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Over the course of four months, between January and May 2018, the IHP Spring 2018 Social Innovation cohort embarked on a learning journey that took them to four countries: United States, Uganda, India and Brazil. They visited over 40 social enterprises and organizations, spending countless hours learning about worlds otherwise unknown.

We realize that without our partners this powerful educational experience would not be possible. In appreciation, we present to you IHP SEN Magazine.

Its contents include feature stories, photo essays, food and music journeys, blogs, and reflections produced by the students during the semester. IHP SEN MAG is a publication that critically reflects on the challenges facing citizens and social innovators around the world, and our Spring 2018 edition includes students’ exploration of local issues and the innovative ways in which organizations attempt to foster inclusive practices and bring about lasting social change.
Introduction: The SEN 4.0 Journey

Ella Scheepers & Kasey Armstrong

As we have done for most of this journey, we would like to begin with a metaphor. A Polynesian canoe metaphor. At our end of semester retreat in Ilhabela, Brazil we launched into the water. In teams of 6 we had to navigate rhythm, speed, team work, tides, wind, different personalities and leadership styles, joy, fear, bravery and much more. And we were invited to see this as a metaphor for our IHP trip... so we did.

Beginning at Launch in San Francisco we met our cohort of 12 humans for the first time: Reyhan, Emma, Arthur, Becca, Carmela, Sanne, Claire, Paige, Marianna, Betty, Ashley and Cindy. We had no idea how this unique combination of people would take shape. We were amazed at the diversity of the group; 11 different universities, majors from business to neuroscience to fashion design to human rights, a complexity of countries, cultures and languages. We watched and learned as they wove together their differences to build a formidable team based on rich, deep connections with one another and with us.

On the ocean, as we pulled through the water trying to find a single rhythm; we learned “to think like an organism” and find harmony. In the canoes that day and throughout the IHP journey we drew on our learning community - and our values of inclusivity, diversity, and respect - to navigate the unpredictable waters.

As we learned to paddle together in rhythm, we were aware that the team inside the canoe was just as important as the canoe itself. The canoes were designed with care and expertise, much like the IHP experience. Each canoe had a seasoned guide orchestrating our navigation of the waters. With Ansely in San Francisco, Martha in Uganda, Abid ji in India and Gabriel in Brazil, we were expertly guided through each country. The country teams, as well as the SIT staff from afar, kept us safe on choppy waters, motivated us to maintain our momentum, and encouraged us to pause and take stock of the magnificent view.

On our experiential journey, interactions and exchanges with many partner organisations and individuals deepened and enriched our learning. Without them we would have been sitting in the canoe staring at the ocean from the shore without getting our feet wet. Instead we were immersed, thrown deep into a network of knowledge, creativity, and passion that inspired and challenged us.

Returning to shore we found ourselves filled with gratitude; for one another as a cohort, for the sturdy canoes, for our expert guides and for the unpredictable and beautiful waters. Ending with canoeing gave us insight and clarity into all the aspects of the IHP experience.
Throughout the trip the students reflected in different ways on their journey; from heritage maps with their amazing home stays families, to photo essays of food journeys, to academic essays. SEN Mag is a small window into their thoughtful and thought-provoking work.

Final barbecue in Brazil with Home Stay families, May 2018
Chapter 1

San Francisco
Hello everyone! Ah! What a week it’s been. I can’t believe that it’s been a week already, and that at the same time it has only been one week. Also, how is it already February?! I am so excited to be able to write about my experiences again and share them with all of you. To remind everyone, I am on a 4-month study abroad journey with an International Honors Program (IHP) that has begun in San Francisco, California for our 2-week launch. We will be headed to Kampala, Uganda next week for a month, and then to New Delhi, India for 5 weeks, and Sao Paulo, Brazil for 5 weeks. The program is a social innovation program studying entrepreneurship, design, and technology. Our program is an experiential learning-based program which means we will be doing a lot of our learning by doing, rather than just spending time in a classroom.

I landed in San Francisco last Sunday and met some of the people on my program right away in the airport. We traveled to our “classroom” spot and met the rest of the people on our program after getting some lunch. In total, there are 12 students on the program. We are mainly from different places along the east coast, however we have a student from Myanmar and a student from the Netherlands. Also, fun fact, there is only one male in our group. God Bless him. We also have 2 faculty members that will be traveling with us the entire time. We have our trustee’s fellow, Kasey,
who is basically a trip leader/mentor, and Ella, our professor that will teach two of our classes. We will be taking 4 classes during our travels. They are (1) Social Entrepreneurship in a Global Comparative Context, (2) Design Thinking and Development, (3) Technology, Change, and Innovation, and (4) Anthropology and Social Change. Here in San Francisco we also have our launch coordinator, Ansley, and our program director, Katy. We will only be with Ansley in San Francisco, but we will see Katy again in India and near the end of our time in Brazil.

We spent the majority of Sunday afternoon becoming familiar with all of our materials for the San Francisco portion of the program and learning more about what IHP is. IHP programs have been around for quite a long time and just recently joined in a partnership with the School for International Training (SIT) and World Learning. Each program looks at a different topic, some of the others include Climate Change, Food Security, and Health and Community. Prior to this day I did not realize what a legacy IHP has and how important its alumni network is. We learned that a lot of the experiential learning portion of our program involves going on site visits to learn about different organizations and how the work they are doing relates to social innovation. Unlike Lehigh, we do not have class every day or always at the same day. Some days we may have two site visits and a guest lecturer and another day a site visit and a class. In case you’re wondering how meals work while were in San Francisco, we were given a stipend to cover all meal expenses enabling us to explore different restaurants or go to the grocery store and cook in our hostel.

Early Sunday evening we traveled to Point Montara, about an hour drive outside of SF, for a 2-day orientation/retreat. We stayed in a nice hostel that was right on the water. It was absolutely beautiful. These two days consisted of us all getting to know each other, learning about expectations of the program, what the program is and going through the syllabi for our courses. All of the people are actually great. We are all surprised by how normal everyone is.

Tuesday afternoon we traveled back to San Francisco and checked into our hostel. We stayed at the HI International Hosteling Center in an area of SF called the Tenderloin. We then went to Thumbtack for our first site visit. Thumbtack is a for-profit organization that connects professionals with people who are looking for their services. Whether you are looking for music lessons, dog training, personal trainers, or just about anything else Thumbtack is the place to go to. Thumbtack was
actually founded by an IHP Alum. While we were there we met Joan Tiffany, who is the Senior Director for all of the IHP programs. After the site visit we had an IHP Alumni Dinner at Thumbtack where alumni from the area came to talk to us and offer advice. It was really cool to see that people who have been on IHP programs years and years ago still came to this dinner.

Wednesday morning, we started out with a site visit to the Coalition on Homelessness, a non-profit that works towards advocating for policy change and education around the homeless population in San Francisco. A big portion of the homeless population in SF is where we are staying in the Tenderloin and it is not a secret that this is the case when walking around. The COH gave us a presentation about what they do and homelessness myths. Homelessness really began around the 1980s when there was a housing crisis and prices started to increase tremendously leading to the removal of a lot of people from their homes. I was stunned to find out that 40% of the homeless population is working. I learned that people can be fined by the police for sleeping, laying down, sitting and just hanging out. We were told that the conditions of shelters is far from decent. People are often encouraged to sleep on the streets for at least one night to push them up on the priority list to get access to a bed in a shelter. Pregnant women are not guaranteed a spot in a shelter until their third trimester. I could continue on, but needless to say, this visit opened my eyes to homelessness and the systemic efforts to alleviate this problem.

