



# Re-inventing the Future of Learning

## #DigiEduHack @ Riara University!

On Thursday 3 October, 2019, Riara University hosted a global Digital Education Hackathon dubbed DigiEduHack at their Mbagathi Way Campus. DigiEduHack aimed at breaking continental barriers by connecting around 50 educational institutions worldwide in order to solve the world’s most pressing challenges in education during the digital era, as part of the European Union’s Digital Education Action Plan. Over 1,500 students, educators, researchers, and innovators, worked around the clock to come up with groundbreaking and fresh innovations in digital learning.

DigiEduHack took place simultaneously during a period of 24 hours in Europe, Africa, Asia, South and North America. Universities, research institutions and other associations in most European countries, Mexico, Canada, Russia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Israel, and Turkey, all hosted their own DigiEduHack events.

“During the 24 hours, innovators will take on challenges in various fields, ranging from learning experience to learning spaces and pedagogies, emerging technologies and data exploitation, access and availability. Each organization has chosen a challenge area that is pressing and relevant for them, with the aim of developing real-life solutions”, said Project Manager, Ida Anderson at Aalto University, Finland, who continued to share:

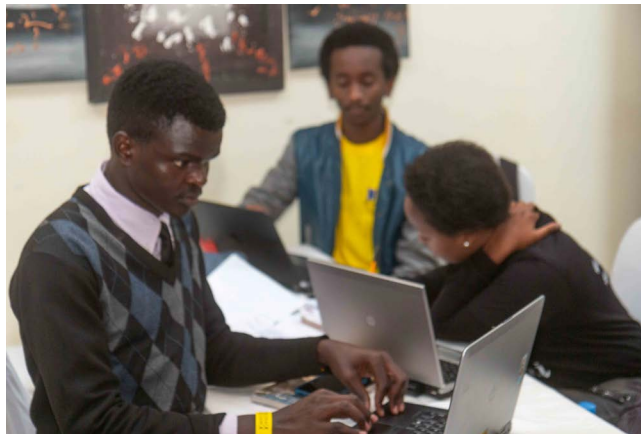
“We want to see fantastic, crazy, out of the box ideas as well as small but important improvements to current ways of utilizing digital tools in education. The best ideas will be rewarded at an international awards ceremony and the best team become EU’s Global Digital Education Ambassadors”.

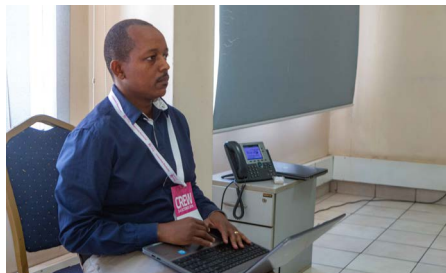
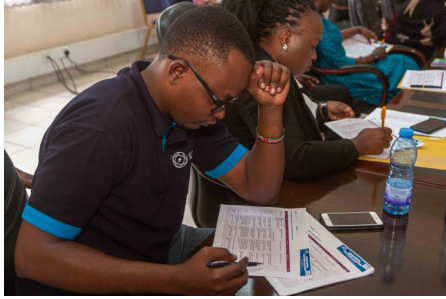
It was noted that the key learning points would be used as a basis for the new Digital Education Action Plan for Europe: “We want to improve the use of technologies for teaching and learning, ensuring that everyone has the necessary digital skills and competences, exploiting data to the benefit of education. DigiEduHack is therefore an innovative opportunity to reflect on where we stand and collect actionable ideas ensuring that digital technologies are used at their best”, said **Begona Arano**, Head of Unit, Innovation and EIT, The European Commission’s Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC).

**DIGI EDU HACK**  
**NAIROBI DIGITAL EDUCATION HACKATHON**  
3rd - 4th October 2019  
Riara University, Mbagathi Way, Nairobi

24 hours to redesign the future of education

**Sponsors:** Aalto University, European Commission, Climate-KIC, TOTAL, RED GIANT MEDIA AGENCY, ArcSkills, Inepanta AfriCare, Riara University, AFELT, Summit Education, TE, IBM, TUSKYS, E.K.R.A.L, NIIT, Razco Limited, Kenet, Kericho Gold, CoolSchool, Safaricom, and others.





# The sky is the limit

In Kenya, universities as currently positioned have numerous been accused of being unresponsive to the needs of the society and producing graduates that are not well equipped or relevant to the market.

