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Puheenvuoro

39

Diak

ELSA KESKITALO, EVARISTE HABİYAKARE & SONJA VANTO (EDS.)

## Universities and Businesses Co-creating Sustainable Communities for the Future

Experiences and Results from the BUSCO Project

Elsa Keskitalo, Evariste Habiyakare & Sonja Vanto (eds.)

UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESSES  
CO-CREATING SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

EXPERIENCES AND RESULTS FROM THE BUSCO  
PROJECT



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# ABSTRACT

**Elsa Keskitalo, Evariste  
Habiyakare & Sonja Vanto (Eds.)**

**UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESSES  
CO-CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
FOR THE FUTURE**

**Experiences and results from the BUSCO  
project**

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[Diak Speaks 39]

The BUSCO project titled as “Building sustainable and resilient communities through co-creation between universities and businesses in Tanzania” operated in 2017–2020. BUSCO was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland and administered by EDUFI through a HEI-ICI funding (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument). The project partners were Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH) in Finland and University of Iringa (UoI) and Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU) in Tanzania.

The project aimed at improving the capacities of the partner universities to promote sustainable community development and community resilience. The project adopted a co-creative model of living labs in order to foster collaboration between universities, communities, and businesses. The project goals were to pilot the joint Master’s Programme in Community Development, Human Rights and Conflict Resolution; to improve e-learning and ICT facilities; to develop a co-creative model of living labs in the fields of ecotourism, entrepreneurship, counselling, community development and law; to promote curriculum reviews; and to develop quality assurance mechanisms and tools.

According to the evaluation, the BUSCO project has fostered the capacity and knowledge base of the partnering universities. Despite many challenges, most of the planned outputs have been delivered, albeit not all on the planned scale. University-community collaboration has been promoted and established through the co-creative model of living labs. The university now has a modern counselling centre, a community resource centre, and a legal advice centre through which to continue and expand the collaboration. Awareness of and capacity for curriculum revision and quality assurance tools have been increased. The universities have benefited from improved ICT facilities and e-learning skills. The Master’s pro-

gramme is now running at Diak; short courses will be opened in Moodle at the University of Iringa; and academic resources are available through Research4Life. The developed models can also be put into action in SEKOMU.

**Keywords:** institutions of higher education, entrepreneurship, developing countries, co-creation, teaching, sustainable development

# TIIVISTELMÄ

**Elsa Keskitalo, Evariste  
Habiyakare & Sonja Vanto (Eds.)**

**YLIOPISTOT JA YRITYSTOIMINTA  
KEHITTÄMÄSSÄ TULEVAISUUDEN KESTÄVIÄ  
YHTEISÖJÄ**

**Kokemuksia ja tuloksia BUSCO-projektista**

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**B**USCO-hanke, *Building sustainable and resilient communities through co-creation between universities and business in Tanzania*, toimi vuosina 2017–2020. Hanke oli Suomen ulkoministeriön korkeakoulutuksen kehitysyhteistyöohjelman (HEI-ICI, Higher Education Institutional Cooperation Instrument) rahoittama hanke. Diakonia-ammattikorkeakoulu (Diak) toimi projektin koordinaattorina, ja hankekumppaneita olivat Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulu Suomesta sekä Iringan yliopisto (UoI) ja Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU) Tansaniasta.

Hankkeen tavoitteena oli kehittää kumppaniyliopistojen kapasiteettia ja sitä kautta edistää kestävästä kehitystä paikallisyhteisöissä ja yhteisöjen resilienssiä. Projektissa hyödynnettiin yhteiskehittämistä eli niin sanottua living lab -toimintamallia yliopistojen, paikallisyhteisöjen ja yritysten yhteistyön edistämiseksi.

Hankkeessa oli viisi tulostavoitetta: käynnistää Diakin ja tansanialaisten yliopistojen yhteinen Master of Community Development, Human Rights and Conflict Resolution -koulutusohjelma sekä parantaa verkko-oppimista ja IT-kapasiteettia. Lisäksi tavoite oli luoda yhteiskehittämiseen perustuvat toimintamallit (living lab), joiden teemoina ovat ekoturismi, yrittäjäyys, psykososiaalinen ohjaus, yhteisökehitys ja lakineuvonta. Muita tavoitteita olivat opetussuunnitelmien arviointi ja uudistaminen sekä laadunhallinnan mekanismien ja keinojen kehittäminen.

Arviointitulosten mukaan BUSCO-projekti on edistänyt kumppaniyliopistojen kapasiteettia ja tietopohjaa. Huolimatta monista haasteista useimmat suunnitellut tavoitteet on saavutettu, vaikkakaan ei kaikkia suunnitellussa laajuudessa. Yliopistojen ja paikallisyhteisöjen yhteistyötä on edistetty ja vakiinnutettu yhteiskehittämisen (living lab) avulla. Iringan yliopistolla on nyt uusi, moderni psykososiaalisen ohjauksen keskus, yhteisöjen kehittämisen ja lakineuvonnan

keskukset, joissa yliopiston ja paikallisyhteisöjen yhteistyö jatkuu. Tietoisuus ja valmius opetussuunnitelmien kehittämiseen on lisääntynyt, samoin laadunhallinnan keinot ovat lisääntyneet. Parantuneet IT-resurssit ja verkko-opetustaidot hyödyttävät yliopistoja tulevaisuudessa. Master-tutkinto on käynnissä Diakissa, ja tutkinnon osia voidaan tarjota erillisinä kursseina avoimen Moodle-verkkoympäristön kautta myös Tansaniassa. Tiedonhaun resurssit Research4Life-portaalin kautta ovat käytössä Iringan yliopistossa, ja ne voidaan yhdessä Moodle-kurssien kanssa ottaa myös käyttöön SEKOMUn yliopistossa.

**Avainsanat:** korkeakoulut, yrittäjyys, kehitysmaat, yhteistyö, opetus, kehittäminen, kestävä kehitys

# CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Tiivistelmä</b>	<b>6</b>
Elina Ylikoski	
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>12</b>
Elsa Keskitalo & Sonja Vanto	
<b>The Busco Story – Project Goals, Achievements and Experiences</b>	<b>13</b>
 <b>1. IMPROVING E-LEARNING CAPACITY AND ICT FACILITIES</b>	
<hr/>	
Fredrick D. Ngumbuke & Marketta Fredriksson	
<b>Building E-learning Capacity – Experience from the BUSCO Project</b>	<b>28</b>
 <b>2. DEVELOPING CO-CREATIVE MODEL OF LIVING LABS</b>	
<hr/>	
Evariste Habiyakare, Sakariina Heikkanen & Kalle Räihä	
<b>Living Labs, the Idea and Pedagogy</b>	<b>44</b>
Agnes Nzali, Heriel Mfangavo, Neema Mwakatobe, Cosmas Masimo & Sara Yengu	
<b>Living Labs, Realization and Sustainability: A Case of the BUSCO project, University of Iringa, Tanzania</b>	<b>59</b>
Dickson J. Shekivuli & Evariste Habiyakare	
<b>Ecotourism Living Lab: A Tool for Sustainable Tourism Development</b>	<b>75</b>



### **3. DEVELOPING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROMOTING CURRICULUM REVIEWS**

---

Lucas Mwahombela & Juha P. Lindstedt  
**The Experiences Of Quality Assurance Development in the BUSCO Project** 89

Lucas Mwahombela, Jarmo Ritalahti & William N. Wilson  
**Experiences of Curriculum Development at the Universities of Iringa and SEKOMU** 104

### **4. PILOTING THE MASTER PROGRAMME IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

---

Jouko Porkka & Agnes Nzali  
**Learning Asset-Based Community Development in the Rural Tanzania** 117

Tanja Oguntuase & Marianne Nylund  
**Community Needs its Youth - A Case Study of a Participatory Approach in Klaukkala** 134

Anisa Doty & Heriel Mfangavo  
**Looking to Intuitive Approaches: Conflict Sensitivity in the BUSCO Project** 152

**Presentation of Authors** 165

Elina Ylikoski

## FOREWORD

**T**his book invites you to join an exciting learning journey into building sustainable and resilient communities through co-creation between universities and businesses in Tanzania.

In its project plan and performance, the BUSCO project incorporated the key values and themes relevant to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a funding party as well as all the universities involved. These values and themes include human rights, inclusion of underrepresented groups, empowerment, accessibility learning opportunities for all and an eco-social approach in solving socially and ecologically entangled global problems – just to mention a few. Today, these values are underlined in the EU policy programmes such as Green Deal and Africa strategy, highlighting the importance of European higher education institutions (HEI) to create value-based, purpose-driven partnerships with African partners. The BUSCO project has already proven to pave the way for Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences sharing the same values.

Furthermore, the BUSCO project is in alignment with the higher education policies and development cooperation policies in Finland in general, and specifically, the characteristics of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. As such, BUSCO provided opportunities for participating universities' students and staff to apply community development methodologies in a developing country context and thus gain valuable knowledge and skills needed from future professionals. This practical experience connected with a strong theoretical ground provided the students and staff with fruitful opportunities to learn, teach, make research and contribute locally as well as make societal impact along the project. Participatory methods, community-university co-operation, the use of living lab concepts as well as the focus on co-creation practices brought together academic, theoretical and practical knowledge and know-how and ensured their best possible use.

Diak as a coordinator of the BUSCO project could not be prouder of the results and impact of BUSCO – or more thankful to its local and global partner institutions, as well as all individuals having devoted their time, enthusiasm and effort on our mutual goals. All the achievements of the BUSCO project have truly been the results of a genuine co-creation and participation, and on behalf of Diak, I really want to sincerely thank you all for your efforts on this.

And now, let the story unfold...

Elina Ylikoski

Director of Innovations, PhD (Econ.)

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ABCD</b>	Asset-based Community Development
<b>AACSB</b>	Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business
<b>AQ</b>	Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria
<b>CABLE</b>	Community Action-based Learning for Empowerment
<b>CBET</b>	Community-based Ecotourism
<b>CBPR</b>	Community-based Participatory Research
<b>CSA</b>	Conflict Sensitive Approach
<b>CSC-Hub</b>	Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub
<b>CS</b>	Conflict Sensitivity
<b>Diak</b>	Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
<b>EDUFI</b>	The Finnish National Agency for Education
<b>EFQM</b>	European Foundation for Quality Management
<b>ENQA</b>	The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>FINEEC</b>	The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HEI ICI</b>	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
<b>HERI</b>	Higher Education Research Institutions (In Tanzania)
<b>HH</b>	Haaqa-Helia University of Applied Sciences
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>LAN</b>	Local Area Network
<b>LL</b>	Living Lab
<b>LMIC</b>	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
<b>LMS</b>	Learning Management System
<b>MCST</b>	Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology (Tanzania)
<b>OS</b>	Operating System
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance / Quality Assessment /
<b>SEKOMU</b>	Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University
<b>TANZICT</b>	The Information Society and ICT Sector Development Project in Tanzania
<b>TCU</b>	Tanzanian Commission for Universities
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainees
<b>TTCL</b>	Tanzania TeleCommunication Limited
<b>UoI</b>	University of Iringa
<b>VAC</b>	Violence against Children
<b>VAW</b>	Violence against Women
<b>VAWC</b>	Violence against Women and Children

Elsa Keskitalo & Sonja Vanto

# THE BUSCO STORY – PROJECT GOALS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPERIENCES

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to first give a presentation of the original BUSCO project plan, and then give an account of how the goals of the project plan have been achieved. The questions covered are as follows: what were the main goals of the project? How were the goals implemented? What are the main results and outcomes of the project? And how can these results be sustained? As with any project, BUSCO has met several risks over the project cycle. One was the fragile financial situation of the Tanzanian partner universities; another was the high turnover of key experts. In the article, the writers explain how the risks were managed and how the project plan was revised over the project period. The writers reflect on the results, achievements and experiences of the project using the material collected from the interim reports and the experiences from the staff working in the project period 2017–2020. The external evaluation report of Ms Raisa Venäläinen has also been used. The articles to follow in this publication cover both the activities developed and the results in detail, as well as discussing the core findings, methods, and experiences of the BUSCO HEI-ICI project. The publication reinforces the sustainability of the results, achievements, and good practices collected during the BUSCO process

## The Goals of the BUSCO Project

BUSCO is an acronym derived from the project title “Building sustainable and resilient communities through co-creation between universities and businesses in Tanzania” which operated in 2017–2020. Within the project, the intention was to build higher education capacity in two Tanzanian universities, the University of Iringa (UoI) and Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU), in collaboration with two Finnish universities, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH). Both the Tanzanian

universities are relatively small, private universities, located in rural areas: the University of Iringa in Southern highlands, and SEKOMU in Lushoto, Tanga region, northeast Tanzania.

Diak had former project collaboration with UoI with North-South-South funding in a project called DIRA (DIRA – Developing Culturally Sensitive Methods in Interventions against Abuse of Most Vulnerable Children in Communities) before BUSCO. Furthermore, a former HEI-ICI project in Kenya, in which a joint master's degree in Global Health was launched, also served as a model for the project. In keeping with the spirit of the Kenyan HEI-ICI project, piloting a master's degree programme in Community Development was a driving force for the BUSCO project. The planning of the curriculum of the joint master's programme started already in 2015 between Diak, UoI, and SEKOMU. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences joined the partnership in spring 2016, when the project planning proper started. The fact that the partners knew each other facilitated collaboration and created a much-needed degree of trust among the partners.

BUSCO is a HEI-ICI (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument) project funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland and administered by Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). The project call was launched in the beginning of June 2016 and the project proposal was submitted in the beginning of October 2016. The project goals and ideas were co-created within the partnership, and developing capacity in higher education was the starting point. The joint master's programme formed a cornerstone of the project proposal. In order to make the joint programme work, it was necessary to build it on e-learning. Consequently, building ICT capacity became a second goal. Tanzania is a large country, and developing e-learning capacity was the goal that the partner universities shared with the Finnish universities of applied sciences.

Traditionally, higher education in Tanzanian universities has been theory driven. According to the national strategy, the partner universities wanted to make their universities more employment-friendly and to promote employment and entrepreneurship. University-working life collaboration is the essence of the Finnish universities of applied sciences, which justified the third goal: to develop university-community collaboration and entrepreneurship in the Tanzanian partner universities.

The adopted approach of fostering collaboration between universities, communities, and businesses was based on co-creation within thematic living labs. In this way, BUSCO was built on top of previous projects, in particular the Finnish-supported Tanzanian Innovation Systems (TANZICT) project, which included the

training programme Team Academy, as well as the physical forum for university and business collaboration, KIOTA HUB, which was already in place at the UoI campus.

Among the Finnish partner universities, Diak represented special expertise in community development in a broad sense as well as in social and health care, while Haaga-Helia brought in its expertise in business and entrepreneurship, living lab thinking, curriculum review, and quality assurance. Haaga-Helia did not participate in the piloting of the master's programme.

Projects last a few years, and the risk is that the developed activities do not continue after the project ends. In BUSCO, this risk was recognized and addressed from the beginning; BUSCO wanted to promote sustainable change as much as possible. In universities, curricula are the way changes and new pedagogical ideas can be implemented. In Tanzania, the university curricula are accredited by the national body, the Tanzanian Commission for Universities (TCU). This prolongs the process of starting a new degree programme, and the process is more time-consuming and challenging compared to Finland, where universities decide their curricula independently.

In the BUSCO project, curriculum review was identified as one of the project goals. The goal was to introduce living lab thinking, as a form of university-community collaboration, into the curricula in selected faculties and programmes. To foster the future development of university processes, especially curriculum development, the project goals were expanded to include developing quality assurance systems as a final goal. Through quality assurance mechanisms, the project wanted to secure the sustainability of the development.

The project aimed at improving the capacities of the partner universities to promote sustainable community development and resilience of the communities. The overall, long-term objective was the sustainability and resilience of the Tanzanian communities in the Southern Highland and Tanga region. In the joint preparatory process, the project goals were formulated as follows:

- Piloting the joint master's programme in Community Development, Human Rights, and Conflict Resolution
- Improving E-learning and ICT facilities
- Developing a co-creative model of living labs in the fields of ecotourism, entrepreneurship, counselling, community development and law
- Promoting curriculum reviews
- Developing quality assurance mechanisms and tools

The project would fall into the HEI-ICI call in the areas of overall Finnish country strategy and the Tanzanian national development plans, and would focus on entrepreneurship, and the agriculture and forest sectors. Furthermore, the project falls under all four result areas of the HEI-ICI programme: 1) improved access to higher education and research information; 2) improved quality of higher education and research environment; 3) enhanced institutional capacity supporting the quality of teaching and research; and 4) strengthened role and relevance of higher education in development of society. BUSCO project goals would also be in line with United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, especially regarding SDG 4) Quality Education (4.3-4.5); SDG 8) Decent work and economic growth (8.3, 8.9); and SDG 9) Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure (9 A-C).

## **BUSCO Activities**

The activities in BUSCO were naturally linked with the overall project goals. In the original plan, the activities would connect to review curricula, the joint master's programme, living lab activities, ICT skills and facilities, and on top of it all, quality assurance, which was expected to strengthen the institutions' capability to sustain the results on the institutional level. The emphasis in all activities was in the University of Iringa and SEKOMU, even though the joint master's programme covered also Diak. Piloting the joint master's programme in Community Development, Human Rights, and Conflict Resolution was linked to multisectoral curriculum development including social, business, and community development; counselling, law, and tourism programmes; and the co-created living labs in the communities. Through improving employment opportunities and entrepreneurship and universities' capacities, BUSCO aimed to enhance the resilience of both the communities and individuals.

The project period started officially on April 1, 2017, followed by a launching seminar in September, simultaneously with the launch of master's programme at Diak. Project organization consisted of a project manager and a project coordinator from Diak, and a project coordinator representing each participating university. In the beginning, there were more than 50 key experts altogether in the partner universities, which in itself was a challenge for coordination. One of the key experts in each activity was named as leader, who, together with their team, was responsible for running the activities and reporting progress every three months. It was decided to have two work meetings a year, with every second one in Iringa and SEKOMU. Together with regular communication through e-mails and sharing



documents on Google Drive, these meetings became crucial check-in points for tracking progress and agreeing on the next steps.

Regarding the activities, building ICT capacity was the most urgent step for piloting the master's programme as it was supposed to take place mostly online. Capacity building in the Tanzanian universities included the procurement of physical infrastructure (computers, network, audio system for counselling in the living lab), as well as building the online access to Open Moodle and library e-resources. The application for accreditation of the master's programme was submitted to the Tanzanian TCU already in 2016 in order to receive the accreditation for the programme both in SEKOMU and UoI by the time the project started. The decision was delayed, but piloting of the master's programme started at DIAK in September 2017, when the first 22 students started their studies.

Building ICT capacity progressed well, and it was ready for the intensive course of the degree programme that took place in UoI in October 2017 with a duration of two weeks. The intensive course was a joint effort with the partnering universities: Diak, Haaga-Helia, UoI, and SEKOMU. The programme consisted of thematic lectures from Finnish and Tanzanian lecturers in the first week and community case studies and presentation of the preliminary analysis during the second week. Community case studies were linked to the communities where the thematic living labs operated. Voluntary students from UoI participated in the intensive course even though they could not collect credits for it, since the Master of Community Development, Human Rights, and Conflict Resolution was not accessible for students in UoI and SEKOMU. According to the feedback, the intensive course was an important learning experience for the Finnish as well as for the Tanzanian students.

The meeting days and the intensive course were also utilized for training sessions held by key experts. The training consisted of e-learning and e-teaching skills and living lab thinking, curriculum review, and quality assurance to support the main activities. In the first year, 42 members of UoI staff were trained for e-learning/Moodle, living lab and design thinking, as well as curriculum review and quality assurance mechanisms, with Diak and HH staff as trainers. Local stakeholders were invited and participated in the training sessions, in particular living lab training sessions, in order to establish the living lab activities. In SEKOMU, the training was more directed towards stakeholders, and, during 2018, more than 500 non-academics participated in the training events and workshops, the most popular workshop being the capacity-building workshop regarding human rights and inheritance, especially gender-based violence and the denial of women's property ownership.

In 2019, a second group of 22 Finnish students started the master's programme at Diak, and in November 2019, a second intensive course in Iringa was arranged, this time only for one week. Again, the feedback from both Finnish and Tanzanian students was very good, and the students even described the contents of the course and the collaboration between students, teachers, and stakeholders as "the experience of a lifetime". The students learned about how to proceed with asset-based community development and community analysis. Unfortunately, due to financial obstacles in SEKOMU, their students could not participate in the intensive courses.

In both universities in Tanzania, in accordance with the idea of co-creation, local stakeholders were invited to be involved with the university from the beginning of the development of the living labs. The decision about which communities to work with was made by the stakeholders after being consulted by the coordinators and key experts. As a first step, it was agreed that each living lab would conduct a needs assessment about the development needs in these communities. Students from participating faculties were involved in conducting the baseline surveys. The second step was an action plan based on the results of the needs assessment: what to do in practice. The third step was the implementation of the plan and establishing the results. The final step was evaluating the impact of the capacity development activities carried out, and ensuring the sustainability of the achieved progress.

The core activity in the living labs was capacity building with the aim of improving entrepreneurship knowledge (Entrepreneurship Living Lab), counselling services (Counselling Living Lab), legal aid (Law Living Lab), ecotourism services (Ecotourism Living Lab), and improving nutrition and environmental conservation (Community development Living Lab). The Counselling and Community living labs were operating only in UoI because SEKOMU did not provide these programmes. Members of the living labs included government officials in the districts and municipal councils, key university experts on thematic areas, students, and community members as beneficiaries. A downside of this funding instrument was the lack of possibility for micro-funding of start-up companies, as the focus of the project was more on theoretical entrepreneurial skills. In addition, the field-specific entrepreneurial skills training could not be included in the capacity building in the Entrepreneurship Living Lab. On the other hand, some, but not all, of the micro-funding challenges could be solved locally.

In the field of curriculum review, revised curriculum descriptions were developed for tourism, business, law, community development, and counselling, with

the aim of strengthening the attention to university-community collaboration, entrepreneurship, and a human rights-based approach. Capacity development trainings were also organized about new approaches in curriculum review. Regarding the goals of quality assurance, awareness of quality assurance methods and tools was enhanced. Quality assurance tools and practices were improved and the skills of academic staff in reviewing curricula were enhanced in order to meet the required standards in Tanzania

## **Risk Management in BUSCO**

Risk assessment was already included as a part of the application document. In the HEI-ICI funding programme, risks were divided into contextual, institutional, and programmatic risks. The anticipated safety situation in Tanzania, internet connections and ICT facilities, and funding mechanisms both in Finland and in Tanzania were regarded as possible contextual risks. The anticipated commitment of the partners and staff, changes in staff, and administrative processes, such as accreditation, were regarded as institutional risks. The coordination of a multisectoral and multifunctional project was classified as programmatic risk. The possibility to change meeting locations, the inclusion of improvement of internet connections in the project plan, and detailed work plans and effective internal communication between the partners were the main risk response and mitigation actions. Naturally, the role of project management and coordination of activities are also crucial in risk management.

Regarding the contextual risks, safety in Tanzania was not a big issue. However, traffic security had to be considered. In the beginning, the Finnish delegation used transportation by car from Dar-es-Salaam to Iringa and Lushoto. After realizing the high number of traffic accidents on the roads, driving was considered a risk, and the transportation mode was changed to domestic flight. Considerable attention was paid to the safety of the students involved in the intensive courses. Detailed travel safety instructions were shared, and, with the guidance of UoI staff, a joint transportation was organized for the route between Dar-es-Salaam and Iringa.

The most important contextual risk factor that actualized was that of funding mechanisms in Tanzania. This had to do with the overall challenging financial situation among the private, small universities in Tanzania that UoI and SEKOMU represent. The deterioration of the financial situation greatly affected the possibility of the Tanzanian partner universities to run their programmes and activities.

The poor financial situation led to changes in staff and the number of key experts working in the project.

The situation was the worse in SEKOMU, which closed most of its programmes in the beginning of 2019. In SEKOMU, the work contracts of all other key experts, except the coordinator, were ended in February 2019. Thereafter, the activities in SEKOMU had to be wound down. The University of Iringa also met severe financial difficulties, and many of the key experts left or took temporary leave to overcome the situation. Diak, as a coordinator, also suffered from high staff turnover in project coordination and in key expert positions. New qualified staff were found to replace the previous ones, but not without some influence on the activities.

Another institutional risk that was actualized was the accreditation processes. Accreditation of the master's programme was delayed in the Tanzanian Commission of Universities (TCU), and the program could not be launched in Tanzania before the end of the project in March 2020. Despite this, Diak launched the master's programme in 2017, and the programme is running at the moment.

The high turnover of key experts was a risk for the coordination of the multi-sectoral and multifunctional project. The reasons for the success of the programme were the key experts' high level of ownership and commitment to the management, as well as the coordination of the project at the operational level.

In order to mitigate the risks, the work plan was revised several times, and the budget adjusted for the remaining period of the project. In the University of Iringa, this meant limiting the number of activities, and in SEKOMU, focusing on activities that the coordinator was able to finish.

## **BUSCO results, outputs and outcomes**

The expected overall outcome was to improve the Tanzanian partner universities' capacity to promote sustainable local community development and entrepreneurship. In order to achieve this outcome, five expected output areas were identified.

The first expected output was improving the curricula of the University of Iringa and the SEKOMU to better meet the needs of sustainable community development and entrepreneurship, and to produce graduates fitted to the current labour market. This objective was achieved to some extent. During the BUSCO project, the curricula in the two Tanzanian universities were reviewed and revised in the following programmes: tourism, business, law, community development, and counselling, strengthening the attention to community collaboration, entrepreneurship,

and the human rights-based approach. During the project period, several workshops were arranged, and university staff were trained for the new approaches to curriculum review. Even though not all the curricula of the Tanzanian universities were reviewed, the permanent staff of both universities were trained for the revision process. With the initiative of project staff from Haaga-Helia, valuable revisions to curricula were made from the point of view of community stakeholders and businesses.

The second expected output was the joint (online) master's programme in Community Development, Human Rights, and Conflict Resolution. This output was not achieved as expected because the Tanzanian Commission of Universities did not accredit the programme, the reason being that the Universities (the SEKOMU in particular) did not have sufficient academic staff, particularly for conflict resolution. However, Diak has benefitted from the project since the programme is up and running at Diak, and two groups of students have started in the programme, the title being Master of Community Development and Conflict Resolution since 2019. However, this indecision has not meant the death of the idea of the master's programme in Tanzania, nor has it meant giving up the ideals behind the planned programme. The course materials of the master programme's courses have been uploaded to UoI's (free) Moodle, and UoI has plans to open the courses as independent, postgraduate short courses.

The third expected output was that platforms and skills for co-creation (living labs) between universities and local stakeholders, communities, and businesses would be developed, and the new initiatives for entrepreneurship were to be created. The living lab model for co-creation and collaboration between the universities and communities was piloted in five thematic areas: entrepreneurship, ecotourism, law, community development and counselling in UoI, and entrepreneurship, ecotourism and law in SEKOMU. Each living lab based the activities on local needs and engaged local stakeholders in the activities. Examples of the results are: capacity building in entrepreneurship and in ecotourism for sustainable tourism; creating awareness for environmental and nutrition issues; establishing a counselling facility, one of the few in Tanzania; increasing human rights awareness and the rights of children and women; and training how to handle land conflicts, among others.

The fourth expected output was improving skills and facilities in e-learning and information technology in universities and in working with communities. This output was originally intended to facilitate the joint online master's programme. Even though the programme as such is not running in the Tanzanian

universities, there have been numerous beneficial outcomes in planning the activities and content of the programme. The staff of UoI and SEKOMU have been trained for blended learning teaching methods, tools on different platforms, and information seeking in the free international library platforms. In UoI, there is now a computer class which staff are actively using for information seeking, teaching, and research purposes. During the project, UoI entered the Research4Life Initiative, which is a programme created for low- and middle-income countries to receive scholarly and professional online information and education literature for free or for a minimal payment.

The fifth output was that the quality assurance tools and practices were developed and adapted for curriculum development and for co-creation between universities and communities. As an output, awareness of quality assurance methods and tools has been developed, and the quality assurance tools and practices improved at UoI. The stakeholders' involvement in the curriculum review process has been strengthened, and the pedagogical capabilities of the teaching staff have been regulated through the quality assurance policies developed in the project. However, as the financial problems in SEKOMU have been severe, it has been agreed that when SEKOMU gets back on its feet again, it will benchmark UoI regarding the quality assurance system.

## **Sustaining the Results and Outcomes of BUSCO**

According to the feedback, co-creation – a participatory approach of the project that was realized in the living labs – was something new in the Tanzanian partner universities. Based on the feedback from the beneficiaries of UoI, it was the first university to support community work in the region. Even though UoI had KI-OTA Hub in its campus area, the new thing in BUSCO was that university staff and students went to the communities and worked closely with local stakeholders and people. Thus, the activities were firmly based on local needs and assets that should support the sustainability of the results.

As a distinct sustainability measure, The Community Resource Centre was launched in UoI in November 2019 to continue the university-community collaboration and to work as a place for university staff and students, as well as local stakeholders, to meet and co-operate. The centre also provides access to ICT and library resources and legal advice. There is a separate room for legal advice in the centre. The staff of UoI supervise the activities and students working in the Community Resource Centre, which is crucial, for example, for the legal aid

activities. The Community Resource Centre is located alongside the premises of KIOTA Hub that is working for university-business collaboration, which hopefully contribute further collaboration between various faculties of community development, law and business.

The Counselling Centre established by the project at UoI will continue to work as a place where students and teachers can work with the clients and gain valuable experience for their future career. The Counselling Centre is a place in the UoI campus where e.g. the police, community workers, and schools can send children and families for consultation in vulnerable situations.

The Tanzanian partner universities have benefitted from the ICT facilities and capacity built in the project. The facilities and capacity are in place, but commitment and ownership of the university leadership are required in order for them to be fully rooted in actual practice. Staff training should continue, and open Moodle courses should be linked to the existing programmes. The fact that the joint master's programme was not accredited cannot be perceived as a failure, but as an opportunity that opened a door for a second choice that is probably a more sustainable solution than the joint programme would have been. Improved e-learning skills and ICT facilities can be utilized in the universities' course provision in the form of Open Moodle courses in the future. Since e-learning is also becoming increasingly important in the Tanzanian universities, this result would benefit the partner universities in the long run.

The Community Resource Centre and Counselling Centre have been established and are running, and Open Moodle have been courses launched for now in one of the partnering universities, University of Iringa. However, the BUSCO project also provided an opportunity for SEKOMU to look further and plan for the activities that would commence when its financial setbacks are resolved and the university re-opened.

During the BUSCO project, the progress in the area of ecotourism in SEKOMU was distinctive. In the beginning of 2018, the first 41 tour guides were trained in SEKOMU, and Usambara Local Tour Guides Association was officially registered in April 2019. In addition, the ecotourism tour guide curriculum was revised at the end of the project period, and hopes are high that this will result in a large-scale improvement in tourism in the Usambara Mountain. SEKOMU has plans to extend the curriculum up to diploma level under the National Council of Technical Education (NACTE), and it will follow NTA levels 4, 5, and 6. The curriculum will be mostly conducted online with the help of the existing ICT and library resources provided by BUSCO. On the societal level, there has been



an increase in the tourism industry in the Lushoto area which is very beneficial for the whole area, including the people, businesses, and environment. In the Iringa district, the Ecotourism Living Lab has been active in Tungamalenga village, which is on the gateway to Ruaha National Park, the largest national park in Tanzania. During the BUSCO project, a Tourism Information Office was opened at the village next to the Ruaha National Park.

