



2008 Wesleyan University Summer Experience Grant Application

When completed, save this application as a Word document and submit through MyCRC by Tuesday, March 25, 2008, at 11:59 p.m. See the Quick Start Sheet for submittal instructions. Please be aware that this is a firm deadline: you will not be able to apply after this date and time. Hard-copy applications will not be accepted.

Your Name:	Nadeem Modan		
Campus Box:		Campus Phone:	
E-mail Address:		Are you a U.S. Citizen?	Yes <u> X </u> / No <u> </u>
Major(s):	Religion Major, and Pre-Medical Track		
Home Address:			
Home Phone:			
Organization Name:	Society for the Promotion of Rationality (SPRAT), and IndoAmerican Volunteer Networks (IAVN)		
Sponsor Name & Title:	Mr. Hasan Jowher (Founder and President), and Self (Founder and Executive Director)		
Address:			
Sponsor Phone:		Sponsor Fax:	
Sponsor E-mail:			
Dates of Employment:	May 20 th , 2008 to August 5 th , 2008		

1. Provide a brief overview of the organization for which you will intern or program/project you are developing.

Society for the Promotion of Rationality: SPRAT is an internationally recognized nonprofit founded by former bank CEO, Mohammed Hasan Jowher, after the 2002 riots in Gujarat, India. SPRAT is located primarily the city of Ahmedabad, and runs grassroots projects throughout the state which address many social ills such as poverty, poor health, illiteracy, and communal violence between different religious groups. All of SPRAT’s services are concentrated on or near the borders of different religious neighborhoods for equal access. One of SPRAT’s initiatives is *Muskaan*, literally translated from Urdu as “Smile”. Muskaan is a recreation park located on the border of two different religious communities which are exceptionally hostile to each other during communal riots, and the park aims to actively promote peace between the two. The population which Muskaan serves is also very underprivileged- most in the area have not received formal education and live on merely a few dollars per day.

IndoAmerican Volunteer Networks: IAVN is registered nonprofit organization which I have founded myself, with the help of eight other Wesleyan students. IAVN’s mission is to provide international volunteers with the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the work of grassroots Indian NGOs. Since we are motivated by the need of India’s impoverished communities for long-lasting change, we make sure that volunteers work on sustainable and measurable projects. We make every effort to maximize the volunteers’ long-term impact, while minimizing costs to the volunteers themselves.

2. Briefly provide details of the internship or experience, including responsibilities and tasks.

For this summer, I propose to combine both a defined full-time internship, as well as an “experience”.

For the full-time internship, I will work with Society for the Promotion of Rationality in Ahmedabad, India. My duties with SPRAT will be to independently research and develop a workshop curriculum around Science and Health. The curriculum will be educational and will address basic biology and chemistry, showing their relevance to hygiene and health. It will be my responsibility to ensure that the curriculum addresses, minimally, water contamination and purification, malaria, cholera, HIV/AIDs and prevention, dental care, diet and nutrition, mental health, and other region-specific health concerns. This curriculum will be designed for an underprivileged population, especially those who have had no formal or informal exposure to science. While simultaneously researching and building the Science and Health Workshop curriculum, I will also implement it in a month-long pilot program at SPRAT’s Muskaan Park. This is to sort out practical and logistical details of teaching the workshop sessions. I will work with and report directly to the President of SPRAT. When the summer is over, SPRAT will reassume ownership of the Science and Health workshop I developed, and implement it on their own.

For the “experience”, I will be expanding IndoAmerican Volunteer Networks, the nonprofit volunteer placement organization which we have founded. During the afternoons and weekends of the summer, I will visit many of the non-profit organizations in Ahmedabad, India and develop long-term relationships with them. I will get to know the organizations and the work they do, and will see if IAVN can help further their mission. While developing relationships with various Indian non-profits, I will also search for home-stay housing opportunities for future volunteers. This year, IAVN is sending eight volunteers to Ahmedabad. If I am able to go to Ahmedabad this summer, next year we aim to send twenty volunteers.

3. How have you communicated with the employer and determined mutual interest?

SPRAT- I have personally communicated with Mr. Hasan Jowher, President of SPRAT, many times. We have exchanged many phone calls and emails. We also met personally a few times this past winter break. I assure you that we have had ample opportunity to discuss mutual interest and feasibility, and are both on the same page regarding the details of the internship, as well as the details of housing and food expenses.

IAVN- N/A.

4. How will this experience enhance or broaden your career goals?

On January 30th, 2008, the New York Times reported that an illegal Kidney Transplant ring had been uncovered in India. Government officials estimated that four to five hundred kidneys had been removed at gunpoint from impoverished day laborers, bicycle rickshaw drivers, or farmers. Their kidneys were sold at hefty prices and transplanted into wealthy individuals, usually foreigners. The recovering victims, who survived on a few dollars per day before the operation, were left to either pay obscene amounts in medical costs, or left simply to die.

This time, everyone found out and the New York Times ran the story. But what about the many other corrupt medical practices in India that are unbelievably common? On a daily basis, hundreds and maybe thousands of poverty stricken individuals are lied to and taken advantage of throughout India. Even Dr. Ketan Desai, the head of the Medical Council of India and the head of Indian Medical Association, was found to be guilty of corruption and abuse of power in 2001.

