4FRONT

August 2025

FINAL REPORT

Higher education as catalyst for innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships for skills development and employability in Africa

Evaluation of HEI ICI and HEP programmes

Minna Mayer, Kristiina Lähde & Heidi Uitto

4FRONT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARU	Ardhi University (Tanzania)
BERT	Breaking Education Barriers: Inclusion, Rehabilitation and Technology
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CRDB	Cooperative and Rural Development Bank
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ENT	Entrepreneurship
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FoodLeader	Empowering Tomorrow's Food Security Leaders: Strengthening Higher Education Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems in Kenya and Mozambique
FUTE	Future Teacher Education for Sustainable Development (FUTE) - Fostering the Teacher Educators and Student Teachers' Competence and Best Practices in Sustainability in Finland, Namibia, and Tanzania
GeoICT4e	Social Innovations in Geo-ICT Education at Tanzanian HEIs for Improved Employability
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HEI ICI	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
HEP	Higher Education Partnership Programme
HEP-TED	Higher Education Pedagogies for Teacher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KADI	Knowledge and climate services from an African observation and Data research Infrastructure
MCL	Multi-Competence Learning
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MoCU	Moshi Co-operative University (Tanzania)
MOPEDE	Capacity Building for Modernizing TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OU	Open University
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PBL-BioAfrica	Problem-Based-Learning Bioeconomy Entrepreneurship and Capacity Building Programme In Africa
SFBioVac	Sustainable Futures- Biogas Value Chain for Circular Economy Competence Growth in Zambia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal (UN global development targets)
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture
SUSIE	Sustainable Business and Employability through HEIs' Innovative Pedagogy
SUZA	State University of Zanzibar (Tanzania)
TEPATE	Theory-Practice Balance in Teacher Education
TIPOTE	Towards Inclusive and Practice-Oriented Teacher Education
TOTEMK	Training Trainers for Teacher Education and Management in Kenya
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAS	University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)
WB	World Bank

SUMMARY

This report presents the evaluation of Finland's Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI, 2020–2024) and the Higher Education Partnerships (HEP, 2024–2026) programmes in Africa. The evaluation was based on 2 surveys (N=49, N=41), 12 interviews, project documentation, and 4 case studies. Together these sources provide a comprehensive picture of how the programmes have contributed to institutional development, pedagogy, digital transformation, employability, and wider collaboration.

The completed HEI ICI projects achieved measurable institutional change. More than 70% of survey respondents reported improvements in curricula and teaching practices, and over 40 new digital courses were introduced. New methods such as problem-based and competency-based learning were integrated into teaching, supported by scalable digital platforms. Importantly, reforms were not limited to individual departments but reached the institutional level, and in some cases influenced national curriculum frameworks, professional standards, and ministry strategies. The ongoing HEP projects, still at an early stage, have already established 5 thematic research networks, piloted digital learning environments, and initiated multi-stakeholder collaboration. Although it is too early to assess long-term impact, 65% of surveyed stakeholders expect policy relevance and positive skills development outcomes if the projects are sustained beyond the current cycle.

Survey evidence shows that the programmes have had a broad effect. In the HEI ICI portfolio, 87% of respondents agreed that partnerships and networks had been strengthened, while 86% pointed to the adoption of new teaching and learning methodologies. 85% highlighted the integration of sustainability and social responsibility into education, and 83% confirmed that institutional strategies had been piloted or adopted beyond the projects themselves. Local ownership emerged as a particularly important success factor: 82% of survey participants identified it as key to results. This ownership was complemented by strong collaboration that extended beyond academia to ministries, companies, and civil society. Among project experts who responded to the survey, 44% reported collaboration with public agencies, 35% with private companies, and 29% with NGOs and civil society organisations.

Pedagogical innovation was one of the clearest achievements. Over 70% of projects reported blended or hybrid learning formats, while 65% introduced problem-based learning and 61% used co-creation and multi-competence approaches. These methods not only diversified teaching but also enhanced its relevance by linking learning directly to real-world challenges. The development of digital solutions further accelerated reform. More than 80% of respondents reported improved institutional capacity for digital learning, 77% noted increased access to and use of online resources, and 70% observed the creation of scalable models for wider use.

The programmes also had a strong effect on employability and personal skills development. 91% of participants reported that their communication and teamwork skills improved to a great or significant extent. 84% strengthened their critical thinking, 83% advanced their digital competences, and 75% developed technical and professional skills. Entrepreneurial skills were somewhat less prominent, though still reported by more than half of participants (53%).

Sustainability of results was closely linked to the ability to mobilise additional resources. 43% of projects managed to access external funding. Several projects generated spin-off initiatives or established regional collaborations. These synergies demonstrate the catalytic role of the programmes in attracting broader support and ensuring continuity beyond the initial funding cycle.

At the same time, the evaluation also identified constraints. Short project cycles of 3–4 years limited the scalability of successful reforms and the institutional anchoring of results. Fundraising capacity

within partner institutions was often limited, restricting access to complementary resources, although some projects succeeded by leveraging existing industry partnerships and networks. Private sector engagement was uneven, and systematic tracking of graduate outcomes remained weak.

Despite these challenges, the programmes clearly functioned as catalysts for learning ecosystems. They strengthened institutional capacity, supported the adoption of innovative pedagogy, expanded digitalisation, and improved the employability of graduates. Projects also contributed to the SDGs. Finnish higher education institutions have been perceived as credible, collaborative, and technically strong partners. Their distinctive contribution lay not in transferring ready-made models but in co-creating locally adapted solutions. This value-driven approach is increasingly recognised as Finland's added value in global higher education cooperation.

The evaluation concludes that both HEI ICI and HEP programmes have built a solid foundation for long-term collaboration and institutional change. To maximise impact, we recommend extending funding cycles with options for follow-up projects, reducing administrative bottlenecks where possible, and supporting resource mobilisation to secure third-party funding. It also stresses the importance of further expanding of mobility opportunities for staff and students to deepen co-learning, and of strengthening monitoring systems for graduate outcomes and contributions. Together, these steps would help sustain the reforms already underway and enable Finnish–African higher education partnerships to play an even more strategic role in advancing both national development agendas and global education priorities.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tässä raportissa arvioidaan Suomen korkeakoulujen HEI ICI ohjelma (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument, 2020–2024) ja HEP ohjelma (Higher Education Partnership, HEP, 2024–2026) Afrikan maiden osalta. Arviointi perustui kahteen kyselyyn (N=49, N=41), 12 asiantuntijahaastatteluun, projektiaineistoihin sekä neljään tapaustutkimukseen. Näiden aineistojen avulla muodostettiin kokonaiskuva siitä, miten ohjelmat ovat vaikuttaneet institutionaaliseen kehittämiseen, pedagogiikkaan, digitaaliseen murrokseen, työllistettävyyteen ja laajempaan yhteistyöhön.

Valmistuneet HEI ICI -hankkeet tuottivat mitattavaa institutionaalista muutosta. Yli 70 % kyselyyn vastanneista raportoi parannuksista opetussuunnitelmissa ja opetuskäytännöissä, ja yli 40 uutta digitaalista kurssia otettiin käyttöön. Uusia menetelmiä, kuten ongelmaperustainen ja osaamisperustainen oppiminen, yhdistettiin opetukseen skaalautuvien digitaalisten alustojen avulla. Uudistukset eivät rajoittuneet yksittäisiin laitoksiin, vaan ulottuivat koko organisaatiotasolle ja joissakin tapauksissa vaikuttivat myös kansallisiin opetussuunnitelmiin, standardeihin ja ministeriöiden strategioihin. Käynnissä olevissa HEP-hankkeissa on perustettu 5 temaattista tutkimusverkostoa, pilotoitu digitaalisia oppimisympäristöjä ja luotu monitoimijayhteistyötä. Vaikka pitkän aikavälin vaikutuksia ei vielä voida arvioida, 65 % kyselyyn vastanneista sidosryhmistä odottaa, että hankkeiden toimilla on politiikkavaikuttavuutta ja myönteisiä vaikutuksia osaamiseen, mikäli ne jatkuvat nykyisen rahoituskauden jälkeen.

Kyselyaineisto osoittaa, että ohjelmilla on ollut laaja-alaisia vaikutuksia. HEI ICI -hankkeissa 87 % vastaajista katsoi, että kumppanuudet ja verkostot olivat vahvistuneet, 86 % raportoi uusien opetus- ja oppimismenetelmien käyttöönotosta, 85 % korosti kestävyyden ja yhteiskuntavastuun yhdistämistä opetukseen ja 83 % vahvisti, että institutionaalisia strategioita oli pilotoitu tai otettu käyttöön hankkeiden ulkopuolella. Paikallinen omistajuus nousi keskeiseksi tekijäksi: 82 % vastaajista piti sitä ratkaisevana tulosten saavuttamisessa. Tätä omistajuutta täydensi vahva yhteistyö, joka ulottui akateemisen kentän ulkopuolelle ministeriöihin, yrityksiin ja kansalaisyhteiskuntaan. Kyselyyn vastanneista asiantuntijoista 44 % oli tehnyt yhteistyötä viranomaisten, 35 % yksityisten yritysten ja 29 % kansalaisjärjestöjen kanssa.

Pedagoginen innovointi oli yksi keskeisistä saavutuksista. Yli 70 % hankkeista raportoi monimuoto- tai hybridimallien käyttöönotosta, 65 % otti käyttöön ongelmaperustaista oppimista ja 61 % hyödynsi yhteiskehittämiseen ja moniosaamiseen perustuvia lähestymistapoja. Nämä menetelmät monipuolistivat opetusta ja lisäsivät sen relevanssia liittämällä oppimisen yhteiskunnallisiin haasteisiin. Digitaalisten ratkaisujen kehittäminen vauhditti uudistuksia entisestään: yli 80 % vastaajista raportoi parantuneesta institutionaalisesta kapasiteetista digitaalisen oppimisen saralla, 77 % totesi pääsyn ja käytön verkkoresursseihin lisääntyneen ja 70 % näki skaalautuvien mallien luomisen laajempaan käyttöön.

Ohjelmilla oli myös vaikutus työllistettävyyteen ja henkilökohtaisten taitojen kehittämiseen. Opetukseen osallistuneista vastaajista 91 % kertoi viestintä- ja tiimityötaitojensa parantuneen huomattavasti, 84 % vahvisti kriittisen ajattelunsa kehittyneen, 83 % digitaalisten taitojen vahvistuneen ja 75 % teknisten ja ammatillisten taitojen lisääntyneen. Yrittäjyystaidot olivat hieman vähemmän kehittyneitä, mutta niistä raportoi silti yli puolet osallistujista (53 %).

Tulosten kestävyys liittyi tiiviisti kykyyn hankkia lisärahoitusta. Hankkeiden vastaajista 43 % kertoi onnistuneensa saamaan ulkoista rahoitusta. Useat hankkeet tuottivat spin-off-toimintoja tai erilaisia alueellisia yhteistyön muotoja. Nämä synergiat osoittavat ohjelmien katalyyttisen roolin laajemman tuen houkuttelemiseksi ja jatkuvuuden varmistamiseksi.

Arviointi toi kuitenkin esiin myös rajoitteita. Lyhyet 3–4 vuoden hankekaudet rajoittivat onnistuneiden uudistusten laajentamista ja institutionaalista juurtumista. Kumppanikorkeakoulujen varainhankintakyvykkyys oli usein rajallinen, mikä vaikeutti lisäresurssien hankkimista, vaikka osa hankkeista onnistuikin hyödyntämään olemassa olevia yrityskumppanuuksia ja verkostoja. Yksityisen sektorin osallistuminen oli epätasaista, ja valmistuneiden uraseuranta jäi puutteelliseksi.

Näistä haasteista huolimatta ohjelmat toimivat selkeästi oppimisen ekosysteemien katalyytteinä. Ne vahvistivat institutionaalista kapasiteettia, tukivat pedagogisia uudistuksia, edistivät digitalisaatiota ja paransivat valmistuneiden työllistettävyyttä. Ohjelmat edistivät myös kestävän kehityksen tavoitteita (SDG). Suomen korkeakoulut nähtiin uskottavina, yhteistyökykyisinä ja teknisesti vahvoina kumppaneina. Niiden panos ei perustunut valmiiden mallien siirtoon, vaan paikallisesti sovellettujen ratkaisujen yhteisluomiseen. Tätä arvolähtöistä lähestymistapaa pidetään yhä useammin Suomen lisäarvona globaalissa korkeakouluyhteistyössä.

Arvioinnin johtopäätös on, että sekä HEI ICI- että HEP-ohjelmat ovat rakentaneet vahvan perustan pitkäjänteiselle yhteistyölle ja institutionaaliselle muutokselle. Vaikutusten maksimoimiseksi suosittelemme hankekauden pidentämistä ja jatkohankkeiden mahdollistamista, hallinnollisten pullonkaulojen vähentämistä, lisärahoituksen mobilisoinnin tukemista sekä henkilöstön ja opiskelijoiden liikkuvuuden laajentamista syvemmän yhteisoppimisen vahvistamiseksi. Lisäksi korostetaan tarvetta kehittää seurantajärjestelmiä valmistuneiden urapolkujen ja kestävän kehityksen tavoitteisiin liittyvien vaikutusten arvioimiseksi. Näillä toimenpiteillä voidaan varmistaa jo käynnissä olevien uudistusten jatkuvuus ja vahvistaa suomalais-afrikkalaisten korkeakoulukumppanuuksien strategista roolia kansallisten kehitysohjelmien ja globaalien koulutusprioriteettien edistämisessä.

SAMMANDRAG

I denna rapport utvärderas de finländska högskolornas HEI ICI-program (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument, 2020–2024) och HEP-program (Higher Education Partnership, 2024–2026) i afrikanska länder. Utvärderingen baserades på två enkäter (N=49, N=41), 12 expertintervjuer, projektdokumentation samt fyra fallstudier. Analysen av detta empiriska material belyser programmets effekter på institutionell kapacitetsutveckling, pedagogiska praktiker, digitala transformationsprocesser, anställningsbarhet samt formerna för bredare interinstitutionellt och samhälleligt samarbete.

De avslutade HEI ICI-projekten resulterade i mätbara institutionella förändringar. Över 70 % av de svarande rapporterade förbättringar i läroplaner och undervisningspraktiker, och fler än 40 nya digitala kurser infördes. Nya metoder, såsom problembaserat lärande och kompetensbaserat lärande, integrerades i undervisningen med stöd av skalbara digitala plattformar. Reformernas effekter begränsades inte till enskilda institutioner, utan nådde hela organisationsnivån och påverkade i vissa fall även nationella läroplansramar, standarder och ministeriestrategier. I de pågående HEP-projekten har 5 tematiska forskningsnätverk redan etablerats, digitala lärmiljöer har pilottestats och samarbete mellan flera aktörer har inletts. Även om långsiktiga effekter ännu inte kan bedömas förväntar sig 65 % av de svarande intressenterna att projekten kommer att få politisk relevans och positiva effekter på färdigheter om de fortsätter efter den nuvarande finansieringsperioden.

Enkätresultaten visar att programmen har haft omfattande effekter. I HEI ICI-projekten ansåg 87 % av de svarande att partnerskap och nätverk hade stärkts, 86 % rapporterade införandet av nya undervisnings- och inlärningsmetoder, 85 % betonade integreringen av hållbarhet och socialt ansvar i utbildningen och 83 % bekräftade att institutionella strategier hade pilottestats eller införts utanför projekten. Lokalt ägarskap framträdde som en särskilt viktig framgångsfaktor: 82 % av de svarande ansåg att det var avgörande för resultaten. Detta kompletterades av ett starkt samarbete som sträckte sig utanför akademin till ministerier, företag och det civila samhället. Bland de experter som svarade på enkäten hade 44 % samarbetat med myndigheter, 35 % med privata företag och 29 % med frivilligorganisationer.

Pedagogisk innovation var ett av de tydligaste resultaten. Över 70 % av projekten rapporterade att de infört blended- eller hybridmodeller, 65 % hade introducerat problembaserat lärande och 61 % hade använt samutvecklings- och multikompetensbaserade tillvägagångssätt. Dessa metoder breddade inte bara undervisningen utan ökade också dess relevans genom att koppla lärandet direkt till samhälleliga utmaningar. Utvecklingen av digitala lösningar påskyndade reformerna ytterligare: över 80 % av de svarande rapporterade förbättrad institutionell kapacitet för digitalt lärande, 77 % noterade ökad tillgång till och användning av nätresurser och 70 % såg att skalbara modeller hade skapats för bredare användning.

Programmen hade också en tydlig effekt på anställningsbarhet och utveckling av personliga färdigheter. 91 % av deltagarna uppgav att deras kommunikations- och samarbetsförmåga förbättrats avsevärt, 84 % att deras kritiska tänkande utvecklats, 83 % att deras digitala färdigheter stärkts och 75 % att deras tekniska och professionella färdigheter hade förbättrats. Entreprenörskapsfärdigheter var något mindre framträdande, men rapporterades ändå av mer än hälften av deltagarna (53 %).

Resultatens hållbarhet var nära kopplad till förmågan att mobilisera ytterligare resurser. 43 % av projekten uppgav att de lyckats få extern finansiering. Flera projekt genererade spin-off-verksamheter eller olika former av regionalt samarbete. Dessa synergier visar programmens katalytiska roll för att locka bredare stöd och säkerställa kontinuitet bortom den ursprungliga finansieringen.

Utvärderingen identifierade dock även begränsningar. Korta projektcykler på 3–4 år begränsade möjligheterna att sprida framgångsrika reformer och förankra dem institutionellt. Partnerhögskolornas kapacitet för resursmobilisering var ofta begränsad, vilket försvårade tillgången till kompletterande medel, även om vissa projekt lyckades dra nytta av befintliga företagsnätverk. Privata aktörers engagemang var ojämnt, och uppföljningen av utexaminerades karriärvägar var bristfällig.

Trots dessa utmaningar fungerade programmen tydligt som katalysatorer för lärandets ekosystem. De stärkte institutionell kapacitet, stödde pedagogiska reformer, främjade digitalisering och förbättrade utexaminerades anställningsbarhet. Programmen bidrog också till de globala målen för hållbar utveckling (SDG). Finländska högskolor sågs som trovärdiga, samarbetsinriktade och tekniskt starka partner. Deras insats baserades inte på överföring av färdiga modeller utan på samskapande av lokalt anpassade lösningar. Detta värdebaserade tillvägagångssätt ses allt oftare som Finlands mervärde i det globala högskolesamarbetet.

Utvärderingens slutsats är att både HEI ICI- och HEP-programmen har byggt en stark grund för långsiktigt samarbete och institutionell förändring. För att maximera effekterna rekommenderar rapporten att förlänga projektperioderna och möjliggöra fortsättningsprojekt, minska administrativa flaskhalsar, stödja mobilisering av ytterligare finansiering samt utvidga mobiliteten för personal och studenter för att fördjupa gemensamt lärande. Vidare betonas behovet av att utveckla system för uppföljning av utexaminerades karriärvägar och effekter på de globala målen för hållbar utveckling. Dessa åtgärder kan säkerställa kontinuiteten i de pågående reformerna och stärka de finländsk-afrikanska högskolepartnerskapens strategiska roll i att främja både nationella utvecklingsprogram och globala utbildningsprioriteringar.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a review of the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI) and Higher Education Partnership (HEP) programmes funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland during the period 2020–2024. This evaluation covers only projects in Africa.

The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes and to examine how they align with Finland's development policy objectives. Emphasis is placed on institutional capacity, pedagogical innovations, digital transformation, skills development, employability, and strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The HEI ICI and HEP programmes form a central part of Finland's higher education cooperation with partner countries. Through these programmes, the aim is to strengthen institutional capacities and support knowledge-based development. Benefits are gained to both individuals and societies. The programmes are closely linked to Finland's development policy priorities and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They also play an important role in promoting inclusive growth and international engagement through education.

The aim of this evaluation is to generate evidence-based insights to support the planning and development of future programmes. In the report we identify good practices, key challenges, and opportunities for improvement, while also exploring ways to diversify funding sources through third-party financing. Additionally, the review investigates how higher education partnerships can contribute to Finland's trade and development policy objectives. The report also provides recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of higher education cooperation, both in Finland and in partner countries.

1.1. Objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation have been the following:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of HEI ICI partnerships (2020-2024) and provide recommendations for future support to higher education.
2. Investigate how higher education partnerships contribute to Finland's trade and development strategies.
3. Identify good practices for accessing third-party funding and fostering synergies with other public and private sources.

More detailed research questions were the following:

- **Impact and effectiveness:** What is the impact and effectiveness of the HEI ICI projects concerning programme-level goals, such as digital transformation, skills development, and employability?
- **Innovations and good practices:** What kind of innovations and good practices have emerged from cooperation within the three HEI ICI programme priority areas?
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration:** What clusters of multi-stakeholder collaboration have evolved around higher education partnerships, and what successful types/models of cooperation with non-academic stakeholders exist?

- **Funding access:** Which partnership aspects, support mechanisms, and processes have been successful in gaining access to third-party funding within the context of the projects?

The review was conducted during summer 2025 and is based on project documentation and literature review, semi-structured expert interviews and two surveys.

1.2. Finnish development policy context

The HEI ICI and HEP Programmes are key programmes for advancing Finland's development policy objectives in a manner that also addresses internationally relevant goals and fosters long-term global partnerships. Both programmes are explicitly designed to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the priorities of the Government Report on Development Policy, and Finland's Africa Strategy. They also reflect the focus areas set out in the Finnish Government's Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation (6/2024), including the rights of women and girls, education, and climate action. In this way, these programmes serve as practical vehicles for translating Finland's development policy commitments into concrete academic and institutional collaborations with partner countries.

The Government Report on Development Policy (2021) identifies Finland's key strengths in development cooperation to be: the rights of women and girls; training and education; sustainable economy and decent work; peaceful and democratic societies; and climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable use of natural resources. Education, as one of Finland's five development cooperation priorities, draws on the international recognition of the Finnish education system and its expertise in areas such as teacher training, school meals, school health care, and digital learning.

HEI ICI and HEP projects also resonate with the objectives of Education Finland and FinCEED: which is to maintain strong global demand for Finnish educational expertise; to position education exports as a significant and profitable export sector; and to ensure that Finnish organisations and experts play a leading role in promoting quality, inclusive education and addressing the global learning crisis.

1.3. HEI ICI and HEP programmes

In this section we present the HEI ICI and HEP programmes in more detail, see table 1 for thematics scope, budget model, funding levels and other relevant information for both programmes.

Table 1 Summary of HEI and HEP Programmes.

Area	HEI-ICI (2020–24)	HEP (2024–26)
Thematic Scope	Broader, e.g. innovations, learning crisis, climate change	More targeted: teacher education, climate, food security
Budget Model	State aid (max. 80%) + self-financing from HEIs (min. 20%)	State aid (max. 90%) + self-financing from HEIs (min. 10%)
Funding Levels	0.3–2M EUR per project (total budget 12.2 MEUR). Total budget includes the Finnish national Agency of Education funding.	Max 1.1M EUR per project (total budget 6,7 MEUR). Total budget includes the Finnish national Agency of Education funding.

Project timespan	4 years	3 years
Mobility & Exchange	Limited; no student exchange funding	Supports reciprocal student/staff mobility.
Crosscutting Priorities	Gender, non-discrimination, climate	Gender, non-discrimination, climate, biodiversity
Partner Engagement	Minimum 1 HEI partner from dev. country and 1 HEI coordinator from Finland. Encouraged multi-stakeholder (incl. NGOs, CSOs)	Same as in HEI ICI.
Non-academic partners	Encouraged multi-stakeholder (incl. NGOs, gov. agencies, companies) as subcontractors.	Same as in HEI ICI.
Impact objective	The long-term expected impact of the programme is to strengthen the capacity of HEIs in the partner countries to contribute to well-functioning, relevant and accessible higher education for the students.	HEIs in the partner countries contribute to sustainable development by providing high quality, inclusive and working-life relevant higher education.
The outcome objectives	In the medium term, the programme expected outcome is improved institutional management and teaching capacity in HEIs in the partner countries participating in the programme.	Strengthened educational and institutional capacities of partner HEIs in providing relevant working-life higher education Improved quality of the partner HEIs' education, including digitalized and blended education

The HEI ICI programme

HEI ICI has been a well-established programme that has supported university partnerships since 2009. The programme has fostered cooperation in over 20 countries, primarily in Africa. The HEI ICI projects addressed some of the most pressing global development challenges by focusing on one of three themes: *solving the learning crisis*, *climate change*, and *innovations for employability*. These themes reflect the priorities of Finnish development policy and build on areas of recognized Finnish expertise.

Previous evaluations, HEI ICI programme achievements 2020–2024

The HEI ICI programme´s results have been summarized before in the report[1] “Higher education as catalyst for development: teacher education, innovations and climate, Synthesis of the results of the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI) projects 2020−2024” (published 3/2025). The HEI ICI programme received 11.2 million € in funding (between 2020-2024), allocated to nine projects across eight countries. The projects developed distance learning capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Global South and supported wider access to higher education for students..

The most significant achievement of the programme period mentioned in the report, was the improvement of higher education quality in partner countries in Africa and Asia. The HEI ICI programme involved 45 HEIs in the partner countries, 14 in Asia and 31 in Africa, together with 11 Finnish HEIs. Finnish institutions and their partners worked together to reform nearly 40 degree programmes and over 300 courses across various fields of study. Additionally, more than 18,000

[1] Available online: https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/HEI%20ICI%202020-2024%20Synthesis%20report_FINAL.pdf

staff members from partner HEIs received training to support their professional development. A significant number of projects had direct links to national policies and strategic objectives, such as teacher education reform, higher education digitalisation, and student-centred learning. Several projects also established partnerships with broader stakeholder networks, including government institutions, the private sector, and civil society organisations. Figure 1 presents the African HEI ICI projects included in this evaluation.

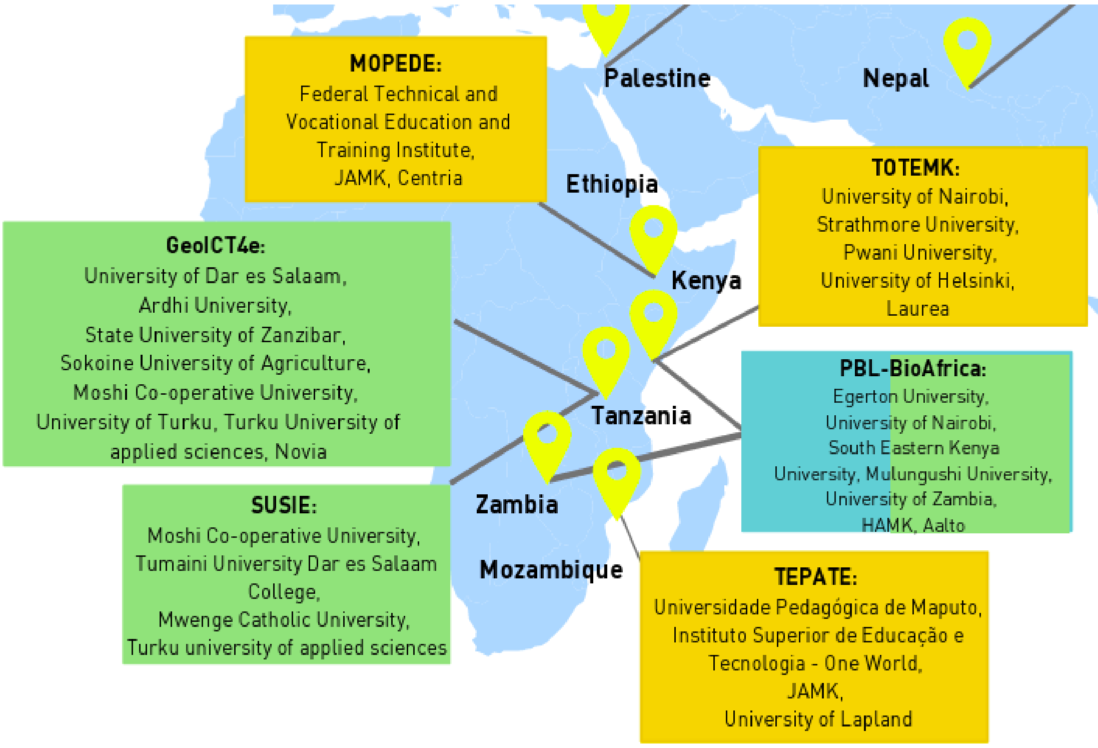

Figure 1 African HEI ICI Projects on a map (yellow: learning crises, blue: climate change, green: innovations).

Higher Education Partnership Programme (HEP)

The HEP programme is a continuation of the HEI ICI programme. The HEP projects tackle key development challenges by focusing on one or more of three themes: high-quality education of primary, secondary and vocational teachers (TVET), climate change and circular economy, and food security as a driver of sustainable development. These themes reflect Finland's development policy priorities and Finnish expertise.

The HEP programme supports collaborative projects between HEIs in Finland and in developing countries. Projects are implemented between 1 January 2024 and 31 August 2026. The total programme budget for HEP projects is approximately €7 million.
See figure 2 for the African HEP projects.

