

15th S-DHG Forum 2025

Forum of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Higher Education Group

Challenging times: Communicating the Value of Higher Education Cooperation with the Global South to Decision Makers and Stakeholders

12–14 November 2025, Vienna

Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD),
Ebendorferstrasse 7, 1010 Vienna

About the S-DHG Forum

The Forum of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Higher Education Group (S-DHG) is an annual gathering of prominent agencies, international organisations and associations dedicated to supporting and funding higher education in international cooperation. The objectives of the S-DHG Forum are to share expertise and experience, to enhance cooperation among funding and implementing agencies of capacity development and cooperation programmes, and to provide a networking platform for relevant resource organisations in the higher education and research sector. Initially DHG (former name) was set up to bring the Paris Declaration (2005) into practice, hence the reference to the aspect of donor harmonisation. However, at the first meeting in Scheveningen, the Netherlands in 2010 that objective proved to be unrealistic, as most educational cooperation programmes had a strong reciprocal benefit policy. However, the ambition to prevent overlaps in activities, to find ways to collaborate with each other, and to share expertise and experiences continued to guide the annual meetings since then. The responsibility for organising the forum rotates among the participating organizations, as no permanent structure has been established.

S-DHG Forum 2025

In 2025 the S-DHG Forum will take place in Vienna. It is hosted by Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD) and supported by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-Dir).

Further information, as well as details on registration and organisational matters, can be found on our website: <https://appear.at/sdhg2025>

Theme of the S-DHG Forum 2025

In the S-DHG Forum, a core belief in the significance of international partnerships is shared. Higher education collaborations with the Global South create substantial benefits not only for partner countries but also for European institutions, the global academic community, and

societies worldwide. Such partnerships address critical global challenges, including poverty alleviation, climate change and sustainable development. However, to sustain and increase support during crises, amid a shifting global security landscape and increasing pressure on development cooperation budgets, it is essential to communicate this value effectively to decision-makers and stakeholders, including government officials, institutional leaders, and private sector partners. To achieve this, an evidence-based narrative that highlights mutual socio-economic benefits, long-term impact, and alignment with the SDGs is needed. This should incorporate best practices, research findings, case studies, evaluation reports, and impact studies. The objective of this year's meeting is therefore to reflect on the shifting discourse in development cooperation and to discuss communication and advocacy strategies. Participants will explore concrete actions—such as drafting a joint position paper—and identify collaboration opportunities, including initiatives like Global Gateway, to advance collective goals and enhance the overall impact of the work of the organisations within the forum.

Programme of the 15th S-DHG Forum 2025

As of 11 November 2025

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

19:00 **Welcome Reception**
Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD)
Ebendorferstrasse 7, 1010 Vienna

Thursday, 13 November 2025

08:30 – 09:00 Registration and Coffee

09:00 – 09:20 Welcome

- **GERHARD VOLZ**, Head of Department for International Cooperation in Higher Education, OeAD
- *Reflections on Knowledge Production in Times of Alternative Facts*, **ANDREAS OBRECHT**, Head of Team for Science and Research for Development Cooperation, OeAD

09:20 – 09:30 Setting the Stage

- An interactive session to introduce and contextualise the meeting theme, facilitated by **ELIZABETH COLUCCI**, OBREAL

09:30 – 11:00 Higher Education Cooperation in a Changing World: New Discourses, Shifting Dynamics, and the Significance of Collaboration to Shape the Future

Plenary Session 1: Presentations, followed by discussion

- *Capacity Building Programmes: A European Perspective*, **BEER SCHRÖDER**, Internationalisation and Co-operation in Education Consultancy
- *Reframing Global North–South Collaborations Through the Lenses of Aware, Connect, Empower (ACE) Principles*, **JAMES OTIENO JOWI**, East African Community and African Network for Internationalization of Education
- *Emerging Models of Collaboration: Insights from India and Asia in a Changing Higher Education Landscape*, **VIDYA YERAVDEKAR**, Symbiosis International University

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30 Anchoring Cooperation: Working Within and Contributing to the Evolution of (Higher Education) Policy Frameworks

