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# CoCiMex

Cooperación Universitaria Alemana-Mexicana para Promover el Intercambio Académico entre Médicos Forenses en México y Alemania

## German-Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany – CoCiMex

Kick-off, 9 and 10 June 2021



Fortalecimiento  
del Estado  
de Derecho



**giz**

Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

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## CONFERENCE OFFICE



Mr Fabian Jung

**MICHEL International Relations & Services (MIRS)**  
DAAD-MEX@michel-irs.com | [www.michel-irs.com](http://www.michel-irs.com)  
T: +49 30 20659-469 | M & WhatsApp: +49-151-67195699

# German-Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany – CoCiMex

Kick-off, 9 and 10 June 2021

On behalf of the German Foreign Office (AA), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) is implementing the project “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico”. In Mexico, more than 70,000 people are considered officially disappeared. At the same time, there are thousands of as yet unopened graves and over 37,000 unknown dead. The aim is to provide relatives with certainty by identifying more of the unknown deceased, thereby contributing to social peace in Mexico and strengthening trust in the Mexican constitutional state.

In this context, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is funding the programme “German–Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany – CoCiMex”. Over a period of 13 months, the DAAD-GIZ cooperation will establish a German–Mexican research collaboration in the field of forensic identification, thus improving the reputation of forensic medicine in Mexico and creating the conditions for the application of the results of the bilateral university cooperation in forensic medical institutes in Mexico.

# German-Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany - CoCiMex

Virtual Kick-off, 9 and 10 June 2021

Wednesday, 9 June 2021 (15.30-18.00 UTC+2 | 8.30-11.00 UTC-5)

UTC+2 Germany	UTC-5 Mexico	
15.15	8.15	Login and short technical briefing
15.30	8.30	Opening of the virtual kick-off event
		<b>Ilona Daun</b> Project Manager German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany
		<b>Mirko Schilbach</b> Deputy Head of Mission German Embassy
		<b>Karla Quintana</b> Commissioner Comisionada Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas
		<b>Maximilian Murck</b> Head of Project “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico” Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ
15.50	8.50	Input Session “Get the data flowing: AM/ PM data in Mexico”
		<b>Maximilian Murck</b> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ
16.20	9.20	Short break
16.30	9:30	Input session “financial project administration”
		<b>Ilona Daun &amp; Anja Munzig</b> German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD
17.00	10.00	Short break
17.05	10.05	Project presentation: Interdisciplinary analysis of bone finds: forensic and genetic identification
		<b>University of Münster   UdG   UOBJA</b> (10 min presentation + 5 min Q&A)
17.20	10.20	Project presentation: German-Mexican university collaboration between forensic doctors
		<b>UK Hamburg Eppendorf   INACIPE   INCIFO   FGE</b> (10 min presentation + 5 min Q&A)

17.35	10.35	Short break
17.45	10.45	Project presentation: Virtual anthropology & databases for human identification in Mexican populations  University of Bonn   UNAM   UABJO   FGE Oaxaca (10 min presentation + 5 min Q&A)
18.00	11.00	Project presentation: The importance of documenting and linking AM- and PM-data  University of Frankfurt   UdG   ICJF   UABJO (10 min presentation + 5 min Q&A)
18.15	11.15	Closure for the day and preview of the next day (15 min)  Carlos Fierro Facilitator
18.30	11.30	End of day 1

### Thursday, 10 June 2021 (16.00-18.45 UTC+2 | 9.00-11.45 UTC-5)

UTC+2 Germany	UTC-5 Mexico	
15.45	8.45	Login
16.00	9.00	Extraordinary Mechanism for Identification – networking activities  Thomas Favennec, Maximilian Murck Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ
16.25	9.25	Short break
16.30	9.30	Results monitoring, presentation by CEval  Dr Vera Hennefeld Coordinator of division Education and Culture CEval Center for Evaluation
17.30	10.30	Short break
17.45	10.45	Opportunity for Q&A
18.30	11.30	Closure for the day  Carlos Fierro Facilitator
18.45	11.45	End of Kick-off meeting

# SYSTEMATISATION REPORT

Prepared by Carlos Fierro, Facilitator

21 June 2021

## List of abbreviations used in this document:

CoCiMex	German-Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange Between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service ( <i>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst</i> )
GIZ	Germany's state-run international cooperation agency ( <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i> )
MEIF	Mexico's Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism ( <i>Mecanismo Extraordinario de Identificación Forense</i> )

## 1. KICK-OFF WORKSHOP: PREPARATION

### 1.1. Objective

The purpose of the CoCiMex kick-off event was to officially mark the beginning of the selected projects involving universities and forensic experts of both Germany and Mexico; to share related details and plans; and to address financial, administrative, and monitoring issues concerning the execution of these projects. For a full summary of the CoCiMex project, please see the corresponding brochure.

### 1.2. Methodology and preparation of the event

The DAAD was responsible for organising this event. This included preparing pre-contractual directives for the selected projects, inviting the project representatives to participate, preparing and uploading event communications, summarising the selected projects, and preparing the agenda and logistics for the event.

Due to health concerns and travel restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, this event was held in a virtual format via the Zoom web platform, with participants connecting from their respective cities in Germany and Mexico.

The logistics and technical management of the event were arranged in collaboration with the event agency MICHEL IRS. The workshop was supported by professional simultaneous interpretation in German and Spanish.

### 1.3. Participants

A total of 33 university and institutional experts participated in the event, including the representatives of collaborating institutions and organisers. (DAAD/MICHEL: Could you confirm from your records how many TOTAL participants we had? It is difficult to determine from the Excel files, which account for the number of connections, but include reconnections and don't account for connections that had more than one participant present... I think you have a more accurate idea of the exact and effective number of participants.)

## 2. KICK-OFF WORKSHOP: DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS

Day 1 | Wednesday, 9 June 2021

### 2.1. Registration

Fifteen minutes before the beginning of each session, the Zoom platform was opened to allow the participants to connect and get ready to participate. A registry of all the participants who connected was kept by MICHEL IRS.

### 2.2. Opening of kick-off, welcome addresses

The workshop began with some introductory remarks from the facilitator. After that, several welcome addresses were given that are summarised below.

#### Ilona DAUN

Project Manager  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)  
Germany

On behalf of the DAAD, Ms Daun welcomed all the participants to the joint kick-off event and noted how excited she and her colleagues were to hear about their plans for their joint projects. She also extended special welcomes and thanks to Mr Schilbach from the German Embassy and Ms Karla Quintana from Mexico's National Search Commission for their participation. Ms Daun went on to state that she was sure the members of the CoCiMex project would achieve great things and was looking forward to their results. Regarding the kick-off event, she announced that the DAAD would be offering information on administrative issues, while GIZ would be providing details of other aspects that would be key to the successful realisation of the projects. In conclusion, Ms Daun said she hoped all the attendees would gain some interesting insights during the two-day event.

#### MIRKO SCHILBACH

Deputy Head of Mission  
German Embassy in Mexico

Mr Schilbach thanked the DAAD for its kind words before recapping the project's development thus far and emphasising its importance for Mexico and Germany. He also highlighted the relevance of identifying deceased people in the current context of forced disappearances and violence in Mexico. Finally, Mr Schilbach noted the international significance of the cooperation between the governments, universities, and public institutions of Mexico and Germany and wished the participants a productive workshop.

#### KARLA QUINTANA

Comisionada Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas  
Mexico

Ms Quintana began with a warm welcome from Mexico to all the participants and a reminder of how crucial the CoCiMex project is to the country. She went on to explain the work being conducted by the National Search Commission during the current situation in Mexico and underscored the importance of Germany's cooperation with its national institutions in achieving its goals. She also wished everyone a productive workshop.

#### CARLOS FIERRO

Facilitator  
Ecuador

Mr Fierro thanked the preceding speakers for their remarks before adding his own welcome to the participants. He reviewed the agenda for the two-day event and invited Anja Munzig to begin with the first presentation. Each presentation was then followed by a Q&A session.