The external evaluation report of the project pointed out the need to organize a follow-up on the implementations of the revised curricula, and well as noting the fact that not all curricula of all the faculties in Iringa were reviewed/revised during BUSCO. Due to the retrenchment programmes in SEKOMU during the project period, some of the faculties were closed, and therefore some of the revised curricula cannot, for the time being, be implemented.

Time will tell to what extent the revised curricula will be used in Tanzanian partner universities, and whether and how the training of staff in revising curricula can be spread to their other faculties. In the vulnerable situation of the private Tanzanian universities, the stakeholder perspective in the curriculum review may turn out to be an extra asset, if the inclusion of the stakeholder perspective continues to form part of the curricular review process.

## **Conclusions of the BUSCO Story**

According to the evaluation, the BUSCO project has fostered the capacity and knowledge base of the partnering universities. The participatory approach already started before the implementation of the project and continued in the co-creative model of living labs which fostered a shared ownership of the activities and results among the beneficiaries.

Despite many challenges, most of the planned outputs were delivered, albeit not all at the planned scale. The universities, especially the University of Iringa, have benefitted from the improved ICT facilities and e-learning skills. Due to this progress, online courses can be provided through open Moodle and academic resources are available through Research4Life.

University-community collaboration has been promoted and established through co-creative model of living labs. The university now has a modern counselling centre, a community resource centre, and a legal advice centre to continue and expand the collaboration. Awareness of, and capacity in, curriculum revision and quality assurance tools have been increased. Established structures and task forces continue this work.



The Finnish partner universities have benefitted from the project in many ways. The Master of Community Development and Conflict Resolution programme has enhanced knowledge of community development, which can benefit Finland; Finland used to be less developed in this area compared to Tanzania. The strong community orientation in Tanzania is an asset in creating innovations through university-community collaboration.

However, due to the actualization of the financial problems in the Tanzanian partner universities, not all the activities could be implemented. This concerns SEKOMU, in which most of the activities had to be slowed down a year before the end of the project. However, the models and practices developed can be put into use when the financial situation in SEKOMU improves. A distinct achievement of SEKOMU is progress in the field of ecotourism. This represents a flagship for the project's goals: promoting sustainable community development, entrepreneurship, community resilience, and a participatory approach to environmental sustainability.

According to the HEI-ICI project objectives, BUSCO aimed to be result oriented. The project plan was revised and adjusted to meet the goals despite the actualization of several risks. Projects are always temporally limited, and the sustainability of the results remains a question mark. Future project funding opportunities would be most welcome in the fragile financial situation. Finally, ownership and commitment among the universities as organizations is crucial for the sustainability of the results in the university structures and provisions, and the members of university staff and students, communities, and stakeholders who use them. <sup>1</sup>

## **Overview of the contents of the publication**

This publication consists of articles divided into four thematic sections covering all five results areas of the BUSCO project. Most of the articles have been written by international, Tanzanian-Finnish groups of authors, representing key experts within the project.

In the first thematic part of the publication, authors Fredrik Ngumbuke and Marketta Fredriksson describe and analyse the building of e-learning capacity in the BUSCO project.

The second thematic part of the publication consists of three articles describing

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the BUSCO documentation: HEI ICI programme documents, project application documents, funding decision, quarterly and annual reports by all project partners.

and analysing the living labs as sites of co-creation within the BUSCO project. In the first article, authors Evariste Habiyakare, Kalle Räihä and Sakariina Heikkänen describe and analyse the idea and pedagogy of the living labs as a concept. In the second article, authors Agnes Nzali, Heriel Mfangavo, Neema Mwakatombe and Sara Yengu describe and analyse the activities, results, and sustainability of living labs in the University of Iringa. In the third article, authors Dickson Shekivuli and Evariste Habiyakare describe and analyse the activities and sustainability of the Ecotourism Living Lab, with special regard to SEKOMU and Lushoto area in general.

The third section describes the developing of quality assurance mechanisms and experiences from curriculum development in the Tanzanian context.

In the first article, authors Lucas Mwahombela and Juha Lindstedt describe and analyse quality assurance as a concept and the process of developing tools for quality assurance in Tanzanian HEIs. In the second article, authors Lucas Mwahombela and Jarmo Ritalahti describe and analyse the process of curriculum review and experiences of curriculum development, especially in the University of Iringa.

The articles of the fourth thematic section are linked to the themes of the master's degree programme in Community Development and Conflict Resolution that has been piloted in the BUSCO project. In the first article, authors Jouko Porkka and Agnes Nzali describe and analyse how the asset-based community development (ABCD) and exposure methods (CABLE) were implemented during the intensive course in Tanzania. In the second article, Tanja Oguntuase, a graduate from the master's programme, and Marianne Nylund describe and analyse youth involvement in community development in Finland. The article is based on Oguntuase's (2018) master's thesis. In the third article, authors Anisa Doty and Heriel Mfangavo consider the BUSCO project in terms of conflict sensitivity, and discuss how conflict sensitivity could be integrated into project plans in general.

# 1

## Improving E-learning Capacity and ICT facilities

This section describes the building of e-learning capacity in the BUSCO project, especially from the point of view of the University of Iringa.

This section demonstrates the importance of building e-learning capacity and development of ICT facilities for HEIs in the Tanzanian context and the difference it can make.

Fredrick D. Ngumbuke & Marketta Fredriksson

# BUILDING E-LEARNING CAPACITY – EXPERIENCE FROM THE BUSCO PROJECT

## **Introduction and the Challenge of E-learning in Tanzania**

The e-learning capacity building during the BUSCO project aimed at improving the computer hardware, network facilities, and e-library resources at University of Iringa, as well as training the trainers on the Moodle online learning platform. The trainers would then be used to train students for the online master's programme in Community Development and Conflict Resolution. The computer laboratory was furnished with new computers and laptops for trainers to use at any time during their course preparation and delivery. The network infrastructure was improved to support the e-learning mission by installing fibre backbone cables and their terminal equipment. The laboratory and improved network connectivity will be used in future to offer online short courses.

At the University of Iringa, the computer hardware and Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure were out of date. During BUSCO's building of e-learning capacity, a new computer laboratory with eleven (11) desktop computers and ten (10) new laptops was purchased and installed. LAN infrastructure was also improved by installing new fibre cables and their terminal equipment. The fibre cables connect spatially separated campus buildings. This article reflects on the evolution of the e-learning infrastructure and tentative changes in the pedagogical practices within the university community.

## **Challenges of E-Learning in Tanzania**

E-learning is defined as instruction delivered on a digital device such as a computer or mobile device that is intended to support learning. This includes interaction with the electronic content, access to learning materials, obtaining online support from academic seniors/instructors or colleagues, interacting with other learners during the learning process online, etc. E-learning is sometimes referred to as online learning, networked learning, virtual learning, web-based training,

and tele-learning (Clark & Mayer, 2016).

E-learning as an alternative or, in blended learning settings, as a complement/supplement to the traditional learning process where a teacher and student meet face to face, requires a well-functioning computer infrastructure (hardware and software, for both computers and network). This is important in order to produce optimal performance and interaction between all the parts of the learning process (Mason & Rennie, 2008; Sangrà et al., 2012).

The basis for establishing e-learning in Tanzanian universities is the basic ICT infrastructure such as LAN, internet, computers, and mobile technology (Mahenge & Sanga, 2016). These environments are available in different quantities and qualities for various universities. Generally, e-learning in Tanzania is appreciated by students because it supports learning at any time and anywhere and, in general, by the new generation of young people who have relatively few doubts about taking advantage of mobile technology since the internet and mobile devices feature so heavily in their everyday life. Tanzanian students face a number of challenges, including the cost of internet access; poor interaction between students, their peers, and instructors; inadequate computer skills; and a lack of access to ICT facilities (Mahenge & Sanga, 2016).

Students at the University of Iringa are facing the same challenges because they are living in the similar mobile environment and e-services world. There is no doubt that they will adapt to studying in the e-learning environment as well.

The cost of access to the internet in Tanzania had remained unaffordable to many students (Mwakisole et al., 2018). However, the possibility of internet access has increased remarkably during the last decade due to the proliferation of mobile phones. Most Tanzanian secondary school students have access to mobile phones, as Mwakisole et.al. (2018) note: "... more than half of surveyed students (56.6%) has access to mobile phones at home with 53.5% using phones to access the Internet." During the writing of this article, the general internet penetration in Tanzania is 46 percent in 2019. In that same year, 85 percent of the population were using a voice telecom service.

Mtebe and Raisamo (2014) discovered in their study that the biggest challenges to receiving all the positive influences of e-learning in universities were technical or economical by nature, including the high price and ineffectiveness of data connections. In addition to this, they pointed out that many universities lacked a network policy, and the teaching staff were not aware of the possibilities for technical solutions.

The challenges faced at the University of Iringa (UoI) are very similar to what

Mtebe and Räisamo observed. At the University of Iringa, lecturers reported lack of time and resources, and too heavy a workload. They also pointed out of being unaware of the online training possibilities before the e-learning training facilitated by the BUSCO project.

In this article, we describe more closely how the project plan was implemented, and discuss the results and what possibilities this development of ICT infrastructure gives for the pedagogical development of the university e-learning endeavour.

The main aim of this article is to reveal the good work that has been facilitated by the project (through the key experts) in building capacity for an e-learning environment. This work is used to demonstrate the preparedness of higher learning institutions for future challenges. More students are joining universities as of recent years, and the current infrastructure is not adequate. It is time to employ an e-learning approach to curb this. Competition between the emerging universities is stiff, so this is an alternative way of using modest resources wisely.

## **University's Internet Connectivity**

In their article, Pima et al. (2016) discuss the development of ICT infrastructure in Tanzanian HEIs. They pointed out the importance of cooperation and joint targeting of the government and private business partners such as internet service providers, data service providers, cellular network operators, and government agencies in the field of ICTs.

The university's internet service provider (ISP) is the Higher Education Research Institutions (HERI) network. It provides its internet connectivity to universities via a national fibre cable backbone. From the beginning of the BUSCO project (July 2017), UoI has been capable of acquiring 20 Mbps speed from this link and pays over 3.5 million Tanzanian shillings per month (equivalent to approximately 1 370.00 euros per month). The internet connectivity costs in Tanzania are still at the very high end (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). This makes the connectivity available only to certain important community groups such as staff members, and not students. Therefore, getting the e-learning concept well practised and understood by the entire university community becomes difficult.

The alternative to the internet connectivity case to students is using the competing mobile service providers. There are more than five mobile service providers in Tanzania. The largest providers are AirTel, Vodacom, Tigo, TTCL, Halotel and Zantel. These providers compete in providing quality internet (data) services to the same customer base. Therefore, consumers (students in this case) can somehow

afford to use these custom data bundles from different providers. This is possible because the majority of the students have smartphones.

## **General Expertise and the Development Process in the Project**

### **ICT Equipment Tendering Process**

The UoI tendering process is usually carried out through the procurement department. In the case of method the ICT equipment purchased for the BUS-CO project, three suppliers were asked to provide their pro forma invoices on the same category of items. We divided the ICT capacity-building items into three categories:

- General ICT equipment i.e.,
  - desk-top computers,
  - computer tables,
  - laptops,
  - projector etc.,
- LAN connectivity equipment i.e.,
  - fibre cables,
  - terminal equipment (switches, Optical Distribution Frame - ODF),
  - connectors and
- The two-way audio communication system for the counselling facility i.e.,
  - audio mixer,
  - microphones,
  - CCTV system (cameras, DVR...),
  - headphones.

These invoices came from the suppliers without their awareness that they were competing. The ICT key expert from the project, together with the procurement department, analysed the invoices and came up with one supplier from each category who was the cheapest of all three. The selected supplier was asked to supply the items at the given time. This exercise went well in all the three categories. It took two rounds to get the items for the LAN connectivity and the two-way audio communication system. The first part was done at the beginning of the project implementation, leaving some items that were finalized during the last phase of the project.

## Installation and Configuration of Computers and ICT Network

The installation of the three categories of item was carried out by experts from each field. The general ICT equipment was installed by the key project expert. The first task was to prepare the room where the computers would be installed. The room had outdated LAN connectivity and, therefore, the LAN installation (cabling, face plate module punching, patch coded preparation) was done manually. The room cabling was laid from the switch box to wall sockets (face plates) to accommodate the eleven (11) new computers and four (4) old ones to form a sixteen (16) desktop computer lab.

The second task was the installation of operating system and applications to all sixteen (16) desktop computers and ten (10) laptops. The desktop computers and laptops were purchased without an operating system or any applications installed. Therefore, the ICT key expert had to install Windows 7 Professional Operating System (OS) on the sixteen (16) desktop computers and ten (10) new laptops. The configuring them and updating Windows was a most time-consuming experience because the internet connectivity was not very good.

The third task was installing these computers into the lab. This was the easy part. After the computer tables were in-place, the task was to arrange the computers on the tables following a star topology to allow them communicate with the LAN through their switches at the wall-mounted switch box. Mainly, this activity involved powering them, plugging in network patch cables, and finalizing the installation work.

## The Role of ICT and Library in BUSCO Project

ICT and the library had several cross-cutting roles in the BUSCO project. Some of their main roles were in improving e-learning and ICT skills, as well as facilities focusing on the assessment of the development needs regarding ICT. This role had several activities, for example:

- assessment of the existing LAN,
- scaling down the existing LAN structure to accommodate the project goals and budget
- hardware analysis.

Another role was the advanced teaching of e-learning technologies and ICT to academic staff members. The training was for the academic staff members who will be involved in the teaching of the postgraduate online short courses. In addition,



ICT's role was to train Iringa community members in the use of new technologies that would improve their livelihood.

## **The Library Resources Development (E-resources) – Research4Life Concept**

Library and information services are an important part of UoI e-learning infrastructure, and that is why information literacy matters, and why the development of the access to e-resources was included in the project activities. An information specialist from Diak library was named as a key expert to the project.

To ensure the continuity and sustainability of the library services, we preferred to activate and promote the Research4life initiative instead of acquiring any e-books or printed book collections for the partner Universities. The Research4life programme was created for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in order for them to receive scholarly and professional information resources and education in information competency for free or with a small payment. The overall challenge is the lack of awareness and common knowledge about the initiative and its benefits in the universities and professional communities of the target countries (Nobes & Harris, 2019).

During the first visit to Iringa, there was a meeting at which the Diak information specialist introduced the local staff to the available resources and instructed the library staff in getting access to the resources. It took some days to get the access, and the newly refreshed access to Research4life resources could be tested during the visit. Preliminary plans with the local librarian were made to market and consolidate the use of e-resources.

The development of the library's e-resources almost stopped since the accreditation process was delayed, and the manager of the library service took another position at UoI. Implementing the new resources stayed in the background and was nearly eclipsed until the phase in which SEKOMU withdrew from the pedagogical part of the project. The new project initiative to build up a community resource centre caused re-adjusted allocation of BUSCO project resources, and library services came into stronger focus than in the original project plan. It was time to refresh the recently acquired access to online resources, make a new plan for promoting these advances, and start to train staff members for online information retrieval.

The second Intensive course in November 2019 gave a good chance to prepare some research4life promotion materials. Access was tested and the local university

library and teaching staff were informed about these valuable information resources. Plans for user education and further promotion were made in cooperation with the local library staff during the visit. The newly established Community Resource Centre, which was one of the concrete project initiatives of BUSCO, was launched. In the centre, educational and scientific information materials, and organized access to e-books and databases, are fundamental activities. The library and ICT staff at UoI will create easy and fluent access to online resources together via a custom-made homepage with authentication. In their future user training, they are going to take advantage of the promotion and training materials, which are freely available and customized to suit the target audience in the member organizations of the Research4life initiative. Teaching staff were already exposed to some preliminary promotion and demonstration of the resources during the Moodle course training.

Research4life is accessible for free to LMICs only. Due to the collaboration with Finnish Universities in the project, it was possible to conduct the professional training to the participating Tanzanian Universities on Research4life. It was well understood that, the resource (Research4life) is very useful for researchers in the LMICs. Future user training will be the responsibility of trained UoI library staff. The locally managed approach is the best way to make the Research4life concept living and sustainable at UoI.

## **Planning and Implementing E-learning Training for Staff**

This also required the efforts of the ICT key experts from UoI and Diak and a library information system expert from Diak. The main goal was to plan the implementation of e-learning training. It was the aim to conduct the training of UoI lecturers as training of trainers (ToTs), aiming at building their capacity. The future goal was getting them ready to train students using the e-learning pedagogical approaches during the implementation of the online master's programme in Community Development and Conflict Resolution, which was waiting for accreditation by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). Unfortunately, the accreditation process took too long. It was not ready even at the very last phase of project implementation.

The training was conducted in collaboration between UoI and Diak's ICT key experts. The library information systems expert (from Diak) was fully involved in training and availing the possibilities of getting e-resources, as well as how to help

lecturers prepare their reference lists using some open and official tools.

Before the training plans, it was discovered that aspects of the computer hardware and local network required improvement. Therefore, a planning meeting between UoI and Diak ICT and library Information experts was organized. It was then decided that a new computer laboratory would be installed and the LAN infrastructure improved in terms of replacing the fibre backbone cables that connected the spaced university buildings.

## **The First Training of E-learning**

The first training of trainers was done at Diak during the first meeting of the project's participating partners. The participating partners were the University of Iringa (UoI) and Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU) from Tanzania, and Diak from Finland. During this training, an online Moodle environment was introduced to the lecturers who were to be involved in the online master's programme. The library information specialist introduced the concept of e-resources.

The follow-up training planning phase was done at the University of Iringa in Tanzania, followed by online sessions through Skype and, later, Zoom meetings between ICT experts from UoI and Diak. The meetings were scheduled for about two hours once a week. This was also used as a mechanism to test whether the connection was reliable enough to host the full online training. The result was positive because we were able to discuss the agenda collaboratively online.

The training was planned and implemented in advance, hoping that the accreditation was going to be ready on time. While the accreditation in Tanzania took too long, Diak had the same course running.

## **The Second Training of E-learning**

During the last phase of project implementation, it was decided that because the accreditation process for the online master's programme was very late, the same suggested courses be prepared as short courses and be conducted online. Therefore, it was agreed during the meeting at Diak in early October 2019 that a free Moodle platform should be installed and configured at UoI servers. The UoI's ICT key expert did the task successfully. During the intensive week in November 2019, the same online course contents from Diak's Moodle Rooms were copied and pasted into UoI's free online Moodle platform. After this successful exercise, UoI academic staff members from each faculty were trained in e-learning.

This was the second training on the same topic but with a different mission. It was decided by UoI management that the training be done by a representative cross-section of academic staff members. Therefore, a total of fifteen (15) staff members attended the training, suggested by deans from the six faculties. Some faculties brought three members and some two. During this training, two aspects were taught: the Moodle platform, and e-resources. The open Moodle platform was presented to them using a practical approach. Every lecturer had an account in Moodle and was introduced to several aspects, such as how to prepare learning material for students, and planning tests and assignments. The Figure 1 illustrates the ICT and library activities life cycle during the entire project period.

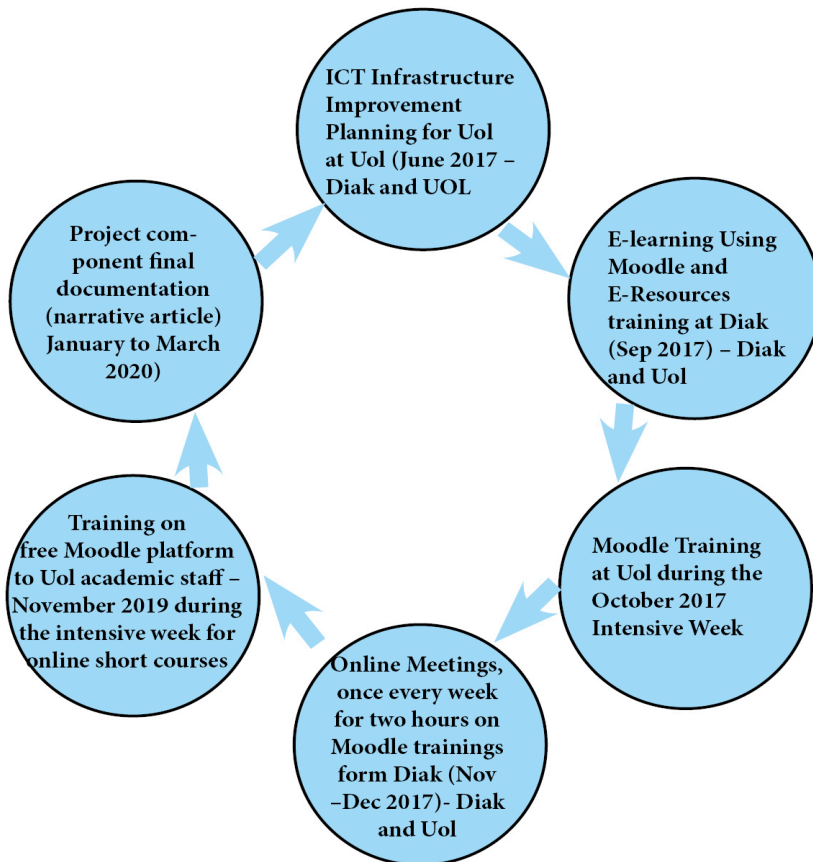


Figure 1. ICT and library project activities life cycle

## **E-learning Training Feedback**

In order to find out the relevance of e-learning to trainers, a short, structured interview was used. Respondents were asked to comment on three main aspects: the practical organization of the training workshop; the training contents; and the impacted skills. The overall response to the questionnaire was very positive. A total number of four (4) randomly selected people were interviewed. The total number of training participants was twelve (12). The majority of the respondents suggested that the practical organization of the e-learning training was well done. The objectives of the training, venue, and training materials were suitable for the training.

They further revealed that the training was very useful for their teaching career. However, they had a general concern about the time used to deliver the training content. They all said the time was not enough. The average time for the content was suggested to be at least two weeks. Their main argument was that there was not enough time to practise the attained skills.

Respondents were asked about the skills of the facilitators in delivering the content. The response was very positive here too. The majority declared that the facilitators were well prepared and had adequate training skills.

The last section of this interview was on the skills attained during the training. The majority of the respondents confirmed that they gained various tangible skills in respect of e-learning and e-resources. Some listed the skills, such as being able to prepare learning materials for their students, creating quizzes, tests, and sharing various resources with their students online.

## **Sustainability Plan of the ICT Infrastructure**

The sustainability plan is crucial for any short-term project. ICT activities which were accomplished during this project requires its sustainability plan in order to continuing realizing its present and future impacts. Thus, the following sections discuss various sustainability plans which are put in place for the ICT and e-learning activities.

## **UoI Education Plan: E-learning Short Courses**

UoI has agreed to run an online short course for each semester. Moodle has been installed, free, and configured into UoI servers. There has been an agreement to use the same e-learning materials that have been developed for the full online master's programme, which was to be piloted during the project period. The Finnish partner university in the project (Diak) started piloting the programme. The same online material has been copied to the free Moodle platform that is configured for UoI. It is expected that the online courses will be piloted starting in the 2019–2020 academic year.

This approach will be the best sustainability plan to realize the project's goal on e-learning capacity building. The same computers and LAN infrastructure that were improved by the project will be used to support the running of these e-learning short courses. These courses will remain the property of the university after the project ends.

Online short courses will be used as a multi-professional platform for different university stakeholders. The admissions office will receive students through online systems, course fees will be paid to the university online, marketing strategies should consider the new strategy, and certificates will be provided online as well. This means the online short courses will change the entire university culture of offering and managing courses.

## **The Commitment of UoI Management**

UoI management provided a dedicated IT engineer who worked as the ICT key expert during the project to oversee the new ICT infrastructure required by the project. This expert has been trained and involved in training other UoI academic staff in e-learning concepts and practical. This ICT key expert was prepared to be a fully engaged learning management system (LMS) administrator. His roles will be managing the team of lecturers and learners through the LMS and providing daily support, as well as keeping the ongoing operations of LMS stable. He will generally deal with defining user roles, creating learning courses, building custom certifications, and providing personal feedback for learners. It is very crucial to have a dedicated person who will be managing the development of e-learning project process and communicating with UoI management leaders. They will be in charge of all practical issues of e-learning development, as Anderson (2017) suggests.

Two training sessions were conducted during the project. The first training was only given to those lecturers who were to teach the online master's programme. The second training was given to at least two representative academic staffs from all six UoI faculties. The idea was that these lecturers would train the remaining group of lecturers during the running of those e-learning short courses.

UoI management has been very thankful for the project due to its support in this aspect (ICT infrastructure). The infrastructure is used by all university academic and non-academic members of staff to surf the internet and to prepare teaching material, as well as all general computing needs. It must be known that the ratio of computers to staff is not good at all. There is a good number of staff members who do not have computers in their offices, and if they do, they are very old computers. The BUSCO computer laboratory is used as their only option to work on their computing needs.

## **Mobile Networks for Student versus Slow and Expensive Internet Connectivity**

It was very evident during the project that internet connectivity at the university was very slow and expensive. UoI receives 20 Mbps from the National Fibre Backbone (last mile connectivity) project, and pays the government a subsidized fee of over 3.5 million Tanzanian shillings every month. This connectivity is not enough for the entire university body of staff and students. Therefore, this connection is highly reliant on the installed BUSCO computer laboratory and to the rest of staff offices where LAN connection is still partially working.

This means the entire student body is left without Internet connectivity. Students have two main teaching computer laboratories; neither of the laboratories are connected to the internet. The goal of the university is to have improved internet connection, such that all students have a wi-fi connection to the university internet as a motivation to orient them in learning to use the e-learning approach.

If this idea is feasible, then it means that more students will be attracted to start learning through the e-learning approach, and hence spread the word throughout the country about the availability of e-learning short courses at UoI. This means that the future of traditional face-to-face training will slowly fade out.

## **Possible Future Initiatives**

The future of these initiatives is vibrant. More online engagement of the university with the Tanzanian community will result in a new way of approaching and addressing problems. Therefore, it is expected that one of the future initiatives as a result of this project will be addressing societal problems using a new online approach. More target groups will be reached, especially younger people, who are expecting access to university services for their future prospects.

Distance learning, if well emphasized, will result in more people getting involved in education than in the present situation where one has to stop every other aspects of life and attend the education system, especially, for the adults. It is said, from the student's point of view, that the main advantage of distance learning is the flexibility offered by distance learning courses. It is possible that the distance modality continues to grow steadily (de Oliveira et al., 2018).

## **Recommendations and Conclusions**

This project has contributed a great deal to the well-being of UoI and the wider Iringa community. Its plan and implementation have been very transparent between implementing partners, the university and the community members (stakeholders). The ICT and library component in this case has added a great positive value to the university academic staff, as well as to the Iringa community youth groups.

The experience during the project implementation revealed that more practical training is needed when it comes to ICT technologies. Otherwise, the overall concept of the project in the ICT and library component had a positive reception among stakeholders. The ICT and library component in the project introduced a new way of working in collaboration and working remotely, taking advantage of the technology and devices. It is expected, through the project experience, that more people at the university and within the community will engage in this new way of learning and collaborating.

This article was written in collaboration between two experts, one at UoI, Tanzania and another at Diak, Finland, through online meetings using the Zoom conferencing platform. The experience from this has been very positive. It is positive that it is possible to use Zoom in teaching and other kinds of academic/societal collaboration. A shared cloud space was used to keep our documents, and where each collaborator could follow the right version of it at any time. Access to



Research4life resources was also frequently used in the process of writing.

For the impacted skill to be sustainable, university management commitment is important. They are the ones who will make sure that the sustainability plans put in place by the project will continue to function. Otherwise, the entire project implementation concepts will stop as soon as the project ends (Koc & Bastas, 2019).

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## APPENDICE

### Questionnaire on Building E-learning Capacity – Experience from BUSCO Project

Dear Respondent;

This questionnaire aims at getting your feedback from the e-learning training using Moodle Open Platform that was contacted on 22 November 2019 at University of Iringa. The training was organized by the BUSCO Project. It is a structured interview with three main sections. The first section is on practical organization of the training. The second section is about the contents of the training and the third section is on impacted skills.

Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Department / Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SECTION ONE: PRACTICAL ORGANIZATION**

1. Did you know about the training before the training day?
2. Did you have enough information about the training objectives before the training day?
3. Were the venue and training materials suitable for the training?

#### **SECTION TWO: TRAINING CONTENTS**

1. Was the training useful to your teaching career?
2. Was enough time used to deliver the content?
3. What is your comment on the facilitator's teaching skills?
4. Was the training (e-learning) relevant to your students, if doubt, why?

Do you think the University administration, lecturers and students are willing to employ the e-learning approach in delivering/learning?

#### **SECTION THREE: IMPACTED SKILLS**

1. Was there any relevant skill that you attained during the training?
2. What was your personal motivation regarding the training?
3. Do you have future e-learning motivation?

## 2

# DEVELOPING CO-CREATIVE MODEL OF LIVING LABS

This section demonstrates the idea, pedagogy and the results of the living labs within the BUSCO project.

First, the idea and pedagogy of living labs as open innovation forum is described.

Second the key results of the living labs in the field of community development, counselling, law and entrepreneurship in Iringa, and the eco-tourism living lab activities and sustainability, with special regard to SEKOMU.

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# LIVING LABS, THE IDEA AND PEDAGOGY

## Introduction

The debate and practices about community development regarding the Global South has shifted its emphasis from top-down models towards bottom-up approaches. The assumption is that local stakeholders should self-organize; adapt and adjust to various changes; and actively respond to rapid changes in market, technologies, and setbacks from exogenous economics. The new focus emphasizes sustainability and resilience embedded in the adaptation and learning capacities of local communities. Within the global economy, socio-economic resilience has been particularly challenging for local communities on the African continent. Without consulting the local communities, authorities and decision makers tend to develop and impose solutions on them. (Hooli, 2016). Until now, the focus of resilience analysis in most African countries has put emphasis on the ability of a community to either recover from or avoid various disturbances. So far, less attention has been paid to the long-term processes by which communities learn and adopt new methods and activities in order to fully improve their own livelihood (Hooli et al., 2016).

Folke (2016) emphasizes the fact that resilience depends on the long-term adaptive capacity of communities based on reorganizing, renewal, development, and innovations. This raises the discussion about the eventual role of different stakeholders, such as higher educational institutions, in developing appropriate methodologies and instruments to catalyse socio-economic resilience in rural communities (Berkes & Ross, 2013). Therefore, the BUSCO partners discussed which approaches could be used to build the capacity of higher education institutions in Tanzania. Since the living lab methodologies have proven to be successful platforms for co-creations in developed countries, the BUSCO partners decided to explore their applicability at the University of Iringa (UoI) and Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU). While the living lab approach is widely used in developed countries, the concept is relatively new there. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the living lab concept and co-creation from a pedagogical perspective. In addition, through benchmarking some practices found in Finnish universities, we explore how higher education institutions (HEIs) in

Tanzania could adapt living lab methodologies to enhance student-centred teaching and learning.

Overall, through the entire project, we put emphasis on the fact that a living lab is not a building, nor does it require major changes in the entire structure of a university, rather the nature of work for the involved parties.

