

Joint Skills

Enhancement Program

Summer Semester 2023

The joint interdisciplinary and intercultural program
for master's-level students from the two universities

University of Ghana—University of Bonn

A Stable Partnership Founded on Continuity

The University of Bonn and the University of Ghana are linked by a strategic partnership that goes back many years and is built on continuity and stability. Its consistency is highlighted by the long-term research projects and regular dialogue generated by official visits and doctoral programs.

In 2022, we decided to open up this partnership to early-career academics too and make them part of the network. For instance, we launched our virtual study hall, where master's students from both universities learn together and discuss their work with one another. So positive and encouraging was the feedback we received from participants and trainers following their time together that we repeated the program in the 2023 summer semester.

Something that began as an attempt to negotiate the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic became an increasingly firm fixture on our calendars. It is a format for learning that facilitates intercultural exchange and allows people to acquire key skills together despite living on different continents.

Factoring different academic calendars, course schedules and examination periods into the overall timetable was a challenge, and trainers and participants had to battle shaky Internet connections at times. Nevertheless, they all stuck together as a study group for the entire summer semester, because the shared experience was important to them and they wanted to learn from and with one another. This is hardly surprising if one considers the wealth of cultural and academic experience that was involved, with 13 students from Ghana, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Nigeria and Trinidad taking part.

The feedback we have received from participants is a delight to read. At the same time, it spurs us on to enable more early-career academics to share these positive experiences.

Let us therefore draw motivation from this as we tackle the planning for 2024 and keep on making the program better and better. The continuity underpinning our partnership will give us a firm foundation to do just that.

We hope you enjoy reading this brochure.

Edward Nketiah-Amponsah

University of Ghana

Scientific Coordinator



Christine Müller

University of Bonn

Head of Section International Students and Study Programs



Two Continents, One Study Hall

Against the backdrop of the current global challenges, global education has undergone profound transformation. As we navigate the pandemic reality of ongoing travel restrictions, questions on how to facilitate meaningful student exchange loom large.

In this dynamic context, lecturers are taking advantage of the opportunities presented by digitalization to break new ground in teaching. Concepts like “Blended Learning,” “Online Lectures,” “Hybrid Courses,” and the novel approach of “Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)” stand testament to the flexibility of the academic community, offering students enriching educational experiences despite the constraints.

Crucial to the success of these concepts is the establishment of stable partnerships, such as the one the University of Ghana and the University of Bonn maintain. Building upon this foundation, in 2022 the “Joint Skills Enhancement Program” was introduced, marking a significant step further in the cooperation of the two institutions. Led by Professor Edward Nketiah-Amponsah from the University of Ghana and coordinated by Christine Müller and Joana Bürger-John from the University of Bonn, the program aims to provide master’s students with targeted training in various skills.

The participants’ response to the program has been overwhelming, underscoring the collaborative learning experience. While challenges persist, the commitment to tackle them with creativity, determination, and a global perspective, remains equally strong.

The Joint Skills Enhancement Program – the Basics in Brief

- **Target group:** master’s students, ideally in the second half of their degree program
- **Academic disciplines:** all disciplines
- **Language of instruction:** English

The program offers:

- Access to an exclusive qualification program with no enrollment fee
- Workshops conducted exclusively in English
- Academic competency and soft skill enhancement
- Experienced, highly qualified trainers
- Africa & Europe: Expanding students’ learning radius from home base
- A change of perspective to cultivate intercultural competency
- Important international networking at an early academic stage

The Lecturers



Professor Felix Ankomah Asante



Gordon Nanninga Fliess



Professor Margaret Ivy Gyan (formerly Amoakohene)



Dr. Jan Schmidt



Berit Stoppa

**University
of Ghana**

**University
of Bonn**

Program contents:

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXCHANGE

Course instructor: Berit Stoppa,
May 26, June 9, October 6

The training on intercultural awareness and exchange offered basic knowledge of cultural dimensions and intercultural communication as well as opportunities to get to know fellow Ghanaian/German students and each other's academic everyday life by a mix of inputs, individual and group work, discussions, and reflection activities.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Course instructor: Dr. Jan Schmidt,
August 18, 25, September 8, 22

The course introduced basic tools, e.g. milestones, phases, gantt diagrams and resources. The conception, planning and execution of projects were discussed – the link to practice was always created. Participants learned e.g. to set goals, to derive realistic tasks and to deal with project risks.

TASK AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Course instructor: Dr. Jan Schmidt,
June 2, 16

The course addressed the practical dimensions of handling different projects and jobs: How to plan limited time and e.g. prioritize tasks especially in a context where different fields need to be coordinated.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Course instructor: Prof. Margaret Ivy Gyan
(formerly Amoakohene)

The course taught participants to understand the fundamental principles underpinning various aspects of communication: personal, interpersonal, group (business, organisational) and mass communication. It addressed the processes of communication and skills needed for effective communication.

