



Insights

Das Magazin des
Alumni Netzwerks Subsahara Afrika

„Europäisch-Afrikanische Beziehungen – eine einseitige Geschichte?“

ANSA e.V. Konferenz 14.10 – 16.10.2016, Gießen

Der Star des ersten Abends war bereits 213 Jahre alt. Denn bei ANSA-Konferenzen haben ehemalige und aktuelle DAAD-Stipendiaten nicht nur die Gelegenheit, einander und die im Kernprogramm präsentierten Themen kennen zu lernen, sondern auch regionale Besonderheiten und die Regionalgeschichte des Gastgeber-Ortes. Zum Einstieg am Freitagabend gab es daher eine Präsentation und Führung im Liebig Museum. Dabei zeichnete eine engagierte Mitarbeiterin des Museums sowohl die Lebensgeschichte als auch relevante Experimente des bekannten Chemikers Justus Liebig nach. Die Geisteswissenschaftler unter den Teilnehmern konnten staunen, während die Naturwissenschaftler versuchten, die Experimente zu durchschauen, noch bevor sie erklärt wurden.

Samstagsvormittag fand die Mitgliederversammlung von ANSA e.V. statt. Es wurden die Aktivitäten des vergangenen Jahres, wie z.B. die neue Experten-Datenbank des Vereins oder die Bemühungen zur Neumitgliederwerbung präsentiert. Aufgrund großer Bemühungen in der Bewerbung der Veranstaltung waren diesmal wieder besonders viele Erst-Teilnehmer der Konferenz vor Ort. ANSA hat die vom DAAD gestellten Mittel so verwendet, dass eine möglichst große Anzahl von Teilnehmern gefördert werden kann. Von den 235 angemeldeten Personen konnten so 39 Alumni und 24 Stipendiaten dabei sein.

Zahlreiche Konferenz-Teilnehmer traten vor Ort dem Verein bei, so dass ANSA e.V. jetzt 140 ordentliche Mitglieder hat. Außerdem fanden Vorstandswahlen statt.

„They care about light on, they get them a generator“

Die inhaltliche Konferenz wurde Samstagmittag durch eine Keynote-Performance des ghanaisch-rumänischen Künstlers Wanlov the Kubolor eröffnet, der Lieder als Ventil für Kritik, z.B. an ghanaischen Eliten, und als Mittel zur Verständigung vorstellte. Textzeilen waren unter anderem: „They care about traffic, they get them a police escort. They care about light on, they get them a generator. They care about pipe out, they get them a water tank.“ Einige Lieder boten für viele Teilnehmer große Identifikationsfläche, andere lösten lebhafteste, positive Diskussionen aus. Wanlov selbst betonte, dass er nicht singe und schreibe, um politisch etwas zu bewegen, sondern mehr als 'Selbsttherapie'.

Es folgte ein Vortrag der Kenianerin Akinyi of K'Orinda-Yimbo, deren zentrale These es war, dass Afrika mehr „self love“ und mehr intra-afrikanische Kooperation benötige. Die folgende Diskussion war aufgrund ihrer kontroversen und teilweise als undifferenziert bzw. unstrukturiert wahrgenommenen Aussagen intensiv. Umstritten war u.a. ob sich 'Europa' aus 'Afrika' heraushalten solle, oder nicht.

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Liebe ANSAs, liebe ANSA-Interessierte,

das ANSA-Jahr 2017 startete gewichtig. Mit tatkräftiger Unterstützung vieler ANSAs haben wir 400kg Flyer mit Informationen zu unseren Aktivitäten und Mitgliedern an insgesamt 320 deutsche Universitäten und Fachhochschulen versandt. Hintergrund dieser Aktion ist die Umstrukturierung der Stipendienvergabe von direkten DAAD-Stipendien zu PROMOS-Stipendien, die von den Hochschulen vergeben werden. Nachdem wir auf der Konferenz in Gießen schon einige PROMOS-StipendiatInnen begrüßen durften, sind wir nun an International Offices in ganz Deutschland präsent und freuen uns auf viele Anfragen von Interessierten.

Selbstverständlich liefen aber auch die klassischen ANSA-Aktivitäten weiter, wie ihr in dieser Insights-Ausgabe lesen könnt: Auf der Konferenz im Oktober 2016 in Gießen tummelten sich wieder rund 60 Teilnehmende zum regen interdisziplinären Austausch und Team-Cooking mit alten und neuen Bekannten.

