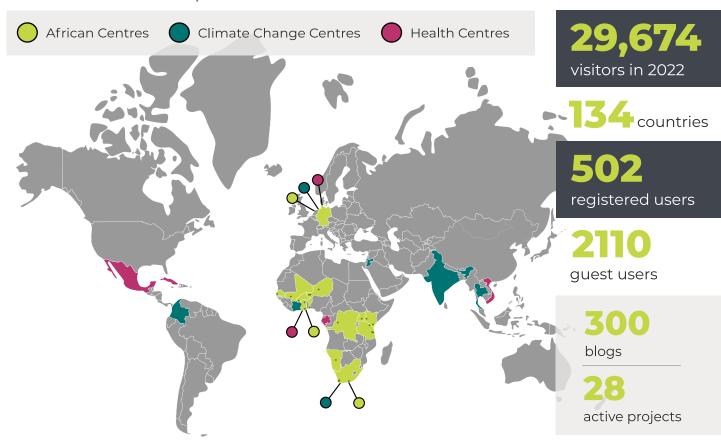
DIGI-FACE REVIEW



DIGI-FACE in places

DIGI-FACE in numbers



Editorial

Paul Webb & Elisa Adams

2023 will be a year for consolidation – focusing on strengthening the platform and its offerings and getting centres actively engaged on the centre pages, Blogs, Publications, Project Management, and Alumni sites. As a DIGI-FACE member you can use and adapt the generic courses for your own purposes.

Being a DIGI-FACE member allows you to become a promoter and influencer of digital adoption at your centre and beyond. It enables joint research projects, facilitates networking, lets you interact with members and see their publications, showcases your own publications, and provides learning opportunities through the modules offered throughout the year.

Stay connected. We are here to help you.

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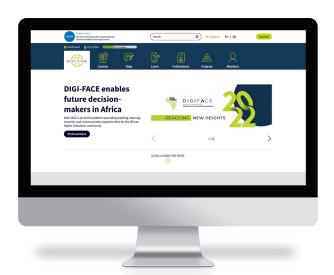


The DIGI-FACE Platform

Hannes Köninger Eldridge van der

Our multifunctional platform with its manifold services was developed and set up in 2020 and opened at the centre level in 2021. It has also been translated into French. Since February 2022, the number of platform visits was over 2000 per month, with a high of 3553 in September. The platform currently has 65 registered PhD and 114 registered master's students. Of the 65 PhD students, 45 are regular users of the platform. Of the 114 master's students, 66 are regular users of the platform. Three hundred blog posts have been posted on the platform since inception. The blog section and the Moodle chat and forum functionalities provide great opportunities for exchange and communication of ideas among the members.

All centres were furnished with basic technical equipment to produce e-learning materials and are provided with Zoom licences for teaching and learning, research, meetings and other activities. A revised project management tool and improved publication section have been implemented and integrated into the platform after extensive testing and evaluation. The requirements for modification of the tools were set in consultation with the DAAD. 'How-to' documentation has been developed and centre administrators were trained on the tools at an IT centre Administrator's workshop in Kehl in September 2022. Feedback received has led to further improvement of the tools. Currently, eight centres have created projects and various user scenarios have been communicated to the centre administrators on how best the tools can be used.



Provided to our centres

- **Basic Technical Equipment**
- **Zoom Licences**
- **Project Management Tool**
- **Publications Section**
 - 'How-to' Documentation

DIGI-FACE Project Management Tool

Hannes Köninger



Our DIGI-FACE project management tool supports online collaboration, aids collaborative project work and brings project partners and research teams from the entire network together. It is helpful for everyday projects, but also for research projects or the supervision of scientific papers.

All members can access this tool free of charge. You only need to be logged in to the DIGI-FACE platform and be registered as a member. Benefit from simple task lists, Kanban Boards, forum discussions, easy invoicing and much more are available and all projects are only accessible to you. In order to ensure collaboration, you can share your work with individual members or the entire network so that others can benefit from your knowledge.