PROPOSAL WRITING/GRANTSMANSHIP

Course instructor: Prof. Felix A. Asante,
July 21, 28

This workshop offered insight into how young researchers could develop workable proposals for post-graduate studies especially at the PhD level as well as for funding purposes. Participants were introduced to the key steps in writing effective and fundable proposals including, writing a compelling problem statement and preparation of a simple line-item budget.

ARGUMENTATION IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

Course instructor: Gordon N. Fließ,
September 1, 15, 29

The course provided participants with all the techniques they need to know in order to write precise and convincing scientific texts. The course introduced basic concepts of reasoning and logic: validity and soundness of arguments, deductive and inductive reasoning, common types of logical inferences. The participants learned useful techniques for convincing argumentation in scientific texts.

Selected participants

Adjoa Amponfi

Nuclear and Radiochemistry

Oluwatimilehin Emmanuel Adegbaju

Seed Science and Technology

Julian Nick Bauer

Crop Science

Michael Adu-Gyamfi

Economics

Stephen Baidoo

History

Diane Korkor Arhin

Developmental Psychology

Mary Magdalene Eliason

Economics

Josbert Abaasah Ayambire

Global Health Risk Management & Hygiene Policies

Francis Mirara

Seed Science and Technology

Harleen Kaur

Economics

Anzhelika Yatsenko

Economics

Andrew Jodhan

Dependency and Slavery Studies

Judith Kawikya Musa

Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security

Diane Korkor Arhin



Subject of study

Developmental Psychology

Duration of study

4 semester

Personal Inspiration

Live life one day at a time.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

When I received the acceptance email for the Joint Skills Enhancement Program, I was thrilled and somewhat anxious about the program. Although I had an idea of the content of the program, I kept wondering how the program would turn out to be, especially, since it involved two universities in two different countries. I must say that, from the first session, I realized that it was worth it applying for the program. It was a privilege having experts as instructors and brilliant people as colleagues in this program.

Before the program began, I anticipated that the teaching approach would be the typical lecture approach. But the learning atmosphere was different, with the sessions being very interactive; everyone could express their views without feeling intimidated. The sessions were also enlightening; there was always something new to know or learn.

Another thing I found impressive about this program is how applicable the content is. For instance, the knowledge I acquired from the sessions in argumentation in scientific writing guided me in fine-tuning my thesis. I also believe that the insight I've had from the project management and grantsmanship sessions is very valuable as I pursue a career in research. My best memory of the program was our last session where we had a virtual lunch together.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

From my perspective, I believe the core of this program was the intercultural exchange. It wasn't just Ghanaian and German students coming on board; students from other countries aside the two countries participated, and I was impressed with that. The intercultural aspect provided the opportunity to learn from people with different cultural backgrounds.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- One thing I appreciate about this program is the way the instructors were concerned that every participant understood what was being taught. We (participants) were given the time and space to have any questions addressed. The valuable lesson I learnt from this is that, in the research space, it's not just about discovering things and making these discoveries known. I should also focus on getting my audience to understand and appreciate what I'm making known to them.
- I would definitely recommend this program to anyone who is eligible because there are insightful things to learn in this program, regardless of one's field of study. Once you're selected to participate in this program, all you need is the willingness to learn and connect with people from different cultural backgrounds and academic fields.

University of Ghana

Data Center

Dean's Office

Cafeteria

Library

International Office

University administration

Lecture hall

Student advisory Service

Campus

Student Services

Crop Science

University of Bonn

Institute

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

I expected to mainly meet Ghanaian and German students and that we would mainly talk about the workshops.

The program then had participants from all around the world, which allowed for a real and interesting international exchange. I really liked the atmosphere and how we got together every week. The ideas from the course come in handy in many different situations – sometimes for university projects, but also in other moments.

I have really good memories regarding the funny discussions via Zoom and the Zoom Chat. I am sometimes able to apply ideas from the project management workshops in my study context.

Motto

Happiness through gratitude.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I have been to East Africa already before, so I expected some stereotypes regarding punctuality. I wasn't aware that food is such a core cultural part of the Ghanaian culture, it was great to see the students getting so enthusiastic about this topic.

Yes, the intercultural aspect enriched the program immensely, especially also with the other internationals from South America and Asia.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I think I enjoyed the workshops on intercultural competence the most, because I think it is often not taught enough. I also learned new ways of working in and with projects, which I think can always be helpful.
- I would recommend anyone who likes to broaden their horizon to sign up. I was really happy that I got the chance to participate in the program.

