



Training a new generation of practitioners to address the complexities of sustainable development in innovative and participatory ways



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## Director's Note



We are quite pleased to share with you exciting news and updates regarding the University of Florida, Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program. We would like to congratulate our fourth cohort of graduates who have successfully completed all requirements for the MDP degree. In February, they participated in the Latin American Studies Field Research Clinic poster session with other Masters and PhD students who recently carried out or are planning upcoming research projects. The posters that MDP students presented can be found at the following web page: <http://mdp.africa.ufl.edu/academic-programs/mdp-degree/field-practicum/placements-and-posters/>. They can be accessed by clicking on the corresponding student's name and will provide you a quick overview of the interesting work that was carried out by our

graduating MDP students in their field practicums in Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, South Sudan, South Africa, and Haiti.

At present, our first year students are focused on preparing for their upcoming field practicums in India, Tanzania, South Africa, Brazil, Trinidad, Colombia and Costa Rica. Below information is provided on the great diversity of projects the students will be carrying out, the host organizations with which they will be working and the rich mix of methods they will be utilizing. We are grateful to faculty members who have provided guidance to our students during the planning stages of their field practicums and to the host organizations who will work closely with them in the coming months. These range from small scale community-based organizations to a large company seeking to apply in an effective manner sustainability standards in the framework of corporate social responsibility. Also noteworthy is the breadth of cross departmental support MDP students are receiving including the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the Warrington College of Business Administration, the Center for Governmental Responsibility at the Levin College of Law, the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication (AEC), the Department of Family, Youth & Community Sciences, the UF International Center, the Center for Latin American Studies, and the Center for African Studies. Two students will link with other MDP students from Emory and Columbia University with support from the University of the Andes in Bogotá, and another will link to the *Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas* founded and directed by illustrious UF graduates. As has been highlighted in the past, cross-departmental support, faculty engagement and extensive professional and organizational networks make UF an ideal institution for the MDP program.

Over 30 universities in 27 countries now offer MDP programs worldwide. The global nature of the program offers still largely untapped potential to link students and faculty across the global association. One example of cooperation among MDP programs is the ongoing collaboration between Sciences Po (Paris, France), Cheikh Anta Diop (Senegal) and UF in the implementation of the project, *Development Security and Climate Change in the Sahel* engaging students and faculty from all three institutions. Dr. Renata Serra, UF MDP Core Faculty member is the Coordinator of this project and she offers an informative overview of the status of this initiative.

UF MDP alumnus, Leandra Merz, co-founder and co-director of IIM International, provides an update on the work she and her husband, Aaron, have made in increasing educational access to orphans and vulnerable children in rural Zambia, creating opportunities for vulnerable children to complete their secondary education. The first graduates supported by IIM scholarships recently graduated and you will be inspired by reading about their future plans. Efforts have been made to consolidate the global MDP Student and Alumni Advisory Council (SAAC), and we are pleased that UF MDP alumnus Seth Marsala-Bell has taken on the challenge of being Treasurer of the SAAC Leadership Committee. We wish him success in this role.

Each year, new faculty member accept the invitation to serve as MDP affiliates. In this newsletter, Dr. Laura Warner from the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication describes her professional interests and what motivated her to become an affiliate faculty member to the program. Of special interest to many MDP students is her expertise in social marketing, which has many applications in development work.

Here, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Carmen Diana Deere, who has played a highly significant role in the UF MDP program since its inception. As a core member of the MDP faculty, Dr. Deere has taught the core course "*Foundations of Economic Analysis for Sustainable Development*", has served as Chair on student committees, and has created exciting field practicum opportunities. It has truly been a privilege to have had the support of Dr. Deere, and we want to wish her the best as she embarks on her retirement in the late summer.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support provided by new MDP graduate, Liz Poulsen, during the past two years as a graduate assistant in the MDP office. In addition to her creative support in the development of this newsletter and the MDP website, Liz has supported efforts to promote the MDP program and has managed the MDP Listserv that has improved in content and quality over time. For all these contributions and more we would like to thank Liz and wish her the greatest success in her professional career.

