

IIE Networker

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HIGHER EDUCATION and INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

University Initiatives that Promote International Development

Leadership Training and Development

Higher Education and Community Development

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About the Cover: Inter-American Foundation (IAF) Grassroots fellowship recipient Lauren Baker speaks with a Quechua indigenous federation president and a Shipibo shaman in Loreto, Peru. The IAF was created in 1969 by the U.S. Congress to fund the self-help initiatives of the organized poor in Latin America and the Caribbean and the groups that directly support them. The IAF disseminates research findings of its fellows to a broad audience concerned with development. IIE has partnered with the IAF to administer its Grassroots Development Fellowship Program.



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The University of Cologne's Capacity-Building Project in Myanmar

By Stefan Bildhauer and Susanne Preuschoff

THE UNIVERSITY OF Cologne's internationalization efforts aim to contribute to solving the ever-changing challenges facing global society. The University of Cologne's (UoC) cooperation projects with countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, referred to at UoC as the Global South, combine these objectives to create research collaborations that contribute to knowledge generation and exchange, and serve as capacity-building measures to support institutional development.

Institutions that do not engage now will miss the right opportunity to be involved in the rapid development of countries in various regions of the world. That is why UoC has had a key focus on Asia for many years now. The University as a whole, and all six faculties of UoC, have developed partnerships in most Asian countries through the Department of East Asian Studies and the Institute of Indian and Tamil Studies. Asia is regarded as a region of strategic importance for extended international engagement (especially in China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and Cambodia). The current process of transformation in Myanmar is especially important, as it offers changes and includes challenges alike.

With funding from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), UoC is a partner in the process of internationalization in

Myanmar. Yangon University in Myanmar is spearheading the work within the country, and Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand and Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia are also involved.

UoC and Yangon University have had a strong relationship for many years, ever since a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 23 August 2004. Multiple activities such as joint research, teaching and field work activities, joint publications, seminars, and internships have followed since then.

The partnership has supported the work of UoC professor Dr. Frauke Kraas, who is currently serving as visiting professor at the University of Yangon's Geography Department. Dr. Kraas recently published work analyzing the current transformation processes of Yangon in Myanmar as a spearhead of national development, and as a bridge to Southeast Asia and the world.

In 2005, UoC along with Yangon University, began conducting fieldwork on a study of Yangon's Theingyi Zay market as part of the greater study on the country's transformation and development.

In December 2012, UoC helped organize a "Housing for People and Urban Heritage for all" forum on urban development in Yangon in December 2012, along with Myanmar's Ministry of Construction. Dr. Kraas co-hosted the forum. Speakers at the event spoke about important urban development



The University of Yangon's Commencement Hall. President Barack Obama gave a speech at the hall in Nov. 2012.

initiatives, including the importance of green and open spaces. Officials from Myanmar's Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD) and experts in urban development from Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Malaysia also participated.

Dr. Kraas and other UoC and Yangon University officials are currently setting up proposals and suggestions for studies of additional cultural urban heritage sites. ■

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