## **Living Labs Concept and Co-creation Process**

The terms collaboration and co-creation may be modern, but the dynamics they represent are extremely old. Several millennia ago, traditional hunters relied on collaboration and co-creation (Bhalla 2011, p. 8). Currently, in the Western world, building co-creation capability in terms of service and product design requires several actors to collaborate through listening to and engaging with end-users, and through responding to external and internal stimuli. This type of collaboration for co-creation using end-user driven innovation methods was later labelled living labs (LLs) (Bhalla, 2011).

LLs are platforms for open innovation where co-creation is a method for addressing real-life issues through the acknowledgement of knowledge from multi-disciplinary social learning, and in which the representatives from different sectors, as well as communities, may have different values, perceptions, and meanings (Adebowale et al., 2014). This provides a rich set of ideas and values for co-creation, which may be used for shaping and creating a strategy for community development in a collaborative manner.

Westerlund and Leminen (2011), define a Living Lab as

*a socio-technical platform including shared resources and collaboration framework with real-life context. It organizes its stakeholders into an innovation network that relies on representation of diverse activities. In addition, it uses different methods to gather, create, communicate and deliver new knowledge, validated solutions, professional development and social impact.*

Furthermore, Heikkanen and Tuomi (2012) define LLs as end-user-centred open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real-life environments. However, Almirall and Wareham (2012) assert that there is no comprehensible definition of living labs. In spite of this, they are driven by two main ideas: involving users as co-creators on equal grounds, with the rest of participants in the real-world

settings. Whatever definition we adopt, there is a consensus on the fact that LLs have become common innovation system instruments in developed countries to increase interaction between parties relevant to the innovation processes. Thus, living labs are practice-driven organizations that facilitate and foster collaborative innovation, as well as real-life environments where processes are studied and new solutions are co-created.

Initially, LLs were formed as a platform in which partnerships, public authorities, and citizens worked together to create, validate and test new services, businesses, markets, and technologies in real-life contexts in cities and rural areas. Later, LLs began to focus on a broader area of open innovation and co-creation of products, services, or societal innovations together with the users (Niitamo et al., 2012). LLs, therefore, can work as bridging platforms to support collaboration between different entities such as communities, private and public sector, universities, and NGOs. They can also connect endogenous knowledge pools and knowledge from other LL participants to create new knowledge and apply it in new contexts (Leminen & Westerlund, 2012).

## **Adoption of LLs on the African Continent**

In developed countries, the concept of co-creation is used frequently, especially in educational institutions, in city development practices, and in commercial service and product design. In contrast, African countries have been very late in adopting the concept of LLs. African LLs rely on traditional community development projects and capacity building, learning, and empowerment of local communities with less or no attention on business development, which could, however, create much more sustainable results. In this perspective, educational institutions find their role as facilitators for training and for empowering local communities to acquire some basic capabilities and technological expertise.

In the African context, LLs have emerged primarily as outputs of action research with the key dimension of addressing challenges in relation to rural socio-economic development and sustainable quality of life (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2016). Many African countries currently form collaboration approaches in order to perform better in their global economy. In the process, there is identification, and support of interaction, of key international, regional, national, and local actors (Adebowale et al., 2014). The number of LLs has been growing in developing countries. In Africa, there are now LLs in countries such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho,

Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. Most of these LLs rely on project-based funding (IST-Africa, 2015).

Coetzee (2012) comments that few studies have been carried out to examine the performance and experiences gained in the practice of LLs. However, Cunningham and Cunningham (2016) note that, in reality, in the context of a developing country, establishing and maintaining LLs is challenging and relatively expensive. This explains why many living labs have proven to depend on donor funding. In Kenya, for instance, there are 25 LLs, most of which are funded by donors (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2016).

In contrast, in the Republic of South Africa, LLs have been successfully running for several years. In this context, they put emphasis on co-creation, especially with the rural communities. Through this co-creation, stakeholders have been able to form collaboration networks to support small firms and other actors to engage with, and accelerate the development and acceptance of, change (Coetzee, 2012). However, adopting the LLs networking approach in Africa requires thorough understanding of each partner's objectives and drivers, sustainability of LL operational processes, and a collaborative culture, as well as competencies for supporting cooperation and community building.

Despite some success in the Republic of South Africa, Schumacher (2013) and Veeckman et al. (2013) assert that there has been a high rate of failure in the operations of LLs in Africa, thereby expected outcomes are most of the time not fully accomplished. In addition, IST-Africa (2015) found that most LLs are not sustainable and that the experience in most developing countries shows that most LLs fail before their objectives are fully achieved. This failure may be due to poor project design and management as well as inadequate knowledge of LL practice. However, we need to acknowledge the rising approval of LLs in developing countries. LLs create a space for collaboration between multiple stakeholders and emphasize real-life settings.

## **Tanzania and the Living Labs Ecosystem**

Tanzania, with a population over 50 million, is among the least developed countries. At the same time, it is an emerging African economy with an annual economic growth of approximately 7%. This economic growth is based on newly discovered natural minerals, a young and growing population, and recent structural transformations (World Bank, 2015). The Ministry of Communication,



Science, and Technology (MCST), established in 2008, was the collaborative ministry in the establishment of the LLs in the country (Hooli et al., 2016). The MCST considers the existing LLs to be pilot studies and maintains that up to 200 LLs should be established in the near future.

By 2015, Tanzania had eight LLs. The most well known were: Buni Hub and KINU Hub, located in Dar es Salaam. Buni Hub was founded in 2012 as an open innovation platform, providing space for projects, businesses, and innovations as well as enhancing interaction between innovation actors (Hooli et al., 2016). The remaining seven LLs include:

- Kigamboni Community Centre (KCC) in Dar es Salaam
- Tanzanian Youth Icon (TAYI) in Zanzibar Town
- Elimu Living Lab in Sengrenema
- Mbeya Living Lab in Mbeya
- Rlab Iringa in Iringa
- Kiota Hub at the University of Iringa
- Arusha Ecolab at Arusha University in Arusha

The above LLs combine community development, ICT, and innovations in local communities as distinct from the conventional more technologically advanced LLs (IST-Africa 2015). The seven LLs came from the innovation-oriented development aid programme of the Government of Finland (Hooli et al., 2016). Tanzania ICT (TANZICT) had the role of LL support, which has mainly involved capacity building, strengthening the LL networks, and funding related activities. Activities included conducting workshops with the emerging LLs and their communities to enable them to express their most important challenges and produce possible solution mechanisms (Mbelle, 1994). Generally, LLs in Tanzania create new entrepreneurial skills and opportunities for people with limited formal education, the participants discuss and define local challenges in groups and find solutions through co-creation, and communities combine local knowledge and practices with external ones.

## **Anchoring Living Lab Methodologies in a Constructive Pedagogy**

As explained earlier, most LLs in developing countries have not been able to achieve their objectives. We identified some of the causes of for such a high failure rate as arising from lack of adequate knowledge and necessary infrastructure to sustain LLs processes. One of the aims of BUSCO was to build the capacity of



the participating higher education institutions by implementing living lab methodological practices in the partner universities. Therefore, this section explores the LL concept from a pedagogical perspective. We introduce this perspective with the aim of showing how one could achieve the human resources needed for LLs to function well. The living lab methodologies find their origin in a constructive epistemology, which articulates mechanisms by which learners internalize knowledge. Learning is a change in performance, which derives from previous experience and interaction within the world. In this perspective, learning is more than a simple aptitude: it constitutes of variety of abilities, previous knowledge, culture, motivation, and even self-esteem. The attribute of learning, whether in teaching, training, coaching, or mentoring, may be considered universal. In order to learn, a learner must internalize a set of skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes that are new to the individual (Ambrose et al., 2010). Every learner is unique, with their own needs and background. Learners are complex and multi-dimensional and should be encouraged to push their own reasoning further in order to solve different problems. Thus, this view not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually encourages, utilizes, and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process. In this view, Glasersfeld (1989) argues that the learner is responsible for their learning. He emphasizes the fact that learners construct their own understanding. Learners will look for meanings and will try to find regularities and order in the events of the world, even in the absence of full or complete information (Glasersfeld, 1989). In this perspective, learners use their previous experience to obtain new skills. According to social constructivism, knowledge is, therefore, constructed in a social context and knowledge belongs to individuals (Kukla, 2000). Kukla (2000) argues that reality is constructed by our own activities, and that people, together as members of a society, invent the properties of the world. Other constructivist scholars agree with this and emphasize that individuals make meaning through interaction with each other and with the environment they live in. This process of sharing individual perspectives is called collaborative elaboration, and it results in learners together constructing understanding, which would not be possible alone. Thus, according to this view, knowledge is a product of humans and is socially and culturally constructed. Learners with different skills and backgrounds should collaborate in tasks and discussions to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992).

Learning in a living lab is a form of learning where the teaching strives to involve students in the learning process more directly than in traditional methods.

Bonwell and Eison (1991) state that, in active learning, students participate in the process, and that students participate when they are doing something besides passively listening. In particular, students must engage in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Active learning engages students in two aspects: doing things, and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Active learning requires appropriate learning environments. Although this may require more from the learner and the teacher, the learning process can be stimulating and fulfilling for both. A key issue is to recognize local practical needs, and challenges, and ultimately to satisfy these needs. Different, and even conflicting, views have been generated regarding how learners acquire knowledge in a controlled environment, such as educational institutions (see Bransford et al., 1999).

## **Living labs and Higher Education Institutions**

In the 1990s, influenced by constructivism, Finland developed project-based learning and inquiry learning approaches. These approaches emphasize that students should be active learners involved in real-life projects (Kotila & Mäki, 2008); learners with different skills and backgrounds should collaborate in tasks and discussions to arrive at a shared view of their learning agenda (Birkle et al., 2017). For successful learning using inquiry learning in a living lab, several authors have identified key prerequisites for successful learning: the learning environment, teamwork, project management, and the motivation to learn (Ritalahti, 2015). In addition, the learning environment should be designed to support and challenge learners' thinking. According to Gulikers et al. (2005), an authentic learning environment "provides a context that reflects the way knowledge and skills will be used in real life". This includes a physical or virtual environment. In most of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, students learn through executing different projects commissioned by real businesses.

Living labs may create new solutions, new knowledge, interesting ways of learning and teaching, networks, and unexpected opportunities. In terms of pedagogy, project-based learning offers opportunities to the instructor to monitor the progress of the project (Savery, 2006). Moreover, such monitoring is crucial in order to ensure that the client/business gets something of value at the end.

Since the LL concept uses a constructivist approach, as students advance, they are also empowered, encouraged, and finally even required to find their own project commissioners. Practice has shown this procedure to be important, because

students show high level of motivation when dealing with commissioners they have found themselves. If there are learning objectives that cannot be reached adequately through the project work, then they may be simply covered through more traditional academic/scholarly methods such as cases, assignments, essays, studies, presentations, and exams. However, the deliverables from the semester project must carry significant weight according to the courses' assessment criteria, or else the students will find themselves working hard for a project, which – despite having been advertised as such – has very little significance in their course grades, which again would be very demotivating for the students. Considering that the students are the ones doing the actual work, this type of situation would be a poor outcome for them.

## **Living Labs Methodologies and the Identity of the Teacher**

Guidance from the instructor (teacher/tutor/coach/facilitator) is crucial, both in form of deadline and interim reports that ensure the completion of the project by the end of a specified period (for example a semester). Once projects start, one of the roles of the teachers is to offer a theoretical framework to the students. The aim is to illustrate how this project is a platform for student's professional development and how it offers a practical context in some of the larger concepts and competences. Through different working phases, students are acquainted to different useful tools and methods. In addition, the instructor is responsible of the teaching of content. Students provide and get feedback in most at various stages, especially at data collection and analytical phase. Most students learn about themselves and they learn how to communicate with real business professionals and other actors (Savery, 2006). In terms of pedagogy, LLs offer an opportunity for project-based learning and for the instructor to monitor the progress of the project (Kerzner, 2009). The involved actors need to have a right mindset. For teachers/coaches, early adapters also called crusaders and/or disruptors usually succeed. They need to be passionate and dedicated to coordination. Teaching in a Living Lab usually means stepping out of one's comfort zones and the teacher/coach may act as a facilitator to help other participants to do that, too.

In order to achieve an optimal learning experience, the learning environment should be safe, pleasant and exciting (Kerzner, 2009). These characteristics of learning environment may contribute to active learning. The learning atmosphere plays an important role in what is actually possible to learn. If the learning environment

is safe enough, the learner can feel free to take risks and to question his/her own as well as other people's thinking. This creates a foundation for learning from other students and the community and provide an opportunity to reflect one's own expectations and notions. In this perspective, both individual features and social equity and interaction within social networks may have profound influences on individual development.

Normally, teachers should not lead the students' project work. If students refuse to seek guidance, to act responsibly, to take initiative and to adopt productive ways of leading their own work, then their learning results will end up on low level. However, teachers should spend a lot of time supporting student teams through coaching and enabling them to find their own answers to the often difficult and elusive questions arising during the projects. Finally, within LLs, teachers act as facilitator for students' reflections on learning and assessment of the project deliverables. These deliverables should be designed to display both the event flow and results of the projects and the development of the student's competences.

In short, the application of "co-creation through Living Labs" is by nature a very different job for a teacher. For teachers who are not familiar with project based learning or inquiry learning, it may require serious efforts from them in order to change own professional identity. Furthermore, it is often a challenge even for students to understand, how working in projects is good for them. Sometimes, learning situations may be chaotic. They have to move from a traditional scheduled and structured classroom, toward an unstructured new way of learning which may lead to some difficulties for traditional students. This may prove hard to understand the link between projects and own learning outcomes.

## **Implementing Living Labs Methodologies in Iringa and Lushoto**

Understanding the need for universities to get involved in living labs and supporting the surrounding community to achieve sustainable development was very easy for the Tanzanian partner universities. Since Tanzanian stakeholders already had willingness to interact with the community to co-create solutions, in the beginning, they were eager to implement the project. For instance, partner universities conducted a baseline research thoroughly. Different stakeholders spent plenty of time highlighting a variety of fundamental needs in the areas of entrepreneurship and business development, ecotourism, women's rights, family consultation, and legal aid. The BUSCO key expert teams also had many ideas about how to respond to the needs of the community practically. The benefit for local communities

in Iringa and Lushoto created by the “development aid” offered by the universities was self-evident. Members from each faculty presented their plans about how they would strengthen the surrounding community with projects commissioned and governed by their very own, faculty-based living labs.

Gradually, the need for actors to leave their comfort zone became more acute. The actors discussed the question of the benefit of co-creation in LLs to the students and to the university. Many of the key experts voiced their concern over the overwhelming bureaucracy connected to an obviously imminent curriculum renewal if studies were to be completed using living lab methodologies. On the other hand, the key experts also understood how the living labs would not live very long outside the scope of funding from the BUSCO project unless the co-operation would offer approximately equal value to all stakeholders: universities, municipalities, companies, locals, and end-users. All agreed that there should be a major curriculum change before any practical implementation would be possible. The current curricula need to be flexible enough to enable learning in LL projects incorporating unexpected events. The learning and teaching should become more student-centred, and the teacher should become a coach.

Another, not foreign argument was the widely perceived need for proper facilities. First, there would need to be a building, which one could call a living lab or Community Resource Centre or anything that would create interest and symbolizes a space for co-creation. We presented and discussed carefully the idea of “bypassing” with our Tanzanian colleagues who expressed the fact that their society was still very bureaucratic. They mentioned the existence of institutional restrictions and regulations, which may prevent teachers and students from being innovative and efficient. We made reflections about the fact that if actors want to achieve results of co-creation, but are not able to have for example a new curriculum or a specifically appointed building, they can bypass these restrictions and still do it on some level. However, even after such deep discussion, it seemed each faculty still wanted to have own LL and most of them still wanted to have a designated physical facility as a LL. For them, this would even increase visibility and external actors would know where to go and whom to ask if they needed assistance or help from a given LL.

Multi-sectoral LLs are common in Europe. Therefore, the wish was to integrate this idea to LLs in Tanzania as well. Initially, the idea of having one living lab, which could serve the needs of the community from a variety of angles, usually requires attention from more than one faculty. To illustrate the Tanzanian bureaucratic culture, it does not stretch the imagination too far to think of a woman in

Africa who after her husband's death is running a small farm by herself. Assume that she finds herself threatened by the late husband's family, who are asking her to leave the land, while also struggling with crop yield and finding more profitable and fairer channels through which she could sell her own products. Obviously, this would be a case for legal aid, women's rights, agriculture, and entrepreneurship living labs. In the worst case, due to strong bureaucratic culture we could be facing the following scenario: the woman could approach, say, the entrepreneurship living lab and would be turned away because the people in charge of LL would interpret the case as women's rights. She might go to the people running this living lab, who would advise her to discuss with the people in the legal counselling living lab. The reader can probably already guess how this all might end.

There is a reasonably strong risk that if each faculty would only focus on their own Living Lab, they would build a tendency to view arising cases solely from their own perspective. Which again might mean that a rather complex case, such as the one described above, might be viewed as insufficient for the learning needs of the students of that particular faculty. However, if all the faculties were united in one Living Lab and they would actively discuss the incoming cases between each other, the likelihood of such a case being interesting to some, many, or to all faculties would increase. That again would lead to students and teachers from different faculties joining their efforts and skills for the good of the local community, while learning new ways of working and gaining wider insights themselves. This might partly illustrate how difficult it is for all of us to leave our old conceptions, habits, attitudes, cultures, no matter how well we can see the practical need to do so. There also needs to be enough flexibility in any concept to be able to adapt it to different environments. Change is usually seen an obstacle rather than an opportunity.

## **Barriers to Implementation of LLs Approaches at Iringa and Lushoto**

In the beginning, it seemed the co-creation with the community put more emphasis on students actually doing the work and the community stakeholders enjoying the benefits. In addition, instead of the teacher being responsible for ensuring learning for students, the teacher's role changed to that of a project manager and/or the agent to secure the desired outcomes to the external stakeholders. The concept of co-creation between universities, municipalities and businesses where the end-user would always be in the centre for co-creation was not easy to implement. In

most of the cases, communities have been passive waiting for the government and universities to bring solutions. In this perspective, introducing the idea of co-creation between universities and the surrounding community required a change in the mentality of the involved actors. Instead, the local actors put heavy emphasis on the need for more funds enabling the work rather than the desired outcomes of the project. Overall, we observed a big challenge related to a general lack of vibrant private sector. This meant the way we had been used to doing corporate partnerships was difficult to implement, since the micro-entrepreneurs in need of support could be scattered over a large area and far away from the university and they just couldn't allocate any financial resources to cover the costs caused by the students' development work. The needs of the local community are often on so elementary levels that might require some imagination to arrange something one would call co-creation, a mutually beneficial project developing both the capabilities of the business community and the skills of the students.

Meanwhile, the course contents on a conceptual level are closer to what we have in Finland, which can easily lead to a situation where the learning objectives are related to complex, corporate issues, but the projects aimed at supporting the learning are on an extremely basic level. In addition, the organization, structures, culture and views on studying, teaching, learning and co-creation may still be traditional. Since the application of LL concept in the same way as in the West proved difficult and too demanding for the Tanzanian actors, some teachers, students and administrators preferred to maintain a traditional approach.

Nevertheless, the rural Tanzania offers plenty of opportunities. Since the needs are many and often not of very complex nature, any kind of help counts. This means that students can actually make a huge difference. When the effects of the co-operation between universities and the local communities accumulate, the whole of society might begin to climb to new levels, small businesses become more economically viable, the challenges they can offer to students become more sophisticated and therefore more intriguing and educative for the students working with, for instance, the local entrepreneurs. This, however, will require generations of students and potentially decades of hard and often frustrating work by the university staff.



## Conclusions and Reflections

At the end of the project, several themes and clusters evolved, and different outputs were achieved. For example, BUSCO established an Ecotourism Centre at SEKOMU, which in turn successfully trained ecotourism guides. In addition, in collaboration with local authorities, local partners were able to draft a regional tourism strategic plan. Both universities developed a business and marketing plan and could map out potential businesses where tourism students could look for internships. Both partner universities organized thematic entrepreneurship training for university staff, students, and local stakeholders. Different themes were included, such as service design, business planning, market analysis, marketing, networking, pricing, safety, hygiene, cold chains, and social media.

The University of Iringa was able to further develop a counselling service clinic/training facility for students. In addition, counselling outreach services were developed. These services target mostly vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the disabled, and survivors of abuse. The University of Iringa organized training in peaceful conflict resolution for local government authorities. The University of Iringa and SEKOMU were both able to develop legal counselling service/paralegal groups and could conduct training of trainers. In addition, these universities organized capacity-building workshops for local authorities on human rights. Both universities conducted thematic trainings on different themes. Since the project aimed at creating a well-functioning co-creation model, local living lab participants, entrepreneurs, people in the communities/villages and, in particular, vulnerable groups such as youth, women, people with disabilities, and survivors of abuse, NGOs representatives, local government authorities, and representatives of local business associations could benefit as well. In order to institutionalize these practices, BUSCO created a Community Resource Centre at the University of Iringa. This centre will still act as a link between the university and the external community, and it will continue in cooperation with the existing initiatives such as Kiota Hub created by Team Academy. Furthermore, the partner universities were empowered with an improved internet and computer lab, teachers trained by BUSCO in project-based learning, co-creation and service design methods, and strengthened online library services and teaching capabilities through collaboration with DIAK's master's programme in community development. For more detailed results and outputs of LLs at University of Iringa, see the next chapter of this publication.

Overall, the BUSCO project was an interesting experience for the Finnish



partners, too. There are some areas of development on the African continent, and it would be beneficial for Finnish actors to start gathering more experience and knowledge about the continent. Big businesses and formal business structures do exist in many big cities such as Dar Es Salam, while rural development and sustainability have some space for improvement. BUSCO developed a good infrastructure at the partner universities in Iringa and Lushoto. BUSCO project was a capacity-building project financed only for three years. After the completion of the project, the full responsibility and project ownership was passed to the local actors. Now it is up to these local partners to capitalize further on the experiences gained through the project. Nevertheless, in order for Tanzanian universities to benefit further from LLs and co-creation methodologies, there is a need for a “grassroots movement”.

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# LIVING LABS, REALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY: A CASE OF THE BUSCO PROJECT, UNIVERSITY OF IRINGA, TANZANIA

## Introduction

This paper builds on the previous paper, which focused on the idea and pedagogy of LLs, and the process of building capacity in two Higher Education Institutions: the University of Iringa and SEKOMU. Since LLs are about multi-stakeholder co-creation, our paper aims at shedding light on the process of establishing and implementing LLs between the University of Iringa and the community in the region. It takes into account how the LLs were designed, implemented and experienced under the BUSCO project. Furthermore, the paper presents and analyses the realizations and factors which acted as facilitators of, and/or barriers to, the co-creative process of moving towards sustainable rural development in the Iringa region. The living lab activities are interrelated with other project activities and are discussed here as part of the project outcomes. The experience with living labs provides a strong foundation for developing strategies for effectively engaging different stakeholders throughout their implementation for the co-creation of innovative ideas targeting services and businesses. In addition to recounting our experiences of implementing LLs, this article specifies the challenges encountered during the experience and how this may be used to improve living labs in the future.

## Methodology in Implementing the Living Labs Activities in Iringa

Living labs require collaborative work for the co-creation of sustainable businesses and services. Hence, it was visualized by the project team that, in order to carry out a specific number of activities involving public participation, collaboration was very important at all stages from planning to the implementation of the activities of the LLs. A series of steps was carried out to foster this collaboration for co-creation, as elaborated below.

### **Step 1. Recruiting students, experts and a lead key expert for LLs**

This first step involved identifying and recruiting a lead in each lab. Thereafter, students and staff of mixed expertise were identified and recruited to work with the living labs. Each expertise area in the activities of the living lab was run by the lead expert, while other experts supported students in the implementation of the project activities. Students were key actors in the implementation, and they were evaluated for the purpose of their learning. The results of their assessment were used as part of their university-based learning.

### **Step 2: Identifying relevant municipal/district/community stakeholders for LLs**

This involved the identification of relevant stakeholders in the activities of the LL from respective departments and units in local government. Thus, government officials were part of the living labs based on their professional competencies related to project activities. These stakeholders were responsible for those activities. Identifying them from their strategic plan for the year 2017/2018 was part of the initial project activities, and then the further needs which were not in their strategic plan for that year but which would be covered by the project were added. The process was also focused on the selection of geographical setting for the implementation of the project activities identified.

### **Step 3. Discussions on the areas for collaboration based on the project objectives with the identified group**

In the preliminary meeting, various areas were thematically identified, and most of them were selected based on the strategic plans of the local government (Iringa Municipal Council and Iringa District Council) as project partners. Schaffers et al. (2010) point out that the preparation of a living lab for development requires setting in place the conditions for the final success of the living labs, such as establishing the commitment of key stakeholders and implanting the living lab in community strategies. The key activities should include creating a joint vision, discussing local development opportunities and possibly working on an agreed model to enable long-term cooperation between stakeholders. From the project side, one key activity was also to support the government activities through the BUSCO project, and hence the relevance of the University in contributing to the community development would be realized. The discussion involved the thematic areas of each LL, as summarized on the following page in Table 1.

Table 1: Thematic areas identified for collaboration between university and community

Living Lab	Identified themes	Problem	Project activity to be carried on
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	Lack of knowledge and skills	Capacity building training in knowledge and skills for youth, women and people with physical disabilities
	Marketing		
	Record keeping		
	Business	Lack of capital	Linkages to financial Institutions
Counselling services	Gender relation in the context of GBV and VAC	Lack of knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity building to conflict resolution chairpersons.</li> <li>- Parenting and parenting in contemporary society.</li> </ul>
	Gender-Based Violence-GBV Violence against Children-VAC	Lack of knowledge and skills in GBV and VAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GBV and VAC sensitization, to teachers, pupils, local leaders and service providers.</li> <li>- Establishment of students' clubs in primary schools</li> <li>- Sharing expertise through a University Counselling Facility supported by the Bus-co Project in supporting victims of abuse/ violence</li> </ul>
Legal Aid	Child Rights	Lack of knowledge on child rights and child law	Sensitization on national child law and child rights, facilitating to establish a child platform for their rights to child protection committees at ward level
	Women Rights	Land ownership for women	Capacity development on legal proceeding for Ward Tribunal members in support of women rights for land ownership
Asset-Based Community Development	Environmental conservation	Lack of knowledge on environmental laws	Training in environmental laws for environmental Committee members
	Nutrition issues targeting women and children	Poor nutrition due to poor child feeding practices	Capacity building on child feeding practices
		Poor school feeding programme	Promotion school feeding programmes in primary schools
		Low consumption of fruit and vegetables	Promotion production and consumption of fruits and vegetables through gardening

#### **Step 4. Conducting need assessment in the identified project areas**

After the preliminary meeting with stakeholders, each LL had to conduct a needs assessment in the identified areas for collaboration. This was aimed at collecting more information from the community members in order to validate the items already identified in the preliminary meeting with the government stakeholders. The information collected was included in the implementation of the project activities. The needs assessment was carried out to enable the local community to navigate the living lab through co-creation and to essentially validate the needs and solutions put forward for community development, and, even more so, to allow local government and community members to own the implementation of the activities of the LLs (Schaffers et al., 2010).

#### **Step 5. Developing an action plan for the implementation of LLs activities**

After discussing the results of the need assessment, an action plan for how to implement the identified activities was made. Each lab had to plan how to go about with the implementation stage and community engagement. This included recruitment of beneficiaries of the activities in each LL. Each lab had a number of beneficiaries for the activities as per available resources. Therefore, the operating groups were organized for the implementation of the action plan in each LL and included the lecturers, students, and their district and municipal heads of units/departments as stakeholders. Others included are the non-government organization experts relevant to the LL.

#### **Step 6: Activities implementation in LLs**

Based on the BUSCO project, the main activity in addressing the identified themes in each LL was capacity development. Different approaches were used in the capacity development training. Students were the ones providing the training through lectures, group discussions and presentations. Before the training, the training objectives were shared with the groups, and the learning outcomes were discussed. Furthermore, a follow-up session was held for the communities in which trainees resided in order to find out how they had progressed after the training. However, some of the issues were outside the scope of the planned project activities. Therefore, they were considered for action by the responsible stakeholders at the district/municipal level. These included mainly technical support

for which skills not given by BUSCO were needed, such as vocational skills in livestock management or farming related to entrepreneurship knowledge acquired during project capacity development training. Details on these are explained in each LL below.

## **Living Labs Experiences in the Busco Project**

### **Community Development Living Lab – Nutrition and Environmental Issues**

This lab facilitated capacity building in communities for nutrition and environmental conservation issues. The capacity building activities were based on the Iringa District Strategic Plan of 2017/2018, as well as those from the community members. Meetings for trainee recruitment were conducted in two wards: Lumuli and Mseke. Different participants from the selected wards were identified. Representative for training were selected from each village in the ward through their village leaders. This was followed by a letter of invitation to the training participants in each ward. The letter of invitation was issued by the district executive director (DED) of Iringa District Council.

#### **Capacity Development Trainings on Nutrition Issues**

According to the Tanzania Health and Demographic Survey 2015/16, Iringa is among the regions with the highest rates of stunted growth in the country: 51.3% (TDHS 2015/16). The main reasons have been identified as inadequate dietary intake and feeding practices, among others. With this data, an intervention promoting balanced diet and good feeding practices was sought as the key to addressing the problem of reducing the rate. This is because food availability is not a problem in Iringa since it is among the food baskets (main food producers) of the country.

A total of 52 participants were involved in the training, including: women's group representatives from each of the 4 villages; 2 community health workers from each village; primary school committee members (2 representatives from each of the 4); primary school teachers (1 representatives from each school); parent-teachers association (UWAWA), (2 representatives from each school); and ward development committee members (WAEO, WLO, CDO, Counselor, WEO, VEOs, VCPs).

Two students were involved in the training. The main training methods used

were: group work and presentation, demonstrations and plenary discussions. The following topics were covered under this theme: proper breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and feeding of children of 2 to 5 years; anaemia, its symptoms/signs, effects and prevention; the production and consumption of vegetable and fruits for micronutrients deficiency prevention; the importance of school feeding programmes in addressing malnutrition and the promotion of learning about nutrition; and production and utilization of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes as a source of vitamin A.

After the training, a follow-up session was held to find out how the participants were able to apply the knowledge to their own practices. Improvements in food intake, in terms of a balanced diet and feeding practices for children, were reported by participants and community health workers. Participants in capacity development training, as well as community health workers, facilitated the dissemination of the knowledge during normal village meetings.

It appeared that some children were suffering from severe malnutrition, and they were referred to the respective facilities for further assessment. Some children had developed medical conditions and had severe malnutrition requiring the close supervision of experts. This is a short-term outcome of the training given to the selected participants by the university students, as supported by the lecturers and stakeholders. The role and relevance of the university in co-creating services and contributing to the solution of the community problems had been realized.

### Capacity Development Trainings on Environmental Conservation Issues

Tanzania's economic growth is extensively dependent on agricultural growth; unfortunately this growth takes place through environmental destruction. The Iringa district has a long history of destruction of water sources, and consequently it is prone to drought, forest depletion, flood, and famine through its agricultural activities (Mbelle, 1994). Therefore, awareness of the need to protect the environment, formulation of policies, and sensitization of the population to environmental issues has been recommended.

