

Laudatio auf die Preisträgerin 2021 der KAAD-Stiftung Peter Hünemann, Constansia Atieno Mumma-Martinon aus Kenia, Preisverleihung am Freitag, 23. April 2021

The Award of the "KAAD Foundation Peter Hünemann" is this year given for the tenth time. For the first time it is awarded to a practitioner and academician in the field of Peace- and Conflict Studies – an area which is at the very core of KAAD as a global community with an ethos of world-wide solidarity.

Our laureate this year is Dr. Constansia Atieno Mumma-Martinon from Kenya. It might interest you, dear participants in this ceremony, what her name tells us. After her Christian name Constansia comes a traditional name of her cultural heritage (we are talking a lot about identities these days, also within KAAD and within this Jahresakademie): Atieno. Atieno indicates that she is female and that she was born in the night. Her surname Mumma-Martinon again indicates her cultural heritage hyphenated with the French name Martinon because she is married to Francois Martinon, a Frenchman who shares with her the love for the French language and for languages in General – which again connects with the topic of this Jahresakademie. When I met Connie for the first time in 2007, it was on the campus of Hekima College, the Philosophy School of the Jesuits in Sub-Sahara Africa. I was surprised to find her lecturing there and she quickly explained that she is the only female lecturer there and the only one who is not a Jesuit (I wasn't surprised about the latter since the Jesuits don't have any female members unfortunately). The reason why she was teaching there was that the Jesuits had started a special institute at Hekima College, which specialized in Peace, Diplomacy, Conflict Studies. It is now well established and the KAAD network in East Africa has several times cooperated with it. So I realized: Connie is a very passionate Peace- and Conflict Researcher and Lecturer.

But something can be said about her in the wider sense even: Connie is a very passionate Teacher! She has stressed many times that she loves teaching and wherever she did, she was quickly known as taking great care of her students in the sense of a professional lecturer but also a personal mentor. Her long career path has brought her to the University of Nairobi, where she is now a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and where she has taken good care of many Masters and PhD students.

Another thing that struck me about Connie: The KAAD-network in Kenya several times held seminars at a conference centre run by religious sisters. The nuns working and living there belong to the same congregation that runs Connie's High School (where she received her secondary education). Every single nun there knows Connie and when she gets there it is an enormous hello and how nice to see you. The connection to these women is a vivid sign how strongly and deeply influenced Connie is by her education and upbringing in Catholic schools. Especially the Lwak Girls High School plays a very important role in her life - operated by those sisters. Connie later returned for several years as a teacher before she started her academic career in higher education.

Shortly after my first meeting with Connie in Nairobi, Kenya faced one of its most difficult moments in history: The so-called "Post Election Violence" in Kenya where anybody in Kenya and anyone who knows Kenya went through a deep shock and looked into an abyss. After the elections at the end of 2007, ethnic clashes broke out which were more vicious and malicious than ever before since the country gained its independence. For Connie and her family, this was a trying moment since it would

have been quite easy to leave all this trouble and trauma behind. They could have gone to France, the home of Connie's husband.

What I got from you during that time, dear Connie was a sense of what we call in German "jetzt erst recht". Even more than before your expertise was needed at exactly this place, exactly this society that you know so well and which you belong to as a citizen, Christian, researcher and practitioner. Even more than before you got involved in precisely this problem and played an important role exactly here. You made this topic your specialty in conferences and research projects. As an author and co-author, you wrote two monographs on conflict and reconciliation and several book chapters, articles and other publications. You decided to stay in Kenya and your involvement into academic and practical peace work unfolded ever more and more.

- Connie worked with the military: in a Peace Support Training Center in Nairobi she trained UN blue helmets and AU peacekeepers. On behalf of the UN she started research projects on ethnicity and conflict in other African countries (here her knowledge of French also played an essential role, which is rare among Kenyans). The main aim of her work here was to create curricula for conflict prevention.
- Connie worked with the private sector: For the oil company Total she carried out environmental impact studies for new mining areas (in the context of a huge new infrastructure and energy concept for northern Kenya in connection with southern Sudan and Ethiopia). This work tied in with the topic she had worked on during her master studies, which focused on water, land and environmental conflicts.
- Connie worked for the Kenya Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She did the academic preparations for the consultation processes of the commission and later compiled a paper as a recommendation to the Kenyan government.
- First and foremost, Connie sees herself as the teacher at University with a mission to convey to her students what Peace, Truth and Reconciliation mean.

Finally I would like to say a few words about Connie's connection to KAAD: She mentioned many times that without the two scholarships she would not have been able to follow her professional and personal path. The path from being a teacher in primary and secondary schools to that multi-talented peace academician with all the mentioned roles, tasks and activities. The time of the doctoral studies in Leipzig (she always vividly talks of her "Doktorvater" Prof. Ulf Engel) was quite turbulent because it was during this time that she met her French husband and gave birth to her son Alain-John. When he was born, she was still in the middle of her doctorate and had to ask KAAD for some individual solutions before she could achieve her goal. She also relied heavily on the KAAD community in dealing with everyday life: At that time, several other KAAD scholarships were studying in Leipzig and Connie often tells of how she involved them in caring for her baby in various ways and that without this help she would hardly have achieved her goal. A very nice example of how the KAAD family spirit works: community and solidarity in a very practical sense.

Her connection with KAAD is very strong up to today. She is not only Vice-Chair of the KAAD Partner Committee in Nairobi but also a committed speaker and participant in events of KASEA, the East African KAAD network. I remember how passionate she got during the KAAD conference in Tamale, Northern Ghana 2015, when we had an encounter with a major local conflict of "chieftaincy". We met the Yaa Naa, disputed ruler of the Kingdom of Dagbon. Connie was right in her element and this is how we yearn to see her for many more years to come. You are an asset to the KAAD community, dear Connie! Congratulations for being the laureate of the Award of the KAAD Foundation Peter Hünemann 2021.