



»»» GIUB newsletter

March 2026

Dear members and friends of GIUB,

For the third time, we are providing you with concise information about developments and events at our department in the GIUB newsletter. The newsletter is published once per semester in German and English. Suggestions for the next issue are already welcome.

The winter semester, most of which is already behind us, brought many events and good news to GIUB. First and foremost, of course, is the CRC Future Rural Africa, whose third funding phase has been approved. The application was led by Prof. Dr. Britta Klagge – we congratulate her and all co-applicants!

In addition to this great success in research, there are other exciting projects at the institute and a truly impressive list of publications from the last six months. Furthermore, the cooperation with the GeoHealth Center at the UKB is continuing, enabling deeper collaboration in research and teaching. Finally, we would like to mention the German Congress of Geography, which will take place in Bonn in 2027 under the motto “Critical Zones.” We expect over 2,000 colleagues to attend, and preparations are becoming increasingly concrete.

There are also many changes among the department’s employees, as you will read in the newsletter. We would like to mention here that Prof. Dr. Kathrin Hörschelmann will continue to head the department as Managing Director until the end of March. She will hand over this position to Prof. Dr. Zbynek Malenovsky on April 1.

For future newsletters, we welcome contributions from the individual research groups, as not all information about visitors, events, new employees, etc. reaches us as the public relations team.

Enjoy reading!

Anna Schoch-Baumann and Carsten Butsch

Public Relations GIUB

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New staff members at GIUB

MAREIKE FRANK took up a position as cartographer/graphic designer on 1 September 2025 (successor to Martin Gref).

DR. JONAS BIRKE took up a position as lecturer in human geography (focus on quantitative methods) on 1 October 2025.

RAPHAELA SINGER took up a position in the Schrott/Herget secretariat on 1 November 2025.

DR. ARNE RIEBER joined the research group Klagge on 1 October 2025, where he works as a research assistant.

DR. JULIANE DAME will represent the Chair of Urban Geography as interim professor from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026.

DR. ANN-KATHRIN VOLMER took up a position as a research assistant in the research group Budds on 15 November 2025.

PIA MAILÄNDER took up a position as a research assistant in the research group Malenovsky on 1 October 2025.

LISANN FREI joined the Examination Office team on a permanent basis on 15 October 2025.

YASNA YEGANEH took up a position as a doctoral student in the Hydrology research group on 1 November 2025.

LAURA INK returned from parental leave on 16 November 2025.

JANA BÖHME took over as head of the library on 3 December 2025, initially on a fixed-term contract for one year, with a 25% position.

DEBORAH WOLFF took up a position as a laboratory assistant on 1 January 2026.

LEA HAACK took up a position as a research assistant in the Cultural Geography Working Group on 1 January 2026.

MANUEL STANDOP took up a position as a research assistant in the research group of Müller-Mahn on 1 January 2026 (third party funding).

NATHALIE SÄNGER took over the academic coordination of the KaVoMa degree programme as a parental leave cover on 2 January 2026.

MARTIN HILLJEGERDES joined the research group Malenovsky as a research assistant on 1 February 2026 (third party funding, ZFL).

BENEDICT HOODT joined the research group Malenovsky as a research assistant on 1 February 2026.

FRIEDERIKE PAUK celebrated her 25th anniversary with the university on 1 September 2025.

PROFESSOR DR. DETLEF MÜLLER-MAHN'S senior professorship was extended by four years, until 31 December 2029.

Departing employees at GIUB

DR. BENEDIKT WALKER (working group Klagge) left GIUB on 30 June 2025.

HON.-PROF. DR. KARL-HEINZ ERDMANN and **HON.-PROF. DR. THOMAS ZUMBROICH** retired during the graduation ceremony on 16 July 2025.

DR. THEO AALDERS (working group Müller-Mahn) left GIUB on 31 August 2025 to work on a postdoctoral fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School in Cambridge.

ANNAPIA DEBARRY (working group Müller-Mahn) left GIUB on 31 August 2025.

DR. LOIC FRANCON (working group Löffler) left GIUB on 31 August 2025.

DR. FRANKLINE NDI left GIUB on 7 September 2025.

JULIAN ANTONI (working group Klagge) ended his term as a research assistant on 30 September 2025.

DR. TOBIT NAUHEIM (working group Nöthen) left GIUB on 30 September 2025 and is now working at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on a Martin Buber Fellowship.

MELANIE STAMMLER (Schrott Research Group) left the GIUB on 30 September 2025.

BJÖRN BOTH (Herget Research Group) left GIUB on 30 September 2025.

MARTIN GREF left GIUB permanently on 31 December 2025, after taking early retirement on 31 July 2025 and subsequently continuing to work at GIUB on a part-time basis.

