

MIASA ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Imprint

MIASA Annual Report 2023

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(MIASA)

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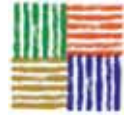
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All MIASA fellowships, academic events and other activities mentioned in this report were sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany under the grant n° [01UK2024A-D], and co-funded by the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, Ghana.



MERIAN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN AFRICA (MIASA)

University of Ghana – University of Freiburg – Goethe University Frankfurt –
German Institute for Global and Area Studies – German Historical Institute Paris

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2023



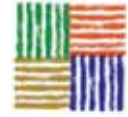


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Figure 1: from left to right: Prof. Gordon Crawford (MIASA Director 'Germany', 2018-2020), Prof. Mamadou Diawara (MIASA Director 'Germany', 2024-2025), Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata (MIASA Director 'Ghana', 2018), Dr. Grace Diabah (MIASA Director 'Ghana', 2022-now), Prof Abena Oduro (MIASA Director 'Ghana', 2019-2021), Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA Director 'Germany', 2021-2023), September 2023



Welcome note by the MIASA Directors

In 2023, the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) celebrated its fifth anniversary. From 2019 to 2023, MIASA welcomed more than hundred fellows, including nine Interdisciplinary Fellow Groups (IFG), four tandem fellowships and forty individual fellows at its premises at the University of Ghana (UG). They covered a wide range of academic disciplines, with a majority from political science, anthropology and sociology, but also many other disciplines ranging from literature to philosophy, from geography and economics to history and archaeology, and from sociolinguistics to religious and cultural studies. About half of the MIASA fellows were affiliated with institutions in Ghana or Germany. A large number of fellows were Africa-based, including many from francophone countries. MIASA is committed to gender balance and a mix of junior and senior fellows. Among the 31 fellows in 2023, 15 were women and one third junior.

Along with its fellowship programme, MIASA organizes a comprehensive academic event programme. In September 2023, the institute hosted its midterm conference on “Sustainable Governance in a Time of Global Flux: Issues, Concepts and Future Directions” with more than fifty invited participants. In addition, MIASA organized five other conferences, three early career workshops, its third annual Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture, its ongoing public lecture series as well as (bi-)weekly internal research seminars. After implementing MIASA’s new artist in residence programme, the institute also organised two major art events. In March 2023, two MIASA representatives attended a Merian network event at its sister institute, the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in The Maghreb (MECAM) in Tunis. MIASA further increased its international visibility with a large delegation at the ninth European Conference of African Studies (ECAS), which took place in Cologne in June 2023, and the participation of the MIASA Directors at the bi-annual Directors Meeting of the University-based Institutes for Advanced Studies (UBIAS) network in Nagoya in October 2023.

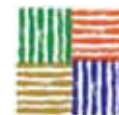
All this was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and the co-funding of the University of Ghana, with the latter offering a particularly inspiring academic environment, as it honoured its 75th anniversary in 2023 as one of the most prestigious universities on the African continent. Moreover, we highly appreciate the close collaboration with and the support of MIASA’s German partners – the University of Freiburg, the Goethe University Frankfurt, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and the German Historical Institute Paris (GHIP), and we are grateful for the time and consideration devoted to MIASA by its Academic Advisory Board (AAB) members. While MIASA Director ‘Ghana’, Dr. Grace Diabah, started her second year in service in 2023, MIASA Director ‘Germany’, Dr. Susann Baller, terminated her three-year term at the end of the year, followed by Prof. Mamadou Diawara, who joined the team in January 2024.

Prof. Grace Diabah, MIASA Director ‘Ghana’, UG

Dr. Susann Baller, MIASA Director ‘Germany’, GHIP (until December 2023)



Figure 2: MIASA bungalow on Legon campus, University of Ghana, Photo © Felix Schürmann, April 2023



The Institute: Governance and institutional development

The German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) initiated the Maria Sibylla Merian programme in 2015. This programme intends to strengthen the cooperation between Germany and countries in the Global South, and it aims at increasing the internationalisation of the social sciences and humanities. Between 2015 and 2020, five centres were implemented by different international partners. Each of them can receive BMBF-funding for up to twelve years: (i) M.S. Merian-R. Tagore International Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (ICAS:MP), New Delhi, (ii) Maria Sibylla Merian Centre for Advanced Latin American Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (CALAS), Guadalajara, (iii) Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America (MECILA), São Paulo, (iv) Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA), Accra, and (v) Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), Tunis.¹



Figure 3: Farewell of MIASA Director 'Germany' Dr. Susann Baller (2021-2023) with MIASA Directors 'Ghana', Prof. Charlotte Wrigley-Asante (2021-2022), Dr. Grace Diabah (2022-now), Prof. Abena Oduro (2019-2021) and EC member Prof. Samuel Ntewusu, December 2023

MIASA was launched in March 2018 at the University of Ghana (UG). UG quickly integrated MIASA as one of four institutes at the College of Humanities and has since co-funded it. The institute is based on a collaboration between UG and four German partners, the University of Freiburg (leading partner), Goethe University Frankfurt, the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), and the German Historical Institute Paris (GHIP). The BMBF sponsorship is divided into a preliminary, main and final phase. The main phase (six years) started in September 2020. In 2023, discussions within UG as well as between UG and MIASA's

German partners on how to shape the long-term future of the institute from 2030 onwards were intensified. UG is fully committed to maintaining MIASA beyond 2030 and to diversify the institute's funding resources, while the German partners expressed their strong interest in supporting MIASA in this process.

¹ See for further information: <https://www.geistes-und-sozialwissenschaften-bmbf.de/en/Maria-Sibylla-Merian-Centres-1713.html>.



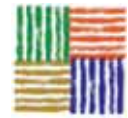
MIASA has two directors, one appointed by UG and one representing the German partners. All decisions are taken together by both directors, who shape the institute's academic design, accompany the fellowship programme, often serve as conference co-conveners and invite visiting researchers. In 2023, Dr. Grace Diabah started her second year as MIASA Director 'Ghana'. MIASA Director 'Germany', Dr. Susann Baller (GHIP) completed her three-year term at the end of the year. In January 2024, she was followed by Prof. Mamadou Diawara (Goethe University Frankfurt). Dr. Susann Baller had already been part of the initial team that presented the grant proposal to the BMBF. MIASA is grateful to Dr. Susann Baller for her important role throughout these years and for her contribution to making MIASA an internationally visible and thriving institute.

The two directors are supported by MIASA's academic coordinator, Dr. Agnes Schneider-Musah, who is employed by the University of Freiburg and on post in Accra. 2023 was already her fifth year at MIASA. The expertise she has gathered during these years contributes to the efficient management of the institute. The administrative team in Accra is comprised of George Amexo, event manager employed by UG via MIASA funds from the UG, who started his appointment in January 2023, Rebecca Adu, senior administrative assistant at UG, who joined MIASA already in November 2018, as well as Ophelia Adamtey, employed by UG as messenger and cleaner.



Figure 4: Dr. Agnes Schneider-Musah, Rebecca Adu and George Amexo, May 2023

This team is reinforced by staff based at the German partner institutions. The administrative team at the University of Freiburg is composed of Luca Hanenberg (administrative coordinator, 75%), Zahra Dandani (administrative assistant, 50%), and, since November 2023, Janne Nübling (graduate assistant). The University of Freiburg has the administrative and financial responsibility of the fellowship programme and fellowship related activities and events as well as travel organization for fellows, guests, directors and board members. In January 2023, the affiliation of the administrative team was moved from the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) to the Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT) at the University of Freiburg. Dr. Marko Scholze (50%) is affiliated with the Goethe University Frankfurt and Eleonora Marchioni (25%) with the GHIP. Both support organizing MIASA events, which are funded via their respective institutions.



All partners are represented in MIASA’s Executive Council (EC), which holds monthly virtual meetings. A formal annual meeting was held in Accra in September 2023. The EC has seven members. UG is represented by two delegates. Prof. Abena Oduro, former MIASA Director ‘Ghana’, served as the EC spokesperson in 2023. Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata, founding director of MIASA and member of the EC since 2019, was appointed Distinguished Research Professor at SOAS University of London in January 2023. MIASA deeply appreciates her leading role in the implementation of the institute and congratulates her for her new position. In August 2023, Prof. Samuel Nteuwusu, Director of the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at UG, replaced her as EC member. On the German side, the University of Freiburg is represented by Prof. Andreas Mehler and Prof. Bernd Kortmann. Prof. Mamadou Diawara was part of the EC on behalf of the Goethe University Frankfurt until he became MIASA Director ‘Germany’ in January 2024. In August 2023, Prof. Thomas Maissen, former director of the GHIP, returned to the University of Heidelberg. His successor at the GHIP, Prof. Klaus Oschema, joined the EC in September 2023. Prof. Jann Lay, representing the GIGA, stepped down from the EC in December 2023 and was replaced by Dr. Julia Grauvogel. MIASA welcomes its new EC members and is grateful for the support offered by those who ended their term.



Figure 5: MIASA Directors and EC members, from left to right: Dr. Susann Baller, Prof. Mamadou Diawara, Prof. Bernd Kortmann, Prof. Abena Oduro, Prof. Andreas Mehler, Prof. Jann Lay, Prof. Klaus Oschema, Dr. Grace Diabah

The EC appoints the members of MIASA’s Academic Advisory Board (AAB), which is responsible for the academic appraisal of fellowship applications. The AAB has a maximum of twelve members whose term of three years is renewable. As the initial AAB meeting took place in January 2020, the first term ended in December 2022. Half of the AAB members accepted to be reappointed for a second term, and six new members joined the AAB in January 2023: Prof. George Bob-Milliar (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and

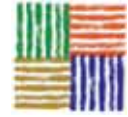


Technology), Prof. Kokou Azamede (University of Lomé), Prof. Fatou Diop Sall (Gaston Berger University Saint Louis), Prof. Fatima Harraq (University Mohammad V, Rabat), Prof. Lynn Ossome (Makerere University), and Prof. Ciraj Rassoll (University of the Western Cape) (see full list in the last section of this report). While Prof. Andreas Eckert (Humboldt University Berlin) was re-elected as the chair of the AAB at the board's onsite meeting in Accra in January 2023, Prof. Fatou Diop Sall was selected as vice-chair.

MIASA is a full-fledged institute at the University of Ghana, Legon campus, and as such part of UG's governance structure. MIASA nourishes strong ties with the more "senior" institutes at the College of Humanities, in particular, the IAS, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2023. MIASA also collaborates regularly with the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER). In addition, the cooperation with the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA), the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), the Department of Philosophy and Classics and the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies resulted in co-organised academic events in 2023. In September 2023, the UG senior management, including the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and then acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gordon Akanzuwine Awandare, the Director of Public Affairs, Elizier Taiba Ameyaw-Buronyah, and the Provost of the College of Humanities, Prof. Daniel Frimpong Ofori, welcomed the MIASA Directors and EC members as well as a delegate of the BMBF, Dr. Christina Norwig, responsible for the Merian programme, at the New Council Chamber on Legon campus. Once more, they expressed their commitment for sustaining MIASA in a long-term perspective.



