars engaged in volunteer work or community service, making continuous efforts to help underserved and disadvantaged communities by actively working with low-income communities, refugees and immigrants, the homeless population, and racial or ethnic minorities. Out of those who volunteered, 48% did so on a monthly basis. When the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges around the globe, Gilman Scholars continued their voluntary service, supporting impacted communities and people by providing meals, pandemic-related health services, and educational assistance.

Gilman Scholars strengthened their role as active U.S. citizens, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Fifty-eight percent of Scholars engaged in civic activities, including assisting with political campaign and local voting processes during the 2020 election cycle. Not only were Gilman Scholars committed to their own civic duties, but they were also devoted to raising civic awareness among others.



61%

of Gilman Scholars in the past year engaged in volunteer work or community service



58%

of Gilman Scholars engaged in civic activities including assisting with political campaign and voting local processes



VOLUNTEER SERVICE



89%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS INCREASED THEIR DESIRE TO GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY



81%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS INCREASED THEIR DESIRE TO WORK WITH DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES



48%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS WHO VOLUNTEERED DID SO ON A MONTHLY BASIS

“I cooked and put together meals for homeless folks in my city as a nurse during the COVID-19 pandemic [and] I volunteered to administer tests in my community.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2015, ECUADOR



21%



Gilman Program Supports Excellence and Diversity

CHAPTER 4

“Studying abroad completely changed my life. I had never been abroad and hadn’t even had the opportunity to leave my state for a decade before I embarked upon this study abroad course. It completely opened up my eyes to the world and to the opportunities that could be available to me. For a kid who grew up in a double-wide trailer in rural Texas, this was a major life milestone — not only did I get to travel abroad thanks to Gilman, but I also felt like someone actually recognized my value and potential.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2006, CHINA

Gilman Program Supports Excellence and Diversity

The Gilman Program, with its focus on both student merit and need, provided study abroad opportunities for a diverse population of American students.

SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

The Gilman Program was created to expand the profile of study abroad by providing financial support to U.S. students who may not otherwise have the financial means to travel abroad for an academic experience or internship. The Gilman Impact Study found that, over 20 years, the Gilman Program was successful in bringing international education experiences to populations of students traditionally underrepresented in study abroad.



SCHOLAR DIVERSITY



self-identified as racial or ethnic minorities, compared to 23% of U.S. study abroad participants