JOHANNES DITTMANN left GIUB on 8 February 2026 and took up a position at the German Rectors' Conference.



RESEARCH

The third funding phase of the SFB Future Rural Africa has been approved. The consortium will be led by Prof. Dr. Britta Klagge during this phase. Jessica Budds, Zbynek Malenovsky, Detlef Müller-Mahn and Eva Nöthen will also be involved in individual projects during this phase:

TO THE ARTICLE



- **PROF. DR. BRITTA KLAGGE:**

Project Z01 Central Administrative Project
CO2 Energy Futures: Infrastructures and governance for renewable energies

- **PROF. DR. JESSICA BUDDS:**

Project C03 Green Futures: The transformation of rural waterscapes in East Africa

- **PROF. DR. ZBYNĚK MALENOVSKÝ:**

Project B02 Future Infections: Linking social-ecological transformation, land surface changes and arthropod-borne infections

- **PROF. DR. DETLEF MÜLLER-MAHN:**

Project C03 Green Futures: The transformation of rural waterscapes in East Africa

- **PROF. DR. EVA NÖTHEN:**

Project Z05/Ö Negotiating African Futures: An exhibition project

RG Hydrology (Prof. Dr. Julian Klaus)

Prof. Dr. Julian Klaus: EcoWat-Secure – Ecohydrological modelling in a data-scarce West African Sudanian watershed: Integrating agricultural dam

operation for water security predictions (Argelander Scholarship, University of Bonn)

Prof. Dr. Julian Klaus: Hydrossential Education (TRA Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Futures, University of Bonn)

Prof. Dr. Julian Klaus: Large-scale research equipment „Laser spectrometer for analysing stable isotopes of hydrogen and oxygen“ (DFG)

RG Cultural Geography (Prof. Dr. Kathrin Hörschelmann & Susanne Bell):

Prof. Dr. Kathrin Hörschelmann, Susanne Bell: SOZIAHR – Social, Economic and Administrative Challenges of Climate Resilience (Mercator Foundation, Climate Protection Funding Line).

RG Geomorphology and Palaeohydrology (Prof. Dr. Jürgen Herget):

Dr. Thomas Roggenkamp: The hydrological extremes of the Rhine in history – a European perspective (DFG).

RG Geomorphology and Environmental Systems (Prof. Dr. Lothar Schrott)

Prof. Dr. Lothar Schrott: Creating Open Access Digital Educational Material in Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection (EUMApplus) (EU funding).

Prof. Dr. Lothar Schrott, Dr. Rainer Bell, Dr. Anna Schoch-Baumann: Monitoring of a landslide in the Ahr Valley, Müsch (Rhineland-Palatinate State Office for Geology and Mining).

Associate Professor Dr. Carsten Butsch

Associate Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch: Blue-green Infrastructure of East Kolkata Wetlands. Sensitive Ecosystem in Transition (DAAD scholarship for Mostak Al Farhad).

Completed dissertations

PHILIPP INNIS (31.01.2025):

Navigating Urban Risksapes: Everyday Risks, Infrastructure Challenges, and Governance in Monrovia, Liberia.

(Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn)

ARNE RIEBER (30.06.2025):

The Political Ecology of Hydraulic Infrastructure in Kenya: Claim-Making and Contestations in Hydrosocial Spaces.

(Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn)

BENEDIKT WALKER (MAI 2025):

The German Hydrogen Sector in Global Production Networks: Structures, Agency, and Uneven Development.

(Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Britta Klagge)

MELANIE STAMMLER (16.12.2025):

Multi-Scale Rock Glacier Kinematics in the Dry Andes of Argentina: From DEMs to the State of Permafrost Using Photogrammetry

(Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Lothar Schrott)

EMMA ATHANASIO MINJA (18.12.2025):

Contested Waters: Historical Legacies of Hydropower Dams and Future-Making in Tanzania's Rufiji Basin (1960s–2010s).

(Supervisor: Prof. Detlef Müller-Mahn;
Prof. Ulrike Lindner, Universität zu Köln)

VALENTINE OPANGA (09.02.2026):

Contested Waters: Historical Legacies of Hydropower Dams and Future-Making in Tanzania's Rufiji Basin (1960s–2010s).

(Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn; Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner, Universität zu Köln)

Research Café

On 14 January 2026, the second Research Café on collaborative research and joint projects took place. The aim of the event was to give institute staff insights into the German research landscape with regard to acquiring large-scale third-party funding projects and to discuss the potential and challenges for geography.

Three guests were invited to share their experiences with the GIUB staff. Prof. Dr. Wulf Amelung (University of Bonn) explained the structure of large collaborative projects at the German Research Foundation (DFG) and key aspects from conception to application. Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn (GIUB) reported on the Collaborative Research Center "Rural Africa," which is currently in its third funding phase. Prof. Dr. Boris Braun (University of Cologne) concluded the event by presenting important criteria for application evaluation from the perspective of a DFG reviewer.



