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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

Department of Educational Communication & Technology

PROJECT TITLE: INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN KENYA AND SOMALIA (IIDEMIC)

Project Period: January 2024 – December 2026

NEW SKILLS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

The “Inclusive and Innovative Digital Education for Migrant Community in Kenya and Somalia” (IIDEMIC) Project seeks to promote use of soft skills to enhance employability; enhance interaction using inclusive and innovative digital tools and promote teacher practice in classrooms to reflect integration of 21st century skills. This is in tandem with the global drive to enhance software and capacity building on technical skills necessary to achieve SDGs (UNESCO, 2014). The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Quality teacher education programmes should be responsive to global standards like 21st century skills in education and Agenda 2063.

With around 4 million refugees, Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the main regions hosting the largest number of refugees in the World. Recognizing the need to design long-term approaches that reinforce the resilience of refugees, Kenyatta University and EU partners have designed an intervention plan that grants access to education and the labour market. This is very important to enhance refugee self-reliance, in which development is very critical under the UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan.

According to UNHCR (2022), Kenya hosts some of the largest numbers of refugees in Africa. Most of these refugees and asylum seekers originate from Somalia (53%) and mainly live in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. Due to conflicts and climate hazards such as droughts, Somalia has one of the highest numbers of displacement globally. There are estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) of about 2.9 million across the country. The challenges in accessing the labour market include low employability (due to low levels of education and technical skills), recognition problems of previously gained skills, limited language skills, restrained access to information and services (mainly due to the language barrier).

Increasing the opportunities of refugees such as social integration, participation in society, meeting their educational needs, entrepreneurship and employment is a situation that almost all European countries should consider. This project is aimed at increasing the educational opportunities of refugees and offering innovative and technological training. It is hoped that this will increase the capacity of higher education institutions in Kenya and Somalia for refugee education and introduce a sustainable education model. In addition, creating digital education content makes this project unique.

The Research Team

The IIDEMIC Project is managed by a consortium of six partners: Kenyatta University (Project Coordinator) and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (Kenya); Mogadishu University and Red Sea University (Somalia); Uniwersytet WSB Merito W Poznaniu (Poland); and Kutahya Dumlupinar Universitesi (Turkey). The Ministry of Education, State Department for Higher Education, serves as an Affiliate Partner. The project will run from January 2024 to December 2026, spanning a duration of three years.



Purpose of the Project

Based on this background information, the Project IIDEMIC is focused on developing the skills of young migrant in-service teachers in order to encourage them to strengthen their teaching and other work-related skills, carry out their own businesses or to increase their potential of employability. Inclusive education as a pillar in the sustainable goals will also be emphasised to cater for those living with various disabilities among the refugee population. This project will focus on inclusive education using an innovative curriculum that introduces soft skills elements in the existing curricula among the migrants leveraging on the digital space. The IIDEMIC approach is multi-disciplinary and focuses on innovative teaching and learning interactive methods, mobility, adaptive facilities, entrepreneurship, health, language, digital literacy, inclusivity, cultural and mental hygiene.

Among the objectives of the project are to:

- i. Strengthen soft skill competencies among Somali refugees in Kenya and IDPs in Somalia to improve their entrepreneurial innovation and uptake of opportunities afforded through technology.
- ii. Integrate 21st century soft skills in supporting ALL beneficiaries
- iii. Promote teacher practice and use of assistive technologies for refugees and migrants
- iv. Promote the development and use of online content considering African and local specificities.
- v. Develop an Inclusive Education programme, through modules aimed at developing teachers' skills in inclusive pedagogy.
- vi. Create a lifelong learning platform that is accessible to the refugee and migrant population that will be used to build requisite capacities aimed at increasing employability opportunities in Kenya and Somalia.
- vii. Develop an accessible data centre with adaptive features to cater for and to assist refugees and migrants with special needs and disabilities access vital information.
- viii. Harness the capacity of ICT to improve access, quality, and management of education and training systems among Somali migrants.
- ix. Create mobile and online education and training platforms and accessibility to all participants regardless of their circumstances.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment was carried out in January 2023 to analyse the various forms of diversity that existed in schools and their environment and the level of inclusivity of diverse learners in the refugee schools in Dadaab and Kakuma camps and Kalobeyei settlement scheme in Kenya and IDPs schools in Mogadishu and Bosaso in Somalia. It also assessed the challenges teachers face, the level of skills and ability to manage and include the diverse learners, and how it affects quality of education.

a. Qualification and Training of the teachers:

The study in Somalia showed that the majority (52%) of the teachers were of secondary level of education and about one third (32%) of them were holding bachelor's degrees. Fifty two percent of these teachers were trained teachers. In Dadaab and Kakuma, Kenya the study showed that 13 (52 %) of the teachers were holders of Bachelor's degree and about 6 (24%) of them were diploma holders while only 1(4%) had a national primary school teacher certificate. However, the study observed that quite a number of the qualified teachers were of refugee origin. Regarding the area of training, 15 (60%) were Bachelor of Education holders, 2 (8%) had a degree in special needs education, implying that the schools lacked teachers to handle learners with special needs.



b. Inclusivity in Refugee and IDPs Education:

Seventy eight percent of the respondents indicated that there were no adult learners in their schools; and only 44% of the teachers and head teachers said that there are learners with disabilities in their classes. Furthermore, 62% of the respondents said that there are slow learners in their classes and 52% of them said that there are fast learners in their classes. An indication that the majority of teachers were not trained in special needs and therefore could hardly identify students with diverse learning needs in order to offer support/early intervention.

