

The Volkswagen Foundation and Its International Focus 2016

Crossing Borders



VolkswagenStiftung

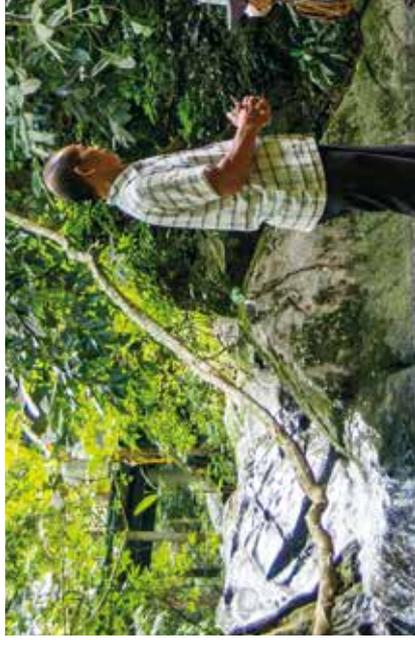
The Foundation's Purpose

The purpose of the Foundation is to support and advance the humanities and social sciences as well as science and technology in higher education and research.

(Statutes of the Volkswagen Foundation, § 2)

The Foundation's Mission

The Foundation is committed to encouraging ambitious research across disciplinary, institutional, and national borders and to supporting creative researchers in breaking new ground.



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of Knowledge

an independent research funding
Government of the Federal
many and the State of Lower Saxo-
Volkswagen Foundation (Volkswa-
a strong tradition in providing
branches of science. To date, the
ndation has allocated more than
to over 30,000 projects in Germa-
nd the world.

funding in an amount of more
euros over recent years makes
ed Foundation the most potent
funding foundation in Germany.
Statutes ensure its independent
gical entity and its character as
it organization.



Concept

Being completely autonomous and economically
self-sufficient, the Foundation is free to develop
its funding instruments and determine the topics
it decides to support. As its funding concept is not
rigid, the Foundation is able to meet the changing
challenges facing modern society and provide
the appropriate impulses for science and research.
The Volkswagen Foundation constantly reviews
its funding portfolio. Guiding principles are a pre-
ference for transdisciplinary issues and approa-
ches, reinforcement of international cooperation,
and support for the upcoming generation of
researchers.

Priority is given to persons and ideas that dare
to cross borders in more than one meaning of the
phrase – borders between countries or continents,
between disciplines or concepts of mind, as well
as between generations or societies. Presented
with an opportunity to develop their own vision,
researchers who fit this profile contribute towards
broadening the horizons of their respective
disciplines and sharpening the profile of their
university.

The Foundation also attaches great importance
to fostering research in and on foreign coun-
tries, focusing on cooperation in symmetric
partnerships.



History

Following the end of World War II the owner-
ship of the Volkswagen Corporation was unclear
and claims were asserted from several sides.
This situation was finally regulated by a treaty
between the Federal Republic of Germany and
the State of Lower Saxony, which turned the auto-
mobile manufacturer into a joint stock company
and fixed the establishment of an independent
private research funding foundation. The proceeds
from the privatization (at that time 1,074 million
German marks) provided the endowment capital
of the Foundation. The Foundation is neither a
corporate foundation nor affiliated to the compa-
ny; its decision-making bodies are autonomous
and independent.

Capital and Funds

shares held by the state of Lower S-
the Foundation as beneficiary (fur
“Niedersächsisches Vorab”). The fi
this context is provided in close cc
the state government to research
in Lower Saxony.

Organization

The Foundation is governed by the
Trustees. The Board comprises 14 €
drawn from the ranks of leaders in
civil society, of whom seven are a
Federal Government and seven by
Lower Saxony. The Trustees are co-
pendent and governed solely by the
Statutes. The Board usually convenes
times a year to discuss and formul-
and to decide on applications. The
responsible for the annual budget

stocks, real estate, and alternative investments. The investment strategy is based on the portfolio theory of risk diversification.

Finance and Administration

Administering the Foundation's finances and budgeting is a task for professional management. This is provided by the "Finance and Administration Division" which among other things takes care of the Foundation's accounting and financial controlling. In accordance with requirements laid down in the Foundation's Statutes, this group also prepares the annual financial statements for the Foundation's auditors and ensures the ongoing internal control of assets. The unit "Human Resources and Corporate Services" is involved in the planning and implementation of everything necessary for efficient staffing and supports the management in all matters regarding the Foundation's employees and recruitment. It also maintains the infrastructure necessary to ensure the smooth running of the office. The "IT-Department" is responsible for the coordination and development of the Foundation's information and communication systems.

Volkswagen Foundation has a staff and over three main divisions. Responsible for the research funding, divisions manage the Foundation's care of finance and administrative four smaller units that directly report to the General, covering, among other things, legal affairs, evaluation/internal communication. The Foundation's funding decisions for the projects and execute the Board's strategy involves the conceptualization of funding initiatives, projects, informing and advising the projects monitoring the funded projects.

"Management Division" takes care of the Foundation's capital assets, currently Volkswagen Foundation pursues two main tasks: to ensure funding for research projects; the other is to maintain the Foundation's capital in the face of market fluctuations. This calls for investment in risk-bearing securities, but also in

Core Principles

The Foundation's support is available to the whole spectrum of academic disciplines, ranging from the humanities and social sciences, through the engineering and natural sciences, up to the bio-sciences and medicine. Funding is allocated to cover personnel costs for both academic as well as non-academic staff, for equipment and running costs. The Foundation is completely free to decide how its funds are to be allocated, which projects it considers worthy of funding, and whom it deems appropriate to grant funds to. The sole restriction is that this be in accordance with the Foundation's Statutes which require all funding to be made to academic institutions and designated for a specific purpose. In general, all applications undergo scientific peer review.

Funding Concept

Overriding features of the Foundation's funding concept include the preference given to new and promising fields of research, interdisciplinary approaches, support for outstanding and especially young researchers, boosts for international cooperation, a close interrelation between research, education and training, as well as the enhancement of communication among researchers and between the scientific community and the public. The Foundation strives to be an active partner and to generate targeted impulses for the

scientific community. The Foundation's attention is also on current developments and issues where the economy, politics and society look to science and scholarship. The Foundation provides suggestions for solutions.

Funding Profile

The Foundation's funding profile is defined by the structure of its portfolio which falls into three main categories: Persons and Projects, Challenges for Academia and Societal Focus. In addition, grants are awarded for extraordinary projects (Off the beaten path) for communicating science and research, and the regionally oriented area "Niederrhein" (Priority for Lower Saxony).

• Persons and Structures

Here, the Volkswagen Foundation provides the explicit funding of individual researchers and targeted structural change. Support is given to outstanding scholars and scientists' ideas. Their approaches to research may also entail a certain degree of risk. The aim is not solely to generate new ideas but also to develop alternatives to existing processes and structures in research and education.

Funding initiatives and calls:

– Lichtenberg Professorships



Academia and Society

category, the Foundation aims to es for research into new fields – which may well harbor potential vulate investigations which trans- 3 borders – either those between practice, between different disci- or between the conventions of many and other countries.

endeavors to stimulate research ich policy makers, the economy, : large look to science to provide scientifically founded concepts for re of society and for coping with s. Topics and issues are developed ion with academia.

In Search of Bold

Scientific Approach to

Principles of Life

“It’s not just about the science, it’s about the people.” – New Options for

Research and Cultural Studies

“What are the challenges of the 21st century?” – New Options for

Research in the Humanities? (call)

Molecular Components

of Biological Systems

at Summer Schools

Focus

Foundation has a strong tradition e internationalization of research supporting effective collaborati-

ions between researchers from different countries and continents. Particular attention is paid to enabling foreign scientists and scholars, especially those from less developed regions of the world, to participate in internationally competitive research projects on an equal footing. In addition, the Foundation aims at inspiring academic interest in current and future global challenges that require a global perspective and new transnational as well as transdisciplinary approaches.

Funding initiatives and calls:

- Europe and Global Challenges
- Knowledge for Tomorrow – Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Between Europe and the Orient – A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Post-doctoral Fellowships in the Humanities at Universities and Research Institutes in the U.S. and Germany
- International Research in Computational Social Sciences (call)
- Trilateral Partnerships – Cooperation Projects between Scholars and Scientists from Ukraine, Russia and Germany (call)
- Cooperative Research Projects on the Arab Region (call)

Also within the scope of most other initiatives, the Foundation accepts proposals from applicants based abroad, subject to the condition that the responsibility for a substantial part of the cooperation rests with a German partner institution.



