# 2013 GPP graduates look to careers of social engagement

On May 23rd, sixty-nine students representing thirty majors accepted certificates in the Global Poverty and Practice (GPP) Minor from Professors Ananya Roy, Clare Talwalker, and Max Aufhammer, as well as Richard Blum, founder of the Blum Center for Developing Economies. Faculty and student speakers stressed the complexity of global challenges as well as the imperative of creatively combating those challenges each and every day.

"We can't let the limitations we face bring us down or be intimidated by the magnitude of the work," said student commencement speaker Sarah Edwards. "We can't think things will never change. We can't stop trying. Really, we can't be stopped."

The diversity of intended career paths in the GPP Class of 2013 is a testament to the program's interdisciplinary nature. Students are bound for many destinations and types of work, from studying housing struggles in post-Katrina New Orleans, to working locally as an emergency medical technician while pursuing a graduate degree in humanitarian engineering design, to helping design a cultural center in a Samoan community nearly 5,000 miles away.

While many graduates intend to work locally, others in the class remain focused on global-scale interventions. Edwards and fellow student commencement speaker Nikki Brand will both be working



Nikki Brand, GPP Class of 2013, encouraged fellow graduates not be innocent bystanders, but to reach further and use the tools given to them at Cal to work toward change.
*Photo credit: Jim Block*

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Despite the wide range of career interests in the Global Poverty & Practice Class of 2013, students express a shared commitment to public service. In May, students celebrated their graduation with peers, family, and friends before scattering to all corners of California, the US, and the world. *Photo Credit: Jim Block*

overseas—Brand in Guatemala with the social entrepreneurship organization Community Enterprise Solutions, and Edwards as a Peace Corps Forestry and Agroforestry Extension Agent in Cameroon.

This diversity of student interests is unified

through a shared commitment to community engagement. This year, three members of the GPP community were honored with prestigious Chancellor's Awards for Public Service in recognition

of their service to communities both local and global. The Chancellor's 2013 Service Learning Leadership Award was given to Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales, who taught the GPP capstone course as well as an enrichment course on educational justice and undocumented students. The 2013 Mather Good Citizen Award, which recognizes one graduating senior who has demonstrated a high standard of conduct and service to the campus, was awarded to Abhinaya Narayanan. In addition to her GPP studies and internships in the community, Narayanan

served as Project Coordinator of Asha, a student-run organization providing education to underprivileged children, and as Student Director of Oakland Community Builders, connecting UC Berkeley students with internships at social justice organizations in the East Bay. Gardenia Casillas, another GPP student, received an Undergraduate Student Award for Civic Engagement. Casillas completed service work in Ecuador providing dental care to poor communities and plans to work in Ethiopia this summer, funded by a Harvard Fellowship in Public Health, before

pursuing advanced degrees in medicine and public health.

As the GPP Class of 2013 disperses to all corners of the globe, the Blum Center is confident that this new generation of poverty action scholars is prepared to face the challenges, questions, and complexities of global development work. Dr. Negron-Gonzales bid farewell to her GPP students with an inspiring quote from Antonio Machado, reminding them: "Journeyer, there is no path. The path is made by walking."

# GPP Students Set Out for Summer Practice Experiences

**>> BY JAVIER KORDI & SEAN BURNS**

Each summer, Global Poverty and Practice students travel to communities all over the world to engage in poverty alleviation work. By giving students on-the-ground exposure to the complex challenges of poverty action, these 'practice experiences' put classroom learning into new perspective. The Blum Center's Student Fellowship program helps to fund a majority of these GPP students as they seek to collaborate with a variety of NGOs, government agencies, social movements, and businesses to turn their studies into tangible community work.

Guided by their own interests and questions, students are challenged to define a practice experience which advances their academic goals and aligns with their passions. For Zahra AbouKhalil, a third year student majoring in Public Health and fluent Arabic speaker, this means traveling to Lebanon in mid June to begin an internship with the Amel Association in Beirut—an organization working for the rights of Syrian refugees. Over 350,000 Syrian refugees have crossed into Lebanon since the start of the civil unrest in Syria. AbouKhalil's practice experience will entail running health and sanitation workshops in the Amel's refugee camps.