Figure 6: Meeting with UG senior management in September 2023



In October 2023, Dr. Mareike König, Deputy director of the GHIP, visited MIASA. Together with Dr. Susann Baller, they developed an institutional memory strategy for the institute. This considered an initial publishing strategy, which was written by Dr. Grace Diabah, Prof. Andreas Mehler and Prof. Andreas Eckert in May 2023. Following these recommendations, all MIASA working papers and annual reports were integrated at UGSpace, a repository hosted by UG. Fellow profiles, event programmes, and other daily announcements are published on the MIASA webpage and advertised via X/twitter, which has increased its number of followers from 125 in January 2021 to 1200 in December 2023. In addition, each IFG and all major MIASA events are presented in a series of posters, which are displayed at the MIASA bungalow and published on the MIASA blog (<https://miasa.hypotheses.org/>). MIASA also publishes short contributions written by fellows and interviews on the blog, while IFG members are asked to write a more substantial working paper. MIASA encourages the publication of research conducted by fellows during their stay at the institute in various forms, and it particularly supports open access publication. By the end of 2023, the MIASA team introduced a guideline for all fellows, which summarizes information on publications, research data management and research ethics.

Academic events and international visibility

MIASA hosted an intense academic event programme in 2023. The institute's major event was its midterm conference on "Sustainable Governance in a Time of Global Flux: Issues, Concepts and Future Directions" in September 2023, which was scheduled right in the middle of the six-year main phase of the BMBF sponsorship. The conference offered the opportunity for a first visit by Dr. Christina Norwig, responsible for the Merian programme at the BMBF, and Dr. Stefanie Wefers, representing the programme managing office, i.e. the German Aerospace Centre (DLR). The conference was attended by MIASA's entire EC as well as by fellows and alumni, principal investigators, UG faculty and other guests. In total, more than fifty guests actively participated in this conference, which was widely covered in the Ghanaian media. Keynote addresses were given by AAB member Prof. Elisio Macamo (University of Basel) and founding MIASA Director Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata (SOAS University of London). Six panels and three roundtables allowed for cross-cutting different research perspectives on MIASA's main thematic field and interconnecting the institute's intersectional topics.²

² For the programme and press releases on this conference: <https://miasa.ug.edu.gh/event/midterm-conference-2023/>. For a detailed report on this conference: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2648>.

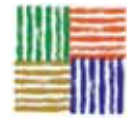


Figure 7: MIASA midterm conference, group picture with the German Ambassador to Ghana, Prof. Gordon Akanzuwine Awandare (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at UG and MIASA Directors in the front line, September 2023

Moreover, MIASA organized five additional conferences in 2023. Each Interdisciplinary Fellow Group (IFG) carries out one conference. In May 2023, the IFG 8 conference on “Increasing Women’s Political Presence in West Africa” took place. Internationally renowned scholars and practitioners contributed to this conference, among them Ayisha Osori (Open Society Foundation London) and Dr. Robtel Neajai Pailey (London School of Economics). IFG 9 had its conference in November 2023 on “Sustainable Regional Peacebuilding in Africa: Practices and Disconnects” at LECIAD, UG. The conference included a keynote by Her Ladyship, Justice Prof. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Ghana, and a roundtable with leading practitioners as well as scholars from Ghana and other African countries, Germany, Canada and USA.

In June 2023, MIASA ran a follow-up conference in the field of restitution, convened by MIASA’s tandem alumni fellows Prof. Hans Peter Hahn and Prof. Kodzo Gavua. In November 2023, GIGA in collaboration with ISSER facilitated MIASA’s second Policy conference on “Accelerating Africa’s Economic Transformation Towards Shared Prosperity and Sustainability”. The Goethe University of Frankfurt organizes an annual conference series which MIASA implements in collaboration with different Point Sud partner institutions. In December 2023, the third conference of this series was held at the Institute for Sciences on Societies (INSS-CNRST) in Ouagadougou on the topic of “The Role of Traditional Institutions in Promoting Sustainable Peace in Africa”.³

³ For a report on this conference: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2613>.



One of MIASA’s flagship events is the annual Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture which was held in December 2023 at UG’s Great Hall with all Legon’s ceremonial protocols. Guest speaker Prof. Felwine Sarr (Duke University) drew a huge audience with his lecture on “Building African Ecologies of Knowledge”. In addition to an online zoom access (as for all other MIASA events), the lecture was streamlined via UG channels (youtube, twitter/X and facebook).⁴ MIASA’s Public Lecture series offered 17 lectures in 2023 showcasing its fellows’ research outcomes to an onsite and online audience. The lectures offer insights into the broad range of projects under MIASA’s umbrella theme of sustainable governance, and they allow to create connections with UG faculty, MIASA alumni and principal investigators as well as other interested scholars. For some lectures, MIASA invited UG faculty as commentators.



Figure 8: Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture with Prof. Felwine Sarr, December 2023



Figure 9: Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture at Great Hall, UG, with Ghana Dance Ensemble, December 2023

⁴ Event page: <https://miasa.ug.edu.gh/event/amo-lecture-2023/> and lecture: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=678782181074846.



As MIASA welcomed, for the first time, two artists in residence in 2023, the institute also organized three art events as part of its Public Lecture programme. In September 2023, the Ghanaian artist Seyram Agbleze put up an exhibition under the title “Still here!” at the IAS entry hall. The Cameroonian artist Stone Karim Mohamad, who has his home-base in Stuttgart, offered a “poetography” workshop as part of the German Weeks in Ghana (a joint initiative of German-funded organisations under the patronage of the German Embassy to Ghana). In December 2023, Stone presented his finalized art-work. His installation turned one of MIASA’s offices into a black box in which visitors could enter for exploring a video installation and a series of photographs on the topic of “Demo-Cracy”. The event culminated in a very well-attended spoken art performance, which took place in the courtyard of the MIASA bungalow.⁵



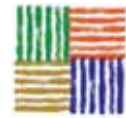
Figure 10: MIASA Directors Dr. Susann Baller and Dr. Grace Diabah at the Female Academic Careers in Africa Workshop, February 2023

Moreover, MIASA extended its series of early career workshops. MIASA’s annual Female Academic Careers in Africa workshop has been organized since 2018 in collaboration with the GHIP. After having received more than 700 applications in 2022, 17 women from seven African countries participated in the workshop in February 2023, which. For a second time, the workshop built on a cooperation with the CEGENSA at UG and the Ghanaian relationship system coach Naa-Aku Acquaye Baddoo. The workshop included a non-public discussion with members of the editorial board of the UG based international journal *Feminist Africa* on publication

strategies as well as a public roundtable on “Positioning and Preparing Oneself for Leadership in Academia”, held at the IAS and with online access.

MIASA’s Writing School, which took place for the third time in April 2023, are made possible with the support of the Goethe University Frankfurt. They are convened by Prof. Akosua Darkwah (Department of Sociology, UG), who is working with a team of mentors and editors comprised of leading scholars from Ghana and Nigeria, including MIASA’s principal investigators Prof. Seidu Alidu and Prof. Simon Bawakyillenuo (both UG) as well as AAB member Prof. George Bob-Milliar (KNUST). Every year, the call for this Writing School draws a high number of applications from across the African continent, of which 18 mentees were

⁵ Visual impressions of the two major art events can be found here: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1915> and <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1706>.



selected in 2023 in order to work during five days on their papers in the field of “Peace, Democracy and Climate Change”.⁶ Finally, MIASA’s Publishing Workshops are run in a collaboration with the two international journals Africa Spectrum, based at GIGA, and the Contemporary Journal of African Studies (CJAS), based at UG. They aim at making African research more visible in international academic journals and bring together Africa-based authors of already completed, but yet to be published papers.



Figure 11: Writing School with Prof. Akosua Darkwah (standing) and Prof. Nana Akua Anyidoho (UG), Prof. George Bob-Milliar (KNUST), Prof. Simon Bawakyillenuo (UG) and Prof. Seidu Alidu (UG)

In December 2023, the second edition of this workshop also incorporated a hybrid public roundtable on “Addressing Asymmetries in Academic Knowledge Production on Africa: Potentials and Pitfalls”.⁷



Figure 12: MIASA team at the ECAS conference in Cologne (left) and the 'Day of Scientific Renaissance in Africa' at UG (right), June 2023

MIASA aims at strengthening networks within UG through co-organizing events as well as by contributing to existing UG academic activities and seminars. For the second time, MIASA participated in UG’s “Day of Scientific Renaissance in Africa”, which was celebrated by the College of Humanities in June 2023. Several MIASA fellows presented their work at the IAS seminar series, the research seminars of the School of Language and the Department of

⁶ For a report on the writing schools: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2596>.

⁷ For a report on the publishing workshops: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2357>.

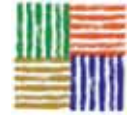


History as well as at the UG School of Arts Colloquium on “Rethinking West Africa’s Environment: An Arts and Humanities Perspective” (August 2023). Besides, six Point Sud workshops were run in Ghana in 2023 with the involvement of UG, of which two were co-convened by MIASA alumni (in March 2023 a workshop on Africanist migration research and in October 2023 a workshop on the digital transformation of land governance). Moreover, MIASA regularly conducts reading groups led by UG faculty. In 2023, MIASA principal investigator Dr. Chika Mba (IAS, UG) offered a reading group with a group of PhD students on “Academic Freedom in Africa”.

Furthermore, MIASA attends international meetings around the world in order to increase the institute’s visibility and to strengthen its networks. In March 2023, MIASA Director ‘Germany’, Dr. Susann Baller, and MIASA academic coordinator, Dr. Agnes Schneider-Musah, attended MECAM’s conference on “Imagining Futures – Dealing with Disparity” in Tunis, which also allowed to network with MECAM’s German partners and a delegation from ICAS:MP (New Delhi). In April 2023, the MIASA Director ‘Ghana’, Dr. Grace Diabah, visited the grantees’ meeting of the Volkswagen-funded “Knowledge for Tomorrow” programme in Naivasha (Kenya). MIASA sponsored a large delegation of fellows, alumni and the MIASA directors and coordinator to participate in the 9th European Conference of African Studies (ECAS), held at the University of Cologne from 31 May to 3 June 2023. The conference offered a platform for a very well-attended reception, which served as a networking event. From 30 October to 1 November 2023, the University-based Institutes for Advanced Studies (UBIAS) organised its biannual Directors’ Meeting in Nagoya. Both MIASA Directors, who are members of the UBIAS steering committee, attended the meeting, which facilitated creating new links with other Institutes for Advanced Studies around the world. During the meeting, the UBIAS Directors decided that the next meeting will take place at MIASA in Accra.



Figure 13: MIASA reception at ECAS, Cologne, picture with MIASA fellows, AAB members and colleagues from Ghana, June 2023



Fellow selection and experiences

MIASA's fellow selection is guided by the institute's internal regulations, a BMBF information leaflet for the Merian centres and the institute's detailed selection guidelines. MIASA's Academic Advisory Board (AAB) is responsible for the fellow selection. The AAB meetings are prepared by the MIASA Directors who participate as guests. At the AAB meeting in January 2023 in Accra, fellows for the academic year 2023/2024 were selected. MIASA had received 123 applications for individual fellows, of which 23 were written in French. 16 applicants were offered an individual fellowship for a period between three and ten months, half of them women. In addition, one tandem was selected, a fellowship format consisting of two researchers, one based in Germany and one in Africa. Fellows, who were at MIASA in the first half of 2023, had already been selected at the AAB meeting in January 2022. This concerned seven individual fellows and one tandem.

IFGs are composed of four to six scholars from different countries and disciplines who collaborate on one project for a period of four months at MIASA. They always have two co-conveners, of whom at least one is based at UG, in order to reinforce the cooperation within the university. Since 2021, MIASA has implemented a two-phase application procedure. In a first step, applicants submit a preproposal which offers a general idea of the project, and in a second step, the co-conveners submit a full proposal, which indicates all IFG members. IFG 8 (February to May 2023) was selected at the AAB meeting in January 2022, and IFG 9 (mid-August to mid-December 2023) in November 2022. In both application rounds, MIASA received between four and five full proposals.



