Globalisation and the internationalisation of research and teaching simultaneously push and pull universities to engage with and compete in the transnational education market. Over the past twenty years a unique German model of TNE ‘made in Germany’ has developed in the world of cross-border education. Applying a practical, policy-oriented perspective, this paper identifies typical features and motivations behind German-backed TNE projects and analyses their inherent challenges, good practices and success stories. Significant policy lessons learnt are summarised for stakeholders and a future outlook scenario on successful and sustainable TNE ‘made in Germany’ is provided.

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1. Transnational education ‘made in Germany’: An introduction

Over twenty-five years have passed since the pioneering days of cross-border or transnational education (TNE). Nonetheless the sector continues to grow rapidly, and with it the challenges for higher education institutions and policy have grown likewise. Australian universities were among the first higher education providers to ‘invest’ abroad, with British and American higher education institutions following close behind. It took German universities until the year 2000 to start exploring systematically the opportunities to be found in the international higher education market, even though a number of individual initiatives go further back. Since then, a unique German model of TNE ‘made in Germany’ has developed and positioned itself globally. Hitherto, most German TNE ventures have been driven by the idea of mutual benefit through cultural exchange and they therefore differ in their genesis and practical nature from American, British or Australian projects. German TNE, however, shares with its international competitors the desire to enhance its international prestige and reputation, to build up profitable research, teaching and sponsorship networks, to increase student recruitment and to widen catchment areas.

This paper sketches German universities’ position in the world of TNE from a practical, policy-oriented position. It identifies and analyses the typical features of German-backed TNE projects and highlights the underlying motivating factors. Prevailing challenges, best practice examples and success stories from the past twenty years are discussed and followed up by the ten key policy lessons learnt for successful and sustainable TNE projects. An overview of current and future policy issues concludes the article. The three authors of this paper belong to, and represent here, the ‘Higher Education Projects Abroad’ department of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst – DAAD), which runs government funded programmes to financially support and advise German higher education institutions in their TNE engagement. The paper purposely focuses on highlighting the typical (i.e. different) German profile of TNE, rather than giving a comparative account of international approaches to transnational education.

Transnational education, cross-border or borderless education - these and other terms exist to describe the phenomenon of mobile degree programmes. Along with the diverse terminology comes a variety of definitions that encompass an even wider range of activities in the field of international higher education. The term ‘transnational education’ was coined in the 1990s with the intention of differentiating student mobility from the then emerging mobile degree programmes which ranged from franchising to foreign-backed universities. The sense of the term may still extend to include mobility of individuals, as is the case in the definition used by the OECD: “…cross-border
higher education includes higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders” (OECD 2005, 7). One of the earlier and rather basic definitions best characterises the DAAD’s understanding of transnational education ‘made in Germany’. Following the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (1997), transnational education denotes any learning activity in which the students are based in a different country to the country where the home institution providing the education is located. This approach implies that either the German or the cooperating foreign ‘host’ institution (or both) award the degree(s) and, consequently, that the distinction between a joint or dual programme and a transnational programme may well be blurred. For this reason the DAAD emphasises the issue of academic responsibility in its definition of transnational education projects. Accordingly, in German TNE projects the German university acts as educational provider and sets the standards for curricula and academic quality benchmarks, within an otherwise mutually cooperative framework.

2. The German partnership model

2.1 Collaborative policy practice

Part and parcel of the German approach to cross-border education is that, typically, it targets project partnerships between institutions which are based on an equal footing and on the idea of win-win situations for all the institutions involved. This implies that German and foreign partners should be equally committed to aligning their interests and to actively pursuing the success of the TNE project. At the same time they have an equal share in the academic and image benefits arising from and through the partnership.

The initial objectives of a TNE partnership usually comprise a) expanding global networks for alumni, research and teaching, b) improving the participants’ international image, c) possibly introducing an international branding process for the institutions involved and d) extending the catchment areas for the recruitment of talented students (and staff). In contrast to many of their international competitors, German universities involved in TNE partnerships usually refrain from targeting financial gain, at least as a main motive (see section 2.3 for further details).