Plenary Session 2: Presentations, followed by discussion

- *The (potential) role of the EU in reinforcing Global Partnerships in Higher Education and Research*, **MICHAEL HÖRIG**, DAAD
- *Advocacy for a Sustained EU Investment in Long-term Research Partnerships with LMICs*, **VINCENT FAUTREL**, European Research Alliance for Sustainable Development
- *New Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)*, **SAIDOU MADOUGOU**, African Union Commission
- *Interregional Dialogue Process on Education for Development in Latina America and Africa*, **NICOLAS PATRICI**, OBREAL

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 Making the Case: How Evidence Supports the Value of Higher Education Cooperation

Workshop 1: Presentations, followed by working groups

- *Evaluating Scholarship Impact and Providing Evidence for Policy Makers*, **BRENDAN HARRISON**, ACU
- *Findings from a Recent Cost-Benefit Evaluation and Attempt to Monetise “Win-Win Partnerships”*, **SYLVIA HOENS** and **KATHELIJNE HOUBEN**, VLIRUOS
- *Sustainable Capacity Development in Higher Education through Long-Term Equitable Partnerships. Findings from the Impact Assessment of AQUAHUB*, **MARGARITA LANGTHALER**, Austrian Foundation for Development Research
- *Higher Education as a Catalyst for Innovative, Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Skills Development and Employability in Africa*, **ANNIKA SUNDBÄCK**, EDUFI

Questions for the Working Groups:

- What types of evidence have you gathered to demonstrate the effectiveness and utility of your higher education cooperation initiatives?
- Which findings provide empirical evidence of the programmes' impact and significance?
- What approaches do you employ to collect data on your programme's outcomes and impacts?
- What are the main challenges you face in measuring the impact of your programmes?

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 – 16:30 From Data to Dialogue: Effective Evidence Communication to Strengthen Higher Education Programmes

Workshop 2: Presentations, followed by working groups

- *Science and SDGs Communication*, **CLAUDIA ZINGERLI**, ETH Zürich [online]
- *Bridging the Gap: Strategic Evidence Communication*, **ALLEN MUKHWANA**, Science for Africa Foundation

Continuation of Working Groups from Workshop 1 with New Guiding Questions:

- In what ways do you disseminate and utilise the evidence gathered to inform stakeholders and guide future programme development?
- Which communication channels (e.g., policy briefs, social media, public forums) have you found most effective in reaching different stakeholders?
- Can you share examples of innovative formats you've used to present evidence?
- Are there any resources or tools you've found particularly helpful in enhancing your communication strategies?

16:30 – 17:15 Evidence in Action: Communicating the Impact of Higher Education Cooperation

Plenary Session 3: Presentations from the working groups, final discussion

18:15 – 19:15 Visit to the Wien Museum

[Wien Museum](#), Karlsplatz 8, 1040 Vienna

19:30 – 21:00 Networking Dinner

Restaurant [Trude und Töchter](#), Karlsplatz 8, 1040 Vienna

Friday, 14 November 2025

09:00 – 10:30 Exploring new Funding Opportunities and Collaboration among Organizations

Facilitator: **GERHARD VOLZ**, OeAD

Plenary Session 4: Presentations, followed by discussion

- *Finding Our Place in a Changing Funding Landscape: Six Pathways for VLIRUOS in an Emerging Team Belgium Approach*, **JAN KENNIS**, VLIRUOS
- *EDUFI Team Europe Initiatives with Openings for Higher Education*, **MAIJA AIRAS**, EDUFI
- *IMPACT HE: A Strategic Erasmus+ Project Rooted in the S-DHG*, **ELIZABETH COLUCCI**, OBREAL
- *King's Commonwealth Fellowship Programme: Funding through Fundraising*, **BEATE KNIGHT**, ACU
- *Update on Global Gateway*, **JUDIT BARNA**, European Commission, DG INTPA [online]

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Parallel Sessions

Parallel Session 1: Support for Scholars and Institutions Affected by Conflict

Facilitator: **HUW DAVIES**, British Council

- *Cara 93 Years and Learning: The Next Frontier in Scholars at Risk Programmes*, **ZEID AL-BAYATY**, Cara – the Council for At-Risk Academics
- *Partnerships for Recovery and Resilience: Norwegian Support to Ukrainian Higher Education*, **HERDIS KOLLE**, HK-Dir
- *Securing Knowledge, Empowering Scholars: The DAAD SAFE Programme for At-Risk Researchers*, **PHILIPP EFFERTZ**, DAAD
- *OeAD Scholarship Opportunities for Students at Risk: Lessons Learned and Outlook*, **GERHARD VOLZ**, OeAD

