Press Release
June 2024

Start of the "UNIHUBS" project

Rotterdam, June 3, 2024

We are thrilled to announce the official launch of the Erasmus+ project, "UNIHUBS: Fostering Innovation in African HEIs to enhance their relevance for the digital innovation labour market". This Capacity Building in Higher Education project, funded with a €799.944 grant from the European Commission, is coordinated by Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, and includes partners from Greece (University of Macedonia & Stimmuli for Social Change); Ghana (Hapa Foundation, Kumasi Technical University & Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology); Kenya (Kibabii University & University of Nairobi) and Tanzania (University of Iringa, Mbeya University of Science & Technology & Tanzania Commission for Science & Technology).

UNIHUBS aims to connect universities with digital innovation ecosystems in a collective effort to improve universities' capacity in adopting innovative educational approaches, addressing digital innovation labor market needs and challenges and improving graduates' employability rates.

The implementation of the UNIHUBS project relies on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research activities, aiming to identify labor market needs and innovation requirements in universities, with a series of targeted interventions, including training workshops, co-creation of educational materials, experiential learning practices and an international online course.

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

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Co-funded by the European Union

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Project reference: 101128313

Press Release
July 2025

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

26th July 2025

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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Press Release
October 2025

UNIHUBS Project Champions Co-Creation and Digital Pedagogy in Higher Education across Africa and Europe

30th October 2025

Press Release #3

The EU-funded UNIHUBS Project, hosted by Erasmus University Rotterdam from 23rd to 25th September 2025, brought together leading academics, digital innovation experts, and policy stakeholders from partner universities across Europe and Africa to accelerate the transformation of higher education through co-creation, digital pedagogy, and Living Lab practices.

The training workshop organized under the banner "Co-Creation Methodologies for Innovation in Higher Education" explored how Design Thinking, World Café, and Living Lab approaches can foster inclusive, student-centred innovation ecosystems within universities. The programme built participants' capacity to design digitally mediated learning environments, integrate sustainability and real-world problem-solving, and promote collaborative teaching models that respond to evolving labor market and societal needs.

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

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Empowering Educators and Students through Co-Creation

At the heart of the UNIHUBS training was the belief that education should move from hierarchy to networked collaboration. Facilitators guided participants through the five phases of design thinking, which are empathise, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

Through World Café dialogues, participants explored collective intelligence and shared experiences across cultures and disciplines, while Living Lab sessions provided hands-on opportunities to co-create and test solutions in real-life settings. This integrated methodology cultivated mutual learning between educators and learners, reinforcing UNIHUBS' goal to bridge the gap between academia, industry, and society.

Living Labs: Real-World Learning in Action

The workshop showcased Living Lab best practices drawn from the PermaLabs project, which integrates sustainability and permaculture principles into business and management education. Through this model, universities engage students, researchers, and local communities to co-create green innovations such as campus gardens and circular economy initiatives.

Participants learnt that living labs thrive on real-life experimentation, iterative feedback, and inclusivity, making them powerful tools for transforming curricula and nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets among students.

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Digital Pedagogy for the Future

In the digital pedagogy track, participants explored how to design student-centered, digitally mediated learning experiences that enhance participation, flexibility, and creativity. Using interactive tools such as Kahoot and Quizizz, educators experimented with game-based learning, flipped classrooms, and mobile learning models that support diverse learners and foster engagement in both virtual and hybrid settings.

A Step toward Sustainable and Inclusive Higher Education

The UNIHUBS mobility programme reaffirmed its mission to build innovation-driven, inclusive, and sustainable higher education ecosystems that are responsive to the digital economy. By integrating co-creation and digital pedagogy, universities can become living laboratories of change, preparing graduates to lead in complex, technology-driven environments. As noted by project experts, the future of higher education lies not in rigid curricula but in collaborative, experience-based learning that values creativity, empathy, and sustainability.

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Press Release
March 2026

UNIHUBS Project Enters Implementation Phase Following International Training and 4th Partners' Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya

25th March 2026

Press Release #4

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

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UNIHUBS Moves from Planning to Implementation

The EU-funded UNIHUBS Project has successfully delivered its International Training Activity and 4th Partners' Meeting, held from 2nd to 6th March 2026 at the University of Nairobi's C4DLab, Kenya. This event marks a major milestone in the project's progress, as the consortium now moves from conceptual development and co-creation to practical implementation across partner institutions.

