

SAFINET

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BULLETIN

How to build better partnerships Africa-EU

Insights from scholars on their experiences with building academic partnerships between Finland and Southern Africa

Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

Upcoming and current funding calls

Engagement between Northern and Southern partners



IN THIS ISSUE

2 About SAFINET

3 Interviews with scholars on building better academic partnerships Africa-EU

Key takeaways from experiences with academic partnerships between Southern Africa and Finland

11 Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

UniPID's Recent Publication of Guidelines for Ethical Partnerships with Southern Partners

Launch of the WHO Collaboration Centre on HiAP and Social Determinants of Health at Tampere University

The SexEd project, funded by TFK

Decolonisation in Nordic Global Health Education, funded by Nordplus

Finland at Science Forum 2023, with participation of SAFINET members in some panel discussions

18 Upcoming and current funding calls

19 Engagement between Northern and Southern partners

We welcome more engagement between Northern and Southern partners in SAFINET activities

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Interviews for this issue were conducted by Johanna Pajula. Johanna Pajula and Chloe Stephenson were the Editorial Team for this issue, with support from the SAFINET Coordination Unit at Tampere University.

SAFINET

Southern African and Finnish Higher Education Institutions' Network for Health and Well-Being

Member Universities

- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Jyväskylä
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Facilitating collaboration between Southern African and Finland's academia

The focus of SAFINET is on building research partnerships and projects within SAFINET scope as well as facilitating joint educational collaboration and capacity building projects.

SAFINET maps funding sources for joint activities, enhances contacts between its members and Southern African higher education institutions (HEIs), and engages different stakeholders.

Join our network

Join our network by sending us an email at:

safinet-tau@tuni.fi

You can also reach us by email if you have any questions or would like to have more information on what SAFINET can offer you.



SAFINET Thematic Groups

- Arts, Culture and Well-Being
- Digitalization, Innovation and Health Services
- Food Systems and Living Environment
- Social Sustainability
- Public and Mental Health and Life Course

Interview with Mari Lahti

Mari Lahti is and has been the project lead for two EU Erasmus + Capacity Building projects in Southern Africa, including new eMaMa – project, which is focused on developing Post Graduate Training Programme for Maternal Mental Health in Southern Africa, involving Namibia, Zambia and Malawi, and the MEGA project, which ended in 2021 and was focused on building capacity by implementing mhGAP mobile intervention in SADC countries.

In addition, her projects include Come4Global – Strengthening nursing students' and HEI teachers' competence on mental health literacy in Eswatini and Finland, a Team Finland Knowledge project funded by the Ministry for Education and Culture Finland.

After graduating as a midwife and nurse, Mari Lahti started working in child protection services, which opened her eyes to the challenges in mental health. This became her focus during her studies in nursing science, first for her Master's and later in her doctoral studies. She started teaching at TUAS in an international nursing degree programme, which had many applicants from African countries. After her colleague met a psychiatrist at a conference, she became involved in her first project with Southern Africa, where most of her projects have been since then. In her current project, eMaMa, there are three universities from Europe and six from Southern African countries. Mari Lahti is the project leader, and in addition, there is a project manager to help deal with administrative issues. She thanks TUAS's project manager and financial administration, which gives excellent overall support.

Mari Lahti, PhD, is a midwife and registered nurse currently working as a principal lecturer at Turku University of Applied Sciences and is a research leader in the Mental Health Promotion research group of TUAS. She is also a post-doctoral researcher and university lecturer at the University of Turku in the research centre for child psychiatry, and is involved in establishing a new international Master's degree programme on Public Mental Health in the medical faculty there

Mari Lahti is seated in the bottom row, third from the right. Image provided by Mari Lahti.