Wir wünschen euch viel Spaß beim Lesen dieser Insights-Ausgabe, die neben dem Konferenzrückblick auch interessante Einblicke zum Essen mit Händen und Neuigkeiten vom DAAD enthält.

Carla und die ANSA Insights Redaktion

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„Europäisch-Afrikanische Beziehungen – eine einseitige Geschichte?“

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voller Präsentationssaal bei der Konferenz

nahezu obligatorisch folgende Tanzen förderten das Team Building und Networking des Vereins.

If you throw an apple hard enough

Der Sonntag der Konferenz wurde durch die Keynote von Prof. Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (u.a. University of Ibadan, Nigeria und Humboldt Universität Berlin, Deutschland) geprägt. Er präsentierte u.a. zu Parallelen zwischen afrikanischen und europäischen Sprichwörtern, die oftmals „common ground“ deutlich machen. Zusätzlich präsentierte er wie Sprichwörter modernisiert, angepasst und teilweise humoristisch ins Gegenteil verkehrt werden. Ein Beispiel aus dem Westen/Norden: „An apple a day keeps the doctor away.“ wird zu „An apple keeps anyone away, if you throw it hard enough.“ So werden auch Redensarten die früher Hierarchien wie Gehorsam gegenüber Älteren lehren sollten, in der Jugendkultur 'umgedreht' verwendet, um Rebellion auszudrücken.

>>> Sprachen, Sprücheln und Soziales

Es folgten Beiträge der Teilnehmer. Ziel dieser Beiträge ist es, die Vielfalt der Forschung und Projekte von Deutschen in Afrika und Afrikanern in Deutschland zu zeigen. Um Inhalten aller Disziplinen eine Chance zu geben, müssen diese daher nicht mit dem Rahmenthema der Konferenz im Zusammenhang stehen. Präsentiert wurden am Samstag und Sonntag u.a. zu den Themen „Regionales Lehrmaterial für Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Namibia/Südafrika (David Steeger), „Zirkulierende Objekte - Vier Geschichten über bocios“ (Anna Ramella), „Spirulina, ein nachhaltiges Lebensmittel“ (Frank S. Winter), „Die Macht der Sprache - und warum westliche Linguisten manchmal die Klappe halten müssen“ (Lea Gleixner), „Colonialism and its influence on the current reception and practice of human rights in Kenya“ (Fred Ongarora) und „Learning from Lymphatic filariasis, an endemic disease in Sub-Sahara Africa: the role of the induced IgG4 antibody“ (Ulrich Fabien Prodjinotho). Zu den hier nicht genannten Teilnehmer-Beiträgen von Friederike Gebert, Abednicho Nyoni und Annika Surmeier finden sich auf den folgenden Seiten ausführlichere Nachberichte.

Teilnehmer als Schriftzug ANSA

Team Cooking, Talken, Tanzen

Abgeschlossen wurde der Samstag durch das ANSA Team Cooking, diesmal im Lokal International Gießen. Dabei teilen sich die Teilnehmer in Kleingruppen auf, die jeweils einen Gang für ein dann günstiges, aber opulentes Mahl zubereiten. Das gemeinsame Kochen, die Gespräche beim Essen (von Smalltalk und Kultur bis zu Mugabe und Trump) und das

Die Konferenz selbst ist trotz oder gerade wegen hierarchiefreier Abwicklung und dank zahlreicher Freiwilliger unter den Teilnehmern sehr erfolgreich verlaufen. Der Vorstand und das Konferenz-Organisations-Team möchten sich an dieser Stelle nochmals für den großen Einsatz aller bedanken. Denn ANSA ist was wir daraus machen.



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Diskussionen beim Abendessen



Keynote-Performance von Wanlov the Kubolor



Netzwerken beim Frühstück



Team Cooking

The Editing Enterprise. Better jobs. Better papers.

