



Fall Semester 2005
Volume 1, Issue 1

VT World Connections

Center for Research and Development in International Education (CRaDIE)

Virginia Tech/ 540-231-8344

www.cradie.soe.vt.edu

University of Vienna Scholar Hosted by CRaDIE

On Friday, November 4, Dr. Mikael Luciak, an associate professor in the Department of Education at the University of Vienna (Austria) will be a guest lecturer at the University Club from 3-4 p.m. with an open reception to follow. Dr. Luciak's study of "Migrant and Minority Education in the European Union" is the basis of his presentation. His research and teaching have an emphasis on intercultural education, the schooling of ethnic minorities in comparative perspective, and issues of racism and xenophobia.

Announcement:

International scholar in science and technology, Dr. Hubert Dyasi, from City College of New York, will be working with the Office of Educational Research and Outreach on December 1 and 2. Various meetings will be held for faculty interested in pursuing NSF funding and other science related initiatives.

CRaDIE Signs MOUs

CRaDIE has signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with international universities. An MOU describes a general understanding of how the two institutions could work together in pursuing joint projects but is not legally binding. MOUs are important as the institutions seek funding from government agencies and private foundations. Once a grant is awarded, the collaborating institutions write and sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which defines the work and responsibilities of the partnering institutions in a more legal way. The current MOUs initiated by CRaDIE are with the following institutions:

University of South Africa

University of Pretoria (South Africa)

University of Cape Coast (Ghana)

Kenyatta University (Kenya)

International University of Kyrgyzstan

Legacy International (a non-governmental organization—
NGO)

Center Moves to New Location

In the School of Education structure, the Center for Research and Development in International Education (CRaDIE) is located within the Office of Educational Research and Outreach. Its new offices are in 225 War Memorial Hall.

CRADIE provides a focus for the School of Education's efforts in international and cross-cultural research as well as outreach activities to clients in K-12, higher education, government settings, and non-governmental organizations at home and abroad. This Center coordinates faculty research and scholarship in the international dimension of the School. The Center also supports and expands the collaborative research efforts by faculty and graduate students with other universities or institutions of higher learning throughout the United States and in other countries.

The Charter Fellows for the Center are Josiah Tlou, John Burton, Patricia Kelly, Jerome Niles, and Barbara Lockee.

Film of Project in Malawi on Television



Ten area teachers spent five weeks in Malawi learning about the country under a Fulbright-Hays grant awarded to CRaDIE.

Blue Ridge Public Television aired a film "Malawi: The Warm Heart of Africa" on October 17, 2005, at 10:30 p.m. as part of its Teacher Travels series. Virginia Tech (CRaDIE) was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Study Abroad Program in 2004, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and designed to promote the internationalization of public school curriculum. Ten area teachers went to Malawi for five weeks to work alongside Malawi teachers and learn about the country.

One of the Fulbright teachers, Jenna Swann, a fifth-grade teacher at Price's Fork Elementary, took video footage of her entire experience. In cooperation

with BRPT, she wrote and narrated the Malawi film that documents the lives of adults and students near Zomba, the former colonial capital.

According to the guidelines of the Fulbright program only U.S. teachers may participate, but to provide for a full collaborative experience, the U.S. teachers selected three of their Malawian counterparts to come to Blacksburg in September 2004. The Malawian teachers were partly funded by CRaDIE and were hosted by the Fulbright teachers. Additionally, Dr. Susan Elliott, an assistant principal at Forest Park High School in Prince William County, hosted them for a weekend in Washington, DC.

CRaDIE Representatives Visit Central Asia

In September, Dr. Thomas Sherman, a professor in Teaching and Learning, and Khaled Hassouna, in the Conservation Management Institute, went to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan with Marlene Ginsberg from Legacy International. Representing CRaDIE, Sherman and Hassouna met with Ministries of Education and university representatives to discuss possible collaborations. They also met with USAID missions in both countries.