We then went on a neighborhood walking tour of the Tenderloin with a man named Del Seymour. A big part of the tour involved him showing us around a place called St. Anthonys, which offers free services that are integral to the livelihood of people experiencing homelessness in the area. They have a technology lab that allows people to come in and use the computers and WIFI. They also offer classes on smartphones. Across the street is a dining hall, intentionally not called a soup kitchen, for the community to use every day. They have a place where families can come and they will dress everyone from head to toe, a drug and alcohol center for people struggling with addiction and more. Right down the street is the Gubbio Project which is church that opens its doors for people to come in and sleep during the day.

Walking around with Del was quite an experience. He knows pretty much everyone. Every block that we turned on to people would stop and say hi, a car even pulled over to say hello. At the end of the tour Del revealed that he was homeless for 18 years and that he had been the areas biggest drug dealer. He is now the mayor of the Tenderloin, running education programs, and spending his days working towards helping those around him in need out of rock bottom. Talk about an inspiration.

After debriefing the morning, we had our first Social Entrepreneurship class which was taught by our wonderful program director, Katy. Normally this class will be taught by the local faculty in each country. This class was basically an introduction to what social entrepreneurship and social innovation is. Social innovation does have one clear definition
and can take on may forms, however at its core, social innovation is trying to address unmet social needs through ideas, actions, processes, systems and more that cuts across the public, private, and civil society sectors. Social entrepreneurship is a form of social innovation that works towards unmet social needs through organization and business. This work is not always positive and there are always losers involved which we will learn more about as the course continues.

Thursday morning began with a guest lecturer with Jack Beck. Jack was previously the San Francisco launch coordinator for an IHP program and has his own non-profit that works with connecting LBTQIA+ volunteers with local events. His lecture was on the Social Entrepreneurship landscape which basically ran us through what social entrepreneurship looks like for profits and nonprofits in SF and where they are able to get their funding from. He taught us about incubators and accelerators, foundations, B Corps, and more. We then had another guest lecturer, Dr. Morgan Ames, teach our first Technology, Change and Innovation class. Dr. Morgan Ames has done a lot of work with the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project and analyzing its success. The OLPC project had the goal of providing every child with one laptop and was focused on countries in Latin America and Africa. This project ended up doing more harm than good due to a lack of attention to the effects of putting a technology into a classroom with no instructions and the assumption that the technology will automatically enable learning. In class we learned about different technologies, aside from computers and the internet, and what was thought about their intended social impact.

After class we had the rest of the day to do whatever we wanted! We all went to lunch at a Mexican Restaurant and then spent the afternoon at Delores Park. We went to an ice cream shop on our walk back and I got earl grey and honey lavender ice cream. I’m sure you can imagine how delicious it was. That evening one of the girls, Becca, made squash soup and then I went to a yoga class. It was a lovely day.

I was feeling a bit under the weather on Friday, so the day dragged on. We visited Impact Hub which is a B-Corporation that is a big space that allows organizations and businesses with a social focus to use their space for a spot to work and to collaborate with others. Using their space requires membership and they host events for their members and the community. We had lunch there which was brought in by Farming Hope. Farming Hope originally started as a funded project through two students that went to Stanford. They hire people experiencing homelessness to help them with farming, gardening, and catering. We then went to Mission Asset Fund for another site visit. Mission Asset Fund is a non-profit that offers financial stability to low-income families in the community through lending circles and credit building. They also offer services to assist with Visa applications and work with the DACA programs.
After the site visits we headed back to the classroom to work on our case study questions. For our social entrepreneurship class we will be researching organizations that aim to address one specific topic/theme in Uganda and India. We found out what theme we will focus on and who we will be working with, and then started brainstorming broad questions we are interested in focusing on. I will be studying education. We ended the day with a debrief of everything we did throughout the week and then had the rest of the night to ourselves.

We have the weekends to ourselves to explore and do whatever we’d like. We took full advantage of this and had a great day on Saturday. A bunch of us took a bus across the Golden Gate Bridge to Sausalito. We got lunch, explored the city, went kayaking, had ice cream and then walked across the Golden Gate Bridge. Sausalito and the bridge were just as beautiful as they are talked up to be. We took a bus back to the marina area and went out for dinner at a nice pizza place. We had to wait over an hour for a table, but I promise it was worth it. We ended the day going to the movies to see Call Me By Your Name. If anyone is looking for a good movie to watch in theaters, I highly recommend it. It was a beautiful film that left me crying like a baby at the end.

Sunday was just as nice as Saturday. We got acai bowls for breakfast. There is an Asian museum that is very close to our hostel that has free admission the first Saturday of every month. They had a Korean fashion exhibit, so we made sure we checked that out. I then met up with a friend, Kris, who graduated from Lehigh and is now studying at Berkeley. We grabbed lunch and went to Lands End, which is a beautiful park that has a beach and Golden Gate views. It was very nice to see a familiar face. I really love how the city, the ocean, hiking, and beaches are all so close to each other in San Francisco. I, of course, had to watch the superbowl. Luckily, the bar in our hostel was playing it, so a few of us hung out there and watched it. It was a great game in my opinion, especially the halftime show. We grabbed dinner at an Ethiopian restaurant and caught up on reading.

This post was a little wordy and I still feel like I left so much out. We are doing and taking in so much, so I found it quite difficult to break it down. I am feeling appreciative, blessed, curious, and excited for the weeks to come. I have been talking about this trip for so long that it doesn’t feel real that it’s actually happening. Thank you all for reading!!!
Chapter 2

UGANDA

“Listen, think, act” ~ Raymond, Entusi Resort and Retreat Center
Every day we consume to satisfy a need or desire, often overlooking a past that has shaped our palettes. Food for Thought is part of a greater body of research into the history of black women’s servitude in the African diaspora and its entanglement with contemporary notions of food privilege, resistance, and power. Historically, women of color have been entrapped in service positions because of social injustices, such as aggressive stereotypes, hierarchies of the colonizer, his bourgeois white family, and the integration of the black nanny figurine into American households and “American Food”.

The black experience has its roots in the kitchens of old masters, roots that made what little was available in the fridge or affordable at the market, work for them in the face of hardships. Both yesteryear and today display white America’s readiness to accept black America’s food with open mouths, equal promptness in ignoring the labor which enables their consumption. With a system built to work against the progress of people of color food became a conduit for establishing identity, making this the crux of my focus.

Elisabeth Grosz describes our bodies as, “‘inscriptive surfaces’ on which ‘values, norms and commitments’ are written.” This act can be physically conquering, objectifying and limiting the subject’s natural instinct to respond through emotion. The service sector that exists today is a result of centuries of these hindrances. It has grown into a performance of its own; with costumes, characters, and a stage set. But as I will explore black female service workers are not the protagonist nor antagonist, they’re instead round characters, well developed and dynamic with food as their confidante.