Collaborative policy practice is a main strand in the different models, features and expressions of German-style transnational education. The majority of TNE is pursued either in a so-called ‘bottom-up’ or in a
The ‘classic’ model of German TNE

The ‘classic’ model of German TNE exports a specific Bachelor’s or Master’s degree programme from a German to a foreign university. Transnational programmes offering a Ph.D. degree component are less widespread. In most degree export programmes the foreign partner essentially provides its infrastructure and, together with the German home institution, elaborates curricula, a system of shared teaching, and student services; the German partner, meanwhile, is responsible for the academic and the remaining administrative contents and necessities. These collaborations are partnerships on an equal footing and usually stem from long-standing study exchanges or research collaborations, which have already proved successful and mutually beneficial. Typically, German TNE degree programmes are initiated by personal academic contacts and designed and implemented through the teamwork of all collaborating institutions. Handouts 1, 2 and 3 illustrate three practical cases of German degree export programmes.

By applying this so-called ‘bottom-up’ approach, German universities deepen already established international collaborations. This approach has been shown to stand a good chance of sustainable success, since on the one hand it builds on existing demand for the programme while on the other it relies on established and functioning communication and organisational cross-border structures (partially because relatively few partners are directly involved and because project management is thereby less bureaucratic). A potential weak spot can arise when the bottom-up TNE project is not correspondingly embedded and espoused at senior management and planning levels. Ideally, although this in fact remains a permanent challenge, any TNE commitment instigated bottom-up should be an integral part of and reflect the wider university planning and internationalisation strategy (see section 3.2).
In collaboration with Qingdao University of Science and Technology, the University of Paderborn has offered Bachelor’s courses in Mechanical Engineering since 2001 and in Chemistry since 2006 – in China. The languages of instruction are Chinese and German. 40% of students continue their studies at the German university in Paderborn, as well as at the Universities of Siegen and Koblenz, which are also partners in the programme. The Chinese Ministry of Education has approved the courses, which feature curricula and assessment criteria and standards set by the German partners, until the end of 2025.

Founded: 2001
Student numbers: approximately 1,000

Handout -1 Chinese-German Technical Faculty with Qingdao University, China

In collaboration with the Universidad de Chile and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg University has established the Heidelberg Centre in Santiago de Chile for postgraduate study and further education in International Law. The Centre is run as an association subject to Chilean civil law and offers a Master course in International Law as well as regular summer schools. The degree course is accredited in Chile. Students write their research thesis at the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg. The successful co-operation has recently been expanded into neighbouring countries and now also includes degree programmes in Natural and Medical Sciences.

Founded: 2002
Student numbers: 30

Handout -2 The Heidelberg Centre in Santiago de Chile, Chile

Relatively few German universities establish international branch campuses; in contrast, this type of TNE is the most favoured by, for example, Australian universities. The German Institute of Science and Technology TUM Asia in Singapore and the FAU Busan in South Korea (see Handout 3) are two exceptions. A branch campus is an off-shore satellite, operated with a foreign partner university, which usually requires the host country’s official approval. International branch campuses demonstrate the challenges involved in building TNE projects in partnership with the (local and/or German) private sector and with appropriate political approval. They do not necessarily require a foreign university partner. In terms of collaborative policy practice these
interactions can include sponsorship relations, work placement networks, teaching contributions by companies or graduate fairs. They improve local integration and the level of acceptance by future students by providing better employability prospects; they strive to enhance the financial and social sustainability of the project and are sought after to address skills shortages in their recruitment. At the same time, however, deep involvement with the private sector presents certain risks of compromising the independence of research and teaching.

The University of Erlangen-Nuremberg has set up an international branch campus in South Korea and offers a Master programme in Chemical Engineering and Bio-engineering (and the opportunity to do a doctorate) at the new Graduate School. The branch campus has represented a unique model of German TNE in South Korea ever since the country opened its educational market to foreigners in 2005. FAU Busan is located in Busan-Jinhae Free Economic Zone and is supported by Busan Metropolitan City and the Ministry of Knowledge Economy Korea. It also functions as a research centre and intensive research collaboration is planned with German and Korean universities and companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Founded:</th>
<th>2010 (2011 first student intake)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student numbers:</td>
<td>approximately 10</td>
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Handout -3 Friedrich-Alexander University Busan, South Korea

2.2 German-backed universities

An excellent and well-known example of the cooperative approach of TNE ‘made in Germany’ is the so-called foreign, or German-backed, university. According to Lanzendorf (2008a), a foreign-backed university is defined as an independent university, which is academically associated with and ‘backed’ by one or several mentoring universities abroad. The mentoring universities take charge of curriculum development, quality assurance and the training of local teaching staff; they usually also export staff to the foreign-backed university and engage in fundraising activities. Besides Germany, the US and, increasingly, British universities, as well as France, Canada and Switzerland are active in the field of foreign-backed provision; Australia is not involved (Lanzendorf 2008b).

