

A Legacy of
Supporting
Excellence and
Opportunity in
Study Abroad

20-Year Impact Study
Abridged Report

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship



The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

October 2021



A large, stylized blue graphic of a hand holding a globe, positioned on the left side of the page. The hand is formed by several horizontal bars of varying lengths, and the globe is represented by a white circle with a vertical line through its center. The background is white, and the blue graphic is the dominant visual element.

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All photos in this report depict Gilman Scholars.

Foreword

Heidi Manley

In July 2021, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona released a Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education. This statement emphasizes the U.S. Government's commitment to supporting global engagement for all Americans, including through study abroad, to develop the linguistic and cultural competencies needed to contribute to America's continued prosperity and to global peace and security. The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program (Gilman Program) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship undergraduate study abroad scholarship program and directly supports the goals outlined in the Joint Statement of Principles by providing funding support to U.S. students of limited financial means, who reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, to pursue overseas study and internships.

This year we celebrate 20 years of the Gilman Program. This is a significant milestone for a program that has enabled over 34,000 exceptional American undergraduate students from all 50 states, D.C. and all U.S. territories to engage in international academic and internship experiences and gain global and cultural competencies to navigate the ever-changing landscapes of education, international business, and scientific discovery and innovation.

We commissioned a 20-year impact study to assess how the Gilman Program has reshaped study abroad by making it more accessible and inclusive for American undergraduate students of limited financial means. The study was conducted by the Institute of International Education (IIE), which supports the implementation of the Gilman Program.

The following report highlights the value of the Gilman Program in providing global opportunities that open academic and professional doors, and the impact that these opportunities have on not only the Gilman Scholars, but on their communities back in the United States, among other key findings. It also highlights the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) commitment to ensuring that American students with limited financial means and from all backgrounds participate in international exchange, fostering mutual understanding and developing critical skills that support our economic prosperity and U.S. national security. ECA supports study abroad opportunities for American students so the next generation of American leaders will have the skills and connections needed to work across borders to address our world's most pressing issues. As Secretary Antony Blinken has said, "International education enhances cultural and linguistic diversity, and helps develop cross-cultural communication skills, foreign language competencies, enhanced self-awareness and understanding of diverse perspectives." The 20-year impact study of the Gilman Program illustrates how this remarkable program addresses all of these areas.

We are proud that the Gilman Program provides opportunities to talented American undergraduate students with high financial need to participate in career-enhancing study abroad or international internship programs. This report showcases the Gilman Program's successes in impacting individuals, local communities and our broader society over the past 20 years and we are grateful to our U.S. higher education partners that have made this success possible.

We laud the outcomes of the Gilman Program to date and continue to work hard to ensure that the next 20 years of the program garner even more success.

20
YEARS
of the Gilman Scholarship

More than
34,000
GILMAN SCHOLARS

from over

1,300
INSTITUTIONS

from all

50
STATES AND ALL
U.S. TERRITORIES

studied in
over

150
COUNTRIES

Gilman By the Numbers



More than

34,000

GILMAN ALUMNI HAVE STUDIED
OR INTERNEED ABROAD



SCHOLARSHIPS UP TO

\$5,000

Additional funding of up to
\$3,000 through the Gilman Program's
Critical Need Language Award

Gilman Alumni represent



1,300

DIVERSE HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

across the United States,
including community colleges



The Gilman Program has
received over

134,000

APPLICATIONS

illustrating the strong demand for the program

GILMAN ALUMNI HAIL FROM



**ALL 50
STATES**

Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and other U.S.
territories, representing both urban and rural areas



Gilman Alumni have served as U.S.
citizen ambassadors in over

150

COUNTRIES

Key Findings

▶ The Gilman Program contributes to expanding and diversifying the U.S. study abroad population.

66% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS

believed that students like them did not typically study abroad

▶ The Gilman Program positively impacts Scholars' academic and professional lives and strengthened their employability and personal growth.



97%

completed the degree or were continuing to pursue degree completion



67%

indicated being a Gilman Scholar on their resume



65%

completed their degree with a GPA of 3.5 or higher

▶ Gilman Scholars, as global ambassadors, continue to engage in cross-cultural activities and advocate for study abroad across communities, serving as a strong force connecting people, cultures, and nations.