Teilnehmer-Beitrag zur ANSA-Konferenz 2016 von Annika Surmeier

South Africa is characterized by high levels of unemployment and inequality. Numerous university students struggle to pay for their tuition and living expenses, including many PhD students and even postdoctoral fellows. These issues are currently reflected in the so-called “university crisis” at South African universities. Against this background and driven by the attempt to contribute towards positive change, South African friends of mine and I founded a social business – the Editing Enterprise. The goal is to offer high quality and well-paying job opportunities, especially for previously disadvantaged researchers so that they have better possibilities to develop their potential as early career scholars, and con-

comitantly help German researchers to write better papers in the English language. Beyond this, we hope that the Editing Enterprise will facilitate mutual exchange and learning between researchers from the so-called Global North and the Global South. This may help to overcome a “Northern bias” that we frequently find in academic articles.

The presentation at the annual ANSA conference was very helpful to get valuable advice from other ANSA members who had extensive business and marketing experience. This will certainly help to develop the activities of the Editing enterprise further.

More information: www.the-editing-enterprise.com

Annika Surmeier wurde in Deutschland geboren und aufgewachsen. Sie hat Geographie und Englisch in Deutschland und Neuseeland studiert und arbeitet als wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Fachbereich Geographie an der Philipps Universität in Marburg. Annika ist Gründungsmitglied von ANSA.



Dung beetles' contribution to decomposition on Mt. Kilimanjaro

Teilnehmer-Beitrag zur ANSA-Konferenz 2016 von Friederike Gebert

It was an honour for me to present my PhD project at the ANSA conference. Since my topic is not directly related to the overall topic of the conference, the challenge of the talk was to make the main subjects of my PhD, which are dung beetles, interesting for an audience not yet familiar with these fascinating creatures.

Sun god Ra & Pyramids

I tried to show the tremendous importance of dung beetles in both culture and ecology by first talking about the enormous significance of dung beetles for the ancient Egyptians. It is assumed that dung beetles were not only used to explain the birthing cycle of the sun god Ra, but that the dung beetle pupa gave the idea of mummification to the Egyptians and that perhaps even the pyramids are directly linked to the life cycle of dung beetles by representing deified cow dung pats. (Cow dung pats are used by dung beetles as material for both breeding and feeding.)

The higher, the less dung beetles.

Then, I shifted towards the huge importance of dung beetles for us today: dung beetles provide important ecosystem functions such as nutrient cycling, bioturbation, secondary seed dispersal and the suppression of disease vectors. I then presented my actual research project where I studied dung beetle assemblages and the contribution of dung beetles to decomposition along a tropical elevational gradient in natural and disturbed habitats from 870 to 4550 m a.s.l. on Mt. Kilimanjaro, northern Tanzania. I found that both species richness and abundance of dung beetles as well as decomposition processes mediated by dung beetles decreased with increasing elevation. This effect was most likely due to adverse climatic conditions at higher altitudes.

Drivers for biodiversity

I was very happy to receive positive reactions to my talk, which I supported by a powerpoint presentation. I especially recall an interesting question about the scientific significance of my work which gave me the opportunity to link my project to the ongoing discussion about the drivers of biodiversity.

Friederike Gebert



Friederike Gebert wurde in Deutschland geboren und ist dort aufgewachsen. Sie hat u.a. Biologie in Deutschland und Conservation Biology in England studiert und in Tansania gearbeitet und lebt aktuell in Würzburg. (Sie arbeitet aktuell als Doktorandin.) Sie ist seit 2016 ANSA-Mitglied.

Realism of Epistemicides and African Futures

Teilnehmer-Beitrag zur ANSA-Konferenz 2016 von Bednicho Nyoni

Can African peoples genuinely create African futures in the current state? At the backdrop of this question, my presentation at the ANSA conference in Giessen grappled with realities of the politics of knowledge generation that are visible in African institutions of epistemologies, such as schools, colleges, churches and universities.

These are sites of epistemicides which have created an asymmetrical world order through concepts, such as coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being as constitutive elements of postmodernism. Analytically speaking, coloniality of power is the domination of the African continent by the global north and it started in the 15th century, thus, from the epoch of slave trade. Since then, the domination has been resident in the colossal continent of Africa, recently as 'soft' power.

Africa's knowledge as folklore

Coloniality of knowledge is seen in the superiority of knowledge traditions. With the be-

ginning of colonialism, Africa's indigenous and endogenous knowledge have been pushed to the barbarian margins of society where they subsist as 'folklore' and superstitions until today. Coloniality of being centers on African personality. Since colonialism, African personality has been taken as incomplete. This being the case, their being is in crisis. African minds need to be decolonized.