Over the years, Mari Lahti has had many great experiences in her projects with Southern Africa but has also encountered multiple challenges. These include:

- Infrastructure at the universities and health facilities is very different from the Nordics, as there are frequent electricity cuts, little to no internet connection, no paper or printer, and no Teams in many places.
- This also makes communication difficult, as people can't join meetings or respond to emails, for example.
- Acquiring visas, passports, etc., can be challenging and costly, especially if one needs to travel to another country.
- Regarding research, healthcare staff often can't participate in research projects during working hours.
- The bureaucracy: administration takes a lot of time, making the contracts, following the money flow, advising partners, preparing meetings and travel, etc.
- When project funding calls for contributions, at least temporarily, from the universities in Southern Africa can be the biggest issue, as there are no extra funds for these.
- GDPR and lack of one in Africa: how to move data around, store it, and analyse jointly?



To navigate these challenges, Mari Lahti has the following tips:

- Most important is the personal connection with the people; face-to-face contact is essential.
- This also goes for upstream advocacy: Mari & her team usually meet with the administration at the university and visit the relevant ministries while visiting a partner university.
- WhatsApp has been an excellent way to connect with partners, as it helps to make a personal connection, and WhatsApp often works even when other apps don't.
- Many problems can be solved by going to the location.
- It is important to get acquainted with the local infrastructure, universities, hospitals, health facilities, etc., and their day-to-day operations.
- Gathering data with paper & pen, no online surveys. This is also a good option from an ethical perspective, as there are risks with online surveys.
- Moving the data around must be thought through thoroughly. Keeping the data at the university archives usually works well.
- International researcher desktop systems would be needed, as the southern partners often don't have one. This could be a capacity-building project.



Images provided by Mari Lahti.

**MOST IMPORTANT IS THE PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE;
FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT IS ESSENTIAL.**



All in all, Mari Lahti suggests not aiming for anything too complex, but rather a stellar, simple, effective project to work with. Regarding ethical partnerships, everything that is done must derive from the needs of the partners in the South, and power and responsibility should be given to them. In practice, this means creating personal connections to the universities and researchers, preparing the application together, and sharing responsibility with those who know what works in their context. This is also highlighted in the EU projects, where to build capacity, the coordination responsibility should increasingly be at the Southern Universities. Likewise, the next project preparation Mari Lahti is involved in is coordinated from South Africa.

Regarding the EU priorities and politics, Mari Lahti finds that Finland's projects with long-time partner countries, such as Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya and South Africa, still get the most funding. Some of the least resourced countries, such as Zambia and Malawi, are getting more funding; however, this amount is still small compared to the long-time partner countries. Finding funding for mental health projects and especially research at the EU level is challenging: a very limited amount of money is available, making the field highly competitive. For example, from ROAMER, a Roadmap for Mental Research in Europe, Finland gets 6 %, which goes mainly to medical research, PET screening, etc. Overall, the mental health field is under-resourced in Finland, the EU, and Southern Africa. It is a political decision what gets funding, and even with the mental health crisis, funding is not increasing. In Southern Africa, there is still a stigma around mental health conditions, and this is reflected in resources and education – for example, in Eswatini, there is only one psychiatrist in the whole country. This also brings ethical challenges to collaboration with Southern African countries – can we inquire about challenges with mental health if there are no services for those in need? This is another reason why advocacy at higher levels is much needed.

In the future, Mari Lahti is hopeful that the EU making Africa a priority area for collaboration is also reflected in the upcoming Horizon calls. These might even allow for more collaboration between Finnish higher education institutes.

ALL IN ALL, MARI LAHTI SUGGESTS NOT AIMING FOR ANYTHING TOO COMPLEX, BUT RATHER A STELLAR, SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE PROJECT TO WORK WITH.

Interview with Wanga Zembe-Mkabile

Wanga Zembe-Mkabile has lived and worked in South Africa most of her life. She started her career as a trauma counsellor at the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture in Cape Town, which provided mental health services to persons affected by apartheid. This was also when she realised that social work is her passion; however, since social work and support systems did not work well in South Africa, she wanted to start working more on the "policy side" of issues to influence decision-making. This was when Wanga Zembe-Mkabile entered the public health research field as an intern at an organisation called Health System Trust. Later, she transferred to the South African Medical Research Council as a junior researcher, focusing on social welfare and social policy. She worked on studies that examined and investigated the role and impact of government social assistance interventions on child health and well-being outcomes. While working as a junior researcher, she started studying at the University of Oxford in the Department of Social Work and Welfare (now called the Department of Social Policy and Intervention), exploring how cash transfers work to improve child health in South Africa. At Oxford, she started collaborating with her supervisors, researching the Child Support Grant in South Africa and how the social protection instruments in South Africa are designed compared to those in Northern countries.