Published with the participation of Katharina Höreth (AG Evers) – media interest was extremely high

The paper “The river Rhine transports around 4,000 tonnes of macro-litter towards the North Sea each year” by Gnann, Höreth et al. (2026) was published in January in the journal *Nature Communications Sustainability*. The subsequent media interest was overwhelming. The article ranks in the 99th percentile (743rd place) of the 218,282 articles of similar age recorded in all journals and in the 95th percentile (1st place) of the 21 articles of similar age recorded in *Communications Sustainability*. It was featured in over 30 journalistic articles, including *Die Zeit*, *The Guardian*, and *Deutschlandfunk*. It was also reported on WDR (TV and radio). But why was there so much media interest?

There is significantly more trash floating in the Rhine than previously assumed. A citizen science research project led by the University of Bonn shows that around 53,000 pieces of macro-trash float past Cologne every day. Researchers from the Universities of Bonn and Tübingen, the Federal Institute of Hydrology, and the Cologne environmental association K.R.A.K.E. e.V. participated in the project.

Over a period of 16 months, macro-waste was systematically collected and analyzed using the floating waste trap “RheinKrake.” The device, which was installed at Cologne’s Zoobrücke bridge in 2022, catches pieces of waste measuring one centimeter or more across a width of three meters and a depth of up to 80 centimeters. Unlike earlier studies, which were mostly based on selective visual observations, this method enabled continuous recording day and night. Extrapolations show an annual waste volume of at least 2,169 tons for Cologne, and in weighted scenarios even up to around 3,392 tons. This is many times higher than previous estimates for the Rhine.

The researchers derive specific recommendations for action from the data. Since disposable products account for around 40 percent of waste, expanding the deposit system could significantly reduce the burden. In addition, the amount of waste fluctuates greatly over the course of the year, for example after New Year’s Eve or when water levels rise. Targeted cleaning measures and preventive emptying of trash cans could effectively reduce the amount of waste entering the Rhine.



Katharina Höreth, a doctoral student in the Ecohydrology and Water Resources Management working group, answered a few questions for us about this exciting paper:

How did the collaboration with the K.R.A.K.E. association come about? Was there initially a personal interest in the citizen science project, or was the goal to combine it with your own scientific work?

Nicolas Schweigert, project manager of the K.R.A.K.E. association's trash trap, sought scientific support for his project during the planning phase. One of the requirements was that the fauna had to be monitored once the trash trap was installed. Leandra Hamann, a biologist at the University of Bonn, developed a concept for fauna monitoring, while Nina Gnann from the University of Tübingen contributed the monitoring system of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive for macro-waste in the sea. I dealt with hydrological issues and coordinated the collaboration with volunteers and data collection on site.

From the very beginning, I found it very exciting to conduct application-oriented research on river systems and, in a broader sense, on the marine environment right on my doorstep. As the project progressed, I came to appreciate the transdisciplinary nature of the topic, and it was only through collaboration with the association that detailed data collection became possible and citizen science monitoring was established. To this day, I am fascinated by the high level of volunteer motivation behind the project, without which we would not have been able to collect data continuously for over three years.

In your study, you found that the extrapolation of your results exceeds previous estimates many times over. What was your reaction, and what does this mean for research and practice?

Personally, I was surprised that our extrapolations exceeded previous estimates. We were aware that we were using a different method than previous studies on macro-waste in the Rhine. Collecting macro-waste with the help of the trash trap and the volunteer team enables us to conduct continuous long-term surveys every two weeks in the Rhine in Cologne.

This unique method probably offers particular added value for research. Through continuous sampling, we were able to investigate the correlation between the amount of trash and the discharge behavior at the location of the trash trap, for example. The discharge data for our study period is also presented transparently, which we hope will ensure comparability with other studies. In addition, we have published a photo catalog with over 20,000 items from our study so that the categorization of the waste can be transparently traced. It would be great if our data could be used for models or for the future categorization of macro waste by AI.

In practice, it is certainly useful to know where the waste comes from according to our analysis. Focusing on how to reduce entry paths is certainly an important next step. Standardized measurement, limit values, or expanded responsibilities could also be considered in more detail.

How will the research continue?

It would be exciting to re-evaluate the data collected over the past three years. So far, the study has only included data from 16 months.

To gain more information about macro-waste in the Rhine, a comparable method could be applied at other locations along the river. Another waste trap is already planned upstream on the Rhine. The implementation of the waste evaluation is still open.

We are also interested in whether major regulations such as the Plastic Packaging Act are reflected in the waste we have examined over time. In general, we have actually found very few straws or plastic cutlery.