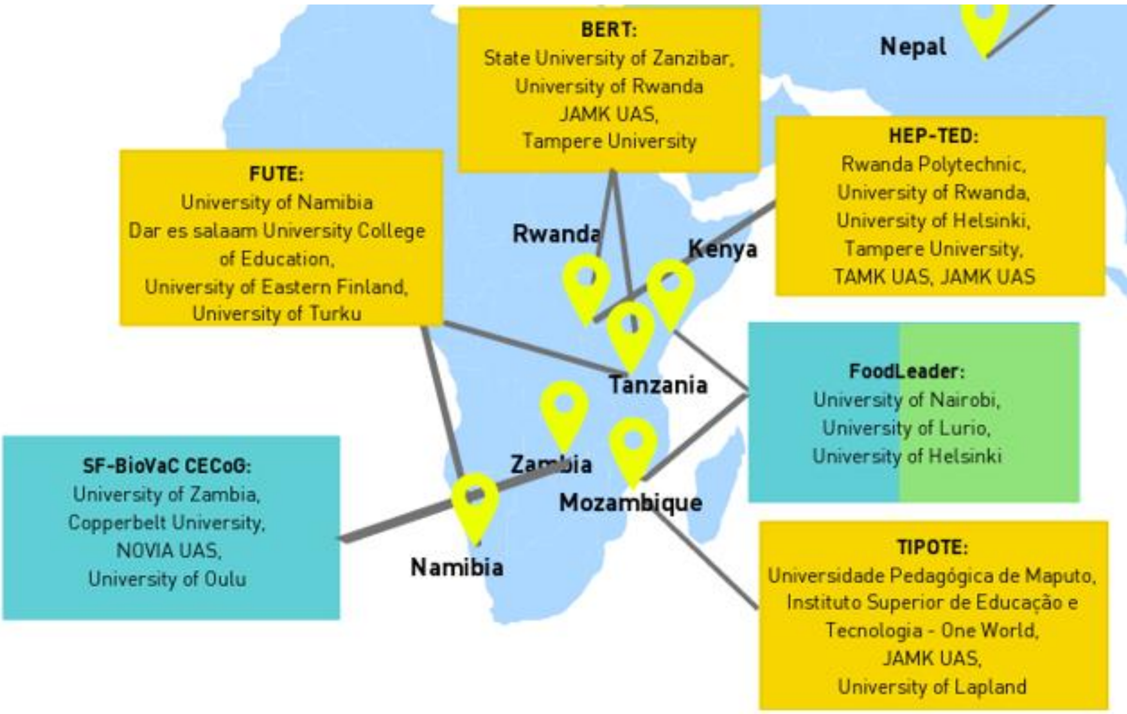

Figure 2 African HEP projects on a map (yellow: education of teachers, blue: climate change, energy, circular economy, green: food security).

The HEP programme design is based on the previous phases, which have shown positive results. During the previous phases, the capacity of the HEIs to implement the projects has increased over time and projects have been learning environments for gradual improvement. HEP continues the emphasis on broad projects where personal-level relations are combined with sustainable institution-to-institution-level cooperation.

Summary of activities so far in HEP

Projects have concentrated on strengthening institutional capacity, supporting educators and staff, and developing new approaches to teaching, learning, and quality assurance. Training, mentoring, and the creation of digital resources have been central ways of introducing new practices.

Collaboration has been a key feature across the portfolio. Partnerships have been built both internationally and locally, often through formal agreements, working groups, and peer networks that bring together HEIs, public authorities, and other stakeholders.

Applied research has been used to inform project activities, providing evidence to guide programme design and support future development. Crosscutting themes, such as sustainability and gender equality, have been integrated into activities, ensuring attention to environmental, social, and inclusivity aspects. Infrastructure and resource development, including digital platforms and learning environments, has supported access to training and collaboration across borders.

Strengths of the HEI ICI and HEP partnership portfolio

The HEI ICI and HEP portfolios together illustrate a complementary balance of breadth and focus in Finland’s higher education cooperation. The six HEI ICI projects, represented a broad disciplinary scope spanning natural sciences, technical fields, education, agriculture, and business. This diversity enabled the programme to respond to a wide range of development needs and to build resilience against shifts in policy priorities or funding trends. The six HEP projects show a more concentrated thematic orientation, with a strong emphasis on education and capacity building, complemented by applied sciences such as nutrition and engineering.

Strengths of the HEI ICI Portfolio

Breadth of disciplinary coverage: The variety of academic fields (STEM, agriculture, business, education) allows the programme to respond to diverse development needs and creates resilience to shifts in policy priorities or funding trends.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration potential: The mix of technical, business, and pedagogical expertise fosters innovation and integrated solutions (e.g. combining environmental science with entrepreneurship).

Policy and practice linkages across sectors: By engaging with both sector-specific skills development and systemic education reform, the portfolio supports changes at multiple levels, from local technical expertise to national policy alignment.

Ability to pilot in multiple contexts: With projects anchored in different sectors, there is flexibility to test models in varied cultural, economic, and environmental conditions, increasing the transferability of lessons learned.

Strengths of the HEP Portfolio

Focused thematic alignment: Concentration on teacher education, inclusive pedagogy, and applied sciences (nutrition, engineering) ensures deep expertise and consistent thematic branding of the programme.

High potential for policy impact: The dominance of teacher education projects links directly to national education reforms, curriculum changes, and workforce capacity in education systems.

Synergies across projects: The thematic clustering enables projects to share resources, pedagogical models, and monitoring frameworks, reducing duplication and improving efficiency.

Clear development relevance: The chosen disciplines, education, food systems, sustainable energy, align directly with pressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as quality education, zero hunger, and climate action, strengthening the case for funding and policy support.

Both HEI ICI and HEP portfolios align closely with global development goals. HEI ICI contributed to multiple SDG targets through sectoral innovations and institutional reforms, while HEP is advancing education, food systems, and sustainable energy in direct support of the SDGs on quality education, zero hunger, and climate action.

1.4. HEI ICI and HEP projects

This chapter presents the most relevant information and key activities of the individual projects included in HEI ICI and HEP. Chapter 4 presents 4 case studies, which demonstrate in more detail what has been accomplished in these projects and what the content of each project has been.

HEI ICI projects (2020-2024, Africa)

HEI ICI projects include GeoICT4e and SUSIE (Tanzania), MOPEDE (Ethiopia), PBL-BioAfrica (Kenya & Zambia), TEPATE (Mozambique) and TOTEMK (Kenya). Project name, partner countries, coordinating HEI, Finnish partner HEIs and Southern partners are presented in table 2.

Table 2 HEI ICI projects´ achieved outcomes based on the final reports of the projects.

Project Name	Partner countries	Coordinating HEI	Finnish partner HEI(s)	Southern partner HEI(s)
GeoICT4e Social innovations in Geo-ICT education at Tanzanian HEIs for improved employability	Tanzania	University of Turku	Turku University of Applied Sciences, Novia University of Applied Sciences	University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Ardhi University (Tanzania), State University of Zanzibar (Tanzania), Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania), Moshi Co-operative University (Tanzania)
Outcomes achieved based on final report: The most important result of the GeoICT4e is the co-creation of a socially innovative and new multi-competence learning (MCL) methods for cross-disciplinary undergraduate student education in five Tanzanian universities. These MCL campaigns enabled universities to renew their institutional learning and mentoring practices to the 21st century with the support of online learning materials, open data, and digital open-source technologies. Because of these learning experiences, universities are now more competent to develop digital solutions addressing systemic societal and climate change challenges in Tanzania and engage local communities and different stakeholders to this process. Because of MCL, universities have been able to change their learning practices and curricula to ensure that these methods can be applied in Tanzanian universities more widely. Due to innovation and entrepreneurial approaches, MCL students have gained confidence for self-employment in the future.				
Granted state aid (€):1 923 365 €		State aid used: 1 880 367 €		Unused funds: 42 998 €
MOPEDE Capacity Building for Modernizing TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	JAMK University of Applied Sciences	Centria University of Applied Sciences	Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute (Ethiopia)
Outcomes achieved based on final report: MOPEDE successfully strengthened the digital pedagogy and institutional capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Ethiopia. A key achievement was the integration of modern, learner-centred teaching approaches into TVET teacher education, supported by new curricula, digital platforms, and updated teaching resources. Capacity building was achieved through comprehensive training programmes for teacher educators, focusing on digital tools, online course design, and interactive pedagogy. This training improved educators' ability to develop and deliver high-quality online and blended learning, fostering more engaging and inclusive teaching practices. Project also supported the development of digital infrastructure, including the establishment of e-learning platforms and resource repositories. These tools have enabled broader access to quality educational materials and created opportunities for ongoing professional development. Peer mentoring played a central role in sustaining skills transfer, both during the project and beyond. The reopening and reintegration of satellite colleges previously closed due to civil conflict marked a significant institutional milestone, with these colleges now fully operational and engaged in digital learning initiatives. In addition, the project addressed negative perceptions of e-learning by organising awareness-raising events for students, employers, and community stakeholders. These initiatives highlighted the benefits of e-learning for skills development, employability, and institutional resilience, helping to shift attitudes and increase acceptance of digital education across the sector. Overall, MOPEDE delivered tangible improvements in teaching quality, institutional capacity, and public awareness, creating a solid foundation for the continued digital transformation of Ethiopia's TVET system.				
Granted state aid (€): 986 341 €		State aid used: 986 341 €		Unused funds: 0 €
PBL-BioAfrica Problem-based-learning Bioeconomy Entrepreneurship and Capacity Building Programme in Africa	Kenya, Zambia	Häme University of Applied Sciences	Aalto University	Egerton University (Kenya), University of Nairobi (Kenya), Southeastern Kenya University (Kenya), Mulungushi University (Zambia), University of Zambia (Zambia)
Outcome achieved based on final report: Incorporation of Problem Based Learning (PBL) methodologies in Institutional/departmental strategies. Professional Teacher Competences (EQF level 6-7) recognized in staff promotions. Integrating PBL, CSA, & ENT into curricula content and delivery. Interdisciplinary curricula implementation across the faculties. Improved partner HEI capacity to provide climate smart bio entrepreneurship education with PBL method: Student challenges institutionalized: will be engaging students with industry through student challenges. Peer/Co teaching trainings helps to solve				

the issue of large classes. Collaborative learning ecosystems created in all HEIs: MoUs signed, positive Feedback on from companies, students, and HEI staff. Students enhanced Problem-Solving Skills and Increased Engagement: students acquire sense of purpose and impacts on their career. ENT & CSA teaching materials. ODL/OU courses developed and piloted; all partners can continue ODL/OU development.				
Granted state aid (€): 1 478 921 €		State aid used: 1 478 921 €		Unused funds: 0 €
SUSIE Sustainable Business and Employability through HEIs' Innovative Pedagogy	Tanzania	Turku University of Applied Sciences		Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College (Tanzania), Moshi Co-operative University (Tanzania), Mwenge Catholic University (Tanzania)
Outcome achieved based on final report: In SUSIE, leaders from Tanzanian HEIs participated in sustainable leadership training, focusing on holistic strategic planning. This resulted in enhanced strategic thinking and fostered a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and equality. The project successfully improved the teacher capacity of Tanzanian HEIs through the use of active teaching and learning methods, which are the foundation of working-life-related innovation pedagogy. SUSIE also established Business HUB learning environments in three Tanzanian HEIs and piloted e-pedagogy with 26 online courses, laying the groundwork for accredited blended master's programs. The SUSIE sustainable leadership training was a success, inspiring young female managers and shifting strategic thinking in HEIs toward long-term sustainability. The SUSIE project reached 3,355 students, 503 teachers, and 18 leaders, while engaging a wide network of authorities, HEIs, local entrepreneurs and communities.				
Granted state aid (€): 959 412 €		State aid used: 959 412 €		Unused funds: 0 €
TEPATE Theory-practice balance in teacher education	Mozambique	JAMK University of Applied Sciences	University of Lapland	Universidade Pedagógica de Maputo (Mozambique), Instituto Superior de Educação e Tecnologia - One World (Mozambique)
Outcome achieved based on final report: In TEPATE 30 key experts were capacitated on student-centred and theory-practice balanced teacher education, collaborative development of study modules and in implementation of teaching practice, in particular supervising and mentoring. 3 new modules, 5 cr. each, were developed and accredited. The modules can be provided to students in face-to-face, online, or blended formats. Guide booklets for supervising teachers in the universities, tutors of teaching practice in primary and secondary schools, and student teachers were produced. Trainings for the HEI academic staff, primary and secondary school teachers, and school managers were organised on TEPATE's main points incl. teaching practise. In total, 950 people were involved in the trainings. 950 prints were produced for in-service teachers. Important result concern in organisational capacity building of HEIs was the co-development between the staff of different faculties and involvement of student teachers in the module development.				
Granted state aid (€): 1 024 500 €		State aid used: 1 024 500 €		Unused funds: 0 €
TOTEMK Training Trainers for Teacher Education and Management in Kenya	Kenya	University of Helsinki	Laurea University of Applied Sciences	University of Nairobi (Kenya), Strathmore University (Kenya), Pwani University (Kenya)
Outcome achieved based on final report: In TOTEMK, a total of 213 HE teachers and their students trained from 22 universities in Kenya to upgrade their professional skills, use of modern technologies in education, pedagogical leadership, and socio-cultural issues in four core training packages. As results from impact surveys, teacher trainers have adopted more learner-centred and collaborative methods in teaching and learning, their use of digital technology and awareness on CBE and CB-assessment have increased. The project had a multiplier effect where the graduates of the TOTs further trained their colleagues in their home universities and boosted to review the curriculum towards CBC. Moreover, TOTEMK prepared MOOCs that enable access by hundreds and thousands of teachers and students at local Teacher Training Colleges, Universities and serving teachers. An important dissemination result is the mention in the Presidential Working Party's Report (2023) on Education Reform as an influential in-service training project.				
Granted state aid (€): 1 183 609 €		State aid used: 1 068 364 €		Unused funds: 115 246 €
Total granted state aid (€): 7 556 148 €		**Total state aid used: 7 397 905 €**		**Total unused funds: 158 244 €**

HEP projects

In table 3 we present HEP Projects´ name, countries, coordinator organisations, themes and granted funding (since projects are still on-going). Information on current progress is taken from annual reports.

Table 3 HEP Projects´ key information.

<table>
<tr><th>Project name</th><th>Countries</th><th>Coordinator in Finland</th><th>Themes</th><th>Granted funding</th></tr>
<tr><td>BERT Breaking Education Barriers: Inclusion, Rehabilitation, and Technology</td><td>Tanzania, Rwanda</td><td>JAMK University of Applied Sciences</td><td>High-quality education of primary, secondary and vocational teachers (TVET)</td><td>863 273 €</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Progress so far:
Strengthened institutional capacity and fostered collaboration for inclusive education across East Africa.
Hosted an inclusive pedagogy workshop at the State University of Zanzibar with faculty and staff from partner HEIs in Rwanda and Tanzania, along with other stakeholders.
Conducted a comprehensive landscape analysis, including a needs assessment and a global mapping of assistive technologies in education, to identify challenges and best practices.
Established peer groups of students with disabilities in Rwanda and Tanzania, actively involving them in key project phases and events.
Organised seminars to raise awareness on education rights, accessibility, and self-advocacy.
Engaged key stakeholders from the start, fostering multi-sectoral cooperation and strengthening global and regional partnerships.
Expanded regional collaboration to build sustainable, locally driven solutions.
Supported the UNCRPD and SDGs by ensuring no one is left behind in education.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>FoodLeader:
Empowering Tomorrow's Food Security Leaders: Strengthening Higher Education Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems in Kenya and Mozambique</td><td>Kenya, Mozambique</td><td>University of Helsinki</td><td>Climate change, energy transition and circular economy; Food security as enabler of sustainable development</td><td>990 000 €</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Progress so far:
Signed partnership agreements and finalised the project plan, including activities and milestones.
Organised a kick-off meeting at the University of Nairobi, including visits to two partner primary schools, DVS offices, and other stakeholders.
Developed a study protocol for practical learning, detailing dietary intake and food sample collection methods.
Conducted a literature review on pesticides and mycotoxins to guide hazard selection for training.
Decided on laboratory equipment purchases and advanced procurement in Kenya and Mozambique.
Launched project websites and social media channels.
Held a project meeting at Lúrio University to plan laboratory equipment installation and visited partner schools in Mozambique.
Selected DigiCampus as the shared digital teaching platform.
Conducted monitoring surveys and completed equipment purchases at the University of Nairobi.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>FUTE Future teacher education for sustainable development (FUTE)– fostering the teacher educators and student teachers' competence and best practices in sustainability in Finland, Namibia and Tanzania</td><td>Namibia, Tanzania</td><td>University of Eastern Finland</td><td>High-quality education of primary, secondary and vocational teachers (TVET)</td><td>754 997 €</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Progress so far:
Strengthened teacher educator capacity to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into teaching through workshops, curriculum work, and community projects.
Delivered two workshops (online and hybrid) with over 150 teacher educators, covering ESD concepts, interdisciplinary education, global citizenship, research-based teacher education, and inquiry-/problem-/project-based pedagogies.
</td></tr>
</table>

- Created an online learning platform on DigiCampus with course materials, training resources, assignments, and recordings, accessed by educators across three countries.
- Established working groups with diverse gender and national representation to co-create workshops and materials incorporating local and global perspectives.
- Embedded crosscutting themes, ensuring gender balance in participation and promoting inclusivity.
- Integrated climate resilience and environmental protection into project content, including renewable energy and conservation.
- Provided tools for participants to create climate-resilient teaching resources relevant to their contexts.

HEP-TED Higher Education Pedagogies for Teacher Education	Rwanda	University of Helsinki	High-quality education of primary, secondary and vocational teachers (TVET)	1 100 000 €

Progress so far:

- Built a strong foundation for quality assurance, pedagogical programme development, and inclusive/digital learning in teacher education.
- Used cross-institutional collaboration between Rwandan institutions and Finnish partners to co-create a framework for continuous improvement.
- Reviewed quality assurance practices in partner institutions and conducted needs assessments to guide improvements.
- Delivered collaborative workshops, knowledge exchanges with European QA bodies, and institutional retreats to strengthen QA processes.
- Conducted benchmarking visits to inform academia–industry collaboration, student research, and innovation.
- Developed a new online platform for managing industrial attachments and capstone projects.
- Completed a baseline survey on industrial engagement to shape future strategies.
- Contextualised the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) approach to guide long-term project direction.

SF-BioVaC CECoG Sustainable Futures – Biogas Value Chain for Circular Economy Competence Growth in Zambia	Zambia	Åbo Akademi	Climate change, energy transition and circular economy	986 600 €

Progress so far:

- Strengthened Finnish–Zambian HEI cooperation in biogas production, sustainability, and circular economy.
- Held in-country meetings in Zambia, including participation in the Engineering Institute of Zambia Annual Symposium.
- Conducted site visits to biogas plants at boarding schools and inspected the planned pilot biogas lab site.
- Held the first board meeting at the University of Zambia. - Signed an MoU between partner HEIs and the Rural Electrification Authority, with Ministry of Energy representation.
- Developed a communication plan with online, print, and media outreach, including posters, brochures, LinkedIn updates, and newsletters.
- Launched the “Biogas Plant Design and Operation” course with 300 participants from universities, ministries, and the private sector.
- Reviewed curricula and strategic plans, identifying underrepresentation of circular economy concepts.
- Engaged management and stakeholders to support curriculum change.
- Strengthened project reporting capacity through meetings with partner accountants and leadership.
- Established a WhatsApp group for partner coordination.
- Mapped biogas-related projects, visited farms, wastewater plants, and research institutions to assess practices.
- Prepared sustainability workshop materials adapted to the Zambian context.
- Mapped over 20 CBU courses containing sustainability/circular economy elements, noting the need for deeper integration.

TIPOTE Towards inclusive and practice-oriented teacher education	Mozambique	JAMK University of Applied Sciences	High-quality education of primary, secondary and vocational teachers (TVET)	891 388 €

Progress so far:

- Completed a four-month inception phase to build shared understanding, improve planning quality, and strengthen stakeholder commitment.
- Conducted the first Training of Trainers week with 38 key experts from partner HEIs, focusing on inclusion theory and practice.
- Facilitated co-creation workshops and formed four output groups.
- Deepened knowledge on the differences between special needs education and inclusion, and the realities of inclusion in Mozambican schools.
- Benchmarked inclusive practices in Tanzania and Botswana.
- Studied inclusive STEM education in Finland.

- Initiated mentoring for inclusive digital pedagogy.
- Raised awareness of politically correct terminology for inclusion and special needs.
- Encouraged learning from institutions in the global south, especially Southern Africa.
- Increased interest among Mozambican management and staff in international best practices in inclusive pedagogy.
- Prepared to pilot inclusive practices in schools, procure digital material production equipment, and share results more widely.

2. APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

In this chapter we introduce the evaluation approach, methodology, and limitations. The evaluation applies a theory-informed, utilisation-oriented framework based on the results chain model, linking inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and impacts. This approach is complemented by selected theoretical perspectives that guide the four research questions on impact, innovation, collaboration, and funding. A mix of methods, including document review, interviews, surveys, and case studies, was used to collect and analyse evidence. The chapter ends with a brief description of key limitations.

2.1. Theoretical approach to evaluation

This evaluation applies a theory-informed, utilisation-oriented approach, grounded in evaluation theory and structured around the results chain model. Figure 3 below (adapted from the logical framework approach) illustrates the conceptual foundation of the evaluation, linking programme inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and broader socio-economic impacts. The model provides a structured lens through which to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and utility of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes.

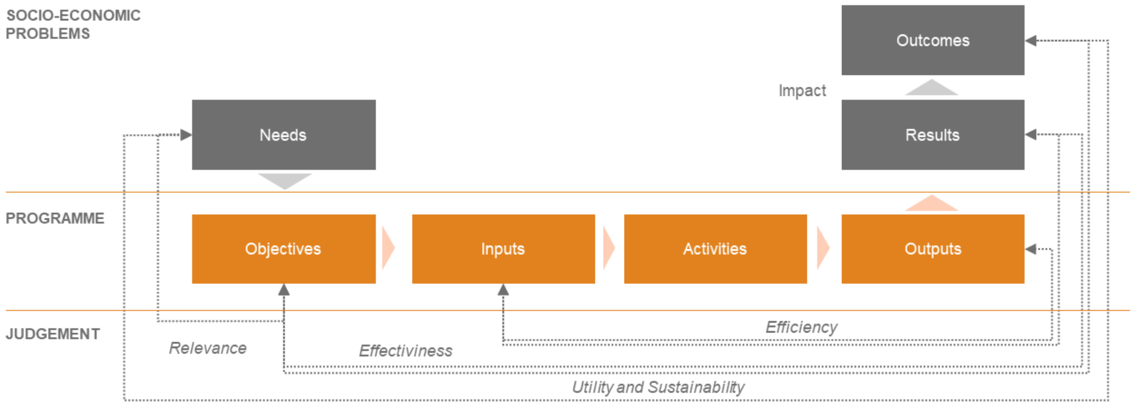

Figure 3 Theoretical foundation of the review.

In this model the analysis begins with an analysis of needs, in this case, capacity gaps in higher education systems and labour market linkages in partner countries, which inform the objectives of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes. These objectives are pursued through inputs (e.g. funding, expertise, institutional partnerships), which are translated into activities (e.g. training, curriculum development, collaborative research). These activities are expected to generate outputs (such as digital tools, new pedagogical models, or institutional reforms), which in turn contribute to results and impacts, including improved employability, strengthened institutional capacity, and more inclusive innovation ecosystems.

The following evaluation criteria are analysed in this evaluation for the HEI ICI and HEP projects:

- **Relevance**: *To what extent are programme objectives aligned with partner needs and Finland's development policy?*
- **Effectiveness**: *How well do activities and outputs lead to the intended results, particularly in skills development, digital transformation, and employability*?
- **Efficiency**: *Are resources used in a way that maximises value, including time, funding, and stakeholder engagement?*
- **Utility and sustainability**: *Are the results used and maintained over time, and do they foster long-term capacity and collaboration?*

Integrating theory with the research questions

The review is structured around four research questions, each of which is mapped to different stages of the results chain and supported by relevant theoretical lenses:

- **Impact and effectiveness**
  Evaluated by tracing the causal pathways from outputs to outcomes and results, using contribution analysis and frameworks for capacity development.
- **Innovations and good practices**
  Analysed through the lens of innovation systems theory and organisational learning, focusing on how new practices emerge from activities and become institutionalised outputs.
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration**
  Mapped through network analysis and collaborative governance theory, examining how actors interact across institutional boundaries and how these relationships contribute to systemic outcomes.
- **Funding access**
  Explored using resource mobilisation theory and partnership models, assessing which structures and processes support access to third-party and blended funding mechanisms.

2.2. Evaluation methodology, document analysis, interviews and surveys

The review includes various forms of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes. The methodology included different components, which are presented in table 4.

Table 4 Summary of evaluation tasks, data sources and methodology.

Evaluation Task	Data Sources and Collection	Analysis Focus / Methodology	Research Question	Evaluation Criteria
Desk Review	Programme documents, project reports, evaluation summaries, policy papers	Mapping objectives, inputs, outputs, and reported results; assessing policy alignment and strategic relevance; identifying existing good practices and lessons learned	All four questions (1–4), especially Q1 (Impact and Effectiveness) and Q2 (Innovations)	Relevance, Effectiveness, Utility
Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with 12 stakeholders representing 8	Thematic analysis: exploring stakeholder experiences and narratives related to innovation, collaboration, and	Q1 (Impact and Effectiveness), Q2 (Innovations), Q3	Effectiveness, Sustainability, Utility

	projects, (project coordinators, partners)	funding; identifying contextual enablers and barriers	(Collaboration), Q4 (Funding Access)	
Surveys	Structured online surveys to a wide range of HEI ICI/HEP experts and partners (N=49) and beneficiaries (N=41)	Descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis; capturing trends in perceptions of impact, effectiveness, and collaboration; validating findings from other methods	All four questions, with emphasis on Q1 (Impact) and Q4 (Funding)	Effectiveness, Efficiency, Utility
Case Studies	In-depth examination of selected projects (thematic relevance and regional diversity)	Analytic case method; contribution analysis; identifying good practices, innovation dynamics, and stakeholder networks; assessing sustainability	Q2 (Innovations), Q3 (Collaboration), Q4 (Funding)	Effectiveness, Sustainability, Utility, Efficiency

2.3. Evaluation limitations

This evaluation provides a broad and evidence-informed assessment of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes, but several limitations should be acknowledged:

The evaluation is limited to the 2020–2024 programme period and focuses on selected evaluation questions. It does not capture earlier phases or long-term impacts beyond the current cycle. Broader cross-cutting themes such as gender or environmental sustainability were not a primary focus and may be underexplored. Also, this evaluation covers only HEI ICI and HEP projects done in Africa, therefore it does not cover all HEI ICI and HEP projects.

The evaluation draws on interviews and survey responses from those who were willing and available to participate. While efforts were made to ensure diverse representation, voices from certain stakeholder groups, especially non-academic and Global South partners, may be underrepresented. In addition, case studies highlight successful practices, which may tilt the findings toward more favourable examples.

As with many complex and interventions with multiple actors, this evaluation does not aim to attribute outcomes only to the programmes. Instead, it examines how they contribute overall. This contribution-based approach is appropriate but relies on interpretation and does not fully capture external influences or unintended effects.

The evaluation was conducted within a limited timeframe, which affected the number of interviews and case studies that could be included. More extensive fieldwork or long-term follow-up would be needed to gain a deeper understanding of projects´ sustainability and larger systemic change projects may have contributed to.

3. RESULTS, IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

Chapter summary

- Partnerships and networks were significantly enhanced, with 87% of respondents affirming strengthened collaboration across institutions.
- Teaching quality advanced through the 86% adoption rate of new learner-centred methodologies and innovative pedagogical approaches.
- Sustainability and social responsibility gained traction, as 85% of respondents reported their integration into curricula and practices.
- Institutional strategies proved durable, with 83% of partner institutions piloting or adopting reforms beyond the immediate project scope.
- Student skill development was particularly strong: 91% improved their communication and teamwork skills, 84% strengthened critical thinking, and 83% advanced digital competences.
- Digital transformation showed wide uptake, with over 80% of participants confirming enhanced digital learning capacity and modernised teaching practices.

This chapter presents the main results and effects of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes, integrating findings on good practices, challenges, impact and effectiveness. This chapter is organised thematically around key areas where the programmes have contributed to change: institutional capacity, pedagogical innovations, digital transformation, skills and employability, resource mobilisation and sustainability of results, and multi-stakeholder cooperation and private sector linkages. The chapter begins with good practices, lessons learned, and challenges, summarized from all HEI ICI and HEP projects.

Good practices from all projects

There has been a range of good practices that have contributed to strengthening institutional capacity, advancing pedagogical innovation, supporting digital transformation, and enhancing employability. Across both HEI ICI and HEP programmes, joint ownership, co-creation, and the engagement of senior leadership have emerged as central enablers of success.

Pedagogical and curricular reforms were important drivers of capacity-building. HEI ICI projects have introduced learner-centred methods such as problem-based learning, entrepreneurial pedagogy, and blended learning. These approaches were integrated into revised curricula, often co-designed with partner institutions and aligned with national qualifications frameworks. Staff development has been supported through peer mentoring, training, and the production of teaching and learning materials. Survey evidence further confirmed this progress: 83% of respondents indicated that institutional strategies had been piloted or adopted beyond the project scope, which is a clear sign of institutional capacity development.