Sincerely,



Glenn Galloway  
MDP Program Director



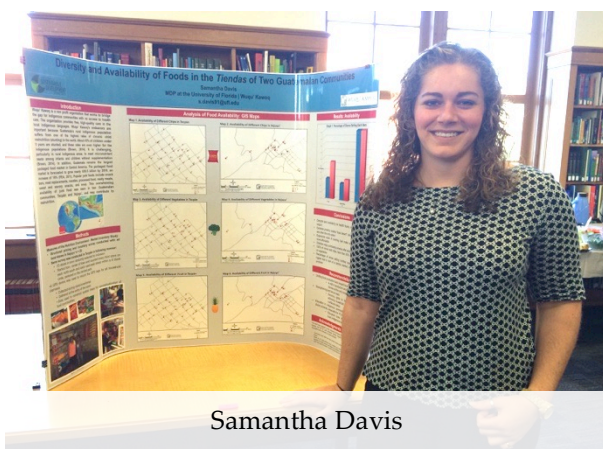


## Final Student Presentations and Poster Session

The graduating cohort of MDP students, along with students in the Master's in Latin American Studies and the Tropical Conservation and Development programs, participated in the poster session that was part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Latin American Studies Field Research Clinic. This was a great opportunity for students to showcase their accomplishments and findings from last summer's field practicums, and to network with faculty and students in other departments. Students were also able to share practical advice on gathering field data with first-year students in various programs during the workshops in the first half of the field clinic, which were facilitated by MDP core faculty member Jon Dain. MDP students also individually presented the results of their field practicums during their defenses, which were open to the public.



Alexandra Sprague



Samantha Davis



Christa Roberts (Grand Prize Winner)

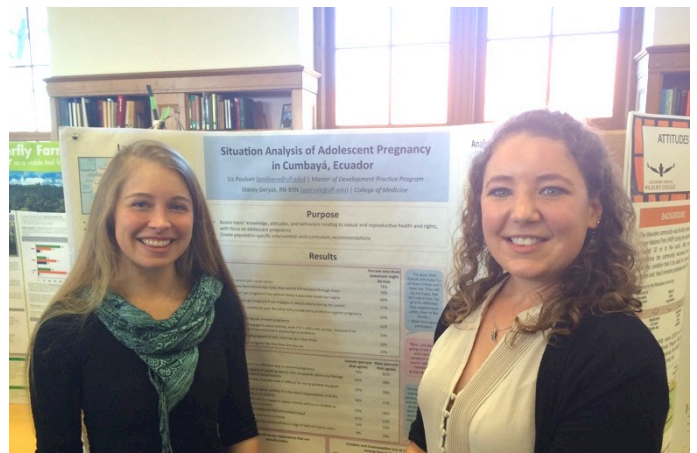
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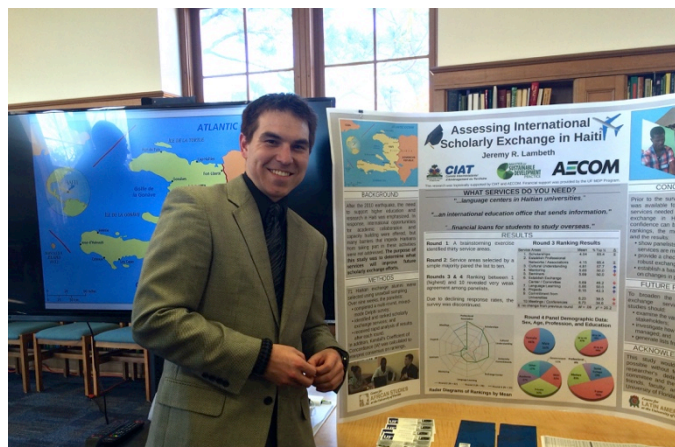
Student	Poster/Presentation
Maria Checa	Feasibility of a Butterfly Farming Initiative in Western Ecuador as a Viable Tool for Sustainable Development
Samantha Davis	Diversity and Availability of Foods in the <i>Tiendas</i> of Two Guatemalan Communities
Liz Poulsen	Adolescent Pregnancy in Cumbayá Ecuador
Alexandra Sprague	Household Livelihood Surveys: Training Practitioners and the Case of Makuleke, South Africa
Antonieta Eguren	Attitudes Toward Wildlife and Kruger National Park in the Makuleke Community, South Africa
Jeremy Lambeth	Assessing International Scholarly Exchange in Haiti
Christa Roberts	Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainability Indicators at Hotels and Eco-Lodges in Costa Rica and Nicaragua
Sheldon Wardwell	South Sudan's New Periphery



