

[Zeige diese E-Mail in deinem Browser an](#)



ACT Newsletter July 2024 - Issue #2

Restitution Dialogues from Cameroon to Freiburg - and back? Get Involved: Experiment in the Heart of Freiburg Ghana - Kenya - Freiburg: Connected with Science

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the second issue of the newsletter from the Africa Centre for Transregional Research. In this edition, we shine a spotlight on our new project "Restitution of Dignity," which will feature a science communication experiment set to take place in the heart of Freiburg. We also highlight the experiences of Dr. Asitoakor, a young researcher from Ghana, who visited our centre in May.

Our newsletter aims to serve as a bridge to keep you updated on our latest activities, upcoming events, recent publications, and the work of our colleagues and partners. We are committed to fostering a rich exchange of ideas and knowledge across regions

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

mit großer Freude begrüße ich Sie zur zweiten Ausgabe des Newsletters des Africa Centre for Transregional Research. In dieser Ausgabe stellen wir Ihnen unter anderem unser neues Forschungsprojekt "Restitution der Würde" vor, für das ein öffentliches Experiment im Herzen von Freiburg stattfinden wird. Außerdem lassen wir Dr. Asitoakor zu Wort kommen, einen jungen Forscher aus Ghana, der das ACT im Mai besuchte.

Mit unserem Newsletter möchten wir Sie über unsere Aktivitäten, bevorstehende Veranstaltungen, Veröffentlichungen und die Arbeit unserer Kollegen und Partner informieren. Wir sind bestrebt, einen regen Austausch von Ideen und

and disciplines.

I am confident that you will find the contents engaging and inspiring.

Warm regards,

Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler

Director

Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT)



Wissen über Regionen und Disziplinen hinweg zu fördern.

Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass Sie hier etwas Interessantes für sich finden werden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Keep me updated about ACTs work!

Research

ACT researchers continue dialogues of restitution in Cameroon



Prof. Dr. Nadja Germann has been a guest of Prof. Dr. Albert Gouaffo at the University of Dschang in Cameroon since the beginning of June. The two are taking six weeks to continue the dialogue they began in Freiburg at the beginning of this year in the grasslands of western Cameroon. For both of them, immersion is a central aspect of their research project entitled "Restitution of Dignity? Colonialism - 'Human Remains' - Humanity", in which they seek ways out of the colonial impasse in a free conversation and struggle for an encounter at eye level. Currently, they are joined by Richard Plankenhorn and his camera. He will document his own journey, his impressions and experiences with the camera alongside the professors' work and use this material to contribute to the successful progress of the project. The whole research team, coordinated by Dr. Balz Andrea Alter, is exploring new ways of using social media and digital cinematography for thought and communication processes in the humanities and cultural studies.

We are happy to announce that the **new project website is now live and accessible under restitutionderwuerde.de**. Please visit us online and check out detailed reports and material from behind-the-scenes!

Visit the new website!

Events

Invitation: Science Communication Experiment in Public Space

Among the Maka from present-day Cameroon, the dead are not dead, but pillars and axis of the living community. However, since 1911, five Maka individuals have been deprived of their function as they have been locked away and stored in cardboard boxes in the Freiburg University Archives on behalf of Eugen Fischer.

What can we learn as a society and research community when we face the challenges of scientific practice that need to be salvaged in this epistemic cruelty?

E 3600 scientific artworks and the ACT have been exploring this question since May 2024 as part of a work commission in collaboration with director Michael Buseke and dramaturge Lucie Tuma as well as a group of five students, who are taking the setting of the 'Restitution of Dignity?' research as an opportunity to enter into an experimental exchange with the people of Freiburg on the Platz der Alten Synagoge.

