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Modernizing and Transforming Medical Education at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College

[Esther Lisasi](#), MD, MPH, [Ahaz Kulanga](#), MBA, [Charles Muiruri](#), MPH, [Lucy Killewo](#), BSc, [Ndimangwa Fadhili](#), MSc, [Lucy Mimano](#), MSc, [Gibson Kapanda](#), MSc, [Dativa Tibyampansha](#), BSc, [Glory Ibrahim](#), BSc, [Mramba Nyindo](#), DVM, PhD, [Kien Mteta](#), MD, MMed, [Egbert Kessi](#), MD, MMed, PhD, [Moshi Ntabaye](#), DDS, PhD, and [John Bartlett](#), MD

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Abstract

The Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University (KCMU) College and the Medical Education Partnership Initiative (MEPI) are addressing the crisis in Tanzanian health care manpower by modernizing the college's medical education with new tools and techniques. With a \$10 million MEPI grant and the participation of its partner, Duke University, KCMU is harnessing the power of information technology (IT) to upgrade tools for students and faculty. Initiatives in eLearning have included bringing fiber-optic connectivity to the campus, offering campus-wide wireless access, opening student and faculty computer laboratories, and providing computer tablets to all incoming medical students. Beyond IT, the college is also offering wet laboratory instruction for hands-on diagnostic skills, team-based learning, and clinical skills workshops. In addition, modern teaching tools and techniques address the challenges posed by increasing numbers of students. To provide incentives for instructors, a performance-based compensation plan and teaching awards have been established. Also for faculty, IT tools and training have been made available, and a medical education course management system is now being widely employed. Student and faculty responses have been favorable, and the rapid uptake of these interventions by students, faculty, and the college's administration suggests that the KCMU College MEPI approach has addressed unmet needs. This enabling environment has transformed the culture of learning and teaching at KCMU College, where a path to sustainability is now being pursued.