Alexandra Sprague and Whitney Turientine



Stacey Geryak (medical student) and Liz Poulsen



Jeremy Lambeth



## Development Practitioner Forum: Randall Borman

*Leader and Activist from Cofán Indigenous Community*

UF's Center for Latin American Studies, Department of Anthropology, Tropical Conservation and Development student group, and Master's of Development Practice Program sponsored a development practitioner forum event featuring Randall Borman, during which he presented on the theme: "Community Development: A Long-Term Commitment." Borman also met with students for an informal lunch session following his talk.

Randall Borman was born to American missionary parents living in Ecuador's Amazonian rainforests, and spent his early years as part of the Cofán indigenous community of Dureno, a town near the Colombian border. Educated in the Western world, Borman returned to his Cofán home to help combat the impacts of uncontrolled oil exploitation and the subsequent colonization by mestizo farmers of what had once been Cofán territories. Borman founded the village of Zábalo in 1984, and, along with other Cofán leaders, has successfully recovered over a million acres of Cofán ancestral territories. He continues to lead the process of developing both mid- and long-term strategies for the protection and maintenance of these lands. During the past decades, Borman has occupied several important political posts within the developing Cofán Nation, and at present, he heads the Fundación para la Sobrevivencia del Pueblo Cofán (FSC, Cofán Survival Fund), an indigenous-based not-for-profit which handles several Cofán conservation initiatives including "Cofán Ranger Program." He speaks the Cofán language "a'ingae" as his first language, and also speaks English and Spanish.







## Development Practitioner Event: Rosanna Kingston

*Resource & Strategic Partnership Director,  
Clean the World*

Clean the World ([www.cleantheworld.org](http://www.cleantheworld.org)) is a non-profit organization based in Orlando that collects soap products from hotels, recycles them, and distributes millions of bars in hygiene kits in nearly 100 countries around the world. Rosanna Kingston, the organization's Resource & Strategic Partnership Director and a prospective MDP student, visited the MDP program to discuss her roles in Clean the World. These include managing sales, donations, and coordination of resources and hygiene products, as well as organizing and leading distribution trips abroad. She is currently developing a recycling project with United Airlines.



## Congratulations!

*Cohort 4 Graduation and Cohort 6 Admission*

The MDP program celebrated the graduation of nine students this spring. Pictured above (from left to right) are Jeremy Lambeth, Liz Poulsen, Samantha Davis, Christa Roberts, Antonieta Eguren, and Alex Sprague. Not pictured: Sheldon Wardwell, Hans Goertz, and Maria Checa. All students graduated with a certificate in Tropical Conservation and Development; other certificates and concentrations include Latin American Studies, tropical agriculture, monitoring and evaluation, and maternal and child health, among others.

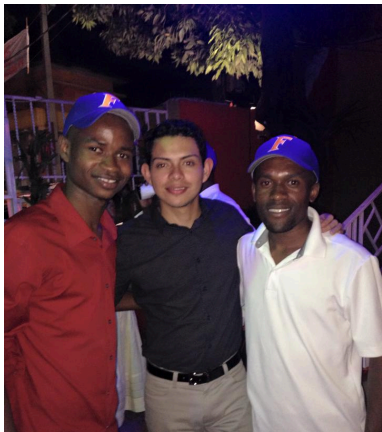
The program looks forward to welcoming a new cohort of students in Fall 2015.