For years, Wanga Zembe-Mkabile has been an important collaborator of the Global Health and Social Policy research group at Tampere University.



Image provided by Wanga Zembe-Mkabile.

This all started when a young researcher from South Africa, Lieve Vanleeuw, approached both Wanga Zembe-Mkabile and Salla Atkins, who had relocated from South Africa to Finland. They all shared an interest in social protection, and Lieve Vanleeuw was asking for help writing a research article. The trio began talking and writing funding proposals together. By this time, Salla Atkins was working at Tampere University, and Lieve Vanleeuw applied to the doctoral programme at Tampere. They met in Finland for the first time when Salla Atkins invited Wanga Zembe-Mkabile in 2018 to the Basic Income Experts Network meeting, which Tampere University was responsible for organising. Through Salla Atkins, who is also affiliated with Karolinska Institutet, Wanga Zembe-Mkabile became acquainted with other professionals working in the Nordic Universities. However, to date, Tampere University remains her strongest collaborator in the Nordics, and together, Salla Atkins and Lieve Vanleeuw they have done research on, for example, the burden of tuberculosis and social protection.

Wanga Zembe-Mkabile is a Senior Specialist Scientist in the South African Medical Research Council at the Health Systems Research Unit. She did her Bachelor of Social Sciences at the University of Cape Town, with two majors, social work & psychology, and Honours in development studies. Wanga Zembe-Mkabile holds a Masters and DPhil in Social Policy, both from the University of Oxford. Her main interests are research and teaching in social policy, specifically regarding social protection and social determinants of maternal and child health.



The Health and Social Protection Action Research & Knowledge Sharing (SPARKS) Network was founded in 2018, and Wanga joined it when she, Salla Atkins and Knut Lönnroth and other social protection experts met at Tampere. It is a network of researchers from the Global South and Global North working on social protection, particularly at the intersection of social protection and health. Since 2022 the network is led by hubs in Vietnam, Brazil and South Africa, which comprise the steering committee and secretariat. The network has applied for grants in collaboration with researchers from, for example, Finland, the UK and the US.

Regarding responsible and ethical partnerships with partners in Southern Africa and the Nordics, Wanga Zembe-Mkabile highlights that the partnerships should be based on equality and mutual respect. Sensitivity when it comes to collaborators with different backgrounds is also important. She gives credit to the people at Tampere University, saying how the team at Tampere has always been very respectful, with all the activities underlined by equality. Working together has been about co-learning and co-creating, with all partners on equal footing. In addition, the structure of the university is very flat, which simplifies matters when it comes to, for example, monetary issues. Occasionally, the transfers take time, but South Africa has been responsible for handling most of the funds for research projects based in the country, which is better to decrease additional costs. For future collaborative projects, there are plans to establish a memorandum of agreement for funding to be held in the two institutes, SAMRC and Tampere.

Wanga Zembe-Mkabile discusses how Finland as a partner has been very different compared to other Northern Hemisphere like the UK, for example. Even though the partners in the UK are often great to work with, the system itself pushes imperialistic views within the funding structure, with UK partners often being given the oversight role and acting as mentors to Southern partners. A similar approach can be observed with some US partners, where projects are often planned with the principal investigator being from the US, the investigator from South Africa acting as the project manager, and the US having full data ownership. This calls for a systemic change.

WORKING TOGETHER HAS BEEN ABOUT CO-LEARNING AND CO-CREATING, WITH ALL PARTNERS ON EQUAL FOOTING.