Digital solutions have played an equally significant role in strengthening institutional capacity. HEI ICI projects developed online platforms, virtual labs, low-bandwidth-compatible materials, and digital repositories that modernised teaching and continued to be used after project completion. Finnish HEIs contributed expertise in open-source systems and digital pedagogy, enhancing both infrastructure and practice. HEP projects are building on this foundation by piloting hybrid and mobile learning tools that prioritise accessibility for underserved students and rural areas. Embedding and transferability were strongest where innovations became part of institutional policies, curricula, or structures. Examples include the adoption of new curricula, the establishment of permanent learning labs, and the continuation of accredited programmes beyond project funding. Some HEP partners have already replicated climate adaptation training modules and community-engaged research models in new faculties.

Effective pedagogical innovations were closely tied to co-creation, contextual adaptation, and institutional embedding. HEI ICI projects employed bilingual facilitation, interdisciplinary teaching methods, and open-access resources to broaden participation. Notable examples include PBL-BioAfrica, which linked problem-based learning to industry challenges, and SUSIE, which integrated innovation pedagogy into entrepreneurship and business hubs. These approaches created authentic learning environments and improved the relevance of curricula. Digital solutions further supported this transformation. Beyond online platforms and repositories, projects also developed remote assessment tools that increased access, facilitated peer mentoring, and enabled transitions to hybrid and asynchronous learning.

Administrative and organisational innovations supported pedagogical reforms by introducing new quality assurance procedures, feedback mechanisms, and cross-departmental coordination structures. Climate-related sustainability innovations were also piloted, such as resilience training modules, circular economy content, and environmentally sustainable teaching practices. In HEP projects, these themes are now being embedded into teacher education, food systems, and technical training programmes. Transferability was facilitated by dissemination events, communities of practice, and the active role of Finnish HEIs in sharing resources and supporting regional networks.

Several projects also demonstrated effective strategies for advancing digital transformation more broadly. Some planned for sustainability from the outset by training local administrators and ensuring that digital solutions were compatible with low-bandwidth contexts, thereby increasing long-term viability. Others developed open-access digital learning resources and multi-competence learning guides, embedding them directly into curricula to enhance practical skills. In addition, blended learning courses were created and linked with entrepreneurship and innovation hubs, showing how digital tools can simultaneously support educational development and labour market needs.

Another good practice was the emphasis on collaborative learning across institutions. By training staff in digital pedagogy and sharing open-source tools, projects ensured that capacity gains extended beyond individual teams. Peer mentoring, co-teaching, and international staff exchanges further normalised the use of digital methods and increased institutional readiness for future innovation.

Employability outcomes were strengthened through targeted practices that connected education more closely with labour market needs. Entrepreneurship training and innovation hubs provided students with opportunities to develop business ideas, engage with private sector actors, and gain practical experience. Some projects enhanced employability by linking academic learning with real-world community and industry challenges. In addition, the creation of open-access modules allowed students to continue developing their skills independently, even after project activities had ended.

Strong connections with employers, industry representatives, and community stakeholders proved essential in keeping curricula relevant. Co-designed courses, internships, and field-based projects provided authentic learning environments and expanded students' exposure to professional networks. These forms of engagement helped ensure that innovations were not only educationally valuable but also responsive to the changing demands of the labour market.

Taken together, these practices illustrate that sustainable results were most likely when innovations were co-created, contextually adapted, and embedded in institutional structures.

Lessons learned

- **Co-creation and ownership are relevant:** Joint ownership, local leadership, and alignment with national reforms increase institutional uptake and sustainability.
- **Pedagogical reform is most effective when embedded:** Problem-based, entrepreneurial, and blended learning work best when integrated into curricula and supported by staff training and mentoring.
- **Digitalisation enables resilience but requires sustainability planning:** Online platforms, low-bandwidth tools, and open-source systems expand access, but long-term maintenance and institutional commitment are essential.
- **Collaboration strengthens outcomes:** Partnerships with ministries, industry, and civil society ensure relevance, legitimacy, and policy uptake.
- **Capacity gaps slow progress:** Limited infrastructure, funding cycles of 3–4 years, and reliance on a few committed experts can constrain institutionalisation.
- **Faculty engagement is critical:** Resistance to new methods and lack of in-service training can hinder pedagogical innovation.
- **Institutional embedding ensures transferability:** Innovations that become part of policies, curricula, or permanent structures (e.g. learning labs, accredited programmes) continue beyond project funding.
- **Employability requires strong external links:** Co-designed courses, internships, and innovation hubs strengthen graduate skills and labour market readiness, but private sector engagement is difficult to sustain.
- **Monitoring and follow-up are essential:** Tracking graduate outcomes and systemic impacts beyond the project cycle would offer relevant information.

Challenges

Despite the progress and positive outcomes of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes, some challenges have constrained deeper institutionalisation and the long-term sustainability of results.

Short funding cycles, typically 3–4 years, were repeatedly highlighted as a major constraint. While reforms often spanned multiple years, the timeframe was widely regarded as too short in relation to the ambitious aims of systemic change. This has is some ways limited opportunities for piloting, scaling, and embedding results into institutional strategies. More time and resources are needed to anchor pedagogical and curricular reforms across faculties and to institutionalise innovations in teaching, learning, and administration.

Capacity and infrastructure gaps also hindered implementation. Many institutions faced insufficient access to devices, limited internet connectivity, power outages, and weaker support structures, all of which restricted the effective use of digital tools and slowed innovation. These challenges were particularly visible in digital transformation, where procurement delays, administrative issues, and the need for additional staff training further complicated progress. The sustainability of digital platforms remained a key concern, as many systems required ongoing maintenance, licensing, and updates that extended beyond the project cycle. Without clear institutional commitments or external funding, there is a risk that digital solutions would not be maintained over time.

Pedagogical innovation has also encountered some barriers. Resistance from some faculty members, coupled with a continued reliance on traditional teaching methods, have slowed adoption in certain cases. Language barriers and the lack of structured in-service teacher training systems further constrained the spread of reforms. Achieving systemic change in pedagogy requires not only innovative models but also the capacity to train, mentor, and support large groups of educators, an area where institutional support structures were sometimes weak.

A recurring issue was the reliance on individual experts. While these individuals often drove reforms forward, projects became vulnerable when expertise was concentrated in single persons, creating risks for continuity once they moved on.

Employability-focused activities faced their own difficulties. Sustaining private sector engagement was often challenging, as companies lacked incentives or resources to commit to long-term collaboration. Economic shocks and weak local industry in some contexts further limited opportunities for placements and internships. Systematic tracking of graduate outcomes was underdeveloped, making it difficult to measure employability impacts over time. Since meaningful career trajectories often require follow-up across multiple years, the short project periods restricted the ability to generate robust evidence of long-term outcomes.

Finally, administrative misalignments between partner institutions, such as differing financial systems, accreditation frameworks, and bureaucratic requirements, have in some ways delayed uptake of project results. These barriers, combined with limited fundraising capacity in partner HEIs, have restricted access to third-party or complementary funding, even though successful projects demonstrated that external resource mobilisation is essential for sustaining results.

Taken together, these challenges illustrate the tension between the ambitious objectives of HEI ICI and HEP and the structural constraints faced by higher education institutions in complex environments. They highlight the importance of longer project cycles, stronger institutional commitment, better support for resource mobilisation, and mechanisms for sustained engagement with faculty, employers, and external stakeholders. Addressing these issues will be critical for ensuring that promising reforms can be fully embedded, scaled, and sustained beyond the lifespan of individual projects.

3.1. Institutional capacity

Both completed HEI ICI projects (2020–2024) and ongoing HEP projects (2024–2026) have contributed to strengthening institutional capacity in partner and Finnish HEIs. Enhancements include strategic planning, leadership, quality assurance, and curriculum governance. In HEI ICI, multi-year partnerships enabled deeper institutional embedding, while HEP projects are already showing targeted gains, such as piloting tools for digital resilience, climate-smart education, and food systems transformation.

Administrative innovations were also observed, such as new quality assurance procedures, academic coordination mechanisms, and feedback systems to support cross-departmental teaching. These changes acted as enablers of sustained pedagogical and curricular innovation. Climate-related sustainability innovations included resilience training modules, integration of circular economy topics, and resource-efficient teaching practices. HEP projects have extended these themes by exploring how sustainability can be translated into teacher education, food systems, and technical training. Some HEP projects build on previous HEI ICI experiences, reinforcing institutional learning and momentum.

In figure 4 we present the perspectives towards project impact. The views were most positive regarding strengthened partnerships and networks (87 % positive), adoption of new teaching and learning methodologies (86 % positive), raised awareness and integration of sustainability and social responsibility themes (85 %), and improved pedagogical competence and teaching practices (81 % positive).

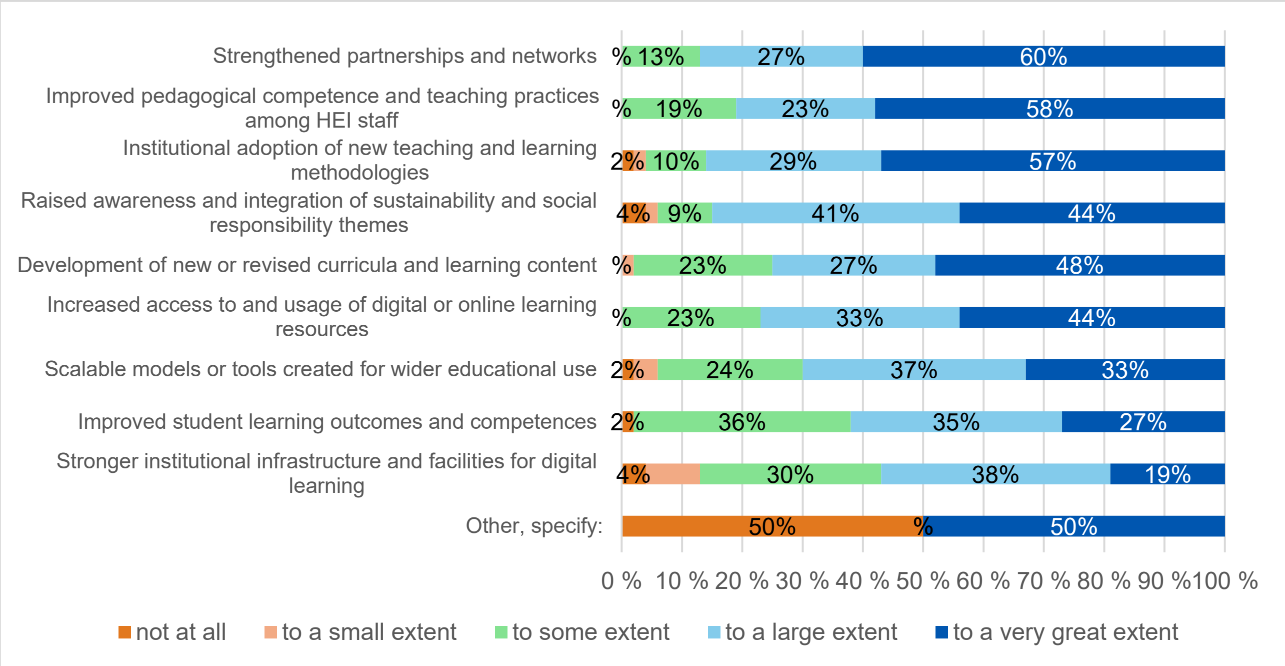

Figure 4 Evaluate how much / to what extent the project developed the following aspects. (n=49)

In figure 5 we present which practices have been piloted or adopted beyond the project scope, which is also a sign of institutional capacity development. The most relevant has been the piloting or adoption of institutional strategies in target countries (83 %).

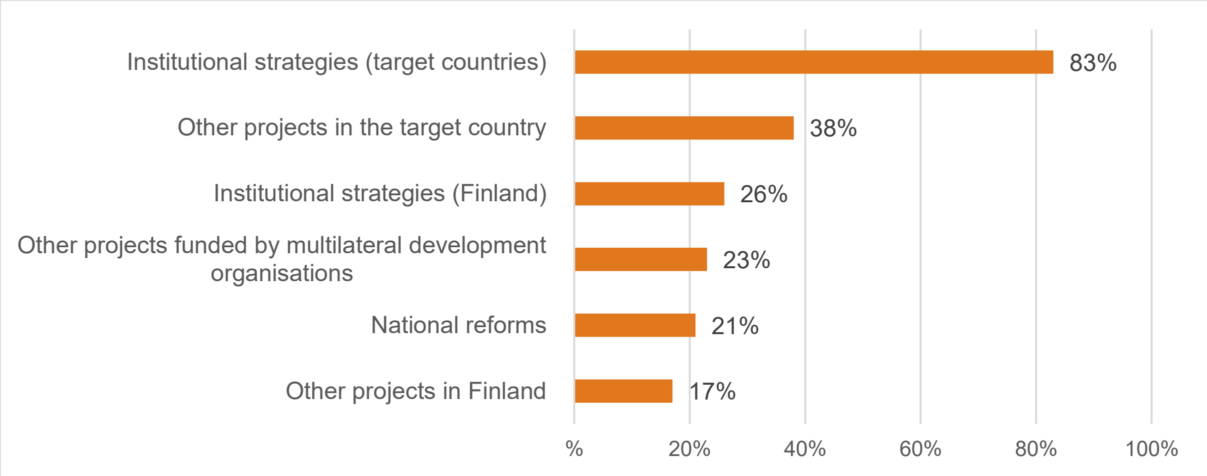

Figure 5 Which of the following practices have been piloted or adopted beyond the project scope? (n=47)

3.2. Pedagogical Innovations

Pedagogical and curricular development has been a central outcome of both HEI ICI and HEP partnerships. The completed HEI ICI projects introduced and institutionalised learner-centred pedagogical methods such as problem-based learning, entrepreneurial pedagogy, blended learning, and interdisciplinary approaches. These methods were embedded into new or revised curricula, often co-designed with partner institutions and aligned with national qualifications frameworks. Institutional staff development was essential, supported through peer mentoring, training, and the creation of teaching-learning materials.

HEP projects, though still in their early stages, have begun piloting innovative pedagogy through new courses and cross-disciplinary teaching. Several projects are working to mainstream themes such as sustainability, food security, and digital transformation into teaching practices. The full impact of these reforms can only be assessed after completion, but early signs point to growing institutional uptake.

The most frequently reported innovative approach was blended and hybrid learning formats (71%), indicating a significant shift toward flexible instructional delivery methods. This was followed by strong emphasis on Problem-Based Learning (65%) and peer-/co-creation-based learning (61%), highlighting the importance of student agency, collaboration, and real-world problem solving. Multi-Competence Learning also ranked high (61%), suggesting the projects actively promoted pedagogical strategies that integrate technical and soft skills development. Meanwhile, more technology-heavy methods like smart learning or AI-supported tools were less prominent (33%), possibly reflecting either resource limitations or gradual adoption. (figure 6)

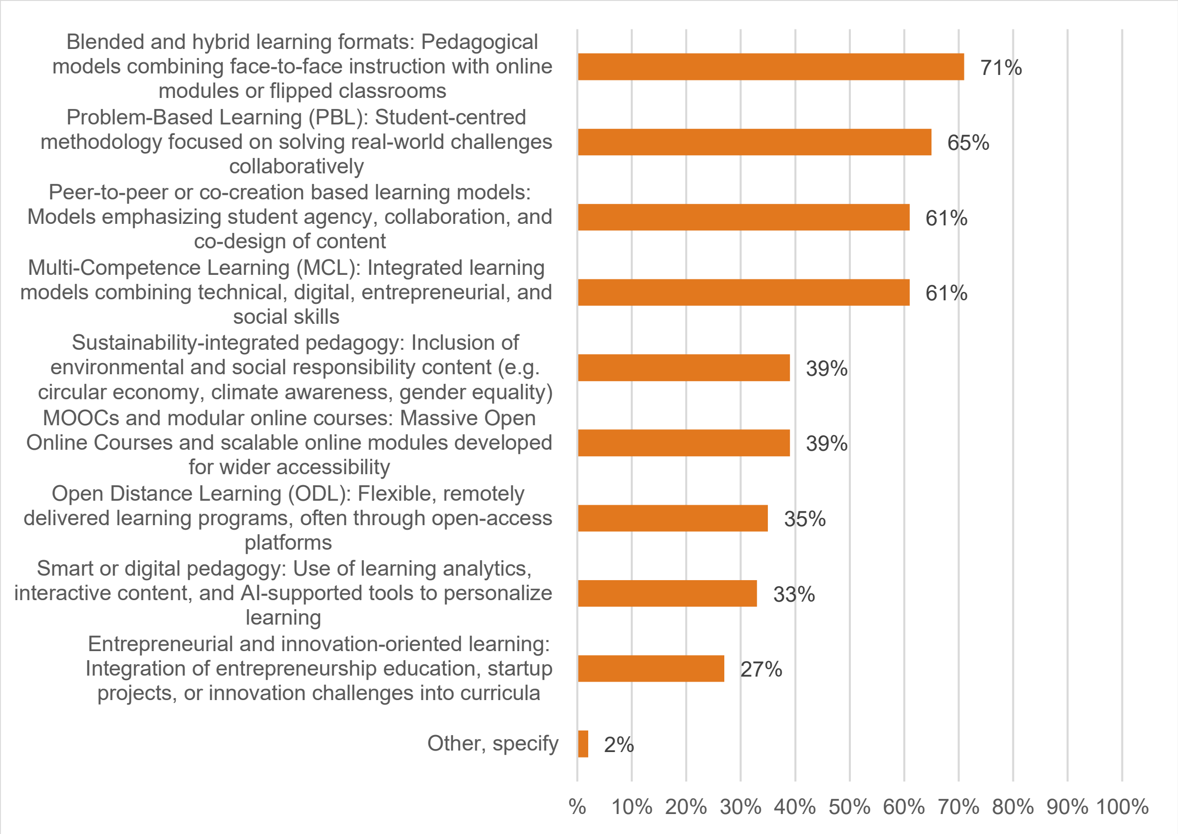

Figure 6 What innovative approaches or pedagogical models have emerged through the project? (choose 1-5 of the most important ones) (n=49)

3.3. Digital transformation

Digital transformation was a central theme across both portfolios, particularly in the HEI ICI projects that coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects developed different digital learning platforms, virtual laboratories, online repositories, and training modules that modernised teaching and strengthened institutional systems. For example, the MOPEDE project successfully integrated an e-learning platform in Ethiopian TVET, significantly boosting students' digital skills and providing a model for national scaling.

HEI ICI projects also introduced digital tools to support remote teaching, quality assurance, and asynchronous learning, many of which continued to be used after project completion. These investments increased the resilience of partner institutions and allowed them to respond to external shocks such as the pandemic.

The ongoing HEP projects are building on this foundation by piloting accessible hybrid and mobile learning environments, with a strong emphasis on underserved groups and rural contexts. Low-bandwidth solutions and mobile-based tools are being developed to expand access and inclusion. While adoption is still in progress, these initiatives point to longer-term potential for institutionalising digital practices within higher education systems.

Survey data supports these outcomes: more than 80 percent of respondents reported improvements in digital learning capacity, and interviews underscored that digitalisation had accelerated institutional reforms, enhanced teaching practices, and expanded access to new student groups.

In the survey, 77 percent had recognized increased access to and usage of digital or online learning resources (replied to a very great extent or to a large extent), 70 percent reported that scalable models or tools were created for wider use, and 57 percent reported stronger institutional infrastructure and facilities for digital learning. Small minority, only 2-4 percent of informants replied that there have not been developments in these areas.

3.4. Skills and employability

Social and technical innovations for employability offer opportunities for developing countries to overcome challenges in logistics, communication, service delivery, and value chain development. By fostering innovations that enhance employability on a large scale, HEIs contribute directly to economic development. This is done in close cooperation with non-academic actors, particularly companies, to ensure that innovations are relevant, practical, and connected to labour market needs.

Both HEI ICI and HEP projects have contributed to developing skills that are relevant for labour markets and broader societal needs. The completed HEI ICI projects strengthened students' digital, transversal, and sector-specific competencies by embedding work-based learning, real-world assignments, and entrepreneurial approaches into curricula. These initiatives enhanced problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, while also fostering innovation and adaptability.

The ongoing HEP projects are continuing this trajectory by targeting skills for green and digital transitions, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, energy, food systems, and climate-related sustainability. While measurable impacts are not yet visible, the piloting of interdisciplinary courses and practice-oriented approaches indicates strong potential for employability outcomes in the coming years.

Survey evidence supports these findings: more than 80 percent of respondents highlighted improvements in pedagogy and curriculum relevance, and interviews underscored the role of project-based learning in enhancing career readiness and student confidence. For the HEI ICI projects in particular, effectiveness was reinforced by survey and interview results showing over 90 percent of respondents reporting positive institutional impact and over 80 percent noting improved curriculum relevance. Interviewees also frequently cited enhanced international collaboration, staff motivation, and increased capacity for project implementation.

For the development of personal skills, relevant for employability, project participants reported high overall satisfaction with skill development, most participants had recognized positive impact on communication and teamwork skills (91 % to a great extent or to a significant extent), critical thinking (84 %), digital skills (83 %) and technical / professional skills (75 %). Entrepreneurial skills were the least developed in comparison, although over half (53 %) had recognized a great or significant effect (figure 7).

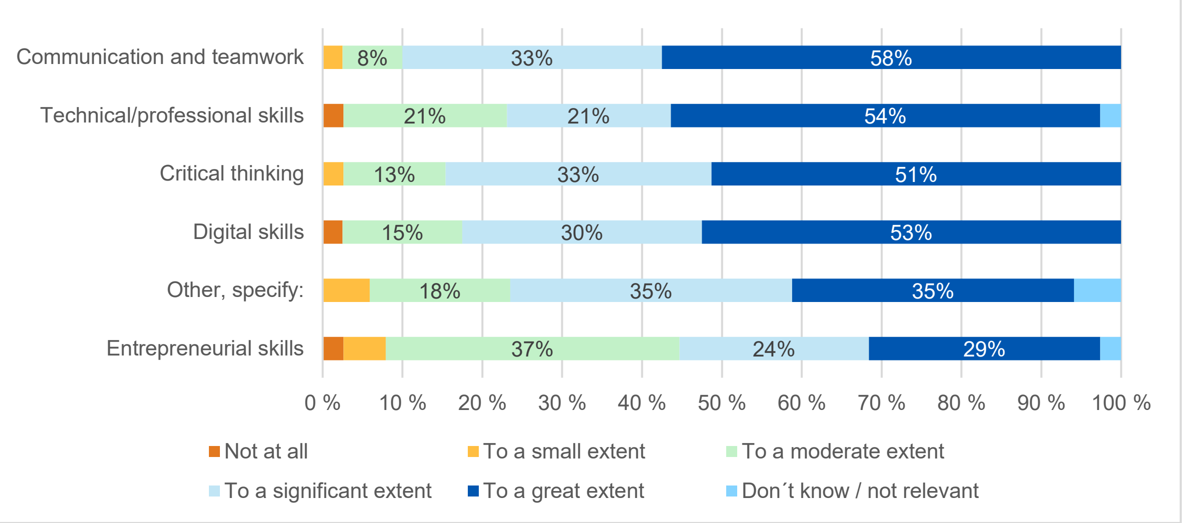

Figure 7 To what extent did your skills develop through the project or course you participated in? (n=40)

For the ongoing HEP projects, early feedback is also positive, though more cautious. Project experts value the opportunity to pilot and adapt solutions in complex contexts but also raised concerns about time constraints and limited resourcing, especially regarding the potential for the anchoring of results in the institutions.

3.5. Resource mobilisation and sustainability of results

The ability to mobilise external resources was closely tied to sustainability of results. HEI ICI projects managed to secure follow-on or complementary funding from Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, national ministries, and multilateral donors such as the World Bank, NORAD, and UNICEF. These included spin-off initiatives in digital innovation, urban resilience, and climate services, as well as fully funded PhD scholarships and regional collaborations.

Survey data shows that 43 percent of respondents reported access to additional funding (see figure 8). Enabling conditions included long-standing trust-based partnerships, strong alignment with national and institutional priorities, robust demonstration effects, and experienced coordination teams with grant-writing capacity. Finnish HEIs played a vital role in identifying calls, supporting proposal development, and in some cases serving as lead applicants.

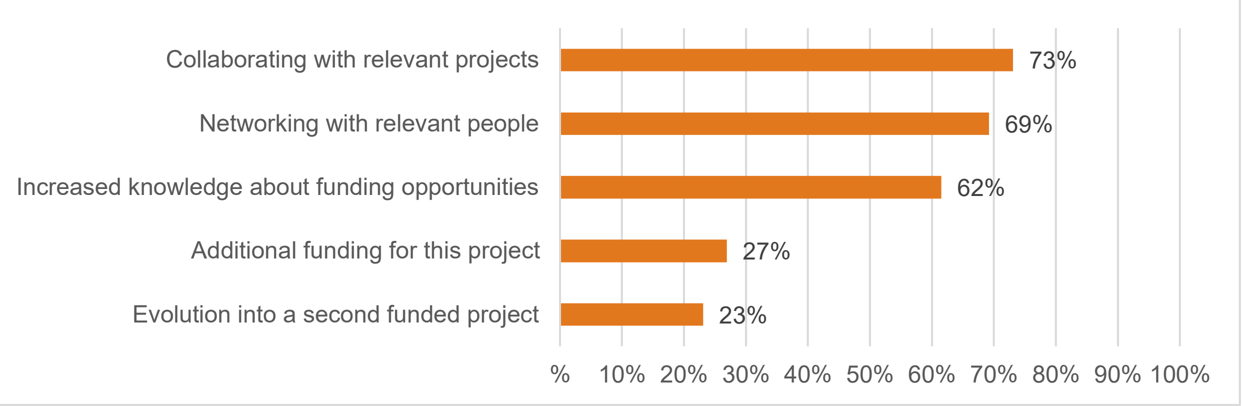

Figure 8. If yes, which mechanisms or partnerships within the project helped your organization gain access to additional (third-party) funding? (n=26)

Despite these successes, most partnerships struggled to mobilise additional resources during the project cycle. Reasons for this vary, for example short timelines, heavy reporting demands, limited staff capacity, and weak institutional support structures are mentioned. Sustainability planning was often overshadowed by actual implementation. Table 5 presents the HEI ICI projects´ synergies and additional funding and good practices for leveraging support.

Table 5 HEI ICI Projects´ synergies and additional funding and good practices to leverage support.

Project	Synergies & additional funding	Good practices to leverage support
GeoICT4e	Catalyzed numerous **spin-off projects** with external funding: e.g. a World Bank-funded urban waste mapping initiative with a private tech company (Literati); a Horizon Europe research project on climate services (KADI); a UNICEF-funded innovation lab on circular economy (WasteX); a **Finnish-Africa startup program** with CRDB Bank (FINhub, $120k) to train student innovators for the financial sector; a Team Europe Initiative on resilient cities (€250k); and even fully funded PhD positions for two Tanzanian students in Finland. These came on top of internal university funding (e.g. UTU provided €100k for a digital innovation hub).	**Align with global initiatives:** Tied project themes to trending issues (climate resilience, digital innovation), making it attractive to major funders (EU, World Bank, UN). **Build proposal capacity:** Conducted workshops to train staff in writing grant proposals, directly aiming to "access more funds to continue the cooperation". **Leverage local industry:** Engaged local financial and environmental organizations (banks, government institutes) as partners, which unlocked co-funding and pilot opportunities.
TOTEMK	Generated follow-on collaborations: a **British Academy–funded writing workshop** for early-career researchers (involving 10 universities) and a joint curriculum initiative (REFORD) between Kenyan and Finnish universities were launched as offshoots of TOTEMK. Also built connections with a UK partner (Edge Hill University) and attempted to integrate a Finnish edtech accelerator (xEdu) into the project. While xEdu's direct role was limited, the engagement sparked awareness in the Kenyan edtech ecosystem.	**Networking and publicity:** Published research and media pieces about project achievements, attracting interest from external programs. **Synergistic activities:** Incorporated side-initiatives (like edtech startup pitching sessions) that aligned with other funders' priorities, paving the way for external support. **North–South–South links:** Facilitated partner travels (Kenyan team to Finland, etc.) which built trust and visibility, encouraging funders like the British Academy to invest in related capacity-building. **Shared ownership and strategic alignment** with national reforms.

