

■ **Content**

Work summary 2015

Key words: stipend contracts, HeJu recruitment, PhD Days, survey analysis, structural development

Mid-term meeting review

Key words: group work, decreasing stipends, motivate other PhD students

Word from HeJu speakers

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About us

The Helmholtz Juniors (HeJus) were founded as an initiative for representing the interests of PhD candidates at all 18 centres in the Helmholtz Association, Germany's largest non-university scientific organization.

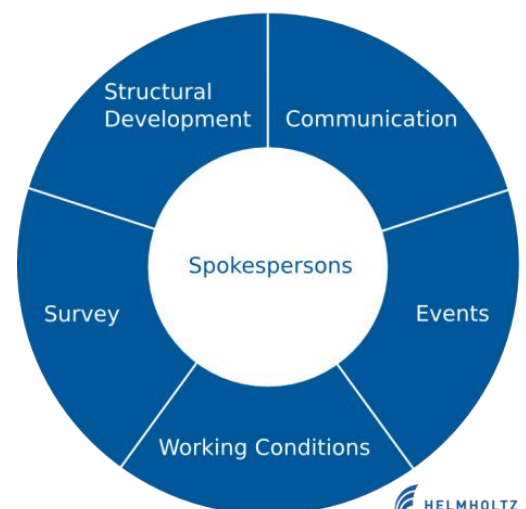
The Helmholtz Juniors currently represent the interests of around 6000 doctoral students. Our primary goals are fostering exchange and networking among PhD students, improving the conditions and expanding the range of advanced training opportunities available within the Helmholtz Association.

This newsletter aims at providing an overview of our activity in 2015. Enjoy reading, think about joining us!



Helmholtz Juniors

The HeJu organigram shows the currently active working groups. Besides, there are two spokespersons of the HeJus who coordinate all activities in close collaboration with the Working Group spokespersons. They represent the HeJus and their aims in public.

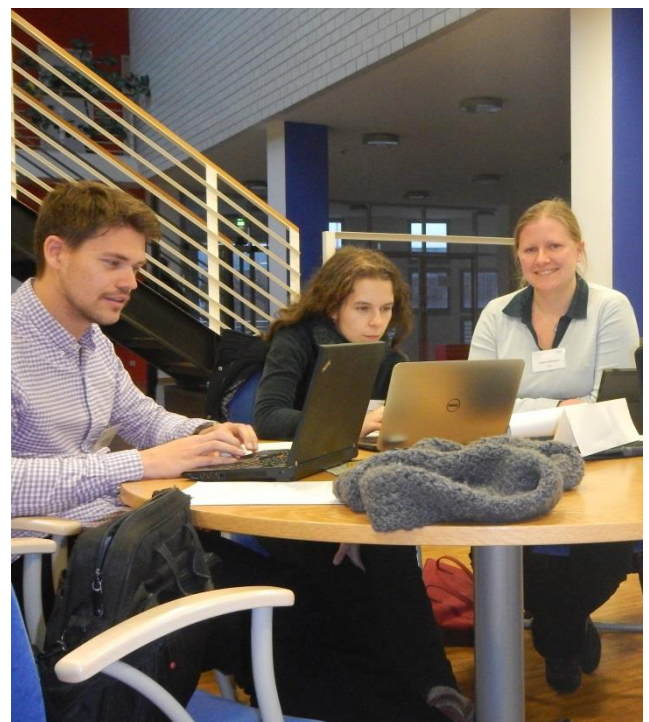


Working Group activities in 2015

The **Events Group**'s main goal is to organize attractive events, which foster the exchange of PhD students from different Helmholtz institutions and offer a platform for interdisciplinary discussions. This year, we have successfully organized the HeJu mid-term meeting together with the Helmholtz headquarters in Berlin and initiated the planning for the Helmholtz PhD Days for September 2016 at HZI in Braunschweig. PhD students from all Helmholtz Centers will meet at HZI for exchanging ideas and presenting their research topics to an audience from different fields of study. Besides scientific topics, the three days event aims to spread information about the Helmholtz Association and offers a platform for networking with fellow PhD students all over Germany. The HeJu are looking forward to meet you there! If you are interested in organizing and planning the PhD Days, join the Events Group in 2016.

The **Communication Group** develops ideas and solutions to improve the communication inside the Helmholtz Juniors, and to foster the outreach of the HeJus. This year we finalized the HeJu Info-Flyer and the PhD Brochure (a guide for new PhD candidates), which can be found on our homepage. The HeJu blog was filled with interesting articles along the year and the HeJu Facebook page was kept up to date. We are also responsible for the Newsletter you are reading now and the new organigram on the first page of it. Furthermore, we designed a document called "Why to become a HeJu?" which is supposed to help recruiting new HeJu members.

In order to make the process of initiating new HeJu members smoother, we designed a template for a handover sheet that contains crucial information for new members in each working group. And last but not least, we updated the HeJu wiki and registered an Email distribution service in order to enhance our internal communication.