Dr. Hohmann Award 2025

Distinction for Dr. Arne Rieber by the Cologne Geographical Society

On 4 December 2025, the Dr. Hohmann Award was presented to Dr. Arne Rieber in Cologne by the Cologne Geographical Society. The award supports outstanding research projects by early-career geographers in North Rhine-Westphalia. Dr. Arne Rieber receives the funding for his research project “German Industrial Transformation: Geoeconomy and the Role of the State in the Chemical Industry”. In this project, he examines industrial policy and private-sector responses to a rapidly changing global economy. The focus lies on the interconnections between geostrategic and economic processes, as well as the increasing competitive pressure on the European chemical industry.

The Dr. Hohmann Award enables him to secure essential resources for his research and to independently advance his habilitation project.

International Paper Award 2025

On 5 November 2025, the International Paper Awards for outstanding publications by young scientists were awarded:

- **DOUWE VAN SCHIE** (Development Geography):

Addressing non-economic loss and damage: learning from autonomous responses in Bangladesh

doi.org/10.1007/s10584-024-03782-7

- **DR. FRANKLINE NDI** (Economic Geography):

Land acquisition, renewable energy development, and livelihood transformation in rural Kenya: The case of the Kipeto wind energy project

doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2024.103530

Science Pitch 2025

Nine young scientists presented their current research projects in a very short three-minute presentation as part of the annual science pitch on 5 November 2025:

• **RAVN HAID:**

Opportunities and Challenges of a Green Fertilizer Industry in Kenya

• **MARTIN HILLJEGERDES:**

Foundation Models and Cloud-Enabled Earth Observation for Rapid Flood Mapping and Impact Assessment

• **DR. ANN-KATHRIN VOLMER:**

Including the role of indigenous knowledge in water governance: The case study of Lago San Pablo, Ecuador

• **GABRIEL BOHN:**

Narrated futures. Narratives in Transformative Geographical Education

• **DR. RAINER BELL:**

Where did the water come from? The Kagbeni flood disaster 2023 (Mustang District, Nepal)

• **MOSTAK AL FARHAD:**

East Kolkata Wetlands: The Political Ecology of a Peri-urban Space

• **IKRAM ZANGANA:**

Inventory mapping of forest-covered landslides using Geographic Object-Based Image Analysis (GEOBIA)

• **DR. ARNE RIEBER:**

German Industrial Transformation: Industry Policy and the Chemical Industry

• **AGOSTINA ORTIZ:**

Permafrost in taluses and block slopes in the Dry Andes?- A geophysical overview

PROF. DR. ILSE VAN LIEMPT

RG Hörschelmann

SHAOQIANG MENG

RG Malenovsky

YOU XUAN

RG Malenovsky



»» PUBLICATIONS

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AMRA, R., ARAKI, S., GEISS, C., AND G. DAVIES (2025). *Error-reduced digital elevation models and high-resolution land cover roughness in mapping tsunami exposure for low elevation coastal zones.* Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment, 37, 101438.

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TO THE FORM



STUDY AND TEACHING

Dr. Juliane Dame appointed as interim professor for Urban and Regional Geography

Since the 2025/26 winter semester, Dr. Juliane Dame has been representing the Chair of Urban and Regional Research at the Institute of Geogra-

phy at the University of Bonn. She focuses on environmental governance and sustainability transformation and offers courses at the bachelor's and master's level. Previously, she worked as a research assistant in the Cultural Geography working group and led a junior research group at the interdisciplinary Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE). Since completing her doctorate at Heidelberg University, she has been conducting research on socio-ecological issues, particularly in South Asia and Latin America. She studied geography with minors in political science and soil science in Bonn and Santiago de Compostela. Her research focuses on resource conflicts and water governance, land use change, urbanization, and the geographies of food and climate adaptation. In November, she organized a transdisciplinary workshop on urban food transformation at the University of Bonn:

TO THE ARTICLE



DR. JONAS BIRKE IS THE NEW LECTURER IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Dr. Jonas Birke joined GIUB as a lecturer in human geography in October 2025. He studied geography and German language and literature at the University of Wuppertal, where he also earned his doctorate at the Chair of Social Geography. He then worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Koblenz in the anthropogeography working group.

His research focuses on urban and cultural geography, transformation research, and digital geographies. His current areas of interest are shrinking cities and urban transformation processes, for example in the context of vacant property revitalization, as well as the changing significance of cultural participation under the influence of digitization processes.

In teaching, he offers courses on quantitative methods as well as urban, cultural, and digital geographies. His practice-oriented approach combines theoretical content with application- and project-based formats. He also strives for close cooperation with human geography, geography didactics, and physical geography.

