

Clean Cooking



Nora Benson is a junior completing an Independent Plan of Study in Engineering and Industrial Design. She has worked on a range of products for people in developing markets including helping develop prosthetic arms for Central American amputees, developing a new product line for fabric makers in Ghana, and designing and building a bridge for a village in southern China. Nora is interested in creating products that help people live better lives, particularly in situations that are less than ideal-like living in subsistence. She finds dealing with the different social, economic, and even political factors that affect these particular end users to be an interesting way to combine her engineering, business, and design interests and loves developing products that empower people to improve their lives.



Name: Taylor Boyke

Majors: Mechanical Engineering, Spanish

Class Standing: Senior

Career Aspirations: Working for an international company doing engineering and/or business consulting work

Interest in this project: Cooking is one of Taylor's favorite hobbies and with her background in engineering she has some technical background in heat transfer and thermodynamics that may be helpful for this project. Food is such an essential and fundamental part of life that she wants to help make it safer for people living in subsistence environments.

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Ayush Gupta is a graduate student at UIUC pursuing a professional Master's in Engineering in Energy Systems. With an undergraduate degree in Aerospace Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai and a strong experience base in different industries, Ayush now wants to work for sustainable growth of future businesses. He understands the importance of sustainability for a safe and flourishing future and the pivotal role of developing economies in it. The opportunity to work on a project for clean cooking will provide him a much needed experience of penetrating local lives in developing countries with innovative and sustainable solutions.



David Patel graduated with a civil engineering degree in May 2014 from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). He is currently a second year MBA student at UIUC and is concentrating in Finance and Marketing. Finance and marketing will reinforce his engineering background, as they will give him business knowledge which is very crucial in the current entrepreneurial world. His interest in the future is to work in a finance or marketing department of a global organization. His interest in the project is to work specifically towards the sustainability factor of the project.

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David Thrift is a senior in the Industrial Design BFA program. Born and raised in New Orleans, LA David is fascinated by the latest technological advances and hopes one day to own his own business. David wants to become a designer who can effectively solve world issues through better design. Other than that David is an avid musician and performs with a band. The trip to India will be his first time outside of the United States.



Erin Usmen is a second-year MBA student at the University of Illinois concentrating in marketing and international business. She graduated from Wellesley College in 2006 with a degree in psychology and then moved back to her hometown of Detroit, Michigan where she worked for eight years before returning to school for her graduate degree. She has a background in accounting and risk management and worked for a general contractor handling military construction projects in the Middle East. Prior to that, she worked as a payroll assistant for an electrical utilities company. Her interest in clean cooking comes from her passion to develop sustainable solutions for subsistence marketplaces with a primary focus on helping the women within those communities.