

Evaluation of the Germanistische Institutspartnerschaften and the Vladimir Admoni Programme

REASON FOR AND GOAL OF THE EVALUATION

Syspons GmbH was commissioned by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to evaluate the Germanistische Institutspartnerschaften (GIP) and the Vladimir Admoni Programme (VAP).

After both programmes had already been examined in the context of a programme area evaluation in 2011, an intermediary evaluation was now carried out before the 2020 programmes will be re-tendered. This has both a summative and a formative character and covers the period from 2010 to the present. In the summative part, the intermediary

evaluation served to monitor the results as the programmes are accountable to the Federal Foreign Office (AA), being the funder of both programmes. In the formative part of the intermediary evaluation, learning aspects were identified in order to contribute to improving the programmes. The central criteria of the evaluation were relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of both programmes. The findings of the intermediary evaluation have been incorporated into the recommendations.

SUBJECT OF THE STUDY

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supports both programmes with institutional funds from the Federal Foreign Office (AA). The aim of the GIPs is to strengthen the position of the German language and culture in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as well as in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Israel and the Palestinian Territories. They aim at supporting German Studies abroad in the field of teaching and research. Together with the VAP, the programme is part of the DAAD's concept to promote German Studies. In addition to promoting the training of German teachers and lecturers

as well as curriculum development at foreign universities, the programme also pursues the long-term goal of increasing the attractiveness of German Studies and the German language abroad through cooperation and exchange with German universities, students and academics. The direct target group of the GIPs consists of German and foreign students and graduates, German and foreign doctoral and post-doctoral students as well as German and foreign university teachers in the fields of German Studies / German as a Foreign Language.

The Vladimir Admoni Programme was launched in 2007 based on the networks and partnerships built up by the GIPs. With the new programme, the DAAD was looking for a way to continue to make available the capacities developed from the GIP partnerships to the respective region. The aim of the VAP is to train a new generation of young foreign academics in the field of German Studies. To this end, foreign doctoral candidates in the field of German Studies and German as a Foreign Language are trained in modern teaching and research methods and prepared for a career as a researcher. German Studies and literature institutes in Germany intensify international contacts and expand cooperation, while doctoral students and researchers abroad and in Germany are able

to gain intercultural experience. The programme serves to strengthen the German language abroad and also aims to guarantee qualified training for German (higher education) teachers in the long term. The target regions of the VAP are CEE, CIS and, since 2018, the Middle East/North Africa. In the Vladimir Admoni Programme, the direct target group is more narrowly defined than in the GIPs. The VAP explicitly addresses graduates of the partner institutes in the fields of German Studies or German as a Foreign Language who are aiming for a PhD followed by an academic career.

EMPLOYED EVALUATION DESIGN

The design for this evaluation was based on a contribution analysis. This contribution analysis was used to investigate the extent to which the observed (positive or negative) changes can be attributed to the two DAAD programmes and to what extent alternative explanatory patterns can be identified. The basis for this analysis was the impact model structure of effects developed by the DAAD, which shows how the programmes work. The evaluation was conducted using a

combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and evaluation. This included a document analysis as well as several online surveys with German and foreign project managers as well as with sponsored individuals of both programmes. In addition, five project visits were carried out, in which the perspectives of German Studies institutes, lecturers and sponsored individuals were included.

KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation shows that the relevance of both programmes is given. The programme logics of GIP and VAP reflect the substantive interests of the funding recipients and of the institutional needs of the German Studies and literature institutes, especially those abroad.

