THE SEESAW PROJECT:
A SCHOOL SUPPLY FUNDRAISER FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN
AND
A CASE STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY IN INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

During the summer of 2011, I volunteered and lived in an orphanage in Greater Noida, India that is sponsored by a non-profit organization called Udayan Care. My experience volunteering there and working for Udayan Care has influenced me deeply. During my stay, I learned valuable experience about social work, international development, and how non-governmental organizations work.

First, I learned how important education is for these children and how we, as volunteers, needed to emphasize this everyday. After coming back from my internship, I would like to raise money for school supplies to give to the girls at the Greater Noida home. I believe that raising funds for a school supply drive would be beneficial for the girls and help them show how important it is for them to be in school. Second, I learned how Udayan Care strives to show children that they are no different from any other child in the means of having the power to make a difference in their community.

Along with this plan for a school supplies fundraiser, I would also like to see if it was possible to arrange for the children to work on a type of community-based project where they live as a way of "giving back." I believe this will help them learn about the positive qualities of teamwork, commitment, leadership, and more. By doing this type of senior project, I want to learn more about educational inequity.
here and abroad as well as gain more experience about community development and working with non-profit organizations. I will research the relationship between educational inequality and the importance of sociological and geographical factors.
This paper discusses how gender inequality and state level openness are correlated to access education and health in India. This is of use because it discusses how factors such as gender inequality may also be connected with the reasons of why there is education inequality in developing countries.

This paper “examines how accessing the recently enacted right to education raises a range of justice concerns for mobile, and particularly transhumant pastoralist, children in India. It argues that provision of formal education reflects institutionalised patterns of economic discrimination and status inequality that deny such children what Nancy Fraser terms "participatory parity." This paper is will help me write my senior project because it discusses the sociological factors pertaining to educational inequity in India.

This study analyzes how gender inequality affects access to higher education, college experiences, and postcollegiate outcomes for those in the United States. It will be helpful in my senior project because it specifically examines the United States.

“Through an analysis of the association between education and beliefs about racial and gender inequality, this article explores for whom education is most likely to foster beliefs that challenge social inequality.” The study of this paper is helpful for my senior project because it discusses how educational inequality is perceived in the United States and how it reproduces rather than challenges social inequality.

This focuses on the differences and similarities between the United States and Norway's approaches to equalizing educational opportunity. This paper asks, “Is one model more successful than the other in providing equality of educational opportunity among youth from different socioeconomic backgrounds?” Using this article as part of my research for my senior project will be helpful for me because it studies the sociological factors regarding educational opportunity in the United
States. I can use this information to compare educational opportunity in India.

Singh, Ashish (2012). Inequality of Opportunity in Access to Primary Education among Indian Children (Population Review 51(1), Population Review Publications). This article discusses how "if a child’s access to education depends on circumstances such as caste, religion, gender, place of birth, or other parental characteristics, then it leads to disparity in access based on circumstances which are beyond the control of a child." Singh focuses on measuring the inequality and unequal access to primary education for children in India. His results suggest that due to varying geographical factors, there is a high level of inequality in educational opportunity. This article will be helpful to my project because it specifically addresses the region in which I am studying, India. It also supports my thesis that there is a substantive difference in educational equality in India compared to the United States.
INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2011, I completed an internship abroad in India for approximately five weeks for the non-governmental organization, Udayan Care. My internship consisted of being a volunteer for one of the orphanages in the organization as well as being an intern for the office. After volunteering and living in an all girls’ home ages 9-21 years in Greater Noida, India, I have had an experience that is very beneficial for majoring in Social Sciences. During my stay, I learned valuable experience about social work, international development, and how non-governmental organizations work.

Udayan Care is a registered Trust, working since 1994 for the care of disadvantaged children and women. Through the power of mentorship, the organization nurtures relationships that transform orphaned children in foster homes, disadvantaged girls in education scholarships, under-served youth and adults in vocational training centers, and children affected by HIV/AIDS through an outreach program.

Within this organization, I had the opportunity of carrying duties in the home such as helping children with their studies and homework, planning and teaching
extracurricular activities, and being a mentor. In the office, I helped design and conduct research on possible permanent mentorship programs.