CRaDIE has signed an MOU with Legacy International, which has 25 years of experience working with community groups in Russia and Central Asia to develop curriculum and disseminate training centered on inter-ethnic and

inter-religious tolerance, conflict resolution and mediation, and democratic processes for dialoguing.

The meetings provided an opportunity for Sherman to assess the possibilities for CRaDIE's continued interest in the region and to gain perspectives that will assist the Center to be strategic as it pursues funding opportunities in Central Asia.

CRaDIE and Legacy have submitted a concept paper to USAID that proposes the building of democratic thinking and leadership at the academic, NGO, and community levels. The concept paper is currently under review in both countries.

Tlou and Kelly Present at Washington Conferences

In July, Dr. Josiah Tlou chaired a panel on teacher education at the ALO/USAID conference in Washington, DC. The purpose of the panel was to develop ideas on how to improve primary teacher education in developing nations. Some of his presentation drew on results from the Malawi project.

In August, Dr. Patricia Kelly presented on a panel at a USAID conference at Georgetown University on using ALO funding to expand efforts beyond the initial grant. The Center for Teacher Education ALO grant formed the basis for the current Malawi projects, a Fulbright-Hays grant, and other projects.

"Sherman and Hassouna met with Ministries of Education and university representatives to discuss possible collaborations."

Civitas Chapter Established at Domasi College in Malawi

Two students in the Virginia Tech masters program in Malawi took Dr. Josiah Tlou's challenge to establish democratic classrooms in two local schools. Alois Muhuta and Misheck Munthali, social studies educators at Domasi College, worked with democratic processes in two 9th and 10th grade classrooms in Zomba for two years. Their research led to an invitation from the Center for Civic Education in Calabasas, CA, to attend a workshop with other African delegates to study Civitas activities based on democratic principles.

Among other experiences, Muhuta and Munthali visited schools in California; then went to Washington, DC where they saw the Civitas sponsored contest

of knowledge of the US constitution with the winners from the best schools in each state competing.

Since then, Muhuta and Munthali have been awarded a grant from the Center for Civic Education to create a Civitas Chapter at Domasi College, which will be affiliated with Civitas Africa.

Misheck Munthali and Ndalapa Mhango will be presenting a paper on social justice with Dr. Tlou at the National Council for the Social Studies in Kansas City, MO, in November. The Center for Civic Education is sponsoring Munthali's attendance at the conference. For more information about the Center for Civic Education visit <http://www.civiced.org>.

"Two social studies educators in the Virginia Tech master's program in Malawi were invited to the Center for Civic Education in California as a result of their research."

Children's Pen Pal Project Develops Cultural Understandings

"Getting to know each other requires a personal touch. It is not enough to have knowledge about one's race, one's ethnicity, one's country or region of the world. We must come to know each other person to person" (D. G. Hayes, *In My Small Village*, 1998, 5). A productive method of assisting students in developing personal understandings of other peoples is through pen pal friendships.

Such was the basis of the pen pal project begun in Fall 2002 by Dr. Mary Alice Barksdale of Virginia Tech and Dr. Carol Watson of Kutztown University (PA), who was then a doctoral student at VT and served as the liaison to the participating schools in Virginia and eventually went to the Malawi schools as one of the Fulbright-

Hays teachers. Ninety Virginia third and fourth grade students wrote letters to 85 Malawian fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students for more than two years in seven exchanges. Because English is a second language for the Malawi students, the head teacher who had initiated the exchange selected a slightly older group of students as the pen pal partners. The head teacher wanted the students in his school to practice using English, but as importantly he wanted to expose the students to an international culture very different from their own.

Barksdale carried the letters between the countries as she participated in the USAID Malawi grant for primary teacher education. Barksdale and Watson

have analyzed the letters and found three themes: daily life and culture, language, and pure communication. The pen pals tried hard to establish commonalities in the discussions of their lives, sometimes patterned their writing to fit the others' style and content, and experimented with language choices that fit their pen pal.

