

In eighth grade, I lived with a family in Zoetermeer, Netherlands, for an exchange program with Alfrink College. They treated me like family, but after living with them for a month, I realized the stark difference between their lives and that of the average Indian kid. Then, when I was selected for Harvard Summer School as the only brown student in my particle physics class, I was immediately awestruck by the advanced knowledge my classmates exhibited, despite being high-schoolers. Their success was attributable to the plentiful resources available at their disposal – the best education, infrastructure, access, and exposure.

These experiences were juxtaposed with my travels across India for Taekwondo championships. On one such trip, I met Ravi, a younger kid from Tripura. I could see him grappling with nervousness ahead of his fight. Trying to initiate conversation, I discovered that he couldn't communicate comfortably in Hindi or English. Lacking resources, he also couldn't afford appropriate headgear. Being the same size, I offered him mine. His face lit up, and in that moment, our connection transcended the sport.

My experiences showed me that my education was my greatest privilege — and one I could use to give back to my community. To this end, I taught Math and English at the Rebecca Belilious English Institution, a school for underprivileged children. I also tutored remedial and advanced math at my high school, daily, free of cost, and for all grade levels, for the next two years.

In grade eleven, I then chaired a committee at OxfordMUN Singapore, where I was able to mentor Afghan refugees living in Germany – their stories of resilience provided shocking insights. Despite unfortunate circumstances, I witnessed how excellent training propelled them to a global platform, making their voices matter. Therefore, I established the Calcutta MUN Society (nonprofit) to bring these opportunities to Indian students. Teaching in schools, conferences, and eventually online, the Society amassed 1000+ students, of which I gathered some to form competitive delegations. These teams won Best Delegation at several national and international conferences — including MUNA'20 at Alfrink College, Zoetermeer. Life came full circle. I was satisfied, and grateful.

However, disparities in opportunity presented themselves again at Berkeley, where I saw students with no programming experience made to compete for grades, clubs, and jobs with those who had published deep learning papers in high school. Thus, I offered free tutoring for CS, math, and data science classes, alongside mentorship for job applications and training for interviews. Overall, I've spent an estimated 2000+ hours teaching my knowledge forward over the past 6 years which I hope to continue at Stanford.

Growing up, my father taught me that my actions have value only when they positively impact those who need it the most. At Stanford, from tutoring with SUMO/CTL to assistive technology research, I aim to bring these ideals with me in everything I do — with the hope of contributing to the facilitation of an environment where people from diverse socioeconomic and academic backgrounds can learn and grow together.