(This photo essay has been adapted for IHP SEN MAG and does not appear in original form)
“Matoke is so passionate for us especially in our culture. Any Ugandan girl must know how to prepare matoke.”

- Henrietta Kikambi
PART II
PUTTING A FACE TO GRACE

“I do the juice Grace (house help, ABOVE) does the food – the matoke – and Molly (daughter) supports. We work as a team.”

PART III
GENDERED INFLUENCES

“The kind of toys they buy for you as a girl; little plates, little saucepans, and the games you do, have to do with cooking. The roles you find yourself doing as a girl are to do with the kitchen and you find that the boys are into other things.”
“Our native cuisine was more healthy — the fries, you wouldn't have fries. Most of what has come from colonialism is you can fry this (food) and its oily (starch). If you go back to our own its natural (she emphasized how many native dishes are steamed).”
Arthur Parens

As an outsider’s first glance, soccer or football (as referred to in Uganda and surrounding countries) may look like a recreational or extra curricular activity for locals. But for many it is much more. Football is known as the most widely played sport in the world, as well as most widely played sport in Uganda. Uganda’s football history reflects the intense and embedded love it has for the game and the many different blessings, teachings, cohesion, and the opportunities it brings. To people of Uganda, football is not just a game, but a lifestyle.

Football as community

Junior is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. I met Junior at YARID (Youth African Refugees Integral Development) where he is a counselor and teacher. However, these are not the only hats Junior wears; he is also one of the football coaches for the youth football team at YARID. While speaking to Junior about his passions and his past, I was fortunate enough to hear his astonishing story about how he found YARID and how it changed his life. Junior was chased out of DR Congo to Uganda by political upheaval, leaving with no family, no friends, and only the things he could carry. He arrived in Uganda with very little. He told me, “I found my life again right over there” as he points at the soccer field about 200 yards from where we stood. Junior went to that soccer field every single day until he met a football team full of...
Ugandans, being taught by a Congolese coach, who only spoke Lingala. “I was the only one who spoke Lingala, so it gave me a chance to translate for my new teammates”. From then on Junior had a community and family that he felt apart of. It gave him purpose and drive to pursue what makes him happy, which is bettering others lives through social work and football. He found life and relief through a ball and a community that accepted and embraced him.

Football as connection

I was walking down Buganda Road with my fellow classmates, when we turned a corner and were engulfed by the most beautiful brown, dirty, filthy, broken looking football pitch I had ever seen. Every type of body was there participating: big, small, fat, skinny, old, young. We stopped and watched for a bit. I asked a man wearing no shoes, a cut off tee shirt, a purple cap, lounging under a tree about the game. He did not turn me away, he did not talk AT me, he spoke to me with genuine intent, appreciation and respect. Not for me, but for the game.

Connections like this can be sparked from the briefest interactions. An interaction that can be positive or negative. Either way, the interaction has creates a bond between two beings. Football has the power to spark interaction.

Football as family

I had the pleasure of interviewing Jesus, our driver, about his life. On our way back from a site visit, I bombarded Jesus with questions of his family, heritage, life aspirations, and what he truly loved. His response was beautiful. What Jesus truly loved was his wonderful wife, Milly, his two beautiful daughters, Lillian and Linnet, and finally football and Manchester United. I was planning on asking him more questions about his life aspirations and the history of his family, but we digressed into a serious conversation about Alexis Sanchez—Manchester United’s new big signing—and how he will change United’s history. I also found out that Jesus idolized and favored the infamous footballer, Cristiano Ronaldo. We talked about Cristiano
Ronaldo’s history, especially when he played for Manchester United. I learned a lot through my direct queries, but I learned more through our discussion of football.

**Conclusion**

Football, Fútbol, or soccer has no lens. Racism, sexism, bigotry, and any sort of inequality or exclusion has no control or place in football. Football has no owner or master. This game has the power to bring together two human beings from opposite sides of the world, that don’t speak the same language, that share no commonalities.

Football is universal and holds the ability to create a community. Through my observations and interviews I have been able to watch the power of football change the trajectory of a person’s life, producing benefits and opportunities that were thought to be impossible. It has granted me cultural acceptance and inclusion by the Ugandan football community when they had no reason to except me. And football has created relationships that I hope to nurture, grow, and keep for many years to come. And if not, it gave me a moment of happiness and bliss that I will remember forever.

Football assists in the process of cultural inclusion, tying culture, lifestyle and ethnicities together and making all these differences irrelevant. Football is a universal language.
Behind Uganda’s Favorite Dishes: Photo Essay

Ashley Han

Who doesn’t like to eat good food? If you ask a foodie like me, thinking about what to eat is the most important decision I make every day. Food is an important part of culture and a way to express cultural identity. Each country and community’s unique cuisine reflects its unique history, lifestyle, values, and beliefs. Personally, I associate food from my childhood with memories that hold a special place in my heart. In times of stress and frustration, my mom’s food brings me the comfort and warmth that I need to get back up again.
Personally, I can’t think of a better way to explore Uganda’s culture than getting to know some of Ugandans favorite dishes. Whenever I go to a new country, I get excited about the new dishes that I get to try. Coming to Uganda, I had no idea what to expect. It’s impossible to leave Uganda without eating matoke, chapati, plantains, and stoney. In fact, when I asked seven members of my host family what their favorite food was, six answered Matoke!

Just passing the streets in Uganda, you can easily spot people making chapati. Up until now, I can’t count how many chapati I have eaten. When I was at a cultural show, I asked what were some of local favorite snacks, “Well, I guess you can say chapati is our favorite”. As someone who loves ginger ale, Stoney the local version and chapati made the show complete.

On neighborhood exploring day, I asked Trisha, my local guide, to take me to her favorite restaurant. Café Javas seemed like any other restaurant back in America with menus full of western dishes. But among those menus, she told me that the jerky chicken and the tilapia fish were her absolute favorites. Although quite pricy, Café Javas seemed like a place where a lot of college students go to hang out and do project work.

As I got to know my host family, food has definitely been an integral part. Whenever kids or I get back from school, a cup of fresh juice is waiting for all of us. I have personally never
encountered such a flavorful, yet rich juice made out of mangoes, avocados, passion fruit, and pineapples. I just love how the family can get together to talk about their day over a fresh drink.

Frida, my host mom, makes me so excited for every meal. Her conscious effort to incorporate veggies and find a nutritious balance have definitely been an inspiration. Her vegetable chicken dish was incredibly delicious yet light and fresh. Because Frida owns a bakery herself, she makes absolutely delicious cakes that are also healthy!

Weekend is definitely the time for the entire family to get together. Because our host father, George, comes back pretty late from work and Roger, a 16 year old, comes back from school around 9pm, it’s often really hard for the entire family to eat dinner together. But on Sundays, the entire family comes together to make brunch. Starting from garlic bread to Irish potatoes, all the hustle and laughter in the kitchen made this meal so special.