The two researchers made a presentation at EERA in Sarasota last year on their preliminary findings. They are presenting their final results at the National Reading Council conference in December. A manuscript is being revised for re-submission to *The Reading Teacher*, a journal of the International Reading Association.

Church Assists Malawi Projects

Blacksburg Presbyterian Church continues to assist Malawian doctoral students in various ways as they pursue their studies. The Church has also helped with establishing a

Children's Library at Domasi College of Education for use by college students in the B.Ed. primary education program as well as for local school children and

teachers. The Church helps support a mission hospital in Malawi and is currently building a school in Zomba.



CRaDIE
225 War Memorial Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Phone:
540-231-8344

Fax:
540-231-2354

E-Mail:
tlou@vt.edu
kellyp@vt.edu

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.cradie.soe.vt.edu

Please submit items and activities of interest to kellyp@vt.edu for the Spring Semester issue.

Malawi Projects in Final Year

The two Malawi projects funded by USAID are in their fifth and final year.

The Domasi College of Education project focused on developing a bachelor's of education degree with primary specialization. The B.Ed. program is designed to teach the tutors for the teacher education colleges.

As a way of developing the human capacity to create and to sustain the bachelor's program, Virginia Tech offered an in-country master's degree for 24 candidates, who have now completed their degrees and have been deployed at Domasi College and in other education agencies. Six doctoral students came to Virginia Tech for two years' of course work, returning to Malawi to collect data and write their dissertations. Two have completed and four should complete by the end of the project.

Two cohorts of 30 students each have entered the B.Ed. program. Currently, one cohort has completed two years of study and the other, one year. Another cohort, sponsored by the Malawi government, is scheduled to enter in January.

The second VT project is with Mzuzu University and was designed to build human capacity in instructional technology and to start a distance

education program using technology at Mzuzu. Five Malawians completed their master's degrees at Virginia Tech in 2003, and returned to Mzuzu University to manage a distance-based degree program that was partially designed during their study in the US, but was implemented upon their return.

In 2004, the group solicited applications for people to begin a post-bachelor's honors program in instructional technology. Although the program would not be delivered via the Internet (as originally intended), it was offered through correspondence education. Four months after it began, the first students enrolled in "Mzuzu University Distance Education Program" (MUDEP) had completed one course and offered feedback that was detailed in a pilot study report. Using this information, the MUDEP team has started a second iteration of courses, and with both existing and new students, are working to build human capacity in Malawi. Another benefit of the program has been the Fall 2005 matriculation of two of the master's program alumni into the Instructional Technology doctoral program. Upon completion of their PhDs, both hope to return to Malawi to lend their expertise in building future distance programs so that the educational needs of their country can be met.

Four Malawians Begin Doctoral Study Fall Semester

Absalom Phiri, a former science teacher educator at Lilongwe Teachers College, began his doctoral study in science education this fall. After completing a Virginia Tech master's program in Malawi, Absalom became the training manager for secondary science programs in the Department of Teacher Education and Development. He is an electronic enthusiast, recently specializing in television and video repair. When

he's not studying, he enjoys playing the guitar.

Ndalapa Mhango, a former Dean of Humanities at Domasi College of Education, has begun doctoral studies in social studies education this fall semester. He had completed his master's degree in the Virginia Tech program offered in Malawi. Ndalapa is a graduate assistant under Dr. David Hicks, who is his advisor. He enjoys traveling and talking with friends.

Simeon Gwayi, received his MAEd from Virginia Tech in 2003. Simeon was a physics lecturer at Mzuzu University, as well as part of the MUDEP (Mzuzu University Distance Education Programme). He is married and has a young son.

Nertha Nyirongo, is a Virginia Tech graduate with an MAEd in 2003. Nertha was a lecturer in the Education Faculty at Mzuzu University, as well as a MUDEP team member. She is married and has three children.