Decoloniality to re-Africanize

A decoloniality project will reconstruct, de-westernize and re-Africanize African humanity, thus, shifting the center of knowledge generation to Africa, thereby authenticating African knowledge. To this end, Africa will be always in relationship with other epistemic traditions with equal importance in the modern world systems.

Meaningful questions

Meaningful questions were posed at the ANSA Conference in Giessen. Why do you think Africa is not developing? Why was Ngugi Wa Thiong'o not chosen as Nobel Prize winner for literature? were only some of them. There are internal challenges within Africa as well as external challenges which are impeding Africa to develop. As for Ngugi, in my opinion, he did not need to win anything because he has won by being one of the best theorists of decoloniality.



Bednicho Nyoni

Bednicho Nyoni is Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Rosstock. His research focus is Development and Religion. He is ANSA member since 2014.

Apropos... ...Power of Language

Why Sometimes Western Linguists
Have to Shut Up

von Lea Gleixner

I chose linguistics as a major to escape the “money makes the world go round” paradigm during lecture time. But towards the end of my Master’s degree, it hit me right in the face when my fieldwork about a Creole language showed me how closely language is connected to economic power and which role I, as a white European linguist can (not) play in this construct.

Creole spoken by descendants of Africans, Europeans and Central Americans

For three months, I investigated the valorization of the English-lexified Creole spoken in San Andres, Colombia, by means of interviews, questionnaires and participant observation. (English-lexified means that that the bulk of the vocabulary stems from English.) I focused on the Raizal people, the autochthonous inhabitants and speakers of Creole, in order to shed light on the loss of their language. They are descendants of (presumably West- and Central-) Africans, as well as of European settlers and people from Central America.

Having worked with well-versed Creole researchers, I had learnt and accepted that Pidgin and Creole languages have the same value as any other language. As a speaker of German in Germany, Spanish in Colombia and English all over, that came easy to me. I felt uneasy when in San Andres, my interviewees and other people I talked to every now and again slipped into their “Creole is a type of broken English”, “what you speak on the streets”, “not structured enough to have an orthography”-talk.

My inner linguist cried ‘Nooo, but the structure has been scientifically researched, it is a language, un idioma, ¿entiendes?, just like English. And you have to continue teaching it to your kids, otherwise it will cease to exist and besides, it does not inhibit your ability to learn English and Spanish well’. 0-5 scale, comparing the periods 2009 - 2010 to that of 1979-1980. Both periods are related to extreme food insecurity, since they are peak years of extended dry spells.

But the longer I lived on San Andres, the more quiet my inner linguist became. San



Painting of a Raizal woman on a wall of a Colombian Island near San Andres.

Andres is a prime example of how language relates to power – and powerlessness. When the Colombian government and religious missions spread the coat of Spanish and Catholicism across the then English and Creole-speaking islands in the 1920s, it forced the culturally, religiously and linguistically different Islander community to speak Spanish and excluded non- Catholics from government jobs. Native Islanders were left without agency. The central government in Bogota had converted them into suspicious and mentally deficient citizens. The latter as they could not express themselves fluently in the official language. The former, as any activity against the Spanish Catholic government, such as being Baptist, talking in Creole and defending oneself against the policy of ‘colombianization’ made one a traitor of the country one officially belonged to.

Whether it was out of economic necessity, surrender to discrimination, the wish to live a tranquil life or to pave one’s children a smoother existence in Colombia, or all combined, nowadays most Raizal Islanders are Creole-Spanish-bilinguals or even monolingual in Spanish.

Pragmatic reasons for Spanish

Although at some locations and occasions you may, still or again, hear exclusively Creole, doing business in San Andres and mainland Colombia, a country with a low level of English proficiency, requires Raizal people to speak Spanish well. There are movements to save Creole, to promote its use, and a lot of people are aware of the cultural importance and the identity function that Creole fulfils on their territory. But human adaptability and acculturation processes are too visible in San Andres: You will find everything from local artists who

turn to sing in Spanish as it yields more success (read: money) to traumatized Raizal parents who want to spare their children the discrimination and hardship in an educational system that assumes perfect Spanish proficiency, to those who realize that Spanish is indispensable for a high quality university career in Colombia and a fairly decent job. Despite that, for most Raizal people, Creole remains in the bosom of the family as it

hard to change the language that acts as social glue, as the thread of intimate family bonds and as a symbol of resistance against (neo-)colonial trends.

