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## Theory-Practice Balance in Teacher Education Project (HEI-ICI) from the Perspective of Arene's Criteria for RDI Activities

Background: Arene – the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences – approved a new criteria for research, development and innovation activities of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (UASs) in February 2024. The purpose of the introduced criteria is to guide the UAS to plan, develop, implement and assess their RDI operations so that they are ecologically, socially, culturally and economically sustainable and responsible.

<b>The project title:</b> <b>Theory-Practice Balance in Teacher Education (TEPATE) 2020-2024</b>	<b>Funder:</b> <b>HEI-ICI (Higher Education Institutions – Institutional Cooperation Instrument) programme, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland</b>
The project promotes one or more of The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and these are clearly communicated	
The UN Sustainable Development Goals formed the basis for the TEPATE project already in the planning phase, and were explicitly referred to e.g. in the project proposal. Specifically, the TEPATE project promotes three SDGs which are: <b>The SDG 4</b> “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”; 2) <b>SDG 5</b> “Gender equity”; and 3) <b>SDG 16</b> “Climate sustainability”. These goals have been furthered in the implementation of the project. The promotion of SDGs in TEPATE project implementation has been communicated through the annual reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland (MoFA); to the Finnish Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique; to the project partners; and to public e.g. through the website of the project. The promotion of SDGs has also been discussed and communicated in the HEI ICI Programme coordinators' meetings, TEPATE project board meetings, on the TEPATE project website, and in conferences/seminars focusing on teacher education.	
The project promotes quality education	
The TEPATE project is designed to tackle the underlying issues related to alarmingly low learning outcomes in Mozambique by enhancing the theory-practice balance of teacher education at two Mozambican Higher Education Institutions: <i>Universidade Pedagógica de Maputo</i> and <i>Instituto Superior de Educação e Tecnologia – One World</i> , referred in the project as “Southern Partners”. In practice, this is done by creating new study modules into the respective universities' teacher education programmes; capacitating teacher educators of the Southern Partners, developing the teaching practice component of the respective universities so that it better equips the graduating teachers to act as teachers in their own diverse classrooms; and educating school managers. By doing so, the project contributes to the aim of the Government of Mozambique to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.	



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Since 'teaching is the profession upon which all other professions depend' as coined by American academic, Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, and teachers 'the single most important factor affecting how much students learn in school' (World Bank report 2019), we can confirm that the TEPATE project promotes quality education by improving initial teacher education in Mozambique.

#### The project builds cooperation and partnerships

The project consortium consists of four universities of out of which two are in Finland and two in Mozambique: In addition to Jamk, partners of the project include: University of Lapland, the Pedagogical University of Maputo (UP), and the *Instituto Superior de Educação e Tecnologia – One World* (ISET ONE WORLD). In addition to the universities, two NGOs as associated partners are providing their expertise for the project: *Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo* (ADPP) and *U-landshjälp från Folk till Folk i Finland sr* (UFF).

The TEPATE project has been designed and implemented in partnership with the Southern Partner HEIs. Although the coordination responsibility has been at Jamk, the ownership of the development activities, starting from defining their focus, lies with the Southern Partners. All decisions regarding them have been jointly done. Overall, the project has been implemented in partnership with the Southern partners which means sharing of experiences; reciprocity, and recognition of joint responsibility of achieving the goals set for the project.

Cooperation with NGOs that operate on a grassroots level of the civil society, and who share the objective of fighting poverty and supporting the education sector, is highly as valuable: NGOs can provide insights on the reality of the country context and the every-day challenges of ordinary people, and practical solutions to tackle them. It is also highly important for the beneficiaries that support by various donors are mutually complementary, aligned, and not reparatory. In the TEPATE project, the NGOs (ADPP, UFF) have been valuable partners as described before.

#### The project activities are target-orientated, transparent, open, ethical and responsible

Special attention was given to the goal-setting already in the planning phase. In order to set realistic and relevant goals for the project, the Southern Partners of the TEPATE project were engaged in the planning phase, and the representatives of both universities were invited to a face-to-face planning workshop in February 2020 prior the submission of the project application. This also strengthened local ownership which is a priority to Jamk.

Throughout the planning and implementation phase of TEPATE project, project content and activities well as financial issues have been regularly communicated amongst all partners.

The progress of project including the financial expenditures have been annually reported to the funder of the project; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the administrator of the [funding instrument](#), EDUFI. All annual reports have been accepted. In addition, the EDUFI has carried out monitoring visits at the Southern Partner Universities, as well as at Jamk. All annual reports have been jointly prepared by partners, and report drafts circulated amongst the project partners prior to their submission.



