The Leibniz Association

The Leibniz Association connects 93 independent research institutions that range in focus from the natural, engineering and environmental sciences via economics, spatial and social sciences to the humanities. Leibniz Institutes address issues of social, economic and ecological relevance. They conduct knowledge-driven and problem-oriented research, maintain scientific infrastructure and provide research-based services.

The Leibniz Association identifies focus areas for knowledge transfer to policy-makers, academia, business and the public. Leibniz institutions collaborate intensively with universities as well as with industry and other partners in Germany and abroad.

Due to the importance of the institutions for the country as a whole, they are funded jointly by the Federation and the Länder, employing some 19,100 individuals, including 9,900 researchers. The entire budget of all the institutes is approximately €1.9 billion Euros.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

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Leibniz
Association

Leibniz Best Minds Network

The Leibniz-Junior Research Group
Leaders' Kick-off Meeting

The Leibniz Best Minds Network

Since 2017, under the umbrella of the Leibniz Best Minds Programme, the Leibniz Association has been promoting junior research groups through the funding line Leibniz Junior Research Groups, and first-time as well as new professorial appointments to Leibniz Institutes through the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors.

The Leibniz Best Minds Network is now bringing together these researchers. It helps young, internationally-minded talents to acquire their first experience of leadership and supports the exchange of highly-qualified female researchers in the framework of the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors. Plans are also being developed to connect junior research group leaders with "Leibniz Women Professors".

The Leibniz Best Minds Network reinforces interdisciplinary exchange and thus unlocks new scope for academic research and the debate on topics of scientific and social relevance. It offers:

- opportunities for informal communication
- further training options
- administrative support for ongoing projects

"The Leibniz Association is a synonym for collaborative research and therefore provides numerous opportunities for exchange. In the Leibniz Best Minds Network, bright talents learn from and with one another; they open up new horizons by stepping beyond the boundaries of their own fields."

MATTHIAS KLEINER, President of the Leibniz Association

The Leibniz-Junior Research Group Leaders' Kick-off Meeting

Which research questions are occupying Leibniz Junior Research Group leaders at other institutes? How do you lead a junior research group? What are the important points to note when planning an academic career?

During the event to launch the Leibniz Best Minds Network on 12 September 2018 in Berlin, junior research group leaders discussed their research and considered the challenges they face in their new leadership roles. An expert coach delivered initial insights into human resource management methods and an informal CV discussion with Professor Christian Hackenberger from the Leibniz-Forschungsinstitut für Molekulare Pharmakologie (FMP) reflected on the success factors, hurdles and goals of academic careers.

From left to right: Tobias Lenz, Michael Melzer, Abdoulaye Sounaye, Franziska Hanschen, Catherine Fischer, Jana Maria Kleibert, Kevin Thurley

Abdoulaye Sounaye

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "Religion, Morality and Boko in West Africa: Students Training for a Good Life"
Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

This project examines the interactions between religiosity and secular education focussing on two African universities: the Université Abdou Moumouni in Niamey (Niger) and the University of Ibadan (Nigeria). In this context the research group investigates the influence of Salafism and Pentecostalism on the students' notions of morality and good life. In addition to the competition and conflict which result from the simultaneous presence of these religious movements on campus, the project studies the overarching question of the student as an intellectual, societal and cultural model. In particular, the project seeks to elucidate how religiosity affects the university as a place of learning and education.

WWW.ZMO.DE/MITARBEITER/SOUNAYE/CV_SOUNAYE_E.HTML

"The Leibniz Junior Research Groups enable me to continue establishing my place in my research field and become scientifically independent. It is great to be able to share thoughts about the challenges of this particular career phase with other researchers on a level playing field."

Jana Maria Kleibert

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "Constructing Transnational Spaces of Higher Education: International Branch Campus Development at the Interface of Network and Territorial Embeddedness"
Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS)

Higher education is becoming ever more international, not least thanks to the establishment of university branches around the world, known as International Branch Campuses. This Junior Research Group examines the drivers and impacts of globalising universities in Europe, the Gulf States and South East Asia. It innovatively links different perspectives of human geography to explore the construction of transnational university networks and their territorial embedding in specific urban and national development strategies. The research project is being conducted in cooperation with the National University of Singapore and the Vrije Universiteit Brussels.

