Introduction

This is a summary report of the first annual reports of the HEI ICI 2020-2024 projects (the 4th HEI ICI programme period). In the first annual reporting, all nine projects submitted their reports by March 2021. The reports were analysed and in the end of April 2021 (weeks 16 and 17) EDUFI organised reporting discussions with each project to discuss the findings of the report related to content and finances. Moreover, the current COVID situation in terms of the project implementation was discussed as well as the strategies of HEIs on sustainable development/Agenda2030 and how they are visible in the HEI ICI project and in the overall development of the teaching and research of the institutions. The discussions were joined by participants from Finnish and southern partner country HEIs.
After the discussion, EDUFI prepared project specific written feedbacks that were sent via the VA-system on 12 May 2021.

**Background of the programme period**

In total of 67 applicants submitted their proposals for the first stage HEI ICI call and nine projects received funding at the second stage in the 4th HEI ICI programme period.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs granted 11,2 million euros for the HEI ICI programme 2020-2024. The total budget including the self-financing share of the HEIs (20%) is 12,4 million euros. The aim of the cooperation is to support capacity to develop distance learning and improved access of higher education for students in the global south. One of the main objectives of the HEI ICI programme 2020-2024 is an improved capacity of open and distance learning in partner countries. In terms of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the objective was timely, and supports well higher education institutions in the changing operational environment.

The selected projects develop digital learning environments such as MOOCs, study modules and distance courses. They will strengthen teacher’s pedagogical capacity of digital and blended learning, develop digital learning platforms, improve IT skills and working life conditions of the HEIs.

HEI ICI programme (read more on the [web page](#)) has three main themes: **Solving the global learning crises** (5 projects), **Climate change** adaptation and mitigation (2 projects) and **innovation development to increase employability at large scale** (3 projects).

Selected projects operate in nine countries in Asia and Africa. Partner country institutions include HEIs from capital regions as well as smaller institutions from other regions. Partnerships also support thematic institutional networking between Finnish higher education institutions as in many projects, there is collaboration between universities and universities of applied sciences.

Moreover, multi-stakeholder cooperation is emphasized. In addition to academic partners, there are non-governmental organizations, ministries of education, other government organizations and private companies (for example ed-tech companies) involved from Finland and partner countries.
Overview of the progress in 2020

Naturally, the COVID-19 has had major impact on the HEI ICI programme and implementation of the HEI ICI projects. Since the aim of the programme is to develop virtual learning, also the workshops planned to organise on site have been forced to organise online. So far the projects have not had common meetings or trainings together in the partner countries but most of them are planning to meet each other in the Fall 2021, depending on the COVID situation. In some cases, the pandemic has pushed the government to invest to more effective infrastructure, classes and modernisation in the country but the effects of these investment to the implementation on HEI ICI projects are to be seen later. Projects were asked to report good practises and lessons learned in their annual reports concerning the post COVID time and the copies of the answers are listed in the Annex 1.

Despite the COVID-19, the travel restrictions and the fact that the new projects have not met face to face during the first months of the programme period, the HEI ICI projects have nevertheless demonstrated good progress and were able to start the implementation online according to the work plans.

The programme period started with a 6 months inception phase during which the project revised the projects documents including the budget, risk matrix, work plan and results framework according to the financial decision and feedback received from the evaluators.

During the inception phase a special focus was given on creating a shared understanding of the rationale and functioning of the projects among the partners. Roles and responsibilities of the project partners were commonly agreed. The Project management chapter describes more the various administrative procedures created.

Important aspect of the inception phase has been the creation of mutual trust among partners. While this is not an easy task while doing everything online, the projects have found good ways to build commitment and ownership through collaborative virtual team working. Also, the partnership agreements have been drafted and signed between most project partners. The project boards were set up and first board meetings held. The virtual kick off events were organised by most of the projects.
The baseline analysis continued during the inception phase through competence surveys collecting data for example on ICT skills and through needs assessments. The baseline analysis creates a basis for the forthcoming capacity building activities, procurements, curriculum development and pedagogical trainings.

A significant number of online networking and dissemination events, workshops, seminars and trainings were already organised in 2020. Majority of the events were various workshops or trainings for the HEIs’ staff related to the project activities. In addition, especially in the beginning of the project period, the projects have focused on enhancing the visibility through stakeholder networking and dissemination events within partner HEIs or targeting external stakeholders.

Majority of the participants of these events were staff of the higher education institutions while the share of the students and non-academic participants has been smaller. 56% of the participants were male and 44% female.

In summary, the main achievements during the first reporting period have been:

1. Creation of solid project management structures, clear division of tasks and responsibilities, internal quality management plans and administrative trainings organised for all partners
2. Partnership agreements drafted and signed, and Project Boards set up
3. Baseline analysis and need based assessments conducted identifying the specific demands related to implementation of the project activities such as: pedagogical capacity building of digital and blended learning, development of digital learning platforms, improve IT skills and working life conditions of the HEIs.
4. Capacity building trainings for HEIs staff started
5. Enhanced visibility of the project through stakeholder networking events.