In 2015, the **Survey Group** had published the report detailing the survey results from 2014. We used different outlets to announce the report: emails to PhD representatives, announcements on various Facebook pages, and an article in the Helmholtz Juniors blog about the survey results. Besides, we commented on PhDnet's achievements concerning contracts for all PhD students within the Max Planck Society and composed another statement contrasting this development with the situation within the Helmholtz Association. We established a collaboration with the internal communications office at the Helmholtz headquarters in Berlin. Their well established network to all Helmholtz sites can be used for spreading future surveys. We also set up a collaboration with social scientists and former members of the Survey Team in order to create and publish a time series of HeJu surveys since 2008. This time series will be the largest publicly data collection with focus on the supervision PhD students receive from their PIs and the institutions they work at in Germany. Work on this paper is in progress.

Working Group activities in 2015

The **Working Conditions Group** deals with all issues concerning PhD contracts and working conditions within all Helmholtz Centers. This year, our main topics were based on the comparison of scholarship and contracts, and the comparison of different contract types with strong focus on defining fair contract situations. We published an information sheet about stipends, built up contacts to works committees at different Helmholtz Centers and summarized all the different PhD contract types. With this information and individual reporting, the working condition group will be able to state clear requirements on working conditions of PhD students within the Helmholtz Association.

The Helmholtz Juniors Mid-Term Meeting 2015

On the 20th and 21st of July, the Helmholtz Juniors Mid-Term Meeting took place at the Helmholtz Association's Head Office (HGF) in Berlin. It was the second Mid-Term Meeting ever and proved to be a great opportunity to meet each other again, to discuss the latest progress and problems, and to improve the cooperation of the Helmholtz Juniors. We had group working phases, several meetings with people from the Helmholtz Association and a plenary discussion on major HeJu tasks.

On Monday, Caroline Krüger from the Helmholtz Head Office welcomed us in Berlin. The working phase was opened by presentations from the Helmholtz Juniors working groups on their activities. Allocated to the two days, we had some group working sessions to get some work done, to work on futures plans, and to meet with guests. Elsbeth Lesner (Staff and Works Councils of the Helmholtz Centres) was guest of a discussion round on working conditions, PhD contracts and stipends. Jennifer Schevardo gave a firm presentation on different networks within the Helmholtz Community with a focus on the new "Helmholtz & Friends" Alumni network. Jan-Martin Wiarda, Bianca Berlin and Janine Tychsen from the Helmholtz Communications and Media Relations Office held a question and answer session on (online) communication strategies and media relations.



Sabine Helling-Moegen (administrative head of the DZNE) gave an overview of the history of the German "Großforschungseinrichtungen" giving us a better understanding of mechanisms and politics in science and education, particularly in the Helmholtz Association.

Finally, we had a plenary discussion on an overall strategy of the Helmholtz Juniors and on tasks for upcoming half year and their priority. Please have a look into our blog for more information.

A Newsflash from the Helmholtz Juniors speakers

We had an interesting and eventful year 2015. Read briefly about it!

The HeJus are complete

With the formation of a PhD representation at the DZNE (Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen) now all doctoral students of the Helmholtz Association are represented by a local initiative at their respective centres.

PhD Guidelines

New Helmholtz Guidelines “for the completion of PhD projects” were released in April 2015. They were created in 2014 by a working group established by the Helmholtz Association and the Helmholtz Juniors and later the Helmholtz Centers commented on it. The Guidelines are a recommendation for the individual member Centers and can be implemented voluntarily. The guidelines are available here: www.helmholtz.de/phd.

Connecting with the Helmholtz Graduate Schools

Also this year the HeJus visited the two Helmholtz Graduate School Coordinator meetings. These are great points to exchange ideas and needs. Our survey was well received as it gives valuable insights into the satisfaction of PhD students regarding their graduate schools.

Cooperation between HeJus and PhDnet

The HeJus share many interests with the PhD representation of the Max Planck Society, the PhDNet. A good reason to engage in regular exchange, for example by visiting each other's annual meeting, in order to learn from each other and to gain new insights into the present situation and upcoming challenges. We are looking forward to also cooperate with PhD student representations of the Leibniz Association and of the Fraunhofer Society that will hopefully form in the next years.

Happy birthday

This year has been a double anniversary for Helmholtz: The Helmholtz Association is turning 20 and the Helmholtz Juniors can look back on a full decade. In 2005, we were founded at a joint PhD student retreat of HZI, AWI and UFZ and kept growing and developing ever since.

Goodbye and Hello

Prof. Jürgen Mlynek retired from his position as president of the Helmholtz Association after ten years. His successor, Prof. Otmar Wiestler, took over presidency in September 2015. We received great support from Prof. Mlynek in the past years and are looking forward to keeping this good connection to the Helmholtz Head Office in future.