Figure 14: MIASA artists in residence, on the left: Seyram Agbleze (Sept. 2023), on the right: Stone Karim Mohamad (Dec. 2023)

During the main phase of the BMBF sponsorship MIASA can host up to six artists in residence for a period of each three months. The purpose of the artist in residence programme is to create an exchange between academic and creative ways in addressing MIASA's research



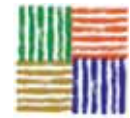
topics. End of 2022, MIASA launched its first call and received 24 applications. The AAB selected one artist based in Ghana as well as one Cameroonian artist, who is based in Germany. In 2023, a new call for 2024/2025 was published, and 46 candidates applied.

Altogether, MIASA welcomed two artists in residence and 31 fellows in 2023. This included 17 individual fellows, and two tandems of each two fellows. Both IFGs were composed of each five fellows. All fellowships together added to 129 fellowship months. While most individual fellows opt for longer fellowships between six and ten months, a few fellows seized the opportunity of short-term stays of three to four months. Half of the fellows in 2023 were women (15). Two thirds were senior fellows (22). As in former years, fellows came from a wide range of disciplines with (Social) Anthropology being dominant in 2023 (10 versus 5 in 2022). Six fellows were scholars in Political Science as well as two in Conflict Studies and one in International Relations. Other disciplines were represented by one or two fellows, among them two for each History and Cultural Studies as well as one for each Archaeology, Africa-American Studies, Development Studies, Geography, Literature, Religious Studies, Sociolinguistics and Sociology.



Figure 15: MIASA fellows end of August 2023

One third of the fellows (11) were based in Germany at the moment of application (as required by the BMBF funding guidelines). 13 fellows were Africa-based; among them five from Ghana and eight others from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal. Seven fellows were affiliated with institutions in other countries, including four from the United States of America. Beyond these statistics, however, it is important to underline that academic careers may follow more complex paths, and fellows bring in different international connections. Several fellows from other countries had an African background



(Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal and Zimbabwe), and one was originally from Germany, but working in Switzerland. MIASA is proud of the language mix at the institute, where many fellows switch between English, French and German as well as African languages, such as Twi and Wolof.

The MIASA fellow life is structured by the Public Lecture Series and other MIASA academic events as well as the weekly internal seminar. The internal seminar is at the heart of intellectual interaction between fellows. Each fellow presents a very short, pre-circulated paper, which can be either turned into a blogpost or expanded into a full paper. IFGs present their project as a group. MIASA fellowships mainly serve writing.⁸ However, some fellows who do research on Ghana or neighbouring countries benefitted from the opportunity to collect data during their stay. MIASA can support short research trips and conference participation through travel funds, but the time of absence is strictly limited, as fellows can make most of their interaction among each other when they are onsite. As in previous years, in 2023 fellows confirmed the importance of their stay for developing new networks. Many fellows also met in their free time, either on campus or in town. A WhatsApp-group consisting of fellows and alumni, which was created by fellows in 2022, continues to serve as a useful tool for both academic and social exchange. At the same time, collaboration with UG faculty members were highly appreciated.



Figure 16: MIASA Working Papers (left) and academic blog on miasa.hypotheses.org (right)

All fellows submit a report at the end of their stay. While some fellows from 2023 raised critical issues in regard to fellowship conditions and technical infrastructure offered by MIASA, most were very positive about their experience and appreciated the fact that “MIASA offers a place to do work in Africa when working on Africa-related projects” (fellow 1). Some

⁸ A list of publications by fellows is regularly updated on MIASA’s webpage: <https://miasa.ug.edu.gh/publications/#by-fellows>.

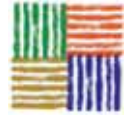


fellows were just happy for the time and space offered at MIASA: “As a fellow at MIASA, I had the privilege of focusing on my writing for a longer period of time without being bothered with other obligations” (fellow 2). Others underlined the career opportunities which were made possible through the fellowship: “I was able to intensify and extend my collaborations with Ghanaian colleagues which resulted in ... plans for future projects” (fellow 3); including for those who had received less opportunities before: “MIASA is an academic turning point for me. The institute provided me the first opportunity to experience scholarship outside of my home country” (fellow 4).



Figure 17: MIASA fellows and alumni with directors and delegates from the BMBF at the midterm conference, September 2023

Moreover, many fellows emphasized the social and networking aspects as well as the diversity of people: “MIASA is special for me because of the wonderful people I met during my fellowship” (fellow 5); “The collegiality that permeated the institute served as a catalyst for productive research, and I never felt the burden of working in isolation” (fellow 6); “MIASA gave me a sense of homeliness among people of different cultural backgrounds” (fellow 4). In addition, several fellows highlighted how beneficial this diverse environment is for knowledge production: “Conducting research in such a linguistically and culturally diverse environment has undeniable benefits that are rare elsewhere in the world” (fellow 7); “I was particularly impressed by the mix of fellows [junior and senior, English-, French- and German-speaking, from North and South and from different disciplines]. ... MIASA offers an environment in which these different barriers are eliminated or at least reduced” (fellow 8). Feedback of fellows thus confirmed that “place matters” as a departure point for academic cooperation and that it makes a difference in how fellows do research in collaborative ways and interact with each other.



Research fields and findings: Sustainable governance

As an Institute for Advanced Studies MIASA offers time and space for cutting-edge knowledge production, critical thinking and mutual academic exchange in the social sciences and humanities. The institute is aware of existing asymmetries in global knowledge production. It highlights the role of African knowledge globally, and it emphasizes the need for more equitable forms of collaboration. Moreover, the institute invites fellows and guests to rethink concepts and approaches, even more as these have often been shaped by a history of unequal academic relations. MIASA thus understand its main thematic field, sustainable governance, as “a theoretical and conceptual challenge” (quoted from the MIASA application for the main BMBF-funding phase). Or, as Prof. Elisio Macamo put it in his keynote at MIASA’s midterm conference in September 2023: Research can be “cruel” when “normatively charged concepts are used and scholars permit these concepts to dictate their thinking”.⁹ Macamo evoked the “moral ecology of concepts” and the ethical dimensions of knowledge production. According to him, sustainable governance makes moral sense before it makes empirical sense; it pre-supposes “governance” as something “good”, but for Macamo governance is an empty shell before we do not consider the moral sustainability.



Figure 18: Keynote speaker Prof. Elisio Macamo (left) and Prof Dzodzi Tsikata (right) at the MIASA midterm conference, September 2023

Sustainable governance is composed of two concepts. MIASA understands governance as referring “to the foundation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which states as well as economic and social actors interact to make decisions.”¹⁰ For MIASA, this explicitly includes practical norms established by non-state actors. The concept of governance acknowledges different historical trajectories of

⁹ Quoted from the report on the midterm conference: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2648>.

¹⁰ Hyden, Goran et al., *Making Sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from 16 Developing Countries*, Boulder 2004, p. 16.



state formation in a *longue durée* perspective, but it is also embedded in social, material and cultural practices of everyday life and therefore heavily relies on particular contexts.¹¹ MIASA's midterm conference in September 2023 showed that governance is anything but an "innocent" concept. It raises questions of the social, political and economic actors of governance. It requires investigation about the inherent power dynamics between these actors and how historical transformations have shaped them. And it needs, as Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata underlined in her keynote address, the question of "how": How does governance work? How is it expressed and turned into practice? How are people and spaces governed? How are legal and normative orders created? And how do various forms of infrastructures shape and change governance?



Figure 19: MIASA fellows and guests at the midterm conference, September 2023

The idea of "sustainability" is deeply rooted in United Nations development language. It gained additional momentum in 2015 when all United Nations member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the Agenda 2030. While the Agenda promised to "embark on [a] great collective journey", where "no one will be left behind" and the world transformed "for the better"¹², it is worth to reflect about its underlying concepts critically and question the logic behind it. "Sustainability" was first promoted by the

World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 which defined "sustainable" development as the one "that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".¹³ Tsikata, however, asked in her keynote at MIASA's midterm conference whether the shift from "good" to "sustainable" governance had really allowed for dropping the conceptual baggage of "good governance", which many researchers consider problematic because of its one-size-fits-all as well as its normative approach of what is conceived as "good". At the same time, it is necessary to discern the "discursive shifts" from one agenda to another, which may hint to some transformation in seeing the world, as Edgar Pieterse indicates. He calls these agendas "policy artefacts": "They are discursive mechanisms aimed at instilling confidence and purpose in a sea of uncertainty and uncontrollable factors".¹⁴

¹¹ See also a summary on MIASA's understanding of sustainable governance based on the application for the BMBF main phase sponsorship: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/sustainable-governance>.

¹² See for the Agenda 2030 text: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

¹³ For the entire report see: <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-ov.htm> (bullet point 3, 27).

¹⁴ Pieterse, Edgar, *The Politics of Governing African Urban Spaces*, in: Ammann, Carole and Till Förster (eds.), *International Development Policy*, Leiden 2018, p. 25–52, here p. 32.

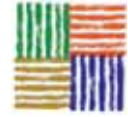


Figure 20: Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata at the MIASA midterm conference, September 2023

Tsikata further observed that the concept of “sustainable governance” is undertheorized: “Is it ‘governance of sustainability’ or ‘sustainability of governance’?”, she asked. The question, however, remains whether the concept needs more definition, or whether it could be one of these “claim-making concepts” rather than an objective condition.¹⁵ Sustainable governance might express a promise, but it is impossible to predict a form of governance that can sustain over time. At best, reflecting about sustainable governance invites us to think about global problems and concerns, such as the debt crisis or climate change, as Tsikata indicated. Therefore, MIASA insists on exploring the field of sustainable governance through thematic focus and grounding, while applying a multi-scale analysis and homegrown perspectives as well as considering global interconnections and historical experience.

For this purpose, MIASA has determined three main thematic corridors – (i) Peace, (ii) Democracy, and (iii) Sustainability transformation – in addition to five intersectional topics - (i) Landownership and acquisition, (ii) Migration and mobility, (iii) Restitution of colonially acquired cultural objects, (iv) African cities, and (v) Human rights. These thematic fields offer contexts to “listen to what is being said in the world”, as Frederick Cooper emphasizes, to focus on the when, how and why.¹⁶ In fact, MIASA addresses the policy-relevant context of “sustainable governance”, which requires a deeper understanding than represented in the “policy artefacts” of agendas, while also insisting on the analysis of specific governance configurations in all their multiple ways. The following summarizes insights into the research conducted by MIASA fellows in 2023. Though the topic of human rights played a role in several research projects (such as projects by Prof. Eyo Mensah and Dr. Ngozika Obi-Ani), it is not listed as a separate point, as all of MIASA’s main thematic corridors and intersectional topics are characterized by cross-cutting connections. Furthermore, two fellows who only spent their final month at MIASA in January 2023 were already considered in the annual report 2022 (Prof. Basile Ndjio and Dr. Abdul-Gafar Oshodi).

¹⁵ Cooper, Frederick, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*, Berkeley 2005, p. 115. In this section, Cooper addresses the concept of “modernity”, which comes with some similar conceptual challenges as “sustainable governance”.

¹⁶ Ibid.



Democracy

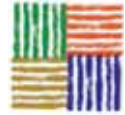
At MIASA's midterm conference, the panel "Formal Institutions, Informality and Knowledge Production" (convened by MIASA alumni Prof. Anja Osei and Prof. Seidu Alidu) explicitly addressed the issue of governance and democracy, arguing that there is a need to better understand political institutions in Africa. While Osei drew the attention to a new "institutional turn" in political science in Africa, Prof. Emanuel Remy Aiyede (University of Ibadan) also insisted that "institutions cannot defend themselves; people have to defend the institutions". Responding to the question raised at the beginning of the panel, "What are the determinants of democratic consolidation?" (Dr. Christian Wali Wali, Université Omar Bongo), the panel made clear that it needs a better understanding of who the members of parliaments, cabinets and other governance bodies are, what their career patterns, their social backgrounds and their connections are with those who do not have institutional power positions. Osei observed that most members of parliament belong to a socially exclusive elite from an upper class and are detached from the needs of people, which offers one explanation of the "moral crises of the exercise of power in Africa" (Aiyede).