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Also project budget was discussed before the submission of the original proposal. Any changes to the budget have since been jointly discussed by the partner in question, and Jamk, and decisions have been done after mutual agreement has been achieved. Special attention has been given to the equal treatment of the Southern Partners even though their sizes and operations vary considerably. Southern partners, however, have created a good collaboration and their representatives have reported satisfaction for the opportunities created by the TEPATE project to work together in the Mozambican context.

The project develops solution(s) to mitigate environmental degradation (e.g. emissions, pollution, circular economy, climate change, biodiversity), to improve the state of environment or sustainable use of natural resources

The primary focus of TEPATE project is not on environmental issues. However, climate sustainability (SDG 16) has to be considered in the project implementation and reported annually too. As an example, educational materials developed in the project have been circulated in digital format. All materials used in workshops with the Key Experts have been in digital format. This saves natural resources and printing and reduces waste. Similarly, the newly developed study modules to teacher students have been digitalised, which not only saves printed materials but also reduces students' need to travel and related resources. Concerning the travel between the southern HEIs, the key experts have travelled by bus avoiding the use of many passenger/private cars and thus decreasing emission and air pollution.

The project provides solution(s) to prepare for and adapt to environmental change (e.g. climate, water, terrestrial life, extreme weather conditions)

Extreme weather conditions such as heat and heavy rainfall are a common place in Mozambique, and extreme weather conditions are projected to exacerbate their frequency and intensity as a result of climate change. In addition to the immediate health risks, these weather conditions also put the ICT and traditional infrastructure in Mozambique under significant pressure.

Transition to learner-centred pedagogy and introduction of new virtual/hybrid study modalities provide with new possibilities to maintain learning processes especially for higher education teachers and learners in situations where access to university (due to bad roads after heavy rains, for instance) or internet (due to power cuts, as a result of heavy rain, storm, or heat wave that puts the electricity network into test) is compromised.

The project uses resources in a sustainable and responsible way (e.g. procurement, travel, events...)

As a general rule by MoFA, all procurements under the HEI ICI programme are to be made in the southern partner countries, based on the procurement regulations of the country in question. Explanations must be provided for any possible procurement made in Finland. At the end of the project, the procurement (fixed assets) will remain the property of the institution for which it has primarily been procured for and which has used it. The Finnish HEI must ensure that they are recorded as the partner HEI property and that the maintenance of fixed assets after the project funding is ensured. In the TEPATE project, the procurements and related competitive tendering were done according to the national rules in place in Mozambique, and those in place in the two organisations. The items to be procured were initiated by each Southern Partner who also were responsible for their competitive



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tendering. The lists were approved by Jamk before the decision to invest the project funds on them was done. The procurements in total equal 2% of the project budget.

Travels in the project have been planned carefully and any unnecessary costs have been avoided. Public transportation has been favoured as per the Finnish travel regulations, and those of Jamk. All expenditures have been verified with receipts and controlled at Jamk (the four-eyes principle).

Travels from Mozambique to Finland have been organised by Jamk e.g. to avoid any possibility for corruptive practices.

The project contributes to sustainable and responsible economic development (e.g. business structure, products and services, impact on partners, regional economic development, new jobs)

By improving the quality of education, the project indirectly supports wider economic development in Mozambique. Educating competent teachers can lead to more skilled workforce, hence contributing to sustainable economic progress. Specifics on direct economic impacts, such as job creation or regional economic development, are not detailed.

The project contributes to accessibility, equality and social justice

The project aims to make quality education more accessible and inclusive, which is fundamental for achieving equality and social justice. For example, the development of modules that are provided online, increases the access to teacher education in Mozambique where the distances are long and roads bad especially after rainy seasons. The focus on enhancing teacher education in rural and poor areas of Mozambique is particularly pertinent to this criterion.

The project generates socially sustainable policies and social capital (e.g. inclusion, employment, community, well-being)

The project is likely to generate social capital by improving educational outcomes and teacher competences, which can enhance community well-being and social cohesion. Among the lessons learnt from the TEPATE Project, the following should be highlighted: In the year 2023, more cohesion was achieved between the Southern Partners as both partners were more equally involved in the development activities and thus, a collaborative spirit between the Southern partners' expert teams developed which led to the building of respect and trust among and between Project Partners.

The project enhances creativity and innovation

The project promotes creativity and innovation through the development of new, research-based pedagogical approaches and study modules. This focus is crucial for fostering an innovative educational environment.

The project contributes to preserve cultural heritage and/or to the emergency of of new culture

While the primary focus is on education, the project's emphasis on local partnerships and contextually relevant pedagogical approaches may indirectly contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and encourage the emergence of new cultural practices in education.