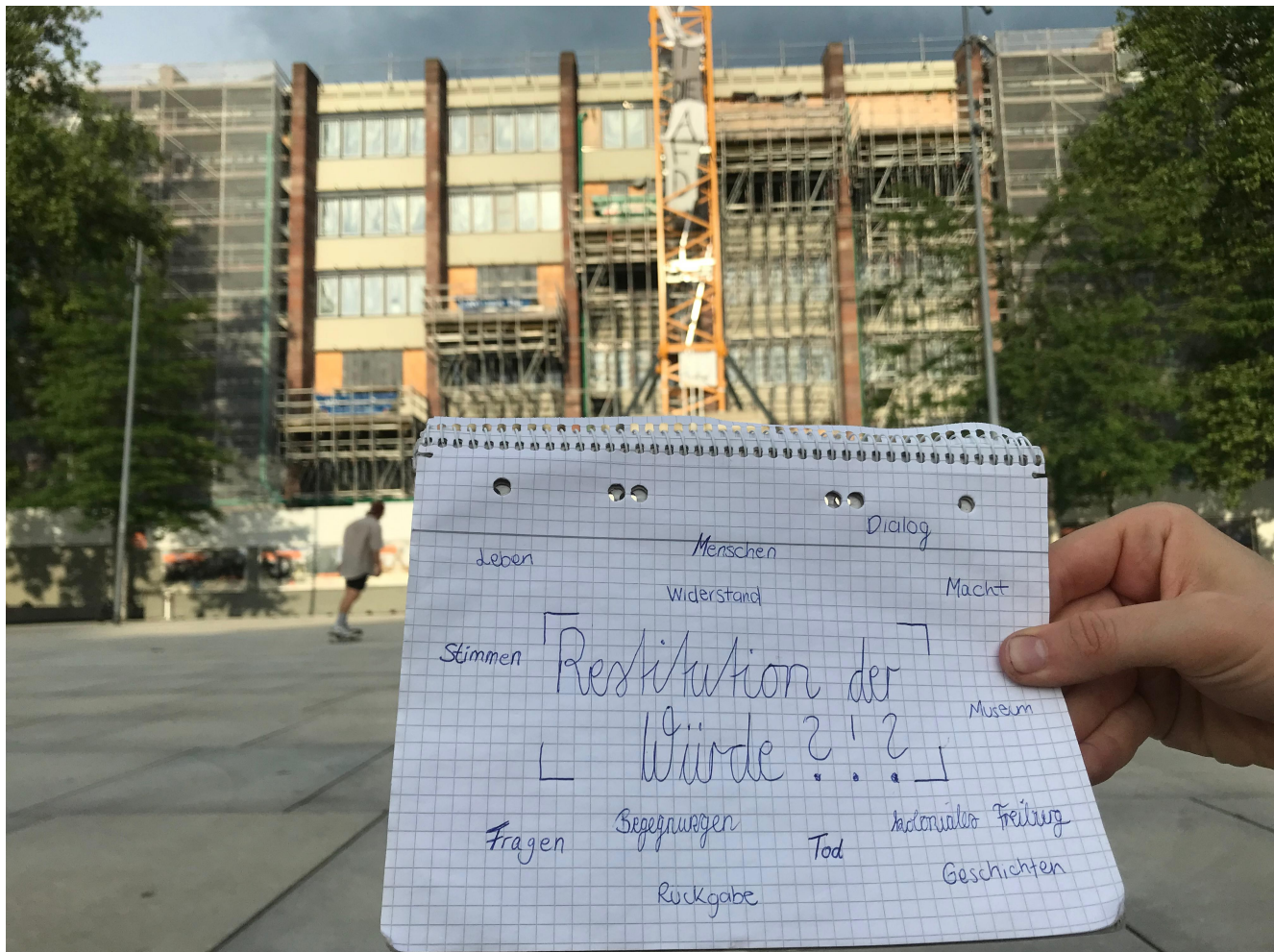
In an artistic research process questions and statements will be collected through a specially created meeting space: Questions from the people of Freiburg to the university archive management, the researchers as well as the descendants of the Maka ancestors, who in turn gave rise to the research. This exploration aims to create public spaces for discussion about humanity, colonialism, science, dignity, and the relationship between Freiburg and the five Maka individuals.

