



## **Trip Report: Opportunities for an International Teacher Certificate Program in Agricultural TVET in Central America**

**Dates:** April 24-29, 2017

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**Purpose:** InnovATE convened this workshop to explore the question “Could a regional certificate program for agricultural technical, vocational education and training (ATVET) teachers provide necessary opportunities for professional and institutional development to which teachers do not have access to today?” Our hypothesis is that a regional certificate program designed cooperatively by TVET authorities in the region could offer a quality, uniform curriculum that teaches the best in vocational education pedagogy. Capitalizing on a reputable agricultural education program model in the region such as EARTH University, CATIE, or Zamorano University could ensure that teachers participating in the course are exposed to the most current and significant issues in agricultural TVET curricula and updated pedagogical methods.

**Description of Activities:** Continuing professional development of agricultural TVET teachers continues to be one of the main challenges in ATVET education. The task of providing continued training to practicing teachers has been conducted primarily by each country’s own institutional capacities and little or nothing has been done to consolidate an international effort in providing not just new technical developments on agricultural TVET but also the latest developments on pedagogy, leadership, entrepreneurship, and information technology.

Forty-two participants from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the United States were invited by the InnovATE project to gather at the EARTH University campus in Guacimo, Costa Rica for the two day workshop. A main objective for the event was to determine if such a regional certification program is attractive for ATVET stakeholders in the region. Participants included ATVET teachers and directors, policy makers from the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, industry, and organizations supporting ATVET such as donors, implementers, and consultants. The list of participants is in the Appendix section.

Before the participants arrived at EARTH University for the workshop, they were asked to answer an online survey designed by the InnovATE team. The survey was created to collect the participant’s perceptions on ATVET programs in their own countries. Participants that represented an ATVET center



marketing aspects (trade-show assistance). The following presentation, in this opening section, was by a local sustainable community representative who made the case for the involvement of higher education institutions for transferring technology and lending support to local farmers. This presentation also highlighted how EARTH University has supported a large number of training and capacity development programs for ATVET teachers.

The remainder of the first day focused on the **Current Situation of ATVET in Central America** and later on **ATVET Case studies** presented from the perspective of ATVET directors in a panel and as individual presentations. ATVET centers such as FADCANIC (Nicaragua), ITVA (El Salvador), ITAGRO (Guatemala), LUIS LANDA (Honduras), and ROBERTO QUIÑONEZ (EL Salvador) have developed meaningful ATVET programs with great impact in their communities. The FADCANIC ATVET program is private and accredited by INATEC. This program focuses on providing educational and research opportunities in agroforestry to the people of the Atlantic Region of Nicaragua. This program is funded through various international organizations such as USAID and SAET (from Norway).

A bridging section of the program between the two above focused on **Training and Development for Teachers at ATVET**. Other formal and non-formal ATVET centers such as INFOP (Honduras), ENCA (Guatemala), INA (Costa Rica), and INATEC (Nicaragua) presented an update on current opportunities, challenges and best practices for teacher's capacity development through a panel discussion. One example, ENCA from Guatemala, indicated that they have a capacity development program for teachers that included the following key features: pedagogical innovation, learning processes, incorporation of new learning theories, teacher as facilitator models, incorporation of information technologies in the learning-teaching process, and revision and updating of curriculum. Recaps for each group of presentations were given by volunteer participants to summarize the sessions at the close of the day.

Day 2 of the workshop featured supporting organizations such as donors, higher education institutions, and implementers providing an overview of their support mechanisms to ATVET programs in the region. In the first section, **Cooperation with Universities**, higher institutions such as UNICAES (El Salvador), Zamorano (Honduras) and EARTH University explained their involvement and impact on ATVET programs. A highlight of this section was the learn-by-doing extension modules conducted at Zamorano where 40 ATVET teachers from 20 different ATVET centers are invited to participate.

The next part of the program, **Government Policies and Support**, invited participation from policy and government regulators. Representatives of the Ministries of Education of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua provided a great overview of how ATVET programs are supported by the government. In addition, there was participation from the Ministry of Agriculture of Guatemala. One of the most significant contributions to the future potential of a regional ATVET certification program comes from the participation of the CECC-SICA as a regional body; their representatives indicated that the Central American Educational Policy was approved in 2014 by all SICA's members. This policy focuses on: universal access to education, the quality of education, and educational equity. CECC-SICA could act as the spearheading organization in the potential implementation of the program given its mission and credibility in the region.