Julian Nick Bauer



Subject of study

Crop Science

Number of semesters

4 semester

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

When I first saw the advertisement for the program, I was impressed by the testimonials of previous participants. Reading through the outlined contents of the summer school sparked an interest in me to submit my application for the Joint Skills Enhancement Program. Luckily enough, I was shortlisted for the summer school.

My expectations for the program were high, and I am pleased to say that they were fully met throughout the course of the summer school. The quality of the facilitators, learning materials, and lesson structure were all particularly impressive. The planning was truly superb.

Personally, I was most intrigued by the “Project Management” and “Argumentation in Scientific Writing” learning sessions of the program. They provided me with an opportunity to learn new things through hands-on practical and interactive sessions which have really deepened my knowledge of these subjects for my immediate, continuous, and future use.



Oluwatimilehin Emmanuel Adegbaju

Subject of study
Seed Science and Technology

Duration of study
4 semester

Personal Inspiration
“If you are too big to serve, you are too small to lead”

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I have always believed that each country has its own uniqueness. This includes the way things are done, the words people use, attitudes, cultural practices, and more. During the intercultural exchange program, I had the opportunity to experience these differences firsthand due to the diverse group of participants. It was fascinating to hear my colleagues share how things are done in their respective communities and countries, the types of food they eat, societal norms, and more.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I learned effective communication and teamwork, especially in a multicultural setting. It was a much more fun, interesting way to learn.
- Definitely, I would recommend it to others. To future participants, I recommend to be open-minded, not to be rigid, and ready to unlearn, learn and relearn.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

The first and foremost expectation from the summer school was learning to manage my time efficiently. I wanted to gain practical skills in project management and effective communication. So I started the program with a mix of excitement and curiosity. As the program unfolded, my initial understanding of time and project management naturally broadened and I got to also learn and appreciate cross-cultural awareness deeply. This development added a valuable dimension to my learning journey.

The interactive sessions by the trainers and engagement with fellow participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, especially in the Zoom breakout sessions, motivated me to stay committed throughout the program.

My best memories include the virtual lunch we had at the end of the program and working on the group task of project management where we applied the skills learnt in the workshop. It was fun to collaborate in an environment involving diverse perspectives, contributing to a successful outcome.

My experience in 3 words: beautiful, enriching, insightful!

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I never had the chance to interact with people from Ghana or Africa before the summer school. Initially I felt they might be reserved or less open to other people, but they were incredibly open-minded, collaborative, super cool and shared their perspectives from time-to-time. Through meaningful discussions with people from Ghana as well as from Germany, my various preconceived notions about their cultures were dispelled. We were a fortunate group of various nationalities who were able to learn about different cultural practices, languages, popular foods despite meeting online. I was surprised to know how certain words/phrases mean something different in other cultures around the world. Mensa in Germany means canteen, but Mensah in Ghana is the name of the third born male in the family.

The intercultural training helped us share our thoughts, perspectives and tastes. Although we all were raised very differently, we had similar point of views on many things.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- What I take away from this program is the multifaceted enrichment that extends beyond academic learning. In addition to the valuable skills, the program gave me a chance to make some really good friends and connect with people from different parts of the world. I was able to broaden my worldview and improve my soft skills.
- The trainers and facilitators are passionate, committed and conduct the workshops in an exciting way. Don't hesitate to give yourself a chance or express your views.



Harleen Kaur

Subject of study
Economics

Number of semesters
2 semester

Seed Science and Technology

Global Health

Agricultural Sciences

Oil and Gas Law

University of Ghana

Globalization and Development

Management & Administration

Geography

Philosophy

Personal Inspiration
Sabar and Shukar (Patience and Gratitude)

University of Bonn

Psychology

Economics

Nutrition Science

Anzhelika Yatsenko



Subject of study
Economics

Number of semesters
5 semester

Personal Inspiration
'One can learn what they dislike only by trying'

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

Prior to joining the program, I had anticipated greater similarities in perspectives between us and students from Ghana. However, my experience has illuminated the stark realization that what I might consider 'the norm' does not necessarily hold true for others. Additionally, I hadn't foreseen the program being as structured as traditional classes, and I had hoped for more open discussions with individuals possessing open-minded viewpoints.