A total of 30 participants were expected to be involved in the training, including: village environmental committee members (two representatives from each of the 5 villages); a ward agricultural extension officer; primary school teachers (representatives from each of the 5 schools); tree growers (2 from each village); and 2 village leaders from each village. The issues that were covered here include community sensitization to the concept of environmental conservation



and environmental laws; promotion of the establishment of tree woodlots at household and institutional levels e.g. schools, promotion of the use of alternative energy for cooking and efficient ways of charcoal production; and sensitization to the best practice of water source conservation. Two students participated in the training. This helped the University of Iringa to realize its relevance to the community through the establishment of this kind of co-creation of community development activities between the university (staff, students) and local stakeholders.

### **Counselling Living Lab in Addressing Local Conflicts, GBV and VAC**

Violence against children (VAC) and violence against women (VAW) are public health and human rights crises of global proportions, with damaging consequences to the health and well-being of individuals and their communities. They are fuelled by gender inequality, social norms excusing violence, and harmful traditional practices; and they are exacerbated by a lack of commitment to taking preventive and protective action, as well as weak protection systems as reported by Hillis, et al (2016). The National Plan of Action to end Violence Against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC 2017/18–2021/22), emphasizes the actions needed for both preventing and responding to violence, and it recognizes that investing in violence prevention initiatives has a positive impact on inclusive growth. The NPA-VAWC plan of action has outlined 8 outcomes: vulnerable household's income increased; women's ownership of properties and securities increased; norms and values that support non-violence practised; security of women and children in public spaces improved; children well nurtured and protected from violence growing to realise their full human and moral potential; access and protection of women and children through legal services improved; services for survivors of VAWC improved; and learning environment for boys and girls that conforms to child's rights in place.

In support of these NPA-VAWC outcomes, the counselling living lab worked in 10 wards in Iringa Municipal Council. Schoolteachers and students were the main participants in the training from the government-owned schools. Before commencing the capacity building, there was a meeting of teachers, stakeholders, and key experts for orientation and identification of students to be involved in the training from 11 primary schools.

During the meeting, it was decided that each school should be represented by two teachers (one female and one male), who deal with the social issues of students. This was important in enabling students to easily access services according

to gender. It was also decided to include female and male students to represent their schools. Therefore, the number of school representatives was 44 members including teachers and their students. The recruitment included 10 primary schools and 1 secondary school (22 students and 22 teacher representatives). In addition, 10 ward chairpersons of Ward Conflict Resolution Councils were involved to represent the community. Other experts from the municipal council were 1 social welfare officer, 3 community development officers and 3 students from the university who helped in the training activities.

Capacity development training was organised for chairpersons from ward conflict resolutions councils who were community members selected due to their wisdom, and who do not have any prior training in legal or social matters. The emphasis was on identification, issues related to gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC), and how those issues influence the two mentioned practices. Reported sources of conflict mainly included infidelity, resources related to family care, and cultural issues related to gender relations. Issues such as gender relations and parenting were discussed, how they manifest during their resolution activities was analysed. In addition, issues such as conflict resolution skills, and parenting skills (including knowledge of land, marital, and child laws) were identified by the stakeholders to be considered during training. In schools, trainings for teachers and students in issues related to (VAC) identification and response were conducted. The lab also facilitated the formation of student clubs in schools to increase awareness, identification and response during the follow-up sessions in schools. The clubs would be supervised in collaboration with two teachers from the participating schools, the Municipal Social Welfare Officer, and the Municipal Community Development Officer. The training focused more on awareness raising and response pathways rather than intervention, as per the project objectives. The facilitation methods were participatory, and the trainees were eager to know more about the topics. School representatives shared some scenarios in which students were attacked on the way to and from school by taxi, bus, motor-cycle, and tricycle drivers. They considered it important to include VAC cases reported to educational officers in the training, even though it was not part of the project plan.

Trainees from all wards and schools gave positive feedback concerning the training, and they wanted more time. They also remarked on the community conflict, GBV, and VAC results, due to their lack of awareness of the same and lack of parenting skills. Hence, they promised to raise awareness in their respective areas. It was also agreed during the training that the trainees would prepare their action

plans for implementation. The service providers' double roles were a challenge, for example, for the counsellor. As an authoritative figure in schools, it was difficult to provide support services in schools. However, the training has helped in clarifying the pathways to response so as not to damage the evidence – and at same time and the lives – of those affected by GBV and VAC.

The experience in this living lab has given the lecturers, students, stakeholders, and other actors an opportunity to meet and share their experiences and expertise through talking about GBV and VAC. This led to an engagement meeting of the task force, where all the key people were present, from grassroots to different channels and pathways when addressing GBV and VAC in the communities and discussing the progress and challenges. This was guided by the municipal social welfare officer and supported by the BUSCO project team

## **Entrepreneurship Living Lab**

Catching up with the TANZICT (2011–2016) project, which was a collaboration between Tanzania's Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology (MCST) and Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, involving UoI among others, the project's components revolved around entrepreneurship and innovation: catalysing innovation hubs and living labs to build the capacity of aspiring entrepreneurs.

In the BUSCO project (2017–2020), the main objective was to continue to develop capacities for entrepreneurship and innovations for entrepreneurs through an entrepreneurship LL. It was also aimed at improving or creating new business ideas and link the beneficiaries with the existing KIOTA HUB which is run by students for individual or group economic income generation. Entrepreneurship causes economic growth by allowing the means of production in a society to be used in newer and more efficient combinations (Smith, 2010). The main topics were the general entrepreneurship knowledge including; opportunities recognition, exploitation of capital sources, business planning, marketing, and financial management.

A total of 82 people were trained in three selected areas, which are Kising'a, Tagamenda and Iringa Municipality. Out of those 82 people trained, 30 were people with disabilities who were at first left behind in most entrepreneurship training opportunities. Before the training, the experts, in collaboration with students, conducted a needs assessment to identify the entrepreneurship challenges facing community members. In the assessment, the district trade officer of the Iringa

district council, the municipal youth development officer, and other key respondents in the villages were sampled and interviewed. The results revealed that 63.3% needed entrepreneurship training, but had not participated in any before. The needs for capacity development training included opportunity recognition, marketing, business management, and bookkeeping. Others were sources of capital and business planning, which is key to securing resources for business, e.g. when applying for a loan.

Based on the identified needs, the training was conducted in the three selected areas for three days, with another three days for follow up and consultations with students, as supported by the stakeholders and their lecturers. The training concentrated on general entrepreneurship knowledge, business opportunity recognition, exploitation, and marketing. In solving capital problems, the LL conducted some meetings to create the linkage of entrepreneurs with financial institutions. Moreover, the linkage to the KIOTA HUB for continuing nurturing entrepreneurs was established, and students fully participated in helping entrepreneurs.

Follow-up sessions were held to measure the short-term impact of the training for entrepreneurs. It was observed that the knowledge of entrepreneurship was impactful to the participants, and it helped some of them to start new businesses. More than 20 new businesses were formed among the trained people, and other existing businesses were improved. The improvements involved the improvement of packaging, product quality, and business advertisements, which helped the entrepreneurs increase sales. During the follow-up session, business portfolios were created to monitor the progress of the participants during the course. The business timeline was determined by each participant to evaluate business growth, challenges, and opportunities.

In addition, with the living lab approach, the experts and the government stakeholders were able to form a total of 24 new business groups with people with disabilities, of which 20 have already been registered under the Municipal Council, and 16 have already accessed a loan from the Municipal Council as capital to start and improve their businesses.

## **Legal Aid Living Lab in Addressing Child and Women Rights**

African governments, including that of Tanzania, are increasingly making efforts to realize children's rights and become child friendly (UNICEF 2016; 2015 and 2014; ACPF 2014a, 2014b and 2013). There have been significant improvements in harmonizing domestic laws with child rights standards, allocating budgets for sectors benefiting children and an increasing commitment to implement them. These encouraging developments should provide the basis for building future interventions. Remarkable progress has been made since in terms of fulfilling children's rights to survival, development, protection, and participation in matters that affect them.

With regards to women's rights in Tanzania related to land ownership, there has been positive development in the agenda of policy and legal reform. Lack of awareness of existing laws has been responsible for poor coordination and duplication of activities between formal and informal arrangements, ultimately resulting in poor practice, which fuel land conflicts (John & Kabote, 2017). Despite a well-established land conflict resolution mechanism in Tanzania, different dispute resolution organs, such as land tribunals, are unable to cover operational costs which must instead either be found from central or local government. The capacity and ability of most grassroots bodies is generally low, partly because they are not competent in judicial entities and therefore are not likely to have an appreciable impact on the incidence of land litigation (John & Kabote, 2017). Therefore due to such challenges, BUSCO project through Legal Aid Living Lab sought for doing capacity development training to land tribunal at Ulanda ward in various legal matters related to land ownership for women.

In addressing both women's and children's rights, the Legal Aid LL worked with 12 (6 male and 6 female) members of the child protection committee from 5 villages in Ulanda ward, which is equipped with working tools in creating community initiative plans for child protection. This involved training the child protection committees in child rights laws and creating child rights clubs in primary schools under their supervisions.

Regarding women's right to land occupation, 12 (6 male and 6 female) ward tribunal members from 5 villages in Ulanda ward were equipped with legal procedures in handling land and pertinent issues related to women and people with disabilities. The trainings were organised by students in the final year of their LLB law programmes, and supervised by their lecturers, district legal counsel, and a district social welfare officer.

After the training, an action plan was developed to help child protection committees formulate child rights clubs and ward tribunal members disseminate awareness to the community members during village meetings respectively. The follow-up visit focused on finding out how the members were able to formulate clubs and disseminate awareness to the community members as planned. The members identified that community members' lives were in danger when they were required to provide witnesses or report cases related to a violation of children's rights. They requested protection so as to be able to provide information freely and follow the rule of law. The matter was discussed, and the district legal counsel and the social welfare officer took the lead for the requested action. Mechanisms to ensure informant and witness safety were created for implementation.

The LL experience provided the LLB students with the opportunity to understand how legal systems or mechanisms work at the grassroots level and to understand their possible challenges. It also equipped them with the creative thinking for problem solving that can impact non-skilled workers at the community level when promoting human rights.

## **Realization of the Living Labs Results**

Living labs can address the opportunities and challenges identified in the development process by bringing together a heterogeneous set of stakeholders with different needs, such as organizations, institutions, local communities, researchers, students, etc., with the aim of delivering new knowledge and practice to development actors (Levén & Holmström, 2008).

The establishment of LLs through the BUSCO project at the University of Iringa provides a new way to connect the university with communities and help with closing the gap between the two. It has been realized that, compared to the traditional ways in which the university approaches learning and teaching, the LLs approach differs in two respects. Firstly, LLs are capable of providing new pedagogy for university teaching and learning. LLs involve key stakeholders in interactive and empowering ways, enabling them to become co-creators, rather than perceiving local communities as passive in their own development. Secondly, it has been realized that a particular strength of LLs lies in communities' real life setting whereby community members realize their own opportunities, challenges, and solutions to the challenges. Another observation was that, if LLs becomes institutionalized in the programmes of higher education through LLs-based courses in the curricula of universities, they could help expose students to an educational

setting of co-creation and complex, real-world challenges. The LL setting allows students and lecturers to experience new types of learning situated in and related to the respective socio-spatial context of the LLs. Moreover, this highlights the importance of external and local knowledge and skills developed in an interactive way such that it can reshape personal and professional alignments. The LL concept is in line with the open new approach as it relies on the idea that external sources of knowledge are a valuable resource. Moreover, LLs would then be one of the best strategies for enabling partnerships within universities to serve as a foundation for advancing sustainable community developments.

## **Sustainability of Living Lab Results**

Sustainability is a prerequisite for any product or service (Cunningham et al., 2012). Living lab practitioners can work towards a more sustainable way of setting up LLs that can run development activities or projects over a longer period of time. Hilty et al. (2011) argue that a combination of efficiency and sufficiency strategies is the most effective way to stimulate possibilities of supporting sustainability. For LLs to succeed, there must be an effective plan and management in the design and development of co-creation that maximizes the socioeconomic conditions of the partnership. Establishing sustainable partnerships of stakeholders with a shared set of values is a strategic step in the planning and establishment of LLs. The LL approach that involves the beneficiaries in the process of problem identification, implementation and evaluation has been suggested by various authors (Baelden & VanAudenhoove, 2015; Leminen & Westerlund, 2012; Liedtke et al., 2012). By integrating users and other relevant actors early on in a new process, the opportunities for the flow of new ideas and their application are improved. This will be useful in the local setting, and it will ensure the benefits of adopting participative practices.

In the BUSCO project, the partners discussed the mechanisms for the sustainability of the activities of the LLs. Each LL had its own strategy for creating sustainable collaboration. However, the main approach was to establish task forces for the collaboration between the local communities and the University of Iringa, and each LL was able to establish one. In schools, clubs were established particularly for dealing with VAC and children's rights in each school involved in the project. The task forces were formed for linkage purposes, so that, in each project area, the task force would follow up all activities, and, if necessary, the needs and issues identified in the area would be addressed by university LLs ex-



perts. The task forces include members from the local government as well other stakeholders, particularly those who were involved in project activities. Together with the establishment of the task forces, a Community Resource Centre was established at the University of Iringa in which the all LLs will continue working with their partners and mentor the communities in different areas. In addition, students will be assigned some tasks in the communities to help them collaborate with the communities in identifying challenges, so that they can help in dealing with these challenges to maximize the long-term project impact, which is to contribute to well-functioning, efficient, and equitable societies. Memoranda of understanding between the University of Iringa and the local government involved in the project have been created to guide the roles of the university and that of the municipal/district councils. Through the established community resource centre at the university and mechanisms created with the stakeholders at the community, lectures and students will continue to work with the community, not only for learning but also for contributing to solving the problems of society. Within the resource centre, there is an office for legal aid, created particularly for legal needs of the community. The resource centre is linked with other university facilities, such as the KIOTA HUB, the counselling facility and the computer lab, which are key to the needs of local community. Students will be assigned special tasks related to the needs such as provision of counselling services and training in computer skills. Students will be graded for the tasks assigned. Lecturers will also have the opportunity to identify the current themes in their teaching for pedagogical review and development, and hence prepare graduates who are fit for the current labour markets. The Community will participate and contribute to the resident-driven development. In this context, living labs could be a promising instrument for the active inclusion of citizens in their development.

## **Challenges**

LLs are organized as platforms that give support, enhance learning, and enable the exchange of knowledge and good practice for the development of all who are involved. However, challenges were encountered during implementation, such as a lack of favourable conditions for entrepreneurship and innovation in services, as well as cultural issues. If it happens that the issues addressed through LLs come into conflict with local cultural values, there is a possibility of establishing resistance within the community. For instance, the issue of women's land occupancy conflicted with some cultural practices, and, hence, needed many awareness



provisions to come to the level of mutual understanding.

However, political leaders have a critical role in influencing communities and community development. In areas where the political leaders were involved, such as the role of ward councillors, the participation of community members in LLs was more positive.

Increased workloads for the participating stakeholders from the local government also had an impact on the implementation. This is because they sometimes became unavailable and hence it was not possible to engage community members as planned. Consistency in developing capacities through co-creation is key in making sure the results becomes substantial. However, mechanisms to ensure their availability were created to minimize the risk of losing the motivation of the community members to participate in the LLs.

## **Conclusions**

Living labs have the potential to address socio-economic and development needs, and it is therefore important to have a deeper understanding of the role of LLs in development process. The LL approach provides an important opportunity to collaborate and co-create, as well as a model for new ways of working in partnership. There must be an emphasis on co-creation with communities in order to address the issue of economic and social sustainability in a collaborative way. LLs proactively support positive change with local capability building, employment creation, and empowerment. The focus of the Tanzanian LLs has been on the local communities and needs-based solutions in response to everyday challenges. LLs should be managed on the levels of community interaction and stakeholder engagement, and setup to succeed. LLs are devices to connect professional knowledge and practices, and apply them in a local context in order to support local knowledge creation and the emergence of new ideas. Therefore, LLs need to foster the collaboration of universities and skilled stakeholders in invention systems. LLs in Tanzania have a potentially important role in supporting socio-economic resilience, but it is too early to judge their comprehensive impact.

The implementation of the living lab approach should go hand in hand with the curriculum. Some curricula which are not practical in nature may find it difficult to create tasks that students will follow and to measure their achievement. Therefore, the improvements should start from the lecturers who guide the students in the process. This will also allow the lecturer to be able to support/guide students in solving real-life problems encountered in the community in the LLs

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# ECOTOURISM LIVING LAB: A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Before the rise of Corona Virus (COVID-19), Page and Dawling (2002) had predicted that the number of incoming tourists would reach about 1.8 billion by year 2020. Several developing countries have identified tourism as one of the biggest sources for national income beside the export of raw materials. In recent years, there was a significant shift in interest within the tourism industry toward ecotourism (Himberg, 2006, p. 133).

Tanzania has attracted many tourists thanks to its factors which is attributed by its countless nature-based attractions. This growth is accompanied by a number of challenges including climate change, limited knowledge and skills among service providers, poor ecotourism governance, and a lack of coordination among the stakeholders. In recent years, Tanzania has promoted the concept of ecotourism as an alternative, low-impact form of tourism that supports the conservation of natural resources through financial benefits for conservation, the provision of education, and increasing awareness of environmental conservation and climate change. Ecotourism also integrates responsible behaviour among the travellers and host communities (Honey, 2009).

Furthermore, ecotourism helps to preserve local culture and provides economic benefits to local communities (Kolehmainen et al., 2008). Existing evidence shows that Tanzania has not utilized most of its ecotourism potential (Mgonja et al., 2015). The actual amount of ecotourism activity in the country is highly localized and relatively minimal due to the following factors: accessibility problems in some protected areas, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient marketing and promotion (Mgonja et al., 2015).

In accordance with Himberg (2006, p. 134), one of the BUSCO goals was to study the attitudes of the local actors towards ecotourism through a thematic living lab method, to assess the availability of resources for development, and to map out the potential supply and delivery of tourism products and services. In order to do this, we conducted a baseline assessment and took subsequent actions

to understand the local community's perceptions of ecotourism and its sustainability. The aim of the baseline assessment was to find out the key tourism industry, capacity, and policy needs, as well as the social, economic, and environmental assets for ecotourism. In addition, the empirical data aimed at finding out what role partner universities could play in order to act as catalysts to strengthen and build the capacity of different ecotourism stakeholders in the two regions. The BUSCO project aimed at assessing the human resource and institutional capabilities for ecotourism development in the two regions. It aimed at finding existing problems and barriers affecting the development of good ecotourism practices and sustainable development in Iringa and Lushoto areas in Tanzania. The ultimate goal was to build respective capacities for Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University (SEKOMU) and the University of Iringa (UoI) in order to act as catalysts in developing appropriate tools and methods to deal with ecotourism education, training, and sustainable development.

## **Ecotourism and Sustainability**

Tourism is widely considered one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, and ecotourism is its fastest growing sub-sector. Yet, the definition of the term ecotourism has not been clear to date (Buckley, 2009). Since ecotourism is a relatively new notion, there is no agreed definition of ecotourism (Weaver, 2013). There are many definitions available, and there are considerable differences among them. The diagram by Buckley (2009) shown in Figure 1 on the following page, may help to capture what constitutes ecotourism. In a broad sense, most of the definitions of ecotourism may fall somewhere within four circles (Buckley, 2009).

However, the diagram does not cover the entire picture of ecotourism. For instance, it only focuses on ecotourism as “a good thing.” For those who consider ecotourism as a means of development, significant participation of the local community in the operation of tourism is often required as a condition for ecotourism. Therefore, ecotourism involving local community is called Community-based ecotourism (CBET). The conceptual framework (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship between multiple variables on which successful community-based ecotourism depends. First of all, it is suggested that, in order for ecotourism to take place, there should be a natural environment, and there should be a concept of sustainable management of all tourism activities through education and financial support to the community. So far, the literature does not clearly distinguish this two. This fact makes the discussion of the definition of ecotourism even more com-

plicated. Given the difficulties inherent in defining ecotourism, Buckley (2009) claimed that “a precise definition of ecotourism is perhaps unnecessary unless the term is to be used in legal or administrative documents, such as planning and development control instruments or grant guidelines for funding agencies” (Buckley 2009, p. 264).

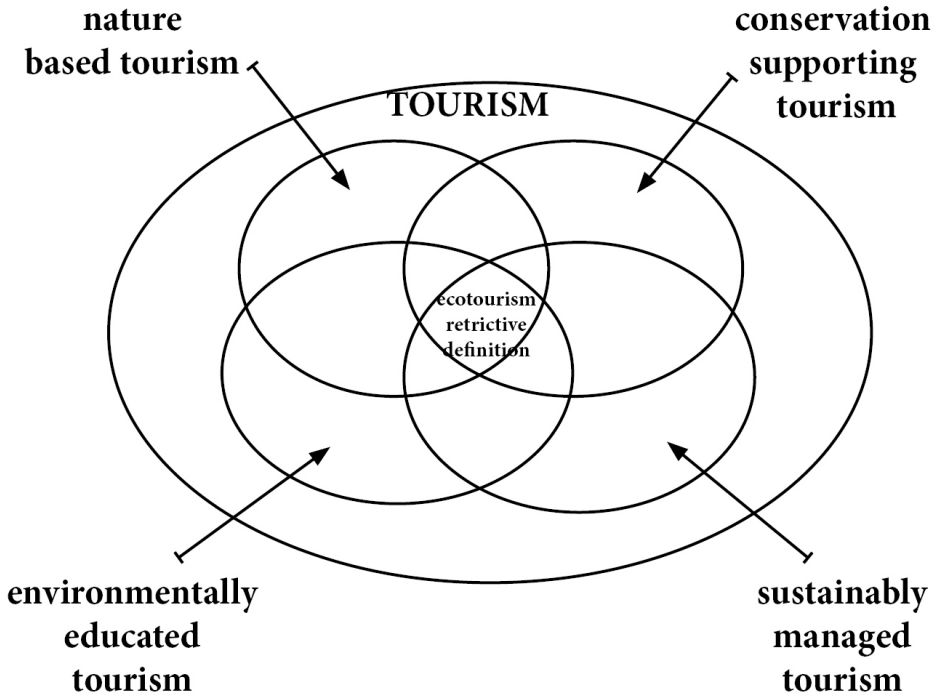


Figure 1. Ecotourism Framework (Based on Buckley, 2009)

According to The International Ecotourism Society (2015), principally, ecotourism intends to:

- Minimize physical, social, behavioural and psychological impacts
- Build environmental, cultural awareness, and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry
- Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates

- Design, construct, and operate low-impact facilities
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people in their community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment

Local communities that have lived close to nature for decades usually have wide environmental knowledge about the natural resources and plant and animal species inhabiting it. Traditional environmental knowledge is “a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, taken down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with one another” (Berkes, 1993, p. 3). According to Barrett and Arcese (1995), the local communities and their nearby natural resources are part of a larger social, economic, and political context and often subject to influences that originate far from the local place. Therefore, a positive external support environment can ensure the survival of local societies and natural resources, while the opposite can wilt societies and their natural resources (See also Michaelidou et al., 2002).

Catering to ecotourism involves building the needed infrastructure to accommodate tourists. This infrastructure development includes transportation, lodging, food, and activities for tourists. Ecotourists are less concerned than “mass-tourists” about large, fancy hotels and paved roads, but a clean and healthy atmosphere must be provided for them, too. Low-impact housing such as small lodges, bed and breakfast inns, or rooms in village homes are usually preferred by ecotourists. These lodges also are beginning to use renewable resources, such as solar energy, to help avoid the pitfalls of modern development that would deplete the very resources that ecotourism has set out to protect (Lindberg, 1993). Thus, through income generation, ecotourism can provide improved healthcare and education for local inhabitants, as well as increased employment in the tourism industry.

Demonstrating the economic benefits of conservation to the local population is one key to successful protection of an area (Scheyvens, 1999). If local inhabitants can be assured of some economic benefits from ecotourism, as well as continued necessities such as foods, fuel, and land tenure, then ecotourism may integrate conservation and development (Kiss, 2004).

Without ignoring the importance of the CBET in developing countries, we identified higher education institutions as key stakeholders in ensuring an increase in ecotourism awareness and in increasing the level of knowledge and competences in the implementation of ecotourism. Due to the nature of the BUSCO project, which focused on capacity building for higher education institutions, we put an emphasis on actions and transformation processes taking place in the partner universities. Furthermore, it is important to establish channels through which

community and educational institutions may co-create knowledge by involving different people and creating mechanisms through which ecotourism skills can be improved and maintained. Therefore, in the remaining part of this paper, reference to CBET will occur only as a secondary concept. The data at hand does not allow us to make a seasoned discussion about CBET in the studied areas.

To summarize, ecotourism has the potential to bring economic development in harmony with nature conservation in rural areas, especially in less developed countries (Wunder, 1999). However, we need to conduct careful baseline studies, and we need new tools and new approaches for better ecotourism development and service quality. For instance, some local people have developed traditional skills of ecotourism and have been trying to make money through selling their own services as tourist guides. BUSCO aimed at finding mechanisms to involve such actors in order to co-create long-lasting solutions for the ecotourism mindset and high-quality services. In the next section, we briefly present how we collected and analysed our data.

## **Data Collection Process and Methods**

The BUSCO project took place in two regions in Tanzania. It involved several actors and stakeholders in Lushoto District, West Usambara, and in Iringa municipality. We used thematic living lab methods, which involved multiple stakeholders, such as key experts from SEKOMU and University of Iringa-UoI, students, local tour guides, tour organizers, and other service providers in ecotourism activities. In total, we reached a total of 51 participants from Lushoto and 35 from Iringa. We selected participants mostly based on convenience for their working areas. We culled data through monitored questionnaires surveys. In order to capture in-depth knowledge about tourism governance and local policies, we conducted thematic interviews and focused group discussions with key informants such as the district executive director, the district tourism officer, local government leaders, and park managers. Furthermore, through action research, we conducted a follow-up study to observe and analyse the situation before and after the intervention of the BUSCO project. For data analysis, we used content analysis and SPSS for descriptive statistics. In the next section, we briefly present our key results and analyse key actions taken to increase capacity for the participating institutions of higher education.

## **Key Results from Lushoto and Iringa**

The surveyed population of tour guides in Lushoto district and Iringa consisted of men and women in differing proportions. The result indicates that the majority of the tour guides were men, while relatively few women acted as tour guides. The survey results also indicate that the majority of the tour guides who have worked for less than one year are women. This points to the need to understand more why women are rare in this field, as well as looking for the possibility of encouraging them more to engage in ecotourism business. This statistic may indicate the fast growth of the tourism business in recent years, and the growing interest among local people in engaging in tourism activities as well.

## **Career Background and Fields**

Looking at the years of work experience, the survey conducted in Lushoto with thirty six (36) tour guides, the result indicates following information:

Six (6) people have worked less than one year, twenty-eight (28) people have worked between 7 and 12 years; eight (8) people had a work experience in tourism sector. Meanwhile, only four (4) people had more than 13 years' experience in the tourism sector. The reason for asking about working duration was to gain a wider understanding of the respondents' backgrounds and experience in the field.

Further, we asked respondents about their education background, and, based on this survey, most tour guides mentioned the following fields: marketing and customer service; tourism, bird watching and ornithology; forestry wildlife; nature conservation; travel management and hotel management; tour guiding and education. It was observed that there was a lack of detailed knowledge in ecotourism among them, and some had limited backgrounds in ecotourism studies. This called attention to the capacity building and training programme, indicating that it should be detailed in a way that can help them start pursuing diverse knowledge acquisition in their fields of expertise.

## **Identification of Local Actors and Stakeholders**

In order to have permission to act as a tour guide in Lushoto, one must be a member of one of the following: ENEPA green consultancy; Tanga Youth Development Association (TAYODEA); District Natural resource Officer; Irente Farm Lodge, Tupande Usambara, Friends of Usambara, Usambara-Mtae Eco & Cul-



tural Tourism and Magamba Eco Cultural Tourism Enterprise.

The survey results show that nine (9) of the participants came from Friends of Usambara, and that eight (8) from Tanga Youth Development Organization (TAYODEA), while Tupande Usambara was represented by only five respondents. The information above reflects the fact that Friends of Usambara is the biggest and oldest tourism organization in the Lushoto district followed by TAYODEA and Tupande Usambara (TU).

While in Iringa, we worked with the following organizations: Mkoga Women Pottering Group; Igeleke Youth Natural Resources Conservation Group; and at Iringa DC, Tungamalenga <sup>2</sup>(tour guide groups, camping groups, Mahuninga Ma-sai Market, traditional dancers, and food vendors). By looking at the two regions (Lushoto and Iringa), a raising number of organizations and the variety of names reflects the growth of tourism industry as well. Newer organizations face challenges linked to lack of qualified staff, weak managerial structures, and a general lack of expertise in tourism activities and service design, delivery, and management.

## **Existing Skills and Needs for Further Training**

According to the survey, slightly more than half had attended formal training. Almost one fourth of the respondents had never attended any formal training. Those who attended training indicated the types of training as follows: motor vehicle mechanics, business administration; forestry and nature conservation, and bee-keeping; wildlife management, ornithology and bird watching; hospitality, tourism and travel management; customer service management; communication and English courses. As we look closely at their fields and level of training, we notice that only twenty (20) respondents had attended formal tourism training and only five (5) had attended training in forest management. Sample size was 39 respondents.

The rest had attended sporadic trainings in one or two of the areas mentioned above. This suggests a lack of diverse knowledge among tour guides because of limited skills as mentioned above. This observation reveals an important area to work on during training. From this survey, it was apparent that most of the tour guides (around 75%) are not satisfied with their current skills. They listed a number of skills needed as an outcome of the training, but the major ones are eco-tour

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<sup>2</sup> Iringa DC=Iringa District, Tungamalenga = Name of a Village at Iringa District which offers traditional products and services for tourists

guide techniques and general tour guide techniques. In the same way, tour guides suggested a number of training modules to be covered during training, of which the major ones were first aid and basic tour guiding medical skills, eco tour guiding techniques, natural and cultural interpretation, geography of ecotourism, and map reading.

We assessed the training needs of the respondents. All respondents identified further training needs, covering the following fields:

- General tourism/guide techniques and eco-tour guide techniques
- Legal and ethical aspects for tour guiding and tourism/ecotourism management
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- First aid/medical skills
- Anthropology, cultural interpretation, and cultural tourism/guiding
- Communication skills (English, German, French) and time management
- Product/package design, agritourism and service design and marketing
- Geography of ecotourism, itinerary preparation, and map reading
- Nature interpretation and botany/plants identification
- Forestry, Usambara and biodiversity, ornithology/bird watching

The reason for the training needs assessment was to develop a curriculum suited to learners' interests and knowledge gaps. The majority of participants asserted their willingness to pay to acquire further training. We asked tour guides to share their impression about their need for formal certification after training. Impressively, all respondents indicated that they needed a completion certificate after training. This indicates that they placed a high value on the training needed.

In addition, a good proportion of tour guides involved in the survey gave their opinions regarding capacity building training and hoped to upgrade their expertise through a field-oriented training programme. Scheduling the programme during the low season of tourism was an important concern, arising not only in the questionnaire survey, but also during talks with the officials of the organizations to which the tour guides belonged. Further, other training considerations involved field/practical training, more time for training, local environment/context oriented training, to schedule training during low season of tourism, more dialogue/discussions and more equipment for training.