We invite you to join this science communication experiment on July 15 from 15.30-18.00 and on July 18 from 13.30-16.00 at the Platz der Alten Synagoge. Audio installations (in German) will provide insights and spark discussions with the affected communities and the project team.

[More information about the experiment](#)

Research

Successful Kick-Off-Workshop: "Of Ears of the Dead and Voices of the Living"



On June 15 and 16, the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute hosted the kickoff workshop of the experiment "Of Ears of the Dead and Voices of the Living", where the participants prepared the project's implementation, aimed at creating the space of encounter and dialogue at the Platz der Alten Synagoge. Over two intensive days, thanks to the participants' engagement and honesty, many new perspectives were uncovered. This workshop served not only as a scientific, historical, and dialectical foundation for the project but also as an opportunity to learn from one another and develop a deeper understanding.

"We were introduced to Freiburg's colonial history and the stories of the Maka skulls by historian Heiko Wegman, prompting reflections on the dehumanizing aspects of colonialism and its lasting impacts. We also focused on our methodological approach, combining scientific communication with artistic expression. Under director Michael Buseke, we explored authentic self-presentation and discussed the project's goals and inclusivity. These discussions led to profound questions about the positions we embody, the voices considered, and how to ensure fruitful collaboration. We look forward to a vibrant premiere in July, enriched by ears of the dead and voices of the living." *(Melanie and Abelina, student assistants)*

Find the full workshop report here

Events

Racism and Deportation Plans: The latest Freiburg Africa Talk



On June 13, the latest Freiburg Africa Talk captivated a large and engaged audience. Prof. Dr. Isabelle Ihring and Prof. Dr. Gökçen Yüksel led a rich panel discussion moderated by ACT Director Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler sharing their experiences and insights on racism in Germany.

The event addressed the alarming revelations by investigative journalists about plans for mass deportations, which have sparked widespread outrage in German society. The panelists insisted that for those who face racism daily, these plans were unsurprising, reflecting longstanding racist political and media discourses surrounding migration and asylum, prevalent across the political spectrum. Prof. Dr. Ihring also shared her recent research on experiences of People of African descent who migrated to Ghana, following a call by the Ghanaian Government.

To bridge the gap until the next Freiburg Africa Talks happen in the winter semester,

check out the university's media portal, where you can find the recordings from all previous Africa Talks!

Watch the recordings of previous Africa Talks!

People

Three Questions to Dr. Bismark Kwesi Asitoakor from Ghana

Could you highlight a recent project or study you're particularly proud of?

I am proud of the 'Climate Smart Cocoa Systems for Ghana (CLIMCOCOA)' Project which was supported with a grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark through the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The project developed a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of climate change on the socio-biophysical bases of cocoa systems in Ghana and assessed the role of agroforestry as a model for climate smart agriculture in Ghana.

What did surprise you about Freiburg (or the University of Freiburg)?

Despite the fact that Freiburg and the University of Freiburg are old historical city and university, respectively, they have the state-of-the-art facilities including a modern and very efficient transportation systems as well as a solid social structure for easy integration for foreigners. This is based on personal experience as well as interactions with people of other African origins, e.g. students from Benin, Cameroon and Ghana, and workers from Rwanda and Ghana.

How do you see possible collaborations with the ACT and/or the University of Freiburg in the future?



Dr. Bismark Kwesi Asitoakor

Research Scientist at the Plant Genetic Conservation Division of the CSIR -PGRRI
(Picture: CSIR)

I am positive about collaborations in research and capacity development especially in forestry or natural resource management, agroforestry, climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience. Through a recent invitation by the Head of the Chair of the Forest Growth and Dendroecology of the University of Freiburg, Prof. Dr. Thomas Seifert and Dr. Christopher Morhart, I have submitted an application for the TWAS-DFG Cooperation Visits Programme – SSA. This is aimed at initiating collaborative research in Freiburg Germany for the year 2025.