Interview with Olli Vainio

Olli Vainio is a successful network and system builder in Southern Africa. In particular, he has been very active in coordinating a number of capacity building programmes funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Africa, and he is a founding Member of the Consortium of New Sub-Sahara African Medical Schools (CONSAMS.net), founded in 2011. His projects with Southern Africa included, among others, MEDUNAM I and II, the Medical Education System Strengthening and Sustainability Project, funded by Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI-ICI) and coordinated by University of Oulu with partners in Namibia and Mozambique. The ongoing DIRISANA+ is co-funded by the Erasmus + Capacity Building programme, a knowledge triangle project of three South African universities and two Namibian universities (representing the plus in the project name) as well as two European universities. The project is focused on capacity building in medical education, and for example scientific literacy, under which the “Undergraduate Health Research Journal” has been established at the University of Pretoria. In addition to DIRISANA +, Olli Vainio is currently involved in the AFFEN: Africa-Finland Education Network, which is funded by the Finland Africa Platform for Innovation (FAPI), which includes building capacity to remote health facilities in Namibia by providing electricity, opportunities for remote consulting and training. (NOKIA was a partner in previous LUT/Aalto project that formed basis for our project).



Olli Vainio is pictured left. Image provided by Olli Vainio.

Olli Vainio, MD, PhD, is a Docent and Senior Advisor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku, Finland. From 2004 to 2017 he was a professor and vice-dean for education (2006-2013) at the University of Oulu, which was when he started many of his projects and collaborations in Africa.

The MEDUNAM – project started long before it got any bigger funding. Everything started when Olli Vainio was working at the University of Oulu. The education and medical faculties collaborated on this and sent the first delegation to Namibia in 2006 to look into founding the first medical faculty in Namibia at the University of Namibia. Previously, the World Health Organization had done a report on how this would be possible. In 2007, a steering committee was founded and Olli Vainio served as its member. However, a lot of advocacy was needed, but the need for a medical faculty was great and the founding President, freedom fighter Sam Nujoma, was also advocating for it, so in the end of 2008, the Ministries of Higher Education and Health and Social Services made a decision that a School of Medicine would be founded at the University of Namibia.

The preparations were done in 2009 and 2010, and the first student intake was in 2010. Most of the teachers then were foreigners, who were not yet familiar with the Namibian context. In 2010, the Ambassador of Finland in Namibia advised to apply for HEI-ICI funding. At first, the University of Oulu gave some funding to develop the medical education at UNAM, and in 2010, the Ministry also gave some smaller funding for a feasibility study.

The first funding for the Medical Education System Strengthening and Sustainability Project (MEDUNAM) I from HEI-ICI was from 2011 to 2013, which got continuation in the form of MEDUNAM II from 2013 to 2015. The project was also expanded at this point with North-South-South funding from the Ministry of Education to include interprofessional education, as many universities already had nursing, midwifery or public health training before medical school. This was done in collaboration with the Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OUAS).

OUAS had a long-term collaboration with the European Interprofessional Practice & Education Network (EIPEN) and the Nordic Interprofessional Network (NIPNET). In 2015, members of these networks met in Ndola, Zambia, at the Copperbelt University and made preparations for AfrIPEN, the Africa Interprofessional Education Network, which was founded in 2016.

The CONSAMS-consortium, on the other hand, started from the MEDUNAM collaboration. The Vanderbilt University in the United States has a big global health-department and collaboration with Southern African countries. Vanderbilt Professor Quentin Eichbaum, who was of Namibian origin, contacted Olli Vainio and collaboration for founding of CONSAMS started. The benchmarking trip was done together in 2011, and soon the second one, and on that trip, CONSAMS was founded. The founding African members of the consortium were from Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Mozambique.

Image provided by Olli Vainio.



As Olli Vainio has gained much and diverse experience from collaboration with Southern African countries, he shared some tips on building partnerships with the actors in the South. He would suggest a consortium of five or six actors, as if there are more, there is always more bureaucracy. It is best to work with people you know, and listen closely who the collaborators in the South want to collaborate with, as South-South collaboration is great for the projects. Only when the partners with the same interests are ready it is time to think about funding applications. Commitment for long-term partnerships is essential. It would be beneficial to include universities which already have experience and good processes for international collaboration, and then others with less experience. With these partners, it would be great to start research collaboration already before gaining funding, and think together what to apply for. It is of great importance to know your partners well, and find partners who truly want to collaborate with you!



