

## Being a teacher in Mozambique

In this podcast, we talk about the HEI ICI instrument with the Programme Manager Kaija Pajala from the Finnish National Agency for Education. We also ask the local project coordinators from ISET One World and Universidade Pedagogica de Maputo, what being a teacher in Mozambique is like today, speakers: Sarita Henriksen from the Pedagogical University of Maputo and Roger Gonzalez Margalez from Higher Institute for Education and Technology

Also participating Janette Peltokorpi from our Finnish partner, the University of Lapland.

(music playing) Welcome to this podcast series on solving the global learning crisis. We'll discover how Ethiopia, Nepal and Mozambique are reshaping their higher education programs in response to the changing demands of the 21st century.

Eeva: Welcome to this broadcast by JAMK University of Applied Sciences, or JAMK for short. My name is Eeva Lehtonen and I am from the School of Professional Teacher education of JAMK. In this podcast we discuss teacher education in Mozambique. JAMK is now coordinating a project in Mozambique. The project is called Theory-practice balance in Teacher Education, or TEPATE there for short.

Eeva: The TEPATE project started last autumn and will run until 2024. The project is one of nine projects that got funding from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the last round. The project is funded through the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument. The short name for the instrument is, HEI ICI, which is the Finnish way to pronounce the abbreviation of the instrument. The HEI ICI instrument supports cooperation between higher education institutions in Finland and in the global South.

Eeva: Today I will first talk with Kaija Pajala from the Finnish National Agency for Education. The Agency is responsible for administering the HEI ICI instrument and Kaija has a long experience from supporting Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences to implement development projects in the global South.

Eeva: After that, I will discuss with the local project coordinators of the TEPATE project and ask how they would describe education in general, and teacher education in particular in Mozambique today. We will also talk about how and why the TEPATE project came to be. But firstly, let's talk about the HEI ICI instrument. Kaija, thank you very much for joining our podcast.

Kaija: Thank you for inviting, Eeva.

Eeva: Nice to have you here. HEI ICI funding is part of Finnish development cooperation. Why do the Agency Edufi and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs want Finnish higher education institutions to participate in development cooperation?

Kaija: Well, first of all, congratulations for the funding. The competition was really, really tough – 67 high quality applications and during this programme period, the competition was even higher since the maximum number of projects was lower than in previous program periods. It is wonderful to have you as a part of HEI ICI family in the coming years. You are the only cooperation project with Mozambique now. Eeva, you were asking why do we want Finnish higher education institutions to participate in development cooperation. Why not! My own strong opinion, from several years, is that of course. We live in a global world and work together globally and universities have a big impact on our societies. I remember when I was working in a couple of universities, always thought that everything else in state

administration, for example, depending on the politics, might change, but research and higher education stays. And universities have to get equal possibilities and funding instruments, also outside European Union. And again, the big interest from Finnish higher education side shows the genuine interest. But the answer to your question everything is.. Everything or the funding is based on the politics. Of course decisions are made by state of Finland and we are following the international agreements that we have been signing... sustainable development goals. For example, as you know.

Kaija: This programme is funded from the Development Corporation funds and certain part of it has been allocated to university corporation. The amount, or share, of the funding for development cooperation is decided by each government and now today we are happy to be able to continue and we received again funding for the programme. This is the 4th programme period, already now. During this government reign, Finland has also established special Africa strategy. The aim is to increase cooperation in many fields and, European Union has also new Africa strategy as you know. Also in EDUFI, we have made strong emphasis on developing the cooperation with African countries, so this is really, really the core project in the field of EDUFI functions.

Eeva: Thank you, Kaija. A very interesting points and I really like the bit where you said that certain things may change, but the research stays. That is very well put and also we at JAMK are very very happy that we got all the three projects, and we are excited to have received a new partner country as well. But continuing from there, there have been several rounds of HEI ICI funding now, and several projects implemented by various Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences. Are there any particular success stories that you would like to highlight?