**Achievement of programme level results**

For the HEI ICI programme period 2020-2024 there are five programme-level indicators of which Indicators 1 & 2 measure impact and outcome of the programme. The indicators 3-5 are indicators set by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as the MFA has been assigned to report to the minister annually and to the parliament.
every fourth year on the advancement of the major programmes like HEI ICI. These indicators are based on the Sustainable Development Goals and the same indicators are used also in other development cooperation instruments funded through the MFA.

As reporting period covers only the first months of the programme period, indicators measuring impact and outcome are out of the scope of the first reporting period as the curriculum development and other major capacity building processes have not yet started. Indicator 3 measures number of higher education institutions reached through measures aimed to increase their capacity. Basically, all HEIs in partner countries are calculated under this indicator and additionally, the HEI ICI project activities may reach other HEIs in the region even if they are not official partners of the projects. So far 33 HEIs in partner countries have been reached. For indicator 4 there is nothing to report yet but in terms of the indicator 5 the SUSIE and GeoICT4e projects have so far created 12 Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) partnerships. Both projects are operating in Tanzania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Target*</th>
<th>Results 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: The benefit to students in terms of passed new training (number of students who have passed education equivalent to min. 5 ECTS). (IMPACT)</td>
<td>Over 30,000 students</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Number of faculties, schools or equivalent in the partner universities where capacity building process (curriculum updating, pedagogical updating, a training package equivalent to 5 ECTS credits, administrative upgrading etc) has been finalized and approved by the university administration. (OUTCOME)</td>
<td>Approximately 88 schools or equivalent in the partner</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Number of educational institutions, incl. higher education, reached through measures aimed to increase their capacity</td>
<td>Approximately over 50 HEIs</td>
<td>33 HEIs in partner countries reached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Number of teachers and teacher education students who participated in pre- or in-service training</td>
<td>Over 13,000 teachers, and teacher education students</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Number of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) partnerships with education and research institutions and private sector actors</td>
<td>No target available</td>
<td>12 STI partnerships created (GeoICT4e and SUSIE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers calculated from updated Results Frameworks of the projects during the inception phase. In some cases the numbers are estimations.
Project management

As a positive side effect of the pandemic, the projects have had time for proper organisation of the project management procedures. All projects have put special attention in planning the project coordination and management as effective and transparent as possible. Several project management tools are in use and the communication between the partners have been active using distance connections. Projects have implemented several new methods to build shared understanding such as virtual video tours in the premises of partner universities, recording project board meetings etc.

The projects have organised management trainings covering programme-level requirements and division of tasks, and reporting schedules and templates have been created. According to the reporting discussions with the projects, project management procedures including financial management seem to be rather clear for all partners.

The function of the Project Board is to monitor project progress and to support the cooperating HEIs in carrying out the activities. The Project Board takes actions if there is a risk that the stated objectives of the project are not adhered to. The Board also approves the possible significant changes in the Project Document and the annual reports before they are submitted to EDUFI.

In each project the members to the board have been invited based on the needs, scope, stakeholders, and structure of the project. The chair of the board comes always from the southern partner institution. Projects have reported that depending on the structure of the project management the project board is meeting at least once in a year. Several meetings in a year is the most common procedure. In many projects the responsibilities are divided between the members of the board and project management is supporting all activities.

A person from each participating HEI is nominated as a coordinator. These persons ensure that the activities are implemented as planned. The coordinator of the Finnish coordinating HEI is the contact point for the MFA and EDUFI.

Internal quality management

According to the rules written in HEI ICI programme document HEI ICI projects are expected to organise and plan the data collection for monitoring purposes during the inception phase. Monitoring needs to be organised so that it feeds relevant and timely information to the decision-makers. Direct feedback from stakeholders in seminars and training sessions should be collected and the key observations discussed jointly. Use of qualitative and process indicators is recommended especially for locating changes in working methods, attitudes, and commitment. Self-evaluation workshop using participatory methods should also, according to the rules of the programme be organised, within the second year of the project implementation.

In the annual reports all HEI ICI projects have reported that they have a plan for internal monitoring. The quality assessment is done by separate working groups, Quality Assurance Team (QAT), Quality core team, Quality Platform etc. or it is part of organizational processes.

The findings observations are reported to the Project board at least annually. In one project the first self-evaluation workshop is to be held already in September 2021 which will focus on quality assurance and monitoring good practices.
Financial management

The total expenditure of the HEI ICI project in 2020 was 567 185 euros of which 80 % was covered by the MFA funding and 20 % by self-financing. Reflecting the time given for the project implementation in 2020 (only 4 months) and the global pandemic, the yearly budget components were used according to the expectations. Especially due to the COVID-19 and postponed travelling, the average usage of the budget 2020 was about 46 %. Moreover, in many projects the first payments to the partners were made only after the inception phase in 2021 and therefore there were no costs to be reported by the partners in 2020 annual report.