Parallel Session 2: Good Practice Examples of Collaboration with Stakeholders

Facilitator: **GHAZALA SYED**, GMS Strategies Consultancy

- *Anchoring Programme Success: Local Partners and their Role for Creating, Rolling Out and Sustainably Implementing Programme Actions*, **ERICH THALER**, University of Basel and **FELISTA AKU**, Afrilabs [online]
- *Internships for Impact: Partnering with the Private Sector — An Example from Sweden*, **REBECCA ANDERSSON** and **ADIAM TEDROS**, Swedish Institute
- *Higher Education Partnerships as Policy Actors: From Global SDGs to Local Policy Impact*, **STEFAN HASE-BERGEN**, DAAD

12:30 – 13:00 Wrap-up and Closing

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Stakeholder Meeting

Speakers

Maija Airas leads the Unit for International Higher Education Cooperation at the Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI. She has devoted a major part of her professional career to promoting internationalization in Higher Education, and her professional interests range from diversity and inclusion in Higher Education to global education and development. She has over 20 years of expertise in strategic leadership and development in the field of internationalization and Higher Education. Airas holds a master's degree in political science from the University of Helsinki.

Felista Aku is a dynamic Senior Partnerships Manager at AfriLabs, a pan-African organization working with 500+ innovation hubs across 53 countries to nurture startups and entrepreneurs. She has extensive expertise in partnerships, business development, project management, marketing, corporate communications, and fundraising. At AfriLabs, Felista leads strategic partnerships, fundraising, and partner engagement for programmes, operations, and events, successfully raising over \$2 million to date. She previously coordinated AfriLabs' flagship Annual Gatherings, including the 2019 edition at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, showcasing her strong event leadership. Felista holds an MBA from Nexford University, USA, and a BSc. in Food Science and Technology from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria. She is passionate about youth empowerment, women-led businesses, and fostering innovation across Africa. An accomplished international speaker, coach, and mentor, Felista has guided young innovators through initiatives such as the AU and HP Foundation's Be Change Makers Africa, where her mentee's solution won in 2021. She has also driven business growth in leadership roles at Work and Connect and Connect Lab. Beyond AfriLabs, she is Creative Lead of Elystar Design, a fashion brand in Abuja.

Zeid Al-Bayat joined Cara, the Council for At Risk Academics, in 2012. Before joining Cara, Zeid gained experience through projects with Human Rights Watch and the London School of Economics and Political Science. Over the years, he has taken on positions of increasing responsibility, culminating in his appointment as Deputy Chief Executive & Fellowship Programme Manager in March 2018. Zeid has led the expansion and doubling in size of Cara's Fellowship Programme, responding to unprecedented global demand and supporting an ever-growing number of at-risk academics and their families. He now leads Cara's Fellowship Programme and supports the organisation's expanding efforts to provide a lifeline for academics at risk worldwide, working with a growing network of university partners (135) and building on Cara's rich legacy since 1933.

Rebecca Andersson is the Coordinator for the Swedish Institute Scholarships. In this role, she oversees SI's scholarship programs for master's studies in Sweden, facilitating opportunities for approximately 300 global professionals and emerging leaders each year. Prior to her current role, Rebecca has held positions at various agencies and organizations within the Swedish Development Cooperation. Her work primarily focused on monitoring and evaluation and project management, with a particular emphasis on research collaboration and alumni relations and follow-up. Rebecca holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from Uppsala University, Sweden.

Judit Barna is Head of Sector for Education in the unit G3 - Youth, Education, Culture and Research at DG INTPA, European Commission. Prior to this, she worked at DG ECHO between

2015-2021 holding a variety of positions: team leader in charge of establishing the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, team leader for Cross-cutting Humanitarian Policies, and Focal Point for Education in Emergencies. She also served as the focal point for the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and supported EU preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit. Prior to joining DG ECHO, she worked on development cooperation policy analysis at the Policy Department of the Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Parliament, focussing on Central and West Africa. Her background is in humanities (MA in Italian and American Studies), she also holds an MBA and an MA in international child studies.