Dr. Patricia Kanngießer – along with eight other young academics who took part in the 2015 call – receiving her certificate of appointment as a Freigeist Fellow of the Foundation from the Secretary General, Dr. Wilhelm Krull. The



Off the Beaten Track

The Foundation also provides support for exceptional projects which lie outside the scope of its current funding portfolio. This offer is open only to truly exceptional projects. Applicants are advised in every case to first contact the program director of the respective subject area.

Communicating Science and Research

There is a pressing need to inform the public at large about the findings of research and to elucidate the working conditions of science. Therefore, the Foundation conceived the funding scheme “Communicating Science and Research” providing support for grantees in all initiatives for public relations activities, translations, and self-organized events. At times, there are also specific calls open to all applicants as was the case in 2015 referring to “Science and Data Driven Journalism”. In addition, the Foundation offers the opportunity to initiate international scientific meetings in the framework of its “Herrenhausen Conferences”. Scholars and scientists of all disciplines are invited to submit outline proposals addressing issues that are characterized by societal relevance and large potential for innovation. Depending on



Review and Decision

The Volkswagen Foundation is core the principles of peer review. Dependent on the respective funding initiative or accordant review procedure, the Foundation may request a number of experts’ written assessments of individual projects. Another procedure involves peer review by a panel of experts. In this case, all projects submitted within the scope of a funding initiative are subjected to a comparative review

There is no permanent body of experts; they are selected from various disciplines and institutes – also from the university sector and from abroad with the requirements of the individual funding initiatives. About 200 consultants and 280 from abroad their expertise to the peer review

Once an application has been approved by the Board of Trustees or the Secretary General, allocated funds are in due course transferred to the recipient institution to be administered under the conditions attached to funding. The Volkswagen Foundation receives the project on the development of the project

as senior postdocs in the sub-
base of this program.

established funding initiative
ocus is the program “Postdoc-
s in the Humanities at Universi-
a. Institutes in the U.S. and
aims at strengthening trans-
relations in the humanities. Ini-
to offer stays to German fellows
sity, the program has been
ade a number of other renowned
ie USA. In 2012, a reciprocal
dded with the financial support
I. Mellon Foundation, which has
nerican postdocs to embark
search stay in Germany.

ents in North African and
at started in 2011, the Foundation
ed its long-term regional engage-

ment: It speedily initiated a call for research pro-
jects to accompany the ongoing political develop-
ments in the region. Subsequently, two more calls
for multilateral-cooperative research projects on
the Arab World were issued, one concentrating
on “State, Society, and Economy in Change” (2013),
the other one on “Experience of Violence, Trauma
Relief, and Commemorative Culture” (2015).

Against the background of the current conflict
between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU, the one-off
call “Trilateral Partnerships – Cooperation Projects
between Scholars and Scientists from Ukraine,
Russia and Germany”, published in December
2014, was intended to strengthen cross-border
cooperation between scholars, scientists, and
academic institutions from all three countries.
Thereby, the Foundation aimed to contribute to
building rapprochement, confidence, and under-
standing in the region and to maintain a dialogue
with colleagues in Germany. The call was open

to researchers from all disciplines, i.e. natural, life
and engineering sciences as well as the humani-
ties and social sciences.

Opening up Research in Germany and Harvesting International Knowledge

In recent years, what has come to be termed the
“digitalization” of society has led to fundamental
social, political, and economic changes. The “digi-
tal revolution” has also had significant effects on
social research, as the development and usage of
new media devices and technologies has genera-
ted an abundance of data about human behavior.
On the one hand, this opens up new opportunities
for social science research; on the other hand, it
also involves methodological and methodical chal-
lenges. These new developments offer an exten-
sive breadth of potential research questions
within the thematic field of the “Computational
Social Sciences”, the exploration of which the
Foundation encourages with its call in this area.
Elsewhere, such as in the US, the UK, and parts of
Asia, the field of Computational Social Sciences
has already been established in academia, and
social phenomena have been explored using com-
putational approaches. In Germany, by compar-
ison, this area has received less attention and is
somewhat less developed. Against this backdrop,
the Foundation intends to support the further
advancement of this field in Germany, among
other things by supporting the development of
international networks. In addition, it promotes
and finances the further training of junior resear-
chers – from the level of master’s to postdoc.

Thriving for Cooperation in Symmetric Partnerships

The Foundation considers the idea of cooperation

equitable cooperation. By defining
issues and designing the instrum-
of its international grantmaking in
process involving the respective
Foundation has pursued this goal
start. This very much aligns itself
Principles for Research in Partners
ch/11-Principles), which the Found
mends to adopt.

International Collaborations among

When pursuing objectives on an in-
scale, collaborating with other fur-
utmost importance. Therefore,
strives to strengthen existing part-
to develop new ones to leverage sy-
join forces, learn from each other,
least – ensure a significantly high
ty of funding. Examples of existin-
are the European Foundation Initi-
can Research into Neglected Tropi-
and the funding initiative “Europe
Challenges”, which is run jointly v
European foundations.

Information and Contact

Applicants should first obtain up-
Foundation’s funding portfolio be-
proposals. For each funding initial
mation for Applicants” provides d-
tion on the respective scheme, its
the pertinent requirements.

Please visit our website under
www.volkswagenstiftung.de. I
any questions after reading the



building your own laboratory equipment”





How to mitigate the consequences for herders.

e in living memory, Mongolia
ee consecutive dzuds during the
2000, and 2001, resulting in high
for nomadic households. The eco-
l consequences of these specific
atastrophes were so severe that
an international appeal for help.
uent occurrence in Mongolia:
i dry summers with low yields
:rmely cold winters with heavy
the animals starve to death or
it.

teen years Central Asia has
ly affected by extreme weather
; cold winters follow hot sum-
tions for animal husbandry
iore and more difficult. For the
of goats, sheep, cattle, horses,
ere is sometimes insufficient
nes not enough water. How do
lds cope with the shocks trig-
imatic factors that threaten
?

al question posed by the inter-
international team of research-
i project supported in the Foun-
initiative "Between Europe and
ocus on Research and Higher
Central Asia and the Caucasus".
:t title "Herders Coping with
yzstan and Mongolia: A New



and stands along the
highway Bishkek-Osh
where the herders sell
their dairy products.



dic herders in Kyrgyzstan are by increasingly tough conditions: ous regions, shrinking glaciers ers to experience floods in winter summer. Other extreme weather s, avalanches, and broken infrastru continually reducing the rangeland ir animals, which results in the degradation of pastures around these respects the herders are ar conditions as in Mongolia, uses are somewhat dissimilar.

ject addresses quite different one hand, by shedding light on



the ramifications of climate change for develop- ing and transformation economies the project team is focusing on one of the most major issues affecting all of mankind. On the other hand, they are investigating the concrete consequences of weather shocks for individual Central Asian households. For many, the loss of their livelihoods through the death of their livestock leads to migration from the steppe to the slum belts surrounding major cities.

To come back to Mongolia: “In recent years, natural disasters happened very often, people died, and many herders lost most or all of their livestock. In the past 20 years, more than 100,000 herders became refugees as result of natural disasters and moved from rural areas to urban areas”, says Dr. Myagmartseren Purevtseren, a project partner from the National University of Mongolia (NUM). The result: 50 percent of the total population of Mongolia lives in the capital Ulaanbaatar, which now has as many inhabitants as Hamburg or Munich. More than half of them, though, are living in yurts around the outskirts of the city – without running water, elec-



tricity, or sanitation. Having lost their source of income they are completely impoverished – with all the attending consequences that slum living brings with it. This is one of the scenarios that project leader Dr. Kati Krähnert from the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) wants to focus on. She wants to analyze precisely under what circumstances the nomadic people in Central Asia are forced to abandon their traditional way of life in the wake of weather shocks.

“Animal husbandry accounts for less than 15 percent of the country’s GDP”, says Kati Krähnert, “a closer look, though, reveals that the majority of Mongolians depend on it in one way or another”. Because of the extreme continental climate, farming as we know it is limited and the people have to depend more or less exclusively on livestock breeding as their source of sustenance. This phenomenon is not restricted to Central Asia, but it serves as an illustrative example for other regions like the Sahel. Taken to its logical conclusion, “in the long term, of course, climate induced migration is likely to affect us in Europe, too”, says the economist.

towards preventing migration to and helping the herders maintain traditional way of life. Kyrgyz partner Chymyrov, Head of Department “Geoinformatics” at the Kyrgyz State Construction, Transport, and Architecture (TA), emphasizes: “I hope the project contribute significantly to unders pasture management, natural ha- mate change affect the livestock i

One point of departure for the project is the cooperation between Kati Krähnert and Mongolian colleagues that has been smoothing for some time now:





ve carried out regular surveys
lds. The findings clearly show
ther shocks – like the especially
conditions in 2010 which led to
id 24 percent of the country's
-impact on the lives of families":
total of 800 households, such
e basis for research also in the
ion project.

eady know about the specific liv-
f the herders, and what questions
e answered? In Mongolia the
mads the year round, whereas

those in Kyrgyzstan are semi-nomadic, wan-
dering between summer and winter quarters.
The migration routes and rangelands have been
passed down within the family through the gen-
erations. The herders must have access to rivers
or other sources of water, and the pasture quality
varies, as do the locations where they erect their
yurts. Good grass and sheltered campgrounds
are valued highly – at least, so the researchers
believe. They do not yet know precisely how
crucial the individual factors might be. Nor do
they know why some families move the loca-
tion of their yurts up to 25 times a year, simply
to put them up again quite nearby, while other

families do so more seldom, although they then
move greater distances. Is their behavior perhaps
connected with some form of inheritance rights?
Does experience and local knowledge play the
decisive role? Or is maybe a higher appetite for
risk the main factor?