For all GIP-funded groups, the evaluation concludes that relevant funding measures are offered, which address the interest of the sponsored parties. All funded groups (German and foreign students, graduates, doctoral candidates, post-doctoral students and university lecturers) strive for professional development through their participation in the programme. However, students and graduates also place greater emphasis on personal and social skills, while doctoral and post-doctoral students place greater emphasis on the interest in developing methodological skills. By participating, funded German and foreign university lecturers aim to strengthen intercultural competences and to gain a different perspective on the subject of German Studies and German as a Foreign Language. German and foreign university lecturers cite didactic competence development comparatively rarely as a motivation for participation. However, the interests of German and foreign participants differ most strongly in this group of funding recipients. For German university teachers, the aspect of getting to know current or new teaching and research methods within the project is not a prioritised motivation for participation, although many foreign university teachers do state this as their motivation for participation. It is also important for foreign university lecturers to get to know new contents in the field of German Studies, which is

rather less the case for German university lecturers. At this point, it must be emphasised that the programme design and implementation is more strongly oriented towards the interests and needs of the competence development of foreign university teachers.

The VAP-funded bodies also validate the relevance of the programme's objectives and the suitability of the funding measures offered for this purpose. Here, the evaluation highlights the research stays in Germany and the international exchange in VAP colloquia in particular. These make a significant contribution to the writing of dissertations based on current literature, the exchange of expertise and the timely completion of dissertations by foreign VAP doctoral candidates. The funding thus makes a relevant contribution to addressing individual career goals, which are seen by the recipients as being primarily in the doctoral and academic fields. The VAP programme thus succeeds in supporting those persons who are particularly interested in a career in academia and research, which is in line with the goal of promoting young researchers.

The evaluation at the level of the foreign German language and literature institutes found a high to very high relevance of the GIPs and VAPs. Here, the evaluation shows that the institutional needs along all capabilities are high (capability to act, to relate, to adapt, and to achieve coherence). Although there are nevertheless high institutional needs, the foreign institutes validate the suitability of the GIP and VAP funding measures to address these needs. At the same time, it should

be emphasised that the needs of the German Studies institutes in Germany are reflected to a lesser extent in the programmes. However, while a mutual exchange is still possible in a GIP, and the German institutes thus benefit relatively strongly from the programme, the VAP does not make this possible. This reduces the attractiveness of and demand for VAP projects. At the level of the funding recipients, the fact that most foreign doctoral students have at least one part-time or full-time job alongside their doctoral project also plays a role here. In some cases, this professional activity also limits the demand for VAP funding, as many doctoral students cannot get time off work, which is needed for the planned research stays in Germany. The evaluation shows that VAP projects have met this challenge by organising themselves within multilateral partnerships. In such partnerships, the parties involved succeed in ensuring a sufficient number of doctoral students worthy of funding and at the same time the parties involved increase the opportunities for exchange among themselves.

With regard to the achievement of goals, the evaluation illustrates that the effectiveness of both programmes is confirmed. In this regard, the evaluation team also comes to the conclusion that the two programmes are in principle subject to a sensible conception, since the impact hypotheses of the two programmes are plausible on the basis of the collected data. Thus, the evaluation shows that the programme instruments, such as the promotion of the format of colloquium workshops, by the participating institutes and the funded institutions, contribute to the achievement of the programmes' goals. It is also clear that the sponsored VAP doctoral candidates benefit from parallel GIP projects and participate in the corresponding exchange formats of the GIPs. For example, in the cases under consideration, VAP doctoral candidates participate in GIP conferences, which enables them to engage in a stronger exchange with German doctoral candidates and a broader public. Thus, synergies are created which are recognised and used by the participants (mediators) and those affected (direct target group). The supervision of the funded students, especially the joint doctoral supervision in the VAPs, as well as the preparation of the stays abroad are also positive features of the programme, which are perceived by the sponsored students as particularly important for their own competence development.