When I started working with Udayan Care, my goals were to overall be a mentor to the children. I wanted to assist them with educational goals, life skills, and extracurricular activities. I also wanted to learn more about working with a non-governmental organization. I felt that I achieved all my goals, except for learning about the business side of working with a non-governmental organization. I realized that because I was only there for a month, there was not enough time to achieve the last part of my goals.

While working with Udayan Care, my objective was to attempt to create a sense of permanency and mentorship with the children through activities, programs, etc. I was asked by Udayan Care to create a permanency/mentorship survey for the children to answer. I also gave the girls at the home music lessons, helped them study for their exams, taught them to be more independent, and exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle. At the end of my time, I completed creating the survey and sent it to Udayan Care. I also believe the girls are more knowledgeable about music. I believe they understand more not to rely on the volunteers to do their schoolwork or other things, and to do it themselves. By the time I left, I noticed that more girls were beginning to exercise often than before.
At times, it was a challenge to cater to every child’s needs because many children lived in the home. I also found it difficult at times to gain access to basic resources. The working environment was at times difficult. Sometimes it was difficult to help the children because of lack of resources, such as school supplies, health needs, etc. On one occasion, I remember a little girl, Aarti, who constantly had trouble completing her assignments because neither she nor the other girls in the orphanage had the supplies to do so. Aarti, being the youngest girl in the home at the age of eight, especially needed guidance and encouragement in her life. I can recall a few times when I would frantically run to the nearest store to get random school supplies combined with nights when I would stay up till the latest hours of the dark, helping her with school projects as well pressuring her to do her homework with me as soon as she came home from school. Another girl, Papiya, would always ask one of the other volunteers if she could borrow her backpack and socks. After a week of this, we realized that she asked because she did not have these things, and we soon later on told her she could keep the things. Other times it was difficult to do business work for the organization because of lack of resources such as the Internet, power, etc. All of this was overcome later on as I learned more and overcame my challenges. To overcome these problems, I realized that I could not help every girl at once, and learned how to manage time wisely. Regarding resources, I learned more about the surroundings I lived in and researched on my own and the help of other volunteers to locate places and things.
It was empowering to see how crucial it was for the girls to do well in school because for most of them, having an education is the only thing that can bring a positive influence in their lives. Being in a country that is very culturally different than the United States, I found that this could be especially challenging for females to be motivated to do well. As I have learned from the organization, “The situation of girls’ education in India is appalling especially for girls from the economically weaker sections of society. Lack of funds, lack of informed choices and ingrained cultural practices deprive them of education. While some initiatives are being taken towards improving primary and secondary education for girls, very little is being done to enable girls to achieve higher education (Udayan Care, 2012). Yet, at Udayan Care, the organization emphasized how every child (female or male) should be ensured the right to an education, mentoring and nurturing them towards a life of independent decision-making and economic independence. Although I stayed for a short period of time, I could see that Udayan Care’s efforts make a difference in these girls’ lives. One bright girl that deeply influenced me was Seema, a 17-year old who became orphaned when she was six. As Seema discussed her future plans with me, she said, “I will go to the university and get a degree in Politics. I have so much love for my country and I have seen that India has parts that are corrupt, but there are people who are doing good and who are doing the best they can so that all of India can grow and prosper. I want be one of these people.”
Working with Udayan Care has completely changed my perspective on life in a positive way. Educationally, emotionally, and personally, I learned very much from working with this organization and living in the children’s home. As I returned to my hometown with many lasting experiences, I also returned with many questions. After living somewhere culturally different from where I originated, I was curious about the disparity of education inequality among different countries. I wanted to examine the differences between education inequality in India, a fast-developing country, and the United States, a country that has been stable for many years. Why is there educational inequality in these countries and is there a relationship between it and sociological and geographical factors?
The existence of education inequality is a significant political and social issue in many regions of the world. Attempts to shrink this problem have recently become more important as there has been an urge from society to reform it. An argument constantly brought forth regarding this issue is the notion that “education reproduces rather than challenges social inequality” (Kane & Kyyrö, 2001: 710). The purpose of this study is analyze educational inequality in two culturally, socially, and geographically different countries – India and the United States – to examine the sociological, economical, and geographical factors that correlate with this problem.

