converge on a point of view. But in discussing cases, and engaging with visiting managers from the subject organizations, they address issues that rarely arise so vividly in business education.

- Privatizing basic services. For instance, is it useful to privatize a basic good, like the supply of water, and if so, how? In the guise of a case about a potential expansion, the class explores the successful privatization of much of Manila’s water system. The hallmarks of Manila Water Company’s model are close collaboration with community groups to install common taps and communal billing, deft operations that cut off thieves who stole water and peddled it to the poor by the jerry can, at exorbitant prices; and higher rates for more affluent, larger users to subsidize the cost of supplying the rest of the population—while improving service for all. It is a clear case of creating significant social value and profits.

As a chastening counterexample, students dissect New Yorker writer William Finnegan’s “Leasing the Rain,” a report from Colombia. It is a clear case of creating significant social value and profits.

At the time the case on Grupo Elektra was written, the Mexico-based retailer of electronics, appliances, furniture, and clothes was profitably serving lower-income shoppers (including by extending credit, but faced dilemmas such as what sales lines to emphasize and what new countries, if any, to enter. It was a sound business, which enlarged customers’ consumer sovereignty.

During the same period, Farmacias Similares, a chain of drugstores in low-income Mexican neighborhoods—associated with a generic-drug manufacturer, and co-located with physician clin-

Last fall, after a lively class dissection of a nonprofit organization’s options for earning revenue and securing funds to grow, McNair professor of marketing V. Kasturi Rangan, head of “Business at the Base of the Pyramid,” called on Saima Hasan, M.B.A. ’15, who told her fellow students she was living the same dilemma.

As a Stanford undergraduate, Hasan explained in a conversation, she conceived and began piloting Roshni (www.roshniacademy.org), a program to enhance the skills of secondary-school girls in India through a free or low-cost, 110-hour supplementary course of instruction in basic employment and academic skills (from English and computer proficiency to workplace etiquette and interviewing and résumé support). The goals were simple: to enhance their prospects for jobs or higher education—on the way to boosting their families’ incomes and, in turn, ability to afford medical care, schooling for siblings, and more. It is a small front in a larger battle; as The Economist recently put it, “South Asia is one of the worst places in the world to be female.”

Having developed a training model, Hasan, by then a graduate and resident in India from 2009, had to call at schools, without introduction, to find a risk-taking principal who would give Roshni access to the building to pilot its after-hours curriculum (it took 20 cold calls to gain initial entry)—and then persuade parents to allow daughters to participate. A hard-won government endorsement in 2009 (India’s human resource development minister told a nervous Hasan, “Good for you!”) has eased expansion. To date, Roshni has reached some 15,000 girls, and has measured their gains in getting jobs and rising from poverty. Compared to peers, Roshni trainees have also deferred their age of marriage, an important social change.

Roshni weathered its transition to a new CEO, once Hasan enrolled at Harvard in 2013, but its finances still depended on philanthropy from Silicon Valley’s Indian-American community. And so, during her M.B.A. studies, Hasan worked after hours to explore other options: fee-based partnerships with U.S. high schools and universities sending students abroad for global experiences; job-placement fees from local employers who recruit Roshni trainees. But those were insufficient. “There are lots of paths we can take,” she said. Might a Roshni for-profit affiliate for higher-income students subsidize the core program? Could the occasional field-immersion experiences become a bigger, corporation-focused business? Perhaps Hasan’s own planned, post-M.B.A. mobile-technology startup could underwrite Roshni, or rely on it for its workforce?

In the end, Hasan said this spring, a partial solution emerged: Roshni has partnered with Tata Group (among India’s best-known global enterprises) for funding and expansion to 20 new schools, with a curriculum broadened to include vocational and entrepreneurship training currently unavailable in rural areas. If this pilot, extending into next spring, succeeds, and Hasan’s planned company can meet her hiring aspirations, she will have found a way to sustain Roshni—and perhaps to train successor social entrepreneurs in India.