

In the eighth grade, I lived with a family in Zoetermeer, Netherlands, for an exchange program with Alfrink College. Then, in tenth grade, I was selected for Harvard Summer School as the only brown student in my particle physics class. In both cases, I was awestruck by the advanced knowledge my classmates exhibited. Their success was attributable to their resources – the best education, infrastructure, and access. These experiences were juxtaposed with my travels across India for Taekwondo championships. On one such trip, I met Ravi, a kid from Tripura. I saw him nervous ahead of his fight and tried to initiate conversation, realizing that Ravi was hearing impaired. I didn't know sign language, and he couldn't read Hindi or English. However, I eventually understood that Ravi didn't have proper headgear, and offered him mine. His nervousness disappeared, and we immediately became friends.

My experiences highlighted that my education is my greatest privilege, and one I could leverage to give back to my community. To do my part, I taught Math and English to underprivileged children at the Rebecca Belilious English Institution. I also tutored remedial and advanced math at my high school, free of cost. In grade eleven, I then chaired a committee at OxfordMUN Singapore, where I mentored Afghan refugees. Despite unfortunate circumstances, I witnessed how excellent training propelled them to a global platform, making their voices matter. To bring these opportunities to Indian students, I established the Calcutta MUN Society (CMS); we initially taught in schools, conferences, and specialized workshops, but when Covid forced us online, the Society quickly amassed 1000+ students — some of whom won *Best Delegation* at MUNA (Alfrink College). I was satisfied and grateful.

When I came to Berkeley, I witnessed academic inequity again — students with no programming experience competed with those who were taught advanced deep learning in high school. Therefore, I offered free tutoring for CS, math, and data science, alongside mentorship for job applications and interviews.

Over the past 6 years, I've spent an estimated 2000+ hours sharing my knowledge, but my impact was limited by reach. The most students I ever reached was when CMS went online, making me realize that maximizing equity in education is impossible without equitizing access to technology. Students like Ravi could read, code, debate, and do much more with appropriate technology. However, millions like him remain constrained by financial resources, lack of exposure, and disabilities. To this end, I joined Professor Barsky's assistive technology lab to research low-cost, disability-friendly interfaces. Moving forward, I hope to continue building my knowledge of gesture control, eye tracking, vision-correcting displays, and other assistive technology applications at Berkeley under faculty such as Allen Yang, Jitendra Malik, or Angjoo Kanazawa.

Growing up, my father taught me that my actions have value only when they positively impact those who need it the most. At Berkeley, from tutoring as a Peer Academic Adviser to researching assistive functionalities, I hope to take this spirit forward and contribute to an environment where people from diverse socioeconomic and academic backgrounds can learn and grow together.