Each year, many GPP students view the practice experience as an opportunity to 'give back' to their home communities. Lorraine Mosqueda will travel to the island of Iloilo in the Philippines to complete her practice experience. Mosqueda, a third year majoring in Microbial Biology, will work alongside the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines to conduct community outreach and



Hillary Acer will intern this summer with City Slicker Farms, which works to empower West Oakland community members to meet their need for healthy organic food by creating high-yield urban farms and backyard gardens. *Photo credit: City Slicker Farms*

spread contraceptive awareness. A native of the island of Iloilo, she aspires to engage with her community on topics of women's and family health that have been central to her studies at UC Berkeley.

International practice experiences such as AbouKhalil's and Mosqueda's have proven invaluable to student's perspectives and professional goals. However, as GPP's Professor Ananya Roy articulates in the foundational course of the Minor, students must also foster a "Politics of Locality"—that is, understand that poverty does not exist 'out there', but is instead a phenomenon with both local and international dynamics. Understanding this relationship between the local and international manifestations of poverty encourages students to not forgo the importance of poverty action in their own backyards. This year, the Blum Center witnessed a significant increase in students

seeking local practices. Thirteen students will stay in California—ten of whom will be in Berkeley or Oakland—working on issues ranging from affordable housing and community health to food security and women's economic rights.

Karem Herrera, a Public Health major, will complete her practice with Don't Sell Bodies, an anti-human trafficking organization led by Cal grad Minh Dang that seeks to spread awareness through the telling of narratives.  There are millions of individuals coerced into forced labor or sexual exploitation in the US, and the San Francisco Bay Area is considered by the FBI to be one most prominent locations for these illegal activities. Herrera's practice experience will focus on assisting Don't Sell Bodies in organizing conferences to increase survivor participation. The inclusion of survivors' stories is central to the organization's mission to empower vulnerable populations through education and awareness—a mission Herrera hopes to forward.

Local practices enable GPP students such as Hillary Acer to work on issues impacting UC Berkeley's neighboring communities. Acer, a third year majoring in Integrative Biology with a minor in Dance, will spend her summer in West Oakland interning with the well-known food justice organization City Slicker Farms. By assisting the organization with the expansion of their home and community gardens program, Acer will be working to increase access to healthy food in one of America's largest 'food deserts.' This practice experience

Student Lorraine Mosqueda will spend the summer working with the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines, a reproductive health service provider and an advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights. *Photo credit: FPOP*

reflects her broader interests in community health and will give her exposure to food and nutrition challenges with an emphasis on social justice.

Capturing the essence of the practice experience, the Blum Center's GPP Program Coordinator Chetan Chowdhry enthusiastically states: "The practice experience is a vital aspect of the GPP Minor because it allows students to directly engage with the political and ethical challenges that are inherent in efforts to address global poverty and inequality.  As a result, it pushes them to think critically about what meaningful global practice entails."

# Students Draw Inspiration, Lessons from Weekend at Clinton Global Initiative University

## >> BY JAVIER KORDI

The glow of Connor Galleher and Matt Pavlovich's PlasMachine drew President Clinton's attention at the CGI-U poster session. Picking up their business cards, Clinton expressed hope that he could support their project by providing them with solar panels. *Photo Credit: CGIU*

In early April, eighteen UC Berkeley students attended the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI-U) conference in St. Louis, Missouri, eager to make progress on their "commitments to action"—student-led projects which aim to tackle the most pressing challenges facing humanity. With $500,000 available for investment in student projects—in addition to funds and support from the institutions in the University Network—and an all-star line-up of key note speakers, this year's event provided an unprecedented atmosphere of collaboration, innovation, and networking.

Ngan Pham, a student in the Global Poverty and Practice (GPP) Minor, described CGI-U as refreshing because it brought together a "group of ambitious and humble individuals" all aspiring to create a positive change. Pham's

project, "ServeFund," prepares low-income students to be competitive and financially eligible for internships and public service opportunities—experiences that employers value highly in today's job market. Because CGI-U brings together prominent public figures and private sector leaders, student attendees are often able to network with their idols. Pham recalls one serendipitous morning at CGI-U when she met and exchanged contact information with Professor Mohammad Yunus, an economist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient specializing in microfinance.

