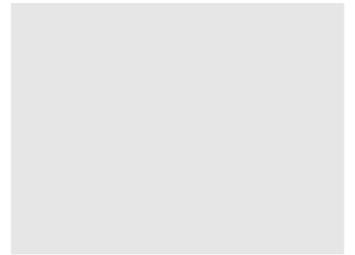


**IndiAlumni**

DAAD IndiAlumni Netzwerk e.V.



## **Report of the Annual Meeting of the DAAD IndiAlumni Netzwerk e.V.**

**12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Hannover**

## Summary

The seventh annual meeting of the DAAD IndiAlumni Netzwerk e.V. took place in Hannover from 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2017. For the first time - besides the regular German participants - the annual meeting also gathered former or current Indian DAAD scholarship holders currently based in Germany. This gave rise to an even more intensified exchange and intercultural dialogue. The inclusion of Indian participants in the annual meeting followed a revision of the association's statutes now also enabling Indian DAAD bursaries to join the association. The entire event as well as all prior communication was therefore conducted in English and perceived as a highly enriching gathering. In total, 50 people attended the annual meeting.

### Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May

The first evening started with an informal get-together in a typical German Biergarten - Biergarten Kaiserschänke - just across the street from the hostel, Jugendherberge Hannover International, where all the participants stayed. Sharing Bratwurst, beer and other delicacies old friends were met and new acquaintances made.

### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May

On Saturday morning the participants gathered at Leibniz Universität Hannover, Campus Herrenhausen and were welcomed by an enthusiastic organisation committee: Ronda, Annika and Rüdiger who highlighted the profound significance of Indo-German exchange and friendship.

Mrs. Christina Hollmann from the DAAD working for the [Alumniportal-Deutschland.org](http://Alumniportal-Deutschland.org) also welcomed the participants and stressed the importance to foster academic exchange. She presented the Alumniportal, a social network providing, for example, multiple discussion groups but also webinars and e-learning opportunities on various topics.



Dr Balasubramanian Ramani from the International Office of Leibniz Universität Hannover then expressed another very warm welcome to all the participants.

Finally, Prof Matthias Pilz from the Centre for Modern Indian Studies at the University of Cologne (CMIS-UC) greeted the participants highlighting the great value of mutual learning between India and Germany. As an example how Germany could learn from India, Prof Pilz mentioned the important role informal learning plays in India. Concurrently, the approach to combine academic learning with practical training - a standard more common in Germany - may show beneficial results if also applied in India.



## Keynote 1 by Vice-Consul Ram Deswal

Unfortunately, the Consular General of Hamburg, Shri Madan Lal Raigar, could not attend the event. However, participants and organisers both were very happy to welcome the Vice Consul, CGI Hamburg, Ram Deswal. Instead of delivering a speech on the “Benefits of Indo-German Relations in an Academic Context” which had been Shri Madan Lal Raigar’s topic, Mr. Deswal announced that he had come not to speak *to* but *with* the participants.



Telling the story of an elephant and six blind men who - by touching different body parts of one and the same animal - all had different impressions of what an elephant looked like, Mr. Deswal referred to the diversity of India and how one could not claim to fully know India. According to Mr. Deswal, Hindi constitutes however a binding ele-

ment across India’s diversity. Engaging in a dialogue with the participants, he encouraged the audience to think of two things they liked as well as disliked most about India. The participants mentioned amongst others flexibility, optimism, diversity of cultures, a certain resourcefulness in finding solutions, train rides and paneer tikka masala whereas in contrast to these positive impressions the extreme levels of pollution (air but also noise), safety and corruption were identified as dislike factors.

## Keynote 2: “Frugal Innovation” Dr Rajnish Tiwari

Dr Rajnish Tiwari, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Technology and Innovation Management of Hamburg University of Technology, delivered a capturing talk on frugal innovation, that is, the art of finding a smart and as simple as possible solution to a specific problem in the market while ensuring high quality.



Dr Tiwari’s presentation focused on what is the need for frugal innovation (FI) (1.), what is the difference between jugaad and FI (2.), drivers and characteristics of frugality (3.) and the evolution of frugality (4.). Concrete examples from India and Germany illustrated the practical significance and implementation of FI.

1. In an era of unrestrained consumerism, following a logic of “I shop therefore I am” as well as seeking continuous and ever increasing economic growth rates, the question whether there is any room for another consumption logic has gained momentum. The search for an alternative consumption model is not about generally devaluing high tech developments but rather about scrutinising the appropriateness and affordability of proposed solutions to get a better fit between what the consumer needs and what he/she gets.

2. One of the major differences between jugaad and FI lies in the fact that jugaad is a process and not an outcome. Jugaad refers rather to makeshift and improvisation including not necessarily legal measures whereas FI focuses on the outcome and on finding long term solutions.