Since the 1990s German university consortia and foreign partners have – with the support of public and/or private funding – founded and in almost all cases successfully established several foreign backed universities abroad, including the German University in Cairo, the
German-Jordanian University, the German University of Technology in Oman, the Vietnamese-German University, the Kazakh-German University and the Turkish-German University. Many of these have effectively turned into beacon models of German higher education abroad, leading Lanzendorf (2008a, 5) to conclude that the German-backed university model “... offers an opportunity for amalgamation and adoption of different national types of teaching and higher education organization to engender truly ‘transnational’ higher education”.

A unique feature of German-backed universities is their comparatively strong national profile, in contrast to, for example, British and French-backed universities (see Lanzendorf 2008b). In many cases study exchanges or work placements in Germany are integral components of the courses on offer, while comprehensive German language schemes as well as measures to secure the commitment of German staff are in place.

Often, albeit not always, German-backed universities are political ‘top-down’ initiatives, deriving from a declaration of intent by two heads of state or ministers. *De facto* they become bi-national projects, often corresponding to (expectations of) foreign policy, cultural policy or international development policy and strategy. Typically, a consortium of German universities, rather than a single institution, backs the foreign university: a) in order to offer it the opportunity to engage with German higher education institutions of all sizes and specialities (see Handout 4 for the case of the Vietnamese-German University), and b) in order to shoulder the extensive demands that such an endeavour makes on the capacity for project management among the various partners.

The Vietnamese-German University [VGU] is the first Vietnamese public university to be set up in the framework of a foreign partnership. VGU is a so-called *New Model University*, conceived and supported by the government as a catalyst to the reform of Vietnamese higher education in line with the German Humboldtian tradition (i.e. unity of teaching and research, institutional autonomy). The World Bank has sponsored the construction of a new campus for VGU. The university currently offers four research-led Master’s and one Bachelor’s degree in Engineering and Economics. In 2009 an academic and administrative *coordination office* was *established for VGU’s consortium network* consisting, among others, of 15 universities and 17 universities of applied sciences.

**Founded:** 2008

**Student numbers:** approximately 200

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**Handout -4**  
*Vietnamese-German University, Ho-Chi-Minh-City, Vietnam*
Clearly, a consortium network organisation renders TNE project management (even) more multi-facetted. Project management becomes project governance. On the one hand, the demands on administrative and academic effort are high(er) and the decision-making processes potentially slower. On the other, consortium-led universities receive wide visibility and publicity. Their stakeholders can therefore potentially count on greater reputational and academic outcomes and on better access to private sponsorship. At the national level, German-backed universities, even if not born of political initiative, may effectively develop into impact factors on the cultural-political relationship of the two countries involved.

Some TNE consortia opt for previously unknown kinds of partnership between educational institutions. Of particular interest in the German case are co-operations between the two traditionally rather independent types of German universities, research-led universities and the universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschule), with the latter providing more technical and application-oriented higher education (see Handout 4).

2.3 Subject priorities and financial perspectives

The majority of globally run transnational education degrees focus on MBAs and Computer or related Sciences. In contrast, German TNE projects disproportionately feature Engineering and Natural Sciences, both of which subjects have a long-standing tradition in the German education system. When functioning as educational export products, these subjects represent German excellence in learning, teaching and research abroad.

