

## **Students Brew Award-winning Idea**

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A video created by five public health master's students rose to the top of more than 65 entries in the "Be the Change: Save a Life Maternal Health Challenge," sponsored by ABC News and the Duke Global Health Institute.



In a Maternal Health Challenge, public health students at Tulane propose an iron-fortified tea to improve the health of Indian women. (Photo from Photosindia, Getty Images)

Their entry ? among three finalists ? proposed an iron-fortified tea for Indian women called MaBa Tea. The video describes how Ma and Ba are Hindu words for mother and father.

When the idea of using tea as a delivery method for iron came up, members of the group knew they had struck on a novel idea with MaBa Tea.

International health and development student Cameron Taylor heard about the competition in late April, and invited some classmates to brainstorm ideas. Taylor had video experience, but didn't have a ready idea for the project.

Neha Sinha, a community health sciences student from India, pointed out that iron deficiency is a big problem in India. Justin Colvard had done previous research on iron deficiency anemia and fortification methods. Colvard and team members Andrew Hebert and Marta Bornstein are international health students.



Students (from left) Neha Sinha, Andrew Hebert, Marta Bornstein, Justin Colvard and Cameron Taylor are finalists with their MaBa Tea idea. (Photo from the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine)

Although the team did not win the top prize of \$10,000 in the [Maternal Health Challenge](#), they will receive mentorship from The Lemelson Foundation, a grantmaking organization that promotes innovation. “Now it's a matter of us taking the idea forward,” says Colvard.

The Tulane team's experience was somewhat unique because the MaBa Tea idea was at such an early stage; most of the competing projects were already in the prototype phase.

Both Taylor and Colvard agreed that the best part of the experience was working collaboratively on a real-world problem. “This is the first group project where I felt everyone was as excited as I am,” adds Colvard.

It was energizing to work “alongside future colleagues to develop a public health program,” says Taylor. “This is why I am in public health.”

*Dee Boling is director of communications for the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine..*