The TWAS-DFG Cooperation Visits Programme is offered by the The World Academy of Sciences for the advancement of science in developing countries and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and provides postdoctoral researchers from sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, with the opportunity to make a three-month ‘Cooperation Visit’ to a research institute in Germany. The ACT supports this applications and hopes to welcome Dr. Asitoakor as a fellow in Freiburg in 2025.

Science Communications

ACT reVISITED: “Linguistic Colonialism”

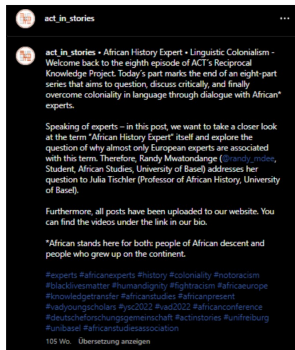
One of our first projects on Instagram was the series on “Linguistic Colonialism” where we critically reflected on terms that perpetuate structural racism. Between May and June 2022, 8 students shared problematic words they encountered in their studies and discussed them with experts - mainly people of African descent and people who grew up on the continent.

The post that sparked the most responses from our community is about the term “African History Expert” and why almost only European experts are associated with this term. Check out [@act_in_stories](#) to find out what Prof. Julia Tischer from the University of Basel has to say about it!

Even if the series has come to an end, the



conversation needs to continue...



Check out ACTs instagram account!

Cooperations

Young Entrepreneurs connect Germany and Kenya with Renewable Energy



In the context of the the “Startup|Energy” initiative, 12 young entrepreneurs from Baden-Württemberg, Kenya and Uganda came together for a fascinating bootcamp in Nairobi in April 2024, organized by ACT member Dr. Harald Schützeichel. With the "Startup|Energy" initiative, the University of Freiburg and the Freiburg Solar Energy Foundation want to promote regional and international exchange between startups working in the field of decentralized renewable energy supply in Germany or East Africa. Four universities have each selected three innovators for the bootcamp: Kenyatta University (Kenya), Makerere University Business School (Uganda), Mount Kenya University (Kenya) and the Universität Freiburg.

Currently, Startup|Energy is calling on innovators and spin-offs from Kenyan universities to take part in the Digital Energy Solutions Award 2024. ACT member Prof. Dr. Dirk Neumann from the University of Freiburg is part of the jury.

[Read more about the initiative here!](#)

Calls

Open Calls for Applications and Proposals at FRIAS and MIASA

Currently, there are plenty of scientific calls open for young and more advanced researchers, with opportunities for diverse fellowships in the academic year of 2025/26.

The **Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA)** at the University of Ghana is dedicated to research in the Humanities and Social Sciences and committed to reduce global asymmetries in knowledge production. MIASA's umbrella topic is 'sustainable governance', therefore, researchers should ideally be covering one or more of the three main thematic corridors – environment, democracy and peace – and/or the intersectional topics addressing their cross-cutting issues – landownership and acquisition, migration and mobility, restitution of colonially acquired cultural objects, African cities, and Human Rights. **Check out their open calls [here!](#)**

The **Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS)** is the University of Freiburg's international research college. The Institute supports academic exchange across existing boundaries: between disciplines, between different cultures and countries, between established and younger researchers. FRIAS Fellowships are aimed at postdoctoral researchers of all nationalities and disciplines in Freiburg, Germany and abroad. Their Sustainable Governance Senior Fellowship is open to researchers of all African nationalities and is aimed exclusively at representatives of humanities and social science disciplines. **Their open calls can be found [here!](#)**



universität freiburg

The ACT newsletter is published once a quarter and provides information on current developments in ongoing research projects, highlights exciting events and gives an insight into the people behind the topics.

Yes, I want to receive the ACT newsletter four times a year!



Copyright (C) 2024 ACT Freiburg. Bildrechte: ACT, Carla Bube, Melanie Schuler, CSIR, StartupEnergy

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT)
Windausstr. 16
79110 Freiburg



This email was sent to <<E-Mail-Adresse>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Africa Centre for Transregional Research · Windausstr. 16 · Freiburg Im Breisgau 79110 · Germany