## 2.3. Presentation: Input session: Financial Project Administration

ANJA MUNZIG

Project Manager

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)  
Germany



### QUESTIONS

Lumila:

How will things proceed once a contract is signed between universities? Does the German coordinator request the money, and does the same person handle the transfer? Can you clarify the stages involved?

### ANSWERS

Anja:

In general, once a contract has been signed and submitted by the person in charge of the contract to the web portal, the person in the third-party funding department is the one who will transfer the funds to Mexico.

Maximillian:

What could the consequences be if there are problems with invoices or receipts regarding the use of funds? Some receipts and invoices are handled by Mexican authorities. Is there any need to send invoices for expenses along with the financial reports? If an invoice or receipt is not very clear, for example, what could happen?

Anja:

What we need you to send in is a list of numbers of the invoices or receipts. The audit department will review the list. You do not have to include the physical invoices, though. If there is a problem with an invoice or receipt, you can write to us to see how we can resolve the problem. In any case, I recommend that you talk with the third-party funding department; they know all the invoice procedures and formats and will be able to assist you.

Ilona:

Strictly speaking, there should be no expenses without a receipt or invoice. You always have to document your expenses.

Christoph:

Is there a maximum amount for certain funds – for instance, if we want to buy something over a certain amount? And does this also apply to personnel salaries?

Anja:

Yes, there are amount limits, and they also apply to fees. In general, positions have to be advertised in an open and transparent call in accordance to the German procurement directive, and we ask that you please consult with the human resources department, as well. Regarding information technology, if you want to work with a partner, no small individual payments should be made on a recurring basis; it's much better to arrange just one larger framework contract.



## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

Carlos Díaz:

Should funds for researchers or investigators be paid directly to the person or to their institution?

Ilona:

Such funds should be paid into the checking account of the respective partner institution and then redirected to the beneficiary.

### 2.4. Presentation: Interdisciplinary Analysis of Bone Finds: Forensic and Genetic Identification

MAXIMILLIAN BORJA HAGEN

Doctor

Institute of Legal Medicine

University Hospital Münster

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

On behalf of: University of Münster | UdG | UOBJA



## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

NO QUESTIONS

### 2.5. Presentation: Virtual Anthropology & Databases for Human Identification in Mexican Populations

DR LUMILA PAULA MENÉNDEZ

Principal Investigator

Department Anthropology of the Americas

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

On behalf of: University of Bonn | UNAM | UABJO | FGE Oaxaca



## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

Christoph:

Is there a concrete concept for the database? Do you already have resources for its implementation, or are you going to use existing databases?

Lumila:

The idea is to optimise the existing database of the Prosecutor's Office in Oaxaca and integrate novel things like tomography. We will hire someone to build the software and optimise the processes involved. We want the repository to be a new idea for generating and combining datasets in ways that are useful for other people.

## 2.6. Presentation: The Importance of Documenting and Linking AM and PM Data

DR FRANZISKA HOLZ

Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Hospital Frankfurt

On behalf of: University Hospital Frankfurt |  
UdG | ICJF | UABJO



### QUESTIONS

Lumila:

More a comment than a question: I would like to talk more with you about the database in Oaxaca and see what collaboration we could establish.

### ANSWERS

Franziska:

Ok, that's an excellent idea – we were already thinking of contacting you about this.

## 2.7. Presentation: Identification of Unknown Deceased and Supportive Academic Exchange in Forensic Sciences in Mexico

Dr Antonia FITZEK

Resident Medical Doctor  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf

On behalf of: Citlalli Treviño,  
Fiscalía General del Estado  
de Coahuila de Zaragoza (FGE) |  
University Medical Center  
Hamburg-Eppendorf



### QUESTIONS

Ilona:

Is it possible to estimate the number of deceased people who could be identified in these projects?

### ANSWERS

Citlalli:

For many reasons, that is currently difficult to estimate.

Maximillian:

In Coahuila and Oaxaca, we estimate there are 30–35 bones to be identified, but there are difficulties in the identification process.

## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

**Ilona:**

Is it possible to estimate the number of deceased people who could be identified in these projects?

**Carlos:**

Of the 5,300 corpses received in Mexico City alone, 1,200 are unidentified, 700–800 are identified, and 400 end up in communal graves. The database is the first step towards enhancing the possibility of identification.

**Christoph:**

Realistically, we estimate that in six months, we identify a maximum of 1,000 people. If we can make the databases compatible, we will have a better chance of increasing this amount, but it depends a lot on the availability of samples, techniques, and resources. If there are enough resources, we could do DNA testing in Germany, which we estimate would cost €10,000. The participation of the families of the unidentified deceased could also increase the number of those identified.

**Carlos:**

Genetic information is important, but the participation of families is key to timely identification. There is also the possibility of doing DNA tests in Mexico.

**Lumila:**

There are around 30 bodies to be identified in Oaxaca. Besides that, the creation of the data repository will increase the number of persons identified in other states in Mexico.

**Benjamin:**

It's impossible to state a specific number, but by combining efforts and methodologies, it will be possible to identify more people in the long term.

## 2.8. Presentation: Get the Data Flowing

**Maximilian MURCK**

Head of Project

Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico |

Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



## COMMENTS

**Antonia:** More an idea than a question: I have heard many ideas here that are related to databases. I think the purpose is to coordinate and combine the different databases, which is something worth discussing. The advantage of having projects work together is that it provides further impetus for cooperation. For instance, the Red Cross and JURIS databases are currently being used, and I think the idea of coordinating them is something very useful and not very difficult to achieve.

**Carlos:** There are multiple databases in the country that are not yet unified, as you mentioned. The idea will be to combine them into something useful and manageable without “creating a monster”. We will need a specialised workforce that is up to the task of combining and coordinating the databases.

**Citlalli:** In Coahuila, there is a plan for exhumations based on DNA, but other characteristics need to be used. It is not always possible to use DNA because many fragments are carbonised, which is often the modus operandi of the murderers. It is still possible to identify many deceased people, however.

**Maximillian:** It is very important to ensure communication among the different Centers of Identification (in Coahuila and Tamaulipas, for instance) and to include the perspective of victims’ families. This is not very common in Germany, but it is very important in Mexico because for many years, the reality is that the authorities have not talked to these families.

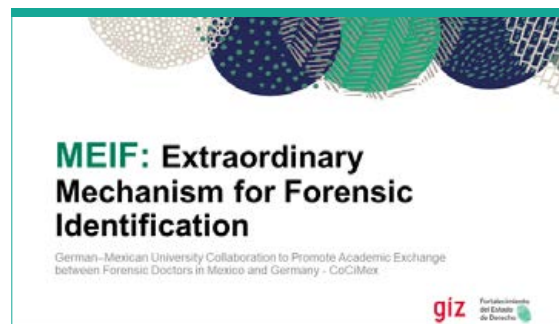
The facilitator provided a summary of the work accomplished on the first day, thanked all the participants, and previewed the agenda for the second day before bringing the session to a close.

## Day 2 | Thursday, 10 June 2021

After a brief recap of the previous day by the facilitator, the event continued with more presentations.

### 2.9. Presentation: Extraordinary Mechanism for Identification – Networking Activities

Thomas Favennec, Maximilian Murck,  
Octavio Montañes  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



## QUESTIONS

**Eliseo:**

Legal statements are a legal mandate of the Prosecutor’s Office. How will the project address this issue?

Article 136 (on the involvement of victims and their families) and Article 369 (on experts) of the National Code involve victims and are binding within the Mexican Constitution. We have been discussing this here, so I would be happy to participate.

## ANSWERS

**Thomas:**

That is a central question to address: the delay in the handling of cases. The mechanism of coordination still needs to be determined. The coordination group will do this by means of an overarching agreement, which is something that is being debated. Please feel free to attend the roundtable to address this issue.

## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

**Franziska & Christoph:**

Who will be the seven coordinators of the group? Will national and international experts be included as well?

**Thomas:**

The United Nations is in charge of the nominations. There are seven profiles and three have been selected (experts in law, international cooperation, and psychosociology), but we don't know their names yet. Next week, there will be interviews with the forensic experts. We are in the final stage of this long process and will have the names in the first week of August. There will be both national and international experts.

**Franziska & Christoph:**

Is MEIF limited in terms of its scope and dates? Will it focus on delayed cases? What is the timeline?

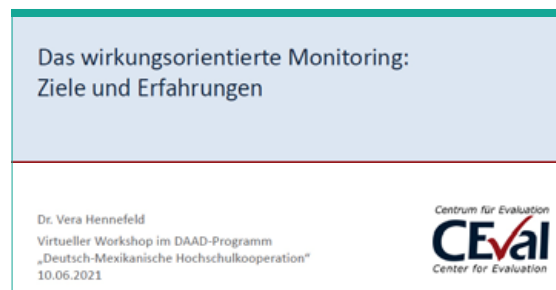
**Thomas:**

MEIF does not have a definite timeline; its mandate is to take on all the cases to be identified. MEIF was created on 5 December 2019, so it covers all the cases that precede that date. There are probably around 37,000 bodies to be identified.

## 2.10. Presentation: Results-Oriented Monitoring: Objectives and Experiences

**Dr Vera HENNEFELD**

Coordinator of division Education and Culture  
Center for Evaluation (CEval)



## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

**Andrés:**

When a new position is to be incorporated into a project, what's the best approach? Making a summary of what the person's contribution to the project will be?

**Vera:**

In the catalogue of indicators, you can indicate the type of positions to be funded by the DAAD (administrative, etc), the volume of work, and a description of the corresponding activities. It is relatively simple, and you can see the indicators in the catalogue.

**Anja:**

When the contracts are signed, you will see this in the report.

## QUESTIONS

Maximillian:

If we need to change something in the indicators, what do we have to do? Do we call Ms Munzig?

## ANSWERS

Vera:

Yes, you have to contact the DAAD to make changes. You have to submit a report by February 2022, so if you need to make any changes, please contact the DAAD as soon as possible for assistance. The important thing is to include aspects where funding is crucial. In other words, if you are delayed in some activities and there is no impact on your funding, you won't have a problem, but if it involves funding, you will.

Anja:

In projects involving GIZ, please contact DAAD first in case of doubt and we will see how to fix the issue.

Andrés:

Regarding the signing of contracts, what happens if there are delays in obtaining signatures from German and Mexican institutes? Is it necessary to have contracts signed to receive the funds? Is there an alternate way to receive them, or does an agreement have to be signed in advance?

Anja:

The contract between the University of Bonn and the DAAD is already signed. This means the university can request funding, but some other contracts have to be signed before the money can be transferred from Bonn to Mexico.

The same applies to the University of Münster. Once the contract between Münster and the DAAD is signed, they can ask the DAAD for the money, but the money can't be transferred to Mexico until you and Münster have signed the contract.

## 2.11. Final Questions and Answers

The kick-off event then culminated in a final Q&A session to address any of the participants' remaining doubts.

## QUESTIONS

Gabriela:

Can we start working with the participants from the University of Frankfurt before the contracts are signed?

## ANSWERS

Anja:

Yes, you can begin collaborating, but the funds cannot be transferred until the contracts are signed.

Maximillian Hagen:

The contract between the University of Guadalajara and our university is in process with no objections, so we expect to sign it soon.

Anja:

Yes, the contract between the two universities is the one that has to be signed prior to the transfer of funds to Mexico.

## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

**Eliseo:**

Regarding research assistants, do they have to be from one of the universities involved, or can they be external assistants? We need an expert in databases and legal issues, for example, but they are not a public employee.

**Ilona:**

Assistants can be external technicians. You have to describe your need for their expertise, and they need to be hired and paid as professional service providers. What is not possible, however, is funding a permanent employee of a public institution.

**Mirsha:**

Regarding the budget, how can money be transferred to the Prosecutor's Office to buy equipment like gloves and materials, hire a technician to create databases, digitalise skulls, and pay students to work in the Prosecutor's Office, for example? The funds will belong to the corresponding university, so how we can resolve the issue of getting the money to the Prosecutor's account? This is a problem in the Mexican public sector.

**Anja:**

We would like you to describe this problem in further detail so we can look for a solution internally. Funds are to be transferred from German universities to their Mexican counterparts, so we would need to know exactly how to proceed in this case.

**Alicia:**

In relation to the above, some projects involve two or more Mexican universities (Oaxaca and Guadalajara, for instance). Do we need to sign additional contracts with all the universities?

**Anja:**

In this case, the German partner has to prepare two contracts for the universities you mentioned: one for Oaxaca and another for Guadalajara.

**Franziska/Christoph:**

Our university in Frankfurt also has the ICJCF as a partner in Guadalajara; do we need an additional contract with the ICJCF? Do we need another contract to transfer the payments, or can the University of Guadalajara do that?

**Anja:**

You need an additional contract if personnel from the ICJCF are to be employed, but regarding equipment, there are ways to transfer funds or material directly to the institute.

**Lumila:**

Some alternatives would be to create a university unit inside the Prosecutor's Office or to buy the equipment and donate it to the Prosecutor's Office. Or, in the case of assistants, could a lump sum be offered to the students?

Also, how are you planning to solve the issues in buying materials and hiring staff for the Prosecutor's Office?

If there are people working in the Prosecutor's Office, it would be ideal to offer a stipend; with some other people working part-time, however, maybe we could offer the equivalent of a student payment. Establishing an agreement with the Prosecutor's Office would be a long process.

**Ilona:**

We need a general list of the students at the partner university. Maybe they could receive a daily stipend, but not salaries in parallel. Instead of transferring money to the Prosecutor's Office, you can pay the students directly; that will be the easiest way.

Entering into a contract with the Prosecutor's Office is not possible since it is a public institution. It may be possible to give money to people working for the Prosecutor's Office as interns, but you have to explain why you are paying them and why these particular people are needed. It may be possible with a student, but definitely not with a public employee of the Prosecutor's Office.

Andres:

Regarding the signing of agreements with universities, can a university pay for tickets or lodging costs involved in international exchanges?

Anja:

Yes, this is possible. Münster can buy tickets and pay for lodging costs directly.

Maximillian:

Can the University of Münster hire people prior to the signing of an agreement?

Anja:

There are no rules on when hiring should take place, but please consult the administration of your university. Personnel can usually only be hired once the contracts have been signed with your partner university.

Benjamin:

Some of our partners are not universities. Can we pay for non-university personnel with our funds?

Ilona:

This is a problem when you have the Prosecutor's Office involved because it is a public institution. In the case of an external institute, however, it is possible to pay fees or salaries.

Antonia:

In our project, the director on the Mexican side is a public employee from the Prosecutor's Office, and there are other public institutions involved as well. Therefore, I am wondering if there is something wrong that we have to fix here. These public officers are the ones who do the identifications, and the DAAD already knew this, so what can we do about it? For example, Citlalli is fundamental to the development of our project and she works for the Prosecutor's Office.

Anja:

Yes, in the case of INCIFO, INACOPE, and the University of Hamburg, funds can be redirected. In the case of the Prosecutor's Office, one possibility is to have contracts involving honoraria.

We will talk to the correspondent department to find a solution for this case.

Citlalli:

Which department in the Prosecutor's Office do we need to discuss this with?

NO ANSWER

## 2.12. Workshop closure and farewell

At the end of the official part of kick-off event, the individuals below offered some closing remarks.

