BIGSAS Alumni Conference 2018

The Future of African Studies Scholars in Africa and Abroad

31 October – 02 November 2018, Addis Ababa University, Arat Kilo Campus
PROGRAMME

**Tue, 30 October**

15:00  Departure from Sheger Royal Hotel
15:45  Visit to Addis Ababa University, with a visit to the University Museum and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (Sidist Kilo Campus)

**Wed, 31 October**

09:00  Departure from Sheger Royal Hotel
10:00  Plenary Session
12:00  Moderation: **Prof. Dr. Dieter Neubert**, University of Bayreuth and **PD Dr. Eric Anchimbe**, University of Bayreuth

Welcome Speeches by
- **Prof. Dr. Tassew Woldehanna**, President of the Addis Ababa University
- **Prof. Dr. Stefan Leible**, President of the University of Bayreuth

Greetings by
- **Prof. Dr. Martina Drescher** und **Prof. Dr. Martin Doevenspeck**, Vice Deans of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS)
- **Stephan Wendt**, First Secretary and Head of Economic and Cultural Section of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Addis Ababa
- **PD Dr. Gerald Heusing**, Director of the Information Centre Addis Ababa of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Opening Speech by **H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor**, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology at the African Union Commission
12:00 – 14:00  Lunch Break

14:00 – 17:30  Panel Session – Day One

(I) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Education and Knowledge Production
   “Changing the Perception of Africa in Education and Beyond”
   Moderation: Dr. Jennifer Scheffler and Mingqing Yuan

(II) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Higher Education, in Fundraising and Collaborative Research
   “Quality Assurance and its Implementation in African Universities”
   Moderation: Dr. Mimboabe Bakpa

(III) Networking of BIGSAS Scholars for Academic Exchange and Entrepreneurship
   “The Chances and Challenges of Research and Alumni Networks in Africa”
   Moderation: Dr. Aychegrew Hadera Hailu

(IV) The Role of BIGSAS Scholars in Public Services, Politics, and Good Governance in Africa
   “Research on Gender in Africa: Challenges and Prospects”
   Moderation: Dr. Morenikeji Asaaju, Dr. Lohna Bonkat, Dr. Chikas Danfulani and Dr. Fulera Issaka-Toure

15:30 – 16:00  Coffee Break

18:30  Reception at the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS)
   Opening Remarks by
   - Prof. Dr. Stefan Leible, President of the University of Bayreuth
   - Prof. Tsige Gebre-Mariam, President of the Ethiopian Academy of Science

Thu, 01 November

07:45  Departure from Sheger Royal Hotel
08:30 – 12:00 Panel Session – Day Two

(I) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Education and Knowledge Production
“Indigenous Knowledges and Decolonisation in Higher Education: Current Discourses, Pertinence and Prospects”
Moderation: Dr. Abraham Brahima, Dr. Lamine Doumbia, Dr. Irina Turner and Dr. Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis

(II) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Higher Education, in Fundraising and Collaborative Research
“Research Funding and Management of Funds at African Universities”
Moderation: Dr. Billian Khalayi Otundo

(III) Networking of BIGSAS Scholars for Academic Exchange and Entrepreneurship
“Academic Networking beyond Academia: Potentials for Innovative Start-Ups”
Moderation: Dr. Christiane Rudic

10:00 – 10:30 Coffee Break
12:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 18:00 Plenary Session: Wrap-up session with recommendations for the future of the BIGSAS Alumni Network and closing remarks (Moderation: Prof. Dr. Susanne Mühleisen, University of Bayreuth and Prof. Dr. Georg Klute, University of Bayreuth)

Fri, 02 November:

06:30 Departure from Sheger Royal Hotel
11:00 – 15:00 Excursion to Abijatta-Shalla National Park
18:00 – 21:00 Dinner at Liesak Resort in Bishoftu
22:00 Return to Sheger Royal Hotel

Sat, 03 November:

Departure from Addis Ababa
PANEL DESCRIPTION

Wed, 31 October (14:00 – 17:30)

(I) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Education and Knowledge Production
“Changing the Perception of Africa in Education and Beyond”

Many media in Germany, including school textbooks, depict Africa in a rather stereotypical as well as anachronistic way. War, catastrophes, famine, conflict, corruption and disease constitute the common narrative. Rural life and poverty dominate the image painted of “the Africans”. Little do German pupils learn about the diversity and richness of the continent, the daily life beyond crises, the thriving cities and growing economies let alone the hopes and future aspirations of young people from different African countries. Material available for teachers on the African continent is, in many cases, either outdated or provided by actors such as aid organisation who may have a biased view.

In this panel we will compare narratives of the continent “Africa” in the context of education in different regions of the world (Germany, China, different African countries). We will than address the questions “What do we think should young people worldwide be taught about the continent?”.

A couple of projects, e.g. from BIGSAS and the Bayreuth Academy will be presented and discussed before we tackle the issue of what else the BIGSAS community could do to help to change perceptions of Africa in education and beyond.

Alumni as well as junior and senior fellows are cordially invited to join the discussions on these relevant topics.

Panel moderators: Dr. Jennifer Scheffler, Mingqing Yuan

(II) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Higher Education, in Fundraising and Collaborative Research
“Quality Assurance and its Implementation in African Universities”

Quality assurance is a topic that has been placed on the higher education policy agendas and actively addressed in nearly all parts of the world. These last years, quality assurance in higher education in Africa began to develop significantly. The increasing request of learners regarding more successful institutions of higher
education, the increase of registrations, the need of better qualified graduates people to manage state economics, the reduction of public financing for higher education are some of the main reasons of this dynamics. In this respect, it is necessary to strengthen the quality assurance in higher education in Africa and to stimulate its implementation in the universities, which have not welcomed it yet. The main objective of this panel is to discuss about the implementation of quality assurance in some African universities and see how it can be linked to a sustainable development in African States. The interest will be to build a BIGSAS Quality Assurance Network for African universities. In this regards, participants will present and exchange on the situation and the functioning of quality assurance in their universities or respective institutions.