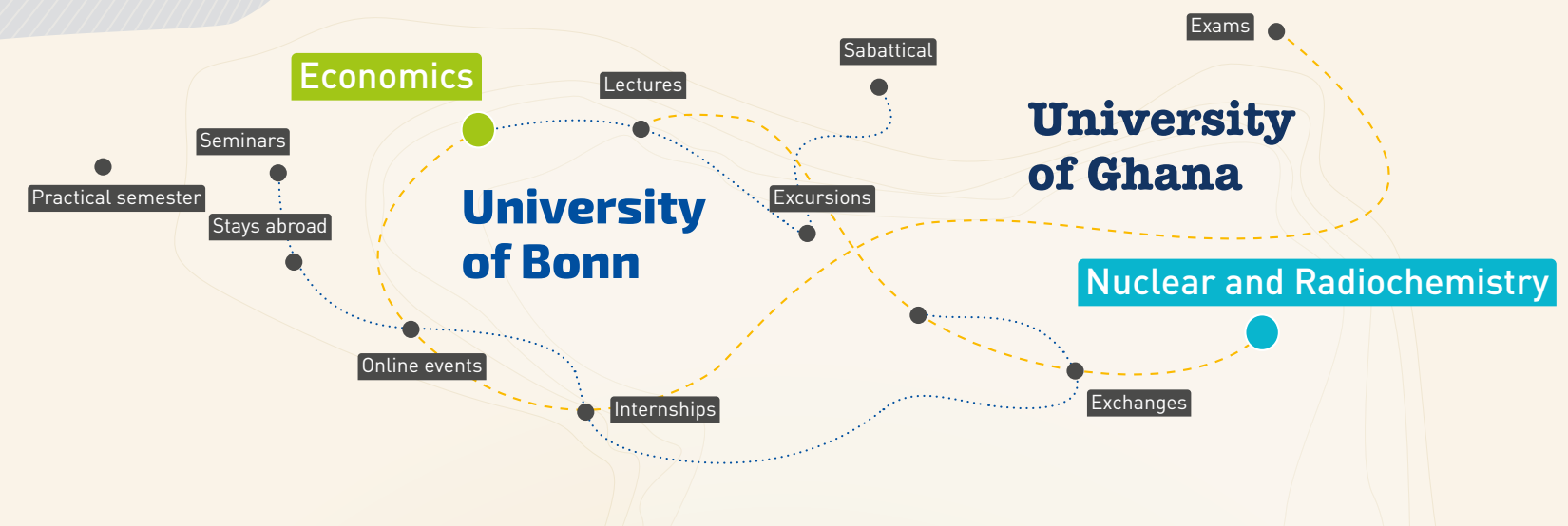
This journey has proven to be quite intriguing as it underscored the nuanced distinctions between those who relocate internationally and those who choose to stay in their home country. As a foreign participant, it has been a rare opportunity to witness and appreciate these differences, shedding light on the diverse perspectives that exist.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

Before joining the program, I had heard that many educated people from West African countries are bitter and often perceive neo-colonialist undertones, readily reminding others of this perspective. Some cautioned me that if I were to visit Ghana, I might be labeled 'white' and potentially face different attitudes. However, while I did encounter such conversations within a group, I found that, overall, people were remarkably friendly and genuinely eager to share their culture and cuisine without any prejudice.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- This experience has taught me the importance of avoiding assumptions. I've come to realize that it's beneficial to approach everything with genuine interest and to take the time to explain, even when I may assume certain aspects are common knowledge. Clear communication and a willingness to share perspectives contribute significantly to fostering understanding and avoiding misunderstandings.
- I would highly recommend others to allocate sufficient time for reflection on the content of classes.



HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

Before the start of the Program, I had the expectations of gaining insights into how to better develop my soft skills and get to network with other students across continents.

I was able to apply the task and time management skills learned from the program in my study, and the internship component of my awarded scholarship. I used the learned tips in effectively handling my school assignments, lectures and research work and whilst completing assigned tasks at work. I think overall the program did good to deliver the various lectures and interactions at everyone's convenience; the facilitators did well to keep students interested in the program through to the end.

My best memory of the program is the group work, where we get to discuss ideas and have fun doing so. In four words, the program was: an interesting bildend experience.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

My stereotype about Germany was that people from there lacked the sense of humor, are always grumpy and looking offended for no reason.

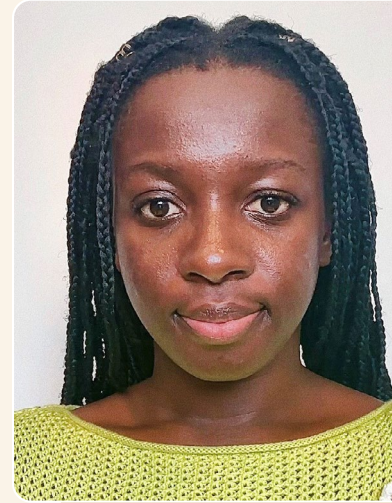
It turned out they are really nice people, smile a lot and have a great sense of humor.

