**KURT R. RICHTER**

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**PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

Dynamic professional with an extensive career marked by expertise in the field of international development, international education, food systems, global safety and research to innovation. Recognized as a skilled manager, proven team leader, and strong administrator with outstanding team building, donor engagement, and communication skills. Extensive experience leading the successful turnaround of multiple international projects across the globe. Led the implementation of over $100 million in international development and education projects. Highly effective leading diverse teams to complete complex projects in challenging environments. Expert in global and local food systems, adaptive project management, research for innovation training, and operating in countries that are challenged with poor security and weak institutions.

**AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

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| * Strategic Planning & Leadership * Policy & Procedural Development * Process Development & Improvement * Statistical Analysis & Reporting | * ArcGIS * STATA * SPSS * USAID | * International Global Safety and Security * High-Funding Proposals & Negotiations * Mentorship, Teaching & Training * International/National Relations |

**EDUCATION**

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| **Ph.D. in Economic Geography**  University of California, Davis, CA | **M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics**  **B.Sc. in Agricultural Economics**  University of Missouri, Columbia, MO |

**CURRENT POSTIONS**

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| **Fixed -Term Faculty** | **Department of Community Sustainability** |
|  | January 2020 - Present |
| Michigan State University | East Lansing, Michigan |
| Appointed as a non-tenure track faculty member in the Department of Community Sustainability. Lead instructor for CSUS 826: International Development: Theory and Practice. Rotating lead instructor for CSUS 834: Survey Design and Statistical Analysis. Serve on multiple departmental committees. Worked with the College of Education at MSU to secure a $17 million project. Support the graduate education of several CSUS and non-CSUS graduate students via special projects, lectures, and serving on committees. | |

**PREVIOUS POSITIONS AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

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| **Interim Director** | **Global Health, Safety and Security** |
|  | December 2023 – July 25, 2025  East Lansing, Michigan |
| Michigan State University |
| Asked by the International Studies Leadership team to lead the Global Health, Safety and Security team at Michigan State University. After four weeks in the interim role, became the longest serving team member when all previous staff resigned. Responsible for the overall management and service quality provided by the office. While interim worked to improve the team’s support of MSU international travel via:   * Maintain travel review and travel risk assessments for over 7,000 undergraduate, faculty and staff travelers * Manage the MSU International 24/7 emergency phone * Reviewed Education Abroad contingency plans * Evaluated Global Safety Critical Incident Management training * Led search committee for new Global Safety coordinator * Onboarded two new Global Safety team members * Cooperated with MSU risk management to negotiate a renewed contract with International SOS * Reviewed risk intelligence platforms to improve support to both international travelers and domestic study away programs * Piloted FACTAL risk intelligence platform at MSU * Reviewed the use of available communication platforms and information sharing tools (TEAMS) to improve communication with stakeholders across MSU * Coordinating with MSU Export Control to redesign the MSU travel registry to meet expected changes in US Federal guidelines for international travel data security * Served on the following MSU wide committees:   + Risk and Security Assessment Committee (RSAC)   + Faculty and Staff Travel Review Committee (FASTR)   + Campus Health and Wellbeing   + Clery Compliance   + Research Security Committee   + MSU Emergency Operation Center   MSU Emergency Management Advisory Committee | |

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| **Co-Principal Investigator** | **Transforming Higher Education Systems Project** |
|  | October 2022 – October 2023 |
| Michigan State University | East Lansing, Michigan |
|  | Lilongwe, Malawi |

Led a team of faculty from three colleges at MSU and over 15 people in Malawi to win and implement the $17 million USAID funded project to help the Malawian higher education system become a driver for economic growth in Malawi. Project focuses on improved STEM education, student life, and research to innovation. Shared responsibility for all implementation, financial integrity, and donor engagement.

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| **Director** | **Global Center for Food Systems Innovation** |
|  | January 2020 - September 2022 |
| *Deputy Director* | August 2015 – December 2019 |
| Michigan State University | East Lansing, Michigan |
| Responsible for daily operation, partnership development, long term strategic planning, team leadership, and serves as a principal point of contact for the Global Center for Food Systems Innovation. Originally, a $44 million USAID program focused on innovation and research in the entire food system. Managed all USAID reporting, budgeting, and planning. Led diverse faculty teams from seven MSU colleges to work across the world on research projects that advanced the center. Responsible for the Global Centers focus and training program on how to utilize human centered design to shape food system research to produce results that could be widely adapted by end users. Created the Center’s focus on defining and teaching innovation as a process. | |

***Major Projects Led***

*Malawi University of Science and Technology Innovation Scholars Program – Principal Investigator*

Secured a $1million award from USAID to implement the Innovation Scholars Program at MUST. The program has been cited by USAID as an exemplary project that uses Human Centered Design to build both the capacity of individuals and the culture of innovation at Higher Education Institutions to use science to create innovations to solve local economic development challenges.

