The 11th UbuntuNet-Connect conference couldn’t deny one of the hottest topics on the continent: digital transformation. Therefore, this year’s conference, held in the beautiful Zanzibar, focused on the concept of SMART education and research. This topic was not just exploited during the two-day conference, but also during co-located events days before.

**UbuntuNet Alliance**

“We are aware that despite the progress the global world is making Tanzania continues to lag behind in the uptake of ICT and innovation and this is mainly due to the prohibitive cost of bandwidth as well as slow speed Internet. We are happy that organisations like UbuntuNet Alliance are helping local entities like TERNET to help us solve this problem. All communities with a gateway for global collaborations.

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**Co-located meetings and workshops**

An important meeting around the conference theme was the Vice Chancellor’s ICT Forum, where several universities from the Eastern and Southern part of Africa gathered to discuss and brainstorm all things digital in today’s research and education environment. Sessions covered topics ranging from challenges of emerging digital transformation, learning and teaching innovation in a digital university, the future of ICT in African higher education, a SMART university administration concluding with a roundtable discussion on how to tackle these topics.

Furthermore, librarians gathered for the LIBSENSE workshop to convene library and NREN stakeholders to explore how repositories can operate embedded in NREN e-infrastructure and provide a foundation for an innovative, open, distributed and networked resource for scholarly communication and open science in Africa.

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**Pictures**


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Being part of a community that strives to support students and researchers to have the best toolkit for their studies and careers, shouldn’t demotivate members on sharing content, albeit stories that show challenges rather than successes. A response that quickly came up, which lead to a stimulating discussion where all participants of the workshop shared their views on these topics. This was exactly, what this first workshop was intended for: African NRENs empowering each other, brainstorming on how to go about communication activities, and identify the needs of communications support.

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Curious to learn more about the Tanzanian Research and Education Network or the regional UbuntuNet Alliance? Read more on their respective websites:

https://ubuntunet.net/
https://www.ternet.or.tz/