Image provided by Olli Vainio.

As challenges in collaboration, Olli Vainio mentions commitment from all partners, as there are a lot of different funders, projects, development collaboration etc. It would be great to have more collaboration with countries from Global North, but this has been challenging. Particularly in Finland and Europe, the funding is very fragmented, and there are mostly small amounts of money for a short amount of time available. It would be essential to have funding for a longer period of time. However, the smaller funding can be used to build partnership that can eventually lead to bigger funding, but there should be a funding instrument to prepare collaboration for bigger funding applications. One challenge is also collaborating with private and public hospitals, as the collaboration is different and you need to have a different perspective, also from the ethical point-of-view.

When discussing ethical partnerships with Southern Africa, Olli Vainio highlights that everything that is done is done based on the needs and circumstances of the Southern partners, on contrary to the Northern partners saying how and what is done. He shared an example of the time when he was in the steering committee founding the first medical faculty in Namibia, before MEDUNAM, and a big German university, also involved in the committee, tried to establish their curriculum in Windhoek as it was. This wasn't good practice, and that university was not involved any further. It is essential to reflect together on different practices, and learn as you go.

IT IS BEST TO WORK WITH PEOPLE YOU KNOW, AND LISTEN CLOSELY WHO THE COLLABORATORS IN THE SOUTH WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH, AS SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION IS GREAT FOR THE PROJECTS. ONLY WHEN THE PARTNERS WITH THE SAME INTERESTS ARE READY IT IS TIME TO THINK ABOUT FUNDING APPLICATIONS. COMMITMENT FOR LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS IS ESSENTIAL.

Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

UNIPID'S RECENT PUBLICATION OF

Guidelines for Ethical Partnerships with Southern Partners

We would like to congratulate the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID), in their collaboration with the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) and their international steering group on their recent publication of ["Ethical guidelines for responsible academic partnerships with the Global South"](#).

Their previous work putting together [trainings](#) for ethical academic partnerships with Southern partners informed many of our interview questions on this topic. These published guidelines will be a helpful resource for SAFINET members and partners to draw on to foster ethical academic partnerships. Many thanks for doing and sharing such important work!

Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

PROTECTING CHILDREN'S SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS BY FUTURE PROFESSIONALS IN FINLAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

SAFINET Member Elina Botha provides an update on The SexEd project, funded by TFK, focuses on enhancing short-term student and staff mobility, curriculum content, and collaboration between North-West University (NWU, Potchefstroom campus) and Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK).

The goal is to empower young people in South Africa and Finland to assess, strengthen, and safeguard their sexual and reproductive health, thereby preventing sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and preserving fertility for future family planning.

The project aims to bolster the efficacy of social work, nursing, and teacher students in addressing sexual and reproductive health, providing them with the necessary competencies, tools, and skills for their future professions. The main initiative involves an intensive course for students from various programs at both universities, conducted both online and on-site in Finland and South Africa during 2023-2024.

The collaboration seeks to develop evidence-based curricula content and improve the practical execution of sexual and reproductive health education. The innovative aspect lies in fostering collaboration between different education disciplines, cultures, and universities, promoting ongoing teamwork and teaching methods for future implementations.

Please read more about the project here: [The SexEd project encourages young people and professionals to talk about sexual health | Tampere universities \(tuni.fi\)](#)



Image provided by Elina Botha.

Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

DECOLONISATION IN NORDIC GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION



Jessica Omija provides an update on the Decolonisation in Nordic Global Health Education project. Tampere University, led by Prof. Salla Atkins and our ten other Nordic collaborating partners, has an ongoing research project on 'Decolonisation in Nordic Global Health Education'.