Due to this fact, the share of the expenditure by the Finnish higher education institutions compared to the southern partners was significantly higher. However, it can be expected to balance itself out in the following years once the projects kick-off properly after the inception phase.
Financial management has been well organised in each of the projects and financial administrators in partner HEIs have been involved in the project trainings. It is crucial that administrators of the HEIs are also aware of the programme financial regulations and requirements. In many cases HEIs own accountants and controllers are participating the HEI ICI programme meetings and are closely following the project implementation which is excellent practise for ensuring a smooth implementation.

Consistency with development policy

The main goal of Finland’s development policy is to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities. Finland’s development policy and development cooperation are guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted within the UN in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda includes 17 different goals and Finland is committed to reaching them both at home and in its international cooperation. Finland’s development cooperation supports this commitment. In accordance with the above-mentioned principles, the HEI ICI Programme supports Finland’s development policy, cooperation objectives and guidelines.

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)
Respect for human rights and their promotion is a principle that guides the planning and implementation of Finland’s development policy and development cooperation to ensure that even the poorest know their rights and are able to act for them. It is equally important that the authorities are aware of their human rights obligations and have the capacity to implement them (https://um.fi/goals-and-principles-of-finland-s-development-policy).

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) entails the systematic integration of human rights as a means of development cooperation. Human rights principles are considered and applied in all phases of the project cycle. The minimum level is that all Finnish development interventions are human rights sensitive, which requires a basic assessment of human rights to ensure sufficient awareness of them. It also seeks to ensure that the intervention does not contribute to discriminatory structures, norms and practices. Human rights progressive interventions usually require cooperation with different stakeholders including state authorities as well as inclusion of right-holders in the process.
The HEI ICI projects are advised to screen their project cycle based on the human rights principles, in particular ensuring possibilities of beneficiaries to participate on equal manners, with a gender sensitive lens. This is to ensure that all processes and information on the projects are transparent and the activities do not contribute to any indirect or direct discrimination.

In the final application phase, all HEI ICI projects were asked to describe the strategic choices made to address HRBA and cross-cutting objectives as part of their project document. In the annual report of 2020, all nine HEI ICI projects reported various activities demonstrating how human rights principles have been applied in the project and how they guide the implementation of HEI ICI projects. Most often the projects reported on activities in accordance with the human rights principles of inclusion and transparency as well as participation and accountability.

The commitment to adhere to the principle of participation and inclusion has been demonstrated in all projects through a joint planning process since the very beginning. For example, it is reported that the project plan is based on local needs and the partners have been involved in the process from the beginning, which contributes to accountability and strong ownership in the administration at the partner university. Also, inception phase studies included wide and open participation from all the partner universities. One of the HEI ICI project has established the joint Code of Conduct to guide their cooperation and express their commitment to, among other things, respect for human rights.

Projects have reported several good practices to ensure participation and inclusion of rural, vulnerable, and socially excluded communities. For example, experts on rural development and humanities are involved in the planning of the joint learning module together with technical expertise. Students from the above-mentioned communities are also encouraged to join project activities, for example, by announcing activities on various social media channels or creating a special quota to ensure their participation.

The human rights principle of transparency in the HEI ICI projects is described in several ways in the reports. All the projects emphasize wide and equal access to the project documentation, development work, goals and activities. Virtual meetings and shared online platforms are considered significant online tools to ensure open and transparent communication between all the HEI ICI partners as well as availability and access to information. Freedom of expression was noted in a report stating that the local media was freely reporting on the virtual kick-off meeting. In order to provide all the necessary information and knowledge in the current situation where cooperation is fully virtual, projects have introduced joint project management tools, video instructions, recordings of meetings and presentations to ensure everyone has equal access to information in an appropriate way.

When reporting on accountability in projects, projects emphasize shared leadership as well as differentiated levels of responsibility and authority. Projects also ensure that everyone has their own role in certain activities and that they are part of a team. All the partners are also accountable for certain activities or assignments by mutual agreement.

Cross-cutting objectives: Gender, reduction of inequality, climate sustainability

All development cooperation activities take into account the cross-cutting objectives of Finland’s development policy. Gender equality is one the values and principles guiding Finland’s long-term action in the development. By integrating a gender perspective into all development interventions, it is possible to identify different roles and responsibilities for women and men as well as access to, for example, information, resources and decision-making.

All the HEI ICI projects have considered the gender equality throughout the whole project cycle from the joint planning to the inception phase. The projects are also requested to provide annual gender-disaggregated data on training and events and the expected results of the projects are gender-
disaggregated. On the annual report 2020, the HEI ICI projects have reported on improving and considering gender equality. To ensure gender equality, a number of concrete and conscious actions have been taken in the projects.

The projects have set targets for women’s participation in training and project activities. Some projects aim for more active participation of female students, others have set gender quotas and others pursue gender equality goals by choosing female junior staff members for training.