You will find help in our forthcoming User Guide to organize and structure your work in the best way and a course is in the planning stage as a DIGI-FACE offering next year. If you have any comments, we welcome your feedback at digiface@hs-kehl.de.

Have fun using the project manager!

DIGI-FACE Publications Site Maretha Allwright

The DIGI-FACE Quality Assurance Body adopted a new DIGI-FACE Publication Policy in 2022. The aim of the policy is to provide a safe environment, based on international standards, where DIGI-FACE members can publish their research papers, theses,

DIGI-FACE members can publish their research papers, theses, dissertations, and other scientific documents dissertations, and other scientific documents subject to certain legal, content-related, and procedural requirements. Registered DIGI-FACE members are invited to login and choose

the Add a New Publication section under the **Publications** site to upload their research publications. The **How to upload a publication** document provides guidelines to ensure adherence to the DIGI-FACE Publication Policy publishing criteria.

The quality of uploaded documents is guaranteed by following an approval process by the DIGI-FACE centres' administrative staff to ensure that the metadata adhere to the DIGI-FACE Publication Policy and the centres' quality standard requirements.

A sub-category, *Open Access Database*, has been added under the Publications area to further support the DIGI-FACE philosophy of promoting open science and knowledge transfer. These databases provide access to open access resources such as e-journals, e-books, electronic theses and dissertations, directories, e-print archives, digital repositories, open education resources, and more.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact us for support and feedback at digiface@hs-kehl.de

Internships & International Work Placement in the DIGI-FACE Team



This European summer (winter in South Africa) Janell Lia-Breitmayer and Hannes Köninger completed international internship abroad for their master's degree in European Public Administration at the University of Kehl. These work placement visits to the Nelson University, Mandela South Africa, allowed Hannes and Janell to

combine their strong interest in international cooperation and project management.

Apart from immersing himself in the South African activities of the DIGI-FACE project, Hannes had the opportunity to inspect the dedicated server which hosts the DIGI-FACE platform at the Nelson Mandela University. While in South Africa Janell helped shape Global North-South academic cooperation between various African and German universities and assisted during the winter school run by the East and South-African-German centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA).

Both Hannes and Janell are convinced that the DIGI-FACE internship programme is inspiring, valuable, and rewarding. They believe that the interdisciplinarity and sociological complexity demanded by such an extensive university cooperation brings new challenges and a variety of engagement at both the operative and strategic levels almost every day. They are proud to be part of the Digital Initiative for African centres of Excellence (DIGI-FACE) network.

On her return, Janell took up the position of Research Manager at the Institute of Applied Research at the University of Public Administration and Finance, Ludwigsburg. She remains a registered user of, and contributor to, the DIGI-FACE platform. Hannes was appointed as a staff member in the DIGI-FACE team at Kehl University as of the 1st of September 2022 and continues to contribute to developing the project in a variety of ways.

Hannes Köninger & Janell Lia-Breitmayer

Quantitative Research Methodologies I and II Sonja Ebbing & Paul Webb

When it comes to statistics, we have found that many smart students have carried over an almost irrational fear of maths from school, especially if they are to face it again in the realm of social studies.

As a firm believer that quantitative research is the easier paradigm of the two (as compared to qualitative research) I have thus aimed to take away the fear factor from statistics with our generic module Quanti 1 developed for DIGI-FACE. It breaks down key methodological concepts and explains the quantitative research process step-by-step. This way, it lays the groundwork for both descriptive statistics, explained still in the first module, and inferential statistics, covered in the follow-up module Quantitative Research Methodologies II.

Both modules are taught in a hybrid fashion, i.e., combining self-paced learning on Moodle and regular Zoom sessions, and use software packages which are easily available, such as Microsoft Excel and BlueSky Statistics. While the first module has been taught to four cohorts by now and will see its first multiplier training soon, the second one has started its first official run in the middle of October 2022. However, it is already clear that it will become an essential part of DIGI-FACE's course portfolio and see more runs in the future. With both modules, we hope to demystify statistics for everyone, and to allow for more and more students to emerge as deliberate and confident researchers in the quantitative realm.