German projects tend to be focused on aspects of financial sustainability, rather than on financial gain. An exported German degree programme in Engineering or Science, by its very nature, requires in the first place, greater financial investment in (laboratory) equipment and a lower student-staff ratio; it thereby presents a greater financial risk and a lower likelihood of financial return. Secondly, public and political expectations in Germany, in contrast to many other societies, have long been related to a traditional understanding of education as a public good which should be freely available. With regard to TNE, this is mainly understood to be start-up funding, with the project committed to introducing measures designed to secure financial sustainability thereafter. By contrast, for Australian or British universities, prospects of financial gain or at least financial balance underpin the rationale for TNE engagement, since their governments tend not to give financial support for TNE.
Effectively, it is government funding that allows German higher education institutions to take their first transnational step. At the same time, and thirdly, the moderate living expenses and student fees to be found in Germany mean that the financial gap between cross-border and home-delivered German programmes is not as huge as is the case in the United Kingdom or the United States of America. This can be a decisive factor in foreign students’ acceptance of German TNE degree programmes. The German TNE sector thus faces the particular challenge of having to offer different added values and/or having to address additional needs of its target groups. These added values and attractions include, for example, a reputation for excellence in certain subjects such as Engineering and Natural Sciences, unique curricular content, innovative combinations of degree pathways, collaborations with business and industry or between research-led and applied learning and teaching, and/or special cultural induction, tutoring and mentoring programmes.

In this specific context, the educational provision of German universities of applied sciences has become a sought after export product and is seen as a unique German strand of TNE ‘made in Germany’ contrasting with the Anglo-Saxon model. One of the largest export projects to adopt this system of application-oriented learning and teaching is the German-Jordanian University, as illustrated in Handout 5:

The German-Jordanian University’s [GJU] curricula and structure are based on the model of German universities of applied sciences and are backed by a consortium of about 60 partners led by Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences.

Practice and application-related teaching in about twenty degree programmes are the principal offering at the Jordanian state university. A particular feature is the year in Germany, which is an integral part of all courses: every Bachelor student spends the fourth year of study at a partner university in Germany and as a placement student with a German company. GJU runs a comprehensive German language scheme and has made language lessons obligatory.

- Founded: 2004 (first student intake 2005)
- Student numbers: 2,500

Handout -5 German-Jordanian University, Amman, Jordan

Although different and – in international terms – sometimes unique, the German approach to TNE has proved through its practical outcomes that it can work successfully (notwithstanding the many challenges that remain). As the director of the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education notes, to some extent this success is based on a well-coordinated and integrated macro-level policy.
well-coordinated and integrated macro-level policy (and funding) context. Indeed, to use his words, German “…international student recruitment policies are integrated with national trade and cultural policies, economic and research agendas drive international partnerships and recruitment, and collaborative partnerships are based on mutual gain rather than financial returns” (Lawton 2011). In this context, German TNE can be understood as a response to the pressing questions of our time: cross-border and interdisciplinary collaboration is mandatory for those higher education teaching and research systems that aim to promote an understanding of global challenges, the human competence to solve them, the necessary role of democratic transition and the potential for partnership between diverse cultures. Section 3 below picks up this thread of the argument at the level of micro-level policy, in order to identify particular key principles that can make a (German) TNE project a success or a failure.

3. Policy setting and policy advice through a German lens

3.1 The German Academic Exchange Service and TNE

The DAAD is the largest funding organisation for international academic exchange in the world and, among other things, supports the internationalisation of German universities. In many ways the role played by the DAAD in the development of German transnational education is unique, since it functions simultaneously as sponsor, service provider, project administrator, moderator and partner:

- The DAAD sponsors German higher education projects abroad with public and private resources, supporting in particular human resources, student scholarships, mobility and German language provision. It exercises financial control and applies wide-ranging quality assurance measures, including independent selection, strict project monitoring and evaluation procedures.

- The DAAD has actively accompanied almost 100 successful TNE projects. In the process, and aided by its global network of 14 branch offices, 51 information centres and over 400 DAAD lectors, the DAAD, and in particular its “Higher Education Projects abroad” department, has gained long-standing experience and sufficient know-how to take on project management for educational export projects on its own account. The ‘Higher Education Projects Abroad’ department is currently in the process of setting up a TNE competence centre, the main task of which will be to further rein-
force its consulting, information and guidance services, as well as its network relationships, in order to offer this knowledge as an international service to higher education stakeholders.

- The DAAD equally functions as a partner, first contact and liaison service for German and foreign universities, partner institutions and other educational providers who wish to become involved in TNE. For some larger TNE projects, such as the Turkish-German University in Istanbul, the DAAD functions directly as coordination office, central administrator and moderator for the various German and foreign stakeholders involved.

3.2 Ten lessons learnt: key principles for a successful TNE project

On the basis of its experience, the DAAD has derived ten key principles to help guide university senior management, project coordinators and TNE practitioners in their work. The core principles guarantee adequate quality assurance and sustainability when applied appropriately to a TNE project.