Also promoting awareness on gender equality in a gender-sensitive manner has been reported, for example, women and men are targeted in their respective areas of interest. Awareness is also raised in the form of a workshop and gender-sensitive learning material that is accessible to all. All the projects reported that they are trying to ensure gender balance in projects teams, trainers, participants and key expert teams. Also gender disaggregated data is collected.

One of the projects mentioned that they have started planning a mentoring programme and training track into the project for women. Particular attention will also be paid to young women and their encouragement to pursue expertise and careers in technology, working alongside senior experts in more responsible roles.

**Agenda 2030**

As Finland’s development policy and development cooperation are guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the HEI ICI projects are also in line with the Agenda2030. Already in their application, the projects have listed the SDGs they have linkages with. During the 2020 reporting discussion the projects elaborated the strategies of HEIs on sustainable development/Agenda2030 and how they are visible in the HEI ICI project and the overall development of the teaching and research of the institution.

The projects are contributing and have linkages through their activities to several sustainable development goals. Naturally all projects are contributing to SDG 4 Quality Education and with its sub-goals (especially 4.3, 4.4., 4.5 and 4.7). Especially the five projects under the learning crises theme have special focus on SDG 4 but all the other projects are also strongly connected to this goal. All the HEI ICI projects have also linkages with SDG 17 (Partnership for the goals and SDG 5 Gender equality. The projects under the climate change theme contribute to SDG 13 Climate Action and the projects under the innovation theme has strong linkages with SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. In addition to these goals, the picture below shows all the SDGs that the projects have linkages with.
Communication and Dissemination

The HEI ICI project have taken a strong focus towards internal and external communication from the very beginning of the programme period. As the projects have not been able to meet face to face, virtual tools and platforms are the main communication channels for project partners to discuss and decide on important matters. For internal communication, projects have regular online meetings and in some cases these meetings are recorded to be reviewed later if necessary. Besides official project meetings, many are organising more casual virtual coffee breaks to catch up with other project members. These are important moments to get to know each other and, to create mutual trust among partners when there have not been possibilities to meet physically.

Most of the projects have created communication and dissemination plan for the programme period. At this stage, the external communication is focusing especially on enhancing the visibility through different channels. All projects have launched a project web page that functions as a main communication platform. News or blog posts are regularly posted by all projects. Also, social media channels mainly Twitter and Facebook but also Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn are actively used to promote ongoing projects. To enhance visibility projects have participated in different webinars to disseminate information on project activities for stakeholders. There have been also several news articles on partner HEIs webpages (external and internal) sharing information about the funding decision and projects’ activities. Some projects have also received visibility in local media in partner countries (i.e. 21st CT kick off meeting featured in news broadcast by several local radio channels, Article on Finnish Ambassador Riitta Swan’s visit in Ardhi University, partner for GeoICT4e released in local newspaper).

HEI ICI projects are also finding new ways to promote the on-going activities and raise interest among larger audience. A good example is a JAMK Podcast series: Solving the Global learning crises that explores how JAMK HEI ICI projects in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal develop the higher education systems and practices to improve student-centred and digital pedagogy, incorporating theory and practice in teacher education, and applying the 21st century skills in their teaching.
Annex 2 provides a country-specific compilation of visibility of HEI ICI projects 2020-2024, with links to news, articles, publications and web pages. More information on dissemination activities are found on the project web pages listed on HEI ICI web page.

Annexes

Annex 1: COVID-19 compilation, Key Lessons learned and Good Practices

21st Century Nepal

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs

As it is impossible to know when travel restrictions may be relaxed, it is important at the holistic project management level to introduce a flexible management review system of the implementation plan.

It is pointless to replan the whole project’s implementation and therefore it should be done in stages. For example, on an annual basis, reviewing actions for the year ahead. That method will allow the consortium to revert to the original plan with very little effort and at short notice whenever it is deemed safe to do so.

Conducting management, as well as learning activities online is not easy. More attention than usual must be paid to the potential for misunderstanding. Keep online session short, spoken communication clear and concise. The same can be said for gaining insights into each other’s culture to build effective working relationships. More acceptance of difference must be adopted to avoid creating unrealistic expectations.

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs

Currently we are working in a difficult circumstance caused by COVID-19 pandemic and immediate future is still unpredictable. In this context, we need be flexible to accommodate and address the emerging challenges in the project plan and activities without compromising the quality.

Also, all three major outputs of this project require continuous collaboration among the experts from all four partner HEIs, feedback sharing mechanism from one another might help all of us to better understand the team members and address the issues, if arise any. The institution lead, or the Project Board Members from each could collect the feedback from the experts of their respective HEIs and share with the respective institution.

CLIDEV

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs

The impact of corona virus have been felt by millions of people across the globe. The Finnish HEIs are certainly not exempt from this uncertainty, with Finnish HEIs forced to stop contact teaching and transfer their teaching online, and also planned for online teaching for 2021 as well.