IFG 8 focused on "Increasing Women's Political Presence in West Africa". The IFG was convened by two MIASA alumnae, Prof. Gretchen Bauer (University of Delaware) and Prof. Akosua Darkwah (UG), who worked together with three additional IFG members, Prof. Erdmute Alber (University of Bayreuth), Prof. Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and Dr. Ebony Coletu (Pennsylvania State University), as well as two visiting researchers, Prof. Aisha Fofana Ibrahim (University of Sierra Leone) and Dr. Marius Kothor (University of Wisconsin-Madison).



Figure 21: IFG 8 fellows, March 2023

The IFG started from the observation that West Africa lags behind other parts of Africa in terms of women's representation in formal political institutions like parliaments and cabinets. In fact, no cabinet in West Africa has more than 30% women, and only those parliaments with affirmative action regulations have higher percentages of women in parliament (such as Senegal with 46%). Nigeria, represented as the largest democracy in Africa, has the lowest representation of women in parliament with only 4% of seats, while Ghana is currently at 15%. Bauer inquired in her research how women gain access to



cabinets across Africa and showed that party primaries are a critical moment for women. Alber, too, investigated selected biographies of highly educated women in Benin in order to understand the constraints and contradictions that keep them from careers as politicians, or encourage them to run for office in political institutions.

Overall, IFG 8 demonstrated the fruitfulness of combining perspectives on women engaged in formal political institutions with those on women exercising power in informal settings. The IFG asked what it takes to win elections, but also revealed that exercising political power goes beyond formal political spheres. Thus, the multitude of women's spaces have to be borne in mind as well as the large variety of women actors – from religious leaders to market women, and from aspirants for political power to pan-African entrepreneurs. For example, Darkwah explored market spaces in Ghana and examined the interaction between women market leaders and state officials. Coletu reflected on the life and commemoration of Laura Adorkor Koffey, who came as an Accra-born missionary to the United States of America in the mid-1920s and became a charismatic speaker within the Marcus Garvey movement. Mougoué focused on the Cameroonian woman Ester Tanyi who moved to Togo and Northern Ghana in the mid-20th century in order to spread the Baha'i faith, a religion founded in the 19th century in Persia. As Mougoué showed, Tanyi evolved as a community leader and reinvented her status and influence. The research of IFG 8 thus illustrated that changes in women's spaces have equally taken place through travelling and building diasporic movements. Women's political power cannot be understood with an exclusive view on formal political office, and research on it needs to think about economic conditions as well as creative and symbolic dimensions – found in songs, cultural expressions and religious practice.¹⁷



Figure 22: IFG 8 conference participants visiting CEGENSA, UG, May 2023

¹⁷ See also the thematic summary of the IFG 8 on MIAASA's poster series: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2107>.

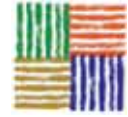


Among individual fellows in 2023, four considered issues connected to notions of democracy from a perspective of participation in and exclusion from public life. Three projects turned around prestige, contested masculinities and the gendered dimension of public life. Prof. Isidore Lobnibe (Western Oregon University) analysed the “New funeral economy and the politics of prestige in Northwest Ghana”, where funerals have become places where chiefs and other prominent figures such as political leaders showcase and negotiate their social and political status as well as their influence and power. Dr. Jean-Marcellin Manga Lebongo (University of Yaoundé II) examined “Hegemonial masculinities and the digital turn” by focusing on the so-called “Syndicate 2000 F”, an online movement which spread from West to Central Africa via social media, asking men to not offer their wives or girlfriends more than 2000 Francs CFA. As Lebongo demonstrated, the movement and the debates around it became a platform not only for re-negotiating gender roles, but also for raising questions about access to economic and political power. Prof. Eyo Mensah (FRIAS and University of Calabar) addressed a highly topical issue of human and equal rights. In his study on discrimination of as well as verbal and physical violence against homosexual men in rural Nigeria, Mensah describes how the signing of the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill in Nigeria in combination with religious discourses and cultural stereotypes have contributed to increased maltreatment of gender minorities, who do not receive any public protection against extreme violent and traumatic acts.

Dr. Issifou Abou Moumouni (LASDEL Parakou and University of Bayreuth) analysed how the digitalisation of governance and democratic processes affects the civic engagement and participation of people with no schooling and no reading or writing skill. For this purpose, Moumouni examined (digital) illiteracy in a district in Northern Benin, where e-governance tools have been implemented by the municipality, while almost half of the population has difficulties in reading and writing and most of them have additional challenges linked to the technical availability and mastery of these tools. This issue of limited access to power was also considered by MIASA’s second artist in residence, Stone Karim Mohamad, in his project on “Demo-Crazy”. The wordplay of “Demo-Crazy” was first introduced by the Nigerian musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti, on which his son, Femi Kuti, later built on. Stone explained that “democracy is supposed to be the ‘government for the people by the people’, but



Figure 23: Artist in residence Stone Karim Mohamad, poetography performance, December 2023



people only vote". For him, the large majority of people in most African countries "is addressed in a language they don't understand", while art can open an avenue to tackle this issue and to imagine "practices which are more rooted, based on our own original structures. It may be utopic, but dreaming is free of charge".¹⁸



Figure 24: Art installation by Stone Karim Mohamad, December 2023

Peace and conflict

In 2023, the thematic field of peace and conflict was addressed by IFG 9 on "Sustainable Regional Peace Building", in the IFG 9 conference, in an international conference on "The Role of Traditional Institutions for Promoting Sustainable Peace in Africa" held in Ouagadougou, in one of MIASA's midterm conference roundtables, chaired by Prof. Andreas Mehler, as well as by one of the individual fellows, Dr. Ngozika Obi-Ani (University of Nigeria, Nsukka). IFG 9 was composed of the two co-conveners Dr. Antonia Witt (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt) and Dr. Linda Darkwa (LECIAD, UG) as well as IFG members Prof. Christoph Hartmann (University Duisburg-Essen), Dr. Tony Karbo (N'Zarama Centre for Peacebuilding) and Dr. Chido Mutangadura (United Nations University). In addition to their interdisciplinary perspective, IFG 9 had three members with practitioners' experience as trainers, consultants and peacebuilding practitioners. A roundtable at the IFG 9 conference offered further insights into the practice of peacebuilding. Moreover, IFG 9 collaborated with two visiting researchers, Prof. Thomas Tiekou (University of Western Ontario) and Prof. Abu Bakarr Bah (Northern Illinois University). Fellows and guests evoked several overarching issues, including the concept of "peace", the deeper dynamics which foster conflicts, the actors in peacebuilding practices, and the institutional settings (concerning both regional organisations as well as the role of democratic and of neo-traditional institutions).

¹⁸ Quotes from an interview with MIASA artist in residence Stone Karim Mohamad: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1613>.



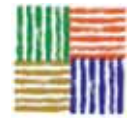
One of the key questions of IFG 9 explored what sustainable peacebuilding means for different actors in regional peacebuilding. In her keynote, Her Ladyship, Justice Prof. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu explained that “peace is organic, it grows, it diminishes, and it dies; it needs to be nurtured”. Dr. Adam Sandor (University of Bayreuth), who participated in both conferences and the roundtable, argued that on a local level (from what he noticed in Niger) “peace” is not a common term, but “calm”. According to him, peace is not built, but a form of “violence management” which puts up a particular kind of order and defines what types of violence are permissible or not. At the conference in Ouagadougou, Prof. Dieter Neubert (University of Bayreuth) reminded the audience that disorder is an aim for multiple actors, including for violence entrepreneurs, mercenaries, and arm traders. Witt therefore asked how peacebuilding relates to violence and how much violence is part of peace?



Figure 25: IFG 9 fellows, November 2023

At MIASA’s midterm conference roundtable, Witt indicated that “conflict is not the opposite of peace”. In fact, IFG 9 indicated, that African regional peacebuilding increasingly takes place in contexts of active violence and that this may have an effect on how to conceptualize them. In this context, Witt wondered whether the concept of “sustainable peacebuilding” is rather “disciplining or liberating”. Even though “sustainability” has become a ubiquitous term in the field of peacebuilding, IFG 9 realized that there is “no coherent body of literature on its analytical value for understanding peace(building)”¹⁹. At the IFG 9 conference, Darkwa, however, added that perhaps more important than dealing with definitions is the question of “what are the ingredients”? Darkwa insisted that “people have to be the unit and the framework of analyses”. At the midterm conference roundtable, Dr. Emma Birikorang (KA IPTC), too, emphasized: “We need to understand the grassroots level”.

¹⁹ Quoted from the summary of IFG 9 on MIASA’s poster series: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2253>.



The second guiding question for IFG 9 was “what are enabling and constraining factors for (more) sustainable peacebuilding by African regional organizations?”²⁰ IFG 9 observed that African regional organisations such as the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS have become increasingly important actors in resolving conflicts in Africa, but they have predominantly focused on immediate and short-term effects, and recently their impact has been questioned. These organisations have policy frameworks for peacebuilding in a sustainable way, i.e. preventing future conflicts. However, as Birikorang asked: “Why doesn’t it work?” Witt argued that the amount of frustration was underestimated. Political context factors matter. IFG 9 also discussed how democracy is perceived to influence sustainable peace(building). Hartmann specified that ECOWAS has democracy in its programme, but that research shows a decreasing interest in it. Witt mentioned that people support the democratic idea, but they are disappointed in how it works. According to Birikorang, different types of democracy are practiced, but it needs a way that can respect the local norms. As Tiekou stated, “when you are building peace, you are changing society”, the question of who is negotiating and driving the agenda and how becomes crucial.



Figure 26: IFG 9 conference with keynote (left) and roundtable (right), November 2023

Fellows and conference participants raised several additional issues which rather nurture conflict than peace, among them the economic situation and environmental degradation. The practitioner roundtable at the IFG 9 conference emphasized the issue of discrimination and marginalisation of certain groups of people as well as the limited budget to strengthen local governance and peacebuilding initiatives. Besides, Sandor noted that peacebuilders are likely to use “bad guys to counter even worse or other bad guys”, which increases frustrations. Mensa-Bonsu highlighted in her keynote the problem of limited homegrown research. She underlined that it needs “adaptive peacebuilding” based on locally generated research. All too often, peacebuilders arrive with their priorities without taking the host country seriously and involving the local population in priority setting. This connects with

²⁰ Ibid.



Karbo's reflection on how to localize peacebuilding by taking into consideration different actors, their spiritual beliefs, nature and the relatedness of all of this in specific contexts. The research of MIASA's individual fellow Obi-Ani added to this the need to acknowledge the historical dimension of peace and conflict as well as the (inherited) trauma of war which resonates in current-day conflicts. Obi-Ani focused on post-memory and the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-70) and how the denial to commemorate and revisit the past has been influencing more recent tensions.

