

The Quarterly Digest - Apr-Jun 2020

What is this? We as the [Steering Committee \(SC\)](#) wanted to share the work done in the network with all of you, so every quarter of the year we put everything (almost) in a nutshell!



Welcome Package

Prepared by the Working Group *Welcome Package*

Welcome Package It started as a spontaneous initiative at our Future Workshop 2019 and has been published this June! We are very excited to deliver you this document, which is available for download in our blog ([here](#)). It serves for the institutes to provide new PhD researchers with basic information for a good and successful start. Don't hesitate to contact the [WG 'Welcome Package'](#) for further enquires.

Contracts extensions? The current situation came with many new tasks for the network. Above all, one of our main concerns was to advocate for finding solutions to compensate the delay or pause in research that many of us experienced. You can find information on legal regulations and funding extensions [regulations due to COVID-19](#) on our blog.

There you will find an email send by Matthias Kleiner, president of the Leibniz Association, to all institutes urging them to react to the situation of their early career researchers, as well. As a background information: The institutes of the Leibniz Association act independently and working contract issues are usually dealt with in-house.



To get a precise picture on how the institutes progress with contract extensions we initiated a small survey in cooperation with the Works Council and the PostDoc Network. As a result, only 14 of the responding 65 institutes (out of 96) had initial plans to extend contracts by the beginning of June. If your institute is amongst those who are still figuring out what to do and has not taken necessary actions yet, you might want to bring this burning topic to the attention of the responsible contact persons.

In the beginning of June, the networks' spokespersons Anja and Jacob addressed the situation in a very constructive talk with Bettina Böhm, general secretary and Matthias Kleiner. Both are taking this challenging situation profoundly serious and made clear to be working towards improvements. We appreciate this!

Diversity matters The COVID-19 pandemic hit some of us hard. Putting ourselves in someone else's shoes can be a challenge, particularly when we too are stuck in our own ways — something that is especially true for doctoral researchers. Fortunately, empathy is something that can be practiced. In order to help you out with that, the WG 'Diversity' has published a collection of very credible, fictional mini-stories of how the pandemic may have affected your peers ([link](#)). >>>



In such a moment of turmoil, another issue arose to the surface: systemic racism in all layers of society. After George Floyd's murder by a police officer in Minneapolis (USA), protests for racial equality swept the world.

The WG 'Diversity' addressed the issue [in a short post](#) that lists a few links to videos and articles that will help all of us in learning how to analyze and address our own privileges and prejudices. We want to highlight that diversity in academia is essential to science. Sadly, research is not and has never been immune to systemic racism. It is time we address white privilege and acknowledge that black lives have not been treated with the same respect as others. Let us all take the time to learn about racism and antiracist practices and educate people around

Online seminars On 9 April, in the midst of the lockdown, the Working Group "Mental Health" organized the first ever online seminar of the Leibniz PhD Network. Almost 200 participants joined in as three experts, Dr. Desiree Dickerson, Dr. Hendrik Huthoff and Dr. Nicola Byrom, discussed coping strategies for dealing with the social isolation, confinement and uncertainty that so many junior researchers have been struggling with during the pandemic. For those that participated, one thing was clear: no one is alone in their situation, as reiterated also by Dr. Elliot C. Brown who moderated the event. The recording of this webinar as well as resources for finding support in mental health issues can be [found in our blog](#).

The success immediately inspired a joint venture with the Working Group "Prevention of Power Abuse". [This seminar](#) focused on the topic of leadership in academia. The experts Prof. Dr. Claudia Peus and Prof. Dr. Thomas Rigotti shared their insights about what good and bad leadership entails and gave helpful tips for doctoral researchers who find themselves in unsatisfying conditions.

Call-to-join We started an initiative to make the Leibniz Association more sustainable by launching a 'Greening' group. This group aims at building on already existing ideas and initiatives from institutes, groups, or individuals within our community. If you have suggestions or want to be an active member of the WG, please contact Kristine (oevel@fmp-berlin.de). If you want to join the communications group contact Isa (i.kilian@leibniz-zfmk.de)

Working remote mode Since online is the "new normal", our usual meeting attendance was moved: Annika (spokesperson for Section A) joined a talk of the new Project Group on career development for employees in research infrastructure; Anja participated the meeting of the Head office's project group on Equal Opportunities; Jacob participated in the meetings of the Evaluation Commission of the WissZeitVG. Ironically, the quarterly "physical meeting" of the N2 board was switched to be online as well. There, Anja and Jacob had an unexpectedly social and overall productive meeting with our friends from Helmholtz Juniors, Max Planck PhD Net & IPP.

Event Funding The first round of applications to the new PhD Networks' event funding program was successful and two local events will be funded. Congratulations to the IRS and the DIW for their workshop "Tackling the Turmoil" on how to do research disruptive social processes, and to PRIF and GIGA for their workshop on "Ethics and Safety in Field Research in the Global South".

Shout outs! We want to thank the WG 'Communication' for their efforts to bring all these amazing results to the public and to the WG 'Survey' for their continuous and profound work in analyzing the data for our upcoming report. Furthermore, we want to emphasize how quickly the WG 'Mental Health' reacted to the COVID-19 situation and set up an amazing online seminar.

Stay safe and reach out to us! Anja and Jacob spokesperson@leibniz-phd.net; Sections: A (Annika) annika.diekmann@bergbaumuseum.de; B (Irene) i.broer@leibniz-hbi.de; C (Kristine) oevel@fmp-berlin.de; D (Suyuan) chen.suyuan@isas.de; and E (Gui) guilherme.abuchahla@leibniz-zmt.de ©