Ratkin Global Community Engagement Fund

Overview:

Thanks to the generosity of the Ratkin Family, Overseas Programs is pleased to announce the Ratkin Global Community Engagement and Social Change Fund. The Ratkin Fund was established by the Ratkin Family to help foster WU undergraduate students’ understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by marginalized or impoverished communities around the world. The Fund provides financial support for international service-oriented projects or volunteer opportunities arranged and proposed by WU undergraduate study abroad participants in connection with their study abroad program. Within the context of their host community abroad, recipients may participate in a service or research project helping to address a social welfare, educational, cultural, or environmental problem, or work with an established organization that seeks to alleviate social and economic inequalities. The Ratkin Fund may prioritize activities that focus on enhancing opportunities for disadvantaged women and children in areas including education; addressing the societal and bodily aspects of global health disparities; or supporting participatory, community-led strategies that deliver access to basic services and infrastructure. This program aims to encourage WU students’ innovation of practical approaches to transform the lives of people in poverty and to create meaningful, sustainable social change in marginalized communities worldwide. Successful applicants will demonstrate a commitment to social justice and positive engagement with the poor and disadvantaged.

Eligibility:

- Eligible applicants must meet all prerequisites for study abroad through Overseas Programs, including a minimum 3.0 GPA and suitable academic preparation for the proposed program.
- Semester, Academic Year, and Summer study abroad students are all eligible to apply.
- Students must have arranged a service-oriented project or volunteer opportunity as a component of their study abroad experience. The planned activity may take place during or after the study abroad program.
- Program location in no way determines a student’s eligibility for an award from the Ratkin Fund, as long as a student has identified an opportunity for participating in a socially-conscious community service or engagement effort.
- Recipients of the scholarship must complete their entire study abroad program. Students who withdraw early will have their award rescinded.
- Upon return to WU, students will be expected to submit a reflection of approximately 1,000 words on their experience accompanied by photos or other visual documentation of their activities in the host community. This report should specifically address how their experience materialized in relation to their original proposal and how they plan to share about their experience with the WU community.

Application components:

- PROPOSAL (approximately 1,000 words) – Please describe your proposed service-oriented project or volunteer opportunity, your level of preparedness for it (e.g., coursework, language ability), its integration with your academic and/or professional goals, and how the funds will be
used to support the successful completion of the proposed project. Please also describe how you found and secured this opportunity and how it relates to your study abroad plans.

- **BUDGET** – Itemized list and description of the project-related expenses to be covered by the grant. Expenses supported by the Ratkin Fund include in-country travel costs associated with the proposed project, additional housing and/or food support if the project takes place after the conclusion of the study abroad program, and the materials required to carry out the project. For example: A student proposing to serve as a volunteer in an after-school program for at-risk children, providing basic English instruction as well as contributing to other on-going activities with the children, may include in their budget transportation to the program center, educational materials to support the English instruction, healthy snacks for the students, and a donation of school supplies and art supplies to the after-school program so they can support students’ academic development and artistic expression.

- **UNOFFICIAL STUDENT RECORD**
- **CURRENT RÉSUMÉ** – Including relevant extracurricular activities

Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

- **The Quality of the Proposed Project:**
  - Clearly articulated project plan and goal
  - Feasibility – is the proposed project realistic? Is it likely to have a positive impact on the intended community?
  - Sound logistical arrangements (including guidance from faculty and/or staff either in the host country or at WU)

- **The Qualifications of the Applicant**
  - The overall strength of the applicant in areas relevant to the proposed project
  - The extent to which the applicant’s previous activities demonstrate a commitment to social justice and creating meaningful, sustainable engagement with poor and disadvantaged communities.
  - The applicant’s ability to conduct the proposed project as evidenced by the applicant’s references or previous experiences

- **Project Relevance to the priority areas of the Ratkin Fund, including the themes of social justice; issues affecting women and children; and social change for marginalized communities.**

Students who have arranged a service-oriented experience in connection with their study abroad program and would like to be considered for an award from the Ratkin Fund should send their applications to Overseas Programs <overseas@wustl.edu>. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. For more information, please e-mail Overseas Programs.