TEPATE	Focused largely on core funding but laid groundwork for future proposals. By project's end, partners were preparing an **Erasmus+ Capacity Building** proposal (with partners in Rwanda and Germany) to continue the work on teacher education. The team also identified other funding instruments since Finland's bilateral TVET funding decreased, ensuring continuity plans were in place (e.g. exploring EU Team Europe support).	**Strategic pivot:** Proactively responded to changes in Finnish funding by seeking alternative donors early (EU Erasmus+, Team Europe). **Institutional anchoring:** Demonstrated project success (e.g. improved teacher training model) to persuade institutions and new partners to commit to scale it up. **Stakeholder inclusion:** Brought Ministry and local authority stakeholders into discussions on next steps, increasing chances of policy-level support or integration into government programs.
PBL-BioAfrica	Attracted complementary collaborations with development partners and NGOs. While primarily HEI ICI-funded, the project's activities led to partnerships with organizations like **GIZ, FIDA, and local NGOs** for community training, and discussions with ministries for scaling PBL nationally. Some partner universities secured small grants to continue PBL initiatives on campus (e.g. innovation contests funded by local sponsors). The project's success in curriculum reform also positioned partners well for future funding focused on entrepreneurship education.	**Showcase results:** Achieving deeper-than-expected outcomes (curriculum reforms, new entrepreneurship courses) provided strong evidence to pitch for more support. **Multi-stakeholder coalitions:** By working with NGOs, ministries, and industry in implementation, the project created a coalition that can jointly apply for funds (each bringing their constituency and credibility). **South-South cooperation:** Built a regional network (Kenya–Zambia) that can tap into regional funding sources (e.g. AU or AfDB education initiatives) beyond the initial Finnish funding.
SUSIE	Spawned *"several spin-offs and unexpected experiences"* that enhanced impact. The project's Sustainable Leadership Training program drew interest from other African universities, prompting planning for new partnerships (potentially fundable by future HEI ICI rounds or African regional funds). SUSIE's collaboration with Business Finland also linked it to Finnish innovation funding networks. Additionally, the established business hubs are now positioned to seek support from programs like the World Bank's entrepreneurship funds or local investors.	**Public–private linkage:** Partnered with Business Finland/World Trade Centre, which not only met project goals but connected the consortium with trade promotion resources. **Visibility:** Gained local recognition in Finland (Turku region) as a model project, helping secure institutional support for continuation. **Flexibility in scope:** Allowed the project to venture into complementary areas (e.g. hosting business events, circular economy pilots), which created entry points to new funding beyond traditional education aid, for example fostering entrepreneurial thinking and supporting access to startup funding.
MOPEDE	Proactively pursued new funding as Finnish support shifted. The project prepared an application to the EU **Team Europe Initiative** to scale digital TVET, leveraging the pilot's success to seek larger investment. An Erasmus+ proposal involving multiple countries was drafted to continue capacity building in TVET teacher education. Importantly, MOPEDE's achievements (e.g. updated curricula, improved facilities at TVTI) gave the institution a solid platform to attract further third-party funding on its own. Strengthening ties with the Finnish Embassy and EU delegation also increased the project's visibility to donors.	**Plan for sustainability from start:** Emphasized from day one how new systems would be maintained and funded post-project, making it easier to pitch for follow-on funding. **Donor engagement:** Kept local EU and embassy officials closely informed and involved, so they became advocates for scaling up the project. **Evidence of impact:** Collected data (M&E results, student success stories) to demonstrate impact, instilling confidence in other funders that investing in expansion (via Erasmus+, etc.) would yield results.

Table 5 summarizes how HEI ICI projects have generated synergies and leveraged additional funding. Several projects managed to catalyse spin-off initiatives, attract support from donors, and link with complementary programmes or regional networks. A common feature was aligning project themes with global and national priorities, such as climate resilience, digitalisation, or teacher education reform, which has made them more attractive to funders. Good practices included building proposal-writing capacity, showcasing results to demonstrate credibility, and fostering coalitions with ministries, NGOs, industry, and private sector actors. North–South and South–South collaborations have strengthened visibility and trust, while proactive engagement with donors and embassies helped position projects for future funding opportunities. Overall, the projects show that strategic alignment, stakeholder inclusion, and strong evidence of results can create pathways to sustain and expand cooperation beyond initial funding.

To sustain the collaboration beyond the project period, the most widely cited requirement across responses was continued and diversified funding. Respondents emphasized that collaborative activities such as joint research, curriculum implementation, field visits, and mobility programs cannot be maintained without external financial support, especially in resource-constrained institutions. Several suggestions pointed to long-term grant strategies, as well as internal budget allocation by the participating universities themselves.

In addition to financial needs, many respondents stressed the value of institutional commitment, formal partnerships, and strategic capacity building. Establishing memoranda of understanding (MOUs), recognizing collaborative efforts in staff performance evaluations, and maintaining digital networks for expert exchange were highlighted as mechanisms to deepen engagement. Respondents also called for stronger links with national education authorities to align projects with systemic reform agendas and ensure broader policy adoption. Moreover, the continuation of teacher and student mobility, regular monitoring and evaluation of implemented innovations, and joint dissemination activities, such as co-authored publications and conferences, were viewed as vital to sustaining impact and fostering a culture of continuous collaboration.

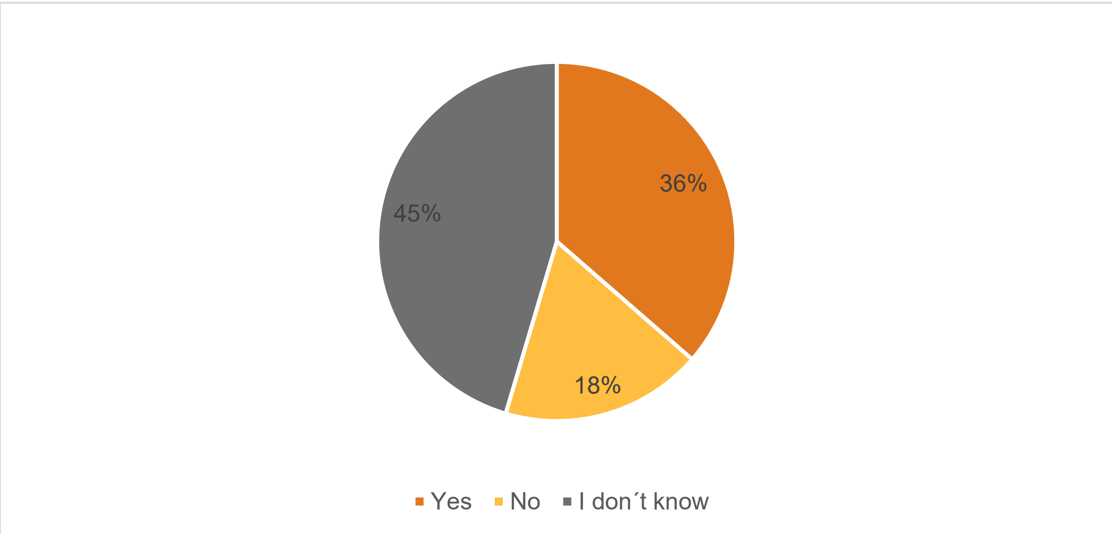

Figure 9 Did the project create foundations for potential export-driven or internationally scalable initiatives involving Finnish expertise? (n=44)

The responses indicate that several promising internationally scalable initiatives and educational export opportunities have emerged from the projects, even if not always intentionally designed as such. Examples include the export of pedagogy models, like Multicompetence Learning and inclusive education approaches and tailored training programs. Respondents also highlighted staff exchanges, joint research, and mobility as key enablers of sustained academic partnerships that could evolve into exportable formats.

At the same time, a few respondents emphasized that educational export should remain embedded in reciprocal academic partnerships, rather than being driven purely by commercial logic. Finnish expertise in disability inclusion, digital accessibility, and pedagogical quality was seen as highly transferable, particularly to African education contexts. However, funding constraints in many partner countries mean that future collaboration and educational export efforts will likely require continued support from development aid or public funding mechanisms, rather than market-based models alone.

3.6. Multi-stakeholder cooperation – private sector linkages and export potential

Beyond development funding, some projects created pathways for Finnish private sector engagement and potential educational export. The survey results show that 36% of respondents felt their project created foundations for potential export-driven or internationally scalable initiatives, while 18 % said no and 45 % were unsure. Most common way to engage private sector was via knowledge sharing (28 %) or indirect linkage through enhancing Finland’s reputation or visibility in education sector (16 %). Only 2 % said that the project was actively promoting export goals (see figure 10).

Examples included collaboration with Finnish companies, start-ups, and ed-tech providers to develop training packages, digital tools, and pedagogical models with international potential. Staff exchanges, joint research, and mobility schemes also created long-term networks that could be leveraged for consultancy or exportable services.

While these foundations are promising, respondents stressed the importance of keeping export activities embedded in reciprocal, trust-based partnerships rather than pursuing purely commercial transactions. Financial constraints in partner countries limit market-driven models, suggesting that future export-oriented collaborations may require blended financing combining aid, public funding, and private investment.

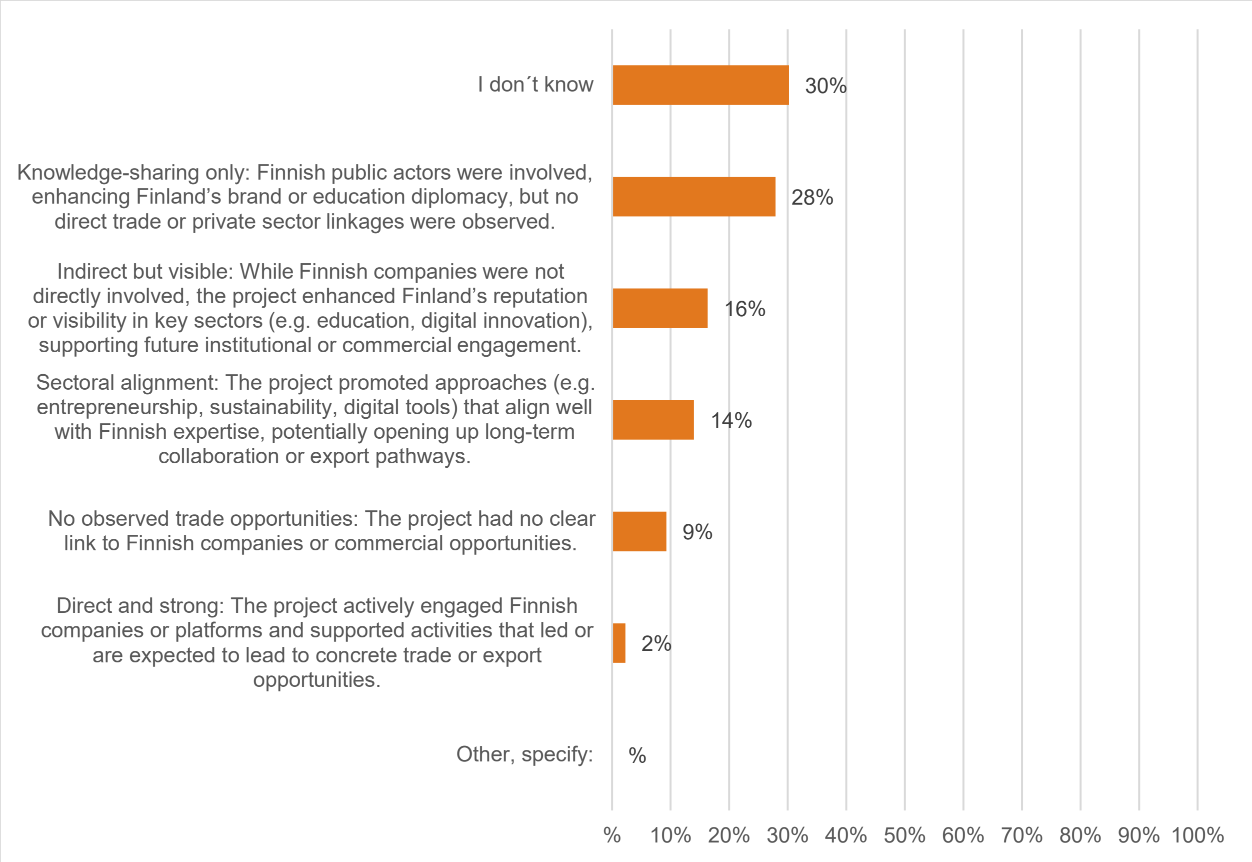

Figure 10 What kind of business or trade opportunities emerged from the project for the Finnish private sector? (select the option that best describes your project) (n=43)

Forms and benefits of multi-stakeholder collaboration

Multi-stakeholder collaboration has been a defining strength of HEI ICI projects, often taking the form of ecosystem-style partnerships where universities served as hubs connecting governments, employers, and communities. Models ranged from informal networks to formal consortia with joint governance structures. Effective practices included advisory boards with external stakeholders and curriculum committees with industry representatives, often introduced with support from Finnish HEIs. HEP projects have similar models, such as cross-sectoral working groups and teacher–community dialogues. Although institutionalisation is still at an early stage, these configurations demonstrate potential for sustained collaboration.

The benefits of collaboration are clear. Projects that engaged a wide range of stakeholders produced more relevant outputs, strengthened legitimacy, and gained visibility. Students benefitted through exposure to real-world contexts, while institutions built capacity to anticipate policy shifts and employer needs. However, collaboration has required time, trust-building, and negotiation outside formal project structures. Engagement from private sector partners has been a bit uneven, and sustainability of partnerships beyond project funding remains a concern.

In figure 11 there are the types of non-academic collaborations in the projects. Most common ones were cooperation with NGOs or community based organizations (59 %), collaboration with private companies for student mentoring and real-world scenarios (37 %) and joint activities with government ministries or public institutions (37 %).

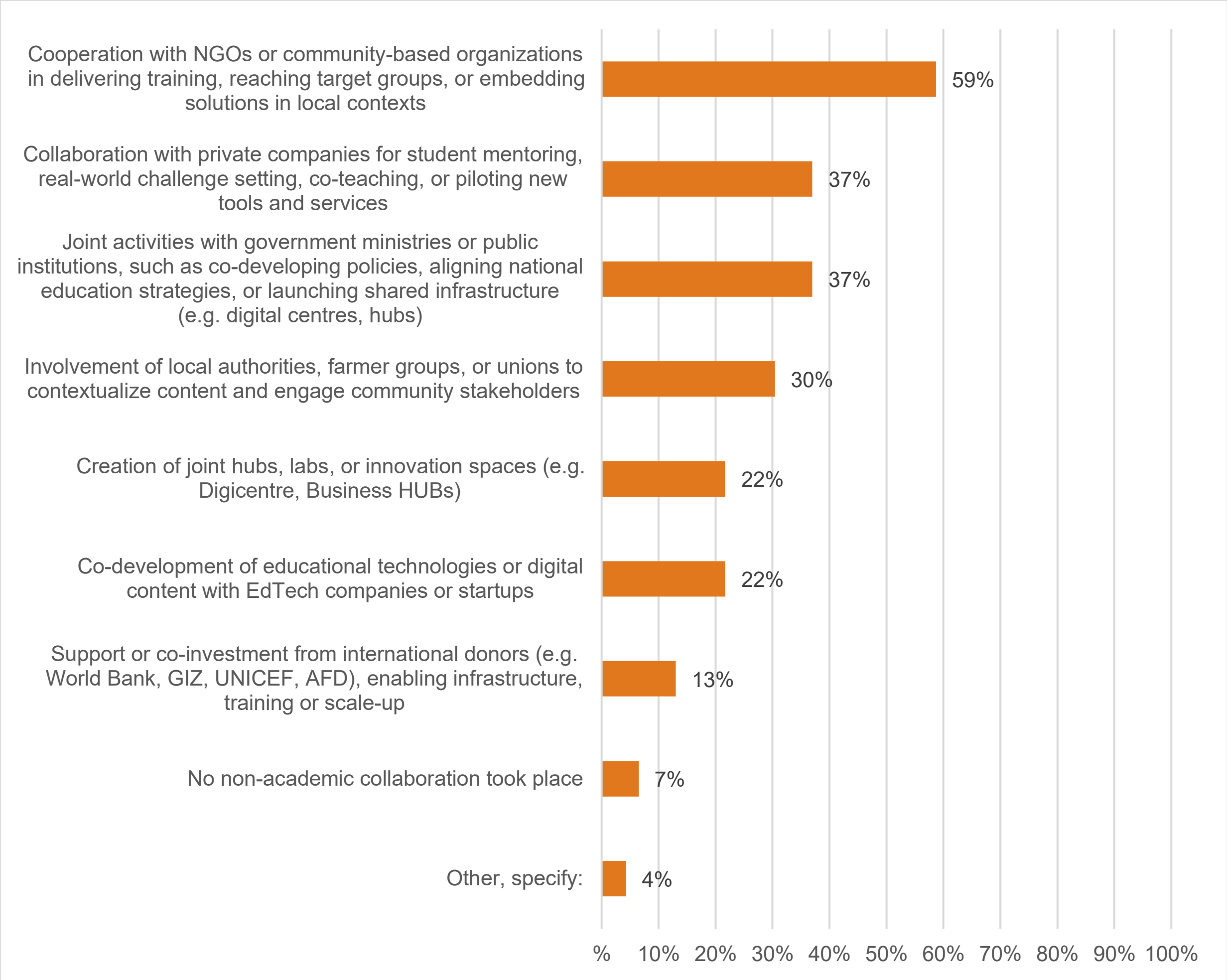

Figure 11 What types of non-academic collaboration took place in your project? (select all that apply) (n=46)

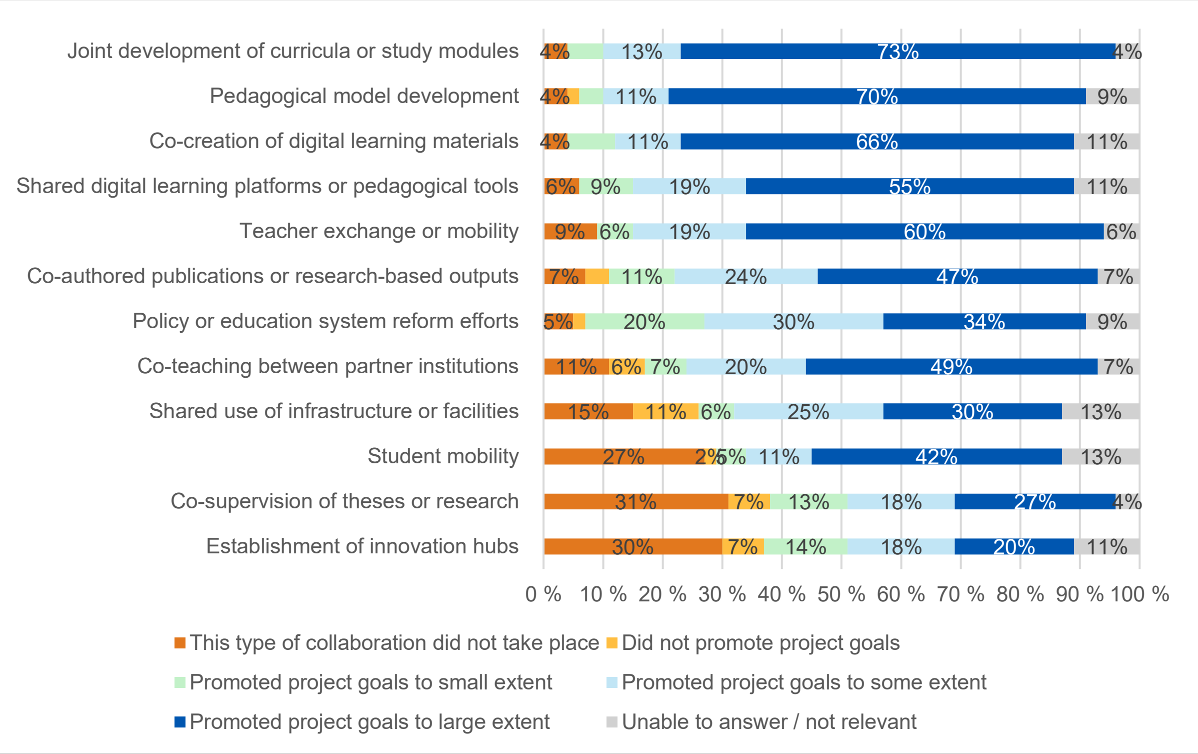

Figure 12 How effective were the following forms of collaboration in promoting project goals? (n=49)

Figure 12 shows how different forms of collaboration were perceived in terms of supporting project goals. Joint development of curricula, pedagogical model development, and co-creation of digital learning materials were most consistently seen as effective, with a clear majority reporting that these collaborations promoted project goals to a large extent. Teacher exchange and co-teaching between partner institutions were also viewed positively. By contrast, student mobility, co-supervision of theses, and the establishment of innovation hubs were less common and often considered less central for achieving project aims. Overall, collaborative activities most closely tied to teaching, pedagogy, and digital tools appear to have contributed most strongly to the projects' progress, while more resource-intensive or longer-term collaborations played a smaller role.

Universities as facilitators and conveners

Universities were not just recipients of capacity-building but acted as facilitators and conveners of diverse societal actors. Finnish HEIs often modelled this role by mapping stakeholders, organising multi-actor workshops, and supporting dissemination platforms. Partner institutions, in turn, began to see themselves as development actors with responsibilities beyond teaching and research. This expanded role presents opportunities for universities to contribute more directly to national development agendas, foster inclusive participation, and strengthen the legitimacy of HEIs in their local contexts.

Lessons for design

In several cases, the partnerships, tools, or pedagogical models developed through HEI ICI have been adapted or scaled through HEP projects. This continuity allows for iterative development, where lessons from implementation inform the next cycle of innovation. HEP projects have brought new thematic focus, especially around climate-smart education and food systems.

Sustainability was strongest where reforms aligned with national policies, achieved accreditation, or became embedded in institutional strategies and structures. Permanent hubs, incubators, and digital platforms provided durable outcomes. Future programmes could support sustainability more systematically by embedding resource mobilisation into project design, strengthening fundraising and MEL capacity, and providing seed funding for scaling.

4. TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF HEI PARTNERSHIPS - CASE STUDIES

This chapter presents four illustrative case examples that highlight diverse ways in which higher education institution (HEI) partnerships can contribute to local innovation, resilience, policy reform, and community development in African contexts. The cases demonstrate how HEIs engage with societal challenges through collaborative approaches, fostering systemic change and sustainable solutions.

The **GeoICT4e** project in Tanzania focused on digital skills and employment, showcasing a systems-thinking approach to building local innovation ecosystems. The **MOPEDE** project in Ethiopia addressed teacher education in times of crisis, exemplifying resilience and institutional innovation in fragile environments. The **TOTEMK** initiative in Kenya highlighted how HEI collaboration can influence national curriculum and policy reform. And the **BioAfrica** project in Zambia and Kenya illustrated how HEIs can foster entrepreneurial, community-anchored education through problem-based learning and innovation.

Together, these cases (summarized in table 6) offer insights into the transformative potential of HEI partnerships across different thematic and contextual settings.

Table 6 Case study summary.

Case	Focus	Type of Case	Theme
GeoICT4e (Tanzania)	Digital skills & employment	*Systems-thinking case*	*HEI partnerships as enablers of local innovation ecosystems.*
MOPEDE (Ethiopia)	Teacher education in crisis	*Resilience and institutional innovation case*	*Resilience and ownership in fragile environments.*
TOTEMK (Kenya)	Curriculum & policy reform	*Policy case*	*HEI collaboration influencing national education systems.*
BioAfrica (Zambia & Kenya)	Entrepreneurship & PBL	*Community innovation case*	*HEIs fostering community-anchored, entrepreneurial education.*

4.1. Social innovations at Tanzanian HEIs for improved employability (GeoICT4e)

Coordinating HEI: University of Turku
Partner HEIs: University of Dar es Salaam, Ardhi University, Sokoine University of Agriculture, State University of Zanzibar, Moshi Co-Operative University, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Novia University of Applied Sciences

Overall expenditure: Whole budget 2 350 459 € (MFA funding 1 880 368 €)
Duration: 9/2020 – 8 /2024
Case Study Theme: Digital Skills, Employment, and Innovation Ecosystems

Background

GeoICT4e was grounded on the long-term and well-established cooperation between the University of Turku (UTU) and four Tanzanian HEIs, University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Ardhi University (ARU), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), and State University of Zanzibar (SUZA). The cooperation expanded with three additional partners: Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences from Finland, and Moshi Co-Operative University (MoCU) from Tanzania.

The project addressed a pressing need in Tanzanian higher education: the misalignment between university graduates' skills and the expectations of the labour market, particularly in geospatial and ICT-related fields. The aim was to improve graduate employability, strengthen digital skills, and promote inclusion, particularly for women in STEM.

What was done in the project?

- The project introduced a student-centred, challenge-based learning approach (CBL), built around real-world problems identified with external stakeholders.
- It piloted this method in five Tanzanian universities through:
    - Student innovation projects
    - The development of Digital Learning Environments (DLEs)
    - Training sessions for academic staff
- Finnish partners coordinated and provided capacity building, while Tanzanian universities adapted the approach to their contexts.
- Employers and NGOs defined challenges and mentored students, and government partners supported alignment with national policies.
- Digital tools and platforms were developed or enhanced in each institution to support blended learning and collaboration.
- Twelve multi-disciplinary MCL (multi-competence learning) challenge campaigns were organised, each led by a local HEI, in cooperation with 89 partners:
    - 57 public organisations
    - 11 private organisations
    - 12 NGOs
    - 2 associations
    - 4 international organisations
    - 3 others

Why is this case significant?

GeoICT4e illustrates how geospatial technologies, challenge-based learning, and local partnerships can build a digital skills ecosystem linked to both employment and resilience. It provides a strong example of synergies between education, innovation, and development cooperation, and demonstrates how HEI projects can feed into broader digital transitions.

Tanzanian partner universities are now more competent to develop digital solutions addressing systemic societal and climate change challenges, and to engage local communities and different stakeholders in the process. The project also fostered innovation and entrepreneurial approaches, giving MCL students confidence for self-employment in the future.

Elements of success:

- Co-creation of socially innovative learning models: The MCL methodology, playbook, online learning assets, and open data were developed and integrated into local curricula and teaching practices at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- Scalability and sustainability: Outputs are sustainable for continued use and updating in all partner universities.
- Real-world learning integration: Students worked on real-world problems, enhancing authenticity and relevance.
- Capacity building: 60 staff members improved their skills in planning and implementing MCL.
- Reach and engagement:
    - 5 universities piloted MCL methods, impacting 284 undergraduate students.
    - Over 6,000 students directly benefited from improved learning materials.
    - Over 1,500 students trained in real-world data use through the World Bank–funded Resilience Academy.
- Innovation ecosystem linkages: Employers, NGOs, and government bodies actively involved in defining challenges and mentoring.
- Open resources: Creation of 10 MCL DigiCampus learning platforms (each 5 ECTS) and an open-access MCL Playbook, with materials available at the Digital Data Innovation Hub.

Lessons learned from the project

The implementation of the project highlighted several important lessons, both in terms of successes and challenges.

What worked well

- Co-design and collaborative development of the MCL methodology were effective and fostered ownership.
- Implementation of the MCL approach strengthened student learning outcomes.
- Engagement with real-world challenges enhanced authenticity and relevance of learning.
- The train-the-trainer (ToT) model proved successful in building staff capacity.
- Digital learning environments (DLEs) supported project objectives and enabled blended learning.

Challenges encountered

- COVID-19 pandemic caused delays and required adaptations in project implementation.
- Limitations in digital infrastructure (unstable internet connections, slow adoption of online tools) hindered progress.
- Limited student access to devices and reliable internet reduced participation opportunities.
- Difficulty in fully engaging stakeholders and ensuring a shared understanding of MCL objectives.
- Resistance to change and insufficient leadership support slowed institutional uptake.
- Financial constraints restricted both the scope and overall impact of the project.

Recommendations for the future

Moving forward, it will be essential to strengthen communication and provide training for stakeholders to build their involvement and commitment. Strong support networks should be established, reaching from government to community levels, to secure resources and broader backing. Pilot programmes could be particularly valuable, as they allow for feedback collection and further development of the model. In addition, involving leaders in training sessions and workshops is crucial to emphasise the benefits of MCL and to secure stronger support at the decision-making level.

Conclusion

GeoICT4e successfully co-created and embedded a socially innovative, cross-disciplinary learning approach in five Tanzanian universities, strengthening employability, digital skills, and innovation capacity. The integration of MCL into curricula, combined with open-access resources and active stakeholder involvement, ensures sustainability. The project's influence extends beyond academia through entrepreneurship, community engagement, and spin-offs such as the World Bank–funded Resilience Academy, demonstrating the long-term potential of well-structured HEI partnerships in driving societal change.

4.2. Capacity Building for Modernising TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia (MOPEDE)

Coordinating HEI: JAMK University of Applied Sciences
Partner HEIs: Centria University of Applied Sciences, Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute (Ethiopia)
Overall expenditure: 1 242 214 € (MFA funding 986 341 €)
Duration: 9/2020-8/2024
Case Study Theme: Vocational teacher education in fragile settings

Background

Ethiopia's vocational teacher education sector has long faced structural challenges, including rigid pedagogy, limited digital capacity, and severe resource constraints. These issues were further complicated by civil conflict, inflation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Amidst this difficult context, the MOPEDE project (Modern Pedagogy for Technical Teacher Education) was launched to support systemic transformation at the Technical and Vocational Training Institute (TVTI) and its satellite campuses.

What was done in the project?

- **Pedagogical transformation**: Over 90 teacher training courses were redesigned, shifting from rote-based methods to student-centred, interactive, and blended learning approaches. Over 1900 attended awareness raising events.
- **Capacity building**: 71 faculty members were trained in digital pedagogy, with each training five peers in turn, forming a multiplier model for sustainable skills transfer.
- **Institutional digital strategy**: TVTI developed its own e-learning policy, quality criteria, and long-term vision for blended learning.
- **Infrastructure development**: A Digital Learning Centre was built, co-financed by multiple donors (GIZ, KOICA, World Bank, KfW), despite challenges with inflation and supply chain disruptions.
- **Operational reform**: An internal Operational Committee was given the mandate to manage quality assurance, curriculum review, and problem-solving.
- **Sustainability structures**: Institutional mechanisms such as ILIT Boards and a Curriculum Advisory Board were established to ensure continuity beyond the project.