Elizabeth Colucci currently serves as the Director for Education Policy and Programs at OBREAL, a membership organisation that provides a platform for strategic tertiary education partnerships for development. She has supported the transition of this organisation towards its current global mandate, profiled around North-South-South multi-lateral cooperation in the tertiary education, research, youth, audio-visual, employment and local development sectors. Elizabeth develops, oversees and coordinates projects and policies on topics ranging from research management to local development, to innovative curricula design, to quality assurance and accreditation and higher education inclusion. She has previously worked for the European University Association, the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in Brussels, the Fulbright Commission to Belgium and Luxemburg and the European Commission.

Huw Davies has worked in the Higher Education International Development space for the past 12 years. He specialises in the development and delivery of mobility and capacity building programmes within Higher Education. He's worked for the British Council for over a decade on a variety of programmes ranging from EU mobility, development science exchange programmes, national level Alumni programmes and scholarships. He is based in British Council's Cardiff office in the UK. He studied International Relations at Swansea University and has a passion for collaborating internationally to build a better world for the next generation.

Philipp Effertz is Head of Section supervising the DAAD's programmes for at-risk students and researchers, including the EU-funded SAFE for researchers at risk and the nationally funded Hilde Domin Programme for at-risk students and doctoral candidates, as well as scholarship programmes for students affected by conflict and crisis. His work covers the international dimension of higher education with a particular focus on students and researchers facing individual or systematic barriers to their academic activity.

Vincent Fautrel serves as IRD Representative to the EU in Brussels where he is engaging with the various EC DGs, EP Committees, EU Member States, European research institutions and other interested actors on Research, Higher-Education and Innovation issues contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Since November 2024, Vincent also coordinates the European Research Alliance for Sustainable Development (ERASuD), a network of European based research institutions, think tanks and universities working with partners in Low-and-Middle Income Countries (LMICs) on scientific programmes related to SDGs. Senior development economist with more than 20 years of experience in managing international programmes on sustainable development in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific countries, Vincent's interest is in innovative, trans-disciplinary and participatory approaches that contribute to more inclusive and sustainable development.

Brendan Harrison is the Senior Research and Evaluation Manager at the Association of Commonwealth Universities and has worked in monitoring and evaluation for 15 years. In his current role, he has been involved in and overseen the evaluation of several scholarship programmes, including the UK's Commonwealth Scholarships, Chevening Scholarships, and Marshall Scholarships programmes, as well as the Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships, the Ocean Country Partnership Programme scholarships, and the King's Commonwealth Fellowship Programme.

Stefan Hase-Bergen has been Head of the Division „Development Cooperation and Transregional Programmes“ at the DAAD in Bonn since November 2024. He previously lived in Hanoi with his wife and three daughters from 2017 to 2023 where he headed the regional DAAD office. He has worked for the DAAD in various positions since 2001, including as Head of the DAAD Regional Office in Beijing (2007 - 2012) and as Head of Marketing at the DAAD Head Office in Bonn from 2012 to 2017 and from 2023 to 2024. Stefan studied Sinology, German Studies, German as a Foreign Language and International Marketing in Trier, Shanghai, Bochum and Reutlingen. Stefan has many years of experience as a manager in the field of university internationalisation. In various management positions, including as head of two DAAD field offices, he has also gained extensive experience in development cooperation with countries particularly in Asia. Most recently, he has been increasingly involved in EU projects. Among other things, he is responsible for the "EU Mobility Programme for Myanmar" as Senior Responsible Officer.

Sylvia Hoens Sylvia Hoens is Monitoring & Evaluation Manager at VLIRUOS and is passionate about using evidence and insights to drive meaningful change through higher education. Sylvia manages the monitoring and evaluation function to ensure evidence-based learning on the VLIRUOS programmes. She supports the different partners in results-based management of their project, to strengthen learning, accountability and impact across projects. Sylvia gained previous experience in academic research within the field of adult education, where she used participatory research methodologies to amplify the often unheard voices of migrant care workers and community health workers. She also worked with Enabel, the Belgian development agency, where she served as Monitoring & Evaluation focal point for multi-agency projects, building expertise in coordinating complex partnerships and integrating learning into practice.

