BIGSAS
Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies
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1. Academic Profile BIGSAS

• The Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) was established at the University of Bayreuth in 2007
• BIGSAS (and the Alumni work) is financed and supported by the Excellence Initiative of the German Federal Government and the state governments
• BIGSAS offers a multi- and interdisciplinary research environment
• BIGSAS connects African and European academic networks
• 97 Junior Fellows in May 2017
• 98 Alumni in May 2017
2. PhD Training at BIGSAS

- Research with a multidisciplinary mentorship
- Training is based on the Individual Research Training Plan (IRTP) and regular progress reports
- Various models, e.g. joint training or double PhD degree
- Transmission and acquisition of employment-oriented transferable skills
- Early integration of the PhD students into the international academic community
- Individual career planning as well as shorter time-to-degree with structural and financial encouragements

Professional management and quality control:
Steady improvement of the quality of the training, mentoring and administration
3. Partner Universities

Multi- and interdisciplinary research environment

- Collaboration with BIGSAS in recruiting, selecting, training and mentoring of PhD students
- Large-scale long-term cooperation between BIGSAS and its six Partner Universities
- Locations of the Partner Universities cover the Arabic, English, French and Portuguese speaking regions of the continent
- Lively exchange through frequent invitations of academics from the Partner Universities as well as co-organised conferences, seminars and workshops
98 Alumni from 21 African, four European, one Asian and one American country
5. Alumni work at BIGSAS: networking

**News, invitations, announcements**

- We reach our Alumni by „classic“ means
  - Mailing lists
  - Invitations to bigger events & printed newsletters (The BIGSAS World) via post
- We established networks via Social Media
  - Facebook
    - In Facebook we created a closed group in which we invite new Alumni who have a Facebook account
  - Instagram
  - Twitter
- We also share information via our BIGSAS App for Smartphones and Tablets for anyone without a Facebook/Instagram/Twitter account

Facebook.com/bigsas.bayreuth
Instagram.com/bigsas_pr
Twitter.com/bigsas_pr

Downloading the BIGSAS App is free
5. Alumni work at BIGSAS: networking

Alumni Meeting & Alumni Workshop in Bayreuth (30 May 2017)

• Title “Advising on Collaboration for Doctoral Training and Academic Career”
• More than 60 Alumni will participate and share their experiences after the PhD studies and discuss future perspectives
• Keynote by Prof Dr Abdellatif Bencherifa (Université Mohamed V de Rabat, Morocco)
• Representatives of BIGSAS Partner Universities will attend as well
EU project „Academic Mobility for African Sustainable Development“ (AMAS)

- Successful application within the framework of the EU programme “Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme” in 2016
- Collaboration of the following Partner Universities
  - Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya
  - Université d’Abomey-Calavi in Cotonou, Benin
  - Addis Ababa University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
  - Université Mohammed V in Rabat, Morocco
  - Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique
  - University of Bayreuth, Germany
- Granted funding of 1.4 million Euro until 2021
- Aims: Establishment and consolidation of cooperation between African Universities in terms of mobility of students and researchers
  - Promotion of exchange and transfer of ideas and knowledge among different regions of the African continent
6. Projects with Alumni participation

DAAD funded programme

• The project “Inception of a Master in African Studies” is a cooperation between the Université de Sousse, Tunisia, and the University of Bayreuth, Germany.
• The project is funded by the programme “Change by Exchange - German-Arab Transformation Partnership” of the DAAD.
• Project coordinators: Dr Ramzi Ben Amara, BIGSAS Alumnus, in Sousse & Clemens Romankiewicz, Institute of African Studies, in Bayreuth.

- Researchers on higher education in Africa and Europe, practitioners in higher education partnerships and internationalization and policy-experts for intercontinental collaboration came together to discuss
- Organised by BIGSAS coordinator Dr Christine Scherer and Postdoc and Alumnus Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis
- Exchanges of experiences from the BIGSAS Partner Universities in Africa, presentation of case studies and future visions
BIGSAS Denkatelier / BIGSAS Forum for Thought / Les ateliers BIGSAS de la pensée, since 2016