Taking the angst out of statistics

Global Onboarding Sonja Ebbing



While the previous years were dedicated to the development of the DIGI-FACE platform and its introduction to the African centres of Excellence network, 2022 saw five new global centres join. They belong to two different DAAD programme lines: the Global centres for Climate and Environment and the Global centres for Health and Pandemic Preparedness.

Over the course of the year, members of the centres joined a working group and enjoyed a structured, step-by-step onboarding process that familiarised them with all the key functions of both digiface.org and our Learning Management System Moodle.

Hannes Köninger and Sonja Ebbing, who were responsible for the onboarding process, are very happy with the results. "It was really nice to see how motivated and engaged the group was", says Hannes, "and that they can see the potential for their own centre's activities in what DIGI-FACE has to offer".

Now, that the last onboarding meeting has been completed, all five centres are fully part of the DIGI-FACE community.

If you have any questions regarding the two programme lines, feel free to contact our colleagues via:

climate-centres@daad.de or health-centres@daad.de

DIGI-FACE Meets - Kehl 2022 Karlien Potgieter & Paul Webb

As reported in an earlier blog, our digital initiative members finally managed to have two fully face-to-face meetings in September 2022. The DIGI-FACE Project Management Group (PMG) and two representatives from the DAAD met from the 26th to the 28th of September at the University of Applied Sciences, Kehl, Germany. Together they clarified what still needs to be done this year and framed a proposal for a DIGI-FACE consolidation phase in 2023.

Capacity building face-to-face meetings for centre IT Managers melded seamlessly with this group from the 28th to the 30th of September. IT managers from the centres of African Excellence worked with experts in depth on using the DIGI-FACE platform to maximum utility. Issues such as managing the IT needs of a centre, editing information on a centre page, adding, and managing publications, the rights and roles of members on the DIGI-FACE platform, adding and administrating courses on Moodle, becoming sustainable, writing a blog post, and the underpinning issues of E-Learning pedagogy were covered.

Over the five days a total of 44 people met face-to-face, namely 20 from the Project management group (including the DAAD staff representatives and interns at Kehl) and 24 participants from DIGI-FACE centres in Africa and Germany.

Evening sociability included a historic walking tour of Kehl, viewing the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, a magnificent masterpiece of Gothic art in central Strasbourg, a tranquil boat cruise on the rivers and canals of ancient and new Strasbourg, and a memorable, rambunctious evening congeniality, flammkuchen and freely flowing beer in the cellar of an ancient restaurant.







Marie Thomalla Arellano | Project Coordinator at the African Climate and Environment centre (AFAS)

Reaction to the onboarding process.



First of all, a big thank you to the well-organised and motivated DIGI-FACE team comprising Sonja and Hannes who supported us throughout. Thanks also to Koshala for the great supervision of the Moodle course in preparation for future tasks as centre IT Manager. I found the meetings a great opportunity to get in touch with the other Global centres and it was a pleasure to interact with their centre IT Managers.

As we learned during the Moodle course, DIGI-FACE can be either regarded as a platform with several features, or as a portal to several platforms. I personally like the idea that it is a virtual portal to an international network of scientific cooperation. As centre IT Manager of AFAS, I am fascinated by the possibilities this portal

offers to our team, our students and our future collaboration with the other Global centres. To highlight two of them, the shareable features for publications and the project management tool have the potential to make individual project outcomes visible for future collaboration.

It is exciting that members of our centre – both staff and our students – can get in touch with the African centres of Excellence via DIGI-FACE. Now that the onboarding process is complete, we look forward to being part of this promising portal and will encourage our centre members to actively take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

DIGI-FACE Launching Activities

Ten centres, namely CCAM, CEGLA NIGER & CESAG, CEMEREM, CERM-ESA MOI & UMI, GGCDS, NGCL, Pro-RUWA, and TRANSCRIM (see our 'centres' section at digiface.org to find out the full names of the centres) participated in the third round of 'Launching Activities'. The activities implemented were multidimensional and included, among others, the creation of new courses, the development of a business model to generate revenues, the promotion of DIGI-FACE to attract more participants, and the training of lecturers about Moodle and the LMS.