With regard to the level of the German Studies institutes, the evaluation team concludes that both programmes succeed in contributing to the institutional strengthening of the institutes abroad. This strengthening takes place along all of the examined institute's capacities: the institute's ability to act, to build relationships, to establish coherence within the institute, and to adapt to changing circumstances. For example, the programmes strengthen the institutes' ability to act and build relationships by supporting them in their promotion of young researchers and their international networking capabilities. The promotion of young researchers within the GIPs is particularly strengthened by supporting the modernisation and development of new study programmes. The (inter)national networking of both the GIP and the VAP foreign institutes is in turn strengthened by the increased

visibility at the (inter)national level, which in turn is enhanced by an increased number of publications, German guest lecturers from Germany as well as increased participation in (inter)national conferences. Nonetheless, the evaluation concludes, with reservations, that although the programmes make an important contribution to the promotion of the institutional capacities of the German Studies institutes, the structural challenges in German Studies abroad remain, which is shown, among other things, by the continuously high need for development that the foreign German Studies institutes identify despite successful GIP and VAP projects. However, it must be emphasized that, given the rather limited project scope, it is not to be expected that the GIP and VAP programmes can solve such structural problems.

With regard to the level of networks and partnerships, the evaluation also comes to a positive assessment of the achievement of goals. Both programmes succeed in initiating intensive and long-term partnerships and in strengthening existing partnerships. These partnerships result in very good working relations and a high quality of communication between the German and foreign German Studies Institutes. Another important finding of the evaluation is that both programmes support cooperation between German Studies institutes within a country and within the respective region. In this respect, the multilateral partnerships are particularly successful. Through exchange and competence development, they support a 'renewal' of the German Studies community, both within the respective country and transnationally in the region. This exchange promotes the quality of relations between the foreign German Studies institutes, which see themselves more as cooperation partners and less as competitors.

The results of the evaluation also show that both programmes succeed in developing long-term impact on the basis of the achieved objectives and succeed in making contributions to maintaining or increasing the attractiveness of the subject of German Studies and teaching the German language and culture. Thus, the results show that the GIPs extend the scope of action of the participating institutes and are used by the foreign German studies institutes to strengthen their visibility both internally and externally. This visibility is in turn important in order to underscore the attractiveness of the department to students and prospective young researchers by means of concrete offers (such as new teaching formats with German guest researchers), expanded research content and international exchange.

With regard to the recipients of funding, it can also be stated that both programmes reach those individuals who will remain professionally active in the German Studies Department after the funding has ended. Accordingly, the competences gained in teaching and research by the recipients remain with the Department of German Studies abroad and do not migrate to other professional sectors. However, while it is possible to support individuals who subsequently remain professionally active in research and the respective department, the effects on foreign secondary schools are small. Only a very small

percentage of GIP and VAP funded persons work in foreign secondary education, so that the long-term contributions to this sector are small. This is in line with the findings of the evaluation that only a small percentage of the research projects implemented in the GIP and VAP have contributed to didactics / German as a Foreign Language. In contrast to this, the integration of an intercultural perspective in teaching and research and the contributions to the establishment of institutional partnerships are very positive. The GIP and VAP are regarded by German and foreign German Studies institutes as low-threshold cooperation programmes that enable the establishment of multilateral partnerships.

With view to the implementation efficiency, both programmes show positive results, although opportunities for improvement can also be identified. It should be emphasised that the changes introduced in the programmes' implementation in recent years have contributed to increased efficiency. This is particularly evident in the extension of the approval period. While the number of GIP projects remained constant, the number of applications to be processed per year was reduced by more than half. Thus, on the part of the participating German Studies institutes, the annual submission of applications - and thus a major cost driver for participating in the programme - has been significantly reduced. The evaluation team also positively evaluates the fact that the DAAD has introduced a maximum funding period and project funding phases. On the one hand, these changes are accepted by the universities and the duration is perceived as adequate to achieve the objectives. On the other hand, these changes also encourage the universities to set medium-term goals for each funding phase. The evaluation further illustrates that both programmes have sufficient financial resources to adequately address the implementation goals of the applicant German Studies institutes. The complementarity and monitoring of the two programmes could be improved. The evaluation shows, for example, that both programmes do not yet have a strategy of their own that aims to develop synergies and thus overarching structural effects by means of complementarity and that describes how these synergies are to be achieved. It should be remembered here that it was already considered to

coordinate the two programmes when they were set up. These considerations are now being updated (see recommendations for action, scenario 1). In addition, the lack of a monitoring system and the previous reporting formats make it difficult to manage the programmes in an impact-oriented manner.

