

TFK programme, funded projects 2025

Project title: Improving student teachers' mathematical literacy in real life contexts	
Coordinator Itä-Suomen yliopisto Hille Janhonen-Abuquah, hille.janhonen-abuquah@uef.fi	Improving student teachers' mathematical literacy in real life contexts (RealLifeMath) RLM project aims to improve the understanding of mathematical literacy in real life contexts for student teachers in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Finland. Mathematical literacy is the ability to use mathematics effectively in everyday life, at work, and as a responsible citizen. It's not just about solving equations or doing calculations - it's about applying mathematical reasoning to real-world problems. It's a key part of the 21st century skills that support critical thinking, problem solving, and informed and meaningful participation in society. All four countries and six institutions share a lack of ability to connect abstract mathematical knowledge to real life experiences. We all have experienced how teacher education takes place in segmented silos. Through this planned collaboration we can bring together mathematics and home economics knowledge and work across North and South. In very broad terms, 16 key experts (lecturers, professors) from these four countries will explore the potential of combining Mathematics (financial) literacy with Consumer Studies and Home Economics content topics to support improved practices regarding, for example, budgeting, financial planning, and consumer spending – in families, communities, and for individuals. Through the various project activities which include hybrid North-South and hybrid South-South visits, hybrid workshops, webinars and the co-development done in-between these activities, a common learning unit "Real Life Math" will be developed. It will initially be embedded into the existing courses in the participating institutions, but which will stand on its own after the curriculum cooperation between the partners. There will be a strong digital and virtual teaching component to the development and implementation of this teaching and learning unit focused on developing and enhancing real-life mathematical literacy for student teachers. The development will require both teacher and student mobility, as the student perspective is valued in the educational development process. The intended beneficence of the project will be for student teachers, teacher educators and the learners in teacher students' future classrooms. The project, therefore, has relevance to the world of work. Its collaborative approach and life-relevance will also support community engagement and community development in the form of enhanced financial literacy. The RLM project's focus on community engagement in Southern Africa promotes social responsibility and active citizenship. In Finland, the project will enhance the employability of student teachers, especially home economics teachers, by introducing focused development of financial literacy, in the field of mathematics, and its potential to support learning in several home economics topics and introducing mathematics as a career choice.
Partners University of Vaasa, LUMA Centre Ostrobothnia, North West University (NWU), Lesotho College of Education, National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Lupane State University	



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