*Grain Research and Innovation (GRAIN) – Principal Investigator*

Responsible for the implementation of a $19.5 million USAID funded wheat research capacity development project in Afghanistan. Led a team of four people based at MSU and a 30-person team based in Kabul. Led the team through implementation in a complex, high-risk environment, while maintaining excellent relationships with USAID- Kabul, USAID-DC and Government of Afghanistan officials. Led the evacuation of 77 GRAIN staff and family members from Afghanistan to Albania in July and August of 2021. Worked to complete educational programs for 19 Afghan refugees in Albania. Secured the final resettlement in the US for all 77 refugees.

*Innovation Scholars Program - Lead:* Designed Human and Institutional Capacity Development program focused on food system innovation in Malawi. Led the interdisciplinary team that used Design Thinking and Adaptive Management to implement a novel capacity development program in Malawi. The project became the model for the MUST ISP and the CAES ISP.

*USAID University* – Practical Human and Institutional Capacity Development

Asked by USAID to lead the design and instruction of USAID University course on how to use Human Centered Design within USAID project design and implementation to facilitate a Higher Education Institutional capacity to produce more research-based innovation and improve the internal culture of innovation.

*Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems – Team Lead*: Working with USAID’s Bureau of Food Security, The Internal Food Policy Research Institute and Wageningen University to develop a practitioner tool kit to guide how to use available tools to conceptualize, design and monitor capacity development activities in food security programming.

*AgriFood Youth Lab – Deputy Director*: With funding from the Mastercard Foundation, worked to implement a program to train underserved youth in entrepreneurship and soft skills in Nigeria and Tanzania.

**PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIRENCE**

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| **Associate Director for Technical Assistance and Special Initiatives** | |
| Office of International Research, Education and Development | June 2012 – July 2015 |
| Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University | Blacksburg, Virginia |

Managed the technical assistance and special programs portfolio for Virginia Tech’s Office of International Research, Education and Development. Major focus was to adapt project implementation to meet the current needs and goals of each individual project. Responsibilities ranged from Principal Investigator to Campus Coordinator.

***Major Projects Led***

* *USAID Tajikistan Agricultural Education and Training Assessment* - Tajikistan
* *Education and Research in Agriculture* - Senegal
* *Rebuilding Higher Education in Agriculture* - South Sudan

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| **Chief of Party** | February 2012 – May 2012 |
| Mercy Corps | Bogota, Colombia |

Assumed the responsibility to lead an emergency food program, funded by USAID Food for Peace, in the departments of Atlántico and Córdoba in Northern Colombia after the removal of expat team. Responsible for the design, management and implementation of all project activities. Ensured that program implementation was cohesive and responsive to communities and partners.

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| **Team Leader** | December 2010 – April 2011 |
| Mercy Corps | Guastatoya, Guatemala |

Refocused a Single-Year Food Assistance Program to meet program goals in the final four months of the project. Oversaw the planning, expenditure and delivery of over $600,000 in aid to over 1,000 households during my tenure.. Managed 38 full time employees plus temporary staff.

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| **National Agricultural Information System Manager** | June 2009 – December 2009 |
| UC Davis International Agriculture Programs | Kabul, Afghanistan |

Performed an agricultural statistic needs assessment within Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). Led a USAID-funded effort to strengthen and expand the capacity of MAIL to utilize Geographical Information Systems and appropriate crop statistical methods. Managed the reorganization of MAIL’s agricultural data collection unit. Worked with MAIL personnel to manage the smooth absorption of a USAID-trained agricultural statistical team. Served as Liaison between U.S. Military, international and local NGOs, and Afghanistan government.

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| **Graduate Economic Researcher** | April 2004 - December 2009 |
| Agricultural Issues Center  University of California | Davis, California |

Worked as an agricultural food system specialist with the leading agriculture policy and outreach unit in the University of California system. In this position I was responsible for creating new research in response to agricultural issues being raised among California agricultural stakeholders. Work focused on explaining how the complex California food system worked at the state, national and global levels. Also worked to adapt academic work into reports and presentations that could be easily understood by policy makers and non-agricultural specialist.

**Director, International Studies** August 1998 – April 2004

College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

University of Missouri – Columbia Columbia, Missouri

Inaugural director of a leading undergraduate international education programs targeting students of agriculture and natural resources. Designed and led all USAID or USDA funded international agricultural training programs. Worked with faculty, staff and students to promote globalization across the university. Led numerous international trips for students, faculty and staff.

