

Account of the 2nd General Assembly of the representatives of the doctoral researchers of the Leibniz PhD Network

This year's general assembly of the newly founded network was hosted by the [Leibniz Institute for Catalysis \(LIKAT\)](#), in Rostock. Many institutes recently joined or elected representatives of doctoral researchers, thus many **new faces** were welcomed, while others met again. After one year of active participation in the communication working group, it was especially nice to meet those again that I had been conferring with during this time. The very friendly and motivating **atmosphere** could not be spoiled by rain and wind, and it was also supported with a surplus of good food – especially pretzels.

The **introduction** of the network by the resigning spokespersons was followed by an introduction of the cooperation within [N²](#), the network of networks, combining [Leibniz PhD Network](#), [Helmholtz Juniors](#) and [Max-Planck Phdnet](#). We hope to learn from these longer established networks and generate possible synergistic effects when in need of a lobby for doctoral researchers in Germany. Dr. Sabine Müller, the research manager of the Head Office, presented the [Leibniz Association](#) and underlined the support for doctoral researchers and the network by the Leibniz Association.

The subsequent **“World Café”** instigated lively discussions and exchange of experiences. This welcome and necessary platform of communication among representatives also provided the network with something to work on – problems, ideas, and suggestions. It showed that we have many open **issues**, ranging from providing anonymous channels of communication within institutes over large differences in working conditions to questions of visibility. In the future, we aim to cultivate a **'Leibniz feeling'** by further improving exchange and communication, but also to provide mentoring for doctoral researchers, and to strive for more equal and better working conditions.

The **working groups** were introduced (as can be found our [3rd newsletter](#)) – many of the newer representatives had criticized a low visibility of their work and aims. We hope that this will improve when the website contents are redesigned. Many of the working groups asked for helping hands. There was a call issued for a task force working on drafting a general PhD supervision agreement, which should become mandatory within the Leibniz Association.

Since the meeting is not only held to talk but also to formulate of our collective will and work towards its realization, we **voted** on our standing rules ([here](#) is the old version; the updated one will be online soon) as well as on responsibilities. Three representatives ran for the job of the spokespersons. Another two candidates applied for the newly created position of financial officer. **Congratulations** to the elected spokespersons [Katarzyna Stoltmann](#) and [Jan-Lucas Schanze](#), and to our new financial officer, [Marie Urbicht](#)! The following section meetings (including the election of this

year's section officers: [Meet the new steering committee for 2017/2018](#)) and working group meetings were fruitful.

The **coming year** will be a very productive one, in which we will go beyond initial setup struggles and direct our workforce towards the declared goals of the network.



Participants at the 2nd General Assembly of the Leibniz PhD Network in LIKAT, Rostock.

Text: Jeanne Wilbrandt, ZFMK.

Meet the new steering committee for 2017/2018!

Spokespersons



Katarzyna Stoltmann

In terms of my study, I completed German Linguistics and Computer Science and Linguistics at the [Humboldt University](#). Since 2013, I have been gaining professional experience at an IT Company. In between, I studied also IT Project Management at a private Business School in Poland. Since September 2015, I have been working as researcher at the [Leibniz-Center for General Linguistics \(ZAS\)](#). In terms of my doctoral research, I investigate how space perception, interpretation, and production depend on language, culture and situation using mouse tracking and motion capture systems. Besides conducting psycholinguistics experiments, I enjoy traveling to sunny places, swimming, and running.



Jan-Lucas Schanze

I am very happy to be one of the current Spokesperson of the Leibniz PhD Network. I studied political science and economics in Mannheim and Berlin. As student assistant I got to know the Leibniz Association at the [German Institute for Economic Research Berlin \(DIW\)](#). After finishing my Master's degree in Berlin, I returned to Mannheim and started to work for the [Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences \(GESIS\)](#). My doctorate deals with survey methodology and I really enjoy to research and learn in the international scientific environment. In my leisure time, I try to play football or tennis as often as possible and currently prepare for the half marathon in my native city Cologne. And yes, indeed, I love the Cologne Carnival!

Financial Officer

Marie Urbicht

I'm the Financial Officer of the Leibniz PhD Network. I studied Biochemistry in Berlin and I am now a first year PhD student in the [German Rheumatism Research Center Berlin \(DRFZ\)](#). During my PhD, I am investigating different chronic inflammatory and autoimmune diseases in humans by cytometry and computational biology. My aim is to find new biomarkers which will be applied in the clinics to predict disease progression and/or therapy response. In my free time, I enjoy hiking or going to the theater and ballet.