Locally, DigiEduHack was championed by Riara University, the only university in Africa to take up the task. Her goal is to redesign university education to help learners connect with their learning, develop crucial technical and soft skills, and help them become solution providers locally and in the region in line with our core purpose of Empowering Lives; Impacting Communities. Prof. Robert Gateru, the Vice Chancellor observed that “The sky is the limit for youth who are appropriately empowered to be solution providers,” adding that “the overall goal is to align the local university education with the aspirations of employers, the learners, the society, and national development goals.”

## Digital Challenges are Global

Challenges facing learners in universities are global. “90 % of future jobs will require digital competency, yet almost half of Europeans lack basic digital skills. In all stages of life, from school through to college and into the workplace, the key to success lies in acquiring new digital competencies”, said **Line Gry Knudsen**, Director of Education at EIT Climate KIC, one of the main partners behind DigiEduHack.

The global main event took place at **Aalto University in Finland**, a pioneer within the field of Digital Education. Aalto University has invested significantly in digital education during the last few years, as noted by Professor **Lauri Malmi** who echoed:

“We are constantly exploring novel online contents and pedagogies, such as educational videos, building content based on virtual reality and augmented reality, developing interactive online text books, and using automatic assessment of students’ submissions that include mathematical formulations, or computer programs. Moreover, games and gamification are used to support learning. During the last three years, we have had more than 150 pilot projects, where courses have been totally or partially revised to include new types of online learning content and new pedagogical solutions.”

Riara University would like to express her heartfelt gratitude to her corporate partners including TUSKYS Supermarkets, Safaricom, Kenya Education Network (KENET), IBM, NIIT, AFELT, Toyota Kenya, Red Giant Media Agency, IBM, Razco Ltd, Text Book Centre, Kericho Gold, Shehacks KE, Mwiko Restaurants, Mugoya Vegetables Ltd, Young Scientists Kenya, Arc Skills, Medanta AfriCare, Cool4School, Ashoka, Sironi Restaurants among many others, that supported the event greatly. Many thanks as well to the judges and mentors who showed up in great numbers to support Kenya’s young and innovative geniuses, not forgetting the team behind the scenes that enabled the success of this event.

Hongera! To all participants that were courageous enough to present their valid ideas and solutions in an effort to redesign our future of learning!

This marks the beginning of a new era in education!

**#DigiEduHack**

**#RiaraHacks**

**#InnovativeGenius**



## NAIROBI, KENYA 2019

I'm writing this article from a little cyber café where I've been for the last 40 minutes. All in a bid to get my papers printed for submission of my assignment. As usual, the most African thing for the middle aged man attending to me is to indulge me in bits of banter as he slowly starts the P.C and the printer to print out my work. Honestly, I'm losing my patience \*sigh\* thinking to myself why? In this era of technological development, am I stuck in a sequel of a paper state documentation?

Hence, why I think it's time to challenge a few things in the education system of this country. We must move to a paperless education system!

How? You may ask. Challenge accepted! Let me explain. You know how you wake up in the middle of the night from a shocking dream and reach out for your phone to check the time and ascertain reality? Well, let's start there. It's always an innocent what's the time, then alas! There you are 4 retweets later, lots of scrolling on Instagram and a few screenshots for later. Oh wait let's not forget finally opening those WhatsApp groups you had ghosted all day long. You are getting the drill right?

Now imagine if our education system could find a way to make learning as interesting as that. So captivating that it's a primary concern at 3.a.m. Arguably, this is already a reality in parts of the world with learner apps and the likes. But just picture the Kenyan system implementing this move. It would definitely boost the response time for the already set development as well as open doors for better ones.

Here I am in complete panic about deadlines, sneaking little affirmation grins and nods to the now-unaware-of-my-situation attendant. And I'm thinking to myself is this an L on my part or is it really the system that needs to change? Then, the irritating sound of the printer stops and in a little glee I snap out of my think tank! Turns out the power on the entire street has just gone. With just six pages of my work to go and 30 minutes to my deadline.

Yet again is it really my fault or is it the system? What if I didn't have to play this blame game every time I needed to hand in my work? If the system could make an application for more interactive leaning with a whole social angle on it, my bet is that I would definitely want to beat these deadlines. And by going paperless I mean making use of software where work can be submitted. Not just any software, but that which will be unique to my education system and my country. With the ability to have anyone of any age interact with it smoothly.