Why this case is significant?

- **Adaptive governance in crisis**: The project's governance structures flexibly adjusted to the unfolding realities of conflict and the pandemic. The Project Board regularly revised implementation plans and risk assessments.
- **Local ownership**: TVTI took full ownership of digital pedagogy strategies, ensuring integration into institutional frameworks rather than reliance on external inputs.
- **Strategic donor coordination**: By aligning with Ethiopia's national Digital Education Plan and coordinating funding from multiple donors, MOPEDE avoided fragmentation and built a robust support base.
- **Trust-building in hierarchical systems**: Cultural sensitivity and inclusive practices, such as recognizing diverse staff contributions, fostered institutional legitimacy and engagement.
- **Scalability and policy impact**: The blended learning model developed through MOPEDE has been adopted as part of the Ministry of Labour and Skills' five-year strategy, with interest from other Ethiopian institutions.

Elements of success:

- Responsive and decentralized leadership
- Embedded quality assurance mechanisms
- Culturally competent project implementation
- Shared ownership and strategic alignment with national reforms
- Continuous professional exchange between Ethiopian and Finnish institutions

Lessons from this project:

In MOPEDE, it was shown that:

- **Sustainable change is relational**: Trust and cultural understanding matter as much as technical solutions.
- **Innovation is process-driven**: Rather than introducing fixed solutions, co-creation and continuous iteration through regular feedback mechanisms, informing curricular review and development are essential.
- **Institutional change requires both structural reform and mindset shift**: Professional development and governance innovation must go hand in hand.

Conclusion

MOPEDE demonstrates that in fragile governance environments, it is possible to deliver lasting institutional transformation when projects invest in local capacity, prioritize adaptive governance, and embed new practices into policy and structures. This project stands as a model for resilience, co-creation, and context-sensitive reform in education development cooperation.

4.3. Training Trainers for Teacher Education and Management in Kenya (TOTEMK)

Coordinating HEI: University of Helsinki
Partner HEIs: Laurea University of Applied Sciences, University of Nairobi (Kenya), Strathmore University (Kenya), Pwani University (Kenya)
Overall expenditure: 1 335 455 € (MFA funding: 1 068 363,92 €)

Duration: 9/2020-8/2024
Case Study Theme: Competency-Based Curriculum Reform and National Impact

Background

In 2017, Kenya introduced a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) to better prepare learners for 21st-century skills and labour market needs. While the reform targeted basic education, it required a systemic shift in teacher preparation at HEIs to succeed. The TOTEMK (Transforming Teacher Education and Learning in Kenya) project responded by aligning university-level teacher education with the new CBC, positioning itself as a bridge between policy vision and practical implementation.

What was done in the project?

TOTEMK began as a capacity-building initiative and evolved into a national driver of education reform. Key actions included:

- **Training and cascading expertise:** 213 higher education teachers trained across 22 Kenyan HEIs, supported by open-access MOOCs developed and hosted by Strathmore University.
- **Curriculum development:** Creation of CBC-aligned online modules (MOOCs) for Bachelor-level teacher education, adopted widely across universities.
- **Research and evidence-building:** Baseline studies in 2020 and 2022 to identify systemic training gaps and inform design.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Teachers Service Commission (TSC), and Commission for University Education (CUE).
- **Policy influence:** Contributions cited in the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023) and embedded in national curriculum strategies.
- **Network building:** Establishment of REFORD, a research network for future-oriented curriculum development. Network building created also through our training seminars, learning platform (Moodle) and other communication channels (e.g. Whatsapp, still in function).

Why is this case significant?

This case illustrates how a well-aligned HEI partnership can move from a pilot project to influencing national education policy. TOTEMK is recognized as a model for preparing HEIs for CBC roll-out, scheduled nationally for 2029. Its outputs, MOOCs, training models, and curriculum content, are embedded in policy frameworks, ensuring relevance beyond the project's lifespan.

Elements of success:

1. Early policy alignment: Directly tied to the national CBC reform from inception, ensuring relevance and credibility.
2. Co-creation with government bodies: MoE, KICD, TSC, and CUE were active partners, ensuring systemic uptake.
3. Evidence-based approach: Baseline studies guided content design and provided legitimacy for policy uptake.
4. Scalable infrastructure: MOOCs and training materials were designed for replication across all HEIs and Teacher Training Colleges.

5. Networked impact: The REFORD research network sustained momentum and extended the project's influence into future reforms.

Lessons learned from the project:

- Engage early with policy priorities to position projects as credible implementation tools.
- Embed government co-ownership in planning and delivery to secure long-term adoption.
- Use scalable digital platforms to ensure sustainability beyond funding cycles.
- Build in research and evidence gathering to influence ministerial strategies and national frameworks.
- Leverage spin-off networks to sustain reform momentum and connect research to policy.

Conclusion

TOTEMK demonstrates how higher education partnerships can translate national policy visions, such as Kenya's CBC, into concrete, scalable reforms. Through strategic alignment, co-ownership with government, and digital scalability, the project not only trained over 200 educators but also shaped national curriculum thinking, influenced ministerial decisions, and created sustainable platforms for future reform. It stands as a policy case study in how to move from pilot initiatives to systemic, lasting change.

4.4. Problem-Based-Learning Bioeconomy Entrepreneurship and Capacity Building Programme in Africa (PBL-BioAfrica)

Coordinating HEI: Häme University of Applied Sciences
Partner HEIs: Aalto University, Egerton University (Kenya), University of Nairobi (Kenya), South-Eastern Kenya University (Kenya), Mulungushi University (Zambia), University of Zambia (Zambia)
Overall expenditure: 1 861 001 € (MFA funding 1 478 921 €)
Duration: 9/2020-8/2024
Case Study Theme: Entrepreneurial Learning and Community Impact

Background

Agricultural higher education institutions (HEIs) in sub-Saharan Africa have traditionally focused on technical training for agricultural production. The PBL-BioAfrica project reimagined their role, positioning them as innovation hubs embedded in rural development ecosystems. By embedding problem-based learning (PBL) and entrepreneurship training into curricula, the project connected student learning directly with community needs, local SMEs, and regional economic development priorities.

What was done in the project?

PBL-BioAfrica transformed agricultural education through a multi-pronged approach:

- **Curriculum reform:** Entrepreneurship (ENT) and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) made compulsory in agriculture programs at South-Eastern Kenya University (SEKU), Egerton University (EGU), University of Zambia (UNZA), and Makerere University (MU).

- **Problem-Based Learning:** Introduced from Year 1, using real-world community challenges as teaching cases.
- **Entrepreneurship development:** Students created startups in areas such as poultry, honey, mushrooms, aquaculture, and agro-dealership.
- **Community engagement:** Rural and peri-urban communities involved in co-developing solutions to enhance productivity, resilience, and innovation.
- **Open educational resources:** ENT training videos, toolkits, and ODL modules created for long-term use.
- **Innovation events:** Agripreneurship challenges and Innovation Weeks brought together students, rural youth, and industry partners.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborated with SMEs like Zambeef, Bukata Farms, and SNV for co-supervision, internships, and applied projects.
- **Inclusive outreach:** Extended training to community members, school dropouts, and early-career farmers, with emphasis on gender and youth inclusion.

Why is this case significant?

Project shows how HEIs can act as anchors of rural innovation, not only educating students, but also catalysing local entrepreneurship and inclusive development. By linking academic learning to rural economic ecosystems, PBL-BioAfrica empowered youth as agents of innovation and positioned agricultural universities as key players in community resilience and prosperity.

Elements of success:

1. Integrated curriculum transformation: ENT and CSA embedded in degree programs across four universities.
2. Community-embedded pedagogy: PBL rooted in real, local challenges ensured learning had direct societal relevance.
3. Strong partnerships: Collaboration with SMEs, cooperatives, and local governments strengthened market linkages and real-world application.
4. Scalable and flexible learning models: ODL and open resources expanded access beyond traditional student populations.
5. Institutional buy-in: Reforms integrated into university strategies, securing long-term sustainability.
6. Regional networking: Leveraged RUFORUM, PBL-Africa, and TagDev 2.0 to share and scale the model across Eastern and Southern Africa.

Lessons learned from the project:

- Position HEIs as local innovation hubs to strengthen relevance and impact.
- Engage communities as co-creators in problem-solving to ensure ownership and uptake of solutions.
- Use entrepreneurship training as a bridge between academic learning and local economic growth.

- Design flexible delivery models to reach non-traditional learners, including marginalized youth and women.
- Leverage regional networks to accelerate scaling and sustainability of innovations.

Conclusion

PBL-BioAfrica demonstrates that agricultural HEIs can be powerful engines of rural transformation when equipped with entrepreneurial pedagogy, strong community ties, and scalable learning platforms. Students emerge not only as graduates but as agripreneurs and changemakers, communities benefit from locally grounded innovations, and universities gain lasting roles as drivers of inclusive development. The model’s integration into institutional policy and regional networks ensures its impact will extend well beyond the project’s life cycle.

5. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter analyses HEI ICI and HEP programmes using the following evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and utility & sustainability. The analysis considers how well both HEI ICI and HEP programmes align with partner countries' needs and Finland's development policy; the extent to which activities achieve intended results in skills development, digital transformation, and employability, how effectively resources are used, and whether outputs are utilised and maintained beyond project funding. For HEI ICI, the evaluation reflects completed project cycles and their long-term outcomes, while for HEP, still on-going, the focus is on early results and emerging trends. Separate assessments are provided for each programme under each criterion to highlight differences in maturity, scope, and performance.

5.1. Relevance

HEI ICI Programme

The HEI ICI programme has demonstrated strong relevance by aligning its objectives with both partner countries' needs and Finland's development policy priorities. HEI ICI projects are designed in response to pressing local challenges, such as improving teaching quality, climate adaptation, and youth employability, ensuring they address real capacity gaps of partner higher education institutions (HEIs). This responsiveness, combined with a sense of ownership among partner universities, has been a key to the programme's success. HEI ICI's thematic focus (e.g. solving the learning crisis, climate change, and innovations for employability) mirrors Finland's development policy and the UN 2030 Agenda, indicating strong policy coherence. The programme supports Finland's priorities like gender equality, quality education and climate action, effectively translating these commitments into academic collaborations. In practice, Finnish HEIs bring internationally recognized expertise (in areas like teacher training and digital learning) to partnerships, but this expertise has been paired with local context knowledge to ensure solutions are practical and culturally appropriate. As a result, HEI ICI projects have produced outputs (new curricula, teaching methods, etc.) that are not only in line with global best practices but are locally relevant, often integrating community or industry involvement to meet labour market and societal needs. The programme's long history has further allowed it to refine its relevance by continuously adapting to partner feedback and national education reforms, keeping projects well-aligned with evolving local priorities. Additionally, through some projects, HEI ICI serves Finland's dual "aid and trade" development cooperation approach by involving Finnish ed-tech companies and fostering networks that may support future education export opportunities. This synergy means the programme is relevant not only to development goals but also to broader international partnership objectives, making HEI ICI a mutually beneficial initiative for both partner countries and Finland's global engagement strategy.

HEP Programme

The newer HEP programme (Higher Education Partnerships, launched 2023) was conceived with relevance in mind, targeting thematic areas that overlap with partner countries' urgent development needs and Finland's development policy focus. HEP projects concentrate on high-quality teacher education, climate change & circular economy, and food security, which are all critical issues in the Global South. By combining Finnish educational expertise with the specific priorities of partner countries, the HEP programme is positioned to strengthen higher education's role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, HEP initiatives in teacher training address gaps in pedagogy and inclusivity in partner institutions, directly tackling the local need to improve teacher preparation quality. Likewise, projects focusing on climate and food systems are rooted in partner countries' contexts (such as climate resilience in agriculture or sustainable energy solutions), ensuring that project activities are relevant to local communities and policies.

Even though HEP projects are still ongoing, early indications show they are well-aligned with national strategies. Some projects have engaged with local education authorities and stakeholders from sectors like agriculture and energy, which helps ground the projects in national development plans. The HEP programme's design reflects Finland's updated development policy (e.g. the 2024 Report on Development Cooperation) by emphasizing rights of women and girls, climate action, and inclusive growth through education. In practice, this means HEP projects include components like gender-sensitive teacher training or community outreach in climate adaptation, aligning with cross-cutting policy goals. Moreover, HEP has inherited the relevance-oriented approach of HEI ICI by fostering co-creation. Projects are planned jointly with partner HEIs, which helps tailor objectives to real local needs. Although HEP programme is in early stages, its selection of focus areas and collaborative approach suggest a high degree of relevance. The challenge ahead will be to maintain this alignment as projects progress, ensuring that initial objectives continue to match partner needs and that any shifts in context (e.g. new education policies or unforeseen crises) are accounted for to keep the programme's relevance on track. Both HEI ICI and HEP projects have maintained a clear development policy focus while adapting to local realities of the higher education sector.

5.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness issues have been discussed in Chapter 3, only the main points are summarized here.

HEI ICI programme has been broadly effective in strengthening institutional capacity while at the same time transforming teaching and learning practices. Its long-term, trust-based partnerships enabled reforms in academic leadership, governance, and digital transformation, but the most visible achievements were pedagogical. Projects introduced and embedded learner-centred approaches, such as problem-based learning, flipped classrooms, and entrepreneurial pedagogy, into curricula that were aligned with national qualification frameworks. These changes modernised teaching, shifting it towards interactive and skills-focused education that has been positively received by staff and students alike. In addition, work-based and entrepreneurial learning components enhanced students' employability by integrating practical, real-world challenges into the curriculum. In several cases, reforms expanded beyond individual projects to influence systemic developments, including new degree programmes and national-level uptake of innovative pedagogical models.

HEP programme (2024–2026), still in mid-implementation, is showing promising early results that build on this foundation. Projects are piloting digital tools and hybrid teaching models that extend access to diverse student groups, including those in rural contexts. At the same time, HEP has introduced interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to teaching, particularly in relation to climate-smart and sustainability themes. Curricula are being enriched with new modules and team-taught courses that integrate external expertise and real-world problems. Active learning and problem-based methods have increased student engagement. Some pilots are already being scaled within institutions, suggesting potential for durable curriculum reform.

Overall, HEI ICI demonstrates how sustained collaboration can institutionalise learner-centred pedagogy and curriculum reform, while HEP shows that even within shorter cycles, targeted innovations, especially in digital and sustainability-focused teaching, can enhance learning and open pathways for broader transformation.

5.3. Efficiency

HEI ICI Programme

Under the OECD/DAC lens, efficiency examines how well the HEI ICI programme has utilized resources (funds, time, expertise) to generate value. Overall, HEI ICI's operational model has notable strengths in efficiency, but also some structural challenges.

On the positive side, the programme's design encourages efficient use of resources through cost-sharing and partnership networks. Finnish and partner institutions typically co-finance projects (HEI ICI funding required at least 20% self-financing from HEIs), which means both sides invest financially and in-kind, leveraging additional resources beyond the MFA funding. However, there are no strict guidelines regarding how the division has to be made in self-financing between partners and Finnish partners can cover all of the self-financing. This arrangement has still promoted a sense of joint responsibility and efficient use of funds, as partners are motivated to see returns on their contributions. Moreover, HEI ICI often capitalizes on existing capacities: Finnish HEIs contribute skilled experts (researchers, ICT specialists, etc.) as part of their regular duties or through institutional support, making knowledge transfer cost-effective. Many projects benefit from established infrastructure (like university e-learning platforms, libraries, or labs), adapting them for local use rather than creating everything from zero, which is an efficient approach.

There are also examples of synergies that improved efficiency. For instance, some HEI ICI projects were able to join forces with other initiatives (Erasmus+ projects, NGO efforts, etc.), sharing workshops or content, thereby stretching their resources. Additionally, the multi-year timeframe (typically 3–4 years per project) of HEI ICI has proven efficient in achieving deeper changes without excessive extension costs. Steady long-term funding has allowed projects to plan systematically and avoid the inefficiency of rushed outputs. As noted, the long duration enabled "deeper institutional embedding," meaning each cycle could consolidate gains rather than constantly restart.

However, there were also challenges with efficiency. One key issue was the perceived heavy administrative burden on coordinating institutions (often the Finnish HEI managing multiple partners). Administrative tasks, financial reporting, procurement, coordination meetings across time zones, have taken time and effort. It could be argued that less time handling the administration of these projects could have given more time for actual implementation of the projects. The complexity of working across several countries and institutions, each with different bureaucratic requirements, has also contributed to this load. But then again, these types of projects always include these practices and good project structure is a key element in creating good outcomes. As mentioned before, over-reliance on a few key individuals was a risk in some projects. In practice, a proactive project coordinator or lead expert often drove activities, but if that person was unavailable, progress slowed, revealing some inefficiencies in delegation and institutionalization of roles.

Another issue relating to efficiency was the way projects monitored systematically outcomes during the projects. Some projects did not have data tracking for student performance and in some of the good outcomes of the projects may have been lost during implementation because of this.

Despite these challenges, HEI ICI projects frequently found ways to adapt efficiently to challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, several projects quickly shifted to online training and remote collaboration to keep work on track. This flexibility, sometimes supported by the programme in the form of ~~or~~ budget reallocations, mitigated what could have been major delays, thereby preserving efficiency under adversity. Long-standing trust, joint ownership and projects´ alignment with local priorities meant that partners were generally committed and coordinated, reducing the inefficiency of miscommunication or duplicated efforts.

In summary, HEI ICI's efficiency has been good in that it leverages partnerships and timeframes well, but the administrative complexity can be seen as both necessary, but still an issue, since some of the project staff perceive it to be heavy. Streamlining administrative procedures and strengthening project management support (perhaps through EDUFI guidance or digital tools) could further improve efficiency in the future.

HEP Programme

Efficiency in the HEP programme is analysed differently, since projects are still on-going. By design, HEP projects run on a shorter timeline (about 2–3 years) and with smaller budgets per project than HEI ICI, which creates pressure to achieve quick results with limited resources. Despite these constraints, HEP projects have made some efficient choices. The programme targets specific themes and often builds on prior HEI ICI relationships or models, which is efficient because it avoids reinventing the wheel. Some HEP consortia include partners that previously collaborated under HEI ICI, allowing them to use established trust and communication channels rather than expending resources to form completely new partnerships. This continuity has been noted as an enabling factor that accelerates implementation and reduces costs for HEP projects. Additionally, HEP's thematic focus (teacher education, climate, food security) has encouraged focused resource use.

However, early feedback from HEP stakeholders does raise some concerns about efficiency. Time pressure is a recurring theme: experts feel the project period is very short to solidify outcomes and properly utilize inputs. This compressed schedule can force trade-offs, like prioritizing the easiest-to-deliver outputs over potentially more impactful activities that require longer to implement. For instance, fully revising a curriculum or institutional policy, which would have high impact, might be hard to do efficiently within two years, so projects may focus on shorter trainings or workshops. While those are useful, it means some resources might not achieve the maximum long-term value simply due to time limits.

Resource constraints are also notable. HEP projects have a lower maximum budget (approximately €1.1 million per project, vs. up to €2 million in HEI ICI), and some cover multiple countries, stretching the funds. Several HEP teams reported that staffing is lean, often one or two key people managing many tasks, which ties back to the risk of over-reliance on individuals.

There are similar challenges in HEP as in HEI ICI regarding administration, but with the added aspect that new HEP projects had to set up frameworks quickly. There have been efficiency gains in HEP through flexibility. For example, the programme's management has allowed projects to adapt plans as needed. Adaptive management is crucial for efficiency in dynamic contexts. Because HEP programme started after the peak of COVID disruptions, it benefited from the digital workflows and remote collaboration practices that HEI ICI had already adopted. A comparative insight is that while HEI ICI projects had the longer time to implement, HEP projects must be efficient under shorter timelines. Early indications suggest HEP projects manage this by being highly focused and collaborative, but they risk not fully achieving depth in each area. Since HEP projects are still on-going, they could benefit from some form of additional implementation support or project management training to streamline processes, but due to realities and limited resources also on the donor side, additional support or changes at this point are probably not realistic.

In conclusion, HEP's efficiency is mixed. The programme is quite lean and agile, extracting value through targeted actions and partnership leverage, yet it faces efficiency challenges from shorter timelines and smaller budgets. Continuous monitoring and adaptive adjustments will be key to keeping HEP on an efficient path as it progresses, and lessons learned in HEI ICI (e.g. standard tools for coordination, sharing admin best practices) should be applied to support this.

5.4. Utility and sustainability

HEI ICI Programme

The utility and sustainability of HEI ICI's results are critical indicators of long-term programme performance. Utility can be seen in how the outputs and outcomes of HEI ICI projects are being used by beneficiaries and institutions, while sustainability looks at whether those benefits endure over time and continue after project funding ends.

In the case of HEI ICI, many project outcomes have proven to be both useful and lasting. A number of innovations and practices introduced by HEI ICI have been embedded in partner institutions' systems, which greatly enhances sustainability. For example, some universities have adopted new curricula (developed during the projects) as part of their regular degree programs, and in certain cases even established permanent units like learning labs, entrepreneurship hubs, or e-learning centres that continue operating post-project. These *durable innovations*, curricula, structures, or policies, owe their longevity to early buy-in and alignment: projects that aligned with national education reform agendas or had strong support from university leadership achieved institutionalization more easily. The usefulness of project results is evident in daily academic practice.

Faculty trained under HEI ICI projects continue to apply learner-centred pedagogies and digital tools in their classes, improving the quality of education beyond the initial project scope. Survey data reveals that pedagogical competence and new teaching methodologies were not only developed but also *adopted institutionally*, 57% of respondents noted that new teaching methods were incorporated at the institutional level to a very great extent.

Furthermore, materials and curricula created have often been shared within and even across institutions. There are instances where a curriculum module piloted in one university was later taken up by another in the same country or region, indicating transferability (with adaptation) of the innovation. Finnish partner HEIs have aided this process by disseminating resources and fostering communities of practice, ensuring the project knowledge remains accessible.

Another aspect of utility is how the programme's outcomes feed into wider development goals: HEI ICI projects have contributed to producing more industry-ready graduates, policy-relevant research, and stronger international networks, all of which have value for society and stakeholders after the project. For example, improved employability skills and new academic programs in areas like sustainable energy or public health, mean that the workforce and communities benefit from the project long after its completion. Data collected in this evaluation shows that partnerships have led to ongoing collaboration such as joint research, student exchanges, or follow-on initiatives, demonstrating that the relationships and capacities built are being utilized continuously.

Some HEI ICI partnerships secured additional funding (from sources like the EU, World Bank, or other donors) to continue or scale their efforts. This is a strong indicator of sustainability. The projects created enough momentum and proof-of-concept to attract new resources, enabling an extended life for project concepts. Several HEI ICI projects are cited as examples where pilots were scaled into larger regional projects or replicated in new contexts with fresh funding. However, sustainability has not been universal or automatic. In some cases, maintaining the collaboration or results beyond the grant period is uncertain, particularly if the partner institutions face structural challenges. If partner HEIs lack stable internal coordination mechanisms or government counterparts change frequently, project gains risk fading out. Based on the evaluation data, it is unclear how well and thoroughly different projects planned for an “exit strategy” (clear handover or integration of activities). Without it, the continuation of activities after external funding stops, is unlikely. Local ownership of results is key. When teachers, department heads, and students themselves have co-created new approaches, those tend to continue organically, but it still requires resources, division of responsibilities as well as consistency.

Overall, the HEI ICI programme’s contributions have demonstrated utility in improving higher education in partner countries, and there is evidence of sustainability in terms of institutionalized innovations and ongoing partnerships.

HEP Programme

For the HEP programme, utility and sustainability considerations are forward-looking, as the projects are still underway. The early signs, however, are encouraging in terms of utility of outputs and the foundations for sustainability.

In the short term, HEP project outputs are already being put to use: new course materials, training programs, and tools developed are actively used by target groups (students, lecturers, and partner communities). For instance, in a HEP project focused on food security education, updated curricula on sustainable agriculture have been taught to current cohorts, and those materials are also being shared with local agricultural colleges outside the partnership, increasing their utility beyond the immediate project circle. Similarly, digital platforms set up for climate resilience education are being accessed by faculty and students for regular teaching, not just special project workshops, indicating integration into everyday academic practice. These examples show that HEP outputs are meeting real needs and are valued enough to be used continuously, a positive sign for utility.

As for sustainability, HEP benefits from and applies lessons learned from HEI ICI. Many HEP projects have a component of capacity-building that goes hand-in-hand with delivering technical outputs. Projects are training local staff to manage and maintain project-introduced systems (e.g. a learning management system or a new pedagogical approach), aiming to ensure the results can be sustained locally. Some HEP initiatives have institutionalized working groups or committees to oversee the continuation of project activities, showing foresight in sustainability planning.

A notable early outcome is that in projects where local educators co-designed the interventions, there are already cases of replication: as mentioned, a few partner HEIs have begun expanding pilot activities to other departments or faculties on their own. Embedding is still in progress for HEP, but these initial signs of adoption in pilot departments are promising. To truly achieve sustainability, HEP projects will need to navigate the transition in the end of the projects. Given the shorter lifespan of HEP projects, there is a risk that without further support, some initiatives might not fully mature into self-sustaining programs by the time projects end. But his risk has been recognized. Some HEP projects have set resource mobilization goals, intending to apply for grants (e.g. Erasmus+ Capacity Building, national innovation funds) to continue the work.

The wider operational environment is also important. HEP programme aligns with current national and global priorities (teacher quality, climate action, etc.), which increases the likelihood that governments or other donors will pick up successful models. Challenges remain, of course. The sustainability of HEP outcomes will depend on institutional commitment in partner countries. If university leadership changes or priorities shift, some gains could be lost. Also, because HEP projects are limited in time, certain systemic changes (like policy influence or infrastructure development) may not fully materialize without extension. Shorter project timelines and limited forward strategy development can constrain sustainability. To ensure sustainability, recommendation is to embed sustainability plans during implementation, such as planning for handover, training locals, and building linkages to policy or other programmes early. In practice, many HEP projects have involved ministry officials, community organizations, or industry partners from the beginning, which is key if one wants to anchor the project in local context. Some respondents had observed that some HEP collaborations are evolving into more permanent partnerships, for example routine exchanges (like faculty visits or joint seminars) are continuing even outside the formal project activities, indicating the relationships might last.

In conclusion, the HEP programme's deliverables are showing clear utility, addressing critical needs and being actively used. For sustainability, the groundwork is being laid. There are positive signs of local ownership, efforts to get additional funding, and integration into institutional practices. However, until the projects conclude and we see whether these initiatives continue or grow in the absence of Finnish funding, sustainability remains an open question. In the broader context of development cooperation in higher education, both HEI ICI and HEP illustrate that sustainability comes from building genuine local capacity and aligning projects with what partners truly value.

6. THEMATIC REFLECTIONS

This chapter looks beyond individual project results, it focuses on broader themes and the role of higher education in enhancing sector-specific knowledge and learning, to support societal development and contribute to the SDGs. The aim is not only to describe what worked well, but also to reflect on the role of universities in driving social change, how partnerships between academic and non-academic actors can be strengthened, and how development goals can be combined with trade and sustainability. By taking a thematic view, the chapter offers insights that can guide both the future design of these programmes and wider discussions about the contribution of higher education to sustainable development.

The HEI ICI and HEP programmes are built around thematic priorities that respond to urgent global and local challenges while strengthening the role of HEIs as drivers of sustainable development. Although the two programmes have different emphases, they share the goal of combining Finnish expertise with local priorities to generate solutions that are relevant, inclusive, and scalable.

For the **HEI ICI programme**, three themes have guided project design and implementation. The first is *solving the learning crisis*, where HEIs play a central role in preparing future teachers and vocational instructors to raise the quality of education at all levels. The second is *climate change*, which requires interdisciplinary approaches to resource use, adaptation, and mitigation, with universities acting as hubs for knowledge, dialogue, and innovation. The third is *innovations for employability*, where HEIs foster social and technical solutions that connect education with labour market needs and economic development. Together, these themes highlight the programme's aim to link education, sustainability, and employment in ways that benefit both individuals and societies.

The **HEP programme** builds on these foundations with its own three thematic priorities. *High-quality teacher education* is at the core, addressing uneven quality in teacher preparation and strengthening pedagogy, digital readiness, and inclusivity in HEIs. Teacher education is central to improving learning outcomes across education systems. In many partner countries, the quality and relevance of teacher preparation, both in general education and TVET, remain uneven, with gaps in pedagogy, subject mastery, digital readiness, and inclusivity. The HEP programme supports partner higher education institutions (HEIs) to strengthen curricula, teaching methods, and institutional capacity for teacher training. This includes the development of digital and blended learning approaches and the promotion of equal access for underrepresented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, and students from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds. By building the competence of future teachers and vocational trainers, HEP projects contribute to sustainable improvements in education quality and labour market relevance.

Climate change, energy transition, and circular economy form the second theme, emphasising locally relevant solutions that advance green jobs, renewable energy, and sustainable resource use. The third theme, *food security*, reflects the importance of resilient and inclusive food systems for sustainable development. HEP projects strengthen HEIs' expertise in agriculture, nutrition, and value chains, while linking modern science with local knowledge.