Kaija: I think almost all cooperation projects have been success stories in some sense at least. Especially in the cases when the institutional cooperation has continued after the HEI ICI funding period. This is actually institutional cooperation instrument, so the aim of the corporation is to get sustainable networks between the partners, and I think the HEI ICI programme is one of the tools, or perhaps only the tool for find your cooperation and sometimes other very successful projects have been a starting point of platform to extend it funding, for example from the World Bank and also a little bit smaller funding from the European Union. Even though this is development cooperation, and according to the rules, our partner country university should benefit from it, according to your own plans that you have made when you made the application, and the result should be sustainable, but the real sustainable success comes from the fact when both parties are benefiting from the cooperation. This is always the core of the mutual university cooperation. Self-evident, but that is the call. And if you remember that, so it is, easy to continue.

Eeva: Yes, I definitely agree with you there as well. We obviously also hope that the project in Mozambique is a start of something rather than just an individual project, so I believe there was already one piece of advice there, but do you have any other words of wisdom for the TEPATE project?

Kaija: I think you'll find best solutions for your challenges if you have them. With your experience, you are professionals in project management. We know that. And if you need help, we are here at EDUFI to help and support you. Turn to us, if needed! We have heard about many solutions from other projects and might have some information that might help you. Of course, we try to disseminate best practices in, for example in our administration handbook. And in our common coordinators' meetings, but situations differ a lot between each other.

Kaija: And I really hope that the situation, the COVID situation, is changing soon and you are able to meet also face to face, shake hands and perhaps even hug each other when you get to know each other.

The continuing discussion also in the same place together is a key to the future fruitful cooperation. And it's more fun. We have to say that. What I would like to say to you also, it is or not an advice, but I hope that... we do have ... In Finland we do have a saying "tuulta purjeisiin". I don't know if you have the same saying in Mozambique, but it means something like "I wish you suitable winds for the sails in your projects."

Eeva: Thank you Kaija for your kind words and advice. Now we turn our focus to Mozambique. Just to let you know, there will be occasional disruptions with the connection to Mozambique, but they will go by quickly. We hope you stick with us still. Joining us from Finland is the project manager Janette Peltokorpi from the Faculty of Education of the University of Lapland. University of Lapland is also part of the TEPATE project. Welcome Janette!

Janette: Thank you Eeva, and hello to all listeners. I'm really happy to be here.

Eeva: We are here with associate professor of language Education and Director of Cooperation, Sarita Henriksen from the Pedagogical University of Maputo. Welcome, Sarita!

Sarita: Thank you Eeva, good morning to all! It's really nice to be here. I'm going to start by introducing my institution, the Pedagogical University of Maputo in Mozambique. Because we are Portuguese speaking country, the name of the institution is in Portuguese, *Universidade Pedagógica de Maputo*. We are a teacher training institution and we have existed now for over slightly over 35 years. Our major mission is to train teachers for the Mozambican secondary school system. We not only teach, train, teachers for the education system, but we also train educational professionals such as psychologists, education administrators and so forth. Over the years, we have expanded our mission in such a way, that teacher training is not only our major goal, but we also train professionals in a number of other areas such as the social sciences and humanities, I'm talking about the philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and we also expanded so as to include other courses due to the societal demands in such a way that we also train economists, educational managers, etc.

Sarita continues: What kind of teachers do we educate primarily? We educate the secondary school teachers, but over the years, our graduates have also been trained in order to feed the higher education system. We have within the last five years, introduced also a basic primary education course within the scope of which we train teachers for the primary school system and this is very much needed. It's an added value considering that the primary school system is key, is paramount, in order to feed the secondary and university system. In other words, we have to focus on the education, on early childhood development and training so that we can produce individuals for the future needs. This is basically who we are. I would add that the Pedagogical university was created... in fact was the first university created in the post independent Mozambique. We came to answer a request made by the 1st President of the Republic, the late Samora Machel, in order to create an institution that was truly Mozambican. And over the years we tried to expand our courses and our presence to the whole country. It was in this way that we had the branches in each one of the Mozambican provinces, and our aim.. our goal at the time was to take education, expand the higher education to the masses and it was a big and very fulfilling project that came to an end, I would say in 2018, when this National University was restructured and gave way to five new higher education institutions.