CGI-U supports a diverse spectrum of student commitments, from social service projects to science-driven solutions to local and global challenges. The conference gave Connor Galleher and Matt Pavlovich an opportunity to unveil their first venture in global poverty alleviation. Utilizing their knowledge of plasma physics and chemical engineering, the duo constructed a device that generates plasma as an affordable and low-input sanitation agent for water and surfaces. Requiring only electricity and air, their device has immense potential to curb infection and disease when used in developing countries. Galleher and Pavlovich were one of two teams to present on-stage in the "Solving the Global Sanitation Crisis" session.

Pavlovich emphasized how easily it was to build partnerships with other attendees. The eerie glow of their prototype on display attracted many at CGI-U, including Stephen Colbert, who described the event as "a science fair for noble causes." Even CGI-U host President Bill Clinton casually walked over to their booth, and—after listening to their pitch—picked up their business cards and mentioned the possibility of providing solar panels for their power needs.



GPP student Ngan Pham met microfinance pioneer Mohammad Yunus, one of her heroes, at the CGI-U conference. *Photo Credit: Ngan Pham*

Beyond networking, Galleher and Pavlovich's exposure in the CGI-U space encouraged the team to rethink the way they presented and marketed their idea. Galleher recalled that "people were in pain when reading our [poster]" because few attendees were familiar with the language of plasma physics. The project team was compelled to "recalibrate [their] message" in order to make it more accessible. They now have a website and a pending project title—"PlasMachine"—that they hope will make the seemingly esoteric topic more understandable and accessible for the general population.

Karem Herrera, also a GPP student, described the three day CGI-U conference as "empowering" because it spoke to all aspects of the poverty challenge—including the inevitable failures and obstacles that aspiring change-makers encounter—and provided opportunities for collaboration. Herrera's commitment is to organize a youth empowerment program in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Working with a team of approximately fifteen UC Berkeley students through MEND (an on-campus organization), her program will extend educational resources to economically



UC Berkeley student Rajika Jindani was excited to share her Commitment to Action, a microfinance project with Jaipur Foot, with Chelsea Clinton. *Photo Credit: Raijka Jindani*

disadvantaged youths in Aguascalientes. During the event, she met the directors of a similar project, Union De Jovenes Por Mexico (Union of Youth for Mexico), and may work closely with the group in the near-future.

Sean Burns, Director of Student Programs at the Blum Center, feels the conference offered an important experience for UC Berkeley students on a number of levels. "Students were able to analyze the vision and strategy of their projects," he remarked. "They were able to meet and converse with dozens of experienced leaders in social change and innovation, and return to campus with a bolstered sense of enthusiasm and confidence for carrying forth their project commitments." Burns, who serves as the UC Berkeley campus representative in the inaugural year of the CGI-U University Network, looks forward to continuing to work with these students as they seek to fulfill their commitments to action.

# UC Berkeley's Development Impact Lab: "Greater than the Sum of Its Parts"

## >> BY LUIS FLORES

Brought together by the common goal of reinventing development practice, a seemingly unlikely group gathered at Blum Hall on the UC Berkeley campus in March 2013; guests came from labs 200 yards away, office buildings in the nearby Silicon Valley, the costal campus of UC San Diego, and some from as far as the University of Michigan. During this one-day conference, the worldwide consortium of the Development Impact Lab (DIL) was launched with an exciting series of presentations, workshops and conversations. The conference, in the words of USAID AAAS fellow Marion Adeney, "opened those doors to let more minds in. " These minds included a "who's who" of engineers, economists, NGO practitioners, private research labs, and start ups, who together compose DIL's contribution to USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN).

Throughout the event, a set of foundational principles eased the process of cross-discipline translation. DIL's "four pillars," ecosystem of innovation, demonstration-based learning, competitive mechanisms to encourage collaboration, and the development measurement and evaluation toolkit, formed the terrain on which the prospects for collaboration evolved.

Illustrating a methodological intervention of the consortium was UC Berkeley engineer Ashok Gadgil's mantra of allowing "no silent failures." DIL will be engaging "not textbook problems," Gadgil reminded the group, "but real problems that are messy with politics and culture involved." The pillars of competition, demonstration-based research, and data-driven evaluation, will ensure that all unsuccessful efforts will be visible and integral to the process of human-centered technology design and transparent data assessment.

The conference kicked off with presentations by DIL partners. These included UC San Diego economist Eli Berman's Policy Design Evaluation Lab, UC Berkeley professor Dan Fletcher's CellScope initiative, and UC Berkeley's Center for Effective Global Action's model for competitive collaboration. These presentations were followed by brief "research snapshots" in which partners like the human-center design firm IDEO.org, Intel Labs, and the Aga Khan Development Network, explored potential avenues for cross-sector collaboration.