The conference in Ouagadougou on the role of (neo-)traditional institutions allowed for deeper insights into the local dynamics of peacebuilding practices. The conference showed that (neo-)traditional institutions are actors in both conflicts and peace negotiations, or as the conference report concluded: "the question of whether traditional institutions contribute to or exacerbate conflict is highly contextual and varies over time and space".²¹



Figure 27: Ghana delegation traveling to the MIASA conference in Ouagadougou, November 2023

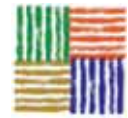
Neubert emphasized that peacebuilding needs to handle the difficult task to build trust between fighters and

bring them together, but neo-traditional authorities can play a role in this. Several speakers demonstrated how (neo-)traditional authorities use reconciliation rituals, symbolic language, expressed in colours and signs, as well as soft power practices such as in music and dance. Moreover, spiritual leaders and customary courts and practices can increase social cohesion. The conference, however, also emphasized that both state and (neo-)traditional authorities can face issues of legitimacy and sometimes they get blended with each other. What is more, both carry historical baggage, and most "traditional" authorities have been re-invented over time.

Sustainability transformation

A widespread conception of "sustainability" distinguishes three pillars: reducing environmental damage, increasing economic efficiency and considering social conditions. Some call it the three "Ps" (people, planet, profit), others the three "Es" (environment, economy, equity). However, as Ben Parvis et al. argue, the genesis and theoretical foundation of sustainability and its three pillars are blurry and lack solid and rigorous

²¹ The conference report can be accessed here: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2613>.



theoretical underpinnings.²² They add that some authors see the three dimensions as interlinked, others as distinct, some weight one factor over the other, while others are adding more categories. Moreover, it mostly remains unclear how different dimensions influence each other. Parvis et al. point to the “inherently political nature of sustainability” and suggest to not understand the term as a “coherent singular concept, but as a common language of broad schools of thought”, which, at the bottom line, share a “critique of the economic status quo, both from ecological and social perspectives”.²³ MIASA takes a wide understanding of “sustainability transformation” for not tapping into the normative trap of UN development language, but inviting fellows and conference guests to reflect about economic, environmental and social change, by including aspects of technology, modes of production and consumption, political dimensions and institutions as well as cultural practices and belief systems.



Figure 28: Policy conference, left with Prof. Abena Oduro and Prof. Jann Lay, right with poster presentation, November 2023

In 2023, MIASA did not host an IFG on this thematic field, but organised a policy conference on “Accelerating Africa’s Economic Transformation Towards Shared Prosperity and Sustainability” and invited a tandem and two individual fellows, who considered the topic from different perspectives. The policy conference was organised in collaboration between MIASA, ISSER, GIGA and the Kiel Institute for the World Economy. It situated Africa’s economic transformation at a cross-road, where economic development needs to regain momentum and transformative patterns must be more inclusive, shared and sustainable. In his keynote, Prof. Kevin Chika Urama (African Development Bank Group) argued that “growth is not enough” and Africa’s economic transition needs to endorse climate-smart decisions. The second keynote by Prof. Stefan Dercon (University of Oxford) showed that the success of “development bargains” cannot be achieved through preformulated recipes, but depends on how committed the political and entrepreneurial elites of a country are and how

²² Purvis, Ben, Yong Mao, and Darren Robinson, Three Pillars of Sustainability: In Search of Conceptual Origins, in: Sustainability Science, 14 (2019) 3, pp. 681–695.

²³ Ibid., p. 690–91.



willing they are to learn. A third keynote by Dr. Nkechi S. Owoo (UG) changed the approach to a microeconomic perspective, insisting on the importance of more inclusive policies for vulnerable populations in order to move toward shared prosperity. The conference included another six parallel sessions, a fourth keynote on the role of digitization in economic transitions as well as poster presentations by early-career scholars from Ghana and Nigeria.²⁴

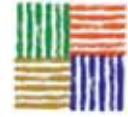
MIASA fellows explored this thematic area in different ways. The tandem Dr. Edith Nabos (University of Leipzig) and Dr. Houd Kanazoé (Université Virtuelle Ouagadougou) examined the widespread use of LPG by taxis in Accra and Bobo-Dioulasso. The project contributed to the fields of African cities and migration, as the first taxis using gas in Burkina Faso were developed by mechanics from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, but it also raised issues of sustainability transformation in terms of energy use (initially, gas was subsidized in order to reduce wood fire cooking) and technological creativity (drivers have to set up an artisanal system for connecting gas cylinders to their cars). Moreover, it offered insights into the complex relations between taxi drivers, economic conditions and politics (as drivers use gas because of economic hardship, while it is officially prohibited in Burkina Faso, but not in Ghana). In addition, a panel at MIASA's midterm conference discussed the interrelatedness of local entrepreneurship, government politics and environment by focusing on the example of mining. At this panel former MIASA Director 'Germany', Prof. Gordon Crawford, and MIASA alumnus Dr. Tobi Oshodi (Lagos State University) described how government policy endorses sustainability only in theory, but is itself involved in illegal mining and the environmental degradation provoked by it. The panel chair, Dr. Diana Ayeh (Helmholtz Centre and MIASA alumna), successfully applied as co-convenor for MIASA's upcoming IFG 11 on "Sustainability in West Africa's Gold Mining Sector".



Figure 29: Panel on extractive governance at MIASA midterm conference, September 2023

The project of Dr. Felix Schürmann (University of Erfurt) dealt with environmental history in East Africa. It demonstrated how much "conservation" is about politics and power. It focused on Rubondo island in Lake Victoria, which was designated in the 1960s to serve endangered

²⁴ The conference report for the two policy conferences in 2022 and 2023 can be accessed here: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/2174>. Further details on the conference and media coverage can be found on the conference webpage: <https://miasa.ug.edu.gh/event/policy-conference-2023/>.



wildlife preservation. The experiment included large-scale translocation of animals, which were shipped to the island, sponsored by the Frankfurt Zoological Society (Germany). Schürmann highlighted the colonial legacy of “nature” as an epistemological category and as a practice of power over nature, which persisted also after the end of colonial rule.²⁵ Dr. Chinasa Abonyi (University of Nigeria, Nsukka) used an ecofeminist approach to analyse how oil pollution and environmental degradation are reflected in contemporary Niger Delta Poetry. According to Abonyi, women are the main victims of environmental degradation, experiencing displacement, economic dispossession, pollution-related infertility and high infant mortality as well as socio-political instability. Abonyi explored how these experiences are represented in poetry. Besides, eco-writing was considered by a roundtable at MIASA’s midterm conference on the role of the humanities in the context of environmental crisis, chaired by MIASA alumna Dr. Emily McGiffin (University College London).

Landownership and acquisition



Figure 30: Panel on land governance at the MIASA midterm conference, September 2023

In the past years, MIASA’s intersectional topic of land governance was addressed by two IFGs, one in 2020 (IFG 3 on rural transformation) and one in 2022 (IFG 6 on urban land governance). In October 2023, MIASA alumni and conveners of these IFGs, Dr. Peter Narh (UG) and Dr. Lamine Doumbia (Humboldt University Berlin), organised a Point Sud sponsored conference on “Digital Trans-formation of Land Governance in Africa”, which offered an opportunity to further develop their research and to prepare a publication. Moreover, they convened a panel at MIASA’s midterm conference on “Land Governance in the Era of Technology and Artificial Intelligence”. Land governance is extremely complex in most African countries

and based on legal plurality. MIASA alumna Aïdas Sanogo (Centre Universitaire de Manga) indicated that ownership perceptions vary from one actor to another and can include “permanent” or “temporary” owners or various forms of “common” land (including stool land). Digital tools are not adapted to these social practices on the ground. Though Narh equally argued that digitization in land governance is contested by many, he nevertheless observed that it can make the process of land acquisition more transparent and increase confidence in land ownership. In addition, MIASA welcomed one individual fellow in 2023,

²⁵ See also Felix Schürmann’s blogpost on “African Worlds Have Been More-than-human Worlds avant la lettre: Relational Ontologies and the Decolonisation of Nature in Africa”: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/3420>.



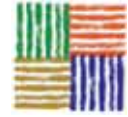
Ebenezer Jones (Akenten Appiah-Menka University), whose research focused on petroleum-driven land dispossession in the Western region of Ghana. Jones evaluated, in particular, a participatory land administration programme, which was supposed to follow the UN-Habitat guidelines for “Fit-for-purpose land administration”. The programme had been initiated by ENI Ghana Exploration and Production Limited when the company needed to acquire additional lands for its Offshore Cape Three Points project. Jones described how the company implemented a sixty-member committee comprised of advocates, policy and strategy makers, implementers and customary authorities, who were responsible to investigate procedures for the land transfer, but his project also made evident that the interests of many people, who had relied on the lands for their livelihoods, were left out.



Figure 31: Video screening at the exhibition of MIASA Artist in residence Seyram Agleze, September 2023

Migration and mobility

Migration and mobility continued to be an important intersectional topic at MIASA in 2023. Alumni of MIASA’s first IFG on “Migration, Mobility and Forced Displacement” (2019) co-organised in March 2023 a Point Sud conference in Accra and Cape Coast on “Speaking Back to Theory: Africanist Migration Research Beyond the Categories”, which also allowed for reiterating connections with MIASA. Other MIASA fellows and alumni co-convened two panels at the institute’s midterm conference which mentioned issues of migration: One panel examined why African individual lives are often categorized in collectivist ways (“communities”, “ethnic groups”), a phenomenon particularly manifest in studies on people who migrate. The other panel explored how people from diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds organise their peaceful coexistence in African cities through religious



practices and non-religious sociabilities. Furthermore, MIASA’s first artist in residence, Seyram Agbleze, reflected in his project “Still here” about migration and forced displacement. His documentary film ends with a silhouette at the Keta beach in Ghana looking at the sea. According to Agbleze, “Looking to the sea recalls all what has come with the ocean, beginning with the slave trade, to this date, where we still have young people taking the ocean to leave.”²⁶ In addition, Agbleze produced collages on weaved fabrics, telling histories about migration in the past and present.



Figure 32: MIASA Artist in residence Seyram Agbleze at his exhibition, September 2023

Individual fellows at MIASA in 2023, who addressed the topic of migration, considered mostly diasporic networks. Two members of IFG 8 (described in more detail in the section on democracy), Dr. Eboni Coletu and Prof. Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, focused on women who moved far from their homes and became spiritual leaders. Dr. Benedikt Pontzen (Centre Modern Orient Berlin) analysed the social role of the Akonnedi shrine in Larteh, a small town near Accra. Akonnedi is a goddess. In the 1950s, Nana Akua Oparebea became one of her main priestesses based in Larteh. In the 1960s, she brought Akonnedi national fame when she became co-founder of the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association, which was initiated by President Kwame Nkrumah. During that time, she also met with the Afro-American Gus Edwards alias Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu with whom she extended the Akonnedi community as a transatlantic religious network with several shrines in the United States of America.²⁷ Dr. Laure Carbonnel (GHIP) examined the African diaspora in Accra by taking into account mainly Africans from francophone countries living in Ghana. She used festive gatherings and dancefloors as a prism in order to explore “mechanisms of sociability

²⁶ See interview with Seyram Agbleze: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1850>.

²⁷ See also Benedikt Pontzen’s blogpost on “Nana Akua Oparebea and the Making of Akonnedi”: <https://miasa.hypotheses.org/3476>.



that connect different people and different scales”, and she asked how the “afropolitan, international, heterogenous character [of Accra] is concretely experienced” (quotes from internal seminar paper). All projects in 2023 demonstrated that the issue of migration is not only about the moment and experience of mobility, but also about the question of how people create connections, sociability and networks through social and cultural practices (including religion and music).