Even though there were no actual visits, I think the shared verbal experience and laughs made it worthwhile. I got to learn a lot about the cultures of the other participants.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- The most valuable thing I learned was that when it comes to task and time management, the important things to take into consideration include breaking larger tasks into smaller, more defined ones, and being disciplined about your time. This is very important for my career and life because I find myself multitasking at all times, and the ability to complete tasks on time is something I need to master.
- Participate and form networks with other participants. It will greatly help you in the future.

Personal Inspiration
Life is a continuous learning process; you learn something new every day.



Adjoa Amponfi

Subject of study
Nuclear and Radiochemistry

Duration of study
1 semester

Michael Adu-Gyamfi



HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

Getting to hear about the Joint Skills Enhancement Program was a joy for me and I could not hold back to apply immediately. This is because, having looked at the topics and faculty/instructors going to handle them, I believed I was going to learn the soft skills and resources needed to become effective and efficient in the academic field.

Especially the communication, time management, and proposal writing parts of the program were the most helpful lessons for me, they really improved my presentation skills and efficiency. I was greatly motivated to apply the time management and planning input and create structure for myself considering the stress of the many things at stake. In addition, as I aspire to be a lecturer, I must mention the presentation: I have achieved accolades on the one I gave on "Count Data Analysis" the first week in November.

My best memory will be the Argumentation in Scientific Writing lessons. These were in fact very intellectually challenging, especially carving and studying the logical sequence of sentences. This was the time when some colleagues could formulate nice sentences only to be informed it was a fallacy...interesting.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

This part of the program was one of the best. We had students from about 7 or more countries. The native Ghanaians and Dutch were only a few, but in two different countries. I got to know the many similarities between our cultures and even interests.... it was funny!

Some proverbs and quotes are the same in our different languages and mean the same too. I actually thought some were unique to Ghanaian.

This intercultural bit of the program enriched it and helped us manage and appreciate some of the lessons better, such as Effective Communication. Considering our diverse cultures and ideologies, coming to a consensus and learning about other points of view was great. It helps understanding each other and building bridges because we may look different, act different, but are one people.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- The length of the program can cause one to lose commitment as time goes on, but my take is that you have no idea what the next lessons have to offer. Missing a lesson is not worth it as you will need even more time to catch up later. This is why I joined all lessons. Lessons to gain these skills are usually very expensive, and by offering them at no cost and by very smart persons, you can't but be committed.
- I will always recommend the Joint Skills Enhancement Program to anyone interested. Not only do you get to learn, but you also meet others and find out about their culture. For me, this was the first time I was in a class with "white" students, and also an online class where we saw each other across two continents. It was a really interesting period.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

I am very happy to have been part of this amazing program. Before the program, I was struggling to fit in from a cultural perspective as much as I had committed myself to be a global citizen. I struggled to present myself well in an academic setting. I had also been thinking of how I can start a project and successfully manage it to the end. This and other reasons made me become interested in applying for the program. I was extremely excited when I knew I was officially a participant.

The structure of the program was arranged in a way that it synced with my academic calendar, a time when I was doing my class assignments and starting little personal projects that were inspired by the ideas I picked from the program. In addition, the intercultural skills helped me with international events that I got to participate in both online and on-site in Germany. One key highlight was the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Youth Hub Event by the UNFCCC 2023 where I had to interact with other youths from across the world. I feel better placed for today's world in terms of embracing diversity of ideas, cultures, interests, thoughts and traditions.

Looking back right now after the program, I remember the little chit chats and exchanges on how we live and do things in our different countries and societies we grew up in. I found it super exciting and informative to be part of the program. I aspire to be capable of applying for grants, start and finish projects, and be sound in my scientific arguments, something that is a great milestone in my career life. Many thanks.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I always thought that Ghana is full of respect for other people, a reason many Ghanaians keep using the word "please" in their daily communication. This stereotype was proved true as my fellow Ghanaian participants explained why they do that. I appreciated the uniqueness of each of our thoughts, ideas and pre-conceptions. We all learnt from each other, and this made the program so rich and beautiful.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I have the power to do what I dream of and make it a reality, not only for myself, but also for the world around me. I am in charge of what I let the world know, what I do and make an opportunity out of my storyline. I also feel inspired to chase my dream PhD now and inspire a diverse community of people across the world.
- Dear participants, this is the most exciting program an ambitious graduate student can have. You learn, unlearn and relearn. You laugh. You explore. You exchange. You inspire and let yourself be inspired. You wow others many times. And most importantly, you become more professional.
- Stay open-minded and create enough space to take home as much as you can because you will surely use it out here as you pursue your life goals.