Michael Hörig is the Director of the DAAD Brussels Office and he has held this position since January 2022. He is responsible for representing DAAD towards the institutions of the European Union, partner organisations and German representations in Brussels. Furthermore, the DAAD Brussels Office is supporting the development, acquisition and implementation of EU-funded projects. Currently, two major projects are being implemented in the Brussels Office: the European Digital Education Hub and the Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative. Michael joined DAAD in early 2011. He has held different positions at DAAD headquarters in Bonn, covering a broad range of topics from Strategic Planning to Development Cooperation and Higher Education Projects.

Kathelijne Houben is Global Networks Coordinator at VLIRUOS, responsible for strategic networks and scholarship programmes. She coordinates the international course programmes *ICP Connect*, which aim to integrate global perspectives and networking dimensions into existing educational programmes. Within VLIRUOS, she is also responsible for academic

mobility and knowledge migration. Previously, she worked at 11.11.11, the Flemish coalition for international solidarity and global justice, where she was Head of Communications and coordinated *Other Talk on Migration*, a network of 40 organisations promoting a new, less polarised narrative on migration. She also served as Director of Policy and Movement at Flemish Refugee Action (*Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen*). Kathelijne is a lawyer by training and has extensive experience in strategic communication, international solidarity, and migration law. A more detailed background can be found on her [LinkedIn profile](#).

James Otieno Jowi is the Founding Director of the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE). He currently chairs the ANIE research and partnerships committee. He is also the Deputy Executive Secretary to the East African Kiswahili Commission and has been serving as the Principal Education Officer at the East African Community (EAC) where he has been coordinating education programs and frameworks for the EAC countries. Prior to this, he was teaching Comparative and International Education at the School of Education, Moi University, Kenya. Jowi holds a PhD in Higher Education Policy Studies from University of Twente, Netherlands and a Masters in Comparative and International Education from University of Oslo, Norway and a Masters in Linguistics from Moi University, Kenya. He has researched and published extensively on higher education in Africa, especially on its international dimension. He also sits on the boards of several international education organizations and has coordinated several projects on higher education in Africa. He is currently implementing three EU funded projects on higher education with one focused on digitalization and internationalization of higher education in Africa.

Jan Kennis started his career with biology, conducting research on rodent ecology in Tanzania and DR Congo while also teaching in higher education. He then moved into development cooperation, managing multiple projects in (higher) education, during which he developed his passion for digital innovation. At the Institute of Tropical Medicine, he developed blended trainings in tropical medicine, delivered digital skills training, and led the redesign of the Wanda travel website and app. His expertise grew as he managed digital projects in (higher) education and health, and as Lead Expert in Digital for Development at Enabel, he contributed to building the D4D Hub. Today, Jan uses his wide experience and open character to build new partnerships and projects for the higher education sector once again at VLIRUOS. Jan believes cocreation based on mutual trust among partners makes for the best approach to reach impact. Alongside this, Jan advises on digital transformation and change management in international partnerships. Believing that technology only succeeds when it impacts lives, he puts designing with people at the centre of every digital project.

Beate Knight is the Head of Programmes at the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) leading a portfolio of research and education capacity strengthening programmes in collaboration with ACU member universities and other partners. ACU Programmes are supporting equitable access to higher education, nurture international research collaboration and mobility and are supporting action-research in climate change adaptation. Beate has a research background in developmental cell biology with a PhD from Kiel University, Germany, and is an experienced research programme management professional with 18 years of practical knowledge and expertise in the UK Higher Education Sector and specialist skills in global partnership development.

Herdis Kolle is senior adviser at the Department of Global Cooperation in the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. The department is responsible for many of Norway's measures for global academic cooperation, with a particular focus on partnerships with priority countries outside Europe and in the Global South. It also oversees the educational component of the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Students at Risk programme, and international credit mobility and capacity building initiatives under Erasmus+. Herdis holds a PhD in history from University of Bergen, with specialisation in comparative social and demographic history, and possesses extensive regional and language expertise related to the former Soviet Union. In her current role, she has more than 16 years' experience in designing and managing programmes for international cooperation in higher education, with a particular focus on Eastern Europe and Asia.

