

Tampere University (TAU) and the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) successfully organised and hosted an IFIP WG 3.4 conference, "[SUZA 2019: Sustainable ICT, Education and Learning](#)" from 25th to 27th of April in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The conference was organised back to back with the 15th International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing countries – IFIP WG 9.4 conference track from 1st - 3rd May 2019 at Dar Es Salaam. The financial support received from the FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES project went a long way to ensure the participation of several participants from Tanzania and other developing countries. The BRIDGES grant made it possible to subsidise the conference fee for those who needed it the most.

Rationale for SUZA 2019

Sustainable development - development efforts that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – is undoubtedly emerging as a prominent development paradigm. *Sustainable* Information and Communication Technologies (*also ICT4D 2.0*) refers to the context in which ICTs have often been viewed as playing a role by prompting social integration and social change or facing the outmost local cultural conditions. Therefore sustainability is understood here, except as ecological dimension of this thinking, also as economic, social and cultural sustainability. However, this many times contradicts the results and evidence visible in literature on the digital divide, most conspicuous in countries of the Global South. To bridge the gap between the possibilities of ICTs related projects to support development in countries in the Global South and the reality of the digital divide, a profound education system in ICT related fields is necessary.

Professor Mikko Ruohonen conceived the concept of SUZA 2019 in this gaping context, and organised the IFIP event according to the guidelines of the [Dublin declaration](#) (2017). The following 4 main objectives delimited the activities of the conference:

- focus on sharing pedagogical and teaching opportunities in the context of mobile learning and gamification case studies
- consider ICT learning infrastructure challenges in the developing countries settings
- co-operate with advanced and developing countries to enable joint programmes and new innovations in ICT -based learning and education
- boost best practices in implementing digital technologies and creating new multicultural learning environments

However, the pivotal conference activities were discussions to initiate academic and teaching practice work on ICT4D, education, learning and sustainable development. Professor Ruohonen and his team from Tampere University are especially keen on flexible, open and agile arrangements with countries in the Global South, but also transferring best practices for special groups, such as disabled people or refugees.

Conference Outputs

Towards the objective of stronger and prolonged collaboration between the Tampere University and State University of Zanzibar, the conference resulted in substantive positive steps. SUZA Vice Chancellor Idris Rai, present at the event, confirmed the university's commitment and interest in collaboration with TAU. The conference keynote speaker Mr. Aape Pohjavirta, CEO and Founder of Funzi - a mobile learning and information service for the emerging markets, delivered a powerful speech and presentation on the case of mobile learning and its potential in emerging markets and developing countries. Mr. Pohjavirta, through Funzi has ongoing collaboration with the State university of Zanzibar, yet another element of the conference strengthening the potential for future collaboration between TAU and SUZA. A number of joint Finnish projects and initiatives were presented, such as Emma Nkonoki from University of Turku about innovations by adding entrepreneurial education to natural sciences curricula (Taajamaa et al 2019) and Erkki

Rötkönen using virtual reality teaching arrangements (Rötkönen et al. 2019). Nicholas Mavengere from TAU presented about using portfolios to enhance learning (Gabi & Mavengere to be published 2019) and virtual class experiences (Mavengere & Ruohonen 2019). This conference enabled a large amount of papers to be presented and published in the Springer series (see below the reference). For example, the team of SUZA staff Mariam Ismail, Umayra El Nabahany, Said Yunus and Ray Ahmada contributed with 4 papers.

The Conference also enjoyed favourable publicity when Zanzibar national television channel crew took notice of the event and visited the conference site. Professor Ruohonen did an interview with the TV crew on the aim of the conference and highlighted the need for collaboration between the 2 universities involved. The interview was aired nationally. Professor Ruohonen feels confident that SUZA 2019 contributed significantly to the discourse in place – Sustainable ICT, Education and Learning, and the need for diverse partnership and collaboration to realise ICTs potential for sustainable social development in emerging markets and the developing countries.

Conference publication and the interview clip of the chair

<https://www.springerprofessional.de/en/sustainable-ict-education-and-learning/17040604>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6533946078780284928/>