About the UNIHUBS Project

UNIHUBS, an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project, brings together universities and innovation ecosystem actors from Africa and Europe. The African partners include the University of Nairobi, Kibabii University, Kumasi Technical University, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Hapa Space, Buni Hub, the University of Iringa, and Mbeya University of Science and Technology. The European partners include Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Macedonia, and Stimmuli for Social Change.

The project aims to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance digital innovation skills, and improve graduate employability. The Nairobi training built directly on earlier project phases, including the needs analysis and co-creation workshops, by operationalising the developed educational framework in real teaching and learning environments.

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

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Nairobi Training Brings Partners Together

The University of Nairobi hosted the training at its innovation hub, C4DLab. The event brought together academic staff, innovation hub practitioners, and project partners from Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, the Netherlands, and Greece. It created a collaborative space for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and practical experimentation. In doing so, it reinforced the project's goal of bridging the gap between higher education, industry, and innovation ecosystems.

Leadership Highlights the Role of Universities in Innovation

Prof. Francis Nyongesa, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Nairobi, formally opened and closed the programme. In his remarks, he stressed the need for higher education institutions to move beyond traditional teaching approaches and to focus more strongly on innovation, commercialisation, and societal impact. His message reflected the broader ambition of the UNIHUBS project, which seeks to position universities as active contributors to economic and technological development.

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Training Focuses on Testing and Refining the Educational Framework

The core objective of the training was to pilot-test and refine the UNIHUBS educational framework and its associated learning tools. At the same time, the programme aimed to strengthen the capacity of educators and innovation practitioners to deliver these tools effectively.

Participants took part in practical sessions that simulated real classroom and innovation hub environments. These sessions included collaborative teaching simulations, action-learning workshops linking universities with industry partners, live testing of the UNIHUBS online learning platform, and co-creation activities aimed at adapting educational materials to local contexts. Through this hands-on approach, the project ensured that its outputs remain practical, relevant, and scalable.

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UNIHUBS Strengthens Innovation-Driven Pedagogy

The training also reinforced the pedagogical foundations of the UNIHUBS initiative. These foundations include experiential learning, problem-based learning, structured reflection, and ecosystem immersion. The project uses these approaches to equip students with the technical, entrepreneurial, and soft skills needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving digital economy.
By embedding these principles into teaching and learning practices, UNIHUBS supports a shift towards more interactive, student-centred, and innovation-driven higher education systems.

Partners Review Progress and Set the Next Steps

Alongside the training, the 4th Partners' Meeting gave consortium members the opportunity to review progress and coordinate the next phase of implementation. Discussions focused on finalising the Action Learning Scheme, developing pilot implementation and evaluation frameworks, and strengthening dissemination and communication activities under Work Package six. The partners agreed on clear timelines and responsibilities, which will help maintain alignment across the consortium and sustain momentum towards key project deliverables.

Key Outcomes of the Nairobi Engagement

The Nairobi engagement produced several important outcomes. First, it created a trained cohort of educators and Digital Innovation Hub practitioners who are now equipped to implement the UNIHUBS framework within their institutions. Second, it enabled the consortium to validate and refine educational materials and digital platforms through real-user testing. Third, it strengthened collaboration between universities and innovation ecosystems, laying a solid foundation for sustained partnerships and joint initiatives. The feedback gathered during the training will guide ongoing improvements to the project's tools and methodologies and will help ensure their effectiveness across diverse institutional contexts.

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UNIHUBS Responds to Identified Capacity Gaps

This phase of the project directly addresses the capacity gaps identified in earlier research, including weaknesses in digital pedagogy, entrepreneurship education, and university industry collaboration. By focusing on applied training and practical implementation, UNIHUBS continues to respond to these challenges through targeted, evidence-based interventions that aim to transform higher education systems across the participating countries.

Looking Ahead to the Next Phase

The UNIHUBS consortium will now proceed with the pilot implementation of its educational framework across partner institutions, supported by continuous monitoring and evaluation. The project will also continue to refine its digital learning platforms, expand its international course offerings, and strengthen collaboration between universities, innovation hubs, and industry stakeholders. The next consortium meeting is scheduled for November 2026 in Tanzania, where the partners will further assess implementation progress.