Here you can appreciate the fine line the re-
searchers have to tread: "It's extremely difficult
for us to find out how, when, and over which dis-
tance a nomad household moves: This is because
our questions harbor European concepts of what
is movement", explains Professor Dr. Edzer Pebes-
ma, who leads the "Spatio-Temporal Modelling
Lab" at the University of Münster's Institute for
Geoinformatics. "We express movement and dis-
tances in miles, time in hours and days. Nomads
think of distances in other terms, as well as the
time it takes to cover them, and the periods they
stay somewhere: They therefore apply other
criteria when developing strategies against the
threat of weather shocks".

The project partners in Münster are experts on
conceptions of movement in space. They want to
overcome the aforementioned cultural hurdles
with the aid of GPS technology. The plan: The
yurts of each of the 800 households taking part
in the surveys in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan are
equipped with GPS loggers. On the one hand,

the first time they are carrying out
term monitoring exercise over large
complex landscapes.

The data will be collected over 12 months
and help the team answer a number of
different questions: How often do
change their location? How far do
told? How do they find their way
rugged landscape? Both countries
ized by mountain ranges, with high
alpine meadows and pastures: A
landscape structure determining
travel routes and where they are
is where the expertise of the project
from Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan comes
own: Myragmartseren Purevtseren
a geographer, and Akylbek Chyrym
KSUCTA is a cartographer. Both are
satellite data – and their countries:

"The combination of different expertise
is one of the things that makes this
out", says Kati Krähnert. "In our research
may be more sophisticated than in
in Asia; but they have the superior
when it comes to knowledge of local
rights. This allows us to formulate
tions for the surveys. Together, we
that by bridging the borders between



Building the responsibility to protect from genocide and other mass atrocities.

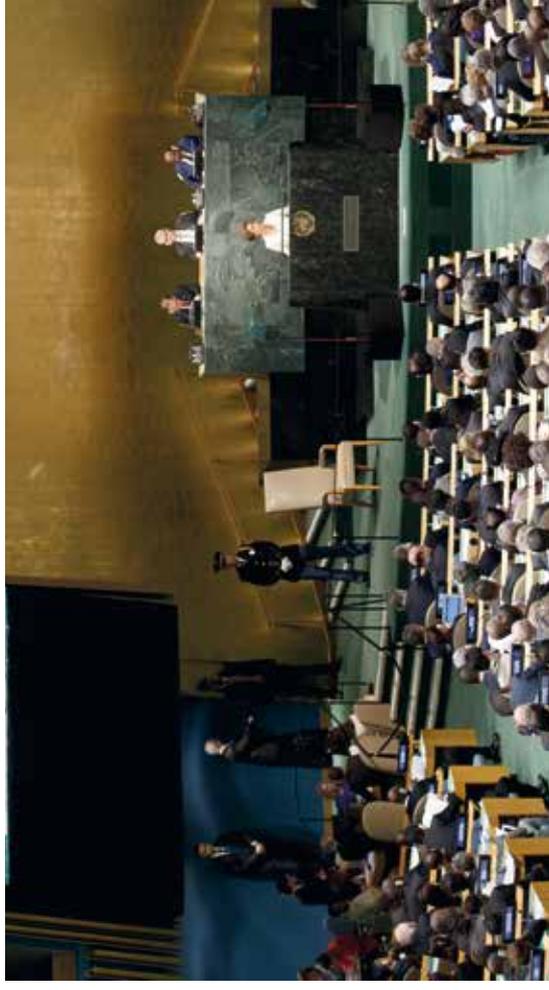
Stuenkel opens the window of Avenida Paulista he lets in the light of São Paulo's main traffic artery. He is the first of a generation of young Brazilians who grew up where the 34-year-old political scientist Professor for International Law at the School of History and Geography, is located in the heart of the city. It is the center of the Brazilian city of São Paulo with 11 million inhabitants. São Paulo is an important industrial agglomeration in South America. Altogether, with a couple of other cities, Stuenkel has spent nine years in Brazil. "By now I know Brazil almost better than any other country. I have a good feeling about the Brazilian tick".

For years, Stuenkel has been an expert on how Brazil has become a power in foreign policy, joining with the northern hemisphere. His work in a recently completed operation project bearing the name of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the Responsibility to

Protect". Together with his colleagues Matias Spektor and Marcos Tourinho, Stuenkel led the Brazilian contributions to a series of publications on Brazilian foreign policy, the military intervention in Libya 2011 and the subsequent international debate about a high-profile Brazilian proposal for "responsibility while protecting".

The political scientist, who is also a non-resident fellow with the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI) in Berlin where the overall project was anchored, goes on to explain: "Until former president Luiz Inácio da Silva came into power, Brazil didn't play much of a role in active foreign policy – that is, showing an interest in resolving international conflicts and issues beyond economics and trade relations." Therefore, Brazilian universities need experts on International Relations like Stuenkel, who speaks nine languages and received his academic training in Spain, the USA and Germany, to build up what is still a relatively young field.

The project "Global Norm Evolution and the Responsibility to Protect" analyzed how the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) challenge and thus reshape the international community's "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P). When the UN adopted R2P in 2005, a decade after the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, governments across the globe committed themselves to protect populations from atrocities like genocide, crimes against humanity,



Peking and São Paulo investigated how so-called "rising" and "established" powers – Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Europe and the US – engaged with the Responsibility to Protect since its establishment in 2005. "It was interesting in this respect to determine the main driving forces behind different interpretations of the Responsibility to Protect in the countries investigated, and to identify the various coalitions that emerged to promote the norm on the global level", explains Thorsten Benner, director of GPPI, who served as one of the project coordinators.

The core of the empirical project comprised almost 400 in-depth interviews with politicians and diplomats, inquiring into the different opinions, attitudes, and visions for the future voiced in the various countries concerned. The initial results have already appeared, with further publications to follow.

The Volkswagen Foundation supported the project within the context of the funding initiative "Europe and Global Challenges". This program

for tackling international conflict challenges like climate change and energy. Bundling the various perspectives gives a multifaceted picture. New approaches towards resolution. Multiplicity acting as the catalyst solutions.

"A problem encountered in research with such a complex topic is that people often believe their view is the only one. They tend only to make use of the edge of their colleagues in the emerging and developing countries, rather than the research process on a whole," says Dr. Wolfgang Levermann, president of the Volkswagen Foundation. One of the major post-colonial attitudes is one of the funding initiative. Another major issue is, "that the academic involved reach beyond the academic papers that address the issue without saying that another approach would be the creation of stable international



and Matias Spector turned out to be to lead the Brazilian leg of the so involved a doctoral student, in assistants. Here, it should be apart from teaching subjects iences, history, and law, the o Vargas also enjoys a reputation Stuenkel and his colleagues are rely well networked, knowing icting as advisors to a number of ans, diplomats, and NGO deci-matters concerning international azilian politicians and officials reign minister) are frequent iversity. Naturally, the students rom such proximity to the prac-ast few years the number of ng for international relations has ily”, says Stuenkel. He sees this as ation of a changing awareness for

Brazil's place in the international order; not only on the part of politics, but also in society as a whole.

A couple of years ago Stuenkel belonged to the Brazilian delegation that put finishing touches to preparations for the fourth and fifth meetings of the BRICS countries. He thinks that Brazil is a particularly good example of an up and coming country that wants to play a greater role in shaping foreign policy. Due to its own colonial history, the multiculturalism brought about by immigrants from all parts of the world, and not least as result of its position as the world's seventh biggest economy, Brazil has diverse links to other continents. Brazil could use this to its advantage in the international arena.