Together, these thematic frameworks underline the complementary nature of the two programmes. HEI ICI has laid the groundwork by piloting solutions to systemic challenges, while HEP is advancing and expanding these efforts with a focus on inclusivity, climate resilience, and food security. By anchoring projects in these themes, the programmes position higher education partnerships as key contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals and Finland's development policy objectives.

6.1. Equity, inclusion and gender

Equity, inclusion, and gender responsiveness were important but unevenly addressed priorities across HEI ICI and HEP projects. While many projects demonstrated awareness of these cross-cutting issues, the depth of engagement varied by theme, region, and institutional context.

In the completed HEI ICI projects, attention to gender equity was most evident in teacher education, public health, and community engagement initiatives. Some projects explicitly targeted gender gaps in enrolment, professional representation, or leadership roles. Others incorporated gender-sensitive curriculum design, introduced inclusive teaching methods, or trained staff on gender mainstreaming. For instance, one project revised course materials to reflect gender-sensitive language and case studies, contributing to a broader institutional shift in attitudes.

Inclusion was more frequently addressed in pedagogical terms, particularly through efforts to make teaching more accessible to diverse learners. These included introducing differentiated instruction, flexible learning pathways, and student feedback mechanisms. In some cases, projects supported the development of services for students with disabilities or learners from marginalised communities, although these efforts were often pilot-level rather than institution-wide.

HEP projects, though still ongoing, show promising developments in this area. Many of the HEP-funded initiatives were designed with an explicit focus on vulnerable populations, often in regions affected by environmental shocks, conflict, or food insecurity. These projects are piloting inclusive models that combine digital delivery, community engagement, and contextualised pedagogy to improve access for students facing multiple barriers. In some cases, the use of mobile-based learning has improved accessibility for women and rural learners.

Despite these advances, equity-related dimensions were not always addressed systematically nor was that the goal. Some survey respondents and interviewees noted that while gender was acknowledged in proposals, it did not always translate into specific actions, indicators, or institutional commitments. Inclusion was sometimes treated narrowly in terms of access or infrastructure, without sufficient attention to cultural and structural barriers. There was limited engagement with intersectionality, such as the compounded effects of gender, disability, socio-economic status, and geographic location.

For both HEI ICI and HEP, a key enabling factor was leadership commitment, projects with champions at management level or within gender units tended to go further in embedding gender and inclusion goals. Likewise, strong collaboration with civil society or ministries often brought an equity lens into curriculum and policy discussions.

From a strategic perspective, future programmes could reinforce the integration of equity and gender responsiveness by:

- Embedding inclusive design in the project planning stage
- Supporting mutual learning through communities of practice on equity
- Strengthening links to national equity and gender strategies

Ultimately, advancing equity and gender responsiveness within higher education partnerships requires moving beyond compliance toward a more transformative understanding, where inclusion is not only about who participates, but how, and with what impact on institutional culture and student outcomes.

6.2. Climate, sustainability and food security

Higher education acts as a hub for knowledge, dialogue, and innovation in climate action, connecting scientific research with practical, community-level applications. HEIs contribute by generating and disseminating knowledge about climate change, building local awareness, and working alongside other actors to promote solutions that are not only environmentally effective but also create employment.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation call for interdisciplinary solutions that encompass economic, social, and ecological dimensions. Climate resilience, sustainability, and food security have emerged as increasingly prominent themes within both HEI ICI and HEP projects, particularly in response to global and regional development agendas and local ecological realities. While not all projects were explicitly focused on these themes, a growing number have integrated them into teaching, research, institutional strategy, and stakeholder engagement.

In the HEI ICI programme, several completed projects addressed climate and sustainability through curriculum reform and pedagogical development. Environmental and agricultural faculties were central actors, but sustainability was also integrated into teacher education, engineering, and business programmes. Notably, some projects mainstreamed sustainability as a transversal theme, embedding it across course modules rather than treating it as a standalone topic. Pedagogical innovations, such as real-world problem solving and community-linked projects, have enabled students to engage with environmental and food system challenges in locally relevant ways.

HEP projects have a particularly strong emphasis on sustainability and food security. Many were designed to respond to urgent local needs related to climate change adaptation, resource scarcity, or agricultural transitions. Projects have introduced content related to climate-smart agriculture, circular economy practices, energy efficiency, and sustainable livelihoods. These themes are not only academic, but they are also deeply tied to societal resilience and equity, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate shocks.

A cross-cutting feature of successful projects has been the combination of knowledge generation with practical application. For instance, students and faculty have participated in field-based assessments, community workshops, or applied research linked to climate resilience and food system governance. These activities have served both as learning experiences and as contributions to local development processes.

Despite these promising developments, several limitations were noted. In some cases, sustainability was included in project plans but not clearly defined or operationalised. Interviewees mentioned challenges in finding qualified staff, balancing local relevance with global frameworks, and avoiding “add-on” approaches that isolated sustainability from core teaching and institutional functions. In others, sustainability activities were small-scale pilots, with limited uptake at institutional or policy levels.

Food security perspectives were most prominent in HEP projects related to agricultural training, nutrition, and community engagement. These efforts often involved partnerships with local NGOs, cooperatives, and government agencies. However, the potential to integrate food security as a broader educational and strategic concern remains underutilised, particularly in non-agricultural disciplines.

Looking forward, **sustainability and food system challenges are expected to intensify, and HEIs are uniquely positioned to address them through integrated approaches.** For both HEI ICI and

HEP partnerships, climate and sustainability themes offer a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional positioning, and societal relevance.

Strategic reflections for future programming include:

- Strengthening sustainability as a core dimension in programme design and assessment.
- Supporting interdisciplinary course development and institutional “green strategies”.
- Linking HEI interventions more systematically to local and national climate resilience plans.
- Enhancing South–South and triangular collaboration on sustainability expertise.
- Fostering multi-actor innovation ecosystems around climate and food security challenges.

6.3. Finnish added value and education perspectives

The HEI ICI and HEP programmes exemplify Finland’s distinctive contribution to global higher education partnerships, often referred to as “Finnish added value.” This contribution encompasses pedagogical expertise, values-based education, and a commitment to co-creation, equity, and institutional development. At the same time, these partnerships play a broader role in Finland’s education diplomacy, strengthening mutual understanding, international trust, and cooperation in an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.

From the perspective of partner institutions, Finnish HEIs are often perceived as credible, collaborative, and technically strong partners. Interviews highlighted appreciation for Finland’s emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy, inclusive educational design, and participatory governance models. The promotion of horizontal partnership structures, where mutual learning and reciprocal exchange are valued, was frequently noted as a strength of Finnish actors. Several partners described Finnish HEIs as “open,” “non-hierarchical,” and “long-term oriented.”

This perception is further reinforced by the way Finnish institutions supported institutional change processes. Rather than exporting fixed models, they often facilitated co-creation of locally adapted solutions. This included mentoring, peer learning, and coaching rather than prescriptive training, a model well aligned with current thinking in capacity development and postcolonial partnerships. Such approaches were particularly effective in contexts where systemic change was possible, such as curriculum reform or pedagogical transformation.

The Finnish education model, characterised by trust, autonomy, and equality, served as both an inspiration and a reference point for partner HEIs. However, interviews also underscored the importance of contextual sensitivity; while Finnish practices were admired, their relevance was mediated through local realities, policy frameworks, and resource constraints.

In broader terms, HEI ICI and HEP have also served as platforms for education diplomacy. They have strengthened institutional ties between Finland and countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, often at a time when global competition for influence in higher education is increasing. Through these partnerships, Finnish HEIs have gained visibility in strategic regions, contributed to multilateral agendas (e.g. SDGs), and supported the principles of rules-based, inclusive international cooperation.

HEI ICI and HEP have also offered an alternative to more extractive or transactional models of internationalisation. By foregrounding ethical and equitable cooperation, the programmes have helped position Finland as a promoter of fair partnerships, quality education, and sustainable development. This positioning supports broader foreign policy objectives, including soft power, credibility, and global solidarity.

At the same time, the programmes have contributed to Finnish institutions' own internationalisation efforts. Many Finnish HEIs reported benefits in terms of staff capacity, global understanding, pedagogical innovation, and institutional development, themes elaborated in the next chapter 6.4.

For future programming, maintaining and deepening the Finnish added value can benefit from:

- Continued commitment to reciprocity, equity, and mutual learning.
- Strategic investment in long-term, trust-based partnerships.
- Integration of global challenges (e.g. climate, inequality) into partnership focus.
- Support for policy dialogue and institutional networking at regional and global levels.
- Reinforcement of Finnish HEIs' capacity to engage in international development cooperation.

Finnish HEIs bring both content and character to international higher education partnerships, not only through technical knowledge but through a relational, value-driven approach that is increasingly relevant in today’s multipolar and contested global education space.

6.4. Feedback effects on Finnish institutions

While HEI ICI and HEP programmes are primarily designed to support capacity development in partner countries, both also generate important feedback effects on the Finnish higher education sector These effects include institutional learning, internationalisation, pedagogical innovation, strategic positioning, and enhanced understanding of global development dynamics.

One of the most cited benefits by Finnish HEIs was the opportunity to deepen staff expertise in intercultural communication, global education, and context-sensitive pedagogical practices. Participation in the programmes encouraged academic and administrative staff to reflect on their own assumptions, approaches, and institutional models. Many described the experience as “mutually enriching” and personally transformative.

In pedagogical terms, working with partner HEIs in different cultural and infrastructural contexts often led Finnish teams to rethink their teaching methods, adapt materials, and explore more inclusive or flexible delivery models. Exposure to the challenges faced by partner institutions also sparked innovation and empathy, qualities increasingly valuable in Finnish HEIs' own classrooms, particularly with the growing diversity of the student population.

Institutionally, several HEIs noted that these partnerships had strengthened their capacity for international project management, including skills in coordination, budgeting, monitoring, and risk management. Some institutions used the experience to build or expand global engagement strategies, create new support structures, or develop interdisciplinary teaching modules with global relevance.

HEI ICI and HEP collaborations also contributed to visibility and reputation. They enabled Finnish institutions to develop or consolidate international profiles in fields such as teacher education, digital learning, environmental science, or health. Participation in these bilaterally funded programmes often opened doors to wider networks, including EU-funded programmes (e.g., Erasmus+, Horizon, Team Europe), Nordic cooperation, and multilateral policy dialogues.

However, the distribution of benefits across Finnish HEIs has not been even. While some institutions have invested strategically in development cooperation as part of their core mission, others rely heavily on individual champions or departments. In several cases, the benefits remained concentrated within project teams, without full institutional uptake or integration into teaching and learning systems. This has implications for sustainability and the strategic leverage of these experiences.

Moreover, while some institutions were able to capitalise on follow-on funding and long-term partnerships, others struggled with high administrative burdens, lack of recognition in performance metrics, or limited internal support. These constraints may inhibit the broader institutionalisation of development-oriented internationalisation in Finland.

Looking ahead, a more systemic approach could support Finnish HEIs in fully harnessing the value of their engagement in these programmes. This might include:

- Strengthening internal learning processes and institutional memory related to partnerships.
- Embedding global competence and equity themes in curricula and teacher training.
- Recognising and rewarding development cooperation in academic merit systems.
- Facilitating cross-institutional dialogue and shared capacity-building across Finnish HEIs.
- Clarifying the role of these programmes within the broader internationalisation and education export strategies.

In short, HEI ICI and HEP projects are not only mechanisms for global solidarity and capacity development, but also engines of institutional renewal, relevance, and global citizenship within Finnish higher education itself.

6.5. Links to Sustainable Development Goals

HEI ICI programme’s links to the SDGS

The HEI ICI programme, with its completed cycles of implementation, demonstrates contributions to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most notably SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). The programme’s emphasis on curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, and digital transformation has expanded access to quality higher education and aligned skills development with labour market needs. Across projects, capacity building for faculty, integration of new teaching methods, and the establishment of innovation hubs have directly advanced SDG 4. For example, the adoption of problem-based and challenge-based learning approaches has improved both the quality and the relevance of higher education, equipping students with competencies for future work.

Gender equality objectives (SDG 5) were addressed through targeted actions to increase women’s participation in STEM fields, leadership training for female staff, and ensuring inclusivity in project activities. These interventions often required deliberate design choices, such as mentorship schemes or flexible learning models, to overcome structural and cultural barriers.

On SDG 8, many HEI ICI projects actively linked higher education outputs to economic opportunities by fostering entrepreneurship, establishing business incubators, and creating platforms for student–employer interaction. This not only supported graduate employability but also strengthened the role of universities as contributors to local innovation ecosystems.

A subset of projects also made strong contributions to SDG 13 and related environmental goals by embedding sustainability into curricula, using geospatial tools for climate resilience planning, and engaging communities in climate-relevant problem solving. The integration of open-source tools and local data into teaching reinforced both environmental awareness and applied skills for addressing climate challenges.

The programme's approach to SDGs has been both direct, through explicit alignment of activities with specific targets, and indirect, as improved institutional capacity and strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships have created enabling conditions for sustainable development. However, lessons from the completed cycle also point to the need for more systematic SDG tracking, as contributions were often reported qualitatively rather than through consistent indicators.

HEP programmes links to the SDGs

The HEP programme, still in mid-implementation, already shows potential for significant contributions to several SDGs, particularly SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Like HEI ICI, HEP is grounded in improving the quality and relevance of higher education, but it places greater emphasis on thematic focus areas such as food systems, renewable energy, biotechnology, and teacher education.

On SDG 4, ongoing projects are strengthening curricula, enhancing teacher training, and introducing hybrid learning models that broaden access, especially in underserved regions. Many projects work closely with ministries and professional bodies to align educational content with national priorities, which supports both relevance and sustainability.

SDG 5 considerations are embedded in project design through targeted outreach to increase female participation in technical fields, efforts to address gender gaps in teacher education, and the integration of gender-responsive pedagogy. While impacts are still emerging, early results suggest increased awareness and gradual shifts in institutional practice.

The programme's contribution to SDG 7 is evident in projects developing renewable energy curricula, conducting applied research with industry, and creating training pathways that support the green transition. Similarly, SDG 13 is addressed through climate-relevant content in food security, energy, and environmental management projects, with some initiatives piloting local adaptation measures alongside educational activities.

HEP also shows strong alignment with SDG 17 through its multi-stakeholder collaboration model. Partnerships span ministries, NGOs, private sector actors, and community groups, and often include regional and cross-sectoral working groups. These partnerships serve as vehicles for knowledge co-production and practical implementation, enhancing both the legitimacy and the scalability of project results.

Given that the HEP programme is ongoing, much of its SDG-related contribution is still potential rather than fully realised impact. Continued attention to monitoring frameworks, long-term institutional integration, and resource mobilisation will be key to ensuring that the current momentum translates into sustained and measurable progress towards the goals.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises the main conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes. The findings highlight both the strengths of the programmes and areas where further progress could be made. The recommendations are organised to address programme-level priorities, actions for specific stakeholders, and forward-looking proposals to ensure that the benefits of these partnerships are lasting, equitable, and globally relevant.

7.1. Conclusions - Role of HEIs as catalysts for learning ecosystems

This section summarises the overall conclusions from the evaluation, highlighting the contributions and outcomes of the HEI ICI and HEP programmes. We have evaluated their impact on institutional capacity, pedagogical reform, digital transformation, and skills development in partner higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as their role in fostering innovation, collaboration, and resource mobilisation.

Impact and effectiveness

HEI ICI and HEP projects have contributed meaningfully to institutional capacity development, pedagogical reform, digital transformation, and skills development in partner HEIs. The strongest outcomes were observed where activities were embedded institutionally and co-created with local actors. HEP projects, still on-going, show early indications of similar impact, particularly in the areas of sustainability and climate resilience.

The evaluation finds that the HEI ICI partnerships (2020–2024) delivered meaningful and sustainable outcomes, despite external shocks like COVID-19 and political instability. They strengthened institutional capacities of partner HEIs in teaching, management, and innovation, aligning closely with Finland's development policy priorities.

Key achievements include:

- Improvements in digital transformation, blended learning, and modern pedagogy.
- Strengthened employability of graduates through skills development, entrepreneurship training, business hubs, and updated curricula aligned with labour market needs.
- Embedded innovations into institutional structures, ensuring continuity beyond the project period.
- Fostering South–South and regional learning.

Both HEI ICI and HEP projects introduced a range of pedagogical, digital, and organisational innovations. The most effective were context-sensitive, scalable, and supported by leadership. Cross-project learning remains somewhat underutilised, and innovation tends to remain localised, unless supported by dissemination mechanisms or institutional strategies.

Projects demonstrated strong adaptive capacity and resilience, managing risks effectively through flexible planning and strong communication. Institutional ownership and inclusion of local stakeholders emerged as critical success factors. Nevertheless, challenges such as limited infrastructure, administrative bottlenecks, and short project durations occasionally constrained results.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration

Projects that engaged ministries, civil society, and the private sector produced more relevant and sustainable outcomes. Effective models included ecosystem approaches, co-teaching, and advisory groups. However, engagement depth and consistency varied widely, and many partnerships still rely on informal or ad hoc arrangements.

Funding access and resource mobilisation

A limited number of HEI ICI projects were successful in attracting follow-on or third-party funding. Enabling factors included strong institutional coordination, leadership buy-in, and alignment with national or international strategies. Many partnerships still lack the capacity, networks, or time to pursue funding.

Several projects successfully leveraged additional funding and partnerships, multiplying their impact and ensuring sustainability:

- Funding was obtained from sources such as the EU, World Bank, and national governments by aligning early with global priorities like climate resilience and digitalisation.
- Training in grant-writing and proposal development for staff and partners built institutional capacity.
- Multi-stakeholder networks enhanced eligibility for and access to diverse funding streams.
- Flexible project design allowed teams to respond to emerging funding opportunities and integrate complementary activities.

Demonstrating early results, aligning with global/national agendas, and maintaining active stakeholder networks was important for attracting follow-on support and ensuring sustainability.

Contributions to Finland’s trade and development strategies

The partnerships contributed to Finland’s dual goal of supporting sustainable development in partner countries while opening opportunities for trade and education export.

Findings include:

- Support for Finland’s priorities in education, gender equality, and climate action.
- Building soft power by strengthening Finland’s visibility and credibility in partner countries.
- Showcasing Finnish expertise in education and technology to African markets.
- Reciprocal benefits to Finnish HEIs, influencing teaching practices, global engagement, and strategic thinking.

Some projects successfully bridged higher education and trade by involving Business Finland, embassies, and private sector actors, demonstrating how education partnerships can serve as entry points for wider economic cooperation.

Summary of best practices

- Finnish added value is widely recognised by partners and stakeholders, particularly in pedagogical approaches, co-creation models, and ethical partnership principles. These strengthen Finland’s global role in education diplomacy and development cooperation.

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships enable impact through more relevant and sustainable outcomes, underlining the role of higher education as catalyst for learning ecosystems
- Successful partnership models with regard to resource mobilisation show strong institutional coordination, leadership buy-in, and alignment with national or international strategies
- Equity, gender, and sustainability are increasingly present in project design and implementation, but require more systematic planning, monitoring, and institutional support to achieve transformative impact.
- Reciprocal benefits to Finnish HEIs are significant yet under-leveraged at a system level, with outcomes often not captured or recognised institutionally.

7.2. Recommendations for future programming and partnerships

This chapter brings together the key recommendations from the evaluation, organised to reflect both programme-level considerations and forward-looking guidance for future programming and partnerships. The suggestions are framed to support strategic decision-making by different actors, general programme stakeholders, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), EDUFI, and project implementers, while maintaining flexibility for adaptation to different contexts.

The recommendations build on the evidence presented in earlier sections, addressing how HEI ICI and HEP can strengthen their effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability, while also enhancing their contribution to Finland's broader development policy and trade strategies. They emphasise the importance of continuity, thematic focus, innovation, and mutual capacity-building, alongside stronger regional collaboration, improved monitoring, and strategic visibility.

These forward-looking suggestions focus on helping institutions grow stronger, linking higher education partnerships more closely with innovation and diplomacy, and making better use of additional funding and collaboration opportunities. The aim is to make sure the benefits of HEI ICI and HEP last well beyond individual projects, building fair, lasting, and globally relevant partnerships that benefit both partner countries and Finnish institutions.

1. Strengthening programme effectiveness and impact

Strengthening programme effectiveness and impact could involve a shift toward phased funding models for projects, supporting continuity, strategic alignment, and deeper institutional transformation. For example, extending funding cycles for individual projects up to 4 years, with the option of follow-up projects, to continue the work and to deepen the impact. Embedding flexibility and adaptive capacity into project design may help ensure resilience to contextual changes, while enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and institutional learning could strengthen evidence-based planning and long-term impact assessment. Deepening local stakeholder engagement and co-creation could improve ownership, accountability, and societal relevance. Institutionalising successful results and practices, through policies, quality assurance, and leadership agendas, might ensure sustained benefits.

2. Strengthening linkages to Finland's trade and development strategies

Strengthening linkages to Finland's trade and development strategies could be achieved by linking higher education partnerships with innovation, export, and diplomacy tools to enhance both impact and visibility. Showcasing Finnish added value and pedagogical expertise might further reinforce Finland's education diplomacy brand, while leveraging collaboration with Education Finland and FinCEED could align development cooperation with education export efforts. Involving Finnish embassies and country teams more strategically could help identify opportunities, convene stakeholders, and enhance visibility.

3. Leveraging third-party funding and fostering synergies

Leveraging third-party funding and fostering synergies might include incentivising co-financing and blended funding models to attract a wider range of investment. Building institutional capacity for fundraising and resource mobilisation may improve sustainability prospects, and planning for sustainability of results and scaling from the outset could ensure continued relevance beyond project lifespans. Facilitating regional and thematic scaling, including South–South cooperation, might enhance knowledge exchange and joint funding opportunities. Also, documenting, sharing, and applying good practices systematically could strengthen peer learning and cross-project synergies.

Programme-Level Recommendations

General

The evaluation suggests that it could be beneficial to promote programme continuity and coherence through tiered or sequential funding tracks, enabling successful partnerships to deepen and scale over time. Strengthening regional and thematic focus, for example through hubs, climate education clusters, or food security consortia, may help build critical mass and foster shared learning. Impact could also be enhanced by encouraging innovation ecosystems that support experimentation, knowledge exchange, and community-driven initiatives connecting higher education institutions with both local actors and global agendas. Reinforcing capacity on both sides of the partnership, while recognising mutual learning and shared challenges as central elements, could contribute to sustaining results. Also, investing in strategic visibility and policy influence might position HEI ICI and HEP as recognised models of ethical and effective higher education partnerships.

For the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)

It may be considered to reinforce the strategic positioning of higher education partnerships within Finland’s development policy portfolio. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs could consider supporting programme-level learning mechanisms, shared platforms, and long-term partnerships through multiyear frameworks or tiered funding. In addition, introducing light-touch requirements for sustainability planning (without creating heavy administrative work or complex compliance processes) and third-party funding strategies during the project lifecycle might help strengthen the long-term impact and resilience of these partnerships.

For EDUFI

Strengthening monitoring systems to track outcomes, might provide better evidence for decision-making and improvement. In addition, providing targeted capacity-building on grant-writing, scaling innovations, and engaging with non-academic stakeholders could help support the long-term sustainability of project results.

For Project Implementers

Embedding sustainability and inclusion principles from the outset, through stakeholder mapping, co-design, and long-term visioning, may increase the relevance and longevity of results. Prioritising the institutional embedding of successful practices via policy alignment, staff training, and strategic dialogue with leadership could further strengthen outcomes. Investing in relationship-building with ministries, private sector actors, and civil society might also maximise both the relevance of the work and the potential for resource mobilisation.

8. REFERENCES

Evaluation Reports and External Studies:

Evaluation Report: Finland's Development Cooperation in the Education Sector – Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Evaluation of Finland's Education Sector Support in Mozambique 2014–2022 – Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Programme Documents and Background Materials:

HEI ICI Programme Document 2020–2024

HEP Programme Document 2023–2026

HEI ICI Projects 2020–2024, *Results of HEI ICI Projects 2020–2024*, *HEP Projects 2024–2026*

Project-Specific Reports:

Final reports of six HEI ICI projects implemented in Africa

Annual reports of six HEP projects implemented in Africa

Synthesis Reports and Monitoring Data:

Results of the HEI ICI Programme 2017–2020

HEI ICI Synthesis Reports 2020–2023

Monitoring reports by EDUFI

APPENDIX

Survey results

Two surveys were conducted. Surveys were designed for two separate groups: project staff and experts and project beneficiaries. Survey for project staff and experts received 49 replies and the survey for beneficiaries received 41 replies.

Survey for project coordinators and other project staff

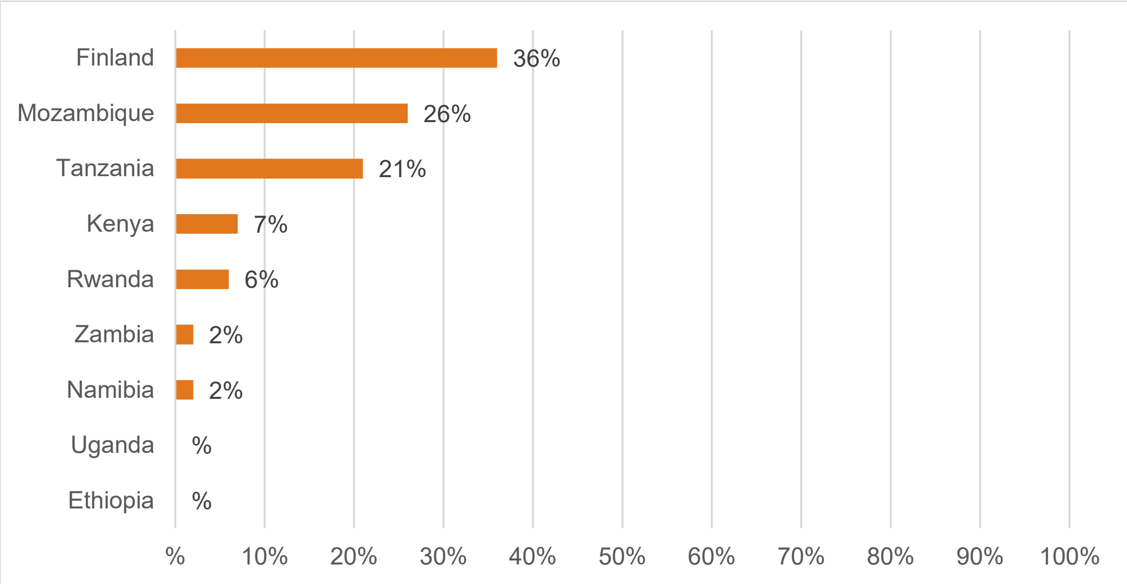

Figure 13 In what country is your organization based? (n=47)

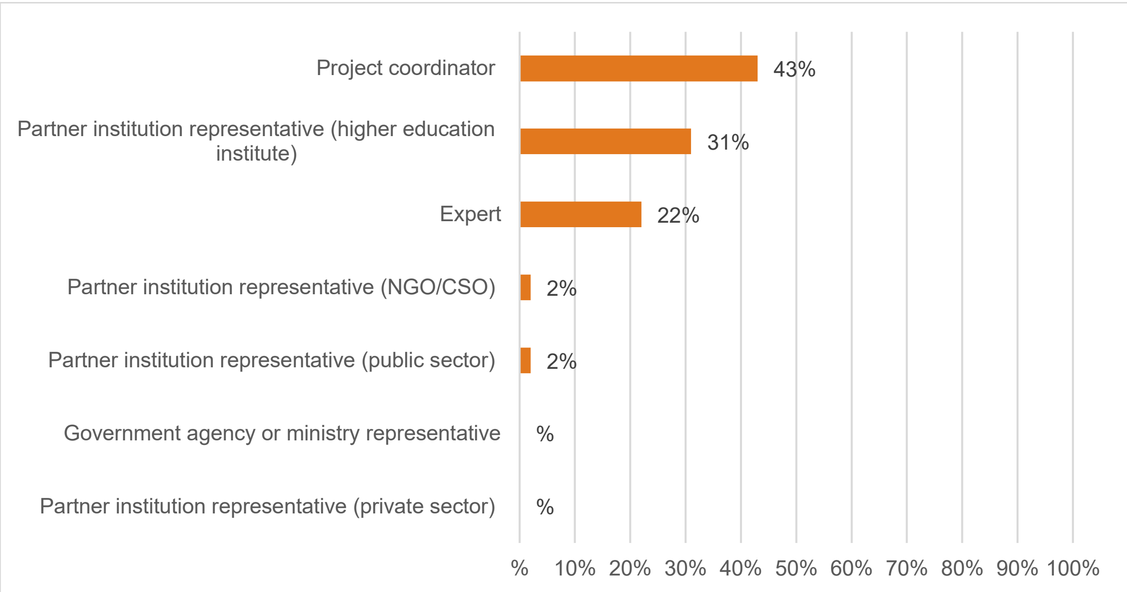

Figure 14 What was your role in the HEI ICI / HEP project(s)? If you have had multiple roles in different projects, choose the most relevant and answer based on that role. (n=49)