With a population of over 1 billion people, the Republic of India is a vast landmass containing a distinct history, geography, and culture. This country contains a variety of ethnic groups, languages, and religions that create its rich cultural diversity. India is one of the most populated countries, surpassing the United States and second to China. In 2007, the literacy rate in India for males was 76.9%, while it was 54.5% for females (Encyclopedia Brittanica, 2012). As shown, there is a sizable gap between the two categories. Factors that seem to characterize educational inequality in India are socio-cultural, gender, and geographical. As discussed in the paper, *Inequality of Opportunity in Access to Primary Education among Indian Children* by Ashish Singh, “it is important to note that India is one of the most diverse nations, due to caste, religion, region, and language. When there is a large amount of diversity...there is bound to be disparity in outcomes such as educational attainment in children belonging to different socio-economic groups”
The Caste system in India is a type of social stratification that has been a part of this country's history through ancient times to today. The lowest of the classes are known as the “Scheduled castes” or “Scheduled tribes.” In education, there have been many reports and studies of how children from this caste suffer from many disadvantages such as being discriminated by teachers and fellow students. There are instances where Scheduled castes’ and Scheduled tribes’ children are forced to sit outside or separately from other students at school with their notebooks and other materials not touched by teachers. Also, teachers’ behaviors tend to “…humiliate students belonging to Scheduled castes with a number of Upper caste teachers having low expectations of Lower caste students in addition to considering them dull and uneducable” (Singh, 2012). This treatment of behavior has a significant effect on the low education attainment in children belonging to these social groups. Today, there is still a considerably large gap between children attending school belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and General Castes (Singh, 2012). Another subtype of India’s socio-cultural factors is religion. The presence of many religions in a vast country creates diversity and at the same time, negative conflict in certain topics. In India, “…Muslim” children have tended to fall behind "Hindus" and "Christians" in access to basic governmental services including education (Desai and Kulkarni 2008; Government of India 2006)” (Singh, 2012). In addition, the traditional roles of the ‘family’ in India play an important role in education inequality. Learning from parents (parental education) has been shown to be crucial in the overall development of a child. According to Singh, “There are many channels through which parents affect the attainments of...
their children: cognitive ability, formation of beliefs and skills, family culture and investment, genetic transmission of native ability, instillation of preferences and aspirations, or provision of social connection” (2012). If the parent(s) believe(s) that education is important, there is a greater chance that the child will have access to education. Sociological studies support this theory, finding that family background is the most significant factor in a child’s educational success.

Gender and gender attitudes in India also affect educational attainment of children. As shown In the Census of India, only 16 percent women in India study up to class 10 and only 4.5 percent of graduates in India are women (Udayan Care, 2012). “There is ample evidence of female children being neglected by their family in comparison to the male children when it comes to education and other basic facilities (Das Gupta 1987; Miller 1981; Singh, Hazra and Ram 2008)” (Singh, 2012). Relating back to India’s history and traditional cultural values, gender inequality is defined as the inequality in women’s access to education and health and has been a continuously negative issue. “The mobility of women, particularly in many parts of South Asia, is limited as young girls and women are often expected to take responsibility of the household duties and men are expected to be the earners of the family,” thus displaying that social and cultural expectations play a role in the existence education inequality (Arora, 2012: 148). Lastly, India's geographical boundaries correlate with the educational attainment for children. Geographically, “...whether a child is born into a rural or an urban area affects his/her chances of getting admitted to a good school, and other services, for example, access to electricity and safe drinking water. This happens because the provision for these basic services is much
This is also proven in the disparity in literacy rates between states of this country. Kerala, a state that is mostly urbanized, has the highest rate with most of its population literate, while Bihar is opposite, with its proportion at around half (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2012). Generally in urban areas, there are higher rates for women attaining a higher education. According to the Census of India, 23 percent of girls in urban India clear class 10 and 8.7 percent of girls in urban India complete graduation, both percentages higher than it would be in rural regions (Udayan Care, 2012). Again, history takes a role in with geographical factors in that the elites or the upper castes perceived the lower castes and those living in rural areas to be criminal. With this in mind, the Indian government along with the elites paid less attention to providing basic institutions such as education for these regions (Dyer, 2010: 307-310).

