

innovATE

Express

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Dr. George Glasson, left, engages with workshop participants in active learning exercise.

InnovATE Leads Place-Based STEM Education Workshop in Malawi

September 28-30, 2015 InnovATE led a workshop in partnership with [Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources](#) (LUANAR) and [USAID/Malawi](#) on place-based science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for university professors, administrators, and ministry officials in Lilongwe, Malawi. The workshop promoted the development of a STEM Education Certificate for secondary school agriculture and science teachers. Participants were introduced to the concept of place-based STEM education which is designed to provide a way for teachers and communities to prepare children to become participants in local problem-solving.

Johanna Cricenti, Program Manager of InnovATE, discussed experiential learning and designing course work and engagement opportunities for entrepreneurial and workforce-ready skills development. After the workshop, one participant said, “Experiential learning is vital to agricultural training and education.”

Dr. George Glasson of Virginia Tech modeled inquiry-by-design pedagogies that engage learners in problem solving. He emphasized the importance of connecting STEM education to local community resources.

By example, Mr. Daniel Chinkuntha, an agriculture expert with the [Tikondwe Freedom Gardens](#) in Malawi, described how the Freedom Gardens, through the [Mobile Malawi program](#), use mobile phones to connect schools with traditional agricultural practices to enhance nutrition and sustainable food security. The participants generated ideas on the courses, resources, and experiences needed for science and agriculture teachers to improve their pedagogy in STEM subjects.

Dr. Josiah Tlou of Virginia Tech led discussions of how the STEM curriculum might be delivered through Open Distance Learning. He presented an update on the [New Partnership for Africa's Development \(NEPAD\) e-schools initiative](#) and the implications of that initiative for Malawi. Dr. Tlou and Dr. Ndalapa Mhango, distance learning specialist and graduate of Virginia Tech, led a discussion of the challenges of implementing technology and distance learning for an agriculture curriculum. The participants generated a list of the resources, infrastructure and skills needed to implement distance learning, and Dr. Tlou led a session on identifying potential funding sources.

Participants left the workshop with a concrete plan and action items for moving forward with a STEM education certification program. One participant said that this workshop was “timely scheduled. We need well qualified STEM teachers to implement the new secondary school curriculum.”

Staff Attend APLU HICD Deep Dive

Dr. Keith Moore, Director of InnovATE, and Johanna Cricenti, Program Manager of InnovATE, attended the [Association for Public Land Grant Universities](#)’ workshop, “Institutional Performance Improvement in Practice: A Deep Dive into the HICD Methodology” September 24-25, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

The workshop provided an overview of USAID’s human and institutional capacity development (HICD) framework and its basis in human performance technology. Participants also

received practical advice on how to incorporate the framework into international projects. Round-table discussions provided opportunities to share experiences and explore possibilities for collaboration between universities and other development partners.



New Study Proposes Policies and Practices for Overcoming Challenges for Women in AET

InnovATE published on its website a new thematic study, entitled “Mainstreaming Gender in AET: Overcoming Challenges through Policies and Practices” by Dr. Emily Van Houweling, formerly of Virginia Tech but now of the University of Denver, Dr. Maria Elisa Christie of Virginia Tech, and Asha Abdel-Rahim of the University of Juba, South Sudan.

The study is the product of interviews and focus groups conducted in four countries—South Sudan, Mozambique, Bangladesh and Cambodia—and a regional conference workshop in Mozambique. A literature review was also conducted to provide a broader global perspective, to ground the empirical data and to fill in gaps in the country level data.

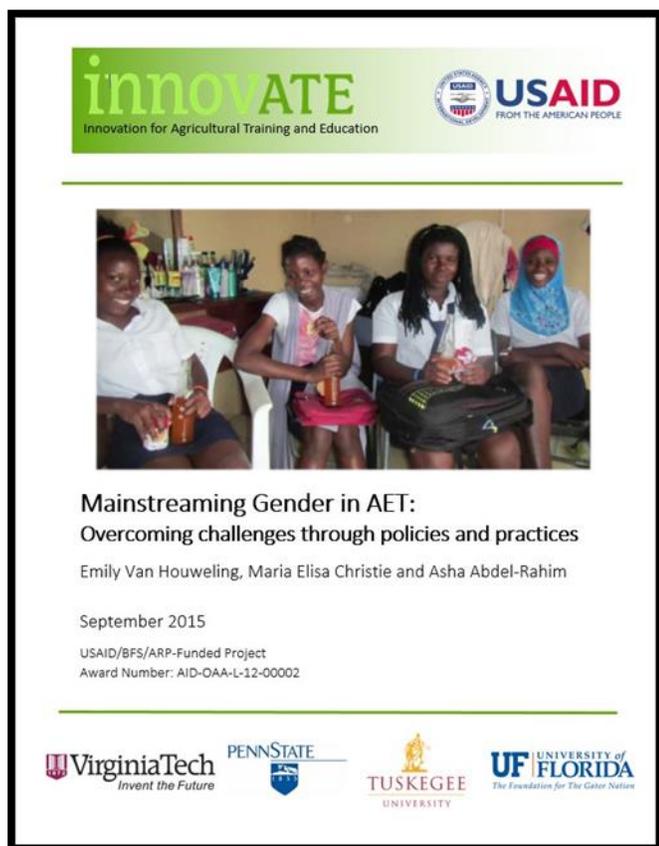
The study focuses on the student experience, examining not only challenges but also characteristics of successful women in agricultural education. The researchers found