Sarita continues: At the moment, the Pedagogical University of Maputo is geographically located in the Maputo Province area only. And somehow we feel that the our national identity has been shaken, but, we feel proud to have contributed to the massification of higher education in such a way that it's not

just an elite project, but it's accessible to everyone, every Mozambican who intends to do further studies.

Eeva: Thank you Sarita for the introduction. Very interesting. We are also here with distance learning tutor Roger Gonzalez Margalez from Higher Institute for Education and Technology. Or ISET One World for short. Welcome Roger!

Roger: Thank you so much Eeva. Big pleasure to be.

Eeva: Nice to have you here, so sorry to already introduced the Pedagogical University of Maputo, but could you, Roger, tell about your institution and what kind of teachers do you educate?

Roger: Absolutely. The Higher Institute for Educational Technology is a Mozambican university or institution of higher learning that was founded in 2005 independently. But that was a branch of pedagogical university since 1998. And that's actually the beginning of this institution. In ISET One World, we train teachers for all levels of education, in principle. But we especially target rural communities of Mozambique. We consider these rural communities are the key places where teachers, which are... both pedagogical and political, is to engage new teachers into changing the world, in getting a high quality education for the ones in most need. Taking into account that more than half of Mozambican population, roughly say 70 % of Mozambican population, lives in rural areas. Without the best living conditions, humanly speaking, a lack of water, difficulties for food and transport, medical care and so on. With this in mind, we are training students that will educate at the teacher education colleges located in all provinces of Mozambique. Either the private institutions or public ones. The more teaching practices of learning by doing are always in place and learning by doing in a holistic way.

Roger continues: The new mentality that we really want in the educational context is, that we perceive education as something... not only in the classroom, but deep understanding of practical application in the situations of the real life that students need to describe, or the functioning of the institution that I represent and is of course a big pleasure to be part of this TEPATE project. To keep on growing, in our modern practices and being in touch with the Finnish experts who have been also very well experienced in in new methodologies. So we are learning together. Thank you, that was my contribution.

Eeva: Thank you Roger and I have to say we are really happy to have both of your institutions participating in this project ... having two such different universities working with us.

**Janette: OK, so moving on. We would like to hear what is it like to be a teacher in Mozambique today.**

Roger: Thank you and thank you for the question. Dear Janette, because being a teacher in Mozambique nowadays is in general, we can say, a very big challenge. It's a very big... it's a very discussed question nowadays. First of all, teacher deployment in rural areas in Mozambique and also in other African countries as we can, we can check in the World Bank reports since the last decade, it is not a very easy task because of the reason that many teachers who come from rural areas want to become teachers and get employed by schools, either public or private schools in capital cities or major towns so that many countries, like for example Mozambique introduce a bonus to the teachers' salaries if they work in the rural schools for a number of years. Even though, low living conditions and lack of self-improvement opportunities, especially for young teachers, is a handicap that makes them avoid rural areas and prefer

to wait for an opportunity to work in urban settings. [There is] still a big lack to deploy teachers in rural areas.

Roger continues: Secondly, I can also mention that most teachers in Mozambique don't have a vocational feeling and just take the career by parental or family indication. I could even say submission. In order to keep family traditions with the father, the grandfather, the uncle, the auntie who were teachers, most young people are addressed to be teachers without a real consideration of what they really want to do. Likewise, teacher and also other professions like policemen are popular in Mozambique for many people who don't show any other vocational preferences or outstanding performances in other fields where higher levels of specialization are a must, such as business or engineering. I wouldn't say that there being a teacher doesn't require high level of specialization, it does require.

