

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Student: **Aaditya Surya**

Course: Economics, Entrepreneurship & Social Justice

Date: August 20, 2021

I had the genuine pleasure of teaching Aaditya Surya over a three-week intensive Columbia University *Economics, Entrepreneurship & Social Justice* course. Amongst a diverse and geographically disparate (over 10 countries) group of 23 equally ambitious, intellectually curious, and high achieving peers, Aaditya was one of the most articulate and thoughtful contributors to class discussions. He always attempted to integrate what he knew and learned into our class discussions, assignments, and in his group work, which included deep dives on Transparency International, The Gates Foundation, and Apple Corp. In his final project 'The Blue Circle', an entrepreneurial proposal developed with a few chosen classmates, Aaditya addressed a societal issue of health for a specific demographic in NYC. This proposal for this business venture included an overview of proposed costs, prioritization of activities, and broader business stakeholder partnerships to ensure sustainability – and profitability.

The focus of the *Economics, Entrepreneurship & Social Justice* course was critical thinking about solving the world's largest problems. We covered fundamental economic concepts, including the challenge of the environment and social issues as externalities in traditional economic models, learned how to categorize and align social justice themes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and assessed various approaches for addressing societal issues. The class was introduced into key players of the broader economy (the public, non-for-profit, and private sector), studied the difference in various types of business enterprises, and learned about the role of finance in funding and sustainability, more broadly. Like other university level courses, this class was a combination of lectures, which included topical discussions on financial news in context of the curriculum, as well as daily project work in which the students had to deliver their research and analysis to their peers during a Q&A challenge. The final stage of the course captured the basics of developing a business plan and proposed model for addressing a societal problem.

While the exposure to benchmarking, case studies, risk analysis, and routine class presentations were challenging, Aaditya enthusiastically embraced the work, welcomed the intellectual challenge, and established himself as a strong team player. In fact, more than one of his comments during class discussions in response to corporate responsibility and sustainability demonstrated a level of maturity and confidence ahead of many of his peers. I enjoyed hearing how Aaditya approached complex economic and societal issues and think he would be a great addition to the Columbia student body. I do hope he keeps in touch as I look forward to learning of where Aaditya chooses to further his studies, his focus major – and of his future successes more broadly.

Sincerely,



Angela Paulk

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