Staff members worked as a team in their respective centres to fulfil the expectations of the call for proposals. For instance, some

Aristide Fongang

modules that were developed were part of centres' curriculum and they will be taught directly from DIGI-FACE in the upcoming semester. The designed cost calculation kit, as well as marketing strategy, can be referenced by other centres planning to produce and offer courses for fees on the platform. Feedback from the main users was critical to improving both their learning experience and the modules. Evaluations by the participants showed the added value that such processes can bring to the centres of African Excellence, and that they are willing to use their achievements as a springboard to create more digital content on the platform. It will contribute to the growth of their centres in the sector of online education. The DIGI-FACE team will continue to monitor their work.

Roles & Rights on the DIGI-FACE Platform

Elisa Adams

The DIGI-FACE project provides the centres with an IT infrastructure and, to use this infrastructure to its fullest potential, we grant certain people administrators rights on our platform. These rights are tied to specific roles, and these roles are only granted to a limited set of people, usually individuals nominated by the centre.

Role 1: centre Administrator

The centre Administrator can

- Edit the centre information page on digiface.org and grant others editing rights
- Approve new users affiliated with the centre
- Approve new publications affiliated with the centre
- Create blog posts for the centre

Role 2: centre IT Manager (Moodle)

The centre IT Manager manages the centre's section on our Learning Management System, Moodle, which we call 'Learn'. This entails:

- Managing participants for online courses by enrolling them to courses and creating cohorts of participants
- Creating new empty course shells or course copies
- Making use of DIGI-FACE's Generic Modules for the centre

The requirement of these roles is the successful completion of the Module 'Managing your DIGI-FACE Moodle site'. If you want to nominate someone who has not yet completed this module, please reach out to us.

Farewells

Dr Dorothee Weyler

Dr Dorothee Weyler, Programme manager and Head of Section of the African Excellence programme of DAAD is moving on to new horizons. After almost 15 years developing the centres of African Excellence programmes Dr Weyler will take over as an intermediate position the management of the scholarship section for Africa, before she moves in the latter half of 2023 to manage the DAAD office in Nairobi, Kenya.

She says: 'Those who know me might know how difficult this decision was for me! Although I am very much looking forward to my new duties in Kenya as the director of our DAAD office in Nairobi I will miss the tasks and opportunities of the day-to-day work with the centres of Excellence, I will miss the freedom to make my/our own decisions and especially the enrichment of working together with all of you. During the last 15 years there was not one day, where I didn't go to work with passion. I always loved to collaborate with you in order to reach our common goals! I really enjoyed working together as a team (or better, as a family) and learn from each other - on our common way to establish the "centre of African Excellence" - as a new brand for high quality standards in Higher Education in Sub Saharan Africa!

It is a kind of consolation, that I will continue to work with the region of my heart and hopefully will keep in contact with most of you in the future. And my successor, Isabell Mering, is already very much looking forward to taking over the tasks of the centre of African Excellence program!'





Eva Rothenpieler

Eva Rothenpieler

Eva Rothenpieler is leaving her position as programme manager for the DIGI-FACE project. She said: 'It was definitely a tough decision, but I must admit that I am happy for the opportunity to pursue new challenges of my interest. I will shift to section ST32 - Scholarship Programmes Africa, where I will be responsible for DAAD-GIZ cooperation on Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa.

While I'm excited about the new job, there's also a big part of me that's sad to be saying goodbye. After working with the centres of African Excellence for almost 5 years, I want you to know how much I've enjoyed working with you and getting to know you. And most important, how much I've learned from you - thank you!'

