

## Second meeting of the EPEP project - Project work in Oulu, August 10–19, 2025

The project work that began in Zanzibar in November–December 2024 continued in Oulu under the late summer sun. The main purpose of the meeting was to continue working on the two main objectives of the project. In other words, together with the EPEP team, we planned the course **Sustainable Physical Education and Sport** currently being developed at our partner universities and practiced, both in theory and in practice, **how swimming and water competencies** could be developed in physical education teacher education (PETE) in Tanzania and Finland.

Niina Loukola, Ari Rahikkala, Saara Pesonen, and Annika Mäkipörhölä (UOULU) took great care to ensure that all guests from Tanzania and Joensuu (UEF) had an easy and enjoyable stay in Oulu. Many thanks for your care. In addition to working on official goals, the EPEP team had the opportunity to experience and enjoy many other interesting and enjoyable activities together. In addition to rewarding and diverse interactions, we got to know, among other things, the city of Oulu, the Finnish school system and teacher education, local sports (visits to the main league football and baseball games), Finnish and Tanzanian food culture, and, of course, the sauna. It was especially wonderful that this time, a total of nine students from all the universities involved in the project were able to participate in the shared joy. The participation of Miia Hautakangas and Ari Koivu from Liikery (NGO), who have been heavily involved in the project work from the beginning, in the meetings in Oulu was the icing on the cake. Best of all, the five Finnish students who participated this time, as well as Miia and Ari, will be traveling to Tanzania in January 2026, when we will see next time each other in connection with the project. Cooperation, sharing ideas, discussions, and working towards the project's goals will therefore continue in just a few months' time. Wonderful.

Work on the first objective of the project progressed well. Many steps forward were taken in terms of the Sustainable Physical Education and Sport course (contents, learning materials, curriculum text, and curriculum implementation). It is truly wonderful and certainly unique that the independent course combining sustainable development with physical education and sport is finding its place, initially in Zanzibar (SUZA) in the bachelor's degree program for physical education teachers and later, in one way or another, also in Dar es Salaam (UDSM). Our work in creating a new course is groundbreaking in many ways. It has been great to see how the work done by the EPEP team has attracted interest from, among others, the [FUTE-project](#), and we can now consider incorporating the same themes into physical education teacher education (PETE) in Namibia. Good things travel far and fast. Working on this course has shown how important it is to understand and engage in dialogue between different contexts and cultures. Working on the course has also highlighted the importance of understanding different contexts and cultures and engaging in dialogue (cf. Participatory Action Research, PAR). Building trust and the active participation of different parties are key to understanding differences and reconciling them. Good and valuable things often happen

slowly but surely through dialogue. Different challenges can be overcome when you take it one step at a time.

Progress was also made on the second key objective of the EPEP project. The development of swimming and water competencies in both Finland and Tanzania is a current issue in many ways. Around the world, the focus of teaching is shifting from teaching swimming techniques and styles to [broader water skills](#). This development is easy to justify both in Finland (high number of drownings in the last summer) and Tanzania (e.g., different conditions for teaching swimming). Ultimately, swimming and water sports are only a marginal part of the overall phenomenon of being in and around water.

The EPEP project is based on promoting sustainable development in the context of physical education and sports. After intensive work on this common cause, it can be stated with even greater conviction and justification that the EPEP project's objectives, which take a broad view of the potential of physical education and sport, are perfectly in line with the statement by UNESCO's Ministry of Sport (Berlin Declaration 2013), which nicely sums up the many possibilities of physical education: *Physical education is the most effective means of providing all children and youth with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge, and understanding for lifelong participation in society.*

Before we meet again in Tanzania, the work continues. The geographical distance no longer seems so great when the next meeting is already on the horizon, the guidelines for the work are becoming clearer, and shared understanding and trust have been strengthened. The words of Finnish poet Eino Leino were truly true during our visit to Oulu. *Kun työtä et palkan tähden tee, työ riemulla palkitsee*. Translation without poetic form goes like this: When you do not work for the sake of pay, work rewards you with joy.

Asanteni nyote sana! Tunatazamia kukuona tena,

Cheers, Tuoppi, and the entire EPEP team.