Roger continues: But in the situation that we have lived in Mozambique in the last times, it is difficult to get the high level of specialization among teachers. In this context, we see that many teachers in the country are not motivated to do their work. Sometimes because of lack of capacities to teach. And also because of all the social obstacles such as family issues, long distance from work to work, and low salaries or difficulties to get commodities such as basic food, transport, clothing, internet connection and so on. So because of these reasons they miss many sessions regularly, and they leave their pupils alone. So imagine the situation of, in a five-day week, having two or three days a week, the pupils without teacher. That happens frequently, so that is being a teacher in Mozambique nowadays. Sadly. Finally, I can also mention that quality teaching also needs intelligent investment. And unfortunately the problem of lack of materials, financial materials like blackboards, pen, paper, printing machines, even school buildings in good qualities in good shape, is not something that can be immediately corrected just with money donations and material help. There is a big need of also training teachers of Mozambique on how to use all basic teaching materials so that gradually new technologies can also be introduced for the better performance in their classrooms.

Roger continues: I hope I have given a rough idea of the situation nowadays. Obviously, I cannot concentrate on everything in my speech because Mozambique is a big country with different contexts in each province and depending whether it's a rural or urban setting. The problems are not exactly the same, there might be variations. But all in all, what resumes the difficult condition with Mozambique is what we have. We can keep on chatting a bit more. Thank you so much.

Eeva: Thank you Roger. There was a lot of information there. Is there something Sarita that you would like to add here?

Sarita: I have to start by saying that this is a very interesting question indeed. And a question that goes to the core of the problem. Even though being a teacher is a very important profession and maybe one of the key professions because it leads everywhere. It leads to lots of avenues. Everything starts from the teacher. And as a result of the teaching process, you become lawyers, medical doctors, etc. But being teacher in Mozambique, as Roger has said, is a major challenge because first of all, the conditions are not of the best. And I'm talking about the salaries... the salaries are so low that it's very difficult for the teacher in the primary secondary to is the tertiary education teacher to start a life and to organize him or herself, and then at times the teaching conditions not – only in the rural areas but also in the urban areas especially in the public schools – can be a major challenge.

Sarita continues: Even though, when we look back to the post-independence Mozambique, we have focused on the government, but over the time and the other governments that came after, focused on

education as a key priority. However, even though the education has figured high in the agenda of the governments of the post-independence Mozambique, we still have lots of challenges because you do not see this primacy of education being materialized, in terms of high budget allocated to the education system or other conditions. Over the years, the education system has benefited considerably from the support of cooperation partners and I would like to highlight all the support we have received from the government of Finland in order to help the education system at various levels. There are lots of challenges, but it doesn't mean that we are going to give up. We are going to keep strong, and we have to. We know that we need to keep on educating the Mozambican so that they can have a future. This is basically what I wanted to add.

Eeva: We can see that the question was actually huge. Some of the issues discussed was already touched upon but if we turn to this project, the full name of our project is Theory-Practice Balance in Teacher Education. And the content and the title of the project is a result of our joint planning process that built on the real needs and desires of your institutions as part of the Mozambican education system.

**Eeva: Would you still tell in your own words why is a project like TEPATE needed in Mozambique now?**

Roger: As we were saying, both Sarita and me in the last question, there is a big need for better quality education that cannot be solved just with money or material help. Even though we have had many from different governments along some years ago, the TEPATE project is addressed to combine better practices with theoretical knowledge as both of them are extremely needed in Mozambique, like also in many other countries in the world, many students or teachers are very well capable of, let's say speaking long and brilliantly about teaching methods, educational practices, solutions for educational challenges, or main needs for teacher education and so on and so forth. Theoretically, if you get my point. But on the other side, out of those students or teachers who are highly graduated, some of them, even with a Master's degree, PhD,, who are able to talk very good about main issues theoretically... most of them are not capable to solve, for example, a math problem of sum or division in grade 9 mathematics, regarding percentages, let's say. Or maybe they cannot mention 3, 4, 5 rivers within Mozambican geography, which is their own country. Or, they have doubts in how to write correctly a relative clause, or to identify a subject to identify a verb in Portuguese language, which is the language official language of Mozambique. Or maybe cannot count the centuries following history using Roman characters.