Stuenkel gives some examples: “Largely unnoticed by the general public, Brazil also mediated



in the nuclear debate with Iran. This came about because of the stable relations it had for decades maintained with Iran”. Brazil's foreign policy role was somewhat more prominent during the Arab spring. Under the presidency of Dilma Rousseff – in 2011 as member of the United Nations Security Council – Brazil as well as Germany abstained from voting for the motion to take military action against Libya. A short while later, the president addressed the UN General Assembly, saying: “A lot is said about responsibility to protect, but we hear precious little about responsibility while protecting. These are concepts we must develop together”. She was not merely paying lip-service to the matter at hand: Shortly afterwards, Brazil submitted to the UN Security Council a concept proposal developed by diplomats and foreign policy actors bearing the title “Responsibility While Protecting: Elements for the Development and Promotion of a Concept”. The RWP paper caused quite a stir – and considerable annoyance; for up to that occasion such initiatives and position papers had been the undisputed prerogative of the Western powers.

At the end of the 1990s, the Brazilian scientist Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães wrote a book titled “500 Years of Periphery: the political positioning of his country up to the current government and its advisors, though, this state of affairs soon be over.

Mareike Knoke

According to the RWP concept paper: “There is a growing awareness that the concept of responsi-



Greenhouse gases. Politics, industry, and to tackle a number of major tasks.

ing in a country where the power
or three hours every day of the
nkamp has learned to come to
power cuts which are common-
frica. "At least you can get early
Internet", says the German politi-
works at the University of Cape
research Center. South Africa is
with a severe energy crisis – but
he country where 39 percent of



the population lives below the poverty threshold
still tries to put climate mitigation policies into
practice. As one of nine senior scientists engaged
in the project "Climate Change Mitigation and
Poverty Reduction" (CliMiP), Rennkamp contri-
butes to investigating the institutional change
linked with such political processes – in South
Africa, Mexico, Thailand and Indonesia.

In Germany, the mention of climate mitigation
immediately calls to mind technology like solar
cells or wind farms. Of course it is not a bad thing
when industrial nations make increasing use of
renewable energies. At the global level, though,
the fixation on technical solutions to the problem
falls short. According to Prof. Dr. Jann Lay, leader
of the research project started in 2013 and an
economist at the German Institute of Global and
Area Studies in Hamburg, "The debate is void of
a development perspective". He therefore finds it
gratifying that other researchers from emerging
economies are given the opportunity to bring
their expertise into the project.

In the world's emerging economies, millions of
people are desperately striving to work their way
out of poverty. The ensuing economic growth
in these countries, though, leads to increasing
emissions of greenhouse gases. Whether or not
these emissions can be dampened will be crucial
to the success of global climate change mitiga-
tion in the 21st century. Therefore, the cardinal
question is: Can climate change mitigation go



it a damper on economic growth, in cooperation with a team of national economists and political scientists is seeking to find answers to these.

In South Africa, there is currently a policy of carbon tax. Maybe this could be a win-win situation: the tax revenues were not simply used to subsidize the electricity bills of the public. Nothing has been decided yet, but the political scientist.

In Mexico, the focus of the carbon tax has been faster: Mexico introduced a carbon tax in 2014. This, however, met with opposition from trade associations

and representatives of the cement and steel industries and the mining sector, all of whom feared loss of earnings as a result of the new tax. Therefore, according to the Mexican project partner, the law has remained something of a toothless tiger.

The aim of CliMiP is to shift the focus from narrow definitions of climate change mitigation policy to encompass the economic consequences. For instance, the researchers carry out opinion surveys to find out how consumers would react to price increases caused by measures of climate change mitigation. They then go on to examine how different consumer groups would be affected: For example, rich and poor sections of the population. The researchers selected Mexico, South Africa, and Thailand for their study because these countries are undergoing particularly rapid economic development. At the



same time, their emissions of greenhouse gases are soaring. “Studies on this topic tend to focus on China or India, completely overlooking other countries in similar stages of development – we want to complete the story”, says Lay. The project group also extended their analysis to include a case study based on Indonesia. The aim of this

and the owners of traditional hot would be particularly hard hit.

In Thailand the project focuses on factors in detail and the consequent change in mitigation for poorer sectors. In general, climate governance



ding to Krittiyaporn Wongsa, partner working at the Public Institute in Chiang Mai, the delay is due to the institutional structure of governance. The key actor, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (ONEP), is the national authority and as such responsible for the project. “The bureaucratic procedures are very complex and complicated, to complete the project it impedes the completion of the project. That may not have been the case if more dynamic agencies in the Ministry of Energy had been involved. Greenhouse Gas Management and the Ministry for Energy had a responsibility over national energy planning. That, at least, is drawn from the first analysis of

Similar to South Africa, Thailand has to face the challenge of securing its supply of energy. In 2014 it had to import 85.19 percent of the crude oil needed. In attempt to shift to cleaner energy, Thailand increases its dependence on domestic natural gas. But at the current rate of production it is estimated that these natural gas reserves will last only six years counting from 2014. There is a need for new sources of clean renewable energy. Wongsa is investigating how small community projects contribute to the desired win-win solution regarding energy security, climate mitigation, and most importantly poverty reduction. She interviews villagers about their experiences with small hydropower plants and local waste-to-energy management. The results are documented and analyzed to assess the projects and the impact of such projects. The young



see if they might be able to utilize it for biogas production or as natural fertilizers.

Wongsa has experience of cooperation with Asian colleagues – from Japan, for instance – in earlier projects. This is the first time, though, that she has worked with experts from other parts of the world; in this case from Mexico and South Africa. She finds these new perspectives rewarding, not only regarding the novel research methods she got to know. She appreciates the comparative aspect: “The cultural, social, and political contexts are different, and this is reflected in the different aspects of political decision-making processes”.

The CliMiP project is an excellent example of the global approach and the networked research

the project is to explore how Euroj share in resolving the problems of involved. Jann Lay sums up: “Three crucial to the success of climate change and these therefore also form the First, negotiations on climate change on the global level; second, climate change on the national level; and third, the specific economic implementation. We expect project results will influence the global approach on climate change mitigation, dev justice – as well as the shape of pc

Sven Titz

For urgently needed research.

Parasitic disease where worms get into the body, causing joint pains and swelling of the limbs, resulting from trypanosomiasis, leishmaniasis, and schistosomiasis – frightening diseases that affect mainly the poorest of the world. The Ghanaian health minister, John Amuasi, knows this only too well. “We have to look around”, he says, “Diseases are commonplace and make life difficult for needy persons in Africa.” People worldwide suffer from parasitic diseases (NTD) of one kind or another. Though treatment is available for many cases there still is no hope because they are poor, there is no

market incentive for research into better health products like drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines or better delivery mechanisms for those remedies that already exist”, says Amuasi.

Already many years ago he decided to contribute towards changing the status quo. Amuasi has been actively involved in efforts to promote NTD research since he was a young medical student: He was part of the launch of the Doctors Without Borders’ Drugs for Neglected Diseases Working Group, and later worked closely with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative. As a senior research fellow at the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine (KCCR), in 2014 Amuasi was appointed the first executive director of the African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ARNTD).

The main focus of this network is to support evidence-based control and elimination of neglected tropical diseases from Africa by empowering current and future generations of African researchers. This includes efforts to ensure that research findings are actually implemented and that help arrives where it is needed most – the people affected by disease. Being responsible for building up the network, John Amuasi interacts with health researchers and policy makers especially in Africa and internationally, drawing from his vital connections built over the years. For example, in 2015 he was a panellist alongside the Minister of Health of the Philippines at the Council on Health Research and Development colloquium



The building of a NTD network started with the Africa Initiative of the Volkswagen Foundation in 2005, which amongst others also focusses on tropical medicine. Working in cooperation with four European partners (Nuffield Foundation, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fondation Merieux, Fondazione Cariplo), in 2007 the Volkswagen Foundation initiated a program called the European Foundation Initiative for African Research in Neglected Tropical Diseases (EFINTD). The central objective was to promote African researchers in different stages of their career and provide incentives for them to work

the African researchers, the foundation developed a strategy to consolidate an successful capacity building experience. “The African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases is the result of them working hard on it”, says Dr. Amuasi. One of the main objectives: To strengthen the network and the exchange of ideas among researchers, to promote young researchers, to improve academic training at universities, and to build up sustainable research that will enable African researchers



archers currently active in
 er holders of scholarships under
 ling program. “The long-term
 nd the circle of members to
 al African experts on NTDs, as
 akers, doctors, pharmacists, and
 rkers”, says John Amuasi. “There
 a wide gap between health
 s and policy making, which
 t to translate important results
 n and implementation and help

those suffering.” A classic example of this diffi-
 culty was the effort in several malaria endemic
 countries to introduce artemisinin-based combi-
 nation therapy (ACT), a new medication against
 uncomplicated malaria that works better than
 the older medicines. Although ACT was officially
 recommended by the World Health Organization
 and the health ministries in several countries, it
 was largely ignored by doctors and patients. “The
 problem was that the older medicines were still
 available”, explains Dr. John Amuasi. “Doctors



and patients alike simply continued using the
 medications they were accustomed to, although
 they were not so effective. There was a need for
 some intervention to remedy the situation and
 some political action would have been useful.
 – However engaging with politics is something
 researchers are generally not very good at.”

