

Explore the ICDD PhD Toolbox!



Kassel, 12.4.22 - The International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) has launched its PhD Toolbox, officially presenting the new e-learning course via an online webinar. This flagship project is based on the accumulation of experience of the ICDD Graduate School of Socio-Ecological Research for Development, which has offered a multidisciplinary research and education environment for more than 80 PhD and postdoc researchers, with most of them being rooted in either the social or agricultural sciences. The Toolbox is the product of the collective effort of former and current PhD students, e-learning experts, video makers, and scientists from the ICDD network. It includes 10 chapters with over 20 international contributors.

Should I do a PhD?

The event commenced with the welcome address from the ICDD director Prof. Dr. Christoph Scherrer. “PhD Toolbox is the product of our international network and our quite profound experience of supporting PHD Toolbox with research in the field and at the desk”, noted Prof. Dr. Scherrer. He also pointed out that even when the students are coming from different fields, they tend to share common concerns, and that the PhD journey starts with the question from the first module of the Toolbox, “whether one should do a PhD at all”. The Toolbox allows users to choose which modules they want to engage with according to their specific needs, while skipping those that do not address them.

About the ICDD PhD Toolbox

Dr. Ismail Doga Karatepe, Graduate School Coordinator, outlined the project implementation process and highlighted the main questions that the PhD toolbox covers, such as “How to present eloquently?”, “How can I do ethnographic research?”, and “What to do after my PhD?”. Dr. Karatepe also stressed that the Toolbox relied on experts from the ICDD network that are truly able to provide answers to these important questions.

Furthermore, he underlined that while the Toolbox is tailored to PhD students – it contains tips that can be quite useful to post-doc students, as well as BA and MA students looking to conduct expert interviews or do field research. Dr. Karatepe concluded by remarking that ICDD Alumni were an integral part of the PhD Toolbox project, as they participated in many videos and offered useful advice.

Structure

Finn Patrick Bourke, ICDD Graduate School assistant, described the Toolbox as a “comprehensive and systematic resource” and summarised the main modules, the experts presenting them, and questions they aimed to answer. The modules include: The Phd Process, Writing Proposals,

Interdisciplinary Research Design, Literature, Research Methods I & II, Theory and Data, Presentation Skills, PhD Defence and Publication Strategies, and Extra Resources.

Bourke indicated that the Toolbox offers both a variety of video materials (e.g., step-by-step tutorials) and other, “extra resources”. The latter category includes tools such as checklists, informative articles, written post-scripts, and links to external resources (e.g., scholarship databases). In addition, this component of the Toolbox will be updated over time according to suggestions and feedback received, making it “an evolving medium that is going to continue to grow on the back of your engagement”.

[Reflections for the future](#)

Prof. Dr. Eva Schlecht, Head of Animal Husbandry in the Tropics and Subtropics at the University of Kassel offered her reflections on the future of the PhD Toolbox and shared her insights into research topics and academic careers. When it comes to the future of the Toolbox, she stated that it will remain available at least until the end of 2023, after which point, it may migrate to the website of the Global Partnership Network (GPN).

Moving on, Prof. Schlecht advised users to watch videos with undivided attention. “The use of the PhD Toolbox is in your hands. You have a lot of flexibility in choosing the tools you need, and you can use them once or repeatedly”, she declared. Meeting these requirements, the videos should enable students not only to “do good science” but also to present their “research ideas, concepts, and results effectively and successfully”. Beyond that, PhD Toolbox has the potential to change the way users “think and work” and promote positive learning outcomes.

Lastly, the future of research projects at the University of Kassel, in Prof. Dr. Schlecht’s opinion, is closely tied to seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). From the standpoint of collectively achieving these goals as a “global community of citizens and scholars”, the work of current and future PhD students is “of great importance”, she asserted.

Read and discover more:

[Watch the Webinar](#)

[Register for the PhD Toolbox](#)

[PhD Toolbox YouTube Playlist](#)