



APPLIED SCIENCES GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATION 2035

Prerequisites for sustainable
cooperation with Africa
(UAS Africa)

By 2035, Africa successfully generates innovations and creates sustainable prosperity

Applied Sciences are the key

1

Practice-oriented training at both the vocational and academic levels is an important political goal for all African countries. This is the only path to innovative and sustainable development, to which Germany can contribute.

2

The German model of universities of applied sciences (UAS model) is the most suitable template for tertiary education in Africa. It has a unique value proposition: its practice- and demand-oriented education is built on feedback from the industry. The transfer of this philosophy together with African institutions of higher education has proven to be beneficial and needs to be promoted.

3

Close interaction between industry and academia must relate to the realities of life in African societies. German UAS can contribute to a paradigm shift leading to a greater appreciation of occupationally relevant qualifications as well as practice- and application-oriented research.

4

African countries' potential for innovation is very high. Entrepreneurship education and a start-up infrastructure must be integrated at universities, which also promotes women in particular. This will benefit both the African and the German partners, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

5

UAS are low-threshold drivers of innovation and are quick to transfer new technologies into practice. This makes them particularly suitable for promoting the economic development of the partner countries through cooperation on an equal footing with Germany.

UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES AS A MODEL FOR AFRICA'S FUTURE

Despite a growing rate of academization, many African countries lack skilled workers in essential sectors. At the same time, a high percentage of graduates are unable to find adequate employment because their qualifications do not meet the needs of the labor market.

One important reason for this is that many African universities are not sufficiently oriented towards the practical application of scientific knowledge. Experience in cooperation with African partner universities shows that often there is little awareness for the benefits of closely collaborating with each other.

Competence-oriented student internships and theses in companies are just as rare as teaching assignments for practitioners, contract research and the like. Moreover, teaching staff at African universities usually have no experience of their own in the private or public sectors beyond higher education. This reinforces the distance between university teaching and professional practice, as lecturers are unable to provide students with insights into the practical work in their fields of study or to establish networks with potential future employers.

In Germany, UAS form the link between the worlds of academia and business. For the past decade, African decision-makers have increasingly taken notice of the German UAS model. In various cooperation projects¹, UAS have been able to prove that it is possible to successfully transform African universities. They have succeeded in revising curricula in a practice-oriented manner, in establishing structures for business cooperation, in founding start-up companies from within the universities, in employing lecturers with practical experience, and much more. The next step is to consolidate these initial efforts and make greater use of the UAS model to transform African academia. This requires a participatory approach that particularly involves women and ensures adaptation to the African context.

By promoting applied teaching, research and transfer in Africa, Germany can fulfill its international responsibility for sustainable development. In this way, strategic partnerships with African institutions are strengthened. Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises in Germany and Africa benefit from practically trained professionals.

¹ They were supported by pioneering programs of the DAAD (e.g. the programs "University-Business Partnerships", "Entrepreneurial Universities"), the BMBF (e.g. the program "Partnerships for Sustainable Solutions with Sub-Saharan Africa"), the BMZ/GIZ (e.g. the program "Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector") and individual state governments.