Beside availability, one of the success factors
 when introducing new medications is of course
 price. Dr. John Amuasi has carried out a number
 of studies in this area, and this was also the focus
 of his doctoral thesis submitted to the Univer-
 sity of Minnesota School of Public Health, USA,
 in Health Services Research, Policy and Admin-
 istration. Dr. Amuasi’s experience in the global
 health arena has made him value the importance
 of winning over key actors. “It was support from
 the former US President’s ‘Carter Center’ which
 contributed to almost eliminating the guinea
 worm”, says Amuasi. “If we are able to achieve
 a high level of visibility for ARNTD it should be
 possible to gain many more important support-

the German Chancellor. And the f
 dent of Ghana, John Agyekum Ku
 already promoting international :
 NTDs is being approached by the
 his global influence to support th
 developing network.

Dr. John Amuasi and his colleagu
 up an action plan with the object
 to have a fully viable and vibrant
 Besides nurturing relationships w
 and ongoing efforts to boost NTD
 Africa, they intend to develop cor
 channels so that scientific findin
 more readily available to all invol
 des community briefings and info
 semination sessions as well as pri
 policy briefs, newsletters, and pat
 “Our dream is that one day peopl
 have to suffer from diseases for w
 no adequate treatment. That’s a g
 fighting for.”

Networki
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of every new research project.”

ion with international partners, uja from Göttingen University ilobal Network for Global History” a southern perspective. Beate wed him about this project and f reaching beyond set research al science.

, you and your colleagues mitted a research proposal ‘Off the Beaten Track’, a for its exceptionally high what way do you personally et stands out by breaking

earch in the area of global history nly nothing new: It has become e research field in many countries, North Atlantic region. New is “southern world” and the pro- n respect of researching glob- cs in close cooperation with lobal South.

cted in the project design? ure the objectives are met?

ative was conceived in the egion by institutes with consid- ce of research in this field – Har- n, and here in Göttingen – but rtners are located in the south-

tunity to become acquainted with research approaches in other regions of the world which are highly active and generate novel perspectives.

To what extent are these cooperation partners free to leave their own mark?

Ahuja: Here, we also have a different approach. More often than not, it is the financially strong science locations of the North that decide on the research topic. Once this has been done, they then set about searching for suitable partners in the southern world who are seen fit to carry out the previously determined research program. In contrast to this, we simply stake out the overall framework: How to proceed within this general scope is then discussed together with our partners.

How far have you progressed in this so far? Have some initial topics already emerged?

Ahuja: It’s only a short while since we received confirmation of funding, we are still in the initial stages of discussion and planning our first topic workshop. As to be expected, the project participants have articulated different preferences. A large thematic field that interests everyone, though, is the history of labor. The partners in Brazil, India, Senegal, Amsterdam, as well as in Harvard and Göttingen, have already done a lot in this area. It represents a field in which global

To return to what makes the project exceptional – viewing things from the southern world: Why do you think this approach was neglected for such a long time?

Ahuja: Our entrenched way of thinking also left its mark on our institutions. We tend to view our world from a strongly European and North-Atlantic perspective – even though this may encompass other parts of the world, the general orientation is given. In the Anglo-Saxon world, for instance, it’s still not unusual to find university courses with the title “The west and the rest”. In Germany, the “World Wars” are generally still taught as if they had been exclusively European Wars. We’re not saying this is the first time that historiography focuses on the global. However, the old imperial history that goes back to the 19th century has left its legacy: University chairs, libraries – and, of course, lines of research are dominated by certain ways of thinking. Consider, for instance, the concept of diffusion: The notion that universal modernization processes emanating from Europe will eventually take hold with similar results in other parts of the world. Empirically unsustainable, the concept shows surprising resilience. This is reinforced by the fact that the discipline of history is still marked by a pronounced national bias today: If this holds true in university departments, things are even worse in schools.

This means that a special effort has to be made?



Prof. Dr. Ravi Ahuja directs t History” at the Georg-August-l on various aspects of India’s so century including e.g. urban h Current projects examine the s



The large thematic field of labor is also relevant for global history research. Professor Ahuja standing in front of an image of a reportage series on labor migration in India by photographer Florian Müller, Hanover.

That is to say: The growing job in part of the working population. In world the debate is dominated by nomenon: so-called 'informal' work is the term given to labor re-ject to social security schemes or tecton. The proportions vary sub-Whereas in many European coun-employment relations still only a of the workforce and are perceive nate departure from 'normality', i of countries in the southern world- relations constitute the absolute countries of the global South, onl- minority of people have jobs that any welfare entitlements or prote This gives rise to the question: WI ry behind these two very differen they linked in some strange way? and 60s it would have been assur Europe and America a work norm welfare state had emerged, and tl eventually become the norm arot world. Today, we not only have to not taken place, but that in our cc growth of precarious labor relati bears at least partial similarity w nating form of informal work in t world. Thus, our previous notion c-cesses has been refuted by real lif phy can play a role in explaining this point, contrary to all expecta-

I would like to ask you about your attachment to this field of research importance of global history to you

Ahuja: Historiography has a tendency in turns and waves. Some people are currently witnessing a period of global history becoming

vanishing – dissolved by new technologies – and time is all that matters now. Encompassing a southern-world perspective reveals that time-space compression unfolds in an extremely uneven way, and that we are faced with a much more fissured geography of the world than that conveyed by the conventional narrative and the media.

Is there any one thing you are particularly looking forward to: Perhaps an area where much is still unknown and where your research approach could possibly open up something really new?

Ahuja: I'll answer your question by quoting two examples. Two years ago the Volkswagen Foundation held a conference on the First World War from a global historical perspective, placing a stronger focus on how the war was appropriated

the political and economic developments in the Middle East and the accompanying food crises; the massive delegitimization of colonial rule in Asia that led to a nationalism supported by broad sections of the population; and debates in Latin America concerning the inaptitude of the European model for shaping the future of politics on the continent. Conventional world-war historiography took little note of these profound consequences of the First World War. Here, there is really scope for breaking completely new ground. We can open up new perspectives on major world events – events that we previously failed to grasp in respect of their consequences for the world as a whole.

Another area that holds promise of revealing new insights is that surrounding the social movements that emerged around 1968, and then there is the economic crisis that spread around the world in the mid-seventies.

alized. Divergences of historical are not necessarily worn down in historical process but sometimes ote an example: The debate in y concerning the "great diver- velopment of Europe and China. ve should also ask: Why does in, serve as the yardstick and on't focus on comparing process- ns of the world? Why don't we e, into twentieth-century political in the area of social policy that ent impacts in Latin America

do, then, is set new points global history and shift the affected ones?
t goes farther than that. Taking



A very interesting aspect:

To overcome methodological nationalism ...

Ahuja: Perhaps I should explain a little further. In Europe, the development of historiography was closely linked to the development of the national states. That was not only the case in Europe but also in post-colonial nations – although this took place in the twentieth century and against quite another background. The postcolonial historiographies in Asia and in Africa first had to free themselves of the imperial perspective. Hence, in many respects the national perspective was the result of overcoming the older dominant perspective, whereas in the European context the national perspective was the original point of departure. That has a great number of consequences. First, in the European space – as well as the American –, young historians find the turn towards global perspectives far less problematic and more liberating. It means reaching beyond a space that had been preset for a long time. In postcolonial contexts the problem is much more complex. Here, too, many historians had perceived over the past four decades the nation-centeredness of historiography to be inadequate and as such unacceptable. However, the turn towards global supranational perspectives is still burdened by the tradition of imperial history. This explains why in India and other parts of the world there was a tendency to concentrate on smaller, subnational levels. A certain naivety in respect of global history might exist in Europe, but not so much from postcolonial perspectives. This may prove beneficial and helpful in respect of developing critical global perspectives on history.

The project will run for three years, certainly a good impulse, but what prospects for a lasting effect?

Ahuja: In my view, the most sustainable you can think of is to invest in people precisely what the project is designed to enable the young global historians at the start of their careers to do. They will be able to draw on the plurality of research perspectives of the world and encourage new approaches. This is a long-term project as many of these young researchers occupy university chairs. The early career opportunity to break out of national constraints that exist in every national history and reflect critically on the earlier this will also become an opportunity at universities.

And perhaps another argument in support of purposefully allowing the global South to come to the fore and have more say ...?

social as well as economic dynamics that don't stop at national borders. We need research that enables us to look beyond these borders and redefine them.

You don't see this, though, as the final goal of developments in the field?