Margarita Langthaler is a senior researcher with the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE). Her work focuses on global education policies, development cooperation in the education sector, higher education and vocational education. Recently, she coordinated the impact assessment of the North-South higher education cooperation project AQUAHUB (Education and Research Hub for the Sustainable Management of Aquatic Ecosystems in Eastern Africa). Margarita Langthaler holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Vienna.

Saidou Madougou is the Director of the African Union Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AU/ESTI). He promotes education, innovation, science and technology research, foster educational cooperation among Member States and support youth participation in African integration. His mandate includes the implementation of Agenda 2063 initiatives like the implementation of African Union continental education policies and strategies, such as CESA, STISA, TVET Continental Strategy and the AU School Feeding Initiative. He holds a PhD in Physics and a Master's in Educational Sciences and is a Professor at Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey (Niger) with nearly 20 years of experience. He founded the African Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (CEA/IEA-MS4SSA) and the Regional Program for Supporting Education Quality in West Africa (PRAQUE_AO). Author of more than 50 publications, he also served as General Rapporteur of CAMES' Specialized Technical Committee. Recognized with national and international academic honors, he is a strong advocate for STEM education in Africa.

Allen Mukhwana is a Senior Research Management Professional and Head of Programmes for Strengthening Science Ecosystems at the Science for Africa Foundation. She leads a continental portfolio aimed at advancing research governance, institutional capacity, and the strategic use of evidence in policy and practice. Her work spans global partnerships, science policy, and systems-level capacity building across African research institutions. With over two decades of experience, Allen has played a pivotal role in shaping resilient and responsive research ecosystems. She has led numerous initiatives in science communication, translating complex research into accessible formats for diverse audiences, including policymakers, funders, and the public. Her current work focuses on promoting Open Research across Africa, championing transparency, equity, and accessibility in knowledge production and dissemination. At the 15th S-DHG Forum, Allen will share insights on strategic evidence communication and stakeholder engagement, drawing from her leadership in multi-country

programmes and her commitment to fostering inclusive and impactful research environments.

Andreas J. Obrecht is a social and cultural anthropologist, writer and sociologist. He was an assistant professor at the Institute of Sociology, University of Vienna (1988–1993) and holds a habilitation in sociology with an emphasis on sociology of development (1997). He was head of the Interdisciplinary Research Institute for Development Cooperation (IEZ), Johannes Kepler University Linz (1998–2009) and was a visiting professor for the thematic focus Sub-Saharan Africa and South Pacific at the Department for Contemporary History, Karl Franzens University Graz (1998–2013). Since 2004, he has been the host of cultural and scientific programmes at the Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF), and since 2009 has been the head of the section “Science and Research for Development Cooperation” at Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAD).

Nicolas Patrici is the Director of Strategy and Development at OBREAL, where he oversees political functions and provides strategic guidance on growth and policy development. With over 17 years of experience in the sector, he leads internal coordination and ensures comprehensive supervision across the organisation. As a senior expert in higher education policy, he plays a central role in major projects, including execution and budget planning. Originally from Argentina, Nicolás has lived, worked, and studied in Europe for two decades. He pursued his studies in Spain, the Netherlands, and France and holds a Ph.D. in Classical Philosophy.

Beer R.E.V.M. Schröder was born in the Netherlands. He grew up in former Dutch New Guinea, the Netherlands and Spain. He studied cultural anthropology, Non-Western sociology and Dutch and Spanish literature and linguistics. He earned his degree with a specialisation in (oral) African literature at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Between 1982-2019 he worked for Nuffic in various management and expert positions. In 2010 he started the S-DHG meetings. When he retired from Nuffic in 2019, H.M. the King of the Netherlands appointed him as Officer in the most Noble Order of Orange-Nassau. In the same year, EAIE honoured him with the award for outstanding contributions to internationalisation in education. Over the years, he designed many capacity building and international co-operation programmes. Furthermore, he published articles and books on aspects of his working field. Today, he is active as a consultant and worked for OeAD, HK-dir, VLIR-UOS and EDUFI and in a variety of positions such as the Advisory Board of the APPEAR programme, the Selection Committee of Amsterdam University College, and the Estonian Dream Apply Organisation.

