An Academic Network for Africa’s Development: The Pan African University

Support of higher education, research and knowledge transfer

Objective

The Pan African University Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change) (PAUWES) in Algeria – embedded in the PAU’s overall structure – contributes to the advancement of higher education and to sustainable development in Africa with (applied) research in the water and energy sector and also with regard to climate change.

Challenges

For the future of Africa, key sectors such as water and energy as well as emerging challenges such as climate change are of great significance. The development of approaches to tackle these challenges in a solution-oriented manner can be supported through the training of highly-qualified professionals and managers, through applied research as well as innovation and technology transfer.

Up to now the African higher education sector still lacks high-quality graduate and doctoral programmes which comply with international standards and are internationally recognised. Moreover, knowledge transfer only takes place to a limited extent and the African science sector only marginally connects and contributes to international academic discourse. Many talented young academics from Africa as well as professionals and managers pursue careers outside of the continent and their innovative capacity is lost for Africa.

Our Approach

In 2008, the African Union Commission decided to found the Pan African University (PAU). The PAU is to become a network for academic excellence on the major challenges the continent is facing. In addition to that, it is to serve as an example in the higher education sector.

The PAU has five institutes in North, West, East, Southern and Central Africa focusing on different themes. The programme implemented by GIZ and KfW supports the African Union and the Rectorate of the PAU as well as the establishment of the PAUWES in Tlemcen, Algeria.

The focus of the GIZ’s support of the AUC is on:

- Advisory of the AUC on the development of the management structures of the PAU and on ensuring academic independence.
- Strengthening of the planning and implementing capacities of the Rectorate through organisational and strategy advisory and the support of academic quality management.
- Supporting the coordination with international donors.

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Regional integration through education: the Institute for Water and Energy Sciences of the Pan African University in Algeria brings together students from all over Africa.
The focus of the GIZ’s support regarding the establishment of the PAUWES institute is on:

- The development of international master and doctoral programmes and the establishment of the prerequisites for applied research.
- Establishment of institutional structures and strategy planning as well as advisory on the development of university management and administrative structures.
- Support of the cooperation with international academic partners as well as with the public, private and civil-society sector.

The KfW Development Bank is funding the rehabilitation of the PAUWES campus with a focus on energy efficiency and barrier free access. In addition to that, KfW is going to finance high-quality teaching facilities and laboratory equipment as well as ICT in order to establish a learning and research environment which is characterised by excellence. Moreover, the provision of scholarships for PAUWES students constitutes human capital investments. Contributions are also made to the salaries and mobility expenses of the lecturers.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is subcontracted by GIZ and supports the recruitment, selection and financing of the teaching personnel as well as the networking with German universities.

Results

One of the first results is the establishment of an efficient communication and information culture between the institutes of the PAU network as well as the partner organisations and donors. In cooperation with the partners and international academic and professional representatives curricula and study programmes have been developed which are tailored to the specific needs of the African continent. The programmes in the energy as well as the water sector with a focus on engineering and governance comply with international standards. An international commission has selected students from all over Africa for both master programmes which were launched in October 2014. With regard to academic networking PAUWES has entered a first cooperation with a German university consortium. First steps towards the development of the research agenda and for the preparation of the doctoral programmes have been initiated.

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