

FIT Hermannsburg celebrates its graduates: Bringing knowledge alive in challenging times, to change the face of the world

Corona, the decision of the responsible bodies of the sponsoring institution to close the university in the foreseeable future and the outbreak of the war in and against Ukraine combined with the worrying realization that peace in Europe is no longer a stable constant - these were not easy conditions under which this year's graduates of the University of Applied Sciences for Intercultural Theology Hermannsburg (FIT) studied. It was also a challenge for the university and the lecturers to organize the teaching under "corona conditions", i.e. online and with very small learning groups because of the restrictive allocation of student visas. But now the six lucky graduates of the Bachelor's programs - David T. Anunda, Florian Ihlenfeldt, Wilke Ringeling, Charity Ugwu, Lara Wunder and Sarah Zawedde, from Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Germany - as well as the graduate of the Master's program San Su from Myanmar stood there to be honored in front of the eyes of the university community and their relatives.

The difficult conditions of study were also addressed by **PROFESSOR JOHANNES WETH**



in the festive service at the graduation ceremony: Despite the imminent closure of the university, despite all adversities, the students had come to FIT, and despite some doubts, they had not given up. "You guys pulled through. Today you are here! And you are not at the end, but at the beginning of something new."

The students had learned to make peace, to build bridges, to respect their counterparts, to live fraternally with all humanity and to seek justice not only for themselves but also for others. Now it is necessary to make use of the acquired knowledge. But how does the acquired knowledge come alive so that it changes the face of the world? Not by putting it before oneself as a title or power, but by everyone using their gifts, their knowledge, their personality for others. "Your true task will be to strengthen the interdependence of people and to carry the wide sky into every home, every country and every culture."

In this sense, FIT is not closing anytime soon, but is just setting out!

During the official graduation ceremony, **RECTOR PROFESSOR ANDREAS KUNZ-LÜBCKE** paid personal tribute to each student and their academic achievements. With concern, he pointed out the loss that the imminent closure of the university in 2025 would bring in view of the more perceptible interreligious encounters and confrontations: The University of applied sciences for Intercultural Theology stands for a professional change of perspective between the religions. Here one learns to know and respect different ways of practicing faith and religion. "If we no longer talk to each other in due fairness, the global forms of religiosity could slide toward fundamentalism and intolerance. FIT is one of the few places where such an encounter of different religious traditions and positions is first possible and second fruitful."





On behalf of the municipality of Südheide, **MAYOR KATHARINA EBELING** congratulated the graduates on earning their degrees. In addition to the demands of studying, she addressed a completely different challenge, namely that of - coming from the big wide world - "getting used to the rural, homely environment in Südheide". For the future, she wished the graduates "strength, patience and the courage to set out for something new."

For the carrier organization of the FIT, the Ev.-luth. Mission Society in Lower Saxony (ELM), **Ms. ANETTE MAKUS** conveyed the congratulations. She advised the graduates to be aware of this very special time between the completion of their studies and the start of a new phase in their lives and to take time to think about who they are and what path they want to take: "Look for opportunities to realize yourself in a suitable field of work."



With the Bachelor's certificates presented by Rector Kunz-Lübcke in hand, **THE GRADUATES** now took the floor:



Sarah Zawedde thanked the teachers and the entire FIT team as well as the family members of the graduates with moving words for their support and guidance on their journey through their studies.

Florian Ihlenfeldt expressed the students' gratitude by presenting each FIT staff member with a sunflower.

And David Tumaini Anunda performed the song "You say" - a song about doubting ourselves, questioning ourselves and being carried by God with all our weaknesses, and at the same time a successful rounding off of this moving day, on which there was much talk of doubt, change and setting out for something new.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATES 2023:



Front row sitting from left to right:

Lara Wunder, Charity Ugwu, Sarah Zawedde

Back row sitting from left to right:

Prof. Dr. Johannes Weth, Prof. Dr. Andreas Kunz-Lübcke (Rector),
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Beckmann, Florian Ihlenfeldt, Wilke Ringeling,
David T. Anunda, Prof. Dr. Katharina Kleine Vettekate,
Prof. Dr. Erna Zonne-Gätjens, San Su (MA Graduate)

WE HAVE MADE IT!

