**RHODES UNIVERSITY AFRICAN STUDIES CENTRE (RASC)**

ABOUT

Rhodes University was awarded a University of Bayreuth (UBT) African Cluster Centre (ACC), as part of UBT’s *Africa Multiple* Centre of Excellence in October 2019. It is one of the four such African Cluster Centres; the other institutions that will join the cluster are Université Ouaga I, aka Joseph Ki-Zerbo University (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), Moi University (Eldoret, Kenya), and the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies at the University of Lagos (Lagos, Nigeria).

This global strategic collaboration has created the need for a formal African Studies Centre (RASC) at Rhodes. The collaboration with UBT forms the flagship project under RASC. It is envisaged that further funding and collaborations will follow as additional projects.

The purpose of the RASC is to support and promote high-level partnerships with UBT and related partners in academia and industry with a view to facilitate interdisciplinary research and teaching, between the collaborating institutions.

Rhodes University and UBT will work together to:

* identify opportunities for increasing staff and student mobility between the two institutions in South Africa and Germany respectively as well as between partners in the Africa Multiple Cluster system;
* continue to develop opportunities for joint PhD candidatures and Postdoctoral fellows in partner institutions;
* identify and conduct Research and other intellectual collaborative projects in furtherance of joint objectives and of interest to the Parties;
* develop strategies to approach such opportunities, including approaching them independently or together where and when appropriate;
* facilitate the development of proposals and offers for individual opportunities, including exploring possibilities for grants and other forms of funding.

(From ACC Proposal)

As proposed, Rhodes’ vision for the ACC collaboration is:

a. Continental cooperation – our intention is to reconfigure African Studies by moving away from the older colonial approaches by enabling ourselves to partner with Bayreuth for the purpose of setting up of an ACC from which we would build on and expand existing collaborations between Rhodes University and other institutions on the continent. For example, Rhodes University already collaborates with a range of African institutions such as Makerere University (Uganda), University of Lagos (Nigeria), the Open University of Zambia, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana), Obafemi Owolowo University (Ile Ife, Nigeria), Mzuzu University (Malawi), State University of Zanzibar, University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and a number of other universities in sub-Saharan, North and Francophone Africa. The establishment of an ACC would significantly strengthen these collaborations, through the reciprocal sharing of knowledge and ideas, the increase of mobility between African universities, and in facilitating Africa-based digital platforms that heighten the scholarly visibility of African academics, writers, artists and musicians.

b. Strengthening existing cooperation with the University of Bayreuth. We are alive to the fact that at the moment, at least two of our team members, Professor Russell Kaschula and Professor Ruth Simbao already have affiliations with scholars working at the University of Bayreuth. We intend to strengthen this cooperation by way of enhancing a broader African studies focus that goes beyond a few projects.

c. Postgraduate Studies – We envisage that researchers forming part of the ACC will contribute to the programme through the supervision of postgraduate students, the editing of journals, the production of academic journal articles, books and creative outputs, as well as the organization of conferences, workshops, exhibitions, performances and residencies for African writers, artists and musicians. Drawing from our track record and expertise in digital platforms, we will collaborate to further develop digital platforms for the sharing, repositioning and reconfiguring of textual and creative knowledge.

d. Sharing of Ideas - As part of the project, researchers from various parts of Africa will come together to share ideas through inter-disciplinary conferences and workshops that speak to the broader theme of reconfiguring African Studies.