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## ACT Newsletter January 2025 - Issue #4

Dear readers,

I hope you had a good start into the new year and were able to celebrate and enjoy the holidays. 2024 has been an exciting year for the ACT as well, and we look back on the past months with joy.

In this newsletter, we would like to highlight the best events of recent times, such as the scientific symposium and the evening event as part of the Burundi partnership of the state of Baden-Württemberg. In addition, we once again introduce interesting people from the ACT network, such as PhD fellows Joseph Kwadwo Asuming and Aseye Tamakloe from Ghana and FRIAS Fellow Dr. Chikodili Collins Ajibo from Nigeria, who report on their experiences and research at and around the ACT.

Of course, we also look ahead to the exciting events and plans that lie ahead of us in 2025. Thank you for

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

Ich hoffe, Sie sind gut ins neue Jahr gekommen und konnten schöne Feiertage genießen. Auch für das ACT ist ein spannendes Jahr zuende gegangen, und wir blicken mit Freude zurück auf die vergangenen Monate.

In diesem Newsletter möchten wir noch einmal die schönsten Veranstaltungen der letzten Zeit hervorheben, wie zum Beispiel das wissenschaftliche Symposium und die Abendveranstaltung im Rahmen der Burundi-Partnerschaft des Landes Baden-Württemberg. Außerdem stellen wir wieder interessante Menschen im Umfeld des ACT vor, wie zum Beispiel die Doktorierenden Joseph Kwadwo Asuming und Aseye Tamakloe aus Ghana, und FRIAS Fellow Dr. Chikodili Collins Ajibo aus Nigeria, die von ihren Erfahrungen und Forschungen am und ums ACT berichten.

Außerdem schauen wir natürlich nach

your interest in the work of the ACT in this past year.

The whole ACT team and I wish you a happy new year!

Yours sincerely,

Andreas Mehler

vorne, auf die spannenden Events, die 2025 vor uns liegen. Wir bedanken uns für Ihr Interesse an der Arbeit des ACT im letzten, vielseitigen Jahr.

Das ganze ACT-Team und ich wünschen Ihnen ein frohes neues Jahr!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Andreas Mehler

## **Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler**

Director

Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT)



Keep me updated about ACTs work!

## **News**

# **Progress on Research Project “Restitution of Dignity”**



From mid-October to mid-December 2024, the team behind the ACT research project “Restitution of Dignity” welcomed Prof. Dr. Albert Gouaffo from the Université de Dschang, Cameroon, for the second time as a guest researcher and part of the ongoing project. During the two months, he continued the dialogue with Prof. Dr. Nadja Germann and together they recapitulated the impressions of her visit to Dschang in the summer.

This took place both behind and in front of the camera. Under the guidance of Dr. Balz Alter from ACT, three recordings were made in the cinematographic laboratory in the media center of the University Library Freiburg, which now need to be evaluated.

Following the fruitful stay in Freiburg, preparations are already underway for Nadja Germann's next trip to Dschang in spring 2025. In this project stage, the two will visit representatives of the Maka, among others, to explore concrete possibilities for restitution of dignity.

[Explore the project website!](#)

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## More than 40 Attendees at Scientific Burundi Symposium



On 18 and 19 November 2024, more than 40 participants from East Africa and Europe discussed “Burundi in East Africa: Opportunities and Challenges” at the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg. The scientific symposium was organized by the [GloPart network](#), the ACT and the [ABI](#). The occasion was the 40th anniversary of the partnership between Baden-Württemberg and Burundi.

The aim of the symposium was to place Burundi in the wider context of East Africa and thus to contextualize the partnership historically and regionally. The focus was on dealing with the colonial legacy, current political developments and conflict dynamics in Burundi as well as Burundi within the East African Community. The comparative approach - especially between Burundi and Tanzania - opened up new perspectives in all fields. The disciplinary diversity and different backgrounds of the panel participants also enabled a rich discussion of the topics. A report of the symposium is in the making and will be published soon.

About the symposium

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## Evening Event Celebrates 40 Years of Burundi-Baden-Württemberg Partnership





Around 70 people attended the discussion event on November 18, 2024 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the partnership between Baden-Württemberg and Burundi, with many more - including in the partner country Burundi - following the livestream.

The event “Global Partnerships - Challenges and Perspectives for Universities and Civil Society.” brought together scientific, political and practical voices. In their contributions, Vice-Rector Melanie Arndt (University of Freiburg) and MdL Saint-Cast (Freiburg) emphasized the need to focus more on the Global South in internationalization. State Secretary Hoogvliet pointed out that it is important to define both individual and common interests in partnerships. Successful examples, but also difficulties of global partnerships were discussed in a panel discussion.

[Find the event report here](#)

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## Lively Discussion at the Freiburg Africa Talk “Restitution: A Positioning”



At the latest Freiburg Africa Talk “Restitution: A Positioning” on November 27, Dr. Fiona Siegenthaler, curator at the [Lindenmuseum Stuttgart](#), Dr. Richard Tsogang Fossi, researcher at the [TU Berlin](#), and ACT director Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler discussed controversial issues surrounding questions of restitution. After an input from Dr. Fossi and a response from Dr. Siegenthaler, the audience provided exciting impulses with challenging questions. The discussed topics ranged from the role of science in the history of restitution, the importance and challenges in provenance research, the role of violence and what constitutes violence in (post-)colonial settings and questions about the future of African art and culture.

Watch the full recording [here!](#)

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## EUCOR Funding for New Project on Human Remains Approved

Good news for the new research project “*Human Remains in University Collections - Comparison and Entanglements*” - a first grant in the form of seed money from the “Research, Innovation and Transfer” funding stream has been approved as part of the [EUCOR Campus start-up funding program](#).