New ethical assessment form for students and researchers at the GIUB

By Dr. Anna Schliehe and Susanne Bell

As geographers, we face many common ethical issues in our own research as well as in supervising students' projects. However, comprehensive and accessible information that is custom-made for geographers has not been easily available. At the University of Bonn there is currently no ethics committee that is tailored directly to physical or social sciences and that could support researchers from these disciplines by providing advice and evaluating ethical aspects. This is why Susanne Bell and Anna Schliehe formed a mini working group to develop subject-specific guidelines and practical guidance for research planning and design that incorporate geographically informed scenarios based on a review of relevant literatures (e.g. Henn, Miggelbrink & Hörschelmann 2023) as well as consultation with many researchers and students at the GIUB over the past two years.

Our aim was to develop an ethical assessment that addresses ethical considerations and consciously reflect on the responsibility of science and the humanities in the research process and help us to weigh up potential risks caused by research, to avoid causing harm and to promote benefits for the integrity of science as a whole, for humans, for other living beings and for the environment. In developing this guide, we have considered the guiding principles of research at the University of Bonn¹ and the Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice by the German Research Association (DFG)². Good scientific work is based on the fundamental principles of transparency and honesty towards oneself and others. It requires compliance with the 'no-harm' principle, taking into account the particularities of the relevant subject area.

This form is designed to think about and communicate these principles of good scientific practice by asking about the project's framework and methods as well as positionality and potential conflicts of interest. It includes questions on local context which is particularly applicable for fieldwork in foreign countries and also asks to reflect on security concerns and strategies for mitigation. We have developed a section on potential risks for humans as well as environmental and ecosystem levels. The form further asks about preparation of information and consent procedures as well as storage and usage of the data that is produced, including the use of AI. We developed

two separate forms – one for students of BA and Master level which can be used in supervision and teaching and one for researcher who plan to publish their results. Currently this ethical assessment form is an informal tool designed to help you think through ethical aspects in a comprehensive way.

We hope you enjoy working with it and would welcome your feedback on how helpful you have found it in your own projects as well as in teaching.

For more information see:

¹ www.uni-bonn.de/en/research-and-teaching/quality-assurance-in-research-and-teaching/good-research-practice/gute-wissenschaftliche-praxis?set_language=en

² www.dfg.de/en/principles-dfg-funding/basics-and-principles-of-funding/good-scientific-practice

TO THE ARTICLE



Guidance on Ethics in Science

TO THE ARTICLE



Guidance on Ethics in
student research projects

NEWS FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

First-semester students in the 2025/26 winter semester

BSc Geography	134
Minor BA	11
Bachelor's degree in teaching	29
M.Ed. Geography	11
MSc Geography	78
Joint Master	22
KAVOMA	33

All degree programs (with the exception of M.Ed. Geography) had admission restrictions, i.e., a local NC. It has not yet been decided whether this will also be the case in the next winter semester. Due to the G8/G9 changeover

at many high schools, fewer first-year students are expected throughout North Rhine-Westphalia.

Introduction of the new BASIS/HISinOne

In May 2025, all student, exam, and enrollment data was migrated university-wide to a new campus management system (HISinOne), which will enable further tools in the future (keyword: e-file). After some initial difficulties, most things are now running (almost) smoothly. All users—from exam office staff, program managers, and teachers to students—are now getting used to the new BASIS (as it is still called).

MAKING HEALTH DISPARITIES VISIBLE

Students create health atlas for Bonn

How are health risks and resources distributed in Bonn? This question is addressed in the new Bonn Health Atlas, which was developed by GIUB students as part of a service learning project. In cooperation with the Gesundheitskollektiv Bonn e. V. (Bonn Health Collective), Apl. Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch and Dr. Anna Schoch-Baumann worked with students to develop a publicly accessible knowledge format that highlights health inequalities from a spatial perspective. The starting point is the realization that health in Bonn is distributed unevenly in social and spatial terms. Factors such as income, quality of housing, heat and noise pollution, and access to medical care and green spaces shape health opportunities, but are often beyond the control of those affected. The atlas links social and environmental aspects and creates a data basis for the discussion of health equity at the district level.

The General-Anzeiger Bonn reported on the project on 25 December 2025, emphasizing the differences between the north and south of Bonn. The Health Atlas is being continuously developed; the next edition is planned for the summer semester of 2026.

DOWNLOAD



Download Health Atlas

TO THE ARTICLE



Report in the Generalanzeiger(Paywall)

GENDERED IMPACTS OF SAND AND DUST STORMS

GIUB and UNU-EHS Students at UNCCD CRIC 23

On 3 December 2025, four master's students from the Geography of Environmental Risk and Human Security program (UNU-EHS/GIUB) presented their research findings at the 23rd session of the UNCCD Committee for Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 23) in Panama. As part of a student consulting project, they presented their study at the plenary session of the Gender Caucus.