Pilot Project on a Decentralised Payment Approach

centres need to develop alternative sources of revenue beyond DAAD funding and need to be sustainable. One way available is by offering courses for a fee. CERM-ESA in Kenya and the NGCL in Namibia have been selected for a pilot project in which they are not only responsible for the development of quality courses on DIGI-FACE, but they also define and manage their own payment system.

Both centres have elaborated on the concept by taking account of their local contexts and their past experiences. Follow-up meetings are regularly organised to discuss a fair course fee, marketing strategies, legal aspects, and administrative and financial management. Nelson Mandela University has also been involved in the project; they assist with all the technical components such as the display and the distinction between paid and free courses on DIGI-FACE, and the enrolment process that will be the most suitable.

Throughout this pilot project, both centres will be supported in the process of generating revenues from their paid courses available on DIGI-FACE. Afterwards, best practice examples and lessons learned will be shared and disseminated to other centres.

In the same line, a mini-module on the sustainability of centres is under development. It will be released on DIGI-FACE and will provide leaders and staff members with key steps to follow to successfully contribute to the financial stability and the long-term prospect of their centers and academic institutions.

Aristide Fongang

Multipliers on the DIGI-FACE Network

Since 2020, DIGI-FACE has offered a variety of generic modules to the African Centres of Excellence. Some of the earlier modules, like Academic Written and Graphic Presentation, have been offered to as many as ten cohorts in English and five cohorts in French. This level of demand has made it clear that DIGI-FACE cannot meet the growing need for course offerings without official multipliers. As a result, the project has used 'multiplier training' sessions with the most successful graduates on our Generic Modules who wish to qualify as official facilitators and enable DIGI-FACE to attain a desired level of scalability and sustainability.

Multiplier training has been conducted for three modules that have been in high demand, namely Academic Written

and Graphic Presentation, Exploring the Online Learning Environment and Strengthening Post-Graduate Supervision. Our multipliers are featured in our facilitator database hosted on digiface.org at digiface.org/facilitators. While most of the facilitators currently facilitate modules for their own centres it is possible for other centres to invite them to facilitate generic modules for them. In this way collaboration between centres is strengthened and, should financial agreements be reached, make a contribution towards the offering centre's sustainability.

If you have any questions regarding the facilitator database or multiplier training, kindly reach out to Sonja for more information.

(Sonja.ebbing@uol.de)



Angulu Ayako



Dr Christopher Mayanja





Dr Dorothy Nakiyaga Dr Justin Maghanga Dr David Chikati





Dr Esther Kiaritha



Ezekiel Chemwor



Kajumba Keti



Evans Mos



Frank Zakaria



Faith Nyaberi



Janeth Mlay



Innocent Muhwezi



Noel Japheth



Prof Mathabo Khau



Prof Naydene de Lange



Raymond Sawe





New Faces



Hannes Köninger

After having supported the coordination team of DIGI-FACE as a student assistant since March 2021, I am happy to be officially part of the coordination team since 1 September 2022. The DIGI-FACE meeting in Kehl/Strasbourg was the perfect introduction to this new task - I got to know many faces from our various centres. As a master's student during COVID times, I gained significant experience as a recipient of a digital teaching offer. I want to combine this knowledge in DIGI-FACE and your experiences with my passion for teaching and digital transformations. From March to May 2022, I also got to know my Project colleagues as a student in my practical phase at Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.

Aristide Fongang

Aristide is a working student at the Sustainable World Academy, Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. He assists Mrs. Anna Hettche in running the DIGI-FACE's Work Package IV - Financial sustainability. This includes, for instance, the Launching Activities, the pilot project of a decentralised payment approach, and the development of a mini-module for centres sustainability. Through these activities, Aristide contacts regularly staff members of different centres; the goal is to support their long-term actions via DIGI-FACE.

As a PhD candidate in sociology at the International Graduate centre for the Study of Culture in Giessen/Germany, Aristide works on sport labour migration and capital accumulation. He had the opportunity to participate in the UNI-CIETY project in 2022 about the third mission of African universities and centres of Excellence. He is a football and rugby fan, and whenever possible, he volunteers in his neighbourhood.