many inspiring examples of hard work, persistence, struggling against cultural perceptions, and challenging gender norms. The personal stories revealed courageous and perseverant women who were excited to work in agriculture and unwilling to let any gender-based obstacle deter them. One woman student in Bangladesh said, “Women think they can do it even if men think they can’t.” These success stories demonstrate a need to deliberately cultivate confidence and leadership of women in agricultural education.

Additionally, policies, curricula and teaching methodologies must not be gender-biased. As one female administrator in Cambodia stated, “If we want to build women’s capacity, we need to focus on long-term training, on getting degrees.”

Read the full study [here](#).

InnovATE Makes Changes to Its Website



InnovATE has updated and re-organized its website. The address is the same: oired.vt.edu/innovate, and you might not notice many visual differences. However, we’ve added a few dynamic elements such as a clickable slideshow and an interactive “Where We Work” map on the home page.

All the same resources are available but we’ve re-located them to what we think is a more user-friendly arrangement. Hover the mouse over the tabs at the top of the page and you’ll now see a drop down menu. There’s also an easy way to sign up to be on our email list in the side bar.

You can still access the Community of Practice from the side bar, but we will be transitioning away from the separate Community of Practice website. As of January 1, 2016, the Community of Practice website will be discontinued. A discussion board and a training opportunities database—the most used elements of the Community of Practice—will be live on the main InnovATE website at that time. We will post

Based on these student experiences, the study proposes gender mainstreaming as an integrated approach to policies and practices with respect to women in university agricultural programs as students, faculty, and high level administrators. Implementing gender mainstreaming means moving beyond mere numerical balance among men and women to a more complex concept of equality in which young women have equal access to quality schooling and opportunities and feel safe and supported in the school environment.

several reminders before the Community of Practice website is discontinued.

Also, we encourage you to become a member of Agrilinks at agrilinks.org. Agrilinks is an online hub where food security and agriculture professionals can contribute knowledge, learn about upcoming events and connect with other practitioners. Like InnovATE, Agrilinks is part of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative. The USAID Bureau for Food Security (BFS) leads the Feed the Future initiative and supports Agrilinks. In the coming months, InnovATE will have a series of blog posts, on-line discussions, and a couple webinars on Agrilinks. Join to engage with us.

We hope with the new, re-organized InnovATE website and the Agrilinks connections you will find the same valuable resources and more

InnovATE-Armenia Developing Food Safety Systems Management Certificate

With InnovATE-Armenia, Dr. Joseph Marcy, Head of the Food Science and Technology Department of Virginia Tech and Dr. Cathy Cutter, Professor of Food Science from Penn State University, are designing a Food Safety Systems Management Certificate curriculum for the Agribusiness Teaching Center (ATC) of the [International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education](#) in Yerevan, Armenia. The InnovATE-Armenia project contributes to the USAID/Armenia objective of promoting economic growth by assisting the development of a workforce trained to increase the competitiveness of Armenia's agriculture sector. Dr. Marcy visited ATC In July 2015 to assess the implementation of best food safety practices

in food production and processing industries in Armenia. He visited food production facilities, farm and roadside food markets and Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) Farm and Vet Service Centers. He also interviewed food processing industry owners and employees, government regulatory staff, the Ministry of Food Safety Systems' officials, CARD Farm and Vet Center staff and CARD food safety staff.



Dr. Cathy Cutter, left, meets with Dr. Davit Pipoyan, Director of Food Safety Risk Assessment from the Armenian National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Cutter visited ATC in September 2015 to assist in designing a new food safety laboratory which will also serve as a wine laboratory for ATC's Wine Academy. The new laboratory is possible because of a generous donation from an Armenian-American donor in the United States—a result of ATC's fundraising efforts. Dr. Cutter left Armenia energized and encouraged by the direction of the program. ATC plans to implement the certificate program in summer 2016.

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