Personal Inspiration

The Holy Bible in Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Subject of study

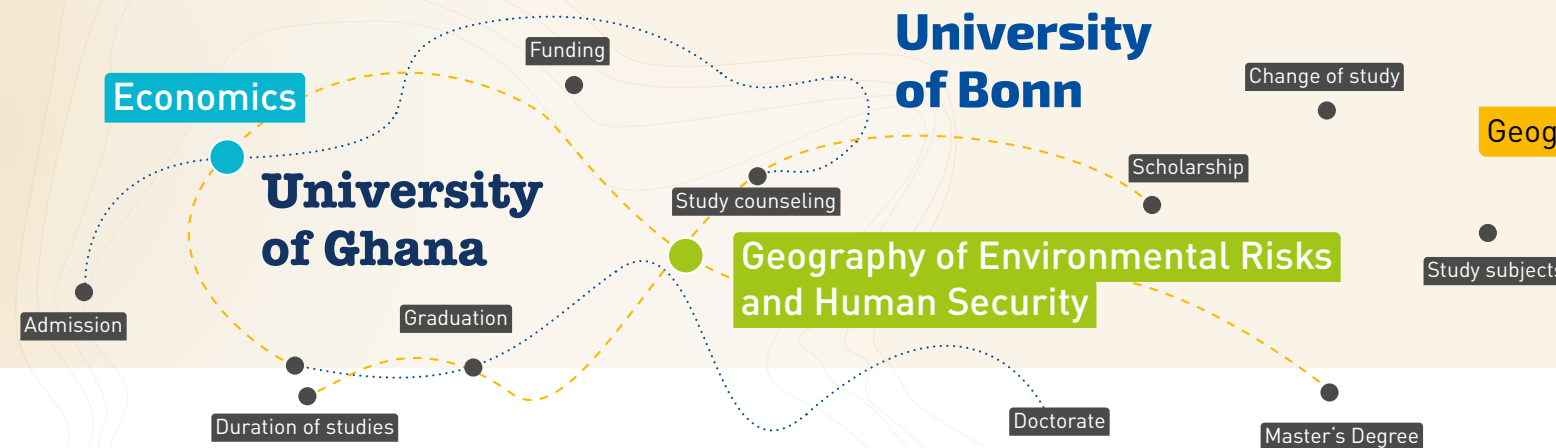
Economics

Number of semesters

4 semester

Personal Inspiration

Not many can get to the top, yet be part of the few!



Judith Kawikya Musa



Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security

Subject of study

Duration of study

4 semester

Andrew Jodhan



Subject of study
Dependency and Slavery Studies

Duration of study
3 semester

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

I was quite excited about the entire notion of the program, the opportunity to interact with students from the University of Ghana. I expected that it would be culturally enlightening, especially in an academic setting.

In my field of studies, we believe that there is no singular reality, that reality is plural, and depending on your cultural background you may have a different perspective on a topic. We had cultural norm exercises where we discussed the cultural responses to topics. I found this interesting, and it helped me to understand cultural and academic differences between Ghana and Bonn. It turns out that we are not so different.

My best memory of the program was when one of the students referred to running late as "Ghana man time". Essentially it means that they run late. As a Trinidadian, we have a similar concept called "Trini-Timing". The best way to describe this experience is: memorable, fulfilling, joyful.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I didn't really have any stereotypes about Ghana and its people.

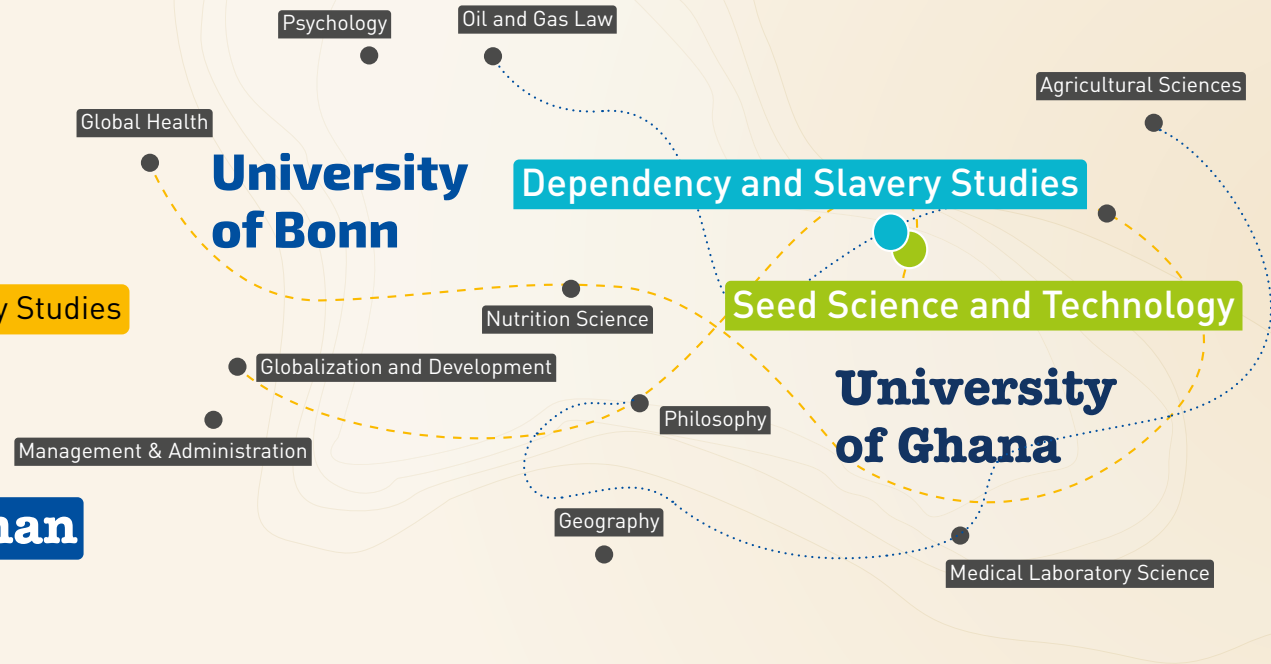
PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- Keep an open mind and respect cultural reasonings
- I would totally recommend this program to my peers; it enhanced my skills.