Annika Sundbäck currently works at the Higher Education Unit at the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) and spent the last 2 years as education policy officer at the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). With over 30 years of experience in EU higher education and external action policy, development cooperation and partnerships in Africa, international higher education, transnational knowledge-creation and quality assurance, Annika has contributed to various EU projects. She has held several expert roles, e.g. for the European University Association, the Norwegian, Belgian and Czech national authorities, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the Swedish Foundation for Internationalization.

Ghazala Syed is a senior education leader with two decades of experience at USAID, the World Bank, and UNICEF, where she advanced higher education and skills reforms across Africa, Asia, and fragile contexts. Her expertise spans university partnerships, employability systems, climate-responsive learning, education financing, and policy design. She is the Founder and Principal of GMS Strategies, a consultancy supporting governments, donors, and higher education institutions to design and scale innovative approaches in skills development, outcomes-based financing, and green learning pathways. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Green Learning Accelerator, led by Times Higher Education, helping to shape an international accreditation framework for green skills.

Adiam Tedros is Head of Unit for Scholarship and Leadership Programmes at the Swedish Institute, a government agency dedicated to fostering global interest in and trust for Sweden. In this role, she leads initiatives that empower future leaders and strengthen international collaboration through education and exchange. Before joining the Swedish Institute, Adiam held a variety of positions within the field of international development cooperation, where she focused on advancing inclusive and sustainable change. She is particularly passionate about initiating and supporting transformative processes and thrives when facilitating dialogue and collaboration among changemakers worldwide. Adiam holds a Ph.D. in Public Administration from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Erich Thaler is heading the International Relations unit of the University of Basel where he oversees global networks and partnership activities. Until December 2024, he assumed the program lead for the Swiss – African Science and Business Innovators' Program SARECO. His unit forms part of the Vice-Presidency Research. Erich joined the University of Basel in 2007. In addition to his Swiss-Africa engagement he is a university representative to the Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships (former KFPE) and a member of the expert advisory group on internationalization within swissuniversities, the Association of Swiss Higher Education Institutions. He was an invited reviewer for DAAD and appear program proposals and has been chairing the Cooperation for Development Expert Community of the EAIE. Before coming to Basel, Erich has held teaching and management responsibilities at Higher Education Institutions and private education providers in Vienna, Munich, Paris, Seoul and Berlin. He lives in Basel and Cologne, is married and father of an 18 year old young professional.

Gerhard Volz has an academic background in Political Science, History and Educational Sciences and has worked for the OeAD since 1998. He was initially responsible for higher education cooperation programmes and funding schemes for various regions, such as Central and Eastern Europe as well as development cooperation programmes worldwide, before moving to European programmes in 2004. Between 2007 and 2020, he was Head of Sector for Erasmus+ Higher Education before being appointed Head of Department for International Cooperation in Higher Education in 2020 – thus being responsible for national and European funding schemes in higher education worldwide, cooperation with national and international stakeholders, as well as for initiatives such as Study in Austria, Euraxess and many others.

Vidya Yeravdekar is the Pro Chancellor of Symbiosis International University, which is a multi-disciplinary, multinational and multi-cultural University having students from all states of India and international students from 85 different countries. Dr. Vidya holds a Post Graduate Degree in Medicine, a degree in Law and a Ph.D. in 'Internationalisation of Higher Education

in India'. She has appointments on various governmental bodies such as the Indian University Grants Commission (UGC), Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), State Knowledge Advisory Board of Higher Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Sub-Group on Higher & Technical Education and Skill Development of Chief Minister's Advisory Council, Government of Rajasthan, India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) Trust set up by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

Claudia Zingerli is Head of ETH Sustainability at ETH Zurich. Between 2014 and 2022 she was scientific coordinator of the SDC-SNSF r4d programme (Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development) and the Solution-oriented Research for Development (SOR4D) programme at the Swiss National Science Foundation. Previously, she was a senior scientist and lecturer at ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich, Switzerland. In her academic work, she focuses on the political nature of natural resource management as well as the politics of knowledge in international development. She managed research projects in the Philippines, Vietnam, Bolivia, and Switzerland. She holds a MA in geography, social anthropology and economics from the University of Basel, Switzerland, and Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, and a PhD in development studies from the University of East Anglia, UK.