• Invitation of important intellectual personalities to share thoughts and deliberations on certain topics with a larger interested audience
• Continuation of the exchange of thoughts beyond conferences, workshops, art exhibitions and intercultural discussions
• Provision of a platform as a place where intellectuals who live with and for Africa meet the culturally interested residents of Bayreuth and its surroundings
• Previous Guests: Boubacar Boris Diop & D. A. Masolo
• Next guest: Euphrase Kezilahabi on 26 May 2017, 6 pm, Iwalewahaus

• Gender representatives of the BIGSAS Partner Universities as well as junior and senior scientists within and outside BIGSAS met to discuss the interplay of gender and internationalisation in higher education

• Presentation of best practice models and challenges towards gender equality at the Partner Universities

• Panels “Best Practices in BIGSAS”, “Challenges of BIGSAS Junior Fellows” and “Challenges and Triumphs of Female Students at BIGSAS”, presented and hosted by BIGSAS Junior Fellows and Alumni
Award Ceremony of an Honorary Doctorate to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 5 May 2014

• Prof Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, the Kenyan author, scholar and Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine, USA, has a 30-year connection with Bayreuth

• The presidents and coordinators of the Partner Universities, the Lord Mayor of Bayreuth, more than 40 BIGSAS Alumni and numerous guests participated the ceremony

• The present Alumni took the chance of being in Germany and went on an excursion to Bonn the following days visiting the German Research Foundation, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the DAAD
7. Selected events with Alumni participation

BIGSAS Festival of African and African Diasporic Literatures, since May 2011

• Authors and artists present readings and performances between prose and poetry, drama and short story, music and politics
• Aim: to contribute to a public debate about current conceptualisations of Africa and Europe
• Theme 2017:

  Africa: We(l)come to Europe. Afrofictional In(ter)Ventions and the Future of Migration

(8-10 June 2017)
8. Selected events with Alumni support in 2015/16

• At the University of Bayreuth
  — Workshop “Cultural Tourism and Indigenous Groups in Africa: Questions Raised and Lessons Learned”, organised by BIGSAS Alumna Dr Jennifer Scheffler, in 2015
  — “Asixoxe - Let’s Talk” - SOAS and BIGSAS Conferences on African Philosophy, BIGSAS Alumni took part as panel speakers, in 2016
  — Workshop “Journées d’étude avec et autour de l’œuvre de Boubacar Boris Diop”, co-organised by BIGSAS Alumnus Dr Rémi Armand Tchokothe, in 2016
  — Workshop “Encounters: Crossing perspectives – Crossing disciplinaries” in collaboration with the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, Universidad del Valle in Cali (Colombia), BIGSAS Alumni hosted a panel and took part as speakers, in 2016

• At a Partner University of BIGSAS
9. Outreach activities with Alumni participation

BIGSAS Journalist Award: April 2011, July 2013, April 2015

- The award recognizes outstanding articles, features and documentations on the African continent that are published in German print and online media
- The jury selecting the winning article consists of BIGSAS Alumni since 2011
- The jury members are invited to be part of the ceremony
- The ceremonies were attended by 250 guests from politics, academia and economy
- The next BIGSAS Journalist Award will be held on 29 May 2017

Dialika Krahe, winner of the award 2011
Philipp Hedemann, winner of the award 2013
Malte Henk and Amrai Coen, special acknowledgement 2015
Alexandra Rojkov, winner of the award 2015
BIGSAS@school, since 2012

- Class visits (primary school to senior classes) by BIGSAS Junior Fellows and Alumni
- Close collaboration with Markgräfin-Wilhelmine-Gymnasium
- Support of the *P-Seminar* “Afrika in Bayreuth” 2013/14
- Aims:
  - First-hand information for pupils
  - Discussions about current topics
  - Critical reflexion of information in the media
  - Overcoming of prejudices and stereotypes
  - Organisation and implementation of joint projects
9. Outreach activities with Alumni participation

BIGSAS in Town, since 2009

- BIGSAS exhibition stands at the annual Afrika-Karibik-Festival in the city center of Bayreuth providing information about the graduate school
- "Bayreuth meets Africa – Eine ungewöhnliche Stadtführung": BIGSAS PhD students and Alumni organise a guided tour through Bayreuth to show some amazing parallels between African cities and Bayreuth, the free city tour is open to the interested public
- In 2016: African fashion parade showcasing African traditional clothes and jewelry by BIGSAS Junior Fellows and friends
10. Contact

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