## Student News: Irving Chan

*Entrepreneurship and Empowerment in Haiti*

***This update comes from first-year MDP student Irving Chan (last on right in above photo) who travelled to Haiti over Spring Break as part of a collaborative program with the UF Warrington School of Business and the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and CEDEL-Haiti.***



Jean Felix (CS), Irving Chan (MDP), and Abner Volsaint (CS)

I was part of a consulting team for small business development whose overall goal is to help improve efficiency and promote meaningful progress in small ventures in Haiti. We have been working with a group of young entrepreneurs in order to help them identify solutions to key needs and challenges in their venture, La Confiserie Soullouquoise

(CS). The program was hosted in collaboration with the UF Warrington School of Business and the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and CEDEL-Haiti.

CS's objective is to promote "Dous Makos Ti Gwav," a traditional food product (similar to fudge) around the country. Working in collaboration with different organizations such as the Dous Makos producers Organization (DMPO), the Ministry of Agriculture, and VETERIMED, CS seeks to improve the quality and

consistency of the product, further promoting employment opportunities among farmers, members of the DMPO, and other stakeholders involved.

In my personal experience, having the opportunity to participate in this project and meet with the entrepreneurs running CS has been an enriching learning process. Their passion and commitment to their vision of having a positive impact, not only economically, but also socially and environmentally, is truly inspiring. By helping CS in updating their business plan, improving their bookkeeping system, mapping their production processes, and providing them with resources for the implementation of best managerial and production practices, our team seeks to collaborate with the growth and development of CS as a company and its impact.



The team with Jimmy Kervens, Jean Feliz, and Abner Volsaint from CS





## Student News: Paris Conference

*Collaboration with Sciences Po and Cheikh Anta Diop MDP programs*

*Pictured above: Sahel working group participants of the Sahel West Africa Club division of the OECD (from top left to top right): Ya Cor Ndione (UCAD); Dezire Zongo (Sciences Po); Ibrahima Barry (UCAD); Tzviatko Chiderov (Sciences Po); and Ishak Afrit (Sciences Po). (Bottom left to bottom right): Rugiyatu Kane (UF); Whitney Turientine (UF); and Dr. Renata Serra (UF)*

By **Renata Serra**

UF MDP Core Faculty and Project coordinator,  
*Development Security and Climate Change in the Sahel*

We are pleased to give an update on the ongoing project *Development, Security and Climate Change in the Sahel*, which is an exchange and collaboration project between the MDP programs at UF, UCAD and Sciences Po. This time we will take you to Paris!

Students and faculty from UF and UCAD visited the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po, where the MDP program is located, from February 28 to March 6. It was a very productive meeting, which gave project participants the opportunity to get to know each other better, and experience the life as MDP student in Paris. The three groups of students presented their respective research projects at a workshop at PSIA (see program below) and received valuable feedback. We visited and made contacts at the Sahel West Africa Club at OECD, the European Union Institute for Security Studies and the main OECD headquarters. We also attended a presentation by Denis Loyer, who spent his career at the *Agence Française du Développement* and shared his insights into the life of a development practitioner. Most of all,

we had fun spending time together, and celebrated the last evening by eating crêpes and drinking cider, in the French way! We are very much looking forward to meeting again in Dakar, Senegal, from May 1-10!

I would like to thank Kate Vivian, Academic Advisor at PSIA, who provided invaluable help in organizing and coordinating the meeting in Paris. I would also like to mention that I was very pleased that Ibrahima Barry, Lecturer and coordinator of the MDP program at UCAD, could join us in Paris. He was supposed to come to UF last September but unfortunately they did not grant his visa to enter the US on time!