However, as long as a national government of Colombia condemns the cultural identity of its Creole speakers as separatism, provides no quality bilingual education nor a truly bilingual bureaucracy, linguists like me may come and go – but they will have to bury their romantic ideas of aiding the revitalization of Creole. And they will have to shut up the inner linguist and maybe themselves. In the same way in which a white person will never remotely experience the discrimination that people of color face across the world, a speaker of the language of European nations that colonized half of the world will never be able to tell Creole speakers to speak in their language for the sake of saving their valuable cultural assets.

At the end of the day, language relates to economic wellbeing and power much more than a speaker of German or English as a mother tongue could ever imagine.



Lea Gleixner

Lea Gleixner grew up in Germany and holds an MA and BA in Languages, Cultures and Business Studies from the University of Giessen, Germany. As a DAAD-scholar, she studied at the University of Ghana for a year, delving into the study of Pidgin. During her Masters, she spent a year in Colombia doing field work on San Andres Creole and experiencing the linguistic, musical and historical connections between West Africa and the Caribbean. She has been a member of ANSA since 2013.

New knowledge and meeting the SDG's – Why Africa needs more PhD students

Neues vom DAAD

The DAAD and the British Council presented a study from the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE) at the Going Global Conference in Cape Town in May 2016. This conference brought together international experts for three days to discuss global strategies in higher education, and the study concentrated on PhD training in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to get a better picture of the actual situation.

High registration numbers at universities in Africa

One part of the picture is that registration has sharply risen at many Sub-Saharan African universities. While this is a very good sign, a lot of challenges for higher education sys-

tems remain. One of these challenges is the fact that an increase in student numbers has not automatically resulted in a higher number of university lecturers. As a consequence, universities have to train PhD candidates in a very short time to double the number, in order to keep up with developments in the higher education sector. Due to this challenge, the DAAD Nairobi has underlined that quality and quantity often do not go hand in hand in PhD training. At the same time it has recognized impressive innovations which show that these challenges are being dealt with.

Insight into six countries across the continent

The case studies by ANIE, which is a network of academics across Africa with a hub in

Nairobi, concentrated on six countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa. In each country up to ten universities were analyzed concerning their PhD training. The final results of the study will approximately be published mid-2017.



Going Global Conference, Study Presentation

We asked James Otieno Jowi, Managing Director of ANIE and project coordinator for the study, about the current need for and future of African PhD holders.

Enhanced institutional capacities and qualified staff needed

What additional value can PhD students contribute to the various regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)?

The essence of doctoral training to higher education and development in Africa cannot be denied. There have been several study reports that have confirmed the serious capacity deficits in African universities with regard to staff qualifications. The majority of the staff in African universities do not have PhD qualifications. This in itself is a grim situation which has to be addressed to strengthen the institutional capacities of African universities. These PhD deficits not only have impacts on the quality of teaching and learning but also on research productivity on the conti-

nent. Compared to all world regions, Africa has the lowest number of researchers per million of its population. Consequently, Africa contributes only about 3% of the research publications globally. It further impacts on the quality of educational programs and graduates from the African Universities. PhD students can thus contribute in enhancing the research capacities of the institutions and could improve the quality of learning in the institutions. Enhanced institutional capacities could also enable the universities to establish new programs which could not be established due to lack of capacities. The growing enrolment of students in African universities can also be meaningful if there is an adequate cohort of well-trained doctoral graduates in the institu-

tions. African universities would also have better possibilities of cooperation with universities in other world regions if they had qualified staff within their programs. The lack of qualified staff has always led to imbalances in collaborations and partnerships.



Foundry

Do African countries really need more PhD students, or is the expansion of Bachelor and Master Programs actually more important?