## **Local Ecotourism Governance**

In the current study, a group discussion and an interview with the local government leaders and tourism stakeholders were carried out. It was found that there were no local policies and regulations governing local tourism business at the district levels. Furthermore, we found that there were no local tourism associations, which are normally catalysts for local tourism service providers and especially local tour guides. Another reported challenge involved communication between stakeholders at the local level, and further monitoring of overall performance of the local tourism businesses not being satisfactory. The majority of the stakeholders proposed the formation of Usambara Local Tour Guides Association (ULTA), and the formation of local policies and regulations to govern local tourism business at the district level. Strengthening lateral communication among the stakeholders will help to enhance accountability between the rights holders and the duty bearers.

## **Ecotourism Training and Capacity Building**

Based on the results above, we set out to develop training and skills development. A total of thirty-five (35) tourism service providers from Iringa and fifty-five (55) stakeholders from Lushoto were involved. These groups involved various actors from businesses, the government, and the public sector. The aim was to implement the concept of co-creation. A participatory approach was used to develop a curriculum, which would better cater for current and future needs. Furthermore, we conducted several capacity-building training sessions for the stakeholders from Lushoto and Iringa respectively. Students and selected invited guest trainers conducted joint trainings, while teachers acted as coaches. In addition to engaging in the training, students were also involved in the follow-up sessions in order to foster the application of the knowledge gained by their trainees by way of smaller steps towards improving ecotourism business in selected sites. Students also participated in organizing an ecotourism stakeholder group at Tungamalenga and Lushoto district in order to have formal leadership, to create their constitution, and to be registered. The group would be a platform for tourism stakeholders to plan and establish mechanisms to improve ecotourism in their areas.

In the Usambara mountains in the Lushoto district, the BUSCO project influenced the formation of the Usambara Local Tour Guides Association (ULTA), and influenced the development of local regulations to govern local tourism practices in the area. The BUSCO project also supported the re-organization of

the tourism information office at Tungamalenga, a gateway to Ruaha National Park, the largest National Park in Tanzania.

## **Project Sustainability and Recommendations**

Based on the above results, we tried to form a link between the social and economic positions of individuals and their roles in ecotourism development and management at the local scale through the ecotourism living lab. The results show that a low level of education limits understanding of ecotourism processes and markets. In order to behave as serious actors in the market, participants need to understand the evolution and dynamics of the market. This requires a certain level of skills in service design, marketing, and promotion based on contemporary technologies – ICT in particular.

The above results indicated a general need for continuous training among local ecotourism service providers before any intervention. Moreover, the skill set should be relevant and grounded on the level of education attained among the trainees. In most cases, there are variations in terms of knowledge and skill set among the tourism service providers. For example, some had training in forestry, beekeeping, marketing, fisheries, and other fields, but they did not have knowledge and skills on ecotourism and, which may have affected the quality of their services. In most instances, local service providers are not satisfied with their current skill set. The study identified a large skill gap, and this indicates the need for a timely update of skills and knowledge through training. Getting an understanding of current skills and knowledge will help to develop a curriculum which is crosscutting, and which caters for the needs of each trainee regardless of their diverse education background. Through the BUSCO project, several training modules were developed, customized, and incorporated in the general training curriculum (see table 1).

Most trainees are very flexible and active when they are given a chance to co-create the design and development of a curriculum. They find this practice more convenient and relevant based on their needs. Further, the BUSCO project showed a certain challenge related to gender participation in rural areas. The issue of gender in mainstreaming economic activities in rural areas is still a challenge. The results indicate that the two regions still consider tourism as adventurous, dangerous, and a tough job for women. There was a consensus that only men would be suitable for acquiring the necessary skills and for working with tourism activities. This indicates a need to improve and advocate for women to engage in ecotourism activities and take leadership positions.

Table 1: Example of Training Modules in Ecotourism at SEKOMU

Course Name	Main Content	Credits
Introduction and overview of tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concepts and definitions of tourism</li> <li>Tourism principles and theories</li> <li>Trends and evolution of tourism industry</li> <li>Negative and positive impacts of tourism industry</li> <li>Tourism case studies</li> </ul>	12
Fundamental principles of ecotourism & eco-tour guiding techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions and concepts of ecotourism</li> <li>Ecotourism principles and practices</li> <li>Ecotourism case studies</li> <li>Tanzania's ecotourism score card</li> <li>Concepts and definitions of tour guiding techniques</li> <li>Qualities of the best eco-tour guide</li> <li>Nature interpretation (plants and animals)</li> <li>Cultural interpretation</li> <li>Forms and types of tour guides</li> <li>Tour guiding values and ethics</li> </ul>	12
First aid and tour guiding medical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions and concepts of first aid</li> <li>First aid tools and equipment</li> <li>First aid techniques</li> <li>Forms and types of tour accidents, injuries and sicknesses and their first aid responses</li> </ul>	12
Marketing techniques for ecotourism and hospitality business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concepts and definitions of ecotourism and hospitality business marketing</li> <li>Principles of ecotourism marketing</li> <li>Market segmentation for ecotourism business</li> <li>Ecotourism market management</li> <li>Ecotourism product development</li> <li>Ecotourism marketing philosophy</li> <li>4Ps for ecotourism marketing</li> </ul>	12
Communication skills for tour guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition and concepts of communication skills</li> <li>Forms and types of communication skills</li> <li>Communication environment needs</li> <li>Communications and special needs</li> <li>Multilingual/multicultural communication skills</li> <li>Importance of good communication skills</li> </ul>	12
Costing/tour pricing/product pricing and itinerary preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concepts and definitions of itinerary, costing, pricing</li> <li>Techniques for itinerary development</li> <li>Fixed costs and variable costs</li> <li>Markup percentage</li> <li>Product pricing (existing and new products)</li> </ul>	10

Course Name	Main Content	Credits
Map reading and the mountain guiding & geography of ecotourism	Concepts and definitions of ecotourism geography Geographical information systems for ecotourism Map reading and interpretation Participatory mapping	12
Ethics and security issues in tour guiding	Concepts and definition of professional ethics Principles of professional ethics Security issues in tourism Global code of ethics for tourism	10
		92

If this happens, it will help to improve the welfare of women and reduce social, economic, and environmental challenges facing rural communities. Income per capita is an important factor indicating whether local tour guides are earning enough to sustain their lives in the long run, including helping their families and serving for future social emergencies in case of sicknesses.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that the ecotourism living lab is a viable tool for sustainable tourism development, which enhances co-creation among the key tourism stakeholders, and improves capacity and the business environment. Through the project, the results revealed the existence of a knowledge and skill gap in ecotourism among key stakeholders. In line with the BUSCO project, we trained ecotourism guides: in collaboration with local authorities, we drafted an ecotourism strategy, and an eco-tour guides association, ULTA, was formed. In addition, we reviewed university curricula and influenced local tourism policies.

This study suggests that, for any local initiative to have a substantial impact on the targeted population, it is important to consider the governance system and engagement of the duty bearers. Influencing the policy and legal environment will help to set up a regulatory and controlling system that will help to ensure the long-term interests of all the stakeholders, i.e. service providers, visitors, the community, and local government leaders (Neil, 1999). Further, formulation and registration of associations will help to maintain a self-governing board among the local tour guides in order to resolve their issues and to have a common voice towards the government and other external stakeholders. In accordance with Weaver (2013), when planning and developing any ecotourism product or service, multi-stakeholder engagement is very important for sustainable development. Inclu-

sive and participatory planning of local tourism development policies helps to increase the sense of ownership, readiness, and continuous improvement at the individual level and at the community level, and therefore leads to sustainable development.

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# 3

## Developing Quality Assurance and Promoting Curriculum Reviews

This section demonstrates the importance of quality assurance mechanisms and curriculum development in the Tanzanian context.

First, we describe quality assurance as a concept and the process of developing tools for quality assurance in Tanzanian HEIs.

Second, the process of curriculum review and experiences of the curriculum development, especially in the University of Iringa, are analyzed.



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# THE EXPERIENCES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BUSCO PROJECT

## Introduction

The government of Finland has worked for several years with the government of Tanzania to respond to Tanzania's economic challenges. One of Tanzania's economic growth strategies assumes that a better business environment is required to support the growth of the private sector and generate jobs for the rapidly growing young population. However, the main challenge is how to make this growth more inclusive and environmentally and socially sustainable. In the BUSCO project, the aim was to respond to this challenge. The main aim focused on improving universities' capacity to promote community development, entrepreneurship, and communities' resilience in two universities and their local environment, UoI and SEKOMU, in collaboration with two Finnish partners, Diak and Haaga-Helia. However, the original setup changed during the project due financial problems in SEKOMU, and the article concentrates mainly on actions and achievements in UoI.

Concern about the quality of higher education in Tanzania is based on its theory-oriented tradition, providing good theoretical skills and knowledge, but, in most cases, failing to link the curricula and university studies more closely to the labour market in order to promote employment and entrepreneurship (Iskandar, 2017). Therefore, this project is linked to the two universities in Tanzania in order to strengthen the working life connections of the universities and to respond to the challenge of ensuring the quality of higher education in the country, with particular attention on developing a new quality assurance mechanism for university-community collaboration. In general, the QA branch of the project can be defined as a benchmark between UoI and Haaga-Helia, as explained in more detail in the subsequent chapter Benchmark project.

The work of quality assurance experts aimed to:

1. Integrate QA mechanisms and tools in the administrative and pedagogical planning processes (within the university) and increase the awareness of the quality system.
2. Develop QA tools and mechanisms and integrate administrative and pedagogical processes in collaboration with communities.
3. Prepare recommendations on QA processes and mechanisms, and apply them.
4. Try to meet the QA criteria set by the Tanzanian Commission for Universities (TCU) and quality criteria for higher education institutions in greater extent especially in the field of curriculum review. (BUSCO 2017a.)

## **The Definition of Quality**

The word quality normally means something positive, even if it is actually a neutral word requiring an attribute, e.g. good/high, bad/low, standard, or optimum. By definition (Summers 2005, p. 386) quality can have two meanings:

- (1) the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs and*
- (2) a product or service free of deficiencies.*

The first definition is often understood as the goal to attain and retain the best possible quality, and the second to pursue for zero errors. However, in many fields of industry, the first principle has been replaced by optimal or even satisfactory quality, implying that quality that is too high could harm the business: if a product is too good, no one needs a new one and the business will collapse.

It is obvious that good quality is so important an aim at the level of higher education that it has to be supported by a quality system providing tools for proper quality management (QM). Quality assurance (QA) is often considered the rear-view mirror of quality management, although it can be pro-active, as well. Perhaps an emphasis on feedback systems, as a way to control quality, gives the impression of retroactive orientation on quality management. The existence of a quality system does not guarantee good quality, but it is a way to monitor and control the level of quality.

## Quality Systems

There are several options for structured quality systems, for example ISO 9000, The Six Sigma, and the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award (Summers 2005, pp. 34–55). Finnish universities, for example, have not adopted any of the existing models, but have rather built models of their own. The image of existing major quality systems has been judged too industry oriented to fit in service organizations. Haaga-Helia UAS considered the Malcolm Baldrige model when it started to prepare for international accreditation, but ended up choosing the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) instead. So far, just a few sub-Saharan African universities have tried to get the AACSB accreditation. In Kenya, two universities are members but none has been accredited. One Nigerian university is a member as well as being accredited. In Liberia, Ghana, and Somalia, one university from each country is a member, and, in Côte d'Ivoire, two. The number is the highest in South Africa; seven members, and three accredited (AACSB s.a.). Even if the figure in Tanzania is still zero, the accreditation model is expanding now in Africa and Asia, and at least the major Tanzanian universities may consider joining the models if the TCU allows the development.

Later, the orientation in Haaga-Helia shifted to the EFQM model (European Foundation for Quality Management) and EQUIS accreditation. In South Africa, two universities have been accredited, and this model is aiming for the African and Asian continents because of the saturation in European market and increasing interest in quality accreditation in Asia and Africa.

Haaga-Helia is a member of AACSB, as well as EFMD (the European Foundation for Management Development), which grants the EQUIS accreditations. The BBA programme is now aiming for EPAS accreditation, which is a programme-based version of EQUIS accreditation. Even though Haaga-Helia has not yet earned the accreditation, the membership has made it possible to collect inside information which can benefit the Tanzanian partners in the BUSCO project when aiming for improved standards in quality and quality systems.

In Finland, international evaluators have accredited some universities, but it is the university's choice to do that. Audit of the quality system is, however, compulsory for all Finnish HEIs. The audit is performed by FINEEC (The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre). The audit is valid for six years, and now the third national round has started. The goal of the audit is not the quality itself but the quality system. For example, in Austria, the system is quite similar and taken care of by AQ (Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria). These two

agencies have cooperated, and both organizations are members of ENQA (The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). (FINEEC n.d.-a; Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria, n.d.; ENQA, n.d.). Both FINEEC and AQ can perform audits in foreign countries, so they would be available for Tanzanian universities as well.

The quality system itself is merely a tool or mechanism for management, and, therefore, something else is required to set the level of the desired quality. One may think that the best possible quality is always the aim, but that is not true when resources are limited, as is the case with many universities around the world. It does not matter if the university is financed by the government or collects tuition fees; resources are still limited and should be used wisely. A quality policy sets a desired quality level. When the feedback or other quality measurement systems indicate a lower quality level than is set by the quality policy, actions are needed in order to improve it, and the actions should continue until operations finally meet the quality criteria. If the measured or observed quality is clearly above the level set by the quality policy, it usually means that no extra efforts are needed in order to improve the quality of the process or activity. Therefore, the resources can be shifted to areas where improvements are in fact required.

## Quality Improvement

The basic idea of a quality system is often described as Deming's quality cycle: plan – do – check – act (e.g. Watson et al., 2004, 12), or also as: plan – do – study – act (Summers, 2005, p. 23), and, in the case of Haaga-Helia: plan – do – learn and develop – act (Haaga-Helia, n.d.). Normally, the steering system of an organization is first taking care of planning operations and reserving resources for doing. 'Doing', in the context of a university, covers both educational activities by staff and students, and administrative operations to support the university's mission. The quality system also has its role in the planning and doing phase, but it becomes more visible when checking is needed. Processes may produce outcomes where the indication of quality level is integrated, but, often, separate quality measurements are needed since the outcomes (performance indicators) typically measure quantity, not quality. The number of credit points the students have earned per semester, or the number of graduates per academic year are more an indication of efficiency than the quality of the university, although good quality and efficiency may often have a positive correlation. Therefore, it is a standard procedure to apply feedback mechanisms, such as course feedback or feedback from graduating students, to evaluate the quality of a university's own operations, i.e.

the capacity to deliver good education.

If quality measurements work well, they can indicate areas where a quality criterion is not met and actions are needed in order to improve. Sometimes, the actions can be implemented immediately by the workers themselves, but often there is a reason to return to the planning phase (refer to PDCA-cycle earlier), and perhaps update the whole process in order to achieve a real improvement. Then, the cycle starts its second and third round until the desired quality level has been met.

Kaizen is a principle of continuous development (Kaizen Institute, n.d.). It states that quality work means that one should try to improve every day – even just a bit. Many people believe in this idea, but how does it match with the idea that the quality policy defines the optimal quality level, and that exceeding this level may just waste limited resources? kaizen ultimately leads inevitably to a point where some criterion has been exceeded. If the organization's only aim is continuous improvement, it would seem that the leaders of the organization have been incapable of setting quality criteria. This may happen especially when it comes to universities because it is more difficult to set the quality criteria for immaterial services than tangible products.

For decades already, the manufacturing industry has purposely reduced quality to the level that keeps customers approximately satisfied but enables a manufacturer to sell new products to markets when the old ones fail to operate after the warranty has been expired. A new refrigerator does not last decades, as did those that were manufactured in fifties, but only from five to seven years. Many service providers are still following the kaizen principle, i.e. trying continuously to improve. Haaga-Helia has stated in its quality policy that the required quality level in all operations is 4.0 when the scale is from 1 to 5 (Haaga-Helia n.d.). When the feedback result is presented, the message is often supported by traffic light colouring: green meaning that the quality criterion has been met, yellow that improvement is needed, and red as clear failure in meeting the criterion. This helps to concentrate the resources to the areas where they are mostly needed.

In summary, a university needs a quality policy and a quality system that actively monitors quality and gives signals to improve if the criteria are not met. As service organizations, universities do not take their quality systems from the manufacturing industry, but rather build quality systems of their own. Naturally, the wheel is there already, so instead of inventing a new one, items within quality systems are copied from other organizations – including industry – but always in a modified form to fit the university's own purpose. If the model was copied “as is”, the results would not be as successful as a tailor-made system.

## Benchmarking project

Within the BUSCO project, there was a chance to test the ideas that Haaga-Helia has in its quality system by applying them to UoI. Brue & Howes (2006) define benchmarking as a concept:

*Benchmarking is basically a method for comparing a process, using standard or best practices as a basis, and then identifying ways to improve the process. Through benchmarking, you can establish priorities and targets for improving the process and identify ways to do so.*

Haaga-Helia was founded in January 2007 by two existing private universities: Haaga Institute's University of Applied Sciences and Helia University of Business and Applied Sciences. The quality system was engineered by quality manager Dr. Juha P. Lindstedt, and work started from scratch. A leading principle was that the quality system had to be very transparent, and therefore all the essential information was published on the university's open website. Free access to the site benefits the Tanzanian partners in the project. In addition, Haaga-Helia's experiences from audits can enhance development at UoI since the criteria were found to be a useful tool for improvement. The audit criteria is published by Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINEEC n.d.-b).

Haaga-Helia earned its quality system label from FINEEC in June 2010. The evaluation gave good marks, and the quality manager continued until summer 2015, when it was time to introduce a new quality manager, who continued the work and led the university to its second national audit in 2017 (FINEEC n.d.-b). After two consecutive successful audits, Haaga-Helia has proven that its quality system should have ideas worth benchmarking.

In the BUSCO project, the primary partner in quality system development has been UoI. In order to keep the setting simple, it was agreed that the other Tanzanian partner, SEKOMU, would benchmark UoI during and after the BUSCO project has been completed. In the beginning of the project, UoI already had a quality assurance system, and its quality manager delivered all the required material (see also Figure 2) to the BUSCO working space to illustrate the stage of the quality system

## The benchmark design in QA within and after BUSCO project

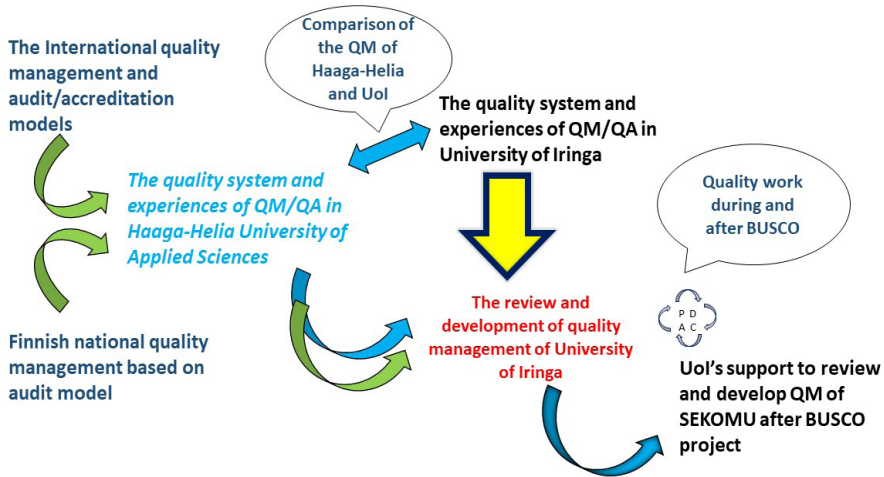


Figure 1. The benchmark design

This article focuses on the area marked with a red font in Figure 1: the review and development of quality management at UoI. The primary benchmark targets were: quality policy and culture; process improvement (academic and administrative processes); documentation and feedback systems; quality mechanisms; and the system as whole.

The quality system of UoI has not been officially audited in the way it is done in Europe or North America. As feedback for UoI's material, Haaga-Helia's QA expert suggested some areas that UoI could benefit from if its documentation could be improved and if some new techniques, e.g. in feedback process, could be introduced. One major concern from UoI's own perspective was the curriculum review process, and it, too, was listed partly as a quality project.

The benchmarking project officially started in during the first sessions in Iringa in autumn 2017. During the sessions in UoI, the main issues were discussed in the meetings between the QA experts of Haaga-Helia, UoI, and the new quality manager of SEKOMU. In larger meetings, other staff and stakeholders were also briefed about the topic. The meetings were organized by a QA assistant. As a result of the discussions in Iringa, an action plan and a schedule set for next steps were drawn up.



BUSCO project: quality system development, next steps

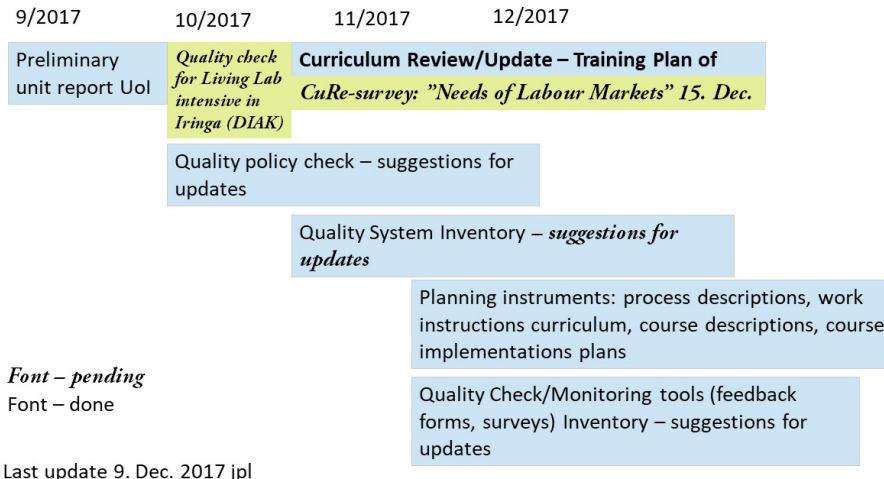


Figure 2. The action plan after the first sessions in Iringa

During the project, the philosophy was that everybody is the quality manager of their own work. This idea was first introduced at Haaga-Helia by its present quality manager, Ms. Tia Hoikkala. Therefore, the key expert in quality assurance did not operate as the quality manager of the project, but quality was monitored by all the key experts, and, as an entity, by the project coordinators.

Documentation is one of the cornerstones of monitoring quality. In project-type work, it is essential that all the documents are saved and organized so that they are transparent and usable for all the project workers. In the BUSCO project, the Google Drive platform was chosen as a working platform.

The BUSCO quality system is highly dependent on feedback given by participants and stakeholders (see Figure 3, p. 101). In the BUSCO project, standard surveys were used to collect feedback from different events, tasks, and groups. There was no need to innovate any new methods; paper forms were used for most of the cases. For the Finnish students who did the studies in Iringa, the first group answered a survey, which was performed by electronic Webropol form. For the second group, the external auditor of the project used big green papers to collect the feedback. Other participants in the final seminar gave feedback using the same method.



## **Methodology**

The main purpose of project BUSCO was to improve the quality of higher education in Iringa University and SEKOMU, and the specific objectives were:

1. To conduct pedagogical training for lecturers from different faculties of UoI.
2. To review the existing curricula in order to meet the demand of the labour market.
3. To develop quality assurance mechanism tools at UoI.
4. To review recruitment, promotion, and appraisal tools.

## **Methodology**

The descriptive survey was designed to cover four outputs of the Quality Assurance unit, namely pedagogical; review, recruitment, and promotion tools; quality assurance mechanism tools; and curricular review. Under each output, a list of data to be collected, was developed with a clear indication of data, sources, and data collection methodologies. Based on the list, interviews and group discussions were organized. The checklists indicated the data to be collected and issues to be discussed, as well as question prompts. The study was conducted by UoI. The researcher employed purposeful sampling in selecting the deans of faculties, heads of departments, and human resource officers. Simple random sampling was used in selecting academic staff and students. UoI was selected to represent SEKOMU for benchmarking. Different data collection methods were used, including consultant meetings through group discussions and unstructured interviews with deans, head of departments, teachers, students and a QA committee. The survey applied methodologies, including group discussions, unstructured interviews, and documentary analysis. Data collected with unstructured interview, documentary review, and group discussion were subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allowed the analysis of quantitative data on the basis of relevant themes. The study involved the following stages: familiarization with data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing a report (Greener, 2011; Yin, 2011). Thematic analysis was used in the analysis of this study because it simplified the interpretation of data presented in a narrative and descriptive form.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The objective was to examine how UoI use the quality control mechanism. In order to obtain the required data from the group discussions, the following people were interviewed using unstructured interview and documentary review: six heads of department, six deans of faculty, eight QA committee members, three human resource officers, and 10 lecturers. The findings are presented in the following chapter.

## **Achievements in University of Iringa**

As stated in the introduction chapter, this article concentrates on the development at UoI, and SEKOMU will benefit from the results later by benchmarking UoI in turn. The following are the achievements from the BUSCO project:

### **Quality Assurance Policy**

In order for universities to fully engage in the quality assurance issues, a quality assurance system needs to be developed that will be responsible for quality assurance activities (Figure 3, p. 101). To this end, the findings indicated that the University of Iringa Council approved the quality assurance policy. The objective of the policy is to enhance the effectiveness of the university's activities, and to focus on the contribution to, and alignment with, the university's strategic goals. The policy is designed to match international standards against verifiable processes and outcomes. The policy also defines roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder category: roles of students, roles of academic staff, roles of head of academic units, roles of support services departments, management functions, and roles of committees (General Quality Assurance Committee, College Quality Assurance Committee, and Administrative Quality Assurance Committee). This is line with a TCU document (TCU 2018), which states that each university will develop an institutional quality assurance policy and operational procedures which clearly articulate the objectives and scope of the quality assurance system.

### **Improvement of Teaching Methods**

The findings revealed that it is important for universities to improve quality assurance mechanisms in order for university lecturers to include teaching and learning methods that are more student-centred in the curriculum (Figure 1, p. 95). It was also observed that the existing methods limit student's opportunities to control

the learning process in group discussions, excursions, field tours, and laboratory experiments. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that the methods of teaching and learning had been updated, and that lecturers now teach using a new approach of teaching (see also Iskandar, 2017.) Through focus group discussions, the Quality Assurance Committee, and the students, the findings indicated the need for the university to collaborate with the community to establish quality assurance mechanisms in order to encourage university lecturers to include teaching and learning methods that are more student-centred in the curriculum. The assessment forms for teaching and learning need to be updated and implemented (including teacher and student forms). Furthermore, it was noted that, in order to improve teaching and learning, lecturers had been taught how to teach their students using online or e-learning methods.

### **Living Lab**

A living lab is a co-creative model where community and business collaboration is developed and established in cooperation with local stakeholders, university staff, and students (Figure 2, p. 96). In unstructured interviews with lecturers, it was observed that, before the co-creation model, there had been no links between the curricula and the living lab concept, or between the university and the community. The implementation of living labs enabled students from the living labs of law, business, counselling, tourism, and community to participate in community activities, and it made the activities become part and parcel of their learning. This is in line with the TCU and NACTE guidelines, which demand that all curricula be linked with the requirements of society (Tanzanian Commission for Universities, 2019a).

### **Programmes and Labour Market**

Through an unstructured interview, the participants commended the importance of the fact that university programmes are linked with the relevant labour market (Figure 2, p. 96). Furthermore, it was also noted that the programmes were last reviewed four years ago, and that the contents were hence partly obsolete and more theoretical. Therefore, there was a need to change all programmes so as to be practical. This was supported by the facilitator from TCU, Mr. Mtweve, who trained 30 participants from different faculties in how to review programmes that can link to the labour market. This concurs with TCU guidelines, which emphasize that, in developing a new academic programme, every university shall ensure

that the programme is enriched with results from comprehensive market analysis (Tanzanian Commission for Universities (TCU), 2019a).

## **Quality Assurance Mechanisms**

The findings indicated that there were some quality assurance mechanisms which were already established by UoI. For example, tools for monitoring teaching, and recruitment and promotion were established, and promotion and recruitment is conducted accordingly (refer to research question 3). Auditing reports from TCU are in place, and curricula were reviewed and new curricula introduced (refer to specific object 2). Meetings were conducted with the heads of departments, deans of faculties, and human resource officers in order to arrange meetings for stakeholders. There were feedback forms for teaching and learning, but some lecturers, heads of departments, and deans were not aware of them. Therefore, it was important to develop and improve the quality assurance mechanisms. Furthermore, it was also noted that some of these mechanisms were not implemented, such as tracer studies and self-institutional assessment. This is supported by Mgaiwa (2018), who argued that, unlike these findings, internal quality audits and tracer studies were not adequately carried out.

The policy applies to all administrative and academic units through internal and external quality assurance mechanism. Quality assurance should apply to the following areas, academic programmes, academic staff and teaching and learning, student assessment, support services, research, resources and facilities, external academic review, external examiners, external professional bodies, external accreditation agencies. This is to assure that high quality standards is maintained for the accreditation to international bodies and admission of students to international institutions for further studies and employment (AfriQ'Units, 2011).

## **Recruitment and Promotion**

Unstructured interviews of human resource officers indicated that there were tools for recruitment and promotion established (see Figure 3, p. 101). However, these forms needed to be reviewed in order to comply with for recruitment and promotion and set rules and standards. This is in line with the Tanzanian Commission for Universities (2019a) standards and guidelines. Furthermore, it was revealed that the human resource unit personnel required capacity building related to the implementation of the rules and standards. Training was conducted for human



(FASS) and Faculty of Science and Education (FASE) reviewed curricula and uploaded for TCU approval, recruitment and promotion forms for University were reviewed, lecturers were taught how to teach using student centered approaches, and as result of BUSCO project FASE developed new programmes.

During the BUSCO project, many steps forward were taken (see Figures 2 & 4). Since the university funding risks listed in the project's risk analysis (BUSCO 2017b) became a reality during the process, SEKOMU's funding contribution was removed from the plan. The idea of benchmarking is to find shortcuts to good practices instead of relying on trial and error. Through good cooperation between the two universities, there was a chance to enhance the development of the quality system of UoI, and later SEKOMU, towards international standards.

The quality experts' team finds that there was a clear advancement in all areas 1–4 which were targeted in the end of introduction chapter (pp. 89-90). In addition, during the BUSCO project, the skills and knowledge of UoI staff increased in the field of QA, which is predictive of better chances to succeed in the future. However, Haaga-Helia's QA expert still wishes that the web pages of UoI could give more information about quality because that would help to recruit new students and staff. The overall evaluation of the project was not done by the quality experts' team but the external evaluator of the BUSCO project.

It seems that awareness of, and understanding of the importance of, quality systems has increased during the project. All evidence suggests that the development described here will not stop when project BUSCO ends; rather, a good start is a promising sign of a rewarding continuation. The university staff and students now understand better that good quality and the mechanisms that help to ensure good quality and systematic development will help the university to recruit qualified staff and more students, which also helps the economic situation of the university. The nature of the quality cycle is that it will roll on, and there is no doubt that this experience demonstrates how Tanzania and Finland can produce fruitful results in cooperation.