During this pandemic, firstly, the value of online teaching platform was realized. Due to this sudden shift from contact teaching to digital platform both teachers and students felt urgency to get acquainted with the latest online learning technology.
Currently, in Finnish HEIs online teaching is mainly done in zoom, additionally youtube, moodle and other platforms is being used.

Secondly, the value of international students and partnerships with HEIs was realized more than ever. As border shuts and travel restrictions in place international students from different countries struggled to commence their studies in Finnish HEIs.

Education projects like ours as the bond between international HEIs partnerships have also been seriously hit as a result of pandemic. In our project we had a plan to organize kick o meeting in Vietnam and Myanmar, however with travel restrictions in place we arranged the meeting on line. We are currently using zoom for meetings, besides email, we are using whatsapp, facebook messenger and Zalo for exchanging messages.

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs**

In both partner countries HEIs during pandemic teaching was online. However, due to lack of infrastructure and unstable internet specially in Myanmar, online teaching is not easy. It was realized infrastructure and internet facility is needed to be improved for online teaching.

As of March 2021, Covid situation has been improved in Vietnam and all the partner HEIs are back to normal contact teaching. If the situation worsen, they will go back to online teaching. In Myanmar case, teaching is online since pandemic starts. However, from February 2021, there is no teaching due to sudden political instability in the country.

**GeoICT4e**

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs**

COVID-19 has shifted our working modalities to online mode and e.g. teaming up is slower. We have faced rapid personal and institutional push towards e-working methods and e-learning solutions, but physical connections and face to-face meetings are crucial especially when new persons with various cultural backgrounds and skills collaborate. In particular, when aiming to create new innovative learning methods jointly.

The role of Finnish HEIs in the project is to

a) lead the learning assets, material design and development of MCL method (MOOCs for MCL learning process, Challenge Campaign overall methodology design and the MCL Playbook)

b) co-design with Tanzanian key experts to have locally adapted solutions of these learning assets for Tanzanian HEIs and their students

c) mentor and coach the Tanzanian colleagues to become skilled professionals in using these learning materials in their teaching and cooperation/outreach activities (training of the trainers), and

d) support Tanzanian colleagues in the establishment of strong partnerships for successful MCL implementation and carrying out the challenge-based learning campaigns in Tanzania.
During the Inception Phase, the work in the project has been highly directed by the Coordinator HEI, and planning work conducted mostly by the Coordinators and Project Managers, but in the near future the key experts are teaming up better in smaller teams, both in theme-specific and intra-university teams.

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs**

During the Inception Phase, the Partner HEIS have organized their teams, and created internal processes to be able to manage the project accordingly.

The collaboration between the Finnish and Partner HEIs has happened mostly between Coordinators and Project Managers. All experts have participated in some meetings, however, and familiarized themselves well with the project.

After the Inception Phase, all experts have their own roles among the MCL concept-based teams. Our resilience towards the Covid19 situation has been rather strong due to our long-term personal connections between many team members. Still, our Tanzanian colleagues suffer from rather weak quality of the Internet, which makes it rather challenging to organize online sessions and events with large teams. Thus, we have started to record the meetings, which provides experts a chance to catch up with the topics via these video-sessions later.

Another good practice is to adopt a bit slower pace for the actions and break the actions into mini-entities to ensure their delivery online. We have thus launched a 2 h weekly meeting schedule and the same link for our project (every Thursday at 9-11 am EAT), each session used for a dedicated, preferred ToT topic or planning meeting.

Our co-presence digitally in various platforms has also become important and thus we are all actively following our WhatsApp groups’ communication. Zoom is familiar to us all now and works rather well also for Tanzanian team members.

**MOPEDE**

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs**

- Structured and transparent management is the key issue in virtual project work create in participatorily way.

- Meetings and visits face to face between partners in the application phase was crucial for shared understanding and co-working. Virtual collaborative planning and workshops went surprisingly well despite the challenges in connections.

- Base line questionnaire and workshop built shared understanding of the current situation of e-learning and answered the question: Where do we stand. Online questionnaires and MS Teams - platforms might be difficult to access from the south. Sometimes phone call and email are more accessible.

- Cultural contexts and facilities for e-learning are challenging to understand from distance without travels between the partners. There is a risk for misunderstanding when there is limited physical interaction and experience of local context.

- Duties and tasks are easy to handle online with distance. Co-working routines were created. Clear process descriptions, Work plan and lists of duties support that.

- To organize key experts at the beginning in small teams and to have several short meeting to plan and develop the project strengthens the goal orientation, ownership and gives option to get familiar personally.
Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs

In 2020 schools in Ethiopia were closed and that was a big destruction. There were no experience of distant or online learning at all.

FTI’s adopted e-learning platform was an effort to minimize the effect of the disruption. MOPEDE gave in ideal time to boost the culture of using e-learning and applying e-pedagogy on FTI and the 15 satellite campuses throughout the different regions of Ethiopia. There is a high tendency of resistance to changes and new digital approaches of teaching learning. The motivated pilot teachers were selected to practice and apply e-learning and epedagogy in the courses they are teaching. As one positive factor since the exposure towards using different digital platforms and virtual meeting tools were improved. Many of the project activities are going smoothly. Online trainings are going well and experts from Finland are delivering them so the e-learning team members can become trainers themselves.