Just getting a sneak peek into what people enjoy eating in Uganda has shown me the value of family, the generosity, and the love of Uganda.
College could be vividly felt by all those who gathered—by all those who joined to participate and voice their concerns, as well as those who came as spectators. The Log, a loved restaurant nestled between the small-town of Williamstown, Massachusetts and Williams College, was at the center of a heated debate regarding the many symbols of colonialism that were embedded deeply in the structures and dynamics of the esteemed institution. A mural stretched across the room where the students were gathered, it showcased the problematic role that many older institutions like Williams College played in history and how that problematic role was represented visibly on campus. The mural depicted Colonel Ephraim Williams, the founder of Williams College, with Mohawk leader Theyanoguwin before they were both killed in the Battle of Lake George in 1755 (Huber, 2018). Many students’ concerns related to the the stereotypical way the mural portrayed Native Americans and how the image of Williams and Theyanoguwin misrepresented the relationships between the British and the Mohawks. Furthermore, it raised questions about the power structures existing within the school. Who decides how history will be depicted? What narratives are erased, and misrepresented? What interests are being prioritized within such neocolonial structures? How do systems of power remain within Williams and how do students exist within such systems?
Decolonization involves not only the literal end of colonial reign over territories throughout the world in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, but extends further into current existing structures and systems of power. It involves the dismantling of the deeply imbedded colonial legacies that have impacted a multitude of facets of life in the post colonial world. This includes the process of identifying symbols of colonial legacies and the subsequent discourses that attempt to engage the needs and concerns of the past and present. Colonialism and its consequences, have continued to be felt through out much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the form of well known challenges. From political insecurity, systematic racism, violent internal conflict, economic underdevelopment, to new forms of conflict and challenges involving the incarceration and killing of black bodies, environmental racism, and more.

Colonization and its consequences can also be seen in the narratives told of “Africa” and its needed saving. Many of these narratives involve “starving” children in need of Western intervention. In other cases the narratives depict countries within Africa as the “heart of darkness” (Conrad, 1995). These images demonstrate the nuanced ways that colonialism shaped visions of Africa. Such ideology and hegemony is argued to have devalued African creativity, agency, and value systems, leading to an “internalized sense of inadequacy” (Nyamnjoh,2012). The diverse levels that colonialism has touched current society, speaks volumes of how wrong those who “...were convinced that the impact of colonialism on our societies was mainly economic” (Mamdani) were.

Decolonization has involved conversations and efforts to remove explicit and implicit symbols of colonialism. In the U.S., it has involved the removal of murals such as the one located at Williams College, the changing of names of buildings that once commemorated the contributions of slave owners and colonists, and the numerous discourses surrounding the “right way” to preserve history. Decolonization has taken many shapes and forms, from former efforts to end slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, to more recently the Black Power Movement, Black Lives Matter Movement, Black Consciousness Movement, and Black Girl Magic.

The decolonization movement represents efforts to create a new world. A world cognizant of the marred history and oppressive impact former colonial rulings had on the world; while also aiming to dismantle the existing systems of power that continue the oppression of those formerly colonized. These visions of change take on different forms and address various issues, but all allude to one central notion and thirst for conscientious equality. and justice. These visions of a new world can be noted in the changes sought. One where racism is non-existent, either in overt or covert ways. Structures that provide resources equally accessible to all. Uncorrupt governments that fulfill their promises of representing the needs of all the people living within their nation. Visions of history books that tell more than a single story.

But there exist different visions. Just as there are those who envision a world without racism and remnants of the colonial legacy, there are those who benefit from the colonial legacy, who
argue that there was good that came from the oppression and massacre of thousands of people and subsequently the cross generational suffering of millions. What about economic progress? What about globalization? Also some argue that the removal of these symbols of colonialism is an erasure of history, by removing these objects we are ending the opportunity for discourse.

When it comes to addressing these problems, it is clear that these different visions influence the manner in which social innovators and entrepreneurs are working in postcolonial countries. Looking at the Millennium Development Villages (MVP) Project, the project itself exudes the presumptuous nature of many projects or organizations started by foreign entities. Jeffrey Sachs, an esteemed economist, developed and started the project expecting the program to be able to sustain itself afterwards. Unfortunately, the results of the project were disappointing to say the least. Many of the programs, without the support of foreign aid, were unsustainable and thus essentially discontinued. Although, the project has been “completed,” those perviously in charge are not held responsible for the potential challenges MVP may continue face. The role of power within ideas of development is key. The fact that those involved in establishing MVP imposed their solutions and left without adequately considering the impact, underlines the role of power structures and hints at new forms of colonialism. For those social innovators and entrepreneurs who intend to enter spaces not of their own, its important to examine their positionality, the lenses through which they view such spaces, the ethics behind their actions, and the subsequent impact they may be having on such communities.

Similarly, social innovators and entrepreneurs belonging to certain communities should still be mindful of who they are in relation to the community they are serving, especially when considering the power they yield in terms of allocating resources in certain areas and not in others. Entusi Resort demonstrates this sort of approach. Despite all of its employees being a part of the community they serve, much of what they do involves constant communication between community ambassadors and other resort team members. As a result, solutions are being developed by those in the community and not by a select few. Ultimately, through this approach of engagement and collective problem-solving, social innovators and entrepreneurs are able to dismantle new systems of oppression, involving privilege that come from post-colonial structures of power. Similarly, they avoid creating new neocolonial structures by not using power to impose “solutions”.
In conclusion, despite the volumes of students that voiced their concerns regarding the problematic mural, Williams symbol of its colonial legacy remains. There were many students that were disappointed by the school’s decision to keep the mural. However, some celebrated the discourses that were sparked by the controversial figures. Many argued that the conversations that resulted from the mural provoked further questioning of the institution and systems of power that students were a part of. Today the mural still traces the wall of the beloved restaurant on the campus of Williams College. However, the mural does not sit alone. Accompanying it is a caption describing the historical event depicted, as well as additional information about the mural and most importantly a contextualized description of the discourses surrounding it. Whether this in itself is an act of decolonization or whether this serves as yet another way of preserving colonial legacies is still being contested. The traces of colonialism remain in a multitude of facets of society, and continue to shape the way social innovators and entrepreneurs engage in creating solutions as seen in Uganda and other places we visited. Similarly, the consequences of colonialism influence power dynamics and structures that occur within such efforts and thus require an approach that engages communities to develop solutions that help dismantle such structures. In this way maybe the visions of a new world may actually become a reality.
Intrigued by our site visit to Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), my story centers around the relationship between people, places and design.

I aim to explore narratives of home and belonging of protracted female congolese refugees who, by utilizing YARID’s services, have become self-sufficient entrepreneurs in the tailoring field. I focussed on the ways in which these entrepreneurs use design as forms of catharsis, empowerment and appropriation in their city of exile, Kampala. I challenge Uganda’s “Right To the City” (RTC), which is understood as the urban dweller’s ability to safely and fairly access public and social services, opportunities for self-sustainability, education, employment and safe and welcoming environments, by navigating complex narratives of journeys from those having sought refuge in Uganda. I pose questions such as: “How are Congolese refugees claiming their right to the city of Kampala?, How do we define safety and what role does entrepreneurship play in achieving it? And, how can we best transform insecure urban areas into protective space to lighten a refugee’s antagonistic sense of home?”
EV: Can you please tell us about what you decided to draw?