Ahuja: What is the most interesting aspect of this development? Conventional historiography has often been criticized for being trapped within the context of a methodological nationalism. The question is what can we do about it? Proclaiming a methodological globalism or localism in its place won't do. To overcome methodological nationalism means to ensure that the determination of the space of relevance becomes part and parcel of every new research project. To put it another way:

in, historiography has made progress over the past decades in well as regional history. Due to its move onto smaller, subnational scales, it is bringing these in greater depth into the global conversation. I see this as a significant achievement. As a result we have gained a new set of insights. We should be careful not to let this go. I also believe that the field is far from withering away, despite the challenges it faces, and also remains a vibrant history. Processes over the world, illustrate that we have to look at the world as a whole if we wish to address global history. With regard to the processes of globalization in connection with precarious labor relations, for instance, we

tance to investigate topics that add a new dimension from a decentered perspective. The case and that of my colleagues throughout South Asia. We are actually already working on several different projects. For instance, we are collaborating on a project funded by the National Endowment for Education and Research (NICAS: MP) in Delhi, in which we are collaborating with Indian partners. In respect, the project supported by the National Endowment for Education and Research Foundation is part of a strategic

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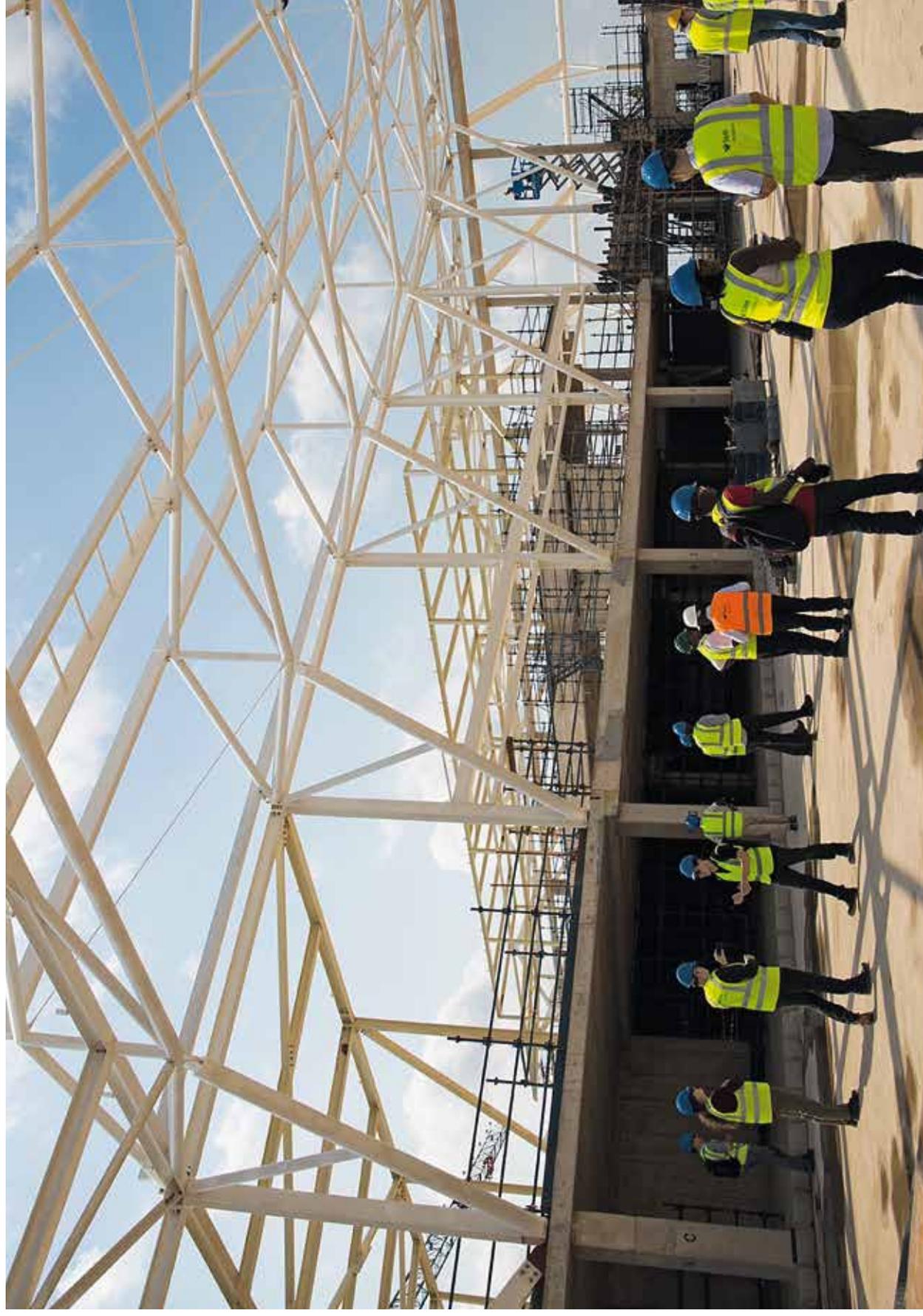
an Foundation is funding the KEYS symposia nia, Ghana, and South Africa.

ain amount of defiance in play
Msinjili chose to study engineer-
gineering is generally perceived
7 demanding, and women there-
tempt it. So I made up my mind
ays the young woman from
w works for the Federal Institute
earch and Testing (BAM) in Ber-
appy in her work; among other
rches new formulas for produc-
colleague, Dr. Wolfram Schmidt,
isiasm for this crucial building
s used all over the world. The two
l KEYS, which stands for Knowl-
or Young Scientists. The project
networks to bring international
with young African scientists
of knowledge on cement and
ogy. What's so special about this
is the combination of summer
nd the quality of scientific sym-
earchers get the opportunity to
nowledge and to discuss their
ienced senior scientists – in an
utual acceptance and esteem.

hree symposia was held in June
ion with the University of Dar
a total of thirty candidates,
midt had carefully selected the
African scientists who were
rship to attend the kick-off event
metropolis. Also four young



the stages of the major
project to concrete experts
Boudewijn Piscaer and
Professor Raïssa Ferron.



his heterogeneous group for a entailed manifold challenges Msinjili managed by her proven kills.

son that such keen interest is the gray building material: The b-Saharan Africa are booming for cement to build new roads, ldings is rising fast. In Africa, of producing and purchasing material is high. "Depending average earner has to work en one and ten days in order to ment that in Germany would only euros", Schmidt explains. This he transport costs involved. In ica, cement works are few and i the material often has to be : distances of several hundred ching the building site. Moreover,

some of the raw materials needed for cement production have to be imported. Although it may be cheaper in the short run to import subsidized cement from China or Pakistan, for instance, this would be contrary to the need to create badly needed jobs at home and to develop more sustainable local solutions fitting in ideally with the local boundary framework and supply chains. In addition, from a more global point of view, it does not make any real sense to ship products halfway around the globe that can be produced from local resources that exist in overabundance.

The main focus of the symposium was therefore on the topic of research into new binder materials and cement compositions incorporating supplementary cementitious materials in an attempt to make the local production of cement and mortar more environmentally friendly and cost efficient. The four days were filled with lectures, presentations, discussions, and a visit to a large construction site. "The participants were highly focused all the time", reports Schmidt. "It wasn't unusual to find them deeply engrossed in discussion until far into the night". The 27-year-old construction engineer Farai Shaba from Zambia was full of praise: "I think the symposium showed us all that we're not alone and that we all have similar problems to tackle – but also that we will progress faster through cooperation."

Kolawole Olonade from the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria was of the same opinion, saying he had received great encouragement: "The symposium has already had an effect on my work. For example, I learned about a new method I can use to characterize cement additives." He reports that he was also able to make new contacts with prospects for cooperation in future.

The young scientists were not short of ideas to resolve the crucial problem of cost. They propose

blast furnace slag that simply do not exist in most African countries. Nsesheye Msinjili, for instance, is working on formulas containing the ash gained from rice husks, which in Tanzania can be found in large quantities. Symposium participant Olonade from Nigeria, for his part, suggests using the ash from cassava peel, coconut fiber, and the seed sacks of oil palm – for all of which there is no shortage where he comes from. He has already experimented with these ingredients as potential cement additives and found them to be suitable. BAM researcher Schmidt adds, "The cane waste known as bagasse, a left-over of sugar production, is another possible ingredient".

New types of cement using local ingredients also constitute a valuable contribution towards climate protection. For instance, large amounts of energy are required in the production of classic Portland cement, which is made of limestone, clay, sand, and iron ore. This is especially due to the very high temperatures and the decomposition of limestone. "Every ton of limestone clincher entails 0.8 tons of carbon dioxide emissions", says Schmidt. That might appear to be rather insignificant compared with the production of other building materials, but the global production of cement is very high and it is growing at an enormous pace. As a result, the cement industry is responsible for about five percent of all anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions today; it thus produces more greenhouse gas than the steel industry or air traffic. If we continue producing cement without new concepts, in 2050 the cement industry will be responsible for about 30 percent of the total CO2 emissions in the world.