The project aims to help the three Upper Rhine universities of Strasbourg, Basel and Freiburg to process their respective human remains collections, each of which reflects

global and colonial origins and knowledge production. All three have been involved in the collection of human remains since the 19th century and today face similar challenges in re-evaluating and reorganizing these ethically sensitive collections, even if their origins, scope and historical development differ.

More information about the project on our website

## People

# Meet Aseye Tamakloe, Filmmaker and PhD Candidate from Ghana

In our latest interview, filmmaker and PhD candidate Aseye Tamakloe from the University of Ghana shares her work at the intersection of cinema, urban studies, and African scholarship. Currently at the University of Freiburg through the Erasmus+ Fellowship, she reflects on her research into Ghanaian urbanism and the evolution of its cinematic traditions, as well as her documentary *When Women Speak*, which amplifies the voices of Ghanaian women activists. The film will be screened in Freiburg in January, more informations about the events at the end of this mail!

Discover how she's researching African cinema narratives, her reflections on Freiburg, and her insights into the dynamic intersection of art, research, and identity. Read the full interview now to learn more about Aseye's journey and her work!



**Aseye Tamakloe**

University of Ghana

[Read the whole interview here!](#)

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## Three Questions to...

# FRIAS Fellow Dr. Collins Chikodili Ajibo



**Which aspect of your visit to Freiburg and the FRIAS is most important to you?**

*The most important aspect of my visit is been provided with conducive environment to undertake my research. Also, it is a rewarding experience to engage in stimulating and scintillating discussion with peers concerning my research and the collaborative potentials of my research with their own research.*



**Dr. Collins Chikodili**

**Ajibo**

is Associate Professor at the University of Nigeria (Nsukka)

**What motivates your work?**

*First, I am motivated by the imperative for a sustainable peace for development in fragile and conflict-affected resource-rich countries in Africa. Secondly, my work becomes even more compelling to find a sustainable pathway for partnership between the resource-rich African countries and the external partners (e.g. the West and China) that somewhat depend on Africa's critical minerals.*

**Why should everyone visit and listen to your Africa Talk?**

*My Africa Talk is ideal for the participation of everyone because it reflects on the global access to Africa's critical minerals necessary to transition to green economy. For instance, Africa (DRC) has the highest concentration of cobalt of which supply chain disruption could be damaging to competitiveness of the industrial economies (e.g. job losses).*

Dr. Collins Chikodili Ajibo holds a PhD and LLM from the University of Manchester (UK). He is twice a recipient of the Georg Forster Research Fellowship awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany. Currently, Dr. Ajibo holds the Sustainable Governance Senior Fellowships for Researchers from Africa at FRIAS, University of Freiburg. His research interests cover international economic law, with particular inclination for international economic law in Africa.

More information about the next Africa Talk on 22 January!

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# Joseph Kwadwo Asuming from Ghana at the Researching Africa Days in Bern



*"I am Joseph Kwadwo Asuming, a Lisa Maskell Ph.D Fellow from the University of Ghana and a visiting scholar at the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg through the Erasmus+ Mobility Programme. Early in my stay in Freiburg, I participated in the Researching Africa Days conference in Bern (October 25-26, 2024), hosted by the Swiss Society for African Studies. My attendance was made possible through travel support from the Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT), with accommodation and registration graciously covered by the conference organizers.*

*At the conference, I presented my research on "Religion and Peacebuilding in Ghana's Fourth Republic" during the panel "African Innovations for Sustainable Peace." Joining the Swiss Society for African Studies allowed me to connect with an engaging network of African studies scholars, fostering new insights for my research on religion's role in sustainable peace, especially within African contexts. This experience enriched my perspective on regional peace initiatives, strengthening the relevance of my work within a broader framework of peacebuilding across Africa."*

Joseph Kwadwo Asuming

Read more about all incoming visitors here!

### *Media, press and publishing*

## **Uni Freiburg Publishes Mission Statement on its Colonial Past**

In a mission statement article, the University of Freiburg discusses its history and the various ways in which it was involved in German and European colonialism. The article mentions the Alexander Ecker Collection and how academics from various disciplines were active supporters of German colonial expansion both within the university and extramurally, and in some cases profited from it professionally.

The University of Freiburg acknowledges the work of different initiatives who pushed for and made a critical debate possible, such as [freiburg-postkolonial.de](https://freiburg-postkolonial.de) and the ACT. The ACT research project "[Restitution of Dignity](#)" is highlighted for its contributions in raising awareness of one of the most difficult chapters in the university's history and initiating further research.

Read the whole mission statement here

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## **Daniella Niteka from Burundi talks about Press Freedom in iz3w Podcast**

*"It is not the job of individual journalists to fight for 'their' press freedom"* - Daniella Niteka, communication scientist at the University of Burundi, visited the ACT in September and was part of the panel on "Peace, conflict and refugees - Burundi and its neighbors" at the Burundi Symposium. Now, she is speaking in the iz3w magazine program *südnordfunk* about the right to media freedom in Burundi.

Listen to the podcast and read the script here!

## Events

# Save the Date(s): Upcoming Events in the New Year 2025

*10 January 2025, 8pm*

Screening “When Women Speak” by Aseye Tamakloe at AKA-Filmclub Freiburg

*22 January 2025, 8pm*

Freiburg Africa Talk: “Conflict, Rule of Law and Critical Minerals in Africa”

*22 January 2025, 7pm*

Screening “When Women Speak” by Aseye Tamakloe at Kommunales Kino (KoKi) Freiburg

*29.-31. January 2025*

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

*February 2025 (tba)*

Event with investigative journalist Olivier van Behmen

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



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