Personal Inspiration

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

"Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea"
— Jules Verne



HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

Embarking on this program was a journey filled with excitement and anticipation. It offered me a unique opportunity to connect with people from diverse backgrounds, each carrying a wealth of knowledge and experiences waiting to be shared. I was a little nervous as I was not sure if my new Friday program would clash with my research project activities. As the program unfolded, I quickly realized the importance of remaining focused and open-minded, avoiding hasty judgments and instead focusing on understanding one another.

The wealth of knowledge presented in the training sessions, covering areas such as project management, effective communication, structuring compelling arguments, and grantsmanship, was not only enriching but also immediately applicable to my academic pursuits; especially when crafting my thesis proposal.

In an ideal world, we would have relished the chance to meet face-to-face, but even in the virtual realm, the bonds we formed were genuine and meaningful. The knowledge I gained in grantsmanship and proposal writing has significantly bolstered my confidence in pursuing a research career. It's a privilege to have been part of this transformative experience.

One of the most exciting aspects of the program was the opportunity to interact with students from diverse majors and even different countries. Given the limitations imposed by the pandemic, my social interactions had been confined primarily to those within my major. However, the program breathed new life into my academic journey, offering a refreshing perspective. The topics covered were both intriguing and relevant, igniting a fire within me to apply what I was learning to my future academic endeavors.

The project management sessions were a highlight, equipping me with valuable tools to enhance my project management skills. The sessions on argumentation in scientific writing and proposal writing/grantsmanship were instrumental in refining my dissertation work. My writing and argumentation have evolved significantly, thanks to the knowledge I gained from this program.

Francis M. Mirara



Subject of study
Seed Science and Technology

Duration of study
4 semester

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

Even though I expected open-minded colleagues, I had mixed feelings about the German counter-parts I had never met before. But my minor insecurities and anxieties vanished as soon as the program began. We were people from various countries hosted by the two countries.

We shared emotions, beliefs, cultures, politics, and learning experiences, making the program extremely engaging. I enjoyed those moments.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I gleaned crucial insights from this program, enhancing my skills in time management, effective communication (both verbal and written), and the art of presenting arguments with greater rigor. The sessions on scientific writing, argumentation, and project management, in particular, have equipped me with valuable tools for my future as a researcher.
- I appreciate that the program offered me the chance to connect with individuals not only from diverse academic backgrounds but also from two distinct countries. It enabled us to establish a network beyond our usual academic circles. Although pursuing a master's degree already demands a significant time investment, dedicating additional time to this program is truly valuable as it contributes to your future professional journey. I would recommend this program without any hesitation.

Personal Inspiration

"The Compound Effect"
by Darren Harry.

Country Music.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

I had great expectations of the program, such as interacting with colleagues from other countries and learning about their culture. I was very excited when I was accepted into the program. Personally, I have been able to manage my time wisely especially with regards to my project work. I loved everything about the program, the skills taught, the facilitators and fellow participants.

Personal Inspiration

Life is a do-it-yourself project.

I am mostly inspired by Fela Kuti's music.