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Conclusion

The successful delivery of the International Training Activity and 4th Partners' Meeting in Nairobi shows that the UNIHUBS project has moved decisively from planning to action. By translating innovative ideas into practical solutions, the project is enhancing the relevance and impact of higher education. Through collaboration, capacity building, and innovation-driven learning, UNIHUBS continues to contribute to more inclusive and future-oriented higher education systems in Africa and Europe

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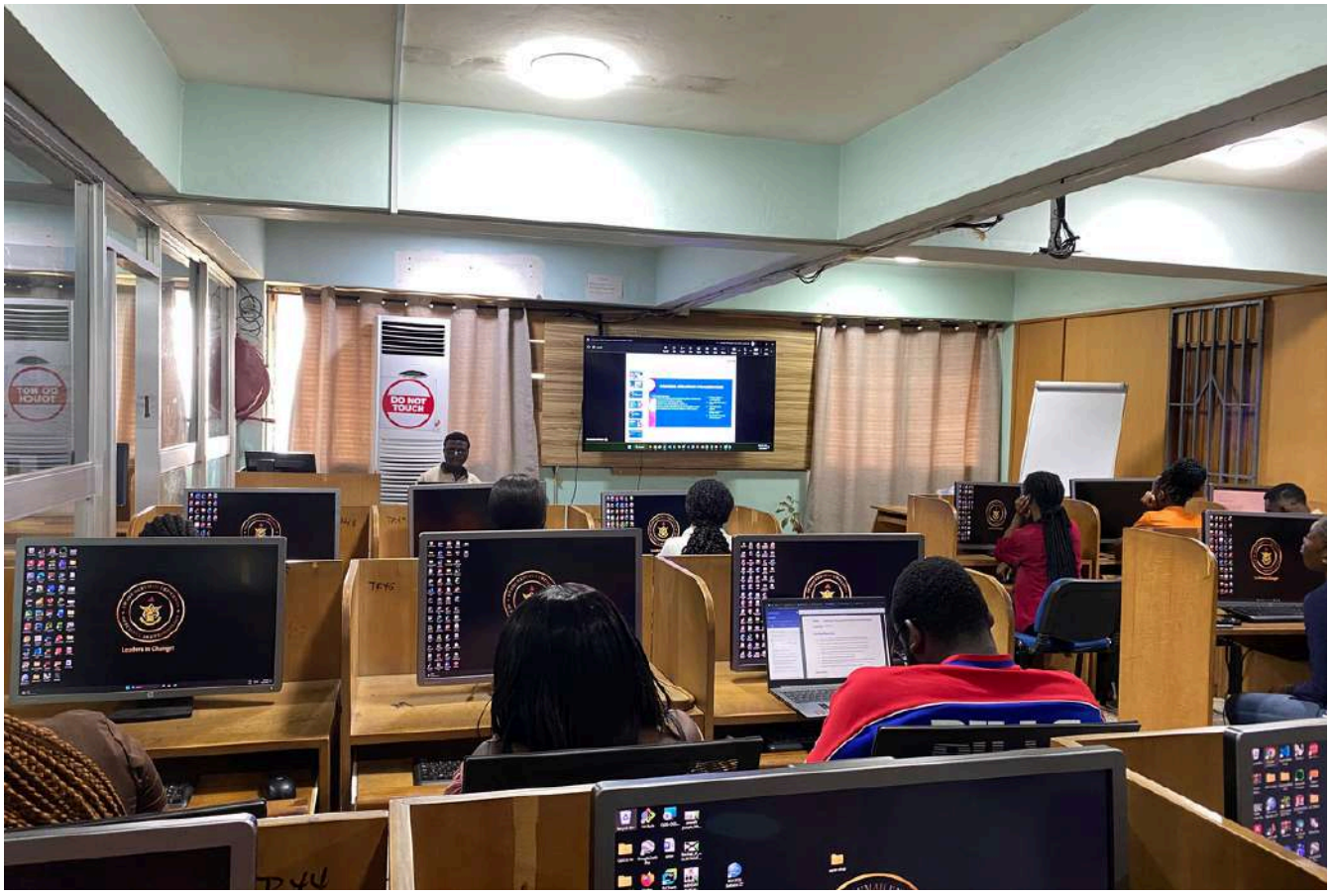
Project reference: 101128313

Press Release
August 2026

Three Ghanaian Universities Complete UNIHUBS MOOC Pilot to Strengthen Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills

August 2026

Press Release #5



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Ghanaian Universities Complete UNIHUBS MOOC Pilot

The pilot implementation was carried out independently by the three Ghanaian consortium institutions: Kumasi Technical University (KsTU), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT). Each institution selected students from its university to participate in the programme, which commenced in late June 2026 and was completed in July 2026.