3. According to Dr Tiwari, FI can be considered a significant trend in developed economies due to three core drivers promoting FI: disposable incomes, demographic development, ecological awareness. The key characteristics of FI can thus be summed

up as seeking to create attractive value propositions guaranteeing core functionalities while minimizing the use of material and financial resources in the complete value chain (long term) and reducing the cost of usage and /or ownership while fulfilling or even exceeding prescribed quality standards. Affordability in the logic of FI is not limited to a monetary understanding but also includes the equally important dimensions of social, environmental and infrastructural affordability. The example of being able to sell cheaper fairness creams or cheaper shampoo in smaller bottles while producing more waste highlights that social and environmental affordability does not necessarily coincide with monetary affordability. FI however is precisely about a better alignment with socially needed and environmentally bearable solutions.

#### 4. Three phases of frugality:

1.0 -> Prior to 1945 FI had enjoyed the status of universal value cherished by all major world religions and philosophy. However, the concept was then discredited.

2.0 -> Developing economies saw a revival of the frugality to raise standards of living.

3.0 -> The concept is again becoming a more universal value due to factors such as financial constraints, environmental concerns and market saturation in the industrialised world leading to the promotion of “responsible innovation”.

Before continuing the discussions in the afternoon, participants and guest speakers together enjoyed a delicious Indian lunch outside in the sun.



The afternoon session continued with three parallel workshops.

## **Workshop 1:** **Prof Dirk Weichgrebe “Waste Management in India”**

Prof Weichgrebe, working at the Institute of Water Quality and Waste Management at Leibniz University, presented his findings in India about waste management. He discussed various problems encountered in India while processing waste. Incineration has also not proved to be a successful solution. The workshop was an interactive session in which the participants addressed four questions in different groups. Following solutions were found:

### 1. What is waste in India?

The group defined waste as anything which is not needed. However, there is an immense need to separate this waste to process it further. Possible solutions to approach this problem would be creating awareness, providing a better infrastructure etc.

### 2. The possibility of establishment of circular economy?

The students in this group prepared a chart of the possible circular economy in India. The circle started with product design.

Product design – Education and laws – consumer (the feedback from the consumer influences the product design) – Product use – Total waste.

This was the first half of the circular economy. Total waste was further divided into recyclable waste and non-recyclable waste.

Recyclable waste – new products – product design.

In this way the circular economy of the new recycled product will start.

Non-recyclable products – incineration – heat recovery and energy generation – residue – landfills.

This was the proposed possible circular economy.

### 3. Non-technical ways to deal with waste management issues in India.

This group of students concentrated on the possible non-technical way to solve the issue of waste management. The basic necessity to manage waste is separation of waste. Awareness and Education of people about waste and management of waste could be very helpful.

Infrastructure needs to be made available to people. If people are expected not to throw things in the surroundings, dustbins need to be made available. Strict laws can be made to separate waste. Incentives to be announced for waste management enthusiasts. These were a few examples of the non-technical approach to waste management suggested by the students.

#### 4. New landfills or relocation of existing landfills.

India is a country with growing population. To find an appropriate piece of land for landfill is a big challenge. The old landfills were planned years ago, however due to political reasons residential places or public schools are being allotted the land next to the landfills. This negatively impacts the children attending such schools. Thus there is a necessity to relocate the old landfills. However, areas for new landfills are not available. As the waste is not segregated it also includes heavy metals and inorganic waste. This waste also cannot be used as a filler for building roads. Thus waste separation is very important in India.



A few common solutions were observed by all the groups, such as waste separation, awareness and education, infrastructure and law. This could be a good start to manage waste in India.

## Workshop 2:

### Dr Christian Wagner “Safety in India: Conflict, Competition and Cooperation”

Dr Wagner, head of the research group “Asia” at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), started the workshop by explaining the difference between safety - accidental events without malicious intent – and security: risks originating from malicious intent. Moving with the workshop’s title, Dr Wagner highlighted the *environment* (extreme levels of pollution for example in Delhi leading to a reduced life expectancy), *health* (very little public spending on health and common phenomenon of out of pocket expenditure for health) as well as *violence against women* as some major conflicts in India.

Dr Wagner then identified competition as the relationship between public vs. private goods. He revealed how in the health and education sector privatisation was gaining increasing ground in India. Instead of having a strong state extensively providing education, health and security for all citizens, which all in all is very costly, one could see an intermediate structure appearing in India with civil society taking up certain tasks and responsibilities otherwise provided for by the state.

The intermediate civil society structure, in particular foreign NGOs such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International and others, is however facing certain challenges such as increasing regulations being imposed upon them and thereby restraining active action.

In total, Dr Wagner identified the question whether safety will remain a private or a public affair in India as a crucial point in the country’s development. Under the heading of cooperation he explained, by giving examples, how the Indian state is under-financed and how therefore, due to a lack of resources, public goods remain weak. One of the reasons why public resources are little is that less than 3 % of the Indian population pays income tax. Most revenue instead comes from indirect tax, thereby putting a much bigger burden on poorer sections of society. With only a small proportion of the population paying income tax, a large black economy and tax exemption thresholds excluding many people from paying tax, the question of safety in India will not be easily answered.