J: My portrait shows me torn between The Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. I am in the center and thus, impossibly a part of both countries simultaneously”.

EV: Could you talk about what the icons on either side of you represent?

J: On the side of Congo, I drew the sign of death to represent my husband who I lost. On the other side, that which represents Uganda, I drew my children and our home - the store you are in right now.

EV: The dress you selected as your favourite design is beautiful. Could you tell me why you selected this one from the many hanging here?

J: This was one of the first styles I created in Congo. The fabric is slightly different at home but this model is popular with my clients here.

EV: You speak of your “first styles”, were you always ambitious to work in fashion?

J: “I always wanted to make something, fashion became interesting when I turned 16 and started sketching. I didn’t change my dream, I just changed the fabric”
The overarching question for the rest of our discussion is, how does entrepreneurship and design work as a tool for empowerment? J discusses the satisfaction she felt when she became self-reliant. “It’s not easy but it’s a really good distraction”. The majority of her children have grown up knowing little of their hometown that exists across the border, which in combination with their Ugandan schooling has made assimilation significantly easier. She discusses her children with pride and says, “they’re real Ugandans”. Her ability to be self-sufficient through design and entrepreneurship appears to have been empowering in what it has offered her children - a clean slate. It appears as though J’s positive outlook stems from her ability to go after her ambition despite her suffering. “I think it really helped that I felt like although having to leave Congo, I didn’t have to abandon everything. There are so many young individuals that leave Congo fit to become a doctor or lawyer but end up selling food on the streets.” The lack of recognition for one’s skillset appears to have a major influence of the psychological well-being and empowerment of Congolese refugees. We also discuss design through a lens of control over one’s life - how can we design our lives? and how can that perceived control empower us? Programs offered through institutions such as YARID provide individuals with a sense of control over the ways in which they choose to design their lives.

The translator, a psychology student with experience in counselling child refugees is intrigued by the conversation on the relationship between design and empowerment. Similar to J, she interprets design as a way to claim control over your life. She argues that identifying psychological struggles and working collaboratively to develop tools and skills to deal with such struggles is key to empowerment. “If you don’t control your mind, you will never know empowerment”. Our perception of safety, freedom and empowerment is a by-product of our mental well-being. Services related to the addressing of psychological distress for the refugee community in Kampala are, according to all subjects interviewed, very limited. J also argues that many are unaware of how their past traumas still limit their perceived empowerment and sense of belonging in their new homes. A way to promote assimilation, J argues, is through implementing more programs that focus both on collective and individual counselling. “Many of these refugees, especially women, have been through a lot. We are strong, but some extra help can bring us very far”.
EV: Can you please tell us about what you decided to draw?
M: I found it hard to decide what to draw. You barely gave me any instructions! What you see on my paper is a girl crying on a road. The road carries on to the right side of the paper.
E.V: Could you talk a little bit about the road? and the question marks?
M: The road is my journey to Uganda. I was raped and my family including my husband, sister and her children were killed. That is the reason for the crying. The question marks represent the life I am starting to build here and what is next for me.
EV: Would you like to speak about the dress you decided to select?
M: This dress is one of my more festive ones. I have only recently started to learn to design and create clothes so I’m proud of where I have come so far. It’s also a look that has been popular with clients.
EV: How did you acquire the skills needed to tailor?
M: That was all thanks to YARID! worked on the streets for a while selling jewellery but it was only once I met someone at YARID that I felt like I had the option to choose where my life was going again.
The overarching question for the rest of our conversation stems around security and how we decide to define it. M speaks of the fear she lives. “I think security is freedom, but even now that I’m financially independent, I still live in fear”. Having experienced people trying to enter her home and work space at night recently, she expresses her rage on feeling like there is no way out of conflict. To expand on her comment she talks about the challenges she has experienced throughout her two years in Uganda. “People think that because I am from Congo, I have money”, in the times this has been true, she feels unsafe, in times this hasn’t she struggles with the higher market prices as a consequence. The underlying notion of entrepreneurship being just as much of a burden as a blessing for Congolese refugees is something she carries throughout the interview.

When asked about the positive aspects of being a refugee in Congo, M, expresses her gratitude for YARID is providing her with a community. “I was so happy when I found YARID, having people to share your suffering is so much more important than I could have ever imagined”. M, recently moved out of the city to get a place with cheaper rent but still commutes into the city to attend events that are organized by YARID. “It’s vital to feel like you can find your home in others, I suffer less when I see others suffer too, it’s strange but it works”. 
“Very often, scale is looked at as scaling an organization or enterprise as opposed to scaling a concept. Looking beyond scaling a particular organization requires a major mindset shift. We must determine how we can collaboratively scale action around a particular problem through the engagement of all the stakeholders affected by the issue.”

- Jeroo Billimoria, Founder, Aflatoun; Founder, Child & Youth Finance International; Schwab Social Entrepreneur (as cited in WEF-Schwab Insight Report, 2017, p.7)

Uber, a multinational company, has created 20,000 jobs per month as of 2014 (Nudelman, 2014). Other businesses such as Unilever worldwide and Jio in India have also provided both part-time and permanent jobs (Tech Class India, 2018), thereby benefitting the so-called bottom of the pyramid. On the other hand, social entrepreneurs tend to get distracted building and managing capitals (Mehr, 2017). Then, how is social entrepreneurship different from traditional business? More importantly, is social entrepreneurship merely ‘social washing’—capitalism disguised to provide social benefits? Analyzing value chain model of Goonj in India, I propose the focus on systems change as the point of differentiation of social entrepreneurship. It is through systems change that we can narrow—if not close—social justice gaps.
Goonj’s Value Chain Model

Goonj’s key value proposition lies in creating mindset and behavior shift with regards to waste, and in re-thinking the concept of ‘charity’ and ‘beneficiaries’. Waste is a crucial nodal element in Goonj’s value chain for empowerment and development. Goonj perceives waste as a valuable resource as it redesigns waste materials into basic necessities—mainly clothing, sanitary cloths and school supplies—which are then distributed to rural disenfranchised communities in the forms of office kits, Anganwadi (pre-school education) kits, wedding kits, and family kits. In Delhi alone, Goonj produces around 2000 kits per week. The team has 800 full time members in order to reach out more than 3000 tons of material in remote villages of 22 states (Goonj.org). Consequently, Goonj rightfully claims its model as “the genesis of a parallel economy—which is not ‘Cash’-based but ‘Trash’-based” (Goonj.org).

Not only has Goonj challenged the idea of what are valuable resources, but it has also shifted the power dynamics among various stakeholders. Goonj has brought dignity and social power to disenfranchised communities by providing access to clothing. Anshu Gupta, the founder of Goonj, highlighted that the type of cloth one wears is the first visible sign of one’s social status and power: “a piece of cloth can decide your status”. Indeed, Goonj is not contented with surface-level intervention. It advocates the mindset shift by denouncing the concept of ‘donors’ and ‘beneficiaries’: “it is important to move away from demeaning words like donors and beneficiaries” (Goonj site visit, 2018 March 14). Indeed, Goonj emphasizes that their donors, who donate cloth, are not doing something great but carrying out their own responsibility to the good world: “you are doing great things because you want to live in the society” (Goonj site visit, 2018 March 14). In so doing, Goonj mitigates the sense of superiority and power of those who donate.

