

Working together for a better future

Junior scientists and alumni meet at the Harnack House for the fourth Max Planck Symposium



How can diverse teams solve social problems? Vice-President Ferdi Schüth (left) discussed this topic with the keynote speakers.

ganic farms around New York City with their management and logistics, thus enabling them to attend the city's weekly farmer's markets. This is a win-win situation, as access to fresh organic produce is by no means a matter of course for the socially disadvantaged citizens of New York. Short transport routes and a network of volunteers keep prices affordable. But what does this have to do with diversity? A lot, as Gabby knows. The organic farms in New York State that receive support from GrowNYC are managed by families and communities of every possible culture, gender and religion.

Gabby drew on her personal experience to summarize the connection between sustainability and diversity: "In the early days, I had to deal with the accusation that I had only been appointed because of my Hispanic origins. But then my response was: I have a Master's degree in agriculture and a doctoral degree in biogeochemistry; I have years of experience in project management and I speak English, Spanish and German. I'm not a 'diversity hire' – I'm a key to the success of this project."

"Sustainability, climate, and their connection with diversity" – this is one slogan that the Max Planck alumni, alumnae and junior scientists who attended the fourth Max Planck Symposium could have given the now annual exchange that took place in Berlin's Harnack House in September.

"We at the MPG make sure that origins, gender, age and other non-scientific factors play no part in the achievement of our scientific goals," said Vice-President Ferdi Schüth during the panel discussion. The Max Planck sustainability network and the junior scientists who are members of the Max Planck Society's PhDnet are also strengthening their commitment to sustainability and diversity. Whether in fields such as diversity consulting, agriculture and environmental research, on committees such as the International Panel for Climate Control or in companies such as Bosch: this year's keynote speakers were international alumni and alumnae from all walks of life whose daily work is dedicated to the creation of a sustainable and diverse future.

The unusual alumni projects that brought both groups together were particularly interesting. "How many of you have been to New York City?"

asked keynote speaker Gabby Pereyra at the beginning of her presentation. 80 percent of those present raised their hands. "And how many of you could imagine living there for more than two years?" Almost all the hands went back down. "In my job, I work towards making metropolitan areas like these more livable for everyone."

As the Project Leader of GrowNYC, the alumna of the MPI for Biogeochemistry has the task of assisting small or-

The Max Planck website is one of the most successful media pages

According to an analysis by the online statistics portal Statista, the domain www.mpg.de was one of Germany's twelve best-linked websites in 2019. The first two places in this category went to the U.S. digital corporations Google and Amazon. The highest-ranked German-language news portal was "Spiegel-Online", which came in third.

The analysis performed by Statista encompassed media sites with .de domains. In 2019, the search engine Google and the online dealer Amazon were the websites most intensively linked with other web pages in Germany. The domain www.mpg.de came in tenth, making it the only science website in Statista's top twelve. It was ranked above the technology website 'Heise.de' and the daily newspaper 'Sueddeutsche Zeitung'.

Three at once

Tatjana Hörnle, Ralf Poscher, and Jean-Louis van Gelder join the MPI for Foreign and international Criminal Law as new Directors

No less than three Directors have taken up appointments at the MPI for Foreign and International Criminal Law this year: Ralf Poscher, Tatjana Hörnle and the Dutch appointee Jean-Louis van Gelder are all in the process of setting up their Departments.



Ralf Poscher was previously a professor at the University of Freiburg, where his tasks included the directorship of the Centre for Security and Society. He has been in principal employment at the MPI for Criminal Law since 1st August and is setting up the new Department of Public Security Law; this Department will focus

primarily on government measures to prevent criminal activity. In criminal law, jurists use the term “preventive turn”. At the same time, Poscher is investigating the boundaries that have to be set for these measures in a new “preventive state”. Ralf Poscher was born in 1962 and completed his doctorate and habilitation at the Humboldt University of Berlin; afterwards, he was a professor at the Ruhr University in Bochum and the University of Freiburg. Guest professorships took him to Osaka, the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton and the European University Institute in Florence.

Tatjana Hörnle has been in full-time employment as the Director of the Institute’s Department of Criminal Law since the beginning of October. Hörnle has authored many publications on legal theory and the philosophy of law; here she places particular emphasis on the theory of criminal law and questions of criminalization, for example in the service

of cultural taboos. Her other areas of work include the law on sexual offenses, which is a new discipline at the MPI in Freiburg. Tatjana Hörnle was born in 1963; she sat the second legal state examination in Berlin and obtained her doctorate in 1998 from the LMU in Munich, where she also completed her habilitation in 2003. She then took the chair in criminal law at the Ruhr University in Bochum; in 2009, she was appointed to the post of professor at the HU in Berlin. She has been the recipient of various grants and is a member of three academies: the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, the Mainz Academy and the Leopoldina.