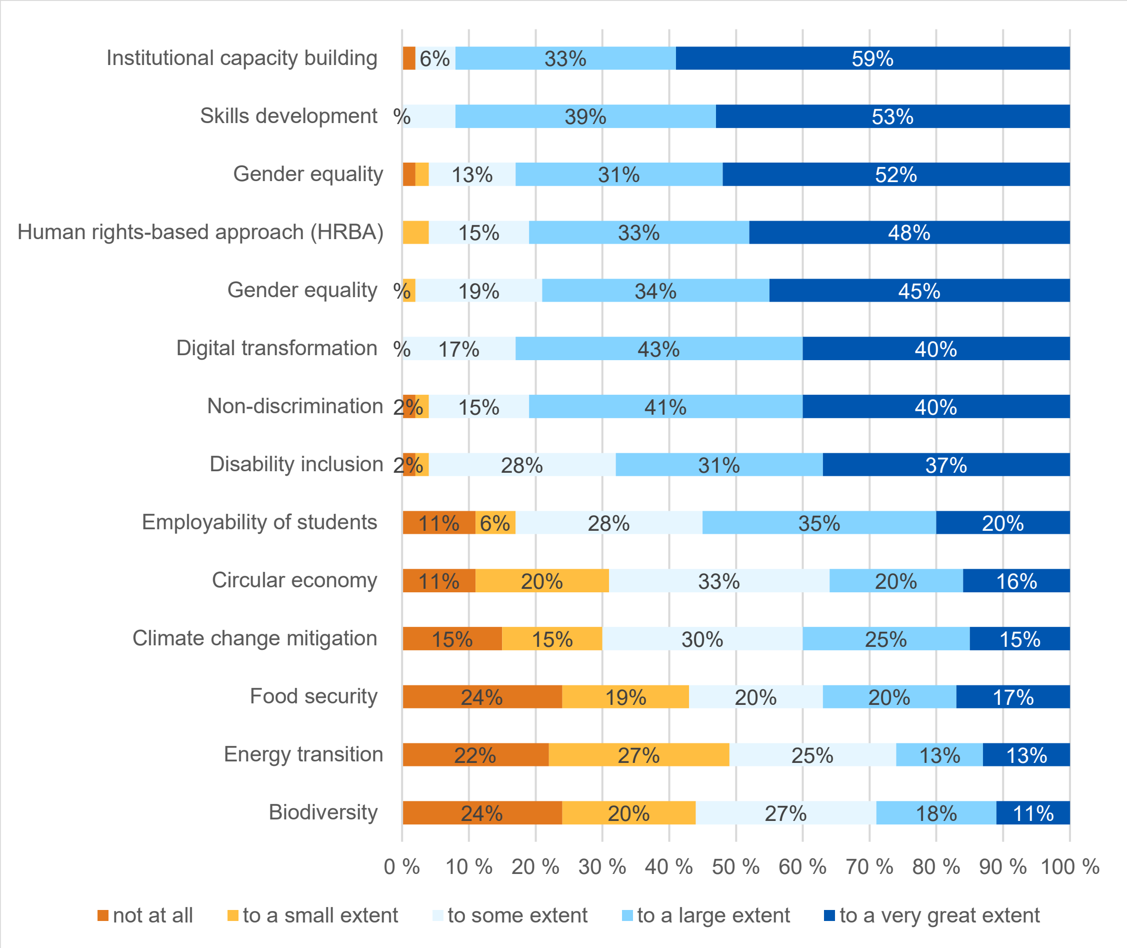

Figure 15 To what extent have the projects contributed to the following? (n=49)

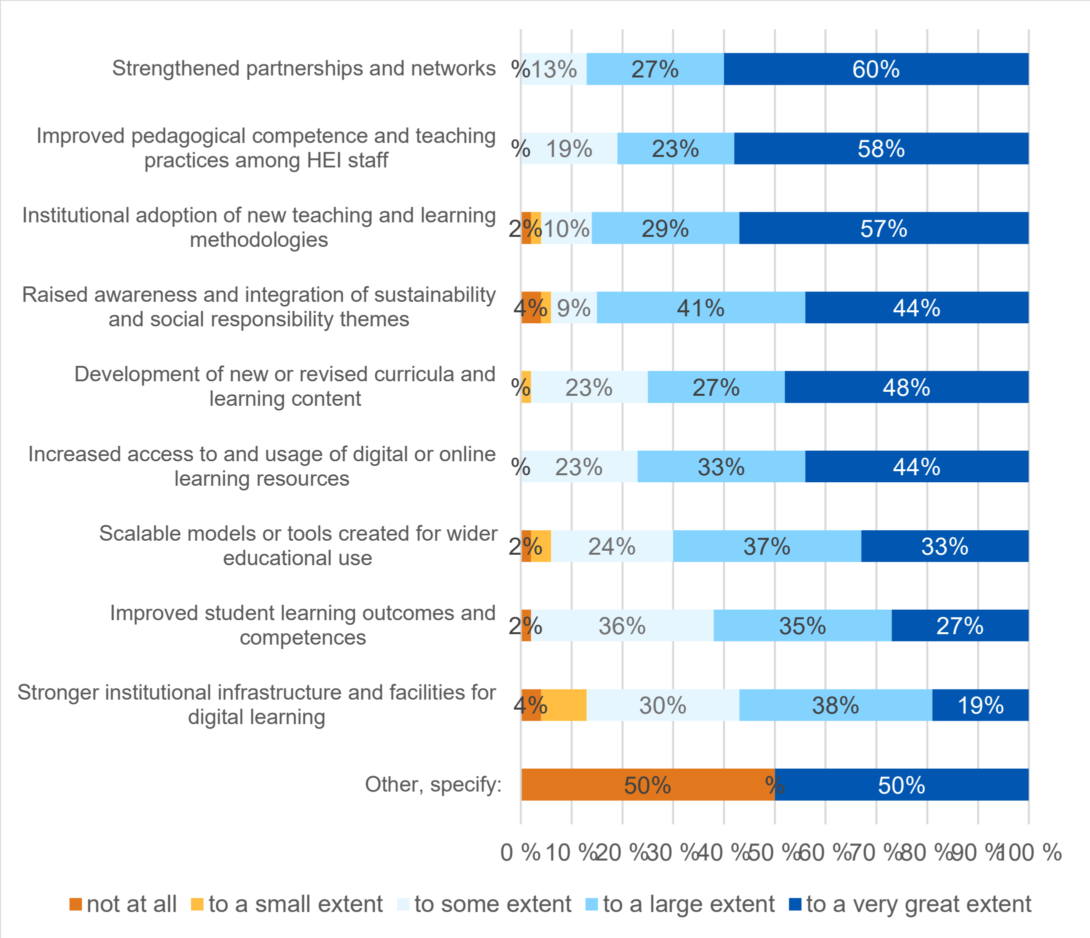

Figure 16 Evaluate how much / to what extent the project developed the following aspects. (n=49)

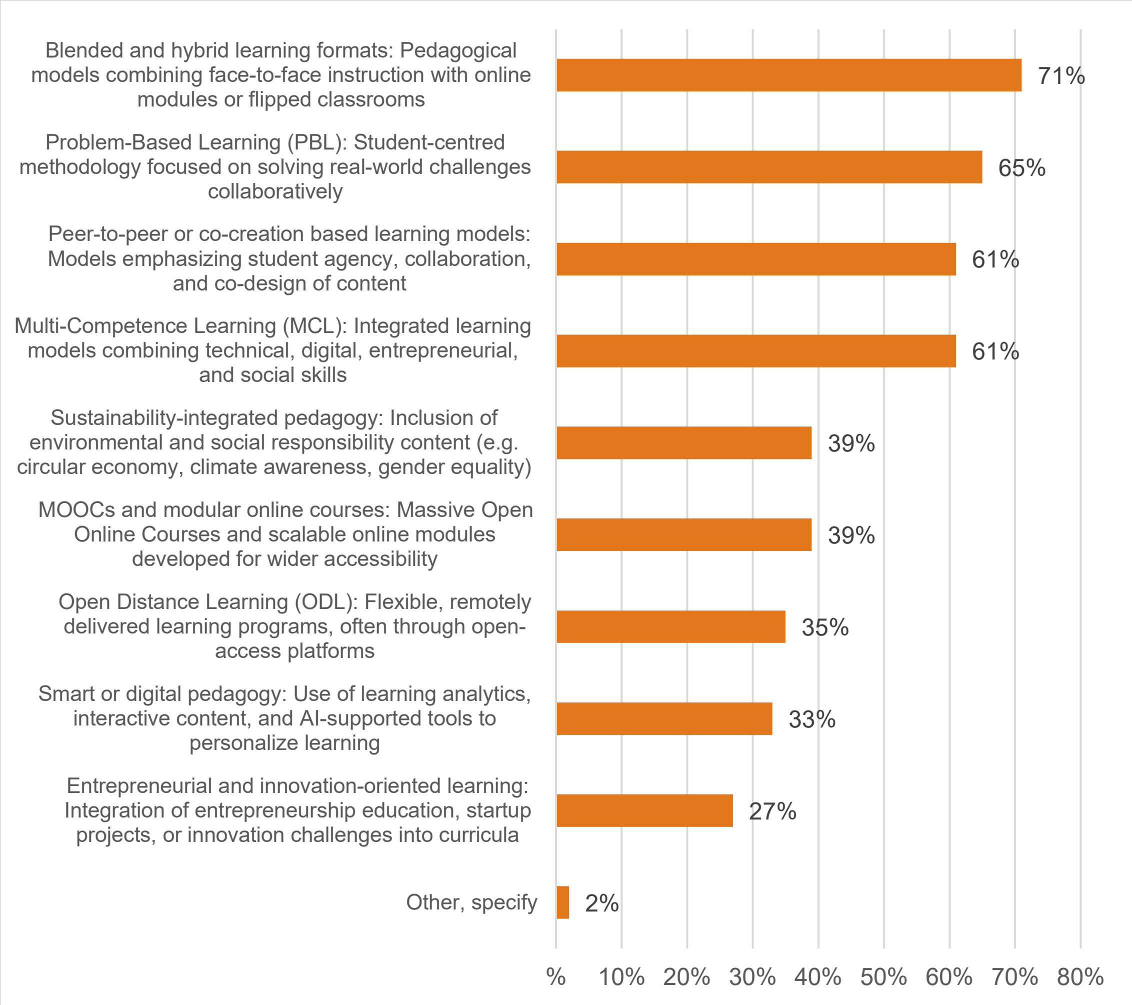

Figure 17 What innovative approaches or pedagogical models have emerged through the project? (choose 1-5 of the most important ones) (n=49)

Figure 18 Which of the following practices have been piloted or adopted beyond the project scope? (n=47)

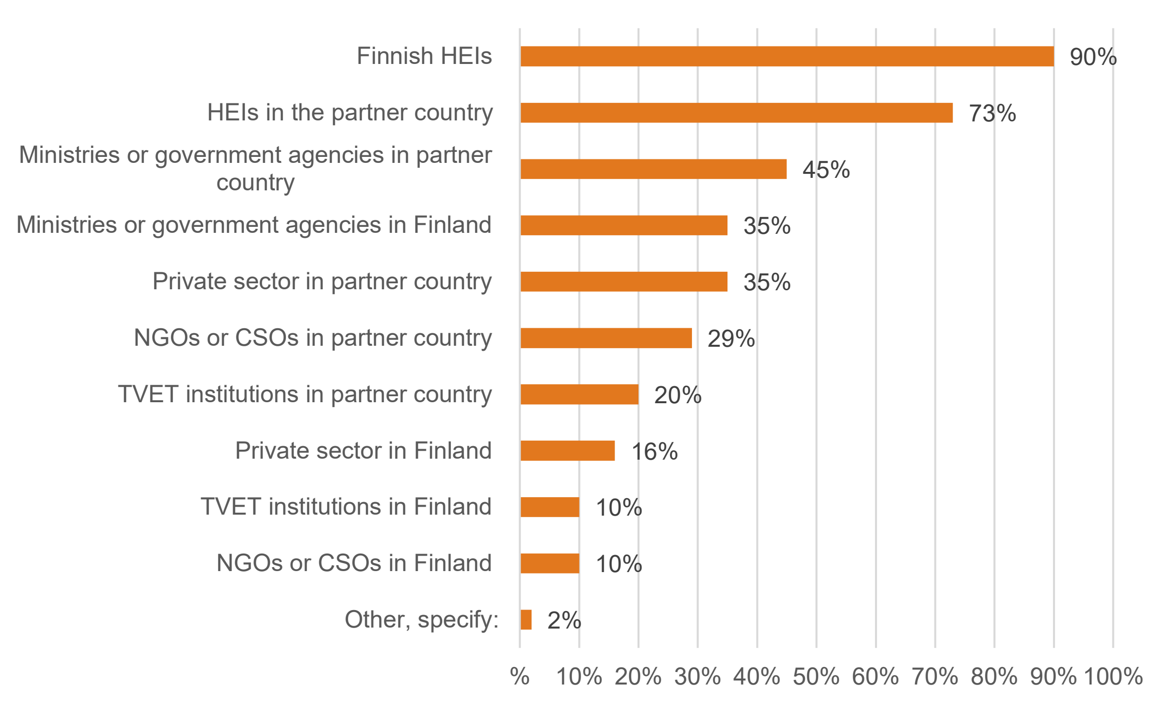

Figure 19 What types of organisations did you collaborate with in the project? (select all that apply) (n=49)

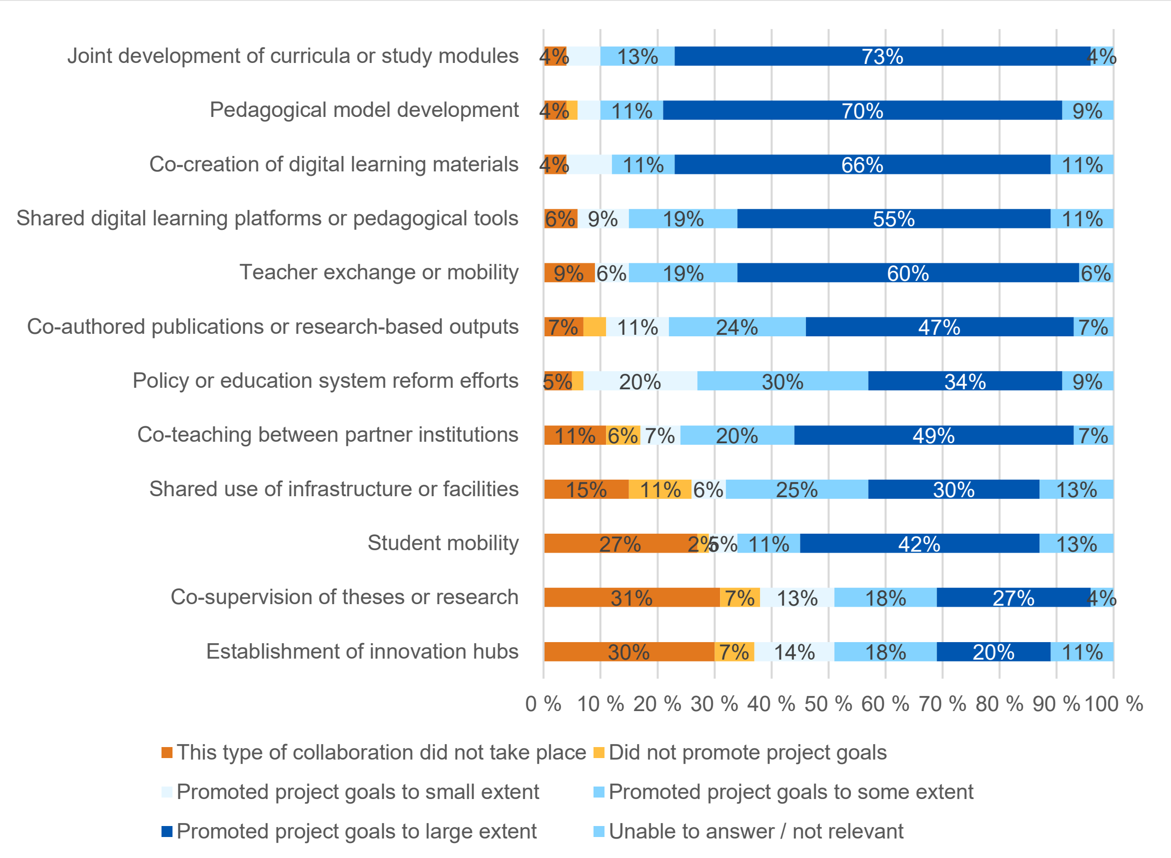

Figure 20 How effective were the following forms of collaboration in promoting project goals? (n=49)

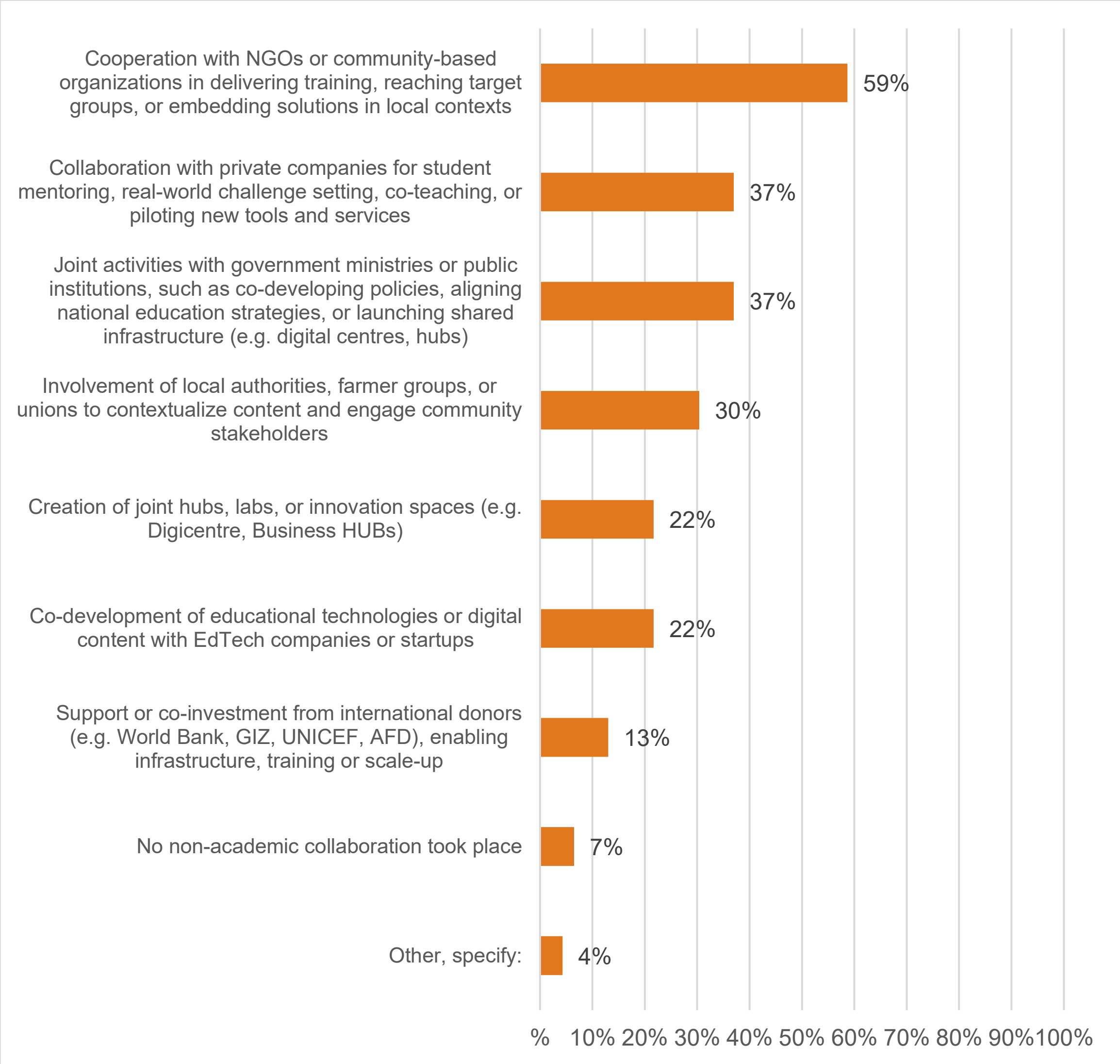

Figure 21 What types of non-academic collaboration took place in your project? (select all that apply) (n=46)

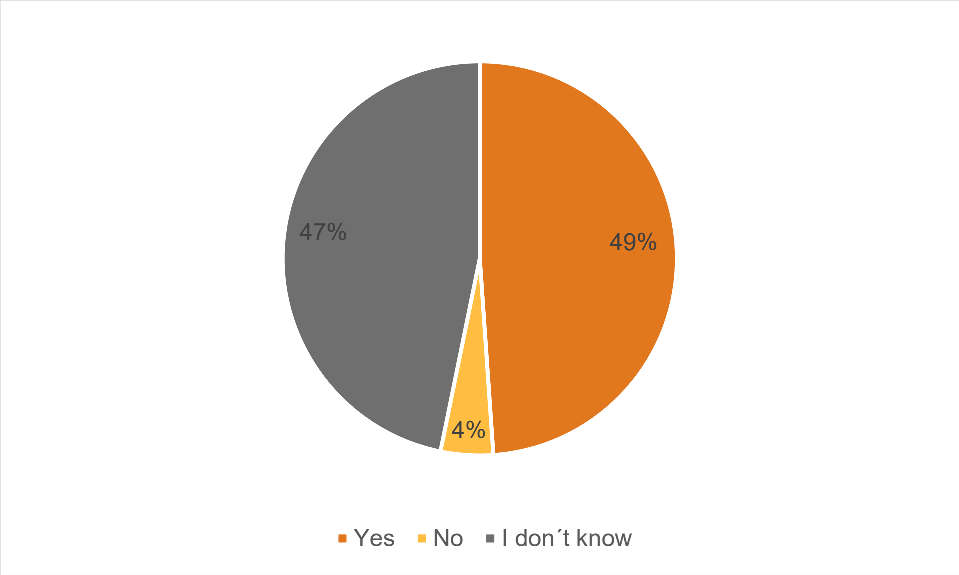

Figure 22 Were any of these collaborations continued or institutionalized after the project? (n=47)

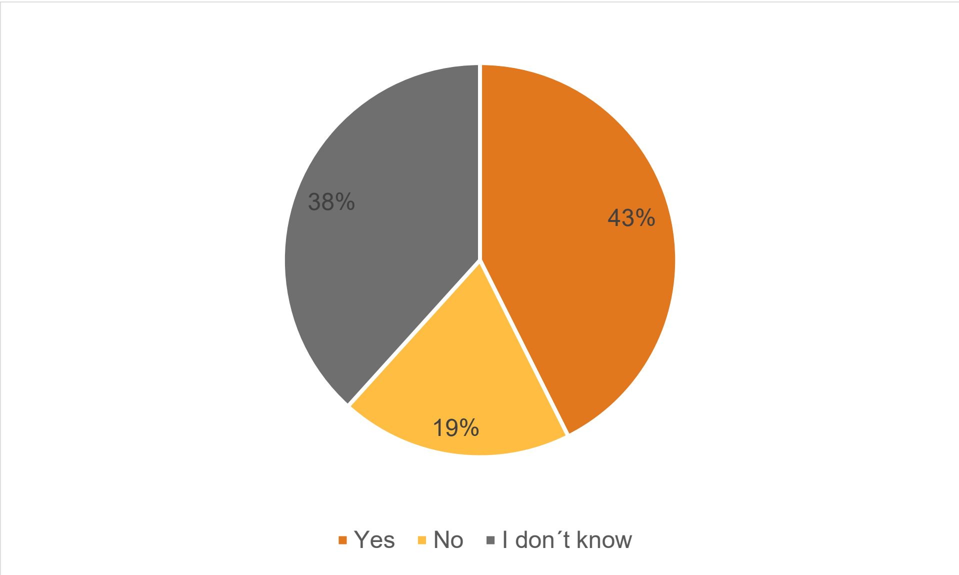

Figure 23 Did this project help your organization gain access to additional (third-party) funding? (n=47)

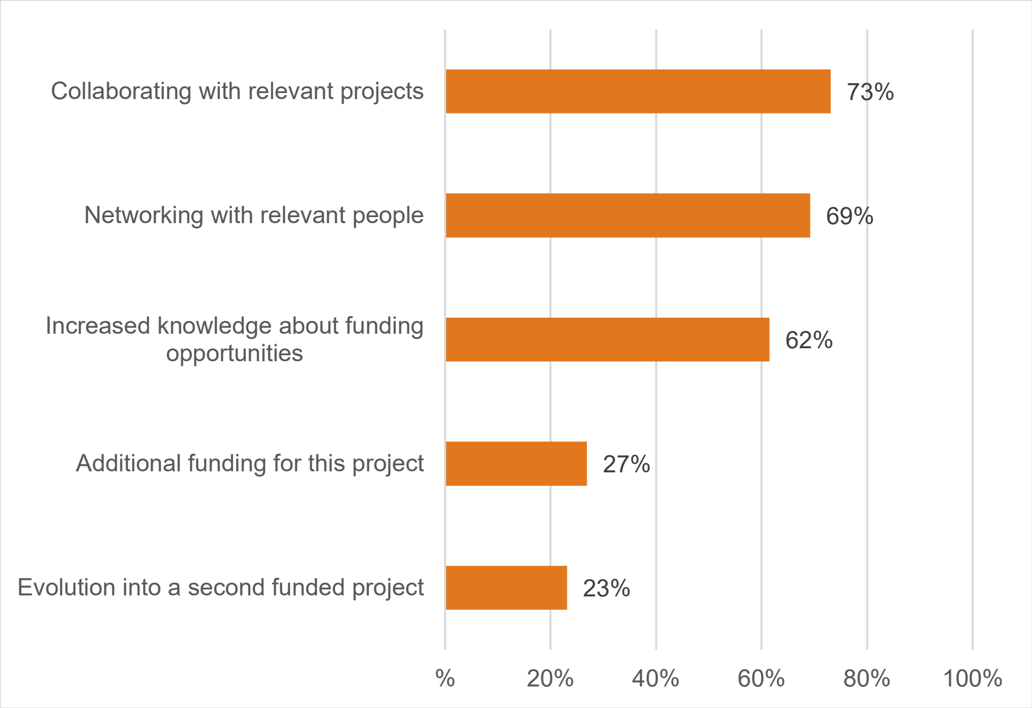

Figure 24 If yes, which mechanisms or partnerships within the project helped your organization gain access to additional (third-party) funding? (n=26)

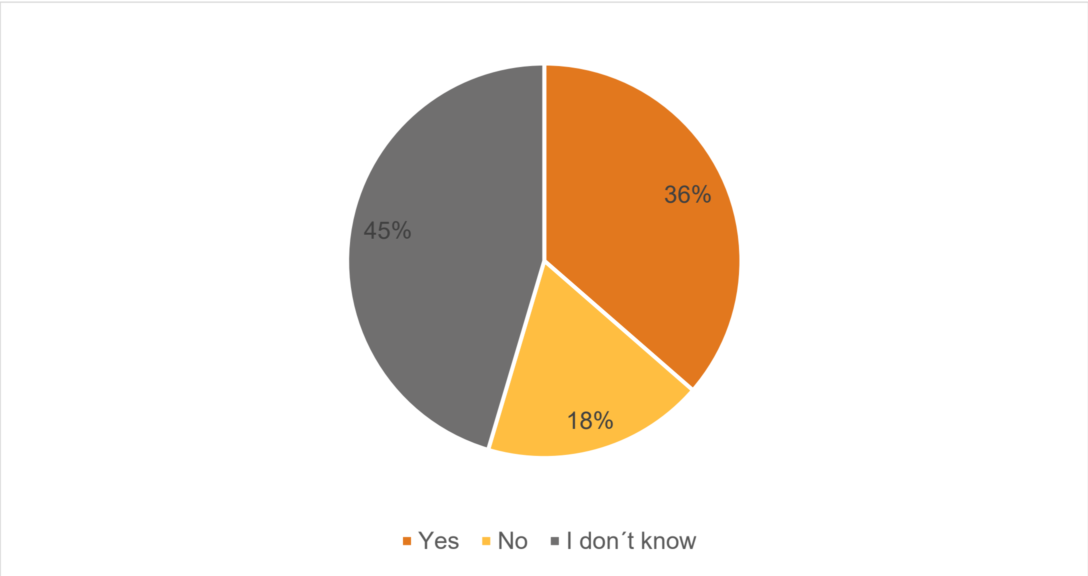

Figure 25 Did the project create foundations for potential export-driven or internationally scalable initiatives involving Finnish expertise? (n=44)

