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“Technological and Institutional Innovations
for Sustainable Rural Development”

Sustainable Rural Development and the Role of Higher Education

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Abstract

Thinking about the contribution of an organisation like the DAAD to a conference topic like “Technological and Institutional Innovation for sustainable Rural Development”, and thinking of rural development in developing countries or emerging societies, a linkage between Higher Education and this topic can easily be drawn. A closer look at the key words in the conference title shows different facets of Higher Education involvement taking into consideration that Higher Education is the major player in knowledge creation, knowledge transfer and knowledge application.

The phrase “Technological and Institutional Innovation” implies that there is an existing infrastructure that has to be renewed or improved. With respect to Higher Education the necessary improvement can be brought about by the universities themselves through international co-operation, which is essential for sharing the up-to-date knowledge. Only with that up-to-date knowledge the problems of rural development can be solved more rapidly and more efficiently. Especially the field of all tropical sciences show, that this co-operation benefits all parties involved and that it helps to identify strategies for research, infrastructure implementation and training measures. From the DAAD point of view it is the bi- and multilateral co-operation between scientists and departments, that is responsible for a significant “Technological and Institutional Innovation” on a very operative level in the last decades. Mutual study and research visits have made it possible to focus on problems like those of rural development, define new research areas and identify funds to finance various projects. The key word “Sustainable Development” is from the DAAD’s point of view closely related to individual training measures. We observe in all sciences a rapid fast growth of available actual scientific knowledge and new technological generations replace older ones rapidly. A sustainable effect, as suggested in the title of this conference, can only be achieved by investment in brains, an investment in qualified staff at the institutions of Higher Education, that develops innovation and finds suitable applications. Qualified staff is necessary for solving the problems of rural development, for any appropriate infrastructure implementation, and this qualified staff has to be developed and further trained on a very high level through life-long contacts with colleagues, training measures, a system of courses. The DAAD is willing to support the opportunity to take part in the necessary academic co-operation.

Keywords: Life long learning, mutual cooperation, qualification, knowledge sharing