Online meetings with team members within Ethiopia and with members of the northern partners are going on smoothly. Everyone, including the management and teachers have a strong stand that we must be ready for digital ways of teaching and learning to lessen the impact if in case such things happen again, be digitally ready.

Main challenges faced so far are poor network connectivity in some regions of Ethiopia to have smooth communication with e-learning team members from some satellites.

Olive

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs

Lessons learnt in online project management: How to run online meetings and workshops? How to get documents signed electronically? How to operate in the mist of digital platforms: Google drive, Teams, Zoom, Hang out, Whats App, Slack, Kialo, Flinga, Jamboard and not to get lost in-between the platforms? What information is where and who has access to it? And how the trust is build when Olive Team members have not met face-to face? The answer to all this is the commitment to the shared aim. In various ways, we are all committed to develop Palestinian teacher education and we do it with all those means we have available.

We are committed to exchanging views, ideas and experiences and, thus, learning from one another. The different channels of communication we have set up already, and that we will establish throughout the duration of OLIVE project, aim to take us toward this direction.

As well, we are committed to exchanging views, ideas and experiences and, thus, learning from one another. The different channels of communication we have set up already, and that we will establish throughout the duration of OLIVE project aim to take us toward this direction. In UH and UEF have been in new situation learning to work by following the COVID regulations. This has been a big change, as in Finland we have much to learn in working remotely when University premises are closed.

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs

Many of the challenges related to working across locations were solved by the overall transformation of the working context - online presence is now the norm, rather than a secondary option. Olive project was already planned during the COVID crisis thus the continued post-COVID situation is not anything new but rather prolonged situation of general online working culture. The pandemic makes digitalization an urgent
concern and a motivation to act for all. The digital solutions for learning are more needed than ever. The project is timelier now than during the initial planning stage.

PBL - BioAfrica

Text in other part of the report:

All the partner universities have been struggling with COVID during this first year of implementation. Institutions and staff on a personal level have been stretched to their limits. The main achievements of the first half-year of the project’s implementation has been attributed to a strong feeling of partnership, respect for each other and collaborative effort to find ways of implementation in the middle of this challenging situation.

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs

Pandemic has challenged the project implementation. Work in HAMK, like in all partners has mainly been in distance, and all the partner communication online. A lot of energy and focus has been on following the pandemic with an attempt to respect the challenges the partners have been having at the institutional and personal level.

All f2f activities have been cancelled. Even though online activities give access to more participants, while the f2f meetings are expected to build a sense of community. Online meetings work reasonably well, but still, technology is causing challenges.

Regular meetings have been an important way of keeping the spirit, and online platforms have worked well in document sharing. The feasibility studies have been the “intellectual” part of the first year. Being already the lead coordinator in previous similar HEI ICI project (PBL East Africa 2017-2020), Aalto has been in active consultation and coordination regarding lessons learnt and sharing best practices with coordinator HEI, especially on the quality plan and monitoring, project logo design and visual identity, and PBL student cases initiation and execution.

A first PBL student case involving an Aalto International Design Business Management (IDBM) course and faculty has been set-up to partner with the project stakeholders fully via online activities. The case builds on the collaboration between Aalto and UoN in the previous HEI-ICI round and serves to transfer knowledge to this new project.

Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs

All the partner country universities reported facing serious challenges that disrupted the normal teaching cycles and practices due to the pandemic. General challenges were access to smart devices and network, especially for vulnerable students. Also lack of skills in e-teaching was common since the change has been sudden.

Many partners also reported challenges with access to content from e-libraries. EGU management encouraged online teaching. Especially after the introduction of online classes, the proportion of students with smart devices increased.

Staff members have been trained on E-learning; however, a lack of motivation for online teaching has been observed. Other challenges faced are student strikes and power blackouts.
UNZA: Time-management issues with regards to incorporating e-learning practice have been a challenge. Nonetheless, the importance of teamwork and flexibility as well as learning from each other has been noted.

SEKU reports that sensitization of students and staff online has worked to some level, and exploration of opportunities in the use of digital platforms continues.

For MU it is already clear that the PBL Bio Africa project is more critical than ever before. The essential role of technology for innovation, the need to be agile and change the learning ecosystems for the project to succeed has been noted. UoN has analyzed the ODL readiness of the university in general. The ICT department is working to ensure more resources to purchase ICT equipment.

Susie

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs**

We have realized the importance of regular and continuous internal communication now that we have to work virtually. It also came to our attention that we keep in touch with our partners more frequently, almost on a daily basis. We have established the Teams workspace for the project, which proved functional and reliable. The document sharing goes well, and all partners and teams upload their meeting memos and action plans to the workspace. This makes document coordination very easy. The virtual meetings in Teams also work well.

