

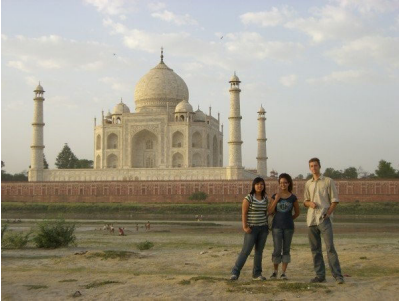
Student's Research Adventure - 2007



Trahern Jones - Volunteering for the International Alliance for the Prevention of Aids (IAPA)



This summer found me in **Chennai, India**, volunteering with the student-run organization IAPA, short for the **International Alliance for the Prevention of AIDS**. Our objective was simple: to disseminate a secular, fact-based education about the HIV virus, the AIDS epidemic, and the steps that people can take to protect themselves from contracting this poorly-understood syndrome.



In our way stood a variety of obstacles, most apparently that of the language and culture gaps. Fortunately, we were blessed with a host of Indian counterpart volunteers and partner NGO's, who could help us tackle communication problems and educational conservatism both inside and out of the classroom.



Throughout the summer, we toured a wide range of schools, colleges, businesses, slums, churches, and children's and young adults' programs, as well as lent a hand to our partner NGO's, serving as teachers and volunteers at orphanages and hospices. Our work reminded us that, despite the growing threat of this dangerous pandemic, despite the challenges to international cooperation and cross-cultural partnership, despite all the odds, hope springs eternal:



I'll never forget shaking hands with children born on train platforms, who now attend English-medium schools in clean, starched uniforms, a burden of new books in their backpacks; I'll never forget the conversations with my students after lectures, explaining to them how it felt to cross the world, and realizing myself, as if for the first time, why I had done so in the first place; and I'll never forget all of those faces, the kids, the parents, the teachers, and the volunteers, who did so much, who changed the world, in some small way, for all of us that summer.



[Undergraduate](#)^[1]

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