
UNIHUBS REPORT REVEALS URGENT TRAINING NEEDS TO BOOST DIGITAL INNOVATION AND EMPLOYABILITY IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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UNIHUBS is a three-year project (2024–2027) uniting African and European universities and innovation hubs. It aims to build inclusive, digitally driven education systems that enhance graduate employability and foster regional innovation.

The UNIHUBS consortium has reached a major milestone in its work to transform higher education across Africa: the release of the Needs Analysis Report (Deliverable D3.1). Funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education programme, this report provides an in-depth assessment of the skills gaps and capacity-building priorities among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania. If African universities are to prepare their students for success in a rapidly evolving digital economy, staff and institutions need practical, targeted training in digital teaching, entrepreneurship, and collaboration with the private sector.

UNIHUBS (project) aims not only to connect academia with innovation but also to empower educators and innovation professionals to actively shape Africa's digital future.

For more information about the project, visit www.unihubs.eu

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A Grounded, Collaborative Approach

The Needs Analysis Report is the result of several months of collaborative research and fieldwork. The team used a triangulated methodology that combined:

- Desk research and literature reviews on digital innovation and pedagogy.
- Analysis of successful educational and innovation models in Europe and Africa.
- 41 in-depth interviews with staff from HEIs and DIHs across the three countries.

Their results were consistent with what the program aims to achieve. That is, there is growing interest in entrepreneurship, digital tools, and student-centred learning, but most institutions lack the structured support, skills, and infrastructure to implement these ideas effectively.

Five Key Capacity Gaps Identified

- **Digital Pedagogy** – Educators need training in designing and delivering engaging digital content.
- **Entrepreneurship Education** – Faculty require skills in innovation pedagogy and project-based learning.
- **Technical Digital Skills** – Coding, data analytics, and cybersecurity are critical but underdeveloped.
- **Human Skills** – Communication, teamwork, and leadership are essential and need development.
- **Collaboration & Partnership** – Skills in co-creation and public-private engagement are vital.

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Gaps Between Vision and Reality

Despite some promising examples, many institutions, particularly those in rural areas, continue to encounter significant challenges. These include outdated curricula, inadequate internet connectivity and access to devices, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and insufficient incentives for faculty to engage in innovation.

What Comes Next

The UNIHUBS consortium will now begin developing flexible, modular training materials tailored to African contexts. These will be adapted from existing EU resources and tested with real users for effectiveness. Key activities include curating existing resources, developing new content, piloting materials, and refining content based on feedback.

A Living Document for a Dynamic Landscape

The Needs Analysis Report will be updated throughout the project to ensure continued relevance. It reflects the dynamic needs of African higher education and digital innovation ecosystems.

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