

Dear scholarship holders and alumni,
Dear partners and friends of KAAD,

The word "crisis mode" was recently voted Word of the Year 2023 by the German Language Society. Surrounded by crises, the state of emergency has become a permanent state, according to the jury. Whether wars and conflicts, climate change and other disasters, debt or education crises - crises seem to be omnipresent and the word reflects the diverse challenges of our time. Our network is affected by these in many different ways. And everywhere, whether in the Holy Land, Ukraine, Myanmar, Ethiopia or other countries around the world, our alumni and alumnae are working for change, dialogue and cohesion.



Advent devotes a great deal of attention to John, the Baptist at the River Jordan. He is commonly referred to as the "forerunner". The Bible shows that he wanted to be a witness to the one who was "greater" than him. His conviction is: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30) Jesus and John were closely connected, Jesus received the baptism in the Jordan from him: a sign of repentance, without which, in John's opinion, there is no salvation. The forerunner: a relative of the Lord, but not himself the Saviour for whom people were waiting and who was to come. He knew that he was at the service of him who was to come.

In a beautiful Advent sermon, Karl Rahner said that it is man's destiny to be a forerunner. "Are we not all forerunners? We travel the roads of our lives with difficulty. There is always something ahead of us that we have not yet caught up with; what we have caught up with always becomes a command to leave it behind and move on. Again and again, the end becomes a beginning; nowhere is a permanent place." And referring to the individual, it says: "Doesn't everyone march into their present with the feeling that the real and eternally valid is really coming, only to quickly realise that their present is turning into the past, that they are old-fashioned and outdated, that they no longer understand and are no longer understood?" That the truly new comes after him, that what moves him is temporary.

This destiny corresponds to the one who, like the Baptist, admits in Advent that he is not the Messiah; who does not overestimate himself to be the glorious and ultimate one, but takes on the "seemingly everyday little task" that "his own hour demands" (Rahner). Letting go - as John was able to let go. Accepting the task of the forerunner.

Is this also a good way to face the crisis mode?

I wish all of you the strength of the "forerunner" - and right now a joyful time filled with hope and light and a blessed Christmas.

Yours



P Dr Hans Langendörfer SJ
President of KAAD e.V.

EDUCATION AND NETWORKING EVENTS

Alumni seminar abroad in Indonesia on the topic of the planned new capital



In cooperation with our KAAD alumni in Indonesia and the KMKI alumni organisation KONTAK, a seminar was held from 20 to 22 October 2023 in Bogor, Indonesia, which dealt with the plans for the new capital of Indonesia, Ibu Kota Nusantara. The seminar was officially opened by KONTAK Chairwoman Celine Widjojo and our Secretary General, Dr Nora Kalbarczyk. Our Head of Asia Department, Dr Anselm Feldmann, gave a presentation on the German experience of the change of capital from

Bonn to Berlin and discussed the potential similarities and differences in the change of the seat of government from Jakarta to Nusantara. Thanks to the technical expertise of the speakers and the outstanding willingness of the one hundred participants to engage in discussion the seminar was a great success. KAAD also used the meeting to appoint the new partner committee in the evening, consisting of Dr Ignatius Iriyanto, Dr Triyanti, Dr Juliana Murniati, Father Simon Petrus Lily and Dr Antonius Wibowo. During the ceremonial appointment and farewell, Anselm Feldmann expressed his gratitude to the resigning member of the committee Hadi Kasim for his considerable commitment to KAAD and the partner committee in Indonesia. Once again, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all former and new partner committee members.

Alumni seminar in Peru on the topic of „Political Polarisation und Democracy“

From 19 to 21 October 2023, our Head of Latin America Department, Dr Thomas Krüggeler, accompanied a seminar at our partner university, the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), which dealt with "Political polarisation and democracy in Peru and Latin America". 42 participants addressed the urgent problem of the loss of a basic political consensus, which is increasingly jeopardising social cohesion and the basic elements of the democratic system, from various perspectives. In his lecture, political scientist Prof Dr.

