**Considering the specific undergraduate school you have selected, how will you explore your academic and intellectual interests at the University of Pennsylvania? For students applying to the coordinated dual-degree and specialized programs, please answer these questions in regard to your single-degree school choice; your interest in the coordinated dual-degree or specialized program may be addressed through the program-specific essay. (300-450 words)**

“The parents don’t really support their kids going to school,” one of the teachers said to me as we were sitting atop the desks of a run-down classroom. I was on a scouting trip on the island of Sumba with the other leaders of our nonprofit, surveying multiple village schools in the area. What commonly stood out among these schools was high-level absenteeism. Although the schools were readily available for students, I learned many other factors came into play. The curriculum was not up to date, students had to travel a long distance as houses and farms were spread out in a low-density sprawl, and their culture did not place importance on the education of the younger generation. Contrary to what I learned in economics, simply investing in human capital was not enough to improve the quality of education or lift them out of poverty.

I hope to formally study and do research on concepts such as social mobility and inequality—an interest I gained from a scouting trip—at Penn. In The College of Arts and Sciences, I will explore these academic interests with a sociology major. I am particularly interested in the Structures of Opportunity and Inequality concentration which focuses on different inequalities present in economies and educational institutions. Knowledge about social phenomena like income and gender inequality, which I have explored in high school through my work in sheSTEM as a content writer and my internship in AMAAN—a microfinance platform for Indonesian women entrepreneurs, may come in useful for the courses I am interested in taking such as Sociology of Gender (SOCI 112) and Sociology in Education (SOCI 596-301). The latter course is taught by Professor Emily Hannum whose work in the Gansu Survey of Children and Families I have followed and am inspired by. It is my hope to work under Professor Hannum, researching the link between family and cultural attitudes about schooling and the welfare outcomes of rural children in the Population Studies Center for my independent study.

With the flexible curriculum provided at The College of Arts and Sciences, I may choose to take some free electives in the School of Engineering and Applied Science. I have an interest in learning and taking courses on Data Science which stem from computer science classes and the Applied Science Academy in high school. The courses I am primarily interested in are within the fields of applied machine learning and data mining as they can be applied to my sociology research which involves collecting and analyzing big data.