

School of Applied Humanities and Languages (Social Work) Network meeting 14.11-15.11.2021

Participants

| Name | Institution | Online participants | Institution |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Prof. Dr. Ralf Rosskopf | GJU, Vice President | Prof. Dr. Vathsala Aithal | FH Würzburg-Schweinfurt |
| Prof. Dr. Sigrid James | Universität Kassel, Exchange Coordinator | Prof. Dr. Hanna Reich | FH Würzburg-Schweinfurt |
| Prof. Dr. Jochen Pleines | GJU, Exchange Coordinator | Prof. Dr. Steffi Kraehmer | HS Neubrandenburg |
| Prof. Dr. Salah Alsalman | GJU, Dean of SAHL | Prof. Dr. Norbert Northoff | Neubrandenburg |
| Prof. Dr. Bader Madi | GJU, Head of Depatment | Prof. Dr. Carola Bauschke-Urban | HS Fulda |
| Prof. Dr. Christine Hildebrand | GJU, Exchange Coordinator | | |
| Prof. Dr. Eva Gerharz | HS Fulda | | |
| Prof. Dr. Sahar Makambreh | GJU, professor | | |
| Stefanie Kirsch | GJU IO director | | |
| Franziska Kaiser | PO Magdeburg | | |
| Julia Kölbel | PO Magdeburg | | |
| Iris Wildfeuer | GJU, IO network coordinator | | |
| Norina Fischer | GJU IO intern | | |

Mr. Jochen Pleines, the network head from the German side started the network meeting and welcomed all participants. He then gave the word to Mr. Ralf Rosskopf for some extended welcome words. Dr. Salah the dean of the school then took the word, thanking Mr. Pleines as the founder and

speaking of the bi-national character of the program which Mr. Pleines seconded, adding how far the school had come. Dr. Bader Madi the head of the social work department also welcomed everyone as well as the exchange coordinator Dr. Christine Hildebrand who also thanked the IT department for making it possible to use the newly inaugurated digital classroom for the network meeting.

Dr. Pleines took the word and mentioned that he is happy to be back at GJU for the first time since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. He also welcomed the online participants, Dr. Vathsala (Würzburg-Schweinfurt) and her successor Hanna Reich from the same university as well as Stefanie Krämer and Norbert Northoff from Neubrandenburg. He added that the network is facing difficult times with some members leaving, himself included, and will generally need to be reconstructed. A year previously it had been decided that Dr. Sigrid James would take over for him as network speaker. Ms. James took the word and introduced herself to the network, adding that she will do her best to fill Mr. Pleines shoes.

The vice president of GJU, Mr. Ralf Roskopf, then started the network meeting with the first point on the agenda, some general updates at GJU. The biggest change is of course the change of the presidency. The new president, Prof. Dr. Ala'aldeen Al-Halhouli, was himself previously dean of the SAHL and therefore knows the school well. The new president also has a strong eye on the German dimension which is a definite asset to the academic networks. He then shared some statistics of the university. Student numbers have constantly grown and almost fulfilling the limit, this growth was only possible and can only be sustained thanks to the partnerships in Germany. New developments at GJU are for example the pilot PHD level at the language department together with HS Freiburg which is also in line with the developments in Germany where the Universities of Applied Sciences are now increasingly able to offer PHDs which they were previously not.

The German Accreditation at GJU was the next point Mr. Roskopf mentioned, currently four out of eight schools have started the process. The language department and the social department of SAHL will be split in this, the accreditation for the other department is happening already, social work will follow. GJU will be the first university outside of Germany to receive the accreditation.

Of course the pandemic introduced new measures for online teaching. GJU moved from emergency response to general improvement of online teaching methods. Online learning committees were formed in each school, Flying faculty took place online, and after only two months in lockdown a new online teaching strategy was developed. So how can GJU let the German Dimension benefit from the digitalization? Mr. Roskopf presented different options for online teaching collaborations, for example involvement of GJU students in courses taught in Germany, or the concept of co-teaching, modules shared between GJU and German professors. Students could in this way compensate for lacking courses at the respective university. Since all GJU courses are taught in English German students could definitely benefit from the classes.

The VP continued with GJU's QS ranking worldwide where currently the university ranks between 800 and 1000 which is exceptional, plus in Jordan GJU reached 2nd place just behind the university of Jordan. Furthermore four researchers at GJU are ranked amongst the 2% most cited in the world, also an outstanding achievement. The newly established research clusters at GJU, officially launched the second day of the network meeting during the events of the German Week at GJU aim at giving visibility to what GJU stands for in terms of research even further.

