

Statement of Purpose

Without time to even identify what they would do or how they would help, Matt and Ryan knew they had to go. It wasn't long after the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, two workers from eMi, a non-profit architecture and design firm in India, left their home in the Himalayas and made the trek to the Kashmir region of Pakistan. In the midst of the chaos and despair, people had begun to rebuild from the broken pieces in hopes of remaking their lives. However, without knowing any better way, they were repeating the mistakes of the past and rebuilding shelters which would instantly collapse at the slightest quake. In that moment, Ryan and Matt understood the role they could play in helping the region rebuild.

On a tea shop's roadside table over a dirty sheet of paper, they created a simple drawing of a typical Pakistani home. With only a minor modification to the existing wall structure, they illustrated how the 10" brick walls could be reinforced with perpendicular wood blocking. Though the change was ever so slight, it would provide more stability through shear forces and allow the heavy walls to withstand future tremors. Finding a copy machine, they began handing the illustration out to those who had begun to rebuild. Though they couldn't provide a verbal explanation for the process, they could speak through the universal language of drawing and with eyes of compassion. Suddenly the few copies multiplied into hundreds of copies and were scattered throughout the hillside. The Pakistani people knew how to rebuild, they just needed someone to show them a different way.

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As architects, I believe we have an ethical responsibility to go to where our services are needed most. How much more valuable is a doctor to the sick and a teacher to the unschooled than to the healthy and educated? All human life should have access to a bed out of the rain, a bathroom free of disease, and a kitchen with proper ventilation. We cannot nor should not, design every new home in the third world. But we can equip developing communities with the tools they need to build more sustainably and safely through their own indigenous and creative practices. During my year as a Master of Architecture student at UC Berkeley, I will devote my efforts towards three things: the research of vernacular shelters, the identification of simple yet strategic improvement to these structures, and to the development of educational tools which would provide guidance on future building projects.

Though I have a strong foundational understanding of India's building techniques and layouts, I will spend in depth time cataloging the most basic vernacular homes in Southeast Asia. I believe the diversity of these shelters can be described as 8-10 typical forms. Through a more intimate understanding of these building forms and through communication with local builders, simple yet powerful design changes can be made to improve these standard layouts. I will make adjustments to the building's circulation, ventilation, heating/cooling means, and water collection system which will evolve the standard shelter while still respecting the vernacular style. As a culmination and output of this process, straightforward teaching tools will be developed which illustrate these sustainable, structural and aesthetic improvements to the original homes. These drawings will provide guidance to indigenous builders who can then apply the new ideas in a way which contributes back to their cultural development.

After completing my graduate studies I would like to establish a non-profit organization devoted to the continuation of this educational process. Through the means of teaching and training builders in communities, I believe these tools could be shared and reproduced to evolve a region's building practices. These teaching tools will be developed for the ten main regions of the world. In addition to indigenous development, I would like to offer architecture students an opportunity to use their skills in a purposeful and tangible way. As another part of this non-profit, I will pair up universities with regions of the world in need of development. Through this partnership, the university will provide an investment of time, resources, and creativity towards the redevelopment of their adopted region. Studios will work on projects in and around the selected region to transform the community one building at a time. This ongoing dialogue will contribute to a gradual yet powerful change for the community, the university and the students. Not only will new ideas be brought to the third world, but students will tangibly see the value of their practical and critical design skills outside of their first world context. Just as we need to share effective means of development, we also need to learn from the richness of cultures outside of our own.

Throughout my undergraduate studies at Kansas State University, I exemplified a commitment to excellence in design and unequivocal purpose in everything I did. While maintaining a focus on my coursework and achieving a 3.8 GPA, I also lived as a leader within our program and community. I was the student representative on the College's Study Abroad Program, served on the department's Architecture Student Advisory Board, worked as a teaching assistant for Structures III & IV courses, and was honored with the *AIA Kansas Student of the Year Award* in 2005. Despite minimal emphasis at the time in sustainability, I independently explored environmental concepts through my seminar classes and design studios. I became the first in our college to achieve LEED accreditation and set an example many have followed. I worked as a research assistant for Wendy Ornelas, FAIA (Assistant Dean of the College of Architecture Planning & Design) to address the important transition from education to practice. As an output of that understanding, I wrote an essay which received an *Emerging Professional Award*. I was chosen to take part in the 2005 Internship Conference *Designing Tomorrow's Architect*.

Now as a professional, I have further evolved in my technical knowledge, design skill and leadership influence. Upon graduation, I began full time work for an architect who had been my mentor for five years. Knowing my skill and capabilities, he quickly gave me responsibility and I began managing projects as well as assisting him directly on high level healthcare buildings.

Now, I work as a sustainability advisor for *Brightworks*, a Portland based consulting firm. I have led efforts to integrate sustainability into more than a dozen projects and have served as a project manager for clients such as Cisco, Hewlett Packard, Yahoo! and CSU Chico. Being one of only two people when we opened our San Francisco office, I have contributed to our company's training development and played a key role in the establishment of our San Francisco presence. Learning to develop my skills as a project manager and communicator, I have never experienced a year of more challenge and growth in my professional development, yet have risen to the occasion.

Despite my corporate experience and high level project involvement, it is the non-profit projects I have worked on which have brought me the greatest fulfillment and capitalized most on my strengths. I have been the lead designer for a children's home and school (Guntur, India), an agricultural community center (Gariaband, India), a 20-acre master plan for Shishaya School (Dehra Dun, India) and created a redevelopment plan for an electrical site in Moloka'i, Hawai'i. Designing for the developing world is not only a statement I have made, but tangible commitment I have lived as evident through these projects.

Although I have an accredited architecture degree and a year of experience already in India, I want to pursue graduate school through the 'Environmental Design & Urbanism in Developing Countries' program to immerse myself in this specific field of study. I want to dig deeper into social, economic, and environmental issues to which I have only begun to scrape the surface. I intend to use this time in academia as an opportunity to further my knowledge, establish credibility in this sector of our profession and take an intentional step towards equipping designers to serve global needs through design.

UC Berkeley is known for its excellence in architecture; it is renowned all over the globe. Accepting students of only the highest caliber in leadership and intellect, I believe I have demonstrated my capability in surpassing these expectations. However, it is not only a credential I seek, but the opportunity this program provides. 'Environmental Design in the Developing World' is a highly esteemed and appreciated area of study with a unique and humble approach to architecture. I want contribute to this program which not only recognizes the responsibility we have as architects to respond to impoverished living situations but also join a program which moves forward in action towards a solution. Additionally, the very essence of the city of Berkeley is where the east meets the west. After living a year in the east but more familiar with the west, I can think of no other place I would rather study than in a city where the two are bridged.

Living in the Czech Republic, India and traveling to more than 15 other countries, I have seen countless colors of development and layers of poverty all woven together to make up the fabric of our world. Every single moment, person and place lives dependently within the larger construct of our planet. I must recognize my place within the history of humanity's past and see my catalytic opportunity to guide its future. I will not change the world, but I will be change within the world by the recognizing my purposes within, outside and beyond the walls.