## Workshop 3: Maximilian Markard “Music in India”

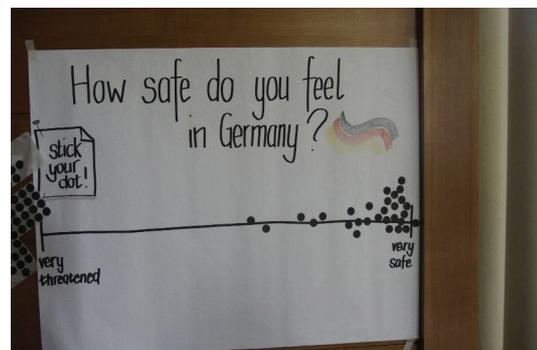
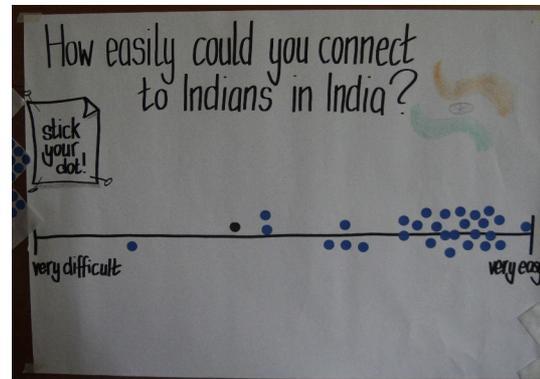
The workshop by Maximilian Markard (Centre for World Music, University of Hildesheim) centered around a principle called Guru-Shishya Parampara, that is, signifying the traditional relationship between (music) teacher and disciple. When Maximilian Markard conducted a six months field study in Pune, India, he investigated the traditional form of musical teaching and its potential when used in a different cultural context. The lively introduction consisted of recordings, on the basis of which it became clear even to people without any musical background, how Indian classical music differs from western musical concepts with the singing voice moving „in between“ the drone of the stringed Tanpura with no chord change.



Mimesis is the central concept: The composition, consisting of melodic or percussive patterns, is passed on by the exact repetition of the teacher. This serves as a cognitive means of memorizing, as there is no notation system in the western sense.

Maximilian Markard showed some very effective ways of memorizing, for example by the use of syllables – „Taka, Takata, Takadima“ – used as counting units for rhythm patterns, which the participants tried out together. Participants also learned that singing the „name“ of the note – „Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni“ – makes it easier to memorize a melody. Entertaining video snippets recorded during Maximilian Markard's research showed western musicians confronted with the traditional Indian way of teaching – and the other way around. Markard, as a future teacher himself, was especially interested in how these teaching concepts can be implemented and experimented with, and in which contexts. After a collective brainstorming, we found that the strong emphasis on cognitivity could be used for therapeutic reasons. Secondly, this style of teaching is very accessible to people without any musical formation, as it seems to be a very natural approach to music. As a last point, it can be used as a musical language within a group of musicians from different cultural backgrounds, a practical working tool for fusion music. To summarize the impressions of the workshop: The Guru-Shishya Parampara might seem conservative at first when seen through „western“ eyes, but it comprises a lot of practical and cognitive knowledge – true complexity made accessible by simple means of mimesis and repetition. We can for sure learn from each other here.

The day at Leibniz University Hannover was concluded with the organising team presenting the major findings of the posters which the participants had been invited to complete during the day. Participants had been asked to answer the following questions:



Before going out together at night, the participants had the opportunity to learn some basic Bollywood Dance moves. The evening and night were then spent in Hannover's city centre in the Brauhaus Ernst August where a wonderful buffet was waiting. This gathering enabled even more networking and exchange opportunities until late at night.



## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May

Despite a short night, the third day of the annual meeting again gathered the participants at Leibniz Universität Hannover and started with a well-deserved thank you session for the organising committee who had planned and managed a wonderful weekend.

Before the general meeting of members the managing board presented the work and purpose of the association. Building bridges between Germany and India, representation, bringing together academics from different backgrounds and staying informed about developments in both countries



count among the main objectives. In various cities in Germany members of the association organise regular Indo-German get together meetings/ Stammtische.

Moreover, the DAAD IndiAlumni Netzwerk e.V. is interested in being active in a social project and calls for proposals. A few years ago, the association had been involved in a project called “Hand in Hand” which initiated a letter exchange between school children in Pune and a school in Germany.

In August 2016, a delegation of members was invited to Delhi to a DAAD Delhi Young Ambassadors Meet Up to present the association and its alumni network to Indian students.

The member Katleen Schneider has started a video blog about her experience in India and the participants were lucky to be the first to see her video about travelling in India “The way you move”. More videos will be published soon and all members are invited to contribute e.g. also Indians about their experience of living in Germany.

Finally, the board presented involvement opportunities for new or yet to become members. These include organising a Diwali event in Cologne in November this year, a call for social projects and to plan and organise the next annual meeting which is scheduled to take place in Hamburg in the spring of 2018. So, see all of you there!