**Dennis NEHB**

Representative

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

Mexico City, Mexico

Thank you to all the participants in Mexico and Germany. Yesterday, Mr Schilbach underlined the importance of this project to Mexico, and I am working to do the same in coordinating the project with GIZ here in Mexico. I have followed part of this event today and want to wish all the projects every success in the implementation phase. On behalf of the



Germany Embassy in Mexico, I'd also like to emphasise that identifying the thousands of bodies in Mexico is a very important and political topic. It is also a priority in the cooperation between Mexico and Germany, as well as with other partner countries – including the USA, as Vice President Kamala Harris discussed this same topic with Presidente Manuel Lopez Obrador during her visit yesterday. Again, I wish success to all the projects and people involved.

#### Carla SCHNEIDER

Junior Technical Advisor

Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico Programme

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Hello everyone, I'm the person in charge of the project Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico. You can contact me regarding this project. We want to congratulate the DAAD and all of you for this excellent event. We'd also like to wish you success with your projects and look forward to welcoming you to Mexico in the coming months. Thank you.

#### Ilona DAUN / Anja MUNZIG

Project Managers

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

#### Ilona:

Thanks to all the participants and the previous speakers for their closing remarks. We hope that these information sessions have been useful for you all. We anticipate a lot of interest in this project in the months ahead, and we are all convinced that it will be very successful. In the winter, we will hold an intermediate event to evaluate the advancements made. There are a lot of administrative questions, so please feel free to ask Anja and me about any of them. Project administration is always a complicated issue, but we are here to help. Now that we have officially kicked off the project, I wish you all a pleasant day.

#### Anja:

I also want to thank you all. Regarding the administrative questions, as Ilona mentioned, we are here to help and are very happy that the project is starting. Have a nice time in Mexico – we will see you all soon!

### 3. WORKSHOP CONCLUSION AND REMARKS

All the invited participants attended the event, and all the project presentations were given as scheduled. During the virtual sessions, the participants had the opportunity to interact both with each other and with cooperation representatives from the DAAD and GIZ. The virtual platform, interpreting, connections, and coordination by the organisers all worked quite well.

Considering these factors, the kick-off event was a total success and fulfilled its purposes and objectives.

## END OF REPORT

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name of institution

Institute of Legal Medicine, University Hospital Münster

### Short profile of institution/faculty

At the Institute of Legal Medicine in Münster we are responsible for the four surrounding state prosecutor's offices and perform about 400 autopsies a year. In addition to forensic-medical questions concerning the dead and the living, our institute deals with toxicological as well as molecular-biological investigations. We analyse about 1400 DNA traces annually and provide an average of 100 identity reports on unknown corpses as well as tissues and bones. Important research foci are forensic age assessments of living adolescents and young adults, the identification of new psychoactive substances and tissue-specific as well as age-dependent DNA methylation for the assessment of unknown DNA traces.

### Partnerships with Mexico/Germany

Universidad de Guadalajara

Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca

Fiscalía General del Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza (associated partner)

# INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS OF BONE FINDS: STRENGTHENING FORENSIC AND GENETIC IDENTIFICATION OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS IN MEXICO

## THE CHALLENGE

Previous meetings, events and discussions in the course of this DAAD-Call made clear that forensic scientists in Mexico struggle with systematic issues over and above the sheer number of unexamined DNA-samples. Consequently, in addition to



finding a way to help with the analysis of DNA-samples, this project focuses on developing long lasting collaborations, training and qualifying future forensic scientists in the field of Forensic Genetics and Human Identification as well as building a database for reference material that will help estimating the post-mortem interval (time since deposition) of human skeletal remains.

## THE APPROACH

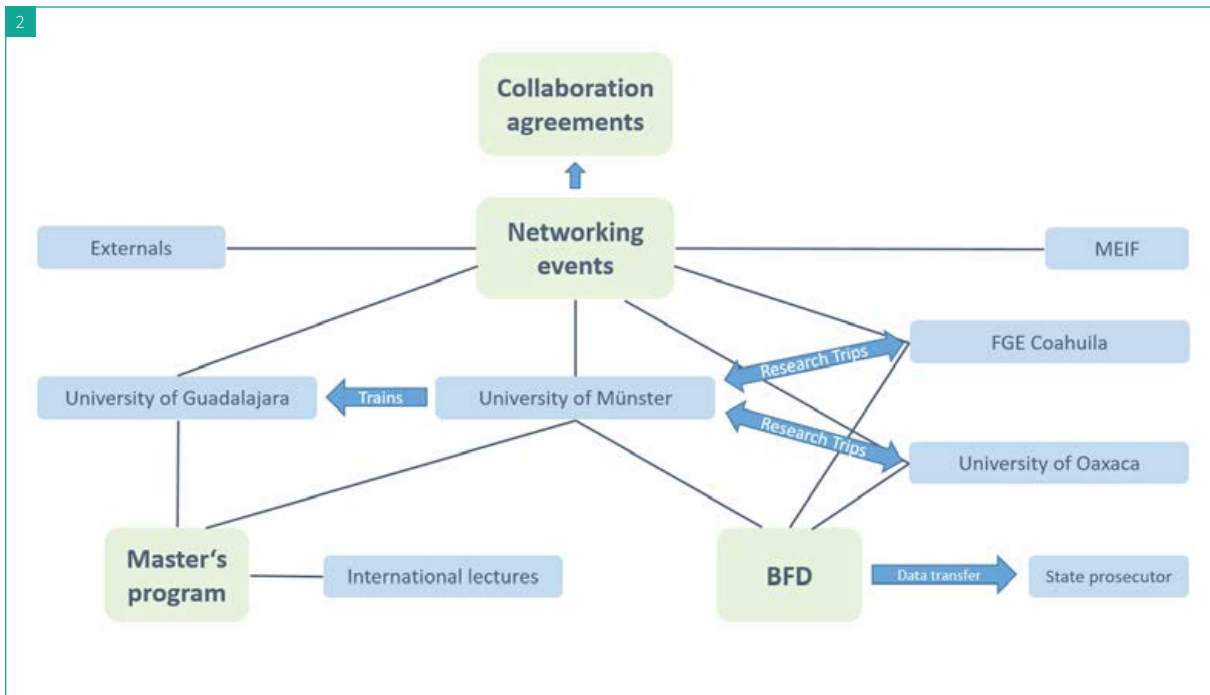
Firstly, we will perform a series of networking events in order to establish and strengthen the bonds between partners with various professional backgrounds. It is of major importance that this will not only include the participating partners of this project but also the other parties that answer this DAAD call as well as international partners.

Secondly, we will perform “train the trainers” activities in forensic molecular genetics to spread the knowledge of DNA based identification of human skeletal remains, which will then be passed on to students of a master's program, “Forensic Genetics and Human Identification”, at Guadalajara University.

Thirdly, we will establish, within the funding period of the project, a database for “bone finds” that will form a basis for estimating the post-mortem interval (time since deposition) of human skeletal remains.

## THE INTENDED IMPACT

Through these initiatives, we will strengthen institutes of forensic medicine in Mexico and lay the foundation for future international and interdisciplinary collaborations. These will, in the long term, lead to improved methods for human identi-



cation that speed up the process of solving identification cases in Mexico. By this, we strengthen the confidence of Mexican society in the rule of law in Mexico.