The project is funded by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the US, the UF Sahel Research Center, and the UF Center for African Studies.

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**Group project presentations at the Workshop held at Sciences Po, PSIA, March 4, 2015**

**Applying the DEED model: Rethinking climate change, gender and small-holder farming in Senegal**

Irving Chan Gomez, Ya Cor Ndione, Whitney Turientine

**Rapid urbanization growth: Are the cities in the Sahel ready? The case of Dakar and Ouagadougou.**

Rugiyatu Kane and Désiré Zongo

**Innovative Technology Solutions to Peri-Urban Food Production in Dakar. The Context of changing Climate and Population Growth**

Tzviatko Chiderov and Thérèse d'Auria Ryley

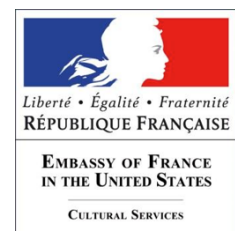
Rugiyatu Kane and Whitney Turientine in front of Maison Internationale at Cite Universitaire

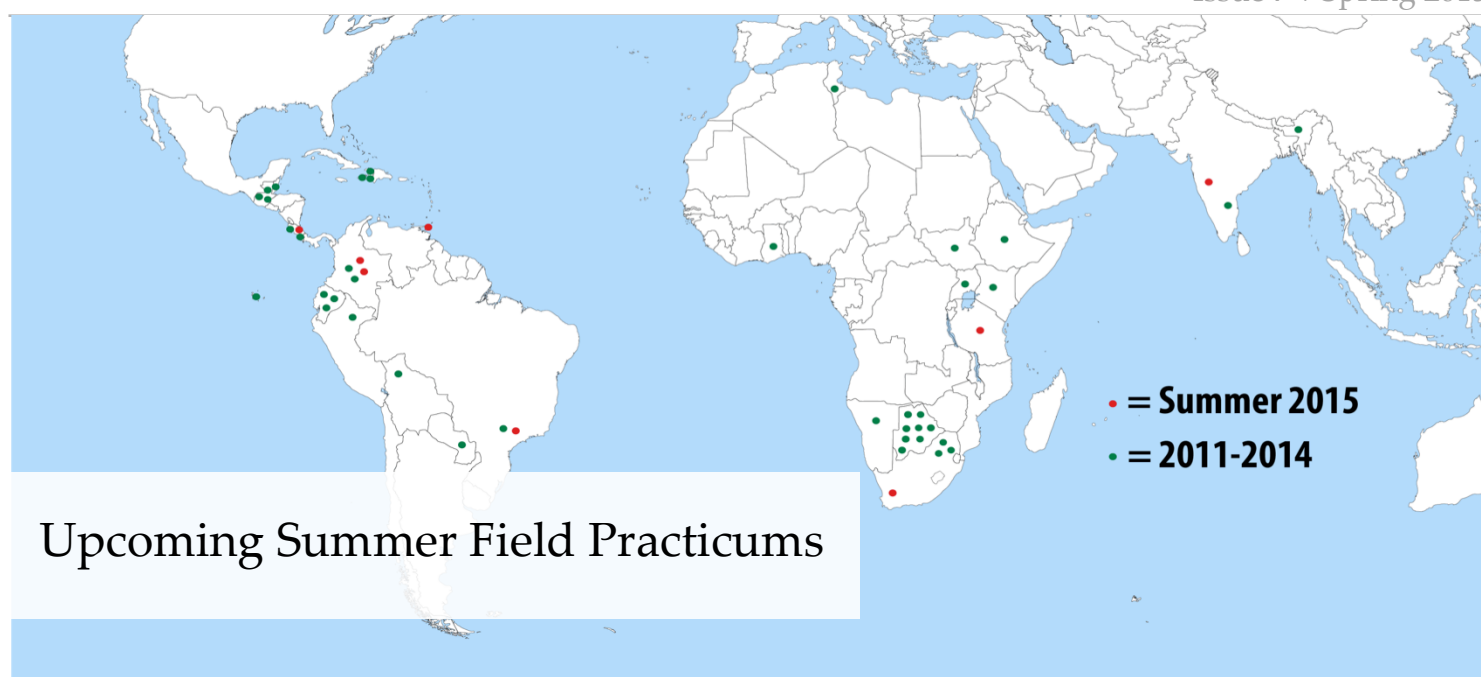


**Whitney M. Turientine**

(Project participant and MDP student, UF)