1. Know the relevant contextual conditions

A decision on whether or not to engage in transnational education should be based on ‘hard facts’. Is there sufficient demand for the prospective programmes? How do the higher education systems of home and host country differ, in particular in respect of graduates’ educational achievements and competence levels, learning cultures with regard to foreign languages, learning and teaching styles? In what way do these differences affect the mode of TNE operation? What legal conditions apply abroad? Which specific resources (e.g. money, staff, expertise) will be needed to set up and run the TNE programme?

2. Integrate a TNE programme within the structures and processes of the home institution

The aims and objectives of a TNE project should be embedded in the university’s internationalisation strategy and their implementation integrated into institutional structures and processes. In this way, the existing know-how and best practice developed ‘at home’, for example with regard to staffing or legal issues, admissions, co-operation procedures, can be applied to the TNE project. The risk of failure is thereby limited, and with it the risk of loss of positive image. Equally, a successful TNE project can be used as a powerful marketing tool for the whole university.
3. **Ensure professional project management**

Setting up a transnational degree programme, an entire faculty or even a new university abroad requires professional project management. Experienced staff must be hired and the existing staff adequately trained. Tasks and procedures need to be clearly identified and communicated to all parties involved; significant project management tools, such as milestone and financial planning, have to be developed, monitored and specified on a regular basis.

4. **Guarantee sound financial planning**

Any TNE engagement requires a certain amount of financial resource in its start-up phase. Besides ensuring that this input is secure, it is important to engage in detailed forward planning on how the project will generate sufficient revenue to support itself sustainably, or even generate profit in the future. Potential sources of funding include the university’s or the partner institution’s own resources, private companies or public funding as well as – to an increasing extent – tuition and other fees, as well as research revenue. Financial planning in the context of TNE also involves necessarily dealing with variable exchange rates, international money transfer charges and different national legislative frameworks. Financial planning also includes measures guaranteeing that enrolled students have the opportunity to finish their studies, in the event of the project failing.

5. **Design and agree on the modes of collaboration:**

Any collaboration should be based on principles of fairness and mutual respect, taking into consideration the different cultural backgrounds and traditions. A contract formalising the modes of cooperation is essential to mark the official status of the partnership. The contract should entail, among other aspects, the agreed inputs, outputs and powers of all partners, arrangements for student fee collection, distribution and purpose of use, as well as procedures for a premature annulment of the partnership. The exporting institution should ensure that its logo and intellectual ownership of the degree programmes are respected and that certain academic and administrative standards and benchmarks can and will be applied. A steering committee holding decision-making control over the joint project, representing home and host institutions adequately (with at least half of the seats going to the home university), should be set up.

6. **Assure the quality of teaching**

As a minimum requirement the quality of the degree abroad must match the quality of the original programme. Quality standards are required in particular for admissions procedures, curricula and teaching, study con-
ditions and student services, lecturing staff and research facilities. Other important issues to be accounted for include the language(s) of instruction, language scheme facilities, the legal framework for sending staff abroad, as well as the monetary and non-monetary incentives available to them. The need for a formal accreditation (and if so, which one) is to some extent subject to the unique setting of the host country; however, it is strongly recommended that all transnational degree programmes be accredited either by internationally recognised agencies or according to the standards of the home country. The transnational degree programme should award either the original degree(s) of the home institution or a bilaterally recognised joint degree.

7. **Carry out quality assurance measures:**

TNE programmes should undergo the same quality assurance procedures as all regular programmes in the home institution. The outcomes of these should be integrated into the processes of programme review. This is particularly important for the so-called bottom-up generated TNE projects. Experience has shown that the senior management of the institution and by extension the overall planning processes are often not as deeply enmeshed with the TNE operation as sound quality management systems would ideally require. Proactive and long-sighted quality management also entails reflection on the promotion of research components in often teaching-only TNE projects. Not only does research development in the TNE setting positively stimulate (the quality of) teaching, graduate employability and postgraduate recruitment, it also encourages academics to commit longer to the project. Moreover, research grants present an additional source of revenue and a contribution to sustainability.