In the following group, **Support Organizations**, work of donors and implementers such as SEDUCA (El Salvador), QTEC (Nicaragua), BAYAN (Honduras), and Creative Associates (Nicaragua) was presented and discussed. A highlight of this section was BAYAN's SAT (Tutorial Learning System, *Sistema de Aprendizaje*

*Tutorial*) program that impacts over 300 communities in Honduras by empowering students with relevant ATVET education.

In the last section of the program, the participants were divided in five groups by organization affiliation to work through a focus-group exercise. Each subgroup was placed in an individual room (to isolate from the others) and asked the same question: “is there a need for a regional certification program for ATVET Teachers?” If the answer was positive, the groups needed to indicate the challenges this certification program would have to overcome. After 1 hour, the groups were reconvened to the main room to present and discuss their results.

All groups answered yes to the posted question. According to the focus groups, the main challenges for this potential certification program for ATVET teachers are:

- A regional/leader organization in Central America must spearhead the effort
- The certification efforts need to be normalized or standardized. Therefore a regional effort to create opportunities to discuss and share ideas on how to develop this effort is necessary. It is clear that the ATVET centers are very similar
- The program needs to clearly specify what organizations will be in charge of training, certifying and auditing the effort. These organizations must be separated from each other to avoid conflicts. For example, the training and certification could be provided by higher education institutions and the auditing by SICA
- There is a lot of installed capacity in the region to develop the program. This capacity needs to be used to leverage the effort
- The training needs to be tailored to each individual country. The certification could be done by a single respected higher education country in the region
- Critical to the program is to identify competencies in common among the countries and adapt to each context
- A potential pathway to follow is:
  - Create opportunities to exchange ideas using face-to-face and online platforms
  - Avoid stagnation by not going where the process might fail
  - Focus on training and development first
  - Leverage on installed capacity
  - Use recent success with local evaluations
  - SECC-SICA meets every 6 months. Use this forum to get support for the project
  - OIRED at VT could support the idea by providing resources to draft a baseline proposal.

Further results and analysis of the surveys, group activity, and workshop will be shared in a future document. Workshop materials and presentations were shared with the group and will be available by request.

**Acknowledgements:** The InnovATE project would like to thank to the Continuing Education Program (PEP in Spanish) at EARTH University for their incredible logistical support to this event. Specific accolades go to Melissa Ugalde-Herrera and Fabian Campos for their incomparable hard work, flexibility, and outstanding service orientation to the InnovATE team and to each one of the workshop participants



**Appendix 1**  
Participant list

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## **Oportunidades para un Programa de Certificación para Educadores en Educación y Entrenamiento Técnico-Vocacional Agroforestal (EETVA)**

### **Antecedentes**

InnovATE es un proyecto financiado por la Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo de los Estados Unidos (USAID) que tiene como meta el fortalecer los sistemas de educación y capacitación en agricultura a través del desarrollo de las capacidades humanas e institucionales. Uno de los principales enfoques del proyecto InnovATE ha sido el conducir misiones de diagnóstico y la organización de talleres para fortalecer los sistemas de educación y entrenamiento técnico-vocacional agroforestal (EETVA) respondiendo a necesidades de instituciones y misiones de la USAID en países en Centro América, Europa del Este, Centro y Sureste de Asia y en África. Este taller proveerá un medio internacional para discutir las oportunidades y retos que los programas EETVA están experimentando hoy en Centro América, incluyendo las actividades para el desarrollo y entrenamiento profesional de profesores en EETVA.

La capacitación y desarrollo profesional de educadores en EETVA sigue siendo uno de los principales retos de estos sistemas. El reto de proveer programas de capacitación para este tipo de educadores ha sido un asunto limitado a las capacidades individuales de cada país y muy poco se ha hecho para consolidar un esfuerzo internacional que promueva no sólo la capacitación en aspectos técnicos, sino también en aspectos de pedagogía, liderazgo, emprendedurismo y los últimos desarrollos en tecnologías de información para actividades docentes.