Recently, the Department of Education in India has stated “priority has been given to an expansion in elementary and community education as well as in education for girls” (Europa World, 2012). Due to the low percentage of that only 50 percent of all children in India have complete access to primary education, the Government of India recently enacted the “Right to Education Act” effective April 1, 2010 with its “…promise [for] free and compulsory education to all children 6 to 14 years of age” (Singh, 2012). This act shows that the government of India’s focus to investing in its future and its continuing efforts provide equal education for all children.
With its more progressive practices, the United States seems to have a more advanced intake on handling education inequality than in India. In the United States, public secondary and elementary education is free and accessible to everyone and is provided by the local governments. This country also has a higher literacy rate, exceeding 95 percent. The United States attempts to create diverse strategies to address educational needs for all people, such as “...preschool programs, classes in the community, summer and night schools, additional facilities for exceptional children, and programs aimed at culturally deprived and disaffected students” (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2012). It seems that one of the most important reasons why the United States and India have different rates of educational inequality is that cultural expectations are different between the two. In the United States, the “American Dream” in which freedom means the opportunity for success and that social mobility is not achieved through status, plays a role in how important education is to our society. For example, “for many students, the “choice” to continue to and complete higher education is not really a choice at all; it is self-evident and has been both expected of them and internalized as natural, to the extent that deviation from the path becomes nearly unthinkable (Grodsky and Riegle-Crumb 2010)” (Reisel, 2011: 263). It is considered a ‘norm’ for everyone in to go through at least high school; the institution of education has become embodied in the minds of all types of social groups in the United States. In this country, the educational opportunities an individual achieves along with that person’s social background continues to be a vital characteristic through college and on. Another socio-cultural influence on educational inequality that is very different from the
country of India’s is gender. In the United States, women are accepted and play a crucial role in social development, education, and the workforce. There have been many studies that show examples of how “the improved status of women...lead to higher economic growth and reduction in poverty. Female education and better health is linked to many other positive developments such as lower fertility rates, lower child mortality, better education of children” (Arora, 2012: 160). In India, discrimination against the female begins when she is born, leading to the ultimate low social status, and economic outcomes of women (Aora, 2012: 149).

Furthermore, in the United States, there are more opportunities for students to learn more about women’s roles in society. According to Klein (1984) and Freeman (1975), “education increases women’s support for feminism. [They suggest] that education raises women’s expectations and creates a sense of relative deprivation, leading them to support feminism,” (Jacobs, 1996: 176).

With differing socio-cultural factors, there is a wide disparity of education inequality between India and the United States. Although both countries have developed new strategies towards eliminating this issue, there are still many concerns for both countries to face. Gender and social inequality continue to be present in India and the United States and “to enable both men and women to partake in global integration, reduction in gender inequalities, therefore, requires a social transformation which takes place through change in deep-rooted attitudes beginning at the family level” (Arora, 2012: 160). Increasing awareness of these issues and providing more equal and basic social services to all social groups are plans that both countries are engaging in today. As Hout and Dohan (1996) discuss,
“there are essentially two paths to equalizing educational opportunities; one is through expansion of the education system so that more students can attend...the other path goes through educational and social reform, where government provisions reduce income inequality, equalize living conditions, and reduce direct costs of education, which in turn reduces barriers that students from less privileged families may face in their educational careers” (Reisel, 2011: 262).

Furthermore, with the ‘dominant group’ in the sense of dominant caste, racial, economic, social, etc., emphasizing formal education can help reduce negative attitudes between different groups and ease intergroup tensions. According to Kane and Kyyro in (2001), For Whom Does Education Enlighten? Race, Gender, Education, and Beliefs about Social Inequality,

“the pattern of education’s association with beliefs about inequality varies across social groups. This pattern is consistent with the claim that group interests must be taken into account in understanding the role of education in shaping social change. Education may indeed have the power to “enlighten,” but we must be careful to specify for whom” (729).

Equalizing or reforming education policies in both countries can help level an individual’s life chances regardless of their gender, ethnicity, birthplace, family background, etc.
SENIOR PROJECT: THE SEESAW PROJECT

My senior project was a process consisting of two parts. The first half was researching education inequality in India to gain a better understanding of what I experienced from my internship and from the knowledge I learned in my major’s classes. For the second part of my senior project, I wanted to incorporate my experience interning abroad for the non-profit organization “Udayan Care” in India. During my stay, the other volunteers and I noticed that especially there was always a scarcity of basic necessities and school supplies. Returning to college in the fall, I could not help comparing the importance of education here and in India. I became interested in education inequality and its factors as well as how to spread the message of how important it is to influence a positive change in one’s own environment as well as the world. I decided that I wanted to create some type of fundraiser to raise money for school supplies for the orphanages sponsored by Udayan Care.

