



Partnering for Change: Link Research to Societal Challenges

Video Transcript

Societal challenges – challenges for research

[Narrator] In today's world, we face complex challenges. Climate change intensifies droughts and complicates issues of water management. Migration or the decline in peripheral regions call for new concepts. Health threats like antibiotic resistance or the lack of healthcare for nomadic people need schemes that work, not only in order to ensure a human right but also to prepare for future risks. These challenges are societal and complex. They are complex because they involve the perspectives of many people.

There are those affected by the problem directly. There are those with the scientific tools to analyse them. There are those who hold the power to enable a solution. Which approaches may researchers use to address these challenges? This question is the focus of our course.

[Prof. Dr. Jakob Zinsstag] In my daily work and research, I am faced with a lot of complex societal challenges. To me, these challenges seem on the rise, and we definitely need approaches that help to solve them, bringing together all actors involved.

In this course, you will explore an approach that brings together the scientists, decision-makers, and affected people. They cooperate as they analyse the problems, develop what they envision as desirable futures, and work on strategies and actions supporting the necessary changes.

This approach is called 'transdisciplinary research'. Currently, I am the president of the Swiss network for transdisciplinary research, td-net. It is our vision that every student and other interested actor should have the opportunity to learn how to do research that helps overcome complex societal problems. So we initiated this course.

[Narrator] In this course, you will investigate the theoretical and methodological background of transdisciplinary research. You also have the opportunity to delve into five outstanding projects. In these case studies, scientists from different Swiss universities and research institutes let you participate as they address complex societal challenges.

The projects focus on such diverse issues as the healthcare situation of nomads in remote areas, water scarcity in the Alps, change processes in a mountain village driven by international tourism investors, labour migration, and global governance in relation to antimicrobial resistance. You will identify the three

main phases and the steps used in transdisciplinary projects. There are important questions that will guide our journey through transdisciplinary research.

[Dr. Christian Pohl] How should we frame a project and its goals?

[Tobias Buser] What actors are important? Who should be involved?

[PD Dr. Flurina Schneider] What are potential challenges and pitfalls of transdisciplinary research projects?

[Dr. Jon-Andri Lys] What are the ethical considerations that arise in research partnerships?

[Prof. Guéladio Cissé] How do transdisciplinary projects impact science and society?

[Tobias Buser] How can scientists from different disciplines and societal actors interact when they want to co-produce relevant knowledge?

[PD Dr. Flurina Schneider] What types of knowledge are important?

[Prof. Dr. Jakob Zinsstag] What could the co-production of knowledge mean to you – for your work, for your environment, for your career?

[Narrator] The course was initiated and coordinated by the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. They are home of the Transdisciplinary Research Network, td-net. td-net and distinguished experts affiliated with Swiss research institutes and universities co-produced the journey that you will now undertake.

[Prof. Dr. Jakob Zinsstag] So a warm welcome to you from me and all the team. We look very much forward to engaging with you in this course.