During her first year at Yale, Wanjiku Mwangi SY ’22 took a political science class on Africa. Born and raised in Kenya, Wanjiku was intrigued by the course material. “It was fascinating to explore how colonialism has affected life in Africa, including the economy, education, and healthcare,” she reflects.

To learn more, she enrolled in Visual Approaches to Global Health, a Yale summer course held in South Africa and Eswatini.

Wanjiku could take this course thanks to an International Summer Award (ISA), which enables students to study or work abroad during the summer. Each undergraduate receiving financial aid is guaranteed one ISA during their four years at Yale.

“We were in Johannesburg for two weeks and Mbabane for six,” Wanjiku says. “We discussed healthcare challenges, and we learned about the epidemiology of various diseases affecting Southern Africa and the impact of epidemics on policy decisions.”

With her cohort, Wanjiku created a short film to show to policymakers at the United Nations. “We imagined a world where Africa had universal healthcare in 2035. How would a woman’s life be different, growing up in an era when access to quality care became a reality for every African?”

Wanjiku returned to New Haven with a new passion, eager to deepen her understanding of how African nations relate to each other. “Now I am researching ways that African social entrepreneurship can enable economic growth,” she says.

“The ISA gave me a new perspective on things I have lived with for my whole life,” Wanjiku says. “I’m determined to figure out how to support a thriving Africa. I am very grateful that Yale has given me this chance.”

Donors make it possible for exceptional students like Wanjiku to attend Yale regardless of their financial circumstances—and to gain global perspectives. To learn more about ways to support these students, please visit giving.yale.edu or call 800.395.7646.