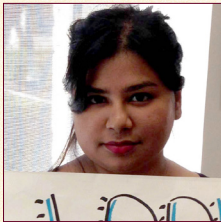


Are you a DREAMer?

DACA could improve your life

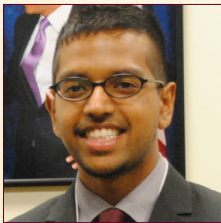
In June of 2012, President Obama granted undocumented youth temporary relief from deportation for a two-year, renewable period through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Eligible individuals that qualify for this relief are permitted to work and apply for a Social Security number. For undocumented South Asians, like other immigrants, these benefits can make a real difference by expanding access to higher education and employment opportunities. SAALT interviewed a diverse cross-section of DACAmented South Asians, who shared their journeys to obtaining DACA status and the program's impact on their lives. Excerpts from their stories are below, highlighting the ways in which DACA has given them more independence and access to opportunity in the U.S.

Ainee Athar, Texas



"I have been undocumented most of my life. I came to the U.S. from Pakistan when I was two years old because I needed long-term medical care. As I grew older, I faced many limitations as a result of my immigration status, including financial barriers to higher education and a lack of eligibility for internships and job opportunities. Though it is not permanent, receiving DACA has alleviated many of these issues. With DACA, I can work and get a driver's license. I finally have some independence and I am able to live my life without fear."

Yves Gomes, Maryland



"Despite the immeasurable pain of having my parents taken away from me, I was incredibly lucky to grow up in a supportive and nurturing community in Maryland. Everyone rallied around me, and an attorney helped me obtain a temporary status that allowed me to work and pursue my academic endeavors for two years. In June 2012, when DACA went into effect, I was overjoyed to know that there was now a defined, albeit temporary, path for kids like me who had been brought to the U.S. as children and for whom the U.S. is the only home we have ever known."

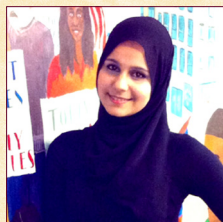
Pratishtha Khanna, Maryland



"Before I was DACAmented, I could not earn a substantial wage or hold down a job due to circumstances beyond my control, regardless of my qualifications. Those limitations really take a toll on one's mental health. My Social Security number has given me a newfound sense of confidence. I now have a new sense of pride, knowing that I can work and help my parents. I am so grateful to have DACA status, which has given me the opportunity to work and develop a sense of self-worth."

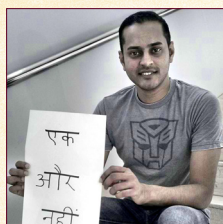


Hina Naveed, New York



"I have always been passionate about learning and pursuing higher education. Obtaining DACA status has made me eligible for in-state tuition rates; this has eased my financial burden. Now that I am DACAmented, I am studying nursing and dream of going to medical school. I hope that someday I can move forward from being DACAmented into being a citizen and pursue my dreams to their fullest."

Bupendra Ram, California



"Through DACA, I have seen a glimpse of what it is like to live with some degree of freedom. Today, I used my Social Security number to get a bank account; I finally have an electricity bill under my own name. It is very liberating to no longer feel dependent on others for my basic needs. I hope that in the future others like me will have the opportunity to become citizens and to truly be free."

Rishi Singh, New York



"Prior to receiving DACA, I faced daily barriers of finding employment that pays a livable wage. I was forced to take jobs in construction or catering, where I was paid under the table and often under-compensated for my work. Having DACA status has given me access to better jobs so that I can pay for school. It has also motivated me to be a more vocal activist for undocumented youth in this country and connected me to groups like DRUM-South Asian Organizing Center, which has given me a place to discover community, find my voice, and join in advocacy efforts for undocumented youth, including immigration reform."

Learn more about DACA eligibility and how to apply

[Bit.ly/DACAeligibility](https://bit.ly/DACAeligibility)

Read more about the young people featured in SAALT's DACA Stories

[Bit.ly/DACASTORIES](https://bit.ly/DACASTORIES)



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