Finally, the results of the sustainability analysis underline that the effects and impacts of the GIP and VAP programmes can be assessed as overall rather positive, however, there are also aspects that limit their sustainability. According to the results of the evaluation, sustainability at the level of the individual and of the networks/partnerships is to a certain degree higher than the sustainability at the level of the German Studies institutes. With regard to the individual level, it is visible that former recipients of funding benefit particularly from their funded training of "soft skills" in a professional and thus sustainable manner. The evaluation also shows that many of the individuals sponsored by the programmes receive funding for more than three months in total and that they have a high level of awareness that the funding is provided by the DAAD. At the same time, however, many of the people receiving funding are not aware of the additional funding opportunities that the DAAD may make available to enable activities in research, teaching and networking even after the end of the projects. At the partnership level, networks and contacts are created which are used and valued sustainably even after the end of the funding, especially at the research level. At the institutional level, however, the evaluation shows that economic independence after the end of the funding period is considerably impaired by the fact that the institutional capacities of the foreign institutes, including financial resources, are limited and a concept or measures to ensure sustainable impact is rare. At this point, however, it should not be forgotten that no financial independence was to be expected under this funding and that the sustainability of the projects is reflected in other forms, such as long-term network formation and competence development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Strategic-conceptual field of action

Recommendation for action 1

The DAAD should merge both programmes for strategic-conceptual reasons and focus more strongly on long-term structural effects in order to strengthen efficiency, long-term effects and sustainability (scenario 1). To this end, a stronger link with other German language support programmes (e.g. guest lecturers, DAAD-Lektor Programme, etc.) could be established at the same time, and the establishment of national or regional competence centres could be considered, which address structural needs in a country or region through a network of German studies institutes (scenario 2).

Recommendation for action 2

Regardless of which of the scenarios described above is implemented, the DAAD should place greater emphasis on the added value of multilateral partnerships, when designing individual projects in order to make greater use of the associated advantages.

Recommendation for action 3

Regardless of which of the scenarios described above is implemented, the DAAD should promote German didactics in a more targeted manner, when further developing its programmes. Here, a stronger link between the German as a foreign language competence centres and the reformed GIP programme in particular could promote didactics of the German language.

Operational field of action

Recommendation for action 4

The DAAD should set up an impact-oriented monitoring system for GIP and VAP to enable systematic and databased management of the programmes.

Recommendation for action 5

In order to increase the visibility of research and teaching results, the DAAD should examine to what extent the establishment of a publication database can be sensibly implemented.

Recommendation for action 6

The DAAD should examine to what extent GIP and VAP recipients can also be classified as DAAD alumni in order to facilitate access to information and other funding instruments.

Publisher

DAAD
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service
Kennedyallee 50, 53175 Bonn (Germany)
www.daad.de

Responsible

Section S12 – Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation:
Mareike Fehling / Florian Hillnhütter
Section P33 – Project Funding for German Language
and Research Mobility: Stephanie Knobloch

Project Coordination

Dr. Esther May, P33

Implementation of the Evaluation

Syspons GmbH, Berlin, Germany

Olga Almqvist, Sarah Hinz, Matías Krämer, Lennart Raetzell (authors of the evaluation report);

Prof. Dr. Hans-Werner Huneke (Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg), Prof. Dr. Paul Sars (Radboud University), Prof. Dr. Alice Stašková (Universität Jena) (external experts)

Layout

DITHO Design GmbH, Köln
June 2020
© DAAD

This publication was funded to the DAAD by the Federal Foreign Office.