The German University of Technology (GUtech) in Oman dates back to an Omani initiative to establish a TNE model different from the Anglo-Saxon projects which dominated the region. RWTH Aachen University is the German partner backing and supporting GUtech in all academic and administrative matters. GUtech awards joint degrees. The university is funded by a private sponsor; the role of RWTH Aachen is, besides the provision of curricula and staffing, to establish and oversee a comprehensive quality management system for administrative learning and teaching processes at GUtech, such as is already operational in Aachen. The involvement of all levels of operation and leadership is a focus of the quality assurance process, with the next planned step being the incorporation of research activities.

Founded: 2007
Student numbers: approximately 280
8. **Supply transparent information:**

The exporting institution should ensure that information about admissions, curricula, examinations, study conditions, student services, tuition fees, visa processes, course requirements and degree pathways is correct, up to date, complete and easily accessible. Information that allows the (future) student to gauge the quality of the degree programme (accreditation, formal recognition of the degree awarding institution, recognition of the degree in the host country and internationally, employment prospects) should be given central attention. It is essential to bear in mind that a student in the setting of the TNE programme may have a distinctive background and may prioritise information in a manner other than that of a regular home student. Marketing campaigns, student services and public relations management must also respond to these varying educational and cultural settings and expectations.

9. **Secure sustained staff engagement**

It may be an exciting experience to go abroad to teach for the first time; however, practical experience suggests that this enthusiasm tends to wear off with time. Securing continued staff commitment to the TNE project is crucial for its success, although often a difficult undertaking and one of the main challenges for any TNE endeavour. To counteract the risk of understaffing, measures should be set up which, for example, guarantee that a teaching-focused commitment abroad does not disadvantage an academic research career but instead counts towards internal promotion. With many TNE locations not naturally associated with outstanding research facilities, staff recruitment sustainability criteria require that priority be given to capacity connections between teaching and research facilities (at least in forward planning). The parallel recruitment of local and international staff is recommended. Special dedicated train-the-trainer programmes, possibly delivered by retired lecturers, could help to minimise potential quality risks. A combination of home, locally and internationally recruited staff has been shown to offer a sound yet flexible foundation for a TNE project. It is of equally fundamental importance for the sustainability of the transnational venture that the degree programme is academically and administratively embedded in the home institution. When individual members of staff resign, the effects on programme operation and management should thereby remain limited.
The West Saxon University of Applied Sciences in Zwickau [WHZ] exports a revised version of its Bachelor course in Computer Sciences to the KSUCTA in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The partners have set up a Kyrgyz-German Department of Computer Science in order to enhance the quality of student training and to improve graduates’ employment prospects. Graduates are given the opportunity to continue their studies at Master level in Zwickau. After graduating, they are then scheduled to assume teaching responsibilities in the export programme in Bishkek, thus successfully completing the cycle of academic staff recruitment.

Founded: 2004
Student numbers: approximately 170

10. **Attribute a national profile to the TNE project**

Any transnational degree programme should convey a special and unique national profile that facilitates recognition by the potential partner and by prospective students and helps create a brand for the university. In the German case each TNE project needs to define whether to use German as the language of teaching, whether to run study exchanges to Germany, what proportion of German lecturers to deploy and whether to seek special relations with German companies (possibly located abroad), for example to offer work placements to students and to foster (sponsorship) relationships with the private sector. In the latter case, German language instruction to foreign students will not necessarily be a priority but should be decided on a case-by-case basis. If recruitment for continuing home-based postgraduate studies is one of the TNE project aims, students of the programme should be professionally trained in German and the appropriate means and infrastructure should be provided (compare Handout 7 and Handout 8).
The patron University of Ulm served as the model for the oldest and most ambitious German TNE project, the German University in Cairo [GUC]. GUC is a private university foundation offering 31 Bachelor, 41 Master degree and Ph.D. programmes focusing on Engineering, Technology-based and Natural Science courses. Besides the University of Ulm, the Universities of Stuttgart, Tübingen and Mannheim are co-operating partners in the project. An intensive transnational student and staff exchange has been developed, with up to 700 GUC students and academic personnel spending one or two semesters at the German partner universities each year. Each student is required to study German, while the language of instruction is English.