Presentations, workshops, and discussions engaged Development Impact Lab collaborators from the Bay Area and around the country. Representing research universities, industry groups, and non-profit organizations, participants brought an array of viewpoints to the table to discuss pressing global development challenges.

After a lively lunch, smaller workshops engaged specific DIL projects. One workshop focused on the establishment of UC Berkeley's Designated Emphasis in Development Engineering (DE2), strengthening a "pipeline of knowledge" for graduate candidates in engineering, economics, business administration, city planning, and public policy.

UC Berkeley's geographical location together with its history of practical innovation made it an ideal setting to host these conversations on interdisciplinary, cross-sector, and even intergenerational innovation. As DIL's executive director Temina Madon, explained to the group, "We are all DIL," a translational group, "moving outside the boundaries of a traditional academic setting."

While these early collaborations can only hint at innovations to come, HESN's UC Berkeley manager, Marion Adeney, is confident that, "the DIL consortium is already a network that is greater than the sum of its parts."

# Generation Innovation:
## Rebecca Peters, 4th Generation Cal Student, 2013 Truman Scholar

>> **REBECCA PETERS**, a Blum Center student and the fourth woman in her family to attend UC Berkeley, was recently named a 2013 Harry S. Truman Scholar. Sixty-two college juniors received the prestigious award on the basis of their academic achievements, leadership accomplishments, and their commitment to becoming a leader in public service. The Scholarship provides leadership training, post-graduate opportunities in Washington, DC, and $30,000 for graduate study. Peters reflects on her winding journey to the Truman Scholarship and her future beyond the Blum Center and UC Berkeley.





RIGHT: Peters examines the bottling mechanisms for community distribution from a safe water kiosk in Chiapas, Mexico, in March 2013. Three fellow GPP students will complete their practice experience at the site in Summer 2013.

My path to the Truman Scholarship began to take shape generations ago, when my great grandmother frequented UC Berkeley's hallowed grounds while pursuing degrees in Spanish and history. My grandmother, currently 96 years old and still reflecting fondly on her time at Cal, similarly began her studies here only to leave to take a job at Lawrence Berkeley Lab as an engineering designer. My mom also began to pursue a degree here before decamping to take a job in the city. I was born in San Francisco and grew up hearing about UC Berkeley, but it always seemed like a distant institution that belonged to my ancestors. As a graduating high school senior I was certain that I wanted to study environmental science and engineering at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to begin a career in Californian river restoration work.

However, my path radically shifted when I enrolled in an Appropriate Technology course that included fieldwork in rural Guatemala. Bearing witness to abject destitution profoundly refocused my perspective, and I began to understand the problem of poverty for the billions of people living without safe water, education, and health care. Learning how to negotiate the complex divides between poverty and wealth helped me develop my own solidarity in the context of inequality, and this experience learning to bridge cultural difference and seek transnational similarities inspired me to apply to transfer to UC Berkeley to enroll in the Global Poverty and Practice Minor.

Once at Berkeley, I declared majors in Society and Environment (B.Sc.) and International Development and Economics (B.A.) through the interdisciplinary field studies program. For my GPP practice experience, I sought to unite these fields by working on rural water projects with the Foundation for Sustainable Development and Water for People in Cochabamba, Bolivia from May to August 2012. Many of my days consisted of visiting communities without connections to the municipal water supply and discussing the role of water cooperatives in improving access. Through this work, I found a significant component missing from the work of the organizations: addressing the asymmetrical impacts of a lack of water on women and girls. I am now leading the expansion of gender sensitive water programs in twelve rural schools in Bolivia this summer, and am a finalist for the Human Rights category of the BigIdeas@Berkeley competition to support these efforts.