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| **Owner/Operator** | December 1996 – August 1998 |
| Barnes Feed and Farm Supply | Springfield, Missouri |

Managed the day-to-day operations for a multimillion-dollar feed and farm supply chain. Responsible for hiring, scheduling, and termination of employees. Negotiated product mix and set pricing strategy to generate cash flow to ensure financial integrity.

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| **Farmer to Farmer Country Coordinator** | January 1996 – December 1996 |
| ACDI/VOCA | Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia |

Assisted in developing an agricultural lending system based on the U.S. Farm Credit model in the Republic of Georgia. Oversaw the work of 20 U.S. executive volunteers. Liaison to USAID, private sector and Republic of Georgia government. Responsible for all USAID programmatic and financial reporting.

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| **Project Coordinator** | May 1994 – January 1996 |
| Agricultural Cooperative Development International | Washington D.C |

Managed a USAID funded $5 million Cooperative Development grant that included training programs, project development and cooperative education. Managed the home-office operations for both a Uganda and Cape Verde based P.L. 480 Title II Monetization program

**SELECT DOMESTIC RESEACH PROJECTS**

Sharpening the Focus of Agricultural Land Policies August 2008 – October 2009

Created the first GIS based measure for sub-10-acre agriculture land parcelization in California. Developed parameters to measure agricultural land parcelization based on current land use patterns for specific commodities.

Solano County Agricultural Futures Project March 2006 – January 2008

Co-Principal investigator tasked to provide an agricultural specific land use study to be incorporated into the 2007 – 2027 Solano County General Plan.

Agricultural Issues Center, University of California April 2004 - June 2009

Led research efforts in agricultural land use policy, organic agriculture, and the utilization of Geographical Information Systems in agricultural economic research for the Agricultural Issues Center.

**SELECT PUBLICATIONS**

Heinrich, W., Silberg, T., Bonnell, J., **Richter, K**., Goddard, C., Gondwe, S., Safaloh, A. Challenging Isomorphic Mimicry With Human‐Centred Design to Build Capacity in Three African Higher Education Institutions. *International Journal of Training and Development*. (2025). P 1-17

Klonsky, Karen and **Kurt R. Richter**. 2011, “Statistical Review of California’s Organic

Agriculture 2005 – 2009”, Agricultural Issues Center, University of California.

**Richter, Kurt R.** 2009, “Sharpening the Focus of Yolo County Land Use Policy”, Agricultural Issues Center, University of California.

**SELECT PRESENTATIONS**

Richter, Kurt, 2008, “Solano County General Plan Agricultural Policy Recommendations, Solano County Board of Supervisors, January 8, 2008, Fairfield, California, USA.

Richter, Kurt 2007, “Recommendations for the Solano County General Plan,” Solano

County Citizens Advisory Committee, December 10, 2007.

Richter, Kurt, 2007, “Shipping News, the Internet and the Price of Cocoa in Boston” *Popular Culture and American Culture Associations Conference,* May 12 - 15, 2007, [Albuquerq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albuquerque%2C_New_Mexico)ue, New Mexico.

**SELECT TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**CSUS 826 – International Development Theory and Practice** Jan 2021 – Present

Michigan State University

Taught a graduate level course on the history, theories, and practice of international development. This is an interdisciplinary course for graduate students from across MSU with interest in international development.

**CSUS 834 – Survey Design and Statistical Analysis** Aug 2021 - Present

Michigan State University

Taught a graduate level course on the history, theories, and practice of international development. This is an interdisciplinary course for graduate students from across MSU with interest in international development.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Native Language: English

Proficient: Spanish

Basic French

**COMPUTER ANALYTICAL SKILLS**

Statistical Software: STATA, SAS, and SPSS

Geographical Information Software: ArcGIS, Google Earth, Google Maps and GRASS Database Software: MS Access and SQL

Microsoft Office Software: All

**PROFESSIONAL AWARDS**

*U.S. Congressional Record December 7, 2021*

Representative (now Senator) Elissa Slotkin of Michigan entered me into the U.S. Congressional Record for leading the evacuation of scientists and female graduate students out of Afghanistan during the US departure of Afghanistan. *- Issue: Vol. 167, No. 211, Pages E1319 – E1320 — Daily Edition 117th Congress (2021 - 2022) - 1st Session*

Global Impact Award Michigan State University 2022

Virginia Governor’s Award for Public Service Nominee Virginia Tech, 2014

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)

PULSE International

The Forum for Education Abroad

Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Board of Directors and Treasurer

Montessori Children’s House

Lansing, MI

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