Moreover, Goonj uplifts power and dignity of disenfranchised communities. The kits are not donated but earned through exchange of community labor. There is power and sense of ownership in being able to contribute back to the community as people identify their communities’ need and work to fulfill this need. In this way, Goonj has proved that the so-called disenfranchised communities do have resources and power (Goonj site visit, 2018 March 14).
Goonj has provided social, economic and cultural value to its consumers not only by providing basic necessities such as clothing and school supplies but, more importantly, by shifting the mindsets regarding waste, contribution, and valuable resources. Additionally, it has challenged and shifted power dynamics by rethinking who the expert is, who has the resource, and who the actual beneficiary is. In this sense, although Goonj could not perhaps control—nor does it attempt to control—the amount of waste produced per household, it has reached to both the structural level (by recycling waste to produce valuable products) and the transformative level (by changing the mindsets of people around waste) of systemic change.

Goonj Model in the Context of Social Justice

At Goonj and many other organizations we visited especially in India (e.g. Jaipur Foot, Barefoot College) the rejection of intellectual property rights struck me. The founder of Goonj mentioned that their social impact is enhanced if more organizations adopt their model: “we want more people to replicate and copy the idea” (Goonj Site Visit, 2018 March 14). This aligns well with the well-known social entrepreneur Jeroo Billimoria’s emphasis about scaling the idea rather than scaling an individual organization (as cited in WEF-Schwab Insight Report, 2017, p.7). Ultimately, real social entrepreneurship is about changing the system rather than benefitting an individual organization (SE Class India, 2018). Consequently, partnership is valued—and is indeed crucial—in Goonj who strategically partners with local governments and other NGOs. The concept of expertise is re-thought; “the process of social change is made “flatter”—devolving leadership and decision-making to the communities most impacted by the issues themselves” (as cited in WEF-Schwab Insight Report, 2017, p.15). Thus, the voice from the Bottom of the Pyramid is heard.

Conclusion: Is Social Entrepreneurship Neo-capitalism?

Although some social entrepreneurs have their own weaknesses, Ms. Manisha Gupta mentioned that, in ideal social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs aim to minimize their role as they transfer ownership, accountability and confidence to the targeted communities. Learning about failures of some socially oriented organizations and structures (e.g. MVP) and witnessing some models whose so-called social mission is not as valued in practice as in public relations (e.g. Jaipur Rugs), I wonder if this claim is too optimistic. I wonder if social entrepreneurship is indeed valuable and necessary. Or is it merely a new form of capitalism in which so-called entrepreneurs focus on social mission just to accumulate capital? Analyzing Goonj, I declare that social entrepreneurship does indeed have some value over traditional business. And its major point of differentiation lies in creating the systems change that will narrow down structural barriers of race, gender and socio-economic class.
When I first met Nani-ji, she spoke at length about her personal mantra of relaxing and enjoying life, such that I decided to explore how those beliefs were manifested towards food. At age 75, Naniji thinks of health as the utmost priority. Accordingly, food should always be fresh and natural; all the produce we eat and cook with is organic, purchased directly from Dera Farms if she has time to make the drive, or from its storefront nearby.

The produce sold by street vendors isn’t fresh, Nani-ji mentioned. She seemed so at home at the store, picking out deep red-colored beets, cucumbers, and cauliflower for our dinner. The employees gave us some chicken samosas to sample—flaky and piping hot, they were a joy to the senses. “I always buy my chicken here,” she exclaims, “so fresh and so good!”
Meal preparation is done by a woman named Punam-ji. “She’s been with me for a long time, for ten years,” Naniji says, “and all the food she makes – I taught her the recipes myself.” After spending the mid-afternoon preparing dinner, Punam-ji leaves and returns just before dinner time at 8:30 PM, when she reheats the food on the gas cook stove. She carries the food to the dining table, setting up plates, utensils, glasses, and small bowls for stews or yogurt.

Food is integral to Indian culture and plays additional roles in social and religious rituals. In the context of Nani-ji’s home, food served as a way to bring us all together at the end of the day, especially as we clasped our hands together in prayer. “Everything comes from God, so it is important to pray before we eat.” During the meal Nani-ji would also ask us about our days, and explain the food that we were about to eat.
After dinner, we scrape our banana peels and leftover food into the trash can; Nani-ji goes up to the terrace every day to feed the pigeons with a little bit of uneaten roti and rice. Most of the leftover roti and rice and other foods are donated to a man who lives nearby.

“He’s just by himself and he has three children, so I give all my leftover food to him. I know I have a woman who can make fresh food every day, so I can afford to have new food. Food is so expensive and there are so many poor people – I can’t bear to waste it and throw it away.” In Nani-ji’s house, nothing goes to waste. The small amounts of inedible food and other waste are collected regularly. Nani-ji pays a man monthly who comes daily to take away the trash to a nearby landfill. She usually hands plastic materials to him in a separate pouch, knowing that the garbage will be sorted further.

She acknowledges the pervasiveness of India’s pollution and environmental issues as India’s population continues to grow and immigrants from nearby countries populate urban areas. “You know, the Prime Minister has a lot of plans to reduce pollution. You see all the plants on those bridges? The plants are supposed to make the air better because it’s so dirty,” says Nani-ji. “It’ll take some time. Three, four years. It’s not all going to be fixed that quickly.”
Nani-ji at her favourite sweet store, Delhi 2018
In today’s era of social media, sharing photos of travel has not only become exceptionally easy, but also a means through which to gain recognition. When we leave our hometowns for a foreign country, our followers, friends, and family expect to see plenty of photographs. Our Facebooks and Instagrams become spaces to share these photographs, and perhaps we attract more attention than usual because the experiences posted are foreign or exotic and therefore cool enough to be given a “like” or “comment.” As a result, these photographs work to reflect something admirable about who we are and the life we live because we travel, perpetuating our desire to maintain social media accounts that display our photos abroad. However, the photographs we take involve individuals other than ourselves and our home networks. In fact, the relationship between the photographer and the local being photographed is rather nuanced, particularly when the photographer is of a privileged race and class as compared to the photographee.

As a social media user and current tourist in India myself, I was curious to see how tourist photography of India presents itself on social media. What types of photographs of India are being taken and posted? Are these tourist photographers aware of their positionality in India? Do they experience the reverse gaze? If so,
is it comprised of their own perceptions of tourist photographers? In an attempt to answer these questions, I interviewed and examined photographs taken by a friend of mine, Victor Bianchi, an American and avid social media user who is currently studying abroad in Bangalore. I have included photographs captured by Victor that he posted on social media as part of a series he titled “Indian Faces.”