identified as first-generation college students



identified as LGBTQIA+ individuals

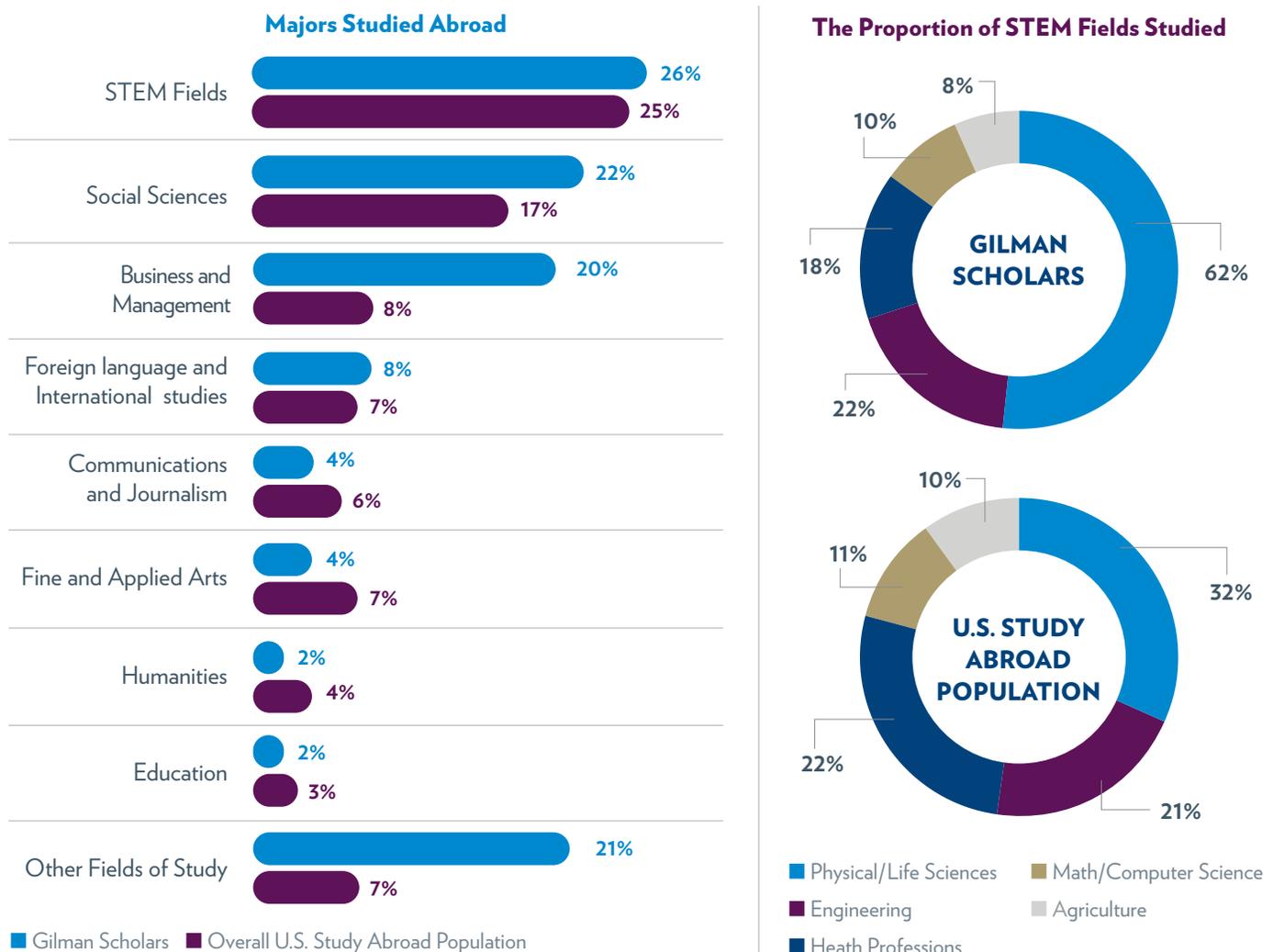


identified as a person with disabilities

Financial challenges. A central barrier associated with study abroad is the cost of financing the travel and academic experience associated with overseas study (West, 2019). The Gilman Program addressed this obstacle by providing access to tens of thousands of Gilman Scholars via financial aid and program support, enabling students with limited financial means to study abroad. 66% of Gilman Scholars indicated they could not have studied abroad without receiving the scholarship. This was especially true for those who were underrepresented racial or ethnic minorities (67%), first-generation college students (70%), and those with disabilities (70%).

Fields of study. Consistent with the overall U.S. study abroad population, Gilman Scholars were most likely to study in STEM fields and social sciences during their study abroad experience, but with a more diverse selection of majors and other fields of study than in overall U.S. study abroad.

Figure 17. Comparison of the Majors Studied Abroad Between Gilman Scholars and the Overall U.S. Study Abroad Population from 2013-14 to 2018-19.



Despite the retained time frame to ensure comparability with *Open Doors* data, the percentages for Gilman Scholars' fields of study were representative of the overall respondent population for all years.

Profile of study abroad. Beyond financial means, Gilman Scholars confirmed that their profile is unlike that of “traditional” study abroad students. Two-thirds (66%) of Gilman Scholars believed that students like them did not typically study abroad, despite their belief that studying abroad was an important part of their higher education experience (83%). In addition to financial support, the Gilman Program has required Gilman Scholars returning from abroad to complete a Follow-on Service Project, promoting international education and the Gilman Program to other students and dispelling misconceptions about who can be a study abroad student, particularly regarding their background or identity.

As a result of its deliberate outreach, selection, program components, and alumni and institutional engagement, the Gilman Program contributed to a more diverse and inclusive profile of the U.S. study abroad population. Historically underrepresented populations in higher education — students of color, first-generation college students, low-income students, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ students — continue to be underrepresented in U.S. study abroad (West, 2019). This report reflects on the Gilman Scholars profile, comparing it to the U.S. study abroad population at large when possible.