Even during covid, thanks to the help of the universities in Germany, GJU was still able to send a lot of students on their German Year at the partner universities. Erasmus partnerships with different

universities, including Würzburg for example, are increasing. The number of incoming students was affected by the pandemic more visibly- the plan had been to reach 200 incoming students at GJU in 2022, which was impossible due to the conditions of the pandemic.

A Highlight of the year 2021 was the summer course which was organized by the International Office.

There also were changes in the German Language Concept which over time will help raise the standard of the acquired language level to B2 instead of B1.

A month ago the new deanship was established, the deanship for Innovation and Technology Transfer which the OIL (Office for Industrial Links) will be part of. This is a big step forward and will help advance interlinking with industry and will facilitate more partnerships, entrepreneurship and projects as well as more industry contacts. This deanship will host the dual studies program as well. The concept of Dual Studies is not widely known in Jordan but very helpful to link academia and industry. More and more companies are becoming GJU partners and are supporting this idea.

Dr. Roskopf summarized his presentation by stating that this was a condensed report and there are a lot of ongoing and developing dynamics at GJU.

Dr. Bader Madi, the head of department gave the word to Christine Hildebrand for news on department level

Dr. Hildebrand opened by stating that this department is in constant process of development, especially also due to the interruptions in the past year caused by the pandemic. When returning to campus things were different. On one hand there were positive strides towards digitalization, on the other reconstruction as the department moved to a different building. She then continued to present the changes study plans of the department. There was a general change in the diploma. It stated for locals and was sponsored at the beginning through scholarships. Once these scholarships ended local students stopped signing up and the current diploma consists only of incoming students, also with a new partner, NOHA, and is currently taken by 27 students.

In total, diploma and master, there are now have 70 students studying at the department.

The workload is considerable and the Social work department has little assistance in administrative tasks as they share a secretary with the much bigger language department. Currently there are three full time professors at the department, one of them being the VP who of course has other obligations and two assistant professors of which one has left on academic leave, leaving the department severely lacking in support

After the brief introduction into the departments current situation the exchange coordinator introduced current updates at the school, starting with the German accreditation for the master social work. This is important not only for the GJU but for the students. They will have better conditions and the exchange will be easier. Changes that need to be made to achieve the accreditation include for example the comprehensive track in the Master program which so far did not include an exam, this needs to change because Germany will not accept it. A graduation project will also need to be added. All credits need to be transferred to ECTS, one standard credit equals 4,5 ECTS, but a research course which is more work received for example 6 ECTS. For the thesis the students will receive 20 ECTS. The ECTS system is based not only on time spent but workload based,

which is a new perspective for Jordan. Mr. Pleines added that the network could maybe support the accreditation process.

The next news at the department is the Bachelor Degree in Social Work that will start for the first time in 2022 and its requirements for which the exchange coordinators shared the mandatory course electives. The general GJU requirements also apply of course, such as the student needing to take the German language classes. The BA degree will take four years and sometimes even a bit longer due to the German year. It will consist of compulsory social work courses geared towards the field and various electives on special topics also meant to help the students compensate for courses they maybe failed during their time in Germany.

For the future it important that once the BA is established the network needs to be expanded. There is interest from other universities already, ones who don't only work in migrants and refugees but who also have similar BAs in Social work, a more generalized program as it is envisioned at GJU. New MOUS will be needed so that the Bachelor students will be able to go on their German Year. The network can certainly support in this acquisition of new partners. Dr. Sigrid James asked how much time there is until these new partnerships need to be established and weather the Bachelor's thesis was compulsory. Dr. Hildebrand informed her that once the track has been approved it will take three years before the first batch of students would reach their German Year, yes the thesis is compulsory. Before the students go to Germany they should have a graduation project in mind which is hopefully linked to their trip to Germany. The idea is that they would then have two supervisors for the thesis, one in Germany one in Jordan. After they come back to Jordan they will finalize their thesis. Dr. Gerharz (HS Fulda) raised the concern that the experience for the students in Germany is already very intense, can they manage their thesis on top of this? In the opinion of the exchange coordinator research for the thesis can be done both during and after the German year, also depending on the topic of the thesis. In general she would like to establish the network in different way that helps pair the student with the right university depending on his or her topic of research.

Dr. Pleines summed up the two vital parts he notices in these developments.

- 1.) For the MA a closer cooperation with the network is needed , especially regarding the possibility of co-supervision for MA thesis. Also regarding the option of online an hybrid lectures.
- 2.) Regarding the BA he sees the German Year is an enormous challenge approaching the network, the structures here are half- half year only in education half internship, hopefully before they go they have a supervisor who can help with the thesis, which will make it easier- but it's a lot in just one year. He sees discussing the conditions for the BA thesis as one of the vital issues for the network.