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# EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF IRINGA AND SEKOMU

## Introduction

The role of higher educational institutions (HEI) in societies has been discussed in recent years,. What should they produce? Critically thinking academics or skilled experts to fulfil employers' requirements to run their businesses profitably? This framing is rather polarized, but the basic question is: what are the competencies and skills students should achieve by the end of their university studies? Traditionally, university students are not expected to focus on the needs of business, but more on general aims. However, one question raised in the discussion is the employability of graduates which has been asserted by (Abelha et al., 2020). Do the traditional universities supply their graduates with competences and skills for the fast- changing work life? (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).

A curriculum is the body of knowledge, skills, and competences that students are expected to reach in an organized and systematic manner. A curriculum is an interactive process developed among learners, teachers and the environment (Chen, 2007); it functions as a mirror that reflects cultural beliefs, social, and political values and the institution. A curriculum is usually one of the main concerns in any form of education (Su, 2012). Educators and teachers/professors are concerned with teaching content and methods. As for stakeholders, they often like to know whether what their children are going to learn will be relevant to their present situation; thus, the quality of any curriculum must reflect employability of graduates. Learners, too, are concerned about what kind of content they are going to learn during their studies. In fact, a curriculum considers what instructors/teachers/professors are going to teach, in other words, what learners are expected to learn?

Furthermore, a curriculum is regarded as the heart of any learning institution, which implies that schools and universities cannot exist without it. It is a process of selecting courses of study or contents (Beauchamp, 1977). A curriculum is a key



for change taking place in the society, thus it should often be dynamic. In a more broad sense, a curriculum refers to the total learning experiences of individuals, not only in school buildings, but also in the society at large (Bilbao et al., 2008).

The challenge with university curricula is very often the traditionalism of them. Their philosophy is based on an ideal of a static society with ever-lasting knowledge, with relatively little focus on skills and competences (e.g., Kirgöz, 2009; Costandinus, 2015). Curricula have been designed to train students to work in academia or as civil servants with rather structured tasks.

The following research questions were used to guide this research in answering the main objectives of the study:

1. What is the importance of a regular curriculum review?
2. What should be done to facilitate the employability of university graduates?
3. What suggestions and recommendations can be made for students who attend field practice or internship?

## **Curriculum Development and Review**

A curriculum encompasses a wide variety of potential educational and instructional contents and practices, framed according to the precise intentions of a given academic discipline. A curriculum is one of the fundamental elements of effective teaching, and it is frequently an object of review or reform. Most of this development may be mandated or encouraged by national curriculum standardization in order to meet common targeted state social and economic improvements. New standards will often be aligned with new requirements of a given time. A quality assurance body directs the standards or levels, for example, the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) directed all Tanzanian universities to transform their curricula so as to align with the University Qualification Framework (UQF by 2017). In Finland, curricular development, contents, and quality are the responsibility of the individual universities. However, they must follow national legislation and the European Quality Framework (EQF). The contribution of the state to common curriculum design consists of properly defined credit hours and teaching qualifications. TCU is trying to prepare graduates to have the same credit hours which will enable them to join similar programmes offered abroad including Finland.

It is in the interest of each state to prepare common standards (Alismail & McGuire, 2015) in order to provide students with the academic knowledge, skills, and competences needed in the future. Hence, during curriculum review in vari-

ous universities, the focus has been to transform them to align with the UQF, as directed by the TCU. It is believed that, by following this approach in the curriculum review process, it will be possible for students to acquire 21st century skills and competences such as problem solving, critical thinking, collaborative learning, comprehending environmental issues through digital teaching method (Tyack, 1974) and students will be able to deal with complex challenges of our time (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). Specifically the curriculum is focusing on the students' skills and competences.

In principle, a curriculum review process is a part of quality assurance improvement. This exercise is mandatory in Tanzania because the higher education sector there is subject to TCU, similar to the case in continental Europe (Billing, 2004). TCU is reinforcing UQF to its universities' programmes curricula so that graduates with similar degree qualifications can enroll for further studies internationally, which include Finland. A curriculum review, which involves stakeholders in the process, is very important as well. In Tanzania, the curriculum generally plays a vital role in improving the economy, providing answers or solutions to the world's most pressing problems, such as issues of poverty, unemployment, politics, socio-economics, environment, climate change, and sustainable development. Due to a curriculum review, innovative skills that are in high demand in local or global markets are included, and many students, even from foreign countries, are therefore expected to enrol. Obviously, a higher number of enrollees would mean a good outcome for project BUSCO, which has supported the exercise and income increase in part of the universities. As a result, if the income is relatively good, it can be used for teachers'/lecturers' promotion, scholarship, funding research and development activities, and building university facilities (libraries and laboratories), as well as enhancing university and business community co-operation and co-creation.

In the Tanzanian context, it is believed that the state can improve people's way of living by performing a regular curriculum review. To strongly enhance this culture, curriculum experts or specialists in universities should continue to work closely with stakeholders (local government leaders, religious leaders, parents, students, business communities, and industries and other economic players in society). Hence, a curriculum review matters a great deal in the direction of change in any subsequent development, not only on the micro level but also on the macro level. As long as the goals and objectives of the curriculum are clear in the reviewers' minds, cutting-edge achievements in various programmes can always be revised and fixed.

## Methodology and Findings

A curriculum review process provides an evidence-based means to answer questions an institution might have about its programmes. The curricula have been reviewed to accommodate societal needs and new technological advancement in the job sector at large. The review process also addresses the challenges that have been encountered during the implementation of the previous curricula so as to ensure the smooth running of education in general. The review of these documents is a result of a lengthy collaborative process with significant inputs from key stakeholders and experts from all universities involved in the project. However, the review process was financially supported by BUSCO project.

From the baseline survey that was conducted in 2017 in the BUSCO project, three themes needed attention. The themes identified included pedagogical and curricular review, promotion, and recruitment. Among those three themes, this article focused only on curriculum review. Before the curriculum review exercise began, each faculty (Table 1, p. 108) had to think about training that would equip and update each participant's reviewing skills, as well as generating the guiding questions which would ease the review process. The university invited experts through the BUSCO project, and support from the TCU and National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) to train participants. In particular, the university invited the following individuals: the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA), the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Resource Management (DVCRM), deans of faculties, and heads of departments, directors, coordinators and the Quality Assurance Committee. A total of 36 participants were trained to undertake the review process.

What does the phrase 'guiding questions' mean? These are critical questions or concerns that guide the curriculum review process. Different faculties were interested in exploring various aspects of their curricula, from broad encompassing questions to more specific curriculum concerns. The exercise of identifying questions to guide the curriculum review provided a focus for the entire process.

Indeed, if the mode of assessment changes, it will compel the curricular reform or review because the instructors will be obliged to teach the contents and the skills that will eventually be evaluated. For example, if the existing curriculum was teacher-centered, it had a different style of assessment than if it was more student-centered. These two focuses to assessment demand a curriculum review. This will create a more consistent and coherent academic programme by alleviating learning gaps that may exist between sequential courses and grade levels. Thus,

from time to time, a curricular review is inevitable, and is essential to be done based on the time set for curricular review by higher education quality assurance regulatory body. Yet, Tanzanian curricula for higher education must be reviewed after every three years.

Table 1: List of Curricula Reviewed From Each Faculty

S/N	FACULTY	LIST OF PROGRAMMES TO BE REVIEWED	TOTAL	REASONS FOR REVIEW
1	Faculty of Arts & Social Science – Community Development	-Certificate in Community Development. -Diploma in Community Development. -Bachelor of Arts in Community Development.	3	Courses not reviewed & Bachelor programme not in the new TCU-UQF format of TCU
2	Faculty of Science & Education	-Bachelor of Education (Arts). -Bachelor of Education (Mathematics). -Postgraduate Diploma in Education Administration. -Postgraduate Diploma in Education Teaching. -Master's Degree in Education. -Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. -Diploma in Information Technology. -Certificate in Information Technology.	5  3	Not reviewed  Diploma & Certificate in Information Technology require an overhauling
3	Faculty of Psychology	-Diploma programmes in Counselling Psychology. -Certificate programmes in Counselling Psychology.	2	Not reviewed
4	Faculty of Theology	-Certificate in Theology. -Diploma in Theology. -Bachelor of Theology. -Bachelor of Theology with Religious Studies.	4	Not reviewed
5	Faculty of Business & Economics	-Certificate in Business of Administration. -Certificate in Procurement and Supply chain Management. -Certificate in Human Resource Management. -Certificate in Accounting and Finance. -Diploma in Business Management. -Diploma in Procurement and Chain Management. -Diploma in Human Resource. -Diploma in Accounting and Finance.	8	Not reviewed

A variety of summarized information was collected based on each faculty's curriculum review perspectives. The documentary reports, which are referred to, are the ones developed by each faculty during curriculum review meetings, which were attended by academic staff and key stakeholders during the review exercise. A qualitative method was used to explore the data for the study more deeply (Cresswell, 2012). Data collection methods used in the study consist of a documentary review of each faculty and compared the findings commonalities as well as innovative practices, which have been pointed out by individual faculties.

The convenience data were collected from only three faculty documents presented despite the fact that all faculties conducted curriculum reviews. All faculties were not able to submit documentary report review on time because some lecturers had excuses like assessing terminal final examinations, and simply needed more time to finish the work. From the documents, the detailed summary of the findings of each faculty regarding curriculum review process were listed as follows:

In the beginning of the process in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the dean articulated the importance of the curriculum review to all the stakeholders including staff members. Furthermore, he explained the details of the programmes that are offered and their respective curricula as well as challenges facing the curricula in use. After the dean's presentation regarding of the importance of curriculum to any programme offered at the University, he further discussed why is it important to have a timely curriculum review. After his opening remarks he welcomed the rest of the participant to contribute their inputs starting with the current curriculum of the Master of Arts (MA) programme in Community Development, Planning and Management (MACDPM). Thereafter, the participants divided themselves into three groups with different assignments and each group came up with resolutions after an in-depth discussion, which seemed to be important for the current social and economic condition.

In the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the three groups came to the following findings. In the final assessment, a panel should decide the final year's research report grades or scores for each student and the weight of the course work should be 50% of the final grade and the examination's 50% as well. Students should have more time to acquire work experience through field practice or industry internship. The work experience should be gained in the second year of the studies to ease the employability of the students. To enhance students' self-employment competences and entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurship courses should become core courses and not be elective anymore. A project-planning course should also

become a part of the core courses and linked to the internship exercise that is important part of the practical training. In the course delivery, the introduction of e-learning to all master student courses was a novel idea. Furthermore, the final examinations should be done at the end of each semester for all the semester courses. An intentional integration of gender, development, and entrepreneurship should be included to some of the core courses, thus a slight expansion of credit hours will be needed.

In the Faculty of Psychology as well, the Dean took the initiative to introduce the development task to the stakeholder and academic staff. The results of the reviewing process were following: There is a need to expose students to field work for at least 120 days during the second year of their studies and in the end of their third year of study. The proposal was an introduction to e-learning to some counselling courses that would enable counsellors to use technology and reach as many people as possible through use of it. Furthermore, there is also a need to have space for internships in the curriculum of graduate students to link them to various institutions where they will get job experience, which is currently on the rise for most Tanzanian graduate students. After the internship period, the students will be in a position to apply for the available jobs with limited barriers, particularly the ones demanding experience, which seems to be an obstacle to most job searchers.

The dean of each faculty is overall in charge of the day to day activities including curriculum review activities, which in the end will result in the best quality of the programme offered in the respective faculty. The working group focused on some critical important issues, which needed attention: Conflict management, financial management and good leadership are core competences today in most of the church institutions, and thus they should be a part of the curriculum. Students of theology also need fieldwork practice or an internship in the first semester of their third year at the university with an assessment of the faculty members. Furthermore, the graduates should attend an internship for one year as compulsory after the graduation.

To summarize, the curriculum review exercises showed clearly the need of it to update the curricula that have not been reviewed for a while.

## Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion will be organized in line with the research question:

1. What is the importance of a regular curriculum review?
2. What should be done to facilitate the employability of university graduates?
3. What suggestions and recommendations can be made for students who attend field practice or internship?

Research question number one focuses on what specifically are the priorities of a timely curriculum review. The curriculum review brings to the surface the most pressing issues that require immediate attention. The reviewed curricula accommodate community needs and new technological advancements in the job sector. The review processes also address the challenges that have arisen during the implementation of the former curricula to ensure the smooth running of education at large. In addition, if the review is done in a timely manner, then it can cope with the pace of scientific and technological advancements and radical transformation in the work field; and it can react quickly to the progress of democracy and human rights, as well as the feeling of insecurity of some society members. Another important function of a timely curriculum review is to identify urgent issues (e.g. premarital counselling knowledge, financial management skills, good leadership skills, integration of gender and entrepreneurship in some core courses, e-learning to some of counselling core courses, as well as conflict management skills) which need immediate attention. And, if curricula are left unattended for more than the recommended number of years, the review may reveal in a negative impact for institutional outcomes, for example, social and economic crises in cases where the majority of university graduates cannot be employed or self-employed because of outdated curriculum contents. Indeed, this attempt will usually ensure the well-being of all society members without delays and avoiding business as usual culture.

Based on the review process, which has been conducted in three faculties, some cross-cutting issues have been identified which are important for university products, employers, and the community in general. These include employers complaining about the experiences the university graduates have. This means that employers complaining about graduate students lacking relevant skills for their employment. The curricula reviewers have identified the weakness; at different times and places, they proposed what should be done to control the situation.

Specifically, research question number two looked at what should be done to enhance the employability of our university graduates. There is undeniable evi-

dence that indicates that existing education institutional curricula are failing to meet the needs of employers. It is true that, at some point, there is a mismatch between the demands of employers and the supply of graduates in each country's education system, including Tanzania. Together with that mismatch, most graduates are viewed as lacking employability skills (Mortimer, 1998). One of the means of improving the employability of graduates is to enable them to withstand changing market conditions, which can be achieved by strengthening appropriate work experience and technical education. Also, in this review, all faculties pointed out the value of fieldwork and internship in promoting employability and self-employment.

Fieldwork is a component of curricula that involves leaving the classroom and learning through first-hand experience. This intends to help students comprehend theory, develop skills, integrate knowledge, develop meaning in places, and work with peers in alternative settings. Thus, carefully planned field experiences help students develop skills and insights that are the mark of a well-rounded education.

Most theories should remain is about students developing their theoretical knowledge through practical experience (Ebue & Agwu, 2017). It is important to have practice because it validates theories and improves them. The timeframe should remain as important fulfilment of the award of the diploma or higher degree in all disciplines offered at University of Iringa. On the other hand, it has been asserted by Littrel (1980) that field work practice helps students to sharpen and develop skills and competences which will be useful and which will help students be more effective and efficient in dealing with their clients and helping them to solve various problems.

Regarding the contribution of internship experience and employability of graduates, all faculties involved in the curriculum review looked at such exposure as vital, which must be given special attention. The research evidence has revealed that imparting internship training is an effective way to improve students' soft skills and competences, preparing them for the future endeavours (Sahrir et al., 2016). Typically, internship enhances work experience, marketability, networking, professionalism, learning how a professional workplace works, and learning from others (Baird, 1999). In addition, during internships, students are able to discover what they do and do not like in terms of the job.

Past research evidence has indicated (Dipaquale, 1997) that, through internship programmes, students observe first-hand how workers interact, how technology is used, and how a real institution functions. Laycock et al. (1992) found that students with internship experience possessed networks for finding future jobs and



earned higher starting salaries than those without internship experiences. Including fieldwork and internship-practice in the reviewed curricula will add a significant value to the curricula and graduates, and promote employability.

Research question number three is about knowing exactly what the suggestions and recommendations for students who are attending fieldwork or internship are. Students who are attending fieldwork or internship should be aware of the importance of such opportunities because this is where theories learnt in the classroom are tested in a real environment or industry. Thus, students who are to do practical training (fieldwork or internship) have to observe the following:

- to show seriousness during work because this is a part of education and it is the chance to get a professional relationship based on classroom learning;
- to act professionally at all times. Be on time. Dress appropriately based on industry requirements. Keep texts and social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram) to a bare minimum;
- to show enthusiasm for any assigned task, meet the deadline for any given assignment because this is very important for an organization's survival; and
- to prioritize tasks and complete them on time. One can ask if there is anything, he/she can help with when he/she has free time to ensure to not be idle when the CEO walks around and wonders if someone is taking things seriously.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings revealed by the curricular review exercise, important issues have been identified, and their suggested solutions have been put forward to be placed in the reviewed documents. They include urgent issues (premarital counselling knowledge, financial management skills, good leadership skills, integration of gender and entrepreneurship in some core courses as well as conflicts management) which need immediate attention have been identified. All curricula must be reviewed in a timely manner in order to circumvent negative impacts on institutional outcomes, graduates, and the community at large.

The review exercises conducted by three faculties indicated unemployment facing graduates today as a major challenge, thus they have unanimously identified the issue of expanding the time for both fieldwork and internships as ways for improving employability and self-employment. The fieldwork should be done for 120 days instead of 90 days, and internships should be done for one year after graduation

for all programmes. It is expected that, upon including fieldwork and internship practices in the reviewed curricula, the quality of the curricula in question and university graduates' competence will improve, and this will promote employability among university graduates.

A curriculum review should be done in a timely manner in order to avert a societal crisis. This is because the content of courses taken by the students greatly influence the level of their interest/performance in the fieldwork or internship programme. Furthermore, curriculum review can add to their ability to transfer knowledge effectively. Students who are attending both fieldwork and internship practices should take this opportunity seriously because this is where the theories learnt in the classroom are translated into a real environment or industry.

Together with the involvement of stakeholders in the curricular review process, in the future there is a need for each faculty to conduct a tracer study to identify the existing relationship between graduates and employers. This is important and worth doing because the university may be producing lower quality graduates, but, based on changes of technologies which might have taken place during the use of an old curriculum, employers might not be satisfied with graduates' performance in general. In addition, stakeholders (parents, community members, and employers) should be given a chance to bring up their concerns to the university or institutional authority regarding graduates' performance before things get worse.

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# 4

## Piloting the Master programme in Community Development and Conflict Resolution

This section demonstrates the core themes and methodological approaches linked to Master's programme piloted in Diak.

First, learning asset-based approach in Tanzania is described and analyzed.

Second, youth involvement in community development in Finland is presented.

Third, the BUSCO project in terms of conflict sensitivity is analyzed.

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# LEARNING ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL TANZANIA

## Introduction

An intensive course on asset-based community development and empowering strategies was part of the BUSCO project, in which asset-based community development (ABCD) was identified as a leading approach. The intensive course was organized in October 2019 in Iringa, Tanzania, in collaboration with three universities: Tanzanian University of Iringa, and two Finnish Universities of Applied Science, Diaconia University (Diak), and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. During the intensive course, it was decided to integrate both exposure and CABLE in the learning process of ABCD.

The purpose of the master's degree was to provide a well-grounded, generic, professional education that prepares graduates to be able to engage with people from grassroots to macro levels of community work, within a dynamic socio-economic and political context. This is because community development is an integral part of social well-being. Therefore, once institutions of higher education embark on training students in community development, the model for training must form the basis of all teaching and learning activities.

The aim of this article is to answer these questions:

1. How do international community development students see the future of a rural Tanzanian village after using ABCD there during their intensive course?
2. Do the diaconal community work concepts “exposure” and “CABLE” add value to ABCD? Could they, in the context of ABCD, form a more functional operational model for community development work in developing countries?

The research questions above will be scrutinized in the light of Diak master's students' learning assignments, which they compiled as a part of the intensive course in Tanzania.

## **Asset-Based Community Development in Tanzania**

Asset-based community development (ABCD) has been considered an important innovation for achieving people's well-being needs by many researchers (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Chiwoya et al., 2016). The development and implementation of community development programmes following an ABCD approach links evidence that engagement plays an important role in enhancing development with long-term effects (Mansvelt, 2018).

The needs-based or 'top-down' approach has been the most common way of doing community development in Tanzania. In this approach, outsiders evaluate what is deficient in a community and how the problems could be solved. Instead of working with the community, outsiders have tended to set the plan and address what they regard as distress for communities (Keeble, 2006). Therefore, the top-down approach as a development strategy underestimates the target community's ability to form their own development work. In addition, community members also become outsiders without the necessary commitment and ownership because they often remain passive and unmotivated. Such an externally driven focus obviously runs the risk of harming development because it leads to deficiency-oriented interventions where the community in question continues to rely upon outsiders (Prentki, 2009).

However, development practitioners currently advocate and use 'bottom-up' approaches, which offer more room for community members' active participation in the development actions. The 'bottom-up' model focuses on internal social arrangements. Within this model are approaches similar to ABCD, which are used for community development programmes, particularly during planning. The most common related approaches are participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and opportunities and obstacles for development (O and OD). These approaches are alternatives to top-down approaches that function through a 'need-based' approach for development (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). The shift towards viewing the resources of a community rather than its needs places the asset-based approach at an advantage.

In the two approaches mentioned above, community members are, for example, facilitating resource mapping, problem identification and prioritization, institutional mapping, and opportunity and obstacle identification. All of these help communities to see the treasure of their community's resources and plan the utilization of their resources for change. External assistance can contribute only if

communities have first actively engaged in developing their own resources. However, even these approaches lack some individual components such as individual knowledge, skills, capabilities, and attitudes that are included in the ABCD. Therefore, the ABCD orientation has great potential in Tanzania and can be regarded as one of the most effective strategies for sustainable community-driven development (Mathie et al., 2017). This is because it focuses on uncovering the merits of all members, encouraging a spirit of parity, even in societies that are hierarchical and differentiated by culture, educational background, and gender. Unfortunately, so far, this orientation has only seldom been employed in community development projects there.

As has been recognized above, ABCD is a work orientation with positive contributions for both local communities and individuals living in them. In many cases, it has empowered the local people who have taken power into their own hands and started making changes in the communities according to the needs they have set for themselves. In these cases, local individuals have become the subjects of their own life, and their living community and the rhetoric of partnership has turned into reality.

However, even ABCD has some challenges. One of the major criticisms for ABCD is that it does not always address the unequal power relations in communities, but rather anticipates shared interests and good will among people with different class, race, sex, and religion as per the previous chapter of this publication. In the field of diaconal social work, a work orientation called ‘exposure’ has been developed in order to make invisible social structures and power elements visible.

## **What is Exposure?**

Exposure is an orientation where employees abdicate their power and the role of expert as much as possible while being in touch with the people and communities they are working with. This orientation was originally developed in the urban work of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands in the 1970s. There was a need for new working models because of the rapid change of the Dutch society, during which former white working-class regions became inhabited by youngsters and migrant workers from former Dutch colonies. In this altered situation, the old working models no longer made sense (Ijzerman, 2013).

The researchers in Ijzerman’s (2013) study began by “hanging around” in the streets and other public places in the region without a set agenda in order to be present amidst the new people living in the region. They developed a method

called embedded intervention, which comes from French priest workers in factories. A crucial question for this method is the matter of how to be present. The exposure work orientation was later developed based on this method. The concept comes from photography, where you as a biographically produced “film” will be exposed to the lights of the social, phenomenological reality of the neighbourhood in which you are present (Ijzerman, 2013). In other words, this is one sort of ethnography, where the worker is present in the environment passively perceiving the reality experienced by the locals as holistically as possible.

Becoming aware of the important role both of emotions and of one’s own biography is crucial in exposure because they influence everything, regardless of whether the employee is aware of it or not. Emotions and biography also play a significant role in the employees’ capability of perceiving the invisible power structures and oppression in society (Ijzerman, 2013).

While using the exposure orientation in work, three important questions must be asked: (1) what do I see (smell, hear); (2) what do I feel; and (3) what do I think about it? (Porkka et al., 2013). “The philosophy behind these questions is that of a holistic approach to the person. It is a way of trying to suspend all concepts and thinking in order to develop a passive attitude. The thinking has to come afterwards and needs to be based on the physical experience.” (Ijzerman, 2013).

A passive attitude is related to the concept of “empty space”, which is crucial in the exposure orientation – if you are full of questions and ideas and in a hurry, you cannot be open to new impulses from the neighbourhood. This sounds very straightforward, but the reality is not. It is difficult because it is challenging to set aside professional knowledge and step into the realm of the “ignorant”, “to listen intuitively to one’s body”, “read the walls”, and look for “empty space”, which all are central concepts from the exposure work orientation. This work orientation formed the basis for a pedagogical model called for community action-based learning for empowerment (CABLE) (Porkka et al., 2013).

It seems evident that exposure and CABLE could be useful tools for overcoming the challenges of ABCD application when helping the workers to better understand the hidden elements of communities and their power relations. Moreover, they could help the workers to understand themselves better.



## **How were the Studies on ABCD in Iringa Implemented?**

During the intensive course, the common language between the teachers and students of the three universities was English, but while interviewing the local people, Swahili was used. Although some of the Finnish students spoke Swahili, the Tanzanian students acted as interpreters in the student groups.

Both the Finnish and Tanzanian students were divided into four mixed groups based on the number of villages which were ready to collaborate with them. Each group consisted of between six and eight members. Figure 1 (p. 123) shows the pedagogical process followed during the intensive course in Iringa.

The studies started with an orientation assignment based on the students' biographies, within which the emphasis was on the communities which they had been involved in during their lives. Because human rights were an important part of the course content, they were also asked to think about times when these topics had become important to them.

The intensive week in Iringa started with presentations by the lecturers of UoI and Diak. These lectures were designed to help the students understand the theory and practice of ABCD, exposure, and CABLE. After that, the students were divided into four peer groups, each group having representatives from each University. When the students shared their biography in the groups, they simultaneously learnt to know other members of the group. The Diak students had done their biography assignment before, but unfortunately this was not the case among the local students, because the group was formed so late that they were unable to complete the assignment in beforehand. This made the sharing experience unbalanced.

During the second day, the students were driven to four different villages for exposure. Stakeholders, including Busco key experts, had selected the villages and informed the inhabitants of the project. Unfortunately, and not in keeping with the idea of exposure, the students were not allowed to walk on their own around these villages, but were rather guided in a group led by a local stakeholder. However, during the first visit they were able to meet community representatives, visit schools, kindergartens, health clinics, and even private houses according to their interests, and familiarize themselves with the physical community environment.

In the beginning of the third day, there was time for reflection when the students analysed and shared their exposure experiences in groups. They also participated in focus group discussions on data collection. In the afternoon, the students

began planning focus group discussions in the villages, which would be the programme of the fourth day. They agreed on the people with whom they thought discussion would be important, as well as choosing which topics were relevant, based on the exposure experience and ABCD.

During the fourth day, the students visited the same villages and implemented focus group discussions with the group of villagers they were interested in – typically three discussions were accomplished according to their plan: with male adolescents and/or female adolescents, women and men, and old people. The head of the village was also interviewed.

During the fourth day, the use of asset mapping and theory related to different forms of capital were taught to the students at the University. According to Green and Haines (2016), there are seven forms of community capital: physical, human, social, financial, environmental, cultural, and political. They argue that, although different forms of capital are linked together, both social and financial capital are at the centre of producing or limiting other forms of capital.

Asset mapping followed the process identified by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). Their process maps or inventories include the assets or capacities of:

- individuals, including youth, seniors, people with disabilities, local artists, and others;
- local associations and organizations, including business organizations, charitable groups, ethnic associations, political organizations, service clubs, sports leagues, veterans' groups, religious institutions, cultural organizations, and many others;
- local institutions for community building including parks, libraries, schools, community colleges, police, hospitals, and any other institution that is part of the fabric of a community.

Using these tools, each group made an asset map based on their visits and interviews. In addition, group presentations were prepared for the final day.

The final day consisted of a seminar in which students presented their findings for those local key holders and stakeholders present. An interesting and even emotional discussion between the students and the other participants of the seminar showed that the findings were important.

The final phase of the learning process was the social analysis and evaluation, which was part of the group report written in Finland after the intensive week in Tanzania.

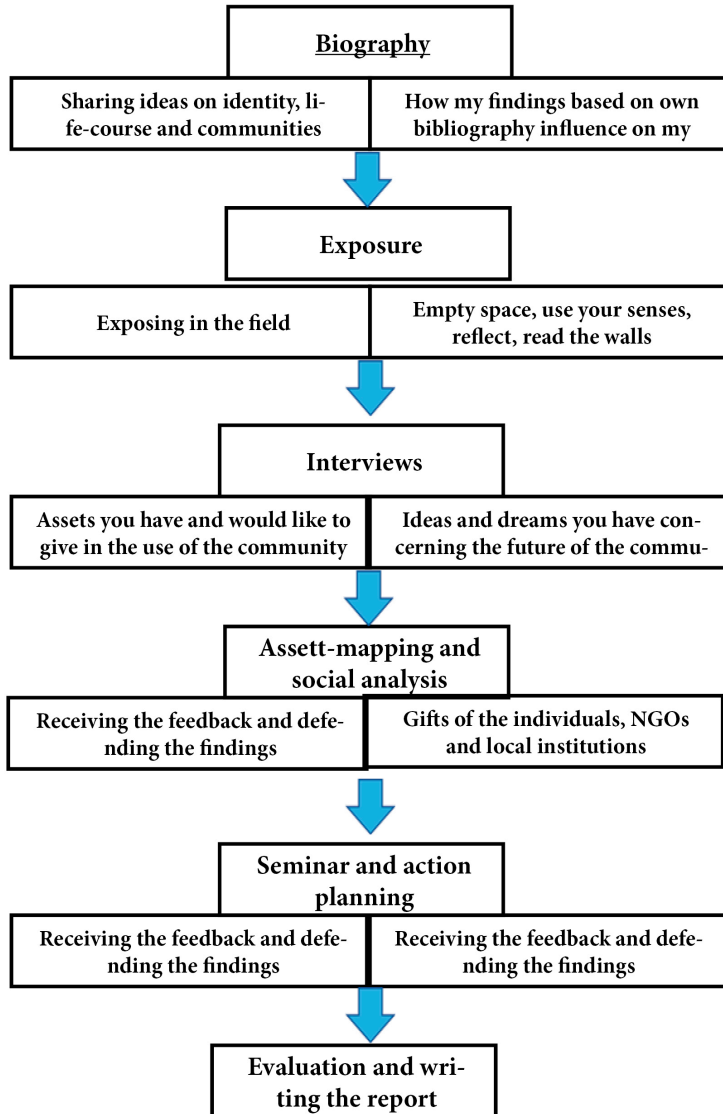


Figure 1: Pedagogical process of the Master's studies of Community Development and Conflict Resolution based on the combination of ABCD and CABLE. (Valve 2013).

## Results and Experience of the Community Case Studies

### The Data Collection: Biography, Exposure and Focus Group Interviews

As mentioned above, the students in the four groups concentrated on different villages. Each of the student groups was randomly assigned a village accidentally without any foreknowledge. However, the village inhabitants knew beforehand that a group of students would visit the village twice. The idea was to follow the exposure methodology while visiting the villages the first time. However, the exposure was organised in groups led by local guides because it was not possible that European students would have been alone in the villages due to local customs. Despite this limitation, the students were able to follow their interests, take photos, walk around their “own village”, visit public places, and be in touch with the local people according to their interests. Students also asked their guide about things they could not understand and were even able to visit some private homes.

