



ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

**JKSK Scholars (2010-2016)
Progress Updates in November 2011**

Arpita Palit
Bangladesh
UG 2, Politics, Philosophy, and Economics major



Arpita had a productive first year as an undergraduate student at AUW. She took classes such as “Social Identity,” “Narrative and Interpretation,” “Public Health,” and “Cultural Resilience and Challenges,” and served as president of the AUW Community Teachers, a club focused on teaching children in the slums of Chittagong. As president, she created the club budget, helped develop curriculum, made schedules for teachers, and taught every week. Through this experience, she discovered very few people encourage slum children to continue their education when they drop out of school. Thus, Arpita made it her mission to help keep these children in school by providing them additional support and encouragement.

During the summer, Arpita and eleven of her classmates at AUW conducted a summer research project on maternal and infant health in Rauzan, Chittagong. She learned about how mothers fed their children, the superstitions they had, and how they made decisions about their children’s nutrition. This data was given to the local hospital, so they could better focus their outreach and help patients. Arpita found the research very challenging, as many of the mothers were hesitant to talk to her. However, she also found the experience rewarding. Arpita is planning a second project that will take place during the winter holiday, when she will interview 12th grade female students about health literacy.

This fall, Arpita will continue her duties as AUW Community Teacher President, and take courses such as “Global Justice,” “Gender, Peace, and Conflict in Asia,” “Principles of Microeconomics,” and “Calculus II.”





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Ganga Silva

Kalutara, Sri Lanka

UG3, Politics, Philosophy, and Economics major



Ganga is passionate about change: she believes that everyone is capable of enabling change, within oneself and one's society, and that the challenge is to retain the positive changes. Ganga knows this to be true because she has seen changes all around her—the result of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict—and she has experienced them within herself, more recently at the Asian University for Women (AUW), where she has spent the last three and half years.

At AUW, Ganga has learned much from her Politics, Philosophy, and Economics courses. One example is the valuable skill of applying and analyzing theory in order to understand real world situations. She enjoys analyzing theories of democracy for development, and critically examining the drawbacks of such theories when applied to the various political systems of Asia. Such analysis has led her to understand the type of change necessary in her country in order to reach developed status. Moreover, she has also learned to look at issues from various perspectives, a skill she found easy to develop among her classmates since they come from twelve different countries.

Ganga has also changed “socially, physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally” at AUW. In addition to learning how to respect individuals of other nations, cultures, religions, and languages, she has developed strong leadership skills. In the past three and half years, Ganga has been a member of Model UN, the Debate Club, and AUW UN Youth and Student Association of Bangladesh; the Vice President of the Science Club; and the Sri Lankan country representative for the Center of Leadership Assistance and Promotion. In addition to these extracurricular activities, she currently works as a research assistant to an AUW faculty member on a project about humanitarian NGOs in Chittagong. Additionally, this past summer she completed an internship at Women In Need, a Sri Lankan NGO funded mainly by UNDP, EU, and UNICEF. There, she worked as a research assistant on domestic violence and violence against women in Sri Lanka. She also designed a database for a new project called “900 Case Studies,” which is the first statistical and analytical documentation on violence against women in Sri Lanka.

In the coming years, Ganga hopes to complete a PhD on international relations and development. She would like to one day work for the United Nations “to empower women and children specifically.”





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Sabina Thapa Magar

Nepal

UG2, Philosophy, Politics, and Economics major



Sabina Magar is currently in her second year as an undergraduate student at the Asian University for Women (AUW). She spent her first year taking courses such as “Pre-calculus,” “Power, Identity, and Resistance,” and “World Literature.” She was also the vice president of the Sports Club, a role that gave her responsibility for organizing various sporting opportunities for AUW students. She was also the secretary of Art Club, a member of the Science Club and the Dance Club, and a very active member of the United Nations Youth Student Association of Bangladesh (UNYSAB), through which she organized events for Non-Violence Day and Women’s Rights Day, among others.

During these events with UNYSAB, Sabina delivered presentations to educate the audience on the importance each holiday. When asked how she managed all her activities, Sabina said, “I learned a lot about time management when I was in the Access Academy.”