Dr. Hildebrand agreed, the German Year is already overwhelming for the Jordanian students as many of them will also face living alone for the first time. The idea was raised that maybe there could be a supervisor and counselling system from the network and the department to assist the students during this time. Dr. Sigrid James added that maybe for the MA thesis the network could also play an active role, they could also offer projects in Germany. Data is already in existence that could be analyzed by students.

Dr. Hildebrand then moved on to introduce the new concept of the research clusters at GJU. Initially there had been a discussion on weather this should be a research institute or a cluster, the cluster

then seemed a more open concept in which anyone who is interested can join. The cluster will be sponsored in parts by the DAAD. Each of the partners will find something that fits their interests of research. It is very important that the German partners contribute in the clusters since funding often has to be applied for in Germany and through German institutions.

It was decided that for the science cluster for this school would be under the headline “Resistance and resilience in crisis situations”. The exact structure of the cluster will still need to be developed, it is envisioned that there should be different cluster groups, one binational, one focusing on transcultural diversity in higher education research etc. The next academic generation should also be inclined. This cluster will also aid in widening the network in general and clearly the role the network will play in the cluster will be essential.

The participants asked for more detailed information on the cluster and it was established that there would be a meeting regarding this once more concrete plans were in action at GJU.

The network meeting continued after a brief coffee break. Mr. Pleines moved to the next point on the agenda, better coordination in applications for funding. Dr. Hildebrand further elaborated that the matter is also not applying for the same fund. The competitive attitude often stands in the way of effective communication and collaboration. The research cluster could be the solution to also decide what to apply for together and more efficiently.

Stefanie Krähmer who participated online, stated that she has the same feeling and pleaded for a platform, so that it will create a sense of connectivity and a better transfer of information from GJU to the outside. It was decided that the IO network coordinator would raise the topic of network platforms since other schools at GJU would also be interested in this.

Dr. Pleines moved on to the topic of Flying Faculty. Previously the dates of the FF were not known to the network. This needs to change. The GJU exchange coordinator explained the changes in the program, for example the option of hybrid Flying Faculty (part online from Germany, part in presence in Jordan) which means that a Flying Faculty professor can now take on longer modules.-

Ms. Sigrid James inquired about the mechanism of inviting new members into the network. She was informed that usually partners had joined the network and left without an official procedure. This is also something that should be changed especially at a point now where many network members are retiring.

The online participants confirmed that the start of the network was very informal but the network had built a core of very motivated people. Mr. Northoff expressed his joy over the Bachelor degree coming into form now. He also offered his assistance for anything that is needed at GJU. Mr. Pleines asked the German colleagues if they can forward the research they are currently working on to him. This would then form the starting point of the planned quarter- yearly department newsletter.

Afternoon program- presentations

After lunch Dr. Carola Bauschke (HS Fulda) joined the network meeting online for the presentations of the PHD candidates. The first presentation was held by the current IO intern and PDH candidate

Norina Fischer, with the title “dynamics of imagined futures of GJU students.” Norina had graduated the year prior at HS Fulda. She decided on this topic for her thesis due to a personal interest in the trajectory of GJU students and a Scientific interest into conflict and instability and how this affects youth. For her research she followed students paths for a year to collect her data.

The next PHD presentation was held by Majd Zaghlan who joined the meeting also online. Her topic is in forced migration with a focus on female refugees. Her central research question being to which extend has social integration of female refugees been achieved?

Dr Carola Bauschke, her thesis supervisor, thanked Majd for the presentation and stated that in her thesis she would like to see her include more gender and migration theory.

Eva Gerharz presented the next project on “ transitional governance and human rights” which was successfully submitted for DAAD under the HAW project. It’s a network consisting of partners Canada, USA, Palestine, Jordan, Germany and the UAE. The focus of the network is general internationalisation. GJU was included in this to strengthen the collaboration. The intention is to increase student mobility, establish more English study tracks in the social sciences, joint teaching with focus on migration and human rights and establishing 3 international summer schools of which the first is scheduled to start, online due to the pandemic, the same week as the network meeting.

Prof. Dr. Sahar Al-Makhamreh continued the presentations with her report on the Collaboration with the Caritas- Project. This project was just extended for another two years and there is talk of even another extension. The Caritas the project is about implementing mediation in schools, with the idea that schools should open their doors to social workers Dr. Makhamreh has met the minister of higher education regarding this matter and hoping this will be made possible. Caritas provides a training at national and international standard in mediation and the students even receive a certificate. The counseling systems need to be changed and the new approaches could also benefit students during their German Year or foreign students at GJU.

The added benefit is that this will create employment for GJU students as well. Her vision is a developed collaboration between social work and schools and universities.