David Sulmont (PUCP) pointed out the problem of distancing oneself from a centre that contains the fundamental principles of the political system, while historian and theologian Juan Miguel Espinoza Portocarrero (PUCP) soberly traced how polarisation also manifests itself in the church. The highlight of the event was a mass celebration with the Archbishop of Lima, Msgr Carlos G. Castillo Mattasoglio, in the chapel of the Catholic University. He advised the participants not to allow themselves to be politically influenced by either the right or the left, but to draw strength from their faith and to fulfil the mission of the Gospel as young academics in service to society. Carlos Castillo has been a member of the KAAD partner committee in Peru for many years and recognised in the large KAAD community on the PUCP campus the success of our long-standing commitment in Peru.



Deepening our partnership with Lebanon



Vertiefungsgespräch an der NDU:
Eliane Harfouche Khoury (Leiterin des Financial Aid Department), Nils Fischer, P. Dr. Bishara Khoury, Santra Sontowski, Prof. Dr. Ziad Fahed (v. l. n. r.)

From 28 September to 5 October, Santra Sontowski and Nils Fischer from the Middle East Department travelled to Lebanon to visit the KAAD community there. At Notre Dame University – Louaize (NDU), they met Father Bishara Khoury, President of NDU, to discuss with him and Prof Dr Ziad Fahed, member of the Lebanese partner committee and "KAAD Ambassador" at NDU, the continuation and in particular the deepening of the partnership with KAAD. Following this, thirty current and former KAAD scholarship holders came together for a seminar to discuss the topic of "Social, intercultural and interreligious action - personal experiences and challenges". A further visit to the Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) in Beirut served to agree on a 'Memorandum of Understanding' to formally confirm the almost ten-year

cooperation between the USJ and the KAAD. In addition, Prof Dr Roula Talhouk, member of the Lebanese partner committee, organised a workshop together with Nils Fischer for the eight scholarship holders and alumni of the Master's degree programme "Muslim-Christian Relations". In a discussion with the Maronite Auxiliary Bishop Boulos Rouhana, the topic was the current situation of Christians in Lebanon.

Meeting at our Jesuit partner university in Guatemala



Thirty former, current and future KAAD scholarship holders, all of whom have been and will be sponsored for the Master's programme in Social Pedagogy at our *Jesuit partner university Rafael Landívar* (URL), took part in an event on the challenges of social pedagogical work in Guatemala and Central America in Antigua Guatemala from 8 to 15 November 2023. KAAD alumnae *Melissa Angélica Lemus García* and *Dr Leonor Lucia González Quiñónez*, who were instrumental in setting up the degree programme, had prepared workshops in which the participants addressed questions such as: What are the biggest social challenges in my work environment? What should our (personal/ institutional) commitment be as a member of the international KAAD network? The answers identified were the defence of democracy and the fight against social inequality and organised corruption. The participants therefore saw their personal and institutional responsibility, not least as part of the KAAD network, in critically analysing the social reality as well as the political and historical education of the population in order to enable political participation through civil society, question official political discourses and create spaces for social transformation. The Master's degree programme at the URL plays a central role in this, and numerous representatives of the local church support this project. The third cohort of students will begin their studies in January 2024. KAAD has awarded ten scholarships to particularly qualified and committed employees of church institutions (*Caritas*, *Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala* (ODHAG), etc.). As part of its commitment to Guatemala, the *Global Church Department of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart* provides all the funding for these scholarships.