While at Cal, I have participated in two Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP) projects with Blum Center

associated faculty and am currently working with Professor Isha Ray to generate a literature review on the current state of water treatment models in Latin America. My first honors thesis, a formative component of my research engagement at Cal, analyzed the formation of current conditions of water access, control, and management in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The municipal government in Cochabamba theoretically incorporated civic participation as an element of their planning system through the conduits of varying levels of administration. However, a 2004 report by the United Nations RISD found clear evidence that elements of class-based discrimination and resulting inequalities in access to water existed in the residential peri-urban spaces of Cochabamba, with such inter-urban spaces becoming places where the population is an indicator of processes of social differentiation (UNRISD 2004). The insurgent urbanization of Cochabamba resulted in the rise of numerous squatter settlements, zones of informal housing, and distinctively "peri-urban" regions on the outskirts of the city. Asymmetrical political power distribution is most obviously manifested in the noticeable absence of municipal services that are provided to the wealthier districts of the city, including water and sanitation. In this way, I came to understand water as not just an environmental, economic, social, or cultural resource, but also the site of considerable politicized inequity. These diverse research experiences that often cross into advocacy have collectively reinforced my belief in the importance of working across disciplines to achieve the goals of reducing poverty, improving global health, and increasing equality in water and environmental resource distribution.

Over the past two years, I revitalized the Water IdeaLab, co-founded a DeCal on water and international human rights, and collaborated with faculty to create an undergraduate curriculum to improve water related student opportunities. I also lead the Nuestra Agua student group, and alongside fellow students introduced a social justice and human rights perspective to the organization which was previously narrowly focused on the role of UV technology and health outcomes for reducing water borne illness in rural Mexican communities. The program in Chiapas will be the summer practice experience for three GPP students to contribute to safe water programs.

While I am thrilled that my efforts thus far have helped engage students in water issues on campus, in the community, and around the world, there are still miles to go. The Truman and Udall scholarships, along with the Berkeley Law Human Rights Fellowship, are honors that I take very seriously as long-term investments to foster my commitment to water, social justice, and human rights work. My roots at Berkeley, beginning with my great grandmother, instilled in me a deep sense of history and appreciation for the educational experience here. I am still awed by the sheer physical beauty of the architecture, inspired by the intellect of my peers, and humbled by the opportunities I have as a student at Cal.

After graduating from Cal and working in Washington, DC with the State Department through the Truman Scholars Institute, I intend to pursue dual masters degrees in Water Science, Policy, and Management (M.Sc.) and International Development (M.A.) which will enable me to contribute to the design of meaningful policies that will shape the future role of the United States in water and the environment. In the future, I hope to work with the State Department's new US Water Partnership to define its direction as a leader in US foreign policy related to issues of environmental sustainability and water security. My vision is to address inequitable water consumption practice while targeting the improvement of strong civil societies able to hold their government representatives accountable to the social, economic, and cultural demands of water. Through designing policies that empower governments to fulfill their obligation to provide affordable and accessible safe water to their people, I hope to make access to and control of water resources a more inclusive, transparent, and equitable process.

Some advice I would offer students looking for ways to get involved in poverty action are to utilize campus resources like the Blum Center, the Scholarship Connection, the Center for Effective Global Action, and Cal Corps. The mentorship and support I have received from the faculty and staff at the Blum Center have been critical to my activism, research, and advocacy for poverty and water issues. The lasting friends I have made through the Global Poverty and Practice minor – the other peer advisors, my classmates, and my Bolivian partners – inspire me every day with their creative brilliance, thoughtful innovations, and deep compassion. The Blum Center has effectively created a space to allow for a new vein of student driven and institution supported work that facilitates the millennial generation's mission to theoretically and practically engage with the challenges of global poverty and inequality. Effective poverty action requires informed actors, and the millennials at Berkeley are capable of critically engaging to end the inequality that drives pressing economic, environmental, and social problems. Go Bears.

With our students working in various parts of the world this summer, it's a time for planning, strategizing, and housekeeping here in Berkeley.

Our team is busy preparing for the inaugural Development Impact Lab "State of the Science Conference," the arrival of our first Global Poverty & Practice Postdoctoral Fellows, fantastic new live-action sketch videos from the #GlobalPOV team, the launch of the 2014 Big Ideas@Berkeley contest, and so much more. We invite you to stay in touch on Facebook (facebook.com/blumcenter) and Twitter (@blum_center) and watch for our new e-newsletter this fall.

We especially want to thank all of the new and long-time supporters of the Blum Center, including those who contribute to the Global Poverty & Practice Fellowships, Big Ideas@Berkeley, the #GlobalPOV Project, and the Development Impact Lab. We are thrilled to see the Blum Center's network growing rapidly and look forward to building new collaborations. Your support makes a tremendous difference to our students, who are eager to explore, rethink, and reinvent the world we live in.

-Blum Center Team