



PROMOTING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Supporting young researchers has always been particularly important to FRIAS. The institute believes that outstanding young researchers should benefit from optimal working conditions enabling them to concentrate on their research projects in an academically stimulating environment that promotes a high degree of independent work. Putting this plan into action evolved into an impressive success story. Not only did FRIAS' Junior Fellows acquire third-party funding of over 6 million euros but to date, 31 of 68 Junior Fellows have also been offered a professorship or similar position in Germany or abroad. Looking back on her time at the LiLi School, Andrea Albrecht, now a full professor in Stuttgart, decisively traces these successes back to the tremendous visibility that FRIAS gave its Junior Fellows.

FRIAS dedicated almost a third of its resources to young researchers. Junior Fellows working in the science sections and in the LiLi School were appointed for a period of three years, which was extended by another two years following a successful evaluation. With high planning reliability,

Junior Fellows were able to advance their academic careers and establish personalised networks in the scientific community. The School of History focussed on supporting advanced postdocs, who spent a year at FRIAS to complete their postdoctoral research projects or second books (habilitation) during a "period of intellectual refuelling" (in the words of Gregor Thum, now an Assistant Professor in Pittsburgh). In addition all four schools hosted young researchers, who, as scholars of renowned national and international funding programmes, were affiliated with FRIAS for several years.

If you were to ask these young academics what FRIAS meant to them they would mention the outstanding working conditions as well as the diverse creative possibilities open to them. Junior Fellows in the science schools benefitted from a start-up package, which allowed them to establish their first working group in record time. According to materials researcher Aurelio Mateo-Alonso, now working as a Research Professor in San Sebastián, Spain, he was able "to practise science from day one."

In the humanities schools, Junior Fellows had the opportunity to invite renowned, external guests from the same research field to FRIAS and organise workshops and conferences. Michael Butter, a specialist in American studies, felt as though he had won the jackpot with his LiLi fellowship.

FRIAS's unique spirit proved to be highly beneficial to the Junior Fellows who also helped substantially in shaping it. Thematic networks played a role in all of the schools, offering young researchers the opportunity to benefit from intensive (usually informal) exchanges with established colleagues in Freiburg and international luminaries alike – ranging from reading each other's manuscripts and inspiring discussions about new research ideas to applying for joint projects for third-party funding. FRIAS owes its distinctive profile to a productive combination of the ambitious, imaginative impetus of its Junior Fellows and the academic experience and objectiveness offered by the Senior Fellows. Many Senior Fellows took on a specific mentoring role, advising Junior Fellows on research and teaching in addition to strategic career planning. Historian Julia Obertreis, who is now a full professor in Erlangen-Nuremberg, describes Senior Fellow Marie-Janine Calic as a clear "role model", who supported her in one of the many areas that tend to be governed by a male-dominated academic culture.

Junior Fellows did more, however, than just provide the four schools with a creative input; they also proved themselves as an equally strong force in driving forward inter-school activities at FRIAS. Thanks to the dedication of Junior Fellows, many interdisciplinary ventures emerged, including the "Conspiracy Theories" (2011) conference organised by Michael Butter, LiLi Junior Fellow, and Maurus Reinkowski, History Senior Fellow, as well as the "Black Forest Retreats" discussion forum, which was launched on the initiative of Junior Fellows spanning three different schools, and not to mention the LiLi reading group, "Literature & Science", which brought together young mathematicians, physicists and literary scholars.

All in all, promoting young researchers at FRIAS focussed on university interaction, integrating all Junior Fellows researching at FRIAS for a longer period into the heart of each of the university's academic institutes, where they held classes and completed their postdoctoral research projects. Linguist Anja Stukenbrock, who is now a professor in Duisburg-Essen, believes that being "close to university life" provided her with a crucial advantage when it came to successfully advancing her academic career. Conversely, young researchers from neighbouring faculties also had many opportunities to benefit from FRIAS; young research groups could enter the LiLi School's annual competition on organising conference projects, and a research prize for the best linguistic or literary qualification thesis was awarded annually. Numerous doctoral candidates and postdocs were also involved in projects from both of the science schools

as well as linguistic working groups, all of which were led by Junior Fellows. In addition, graduate students, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers from the faculties were invited to actively take part in the schools' events. This is not to mention the large number of gifted students who provided research assistance to Senior Fellows in the humanities schools, enabling them to get to know international luminaries from the same subject area on a personal level. Last but not least, master classes, workshops, tutorials and summer schools were led and taught by fellows, providing the university's young researchers with an attractive, extended curriculum of topics which are usually underrepresented.