Founded: 2001 (first student intake 2003)
Student numbers: 8,000

4. Where do we go from here? Outlook and conclusion

Global demands for education continue to grow. Globalisation and the internationalisation of research and teaching continue to push and pull universities to position themselves in the transnational education market. Some classic TNE importers like China and Malaysia have begun to be involved in the export of degree programmes themselves. New TNE markets are being opened up, especially in densely populated regions of the world such as the African continent, as well as in countries like India and Brazil which have only recently opened their legal doors to foreign higher education institutions. The UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010 refutes the entrenched view that societies in the Global South cannot make rapid progress in expanding their education systems (UNESCO, 2010). Simultaneously, the social and economic transition processes in the Arab world are generating huge potential for international co-operation in higher education. Nowadays universities are perceived as powerful engines of social, cultural and economic change at national and international levels.

Against this background of current developments, we believe that German universities – just like their international competitors – should not be content with their TNE achievements, but should progress their transnational collaborations to an even higher level of quality, approaching new partners to test new concepts of partnership-on-equal-
footing, intensifying teaching-research relationships and fostering their links with the private sector. The rapidly growing German-backed universities in the Middle East, in particular, need to move into a new phase of intensive joint strategic development. The equal partnership policy characteristic of TNE ‘made in Germany’ provides a sound foundation for intensified engagement in established and evolving markets and partnerships. German universities and policy makers need to combine their expertise in order to consolidate their approaches strategically. Together they face the following tasks:

First, the ‘TNE made in Germany’ label should be strengthened and comprehensively implemented in partnership projects of all types, albeit always carefully tailored case-by-case to local contexts and conditions. German universities should be made aware of, and motivated to use and communicate, the label and its main features.

This paper has identified the salient features of the German approach to transnational education as follows:

- A transnational education project implies that the academic responsibility lies with the exporting mother institution.
- Partnership on equal terms between the German and the foreign partners is the key element of any collaboration and ensures a good chance of success and sustainability.
- Bottom-up and top-down approaches to the development of TNE exist and operate in parallel, with the proviso that increase in size usually results in more top-down input.
- The focus of German TNE is on the export of degree programmes and German-backed universities, rather than on international branch campuses and franchising.
- The objectives of TNE ‘made in Germany’ are reputational and recruitment gains, fruitful research and teaching networks and financial sustainability, rather than financial profit (at least in the first instance).
- Application and practice-oriented systems of learning and teaching, such as those characteristic of universities of applied sciences, are popular export products, as are the cost- and staff-intensive subjects of Engineering, Natural Sciences and technology-based disciplines, supported through a network of work placements and business contacts.
- German language provision and facilities, German teaching staff and close relations with German universities and, in some cases,
German companies form an integral component of TNE ‘made in Germany’.

**Secondly, project management tools and practices** must be gathered and communicated more widely, so that the expertise and lessons learned can be shared among the TNE community and the positive synergies utilised. In addition, new forms of learning and teaching models in transnational education should be explored. For example, e-learning and blended learning have hitherto been under-used in German cross-border education as complementary means of teaching and learning. In this regard German universities should take recourse to the expertise gained internationally and apply it to the German TNE situation where appropriate. This is one way to find innovative solutions to the problems posed by the sustainability of staff commitment to TNE projects.

**Thirdly, a debate on the German conception of higher education** is needed, together with a decision on whether and how its defining features should be transferred into transnational projects. This means, for example, addressing the German tradition of student self-governance and its role in transnational education projects, especially at the German-backed universities. Another item for debate is the Humboldtian tradition of the unity of teaching and research, its relevance to TNE projects, and the strategic and policy responses to it. In order to strengthen the research component in the specific context of German TNE, particularly innovative approaches referring to applied research and to the private sector are recommendable here.

In order to meet these challenges, the DAAD has joined forces on the policy front with German universities and with the German Rectors’ Conference [HRK]. Together they are in the process of a) anticipating a debate on the place of the German higher education paradigms in TNE, potentially resulting in a Code of Conduct setting out the standards of TNE ‘made in Germany’. Such a code could then act as a new tool of enhanced quality management for German TNE. The DAAD and HRK also plan b) to produce a manual of best TNE practices ‘made in Germany’ as a set of guidelines for project practitioners. They will c) jointly develop a policy checklist for higher education senior management, offering systematic decision-making advice on whether or not to engage in TNE. With global competition in the world of transnational education continuing to grow, German higher education appears to be well placed to meet the challenge, just as long as its stakeholders remember what TNE ‘made in Germany’ stands for.
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