

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Georgia Regional Innovation Outreach Initiative: 2016 D-Lab Visit**

During Summer 2016, the UC Davis D-Lab team formed by Professor Kurt Kornbluth and two UC Davis students traveled to the country of Georgia in Eastern Europe to implement and support the project “Georgia Regional Education Initiative”. Led by the UC Davis Humphrey Fellow, Kakhaber Bakhtadze, and designed under the UC Davis DLab Program, this trip was successfully executed as a result of a year of planning and evaluation under the UC Davis D-Lab Program.

The team worked with local partners in Georgia (BCC and GIPA) to evaluate current courses and to further develop appropriate project-based curricula using the D-Lab model, with a focus on Environmental Protection, Natural Resources Management, and Rural and Agriculture Development. The training took place in Bediani, a small town two-hours away from the capital of Tbilisi. The goal was to deliver a short D-Lab style, feasibility study and training module around business development and project’s sustainability using the 4-Lenses approach. This exploratory visit also had the goal to identify and meet with potential partners in Georgia, whether private, public, or nonprofit, to discuss further collaboration between UC Davis D-Lab and their organization in conjunction with BCC projects. The team held meetings with various stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Science.

This exploratory visit provided a good starting point to evaluate further collaborations between the University of California and the Global Institute for Public Affairs in Georgia (GIPA). Additionally, participants of the training found each activity and lecture to be useful for the development of their business models, and are interested in more training opportunities that will provide in-depth knowledge on agriculture issues relating to their project ideas.