
AT Fair Summary

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On September 3, 2020, ECHO held its first virtual Appropriate Technology (AT) Fair. As this year has brought many challenges for in-person gatherings, we were grateful for all who took advantage of the shift towards virtual gatherings and participated in this event. It was an enriching time for ECHO staff, and I hope of benefit to the network of attendees.

The event featured a plenary talk on Creative Capacity Building (CCB) by two ECHO East Africa staff members, Harold Msanya and Erwin Kinsey. Harold and Erwin shared the importance of utilizing the CCB approach when developing appropriate technologies, and described their experience using CCB in various communities in East Africa. The CCB approach brings together end-users, manufacturers, engineers, and other community members to address specific local challenges. One wonderful thing about this approach is how it helps us discover that each one of us is creative and can help address the problems we face. Conducting CCB trainings requires that we value all stakeholders' perspectives and create an environment that encourages creativity.

In addition to the plenary talk, three network members shared their experiences of working with appropriate technologies in the field. Craig Bielema, formerly an ECHO intern and AT Manager for ECHO Florida, walked us through the design process for a recent institutional cookstove project he had been working on in Burundi. He pointed out that we must start with a well-defined problem before jumping to solutions.

Tim Tanner, CEO of Kilimo Timilifu in Tanzania, shared ways that Kilimo Timilifu uses appropriate technologies in their work, from dibble sticks to homemade drip tubing. Tim reminded us that even the simplest of technologies can be the right fit, depending on one's constraints.

Greg Bixler, founder and CEO of Design Outreach, shared about Design Outreach's work around the world with the LifePump (<https://lifepump.org/>) and other technologies. He also highlighted some considerations and trade-offs to keep in mind when using appropriate technology. From simple technologies to very complex, each one has a place depending on the problem we are trying to solve.

After these talks, participants in the virtual AT fair were able to interact with presenters and fellow network members through four breakout sessions. Session topics included Creative Capacity Building; use of appropriate technologies to increase agricultural production; manufacturing appropriate technologies; and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene).

If you were unable to attend the event, don't worry! All the sessions were recorded and can be accessed at: edn.link/2020virtualfair (<http://edn.link/2020virtualfair>).

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