Panel moderator: Dr. Mimboabe Bakpa

(III) Networking of BIGSAS Scholars for Academic Exchange and Entrepreneurship

“The Chances and Challenges of Research and Alumni Networks in Africa”

Networking that brings together scholars of related disciplines has become an accepted approach to tackle issues of great significance to the academic community. A group of scholars who establish a network can cooperate on a number of issues to advance the frontier of our knowledge. They can design joint projects, carry out interdisciplinary research, publish and circulate peer-reviewed articles and deliver consultancy services. However, networking takes place within a given geographical context and within a prevailing academic culture. This panel assesses the extent to which scholars were able to set up research and alumni networks in Africa. The panel also discusses a variety of challenges facing scholars who seek to establish research and alumni networks in Africa.

Panel moderator: Dr. Aychegrew Hadera Hailu
Researching gender through a wide variety disciplinary lenses is prevalent. Similarly, there are enormous books on research methodology, many of which highlight and examine the positionality of the researcher in Africa and or elsewhere. Yet there are still prospects as academics for critical self-reflection on one’s preconceptions, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and of the researcher’s place in the setting, framework or social phenomenon. This panel invites wo(men) who have conducted research in Africa to reflect about how their gender influenced on their research experiences or on how their research impacted on them as a wo(man). The basis for this is to create an opportunity for a platform to establish links between the personal and the theoretical. Each panelist is expected to give a subjective interpretation of their experiences. In the end we hope the perspectives that emerge from the discussions challenge and inform other researchers in Africa (men and women) to consider how their gendered experiences are part of the research process. And significantly, how to integrate these experiences of our research in the classroom and beyond.

Panel moderators: Dr. Morenikeji Asaaju, Dr. Lohna Bonkat, Dr. Chikas Danfulani and Dr. Fulera Issaka-Toure

Thu, 01 November (08:30 – 12:00)

(I) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Education and Knowledge Production

“Indigenous Knowledges and Decolonisation in Higher Education: Current Discourses, Pertinence and Prospects”

The idea of promoting indigenous knowledge up to the standards and epistemological requirements of modern science in Africa is closely linked to the ideological claim for decolonization and “Africanisation” of Higher education institutions and curricula. This refers to a radical process of redefining educational standards to ensure that teaching and learning occurs within appropriate African contexts of relevance. The panel aims at stressing integrative approaches fully informed by the notion of “hybrid science”, the conviction that local and global science are culturally equal and capable of synergistic complementarity.
The panel discusses the status and importance of decolonization and indigenous knowledge in academic research, teaching and learning programmes; critical views on the idea of Africanisation as a radical prerequisite for progress and expansion in higher education. It also engages in relating and discussing personal as well as institutional experiences on integration of indigenous knowledge systems and decolonization in education and research.

By the end of the workshop, we hope to have achieved some common ground on the need for and the dimensions of decolonization and the integration of indigenous knowledge in Higher Education. In addition, we might also develop some ideas together for tangible benchmark standards of an ideally decolonized study environment in the Humanities that we as active scholars and teachers could work towards.

**Panel moderators:** Dr. Abraham Brahima, Dr. Lamine Doumbia, Dr. Irina Tumer and Dr. Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis

(II) Contributions of BIGSAS Scholars to Higher Education, in Fundraising and Collaborative Research

“Research Funding and Management of Funds at African Universities”

The world over, it is the mandate of universities to carry out research, offer scholarships, and generate and transfer knowledge and innovation. These are crucial aspects for enforcing social, technological and economic development. African universities are facing renewed external and internal pressure as the drive for them to meet the changing needs of the continent become more pronounced. This beckons the need for research, which unfortunately is and has been insufficient to many universities across Africa. The number one leading challenge to this effect is the low levels of funding by African universities from their respective governments. This panel exposes the trends (current and previous) of funding and management of funds in various universities, with special focus on postgraduate and postdoctoral research. The panel further discusses strategies for improving and managing research funding and the affected research infrastructure; laboratories and equipment. Therefore, the panel organisers call for abstracts that regard any of the above-mentioned issues. The abstract could include your university’s current funding opportunities, trends across time, challenges and future prospects of funding. Additionally, the structure for management of research funds at your institution could also be of interest. Moreover, this panel welcomes your own experiences with respect to acquiring research funds for your own academic venture and/or for enhancing delivery of knowledge in the teaching/learning endeavor.

**Panel moderator:** Dr. Billian Khalayi Otundo
Although we have received high academic qualifications by participating in BIGSAS, not all former BIGSAS scholars strive for a career in academia. At the same time, other graduate schools actively support their graduates to found their own businesses after graduation.

This panel intends to discuss the potentials for BIGSAS scholars to launch (innovative) start-ups that build on the expertise gained during our studies. How could we use our knowledge? What do we have to offer? Is there a market for our knowledge? How do we translate ideas into plans and successful business models?

The panel intends to bring interested BIGSAS Alumni together to discuss these questions and eventually go through a specific example. It invites all Alumni, who are interested in the topic and especially those who already have specific ideas to be discussed.

*Panel moderator: Dr. Christiane Rudic*
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
Sidist Kilo Campus (30 October)
Arat Kilo Campus (31 October and 01 November)

ETHIOPIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
Around Gulele branch of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia: The old historic building of the late Blaten Geta Hiruy Wolde Selassie

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