### Contact

Maximilian Hagen  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Hospital Münster  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster  
maximilian.hagen@ukmuenster.de

Prof Dr Marielle Vennemann  
Head of Section Forensic Molecular Biology  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Hospital Münster  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster  
marielle.vennemann@ukmuenster.de  
Dr Andres Lopez-Quintero

Associate Professor  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG)  
andres.lopezq@academicos.udg.mx

Dr Jaime Alfonso Mayoral Vazquez  
Forensic Medical  
Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO)  
jimymayoral@hotmail.com

Dr Citlalli Ixchel Treviño Gomez  
Forensic Medical Expert  
Fiscalía General del Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza (FGE)  
ixcheltg@gmail.com

### PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS

**1** Schematic overall structure of the project | **2** Examples representing the three main procedures. a) Right femur with the typical morphological correlate of a high postmortem interval. b) A series of fresh bone cut sections taken from samples of different ages. c) The positive control test for assessing the chemiluminescence using a blood sample.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name of institution

Institute of Legal Medicine, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany

### Short profile of institution/faculty

The University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) has been one of Europe's leading hospitals since it was founded in 1889. With more than 11,000 employees and more than 1700 beds, the UKE is one of the largest employers in the City of Hamburg. The Institute of Legal Medicine (ILM), part of the Diagnostic Center of the UKE, offers a comprehensive range of forensic medical services for the Hamburg metropolitan region. The ILM has its own working areas for forensic pathology, radiology, toxicology, molecular genetics and clinical forensic medicine as well as forensic age diagnostics, odontostomatology and anthropology. Due to its interdisciplinary structure, the institute is actively involved in operational case analyses of the surrounding state criminal investigation departments.

### Partnerships with Mexico/Germany

INFICO, FGE, INACIPE, UNAM

# HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS A SAFER SOCIETY – IDENTIFICATION OF UNKNOWN DECEASED AND SUPPORTIVE ACADEMIC EXCHANGE IN FORENSIC SCIENCES IN MEXICO

## THE CHALLENGE

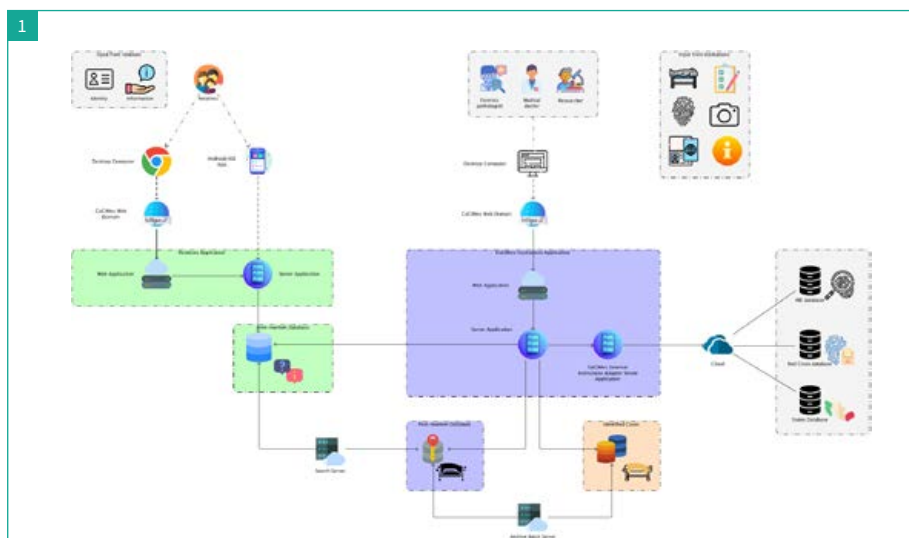
Development of a sustainable, interdisciplinary, and multi-professional forensic medical collaboration, as well as a capacity for identification of missing people and unknown deceased in Mexico. This would be achieved, through a partnership between the Mexican and German partners using state-of-the-art scientific and technical methodology, in collaboration with associated companies, such as DERMALOG/ACERTA (Acerta Computación Aplicada, S.A. de C.V.). The identification program will focus on the identification of officially

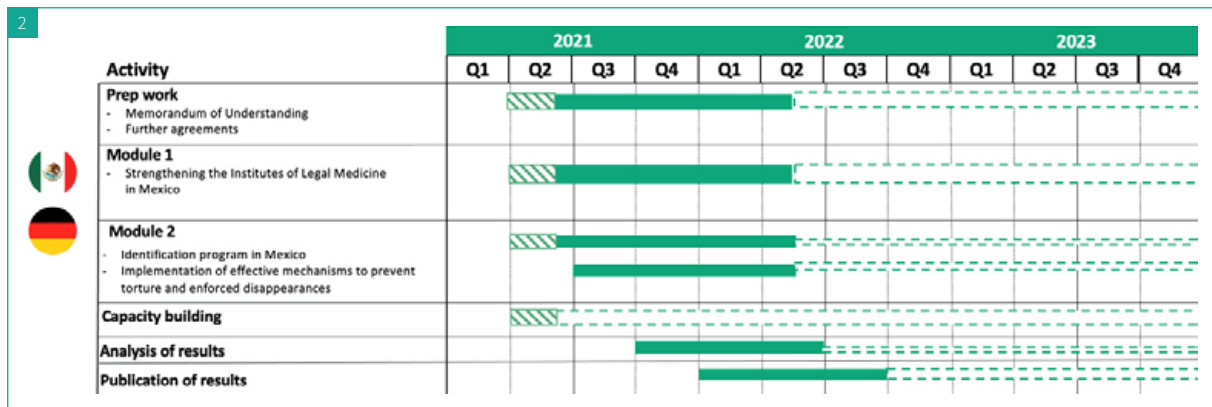
disappeared persons (AM, ante-mortem data) and unknown deceased (PM, post-mortem data). Therefore, a mergeable, unified AM (application-based) and PM (web-based) database for relatives and professionals will be established with the help of a German IT-Team.

## THE APPROACH

Curricula: Bilaterally developed curricula on site (or online), synchronization of the level of education and training of various professionals in the fields of forensic pathology, forensic anthropology, forensic molecular genetics and forensic toxicology with the initiation of topic-specific continuing education programs.

Identification program: Uniformity of AM and PM databases for institutions with the option to transfer the database onto existing platforms and vice versa. First, exchange and merging of identification variables on existing databases in Mexico City. Second, definition of necessary variables for AM- and PM database for safe





identification. Third, development of unified, easily accessible AM and PM database (application, web-based).

Community engagement to advertise the APP and unified database shall be accomplished through advertisement campaigns. The collection of the AM data on site in Mexico will be implemented by all cooperation partners. Therefore, mobile workgroups shall be established to reach the relatives and advertise the campaign in different regions. The collection of the PM data will initially be implemented through all cooperation partners. The main responsibility for data collection lies with the Mexican cooperation partners. To perform dactyloscopic comparison of fingerprints, ready-to-use fingerprint scanners for PM analysis will be acquired.

## THE INTENDED IMPACT

The AM database shall be easily accessible for relatives, using an application on their mobile devices (APP) or via a web-site. The PM database for forensic specialists shall be an access authorization regulated database. The goal is to connect both databases, to be able to use already existing data and to link matching data. Supplementation of fingerprint matches through DERMALOG / ACERTA databases is possible. A unified, nationwide applicable database, the integration of the relatives, and the practical application of these measures shall contribute to a holistic approach and the identification of officially disappeared persons and unknown deceased throughout Mexico.