Roger continues: There are some examples of how teachers are well prepared theoretically, but are not completely solid in applying knowledge in practice. Regarding this, TEPATE project is supposed to engage Mozambican teachers, or students who will be teachers, in recognizing the educational needs for the country with a deep understanding of how to bring real development for themselves, but also for next generations in order to look at education not just as a job but as a key element to improve the living conditions of all of us. Starting from education, which is, as we all know, is key to start any kind of development in a nation. So that's more or less what I could resume very briefly about the importance TEPATE. This conjunction between theoretical and practical content and knowledge that we very much need in Mozambique. So thank you very much, and let's keep on. Let's keep on fighting for that, thanks.

Sarita: When I look at the TEPATE project; one of the goals that come to my mind is the issue of innovation. But I look at TEPATE also as a project that's going to convey or to bring this idea of lifelong learning. If you remember our initial discussions, we mentioned that very often. Teachers are trained

and they graduate from university, whatever their level, and they go on for years without reinventing themselves. I think that TEPATE brings in the idea of the need to keep on learning. Keep on innovating. And more than that, it brings in the idea that teachers have to use what they have in their surrounding environment in order to teach. And most importantly, one of the things that we want to leave, one of the legacies of the TEPATE project hopefully will be that teachers will at all times have the students at the center of the teaching and learning process. That's what we want to achieve, not just the ability for teachers to apply the theories into the practice, but also, and very importantly, to make sure that at all times, students are an active part in the teaching and learning process.

Janita: I think that's Sarita and Roger highlighted very nicely that our project is focusing on some of the key issues in the Mozambican education system, or developing the Mozambican education. But of course, we cannot solve everything in one project. So I think, we are in a way of solving some of the issues, but we still need to continue the work and this is just a part of the solution.

Sarita: I would also add, and this is also important Eeva and Janet, and Roger. The TEPATE project is also about the networking. I would say that this is one of the major gains of the project also. The fact that we, universities from the global South, have been able to partner with universities from the global North. The project constitutes an opportunity, a platform for the exchange of ideas, exchange of experiences, sharing how we do things in different contexts. I think it's going to be at the end of the day, a win-win situation. Because we are learning from each other and it's great in that way. Networking, interconnections, even though we are separated by thousands of kilometres of the distance.

Janette: I totally agree with you that it's really great to learn from each other, even if the contexts are very different. But I still think that we can learn from each other and. Maybe some of those things can be applied in our own context.

Roger: Just to underline a little bit this question. We are calling ourselves key experts in the context of the project, and not only us, but also the 24 key experts of Pedagogical University and the 6 from ISET One World. But on one side it doesn't mean we are experts because we are bringing everything done to improve what is needed to be improved in any rural school. It's not exactly like that directly, or "top-down" like we could say. We are also learning, either in using technological means, managing or leading teams of people either in Mozambique and also dealing with Finnish counterparts. It is also a learning process for all of us, either if we have been involved for many years in different educational projects internationally, or for the ones who is the first time that we are dealing with another language, another country, a different context. It is a big pleasure and we will get a lot from ourselves and then let's try to fight for the best impact in the communities. We shall focus in numbers to reach many people. But not get crazy about the numbers of people we can reach. It also matters a lot, the quality, of which capacities we are we are giving and we are getting for ourselves. So far it's going well. I'm happy about this networking that we are establishing and maybe at the end of the whole process we are a little bit closer to being experts, like expert-experts, but who knows? Let's see what happens. It's a big pleasure. So let's move on.

Eeva: That is all for this time. Thank you very much. Sarita, Roger and Janita for your insights and we hope to get back together in further episodes to elaborate the progress of our project.

Sarita: Thank you, thank you very much, Eva.

Roger: Thank you, see you next time.

Janette: Thank you.

This podcast series is produced in the higher education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument HEI ICI programme, with the support of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland