

# swissuniversities

## SUDAC Programme

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## COFER PRO GED: Promoting gender equality and diversity through shared knowledge production

### Summary

This pioneering project entitled "Promoting Gender Equality and Diversity through Shared Knowledge Production" (PRO GED) aims at fostering scientific exchange on the levels of research, education and institution building in the field of gender and diversity. It is a joint cooperation between three Swiss Institutions of Higher Education (the University of Zurich as the leading house with the University of Geneva and the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz as official partners) and several official partners in the Middle East and North Africa (the ISIS Center for Women and Development and the International Institute for Languages and Cultures, INLAC, in Fez/Morocco; the Women and Memory Forum in Cairo/Egypt; the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, IWSAW; and the Department of Social Sciences, DSS, at the Lebanese American University in Beirut/Lebanon). PRO GED will be coordinated by the Chair for Gender Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Zurich, with its decidedly non-Western focus and its firmly established national, international and regional networks.

Taking the two key concepts of gender and diversity as its core concerns, PRO GED aims at fostering scientifically based competency in dealing with the complexities of relations of difference and inequality in a globalised world. The main objective of the project is to develop a collaborative platform for gender and diversity expertise and excellence in research and education between Switzerland and North Africa and the Middle East. PRO GED's distinctive and innovative approach is constructed around three main focal points:

a) Research, knowledge production and knowledge circulation: In making knowledge production and knowledge circulation in both research and education its main focal point, PRO GED privileges an innovative, interdisciplinary approach that combines social sciences, the humanities and natural sciences with transcultural competencies, as has already been successfully explored at the University of Zurich. PRO GED aims at overcoming traditional disciplinary boundaries and at developing new, timely and highly relevant perspectives on existing concepts and terminologies through cross-regional, transnational and interdisciplinary dialogue; while promoting research "with" instead of research "on" a region of utmost social and political relevance.

b) Bridging the gap between academia and society: PRO GED focuses on shared knowledge production and knowledge transfer to contribute actively to reducing inequalities based on gender, religion, class, ethnicity and nationality. By promoting and disseminating concerted expertise in the field of gender and diversity, PRO GED aims at academic as well as practical solution finding in different institutional settings and methodological contexts and adds new value by enabling collaborative efforts at bridging gaps between "theory" and

“practice”, re-search and implementation, and, more generally, between academia and society at large.

c) Network and institution building: PRO GED is based on previously established contacts between the Chair for Gender Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Zurich and the Southern partners in the MENA region as well as on a strong existing network between the Swiss partners that has evolved during the process of institutionalising gender studies at Swiss Institutions of Higher Education over the last decade and a half. Building upon this basis, PRO GED aims at intensifying and concentrating these networks, extending them to new partners, and fostering targeted collaboration between Swiss and Southern partners in a highly democratic and respectful manner.

The project's focus lies on the SDGs of gender equality (5) and reduced inequalities (10), followed by quality education (4), peace, justice and strong institutions (16), and partnerships for the goals (17).

Expected outcomes of PRO GED are the building and consolidation of a platform for the continuing development of sustainable forms of collaboration on gender and diversity in research and education via the following activities and concrete measures:

1. Organising academic events, such as conferences and major workshops centred on the three main thematic fields of memory and development (1), the production and circulation of gender and diversity knowledge across institutions (2), and access to public space (3).
2. Elaborating educational programmes, such as a graduate course on collaborative cross-regional and transcultural gender and diversity studies, as well as exchange programmes.
3. Preparing targeted joint publications for both academic and non-academic fora.
4. Facilitating transfer of knowledge and expertise in gender and diversity among academia, activists and practitioners across the involved regions with a strong focus on competence and capacity building.

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