Transforming Lives: the Global Social Benefit Fellowship

A gift from the Robert N. Noyce Foundation enabled the design, piloting, and validation of the action research paradigm, for which Miller Center won the prestigious Cordes Innovation Award in Academic Student Learning in 2017.

The Fellowship offers an integrated program in action research with GSBI® social enterprises, providing transformative social justice learning experiences for high-potential Santa Clara University undergraduates.
Action research projects provide practical tools for social enterprises to help them scale their impact. The principle of value exchange informs the choice of GSBI social enterprise hosts, architecture of the action research projects, and selection of interdisciplinary teams of juniors. The 9-month Fellowship includes two academically rigorous classes, seven weeks of field research, participation in the GSBI In-Residence accelerator program, and vocational discernment.

**Ashley Armstrong**
Fundación Paraguaya  2012  
BA Anthropology & Economics 2013; Class Valedictorian  
Master of Philosophy Development Economics, University of Cambridge 2014  
I had the unparalleled opportunity to be part of Miller Center’s first cohort of Fellows. I created a nutrition guide and educational program to help women use their loans more effectively. Most recently, I was VP of Operations and Strategy at a drone delivery start-up. I am now leveraging that knowledge to launch robotics solutions for humanitarian applications.

**Lindsey Allen**
Solar Sister 2015  
BS Political Science 2016  
Fulbright Researcher, Morocco 2016-2017  
Measuring the impact of clean energy solutions gave me the opportunity to engage the developing world in a meaningful way. The nature of the Fellowship – the ownership we have over our deliverables, the fieldwork, and the reflection – helped me develop critical professional and leadership skills at a pivotal point in my educational career. After my Fulbright, I’ll facilitate international partnerships for Farmerline, a GSBI social enterprise in Ghana.

**Erika Francks**
ONergy 2016  
BS Environmental Studies 2017; Class Valedictorian  
My team detailed customer experiences with ONergy’s innovative solar technologies. I wrote my senior Honors thesis on The Future of Solar Microgrids in Sub-Saharan Africa and developed a prototype Microgrid Replication Playbook for Miller Center. In my valedictory speech, I highlighted personal growth fostered by the Fellowship. As a consultant at Accenture, I hope to explore the role of solar microgrids in renewable energy transitions.

**Natalie Lays**
Solar Ear 2013  
BA Psychobiology 2014  
Fulbright Scholar, Brazil 2015  
The profound experience I had with this Fellowship confirmed my desire to pursue global health. After medical school, I hope to impact Latin America’s most marginalized communities.

**Isabel Miranda**
Iluméxico 2016  
BA Economics 2017  
As a result of the Fellowship, I became very passionate about sustainable development. I am now pursuing a Master’s degree in International and Development Economics.

**Ty Van Herweg**
BanaPads 2014  
BA Economics 2015  
Fulbright Researcher, Uganda 2015 -2016  
The operations manual I prepared helped BanaPads win a social entrepreneurship prize and a $50,000 grant. My Fulbright research launched Wakabi, a last-mile ridesharing and retail delivery service. The Fellowship enabled me to enhance my business acumen and instilled a passion for compassionate innovation. I now work at Amazon.

**Jack Bird**
Lifeline Energy 2013  
BS Environmental Science & Political Science 2014  
Nobili Award, Miller Center Advisory Board Member  
I shadowed an agroforestry expert to document sustainable farming practices designed to improve farmer livelihoods and mitigate the effects of deforestation. My time in the woodland savannah gave me a raison d'être and the tools necessary to face any challenge.

Social enterprises receive useful deliverables such as social impact reports, marketing materials, and business development strategies. Most Fellows report that the Fellowship provided the most distinctive and impactful experience of their Santa Clara University education. Prospective employers find the Fellows exceptional candidates for any position that requires teamwork, ingenuity, and an ability to get things done.
Support of the Global Social Benefit Fellowship or Social Enterprise Practicum programs can change lives globally.

Join us in creating transformative social justice learning experiences for high-potential undergraduates, regardless of their economic backgrounds.

It is not hyperbole to say that without Misja Ilcisin’s presence as operations associate on our staff, we may not have closed a $1.2 million deal with USAID to scale up our maymay app and electronic medical records software nationwide, have pending seven-figure deals with large international funders to expand our social impact, and have streamlined operations for our maymay app. This Fellowship is the right kind of program, and a rare one in the United States: giving talented undergraduates an opportunity to get outside of the classroom and get real, on-the-ground experience in the developing countries that they read about in textbooks in an academic setting.

- Michael Lwin
CEO, Koe Koe Tech, Myanmar
GSBI Accelerator 2015