Visit to our partner country Ghana

At the end of November, *Miriam Rossmerkel*, Desk Officer of the KAAD Africa Department, travelled to Ghana. She was accompanied by *Prof Dr Uwe Hunger* and *Anja Chrzanowska* (*Fulda University of Applied Sciences*), who are currently evaluating KAAD's Sur-Place programme. In Kumasi, they visited the *Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology* (KNUST), where most of the KAAD Sur-Place scholarship holders in Ghana study and where many KAAD alumni teach. However, the main purpose of the trip was to attend the annual seminar of the *KAAD Association of Scholars in West Africa* (KASWA). Alumni and scholarship holders from all over Ghana travelled to the event, which this year focused on the topic of "Migration in the health sector". Presentations on migration movements among academics and on migration in and out of the healthcare sector in Ghana highlighted the enormous actuality and relevance of the topic for the country. After the end of the seminar, meetings were held at the *University of Development Studies* and with representatives of the *Diocese of Tamale* and the coordinator of the third-party scholarship programme of the *Diocese of Münster* for northern Ghana. At the end of the trip, the delegation was able to gain an insight into the highly topical project of KAAD alumnus *Dr Vincent Kyere* in Accra. He runs a recycling project at the world's largest informal rubbish dump for electronic waste, which prevents informal collectors from disposing of materials such as cables, batteries and plastic in a way that is harmful to health and environment. The project therefore provides essential and direct help to improve the lives of the people living there.



Jointly hosted webinar with Görres Society on the topic "When Christians belong to a minority..."



Rev. Prof Dr Mitri Raheb

On 12 October 2023, KAAD and *Görres Society* jointly hosted a webinar on the question of what challenges Christians face when they belong to a minority in a society. *Prof Dr Esther-Maria Guggenmos*, religious studies scholar at the *University of Lund*, Sweden, and former KAAD Head of Asia Department, used the example of Asia to highlight the importance of international networking for the activities of Christian minorities in various social areas, while *Rev Prof Dr Mitri Raheb* focused on the expulsion of Christians from Syria and then went on to talk about the war in the Gaza Strip and the massive impact on the Christians living there. KAAD alumnus *Prof Dr Babu Thaliath*, Professor of Philosophy at *Jawaharlal Nehru University* in New Delhi, focused on the huge ethnic and religious conflicts in India. KAAD Secretary General *Dr Nora Kalbarczyk* concluded the event by saying that global changes towards "new nationalisms" and the strong discrimination of minorities must be countered with a "culture of dialogue". We would like to thank *Görres Society* for this successful seminar and look forward to further joint events in the future.

PERSONNEL

Committees



Tanja Himer © Martin Steffen (Adveniat)

With the consent of the *German Bishops' Conference*, this year's KAAD General Assembly elected *Tanja Himer* as a representative of the *Episcopal organisation Adveniat e.V.* to the General Assembly. *Tanja Himer* has been Managing Director of Adveniat since February 2021 and has been in close and regular contact with KAAD ever since.



As a representative of university pastoral care and delegated by the *Federal Association of Catholic Churches at Universities e.V.* (formerly *Forum Hochschule und Kirche e.V.*), *Denise Polaczuk* was newly admitted to the KAAD General Assembly. *Denise Polaczuk* has been the International and Interreligious Affairs Officer of the *Catholic University Chaplaincy* at the *Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich - Leo 11* since February 2021 and has since worked closely with KAAD at various levels, in particular in the committee *International Advisory Forum* of the Federal Association. She succeeds *Sabine Gerhard*, who has been a member of the KAAD General Assembly as representative of the KHG at the *Technical University of Munich* and has pled for the interests of international students in Germany since 2016.



Andrea Pingel was newly elected to the General Assembly as a representative of the *Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK)*. Since October 2022, she has been Managing Director of Department 4 "Education, Culture, Media" in the General Secretariat of the ZdK and Managing Director of the *Committee of Catholic Organisations in Germany (AGKOD)*. She succeeds *Dr Kathrin Großmann*, who has taken over as head of the ZdK's Theology and Faith Department. As Managing Director of the *Christians and Muslims discussion group* of the ZdK, the cooperation between *Dr Kathrin Großmann* and the Secretary General of the KAAD will continue.

Change at the office in Bonn



Lukas Heinen, who has supported KAAD as a student assistant since January 2022, took over the secretariats of the Middle East and Latin America Departments this autumn after completing his degree in Political Science at *RWTH Aachen*. The Middle East secretariat became vacant after our colleague *Fernanda Hulverscheidt Fagundes* moved to the *Kindermissionswerk* on 1 September 2023. She had been working for KAAD since 2019.

