

2030 Agenda: Diverse Activities of the DAAD



In mid-March 2017, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) welcomed numerous experts and specialists to an experience exchange on the United Nations' 2030 Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda established by the United Nations address 17 different subject fields, thereby also emphasising the significance of a high standard of education in meeting global challenges. The contribution of higher education and scientific research towards sustainable development was just recently the focus of a meeting of experts in Berlin which also highlighted the diverse activities undertaken by the DAAD in this field.

Recurringly noted down on yellow cards by the participants in a "Thinking Lab" at the Berlin expert consultation was one particular challenge: How can one bring together the various actors such as universities, aid organisations, political institutions, and companies to cooperate successfully on development projects in the field of higher education? As a well-functioning example, the Thinking Lab presented the NoPa ("Novas Parcerias/New Partnerships") project.



Participants of the Thinking Lab at which the NoPa (“Novas Parcerias/New Partnerships”) project was presented.

NoPa is a German/Brazilian programme for the promotion of practice-oriented research partnerships. Since 2010, the DAAD has been cooperating in NoPa together with GIZ , Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the CAPES agency of the Brazilian Ministry of Education: The aim of the programme is to promote research-based and simultaneously speedily usable innovations supporting sustainable development. This includes, among other things, staging matchmaking events which take place very early on, just after the DAAD’s invitation to tender for cooperation funding. These events are attended by representatives from higher education institutions, research institutions, companies, but also by policy-makers and development cooperation fieldworkers. This enables the attendees to work together on their joint tenders at an early stage. It thereby also ensures that the research questions are formulated in such a way that the results can later be used efficiently in practice.

International Meeting of Experts

The Thinking Lab in which NoPa was presented was part of the conference entitled “Role of Higher Education, Science and New Alliances in the Context of the 2030 Agenda”. The international experts meeting was staged by the DAAD in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), the GIZ, and KfW Development Bank. The event took place on 20/21 March in Berlin and was attended by around 100 experts, including a number of DAAD representatives, who came together to debate the significance of higher education and science in promoting sustainable development. According to the United Nations’ 2030 agenda adopted in 2015, both these areas are to receive greater focus and consideration in achieving the [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs) [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs].

Promotion of Africa’s Young Scientists and Researchers

In addition to supporting cooperation projects such as NoPa, the DAAD contributes to achieving the SDG through many other activities. For example, as regards SDG 4 “Quality education for all”, awarding additional scholarships to students from the least developed countries is expressly in line with this goal. Especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of students is growing at a terrific speed. For example, Kenya’s volume of students increased greater than fivefold between 2010 and 2016, to over 500,000. “It is hence enormously important to turn out new and well-qualified higher education teachers with the appropriate training right now”, says Christoph Hansert, head of the DAAD’s Development Cooperation section. It is with this objective in mind that, with funding provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and De-

velopment (BMZ), the DAAD has at the last count already awarded over 600 additional scholarships to ongoing African higher education teachers, especially for their training at [Centres of Excellence in Africa](http://www.african-excellence.de/home/) [<http://www.african-excellence.de/home/>].



Pictured discussing the potential of Bilateral SDG Graduate Schools in another Thinking Lab (seen from the left): Taki Sithagu (University of the Witwatersrand), Aditya Kumar (Development Action Group), and Lars Gerold (DAAD)

The new DAAD programme “Bilateral SDG Graduate Schools”, likewise funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), also contributes towards achieving the United Nations’ new development goals. The DAAD’s programme funds the establishment of a total of seven SDG Graduate Schools in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In these cooperations, German universities and their international partner universities jointly turn out experts and lecturers at Masters’, doctorate, and postdoc levels. The objective is to sustainably strengthen the structures for interdisciplinary research and the funding of young scientists and researchers at the local higher education institutions and elaborate solutions for key SDG topics. At the 2030 agenda conference in Berlin, representatives of the South African University of the Witwatersrand and the Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) presented their joint Graduate School which has its focus on sustainable urban development. It is a matter of getting the population to actively participate – a point emphasised in Berlin by Aditya Kumar, director of the “Development Action Group” from South Africa that is intensively involved in this cooperation between the two universities. “Given the high growth of urban populations, it is very important to develop structures that are sustainable and encourage participation at local level”, explains Professor Philipp Misselwitz, chair of the HABITAT unit at the TU Berlin.

Working on Concrete Problems: Water

Access to clean water, the topic of SDG 6, is another focus of the DAAD, bringing together key actors in the field of water management to cooperate on working out sustainable solutions. For example, the universities of Siegen and Kaiserslautern together with the Freie Universität Berlin (FU), with the cooperation of Kenyan universities, DAAD alumni from East Africa, Kenyan Water Action Groups, the DAAD, and GIZ, jointly staged a seminar in Kenya at which the participants from research and practice focused on the objective of providing clean water to poor urban residents via “Action Research” in the slum areas. Apart from the technical implementation side, it has become clear that a still greater focus of higher education institutions and development cooperation is especially needed on organised crime in water management and on intelligent flood management in slums. Another example is that as recently as in March 2017, the DAAD staged a water “alumni talk” in Hanoi, attended by former funding recipients from Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Myanmar,

and Thailand, for the purpose of debating water and environmental issues in their countries from the perspective of various specialist fields. “These are the kinds of measures by which we help build up interdisciplinary teamwork to resolve concrete problems”, explains Christoph Hansert.



Dirk Messner: pleading the case for the joint creation of new knowledge

Findings of the Experts Meeting

The key message was given out to the conference participants by the director of the German Development Institute (DIE), Professor Dirk Messner. In addition to adapting and applying global knowledge to local situations, “joint knowledge creation” will in future become ever more important in seeking to achieve the SDG by 2030. As does Germany and leading German companies, development cooperation must set aside 3% of its budget for research and development; today it is still a long way from achieving that target. Such an increase can only be achieved by a huge expansion of innovative cooperations undertaken by higher education institutions, development cooperation stakeholders, and new actors from trade and industry and civil society. Pilot projects for cooperations reaching beyond own areas of expertise were presented in diverse forms at the experts meeting in Berlin. Now the only thing missing for this expansion is the funding.

Hendrik Bensch (31 March 2017)