

Dialogues on Social Innovation

November 10, 2015, 6.30 pm

Venue: DAAD premises, 11 El Saleh Ayoub, Zamalek, Cairo

“The Role of Universities in Fostering Social Innovation”

In the current global emphasis on knowledge economy, universities are located at the core of the call for social innovation. With new developments in technology and ICT communities the patterns in relationships are changing, for instance, between professors and students and universities and their communities. At a broader level, the diversification of the higher educational offer, through the introduction of new private universities as well as through new programs, aims at reducing the burden currently placed on public universities. This renewed centrality of the university calls for an attention to its role as a fundamental institution in shaping society. Institutions have above all semantic functions to confirm and re-confirm certain orders and to establish the reference for their evaluation. But the meanings and values attached to them are far from being stable, or uncontested, and a focus on this instability and ambiguity offers insights on how social innovation might originate from institutions. The university is highly relevant for discussions on citizenship, civic consciousness and state society relations. By discussing its role for social innovation, this dialogue addresses questions such as the democratization of education, the relation of knowledge and power, and access to the labour market.

Dr. Daniele Cantini is since 2011 Senior Research Fellow at the Research Cluster and Graduate School “Society and Culture in Motion” at the University Halle, Germany. Between 2007 and 2010 he was affiliated researcher at the CEDEJ in Cairo. Currently he is leading a project managed through the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB) that investigates knowledge production at Egyptian public universities at the doctoral level.

Prof. Dr. Amal Hamada is since 2007 assistant professor at Cairo University, Political Science Department, Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS). She is the deputy director of the Centre for Civilization Studies and Dialogue of Cultures at Cairo University. She has been a Ford Foundation Scholar as well as a Fulbright Scholar in Residence and is a frequent speaker at international conferences.

The debate will be chaired by Dr. Florian Kohstall, Head of Freie Universität Berlin Cairo Office.

The Dialogue on Social Innovation is jointly organized by the Cairo offices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Freie Universität Berlin, and the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB).



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