SOCS 461

When I began the first course of my senior project (SOCS 461) at Cal Poly, I was advised to contact a group of people who wanted to start a project that had similar objectives to mine. This group was known as “The S.e.e.s.a.w. Project” with the acronym meaning, “Student Success Ensures Student Access Worldwide,” The Seesaw Project’s mission is to “address the needs of underserved students, classrooms and schools by providing basic educational supplies.” Student volunteers in the Seesaw Project (a.k.a. “sponsoring students”) participate in a type
of academic sponsorship program would raise these funds. “Similar in concept to a walk-a-thon, when students participate in an athletic event and ask their families to pledge a donation for each lap they accomplish, this program invites students to strive for academic excellence — and to ask their family, friends, and community members to support their efforts by pledging to contribute donations based on the grades they earn — and every dollar will buy school supplies for children in need” (The Seesaw Project). In return, the recipient students engage in a classroom or school beautification project at their teacher or organization’s discretion, thus ‘earning’ their school supplies (as a way of ‘paying it forward’ and lessening any likelihood of dependence). Also, by participating in this type of “seesaw effect,” each student would be working towards a positive change in the world, further establishing long-term, sustainability. This practice shows both sponsoring and recipient students the importance of maintaining that positivity by continuing to give back to others. Along with the orphanage, Happy Kids, from Ghana, West Africa, I was fortunate to have The Seesaw Project invite Udayan Care’s children as their recipient students.

During my first quarter of working with the Seesaw Project, the four of us focused on elaborating on our mission and what are definitive goals would be. Ultimately, the Seesaw Project would like to gain non-profit status, and we realized that there would be many steps into getting to this goal. We researched how we first have to establish ourselves at Cal Poly by becoming a club, then an independent student organization, and then ultimately a non-profit organization. We decided that our goals were to include that “the disparity between schools’ means is bridged
and balanced in a sustainable manner, all children have access to basic school supplies and necessities, sponsoring students recognize their desire for and ability to create positive social change, recipient students feel a sense of connection to their goals and their ability to achieve them, and that all students increase their sense of solidarity and community among all participating students. To further personify the project and to promote sustainability, I introduced a Skype mentorship program to encourage communication between the students and to promote cross-cultural education and personal connections. Using the thriving non-profit organization Infinite Family’s concept on mentorship as our framework, we created a similar type of program. With the establishment of long-term nurturing relationships, our project’s goal is to develop young people into “fully contributing members of their country’s sustainable, developing society.” Our hope is to enhance the literacy, problem-solving, decision-making, technological, and interpersonal skills. The Seesaw Project’s vision is to inspire and motivate children who have a limited support network and to encourage them to make a positive impact on a global and local perspective. Near the end of our quarter, we began spreading our name on campus by giving presentations about our project in our classes and many sociology classes as well. We established that at the beginning of the next quarter, we would hold an information meeting for those that were interested in the project from the class presentations.

SOCS 462

The next quarter of my senior project (SOCS 462) began with our discussion of delegating titles for our board. Establishing roles helped us realize
who and what we needed in order to become a club on campus. We also continued
to make in-class and club presentations and had our first informational meeting to
the public. Because we are still not an established club on campus, we were
fortunate to umbrella under the Social Sciences Club at Cal Poly. Under their name,
we reserved a lecture room at school and sent emails, made club announcements,
and classroom announcements to those interested in the project. Although it was a
small turnout, we gained much insight from our first meeting from other students.
We discussed the benefits and implications of starting a bank account, especially
because we had limited starting funds. We also researched how much it cost for
basic school supplies and video cameras for computers in India and Ghana to help
us establish how much our monetary goal should be. During this time, we discussed
how our goals were to gain at least 50 sponsoring students, 5-10 students to
participate in the mentorship program, and at least 10 students to help us become a
club on campus (the minimum amount of people has to be eight). We believed
that each student would be able to pledge at least $10 of donations, so our goal would be
$500 in the end, with $250 going to each organization. We discussed more ways of
how to publicize our project. From here, the Seesaw Project created:

A logo:

an email account (thesseesawproject@gmail.com)
a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thesseesawproject)
and a website (www.thesseesawproject.org)
We also began talking to other clubs and organizations on campus that would like to support this effort.

