

Lessons learned from running the University of Turku overseas campus in Namibia 2019–2024 by Erkki Sutinen, November 13, 2024

Future Tech Lab: A University of Turku remote campus at U Namibia’s main campus in Windhoek, June 2019-May 2024, see ftlab.utu.fi (turning African challenges by African young people towards Africanfuturism)

Conceptualized as a *plug-in campus* of the base university (U Turku) that is connected to and makes use of the infrastructure of the host campus (U Namibia)

To be developed further into metaversity and UniGround, inspired by Richard Branson and worded by Jutta Urpilainen, using remote presence, robotics and AI, digitalized for contextually relevant co-crafted artefacts

Principles for learning, research and community reach:

As	Transforming as academia	Future tech lab as a physical university campus; UniGround; Modus operandi: Finnish-Namibian fellowship; Reforming the curricula
Within	Co-designing within communities	Twinning RDI and community development; bottom-up; empathy: trust, initiative, ownership, language; traditional authorities and political leadership
For	Making a difference for individuals	Finding and Empowering Individuals; Counseling; The BauStead residence
On	Working on Technologies	Remote presence; Metaversity; Robotics

Lesson 1: Listen to the demands of people, especially the young ones. Listening to vs. p(m)atronizing. Demands vs. needs. Co-financing, shared ownership. Complete rethinking of faculty training.

Lesson 2: Recognize and reward the talent, independently of their formal qualifications. Recognition and integration of diverse talents. IPRs? Affording 1 billion losers?

Lesson 3: Align with and between the cultures, education is not an export & import business. Cultural sustainability? Ubuntu – exclusive or inclusive? Plugging in a remote campus in a foreign context may be technically straightforward, but socially and culturally very demanding and time consuming.

Lesson 4: Rethink and reform existing models, conventional models might mislead. K12? Bologna?

Lesson 5: Invest time and trust. Kübler-Ross's stages of grief - Denial: “it cannot be true that they sent this person here”. Anger: “let’s send them back, at least out of our sight.” Bargaining: “If only they could do something meaningful.” Depression: “No, they cannot.” Acceptance: “Ok, let’s find a way.”



“Quality is the relevance of contents.”

Coming to a library or hopefully to a bookstore physically or digitally close to you: Sutinen & Uwu-khaeb: *The Remote Campus of the University of Turku in Namibia 2019-2024: Dreams Encountering Realities.*