Section Officers

Section A: Humanities and Educational Research



Saskia Ripp

I studied translation science, linguistics and cultural science in Germersheim and Mannheim and I am currently working on my PhD at the [Institute for the German Language \(IDS\)](#) in Mannheim. Specifically, I investigate the user's perspective of using online descriptive and reference grammars. I want to find out how grammatical information must be presented in order to make it useful and understandable for every user based on their individual grammatical knowledge. In my free time you can find me playing (beach) volleyball for my club in Leimen, cheering for my favorite soccer team, or at any other sports event in town.

Section B: Economics, Social Sciences, and Spatial Research

Aida Cumurovic

I studied Economics and International Economics and Policy Consulting. I'm doing my doctorate at the [Halle Institute for Economic Research \(IWH\)](#) on Financial Literacy, Behavioural Economics, and Behavioural Finance. I enjoy going for bike rides in and around Berlin, going to concerts, to the cinema, and traveling the world.



Section C: Life Sciences



Rosa Isela Grote-Gálvez

In 2000, I came from Peru to Hamburg. After finishing my masters in Biology, I worked for the industry. Thanks to a stipend I am now doing my doctorate at the [Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine \(BNITM\)](#). I am a passionate immunologist and investigate how the immune system deals with protozoan pathogens. My PhD project focuses on Chagas disease, which is the most important neglected disease in Latin America. Besides research, I am a mom (my kids are 14 and 8 years old) and I like to go cycling.

Section D: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Engineering

Florian Korinth

I studied chemistry in Berlin and moved to Jena for my PhD studies at the [Leibniz Institute of Photonic Technology \(IPHT\)](#). My field of research is vibrational spectroscopy, especially Raman imaging. In my opinion, science plays an important role in improving our lives and finding solutions for problems of our society. Creativity is important to me, as it is the source for new ideas. In my free time, I like to read, socialize with others, enjoy playing board games, and participating in role-playing games.





Section E: Environmental Sciences

Meike Weltin

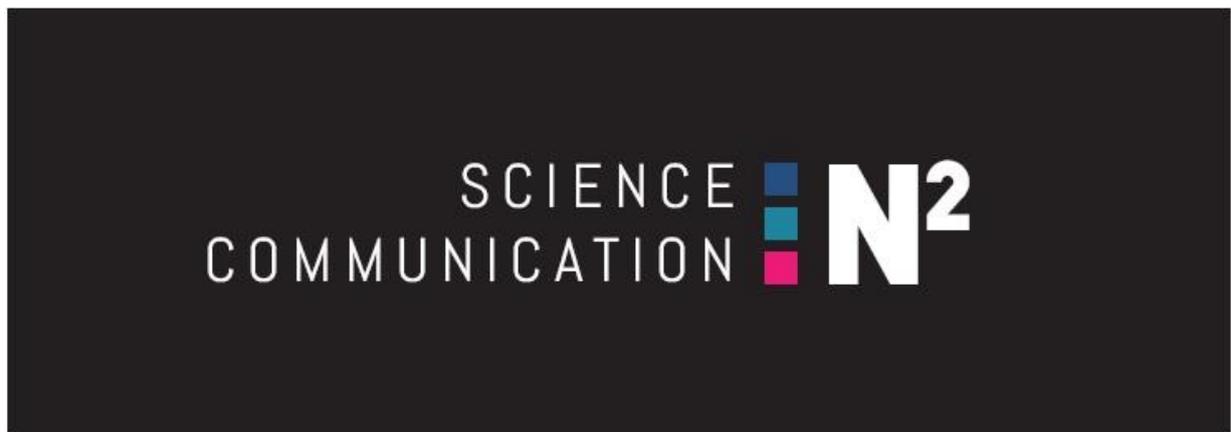
I work at the [Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research \(ZALF\)](#) in Müncheberg. For my doctorate, I investigate the decisions and motivations of farmers to adopt innovative and 'green' practices both on the farm and regarding regional cooperation and exchange. By training, I am an economist, but I like to dive into the diverse spectrum of the social

sciences (and statistics, I admit it) and I am an excited learner in the field of the natural sciences. Taken together, I am very keen to see how one can bring different disciplines, approaches, topics and perspectives together. Besides science, I am frequently plagued by wanderlust; love to be outside and among people.