The last project to be presented to the network was the AttiMa- Project, presented by Prof. Dr. Christine Hildebrandt. The project is a workshop between different countries, initially Lebanon, Jordan and Germany. This year for example an event was held, a one week long online summer school with students from both Germany and Jordan. The students had to work together and give their input on various topics, Social work in school or sexual education another. The project received input about the role of women in the country and gave the students room to exchange their points of view. The project will run for another year.

Conclusions already are that good preparation is needed for an event like this if there are more than one nationality in one group, some topics can be sensitive.

She added that since the covid pandemic it is known that problems are always global. New structures are therefore needed, local solutions to problems are no longer enough and need to be replaced by long-term measures for global exchange to learn from each other. Learning how to create these joint structures is at the core of the project. The intercultural approach is the way to go for the future.

Wrap up of the network meeting and closing discussion

Dr. Jochen Pleines stated that looking back at all the network meetings he perceived a feeling of evolution at GJU. The pandemic created some changes but in general there is continuity even throughout with teaching, exchange and research having continued.

Options to reinforce the contact between department and network were discussed during the meeting and communication and structure seem to be the words of the day. He wished to see more of a sense of coherence and communication of needs and requirements towards the network. The newsletter is a good start for keeping the network updated about what is happening at GJU and vice versa.

Sigrig James added that she is glad she joined the meeting along with Mr. Pleines since she had many question marks about the future of the network. Now her conclusion is that there is hope and she looks forward to the changes and new developments spoken about in the meeting. She herself wants to create a data base of existing partners and possible new ones, since expansion is still one of the major issues for the network. She also sees the opportunities in terms of joint teaching and joint thesis supervision using the new technological possibilities such as the smart classrooms.

The idea of having task groups within the network which will focus on specific needs of the department also seems a good option to her. This also applies to research projects, at the start of the semester it should be established which interests exist and who would be a good supervisor for projects.

There is also the option of Erasmus funds that can be explored more, there are funds for both student and staff mobility.

The GJU vice president Ralf Roskopf added that the digital format and hybrid formats in general should be considered for future collaboration. He also explained that the newly inaugurated research clusters will create a very good dynamic and more options for collaboration. In his opinion, once the department has staff they are lacking in social work more collaboration can be done so that the network is - not only centring on how to support the department but move towards a mutual benefit. This is the aim if the next two years- its needs, staff, stability and structure

Dr. Jochen Pleines ended the session with some good news for the network. The “English- Arabic glossary for Social Work” that was a previous project they carried has currently 5500 downloads. The countries in order of number of downloads are Jordan, Germany, France, Netherlands and many others. He also pointed out the idea of his colleague, director of the LSI (Language Institute) Bochum Abraham van Veen, to start Arabic language courses for social work as well.

The date for next year’s meeting was tentatively set for the 19th and 20th of September in Fulda.

12.11. 2021 Follow -up session after the network joined the proceedings of the German Week in the morning

Dr. Sigrid James opened the follow-up session by stating that what was needed are concrete results. Dr. Bader Madi seconded this and promised his support as the head of department. Dr. James continued with a summary of the discussed items. As a general step the network platform will be created in order to achieve more uniformity and easier means of communicating. She herself will provide the database of active network members for this. A possible collaboration with HAW Hamburg was then discussed, a delegation from the HAW had visited GJU and the vice president had visited them in turn. The HAW also offers social work so a collaboration would be possible. Ms. Stefanie Kirsch, the director of the international office, informed that HAW will sign a MOU if three GJU faculties are involved. Once the MOU has been signed the network will be notified.

The quarterly Newsletter will be created by the department and should update the members of the network of news from GJU and all partners. Other new communication structures include the network speaker and exchange coordinator exchanging information once a month.

Regarding joint teaching and FF the partners encouraged the department to define their needs at the start of the semester. The head of the department Dr. Bader confirmed this, they will get in contact in January when they establish the schedule for the next semester. Erasmus sponsored colleagues have more flexibility and do not need to be informed as early. The IO informed the network that Lisa Krimphove at the GJU International Office is the coordinator for Erasmus scholarships.

In the wrap up yesterday we also mentioned joint supervision for the MA and the BA thesis, and there should be a colloquium at the start of the decision process for students who are trying to decide what to write about.

Dr. Sigrid James highlighted again the importance of good preparation for the Bachelor's degree. Any help needed she offers her support. Dr. Hildebrandt stated that any new MOU that is signed now should already include the BA. Having MOUs signed already would also help for the accreditation by the ministry of higher education. Mr. Pleines mentioned that a chart was previously created for all existing MOUs which might be helpful.

More information on the research clusters was requested from the network members which Dr. Hildebrandt assured them they would be provided in an additional meeting once the clusters ideas become more concrete.

End of network meeting Social Work