



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

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Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument

PBL East Africa

Strengthening Problem-Based Education in East African Universities

Academic Disciplines Engineering, Business, Design, Computer science, Development Studies

Project Budget (MFA Funding and Total) 700,000 Euros / 897 500 Euros

Project Duration 1.3.2017-30.3.2020

Coordinating Institution Aalto University/ Aalto Global Impact

Responsible Coordinator(s) and Contact Details Riina Subra, riina.subra@aalto.fi, +358-50-4066251

Affiliate Partners

Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi



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Description of the Project

The Strengthening Problem-Based Education in East African Universities project (PBL East Africa) is a joint initiative of Nairobi University (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), Dar es Salaam University (Tanzania), and Aalto University (Finland). It aims to establish best practices in problem-based learning (PBL) for innovation, engaging several disciplines, empowering students and developing an approach to critically address societal challenges in facilitated real-world situations.

The project consolidates universities' role in teaching innovation practice through collaborations with societal partners, leveraging universities' strengths in open knowledge creation and sharing. It contributes to skills development among students, faculty and partners, with the aim to translate into an improved capacity of local youth to engage in productive employment and of local innovation ecosystems to develop pertinent and socially justifiable concepts, products and services.

While commitment to PBL teaching is strong in the partner universities, concrete practice is much needed to apply new teaching methods and foster a student-driven, inquisitive mindset. This project operates as a piloting platform, allowing each university to test, choose and refine the best way for them to implement PBL education and to integrate it into their longer-term teaching and curricula. It builds PBL teaching and administration capacity through direct collaboration of established Aalto PBL courses and their student teams with pilot courses at partner universities. The teams and their mentors are paired to work together on local challenges identified by the East African universities, conducting fieldwork together and sharing innovation methods.

With a focus on design thinking, sustainability and human rights considerations, PBL East Africa strengthens the contribution of universities towards inclusive and responsible innovation practices in North and South. It will pilot up to ten student challenges during 2017-2019, coordinated by the School of Computing and Informatics C4DLab (UoN), CEDAT College (Makerere), UDIEC (UDSM), and Aalto Global Impact (AGI) in Aalto.

Key Results to be Achieved:

- 1. Improved quality and societal impact of PBL education in partner universities**
- 2. Enhanced administrative arrangements and curricula to support PBL teaching**
- 3. Strengthened relevance and contributions of partner universities in local innovation ecosystems**