El proyecto InnovATE está convocando a este taller para tratar de responder a la siguiente pregunta: “¿Puede un programa regional de certificación para educadores en EETVA proveer de las oportunidades necesarias para el desarrollo profesional e institucional de los educadores?” Nuestra hipótesis es que un programa regional de certificación diseñado en forma colaborativa por las autoridades de la región puede ofrecer un currículo uniforme y de alta calidad que transmita los mejores elementos de la pedagogía en educación vocacional a los educadores que tiene menor acceso a este tipo de currículo. Más aun, este programa de certificación se podría desarrollar alrededor de un modelo exitoso y reconocido en la enseñanza de la agricultura como el caso de la Universidad EARTH, lo cual aseguraría a los participantes que dicho programa de certificación incluiría los desarrollos más recientes y significativos en el desarrollo curricular y pedagógico de EETVA.

### **Objetivos del evento**

Este evento servirá como un medio para discutir los retos potenciales y apalancadores de los programas EETVA en Centro América. Los objetivos específicos son:

- Reunir a educadores, directores, representantes del gobierno, donantes, y otros grupos de interés y apoyo de programas EETVA para evaluar los retos actuales de las actividades de entrenamiento y desarrollo profesional para educadores en EETVA
- Proveer un foro de discusión para presentar casos individuales de instituciones educativas donde se realcen mejores prácticas, retos y perspectivas futuras de los programas EETVA
- Caracterizar la situación actual de las actividades de entrenamiento y desarrollo profesional para educadores en EETVA en la región Centroamérica

## **Appendix 2**

### **Program and Agenda**

- Explorar la viabilidad de usar instituciones superiores de educación como las Universidades para desarrollar un programa regional para la capacitación continua de educadores en EETVA

### **Metodología del taller**

Los participantes del taller deberán presentar y discutir retos, apalancadores y perspectivas futuras de sus programas EETVA en su propio contexto geográfico, social, político y económico. Se utilizarán grupos de discusión y presentaciones individuales como principal medio para lograr el mejor aprovechamiento del tiempo y el evento. Los participantes serán agrupados por tipo de institución y grupos temáticos de manera que se mantenga un flujo apropiado de la discusión. Los grupos de discusión serán fundamentales para crear un ruta integral hacia el futuro. Cada actividad será facilitada por uno de los líderes del equipo InnovATE de manera que se cuente con un ambiente apropiado para fomentar la discusión entre todos los participantes.

### **Resultados esperados del taller**

- Caracterización de las actividades actuales de capacitación y desarrollo profesional que son ofrecidas a educadores en EETVA en Centroamérica
- Identificación de los retos y apalancadores de los sistemas EETVA en Centroamérica
- Construcción de un marco de referencia común para atacar los retos y problemas de la capacitación y desarrollo profesional de educadores en EETVA
- Recolectar y compartir casos de estudios de instituciones individuales EETVA en Centroamérica
- Creación de una lista de mejores prácticas para la mejorar la capacidad regional de los programas de entrenamiento y desarrollo profesional de educadores en EETVA
- Incrementar y mejorar la red de contactos de los sistemas EETVA centroamericanos por medio del intercambio de información entre todos los participantes.

### **Lugar y participantes**

El evento se llevará a cabo en el campus de la Universidad EARTH en Guácimo, Costa Rica entre el 25 y 28 de Abril del 2017. Los participantes a invitar serán educadores, directores, representantes del gobierno, industria, donantes e instituciones de apoyo a los sistemas EETVA en Centroamérica.

**Appendix 2**  
Program and Agenda

**Agenda: Oportunidades para un Programa de Certificación para Educadores en Educación y Entrenamiento Técnico-Vocacional Agroforestal (EETVA)**