Most notable of all of Sabina’s activities is her summer project in Nepal. Sabina was the Nepal representative in a multi-national research project initiated at AUW to identify the number of young women interested in general science in the junior and high school level. Sabina, for her part, interviewed 50 students from different schools aged between 13 and 17 years old. She questioned them about the science classes they took, whether they liked the classes, and how interested they were in continuing with science at the university level. This academic year, Sabina and her classmates will look at the data gathered from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, India, and Nepal, and try to predict whether the number of female scientists will increase in these countries over the next few years.

During the summer, Sabina also held an internship with a local bank in Nepal. There, she worked in the cash department, and learned about loan and credit. She believes that the experience will be beneficial to her when she enters graduate school, as she plans to get an MBA or study economics.

This fall, Sabina is taking “Principles of Microeconomics,” “Calculus I,” “Global Justice,” “Gender, Peace, and Conflict in Asia,” and “Mandarin I.” She has declared Philosophy, Politics, and Economics as her major.





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Mingzhu Ha

China

UG 2, Major undecided



Mingzhu began her second year as an undergraduate student at the Asian University for Women (AUW) confident in her desire to study Environmental Science. The strong interest in Environmental Science stems from Mingzhu's summer experience: she completed a summer project entitled, "Environmental and Social Impacts of Dams in Yunan Province." In the Yunan Province, she visited four villages to interview the families about their beliefs on water and the impact of pollution entering the river, with the objective of determining the severity of the impact. What she discovered was that the river was more polluted upstream than downstream. She attributes this difference to illegal factories located upstream, and the lack of law enforcement; while laws meant to protect the river are strongly enforced in the downstream area, particularly since that part of the river is close to the China-Vietnam border. Mingzhu looks forward to analyzing the full spectrum of data she has collected over the next few months, and to learning more about Environmental Science so that she can build her career on issues related to water management in China.

Along with her interest in Environmental Science, Mingzhu has taken a great interest in oral history after taking a class on the topic in Fall 2010. In that class, she began writing the history of her experience as a member of her ethnic group, Mongghul, a minority in China. Over the summer, she collected stories from her grandmother and her mother in the hope of completing the history of three generations of Mongghul women.

Mingzhu was also very active in clubs during her first year as an undergraduate student. Alongside a full course load, she visited an orphanage in Chittagong to teach English to young children with AUW's Women Across Borders club; she visited factories and interviewed factory workers about their lives with the Social Science Club; and she presented science articles to her peers in weekly sessions and led discussions with the Science Club. When talking about these experiences, she cites her "thirst for knowledge" as the source of her motivation and boundless energy.

This fall, Mingzhu is taking "Global Justice," "Information Communication Technology for Development," "Biology I," and "Chemistry I." She is also the student assistant for "Mandarin I," a new language offered at AUW. When asked why she chose to be a student assistant, Mingzhu said that she enjoyed being a student assistant of "Chinese History" in her first year and looks forward to the challenge of teaching Mandarin.





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Hanh Ngo Hong
Vietnam

UG 2, Philosophy, Politics, and Economics major



Hanh has begun her second year as an undergraduate student at the Asian University for Women (AUW). During her first year as an UG student, Hanh took “History of China I/II,” “Pre-calculus I/II,” “Women’s Issues,” “Grassroots and Community Organizing,” and “Power, Identity, and Resistance I/II.” Of those courses, she says “Women’s Issues” and “Grassroots and Community Organizing” were her favorites because she learned about the many ways in which the larger principles of a society or organization can impact the individual. She also says that these classes made her aware of the overlap between current issues and her own life.

Hanh also participated in two clubs: Rotarat, a non-AUW organization based in Chittagong that is dedicated to developing the leadership skills of its members, and Public Speaking Club, through which Hanh taught young children at a local school. Additionally, Hanh worked at the library circulation desk and the IT lab. She says that the most valuable thing she learned from these extracurricular activities was how to communicate with different people.

Hanh also completed an oral history project this summer in Vietnam. The project focused on documenting the nation’s history through the lens of individual experience. After employing a careful candidate vetting process using local connections, Hanh conducted a number of interviews. She remarks that it was often difficult to find the specific information she was looking for, which only honed her communication skills further.

This fall, Hanh has declared Philosophy, Politics, and Economics as her major. She is taking “Issues of Cultural Heritage,” “Human Intervention,” “Calculus I,” and “Mandarin I.” She is looking forward to working hard and receiving good grades, gaining more knowledge, and joining new extracurricular activities.

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