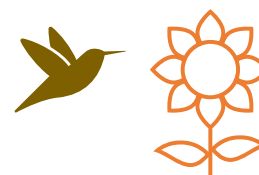




BIGSAS Junior Fellow Representatives' Summer 2023 Newsletter



Dear all,

So much happened since we, Eileen Jahn and Monika Rohmer, took office in April 2023. After the winter months, we were again able to do more activities outdoors. And so, we did (see: *Getting together*)! Next to events organised by the Representatives, numerous lectures and seminars were organized by Junior Fellows – too many to list all of them here!

We are grateful for the BIGSAS community in delightful and trying times. We did our best to carry on the community spirit this semester and hope that our work will be continued by our successors as well as everyone in BIGSAS. After all, it is a communal project.

Yours,

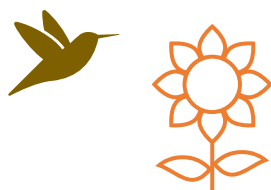
Monika & Eileen

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A visit from Minister Svenja Schulze

On August 24th, when Bayreuth like so many other places was in the grips of a heat wave, Minister Svenja Schulze (Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development), visited Bayreuth, the Iwalewahaushaus and the Cluster of Excellence Africa Multiple. BIGSAS Junior Fellows had the opportunity to meet and engage with her. Thierry Boudjekeu and Monika Rohmer shared stories and research from current doctoral students and alumni, emphasizing the importance of preserving BIGSAS' excellent academic legacy. They proposed the need for more scholarships for African female applicants and continued collaboration with the Ministry. The minister showed great interest in their presentations and elaborated on her diplomatic work and political agenda during an open discussion and a tour of the Iwalewahaushaus exhibition.



Getting together

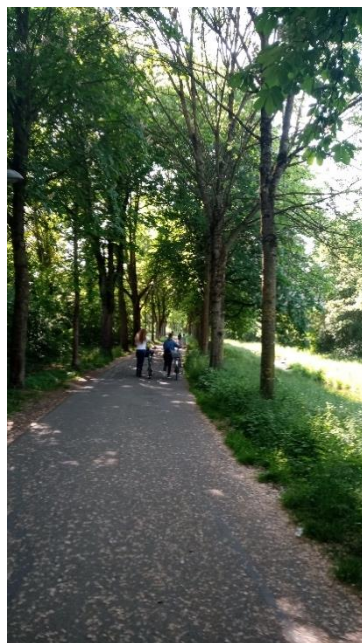
A PhD can be a lonely process, but it should not be. That's why we offered a range of possibilities to meet up, connect, and exchange. These gatherings and activities ranged from productive Working Days over informative museum tours to a communal farewell picnic.

Regular Working Days

This term, we continued the Working Days. We met on several Wednesdays to work, read, and discuss together at GSP. While on some mornings you could feel the concentrated attitude throughout the GSP hallways, some afternoons were rather marked by laughter and delicious chocolate cake. We enjoyed getting to know new JFs and seeing familiar faces. Join us next term at GSP, S17!

Joint walk and dinner

The JF Reps Eileen and Monika decided to talk to each other, sometimes it helps to walk and sometimes it helps to have some food. Hence, on 26 May we walked from ZOH along the Mistelbach to Restaurant Kreta, where we enjoyed dinner in a beer garden atmosphere. Some enjoyed seafood while others fended off the continuous proposals for Greek liquor.



Guided Tour at Margravial Opera House

On 2 July, we visited Bayreuth's World Heritage Site: The Margravial Opera House. Situated a few steps from Iwalewahauss and the Opera ice cream shop, it was a pleasantly chilled atmosphere for another warm day in Bayreuth. We were impressed by the stunning architecture and enjoyed the newly opened museum next door. Next to golden displays and wooden ornaments, we had a lot of fun with wave machines and baroque theatre frames...