The study, commissioned by the UNCCD and supervised by researchers from UNU-EHS, analyzed the gender-specific impacts of sand and dust storms (SDS) using case studies in Mali, Egypt, and Australia. Climate change, land degradation, and desertification increase the frequency and intensity of SDS and lead to unequal health, social, and economic consequences.

Gender roles shape exposure and vulnerability differently. Discussions emphasized the importance of gender-responsive adaptation, youth- and women-led land restoration, and the need to fill existing data gaps.



A group picture with the CRIC Chairperson, UNU-EHS and UNI-BONN students and, UNCCD Secretariats



NEWS

GEOGRAPHICAL HEALTH RESEARCH

GIUB and GeoHealth Centre sign cooperation agreement

On 7 January 2026, the long-standing collaboration between the GeoHealth Center at the Institute for Hygiene and Public Health (University Hospital Bonn) and the GIUB was formalized through a cooperation agreement. This further strengthens Bonn's position as a center for geographical health research. With PD Dr. Timo Falkenberg (GeoHealth Centre) and Apl. Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch (GIUB), two of the three spokespersons for the working group "Medical Geography and Geographical Health Research" are based at the University of Bonn. The agreement provides for the continuation of close cooperation in research and teaching, which has been significantly shaped by Prof. Dr. Thomas Kistemann over many years. With the change of leadership at the GeoHealth Centre to Timo Falkenberg, an institutional reorganization became necessary. Falkenberg has been a lecturer at the GIUB since 2016 and regularly supervises theses. Joint research focuses in particular on urban health and health in the Global South.

In the summer semester 2026, Timo Falkenberg, Carsten Butsch and Thomas Kistemann will jointly curate the lecture series of the Bonn Geographical Society (BGG) as part of the "...mittwochs im GIUB" program.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SCIENCE RALLY AROUND POPPELSDORF

As part of the Science Rally on 31 January 2026, the GIUB once again opened its doors to around 175 students aged 13 and above. This year, the station focused on the topic of water. Under the motto "Two times H₂O,"

the participants first examined water samples from various bodies of water in and around Bonn. Using simple chemical and physical analyses as well as microscopic observations, they drew conclusions about natural and anthropogenic influences in the catchment area based on the water quality they determined. At a second station, they changed scale and used the example of the surrounding area of the megacity of Kolkata to examine urban water cycles and the importance of wastewater as a basis for life. The stations illustrated how closely water is linked to ecological, social, and global issues. End of form

The GIUB would like to participate in the Science Rally again next year; topic suggestions and active participation from the institute are very welcome!



AI DAY AT GIUB

Potential and challenges of AI for research and teaching

For two years, GIUB and the "AI Working Group" have been looking at how artificial intelligence affects research and teaching in geography. The working group, made up of students, research assistants, and professors, put together a guide on using AI in teaching and encourages institute-wide discussion on the latest developments. With this in mind, AI Day took place on 26 November 2025. The focus was on the potential of AI-supported models for spatial analysis and forecasting, for example to predict extreme events such as forest fires, droughts, or floods. It became clear that long-term training

data in particular increases the predictive power of such models. At the same time, there was discussion about how AI is changing scientific work processes and raising new questions about research ethics. A key conclusion was that AI poses a considerable challenge for teaching. What is needed is thoughtful guidance for students, the further development of exam formats, and fair access to AI tools. AI Day provided important impulses for further discussion of AI in geography.

EXCURSION TO NORTH AFRICA – REUNION AFTER 40 YEARS

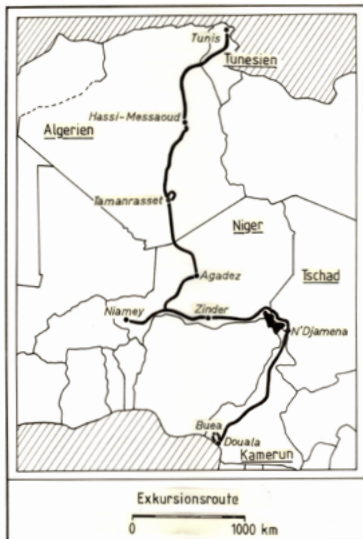
By Wolfgang Schmiedecken

In September 1985, a 60-day excursion set off from Bonn with the aim of exploring North Africa from the Tunisian Mediterranean coast to the rain-forest zone in Cameroon in two desert-ready fire trucks converted by GEO-Tours in Hamburg. The aim was to gain insights into climatic, landscape ecological, and agricultural geographical conditions and to study different landscape forms. The excursion, in which 17 students and two drivers (also geographers) took part, was led by Prof. Dr. Eberhard Mayer and AOR Wolfgang Schmiedecken, with occasional support from Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Lauer and Dr. Dieter Anhuf.