Jean-Louis van Gelder will be moving to Freiburg at the beginning of 2020. The Dutch scholar is a jurist and psychologist; he was previously appointed to a professorship at the University of Twente in 2017. Van Gelder will be taking charge of the existing Department of Criminology and plans to completely re-orient its research. His projects will include the use of virtual reality to find out why people decide to commit a crime. Van Gelder worked at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement for some time. In 2017, he received an ERC Consolidator Grant for his project “Crime and Time”, which also falls within the field of criminal psychology.

Photos: Hörnle: Hath, Poscher: Michael Bamberg, van Gelder: Charles Kuiper (top); MPC (bottom)

“The fact that so many web pages link to the Max Planck Society website proves that many people rate its content as particularly sound and reliable. At the same time, it shows that www.mpg.de provides easy access to a lot of information that is highly relevant to society,” says MPG press spokesperson Christina Beck.

According to Statista, the most commonly linked websites worldwide are Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn. The Internet now consists of more than 1.7 billion pages. This figure is 60 percent up on the number of pages online in 2016.

WELL-CONNECTED MEDIA PAGES

The top 12 websites with the top-level domain .de rated according to the number of subsites that linked to them in 2019.

1	google	62,955
2	amazon	45,405
3	spiegel	40,836
4	businessinsider	36,480
5	blogspot	31,400
6	ccc	28,878
7	bund	28,878
8	welt	27,304
9	siemens	25,947
10	mpg	25,368
11	heise	24,652
12	sueddeutsche	22,834



The courage to build bridges

How the Collaborative Science Symposium is fostering scientific exchange with African students

When she moved from New York to Tuebingen in 2013, Renée Hartig could never have dreamed that she would be actively helping to shape scientific exchange between Africa and the Western world right at the start of her scientific career. However, with a generous portion of courage and perseverance and the help of numerous supporters, the doctoral student at the MPI for Biological Cybernetics has succeeded in initiating an innovative program in Africa known as the Collaborative Science Symposium.

“Our African students were so excited!” she says. Months after the Collaborative Science Symposium in Zambia and Kenya, the American scientist can still see the shining eyes of the 18 to 23-year-old participants in her mind’s eye. “Life in Africa is dominated by a vicious circle of poverty, starvation and disease. That’s why I found the courage, optimism and enthusiasm of these young people all the more moving.” One of these students was James Nkhoswe from Zambia. On being asked why he took part in the Science Symposium, he answered, “I want to do something for the future of my country.”

Ana Silberling, coordinator of the TRend volunteer program in Africa, also knows how important scientific collaboration with Africa is for the continent’s future. “Initiatives such as the Collaborative Science Symposium help strengthen the African research sphere in the long term by providing local training for tomorrow’s scientists.” Silberling supported Renée Hartig’s ambitious plan to create her own volunteer project right from the start. The PhD student initially managed to forge links with two universities which were willing to host the Collaborative Science Symposium.

“Our contacts at the Universities of Zambia and Nairobi were incredibly helpful,” says Renée Hartig of D. Chuba, Director of the Biological Sciences Department in Zambia, and Paul Rabala, School of Computing & Informatics in



Nairobi, Kenya. A team of volunteers also had to be recruited. “Making people enthusiastic about Africa is one thing, but we needed more: we had to find like-minded people who were willing to put up with some hardships,” recalls Hartig.

Despite the vaccinations, malaria prophylaxis, and increased security measures due to the recent terrorist attacks in Nairobi city center, Hartig was able to put together a team of six volunteer helpers. From 21st January to 1st February, the young scientists became part of a special adventure that had both a human and an intellectual side. Renée Hartig flew to the African continent with Ana Vedoveli, MPI for Biological Cybernetics, Rea Antoniou, MPI for Intelligent Systems, Ali Karimi and Mike Hemberger, MPI for Brain Research, and Leonardo Christov-Moore and Pamela Douglas from the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Central Florida (U.S.).

The students who took part in the workshops came from various disciplines: biology, chemistry, physics, or mathematics. Following an introduction to scientific theories, methods and techniques, focusing in particular on the area of biology and the neuro-

Around 35 students from Zambia and 20 from Kenya took part in the Collaborative Science Symposium in Africa. The scientists who flew out to the Symposium gave the participants an insight into various scientific theories.

sciences, the scientists set great store by doing practical exercises with the young students. “It was great how we did experiments using the simplest of materials,” recalls James. These included the use of foldscopes, optical microscopes that can be made using a sheet of paper and a lens and which cost less than one dollar.

“Everyone in our team found creative solutions to problems on just a small budget, and we were all inspired by the participants every day,” says Hartig when asked about the collaboration with the students at the Symposium. Neither did this stop after the Symposium ended. “We are still in contact with Zambian students like James Nkhoswe.” The team is currently assisting James with his applications for grants which will enable him to study abroad. “I’d like to study environmental sciences in Germany,” says James, confidently adding, “I’d like to take what I learn in Germany back home to my own country. I’d like to build a bridge so that my country will be better off in the future!”