WWW.IBC-SPACES.ORG

Franziska Hanschen

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "Optimization of Glucosinolate Degradation Pathways for Increased Quality and Health Benefit of Brassica Products (OPTIGLUP)"
Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ)

The research group studies the optimisation of glucosinolate degradation to induce isothiocyanate formation in Brassica vegetables such as cabbage and broccoli. As isothiocyanates help prevent cancer, the research group's aim is to optimise both the cultivation and storage of cabbage so that the isothiocyanates are preserved. Together with partners at the German Institute of Human Nutrition Potsdam-Rehbrücke (DIfE) and University of Freiburg – Medical Centre, the junior research group is also investigating whether newly identified degradation products also contain health-promoting properties.

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"Through the network, I get in contact with other Junior Research Group leaders. The sharing of practical and strategic issues is a real benefit."

Michael Melzer

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "Compliant Magnetosensory Systems: Enabling Magnetic Functionalities for E-Skins, Soft Robots and Healthcare"
Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research Dresden (IFW)

Tomorrow's electronics will be soft and compliant. In the future, it will be able to fully adapt the shape to its environment and seamlessly connect to even living materials for optimal interaction and minimal wearing effects. The development of flexible and stretchable electronic systems is thus in the focus of versatile scientific activity around the world. Dr Michael Melzer's junior research group seeks to combine recent research insights into compliant magnetic sensors with simple electronic circuits on the same flexible platform in order to design soft magnetic sensory systems that can be used to drive the development of e-skins, intelligent textiles, soft robots and other novel technologies.

WWW.IFW-DRESDEN.DE/RESEARCH/JUNIOR-GROUPS/#C442

Matthias Prigge

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group “Shedding Light on Plasticity of Monoaminergic Circuits in the Brain”
Leibniz Institute for Neurobiology (LIN)

Psychiatric disorders, such as severe depression or attention disorders, have long been associated with changes in the level of neurotransmitters in a certain region of the brain. Conventional drug therapies alter the amounts of these neurotransmitters in the entire brain. Dr Matthias Prigge’s junior research group wants to better understand the neuronal circuits affected in the various regions of the brain and to uncover the primary molecular processes that have led to the changes in the neurotransmitters. Ultimately, the Leibniz Junior Research Group’s findings should contribute to delivering the neurobiological basis for new therapies in order to provide more efficient help for those affected.

WWW.TEAMPRIGGE.DE

Kevin Thurley

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group “Prediction of T Cell Communication and Differentiation Dynamics by Quantitative Mathematical Modelling (ImmuMod)”
German Rheumatism Research Center Berlin (DRFZ)

This project studies the conditions under which chronic inflammatory disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis develop. It elaborates novel methods of data and image analysis as well as mathematical modelling to systematically investigate the communication networks between immune cells. Together with partners in immunology, specific hypotheses are to be developed and experimentally tested to pave the way for improving targeted therapies for chronic inflammatory disorders. The Leibniz Junior Research Group will cooperate with partners at the University of California San Francisco and Heidelberg University.

WWW.DRFZ.DE/EN/FORSCHUNG/ARBEITSGRUPPEN/SYSTEMBIOLOGIE-DER-ENTZUENDUNG

Catherine Fischer

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "QUEST - QUiet-sun Event Statistics"
Kiepenheuer Institute for Solar Physics (KIS)

The sun is completely covered in small-scale magnetic elements which make their way from the sun's interior to its surface (photosphere). They are continuously involved in physical processes, such as the intensification of magnetic fields or the generation of magnetohydrodynamic waves. Such events leave traces also in the higher solar atmosphere and these processes are thus an important factor in calculating energy transport through the solar atmosphere and investigating the heating up of the sun's outer layers – a largely unexplained phenomenon in solar physics. With an international team of solar observation specialists and employing theoretical modelling, such processes are now to be systematically investigated, using a statistical analysis of large volumes of data that will be delivered by both ground-based telescopes and satellites.

WWW.LEIBNIZ-KIS.DE/DE/INSTITUT/

Tobias Lenz

Head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group "Sources and Consequences of Legitimation Strategies of Regional Organisations"
German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA)

Against a backdrop of growing political authority in which they have been the subject of greater public scrutiny, in the last few decades regional international organisations have been increasingly justifying their claim to power. Whilst the legitimacy dynamics of global and European organisations like the EU have been well documented, there is almost no understanding of the issue with regard to regional organisations in other parts of the world. This junior research group uses international comparisons to investigate these processes, collaborating with researchers at WZB Berlin Social Science Centre, FU Berlin and the Universities of Stockholm and Oxford.

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