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Life-changing opportunity to change lives



Northeastern senior Ben Kuhlmann works with budding entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Courtesy Photo*

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Northeastern's **Presidential Global Scholars Program** enabled **business** major Ben Kuhlmann to gain a life-changing experience promoting entrepreneurship through a nonprofit organization in Cape Town, South Africa.

Now, the Northeastern senior is focused on creating life-changing experiences for others.

Kuhlmann is working for the entrepreneurship center at the Tertiary School in Business Administration (TSiBA), mentoring and awarding micro-loans to small business owners who show promise despite their poor economic standing.

It's an invaluable experiential learning opportunity Kuhlmann would not have had without the \$5,000 scholarship he received from the Presidential Global Scholars Program, which provides up to 200 qualified students annually with the financial means to participate in an international co-op experience.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity Northeastern presented to me," said Kuhlmann, who also completed a co-op with Morgan Stanley, in Sydney, Australia. "It's been a great experience and it's opened up the doors for other co-op students to work at TSiBA."

The Tertiary School is a small college dedicated to offering emerging young leaders from local communities an opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and small business management.

At the center, Kuhlmann recently awarded two entrepreneurs about \$3,000 each to start-up their businesses—a paper supply company and a swimming school.

He also manages the center's equity fund, which includes making three-to-five-year investments in the most promising start-ups. The center eventually buys out its increasingly large stake in each enterprise in order to fund other ventures.

Northeastern's Social Enterprise Institute provides the investment capital for the equity fund. The institute gives students the opportunity to become globally aware business leaders, by enabling them to help build micro-enterprises that cater to the poor in developing countries.

The goal of the equity fund is to alleviate poverty by supporting as many entrepreneurs as possible. "If done properly, it's quite an effective tool," Kuhlmann said, noting that his growing passion for social entrepreneurship has changed his career path.

"It makes me happy to know that my work has a direct and positive impact, and I don't think I could go back to sitting in an office in front of the computer all day," he said. "I want to work in the development field where I can see and feel the impact that I help to create."

For more information, please contact Jason Kornwitz at 617-373-5729 or at j.kornwitz@neu.edu.

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