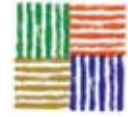
African cities

The intersectional topic of “African cities” was introduced at MIASA at the beginning of its main phase. Since then, it has proved to develop as a vibrant field. The topic encompasses various approaches. African cities are places of many challenges in terms of governance and infrastructures, but also sites of innovation, creativity, sociability and change. In 2023, several fellows raised the issue of African cities, some already mentioned in other sections above, such as Dr. Edith Nabos and Dr. Houd Kanazoé, who worked on urban public transport and the use of LPG by taxi drivers in Accra and Bobo-Dioulasso (see more under “sustainability transformation”), and Dr. Laure Carbonnel, who examined how African diasporas in Accra negotiate their interrelation with their host city on urban dancefloors (see more under “migration”). In this section, three projects are presented, which each employed a different perspective on the topic: Dr. Emmanuel Yeboah-Assiamah (UG) has a political science background. He analysed urban municipal politics and the implementation of selected SDGs in Accra. Dr. Silke Oldenburg (University of Basel) is an anthropologist, who investigated youth protests in the city of Goma in Eastern DR Congo. Dr. Jenny Mbaye (City, University of London) explored as a sociologist the deeper meanings of the “creative city” at the intersection of creative economy, cultural politics and urban transformation.



Figure 33: MIASA fellows and team members taking lunch together in Accra, August 2023

Yeboah-Assiamah described African cities as made of systems that interact to deliver various resources, goods and services. His study deployed a political settlement analysis, using the Accra Metropolitan Assembly as an example in order to assess city operations, which aimed at keeping the city clean and climate resilient. Oldenburg offered insights into the political dynamics of urban youth in the context of conflict in Eastern DR Congo. She focused on a highly mediatized



protest under the motto of “#Goma veut de l’eau” (“#Goma wants water”), which has been led over the past ten years by the social movement LUCHA. Adopting novel forms of protests, including sit-ins and door to door mobilization, Oldenburg showed how young people claim their “right to the city” and “alternative imaginations of political futures” (internal seminar paper). Mbaye argued that the concept of the “creative city” has been too easily dismissed or overlooked, but that “the capacity for creative practices to ‘step up’ and resolutely inform the sphere of politics and policy in African contexts” needed further understanding. She linked this observation with her research interest in educational programmes on creativity on West Africa (with a focus on Ghana and Mali) and decided to explore alternative institutions “that have been establishing new referents for creative practices, while affirming their political responsibility through their engagement with and embeddedness in their social/urban fabric”. Mbaye thus identified “‘art as a thinking system’ to transform the city, and society” (quotes from internal seminar papers).

Restitution of cultural materials

The intersectional topic of “restitution of African objects removed in colonial contexts” has been established at MIASA since the institute’s inception in 2018. In 2021, MIASA hosted its first IFG that focused on restitution (IFG 5). From October 2022 to March 2023, MIASA welcomed two tandem fellows, Prof. Kodzo Gavua (UG) and Prof. Hans Peter Hahn (Goethe University Frankfurt), who worked together on the question of “What is restitution? Entangled Perspectives from the South and the North”. They presented their research at a round-table in March 2023, and co-convoked a symposium on “Restitution, Museums, and Cultural Policies in West Africa” in June 2023, which was already the fourth international conference in the field of restitution organised by MIASA in Accra. This event brought together researchers and museum practitioners from Ghana, Togo, Benin and Germany (Grassi Museum Leipzig, MARKK Museum Hamburg, Museum Fünf Kontinente München).



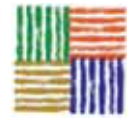
Figure 34: Conference on restitution and museums with co-convokers Prof. Kodzo Kavua and Prof. Hans Peter Hahn, June 2023



Figure 35: Visit at the Ghana National Museum during the conference on restitution and museums, June 2023

Hahn and Gavua argued that the current goal cannot be a “manual” on how to do restitution, but that it needs dialogue and respectful partnership, or as Gavua put it at one of the events: “We must rebuild our relations”. The return of objects is crucial in this process. Gavua emphasized that the removal of objects has created a knowledge gap, and knowledge on the objects has been produced elsewhere. The current state of objects and museums therefore symbolizes existing imbalances of power, which is also “expressed in an asymmetry of public positionings” and a simplified idea of “communities of origin” (internal seminar paper). Gavua underlined that origin is not the only importance of restitution, and Hahn explained that a returned object “will not be the same as more than hundred years ago when it was taken away in a context of violence” (conference). Both stressed that all actors involved in restitution processes today are “members of society in the 21st century” and that “society” is “a group of people with diverging interests, competences and goals of action” (internal seminar paper). Restitution has to take this into account, and museums can play a powerful role in this. However, the tandem emphasized that the concept of museums has to be rethought for this purpose. According to Gavua, “restitutions may turn to be the death of the arrogant museum”, which is working in isolation. Hahn and Gavua indicated that museums “cannot be conceived simply as containers whose duty lies in custody and display” (conference outline), but must become shared and open spaces, which involve different actors and serve as facilitators in thinking about the life of objects after their return.

From November 2023 onwards, Dr. Sarah Dornhof (Humboldt University Berlin) joined MIASA as an individual fellow. She explored the concept of cultural heritage and how it interlinks with sites of commemoration, such as the forts of the Transatlantic trade, museums, contemporary art and politics. She thus aimed at de-essentialising the idea of “heritage” and questioning “the interests, authorities and places that define our understanding of what heritage, whose heritage it is, and what it excludes and obscures” (internal



seminar paper). Her project thus offered a way to continue a critical reflection on museums and heritage introduced by Hahn and Gavua, but turning the focus on contemporary artists and how they reflect on “re-appropriation, restitution and repair” (ibid.)

African knowledge production

MIASA has designated the question of knowledge production as a cross-cutting issue which need continuous reflection in all academic events and research conducted at the institute. Fellows reflect about the deeper meanings of the concepts they address, about the colonial legacies in epistemologies, and about the power dynamics inherent in their research practice and archives. For example, Coletu explicitly aimed at focusing on “‘impossible questions’ that emerge at the limit of what we think is possible to know”, Mbaye searched for “alternative forms of knowledge production and participation”, and Dornhof observed how contemporary art is “challenging a Eurocentric exploitation of images and an imposition of linear historical time” (all quotes from the internal seminar papers). Dr. Abdourahmane Seck (University Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis) further discussed the field of knowledge production as an individual fellow in his project on “memography”, starting from the remark that the concept of “knowledge *production*” itself is problematic because it pre-supposes knowledge as a “product” in a “neoliberal demand of knowledge” (quoted from Seck’s public lecture). Seck introduced the notion of “memography” as a way to “break down the disciplinary ‘subject/object’ dichotomy” and to rethink epistemic orders, but also to explore knowledge in “a poetic, intellectual, political and radical encountering that is experienced and made effective, above all, in a space of social connection and conversation, not from a logic of investigation” (internal seminar paper).



Figure 36: Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture with Prof. Felwine Sarr (left) and Seperewa player (right)



Seck's project related to MIASA's third annual Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture, held in December 2023 by Prof. Felwine Sarr (Duke University) on "Building African Ecologies of Knowledge". The lecture raised the epistemological question of what types of knowledge are produced and transmitted in African societies and for what purposes. In the context of multiple crisis and existing geopolitics of knowledge, Sarr argued that it needs an epistemic shift, revising what is conceived as knowledge and reactivating resources of knowing embedded in African cultural practices. According to Sarr, it is important to embrace the plurality of knowledge, while being aware that not all knowledges are equal and that different types of knowledge do not have the same ability and capacity. However, for going beyond the limits of a narrowly understood Western vision of knowledge, it is important to overcome what Sarr calls a "monoculture" of knowing, the "scientific pretention of being the only legitimate and true knowledge". Building African ecologies of knowledge, Sarr explained, means to open up for new knowledges, to recognize the interconnectedness of different ways of knowing, and to integrate "ignorance" – what we do not know yet – as an epistemological space of creativity and innovation.²⁸

The cross-cutting issue of knowledge production was equally addressed by a roundtable on "How to Protect and Foster Academic Freedom in the Field of International Scientific Cooperation" organised by MECAM in Tunis in March 2023, with the participation of speakers from ICAS:MP and MIASA, as well as by a MIASA reading group on "Academic Freedom", facilitated by Dr. Chika Mba. Five PhD students from UG participated in the reading group and discussed political, institutional and epistemological constraints to the freedom of academic thinking and writing. Moreover, both artists in residence in 2023 offered new perspectives and different ways of reflection on MIASA's thematic areas. Seyram Agbleze saw the difference between academia and art in the way how scholars "always want to put everything into context and have an empirical example to proof", while artists "are working with imagination".²⁹ Stone Karim Mohamad explained that as an artist he doesn't come out "with a study", but "invites people to experience something on their own": "Art can create a larger dialogue – the possibility of dialogues, as my art reflects my own perceptions, and people react by emotions. Art creates connections."³⁰

²⁸ For further information on the lecture, see the conference webpage: <https://miasa.ug.edu.gh/event/amo-lecture-2023/>. The full lecture is accessible online:

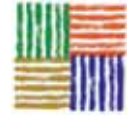
https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=678782181074846.

²⁹ An interview with MIASA's first artist in residence, Seyram Agbleze, can be accessed here:

<https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1850>.

³⁰ An interview with MIASA's second artist in residence Stone Karim Mohamad can be accessed here:

<https://miasa.hypotheses.org/1613>.



Events: Overview

Public Lecture Series

Date: 28 February to 8 December 2023; total of 17 lectures in 2023

Format: Lecture Series

Venue: MIASA seminar room and online

Conveners: MIASA Directors

Objectives: Highlighting the research of MIASA's residential fellows amongst a broader (international) audience; see detailed programme below.

Internal Seminar ('jour fixe')

Date: 9 February to 23 November 2023; total of 21 sessions in 2023 (19 seminar sessions and 2 sessions about MIASA with campus tour)

Format: Research seminar

Venue: MIASA seminar room

Conveners: MIASA Directors

Objectives: MIASA fellows present their ongoing research based on a pre-circulated, very short paper; strictly fellow-internal with a focus on discussing preliminary findings.

Female Academic Careers in Africa Workshop

Date: 15 to 17 February 2023

Format: Workshop

Venue: Yiri Lodge, UG

Collaboration with: CEGENSA (UG) and GHIP

Conveners: Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA/ GHIP), Prof. Charlotte Wrigley-Asante (MIASA/ UG), Dr. Grace Diabah (MIASA/ UG) und Dr. Deborah Atobrah (CEGENSA/ UG)

Objectives: Building academic networks among early career female academics, sharing experiences, reflection on work environment and self-positioning.

Female Academic Careers in Africa Roundtable: Positioning and Preparing Oneself for Leadership in Academia

Date: 16 February 2023

Format: Roundtable

Venue: J.H.K. Nketia Conference Hall, IAS, and online

Collaboration with: CEGENSA (UG) and GHIP

Conveners: Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA/ GHIP), Prof. Charlotte Wrigley-Asante (MIASA/ UG), Dr. Grace Diabah (MIASA/ UG) und Dr. Deborah Atobrah (CEGENSA/ UG)

Roundtable speakers: Prof. Awo Manu Asiedu (UG), Dr. Doris Akyere Boateng (UG), Dr. Jenny Mbaye (City University of London)

Objectives: part of the Female Academic Careers in Africa Workshop, reaching out to a broader audience on campus and beyond.



External: MECAM's Closing Conference: Imagining Futures – Dealing with Disparity

Date: 17 to 19 March 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: University of Tunis

Convener: Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in The Maghreb (MECAM), Tunis

Objectives: a MIASA delegation of two participated in this conference; networking with Merian Centres MECAM and ICAS:MP; Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA Director 'Germany') contributed to a roundtable on "How to protect and foster academic freedom in the field of international scientific cooperation".