Social Media and tourist photography

I selected these photographs because they capture Indian faces as opposed to landscapes, and thus their creation involved an interaction between the photographer and the photographee. These photographs stood out to me because they capture Indians candidly; some of the subjects are not looking at the camera and therefore are not posing to evoke a specific image or narrative. From my own experience as a social media user who follows many travelers, Victor’s decision to take such rich portraits of locals and to represent a diverse selection of Indians is unique. His approach is refreshing amidst a trend to photograph Indians in a way that represents how Americans understand their culture: dressed in elaborate traditional clothing and jewelry, or engaging in cultural activities such as a dance or wedding. Instead, these photographs depict Indians in their everyday life. Victor speaks to this intention, stating that he likes to take pictures “that feature unmediated chance encounters and random incidents within public spaces”. Instead of contributing to an idealized, foreign narrative of India, his photographs are meant to “demonstrate the real faces and emotions of Indian people”. He hopes to challenge the images of India we develop through the media and as Americans who generally only encounter Indians “lucky or rich enough to make it out of their country in search of a better life” (Wright 2018). Although Victor’s photographs are relatively authentic, his positionality as a tourist photographing local people cannot go unanalyzed.

The power dynamics embedded in the creation of these photographs – established through a deep-rooted history of colonialism in India and perpetuated through the continued superiority of the white race, the upper-class, and Western ideologies across the globe – are significant. As a white man of privileged socioeconomic status from a Western country photographing locals of an ethnic minority in a non-Western country, there is room for exploitation of both the subject and the subject’s culture. By taking these photographs and posting them to social media, Victor is using and representing traditional cultures and lifestyles as a means of personal profit, specifically, gaining recognition for his photography skills and the

Instagram photo, Victor Bianchi
aesthetic of his social media accounts. This is considered cultural commodification (O’Conner 2012). In fact, Victor’s Instagram account is registered as that of a professional photographer, which sets it up as a platform for business inquiries. During our interview, Victor acknowledged his positionality as a white photographer in India. He is aware that his photography “can be used as a technique to commodify [...] the local culture and the people [he] meets in India”. However, Victor claims he does not want to “fit [the local’s] stereotype of another tourist taking pictures,” which many tourists who commodify culture through photography do. Therefore, he tries to “distance himself from other tourists” by taking “crude and raw pictures that most people would often avoid”. Through this, he hopes to “occupy a more favorable and unique position” as compared to the other tourists.

Evidently, Victor holds his own negative perception of tourist photographers. Specifically, Victor implies that other tourists do not aim to take the “crude and raw pictures” he does, thus making their position as tourist photographers less “favorable”. Furthermore, Victor acknowledges the power that the local subjects hold, citing that they have the ability to “make the photographer uncomfortable,” and elicit feelings of “remorse and shame” within him. Here, Victor speaks, without familiarity of the concept, explicitly about his experience with the ‘reverse gaze’ as inflicted on him by the reactions of the local subjects. However, it is likely that Victor’s feelings of “remorse and shame” also stem from his own prevailing negative perception of tourist photography. In an instance where he experiences the reverse gaze, Victor is confronted with the negative perception of the tourist photographer that he hopes not to embody, despite all efforts on his part to distance himself from it.

As Victor’s experience highlights, even when a tourist photographer attempts to differentiate him or herself from the stereotypical tourist photographer, it is difficult to do so in reality. At one point or another, the tourist photographer becomes subject to the reverse gaze and is forced, however momentarily, to view oneself as the stereotypical tourist photographer. This might be explained by the inherent selfishness of photography, as it “restricts visibility to satisfy [a] subjective, ideological purpose” (Sontag 2010). Even if that purpose is to capture a local people authentically, it must be asked for whom they are being captured. Particularly in a dynamic where the photographer is of a privileged race and class as compared to the photographee, it is arguably never for the local people and always for the photographer and his or her home networks. Victor exemplifies this through his own purpose, which is to respond to an idealized and incomplete
American narrative of India and its people by contributing to a more “real” and “authentic” one through his photography. He is doing this for his friends, family and followers on social media, and not for the subjects he is photographing.

Sontag reiterates photography’s selfish nature by citing that “even when photographers are most concerned with mirroring reality, they are still haunted by tacit imperatives [...] in deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another, photographers are always imposing standards on their subjects” (2010). It is nearly impossible to avoid imposing these standards, however subconscious they are. In the era of social media these standards are further amplified. Social media encourages certain aesthetic trends that influence photographers’ beliefs of how photos should look, as well as the general use of filters to adjust contrast, lighting, saturation, etc., in a photograph. Victor’s photos contribute to this trend as they have been selected and edited to feature good lighting, cohesive color schemes, and striking facial expressions.

In conclusion, the prevalence of social media presents a new set of issues and points of analysis for understanding tourist photography. Social media encourages the commodification of other cultures through photography by providing a platform on which photographers can gain recognition or personally profit from doing so. Furthermore, it encourages the photographic representation of culture in ways that fit specific aesthetic trends and existing narratives of a local culture and people. Even when social media is used to disrupt existing narratives, as Victor attempts to do, the selfish nature of photography as a practice and the exclusive audience that one’s social media accounts cater to, ultimately make it impossible that tourist photography benefit anyone other than the photographer and his or her home networks. As a result, the power dynamics inherent in tourist photography are upheld.

Tourist photography is not the only content present on social media that depicts a local or marginalized culture and people. It might be argued that there are instances when the sharing of photographs and videos of a specific culture and people on social media can be used to benefit the subjects.
When approaching Monika about this feature story I imagined our shopping was going to be done at a crowded market full of people. I suppose that the reason for this feeling stems from the freevesl attitudes of individuals I grew up with. I thought that my own standards and analysis of the world of fashion were too high and not relatable.

Why Fashion? Who cares?

From my observation of the American and European fashion industries, I have found that a majority of people play along with a throw-away culture, with the fast fashion industry supplying the fuel to a broken machine of exploitation and wastage. Due to this lingering doom I have to ask myself if everyone is like this? How can we reduce waste and over-consumption in the fashion industry and where should the world find inspiration in tackling this issue? To understand these issues, I have followed Monika’s Journey in clothing and her understanding of the Indians view of clothing and its roll in her home and her life.
PART I
THE BEGINNING

We found ourselves in Khan Market at the Turtle Café after a long day of looking around Old Delhi. This is where she began her story about personal style and how expanding her wardrobe over the last few months has changed her life. She explained how this transformation had changed her mindset about her worth and place in the world.

On this day we decided to go into a store called FabIndia, it’s a higher priced store that has traditional Kurtas and also “western” clothing. Monika had a personal rule that she didn’t spend more than 900 rupees on a kurta and FabIndia may or may not have something to offer in this range.

Monika spoke to me about where and when she shops, normally she gets something new once or twice a month weather it be a kurta, a dress or a pair of jeans. She has recently tried experimenting more with fashion and valuing her appearance. She said, “over the last few months, I have been trying to experiment and go out of what I normally wear.”

PART II
FINDING YOUR PERSONAL STYLE

To Monika, her personal style has changed over the last few months, now preferring light colors and simple patterns. Going into a shop like FabIndia would have not been something that she did a few months ago, she couldn’t justify spending a lot on herself if it wasn’t for a special.

Monika felt that the white dress fit her really nicely and would be good on a hot day. The second outfit was not her favorite, the pants hit her at an awkward length and she felt that the shirt was something she already had in her wardrobe.

Monika ended up leaving the store empty handed, she explained that she only purchased if she really loves it.
PART III
TAKING OUT THE TRASH

After leaving the store she talked to me about the life of her clothing. She explained to me that she is very conscious of taking care of her clothes so as to keep them for a long time. When she no longer wants a piece she either has taken it to Goonj or she has a man in her area that purchases old clothing and then makes rugs out of them. The third option is that her mother turns old clothing into rags to clean the house. And once its life has been used up it goes straight into the trash.