African universities need more PhD students, because:

- Africa's research productivity is still quite low and this can be enhanced by training more doctoral graduates who can contribute to research.
- Quality of programs and of learning has also been a perennial challenge. One way of addressing this is developing quality academic staff for the programs through doctoral training.
- Pioneer African scholars are aging and are retiring from the system; these can only be replaced by equally qualified personnel.
- New knowledge areas are being developed some of which require specialized expertise in which Africa needs to invest by training scholars with PhDs.
- There is already sufficient capacity at Bachelors level and good masters programs.
- Most institutions just have few doctoral programs due to different reasons, and this needs to be redressed.
- The development challenges facing Africa including the requirements of achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals; editor's note) and the continental and regional development agendas require good training at PhD level, and universities have a special and crucial role to play in this.

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New knowledge and meeting the SDG's – Why Africa needs more PhD students

Neues vom DAAD

Better PhD training opportunities in home countries and strengthening STEM subjects

In which areas should the higher education sector in SSA be expanded?

The higher education sector in Africa still generally needs expansion in all sectors. The continent currently has a youth boom with majority of the population being below the age of 25. Yet access to higher education across the continent has just recently risen to 7% of the cohort that should be in higher education. This is still low compared to many other world regions where access to higher education is at an average of at least 40%. It means that majority of young Africans will not have the possibility to attend higher education if the sector is not expanded. Some countries in Africa still send most of their students abroad for higher education due to inadequate capacities at home. It has to also be noted that in the past few years

several African countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Botswana and Ghana have given much priority to expanding the higher education sector to enhance access. Though this has also resulted to serious quality concerns, it has opened more opportunities to students who would have otherwise been excluded from higher education at a time when Africa needs increasing numbers of quality graduates.

If the disciplines of training are compared, it has been noted that majority of the universities have put more emphasis in training in the social sciences at the detriment of the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. It has been argued by some scholars and policy makers that for Africa to leap ahead in development, investment in the STEM subjects will be crucial. This has led to

the introduction of these subject areas in several universities though this has been slowed down by the investments and human capacity requirements for these subjects. While it has been agreeable that the investments in the STEM subjects is important, especially due to the lopsided way in which the social sciences have an upper hand, it should not be at the detriment of the other important learning areas including the social sciences. A scan of the research funding landscape in Africa has also noted the increase of funding programmes to the STEM subjects while those for the other subjects are dwindling. While this is the case, it could be in tandem with key continental and regional higher education policy documents such as African Unions Agenda 2063 which prioritizes training in the STEM areas. This was also a key outcome of the African Higher Education summit held in Dakar in March 2015.

Importance of shared experiences and cross-cultural learning

In which areas can academic exchange profit the most from one another?

Academic exchanges are an inherent part of internationalization and higher education partnerships and collaborations. Generally, they are expected to impact on quality of education, enhance learning experiences of students, and provide opportunities for joint researches and sharing of experiences in addition to cross cultural trainings and experiences that students and staff attain from these programs. While traditional exchanges have been with other world regions especially Europe and North America, there should also be exchanges between African universities to facilitate intra Africa collaboration and knowledge exchanges. Academic exchanges offer several externalities that should be beneficial to all disciplines. However, the nature of exchanges in the different disciplines could be different. Some could be on experimental learning, some on community engagements, others on intercultural competencies while others could be on

sharing specialized laboratory or research equipment and experiences. They add inestimable value to learning experiences and the quality of learning.

Informationen aus dem einleitenden Teil von Sabine Bretz, DAAD-Nairobi Regional Office, Projektkoordinatorin; Interview mit James Otieno Jowi, Projektkoordinator und geschäftsführender Direktor von ANIE (African Network for Internationalization of Education, <http://www.anienetwork.org/>); Fragen gestellt von Simone Beetz (ANSA Insights Redaktion)

In Kürze

+++ Der DAAD Ticker +++

Der DAAD bietet Stipendien für postgraduierte Studiengänge für den Zeitraum 2017/18 an. Im Mittelpunkt steht hierbei eine ein- bis zweijährige Ausbildung von Fach- und Führungskräften im Bereich Nachhaltige Entwicklung.

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An der University of Zimbabwe am Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in Harare fand im vergangenen November zusammen mit dem DAAD ein German Studies Workshop statt. Der Workshop wurde von deutschen und österreichischen Mitarbeitern im diplomatischen Dienst unterstützt.