Farewell Picknick for our Dean Andrea Behrends

On 7 September, we gathered at *Luft und Biergarten beim Claus* to spend time and say farewell to our BIGSAS Dean, Prof. Andrea Behrends. After the elongated walk, cycle, or hike uphill, we enjoyed the slowly changing leaves, dipped our toes into the ice-cold water, enjoyed a game or two, and snacked on plenty of food. Over drinks, we wished our farewells to the BIGSAS Dean. But for many of us, it's not a 'good-bye' but rather a 'see you later'.



Workshops (co-)organised by Junior Fellows

Peer Learning and Exchange Session on Accounting for Travel Expenses

On 7 July, Eileen and Monika organized a peer workshop on accounting for travel expenses. Before the peer session, several JFs had contacted us on an individual basis with questions regarding their applications and accounting for field research. Issues raised ranged from accessing money in various African countries to the correct way to handle receipts during and after the research.

Stakeholders Workshop and Advanced Methods Lab III at the University of Pretoria

Through the Cluster-funded project -The Intractable Problems of Human Rights- the Chair of African Legal Studies held a Stakeholders Workshop and Advanced Methods Lab III, from 22nd to 24th August 2023 at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria. The event was co-hosted with the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, to discuss and debate the three intractable human rights issues: child labour, human trafficking, and LGBTQI+ rights. The workshop brought together a diverse group of twenty-one stakeholders, including academics from various fields such as law, sociology, education, practicing lawyers, PhD students, and international relations practitioners. The workshop included presentations by participants on the three human rights issues, in-depth panel discussions on key legal and institutional barriers impeding the protection of



of these issues, and an advanced methods lab where participants debated whether mixed methods approaches to socio-legal problems could be a solution for these hard issues.

Although there were heated debates, the participants reached a consensus regarding the recognition of the interdisciplinarity of these three intractable problems and the need to apply mixed methods in resolving them. There was also agreement on the need to decolonize African education and laws and to re-Africanize the same to better come up with solutions fit for purpose.

The workshop will result in an edited book that will be published in 2024. The book will include various paper contributions from the workshop participants, identifying the status quo of the intractable problems and possible solutions to the same.



PhotoVoice as a Practice of Representation and Social Solidarity

On 6 June, Carla and Eileen invited Prof. Shose Kessi from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, to give a workshop for Junior Fellows revolving around methodological reflections, offering tools to elevate epistemologies from the Global South and to end epistemic violence reproduced through the illusion of methodological objectivity. During the workshop, the PhotoVoice method was introduced, the Social Justice component was highlighted, and the participants were invited to try their first practical exercises applying the method.

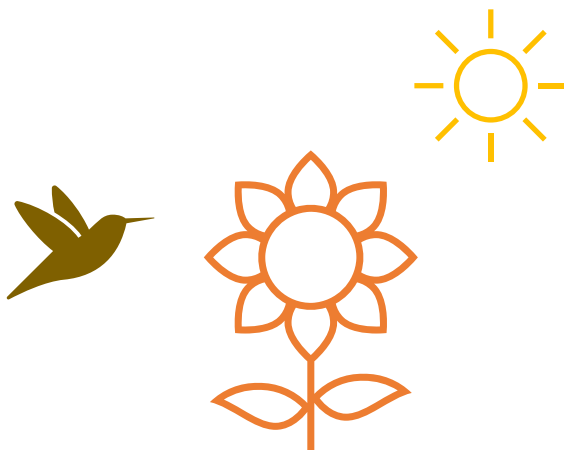


This term's topics and issues

- **All Early Careers scholars' meetings** were facilitated by BIGSAS and the ACCs via Zoom
- Ongoing conversations and interventions around **health-related concerns** for JFs
- BIGSAS Future (**BIGSAS Future Survey**) → results were addressed in the Steering Committee
- **Topping-out ceremony** of the new Research Building
- Concerns, ideas, and possible wishes for **graduation at BIGSAS** (September 5 via Zoom)

BIGSASworks!

