



April 25, 2020

Dear Global Leaders Program,

I am writing to let you know about a young man who works with us in Delhi, India. Amani Project and Smile Foundation hired Shashank Saxena to be our program coordinator and music specialist for our emotional intelligence and music program. The position required someone who knew music well, knew how to teach music to children, was a big thinker, and possessed a healthy amount of emotional intelligence so that he could impart new methodologies from Yale University to the students in our Amani Project Clubs.

After interviewing several candidates, we all agreed that Shashank was far and away the most qualified candidate. We spent a few days with him in advance of our student workshop and it was clear from day one that he was going to be amazing.

Before we open Amani Project Clubs in any given country, we present a teacher and mentor training over five days. Shashank stepped right in and led the music and emotional intelligence activities with mastery. He used his guitar in every lesson, whether that was in helping students learn how to regulate their emotions, or teaching them things like beat, tempo, and dynamics. At the end of the workshop, we knew the Clubs would be in good hands.

We were wrong. They were in GREAT hands! More than any other coordinator in our family of programs around the world, Shashank stepped in and started improving the music training from the start. After just a few days we started receiving messages from him about ways he thought the music training could improve, as well as providing new and innovative music/emotional intelligence activities that we have shared with our other programs in Tanzania, South Africa, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. He is a true innovator, but most importantly, he is beloved by the children who continue to grow as musicians and emotionally healthy human beings due to his love of what he does.

If you have any questions about Shashank, I'd be happy to chat. I'm at +1 415.378.4800 or erik@amaniproject.org.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erik Gregory".

Erik Gregory

Executive Directory, Amani Project