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Mitte November fand das „Falling Walls“ Forum in Berlin statt, das Wissenschaftler international vernetzt. Der DAAD ist durch sein weltweites Netzwerk von Außenstellen, Informationszentren und Lektoren an der Vorauswahl der Berliner Lab-Teilnehmer beteiligt gewesen. Hier gewann Ryan Awori das vom DAAD organisierte Falling Walls Lab Nairobi mit einem Vortrag über mikrobiologische Innovationen bei der Entwicklung von Antibiotika.

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DAAD Alumni waren im Mai 2016 mittendrin auf der größten Industriemesse, der Hannover Messe 2016. Zudem war der dort DAAD mit einem eigenen Stand vertreten und bot im Rahmen des Forums „Global Business & Markets“ die Möglichkeit, über den Einfluss der Hochschulbildung auf nachhaltige Entwicklung und die Nutzung erneuerbarer Energien zu diskutieren. Es ging dabei unter anderem um Themen wie Energiepolitik in Kenia und die Entwicklungen im Energiesektor in Kamerun.



Eating with my hands: Banku, Fufu, Kenkey & Co

Eine Perspektive auf das Essen mit den Händen

In Germany, there are few types of warm food that are acceptable to be eaten with your hands, other than chicken wings and tapas. In Ghana, I experienced the opposite: It normal to eat with one's fingers, and even to eat from the same bowl with friends.

And let me tell you, the haptics of food are amazing! The soft, grainy touch of Kenkey and the tingling feel of ground pepper is an experience to remember. Eating out at the Night Market at the University of Ghana had become one of my favourite daily rituals during my year there:

Choose a meal.

This was a challenge at first, as I could not grasp (nor see) the variety of different Ghanaian meals. They were placed in huge bowls covered with cloth. Then my Ghanaian friends introduced me to the secret content within. Ever since my fingers and tongue had touched the fine-smelling kenkey and pepper, I knew this was a love affair.

Wash your hand(s) well.

On the tables next to a food stall, you will find a bowl, soap and a carafe of water. With that, you wash your right hand – the one which it is acceptable to eat with – by pouring water, soap, again water over your hand. You will only ever eat with the right hand.

Dip in (your right) fingers.

And eat. In case a friend passes by, do not forget to invite him or her to eat with you by saying "You are invited" or "yenko di" (Twi).

I am convinced this is the best way to enjoy our food. Fork and spoon remove us a bit too much from food – a prime source of our wellbeing.

Ghana put me that bit closer again and taught me that it is not the variety of dishes to choose from, but the crave and satisfaction involved in eating a particular one that makes one feel: simply good.

Lea Gleixner

Eating with my hands: Banku, Fufu, Kenkey & Co

Eine Perspektive auf das Essen mit den Händen

Eating with my hands started at infant age with my parents, relatives and siblings placing tiny bits of solid food in my hand during meals. This is typical of most growing Ghanaian children. Staple Ghanaian foods are usually in solid form accompanied by delicious soups or sauces such as Banku with Okro stew or groundnut soup, Fufu with fish or meat light soup, palm or groundnut soup, Tuo zaafi (TZ) with vegetable soup, Rice ball (omo tuo), kenkey with "spicy" sauce, among others.

The special technique of eating with the hands is acquired shortly over time and between ages 3-4 one is already an expert in combining both soup/sauce with the solid portion without any difficulty. We commonly refer to the hand as the universal five letter word cutlery, "Spoon" where each finger represents a letter of the alphabet.

Eating with the hands is indeed an interesting act which often involves remoulding the solid portion of the meal such as the Banku or Fufu with a groove in which the soup is collected. A variety of skills and innovations apply to the vast staple foods. Most fascinating is one's ability to firmly close the four or three fingers together to "drink" soup without a spoon. Eating in other countries within the continent or region has never been a challenge since most staple foods are similar. Hence, eating with the hand is predominately accepted even in restaurants.

In high school, eating with the cutlery is mandatory which I find rather inappropriate for my staple Ghanaian dishes. Nevertheless, a side benefit if this high school rule is that I am extremely comfortable using cutlery for foods that require it and in countries where that is a norm, such as Germany.

I however miss greatly my Ghanaian foods and indeed get great satisfaction when eating them with my hands. "boo ye de" a popular Twi phrase meaning "food is sweet".

Jonas Bugase



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