Mary Magdalene Eliason

Subject of study
Economics

Number of semesters
4 semester



HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I did not have any stereotypes about any other country before being accepted into the program. I did feel that intercultural exchange was possible if one had an open mind. I think the intercultural aspect enriched the program because you get exposed to different views and perspectives about a way of life.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I acquired some skills, some of which I believe will be of great help in the future and in my career – especially the proposal writing and grantsmanship and ways to communicate effectively.
- Definitely, I would recommend this program to my peers and tell them to be active participants.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

I remember thinking the Joint Skills Enhancement Program (JSP) was designed with me in mind when I first read the flyer. I obtained my bachelor's degree at the University of Ghana and am now in the third semester of my Master's in Bonn. I felt I could contribute to the intercultural discussions. Additionally, the content sounded promising. Who would not want to acquire effective project management skills, cross-cultural and gender-sensitive communication skills, scientific writing and skills needed in making valid and sound arguments? And all this at no extra strain on my pocket as a student.

The program promised to teach all this in a relaxed and friendly online environment where I would meet and network with new people. Our "trans university" WhatsApp group and Zoom comments section were often filled with laughter and cheer.

As I was already writing my research proposal at the time of the JSP, I could immediately feed in what I had learnt about academic writing, scientific argumentation and project management into the design and content of my proposal. This paid off, as my proposal was accepted with minimal changes made. I also learned of new free project management software which I continue to use after the JSP.

Having a "digital lunch" is definitely up there on my list of favorite things about JSP.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

I have lived in both countries and have a feel of both Ghanaian and German cultures. JSP however was the platform to learn some cultural aspects of Trinidad and Tobago, India, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Kenya and, of course, a build on my experience of German culture. The intercultural exchange aspects of the JSP were an integral and lively part relished by my colleagues and I. I initially found the idea of having a "digital lunch" absurd, but in

the end it was a memorable way to end the JSP. That's the one part I truly wish were in-person:-) From issues with a bad internet connection to the need of handling improvised study situations to managing exams, work, internships, travels to home destinations or study sites during the semester, we found a lot of common ground. It made us see that borders do not define what we are or what we do, but that the things we witness on a day-to-day basis unite us.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

The culture you live in influences the way you and the people around you behave. I will apply culturally- and gender-sensitive language in the design of any intervention in my future Global Health career.

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I highly recommend this program to any student who wants to learn project management, good scientific writing and argumentation as well as cross-cultural and gender-sensitive communication whilst meeting with peers in a flexible and relaxed environment. You will not regret enrolling in this program.

Tips: Two things.

1. Show up
2. Interact with your peers

You will have fun and learn a lot whilst doing these 2 things.

Personal Inspiration

IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

"Africa is not a country", Dipo Faloy



Josbert Abaasah Ayambire

Subject of study
Global Health Risk Management & Hygiene Policies

Number of semesters
3 semester



Stephen Baidoo

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE PROGRAM?

Learning time and task management from this program has been beneficial. My task management skills have improved, resulting in increased productivity in my scientific career. There is now a balance between my input and results, and I can easily pay attention to all tasks with more ease than before.

HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE?

During the program, I had the opportunity to share classes with people from Europe and North America. It was my first time sharing a classroom with people from these two continents. I found it very interesting to observe how these diverse backgrounds affected the participants' way of thinking. In addition, I appreciated the similarities in thinking with my colleagues from different African countries. The intercultural experience provided me with new valuable insights for the program.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- I recommend this program primarily to anyone intending to pursue a scientific career. The program's content will guide you through your professional journey. All information and sessions were valuable as they were tailored to enhance our academic journey.
- Pay close attention to the soft skills that you can gain in this program, mainly from the instructor and your fellow attendees.

Subject of study

History

Duration of study

4 semester

Stays abroad

Excursions

Sabbatical

Lectures

University of Ghana

University of Bonn

Online events

Internships

Exchanges

History

Practical semester

Personal Inspiration

"We Up" by Black Sherif

Voices of participants

"Learning about both scientific and non-scientific issues critical for my day-to-day and academic life has boosted my confidence for my master's thesis."

"I liked the diversity of the students. Definitely a cultural learning experience."

"The exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds, especially learning more about German culture, has been invaluable."

"Attending the program offline would have been preferable for me, as I missed the opportunity for in person interactions with fellow participants from Bonn."

"The facilitators' approachability and patience, both in meetings and via email, contributed significantly to the program's success."

"The diverse program and international group, coupled with highly motivated trainers, made for an enriching learning experience."

"The sessions requiring practical application of concepts were engaging, exciting, and fostered inclusiveness among participants."

"I really wanted to attend the program in an offline format. I also missed not being able to meet my fellow mates from Bonn."

"I have all the materials available to keep looking things up as many times as I need to."

"I felt rushed due to limited time for practical exercises. However, having access to all materials for review is beneficial."



**University
of Ghana**

www.ipo.ug.edu.gh

**University
of Bonn**

www.uni-bonn.de