External: Volkswagen Foundation Grantees Meeting "Knowledge for Tomorrow"

Date: 2 to 6 April 2023

Format: Networking meeting

Venue: Naivasha

Convener: Volkswagen Foundation

Objectives: Dr. Grace Diabah (MIASA Director 'Ghana') participated in the meeting and presented MIASA.

Writing School: Peace, Democracy and Climate Change

Date: 25 to 29 April 2023

Format: Workshop

Venue: Yiri Lodge, UG

Convener: Prof. Akosua Darkwah (Department of Sociology, UG)

Objectives: Accompanying early career postdoctoral researchers and lecturers based in Africa in how to develop efficient writing strategies, strengthening writing skills, developing Africa-based academic networks, enhancing submission success rate.

Interdisciplinary Fellow Group (IFG 8): Increasing Women's Political Presence in West Africa

Date: 16 to 17 May 2023

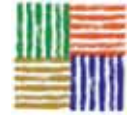
Format: Conference

Venue: Auditorium of the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Research, UG, and online

Conveners: IFG 8 members

Keynote: Ayisha Osori (Open Society Foundation)

Objectives: Final workshop on IFG 8 research outcomes and discussion with external specialists; interaction with practitioners.



External: 9th European Conference of African Studies (ECAS)

Date: 31 May to 3 June 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: University of Cologne, Germany

Convener: AEGIS – African Studies in Europe and University of Cologne

Objective: MIASA directors, fellows and alumni participated in several panels. MIASA had a display table during the conference and organised a networking event with a reception.

External: Day of Scientific Renaissance in Africa

Date: 21 June 2022

Format: Networking event

Venue: Auditorium of the Cedi Conference Centre, UG

Convener: College of Humanities, UG

Objectives: MIASA had a display table at the event.

Restitution, Museums, and Cultural Policies in West Africa

Date: 22 to 23 June 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: Auditorium of the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Research, UG, and online

Conveners: Prof. Hans Peter Hahn (Goethe University Frankfurt) and Prof. Kodzo Gavua (UG)

Objectives: Follow-up conference in the field of restitution, academic exchange between researchers and museum practitioners from Ghana, Togo, Benin and Germany.

Reading Group: Academic Freedom

Date: 28 July to 18 August 2023, four meetings

Format: Reading group seminars

Venue: Seminar room, IAS, UG

Convener: Dr. Chika Mba (UG)

Objectives: Creating debates between research at MIASA and UG graduate students.

Exhibition: Artist in Residence Seyram Agbleze: Still Here!

Date: 5 September 2023

Format: Exhibition

Venue: Foyer of the IAS, UG

Curators: Seyram Agbleze and Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA/ GHIP)

Objectives: Showcasing the artwork produced by Seyram Agbleze during his stay at MIASA and creating a space for exchange with UG faculty, fellows, and a broader audience.



Mid-term conference: Sustainable Governance in a Time of Global Flux: Issues, Concepts and Future Directions

Date: 19 to 21 September 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: ISSER conference hall, UG, and online

Conveners: MIASA EC members and directors

Keynotes: Prof. Elisio Macamo (University of Basel) and Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata (SOAS University of London)

Objectives: Bringing different fellow generations together, creating a platform for discussion also with EC members, allowing for a reflection on MIASA's main themes.

Poetography Workshop: Producing Poems with Pictures

Date: 12 to 13 October 2023 (two hours each)

Format: Workshop

Venue: MIASA seminar room

Facilitator: Stone Karim Mohamad

Objectives: The workshop was offered as part of the "German Weeks" in Ghana, an initiative of the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Ghana and the German Embassy to Ghana. The workshop was open to fellows and a broader audience. It offered insights into the artistic practice of Stone and invited participants to try themselves to create photographs and poems which are connected to each other.

External: UBIAS Directors Meeting and conference

Date: 30 October to 1 November 2023

Format: Conference and networking meeting

Venue: Institute for Advanced Research, Nagoya University, Japan

Convener: Institute for Advanced Research, Nagoya University

Objectives: The MIASA Directors are represented in the UBIAS steering committee. The meeting brought together directors and delegates from around thirty university-based institutes for advanced studies from around the world.

Policy Conference: Accelerating Africa's Economic Transformation Towards Shared Prosperity and Sustainability

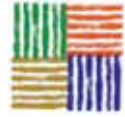
Date: 21 to 22 November 2023

Format: International conference

Venue: ISSER conference room and online

Collaboration with: ISSER (UG), GIGA and Kiel Institute for the World Economy

Conveners: Prof. Jann Lay (GIGA), Prof. Jann Lay (GIGA), Prof. Charles Ackah (ISSER, UG), Prof. Abena Oduro (ISSER, UG), Prof. Rainer Thiele (Kiel Institute for the World Economy)



Keynote speakers: Prof. Kevin Chika Urama (African Development Bank), Prof. Stefan Dercon (University of Oxford), Dr. Nkechi Owoo (UG), and Dr. Edward Asiedu (UG)

Objectives: Event within the MIASA policy conference series, aims at bring academic research and practitioners together for discussing topical issues within the thematic frame of MIASA.

Interdisciplinary Fellow Group (IFG 9): Sustainable Regional Peacebuilding in Africa

Date: 27 to 28 November 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: LECIAD conference room, UG, and online

Collaboration with: LECIAD (UG)

Conveners: IFG 9 members

Keynote: Her Ladyship, Justice Prof. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, Judge of the Supreme Court

Roundtable: George Amoh (Executive Secretary, National Peace Council), Mutaru M.

Muqtar (Executive Director, West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism), H.E. Daniel Krull

(Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany), and Dr Colonel Timothy Ba-Taa-Banah

(Director, Counterterrorism Fusion Centre, Ministry of National Security)

Objectives: Final workshop on IFG 9 research outcomes and discussion with external specialists; interaction with practitioners.

Role of Traditional Institutions in the Promotion of Sustainable Peace in Africa

Date: 30 November to 2 December 2023

Format: Conference

Venue: INSS, Ouagadougou, and online (with French/English translation)

Collaboration with: INSS (Ouagadougou), Goethe University Frankfurt

Conveners: Prof. Seidu Alidu (UG), Dr. Susann Baller (MIASA), Prof. Ludovic Kibora (INSS-

CNRST), Dr. Sarah Kirst (Philipps University Marburg), Prof. Augustin Loada (University of

Ouagadougou II), Dr. Marco Scholze (Goethe University Frankfurt)

Objectives: MIASA's "roadshow" conferences take place at different sites in Africa by using the already established networks of Point Sud; each conference addresses one of MIASA's key topics.

Art Installation, Talk and Poetography: Artist in Residence Stone Karim Mohamad: Demo-Crazy

Date: 7 December 2023

Format: Exhibition and performance

Venue: MIASA bungalow and seminar room

Curator: Stone Karim Mohamad

Objectives: Showcasing the artwork produced by Stone Karim Mohamad during his stay at MIASA and creating a space for exchange with UG faculty, fellows, and a broader audience.



Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture: Building African Ecologies of Knowledge; guest speaker: Prof. Felwine Sarr (Duke University)

Date: 12 December 2023

Format: Annual lecture

Venue: Great Hall, UG, and online

Collaboration with: Department of Philosophy and Classics (UG) and IAS (UG)

Organising committee: Dr. Grace Diabah (UG/ MIASA), Dr. Susann Baller (GHIP/ MIASA), Dr. Richmond Kwesi (Department of Philosophy and Classics, UG), Dr. Chika Mba (IAS/ UG), Prof. Abena Oduro (Department of Economics, UG)

Objectives: Annual major event at UG, reflection on African knowledge production.

Publishing Workshop “Sustainable Governance” for African Scholars

Date: 14 to 15 December 2023

Format: Workshop

Venue: ISSER seminar room, UG

Collaboration with: CJAS (UG) and Africa Spectrum (GIGA)

Conveners: Dr. Julia Grauvogel (GIGA), Prof. Akosua Adomako Ampofo (IAS, UG), Dr. Peter Narh (IAS, UG), Dr. Edwina Dei Ashie-Nikoi (IAS, UG), Dr. Maxine Rubin (GIGA)

Objectives: The workshop is based on a collaboration between the two academic journals Africa Spectrum (run by GIGA) and CJAS (run by the IAS at UG). The workshop offers editors' and peer feedback on pre-circulated draft papers and a discussion about publishing strategies.

Public Roundtable: Addressing Asymmetries in Academic Knowledge Production on Africa: Potentials and Pitfalls

Date: 14 December 2023

Format: Roundtable

Venue: ISSER seminar room, UG, and online

Collaboration with: CJAS (UG) and Africa Spectrum (GIGA)

Moderator: Dr. Maxine Rubin (GIGA)

Roundtable speakers: Dr. Odilile Ayodele (Human Sciences Research Council), Dr. Susann Baller (GHIP/MIASA), Dr. Abiodun Omotayo Oladejo (Walter Sisulu University), and Dr. Moses Khisa (North Carolina State University)

Objectives: Part of the Publishing workshop, reaching out to a broader audience on campus and beyond.

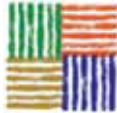


Figure 37: Female Academic Careers in Africa Workshop, participants (above), Provost of the College of Humanities and MIASA Directors (middle), roundtable panelists (below), February 2023



Figure 38: Writing School group picture (above) and group work (middle), April 2023, and Publishing Workshop group picture (below), December 2023



Public lecture series 2023

Date	Name	Title
28 February	Dr. Jenny Mbaye	Creative Cities in African Contexts: Approaches and Perceptions
14 March	Prof. Kodzo Gavua and Prof. Hans Peter Hahn	Restitution and Museums: Some Imagined Issues
28 March	Prof. Eyo Mensah	Women as Public Transport Providers: A Qualitative Study of the Perception of Female Tricycle Riders in Nigeria
18 April	Dr. Laure Carbonnel	Cultural Intermediation and the Mediation of Culture: The Issue of Cultural Hegemonies in Social Gatherings
9 May	Dr. Felix Schürmann	Mapping Rubondo Island: Knowledge and Ignorance in the Construction of "Natural Space" in Interlacustrine Africa since 1875
6 June	Dr. Jean-Marcellin Manga Lebongo	The People's "Calls" and "Counter-calls" For Paul Biya's Candidature: Pre-election Confrontation, Hegemonic Tensions and the Struggle for Political Change in Cameroon
13 June	Prof. Erdmute Alber	Responsibilizing Parents to Overcome Blindness: Changing Intergenerational Relations through Education for all in Northern Benin
4 July	Dr. Ngozika Obi-Ani	"Our Mothers are Not Free" The Ndi'ishi Tradition and Social Control among the Nsukka Igbo, South-eastern Nigeria
22 August	Dr. Chinasa Abonyi	Women and Survivability: Ecofeminist Representation of Oil Pollution and Environmental Degradation in Niger Delta Poetry



29 August	Dr. Silke Oldenburg	The Politics of the Punchline: Elections, Ebola and the Power of Laughter in Goma, DR Congo
12 September	Dr. Benedikt Pontzen	Akonedji, An African Deity and Her Shrines in Larteh: A Field Report
26 September	Prof. Isidore Lobnibe	Changing Mortuary and Funeral Economy and the Politics of Prestige in Northwest Ghana
10 October	Dr. Abdourahmane Seck	From the African University We No Longer Want, To the One We Will Unavoidably Build
17 October	Dr. Jones Ebenezer Osei	Petroleum Driven Land Grab; Threat to Peasant Livelihood?
7 November	Dr. Emmanuel Yeboah-Assiamah	African Cities and the Sustainable Development Goals: Political Settlement Analysis of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana
14 November	Dr. Issifou Abou Moumouni	Elections in the Context of Digitalization in Benin: Issues and Challenges for People in illiteracy
5 December	Dr. Edith Nabos and Dr. Houd Kanazoé	Negotiating LPG in Urban Transportation: Taxi Drivers Stepping on the Gas in Accra and Bobo-Dioulasso