### Contact

Institute of Legal Medicine, UKE  
 Dr. med. Antonia Fitzek | Resident, MD | a.fitzek@uke.de  
 Prof. Dr. med Benjamin Ondruschka | Institute Director, MD | b.ondruschka@uke.de  
 Dr. Eilin Jopp-van Well | Forensic Anthropologist | e.jopp@uke.de  
 Johanna Menger | Resident, MD | johanna.menger@uke.de  
 Sophie Landgraf | Resident, MD | s.landgraf@uke.de  
 Steve Lazzeri | steve.lazzeri@smartiotembedded.de  
 Waldemar Krause | waldemar.krause89@gmx.de  
 Marcus Schwarz | marcus.schwarz@medizin.uni-leipzig.de  
 Pierre Falkenburg | n\_falkenburg@web.de

INACIPE (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales)  
 Dr. Eliseo Lázaro Ruiz | eliseo.lazaro@inacipe.gob.mx  
 Prof Manuel Jorge Carreón Perea | jorge.carreon@inacipe.gob.mx

Aguirre López Edit Monserrat | aguirrelop24@gmail.com  
 Karen Rebeca Guadalupe Polanco Muñoz | kareninapol@yahoo.com.mx

INCIFO (Instituto de Servicios Periciales y Ciencias Forenses del Poder Judicial de la Ciudad de Mexico)  
 Dr. Carlos Enrique Díaz Otáñez | carlos.diaz@tsjcdmx.gob.mx  
 Raquel Huerta González | Forensic Anthropologist | raquel.huerta@tsjcdmx.gob.mx  
 Macuixochitl Petra Soraya Mejía Jiménez | mejiajimenez.mx@gmail.com

FGE (Fiscalía General del Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza)  
 Dr. Citlalli I. Treviño Gomez | ixcheltg@gmail.com  
 Diane Aime Medina Calvillo | daime0110@gmail.com  
 Sandra Marlen Garcia Bautista | sandramarciab@hotmail.com

### PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS

1 Conceptual application solution for am and pm database (using Visual Paradigm) | 2 Project Timeline (using Microsoft Power Point)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Name of institution**

Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn (Department of Anthropology of the Americas, University of Bonn)

**Short profile of institution/faculty**

Since its establishment 200 years ago, the University of Bonn has positioned itself as a research university that strives to answer scientific, societal, and technological questions. It ranks 4th in Germany and 87th globally (Shanghai Ranking). Some indicators of success include Nobel Prizes, Field Medals, Leibniz Prizes, as well as third-party funds amounting to about 154 million euros. The University of Bonn has six Clusters of Excellence, the largest number in Germany.

**Partnerships with Mexico/Germany**

UNAM, UABJO, FGE Oaxaca

# VIRTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY & DATABASES FOR HUMAN IDENTIFICATION IN MEXICAN POPULATIONS

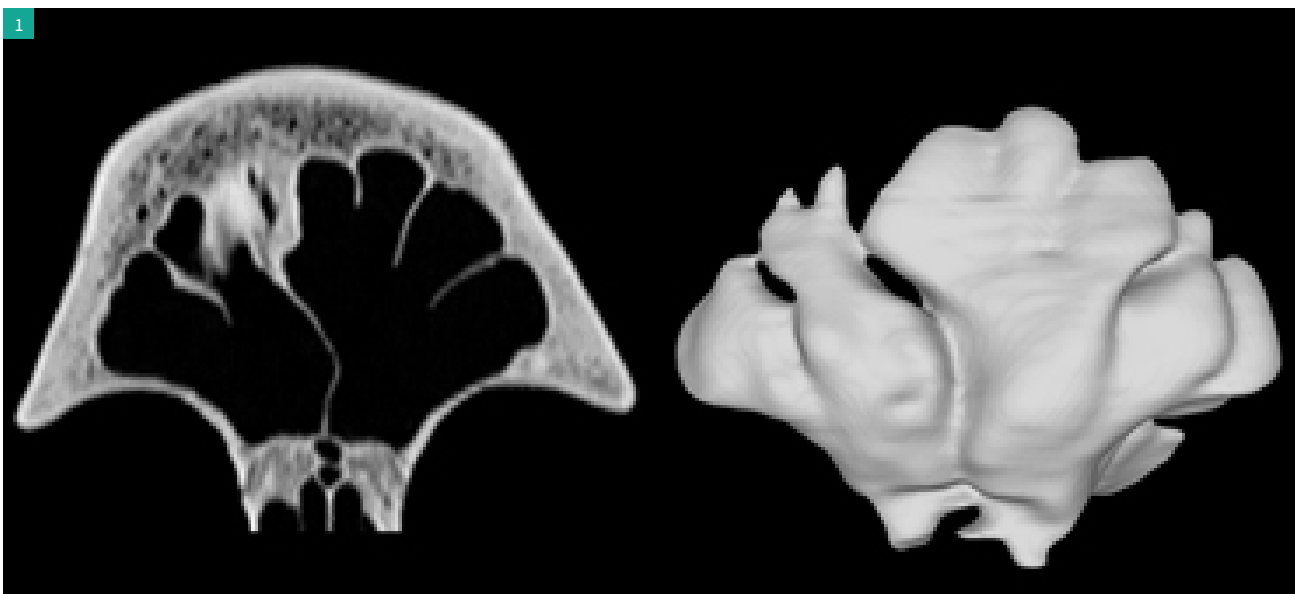
## THE CHALLENGE

The present project is focused on improving the databases of unidentified persons and applying cutting-edge methods from virtual anthropology (VA) for advancing the identification of Mexican individuals coming from forensic contexts. For this, we will focus on assessing whether the inner ear, frontal sinuses, and teeth are relevant phenotypes for human identification. Within this research agenda, we plan to create retrospective and prospective databases with imaging and postcranial data, as well as to conduct morphological analysis on endocranial and dental features of both identified and unidentified individuals. We will be focusing on the analysis of individuals from Oaxaca, but we will build a large comparative data set including individuals from other states.

## THE APPROACH

This project has 6 objectives:

- 1) Investigate the unidentified persons in Oaxaca state
- 2) Set up a project database and repository for the identified and unidentified persons in Mexico City and Oaxaca
- 3) Train Mexican experts, researchers, and students in virtual anthropology techniques
- 4) Apply virtual anthropology techniques to analysis of craniofacial phenotypes for human identification
- 5) Build up a work network on databases for unidentified persons and virtual anthropology techniques for human identification
- 6) Publish and communicate the results of the project to a wide audience

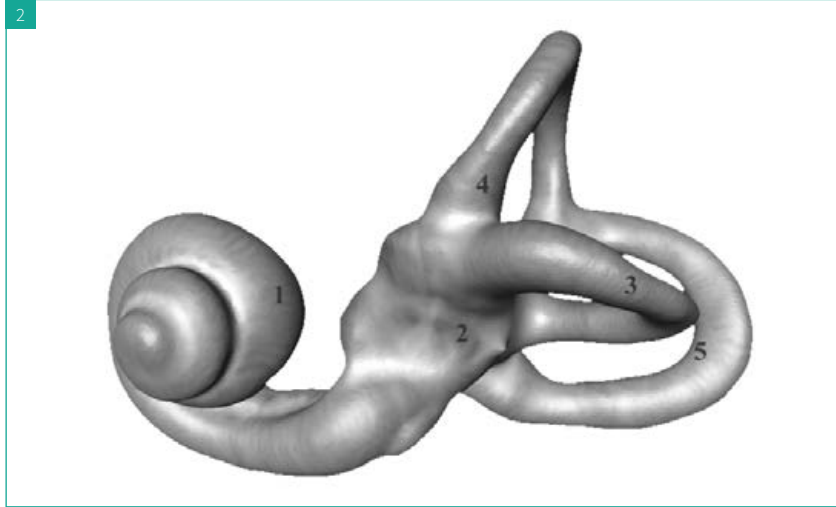




We are a team of experts with diverse backgrounds. Researchers working at the Universities will train students and experts on the use of morphometric techniques. Forensic experts at the Institute of Expert Services Oaxaca will provide an analysis of the current databases. Together, we will build up a repository and database, as well as validate the endocranial morphometric techniques for individuals from Mexico.

## THE INTENDED IMPACT

- Database improvement in Oaxaca (Activities 1-2).
- Prospective and retrospective compilation of imaging and postmortem data of identified persons from Mexico City and Oaxaca (Activities 3-4).
- Workshops and curricular Biometric Seminar design for master's students from University of Guadalajara (Activities 5-6).
- Phenotypic characterization of individuals from Mexico City and Oaxaca (Activities 7-8);
- Establish an expertise committee on databases for unidentified persons and virtual anthropology techniques for human identification (Activities 9-10);
- Submission of manuscripts and presentations at scientific events (Activities 11-12);
- Talks for relatives of missing persons (Activity 13);
- Development of three bachelor's thesis projects (Activity 14).



