

Research Design and Preliminary Results of the Scientific Study of the Funding Programme “Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Networks“

**DAAD Conference „Going Forward – Strategic Partnerships as a
Driver for Internationalisation“**

Berlin, 18 April 2016

Prof. Dr. Georg Krücken
International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel
INCHER–Kassel
Universität Kassel
kruecken@incher.uni-kassel.de

The International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel (INCHER–Kassel) at the University of Kassel

- **Strong Interdisciplinary Orientation;** Broad Focus on Higher Education: Research, Teaching, Third Mission, Governance and Organization
- **Currently 35 Researchers** (including Ph.D. Students, High Level of Third Party Funding)
- **Strong International Orientation:** International Projects, Conferences, Guest Researchers, Publications, Networking
- **Academic Focus:** Ph.D. and Postdoc Training, Relevance of a Variety of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches, Long-term Oriented Research, Peer Reviewed Journal Publications
- **Transfer and Collaboration** with Practitioners in the Field, e.g., Conference „University Governance: Impeding or Facilitating Creativity?“, Hannover–Herrenhausen, September 29th and 30th, 2016

Scientific Study of the Funding Programme “Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Networks“

Coordinating Researcher Dr. Yasemin Kooj, INCHER

DAAD Focus on **Institutionalisation** and **Sustainability** of the Programme at University Level (Long-term Effects)

Three Successive Project Goals:

The Analysis of

- 1) Initial Phase of Generation of Ideas and Project Planning
- 2) Realisation in Projects
- 3) Sustainability of Projects

Conceptually: Social Innovation Perspective (Rogers 1962; Baldrige/Burnham 1975; West et al. 2004; Howaldt/Schwarz 2010)

- Here: Individual Projects as Social Innovations
- Focus on Generation of New Concept, Realisation, Institutionalisation and Diffusion within Organisation
- Focus on Social Innovations, not Technological Innovations
- Increasing Importance of Studying Social Innovations
- No Clear-cut Model on Emergence and Diffusion of Social Innovations

Conceptually: Universities as Organisations with Specific Internal Governance (Musselin 2007; Hüther/Krücken 2016)

- Recent Emphasis on Universities as Strategic Actors (Clear-cut Goals and Missions, Strong Leadership, Accountability etc.)

In Comparative Organisational Research, however, Universities as:

- Loosely Coupled Systems (Departments, Administration/Scientific Staff)
- Organized Anarchies (Unclear and Open Decision-making Structures)
- Governed by Academic Profession (Strong Role of Scientific Staff, in Particular Professoriate, and Bottom-up Initiatives)

Tensions between “New” and “Old” Models of University Governance

Implications for Generation and Diffusion of New Ideas

Conceptually: Evaluation Research (Bergmann et al. 2005; Stockmann 2007)

4 Success Factors:

- Properties of Actors
- Institutional Support
- Planning and Realisation of Project
- Communication

Variety of Research Methods and their Combination ("Triangulation")

- All Data Remain Anonymous, No Disclosure of Participating Projects and Individuals!
- Document Analysis (Grant Applications, University Strategies, Reports to DAAD etc.)
- Online Questionnaires (Different Target Groups)
- Focus Groups (Different Target Groups)
- Individual Face-to-Face Interviews
- Individual Telephone Interviews



Success Factors: General Findings and Concrete Examples

Properties of Actors (Success Factor I)

- ✓ Generation of Ideas as **Collective** Process (vs. Theoretical Expectation)
- ✓ High **Intrinsic** Motivation
- ✓ High Degree of **Previous International Experiences** (Study and Work Experiences Abroad, International Projects)
- ✓ **Pre-existing** Network Contacts
- ✓ High Importance of **Coordinators**

- ± **Low** Personnel Turnover in Projects
- ± **High** Involvement of Project Leaders (Not Just Symbolic / Representative)

Institutional Support (Success Factor II)

In General:

- ± Active Involvement of University Leadership in SP
- ± Interest of University Leadership in TN
- ✓ Support by University Administration
- ± Financial Support by University

Diffusion of Social Innovations in Universities:

- Challenge for SP: From Central Units (Administration, Leadership) to Decentral Units (Departments)
- Challenge for TN: From Decentral Units (Department, Institutes, Working Groups) to Larger and more Central Entities

Institutional Support (Success Factor II)

High Involvement of University Leadership in SP if

- “Flagship Project” or “Prestige Project” due to Regions, Countries, and Universities Involved
- Embedded in Internationalisation Strategy
- Previous Investments in Partnership

High Interest of University Leadership in TN if

- Personal Ties to Project Leader
- Particular Relevance of Research Area for University
- Project Embedded in Internationalisation Strategy

Planning and Realisation of Project (Success Factor III)

- ✓ Huge Variety of Activities (TN, SP)
- ✓ Exchange and Mobility [(Doctoral) Students, Scientific and Administrative Staff]
- ✓ Conferences and Workshops
- ✓ Networking Activities

- ± Structural Innovations (e.g., Common Teaching Programmes):
 - Financial Constraints
 - Time and Commitment
 - Administrative Obstacles / Compatibility of Higher Education Systems

Planning and Realisation of Project (Success Factor III)

Examples of Good Practice:

- ✓ Establishment of Web-based Support System that Provide Information on the Project
- ✓ Broad Inclusion of Junior Researchers and Students
- ✓ Constitution of Long-term Summer Schools with own Structures and Financing
- ✓ Expansion of the Network, Inclusion of New Members
- ✓ Applications for New Common Research Projects

Planning and Realisation of Project (Success Factor III)

- ± Existence of Steering Committees (Positive Role)
- ± Continuous Self-evaluation and Necessary Modifications
- Different Network Models: SP with Focal Organisation, Multilateral and Heterogeneous Networks Structures in TN

Communication (Success Factor IV)

- ± Critical: Decision-making Structures, Modifications of Time-table not always Clear
- ✓ Positive and Trustworthy Communication Climate (Longstanding Relations and Knowledge of Involved Persons and Institutions)
- ✓ Informal and Flexible Modes of Communicating
- ✓ Mix of Face-to-Face and Technically Mediated Communication
- ✓ Role of Online Platforms and other Forms of New Media: Changes over Time



Thank you!