After the visit, the students were asked to reflect on their experience in the light of their biography. The role of biography is crucial in the CABLE methodology because our life history has an influence on the way we see life, especially how we see a new environment: what do we see (smell, hear), what do we feel, and what do we think about it? (Porkka et al., 2013). The link between experience and personal biography was described in the following way:

*The pre-assignment was an important part of the exposure method and raised awareness of our own experiences and helped us understand how our previous experiences define how we see and experience the world now and how we have such different interpretations from similar situations. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*Our exposure to the village did not last as long as we would have wanted to, still we had the opportunity to be a part of the daily life of the village and observe what was going on during a normal day. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

One of the groups wrote that exposure offers an orientation which makes it possible to avoid the mistakes of the international development aid where the workers have tried to teach the locals how they should be doing things. On the

contrary, it is important to listen to the local people and find the answers by using the local knowledge and expertise (Tedx Talks, 2012).

*This is what we actually did in our field visits [...] by using the method of exposure. On the first visit to the village, we were only observing our own interpretations. We should, however, remember to keep Sirolli's advice with us through the process, during the visits and even after that. (A student's comment in the learning assignment).*

After exposure, the students reflected on their experiences in the light of their biography and shared their experiences in the groups. Later in the day, they planned the focus group interviews that they would implement during the second visit to the villages. Following their plan, they interviewed children, adolescents, adult women, and adult men. Moreover, the director of the village was interviewed individually in most of the cases.

*We conducted three separate interviews. One of the groups had men in it and the other two had women. [...] by dividing the villagers into different groups, we were able to get a set of answers from every subgroup of the village. To conduct an interview like this, you must consider the power structure and the roles of the villagers to get everyone's voice heard. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

It became obvious during the interviews that the informants were more ready to tell about the challenges and difficulties than the assets. This is typical in many parts of the world – it is easier to see the problems and difficulties than the strengths and assets.

*At first, it was difficult to get the villagers to concentrate on the assets rather than the needs. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*Their common concern was that the government should give them more money so that they could sustain their needs. When we asked what kind of assets – resources, skills, strengths – they do have and how do the assets help the community, they firmly stated that they do not have any assets. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*The identification of assets was difficult in the beginning and no matter*

*how the interviewer tried to phrase the questions and lead the conversation to have the focus on assets and strengths, the answers tended to fall back to problems and needs. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

In addition, some challenges in the interaction happened during the discussion, especially in the beginning. It is obvious that it is not an everyday occurrence for the village people that European students interview them and are interested in their way of seeing their life and assets.

*[...] men were quite shy, barely making eye contact. They answered the questions at minimal sentences. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

The discussions did not always happen according to expectations. Gender roles in particular were different from expected from what the information received from the locals had suggested. Women had many ideas related to economic development and business. They just did not know how to make them come true.

*The interviews even brought up some surprising remarks. For example, the men emphasized more education and health care, while the women concentrated on economic development. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*The greatest dream that the women were eager to talk about also, was to get a big market place [in their village] where they could sell their crops. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*As we were talking to them, we realized that these women had a lot of development ideas in their minds – they simply just did not know how to put those ideas into action, since to begin with they did not believe that from their community anything good could come out of. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

## **Asset Mapping**

According to students' analyses, the biggest challenge obstructing development in the village is a lack of hope and trust in the assets which already exist in the villages.

*[...] is the kind of village that can sustain itself through the assets the community poses. However, from what we found out during the interviews is that the villagers hold on to the belief that their village as itself does not have any assets thus it is not possible to develop itself without the assistance from the outside. They believe that nothing good can come from their village that could contribute to the development of the village. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

Asset mapping turned out to be a powerful method to make local assets visible. In this tool, answers to five questions form the basis of a community development strategy and action plan. These questions were:

- What things can communities do by themselves?
- What things do communities need some additional help with from institutions?
- What things can institutions do on their own?
- What things can institutions stop doing to create space for community action?
- What can institutions offer to support community action in addition to the services they deliver?

The assets of the local people, and their ideas about village development surprised even the stakeholders during the final seminar when the findings of the students were presented.

*[...] the information [presented by the students] was skewed and that the villagers were known to be lazy and lacking initiatives." (Comment of one stakeholder during the seminar day in Iringa)*

In the Figure 2 on the following page, the asset map of one of the villages is reproduced in the form in which the students of that group presented it.

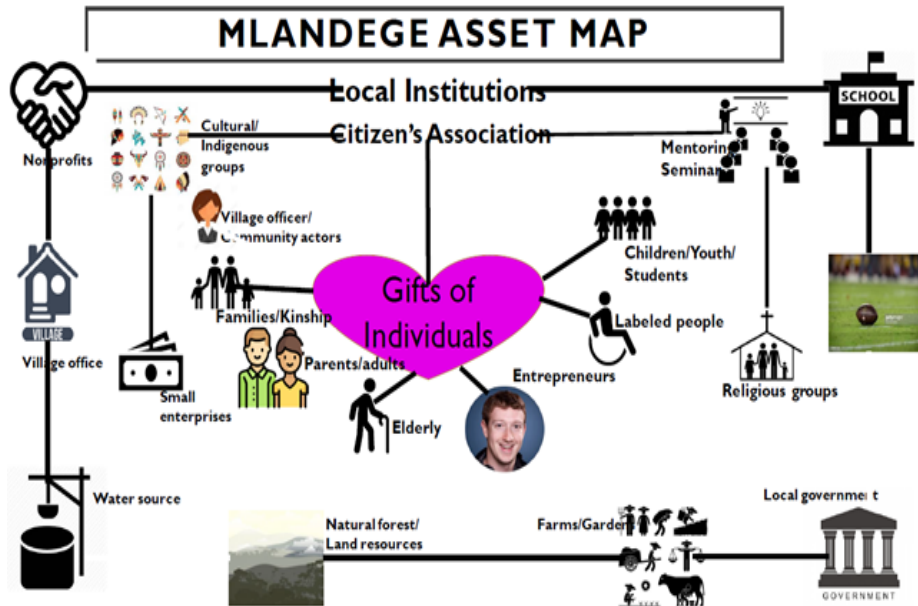


Figure 2: Asset map of one village based on the students' data collection and analysis. (Aalto-Samatch & Laguinday 2020 following the model of Foot and Hopkins 2010).

## Action plan

In the action plan, the students were asked to make a plan for the next steps if they could be community social workers in that village. They wrote that, according to their findings, it would be possible to improve the villagers' living standards.

*[...] because most of the people were hopeful and willing to work towards making their living conditions better, all they needed were tools and leaders to encourage these initiatives and believe in them. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

The student wrote about, e.g. agricultural development, building a market-place, health care and education development, education development, and job opportunities. These plans took into account, e.g. climate change, the need for deforestation, sexual health and menstruation education for young, developing sanitation facilities at schools, and the rights of vulnerable groups of people. In these action plans, it was also recognized that the local people have business ideas and dreams of developing them, but they need micro loans and access to already existing funds and other financial tools to make their dreams come true. The students



were highlighting how local communities have the capacity to run their own development by identifying and using assets and resources that create opportunities for local economic projects.

*For example, people with mechanical or construction skills could provide mentoring programmes to other interested people and this way more people could get access to a new education and job opportunities. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

*Cultural capital can be linked to our action plan [...]. Cultural capital is linked for different kinds of factors like arts, music or history and it can be seen to build and strengthen the communities as well as is connected even with better economic development. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

One important finding in the action plans seems to be that participation and increasing the political power of the people is an important way of bringing existing assets into use. In addition, collaboration between neighbouring villages would help villagers to advocate together as a bigger group for a better future. However, these changes challenge the existing power structure, and this might be difficult to overcome.

*Any changes made in the themes lifted up in the action plan would challenge some kind of current power structures, ways of benefiting and taking advantage of the natural resources. The planned actions might as well challenge current attitudes and values. The conflict might also occur between the human interests and the environmental needs. (A student's comment in the learning assignment)*

## **Evaluation**

The students visited the villages only twice. Despite the short period of contact, they conducted a multifaceted analysis of the villages and their opportunities by making many invisible assets and dreams visible. According to the students' action plan, villagers were very much aware of their limited skills. However, each of the student groups would have been interested in continuing the work they merely started. Their common idea was that they would like to follow the same model

that they used during the intensive week in Iringa. Asset-based community development is, according to them, a much more promising way to approach communities like the Tanzanian villages than needs-based community work.

*We find it important to reserve plenty of time for the exposure process, spending time with community members and getting to know their assets and needs. This way it would get easier to find the people, who could be involved in different phases of the development process. (Evaluation of one student group in the learning assignment)*

*Need-based community development can make people feel overwhelmed when only focusing on problems while nothing happens. If people are too concentrated on their needs and problems, they might not see their origins nor possible solutions. (Evaluation of one student group in the learning assignment)*

*This experience taught us how essential it is to reserve enough time for the exposure process and interviews. (Evaluation of one student group in the learning assignment)*

## **Conclusions**

This article analysed the learning experiences of Diak's master's students in relation to asset-based community development and empowerment strategies. The first aim of the article was to answer the question about how these international community development students see the future of a rural Tanzanian village after using ABCD there during their intensive course. The authors also asked whether the diaconal community work concepts "exposure" and "CABLE", in the context of ABCD, could form a more functional operational model for community development work in developing countries, based on the experiences of these students.

The article explored the application of the ABCD process in a community development education. Students' views became considerably more positive once the ABCD concept was introduced to them. Although they realized it would be difficult, the students were eager to move from a deficit approach to an asset-based approach on the micro level, where the role of facilitating development starts. The ABCD orientation opened a positive new way for the students to see the future and opportunities of rural Tanzania.

While some community members responded positively to appreciative interviews, others responded in terms of a deficit or needs-based paradigm. It is obvious

that people around the world have a tendency to default to a deficit-based paradigm. However, realizing that this tendency was universal helped the students to also critically view their own context and their deficit-based discourse, which is very typical also in Finland.

According to the students evaluations, the diaconal concepts CABLE and 'exposure' were well suited for an ABCD working orientation because they strengthen bottom-up approaches where the community members' opinions and experiences play a key role. Exposure was successful as a starting point to the learning process. Most of the students were open and "empty" when they entered the village the first time. According to the learning assignments, they avoided the "from above" attitude and became well aware of the hidden power structures in the villages despite the limited time.

The importance of worker's personal biographies for community development work is a central element in the CABLE approach. The students wrote their biographies as an orientation assignment before the intensive course. However, it was a problem when the students of the other two universities had not done the assignment. Therefore, sharing their findings based on their biographies was difficult. Despite this challenge, some dialogue between students' own biographies and their visiting experiences took place. However, the importance of understanding community workers' own life histories was not fully reflected in their work.

According to this experience, exposure and CABLE are well suited for ABCD. Moreover, they offer practical tools to make power relations visible and help workers become aware of the invisible structures in societies – lack of which has sometimes been considered problematic in ABCD.

Research on the views and experiences of the community members who participated in the ABCD process, would be valuable for understanding how the communities benefited from the ABCD applied in the training of these social work students. It would be too early to draw conclusions about how the students' preferences and interests in terms of working models are influenced by this in long term, but the findings indicate that a foundation for positive attitudes towards grassroots work (specifically, community development) has been laid through the application of ABCD.

## **RESEARCH DATA**

(Based on the group and individual work during the intensive course in Iringa, Tanzania. User rights have been given to the authors by the students).

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Tanja Oguntuase & Marianne Nylund

# COMMUNITY NEEDS ITS YOUTH - A CASE STUDY OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN KLAUKKALA

## Introduction

This article is based on a master's thesis (Oguntuase, 2018) as part of the master's programme in Community development, human rights and conflict resolution (2017–2018), piloted in the BUSCO project (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, n.d.; Siirto, 2018). The thesis is an example of how key elements of the BUSCO project (building sustainable and resilient communities) and the contents of the master's degree programme have been combined. The thesis illustrates how a sense of community can be developed by using community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach with residents in the Finnish community of Klaukkala. The CBPR approach is very common in community development.

Communities and neighbourhoods can experience various challenges when there is a rapid growth of, or change in, the demographic structure of the residential population. These kinds of changes have been considered to be one reason for some alarming symptoms within the Klaukkala community. There have been signs of social problems, a diminishing sense of community, lack of social control, feelings of insecurity, crimes, and disagreements among neighbourhoods. Consequently, the local authorities wanted to find out what should and could be done to improve the situation of the community, and to prevent these alarming symptoms mentioned earlier among the youth. For this, the whole community is needed, as the actions of the youth affect the community and vice versa.

Participatory research in the community was considered a new, practical, and effective approach on the matter. Therefore, the main aim of this research was to examine, together with the community, what the existing positive elements and possible threats are regarding the sense of community in Klaukkala. The purpose was also to explore what actions are needed from different actors to improve the situation and enhance the sense of community.

## Community Development and Sense of Community

A sense of community can be viewed as a part of community development. It is often used to characterize the relationship between individuals and social structures (Perkins & Long 2002, p. 293). A sense of community has been defined by Sarason (1974 in Mahmoudi Farani 2016, p. 363) as “the sense that one was part of a readily available mutually supportive network of relationships”. The other classic definition is that of McMillan and Chavis (1986, p. 9), where they argue that a sense of community has four elements, as summarized here. (1) Membership means the feeling of belonging to the community, the feeling of acceptance and knowing who is and is not part of the community. (2) Influence refers to the influence a member has on the group and vice versa, and the feeling of being influential. (3) Integration and fulfilment of needs means that being a member of the community satisfies some needs and membership is awarded somehow. Lastly, (4) shared emotional connections means the shared history of the members.

According to Neal and Neal (2014), the four elements of sense of community (membership; influence; integration and fulfillment of needs; shared emotional connections), reflect individuals’ perceptions of cohesion, belongingness, and their bond with the group. The feelings of cohesion, belongingness, and bonding are of the strongest with those who possess relatively dense social networks. Consequently, these dense social networks create the feeling of belongingness and being a member of a strong, supportive community. In neighbourhoods, a situation like this leads to a sense of community. (Neal & Neal 2014, pp. 2–3; see, e.g., McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

While bringing about healthy community development, building a sense of community is important (Chavis & Wandersman 1990, p. 56). In a neighbourhood, a sense of community is a feeling of being a member of the local community, and these social ties lead to community attachment. In addition to community attachment, a sense of community is also connected with the concept of neighbouring: friendly recognition, helpfulness, proactive intervention, and embracing and resisting diversity. Having a sense of community changes the stranger next door into a neighbour with potential shared interests in the local community (Mahmoudi Farani 2016, p. 365, pp. 368–379.) According to O’Connor (2013, p. 977), participation, such as through neighbourhood associations, is usually related to a sense of community. However, Mannarini and Fedi (2009, p. 224) note in their study that not all participation leads to heightened sense of community.

On the individual level, a sense of community relates with the feeling of being influential or powerful (Evans 2007, p. 693). Nowell and Boyd (2010, p. 836) argue that a sense of responsibility is one dimension of a sense of community, and that a sense of community is also value-based. An individual's sense of community may not depend only on the benefits or value one gets from being a member of the community; it can also depend on a normative sense of responsibility for the well-being of the community (Nowell & Boyd, 2010, pp. 836–837).

Young people can perceive community in quite different ways than adults (Evans, 2007, p. 694). Often, young people are expected to behave in respectful, caring, and responsible manner, yet they are excluded from the matters of the community. In Evans' (2007, p. 699) research findings, young people experienced a sense of community especially in connection with the themes of voice and resonance, power and influence, and adult support and challenge. The experience of being heard made young people feel particularly like they were an important part of the community, i.e. that they matter and belong to the community. By gaining power, young people have also become aware of the responsibility associated with it. Therefore, the adults of the community have an important role in helping young people to build skills, as well as in forming opportunities for using these skills. When a blend of support and challenge is added, the community opens to the young people in a new way and builds their sense of community (Evans, 2007, pp. 694–703).

It has been stated that youth participation has a positive impact on the results of interventions when the youth have been offered different types and levels of participation activities (Aistrich & Absetz, 2013, p. 8). For example, the involvement of youth in planning and implementing physical activities, increases their motivation. According to those authors, a high level of youth participation can be reached, but it requires a variety of opportunities for taking part at different levels and for different needs. In addition, the levels of commitment required for participating should be varied (Aistrich & Absetz, 2013, p. 8). In another study regarding youth participation, the young people involved were not interested in participating using traditional representative ways. Instead, they were interested in loose, unorganized and project-oriented civic activities, e.g. organizing events (Merikanto, 2013, p. 4).



## **Case of Klaukkala**

In this article, community development is defined as an approach to developing the community of Klaukkala by its residents. A neighbourhood is a spatialized urban community (Moulaert, 2010, p. 7): an area of specific geographical location, for example residential areas, limited by major streets or other physical barriers (Green & Haines, 2016, p. 4). Klaukkala is defined as a community having a geographical location, meaning a community of place and territory.

In this case study, we focus on Klaukkala, which is the most southern area of Nurmijärvi, consisting of different neighbourhoods. Nurmijärvi is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Finland, and is situated 50 kilometres north of the capital, Helsinki. Moreover, it is Finland's largest rural municipality, with 42 000 residents. The population is expected to approach 45 000 in the 2020s (Nurmijärven kunta, n.d.-a). Children (aged 0 to 14) and young people (over 15 years) form almost one-third of the population. Inward migration has had a major impact on rural populations, as, especially, families with small children move out of metropolitan areas and into smaller towns, such as Nurmijärvi.

Klaukkala has approximately 17 300 residents, and it is therefore the biggest (as well as the fastest growing) population centre (Nurmijärvi pähkinäkuoressa, 2018, p. 10, 19). An especially alarming development among the youth of Klaukkala has raised high concerns there. Whereas the amount of crime committed by young people has been decreasing nationally in Finland year after year (Näsi, 2016), in Nurmijärvi, particularly in Klaukkala, youth crime has been rising in the recent years (Tiina Kuosa, personal communication, 23.4.2018).

In 2017, concern for the youth was rising, and the behaviour of young people culminated one weekend when two teenagers were assaulted and, when arriving, police faced protest from all youth that was present (Joutsen, 2017a). The detective inspector stated that the same group of local youth aged between 13 and 18 had been causing trouble for several weeks in Klaukkala, causing fear and disorder. According to the police, young people in Klaukkala had never been as aggressive as they were appearing at that time (Joutsen, 2017a; Joutsen, 2017b).

## **Community-Based Participatory Research Approach**

The purpose of this research was to find out how community members perceive the community, to find ways of improving the situation in the community, and to diminish the current restlessness of the youth. The main research questions were:

1. What are the existing positive elements and possible threats regarding sense of community in Klaukkala? And
2. What could be done to enhance the sense of community in Klaukkala?

### **Mixed Methods**

In conducting this research, a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach was used, in which the community is part of every step of the research (Hacker 2013, 2; Coughlin, Smith & Fernandez 2017, p. 15). The aim was to find the reasons behind the current problems and needs of the community, and to see what processes may be needed in order to improve the situation in a sustainable way. In this research, a community is defined by its geographical location. Residents of different ages, associations, and institutions, as well as public officers of that specific area were invited to participate in the research. Community meetings were convened to bring the community's input to the contents and process of the research.

As CBPR was used as the methodological approach for this research in order to emphasize the role of the community (Coughlin et al. 2017, 23), mixed methods were used as the data collection method in order to allow a deeper insight into the community (Creswell 2015, 15). In this research, the methods are integrated both in the data collection phase where the contents of the quantitative research are based on the qualitative research, and in the data analysis phase, where the results are both compared and analysed together (merged) (Leavy 2017, p. 182).

### **CBPR in Action**

The target community of this work was Klaukkala. Two kinds of actors collaborated in the research: the municipal youth work in Nurmijärvi and three junior high schools in Klaukkala. The municipal youth work of Nurmijärvi supports young people as they grow up, focusing on responsibility, participation, and taking care of oneself and the environment. Youth workers visit local schools and organize group activities, as well as offering individual counselling for young people (Nurmijärven kunta, n.d.-c; Merja Winha-Järvinen, personal communication, 8.2.2018).

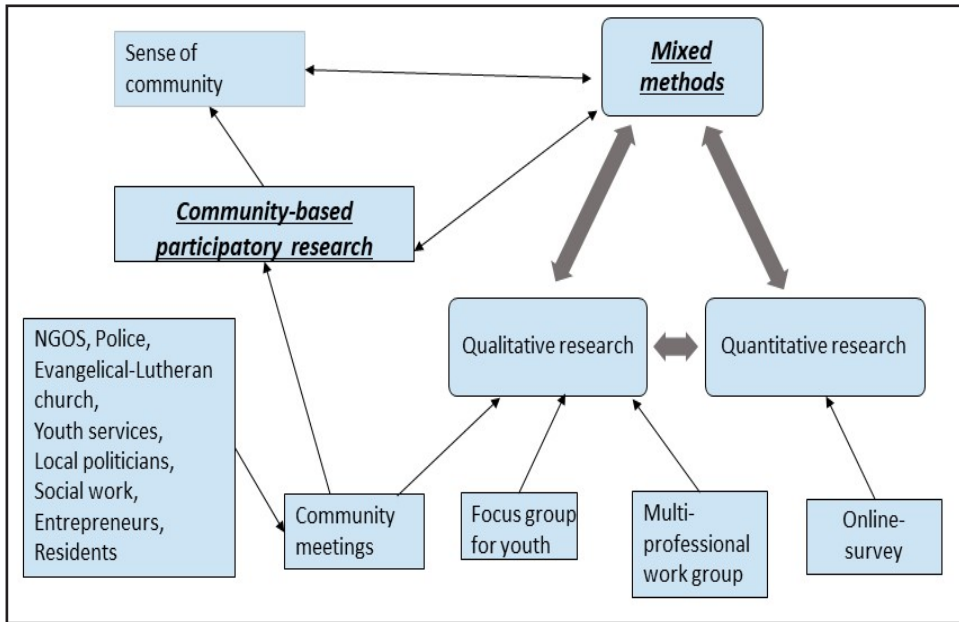


Figure 1. Methodology, methods and key concepts (Oguntuase, 2018)

The target group of the research was the residents of Klaukkala. The research followed the principles of CBPR, ensuring community participation, and incorporating relevant perspectives on the community. Community meetings formed the basis for community participation, and cooperation with the head of youth work continued through the process. The community was involved in different steps of the research process (Figure 1).

In the first community meeting (15 attendees), outlines for the research were agreed on, and data collection for the qualitative research started in the first community meeting. Thematic questions developed for regional counselling by Eriksson, Arnkil and Rautava (2006, p. 15) formed the basis for the discussion, and later for the whole piece of research. The thematic questions were as follows: 1) Have you noticed some positive development in your community lately, which should be supported, regarding the local youth? 2) Is there any development in the community that worries you and which should be addressed, regarding the local youth? 3) What should be done and what could you do to improve the situation? 4) What would follow if you do it? Who reacts and how?

Klaukkala has its own multi-professional team, which examines the phenomena regarding children and youth of the area. The participants of the team came from school personnel, social services, school health care, municipal youth work, police and youth work of the Evangelical Lutheran church. The team has regular

meetings, which youth work organizes. (Merja Winha-Järvinen, personal communication, 8.2.2018). Focus group interviews were conducted with the multi-professional team (7 attendees), and with young residents (9 attendees, aged 13–17).

The community meeting was used as a tool to decide how the research should proceed. The community wanted to find out which ideas would be the most preferable among the residents of Klaukkala. Two online surveys were conducted, one for residents between the ages 13 and 19 and another one for adults over 20 years. The survey for young people in ages 13–19 were designed to give them a chance to be heard. The respondents could choose a maximum of 5 options per question. The main questions in the survey followed the pattern of the thematic questions for regional counselling mentioned earlier, together with a selection of possible answers based on the ideas gathered in the first community meeting. In addition to multiple choice questions, there was also a chance to reply to open-ended questions in the surveys. Responses to open-ended questions were added to the qualitative data: 77 statements in total.

As can be seen from Figure 2 (on the following page), the entirety of the qualitative data consists of the first community meeting, the focus group interviews and from the open-ended questions in the online-surveys. The qualitative data were analysed following the principles of theory-guided content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, pp. 123 – 127, 133). In the quantitative part of the research, the total sample of the online survey was 359, which is approximately 2% of the population of Klaukkala. The survey for the age group 13–19 obtained 226 replies, which is approximately 1% of the residents of that age group in Klaukkala. Thus, it shows that residents in the ages of 13 to 19 replied more than residents over 20 years. The survey for residents aged over 20 years obtained 133 replies. The aim of the surveys was not to represent all residents in Klaukkala. To collect information via surveys was decided in a community meeting as part of CBPR approach. The surveys gave some basic information of issues related to the sense of community. Based on the surveys, focus group discussions were organized. After separate analysis, both datasets were combined, presented and discussed together in a summary manner (Creswell 2015, pp. 36, 82–83).

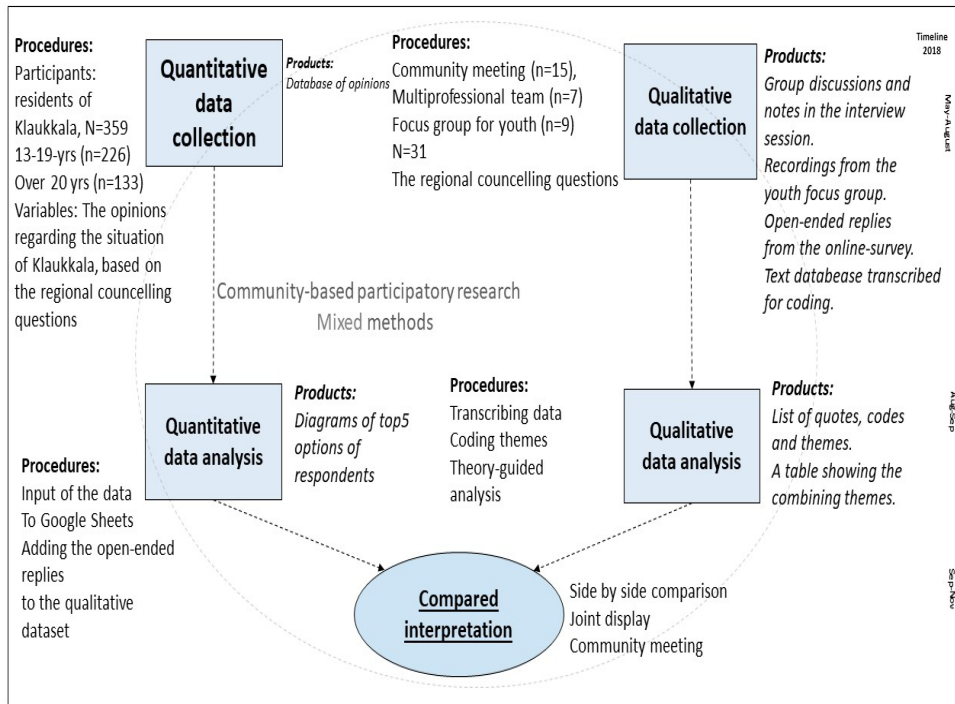


Figure 2. A mixed methods design (following Creswell 2015, p. 59)

The guidelines on how to utilize the collected data for this research were formed together with the community meeting attendees and the head of youth work, Merja Winha-Järvinen, who commissioned the research.

## Revising Sense Of Community

In this chapter, the results of the data, collected via a CBPR-approach, are discussed. There are three main themes: how the residents see both positive and negative aspects of the community; what are threats to sense of community; and the significance of the participation.

### Positive Aspects of the Community – Are They for All?

Based on the findings, the opportunities for hobbies and activities in sport clubs are regarded as the most positive aspect of Klaukkala (Table 1). The results indicate that participating in local events demonstrates and increases the existing sense of community, and that participating helps residents to get to know each other.

Other positive aspects of Klaukkala are the new youth centre, the well-behaving majority of young people, the increased services for the youth, the services and events of the new community centre, renovated schoolyards, and how the youth know how to utilize the internet.

Table 1. The options with the most votes in the online-surveys regarding the positive aspects of the community.

Question	Most popular option + votes	Second + votes	Third + votes	Fourth + votes	Fifth + votes
Positive aspects >20 yrs	Possibilities for hobbies (83)	The services of the community centre (78)	Majority of the youth are well-behaving (70)	The activities and events of sports clubs (67)	New youth centre (62)
Positive aspects 13–19 yrs	Possibilities for hobbies (119)	The youth know how to utilize the internet (94)	Renovated school yards (93)	Increased amount of services (85)	New youth centre (83)

Data base: Total n=359: residents between ages 13 and 19 (n=226) and residents over 20 years old (n=133), (Oguntuase, 2018)

Personal networks can be formed via participation, and those networks are essential for a sense of community. Looking at the definition of the dimensions of sense of community by McMillan and Chavis (1986, p. 9), and comparing them to the significance the respondents ascribe to hobbies and sports club activities in the qualitative data, it seems they indeed build a sense of community. The results show, how being part of a sports club or a collective hobby makes you feel that you belong; it has an influence on your life; being part of the ups and downs of the group forms shared memories and builds commitment. Also, instrumental and social participation are categories of sense of community according to Mannarini and Fedi (2009, p. 213), and the collective nature of having a hobby locates it to those categories

The findings of this research indicate that in community members' view, participation builds sense of community. The members of the community feel that the sense of community formed, for example, in hobbies and sports clubs has an effect in to the every-day life of the whole community as well. However, do different and separate hobbies really bring people together and build a sense of community for the whole community? According to Mannarini and Fedi (2009, p. 224),

not all forms of participation does lead to a heightened sense of community, and signs of this can be noticed from the results.

According to the qualitative research findings, members of the community feel that the sense of community formed in hobbies and sports clubs has an effect on the everyday life of the whole community as well. However, the experiences of connectedness vary, depending on the activities of the family. People who are part of different groups feel that there is plenty of sense of community to be found, as they have dense social networks that bring them the feeling of belonging and cohesion, i.e. a sense of community (Neal & Neal 2014, p. 2). People who are part of these dense networks also see it as a positive aspect of the community.

However, not all families can afford a hobby for their children, and this raises concerns in the community. This indicates also how the existing sense of community in Klaukkala is not distributed evenly between families and among the youth. This also causes inequalities regarding sense of community. These findings reflect those of Evans (2007, p. 697) on how youth from privileged families often have more opportunities to be involved in the community and thereby utilize the sense of community.

### **Threats to the Sense of Community**

According to the results, there are plenty of aspects diminishing sense of community in Klaukkala (Table 2 on following page). Vandalism and increasing rates of crimes together with the untidiness of the community and inoperative infrastructure are lowering the feeling of comfort and safety. The negative atmosphere among adults in the community group in social media, mainly Facebook, is viewed to have an affect also on the actual community. The findings show how well neighbours interact with each other in the community, which affects the way residents perceive sense of community. Differences between families of different neighbourhoods are various, and there is inequality to be found.

Table 2. The options with the most votes in the online-surveys regarding the alarming development in the community.

Question	Most popular option + votes	Second + votes	Third + votes	Fourth + votes	Fifth + votes
Negative development, >20 yrs	Vandalism (96)	Trashing of premises (63)	Behaviour in social media (56)	Parents shifting the responsibility of upbringing to authorities (51)	Disturbing driving with mopeds (50)
Negative development, 13–19 yrs	Bullying in schools (107)	Pressure on appearance, (106)	Vandalism (84)	Usage of snuff (81)	Positive attitude on drugs, loneliness, alienation (77 each)

Data base: Total n=359: residents between ages 13 and 19 (n=226) and residents over 20 years old (n=133), (Oguntuase, 2018)

Overall, the role of adults in creating an atmosphere of community, and thereby affecting the life of the youth, is acknowledged in the findings. In the qualitative data respondents of all ages bring out, how the behaviour and attitude of adults - negative and positive - are significant for the overall atmosphere in the community and thereby, in their view, to the sense of community. The behaviour in social media is also noted as negative development. This finding is consistent with that of Evans (2007, p. 694), who proposes that, to increase a sense of community, adults should create a connected, responsible, and influential environment for and with young people which can make the community strong and raise respectful, caring, and responsible young people.