### Contact

#### Researchers and Forensic experts:

Lumila Paula Menéndez | PI & Lecturer University of Bonn | [menendez@uni-bonn.de](mailto:menendez@uni-bonn.de)

Mirsha Emmanuel Quinto Sánchez | Professor, National Autonomous University of Mexico | [mirsha@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx](mailto:mirsha@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx)

Alicia Fonseca Muñoz | Professor, Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca | [afonsem@gmail.com](mailto:afonsem@gmail.com)

Shunashi Soledad Victoria Bustamante | Forensic Expert, Institute of Expert Services | [bustamanteshus@gmail.com](mailto:bustamanteshus@gmail.com)

Jaime Alfonso Mayoral Vasquez | Forensic Expert, Institute of Expert Services | [jimymayoral@gmail.com](mailto:jimymayoral@gmail.com)

Yeimi Nayely Guevara Contreras | Forensic Expert, Institute of Expert Services | [hiraysumi31@me.com](mailto:hiraysumi31@me.com)

Marco Antonio Velazquez Guerrero | Forensic Expert, Institute of Expert Services | [marko\\_guerrero@hotmail.com](mailto:marko_guerrero@hotmail.com)

Ivet Margarita Gil-Chavarria | Professor, Institute of Expert Services | [ivetgil@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx](mailto:ivetgil@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx)

Andres Lopez Quintero | Professor, University of Guadalajara | [andres.lopzq@academicos.udg.mx](mailto:andres.lopzq@academicos.udg.mx)

#### Students:

María Clara López Sosa | University of Bonn

Daniela Berrio Domínguez | University of Bonn

Guillermo Bravo Morante | University of Bonn

Daniela Iveth Canchola Hernández | Autonomous University of Mexico

José Ortega Albor | Autonomous University of Mexico

Ibeth Guadalupe León Luna | Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca

Alfonso Chávez Manuel | Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca

### PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS

**1** Frontal sinuses used for personal identification. The structural complexity of the phenotype can be seen on the radiograph (left) and on a CT scan (right) Credit: Quinto-Sanchez Mirsha-UNAM. **2** Model reconstruction of the human bony labyrinth from CT-scans. References: 1 (Cochlea), 2 (Vestibule), 3 (External ductus), 4 (Superior ductus ampulla), 5 (Posterior ductus). Credit: José Braga Wikimedia Commons (modified by Lumila Menéndez).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Name of institution

Institute of Legal Medicine, University Hospital Frankfurt, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

### Short profile of institution/faculty

The Institute of Legal Medicine in Frankfurt am Main and its departments of forensic medicine, toxicology, biology (including entomology and DNA-Analyses), molecular pathology and medical law, provide medico-legal services for the metropolitan region of Frankfurt and the south of Hesse (about 3.7 million inhabitants). The institute offers education and training to students of the Goethe University Frankfurt, the Technical University Darmstadt, and the Hessian Police Academy, as well as for members of the Hessian State Criminal Police Office (HLKA) and the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). The everyday routine work includes external post mortems, autopsies, examinations of victims of violence and living persons for age determination, and expert opinions for public prosecutors and courts.

### Partnerships with Mexico/Germany

Instituto Jalisciense de Ciencias Forenses Dr. Jesús Mario Rivas Souza (IJCF), Guadalajara, Jalisco;  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG), Guadalajara, Jalisco;  
Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO), Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca

# THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCUMENTING AND LINKING AM- AND PM-DATA

## THE CHALLENGE

The focus of the project lies in the joint creation of a pragmatic approach to facilitate and hasten the identification process of unknown bodies, and to raise the chances for unknown decedents to be identified. In the Mexican context, the aware-

## THE APPROACH

The project involves training and student education as well as routine work in medico-legal services.

As there has already been a collaboration in the past between the German project partners and the IJCF, the workflow and the

1	Degree of relevance	Weighting factor	Weighted value
Social space	9.20	12.5%	1.15
Social need for the supply of forensic science disciplines	9.23	12.5%	1.15
Potential students	8.12	25%	2.03
Experts	9.15	25%	2.29
Potential employers	8.95	25%	2.24

ness of the importance of documenting and linking AM data of missing persons and PM data of unknown decedents needs to be strengthened – in education, research, procedure, and in all institutions involved in the ID-process.

Due to the high number of unidentified bodies and the tremendous consequences for the affected families and civil society, it is necessary to find solutions that make the bereavement of the families less traumatic and painful. This requires open communication, scientific assessment of the current situation and transparent action.

challenges are well known, which is a good basis for further development of ID strategies and techniques. Local needs and particularities will be taken into account, to achieve the best results. The UdG, which is developing new postgraduate degrees in forensic/legal medicine and cooperating with the IJCF, will be supported in the training of future forensic specialists. Together with UABJO, the taking of AM- and PM-data in the state of Oaxaca will be analyzed and worked on. The multicultural society and the multitude of languages will necessitate coordination efforts to realize standardized data-acquisition.



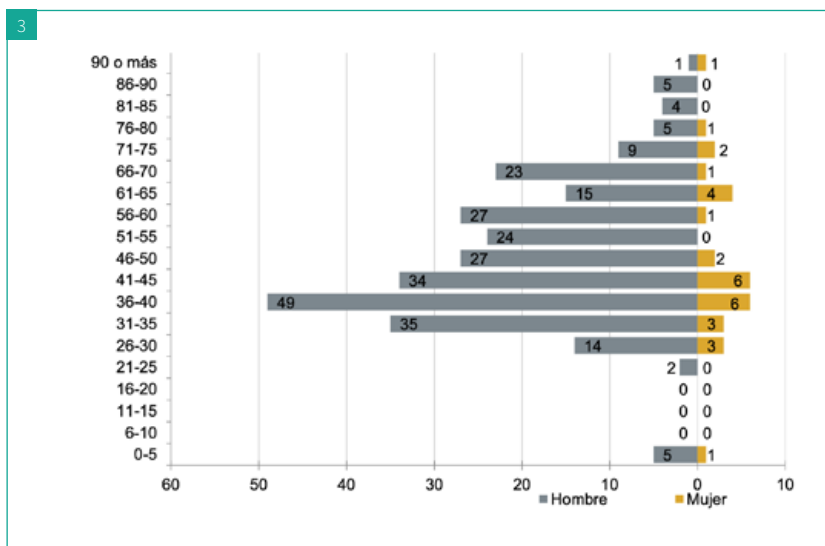
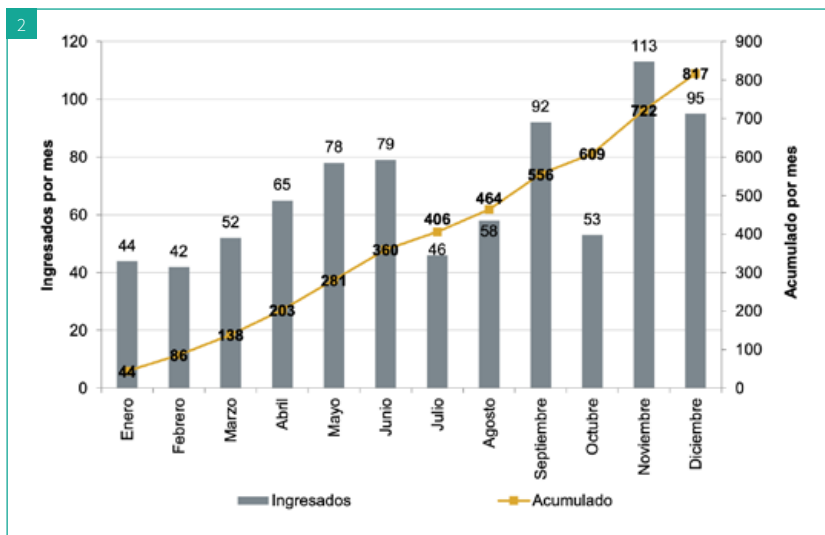
The main goal is to increase the awareness for the need to improve the quality of acquisition, structured storage, exchange, and comparison of AM- and PM-data at all levels and institutions.

