

IPDET – International Program for Development Evaluation Training Opening Reception, 15 July 2019

Speech of the Rector Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann

The spoken word applies

- Dear Dr. Alison Evans, Director-General and Vice-president of the World bank
- Dear representants of the DEZA and the World Bank
- Dear Dr. Stefanie Krapp and Prof. Dr. Reinhard Stockmann
- Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the University presidency to the second IPDET Training Program here at the University of Bern. As you are aware, this program is managed jointly by our Center for Continuing Education and the Center for Development and Environment, together with the Center for Evaluation at Saarland University in Germany and the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank.

About 250 participants have joined us, representants from ministries and NGOs, Think Tanks, Universities from all around the globe, as well as collaborators from the World Bank and UN organizations such as the UNPD or UNICEF.

The University of Bern plays a leading role when it comes to Evaluation. Since more than 16 years, we offer courses in Evaluation on the Master of advanced studies (MAS), the diploma of advanced studies (DAS) and the certificate of advanced studies (CAS) level, here at the Center for Continuing Education. Professional Evaluation is getting more and more important, also regarding the UN

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by which all nations are obliged to evaluate their contributions.

So far the IPDET has reached more than 3'500 participants from 125 countries. The main goal of the program is to provide the tools to evaluate development strategies, programs and projects on a local, national and global level. The idea is to reach ministries and authorities in developing countries, but also professionals at development banks, in the non-profit or foundation sector, the UN, from bilateral development agencies, universities or the private-sector.

For us, as a comprehensive University in the center of Europe, IPDET is also an opportunity to strengthen our international network and visibility on a global level. As a research intensive University, we are driven by scientific interest and social needs and we strongly endorse interdisciplinary research on all levels, to make the most value out of our eight faculties, encompassing all major academic fields.

The University of Bern recognizes its ethical responsibility and shares its main vision: Knowledge generates value. In our strategy 2021 we concentrate on five major key areas in research and teaching. Three of them fit perfectly within the goals of the IPDET program, these are:

- Sustainability
- Intercultural knowledge
- Politics and administration

In the field of sustainability we aim at initiating transformations in line with the UN 2030 Agenda, for example with the interdisciplinary research Center for Development and Environment (CDE). For this purpose, the CDE engages in social learning and co-production of knowledge in several world regions, invests in long-term partnerships, and connects local realities to global debates. In this context we are of course very proud that Peter Messerli, head of CDE, is also co-chair of the scientific expert group who is working very hard, as we speak now, on the UN world report for sustainable development, together with Endah Murniningtyas from Indonesia and Ban Ki-moon, the former secretary general of the UN. The first report is to be issued later this year.

With the IPDET program we can further implement sustainability in important topics such as global change, the regulation of world trade, or climate and biodiversity change.

The second major hotspot of our strategy is Intercultural knowledge. In our globalized world cultural exchange and an understanding of one's own and other cultures and religions are key. Our University therefore places a high value on intercultural knowledge and invests considerably into encouraging the dialogue with global partners.

The third major topic, namely politics and administration, touches upon the fact that we are located in the capital of Switzerland. With research and teaching in the fields of law, economics and social sciences, we fulfill political and administrative needs for the local and national public authorities, just as the IPDET does on the global level.

I would not stop here without mentioning two other key areas of our University, namely health and medicine as well as Matter and Universe. Together with our partner, the University hospital – Insel Group – we are thriving to become Switzerland's first address in medical education as well as in translational medicine and biomedical engineering.

Last but not least, the University of Bern has a strong and long-lasting tradition in space science. Some of you may know, that it was here in Bern, where the Solar Wind Composition experiment was designed, which was sent to the Moon on board of the Apollo 11 mission in 1969. The solar wind sail was enrolled by the astronaut Buzz Aldrin even before the US flag. Given this we just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the moonlanding two weeks ago, with the scientific spearheads from ESA, NASA, ESO and others. As part of this celebration we had a big outreach program all over the city, aiming at raising the awareness of families, kids and scholars to what space science does to monitor the environmental threats of our planet.

Even though having been on the moon, it is our first priority to make the earth a better place to live. And this is also the main goal of the IPDET International program for Development Evaluation Training.

Last but not least I would like to thank all the partners of this program, first and foremost the Swiss agency for development and cooperation (SDC or DEZA) represented by Nicole Ruder, the Deutsche Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (IOB), for financing a total of 78 full or partial scholarships. I would also like to thank the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank for choosing us as location of the IPDET program for the next years, this is really a big honor and the University of Bern appreciates this very

much. I also thank the Centre for Evaluation of the Saarland University and Prof. Reinhard Stockmann for the excellent collaboration. Last but not least we thank also the city of Bern for providing the liquid ingredients for the evening happy hours and the city tours.

With this IPDET 2019 is officially opened. Thank you very much.