Goonj clothing packages for communities, Dehli 2018
Reyhan Ayhan

Music has proven to have the power to heal, move, and empower people. The music we love plays a role in the way we choose to identify ourselves. Music can express various parts of our personality and impact the way we feel. The music that becomes a part of who we are can be rooted from cultural, social, and economic influences. We hear these songs through systems developed within communities and institutions we belong to. Our family, friends, teams, and groups we’re a part of are examples of some of these communities. I explored how particular songs connect to my personal identity and some of those in my immediate family, as well as the music that my Indian host sister believes connects to hers. Although our selected songs sound very different, they were all a representation of the love and understanding we have for our intimate connections with one another and our lives as a whole.

Myself

The first song I selected is “No Vacancy” by One Republic. This song metaphorically describes feeling less empty and alone after meeting someone that understands you for who you really are and makes you feel whole. The social influences of this song has to do with the expectation of needing someone to feel complete. For decades music, movies, and other forms of art, commonly depict love as a feeling that can only be felt when it exists externally. The issue with this perception is that love is then understood as a feeling reliant on the actions and emotions from others rather than a force that could be felt within oneself. This concept was something I had personally struggled with until the resonance of this song had led me to a realization that the more we get to know our true selves, the more whole we actually feel.

My Brother: Rojder Ayhan

The second song that I believe resonates with my identity is “Love Yourz” by J. Cole. J. Cole discusses the values in being grateful for what we already have before running off seeking to the next popular thing. He argues that there will always be something more appealing out there when you’re comparing what you have to what someone else has. Ending the cycle of falling under society’s influence of constantly wanting the best next thing is a choice that could lead us to living happier, more purposeful, lives. Alongside the social influences, there are
economic influences behind this song. J. Cole communicates his life feeling more meaningful before he had acquired more materially. He admits to have failed to truly value the important people in his life. The title of the song “Love Yourz” speaks for itself as it alone reminds us to love all that we already have. There’s a system developed in listening to a genre you’re raised with listens to while growing up. I had early exposure to rap and hiphop because it was my brother’s popular choice of music. I had friends in elementary school who were unfamiliar with artists like Eminem and Jay-Z while I had already been listening to their music secondhand. I grew up with the genre and so it unintentionally integrated into a part of my identity as I filtered the rap artists I particularly enjoyed listening to. Another system exists in seeking freedom and expressing oneself through writing. Listening to artists like J. Cole and Kendrick Lamar who are known for the lyrical capabilities influenced my own self-expression through writing.

"...You ain’t never gon’ be happy till you love yours"  
- J.Cole

My Mother: Leyla Ayhan

The last song I had selected was “I’m Coming Home” by Skylar Grey. This song is dedicated to those returning home from the military. My interpretation had changed as the song began to play a role in my life and the relationship between my mother and me. My mother isn’t as familiar with music in comparison to my father, brother, and I. Due to her own cultural influences, she hadn’t grown up with music being constantly accessible through CDs and cassettes but only performed by friends and family. She isn’t a part of the more modern trend of taking accessing music via the Internet. She enjoys music when she hears it. Whatever music gets played in the house, she listens. I had played “I’m Coming Home” frequently around our house when it was first released in 2010. My mother eventually picked up the repeated line “I’m coming home, I’m coming home” and continues to sing it at home. The day I left for college, she sang those lines and continues to sing it when I visit home for the weekends. It makes me smile as it reminds me that home is something I’ve found within her.

My Host Sister: Arene Sherwani

I asked my 10 year old Indian host sister in India, Arene, about songs that resonated with her identity. Arene admitted to enjoying all kinds of music, but particularly music that puts her in a good mood. The first song she had chosen was “Que Sera, Sera” by Doris Day. The song has social influence as its premiered in a Hitchcock film and won a grammy award. first released in 1956. She found this song through her mother’s friend
who was a singer. Similar to my mom and I, her and her mom eventually bonded over the song. The song reminds her to not worry about the future as that keeps her calm and reminds her that everything will be okay. The second and third songs that she selected were “I Have A Dream” by Abba and “It’s A Beautiful Day” by Greg and Steve. Arene explained that she found both these songs through her choir group at school. She expressed how these songs make her feel inspired to pursue her dreams and is reminded that everyday is a nice day if she chooses to believe it to be. All of her selected songs are influenced by Western culture as they are all in English. Her identity is influenced by an American culture that generations old and I read a sense of maturity and understanding in her.

Our identity evolves through age, experience, and constant exposure to new things including and importantly music. I believe that both mine and Arene’s song selections would change as we explore new music and find other reasons to connect with certain songs.
Initially, the programme in Brazil brought a lot of frustration. I found it impossible to compare it to Uganda and India because I our Brazil visits were focused on social movements and other forms of alternative organising, which I did not equate to social innovation or entrepreneurship. When I finally was able to step back with some perspective it occurred to me that social innovation in Brazil is presented through a different lens and I still struggle to grasp that. In San Francisco, Uganda, and India we were able to use the term business, and that word has hardly been present since arriving in Sao Paulo. This experience has shifted my perception of social innovation.

I have written off many of the methods of social innovation that I witnessed in Brazil, but now I understand that these spoken word nights, street art expressions, performances, and marches are empowering the community they come from. I am in awe of the Brazilian passion for resistance and justice. It is something that the rest of the world can learn from - innovation can manifest in giving a voice to those who need it.

Considering how the constructs in Uganda and India often result in the top of the pyramid helping the bottom of the pyramid made me think of our frequent discussions on the impact of foreign intervention. If someone comes from the
outside can they ever truly understand the problems they are trying to address? Why isn’t this applicable domestically?

Despite good intentions, I wonder critically about outside intervention in any form. Brazil presented an interesting position because all of the organizations we visited were created by the people who were using it for the people who were using it, which is powerful and impressive. Brazilian social innovation was also largely focused on community building, which I found to be an alternative and an inspiring take on the typical models we have seen in other countries. The emphasis on art and creativity as an expression of social innovation broadened my perspective of what is considered to be social innovation. Also it caused much confusion.

When thinking of myself as a potential social innovator now I see far less boundaries. In San Francisco I remember thinking to myself that there is just no way I could ever come up with an idea like the ones we saw there. But social innovation and entrepreneurship exist in so many forms it is selling myself short to think that I could never be creative enough for such a thing. If I were to be in such a field, having the knowledge I do now, I would look for something within my own community to address. More than ever I believe in the power of community and the power to maintain it, and to make a global difference it is best to start where you are planted, a place you understand. It seems in the United States when we consider social innovation we imagine something philanthropic and abroad. Or something that is for populations of people not in our own socioeconomic status, class, gender, race etc.

My strength would be to find work in my love for my home. As everyone knows, I firmly believe my hometown is the greatest place on earth, but I also know it has many challenges, from socioeconomic disparity, to drug abuse, to lack of diversity. My love for those people and that place would make me a successful social entrepreneur, if I decide to be one.
And the journey continues...