

May 2013

The German Universities and the DAAD:
Partners in Development Cooperation

Declaration of the DAAD Executive Committee

DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

1. Higher education and science are keys to sustainable development. Their significance for German and international development cooperation is growing.

Effective systems of higher education are among the basic prerequisites for social and economic development. They are a powerful lever for achieving internationally agreed development goals and act as catalysts in the construction of sustainable systems of knowledge and innovation in the partner countries. Universities educate the leaders of tomorrow. Through teaching, research and mentoring, they make crucial contributions towards strengthening all levels of the educational system.

2. Measured against demands and expectations, higher education systems in many developing countries are lagging behind.

Universities are overcrowded and underfunded. Modern infrastructure, needs-driven research and highly trained university instructors are lacking. Moreover, the quality and relevance of existing degree programmes often remains far behind international standards. Development cooperation must face these challenges in order to enable developing countries to share in international progress and open up prospects for self-determined, sustainable development.

3. Global “knowledge-intense” challenges require more international cooperation as well as new forms of cooperation in multilateral networks.

The major challenges of the future can only be overcome through cooperation with science and research. Among these “knowledge intense” topics are climate change, the fight against global poverty, questions of security and immigration, food scarcity and resource depletion. In view of the increasing complexity of development issues such as these, it is in Germany’s interest and sphere of responsibility as a leading nation in science and research to cooperate closely with partners from developing and emerging countries in tapping into local knowledge and developing internationally sustainable solutions.

4. German institutes of higher education have acquired long years of experience, sustainable networks and proven competencies in cooperating with developing countries. These qualifications make them valuable partners for development cooperation.

The German universities have been working intensively with developing and emerging countries for years. Areas of emphasis are the education and advanced training of professionals, the modernisation of teaching, joint research activities and the improvement of university management. The education strategy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) acknowledges these contributions. The BMZ defines “Promote Higher Education and Research for Future Elites” as an independent policy goal and appreciates the resources and capacities that German universities invest in development cooperation.

5. The DAAD supports the German universities and their international partners in their commitment to development policy. The instruments developed for this purpose have proven effective and sustainable.

Through its programmes and educational cooperation projects with developing countries, funded primarily by the BMZ, the DAAD contributes towards transforming the universities in these countries into motors of development and facilitates their integration into the global knowledge society. An external evaluation attests to the high relevance and effectiveness of this work. Through the linking of individual and institutional promotion in particular, the DAAD is extremely well positioned for reacting appropriately to the needs of the partners and sponsored persons.

6. German universities and their partners bring their own interests and capacities to the cooperation, making long-term development success possible. The DAAD promotes

the strengthening of this partnership approach in the area of higher education and research.

With its funding programmes, the DAAD emphasises cooperation among equals, in which institutes of higher education in Germany and developing countries develop and implement projects jointly. These projects are directly linked to the interests of the partners, strengthen their self-responsibility and thereby facilitate the formation of sustainable structures and networks that continue long after the project period ends. Through the universities, national development cooperation is expanded by a civil society component, that opens up alternative approaches, which reach beyond bilaterally negotiated focuses, precisely in politically difficult contexts.

7. The DAAD is committed to gaining even more of the potential inherent in the knowledge and expertise of German universities for development cooperation with the goal of further increasing the contribution of higher education and science for sustainable development.

The DAAD supports interested universities in anchoring development cooperation as a distinguishing feature in teaching and research. It encourages donors to routinely incorporate university components in their thinking about central fields of cooperation in German development policy and to integrate German institutes of higher education more strongly as partners and multipliers in development cooperation. Commitment to development policy also requires the development and bundling of corresponding capacities at the German universities. The Federal Government should allocate additional resources for this purpose.

8. The DAAD wants to expand its involvement in the area of development cooperation and further improve the effectiveness and partner orientation of its activities and programmes.

In order to intensify the interlocking of science with development policy practice, the DAAD will continue to collaborate closely with actors of bi and multilateral development cooperation in the future and further promote networking among universities, economy and society. Capacities for monitoring and evaluation in the DAAD and at the universities are to be expanded and innovative forms of cooperation that correspond even more closely with the needs of the partners are to be developed.

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