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs**

We have learned to work in a virtual environment via Microsoft Teams Platform

We did our kick-off meeting partly online with TUAS team on 15th and 16th January.

We did our financial training with TUAS online. We conduct our weekly project management team meeting online.

We had a virtual coffee break meeting with the entire project team We have also learned that we have a committed and open minded team, though we currently don’t have face to face contact with the TUAS team but there is excellent communication and everything openly available/is shared via Microsoft Teams Platform.

In addition, Tanzanian members are ready to learn new innovations, we recently had innovation pedagogy training at MWCAU and MoCU, members are ready to embrace new innovative ways of teaching and learning including working in virtual environment.

**TEPATE**

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs**

The implementation of the inception phase changed significantly due to the COVID. All activities that were planned to take place in Mozambique, were implemented remotely.

However, the planned activities were carried out successfully considering the limitations due to the pandemic, thanks to the good coordinators of the partner universities and collaboration between all partners.
However, the unreliability of the ICT infrastructure in the South impacted the online activities as quite many key experts of the Southern universities dropped out occasionally/repeatedly during the online events. Regardless of the problems related with the ICT infrastructure, the pandemic has opened new learning possibilities to the SPs that were not planned and expected in the planning phase. For example, learning and experiencing new tools such as Teams, Zoom, Linoit, and Miro, and different working methods enabled by them at the early stage of the project will likely enhance and speed up the use of technology at SP HEIs.

As no travels between project partners were possible due to COVID-19, the Key Experts of the UoL raised the issue of not getting to know the local context first-hand, and expressed their consequent concern on how to be able to support the Southern Partners in an optimal way. They also expressed their concern about some Key Experts’ limited English language skills while re-assuring their commitment to learn more. They also report to continue feeling “positive” about the project.

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs**

One of the major lessons learned during the COVID19 pandemic has been the need to be prepared. This relates both to human abilities to utilise ICT tools, and to a good, reliable internet connection. Both SPs conclude that being able to work online is a necessity now.

During the Inception Phase, all interaction between the partners was conducted online. Considering the situation, the activities were completed rather successfully. To tackle the challenges caused by unreliable internet connection, both partners are searching for suitable facilities with a reliable internet connection for the TEPATE Project.

Further, UP reported one or two key experts constantly missing the virtual workshops. A replacement were done on 3.3, in the introducing a person with a much needed background in Mathematics to the KE team. The representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Education to the project board are still to be confirmed. The Project Manager has requested the Finnish Embassy in Mozambique to help with this issue. For ISET One World, TEPATE project is the first of its kind in terms of scale.

Further, the ISET One World team is young with limited experience on large-scale projects. However, ISET One World is committed to the Project, and eager to network with other professionals missioned to develop teacher training and teachers’ capacities in the country.

**TOTEMK**

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in Finnish HEIs**

University of Helsinki:

Owing to Covid-19 pandemic, we have been virtually communicating reasonably well via Zoom, emails, Google Drive and WhatsApp with minimal technical problems.

The biggest challenge has been providing a common understanding of financial issues due to varied local systems of bookkeeping. However, by bilateral meetings and joint problem-solving, we have reached an understanding. We have had more EG meetings than those scheduled, but all these meetings have been important and required, now that we cannot meet F2F.

Laurea University of Applied Sciences:
During the inception phase, we have learnt to know our partners in Kenya. Despite the CV-19, technology has enabled us to remain in contact and to implement tasks planned at the inception phase of the project. Naturally bonding within the project team would have been different if there had been a possibility to meet F2F. However, the Laurea experts have a long history of working together and we have also got to know the UH experts quite well during the project preparation.

**Key lessons learned, good practice (in a post-COVID context) in partner country HEIs**

UoN: At School of Education, many members wanted to participate in the project and trainings, but only limited members could do so. Some technical and management matters necessitated individual and group F2F sensitization meetings about the project with key institutional staff by the project Team. Few challenges due to change of bank account and staff changes UoN at the CEES necessitated sensitization of new Accounts staff on financial reporting.

SU: Balancing micro-institutional dynamics amidst the pandemic can lead to delays but with commitment and support from team members, it is possible to deliver expected outputs. At times, the delays were due to constraints beyond our control.

Second, it is important to synchronize the financial structure and terminology between the EDUFI framework and the Kenyan financial framework. We need to be dynamic in terms of processes and interactions between agents, at times co-opting new members. The magnitude of the actual project is larger than the planned one. We have worked harmoniously despite challenges of time brought about by clashing university responsibilities. This has however, enhanced our time management skills. We have been able to mitigate the challenge of technical expertise in ICT by incorporating an ICT expert. The role of a financial advisor should also be catered for better management of finances in order to ensure timely and well-advised financial reporting.
### ETHIOPIA

**MOPEDE - Capacity Building for Modernizing TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia**


Social media:
- Twitter: @JAMK_AOKK
- Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu](https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu)

JAMK Learning crises blog: [https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/](https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/)