The excursion led from Bonn via Tunis, Tamanrasset, and N'Djamena to Douala, a north-south route that offered an ideal cross-section in terms of



objectives. The stops that were explored in depth included the steppe regions of southern Tunisia, the oases in the Tunisian-northern Algerian region, the sand and scree areas of the inner Sahara desert, the Hoggar Mountains, the Sahel zone in Niger, which was already overpopulated at that time, Lake Chad, which now consists only of pools, the Mandara Mountains in northern Cameroon, and finally the tropical rainforest with the 4,094-meter-high Mount Cameroon northwest of Douala, which receives over 10,000 mm of rainfall, the highest in Africa, and was climbed by four members of the expedition from Buea at the end of the trip.



In addition to the geographical view of the different landscape zones, the participating students were particularly struck by the unavoidable confrontation with the conditions in Africa, such as encounters with the people living there and, especially in the arid regions, their permanent lack of water, food, and medicine.

Forty years after the excursion, eleven students (one of the participants had already left at the time of the photo recording), the two drivers, and Wolfgang Schmiedecken were able to revisit these memories from October 3 to 5, 2025, at the Eifelhaus in Nettersheim. They

looked at photos taken at the time and watched the film made during the excursion, and some events that were no longer fresh in everyone's memory were discussed again and often reevaluated.

Overall, the participants enjoyed the meeting so much that they immediately agreed to meet again in 2026 – a date has yet to be set.



THE „GELBER SAAL“ AS A NEW SOCIAL ROOM AT GIUB

The „Gelber Saal“ was redesigned into a new social space during the summer semester break of 2025. With a new kitchenette, coffee machine, refrigerator, and flexibly configurable tables, the room now offers ideal conditions for lunch breaks, coffee breaks, or quick chats between appointments. Since the redesign, the social room has been actively used and has quickly become a central meeting place. The room thus contributes noticeably to more exchange and networking within the institute.

The social room is open to all GIUB employees daily from 10:00 a.m.

NEW RELAXATION AREA („RUHE-OASE“) AT THE GIUB LIBRARY

The library now has a new retreat for students, researchers, and staff: the quiet oasis. In the midst of academic work, the quiet oasis offers a deliberately designed space that allows for relaxation, balance, and inner peace. Soft colors, pleasant lighting, and quiet acoustics create an atmosphere that invites you to switch off—far away from the hectic library and everyday university life. The quiet oasis also houses current geography journals. The room is open to all GIUB department members and students during library opening hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and is located behind the small reading room in the library.





»»» UPCOMING EVENTS

DKG 2027 (GERMAN CONGRESS OF GEOGRAPHY) IN BONN

The Department of Geography (GIUB) will host the German Congress of Geography (DKG) in Bonn in 2027. The DKG 2027 will take place in close cooperation with the German Geographical Society (DGfG). While the DGfG will mainly be responsible for public relations, participant management, and financial planning, the GIUB will be responsible for the content, room management, and all on-site organization.

The venue is the Poppelsdorf Campus with its lecture hall center and the lecture halls and seminar rooms of the adjacent institutes. From 13 to 17 September 2027, a good 2,000 expected participants will have the opportunity to exchange ideas on the entire spectrum of geography. The Day of Applied Geography, the Day of School Geography, the Annual Meeting of the German Society for Geomorphology (DGGM), and the Young Congress for Geography (JKG) are integral parts of the major event. The opening ceremony will take place on 12 September 2027, at the Bonn Opera House.

The conference motto is “Critical Zones.” Complex processes, conflicts, and contradictions converge in critical zones. This is where crucial decisions for the future are made. Since ancient times, the term “zone” has been used to define and describe geographical areas. Today, the “critical zone” refers to the thin layer on the Earth’s surface where numerous vital processes take place. It has therefore become a key concept in Earth system science. The dramatic consequences of human environmental destruction are particularly evident here. Social upheavals can also be made tangible as critical zones in their spatiality. At the same time, however, critical zones are not only places of crisis. They can also become spaces of transformation in which power

relations are challenged and other forms of society become possible. With its focus, the DKG 2027 invites participants to engage with critical zones in research, education, and practical application.

A local committee was formed to organize the conference, taking into account all status groups and geographical disciplines:

- **Prof. Dr. Britta Klagge** (Chair)
- **Prof. Dr. Julian Klaus** (Physical Geography)
- **Prof. Dr. Nadine Marquardt** (Human Geography)
- **Prof. Dr. Eva Nöthen** (Geography Education)
- **Patrick Hainbuch** (student representative, JKG)
- **Apl. Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch** (organization)
- **Apl. Prof. Dr. Manfred Nutz** (organization, lead)
- **Prof. Dr. Lothar Schrott** (guest, DGGM)

The DKG 2027 is particularly focused on sustainable congress design. To this end, the GIUB is in close contact with the Vice-Rectorate for Sustainability and has already developed guidelines for sustainable event planning and coordinated them with the Rectorate.



