Our 2\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly is around the corner!

We are really excited to welcome 102 doctoral researchers from 65 of the 91 Leibniz Institutes to LIKAT in Rostock on September 7\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th}. The Leibniz PhD Network was founded a year ago, in September 2016, at the IPK in Gatersleben, where an already large number of institutes (50) were represented by their doctoral researchers. We hope to keep the participation increasing year on year!

We are very happy to see this network grow and develop further, as we strive to represent the interests and needs of all Leibniz doctoral researchers.

Expect our report of the General Assembly in our next Newsletter!

What do doctoral researchers need for a start in science? What do they need for a life outside of it? - The Leibniz PhD Network and Matthias Kleiner talk

A few months back, the Leibniz PhD Network's speakers, Olga Naumov and Martin Schmidt, sat together with Matthias Kleiner, the president of the Leibniz Association, in the Sauriersaal of Berlin's Naturkundemuseum. They discussed current conditions of doctoral researchers and their needs. The interview appears now in the current “leibniz” magazine (02/2017). Here we give you a short outline.

Often, doctoral researchers worry about the difficulty of planning and following a career in science. Continuing down this path is difficult, as positions are scarce, short-term, and frequently require mobility. As a result, only about 20\% of all doctorate graduates in Germany continue a path in academia.

During the discussion, ideas were exchanged to tackle these problems. A focal element was the importance of preparing doctoral researchers not only for academia, but also for a life outside of it. Ideally, a path to a professorship wouldn't need to be a straight path in academia; higher flexibility for going from academic to non-academic positions and vice versa is needed.

Other points discussed were for example disadvantaged working conditions of doctoral researchers on stipends, who, in comparison to researchers on the German ÖD tariffs, receive no social benefits from the state. 85\% of all doctoral researchers in the Leibniz Association have regular working contracts. However, this is an area the Leibniz PhD Network seeks to improve.
Finally, looking into the future and further development of science, Naumov, Schmidt, and Kleiner discussed features that in their opinion will bring science forward. Among these, the importance of interdisciplinarity, digitalization, and open science was highlighted. You can download the free magazine and read the full interview (p. 90 ff) in German here.

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**Federal election in Germany: What are parties saying about science policy?**

On 24 September 2017, federal elections in Germany will be held to elect the members of the 19th Bundestag. Several German PhD networks (including N², of which the Leibniz PhD network is part of) provided together a survey for six German parties: CDU/CSU, SPD, DIE LINKE, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, FDP, and AfD. All parties responded to the survey.

The questions cover four different topics: (I) science in society and politics, (II) doctorate and career in academia, (III) general conditions of the doctorate, and (IV) scientific exchange. The goal of this survey is to serve as a decision support for the federal election – of course especially for scientists, but also for the interested public.

So, especially if you are entitled to vote, or just for your own interest and political understanding, check the parties’ answers here. You will find their positions on various issues within the science policy scope, such as strategies for increasing the percentage of
Register soon for the N² Science Communication Conference on 6-8 November 2017 in Berlin

The first event of N² – the PhD networks Max Planck PhDnet, Helmholtz Juniors and Leibniz PhD Network – is coming soon!

This conference is no conventional conference. The goal is to have an outreach to scientists by informing and encouraging doctoral researches to try new ways of communication.

Including keynotes by advanced scientists and experts in public media, workshops, exciting performances, talks, poster sessions, art contests, a pub quiz and more, this event is meant to give an insight into state-of-the-art science communication. How to communicate science in a better way? How open is science itself and towards the public? To what extent does society rely on the expert knowledge of scientists?

Registration starts very soon. Go to the official website to check for updates about the registration! In the website you can also find information about the venues, hotel recommendations, and more details about the program and the speakers.

Here is the detailed (preliminary) program:

**6th November**

13:00 - Registration
14:00 - N² Event Introduction
14:45 - Welcome Lecture on „Innovation with participation“
15:30 - Frontiers – Presentation on Open Access
16:00 - Poster Session + Coffee Break
17:30 - Keynote by Sam Illingworth
18:30 - Snacks + Welcome Reception
19:30 - Dr. Vogel: Physics in Hollywood
20:00 - Science Lounge and Art Contest
**7th November**
09:00 - Workshops on (1) Data visualisation and (2) The Art of Presenting Science, (3) Impact Training, (4) How to Write a Popular Science Article
11:00 - Coffee Break
11:30 - Keynote by Dr. Tobias Maier from Nawik: “Increasing Impact: How to Communicate Science to Non-Specialist Audiences”
13:00 - Lunch
14:15 - Workshops (1) Data visualisation and (2) The Art of Presenting Science, (3) Impact Training, (4) How to Write a Popular Science Article / Berlin Museum Tour (alternative to the workshops)
16:15 - Poster Session + Coffee Break
17:45 - Art Contest
18:45 - Pub Quiz in Café Hardenberg

**8th November**
09:00 - Keynote by Prof. Güntürkün
10:00 - Coffee Break
10:45 - Introduction Panel Discussion (Prof. Kleiner, Leibniz Association)
11:00 - Panel Discussion (participants tba)
12:30 - Closing Remarks + Awards and Prizes

We hope to see you in Berlin!