Reading group

Period	School/ department	UG reading group facilitator
28 July to 18 August	IAS	Dr. Chika Mba
	Academic Freedom	



Fellows and guests: Overview

Individual fellows

Name	Senior/ Junior	Fellow- months	Discipline and Project title	Country at the moment of application and affiliation
Dr. Oshodi, Abdul-Gafar	J	1 (+5 in 2022)	Political Science	Nigeria: Lagos State University
			Governance from below? Non-State Actors and Chinese Environmental Footprints in Ghana	
Prof. Ndjio, Basile	S	1 (+5 in 2022)	Anthropology	Germany: FRIAS & University of Douala, Cameroon
			Orientalising African Urban Space: Chinese Property Development and Architectural Innovations in the City of Douala, Cameroon	
Prof. Mensah, Eyo	S	7 (+5 in 2022)	Linguistics	Germany: FRIAS & University of Calabar, Nigeria
			Ritual Cleansing Practices of Homosexual Men in Rural Nigeria: Discourses of Violence and Discrimination	
Dr. Carbonnel, Laure	S	8 (+4 in 2022)	Anthropology	Germany: GHIP
			Arts in the Making of Pan-African Collectives. Malian Diaspora Cultural Practices in Accra	
Dr. Mbaye, Jenny	S	6	Cultural Studies	UK: City, University of London
			Grounding Cultural Policy and Governance in West African Academia	
Dr. Schürmann, Felix	S	4	History	Germany: University of Erfurt
			The Rubondo Experiment: Islanding Wildlife During the Decolonisation of East Africa	
Dr. Lebongo, Jean-Marcellin Manga	J	5	Political Science	Cameroon: University of Yaoundé II



			Hegemonial Masculinities and the Digital Turn in Africa	
Dr. Abonyi, Chinasa	J	3	Literature	Nigeria: University of Nigeria, Nsukka
			Women and Survivability: Ecofeminist Representation of Oil Pollution and Environmental Degradation in Niger Delta Poetry	
Dr. Obi Ani, Ngozika	J	3	History	Nigeria: University of Nigeria, Nsukka
			Postmemory, Trauma and Nigeria-Biafra War: A Case of Uju-Anya	
Dr. Abou Moumouni, Issifou	J	7	Social Anthropology	Benin: LASDEL & University of Bayreuth, Germany
			Illiteracy in Contexts of Participative Democracy	
Dr. Pontzen, Benedikt	S	4	Religious Studies	Germany: Centre Modern Orient Berlin
			Traditional Religion and Urban Life in an African City: The Akonnedi Shrine in Accra	
Dr. Oldenburg, Silke	S	3	Social Anthropology	Switzerland: University of Basel
			Imagining Futures Otherwise: Youth and Urban Protest in Goma, DR Congo	
Dr. Osei, Jones Ebenezer	J	5	Development Studies	Ghana: Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training
			Petroleum Driven Land Grab; Threat to Peasant Livelihood?	
Dr. Seck, Abdourahmane	S	4	Anthropology	Senegal: University Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis



			Memography and Contradictory Dynamics	
Prof. Lobnibe, Isidore	S	5 (+5 in 2024)	Social Anthropology	USA: Western Oregon University
			New Funeral Economy and the Politics of Prestige in Northwest Ghana	
Dr. Yeboah-Asiamah, Emmanuel	J	5 (+5 in 2024)	Political Science	Ghana: University of Ghana
			African Cities and the Sustainable Development Goals: Political Settlement Analysis of Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana	
Dr. Dornhof, Sarah	S	2 (+3 in 2024)	Anthropology	Germany: Humboldt University Berlin
			Contemporary Art and the Notion of Heritage	
Total		73		

Tandem fellows

Name	Senior/Junior	Fellow-months	Discipline	Country at the moment of application and affiliation
Prof. Hahn, Hans Peter	S	3 (+3 in 2022)	Anthropology	Germany: Goethe University of Frankfurt
Prof. Gavua, Kodzo	S	3 (+3 in 2022)	Archaeology	Ghana: University of Ghana
	Project title:		What is Restitution? Entangled Perspectives from the South and the North	
Dr. Kanazoé, Houd	J	5	Geography	Burkina Faso : Université virtuelle Ouagadougou
Dr. Nabos, Edith	J	5	Social Anthropology	Germany: Leipzig University



	Project title:	Exploring Energy Use in Urban Transportation: Taxi Drivers Stepping on the gGas in Ghana and Burkina Faso
Total	16	

Interdisciplinary fellow group (IFG)

Name	Senior/ Junior	Fellow- months	Discipline	Country at the moment of application and affiliation
Prof. Bauer, Gretchen	S	4	Political Science	USA: University of Delaware
Prof. Darkwah, Akosua	S	4	Sociology	Ghana: University of Ghana
Prof. Alber, Erdmute	S	4	Social Anthropology	Germany: University of Bayreuth
Prof. Mougoué, Jacqueline-Bethel	S	4	African Cultural Studies	USA: University of Wisconsin- Madison
Dr. Coletu, Ebony	S	4	African American Studies	USA: Pennsylvania State University
			IFG 8: Increasing Women's Political Presence in West Africa	
Dr. Witt, Antonia	S	4	Political Science	Germany: Goethe University Frankfurt, PRIF
Dr. Darkwa, Linda Akua Oppongmaa	S	4	International Relations	Ghana: University of Ghana
Prof. Hartmann, Christoff	S	4	Political Science	Germany: University Duisburg-Essen
Dr. Mutangadura, Chido	S	4	Political and Conflict Studies	Switzerland: United Nations University



Dr. Karbo, Tony	S	4	Conflict Studies	Côte d'Ivoire: N'Zarama Centre for Peacebuilding
			IFG 9: Sustainable Regional Peace Building	
Total		40		

Fellow statistics

Total number of fellows		Total number of fellow months	
Total	31	Total:	129

Countries of institutional affiliation of fellows at the moment of application			
Germany:	11	Nigeria:	3
Benin:	1	Senegal:	1
Burkina Faso:	1	Switzerland:	2
Cameroon:	1	UK:	1
Côte d'Ivoire:	1	USA:	4
Ghana:	5		

Germany-based:	11	Other:	7
Africa-based:	13		

Junior / Senior Fellows:		Female/ Male Fellows:	
Junior Fellows:	9	Female:	15
Senior Fellows:	22	Male:	16



Main disciplines of fellows:			
(Social) Anthropology:	10	Development Studies:	1
Political Science:	6	Geography:	1
(African) Cultural Studies:	2	International Relations:	1
Conflict Studies:	2	Linguistics:	1
History:	2	Literature:	1
African-American Studies:	1	Religious Studies:	1
Archaeology:	1	Sociology:	1

Artists in Residence

Name	At the moment of application based in	Number of months	Project title
Agbleze, Seyram	Ho, Ghana	3	Still here!
Stone, Karim Mohamad	Stuttgart, Germany	3	Demo-Crazy

Research and Policy Visitors

Name	Institutional affiliation	Related project	Discipline
Prof. Fofana Ibrahim, Aisha	University of Sierra Leone	IFG 8	Gender Studies
Dr. Kothor, Marius	University of Wisconsin-Madison	IFG 8	History
Dr. Osori, Ayisha	Open Society Foundation, London	IFG 8	Policy Visitor
Prof. Bah, Abu Bakarr	Northern Illinois University	IFG 9	Sociology
Prof. Tiekou, Thomas	University of Western Ontario	IFG 9	Political Science



Team and governance bodies

Academic Advisory Board (AAB)

Name	Affiliation
Prof. Azamede, Kokou	University of Lomé, Togo
Prof. Bob-Milliar, George	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana
Prof. Boone, Catherine	London School of Economics, UK
Prof. Diop Sall, Fatou	University Gaston Berger, Saint Louis, Senegal
Prof. Eckert, Andreas	Humboldt University Berlin, Germany
Prof. Harraq, Fatima	University Mohamad V, Rabat, Morocco
Prof. Macamo, Elisio	Basel University, Switzerland
Prof. Meyer, Birgit	Utrecht University, Netherlands
Prof. Nugent, Paul	University of Edinburgh, UK
Prof. Ossome, Lyn	Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
Prof. Rassool, Ciraj	University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa
Prof. Wittrock, Bjorn	Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala, Sweden

Executive Council (EC)

Name	Affiliation	Comments
Prof. Oduro, Abena	University of Ghana	EC spokesperson in 2023
Prof. Tsikata, Dzodzi	University of Ghana	Until July 2023
Prof. Ntewusu, Samuel	University of Ghana	From August 2023
Prof. Mehler, Andreas	University of Freiburg	Speaker for the German consortium



Prof. Kortmann, Bernd	University of Freiburg	
Prof. Diawara, Mamadou	Goethe University Frankfurt	
Prof. Lay, Jann	German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)	
Prof. Maissen, Thomas	German Historical Institute Paris (GHIP)	Until August 2023
Prof. Oschema, Klaus	German Historical Institute Paris (GHIP)	From September 2023

Directors

Name	Position	Affiliation	Comments
Dr. Diabah, Grace	MIASA Director 'Ghana'	University of Ghana	
Dr. Baller, Susann	MIASA Director 'Germany'	German Historical Institute Paris	Based in Accra Until December 2023

Team

Name	Position	Affiliation	Comments
Dr. Schneider-Musah, Agnes	Academic Coordinator	University of Freiburg	Based in Accra
Hanenberg, Luca	Administrative Coordinator	University of Freiburg	
Dandani, Zahra	Administrative Assistant	University of Freiburg	
Amexo, George	Event organisation	University of Ghana	Funded via MIASA/ University of Freiburg
Adu, Rebecca	Senior Administrative Assistant	University of Ghana	



Adamtey, Ophelia	Cleaner and messenger	University of Ghana	
Dr. Scholze, Marko	Goethe University Frankfurt events	Goethe University Frankfurt	
Marchioni, Eleonora	GHIP event support	German Historical Institute Paris	



Figure 39: MIASA team and Ghana national service support, December 2023



Figure 40: Antton Wilhelm Amo Lecture organizing team and speaker Prof. Felwine Sarr, December 2023



Figure 41: MIASA artist in residence Seyram Agbleze, asafo flag with Sankofa sign (left) and capture from the video (right)



Figure 42: MIASA artist in residence Stone Karim Mohamad, photographs in Accra



Figure 43: MIASA artist in residence Stone Karim Mohamad, art installation and exhibition at the MIASA bungalow, December 2023



Abbreviations

AAB	Academic Advisory Board
ACT	Africa Centre for Transregional Research
AU	African Union
BMBF	Federal Ministry for Education and Research, Germany
CALAS	Maria Sibylla Merian Centre for Advanced Latin American Studies
CEGENSA	Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy
CJAS	Contemporary Journal of African Studies
EC	Executive Council
ECAS	European Conference of African Studies
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FRIAS	Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies
GHIP	German Historical Institute Paris
GIGA	German Institute for Global and Area Studies
ICAS:MP	R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies 'Metamorphoses of the Political'
IAS	Institute of African Studies
IFG	Interdisciplinary Fellow Group
INSS-CNRST	Institut des Sciences des Sociétés – Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique
ISSER	Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi
LASDEL	Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherches sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local
LECIAD	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MECILA	Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America
MECAM	Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb
MIASA	Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa
PRIF	Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (Leibniz Institut)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
UBIAS	University-based Institute of Advanced Studies
UG	University of Ghana