Instead of relaxing on one of Florida's many beaches this Spring Break, I, along with one of my other cohort-mates, Rugi, was privileged to spend my time collaborating on an on-going project with fellow MDP students at Sciences Po University in Paris, France! It was such a great opportunity to meet and work again with the Sciences Po students and our other colleagues from Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) from Dakar, Senegal. Since our initial meeting at the Democracy, Security, and Climate Change in the Sahel Conference this past Fall, three groups of us students from all three universities have been working remotely on proposals for policy briefs that address issues as varied as agriculture and urban planning in the Sahel. Meeting in Paris this March gave us all much-needed face-to-face time to refine our topics and present them at a workshop on Sciences Po's main campus. Throughout the week leading up to the workshop, we also visited the OECD's Sahel West Africa Club (SWAC) to learn more about the organization's functions and current research in West Africa. We even managed to see some of the great sights in Paris, namely The Louvre, Champs-Elysees, The Eiffel Tower, and more! The experience was truly invaluable. The exchange program between the universities has one more trip scheduled this semester in May to UCAD. There we hope to advance further in our respective projects and visit key development organizations working in Senegal! Stay tuned for more from us on this exciting and epic exchange opportunity!





Student	Host Institution/NGO	Location(s)	Project
Whitney Turientine	Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (UF-CGIAR-CCAFS)	Arusha, Tanzania	Integrating gender considerations to ensure equitable access to climate services. Needs assessment, stakeholder focus groups, facilitated learning exercises, follow-up briefs, participatory impact pathway analysis workshops.
Chad Henry	Habitat for Humanity / University of West Indies	Trinidad	Promoting sustainable home food production in Habitat for Humanity communities. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups.
Gabriela Polo	UF in Costa Rica- Law Clinic	Costa Rica	Work with oyster farmers (women) in the island of Chira.
Ben Christ	Institute de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPE)	Nazará Paulista, Brazil	Perceptions of extreme drought among differing groups in Brazil. Community-based social marketing with middle school students and rural producers.
Matt Anderson	SAB-Miller / Universidad de los Andes	Bogotá, Colombia	Design of strategies for the communication and adoption of the PROSPERAR sustainability plan by SAB-Miller brewery employees. Surveys, interviews, group discussions, network analysis, scenario planning.
Irving Xchel Chan-Gómez	SAB-Miller / Universidad de los Andes	Bogotá, Colombia	Design of strategies for the communication and adoption of the PROSPERAR sustainability plan by SAB-Miller brewery employees. Network and value chain mapping, direct observations, meter reading, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, storytelling, project diary, stakeholder analysis, footprint calculators, PDCA cycle, lessons learnt workshops.
Kristen Marks	Rahab's Rope	Goa, India	Leadership development training for young women to prevent forced involvement in sex trade. Develop curriculum and conduct leadership training class.
Jessica Horwood	UF Entrepreneurship and Empowerment in South Africa (EESA)	Cape Town, South Africa	Entrepreneurship and empowerment: analyze existing enterprise, suggest measures to address challenges. Also conduct impact assessment of EESA on former clients. Mapping analyses, situational analyses, SEE model, review documents, networking with partners, focus groups, surveys, interviews.





