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ACT Newsletter October 2024 - Issue #3

Dear Readers,

I hope you were able to enjoy the summer and are already looking forward to the beginning of the winter semester as much as I am.

There has been a lot going on at and around ACT in recent months, from a joint workshop with MIASA to visits from Harvard and Ghana, and a special dissertation.

In this newsletter, you can read about all these and many more news - and of course we also provide information about the diverse upcoming events in the winter semester.

I hope you enjoy reading it!

Warm regards,
Anika Becher

Dr. Anika Becher

Geschäftsführerin/Managing Director
Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT)



Keep me updated about ACTs work!

News

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

Ich hoffe, dass Sie den Sommer genießen konnten, und schon mit genauso viel Freude wie ich auf das jetzt beginnende Wintersemester blicken.

Am und ums ACT war auch in den letzten Monaten wieder viel los, von einem gemeinsamen Workshop mit MIASA über Besuch aus Harvard und Ghana, bis hin zu einer ganz besonderen Dissertation.

In diesem Newsletter können Sie zu all diesen und noch vielen weiteren Neuigkeiten weiterlesen - und wir informieren natürlich auch über die nun anstehenden vielfältigen Termine im Wintersemester.

Ich wünsche Ihnen viel Freude beim Lesen!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
Anika Becher

Harvard Researcher Evelyn Hammonds Attends Workshop on Bone Collections



“Reckoning with human remains means also reckoning with the violent, eurocentric epistemologies they helped to build, and that in too many cases still shape research cultures and practices.”

Following research projects on the restitution of human remains, a workshop on “Human Remains in University Collections - Comparison and Entanglements” was held at the Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut (ABI) on July 15, 2024, in cooperation with the ACT and the FRIAS. Participants from France, (Southwest) Germany, Switzerland, the USA and Tanzania met for an informal exchange on the more than 100-year-old “collections” of human remains and the current challenges in connection with the commemoration and reparation of the injustice represented by these collections.

The workshop revealed stark differences in how Universities are addressing this implication and responsibility. In particular, there is a major distinction between private US based Universities and largely state-funded Universities in the European Union. The opportunity to hold such a workshop arose from the visit of Evelyn Hammonds (Harvard University), a distinguished researcher in the field of the history of science and medicine and Chair of Harvard University's Committee on Human Remains in

University Museum Collections.

Read the results of the exchange in the workshop report!

Restitution Workshop with MIASA



On September 16 and 27, 2024, a diverse group of researchers and practitioners from Africa and Europe interested in the field of restitution met at the University of Freiburg for the workshop “Restitution dynamics from Africa and the German debate”. The workshop was organized by the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) of the University of Ghana and the ACT. A comprehensive report of the workshop is in the works already.

To the event page!

Symposium on Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region



The event, jointly organised by ABI and ACT, brought together researchers from the region as well as those working there. The diverse group of 14 participants engaged in lively discussions with the presenters, and revealed the good work being done on the ground and the opportunities for improving the lives of refugees.

Among the topics discussed were current challenges in funding and recent research developments, as well as the political discourse around refugees in Uganda.

Participants shared insights from research as well as from hands-on experiences, for example with the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict and Caritas International.

[More information about the symposium](#)

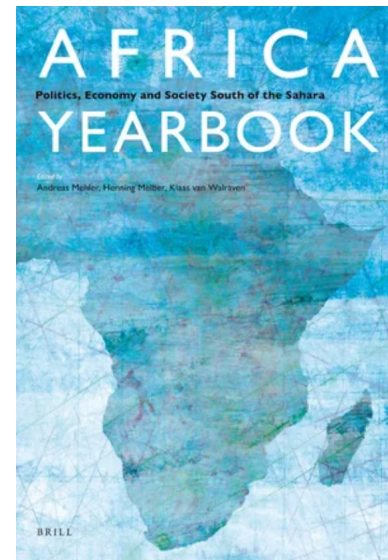
20th Edition of the Africa Yearbook

“I’m delighted to share a special milestone with you: the 20th anniversary edition of the Africa Yearbook was just released on 26 September! For those unfamiliar, this annual publication provides a comprehensive overview of the political, economic, and social developments across sub-Saharan Africa. It’s a truly invaluable resource for anyone keen to stay updated on the region, be they scholars, policy-makers, or general enthusiasts.

Since its inception in 2005, I’ve had the honor of co-editing the Africa Yearbook alongside a dedicated team.

This anniversary edition is particularly exciting as it highlights our continued efforts to connect research with real-world developments, a goal that resonates deeply with the work of ACT and ABI here in Freiburg. We look forward to celebrating this edition with you and, as always, welcome your thoughts!”

Andreas Mehler



Find the book here!

People

Portrait: Dr. Stephanie Boye and her Unique Path to Academia

“The important question is: what can I learn from the ‘other’? The aim is to adopt as Afrocentric a perspective as possible in order to enable a new view of literary texts and to shed more light on the socially relevant topics they contain.”



The ACT's former academic coordinator, Dr. Stephanie Boye, opens up new perspectives on french-senegalese literature in her recently published dissertation. Bringing an Afrocentric perspective to various texts, she examines the untranslatable senegalese concept of *jom*. Her unusual career is closely linked to her time in Senegal, and her research reflects the reciprocal approach of the ACT. In the profile linked below, we learn more about Dr. Stephanie Boye and her unique path to academia.

Read the whole story in the portrait!

Interview with Archivist Judith Opoku-Boateng from Ghana

“Archives hold the records that document the provenance of cultural objects, the circumstances of their displacement, and the histories of the communities to which they belong. These archives are essential in verifying ownership, providing historical context, and facilitating claims for restitution. By preserving and making accessible these materials, archives help reclaim narratives that were once silenced or erased by colonial histories.”

Judith Opoku-Boateng is the Archivist in Charge of the J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. She visited the ACT in September 2024 and joined the Restitution Workshop held together with MIASA.

We asked her about her passion for preserving Africa’s audiovisual heritage, the role of archives in the restitution debate and the challenges she faces in preserving audiovisual heritage.



Find her answers in the full interview!

Opportunities

Call for Applications extended: PhD Erasmus+ Exchange with Ghana

All active PhD students in Humanities from the University of Freiburg with a residence in Germany are invited to apply for the Erasmus+ scholarship in cooperation with the University of Ghana in Accra. The semester stay is funded with a monthly stipend, travel allowance, tuition waiver, as well as additional funds for participants of a disadvantaged background. Funding is available for a period of up to 4 months from May 6, 2025 (summer) and the application deadline has been extended to October 21st.

We encourage you to share this opportunity with those who might be interested and look forward to inspiring applications.

Find the Call for Applications here!

Events

Save the Date(s): Upcoming Events in Semester 2024/25

18.-19.11.2024

Scientific Symposium on “Burundi in East Africa: Opportunities and Challenges” to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Burundi partnership of Baden-Württemberg

18.11.2024

Evening Event of the GloPart network: “Global partnerships – challenges and perspectives for universities and civil society. 40 years of Baden-Württemberg & Burundi partnership”

27.11.2024

Freiburger Afrikagespräch: “Restitution: Eine Standortbestimmung”

22.01.2025

Freiburger Afrikagespräch: “Conflict, Rule of Law and Critical Minerals in Africa”

29.-31.01.2025

ColloqueEUCOR Konferenz «La décolonialité en mouvement - tensions, controverses et pratiques» / "Dekolonialität in Bewegung- Spannungen, Kontroversen und Praktiken«

All upcoming events are listed on our website!



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!



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