<b>Martes</b>			<b>25 de Abril</b>		
Todo el día		Llegada al campus de la EARTH	Comidas por su cuenta		
<b>Miércoles</b>			<b>26 de Abril</b>		
<b>Hora</b>		<b>ít.</b>	<b>Presentador/Moderador</b>		
6:00 AM	7:30 AM	<b>Desayuno en Cafetería</b>			
		<b>Bienvenida y motivación</b>			
8:00 AM	8:30 AM	Bienvenida a la EARTH, introducción al taller, objetivos y resultados esperados.	D.Sherrard, H. Arias, H.Quesada		
8:30 AM	8:45 AM	Bienvenida del proyecto InnoVATE	L.V. Crowder		
8:45 AM	9:00 AM	Bienvenida del USAID	C. Cohen		
		<b>Tour 1 de la Universidad EARTH</b>			
9:00 AM	10:20 AM	Tour de granjas Peri-urbana y Agropecuaria	Estudiantes de la Universidad EARTH		
10:20 AM	10:30 AM	Regreso al salón de Conferencias			
		<b>Conexiones con la Industria</b>	Moderador: Fabian Campos		
10:30 AM	11:00 AM	Oportunidades de programas EETVA con las pequeñas industrias agroforestales	J.D. Montejó. R. Mora		
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Involucramiento de la EARTH con pequeñas industrias agroforestales: Modelo de Comunidades Sostenibles	J. Azofeifa		
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Almuerzo			
1:00 PM	1:30 PM	Lecciones aprendidas de la EARTH en programas de capacitación para educadores de EETVA	F. Campos		
		<b>GRUPO 1: Situación actual de programas EETVA en Centroamérica</b>	Moderador. Henry Quesada		
1:30 PM	2:30 PM	ITAGRO, FADCANIC, ITVA and ENCA	J. L López, S. Borge, R. Hernández, and C. Arreaga		
		<b>GRUPO 2: Entrenamiento y Capacitación para educadores en EETVA</b>	Moderadora: Rebecca Williams		
2:30 PM	3:30 PM	INATEC, INA, INFOP	M.D. Diaz, L. Zamora, E. Valenzuela		
3:30 PM	3:45 PM	Refrigerio			
		<b>Casos de estudio en EETVA</b>	Moderador: John Ignosh		
3:45 PM	4:00 PM	Caso de estudio de FADCANIC y SIG	H. Quesada and J. Ignosh		
4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Escuela Agricultura Kennedy; Escuela Agricultura Luis Landa; Escuela Nacional de Agricultura Roberto Quiñónez	J. O. González; R. Berríos; J. M. Cámbara		
5:00 PM	5:30 PM	Discusión y cierre de Día 1	Moderadora: Rebecca Williams/Todos		
5:30 PM	6:30 PM	Descanso			
6:30 PM	8:00 PM	Cena con agroindustriales	El Colono V. Serrano		

**Appendix 2**  
Program and Agenda

**Agenda: Oportunidades para un Programa de Certificación para Educadores en Educación y Entrenamiento Técnico-Vocacional Agroforestal (EETVA)**

<b>Jueves</b>		<b>27 de Abril</b>		
<b>Hora</b>		<b>ít.</b>		<b>Presentador/Moderador</b>
6:00 AM	7:30 AM	<b>Desayuno en Cafeteria</b>		
8:00 AM	8:15 AM	Convocar el día 2		H. Quesada
		<b>GRUPO 3: Cooperación con Universidades</b>		Moderador: Van Crowder
8:15 AM	9:15 AM	ZAMORANO, EARTH, UNICAES		M. Baires, F. Campos, J. A. Trigueros
9:15 AM	9:30 AM	Refrigerio		
		<b>GRUPO 4: Políticas y apoyo del gobierno</b>		Moderador. John Ignosh
9:30 AM	10:30 AM	MINEDUC/Guatemala, MAGA/Guatemala, MEP/Costa Rica, MINED/El Salvador		G. Misael, F.Concaha, R.Quirós, G. Ramírez/L. Balmore
10:30 AM	10:45 AM	SG-CECC		C. L. Lépez and A. González
		<b>Tour 2 de la Universidad EARTH</b>		
10:45 AM	11:50 AM	Tour de granjas Peri-urbana y Agropecuaria		
11:50 AM	12:00 PM	Regreso a la cafeteria para el almuerzo		
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Almuerzo		
		<b>GRUPO 5: Organizaciones de apoyo</b>		Moderador: Fabian Campos
1:00 PM	2:00 PM	Creative-Associates, SEDUCA, QTECC, BAYAN		S. Vanegas, R. Díaz, R. Sánchez, C. Sagastume
		<b>Retos y futuro de los programas EETVA: Énfasis en capacitación y desarrollo profesional de docentes</b>		
2:00 PM	2:15 PM	Programa de certificación para educadores en EETVA		H. Quesada
2:15 PM	3:15 PM	Grupos de enfoque		Por instituciones y roles
3:15 PM	3:30 PM	Refrigerio		
3:30 PM	4:30 PM	Resultados y discusión de los grupos de enfoque		Facilitators: H. Quesada and J. Ignosh
4:30 PM	5:00 PM	Futuras acciones/ Comentarios de cierre		Todos/C. Cohen
		Cierre		
<b>Viernes</b>		<b>28 de Abril</b>		
		Salida de EARTH		