Helen Meier, who previously worked in both public relations and the secretariat of the Latin America department, is now focussing entirely on public relations and text work. The German studies graduate has been working at KAAD since 2015.



Congratulations on thirty years of service

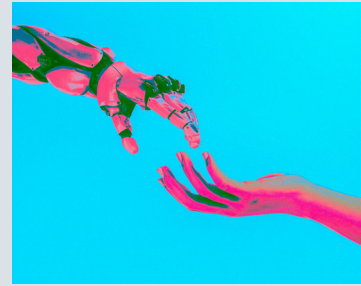


In October, *Ute Baumgart* celebrated her thirtieth anniversary of service. After completing her Master's degree in Ancient American Studies, Ethnology, Spanish and Historical Geography at the *Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University of Bonn*, *Ute Baumgart* joined KAAD in 1993. She has worked in almost every department at KAAD over the years, including as the first Assistant to the former Secretary General, as Head of Administration and currently as Accountant. She celebrated her anniversary at a hiking seminar, which she led herself, with 16 scholarship holders and seven colleagues, our President *P Dr Hans Langendörfer SJ* and our former Secretary General, *Dr Hermann Weber*. We would like to thank *Ute Baumgart* for her decades of commitment to young people, her extensive knowledge and her team spirit and look forward to working with her in the future!

OUTLOOK FOR THE YEAR 2024

KAAD Annual Academy 2024

Under the title “Artificial Intelligence: Intercultural Reflections from Science and the Church”, the Annual Academy 2024 aims to examine the ever-increasing role of AI in global discourses and addresses the fundamental questions about humanity, consciousness and identity associated with it. Against the backdrop of the structural changes brought about by automation, questions of inequality and social participation also arise. The impact of AI needs to be assessed, because while it is being used in the Global South in various areas such as healthcare, education and agriculture to improve services and make them more accessible, especially in rural areas, AI-supported systems can on the other hand lead to an increase in prejudices and inequalities as well as an already existing digital divide. The 37th Annual Academy of the KAAD, together with representatives from science, politics and the church from around fifty countries, would like to look at the (potential) impacts of AI from an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective and establish criteria for an ethical approach to AI.



KAAD International Academy 2024 in Kairo

Every year, the KAAD organises an academy in one of the partner regions, which is attended by scholarship holders, alumni and partners from the region as well as guests from other regions and countries. In October 2024, the academy will take place in Egypt and will focus on ethical approaches to public health in the Middle East.

Prize Winner 2024 of the KAAD Foundation Peter Hünemann 2024



In 2024, *Prof. Dr. Oleh Turiy* from Ukraine will be awarded the 13th KAAD Foundation Peter Hünemann Prize for his academic and ecclesiastical commitment to his home country. The renowned church historian holds the Chair of Church History at the *Ukrainian Catholic University* in Lviv and is its Vice-Rector for External Relations. As a representative of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, he is involved in academic research into church history and ecumenical dialogue, and also stands for a democratic Ukraine. He has been a reliable partner for KAAD in Ukraine for more than twenty years.

Hermann Weber-Scholarship 2024

This year's KAAD Hermann Weber Scholarship is awarded to *Willis Awandu* from Kenya for his outstanding academic commitment to his home country. After *Willis* was initially awarded a KAAD scholarship to study for a Master's degree in Water Resources Engineering and Management at the *University of Stuttgart*, he returned to Kenya to work for a water engineering company before becoming a lecturer at the state-run *Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology* in Kakamega. Since 2022, *Willis* has been pursuing a PhD at the *Technical University of Darmstadt* on integrated river power generation and water treatment systems for developing countries. He is an active member of our *KAAD Association of Scholars in East Africa* and the *KASEA Western Kenya Group*. He has worked hard for his academic success – despite unfavourable starting conditions – through his enthusiasm, high motivation and technical expertise. Congratulations, dear *Willis*!