JAMK Podcast series: Solving the Global learning crises

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### KENYA

**PBL-BioAfrica - Problem-based-learning Bioeconomy entrepreneurship and capacity building programme in Africa**

Project web page: [https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/](https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/)

Social media:
- Twitter: @PBioafrica

News articles: [https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/news](https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/news)

**TOTEMK - Training of trainers for teacher education and management in Kenya**


Social media:
- Twitter: @TOTEMKproject


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### MOZAMBIQUE

**TEPATE - Theory-Practice Balance in Teacher Education**


Social media:
- Twitter: @JAMK_AOKK
Facebook:  [https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu](https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu)

JAMK Learning crises blog:  [https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/](https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/)


News articles on partner’s web pages:

University of Lapland:
-  [Lapin yliopisto ja JAMK kehittävät Mosambikin opettajankoulutusta, 10.9.2020](https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/)
-  [Improving Theory-Practice Balance of Mozambican Teacher Education, 10.9.2020](https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/)

Universidade pedagogica de Maputo:
-  [https://www.up.ac.mz/noticias/646-projecto-de-capacitacao-de-professores](https://www.up.ac.mz/noticias/646-projecto-de-capacitacao-de-professores)

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### MYANMAR

**CLIDEV - Strengthening Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Myanmar and Vietnam**


Social media:
Twitter:  @VITRI_HY
Facebook:  [https://www.facebook.com/Clidev-project-103542688194412](https://www.facebook.com/Clidev-project-103542688194412)
Instagram:  [https://www.instagram.com/vitri.tropical/](https://www.instagram.com/vitri.tropical/)

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### NEPAL

**TPP Nepal - Developing Pedagogy for 21st Century Skills in Nepal**


Social media:
Twitter:  @JAMK_AOKK
Facebook:  [https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu](https://www.facebook.com/opettajakorkeakoulu)
JAMK Learning crises blog:  [https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/](https://blogit.jamk.fi/learningcrisis/)

JAMK Podcast series: Solving the Global learning crises
Nepal episode:  Online Learning in Nepal - an interview with Dr. Jeevan Khanal  
[https://soundcloud.com/jamkaokk/developing-online-learning-in-nepal](https://soundcloud.com/jamkaokk/developing-online-learning-in-nepal)

Conferences:
An abstract submitted to the online to the European Educational Research Association’s online conference, ECER 2021:  *Nepalese University teachers’ perspectives on integrating 21st century skills in their teaching – barriers and needs*
## PALESTINE

**OLIVE - Teacher Education without Walls – New models for STEM and Teacher Education in the Digital age in Palestine**


Social media
Twitter: @OLIVE_heiici

OLIVE blog: [https://blogs.helsinki.fi/olive-project/](https://blogs.helsinki.fi/olive-project/)

News articles on partner’s web pages:
Birzeit University:
- [Finish delegation looks into cooperation in digital-era education, 14 Oct 2020](#)

## TANZANIA

**GeoICT4e - Social innovations in Geo-ICT education at Tanzanian HEIs for improved employability**

Project web page: [https://www.geoict.org/](https://www.geoict.org/)

Social media
Twitter: @GeoICT4e
Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ututanzania/](https://www.facebook.com/ututanzania/)
Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/geoict4e/](https://www.instagram.com/geoict4e/)


News articles on partner’s web pages:
Turku University
- [Turun yliopiston koordinoimalle paikkatietokoulutuksen kehittämishankkeelle lähes 2 miljoonan rahoitus, 16.7.2020](#)

Turun ammattikorkeakoulu:
- [GeoICT4e - Social innovations in Geo-ICT education at Tanzanian HEIs for improved employability](#)

Novia
- [Novia participates in a a HEI ICI project in Tanzania, 4.12.2020](#)

**SUSIE - Sustainable Business and Employability through HEIs' Innovative Pedagogy**

Project web page: [https://susie.turkuamk.fi/](https://susie.turkuamk.fi/)

Social media:
Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/susieproject](https://www.facebook.com/susieproject)

SUSIE Blog: [https://susie.turkuamk.fi/blog/](https://susie.turkuamk.fi/blog/)

SUSIE video on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAREPSAK1NA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAREPSAK1NA)

News articles:
### VIETNAM

**CLIDEV - Strengthening Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Myanmar and Vietnam**


  - **Social media:**
    - Twitter: @VITRI_HY
    - Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/Clidev-project-103542688194412](https://www.facebook.com/Clidev-project-103542688194412)
    - Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/vitri.tropical/](https://www.instagram.com/vitri.tropical/)

  - YouTube video presenting the project in Vietnam: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sylLnnYl8Vw&t=67s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sylLnnYl8Vw&t=67s)

### ZAMBIA

**PBL-BioAfrica - Problem-based-learning Bioeconomy entrepreneurship and capacity building programme in Africa**

- **Project web page:** [https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/](https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/)

  - **Social media:**
    - Twitter: @PBioafrica

  - News articles: [https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/news](https://www.pbl-bioafrica.net/news)