According to Schmidt, "Action is urgently needed". He remains optimistic, though, and believes the new cement formulas will lead to important



the young scientists from Africa, plant waste. Schmidt is quick to p "because there isn't so much indi in Africa but a strong agricultural plant waste harbors a huge poter

However, a lot of research still ha before this potential can be realiz lies the nub of the problem: The a ing of budding construction engi ists at most African universities f some of the necessary skill-sets. " students are highly focused, their to concentrate on applied science research", Schmidt has noticed. A ing revolves around the classic lec often than not is based on old lite tion to this, the professors do not status as in industrial nations an badly paid – some having to top i with jobs on the side. Under such



Arab world is a challenge for all concerned.

200-page report on the symposium proceedings, they have initiated a LinkedIn group to provide a platform for participants and experts alike to keep in touch.

Msinjili is already making plans for the next two symposia to be held 2016 in Accra, Ghana, and 2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The focus then will be on valorization of by-products for cement production and waste management, as well as on application of tailored African concrete solutions and new capacity building, respectively. The construction engineer expects many more applications than for the kick-off event, and she hopes next time to receive more applications from Germany. In future she would also prefer the symposia to be held in universities rather than hotels: "That way local students would be able to benefit by listening to the presentations of the international young researchers and experts, and they could possibly actively participate with posters, for instance, and provide added inspiration to the discussions and proceedings".

Over the next couple of years, Msinjili will have her hands full working on her doctoral project and her concept for refining rice-husk ash for use as a sustainable and applicable cement clinker replacement. And she also wants to do her part in raising the share of women in her branch. This was another result of the symposium in Dar Es Salaam: All six female African participants expressed their conviction that female engineers should more often be able to present themselves and their work at schools and universities. This would encourage young women to become involved with sustainable construction projects and play a greater role in shaping the future of their country.

tivated graduates often choose to emigrate because of the demand for engineering services in their branch at home. Schmidt complains, "Another problem is that we are not able to benefit fully from international networking and cooperative events through lack of expert events through lack of policy." Without question, child to read and write, and also adult important. However, we should step up to improve the education of university students, those are the people who will be of their countries in academia, economy. We should support them to achieve sustainable development and "independent existence", he stresses.

doubt that the young African students will be able to make their mark. "The next challenge is to make sustainable cement types is going to be a challenge," he says. And because they are not used to being in conventions, he fully expects that many of the young engineers to come up with new ideas for construction like building with recycled materials. "After a visit to the large airport in Dar Es Salaam, the event as a motivational boost to the participants and further education. One of them now wants to enroll in a university in Germany offered by foreign universities



Prof. Dr. Ulrike Freitag is director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the Free University of Berlin (ZMO) since 2002. A his special interests is Saudi Arabia and leading research in the study of the Middle East, Africa and Asia with a strong historical perspective. Her first call of the funding scheme "Arab World", the Volkswagen F

The transformation processes in the Arab world triggered by the 'Arab Spring' 2010/2011 are also an important topic for research. The Volkswagen Foundation soon offered scholars from Germany and the Arab region opportunities to engage in cooperative research on special aspects of these processes. How does a project function under the difficult circumstances that prevail in the region? Is it at all possible for science to accompany processes developing at such a pace that it's difficult to keep up with events? Mareike Knoke spoke with Middle East historian Ulrike Freitag.

Professor Freitag, many scholars say the fast-moving events of the 'Arab Spring' in 2011 took them completely by surprise. Did you think it would develop so rapidly?

Freitag: I had no idea that the uprisings would spread so quickly from one country to another, and that they would give rise to the bloody civil wars now raging in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. Of course, everyone knew that something was afoot, that there were discussions and widespread discontent. The enormous escalation, though, caught us all by surprise.

What effect do such surprise turns of event have on your work as a researcher?

Freitag: Changes like these are part and parcel of my daily work as I research precisely those areas where certain social or political movements



actual projects. Whether this functions or not, we will just have to wait and see.

Do you come across any hurdles during your work?

Freitag: In our case there were some difficulties concluding the required cooperation agreements with the partner universities. As we already knew from other colleagues, we often have to be extremely flexible. For instance, immediately following the revolution, our Egyptian colleague tried to formalize the research cooperation with Cairo University. The university management was very taken with the idea. And then – it was shortly after President Mursi's ouster – she was informed by her university that it was no longer opportune for local academics to work with researchers in other countries. In any case, she was told, it would take several years before an agreement could be signed. In Morocco, on the other hand, not only would tax have had to be paid on the project funds, depleting them significantly, but also the university wanted to keep part of it as institutional overhead. This would have meant nothing would be left over for the local Ph.D. students. We did finally manage in both cases to conclude agreements, but had to find another solution for the young research associates via stipend contracts.

Does the fast pace of developments in these countries sometimes frustrate project proceedings?

Freitag: Here, we have to be flexible, too. For instance, during the kick-off meeting for our project in Berlin we had to confront the question whether, after the overthrow of Mursi and the Muslim Brotherhood government in 2013, it would still be possible to investigate the protest

such from the interviews and subsequently put under arrest. For the same reason, we refrained from setting up a Facebook page for the project because data security – details of the participating persons – couldn't be ensured.

That means you feel a sense of responsibility for your partners?

Freitag: But of course. We must never lose sight of the safety of the people we cooperate with. We have to take the threat of possible reprisals very seriously indeed. In many cases, the very fact that funding is received from abroad can be enough to raise suspicion. For this reason, for a long time we have made a point of discussing with our partners whether granting a German stipend might be a danger for research associates in their countries.

Do you always know the reason why your and other researchers' efforts are sometimes thwarted?

Freitag: At least sometimes official reasons are given. I can relate an experience made in a project initiated by German and French colleagues in Saudi Arabia: An architect wanted to research traditional stone architecture in Saudi Arabian villages in cooperation with a local women's university. The local governor of the region, however, banned a planned meeting in one of the villages because he considered the presence of young female students to be indecent – supposedly because it couldn't be ensured that the genders would be separated during the event. Whether the ban was really due to moral considerations or whether the governor was bothered by the idea that a free exchange might take place between the artists, village inhabitants, urban intellectuals, and foreign researchers expected to be present, we never found out.

Sometimes such issues can be negotiated with local authorities, sometimes one just has to wait for the spur of the moment.

What about support here in Germany? Is there sufficient funding for research on the Arab world?

Freitag: The funding that comes from the Volkswagen Foundation is somewhat limited. It takes into account the need for research, but I was talking about and which is : researchers working in the region would like to see more initiatives most unlikely that state institutions prepared to fund a project like ours. The frequently unstable research

In conclusion, a question about your role you play: How far do you see in an advisory position?

Freitag: For my part – I'm sure I can't speak for my German project colleagues at all – I do not see myself as an advisor in countries we are researching in. We don't want to intervene in local politics, only exception might, at times, be in an advisory function. However, I do find it an important task in reaching as wide a range as possible. In Germany we can do that through scientific and other publications that challenge stereotypes and present an updated picture of Arab countries: that's what we should address. We of course have to address the politicians. For it appears to me that there is no idea of how diverse positions are within different Arab countries. There are many facets quite surprising, such as the existence of many well-known artists and intellectuals in a country

disease in Uzbekistan.



orce of life, and in many cultures
: purity. However, water can
fe. Louis Pasteur, the father of
ated more than 100 years ago
o percent of our diseases". Today,
n. Organization (WHO) estimates
of all cases of disease worldwide
contaminated water. In many
al Asia, for instance, an adequate

In Uzbekistan researchers are facing up to the
complex questions: To which extent does the
population have access to adequate hygiene and
sufficient supplies of clean drinking water? How
can the health risks associated with water be
prevented or at least diminished? "We still don't
know enough about the links or the exposure
routes through which pathogens breeding in
water affect human health in the region", says Dr.

Research Capacity and Water-Related Diseases:
Improving Risk Management Strategies for
Public Healthcare in Uzbekistan (HEALTHCAP)",
which is investigating conditions in the Central
Asian country.
Besides three Uzbek institutes another coopera-
tion partner is the International Centre for Inte-
grated Assessment and Sustainable Development

trained and healthcare improved.
gen Foundation is supporting the
the context of its Central Asia fur
which has already supported sor
and made over 50 million euros a
successful cooperation between r
Germany and in the region. In the
Uzbek researchers were granted 5
for 37 projects.



national health reforms and policy initiatives like the “Water Safety Plan”, which among others foresees the full development and modernization of the water and health systems by the year 2020. Dr. Subramanian points out, “HEALTHCAP stands out by its scientific and interdisciplinary approach in analyzing the complex linkage between water supply and public health”. According to his colleague, hydrologist and team leader Prof. Dr. Islam Usmanov from the Research Institute of Irrigation and Water Problems (RII-WP) at Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration “Previous measures undertaken by the authorities concentrated on stopping the spread of disease once an infection broke out. There was no attempt to investigate the impacts of climate, environmental change, or industrial and agricul-

cross-disciplinary approach as a r to analyze the complex issues in (op suitable solutions.