Due to time constraints, we realized that due to many factors, new achievable goals had to be made. My final goals were to give more presentations to students/clubs/classes up until June 1\textsuperscript{st}, have at least two more officer meetings to discuss ways to publicize the project and our goals for the summer/next year, downsize our monetary goal to $250, find students to further this project next year and those who are committed into making the Seesaw Project an established student organization, find new ways to publicize and fundraise, and to continue to keep in touch with my organization, Udayan Care.

We decided to begin the mentorship program in the fall quarter of 2012, to hopefully gain more interested students and to further research how to create a successful type of program. We discussed how to get in touch with local businesses in San Luis Obispo to help us publicize our project such as KCOY and SLO Life Magazine as well as on campus, such as the Mustang Daily. On May 30 and 31, 2012, the Seesaw Project held a school supplies drive at Cal Poly to further promote our name. With many students moving away for the summer and graduating, this was a great opportunity for those to contribute like-new or new school supplies, with all donations will be distributed to local schools in need. This was a great opportunity for Cal Poly students to learn more about the project and how to get involved. We also established an online fundraising campaign that will continue until the end of
summer. Realizing that there should be a simple, easy, and quick way to donate money, we created a donation page at www.gofundme.com/theseesawproject.

With the school supplies drive, we were able to receive a sizable amount of school supplies to donate to local schools in San Luis Obispo, and we are continuing to receive more throughout the next couple of weeks.

At the online donation page, we managed to gain $175 in one week. We decided to raise our goal to $450 and will continue to ask for donations until the end of June. Another effort that is currently in progress is for us to hold a benefit auction. We are currently collecting donations to be part of a local fundraising auction, which will take place this fall. Each donated item will be part of the auction event, and 100% of funds received will then be used to purchase school supplies for students who desperately need them. This event will also be an awareness-raising effort, with an opportunity for the public to learn more about the children in our schools, and our efforts to support them in their basic educational needs.

With all these efforts in progress, the Seesaw Project is excited to see what will become of this simple idea in the future. Our current are to have a solid group of people who want to further our mission, to create a club for us on campus, and to think of ways for the recipient students to “pay it forward.” I have learned that this
project has not only motivated me academically, but personally as well. I have realized that this project is more than a senior project to me, and it is something that cannot be finished in a matter of two quarters. Although I am graduating, I look forward to continue working with the Seesaw Project in the future.
REFLECTION

As I have now finished the courses, SOCS 461 and SOCS 462, I have gained much insight from my senior project at an academic and personal level. Academically, I have learned about the process of what it takes to become an established organization, specifically non-profit. I have taken many sociology, anthropology, and geography courses in my college career and by completing this internship and senior project, all the information I learned from these classes became more understandable to me. I was able to understand the issues concerning international development and of how to make ideas into long-lasting, sustainable efforts. As I told peers, family, friends, professors, and others about my experiences in India and with the Seesaw Project, it was more influential telling them my personal stories than to just read off a typical list of my goals and objectives. Working on this type of senior project allowed me to grow as an individual. Through these last six months of many struggles and achievements, I learned the limits of myself such as being able to express myself, of how to work well with others, and of how much I can influence others. This is where I learned that personally, I have come to the realization that it is our moral obligation as being part of the human society to make the world a better place. Working with Udayan Care helped me gain the understanding of family through a different perspective and allowed me to appreciate mine even more. Asmani, one of the children I cared for at the home, inspired me very deeply, so much that I call her my little sister as she calls me “didi” or big sister. Joining the orphanage six years ago at the age of nine years old, Asmani, a child from West Bengal, has called Udayan Care her home.
She has loved and appreciated everything the organization has offered her and although they all come from different areas and backgrounds, she calls the girls her true family. As she said, “the meaning of family does not necessarily mean the people who are blood-related to you. They are the people who are always there for you, who care about you and love you, and will do anything for you.” I felt very fortunate to be considered part of her family and I hope that I influenced her as she has influenced my life. I wanted to take part in The Seesaw Project because I wanted to give back to these girls and to the organization that I learned so much about in India. By promoting this project to my school, I want to show others the importance of how different other parts of the world are and to be able to understand, accept, and make positive changes outside of our small, social worlds. I’ve realized that in order for others to truly step outside their comfort zones, one must be able to capture them by connecting them with a story they can relate to.


