

**Namibian-German Student Conference of Humanities**  
**University of Namibia & FernUniversität in Hagen**  
**25.10.-26.10.2024, online**

The "Namibian-German Student Conference of Humanities" organized by FernUniversität in Hagen, in collaboration with the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the University of South Africa (UNISA), facilitated a platform for students, researchers, and faculty to engage in cross-continental dialogue. The conference, developed through the vision of Leo Ryczko from FernUniversität and Dr. Kletus Likuwa from UNAM, aimed to enhance academic networking and foster interdisciplinary collaboration across three countries. The event featured research presentations in fields such as history, media studies, literature, and education, with a focus on promoting intercultural dialogue and the development of academic networks. Through interactive discussions and networking opportunities, the conference successfully encouraged the exchange of ideas and laid the groundwork for future academic partnerships.

In their opening remarks, Prof. Dr. Michael Stoiber (FernUniversität) and Prof. Nelago Indongo (UNAM) underscored the conference's commitment to fostering academic exchange, highlighting its importance as a platform for students from Namibia, South Africa and Germany to engage in meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue.

Conference organizer Leo Ryczko presented the goals of the conference, emphasizing its role in stimulating student-led research, encouraging cross-cultural collaboration, and exploring diverse academic perspectives within the humanities.

The session History in Biographies explored the use of biography as a critical method for understanding historical narratives. **Samkelo Ntobeko Mngadi** (UNISA) investigated the intellectual contributions of Inkosi Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli, the first African-born Nobel Peace Prize laureate, through a biographical lens. He emphasized Luthuli's advocacy for non-violent resistance, multiracialism, and democracy, positioning him as a hybrid African intellectual who influenced South Africa's transition to democracy and global solidarity against apartheid.

**Jörg Niehoegen** (FernUniversität) focused on the transnational biographies of German Namibians, examining how they positioned themselves within complex social networks and cultural exchanges between Namibia, South Africa, and Germany. Through oral history interviews, the research aims to shed light on their roles as cultural mediators and their impact on the transnational relationships that shaped Namibian-German identity.

**Monika Krämer** (FernUniversität) analyzed Margarethe von Eckenbrecher's memoirs to discuss how German settlers in Namibia legitimized colonial rule. Through the lens of personal retrospection, Krämer examined the construction of racial and cultural stereotypes and the role of violence in asserting colonial power, alongside the myth of Namibia that emerged from these narratives.

The session Media & Communication covered the intersection of media and culture. **Etietop Akpabio** (UNAM) examined the perceptions of Windhoek residents regarding the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's (NBC) fulfillment of its public service mandate. He employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather insights into the public's views on NBC's programming and services, revealing significant feedback that could inform future improvements in the organization's broadcasting strategies.

**Christiane Rügheimer** (FernUniversität) introduced her planned Bachelor thesis on Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, specifically analyzing the rituals in the dystopian society of Panem. Rügheimer aims to explore whether the depiction of these "Hunger Games" rituals mirrors ancient Greek sacrificial rituals and what this reveals about social stability and the protagonist's role in this process.

During the Guided Networking Event Desirée Kampmeier led a practical session on effective networking strategies, allowing participants to apply these techniques in virtual break-out rooms and were able to exchange ideas on topics such as balancing studies and family, research in an international context, and potential research collaborations.

The session Gender & Education critically engaged with issues of gender in education. **Sarafina Iikela** (UNAM) explored the participation of learners in school leadership in selected secondary schools in Namibia's Omusati region. She found that while platforms for learner involvement exist, their effectiveness remains challenged by factors such as insufficient guidance and lack of empowerment, emphasizing the need for improved governance practices in schools.

**Victoria Lilemba** (UNAM) compared social and cultural practices in Northern Namibia and Western Zambia, focusing on their contributions to modern girl-child education. She highlighted the dual impact of initiation rites on education, noting that while both regions practiced such rites, they did not provide adequate counseling or educational integration, leading to mixed outcomes in terms of educational progress for girls.

**Millen Madyaao** (UNAM) explored the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in Namibian primary schools. He identified gaps in teacher preparedness, pointing out that while teachers acknowledge the importance of IE, many lack the necessary training, resources, and support to effectively address diverse learner needs, calling for better professional development and policy interventions.

The session Aspects Of Work(ing) addressed a range of labor-related themes, offering a broad lens on labor dynamics in Namibia. **Jona Heita** (UNAM) investigated the relationship between livestock farmers and wildlife managers in human-predator conflicts. He found that distrust between farmers and managers, driven by slow conflict responses, dissatisfaction with compensation, exclusion from management, and poor fence conditions, contributes to the conflicts. Heita concluded that addressing community-specific social-ecological factors is key to mitigating these conflicts.

**Anne Roeske** (FernUniversität) analyzed the role of women sent by the German Women's Nursing Association to German South West Africa. She found that while their presence was promoted by imperialist ambitions, the nurses' everyday experiences often contradicted these goals, with their contributions largely marginalized. Roeske also discussed how their work opened new areas of inquiry, particularly around individual and gender history in the context of German colonialism.