## Alumni Update: Leandra Merz

*Co-founder and Co-director of IIM International*

*Leandra Merz graduated from the MDP program in 2014. She provided us with this update from Zambia, where she and her husband are co-directing an organization that provides educational access to orphans and other vulnerable children.*

IIM International is dedicated to providing increased educational access to orphans and vulnerable children in rural Zambia. Leandra and Aaron Merz were inspired to start this NGO in 2012 in order to further assist the villages they served as Peace Corps Volunteers. The passion for helping these communities led Leandra back to the University of Florida for a Masters in Sustainable Development Practice. She was able to apply much of what she learned to improve the organization, but the most valuable information was related to fundraising and grant-writing. These invaluable skills have allowed IIM International to grow significantly in the past 2 years.

From 12 students in the first school year of 2013, IIM International now sponsors 21 high school students for the 2015 school year. Primary school is free in Zambia and many times uniforms are not even required so most children are able to attend grades 1-8. However, grades 9-12 are \$200 a year for tuition alone. For a subsistence farmer (as most rural Zambians are) with an annual salary of \$300-\$400 a year, it is very difficult to send even one child to high school. We applaud the many families who sacrifice greatly in order to provide their children with an education. Sadly, this system leaves no hope for orphans or vulnerable children to attend high school. There are no government scholarships and very few private scholarships within the district. This is why IIM International has stepped in to offer sponsorships to academically qualified students with great financial need.



Students in front of the new borehole

Evaluations of the first year of programs revealed that even with sponsorships many students struggle to perform well and to stay on track for graduation. IIM International realized that scholarships were only the beginning of what was needed to transform lives in this community. Poor boarding facilities and lack of support from caregivers were extremely detrimental to our first class of sponsor students. Through extensive fundraising efforts, we raised over \$25,000 in order to build a student life center. This includes a male dormitory and a female dormitory with a capacity of 40 students, a kitchen, a house for a full-time caregiver, a borehole for clean water, and





Dorm bedroom

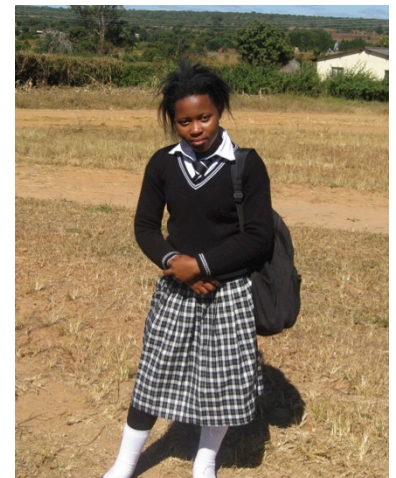
basic toilets. In January, the Student Life Center opened its doors to 18 students who now have a safe place to live, 3 nutritious meals a day, clean water, health care, and support from several staff members and volunteers.

We are pleased to report that two of our scholarship recipients, Mbachi and Elizabeth, graduated in December. Mbachi began working as a cook for us in order to save some money and she is now preparing for college. In April, she will begin a nursing program and continue pursuing her life-long dream of becoming a nurse. Mbachi represents the full mission of what IIM International is trying to accomplish in Zambia. Her mother

passed away when she was a child and she has been living with her father who supports her and her siblings while working at the local health clinic. Our scholarship allowed her to stay in school and delay the typical process of starting a family and serving as a homemaker. Even if Mbachi chooses that role now, her extra years of education have made her more prepared to carry out that role in a more informed manner, take better care of her children, and properly manage a household budget. But our hopes are that she is able to realize her dream and continue on the path towards a profession in the medical field in order to better support her future family.

Future goals for IIM International include adding poultry, rabbit, and pig facilities as well as kitchen gardens. These livestock and agricultural projects would provide more affordable sources of food, some income generation and an opportunity for students to learn more advanced methods of farming. IIM International also hopes to begin offering vocational and life skills seminars to students and community members. We

realize that many people are unable to attend school because of the pressure to generate income. Likewise, many young women who have qualified for secondary school have already found themselves pregnant and have no daycare options that would allow them to attend school full time. We hope that by offering programs designed to improve the quality of life, the business and family management skills of individuals, and instruction in a broad range of income generating activities we are able to impact a larger demographic of the community in which we work. To learn more about IIM International or to donate towards our mission please visit [www.IIMinternational.com](http://www.IIMinternational.com).



