

Organisational needs often forgotten in developing countries' IT education

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A shortage of skilled IT service management professionals constitutes an obstacle for the efficient use of information and communication technology, and is a particular challenge for the least developed countries, such as Tanzania. Tanzanian universities offer a high level of education in, for example, computer science and software design, but not in information technology. This is problematic, because graduates of information technology programmes typically develop ICT services within organisations.

In a recent study completed at the University of Eastern Finland, a new approach observing the needs of local organisations in the development of IT education was created. In his doctoral dissertation, Jyri Kemppainen, MSc, presents an approach that guides local curricula planners to integrate the international requirements set for IT service management professionals into the needs emerging from the local operating environment. A concrete outcome of the PhD study is a curriculum for a Master's degree programme in [information technology](#) at the University of Iringa in Tanzania.

The IT curricula in developing countries are often direct replicas of those used in [developed countries](#), and the local situation has not been taken into consideration. This is a challenge for ICT services within organisations in particular, because IT service management professionals need to be able to design and maintain well-functioning technical solutions in the local environment.

The new approach combines the viewpoints of organisational IT support and a high level of education. Both the viewpoints are important, as IT [education](#) is expected to meet the needs of international IT degree requirements and local working life alike. The approach was created based on Kemppainen's seven years of action research carried out in IT positions in a Tanzanian university, and 14 years of work experience in different Tanzanian organisations.

New approach finds applications in developed countries, too

The new [approach](#) can also be applied in developed countries, because the integration of the international IT degree requirements into the ICT needs of local organisations makes IT studies increasingly appealing to students. Furthermore, this would also ensure that the skills of IT graduates are in line with the requirements of working life.

The results were originally published in Proceedings of the ACM Information Technology Education (SIGITE), Journal of Information Technology Education: Research, and The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries.

More information: The doctoral dissertation, titled "Appropriating IT Service Management Education in a Tanzanian University: Global and Local Perspective," is available for download at epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_i...n_978-952-61-1553-5/

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