99%

indicated that their Gilman-supported experience increased their knowledge of their host country and respect for the values of people from different cultures.

65%

reported that their host community members felt more positively about the United States due to their influence while studying abroad.

99%

encouraged others to study abroad, and 97% recommended the Gilman Program specifically.

75%

maintained their relationships with people from their host country, and 25% returned to their host country after their return to the United States.

▶ Gilman Scholars transformed their learnings from study abroad to action, positively impacting U.S. organizations and communities.

Gilman Scholars established more than
400 NEW ORGANIZATIONS
ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS



72%

reported making improvements to the places where they work



89%

returned to the United States with an increased desire to give back to their community

61%

engaged in volunteering work or community service

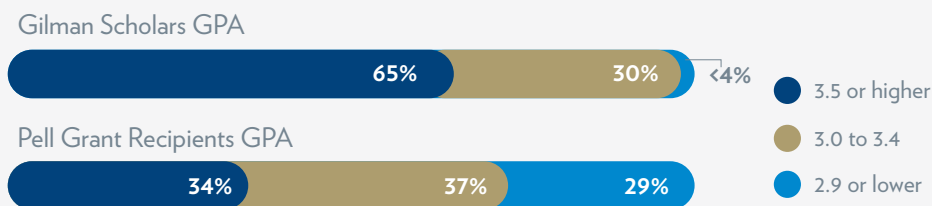


Gilman Program Leads to Global Opportunities and Success

Studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar paves the path to academic success for young Americans by providing the critical skills and experience they needed to succeed in the workplace or in academics. After returning from abroad, most Gilman Scholars (89%) completed the degree they were seeking during their Gilman experience; an additional 9% were working toward completion.

SCHOLAR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Gilman Scholars achieved high academic performance after their return home.



Gilman Scholars achieved outstanding academic outcomes when equipped with vital assets, underscoring the value of the program in supporting individuals with financial need to promote their academic potential and excellence in the long term.



1 OF 4

GILMAN SCHOLARS
LATER OBTAINED
ADVANCED DEGREES



CULTURAL INTERACTION

Interacting with people from different countries and cultures allowed Gilman Scholars to observe how the United States was perceived abroad and to gain a deeper understanding about their own country, culture, and roots.



66% of Gilman Scholars indicated that their Gilman experience increased their appreciation of U.S. culture

“My experience humbled me as a person. I was able to gain more appreciation for my own culture but also yearned to learn about other cultures in all aspects.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR,
2011, JORDAN

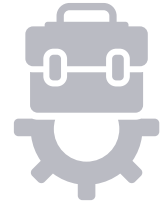
Gilman Scholars indicated that their academic (87%) and professional lives (79%) were more successful as a result of their Gilman experience.

Gilman Experience Positively Affected Gilman Scholars' Professional Lives



65% of Gilman Scholars indicated that their prior international exposure benefited their current job or studies

50% of Gilman Scholars emphasized the benefits of their experience in their host country



Gilman Scholars also reported that being a Gilman Scholar made them more competitive when applying for new professional or academic opportunities, and **30% believed that being a Gilman Scholar contributed to a job offer**. Most Gilman Scholars (**83%**) mentioned studying abroad during their job search, with **67% indicating the experience on their resumes** and **31% mentioning it in interviews**.

The majority of Scholars (84%) are devoted to public service fields such as education, health, and government.

“I didn’t have to apply for my current position, as my resume was pulled from a separate application pool by the hiring manager for this team and I was offered an interview because my of my Gilman experience in Brazil and my ability to speak Portuguese were highlighted on my resume and discussed in my [initial] interview.”
GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2017, BRAZIL



Gilman Scholars as Global Ambassadors

Studying abroad with the Gilman Program contributed to Gilman Scholars' global competency and worldview. This section looks at how, since their return to the United States, Gilman Scholars have continued to engage in cross-culture activities, advocate for study abroad across communities, and serve as a strong force connecting people, cultures, and nations.