Contact: a.fongang@fs.de



Andrew Thuo

Andrew is a Learning Technologist at Nelson Mandela University where he teaches staff how to take advantage of different technologies to support learning and teaching through virtual training and "how to" workshops. He feels the DIGI-FACE project equips him with excellent opportunities to use technology to empower educators in the African context. He is a facilitator for the Exploring the Online Learning Environment and the Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning courses. Andrew collaborates on developing the Moodle tips to support members of the project on a bi-weekly basis. In his free time, Andrew enjoys playing basketball (online and in person) and doing Pilates. He is currently studying towards his second master's degree in development studies at Nelson Mandela University with an emphasis on the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Higher Education.

Contact: Andrew.Thuo@mandela.ac.za

Maretha Allwright

Maretha joined the DIGI-FACE Publications Project team as a consultant in February 2022. She holds a BA Honours Information Science degree from Stellenbosch University and has experience in the management of library and digital systems as well as electronic resource management. She is passionate about all areas of electronic information delivery and metadata standards and was excited to join the Publications Project team.

Maretha's responsibilities include advising on the requirements and structure for adding publications to the platform, developing a new publication submission form, and creating a publication user guide and a list of open access online resources. She enjoyed being part of this project and is looking forward to assisting DIGI-FACE members with publication metadata submissions as well as to create more information guides on subjects pertaining to online publishing.







DIGI-FACE Supports DAAD Southern African In-Country/ In-Region Scholarship Holders Conference

Members of our South African DIGI-FACE team were privileged to attend the DAAD In-Country/In-Region Scholarship Holders Conference from 15-18 September 2022. The conference, held in in Port Elizabeth/Gqeberha, South Africa, was a great opportunity for Master's and PhD students who are currently funded under the DAAD <u>In-Country/In-Region Programme</u> studying at Universities in South Africa, Namibia and Malawi. The theme for this year was 'Digitalisation: support or restriction?'. Various interactive workshops, presentations, and discussions were hosted and networking opportunities offered for the young academics and various partners in Academia and Industry.

Karlien Potgieter and Elmien Waring attended the opening event of the conference where they experienced an overall feeling of optimism as our future African decision-makers networked

and enjoyed conversation with each other and guests. Elmien offered a workshop as an interactive space aimed at enlightening participants about the DIGI-FACE project and highlighting the resources and support available to them as DAAD scholarship holders. The different functions of the platform were explored revealing opportunities for networking and being able to engage in the DIGI-FACE modules that have been developed. The workshop also offered a quick look into a practical aspect of the courses by assisting researchers in strategies on presenting research findings as infographics.

By all indications the participants responses appeared to be overwhelmingly positive. They all indicated an interest in being part of the DIGI-FACE project and the fact that most stayed well past the time allocated to discuss the project further speaks volumes.

Francophone Centres and Digitalisation Michael Kongo

Francophone centres received several training sessions and assistance from the DIGI-FACE coordination team. Among them were the centre Congolais Allemand de Microfinance (CCAM), CEGLA and PRO-RUWA. These three centres comprise six Francophone countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

A course on academic writing was held in Congo and Mali. During eight training sessions, the participants engaged with the intricacies of how to produce a scientific document (dissertations or articles). A formation of trainers was also organized in Bamako and Kinshasa. This training brought together centre IT Managers (computer specialists, technical and educational managers) and lecturers to enable them to be autonomous in producing online modules and to be able to help other academics. On five days spread over two months, participants at the PRO-RUWA centre pledged to put educational materials online and learned to explore the Moodle platform.

Our visit to Kehl in September 2022 strengthened the unity between the French-speaking and English-speaking centres. We found that many issues unite us and that we can learn from each other's experiences to promote online teaching. Digitalisation has become part of the daily vocabulary of our centres, thanks to the DAAD.











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