This research project aims to ensure that global health teaching is fit for the 21st-century challenges and demands of working life. The research draws from a rethinking of how global health programs operate, where they focus, and how teaching matches contemporary challenges for future working life. Project stakeholders assert that teaching global health has focused on the Global South, yet new challenges will require engagement with health issues as part of global policymaking.

From pandemics to sustainable development goals, climate change, and implications of globalisation, inequalities, and decolonisation (i.e., changing balance and moving away from colonial-type power dynamics), the needs of the emerging working context of global health for more commonality in problems and aims are fundamental. Whereas an increasing number of global health students will situate themselves in Nordic labour markets, operating in a more interconnected world will require more globally aware public health professionals. As such, building a global health career already begins during the time of studies. Therefore, the focus on common challenges and decolonisation enables us to create a novel, more aware Nordic approach to Global Health relevant to values and priorities in Nordic countries while recognising the imperative of decolonisation in global health in practice.

The project is funded by Nordplus.



Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

FINLAND AT SCIENCE FORUM 2023, WITH PARTICIPATION OF SAFINET MEMBERS IN SOME PANEL DISCUSSIONS



Image sourced from the
Nordic Co-operation

December 4th

14:00–17:00: Toxicology Education in Africa –
The Team Finland Knowledge Experience (hybrid
side event)

December 6th

13:30–15:00: Finland’s Independence day
Reception @ Finnish exhibition stand

December 7th

09:00–10:30: Transforming Higher Education for
a Sustainable Future (panel discussion)

11:00–12:30: South-North partnerships in social
and health science: Innovations for uplifting
people (panel discussion)



Keep an eye out: recent, ongoing, and upcoming projects and events

LAUNCH OF THE WHO COLLABORATING CENTRE ON HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES AND THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially designated Tampere University as a WHO Collaborating Centre, tasked with aiding evidence-based decision-making regarding health policies. The Centre's activities contribute to WHO's initiatives, focusing particularly on the social determinants of health. Enhancing the health and well-being of populations requires effective collaboration among diverse partners.

Collaborating Centres are institutions designated by WHO to carry out activities that support WHO's programmes. The Collaborating Centre at Tampere conducts international research and translates information that promotes the Health in All Policies approach across the world.

Collaborating Centres are institutions designated by WHO to carry out activities that support WHO's programmes. The Collaborating Centre at Tampere conducts international research and translates information that promotes the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach across the world.

“The Collaborating Centre is an important part of Tampere University’s globalisation because it combines the know-how developed at the University with meeting global challenges. The Centre fosters new projects and opens new opportunities for students and researchers. The Centre will also strengthen interaction between research and policymaking,” says Dean Juho Saari, Professor of Social and Health Policy at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The Centre is led by Professor Meri Koivusalo, Professor Salla Atkins, and Research Director Lauri Kokkinen. According to the researchers, scientific knowledge can influence policies that promote health and diminish health disparities worldwide. Global challenges require cross-sectoral cooperation.

“The conditions in which people are born, live, work and age also determine their health. In the Centre’s research and co-operation, we will emphasise ways in which societal decisions and policies can promote public health, narrow health disparities, and ensure universal health services,” Koivusalo says.

WHO designates Collaborating Centres for four-year periods.



Photo credit: Mikko Korhonen

MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AND INTERNATIONAL REACH

The Collaborating Centre at Tampere is a testament to the multidisciplinary nature of global health endeavors. Collaborators from various disciplines come together to address the intricate interplay of social determinants of health and policy development.

An integral part of this collaboration includes partners from South Africa, bringing a unique perspective and expertise to the table. This international collaboration enriches the Centre's research and enhances its capacity to address diverse global health challenges.

SOCIETAL ASPECTS DETERMINE HEALTH

Health in All Policies stands as the flagship strategy of WHO. At the UN's Earth Summit in Rio in 2011, 165 countries pledged to adopt and implement this strategy.

Finland has a substantial history of incorporating health aspects into policies beyond those explicitly related to health.

“We have success stories in areas such as traffic safety, occupational safety, and tobacco policies. However, Finland still has much to learn, for instance, about how to include health in economic policies,” Kokkinen points out.