Going to my own doctor in New Hampshire, the thought doesn’t even cross my mind that he would intentionally misdiagnose my condition. But in India, every other doctor has printed his own Medical Degree from his home

printer. While my parents and I complain of rising insurance costs and higher copays at the doctor's office, the poor of India worry about lied to and told that they have cancer, when all they really have is the common cold.

As sad as they are, it is true stories like these which have molded my future plans. It is such dichotomies that inform my decisions- past, present, and future. The rich and the poor. The healthy and the impoverished. The bloated and the starved. A person I admire once said that much of humanity does not have enough to eat, only because some have too much. I might not be able to feed the world, nor will I be able to prevent every future Kidney Transplant ring, but I can at least try, in this summer and in my future plans.

I spent a part of this last winter break in Ahmedabad, and that month gave me some much needed perspective on my own life. Although I was on vacation with family, I spent much my time on the streets. I saw too much injustice to sit back, relax, and to watch it all happen. I realized that even though I was just a college student, there was so much I could do to advance social justice. I contacted the President of SPRAT, and asked him what I could do to help. Among other things, he asked me to come back during the summer, and bring with me others who were committed to social justice and change. Non-profits in India have a severe lack of motivated staff members, and there is no culture of volunteerism in India as there is in America, he explained. I could help the most by connecting him with dedicated volunteers. And this situation resonated with the other non-profits I visited.

I came back to America and decided that although I will continue on the Pre-Medical track, I will also take action right here, and right now. Simply going to classes, learning about biology, and preparing for the future is not enough. That is not enough to feed the hungry children in India, and it should not be enough for my own conscience. If the President of SPRAT tells me that I have a big role to play in helping SPRAT and in lifting the impoverished, I cannot sit back and twiddle my thumbs. Nor will I let other motivated college students be discouraged from their own noble aims.

I was going to use the resources that college offers me, and transform them into something meaningful. I wanted to use my unique position to do something that would help change the world for the better. I can create feasible and tangible change myself, and I can also help inspire a generation to dedicate their lives to social justice. These were the some of the thoughts that went into creating IndoAmerican Volunteer Networks.

This summer, I want to help SPRAT to teach the poor about health and hygiene. Hopefully it will prevent some impoverished person from being taken advantage of by a "doctor". It will, at least, keep someone from getting sick and missing work, so they don't lose the few precious dollars that keep their children from starving. My summer plans will not only help those who I am serving, but they will also help me.

I know that my career and my future plans involve serving the impoverished, but how? Will I be a doctor in Ahmedabad, India? Will I become an entrepreneur? How, exactly, will I serve? Given the chance to work with SPRAT in Ahmedabad this summer, I will be able to better evaluate my future plans. I would gain knowledge that cannot be attained without immersion. Am I ready to sacrifice the comforts and coziness of New Hampshire, for the heat and humidity of Ahmedabad? Am I ready to tackle the health concerns of the impoverished, concerns that I can not even fathom while sitting here at Wesleyan? Am I capable of successfully creating and managing an organization?

I do not want to jump into medical school expecting to practice with the impoverished, only to find out that I do not have emotional strength to deal with their burdens, or simply that I cannot work in such an environment. I do not want to commit my career to an entrepreneurial Endeavour, only to find out that I do not have the skills to manage it.

And given the chance to work with SPRAT and expand IAVN, this summer would be an unprecedented learning opportunity for me on so many levels. I would understand biology, chemistry, and health from the teacher's perspective rather than a student's. Not only would I understand the subjects better, but that understanding would



help me to decide whether or not I can really devote my career to those subjects. I would get a chance to do grassroots serve work with the impoverished, an experience which I still have not had. I would be able to directly learn about organization building and organization management, through close interaction with SPRAT's president and through IAVN. Not only would I gain such valuable skills, but I would also get a better perspective on whether or not the entrepreneurial non-profit sector interests me.

Another positive aspect of these summer plans is that I can explore another strong interest of mine: religion and interfaith cooperation. Ahmedabad is a religiously diverse city, and unfortunately also has a history of conflict. In the most recent episode, in 2001, the entire state of Gujarat was affected to some degree. Since it is in SPRAT's mission to actively promote peace and dialogue between religious communities, I will be able to see the process of peace-building and how grassroots work around these sensitive topics is conducted. Religion played a big role in my upbringing, and it is endlessly interesting for me to study and work with it, especially in a context as practical and down-to-earth as conflict resolution.

With regard to my future plans, there is no doubt that they involve serving the impoverished and helping the afflicted. But how, specifically, will I do that? I'm very unsure. The Wesleyan Summer Experience Grant will give me insight into multiple different career directions, and I will be able to gain an enormous wealth of practical knowledge and skills which are not accessible in classroom. All the themes and topics which interest me converge in this one experience- social justice, health, entrepreneurship, religion, and interfaith cooperation. If offered the Wesleyan Summer Experience Grant, I promise to take full advantage of it, for such an extraordinary opportunity at synthesis comes only once in a blue moon.