Mbachi



Kitchen, with full-time caregiver Regina



Student Life Center during construction



## Other Alumni Updates

**David Morrissey ('12)** has returned to the U.S. from working in Haiti and Guatemala, and is now the Administrative Coordinator for the Rural Health Research Institute at Georgia Southern University ([class.georgiasouthern.edu/rhri](http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/rhri)), where he is working to address some of the same health concerns in rural parts of the U.S. that are prevalent in Haiti and Guatemala (nutrition, access to health care, socioeconomic factors, etc.). He came to the MDP program with a background in environmental monitoring and GIS, but Dr. Rick Rheingans and the health focus of the program piqued his interest in the health issues related to under-resourced communities, both in the U.S. and abroad. He is grateful for his experience with the MDP program and hopes to continue working overseas as he is able.

**Seth Marsala-Bell ('14)** is currently an Energy Corps member working as a Farm Energy Educator/Researcher at the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). He is currently located in Butte, Montana and his projects have included working on multiple studies in regards to saving, reducing, and promoting renewable energy application to farms in the Northwest. He has constructed a high tunnel (hoop house) and has been monitoring the temperature fluctuations to determine how the growing season can be extended in a northern climate. He has been working to update the ATTRA database, which is a valuable resource to farmers all across the U.S. and it is federally funded. He has also been conducting multiple community events to promote energy saving education. He reports: "The people here are amazing and the scenery is so beautiful."



Seth Marsala-Bell, with solar cooker



**Erica Linn-Odera ('12)**. Since graduating from the MDP program, I have worked at the University of Florida's Public Issues Education Center for three years, where I have worked on applied research projects and program evaluations regarding natural resource and agricultural issues in Florida. This fall I will begin a PhD program in Agricultural Education and Extension at Penn State University. I intend to pursue a dual-title PhD with the International Agriculture and Development program, a program which complements students' primary field of study and specifically helps prepare graduate students for the international development field. My research interests are related to the impacts of program evaluation on international community development issues. My academic advisor will be Dr. Mark Brennan, UNESCO Chair in Rural Community, Leadership and Youth Development. I am very excited to pursue further studies, and with a doctoral program that very much complements my MDP degree! On a personal note, my husband Levy and I welcomed our first child, our son Isaiah, this last January and have been having a lot of fun being parents.



## Faculty Spotlight

*Dr. Laura Warner, MDP Affiliate Faculty Member  
Department of Agricultural Education and Communication*

***Dr. Laura Warner, a faculty member in UF's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, joined the MDP program this semester as an affiliate faculty member. We spoke to her regarding her interest in the MDP program and in the development field.***

**How did you hear about the MDP program, and what motivated you to become an affiliate faculty member to the program?**

I learned about the MDP program through my colleagues and Agricultural Education and Communication (AEC) students who have taken MDP classes or pursued the certificate. My work is focused on encouraging sustainable practices and the MDP program aligns well with my areas of interest and the work we do in AEC.

**What specific aspects of the international development field are you passionate about, and why?**

I am passionate about developing the competencies among international development practitioners that help them to plan, implement, and evaluate programs that encourage positive changes in the communities where they work. One strategy I teach is *social marketing*, where commercial marketing principles are used to

encourage behavior change. I also teach program evaluation and love to strategize with students and practitioners on ways to capture the impacts of the work they do.

**What are some of the most meaningful initiatives that you have been connected with in the development field, and why were they meaningful to you?**

Because I focus on increasing programming competencies among practitioners, I have the opportunity to be involved indirectly with many different projects, locally and globally. The most meaningful initiatives for me are those where the practitioner is more successful because of something they've learned from me, such as a new strategy to promote change in a community or a better way to understand the target audience.

