

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Institute on the Environment

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To Whom It May Concern,

Acara is a program of the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota that gives emerging entrepreneurs a chance to envision and launch successful social businesses. Since 2009, more than 300 students from 20 universities have participated in Acara's programs, guided by mentors in academia and industry to collaboratively explore business concepts and implement sustainable solutions while developing their leadership skills. Acara gives university students a chance to envision and launch successful social businesses. Acara's initial focus was on water and energy in India. Plans are to expand to Latin America and Uganda, and to address food and water security.

Acara's mission is to develop practical business solutions that address global societal and environmental challenges. This mission has two components. The first is focuses on education. Acara will educate and inspire the next generation of leaders by bringing real global challenges into the classroom, requiring all the academic skills of the students plus teamwork, customer research, multi-cultural understanding and real world deliverables, and developing a similar-minded network of university partners. The second component of the mission is about impact. Acara supports incubating the best ideas and the best students beyond the classroom and fostering an ecosystem of partners and mentors to assist these fledgling ventures.

This program is innovative in how to provides resources to students involved in developing social ventures. The impact of the program is that it produces a new generation of global leaders – by providing students with an insight into global problems and how to impact change. Students will create practical social venture plans that identify business approaches addressing the broad problems identified by Acara and its partners. The output goal of the program is the successful launch of the plans.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Mercer-Taylor
Sustainability Education Coordinator, Institute on the Environment
University of Minnesota

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ENVIRONMENT

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Driven to DiscoverSM