INNOVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

a human-centered approach to innovating in African higher education
Meet Andy,
a Department head at a University in Africa.
Andy faces the ongoing demand of resolving problems & producing innovations to help his country prosper long term.
With each demand, Andy is met with a variety of:

**PRESSURE**

- "What do my faculty need?"
- "I want to make change in this area but HR has limited capacity."
- "The guidelines of my university are limiting my ability to make real change."
- "High turnover in leadership positions makes it hard to sustain impact."  

**CONSTRAINTS**

- "What are outside donors asking of me?"
- "How will I achieve my professional and personal career goals?"
- "I don’t have the time to address community demand."
- "What do my students need?"
External pressures and institutional constraints direct Andy toward a career centered on the question:

**How can I do all I need to given the available resources?**
In this higher education context:

- Pressure drives priorities
- Andy becomes the center of the story
- Constraints limit pathways
- Andy is prevented from thinking about long term goals
As a result, few African communities access opportunity for transformative change.
What will it take to break this cycle?

How might we co-create long-term transformative change with and for people?
In 2016, the Global Center for Food Systems Innovation, a lab at Michigan State University, and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, a University in Malawi, set out to answer these questions.
THE PROBLEM: Food Security in Africa

POPULATION
The world population is projected to reach 8.5 billion by 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050.

ARABLE LAND
Worldwide arable land is projected to shrink to 585 million hectares by 2050.

FOOD DEMAND
Global food demand in 2050 is expected to increase by at least 60%.
If we want to break the cycle, we have to start with people in the cycle:
THE CHALLENGE:
Process

*If we want to help Andy do things differently, we have to be willing to do things differently:*

How do we actually do that?
Start with the “what” not the how.

- Human-centered
  LUANAR faculty and MSU experts working together.

- Measurable
  Using evidence driven practices.

- Adaptive
  Committing to respond to LUANAR’s needs even as they change.
Say hello to Andy.

We didn’t tell him to be innovative, we gave him a path, a methodology and a means and space to practice.
THE METHODOLOGY:
Human-centered design

- EMPATHIZE: What are the needs?
- DEFINE: What’s the goal?
- IDEATE: What are possible ways of getting there?
- PROTOTYPE: What works?
- TEST: How do we know?
THE PATH: Human-centered development

- **EMPATHIZE**
- **DEFINE**
- **IDEATE**
- **PROTOTYPE**

INNOVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM
THE PRACTICE:

INNOVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

• 9 faculty and 8 university leaders
• 6 in-country workshops
• 15 months of applied learning and feedback
THE RESULT:

Users drive priorities

Institutions form pathways

Transformative change becomes the center of the story

Andy is compelled to consider long-term goals
What is the impact?

What did this look like in practice?
Accelerating feedback loops

- weekly planning meetings
- periodic assessment of goals
- project updates from scholars
- regular coaching meetings
- workshop artifacts and field notes
- written reflections post-workshop
Developing and testing innovations in 10 unique areas

Cassava Virus Detection
Water Management
Fish Processing
Leadership Development
Goats
Indigenous Vegetables
Agribusiness Experiential Education
Oil Seeds
Digital Storytelling
Veterinary Medicine Gaming App
Bridging the gap between classroom and community

Dr. Sera Gondwe
Transforming institutional leadership
Learning from local farmers

INDIGENOUS PLANTS

Dr. Abel Sefasi
Scaled Impact through people

Individual students and faculty

University leadership

Community driven innovation
How can your university use human-centered approaches to co-create long-term, transformative change with and for people?
Contact us!

gcfsi.isp.msu.edu

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Thank you.