Uzbekistan has a continental cli by hot, dry summers and low rair sive cultivation of cotton and othr agriculture take enormous amou and the use of fertilizer and pesti spread. In addition to this, Uzbeki growing industry consumes almc miles of water every year, half of neled back in a contaminated sta a further major threat to the supy water. As a consequence of all thi water has become a scarce comm bination with inadequate hygien



gs, rivers, and canals, and many ed water. It is estimated that cent of the population is con- at does not meet national stan- nditions like these it's no wonder fers and there is a high incidence ase", says Saravanan Subrama- ly worked on the issue of water Asia.



k package, the HEALTHCAP ie status of water supply and he health sector infrastructure rince. Data were gathered also quality, the health status of ind sociocultural dimensions. In ey carry out a detailed survey holds. "We chose the region of e of its combination of rural and with readily accessible health aterborne diseases", explains m the Research Institute of ene and Occupational Diseases 4-45 million inhabitants, Tashkent ountry's third-biggest and fastest e, surrounding the capital of the ie North East of Uzbekistan. Here, of the population is connected to upply, and 70 percent of house- ed with a wastewater system.

are taken to improve water sup- l not enough wastewater treat- water distribution systems. Many hat do exist were built in the ntury and require renovation ion by now. hough, there are differences r as a whole as well as between areas. In the province of Tash- ICAP team is therefore looking at

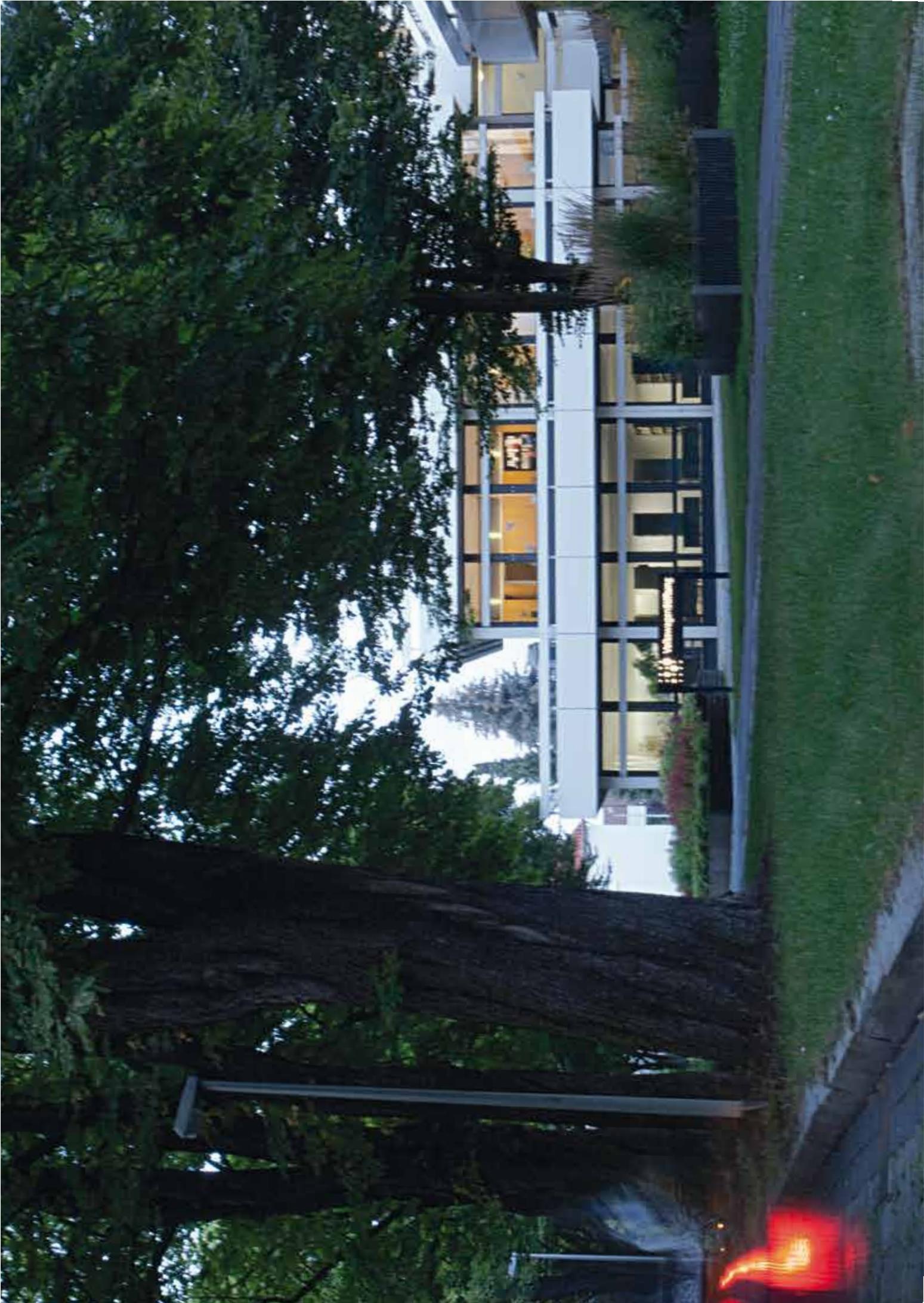
car ride from Tashkent and many of the people here access water via wells or pumps from ground aquifers near their homes, others have to fetch it from the river or from water distribu- tion points. Based on a computer-aided survey of about 250 selected households in each of the two districts the researchers are collecting the major part of the up-to-date data they need. They are assisted by master students from Tashkent State Medical Academy.

The participating households have to answer a comprehensive list of questions: How do you access your water, what do you use it for, how clean is it, are you happy with the supply, what diseases are common in your community? Ph.D. student Minjung Cho from ZEF, University of Bonn, has already gathered experience in other international research projects, "in which I worked mostly on strategies and measures for improving the health sector". In the framework of HEALTHCAP the young researcher passed on her

reports: „Since 2014 I have been aware of the pro- ject and meanwhile I have learnt some new sci- entific methodology in partnership with the Ger- man experts. Currently I contribute to the project by helping to fill the gaps in the monitoring of water-related diseases by analyzing the epidemi- ological and environmental parameters."

The household survey has just started, but older data already reveal the impact of environmental influences: "In the summer months between June and September some regions exhibit a higher incidence of acute diarrhea than the rest of the year", says Subramanian. The data show a clear connection between the monthly temperature, water quality, and waterborne diseases. HEALTHCAP team member Professor Usmanov believes, "this is only one indication of the growing significance of climatic influences". In Uzbekistan climate change is having a greater impact than in Europe: The annual mean tem- peratures there are already two degrees Celsius

"The investigations provide vital i facets of climate change that imp health of the population", says Az lov. Moreover, like Professor Usma: convinced that HEALTHCAP delivi a future Center of Excellence on e and health research in Uzbekista lead to a further strengthening of between European and Uzbek res researcher Dr. Subramanian asse: nificance of the project in the foll- "I believe our findings will be of v provinces in Uzbekistan and may beyond – for instance countries a where climate change is not yet c. No matter what the prevailing rei: environment, water, and health, f the world are dependent on a goc water. Actress and UNESCO activi burn once summed this up in the "Water is life, and clean water me



Photography/References

- title: Adilet Bekturov from Bishkek University (left)
going through the questionnaire with herder Kalbai Abdiev
who is prepared to use the GPS logger. (cf. page 16)
Maxim Shubovich, Bishkek
page 4: Mirko Krenzel, Hanover
page 5: Eberhard Franke, München
page 6: Martin Neumann, Hanover
page 8: Sven Stolzenwald, Hanover
page 9: Muhammad Fadli, Jakarta
page 10: Daniel Pilar, Hanover
page 11: Kristy Carlson, Bujumbura
page 12: Samyra Cury Salek
pages 14 – 19 top, and 20 top: Maxim Shubovich, Bishkek
page 19 below: Gordon Welters, Berlin
pages 20 below and 21 top:
Otgongerel Buyanaa, Ulaanbaatar
pages 22 and 25 top right: Mattias Erfurt, GPPI Berlin
page 23: picture alliance/Photoshot
pages 24 and 25 top left: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, São Paulo
pages 26 – 30: Sutee Wongkamolchun, Chiangmai
page 31: Fabian Fiechter, Hanover/Lörrach

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