Racial and ethnic background. The Gilman Program diversified the study abroad population by giving opportunities to a comparatively greater number of students who identify as racial or ethnic minorities than among the U.S. study abroad population or Pell Grant recipients.

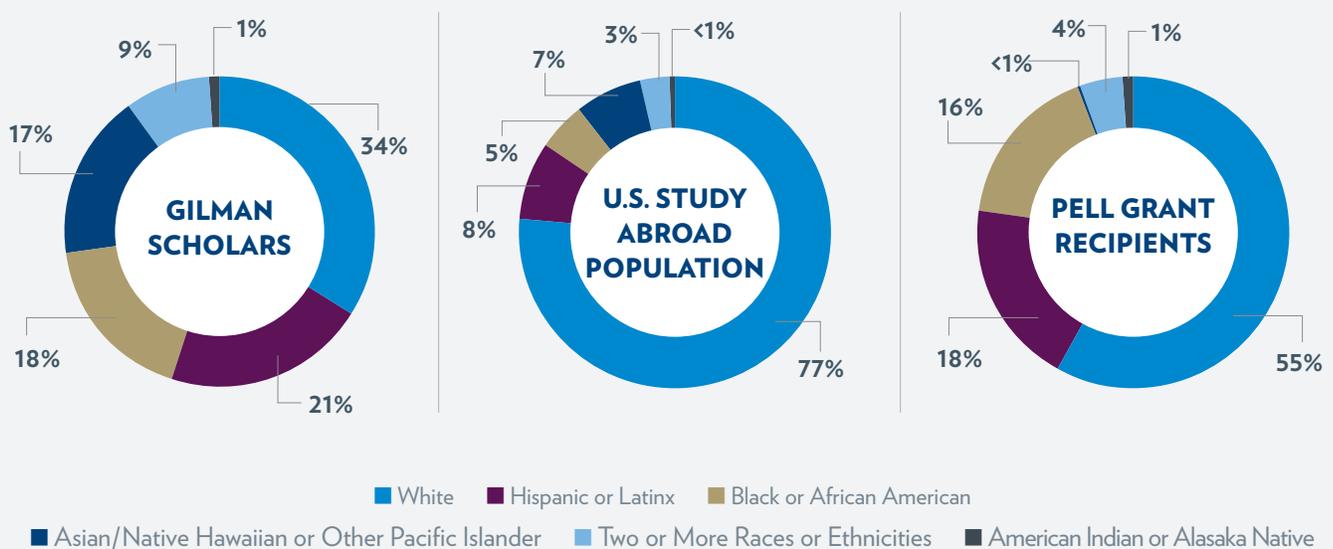
Geographic diversity. The Gilman Program has successfully reached students who grew up in diverse U.S. locations: a total of 57% of Gilman Scholars came from small towns or rural communities across the United States. Specifically, 43% of Gilman Scholars grew up in

“As a first-generation college graduate with a disability, [...] I actually studied abroad and I got to see firsthand that I am capable of traveling on my own, that being disabled doesn’t have to restrict my options or possibilities. And that experience and self-confidence have stayed with me [and continue] to push me and trust [myself] if I want to do something.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR,
2008, AUSTRALIA

Figure 18. Comparison of Race and Ethnicity of Gilman Scholars, the Overall U.S. Study Abroad Population, and Pell Grant Recipients

Gilman Scholars were more racially and ethnically diverse than the overall U.S. study abroad population (IIE, 2020) and Pell Grant recipients (NCES, n.d.).



a state capital (7%) or a major city (36%), while 35% grew up in smaller cities or towns, and 21% grew up in rural areas. The Gilman Impact Study found that certain outcomes were greater for students from smaller urban or rural areas, demonstrating the importance of outreach and inclusion of students from these locations.

Institutional diversity. Gilman Scholars came from 762 unique institutions, with 26% coming from Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (19%), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (10%), HBCUs (3%), and other types of MSIs (1%). For comparison, in the 2017/18 academic year, only 12% of U.S. study abroad students came from MSIs (Baer, Akolawala, Winn & Blake, 2020).