Young people are concerned about how modern society puts pressure on them, for example, regarding their appearance (Table 2). In addition, the replies to the online survey raise concerns about bullying, loneliness, and alienation that young people face. Another interesting finding is that some young people are deeply concerned about the well-being of other young people in the community. Youth's attitude towards substance abuse is a worrying result. In the survey's open-ended questions, some young people expressed their concern about the positive attitude that other young people have towards intoxicant. In the survey, there were no specific questions about attitudes towards intoxicants. What also rises high concern is the lack of connectedness and safety among the youth. The youth of Klaukkala have formed strong groupings, and even gangs, and those groups do not interact with each other at all. There is even a threat of violence between the youth, which



has an impact on where and with whom young people can move about and interact. This indicates a strong sense of community within those certain groups, but it is used in a destructive manner, as the influence on the overall community is negative. This is alarming and a sign of sense of the community dividing people into subgroups (McMillan & Chavis 1986, p. 20).

This disruption of the community is a quite significant finding of this research. Neighbourhoods and groups formed inside the community do not interact or intersect, and the sense of community does not benefit the whole community and is not mutual.

## The Significance of Participation

An interesting outcome is that, no matter what the personal experience of neighbouring is, connecting with neighbours is considered to have a significant meaning in the community. The findings indicate that higher level of participation from people of all ages is considered important by respondents of all ages. According to both sets of results, there is a need for young people to participate more in the development of the community, and, indeed, the youth would be willing to participate more. (Table 3)

Table 3. The options with the most votes in the online-surveys regarding the views on what should be done in the community.

Question	Most popular option + votes	Second + votes	Third + votes	Fourth + votes	Fifth + votes
What should be done > 20 yrs	Youth should participate in the development of the community (80)	Trashcans to the areas where the youth spend their time (72)	Outreach youth work (68)	Easily accessible hobbies (56)	Participatory budget for the youth (56)
What should be done, 13–19 yrs	Trashcans to the areas where the youth spend their time (165)	Youth should participate in the development of the community (831)	Rewarding youth for behaving well (76)	More neighbourhood sports sites (69)	Easily accessible hobbies, (54)
What could you do > 20 yrs	Participating in local events (86)	Voluntary cleaning effort (52)	Networking with neighbours (56)	Taking part in sports club activities (46)	Taking part in residential activities (42)
What could you do, 13–19 yrs	Taking part in sports club activities (88)	Participating in local events (75)	Easily accessible hobbies (69)	Voluntary cleaning effort (69)	Taking part in residential activities (50)

Data base: Total n=359: residents between ages 13 and 19 old (n=226) and residents over 20 years old (n=133), (Oguntuase, 2018)

The findings support the views of Evans (2007, p. 694, p. 700), as the community wants to utilize the potential of the youth. This would increase the sense of community and would make young residents feel that they are an important part of the community. Adults need to help the youth getting their voices heard, and authorities can help both adults and youth in achieving this. Individual behaviour can be changed through policies and programmes, as Green and Haines (2016, p. 4) suggest, and, to make them truly effective, authorities must hear the voice of community members. When people feel that they have an influence on their immediate environment, their sense of community increases (McMillan & Chavis 1986, p. 12, 15).

## **Disruption of the Community leads to Enhancing Participation**

In this section, the conclusions of the present research are presented. In addition, the continuation of the work done with the community after finalizing the research is discussed, alongside thoughts for the future.

### **Everyone is needed**

The research findings present an overview of the community, regarding the present situation for young people, but also the kind of impact the whole community has on the youth, and how to go forward together. As Figure 3 on the following page shows, the results are mostly convergent as members of the community present various views on the positive and the negative aspects of community, and what should be done to improve the sense of the community.

One important finding of this research is the disruption among the community of Klaukkala, and how it affects its sense of community. The residents estimate the sense of community very differently, basing it on their own experiences. Disruption of the community is not repaired easily; building a better functioning community takes time. However, the community members are willing to make change happen and would like the situation to develop. The results of this research support the idea that enhancing participation in different ways would increase the sense of community. The community members acknowledge this. The youth want and need a higher level of participation, and adults can help to achieve it. Although this research is based on the concerns of local youth, who replied to the survey, a significant finding of the research is how everyone is needed in changing the situation for the better and in enhancing the sense of community. This supports the premise of the community meeting.

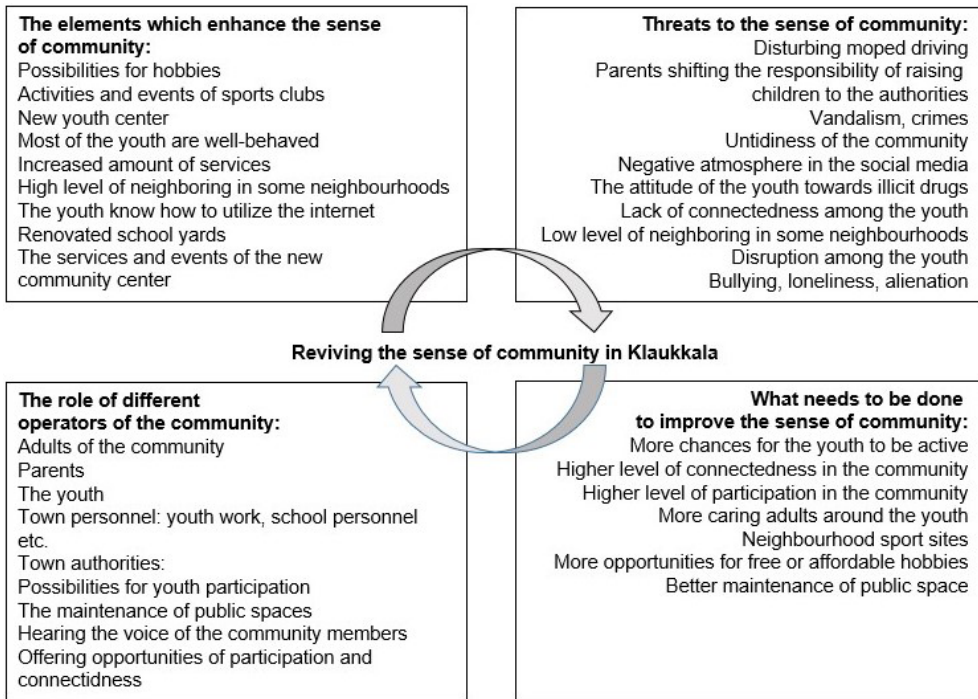


Figure 3. Summary of the main conclusions.

## Ongoing Process of Increasing Participation

The process and results of the thesis (Oguntuase, 2018) on which this article was based were presented to the local administration and government. The findings of the research were well received in Nurmijärvi and among different actors in Klaukkala. Different participatory and dialogical methods have been used before in Nurmijärvi. Hence, participatory research of this kind had a good basis to build on. As a continuation of the CBPR process, the town formed a community forum in November 2019, to which a variety of local actors were invited, and the local youth also took part in the forum. Different ideas for collaboration and for enhancing the sense of community were presented. As initiated by the town manager, the forum will become a yearly event.

In 2018, the municipality of Nurmijärvi participated in a series of workshops where ideas were developed to concrete activities. The CBPR research project described in this article, was used as a basis for planning an experiment in Nurmijärvi. The youth participation project started in Klaukkala in January 2020 and was

carried out by municipal youth workers. In collaboration with local schools, the youth workers organized discussion events in four schools, meeting approximately 350 students. Young people were asked to communicate their thoughts about the three most concerning local phenomena, based on the replies of the youth in this research (the use of intoxicants, vandalism, and bullying, loneliness and alienation). The ideas and initiatives formed in school discussions were finalized and voted on. Teams for each initiative were formed, and the project will continue throughout 2020.

Consequently, enhancing youth participation is now one of the main goals of the local educational and cultural department. It is hoped that a preventive approach will alleviate the pressure on special health care and social work. Youth work in schools could also increase the sense of community, as the youth have more opportunities to be heard and have meaningful encounters with adults.

Another preventive project started in 2020, for which youth workers from Nurmijärvi will take part in an activity called Ankkuri [Anchor in English], together with the police and social services. The aim of the cooperation is to increase young people's well-being and to prevent crimes. Young people and their families will be heard and discussed with in a holistic manner. The aim of the work is to find suitable support for young people, to support youth assets, and to prevent negative development in young people's lives. To be able to succeed in this, the active participation of the youth themselves is central.

A sense of community is also one of the values in the municipal strategy of Nurmijärvi for the years 2018–2025. Enhancing a positive sense of community among the residents is seen to increase the level of comfort and the sense of security. In addition, the aim of the strategy is to strengthen the participation of residents of all ages alongside active citizenship. The municipality welcomes new ways of collaborating with organizations and different actors (Nurmijärven kunta, n.d.-b, p. 15, 21). A sense of community is also among the criteria in granting funds from the participatory budget of the municipality of Nurmijärvi.

## **What next?**

There is a need for participatory research and community development in urban communities, and Nurmijärvi has shown a good example of how to embrace such activities and use them to develop work in the community and enhance the well-being of residents of all ages. The participation of young people is very important in community development - whether it is done in densely-populated com-

munities like Klaukkala or in rural areas of Tanzania. For example, the research questions of this study, and the procedure of regional counselling (Eriksson, Arnkil & Rautava, 2006, pp. 14–15), could also work in rural communities as a starting point for looking into the situation of the community, alongside setting a vision for the future. Naturally, to really understand the community and enhance its situation, members of the community – including the youth – must be heard.

In Nurmijärvi, one line of future collaborative work with different actors could be to examine what is the cause of the disruption among the youth in Klaukkala and the lack of sense of community. How to turn the situation for the better? Could the principles and methods of community development be utilized? The work could be carried out together with the youth and their families, along with heavy input from different operators, including municipal operators, NGOs, social work, health care, police, entrepreneurs, media, etc. This study could lay the groundwork for this continuing work, as having sense of community (as one value in the strategy) that increases the wellbeing of community members. By developing collaborative policies, and by developing local communities, subsequent generations would grow up in a culture of cooperation and participation, and the local sense of community would increase in the coming years.

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Anisa Doty & Heriel Mfangavo

# LOOKING TO INTUITIVE APPROACHES: CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN THE BUSCO PROJECT

## Introduction

The BUSCO project, carried out in Iringa, Tanzania was to improve the capacity of the University of Iringa (UoI) to promote community development, entrepreneurship, and community resilience. Collaborating in the project were two Finnish partners, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Haaga-Helia).

As part of an internal impact evaluation carried out by the BUSCO project, we decided to also look to the project in terms of its conflict sensitivity. The background for this was threefold. First, the acknowledgement that previous development interventions carried out in Tanzania had, at times, caused tensions and unintended negative effects in the communities in which they had been implemented (see, e.g., Mteki et al., 2017). A second point of departure for this inquiry was to respond to a recent call among top experts in the field who were looking to intuitive approaches to conflict sensitivity as a way of overcoming and shedding light on the perceived knowing-doing gap in the sphere of making conflict sensitivity a mainstream quality requirement for all aid interventions (Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, 2019). Finally, looking at the BUSCO project through a conflict sensitivity lens, we wanted to seize the opportunity to raise awareness about the notion itself among project stakeholders, the on-going master's degree programme participants, and others involved in development efforts in fragile and resource-scarce contexts. This last point has to do with a renewed and ever-stronger emphasis by aid actors globally on the importance of conflict sensitivity as a key quality consideration for all development actors. For this reason, conflict sensitivity is also being integrated into the study units on conflict resolution in the master's programme. This text may therefore be considered a resource supporting this learning goal.



## The Notion of Conflict Sensitivity

The notion of conflict sensitivity rests upon the recognition that interventions carried out in a conflict-affected, fragile, or resource-scarce environment will inevitably interact with the open and/or latent peace and conflict dynamics within that context. This interaction often takes place in surprising and unintended ways. Conflict sensitivity calls for aid actors to develop a refined understanding of the context in which they work, to identify the interactions between their work and the context, and to adapt their ways of working and activities in view of reducing the risk of contributing negatively to conflict, while leveraging opportunities to contribute to building sustainable peace (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012).

Maier (2019) describes conflict sensitivity by comparing it to risk assessment and management. He claims that “these two concepts resemble each other in that they both provide tools for an elaborated understanding of the context in which the intervention is taking place... (and) enable us to design our intervention accordingly and to build scenarios for contingency plans. Conflict sensitivity, however, is not limited to this.” Maier maintains that conflict sensitivity provides an additional dimension, an extra ‘lens’ through which to examine how interventions actually influence the context and its dynamics, particularly its peace and conflict status. In this sense, conflict sensitivity resembles gender mainstreaming where aid actors can use ‘gender lenses’ to assess the impact of their intervention on the specific situation of women and girls, and men and boys within the target group of the intervention.

Actors and organizations committed to conflict sensitivity have adopted various definitions of it over the years, depending on their work and the contexts in which they operate. This article builds on the Global Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub’s (Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, i.a.) definition of a conflict-sensitive approach (CSA):

*A conflict sensitive approach involves gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction [between] activities and context and acting to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of intervention on conflict, within an organisation’s given priorities/objectives (mandate).*

Moreover, this article looks at conflict sensitivity more broadly as an ethos of aid in fragility: an underlying sentiment informing and providing guidance to the practice of aid actors. Conflict is understood here as a natural and inevitable so-

cial phenomenon, a universal and inherent feature of human society, and an important driver for change. As such, conflict is used, in line with Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2016), to mean the widest set of circumstances in which parties to conflicts perceive that they have mutually incompatible goals. Conflict is thus not something to be avoided altogether, but rather seen as something to be handled and to be taken into consideration in ways that are non-violent and that do not produce new forms of injustice, exclusion, or violence, either physical nor structural.

In addition to the suggested definitions of conflict and conflict sensitivity above, we build our discussion here on Mary B. Anderson's (1999) seminal work on developing the Do No Harm approach. Anderson found clear and consistent patterns of interaction between aid and context. The first has to do with resource transfers, and the second with the messages of aid. Anderson found that the influx of material and immaterial resources in humanitarian and development interventions affect conflict dynamics in five predictable ways. 1) Theft: aid resources are often stolen. 2) Market effects: interventions have an effect on prices, wages, employment opportunities, and profits, and can reinforce economies of conflict or economies of peace. 3) Distributional effects: when projects are targeted to some groups and not others, and these groups overlap with existing divisions represented in the context, assistance can reinforce and exacerbate conflict. Profit and wage effects of interventions may also reinforce intergroup tensions. 4) Substitution effects: aid can substitute local resources that would otherwise have been used to meet needs within the context without the intervention, thus potentially freeing local resources for the pursuit of conflict. Finally, 5) legitimization effects: aid can legitimize some people and actions while weakening or sidelining others.

Anderson (1999) further found that the content and particular ways of implementing interventions can also reinforce and worsen conflict tendencies or support existing capacities for peace. She found that the messages "sent" by aid are related to and interact with the impacts of the resource transfers discussed above. Anderson identified seven types of negative implicit ethical messages that interventions typically deliver. 1) Arms and power refers to a common situation where armed guards are used to protect assets from theft, or staff from harm. The hidden moral message here is that it is legitimate to determine with arms who has access to food, medical supplies, construction materials etc., and that security and safety are derived from weapons. 2) Disrespect, mistrust, and competition among aid actors refers to aid actors' inability to work with each other cordially, resorting to publicly criticizing other actors' or staff members' work. The message conveyed

here in recipient communities is that it is not necessary to cooperate with disliked people or organizations or with those with whom one disagrees. This in turn may result in reinforcing sentiments underlying intergroup conflicts. An example of 3) aid workers and impunity is when project employees use goods and support systems provided by interventions for their own purposes. The message here is that whoever has control over resources also has access to them for personal benefit without having to be accountable. 4) Different value for different life refers to policies and regulations adopted by aid actors, which apply differently to expatriates and local staff. The message here is one of inequality, that some people and lives are more important than others. 5) Powerlessness is a type of message where intervention staff assert a lack of power to have an effect on events or circumstances around them: “I can’t do anything to change this. It’s the donor’s fault. I am not in charge etc.” The message received here is that individuals in difficult circumstances cannot have much power, and thus do not have to take responsibility for the effects of their actions. 6) Belligerence, suspicion, and tension is a type of negative implicit ethical message that points to situations where aid workers approach every situation with suspicion and belligerence, sending a message conveying that power is the broker of human relations, and that it is normal to approach everyone with hostility and suspicion. The final category of negative implicit ethical messages relates to 7) publicity. Here, the focus is on how interventions use images of the circumstances in intervention contexts, which may lead to victimization of certain conflict parties, as well as reinforcing modes and moods of tension, instead of helping to find equitable ways of responding to needs on all sides. Anderson claims that intervention staff that are mindful of the potential impact of their attitudes on local people are able to take action that can make a big difference by being persistent, acting as an example to others, and by maintaining a consciously positive and open, trustful attitude.

## **A Knowing-Doing Gap between Ideals and Practice**

While the idea of conflict sensitivity is not new (see, e.g., Doty, 2016), since its inception dating to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, it has become an increasingly important consideration in recent years for aid donors, multilateral organizations such as the EU, the UN, and the OECD, as well as I/NGOs working in conflict-affected and fragile contexts (Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, 2019). Actors working in conflict-affected and resource-scarce areas are increasingly realizing that their work often has unintended negative impacts on

the peace and conflict dynamics within their operational contexts (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). Hence, there is a rising awareness of the need for conflict sensitivity among aid actors at large. This has been prominently inscribed into recent high-level international policy documents such as the OECD's DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (2019), which requires all actors within their respective roles and mandates to strive to make a positive contribution to preventing armed conflict and violence and promoting sustainable peace, and, at a minimum, to adopt a 'do no harm' and conflict-sensitive approach.

At the same time, there continue to be gaps between knowing about conflict sensitivity and explicitly embedding it within policy and practice. In a discussion of achievements and failures over two decades of debates around conflict sensitivity, Paffenholz (2016) points to three explanations of why conflict sensitivity has "never entered the mainstream aid system." She claims there has been an excessive focus on toolboxes, that no real mainstreaming has taken place, and that the conflict sensitivity debate was "quietly overtaken" by the debate on state fragility.

## **Conflict Sensitivity has not been solved – What about Intuitive Approaches?**

Whether or not one agrees with the reasons described above for conflict sensitivity not having reached the mainstream aid system, it is clear that conflict sensitivity has not "been solved"; It is still very much on today's agenda and a challenge for all actors working in conflict-affected, resource-scarce, and fragile contexts. This was the unanimous opinion on the matter in a panel discussion arranged by the Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub and the Peaceful Change Initiative in December 2019. One of the panellists concluded that, rather than making conflict sensitivity yet another checklist and assuming that the knowing-doing gap would be solved merely by virtue of elevating it to policy level, what needs to happen is a "... dramatic organizational shift... not only teaching people how to be conflict sensitive... but to actually learn [ ] from the fact that quite a [few] people on the ground already work in these ways." The call is thus to learn from those successes and lived experiences and to move away from worrying too much about people not necessarily knowing about the concept of conflict sensitivity. The idea here is that the conflict sensitivity agenda at donor, organizational, and NGO levels can learn a lot from the often creative and intuitive ways of acting in a conflict-sensitive manner (Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub, 2019).

But how exactly can the conflict sensitivity agenda be translated into something that is actually bottom-up, and owned and driven by actors successfully engaging in conflict-affected/prone, fragile, and operatively challenging, resource-scarce spaces? It is this question that has guided the inquiry at the foundation of this article. As such, this text follows in the tradition of an earlier research piece carried out in the context of a rural village water resource management project in Far Western Nepal in the aftermath of the civil war (Doty, 2016). Doty's research found this development intervention to have been intuitively conflict sensitive through its emphasis in its activities on complete transparency, complemented with good, proactive communication; and through the strong local presence of project actors in the areas of project implementation, ensuring the aforementioned good communication and counterbalancing the challenges of various local pressures and tensions related to recruitments, procurements, payments etc. Further points accounting for an intuitively conflict-sensitive approach included project staff members' personal experience and knowhow related to working in conflict settings in Nepal, central to which was an unwritten principle of neutrality as a code of conduct, as well as an awareness among staff of the implicit ethical messages sent to communities through project decisions, activities, and staff conduct.

## **Methodology**

The aim of the BUSCO project, carried out in Iringa, Tanzania between June 2017 and March 2020, was to improve the capacity of the University of Iringa (UoI) to promote community development, entrepreneurship, and community resilience. The project did not include a formal requirement or a plan for ensuring conflict sensitivity. Therefore, it constituted a suitable case for looking into intuitive ways of ensuring conflict sensitivity and doing no harm.

Ten persons were selected by purposive sampling (Sharma, 2017) to be interviewed as part of an internal impact evaluation in order to find out whether or not there had been signs of intuitive conflict sensitivity in the BUSCO project. All of the interviewees had been involved in the project throughout its duration. These research participants were community and University of Iringa stakeholders involved in the BUSCO project run by UoI. Interviewees included heads of university departments and government and university offices linked to the so-called living lab units of the project. Included in the group were community development officers, social welfare officers, legal counsel, trade, environmental, educational, and tourism officers. Three of the respondents were female and sev-

en male. All of the interviewees had either college degrees or master's/other advanced degrees.

We carried out the interviews using a semi-structured interview guide including questions about the outcomes of the project as a whole, surprising or unintended effects of the project, and possible reasons for and reactions to them. The interview guide took the following form:

*OPENING: Ask the interviewee to think to him or herself about the project as a whole: Why was the project initiated/What was the reason for the project? What were the activities? When and where did they take place? Who were the beneficiaries? Who was the project carried out by? How were all of the above points decided upon?*

*Q1) Thinking about the project as a whole, how did it go? Reflect freely in your own words.*

*Q2) Can you tell me/us about any surprising or unintended effects (apart from predetermined project objectives) that you know of/have heard about?*

*Q3) Were the possible surprising or unintended effects a) positive and/or b) negative? Please describe both in detail.*

*Q4) What do you think were the reasons for the described a) positive unintended effects and/or b) negative unintended effects. Please describe in detail.*

Ethical clearance for the data collection was sought and received from the university, and informed consent, ensuring anonymity, to participate in this research endeavour, was received from all respondents.

Seven of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and three of them were recorded by taking notes. We then carried out a thematic analysis of the data (Ryan & Bernard 2003).

## Unintended Negative Effects of the Project: Tensions Related to Participation, Budgeting and Timing

Tensions arising from defining the number and participation of the project beneficiaries during the planning phase of the project was one of the points identified by interviewees as a negative unintended effect of the intervention. Strategic plans of participating university departments had been used as the basis on which demands for capacity development activities had been identified. However, during the planning phase, project stakeholders had made it clear that a larger number of direct project beneficiaries would be needed in order to achieve the goals set for the intervention. This was in contradiction to the project budget, causing tensions between the project team and stakeholders, and leading to the need to re-negotiate the issue of participation. One interviewee explained:

*[One] challenge ... [was] that the project only covered a few groups, and we needed the project to support us with all the groups. However, due to budget constraints in the project, the project [could facilitate] only ...two groups... [which]... led to some challenges on how we could cover the rest of the groups. But, also, the remaining groups feel excluded as they also wanted to be part of the project [like] the other groups involved. However, since we knew it was not possible to cover all the groups, we needed to discuss with the remaining groups on the issue of the budget, and they were willing to allow the 2 groups to be part of the project.*

An agreement was reached to involve representatives from each of the targeted stakeholder groups in order to display a sense of inclusivity on the part of the project. This, however, caused some further reservations and fear of conflicts about participation arising among beneficiaries, which in turn was linked to the cost of participation and inadequate budgeting by the project for travel expenses, as another interviewee explained:

*There are things that happen[ed] in the project, especially in the payments [to]...participants [for covering travel expenses]. Participants were given [a] transport fare amounting [to] 3000 TSH, which was little to some participants because they were coming from far places. Normally...we give 5000 TSH for transport cost... this came as a challenge [as]...the project did not budget for the 5000 TSH and [this] cause[d] some people not to [be able to] participate.*

Other research participants commented on the same point, one explaining that community members were not able to cover the gap in the travel costs from their own pockets due to poverty, a second maintaining that this lower budgeting “may affect... participation when confronted with more attractive incentives elsewhere,” and a third interviewee describing how the situation had led to tensions and negative feelings among participants at the beginning of the project.

In addition to the question of beneficiary participation, a further unintended negative effect of the project had to do with feelings of exclusion and limited participation of UoI faculties in the project, as one respondent described:

*...some faculties were not part of this project at the beginning, and [this] led to the feeling of being left out...*

A final theme that emerged from our data concerning negative unintended effects of the project was related to the timing of, and frequent unplanned changes in, project activities, which were linked to the theme of participation:

*...areas, which I saw as a challenge...was the involvement of the influential people who were supposed to be part of the project implementation. These included the community development officers in the wards, who are responsible [for] handling violence and conflicts in the wards. However, they were involved at the last stage... of the project activities.*

The above interviewee feared that the sustainability of the project may be compromised since these key stakeholders had missed important parts at the beginning, claiming that early involvement could have led to substantial impact.

Other respondents spoke to the challenges caused by changes in the timetable of the project during implementation:

*This brought challenges to participants in the trainings, considering the fact that they have other things to do.*

*For the participants to be able to attend the training or project activities we need to prepare them through our local government at the village/street level, and that requires planning so as not to disturb their plan(s). Unplanned changes affect us, the local government, and community members partici-*



*pating in the training and, hence, [the] response to the training.*

The above point about timing was also reported by key experts from the university involved in the project. They described changes in the timetable caused by the beneficiaries and stakeholders themselves as having affected the timely implementation of the project activities:

*Sometimes you plan [the activities with the stakeholders] and, once the time for implementation has come, you find out from them there is a political event at the community that may take 3–5 days and local leaders are involved. So, this call for rescheduling of the activity [needs] to suit the time for both stakeholders, key experts at the university, and community members.*

## **Signs of Intuitive Conflict Sensitivity: Responses and Solutions to Challenges**

Proactive and clear communication, a participatory approach, and adaptability on the part of project actors were aspects that we identified as signs of intuitive conflict sensitivity from our interview data. One interviewee explained how being extremely clear about the objectives of the project would be crucial in avoiding tensions, calling for “sensitizing... community members [to the idea] that it is important to focus on the training [and the knowledge thereby created], rather than [the] money given to attend...”

The adaptability of project actors, their willingness to discuss, negotiate, and change plans, was seen as valuable in avoiding tensions becoming more serious, and as accounting for the good outcomes of the project:

*... there was... room for discussion and advice, when the leader was advised and consulted [and] was able to listen and, if possible, had a chance to adjust accordingly. We appreciate the flexibility of the leaders of the project, because it was [possible] for us [thus] to include the representatives of other groups [in the trainings].*

The participatory approach of the project emerged as one of the most important elements of intuitive conflict sensitivity, something preventing the exacerbation of existing tensions, and an approach that was not seen as a norm in previous experiences of development interventions in the area:

*I would say the project has been so different from other projects that I*

*was involved in. This is because there was a participatory approach from the high levels of the stakeholders in the district to the community levels. This has led to the acceptance of the project and its activities... Since the beginning, the participatory approach has helped a lot in minimizing the challenges. The project [started] the participatory approach before implementing the project, which was positive. I have not seen this in the project that [I was involved with] in the past.*

*The implementation of the project was very good... I have seen [a] participatory approach in planning and implementation. As the expert from the municipal[ity], I was also able to give my advice, and it was considered by the project team.*

## **Discussion & Conclusions**

The data gathered for the purpose of this article was limited and therefore cannot amount to a full appraisal of the BUSCO project's conflict sensitivity. What we knew from the start, however, was that conflict sensitivity had not been inscribed into the project as a quality requirement or implementation approach. This is what made the BUSCO project a good case to study with a view to looking for possible intuitive approaches to conflict sensitivity.

We found the project to have had unintended negative effects with regard to participation, budgeting, and timing of project activities. Using Anderson's categories of the effects of resource transfers, the effects of the BUSCO project could be framed through the notions of market effects (appropriate levels of compensation for travel costs), distributional effects (questions concerning the targeting of project activities to some groups over others), and legitimization effects (issue of participation in the project). We did not find signs of the project having sent negative implicit ethical messages. It should be noted, however, that the result could be different with a broader data set including interviews with beneficiary community members.

We identified clear communication of the BUSCO project's activities and objectives, the participatory and inclusive approach, and the willingness of the project team to renegotiate the how and when of intervention activities as signs of intuitive conflict sensitivity. These can all be seen as ways of working that have the potential to maximize the positive effects of an intervention on local cohesion, cooperation, and prevention of conflict. Furthermore, these aspects of the project

may also be seen as having the potential of conveying positive implicit ethical messages from the project to its context. It is to this end that we would like to bring to the attention of all BUSCO stakeholders the seeds of conflict sensitivity that already exist in the ways of working carried out so far. By nourishing and fertilizing these seeds further, conflict sensitivity can easily be adopted proactively and explicitly within any future development processes. In the first instance, it is a question of raising awareness of the potential of aid to inadvertently do harm. The lists of common negative effects of resource transfers and negative implicit ethical messages sent by aid actors, as described by Anderson (op. cit.), could further be used as a checklist for the kinds of things to be kept in mind while planning and implementing development projects. Finally, integrating a commitment to conflict-sensitive action into project plans, conflict sensitivity training as an integral part of project activities, and collecting evidence of learning and best indigenous conflict sensitivity practices are additional ways of ensuring that development interventions are able to maximize their positive impacts and minimize negative ones on open or latent conflict dynamics.

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# PRESENTATION OF AUTHORS

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## DIAK PUHEENVUORO

**DIAK PUHEENVUORO** –sarjassa julkaistaan Diakonia-ammattikorkeakoulun temaattisia puheenvuoroja, erilaisia selvityksiä sekä opinnäytetöitä. Tekstilajiltaan julkaisut voivat poiketa tieteellisestä tai raportoivasta tekstistä.

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# DIAKONIA-AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUN JULKAISUJEN KRITEERIT

**DIAK TUTKIMUS** -sarjassa julkaistaan uutta ja innovatiivista tietoa tuottavia tieteellisiä tutkimuksia Diakonia-ammattikorkeakoulun opetus-, tutkimus- ja kehittämistoiminnan alueilta. Julkaisut ovat monografioita tai artikkelikokoelmia.

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The publication demonstrates the role of higher education in developing sustainable communities, and how university-community collaboration can be developed through co-creation.

The BUSCO project was targeted at improving the capacities of the partner universities to promote sustainable community development and resilience of the communities in Tanzania. The publication describe and analyze the experiences and results of the BUSCO project. The main areas were piloting the Master's Programme, improving e-learning and ICT capacity, the co-creation in living labs, promoting curriculum reviews and developing Quality Assurance mechanisms and tools.

The BUSCO project– *Building sustainable and resilient communities through co-creation between universities and businesses* operated during 2017–2020 in Tanzania. Partner universities were Diaconia University of Applied Sciences and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland and University of Iringa and Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University in Tanzania.

The targets of this publication are decision makers, experts, researchers, lecturers and students interested in global development in higher education field. The publication is a part of the research, development and innovation activities of Diak.