Okay, power is back... the last of my six pages are finally out! Definitely a save this time! As I huff and puff back to class to hand in all of this I can't help but conclude that the biggest play in making the system better is teamwork. An interactive curriculum with use of modern tech is definitely an incentive for the learners. And if learners are actually enjoying while getting the knowledge then the system is on its road to success!

Carpe Diem!

Nicole Nyona.

## DIGITAL EDUCATION HACKATHON 2019

As planet earth slowly revolves around the sun every twenty-four hours, the world is slowly evolving into the digital era, slowly accepting that the world is online. This evolution bearing with it threats not too dinosaurs this time, but to the human workforce to what they would normally refer to as careers that will soon be replaced by artificial intelligence or even robots (more Sophia's). As new technology slowly creeps up on us everybody needs to jump on this bandwagon to experiment and embrace digital technologies.

An opportunity to shape and direct this evolution into the digital era in the sphere of education happenend. A chance to redesign the learning space in the tertiary education system to embody more engaging, motivating and transformative learning with the use of digital technologies. An opportunity which enabled to preparation of the youth of Africa and the world for the future workplace. This was a platform that modelled a learning transformation that can be utilized by institutions across Africa, to enhance employability and better yet become a more responsive solution to social-economic challenges facing Africa and the world.

Think about your course of study and how it would be transformed and made engaging, motivating and transformative in the digital age. How would you want the course material delivered? I would most definitely think ... Yes, that idea is what the Digital education hackathon was looking for on the 3rd of October 2019 at Riara University.

Susan Maina,  
Alumnus RLS



## HOLD MY HAND, IGNITE MY HOPE MBUNG'AKI ENKAINA INYIEYIE OSILIGI LAI

The May-August 2019 break from School was a busy one for Chriswell Nelia'ng, a student of Education Arts as he engaged himself in empowering his community. Chriswell's life's guiding mantra is to leave behind for generations to come and to give hope to the hopeless. He took part in:

- Helping the poor and disabled;
- Teaching the community about the importance of the conservation of the environment;
- Educating members of the community on the fight against negative cultural practices including; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early marriages, vices that interfere with the lives of the girl child; and
- Campaigning for education for the Girl child as many people in his community still do not believe in educating the girl.

## THE 87-YEAR OLD NKOKO

Together with his friends, Chriswell managed to pay a courtesy call to the 87-year old grandma in the picture above and donated to her the following items among many others:

- A pair of *shukas*;
- A pair of rubber shoes;
- 10kgs of rice;
- 10kgs of wheat flour; and
- 20kgs sugar.

Most importantly, they gave her company throughout the day. This they considered as important because in this day and age, many elderly people have been abandoned and happen to spend most of their time all by themselves.



### Wheelchair

Through the help of donors, Chriswell also managed to get a wheelchair for one physically disabled man in his locality.

### Other Donations

With the help of the donor, he also managed to acquire the following items that he donated to his former primary school, Ole Tuya primary, in the company of his friends. The items included:

- 400 exercise books and stationery;
- 500 textbooks; and
- A football.

Chriswell looks forward to embracing the challenge as it gets tougher. He is glad to be part of it and is grateful to my mentors at Riara University: Prof. Robert Gateru and all the faculty members of the School of Education.

***I am proud to associate with Riara University!***

## Mbagathi Secondary School @ RU.

On Tuesday, October 1, 2019, the School of Education hosted about 100 girls from our neighboring school- Mbagathi Secondary School. This event was mainly organized and conducted by the RSE students with guidance of the School faculty. Several RU faculty members that included Dr. Ken Walibora, Dr. Julius Otundo, Florence Kimani and Dr. Margaret Njeru spent time encouraging and motivating the students. Most of the time during the visit was spent during mentorship group activities led by the RSE students. This was a great activity that was appreciated greatly by both the visiting students and also the administration at Mbagathi School.



# New Basketball Kits For Riara Scarlets

On September 12th, 2019, a hand-over ceremony was held for Riara Scarlets to receive brand new basketball kits from Granate Insurance. The short event entailed a short speech from Mr. Nathaniel, Managing Director of Granate and a vote of thanks from the team's captain, Aurelia Phosa. In attendance was the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gateru and a photo session was held to commemorate the act of kindness.



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