Aware of the barriers to study abroad that community college students experience, since 2010 the Gilman Program has expanded eligibility for its support to students on summer study abroad programs and has also continued to reduce the minimum length requirement for short-term programs to support community college students and increase their participation in study abroad. As a result, 86% of Gilman Scholars from community colleges participated after the 2009/10 academic year, when the Gilman Program began supporting summer study abroad programs.

First-generation college students. Focused on obtaining their degree and at times skeptical of their place in academia, first-generation college students often self-exclude from study abroad opportunities (Carr, 2014, Stokes, 2017). Almost half of Gilman Scholars (46%), however, self-identified as a first-generation college student.¹ A high school or General Educational Development (GED) diploma were the highest levels of education completed by 28% of Gilman Scholars' parents, and 19% of Gilman Scholars' parents had a level of education less than high school. The annual evaluation of the Gilman Program consistently finds that the first-generation college students have high gains in self-confidence and interest in further education, and this Gilman Impact Study further highlights the long-lasting impact of the study abroad experience on this population.

Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may have concerns about studying abroad, including their opportunities to live or study in accessible facilities. There has been an increase in students with disabilities who study abroad, and the latest *Open Doors* found that, on average, 11% of U.S. students studying abroad had a disability (IIE, 2020). In contrast, 14% of Gilman Scholars who participated in the program since its inception reported having a disability, showing the program's advocacy and contribution in supporting this student population over the years.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND HIGH FINANCIAL NEED

More than two-thirds of Gilman Scholars perceived the Gilman award as both merit-based (based on academic performance) and need-based (based on their financial standing). They indicated that having received a credible U.S. government-sponsored scholarship with this equal focus was both a recognition of their value, which increased their self-efficacy and self-confidence, and a validation of their excellence, which made them more competitive when pursuing other academic and professional opportunities.

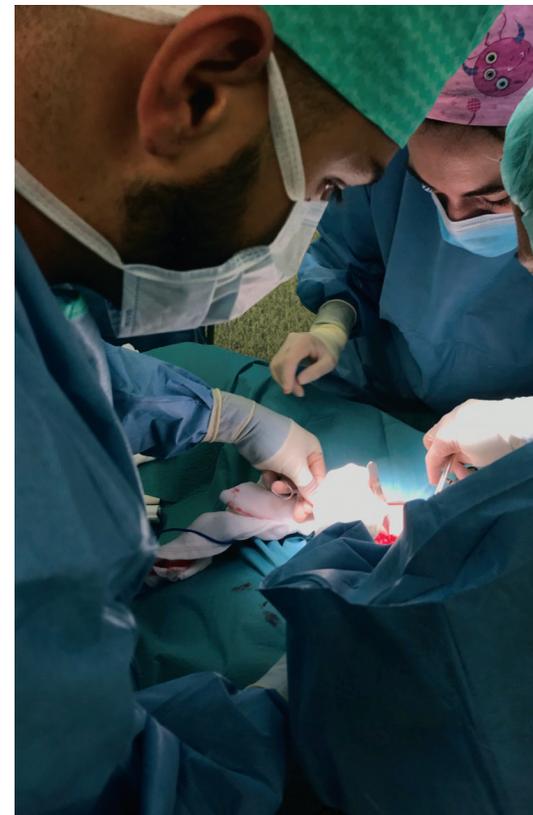
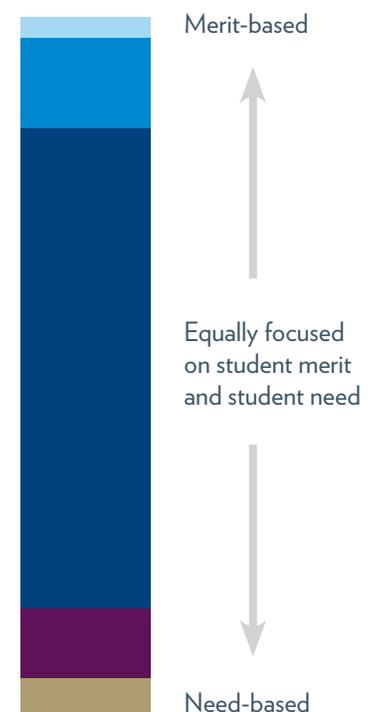


Figure 19. The Focus of the Gilman Award on Student Merit and Need Perceived by Gilman Scholars



