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COFER EFORD: Education for Development

Summary

Research and education are fundamental to sustainable development. This project entitled Education for Development (EFORD) aims at improving academic and vocational education of re-searchers and professionals who work on and in development and conflict-affected contexts. By improving the coordination between distinct educational institutions (universities, universities of applied sciences, vocational training schools, independent research centers) and their curricula it will reduce the gap between research results and their actual uptake. EFORD works together with social sciences, natural sciences and health sciences to draw on findings and transcend traditional disciplinary clusters. In terms of policies, EFORD follows an SDG16+ approach according to which the promotion of peace is closely linked to the development of just and inclusive societies. Health policies and natural resource and ecosystem management policies are crucial to the development and to the well-being of all societies. In terms of research, EFORD will concentrate on the generation of “interface-knowledge” between the three polices mentioned and on science-practice transfer knowledge.

The results gained will serve to better combine research and education for development and to inform the design of teaching programs beneficial to achieving the SDGs. The interdisciplinary findings will facilitate cooperation across disciplines for the design of a “blueprint” curriculum (output) and optimize the knowledge base necessary for the achievement of the SDGs (out-come).

The produced “Clusters of Integrated Education for Development” (COIED) will be innovative in the following three dimensions: a) They will provide thematic connections between the areas of health, natural resource and ecosystem management, and peacebuilding; b) They will provide research-practice connections transcending university and vocational training curricula; c) They will suggest financing models how to support such educational clusters in view to sustain the developed offers and to multiply them into other thematic and geographic areas relevant for the attainment of the SDGs.

Furthermore, they will include new techniques how to institutionalize educational partnerships in terms of exchange schemes for faculty members and students and in regard to the implementation of new distant learning and teaching techniques including MOOCs and blended courses.

EFORD will be coordinated by swisspeace which has already has contacts with the three partner institutions in the Global South (Birzeit University in Ramallah, University of Juba, Centre Suisse de Recherche Scientifique in Abidjan) thanks to past collaborations. swisspeace also has research collaboration experience with CDE und Swiss TPH which bring in the needed competences in the policy fields involved. New partners will be the HAFL, the SFIVET and the TCHE. These three partners will contribute pedagogical, didactic and technical expertise needed to designate, analyse and fill the gaps between the different forms of education and curricula.

In the frame of EFORD, the following SDGs are of primary relevance: SDG3: Good health and well-being, SDG4: Education quality, SDG15: Life on land, SDG16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals.

While the importance of education for development is commonly acknowledged, little is known on how research results on development are being fed back into and taken up by educational and vocational programs. The EFORD project therefore takes a meta-level focus on education and combines it with a thorough assessment of didactic practices and curricula in different disciplinary fields and their practical fields of application. The results gained will serve to better combine research and education for development and to inform the design of teaching programs beneficial to achieving the SDGs.