**Dawid Gawaseb** (UNAM) conducted an exploratory study on the living and working conditions of car guards in Windhoek's Central Business District (CBD). The research revealed the precarious nature of their work, exacerbated by privatization, and highlighted their resilience strategies, including seeking alternative income sources and relying on informal support networks.

The mixed session Media Studies & Historical Perspectives focused on the influence of social media on public relations in Namibia and expanded on historical themes. **Colleen Matiti** (UNAM) examined the role of social media in public relations (PR) practice in Namibia, focusing on its deployment, challenges, and opportunities. She found that while social media has positively impacted PR practice, many PR practitioners still fail to integrate it fully into their strategies, with the need for improved training and investment in PR departments highlighted as key recommendations.

**Sinikka Gusset-Bährer** (FernUniversität) examined the role of German women in the colony of German South West Africa. She focused on the expectations placed on these women and their role in supporting the colonial agenda, revealing how they were integral to the social fabric of the colony despite their limited influence on imperial objectives.

**Martha Nyau** (UNAM) presented the power struggles and succession disputes over the Aandonga throne from 1857 to 2021. Her research involves 34 participants, including traditional leaders, royal family members, and government officials, and compares perspectives from the Aandonga, Ovashambyu, and Ovakwangari communities. Using a qualitative, constructivist approach and multiple case study design, she analyzed the causes of succession conflicts through thematic analysis.

Co-organizer Dr. Kletus Likuwa offered concluding reflections on the conference, summarizing key discussions and emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between Namibia, South Africa and Germany in fostering future academic endeavors.

Overview of the Conference:

### **Welcoming Words**

Prof. Dr. Michael Stoiber, Dean of Institute for Humanities, FernUniversität in Hagen  
Prof. Nelago Indongo, Director of Centre for Research Services (CRS), UNAM

### **Aims and Expectations**

Leo Ryczko

### **Panel 1: History in Biographies**

#### **Mngadi, Samkelo Ntobeko (UNISA)**

*A Biography of Inkosi Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli as a Hybrid African Intellectual*

#### **Niehoegen, Jörg (FernUni Hagen)**

*Transnational Biographies – German Namibians*

#### **Krämer, Monika (FernUni Hagen)**

*Margarethe von Eckenbrecher: What Africa Gave and Took from Me: Experiences of a German Woman in South West Africa 1902-1936*

### **Panel 2: Media & Communication**

#### **Akpabio, Etietop (UNAM)**

*Audience Perceptions of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's Fulfilment of its Public Service Broadcasting Mandate: A Survey-Based Analysis of Windhoek Residents*

#### **Rügheimer, Christiane (FernUni Hagen)**

*An Analysis of Suzanne Collins' Dystopian Trilogy 'The Hunger Games' and its Resemblance to Ancient Greek Rituals*

### **Guided Networking Event**

#### **Desirée Kampmeier, International Office, FernUniversität in Hagen**

*Short Input on Networking and How to Do It*  
*Digital Networking in Break-Out-Rooms*

### **Panel 3: Gender & Education**

#### **Iikela, Sarafina (UNAM)**

*Examining Learners' Participation in School Leadership at Selected Secondary Schools in the Omusati Region, Namibia*

#### **Lilemba, Victoria (UNAM)**

*A Comparison of Socio-Cultural Practices in Northern Namibia and Western Zambia and their Contribution to Modern Basic Girl-Child Education*

**Madyaao, Millen (UNAM)**

*Teacher's capacities to implement inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in Khomas region, Namibia*

**Panel 4: Aspects of Work(ing)**

**Heita, Jona (UNAM)**

*The Relationship between Livestock Farmers and Wildlife Managers: A Social-Ecological Analysis of Human-Predator Conflicts in Sheya ShUushona Conservancy*

**Roeske, Anne (FernUni Hagen)**

*The Woman in the German Women's Nursing Association in the Colonies in the Light of Imperialist Ambitions and Colonial Experiences - Everyday Nursing Life in German South West Africa at the Beginning of the 20th Century*

**Gawaseb, Dawid (UNAM)**

*Exploratory Study of Living and Working Conditions Among Car Guards in Windhoek Central Business District (CBD), Namibia: Resilience Theory Perspective*

**Panel 5: Media Studies & Historical Perspectives**

**Matiti, Colleen (UNAM)**

*Social Media and Public Relations Practice in Namibia: Exploring Deployment, Challenges, and Opportunities*

**Gusset-Bährer, Sinikka (FernUni Hagen)**

*German Women for the Colony of German South West Africa*

**Nyan, Martha (UNAM)**

*Omasipa Omanene Iha Ga Pile Mombiga Yimwe: Exploring a History of Power Struggles over the Aandonga Throne, 1857-2021*

**Closing Statements and Way Forward**

Kletus Likuwa