Conclusion



More than

38,000

**GILMAN ALUMNI
HAVE STUDIED OR
INTERNEED ABROAD**

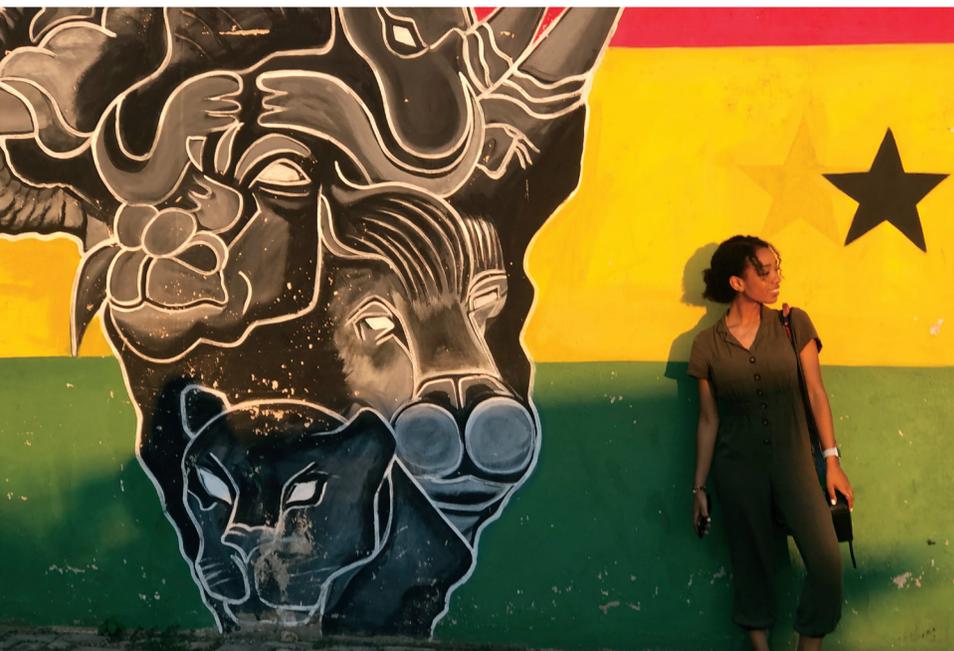
since the
inception of the
Gilman Program

The Gilman Program supports American students from diverse backgrounds to study abroad, providing critical opportunities for Gilman Scholars to enhance their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills, which leads to a more successful academic, professional, and personal life and leading to contributions across sectors and communities within the United States.

It is important to acknowledge the Gilman Program's focus on merit. This study highlighted the excellence of Gilman Scholars, who transformed their study abroad experience and the skills they gained into action and continued to make improvements to their companies, organizations, and institutions. Beyond the impact on U.S. organizations, Gilman Scholars shared a sense of responsibility to give back to communities. Many became leaders in their home communities and a voice for their fellow citizens, committing themselves to create better communities across America.

The Gilman Program has enabled students to gain enriching international experiences and has developed a thriving community of globally engaged, service-minded, individuals. Through Gilman Scholars' committed

engagement with their home and global communities, the influence of the Gilman Program spans beyond the national borders and program period, continuing to build bridges across people, cultures, and nations through the efforts of its over 38,000 Gilman alumni from all U.S. states and territories. The past 20 years of the program showed that the Gilman Program has not only met its goals of reshaping study abroad to be more accessible and inclusive for American students of all backgrounds; it has also fulfilled the commitment of the U.S. Department of State to cultivate global leaders who engage internationally, fostering mutual understanding and developing critical skills to enable growth and support U.S. national security and economic prosperity.



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20 YEARS with Gilman

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The Gilman Program enables American undergraduate students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, gaining proficiency in diverse languages and cultures and providing them with skills that are critically important to their academic and career development. Under this program, the John McCain International Scholarship for the Children of Military Families (Gilman-McCain Scholarship) is also available. Approximately 3,000 scholarships of up to \$5,000 are awarded each academic year. Since its inception in 2001, the Gilman International Scholarship Program has awarded more than 38,000 scholarships to U.S. students studying or interning in 151 countries.