BGG LECTURE SERIES IN THE SUMMER SEMESTER 2026

The BGG lecture series offers an insight into the various topics of geographical health research during the summer semester. The aim of the series is to provide an overview of the three major strands in geographical health research based on current issues:

- a) the spatial distribution of health and disease,
- b) issues relating to the spatial organisation of the health care systems, and
- c) current perspectives on health in space informed by social theory.

15.04.2026, 12:15 pm:

Dr. Timo Falkenberg, Prof. Dr. med. Thomas Kistemann (GeoHealth Centre), Apl. Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch (GIUB): Gesundheit, Krankheit und Raum – Gesundheitsgeographie in Bonn.

06.05.2026, 17:15 pm:

Dr. Christina Frank (RKI): Das Drittel Geographie in der Epidemiologie – Geographische Aspekte ausgewählter Infektionskrankheiten.

10.06.2026, 17:15 pm:

Dr. Sebastian Rauch (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg): Gesundheitssystemforschung (Arbeitstitel)

17.06.2026, 17:15 pm:

PD Dr. Klaus Geiselhart (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg): Lebendige Verflechtungen auf dem Planeten Erde

Already a member of the BGG?

The BGG regularly organizes lectures by specialist scientists on general, regional geographical, and ethnological topics, as well as excursions, and provides information about offers from other geographical societies. Membership is particularly aimed at professors, research assistants, and active and former students with an interest in professional exchange and current geographical issues. Membership can be purchased through the office (full members 15€, student members €6.50 per year).

Button for all information and registration → <https://www.geographie.uni-bonn.de/de/das-institut/bonner-geographische-gesellschaft/bonner-geographische-gesellschaft>

**INFORMATION &
REGISTRATION**



Summer semester 2026 program (preliminary version)

Date	Titel	Speaker
15.04.2026	BGG: Gesundheit, Krankheit und Raum – Gesundheitsgeographie in Bonn (Arbeitstitel)	Dr. Timo Falkenberg, Prof. Dr. med. Kistemann (GeoHealth Centre), Apl. Prof. Dr. Carsten Butsch (GIUB)
22.04.2026	Wildfire Effects on Stream Temperature and Flow in Humid Mountain Forest	Prof. Dr. Catalina Segura (Oregon State University, USA)
29.04.2026	Hydrology of Permafrost (working title)	Prof. Dr. Sean Carey (McMaster University, Canada)
06.05.2026	BGG: Das Drittel Geographie in der Epidemiologie – Geographische Aspekte ausgewählter Infektionskrankheiten	Dr. Christina Frank (RKI)
13.05.2026	Hybride Geographien kultureller Teilhabe- Erreichbarkeit, Sichtbarkeit, Ungleichheit?!	Dr. Jonas Birke (GIUB)
10.06.2026	BGG: Gesundheitssystemforschung (Arbeitstitel)	Dr. Sebastian Rauch (Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)
17.06.2026	BGG: Lebendige Verflechtungen auf dem Planeten Erde	PD Dr. Klaus Geiselhart (Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)
24.06.2026	-	-
01.07.2026	KUBB tournament	-
08.07.2026	-	-
15.07.2026	Lecture on former research work in Pakistan	Prof. Dr. Matthias Winiger (GIUB)
22.07.2026	Summer party with graduation ceremony	-

EXHIBITION “SPACE AND IDENTITY”

From 5 February to 5 March 2026

On 5 February 2026, students from the advanced art class at Tannenbusch High School visited GIUB to present their artwork at a vernissage. In their works, they explore the significance of space for their identity. They used old map material as the basis for (self-)portraits. At the festive exhibition

opening, each artist briefly described why they chose certain map sections and which aspects of identity the portrait depicted on them represents. The students were welcomed by Prof. Dr. Eva Nöthen and Prof. Dr. Kathrin Horschelmann. Following the opening ceremony, there was a lively exchange between students, GIUB institute members, teachers from Tannenbusch Gymnasium, and friends and families of the artists.

The exhibition is on display from 5 February to 5 March 2026, in the “Büdchen” in front of the GIUB.

19TH CAREER AND INTERNSHIP FAIR

On 10 June 2026 at the Geozentrum

The fair with exhibitors:

From 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the foyer of the Geozentrum and in Room VIII, you will have the opportunity to talk to employers from various companies and sectors. Students can also find out about other helpful services offered by the university and exciting external organizations.

The panel discussion:

From 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., a panel discussion will take place in Lecture Hall II of the Geozentrum. There, students will have the opportunity to meet interesting potential internship providers.

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GIUB staff receive newsletter automatically via internal mailing lists.

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