Blended Learning Brings Course Content into Practice

The pilot adopted a blended learning approach, combining self-paced online learning with face-to-face classroom sessions, interactive discussions, practical workshops, case studies, group assignments, presentations and continuous facilitator engagement. This approach enabled students to build theoretical knowledge while developing practical competencies that can be applied in entrepreneurial ventures, innovation ecosystems and professional environments.

About the UNIHUBS Project

UNIHUBS is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project funded by the European Union. It brings together universities and innovation ecosystem actors from Africa and Europe to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance digital innovation skills and improve graduate employability. The Ghana pilot forms part of the project's wider effort to connect higher education with practical innovation, entrepreneurship and the needs of the digital innovation labour market.

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

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Pilot Supports Quality Assurance and Course Refinement

The piloting formed an essential component of the quality assurance process for the UNIHUBS educational resources. It provided an opportunity to assess the relevance, accessibility, usability and effectiveness of the course materials, while collecting feedback from students and facilitators to support further improvement before wider deployment across consortium institutions.
Throughout the pilot, students participated in an intensive learning programme built around four thematic modules designed to address contemporary entrepreneurship and innovation challenges.

Business Development and Execution

Students explored entrepreneurship and business development within the African context. Discussions covered opportunity recognition, customer value creation, market assessment, business models, strategic planning, financial sustainability and business growth strategies. Participants developed business concepts, prepared financial projections and presented investment pitches, receiving constructive feedback from facilitators.

Technology Transfer in Higher Education Institutions

The technology transfer module introduced participants to the role of universities as engines of innovation and economic development. Students examined innovation ecosystems, university innovation hubs, intellectual property management, commercialisation pathways, research translation, prototype development, market validation and business scaling strategies. Practical exercises helped participants identify opportunities for transforming research outputs into commercially viable products and services.

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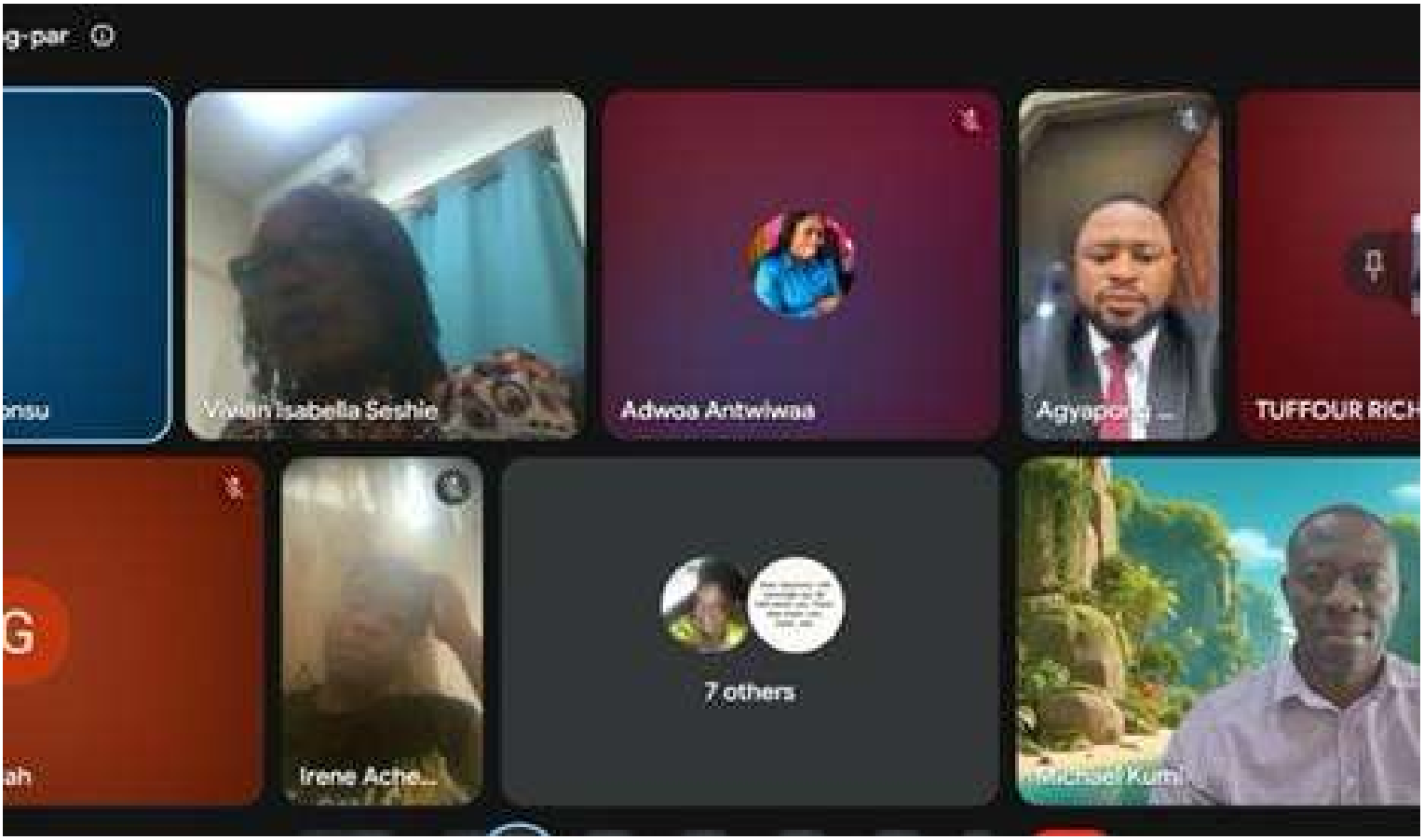

Digital Marketing

Recognising the increasing importance of digital technologies in modern business, students explored digital marketing strategies, customer segmentation, digital branding, content development, social media marketing, digital campaign planning, performance analytics and ethical digital communication. Practical activities included customer persona development, content planning, campaign design and the evaluation of digital marketing effectiveness using analytical tools.

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Professional Communication

The professional communication module strengthened participants' communication, leadership and interpersonal competencies. Students developed skills in oral presentations, teamwork, stakeholder engagement, negotiation, professional writing, conflict management, critical thinking, adaptability, ethics, leadership and self-management. Interactive classroom activities encouraged collaboration while building confidence in communicating ideas within professional and entrepreneurial settings.

Practical Learning Across the Modules

Across the four modules, the programme combined structured learning with practical activities that encouraged students to apply concepts to real situations. Case discussions, group work, presentations and facilitator feedback helped participants connect course content with entrepreneurial decision-making, innovation practice and professional problem-solving.

Positive Student Response

Across the three participating universities, students responded positively to the opportunity to take part in the UNIHUBS MOOC piloting. Participants highlighted the practical orientation of the programme, the quality of the learning materials and the interactive approach used during the blended learning sessions.

Participants reported that the programme strengthened their understanding of entrepreneurship, innovation management, digital technologies and professional communication, while broadening their appreciation of how universities can support enterprise creation and technology commercialisation. They also valued the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from different academic disciplines and to work on problems that reflected real-world challenges.

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Feedback Will Inform Wider Roll-out

Feedback gathered during the piloting will contribute to refining the learning materials, improving instructional delivery and ensuring that the MOOCs effectively meet the needs of future learners across partner institutions. The Ghana pilot therefore served not only as a learning experience for participating students, but also as an important test of how the educational package performs in a real university setting.

Regional Collaboration Continues

Following the successful completion of the Ghanaian piloting activities, consortium partners in Kenya and Tanzania are scheduled to undertake their respective MOOC piloting programmes in September 2026. Lessons from Ghana will inform these subsequent implementations and provide further opportunities to validate the learning materials across different institutional and national contexts.

The collective experiences from Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania will contribute to the final refinement of the UNIHUBS MOOCs before their broader adoption throughout the consortium. This collaborative process reflects the project's commitment to continuous improvement, innovation in higher education, and the development of graduates equipped with the knowledge, digital competencies and entrepreneurial skills required to contribute to sustainable economic and social development.

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Looking Ahead

The successful completion of the Ghana piloting exercise represents another important achievement for the UNIHUBS consortium and demonstrates the shared commitment of participating institutions to strengthening higher education through innovation, entrepreneurship, digital learning and stronger university-industry partnerships. As the project progresses, UNIHUBS will continue to create opportunities for students, academics, innovators and industry partners to collaborate in building resilient innovation ecosystems capable of responding to local and global development challenges.

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