Setting up the Collaborating Centre is based on Finland’s active role in promoting Health in All Policies. In 2013, the Helsinki statement issued by WHO emphasised the importance of cross-sectoral work for promoting health. ([Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies](#)).

The Collaborating Centre in Tampere will continue this work by concentrating on the social determinants of health and their role in decision-making.

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The Collaborating Centre at Tampere University will continue this work by concentrating on the social determinants of health and their role in decision-making.



Photo credit:: Laura Hyyti

THE COLLABORATING CENTRE AT TAMPERE IS A TESTAMENT TO THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH ENDEAVORS. COLLABORATORS FROM VARIOUS DISCIPLINES COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE INTRICATE INTERPLAY OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT.



Photo credit:: Laura Hyyti

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN HEALTH PROMOTION

The Centres form a collaboration network that operates in WHO's spheres of activities. Good health and well-being are one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Many of the goals also have an indirect link to health.

“The Centre enables us to collaborate with other UN organisations. In academic work, it facilitates building international consortia for conducting research projects,” Atkins emphasises.

Tampere University's researchers cooperate especially with centres working on similar themes in South Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa.

Tampere University already plays a significant role and has wide-ranging expertise on health care, public administration, public health policy, cross-sectoral cooperation, and gender equality research. The Collaborating Centre increases the University's international networking on social and health policy topics.

For the researchers, the Collaborating Centre is an acknowledgement of international-level expertise. For the researchers, the Collaborating Centre is an acknowledgment of international-level expertise. “The Collaborating Centre supports the societal impact of Tampere University and is a significant advantage in international research projects. We concentrate on themes that have been agreed with WHO but also open avenues for more wide-ranging cooperation,” Kokkinen mentions.

Gökhan Depo, PhD, serves as the Coordinator of the Centre. He earned his PhD in Organizational Leadership and Policy Development from the University of Minnesota, US, and his master's degree in Education and Globalization from the University of Oulu, Finland. Dr. Depo is a Fulbright scholar.

THE COLLABORATING CENTRE AT TAMPERE IS A TESTAMENT TO THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH ENDEAVORS. COLLABORATORS FROM VARIOUS DISCIPLINES COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE INTRICATE INTERPLAY OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

Upcoming and Current

FUNDING CALLS

1

Horizon Europe

[HORIZON-INFRA-2024-DEV-01-02:
Strengthen the bilateral cooperation on
research infrastructures with Africa](#)

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- contribution to the new Commission strategy with Africa, notably to the following specific objectives: rapidly enhance learning, knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities (with attention to female and young researchers);
- enhanced research capacities in Africa;
- enhanced Euro-African cooperation in R&I

Follow the link for eligibility criteria and more information.

Open from 6.12.2023-12.3.2024

2

Research Council of Finland

[Academy Programme for Sport Science and
Physical Activity 2024](#)

[Academy Project Funding 2024, all research
fields](#)

Follow the link for eligibility criteria and more information.

Winter 2024 Call, deadline 17.1.2024

3

Capacity building

[ERASMUS+ Capacity Building in the field of
Higher Education call](#)

3 strands, covering national, regional and cross-regional projects (depending on strand and country requirements).

Follow the link for eligibility criteria and more information.

Deadline 8.2.2024

Engagement between Northern and Southern Partners

We would also like to welcome our Southern partners to the activities of the network, especially to the thematic group meetings. We are particularly interested in gaining potential partners and collaborators who are mid-career and senior scholars from the SADC countries who are active in the research community in the areas of health and wellbeing.

SAFINET is active across five thematic groups, which meet virtually to discuss upcoming, ongoing, and recently completed projects and collaborations each term:

[Arts, Culture and Well-Being](#)

[Digitalization, Innovation and Health Services](#)

[Food Systems and Living Environment](#)

[Social Sustainability](#)

[Public and Mental Health and Life Course](#)

Warmly welcome!

-
Please reach out to the SAFINET functional mailbox (safinet-tau@tuni.fi) to find out more about our next thematic group meetings and how to join.