Registration is open!

Book your place in the N² Science Communication Conference on 6-8 November 2017 in Berlin

You can now register to participate in the first event of N² – the PhD networks [Max Planck PhDnet](#), [Helmholtz Juniors](#) and [Leibniz PhD Network](#). There are 50 places for doctoral researchers of each of the hosting non-university research associations, so register soon!



We live in a World where all information can be virally disseminated. Scientists need to adapt to these conditions and learn how to effectively communicate their knowledge to a broader audience.

A complete program awaits you, with speakers especially picked for their successful, yet original methods of science communication and use of public media, as well as workshops, exciting performances, poster sessions, art contests, and more. Check out

the complete program and register at www.n2jointevent.de. In the website you can also find information about the venues, and hotel recommendations.

We hope to see you in Berlin!

Meeting the Leibniz works and staff councils: They are willing to help

The Leibniz PhD Network is celebrating its first anniversary and we are still spreading the word about us. Thus, we also strive to invite feedback and form collaborations by meeting colleagues and different committees of the Leibniz Association. The works and staff of the Leibniz institutes are partners of great importance to us, as they have a say in our training and qualification. In the Leibniz Association, the works and staff councils closely monitor the situation of doctoral researchers and try to help whenever it is necessary. Accordingly, one of our spokespersons was invited to attend this year's council conference in September.

Approximately 100 members of the Leibniz works and staff councils met in Haltern am See (NRW). The event was co-organized by the Education and Science Workers' Union (German: GEW), the largest German trade union in the field of education. We report here the outcomes of direct relevance to us.

The first panel of the meeting focused on working conditions and career development. Dr. Sabine Müller from the Leibniz Head Office presented efforts by the Leibniz Association to propose a joint career plan for all member institutes. Our spokesperson Jan-Lucas Schanze introduced the Leibniz PhD Network to the works and staff councils and Diana Modarressi-Tehrani reported about recent efforts of the Postdocs at Leibniz institutes to establish a Leibniz Postdoc Network.

The PhD Network and the works and staff councils agree that high standards of working conditions are crucial for a successful doctoral phase. Currently, two cutting lines divide doctoral researchers: Stipends versus ordinary contracts, and third party funding versus employment from institutional budgets. At the seminar in Haltern, the general opinion about stipends was much more critical than in the past. "Stipends create a two-class society of doctoral researchers" one participant said. Institutes do not pay any social insurance contributions for their doctoral researchers with stipends.

Third party funding is generally welcomed by the institutes. On the downside, institutes have less control about the length of contracts and the concrete working time dedicated to research. A board member claimed that there should be political pressure on public sponsors of scientific research to keep in mind the specific situation and requirements of young researchers.

In the Leibniz Association, there is no empirical data about the working situation and work life balance of doctoral researchers. The works and staff councils highly appreciate the efforts made by the Leibniz PhD Network to conduct a survey addressing working conditions among Leibniz doctoral researchers. We will certainly stay in touch with our colleagues in the works and staff councils and come back to them with empirically

backed findings in the near future. These data will help them to help us in our quest for fair and fit working conditions.



From left to right on podium: Jan-Lucas Schanze (GESIS), Sabine Müller (Leibniz Head Office), Diana Modarressi-Tehrani (DBM), Bernd Bibra (DIW Berlin).

Text: Jan-Lucas Schanze, GESIS.

Leibniz PhD Network at the IZW's 4th Leibniz PhD Student Symposium

From September 28 to 29, 2017, the [Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research \(IZW\)](#) in Berlin hosted the 4th Leibniz PhD Student Symposium entitled "What future do we have as scientists? - Rethinking scientific publishing and careers". The organizers had put together an interesting program giving doctoral researchers an overview on how and where to publish the results of their work and making them aware of funding and career opportunities. In the context of this symposium, we also had the opportunity to present the Leibniz PhD Network. To our great joy, most of the participants reported that they had elected PhD representatives in their institutes and had heard about the network before. The presentation was well-received and sparked an enthusiastic discussion among doctoral researchers about what the network could do to improve working conditions and education. Opportunities like these underline the importance of the network and the need to make it visible to the public, in order to give young researchers a voice and bring together their ideas on how to shape our future.

Text: Marie Urbicht, DRFZ.