c. Teacher Preparedness in inclusive education:

In Somalia 72% of the teachers and head teachers said that they were not fully prepared or not sure if they are fully prepared to handle diverse learners in the refugee/IDP context. In Dadaab, only 13% confirmed that they were trained in special needs education and are capable of handling learners with diverse needs. 66% of teachers reported that learners with special needs in their classes required assistive devices to support their learning for instance wheelchairs, hearing aids, and braille machines, ICT integration among others. Seventy three percent reported that learners with disabilities required adaptation of instructional methods as well as innovative learning and teaching resources. The head teachers generally reported that the resources for special need learners were inadequate in the camps.

d. Innovative Digital and soft Skills needs

The majority of teachers and head teachers who participated in this survey in Somalia; agreed/strongly agreed the following training areas were suitable for teachers in refugees/IDP: Management of diversity in learning-cultures, gender, adult learners, disability, Psychosocial support skills, Conflict management, Critical thinking, Health education, Assessment of competence-based curriculum in the context of emergency, Entrepreneurial skills. Other additional areas of training participants thought were important for teachers dealing with migrant learners are; basic counselling skills, curriculum-based competencies, teacher appraisals, emerging issues in education, First aid skills, life skills, mentorship and coaching in career choice, self-awareness programmes, integrated learning approach, The modules to be developed by IIDEMIC will focus on most of these areas.

Methodology

The methodology is in three pillars stages and supported by the following:

- The development of an analytical framework/soft skills competency development.
- The second stage consists of co-creation of a blended system for domiciling the soft skills competency modules for use by the Somali Refugees and IDPs,
- The third and final stage is about management, reports and recommendations to practitioners and policy makers.

The Conceptual Model of Soft Skills aims to capture and describe refugee/IDPs specific soft skill competences by examining the core, practical and professional competences which will be structured into: knowledge, leadership, team work, communication skills, critical thinking, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship. The Framework proposes a progression model to help in-service teachers assess and develop their soft skill competence. The model outlines the interrelationship between soft skill and employability by sharing a number of competencies so as to help in-service teachers identify and decide on specific steps to take to boost their soft skill competence at the stage they are currently at.

The project will develop multi-disciplinary inclusive education modules to develop teachers'/trainers' skills in inclusive pedagogy in order to enhance/increase employability and entrepreneurial skills. The Project will also leverage on KU's Centre for Refugee Studies and Empowerment which is intended to implement and coordinate educational projects for refugees and host communities. IIDEMIC will focus on inclusive education for migrants and refugees, leveraging on digital space. The project will use the methodological approach of soft and employability skills as in the above figures. One of the



main objectives of this project will be improving the education capacities of the refugees in Somalia that is in the source country.

Training modules will be developed based on areas focused on the 21st century graduate, namely:

1. Contemporary Instructional Methods for Teaching Adult Learners,
2. Adaptive Instructional Resources;
3. Teaching English in a multilingual setting;
4. Entrepreneurship;
5. Digital and Assistive Technology Learning Tools;
6. Inclusive Education for Migrants & Refugees;
7. Basic Health Education;
8. Maternal and Child Health & Promotion;
9. Guidance & Counselling - Reintegration;
10. Cultural Diversity and Democracy.

Project Beneficiaries and Expected outcomes:

The Beneficiaries of the IIDEMIC Project will be academic and technical staff from HEIs, in-service teachers and ongoing professional trainees in areas that cover the project issues and mothers and children. The capacity of HEIs will be developed, and in this way, the activities to be carried out for refugees' education, improvement and development capacities will be increased. Higher education institutions will potentially become stronger partners in new collaborations and joint studies by increasing their competencies in the fields of academic and human resources.

One of the short-term effects will be to enhance the quality and content delivery to the participants and personal enrolment into the courses/modules by the participants. The long-term effect from this project will be the creation of more competent and skilled graduates and professional experts through innovative and inclusive training and exposure to comprehensive modules. After the project completion, the developed programme will be introduced in the Education system at targeted Kenyan and Somali HEIs on a continuous basis. Therefore, IIDEMIC will support by contributing academically to the ongoing activities for refugees in the international arena. Capacity building will be through the complementary relationship between Kenya, Somalia, Turkey and Poland partnership. Collaboration opportunities such as seminars, meetings and joint activities to be organized within the scope of the project to improve the joint working capabilities of universities for refugees.

Therefore, this project will bring a significant contribution to the HEIs in third countries not associated with ERASMUS+ in the frame of "introducing innovative elements in the existing curricula", "knowledge transfer and capacity building" and "the strengthening of the capacities to network effectively in research, scientific and technological innovation"

Support will be sought from leading organizations that operate in education in emergencies. They are important in providing a more comprehensive educational and innovative perspective to the proposed initiative. Among the stakeholders the Ministry of Education, State Department for Higher Education and Research and County and Subcounty Directorates; Ministry of Interior - State Department of Immigration and Citizen Services, Department of Refugee Services, Kenya; the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, Windle International Kenya, Lutheran World Federation. In addition, Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and Teachers' organisations such as Kenya Secondary School Headteachers' Association and Kenya Primary Schools Heads association, will be key to the achievement of the project goals.