Gilman Scholars' Intercultural Competency Improvements

Knowledge of the culture and society of their host country

99%

Respect for the values of people from different cultures

99%

Ability to explain complex global issues to other people

92%

Knowledge of the government and politics of their host country

90%

Ability to recognize bias and critically assess news sources

87%

“The experience increased my cultural competence and understanding of how global issues impact people and places in other countries.”
GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2009, THAILAND

94%

of Gilman Scholars remained engaged with their host country following their Gilman Program



75%

maintained relationships with people from their host country



67%

kept up an active interest in the culture of their host country



25%

returned to their host country after returning to the United States

LANGUAGES

One of the goals of the Gilman Program is to encourage students to study languages, especially critical-need languages that U.S. Department of State deemed important to national security. The Gilman Critical Need Language Award offered by the Gilman Program served as a great incentive for students to study critical-need languages while abroad, leading to strengthened American diplomacy through Gilman Scholars' positive engagement with the world.

74% OF GILMAN SCHOLARS STUDIED A LANGUAGE WHILE ABROAD

61%
formally

18%
informally

45%
were critical-need languages

Top Foreign Languages Studied by Gilman Scholars

LANGUAGE	PERCENTAGE
Spanish	25%
Chinese (Mandarin)*	11%
Japanese*	11%
Arabic*	8%
French	7%
Korean*	7%

*Critical-need languages defined by the U.S. Department of State

9% of Gilman Scholars studied other critical-need languages, including including Azerbaijani, Bahasa, Bangla, Hindi, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu.

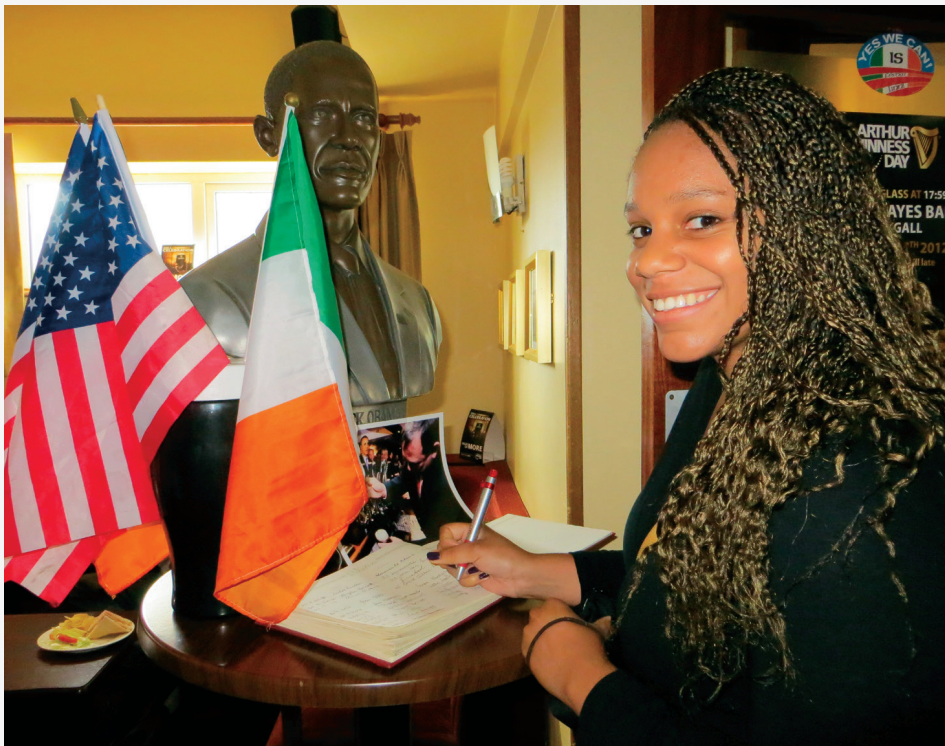
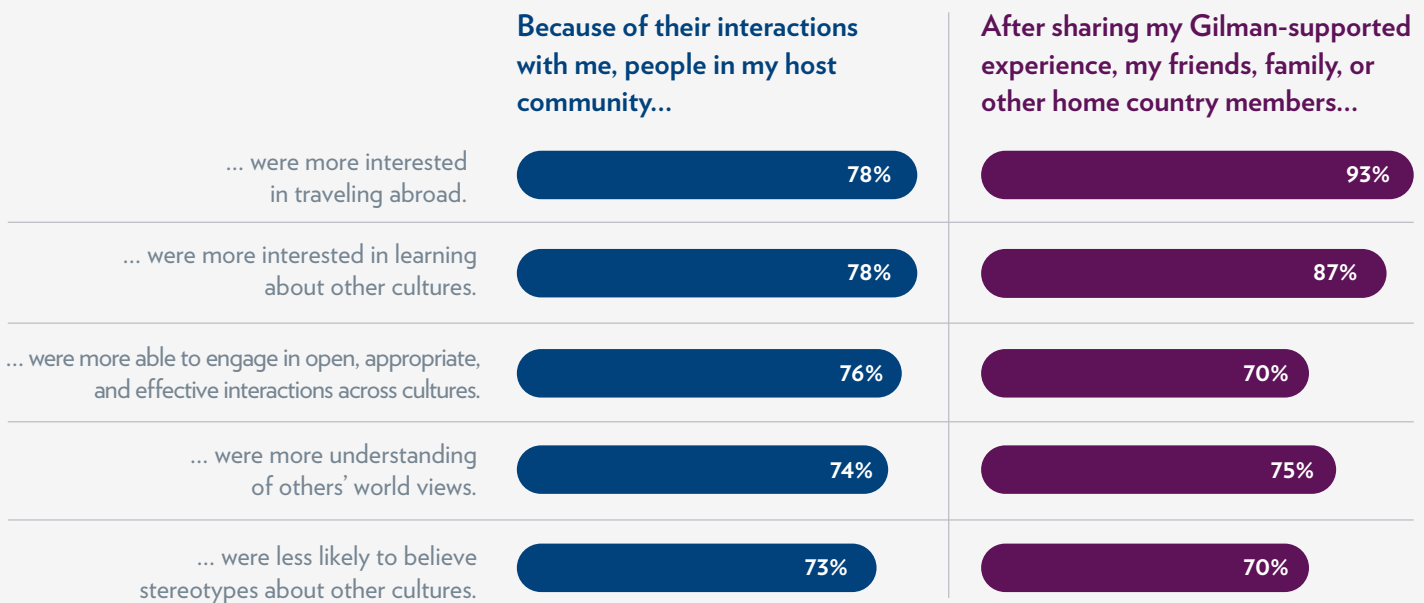
Most Gilman Scholars (**89%**) improved their ability to communicate in the primary language they studied while abroad, preparing them for a globalized workforce.

“After returning to the USA and graduating, I was employed at a company that communicated regularly with their Japanese subsidiary. I was able to aid in communications.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2009, JAPAN

Gilman Scholars as Global Ambassadors *(continued)*

Gilman Scholars extended the impact of the Gilman Program beyond the United States via their interactions with people around the world, strengthening global communities' intercultural competencies and fostering mutual understanding among different people, nations, and cultures.



Gilman Program Benefits Organizations and Communities

The Gilman Program extends its impact beyond individual growth as Gilman Scholars transform their learning into action, as evidenced through changes and improvements across U.S. organizations and communities.



When the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges around the globe, Gilman Scholars continued their voluntary service, supporting impacted communities and people by providing meals, pandemic-related health services, and educational assistance.

“I cooked and put together meals for homeless folks in my city as a nurse during the COVID-19 pandemic [and] I volunteered to administer tests in my community.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2015, ECUADOR

IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY



11%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS ESTABLISHED MORE THAN

400

NEW ORGANIZATIONS, COMPANIES AND OTHER VENTURES

5%

OF GILMAN SCHOLARS ESTABLISHED A FORMAL ORGANIZATION

creating more than

1,000

JOB FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY

Gilman's value and long-lasting impact is reflected not only in new organizations created by Gilman Scholars but also in the continuous improvements Gilman Scholars have made at U.S. organizations where they work or volunteer.

72% of Gilman Scholars reported making improvements to organizations where they work, volunteer, or intern as a result of studying abroad as a Gilman Scholar. Such organizations include and are not limited to for-profit organizations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or higher education institutions.

40% of Gilman Scholars helped their organizations better support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

38% of Gilman Scholars improved their organizations' access to knowledge or resources based on the varied needs of the organizations or institutions. Some were able to leverage the foreign language skills they advanced while abroad to provide translation support for their organization.

27% of Gilman Scholars improved their organizations' networking and partnership building, leveraging the expanded global networks they developed during their Gilman-supported experience, as well as their strengthened interpersonal skills and global competency.

Other improvements Gilman Scholars made to their organizations included:

- 17% facilitating international exchange
- 16% improving the organizational vision and mission
- 14% expanding the global reach of the organization
- 12% shifting the organizational focus to a more international perspective



Gilman Program Supports Excellence and Diversity

The Impact Study found that, over the past 20 years, the Gilman Program’s support for students with high financial need has meant that Gilman Scholars represent the full diversity of the United States and a vast expansion of opportunities for students who have been traditionally underrepresented in study abroad.



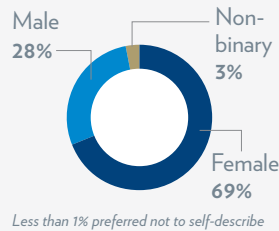
Gilman Scholars and Study Abroad

92% of Gilman Scholars reported that academic study and coursework was their primary goal for studying abroad. 13% also interned.

83% of Gilman Scholars had never studied abroad prior to their Gilman-supported experience.

66% of Gilman Scholars believed that students like them did not typically study abroad.

Gilman Scholars self-identified as



95% of Gilman Scholars were 30 years or younger when studying abroad (average age was 22).

SCHOLAR DIVERSITY



self-identified as racial or ethnic minorities, compared to 23% of U.S. study abroad participants



identified as first-generation college students



identified as LGBTQIA+ individuals



identified as a person with disabilities

SCHOLAR ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

Gilman Scholars were more likely to study in less traditional destinations or world regions underrepresented in U.S. study abroad, including Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East than the overall U.S. study abroad population.

26%

FROM MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS



57%

FROM SMALL CITIES, TOWNS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

“Studying abroad completely changed my life. It completely opened up my eyes to the world and to the opportunities that could be available to me. For a kid who grew up in a doublewide trailer in rural Texas, this was a major life milestone—not only did I get to travel abroad thanks to Gilman, but I also felt like someone actually recognized my value and potential.”

GILMAN SCHOLAR, 2006, CHINA

Methodology

IIE's Research, Evaluation and Learning (REL) unit used a mixed-methods approach to examine the outcomes of Gilman Scholars' experiences abroad and the impact of the Gilman Program across the United States and worldwide. REL used the following evaluation questions to guide the research and provide a useful framework for the impact study:

1

How has the Gilman Program advanced Scholars' overall competency, enhanced their careers, and contributed to their professional and personal growth?

2

As a result of studying abroad with the Gilman Program, have Gilman Scholars created impacts in their U.S. colleges, universities, organizations, and communities?

3

Have Gilman Scholars continued to serve as global ambassadors, contributing to mutual understanding and promoting sustainable international linkages in their professional and volunteer work?

SURVEY. In the fall of 2020, REL sent the Gilman Impact Survey to 23,733 Gilman Scholars who studied abroad between 2001 and 2019 and for whom an active email address could be determined. Of these recipients, 19% (4,394 respondents) responded to the survey.

INTERVIEWS. REL interviewed 10 Gilman Scholars to gain a deeper understanding of Scholars' trajectories after their study abroad experience. The team selected diverse interview participants with a range of demographic characteristics and program experiences and representing different program years.

ANALYSIS. REL analyzed quantitative data using SPSS data analysis software, primarily using descriptive statistics and some inferential statistics. All quantitative findings are presented in aggregate, and responses were comparatively analyzed based on a variety of factors such as demographic details, socioeconomic status, and program information. Qualitative data were reviewed to identify salient themes across interviews and open-ended responses.



4,394

SCHOLARS
RESPONDED
TO THE GILMAN
IMPACT SURVEY

Terminology

- All data presented in the report are based on the respondent population. Throughout the report, respondents are referred to as "Gilman Scholars."
- For the purposes of this report, references to "study abroad" refer to both academic study and internships abroad.
- In this report, first-generation college students are defined as students whose parents did not complete a four-year college or university degree. For details, please visit the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation.

20 YEARS with Gilman

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program

gilmanscholarship.org

The Gilman Program enables American undergraduate students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, gaining proficiency in diverse languages and cultures and providing them with skills that are critically important to their academic and career development. Under this program, the John McCain International Scholarship for the Children of Military Families (Gilman-McCain Scholarship) is also available. Approximately 3,000 scholarships of up to \$5,000 are awarded each academic year. Since its inception in 2001, the Gilman International Scholarship Program has awarded more than 34,000 scholarships to U.S. students studying or interning in 150 countries.

