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## 'U' Students Want To Give Light To Nicaraguans



Jason DeRusha ([http://wcco.com/bios/local\\_bio\\_161103707.html](http://wcco.com/bios/local_bio_161103707.html))  
Reporting

*(WCCO) Minneapolis* They know they're idealistic, but a group of University of Minnesota students isn't deterred. They're planning on changing the world.

Unlike most pie-in-the-sky idealists, these students have a business plan and an idea. They're trying to bring light to parts of the world where there is darkness.

"Imagine going home at night and not being able to turn on a light bulb," said Patrick Delaney, a 23-year-old electrical engineering student, who's turned his passion into a non-profit organization, Bright New Ideas.

Delaney and his friends just spent 17 days in Nicaragua.

"When we went down there and saw the looks on people's faces, we felt incredibly inspired to continue with the project," he said.

Most Nicaraguans don't have access to electricity, so they use kerosene-powered lanterns for light at night. And these students say, it's not a good solution.

"It's a huge cause of indoor air pollution," explained Trisha Qualy. "It's also very dangerous for kids. Many kids ingest it and die, and it's a fire hazard as well."

The current solar lantern prototype runs from eight to 10 hours on one day's charge, but the students found that Nicaraguans don't need that much light at night.

They hope that by reducing the length of use, they can juice the brightness of the light.

Delaney considers this effort his calling.

"We're willing to do almost anything to follow it through -- this is the biggest opportunity I've ever had in my life to help people," Delaney said.

Bright New Idea's concept was so bright, the students made it to the finals of the Minnesota Cup, a competition for entrepreneurs. But to truly ignite their plan, they need seed money.

"I want to, and I think we want to really show what a bunch of University students can do for Minnesota and for the world, to really make a difference, and we can't do that without the support of our Minnesota, our fellow Minnesotans," said team member Aleksandr Kladnitsky.

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University of Minnesota students are creating solar-powered lanterns to bring light to Nicaragua.

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