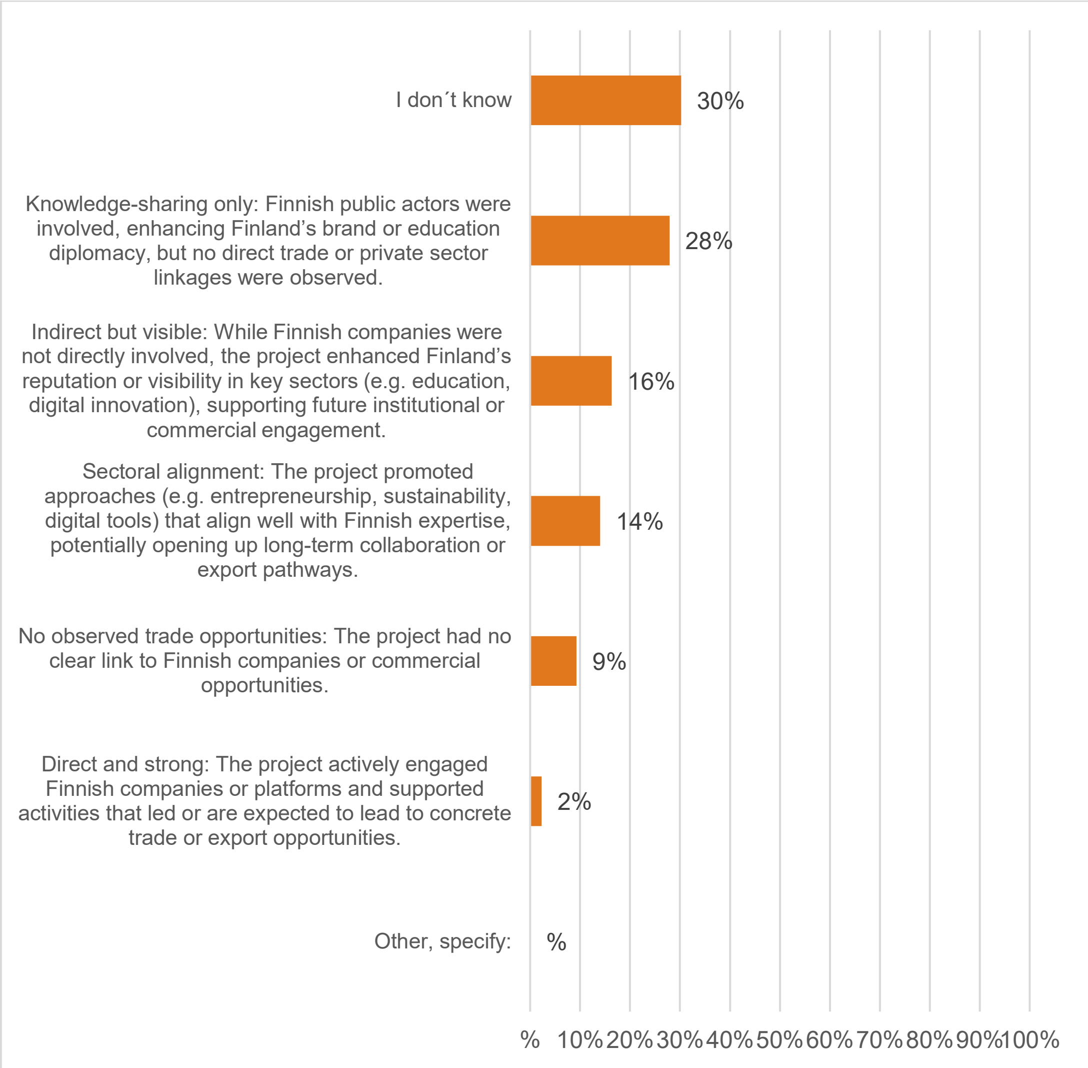

Figure 26 What kind of business or trade opportunities emerged from the project for the Finnish private sector? (select the option that best describes your project) (n=43)

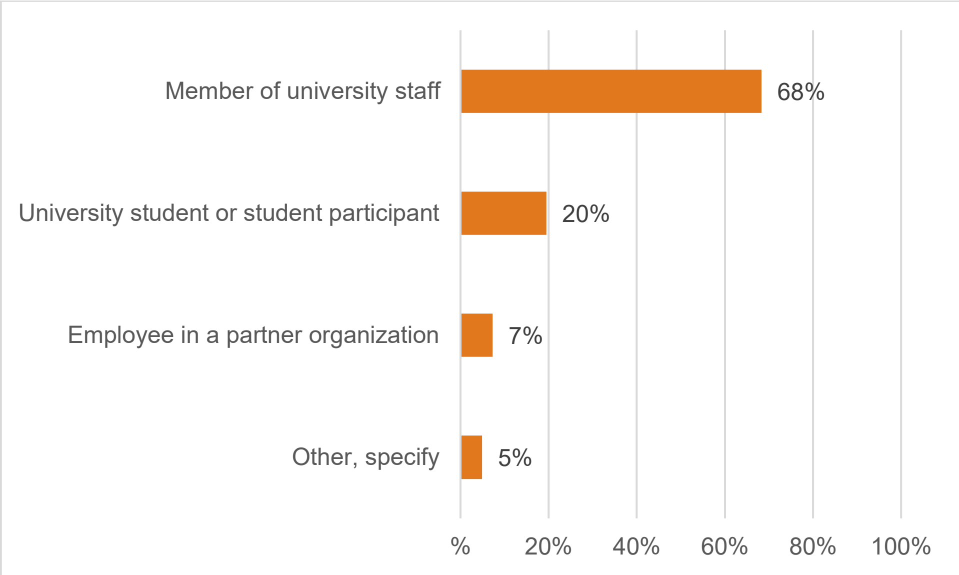

Figure 27 What was your status during the project implementation? (n=41)

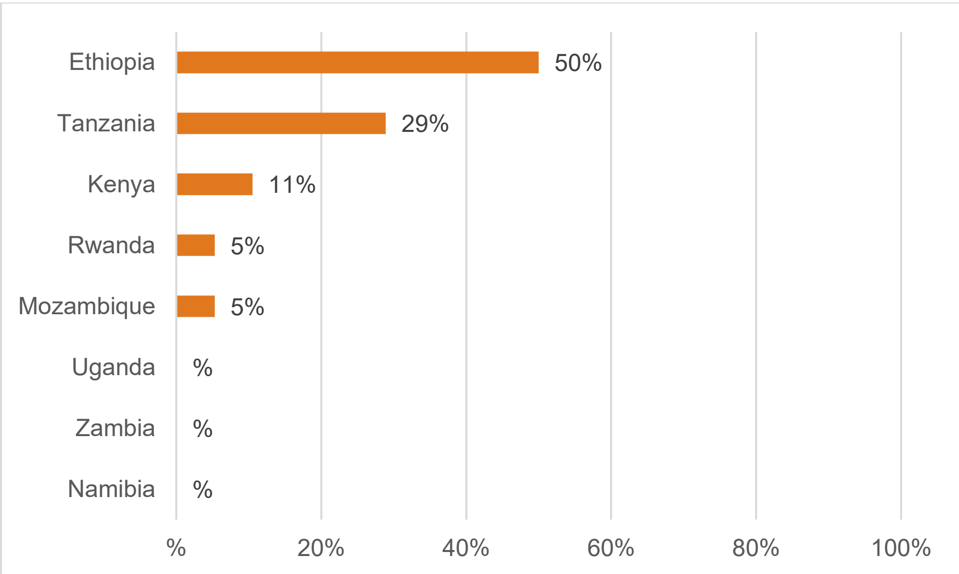

Figure 28 In which country did you participate in the programme? (n=38)

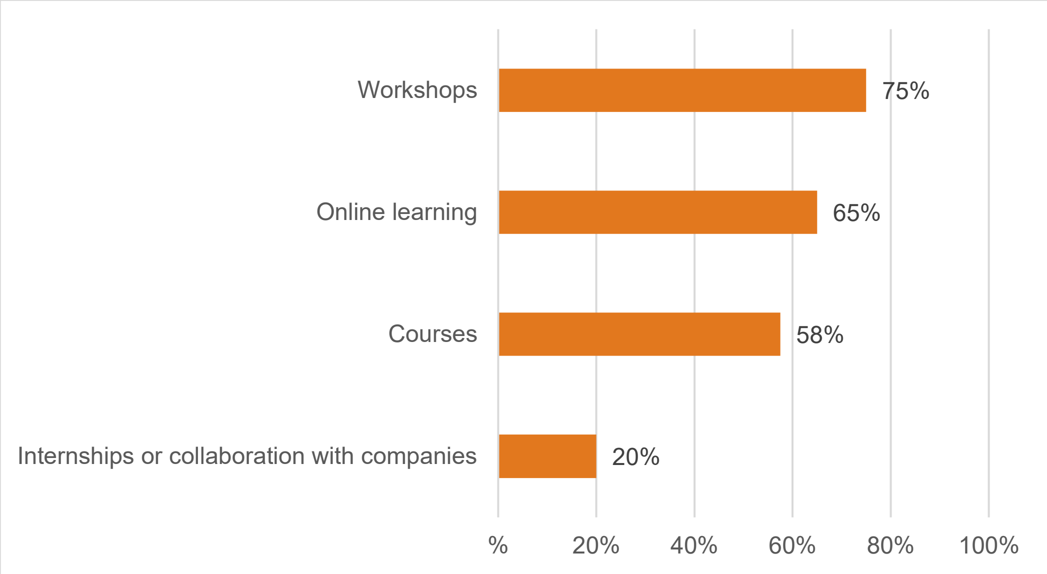

Figure 29 Which project activities did you participate in? (select all that apply) (n=40)

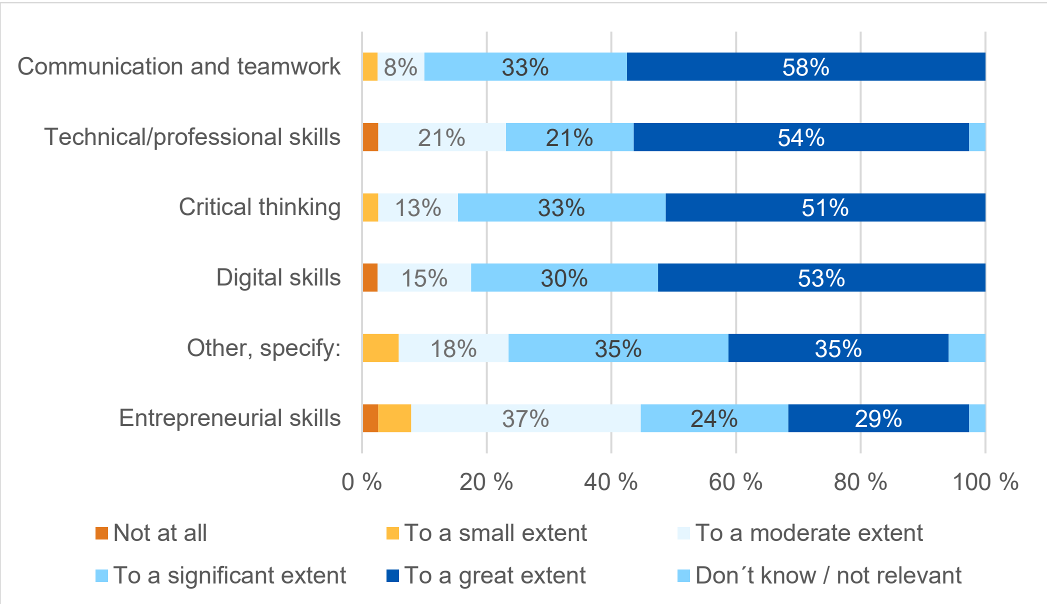

Figure 30 To what extent did your skills develop through the project or course you participated in? (n=40)

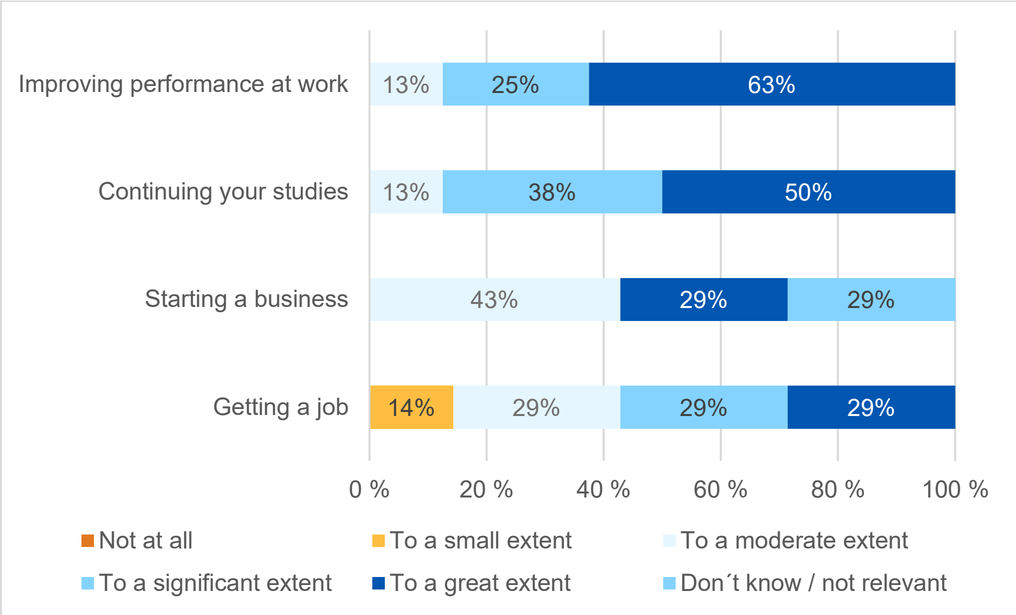

Figure 31 How much have these skills helped you in the following? (n=8)

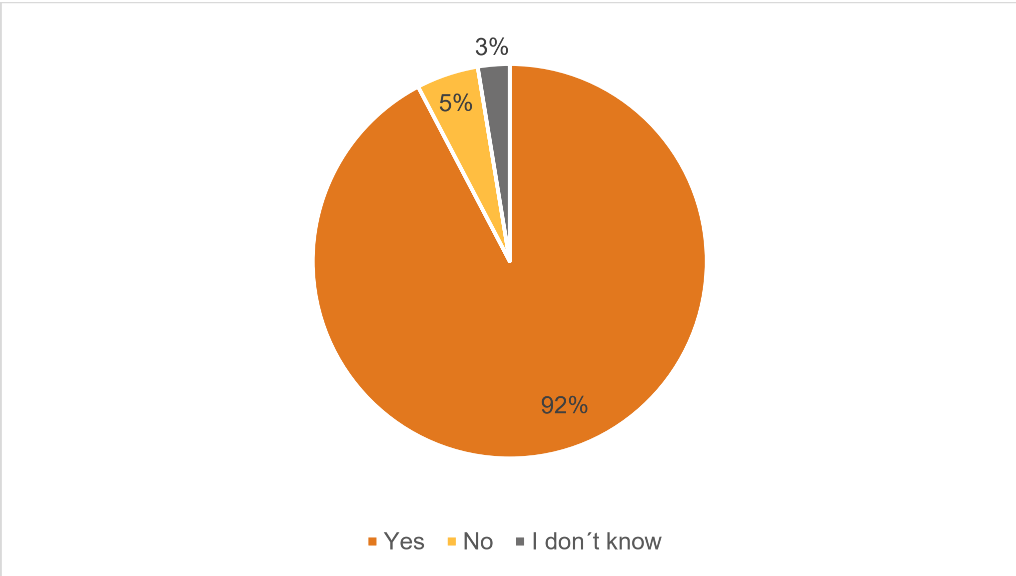

Figure 32 Have you used or applied what you learned in real-life context? (n=39)

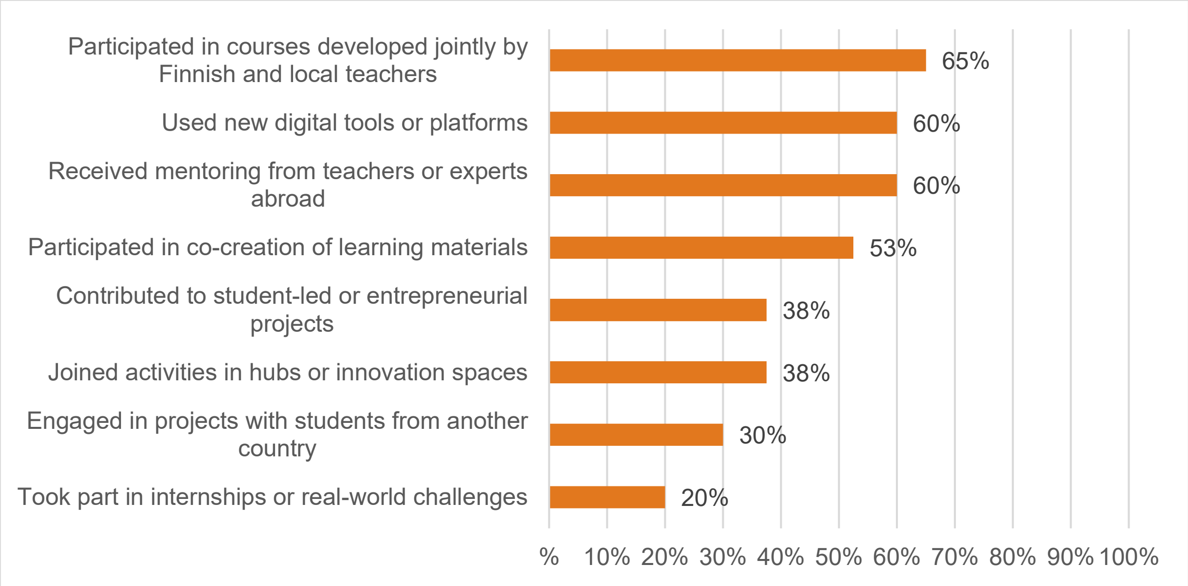

Figure 33 What kinds of collaboration or learning experiences did you take part in during the project? (Select all that apply) (n=40)

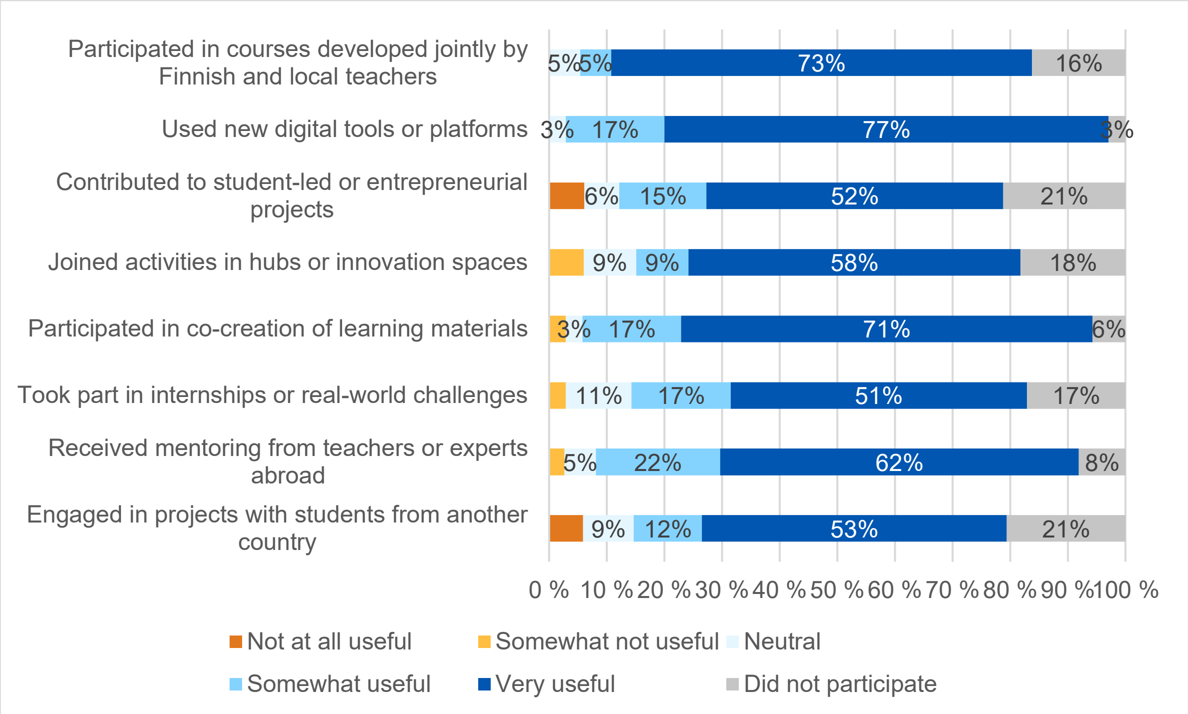

Figure 34 Evaluate how useful in general different learning experiences were. (n=40)

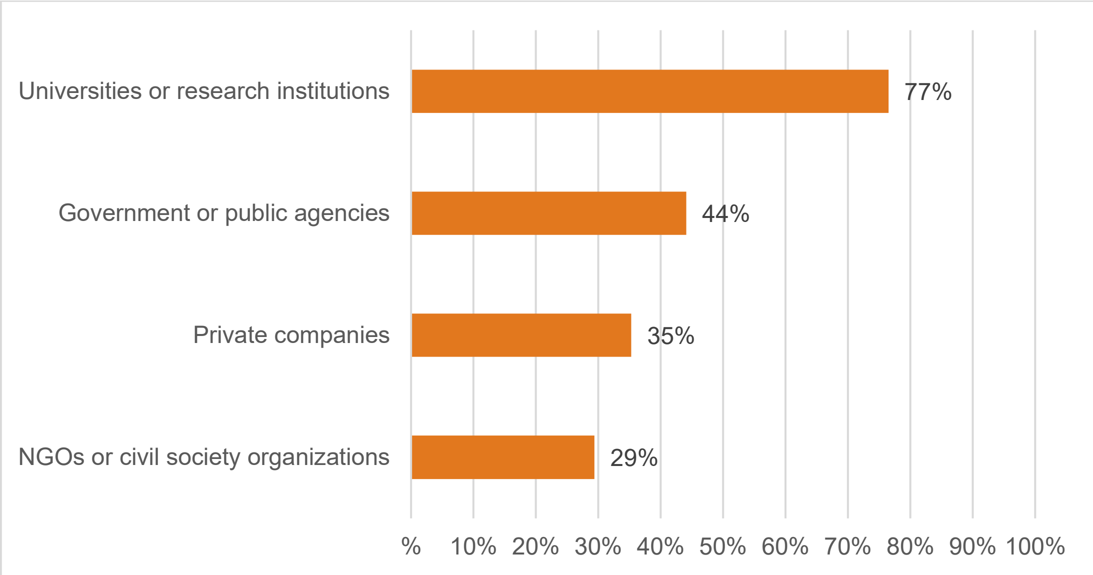

Figure 35 Did you work or collaborate with people from different sectors during the project or course you participated? (select all that apply and describe below in more detail) (n=34)

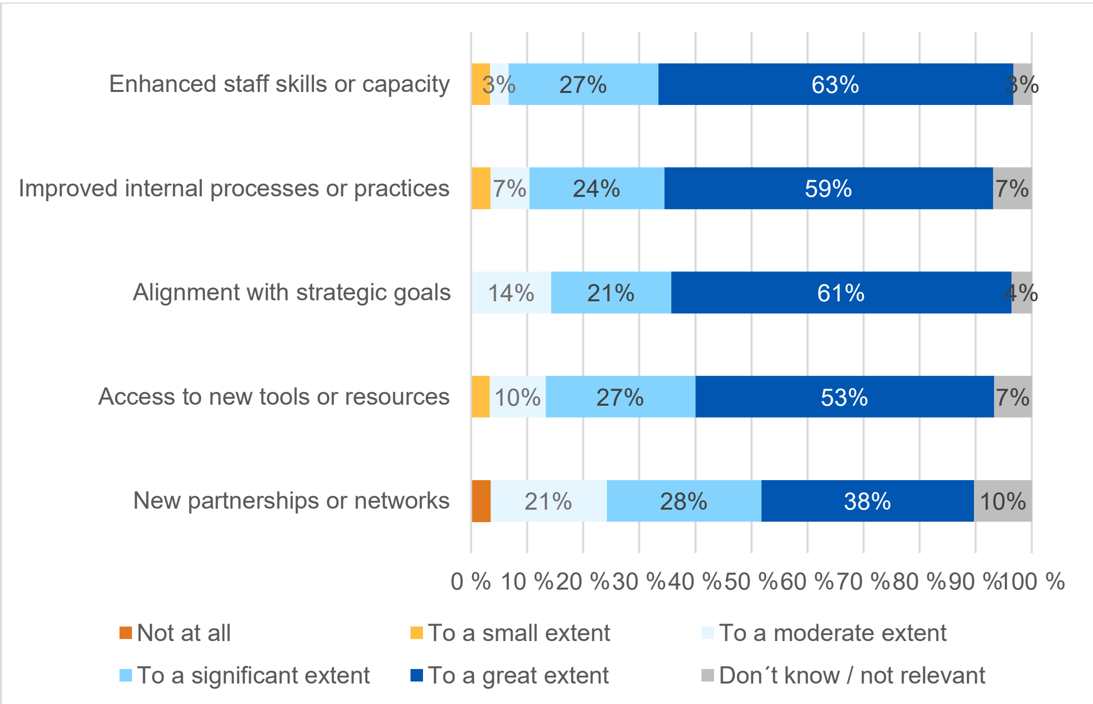

Figure 36 How has your organization benefitted from your participation in the project? (Please select all that apply and elaborate briefly below) (n=30) Asked only from member of university staff and partner organisation.

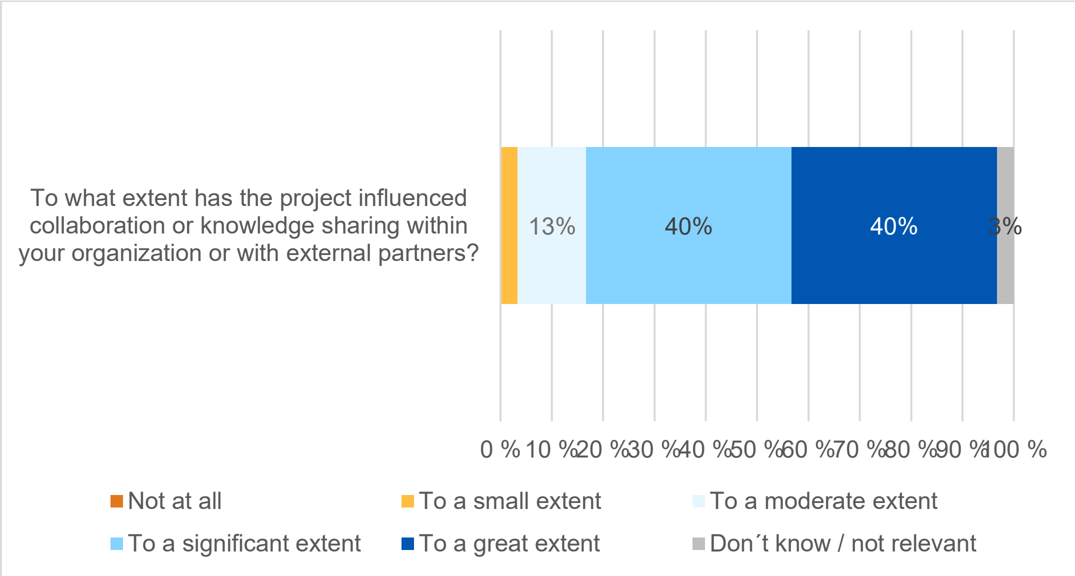

Figure 37 To what extent has the project influenced collaboration or knowledge sharing within your organization or with external partners? (n=30). Asked only from member of university staff and partner organisation.

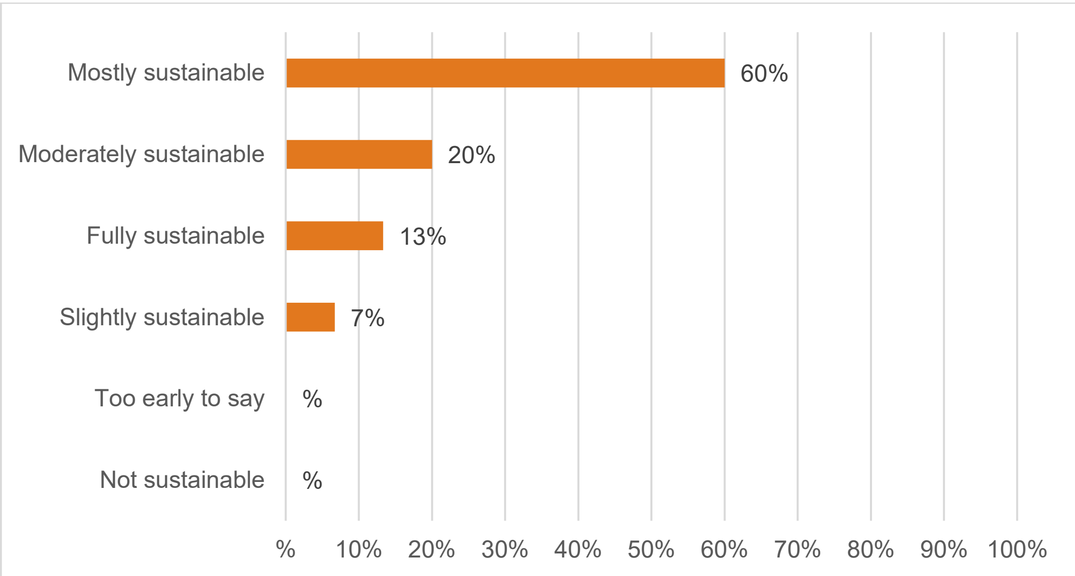

Figure 38 In your opinion, how sustainable are the benefits your organization has gained through the project? (n=30)

4FRONT

4FRONT