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**N² meets the scholars of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)**

**About BMBF scholarships**

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research financially supports doctoral researchers who achieved outstanding merits with graduate fellowships. There are 13 grants that doctoral researchers can apply for. Currently there are 3,700 BMBF scholarship holders. Beneficiaries receive a monthly allowance of 1,350 euros, without social security.

**The Promovierenendinitiative (PI)**

The BMBF Promovierenendinitiative (PI) was founded in 1999 to represent the interests of the BMBF scholarship holders. Further aims of this network are to provide information on general developments in the area of higher education policy and the situation of the doctoral researchers in the various foundations.

Although PI is a non-political representation, it works on:
- the social, legal and financial status of the doctoral students (e.g., financing of the final phase of the promotion),
- career opportunities,
- developments in science policy, in particular Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz.

**PI meets N²**

The initiative meets three times a year. On August 1st, during their last meetings, representatives of the Leibniz PhD Network, Max Planck PhDnet, and THESIS were invited for a plenary discussion. As members of N², we discussed our current goals and
potential collaborations. In 2017, N², PI, and other PhD networks collaborated successfully for the federal election survey, (see corresponding article in this issue of our newsletter). With regard to the current situation of doctoral researchers with stipends, we laid the foundations for future cooperation between N², PI, and THESIS.

Meet the communication working group

We would like to present a series of posts introducing the working groups within the Leibniz PhD Network. Together, all groups constitute the engine of the network. This month, we present the communication working group, which is responsible, among other tasks, for managing the Facebook page and the monthly Newsletter.

Carolina Schwedhelm
I am starting the third year of my PhD in nutritional epidemiology at the German Institute of Human Nutrition (DIfE) and excited about it! I like being involved in various projects, such as those related to the Leibniz PhD Network. In my free time, I enjoy doing sports, exploring nature, and traveling!
In the communication group, I have been in charge of the coordination of activities.
Pascal Bartling
I am currently doing my PhD at the German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures (DSMZ). My main research interest deals with a group of marine microorganisms, on how they move and exchange genetic information. Within the communications group my job is to maintain the Facebook page. In my spare time I love to bike, hike, run and visit concerts.

Lara Blagojević
I am doing my PhD in food chemistry at the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) in Großbeeren near Berlin. In the communication group, I write articles for our monthly newsletter. Apart from research, I like to ride my bike and enjoy the mountains and the seaside in my freetime.

Martin Wolff
I am currently doing my PhD at the Research Center Borstel (FZB). My project contains the identification of predictive biomarkers in smoke-related exacerbations. Acrobatics and Calisthenics make my life complete.

Jeanne Wilbrandt
I am in my fifth year of doctoral studies in the field of comparative genomics. My PhD revolves around the properties of protein-coding gene repertoires of insects and computational challenges are my frequent companions. To get the head out of code, I enjoy being the students' and graduate researchers' representative of the Zoological Research Museum Koenig (ZFMK), Bonn. My main contribution to the communication group is text checking and editing. The rest of my free time is spent with hiking, reading, politics, and cooking.

Helmholtz 2nd NextGen conference: an experience report
At the beginning of July, around 120 doctoral researchers from 17 of the 18 Helmholtz Centers that are distributed all over Germany met at the GEOMAR in Kiel for the 2nd NextGen conference. This three day interdisciplinary conference afforded a welcome opportunity for the young researchers to talk and communicate about their science, ideas, and everyday PhD life. Aptly, this year's conference theme was science communication with a focus on workshops, coachings, and experience exchange.
The highlights included a poster session workshop, during which the participants learned how to give a good pitch talk for a poster. Furthermore, innovative ideas were developed concerning everyday life and communicating science with the cooperation of Yoweedoo. Finally, ISOS (Integrated School of Ocean Sciences, Kiel) helped us to bring on board inspiring coaches to teach radio, video, theater, and graphic communication. It was great to see how, in such a short time, nice and new ways of communicating science can be learned and applied, for example by producing video interviews or a radio show!

In another memorable session, eight alumni provided insights of their career paths to the young doctoral researchers. They covered a broad and interesting spectrum of taken positions, including professor, journalist, postdoc, or even mussel farmer.

The scientific exchange was complemented by social exchange during our evenings: we were lucky that Kiel showed its nice side weather-wise and we could enjoy a delightful BBQ at Johns Burger (all cooks themselves are scientists) and a sunny event dinner on the steamboat “Freya”.

All in all it was a great experience to be part of the conference and especially the organizing team. It was a lot of fun to work with many committed doctoral researchers from the GEOMAR and the Helmholtz Juniors (Hejus), making this event possible!

Text by Luisa Listmann

Participants at the 2nd NextGen Conference, July 5th, 2017 in GEOMAR, Kiel, Germany.
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