

KFH

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Strategy

Applied Research and Teaching in Partnership with Developing and Transitional Countries

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1. Environment, general background

Globalization is bringing about a growing amount of international networking of economic and social connections. For example, in the field of modern technology in the industrial countries there is a growing international market for research services which are financially supported by business. In the framework of global production chains, companies are active in industrialized countries as well as in developing and transitional (D&T) countries. In other fields too (e.g. health, social development, education) the importance of international networking and cooperation is growing.

These developments are spawning new challenges and opportunities for teachers and researchers at the universities of applied sciences. Teachers must not only prepare graduates for an international environment in terms of expertise, but also in terms of working in an intercultural context. Researchers must find their place in and interact to a greater degree within an international environment. In this environment cooperation with developing and transitional countries should be of special interest to universities of applied sciences (UAS). These countries must expand their own capacities in order to integrate on a global level. In this context, application oriented research (aR&D), the specialty of UAS, assumes an important role. Under the economic, social and technological conditions in these countries research which delivers the most direct benefit in the form of applications is essential.

Research with and in developing and transitional countries under the aspect of global integration is certainly also in the interest of industrialized countries. However, the private sector tends not to finance research whose profits are difficult to internalize. That is why research with D&T countries cannot be financed exclusively by the market, but must in part also be viewed as an international, public good.

This is the point of departure of support by agencies for development work (In Switzerland, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation: DEZA) in research. They make available funds sustainability to strengthen institutional and individual research capacities in D&T countries. At the same time, they are interested in seeing to it that specific, development relevant research results are generated. For this purpose they work purposefully together with Swiss research experts in areas which are important for questions of development.

At the moment, research in development and cooperation still bears the heavy imprint of the universities because they were once involved in this field. In application-oriented research the universities of applied sciences, however, have a competence which, for one, is of enormous importance for developing and transitional countries and, for another, supplements university research. Considering the rapid economic development in threshold countries, moreover, the interest of the private sector in Switzerland and in the D&T countries in this specific research competence will no doubt increase.

The formal bases for this involvement from the perspective of the UAS are the expanded mission (application oriented research and development, services for the benefit of third parties and cooperation with universities and research institutions at home and abroad) as well as the goals defined by the Swiss federal authority (*Bund*) which requires more aR&D involvement on the part of UAS and greater national and international networking. In terms of development cooperation the act creating the DEZA defines its mission as being to promote scientific research in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid and to support academic training and the teaching in these subject areas.

Objectives defined by the *Confederation*

The universities of applied sciences shall intensify their special role as an engine of innovation at the interface between practice and science. They shall expand their cooperation with implementing agencies and other universities, network their research activities and assure the transfer of research results.

Hence, application oriented research in cooperation with partners in developing and transitional countries offers universities of applied sciences a good opportunity to position themselves in the international research environment and to intensify their international networking. At the same time aR&D provides the basis for making teaching responsive to requirements placed on graduates in an international environment.

2. Experiences

Currently there are at least 50 UAS branches, departments and universities of teacher education involved in a cooperation with developing and transitional countries. Some of these UAS already have competence centers for cooperation with D&T countries (e.g. SHL Zollikofen, Center for Development and Cooperation of the Bern University of Applied Sciences AHB, the Institute of International Cooperation in Education of the PHZ in Zug) or are creating them. But their involvement mostly takes place on the level of individual departments and emerges from the initiative of individual teachers who are interested in the subject area. Moreover, at different UAS adult education modules are being developed for development and cooperation subjects and sustainability. Hence, the cooperation with development and transitional countries is certainly important for some UAS, although in their formal mandates (mission, strategies of the UAS) there is no explicit mention of the priority of the subject.

Institutionally, the subject area on the level of the UAS, or KFH, is currently represented by the university of applied sciences working group (WG-UAS) which administers the DEZA financed program for the Initiation of Research Partnerships with D&T Countries. Moreover, there is an ERFA group Development Cooperation at Universities of Applied Sciences in which the teachers carrying out the corresponding projects can share their experience.

Potential and benefits of this kind of cooperation are presented in the evaluation of the DEZA financed program Initiation of Research Partnerships with D&T Countries and elsewhere. To date, the program has co-financed 53 projects of 32 school extensions or departments. Independent of this program, diverse UAS carry out research and advisory assignments for development and cooperation (EZA) agencies. There is evidence that these projects enable the UAS to build competences and offerings which are not only growing in importance for D&T countries and, hence, for EZA agencies, but also generally speaking in the context of a globalized world economy. The cooperation promotes the national and international networking of the UAS. The UAS cooperate both with universities and universities of applied sciences as well as with private enterprises and NGOs in D&T countries. In Switzerland this results in cooperations between universities and companies. The cooperation leads to greater competence in the management of research projects both in the Swiss UAS as well as in the D&T partners. It permits student exchanges and the establishment of new courses. Frequently, what results is a modification / enhancement of curricula and teaching methods and the bond between research and teaching is improved.

Besides this direct, practical benefit for the UAS, the cooperation with developing and transitional countries also promotes ethical solidarity and aspects of foreign policy (international positioning of Swiss research).

The experience in the competition for research funds available from the DEZA and the Swiss National Fund for projects with D&T countries reveals the potential of application-oriented research (as comparative advantage of the UAS), in comparison to basic research in this field. However, the public funds available to finance activities like these are relatively modest and potential partners from the private sector willing to finance such projects must first be convinced of the benefits of this kind of cooperation. Hence, while the benefits for the UAS justify increased involvement in this area, the financial arrangements pose an enormous challenge.

3. Mission

In the context of an increasingly globalized economy and society, the Swiss universities of applied sciences have their own interest in cooperating with developing and transitional countries on teaching and research. This is their way of assuming responsibility for balanced global development. The interaction and cooperation with partner institutions in D&T countries form the foundation on which students and teachers in teaching and research can come to grips with development cooperation and, by doing so, acquire and deepen their competences in an international and intercultural context.

4. Objectives

General

- Universities of applied sciences and their partner institutions in developing and transitional countries expand their teaching and research capacity in matters related to global sustainability and development.

Research objectives

The universities of applied sciences

- Build knowledge and research capacities in application-oriented research at the UAS on the personnel and institutional level and at the partner institutions in D&T countries.
- Promote knowledge transfer between teaching, research and application and between the UAS and the partner institutions in D&T countries.

Teaching objective

- The UAS offers its graduates opportunities to acquire expertise and methodological competence in matters related to development and intercultural cooperation.

Instruments

- Research partnerships with D&T countries
- Experience and knowledge sharing by forming networks, by educational opportunities for teachers and students and by exchange programs for teachers and students.
- Courses on the subject EZA / Sustainability
- Institutionalized transfer of the results of application-oriented research into teaching and practice by cooperation with users (private business, public administration, society)

5. Organizational form

General

For the implementation of the strategy the KFH has provided for three measures:

1. Establishment of a Coordination Office
2. Agreement with DEZA
3. Establishment of a network

Coordination office

The Coordination Office is *part of a general secretariat*. It is located by contractual agreement at an UAS. The costs of the Coordination Office are born by:

- Contributions from the universities of applied sciences
- Contributions from other associated organizations which are recipients of services
- Contributions from the DEZA program
- Overhead contributions from research and service assignments generated by the network (3% of the overall turnover volume, maximum of CHF 10,000.00)
- Proceeds from contributions for events
- Proceeds from other services.

The Coordination Office is controlled by a *Control Group* consisting of representatives of all 7 UAS. The Control Group is also made up of one representative each from the UAS-Kalaidos and the SKPH by invitation. The Control Group is chaired by one representative of the general secretariat of the KFH.

The Control Group

- Submits a proposal to the general secretariat for the election of the coordinator
- Manages the Coordination Office strategically (defines focal points, drafts development plans etc.)
- Approves the Coordination Office's annual program
- Monitors the performance of the DEZA program and if needed sends a proposal to the KFH
- Nominates the representatives of UAS and Universities of Teacher Education (PH) in the approving body of the DEZA program
- Supports and advises the coordinator
- Approves the reports of the coordinator
- Reviews budget and accounts and communicates to the attention of the KFH.

The Coordination Office

- Organizes in a suitable manner a network among teachers of the UAS and PH in teaching, research, and services who are interested in cooperation with D&T countries,
- Implements the DEZA program Promotion of Research Partnerships of Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences with Developing and Transitional Countries,
- Seeks outside the DEZA additional funding for teaching and research partnerships with D&T countries,
- Offers network members and the institutions supporting the Coordination Office services against a reasonable charge for the costs,
- Mentors as much as time will allow working groups arising in the context of the network,
- Assures information and experience sharing both within and without the organization,
- Organizes conferences and educational events for the members of the network,
- Represents the network to the public,
- Maintains contact with other institutions and networks with a similar or identical orientation, especially with those in university environments.

The Coordination Office is managed by one coordinator (20 percent part-time appointment).

The coordinator is provided with additional secretariat and bookkeeping resources.

Requirements for position: researcher with experience in cooperation with D&T countries, leadership position or experience at an UAS

Agreement with DEZA

The KFH concludes an agreement with DEZA on the Program for the Promotion of Research Partnerships of Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences with Developing and Transitional Countries. The program is conducted by the Coordination Office.

Tasks of the Coordination Office for the DEZA program

1. Inform target recipients (UAS and PH) about program
2. Compose a team of experts to advise project writers and to process project applications for consideration by the Assessment Committee,
3. Execute the resolutions of the Assessment Committee, secretariat of the Assessment Committee,
4. Acquire evaluation reports and preparation for the Assessment Committee,
5. Handle the financial transactions related to the program,
6. Represent the program in public,
7. Write reports to be sent to the KFH.

(The tasks and the principles of the composition of the Assessment Committee are specified in the agreement with DEZA.)

Tasks of the KFH

Conference

- Resolution to establish the Coordination Office (incl. financing) and decision on location
- Concluding agreement with DEZA regarding program
- Approval of program reporting to be sent to DEZA

General secretariat

- Agreement with UAS regarding location of Coordination Office
- Head of Control Group
- Election of coordinator
- Representation of program to the DEZA.

Network

To anchor the subject of EZA and the processing of the DEZA program to the UAS a network consisting of interested UAS, extensions or departments / institutions and teaching is established.

A network offers the following advantages:

- Existing resources can be brought together without heavily hierarchical administrative structures and processes.
- The extension of the structure can take place in steps on the basis of concrete experiences and by means of sharing between those interested in the subject and involved partners. This means that, to the extent which new UAS participate, the subject area will be on a broader footing.
- The subject is developed on the basis of effective benefit for the participants, not solely on the basis of the institutional mandate.

Purpose

By means of the effective networking of the universities of applied sciences or their institutions and the interested teachers and in close cooperation with additional partners (public administration, public and private corporations, etc.) the following should be achieved:

- Acquisition and exchange of knowledge and skills (competences) in the field of development cooperation.
- Reinforcing the role of the UAS in the field of EZA by external and internal communication of competences and comparative advantages of the UAS
- Support of the UAS in making contacts with partner institutions D&T countries
- Influencing the awarding of research funds in the field of EZA, and mobilizing funding for activities of the UAS in the field of EZA.