Usman Ahmad and Monika Rohmer initiated a renewal of *BIGSASworks!* in August 2022. The goal was to make BIGSASworks! more attractive for Junior Fellows as well as more visible. After thorough discussion amongst JFs, with the BIGSAS Steering Committee and the IAS, from October onwards papers will be published as individual working papers in the series University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers. The first papers are planned to be online by October 2023. To ensure continuity, Usman & Monika will organise a workshop on October 25th to explain what it means to edit *BIGSASworks!* and find two new junior editors.



Welcome to our new Junior Fellows

1. Josephine Baako-Amponsah
2. Juliet Gudhlanga
3. Malaika Mahlatsi
4. Yousra Sbahi



We warmly welcome you to BIGSAS and wish you all the best for the coming years!

Congratulations for Defences

Taha El Hadari defended his dissertation with the title “Research Synthesis: A Meta-Analysis and Meta-Ethnography of Sociolinguistic Research in Morocco” on June 7th.

Our congratulations and all the best for your future career!



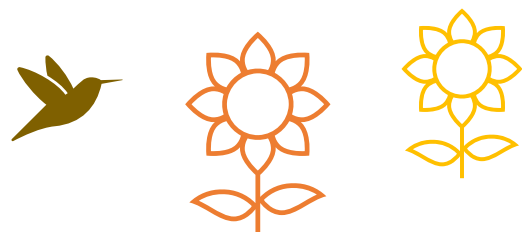
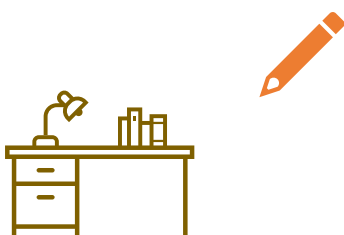
Thanks, and farewell to Prof. Andrea Behrends

Finally, we closely cooperated with our BIGSAS dean, Prof. Andrea Behrends. While as Reps we met over lunch with her twice, all Junior Fellows were able to directly address the Dean during regular online meetings and on other occasions. We hope that this fruitful exchange will continue with anyone who becomes the new Dean and wish all the best for Prof. Andrea Behrends' new responsibilities in Leipzig.



Thanks to the BIGSAS team

We want to thank all BIGSAS staff for their continuous efforts. Thanks to Ms. Wagner and Ms. Volk who patiently explain the formalities to us Junior Fellows and all other questions with which they are addressed. Thanks to Michelle Heese who always had an open ear for the Junior Fellows' concerns and organizes so much with unwavering energy. Thank you for your openness, patience, and continuous work!



About the Reps





Monika Rohmer is a Research Associate at the Department of African Languages and Literatures of the University of Bayreuth. In her dissertation, she explores conceptualisations of WATER on the Senegalese coast from an eco-linguistic perspective. She loves to show Bayreuth and its surroundings to everyone interested. Her favourite summer activity is cycling to *Badesee Trebgast*, always alongside her four-year-old son.



Eileen Jahn is a Research Associate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Bayreuth. In her dissertation, she focuses on the politics of access to electricity networks as they are mobilized in knowledge by undersupplied and precariously connected residents in South Africa. She likes to spend time in nature and soak up the sun.

What do YOUR Representatives do?

- ✓ Read all applications and participate in the interviews for JFs admission to ensure a fair procedure 
- ✓ Receive requests & complaints from JFs and follow them up in close communication with BIGSAS management and administration
- ✓ Keep the mailing list up to date to circulate information and requests, but also to get feedback from JFs concerning BIGSAS activities 
- ✓ Help coordinate JF activities as well as BIGSAS participation
- ✓ ... (there's always room for your ideas)

We are looking for representatives for the next semester, starting in October 2023.

We are looking forward to your application!



Contact

You can reach the Junior Fellow Representatives via the email address bigsas-reps@uni-bayreuth.de

To stay up-to-date, we further recommend joining our WhatsApp group.