## THE INTENDED IMPACT

UdG: Contributions of the project to the development of new teaching modules at the university will lead to more awareness and knowledge among the students concerning the identification of unknown bodies. Training of forensic doctors in medicolegal services will lead to an improvement in documentation of AM and PM data.

IJCF: A further development of the IJCF-databank will lead to an increase in in-house identifications. Any improvement in the identification process will lead to a better relationship between the IJCF and local NGOs, which is the basis for rebuilding trust in medicolegal services.

UABJO: The standardized acquisition of AM and PM data will be a solid basis for the building of a databank. The structured data will potentially be matchable with other states or databases.



### Contact

PD Dr. Christoph Birngruber  
Institute of Legal Medicine, University Hospital Frankfurt,  
Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main  
Senior physician, forensic pathologist, prosecutor  
Birngruber@med.uni-frankfurt.de

Dr. Franziska Holz  
Institute of Legal Medicine, University Hospital Frankfurt,  
Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main  
Physician, specializing in forensic pathology  
Holz@med.uni-frankfurt.de

Dra. Nallely Ramírez  
Perito médico adscrito al Servicio Médico Forense del  
Instituto Jalisciense de Ciencias Forenses.  
nallelyrmzc@gmail.com

Gabriela Guadalupe Carrillo-Núñez, MD  
PhD in Public Health  
Chief Dept of Morphology  
Campus Sciences Health, University of Guadalajara  
gabriela.carrillo@cucs.udg.mx

Dra. Alicia Fonseca Muñoz  
School of Biological Systems and Technological Innovation.  
Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca UABJO  
afonseca.cat@uabjo.mx

### PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS

1 Degree of relevance and weighting factor of Forensic Medicine in Jalisco. | 2 Month of admission to SEMEFO of PFSIs from January to December 2019 [IJCF]. | 3 Age groups of PFSIs whose sex and age could be identified (from January to December 2019) [IJCF].



Víctor **AURIOLES DÍAZ**

Project Assistant  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Mexico City, Mexico

Víctor Aurióles Díaz has a B.A. in international relations and political science with a focus on international analysis and the German language. He currently works as a DAAD-GIZ project assistant. He also has work experience in both the governmental field and private sectors, primarily in project management.

email: [aurioles@daadmex.org](mailto:aurioles@daadmex.org)  
URL: [www.daad.mx](http://www.daad.mx)



Dr Christoph Gerhard **BIRNGRUBER**

Senior Forensic Pathologist  
Institute of Legal Medicine Frankfurt  
University Hospital Frankfurt  
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Dr Christoph G. Birngruber graduated in human medicine from Justus-Liebig-University Giessen. His studies included stays abroad in Togo and South Africa, and his doctoral thesis (2010) investigated the individual specificity of human hair. In 2018, he completed his postdoctoral lecture qualification on the topic of identifying unknown deceased individuals using morphological methods. His research focuses on forensic pathology and the identification of unknown bodies. He recently worked as a specialist in forensic medicine at the Institute of Legal Medicine in Giessen (from April 2019) and together with Dr Franziska Holz as an international expert for the GIZ in Guadalajara, Mexico (from October 2019). Since March 2020, he has been working as a senior physician and head of the autopsy unit at the Institute of Legal Medicine in Frankfurt am Main.

email: [birngruber@med.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:birngruber@med.uni-frankfurt.de)  
ResearchGate: [profile/Christoph\\_Birngruber](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Christoph_Birngruber)  
URL: [www.rmif.de](http://www.rmif.de)



Prof Dr Ramón **BONILLA VIRGEN**

Coordinator of Medical Speciality in Legal Medicine  
University Center for Health Sciences (CUCS)  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG)

Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico

**Dr Ramón Bonilla Virgen** is a professor of histology, human anatomy, and dissections. Prior to his current position, he worked in general surgery and thoraco-abdominal trauma surgery at the Hospital Civil de Guadalajara (Fray Antonio Alcalde) and the University of Guadalajara's University Center for Health Sciences. He previously earned a scholarship as a surgeon and midwife from the latter institution. In addition, he completed in-service training in advanced laparoscopic and hiatal surgery and served as a professor in the Department of Morphology of the University Center for Health Sciences.

email: [ramon.bonilla@academicos.udg.mx](mailto:ramon.bonilla@academicos.udg.mx)  
URL: [www.cucs.udg.mx](http://www.cucs.udg.mx)



Prof Dr Gabriela Guadalupe **CARRILLO NUÑEZ**

Chief of the Department of Morphology  
University Center for Health Sciences (CUCS)  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG)

Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico

**Prof Gabriela Guadalupe Carrillo Núñez** completed her Ph.D training in public health at the University of Guadalajara. She had previously earned an M.Sc in immunology from the same institution and went on to work there as a medical doctor. She has been the head of the Department of Morphology at the University Center for Health Sciences since 2019. In addition to having served as a titular professor at the University Center for Health Sciences since 1985, she has been the co-director of the International Continuing Education Diploma at the Autonomous University of Madrid since 2018. She has also worked as the general coordinator of a programme for timely detection and counselling with regard to sexually transmitted infections (PRODOCITS) at the University Center for Health Sciences since 2012.

email: [gabriela.carrillo@cucs.udg.mx](mailto:gabriela.carrillo@cucs.udg.mx)  
URL: [www.cucs.udg.mx](http://www.cucs.udg.mx)



Ilona **DAUN**

Programme Manager  
Section P31 – Development Cooperation: Structural Programmes  
for Higher Education Institutions  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Bonn, Germany

**Ilona Daun** is a senior desk manager in the development cooperation division at the DAAD. She studied Spanish and English at TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences and holds a diploma in translation. Having grown up in southern Switzerland, she is also fluent in Italian.

Ilona Daun joined the DAAD in 2008 and has been responsible for study and research programmes for Germans in South Asia. Since 2012, she has been coordinating higher-education cooperation projects carried out with the GLZ in the department “Development Cooperation – Institution Building in Higher Education” (P31). She was also responsible for the German-Brazilian research cooperation programme NoPa, a higher-education cooperation programme on renewable energies in Senegal (PESEREE), and the Higher Education in Sustainable Textiles (HEST) programme in Bangladesh.

email: [daun@daad.de](mailto:daun@daad.de)  
URL: [www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)



Prof Carlos Enrique **DÍAZ OTAÑEZ**

Head of Research and Education  
Institute of Forensic Sciences (INCIFO)

Mexico City, Mexico

**Prof Carlos Enrique Díaz Otañez** holds a Ph.D in criminalistics and criminology and an M.Sc in biology. His areas of expertise include the identification of drugs of abuse using immunoassay methods; the determination of medicinal products, pesticides, and drugs of abuse by means of gas chromatography and mass spectrometry; and the determination of toxicants using colour development techniques.

email: [carlos.diaz@tsjcdmx.gob.mx](mailto:carlos.diaz@tsjcdmx.gob.mx)



Thomas **FAVENNEC**

Executive Director  
Lab-Co  
Mecanismo Extraordinario de Identificación Forense (MEIF)

Mexico City, Mexico

**Thomas Favenne**c is an international development professional with over 13 years of experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating publicly and privately funded programmes in Latin America, Europe, and Africa. He is the co-founder and executive director of Lab-Co, a non-profit laboratory for policy innovation in citizen security, justice, and human rights in Latin America that has offices in Mexico City and San Salvador. He also consults for different international organisations, including the GIZ. Here, he is facilitating a dialogue among authorities, victims' collectives, international organisations, and civil society on the creation of the Extraordinary Mechanism for Forensic Identification (MEIF). Thomas Favenne holds an M.P.A. from the Harvard Kennedy School, as well as a B.A. and an M.B.A. from ESSEC Business School (Paris).

email: [thomas.favennec@lab-co.org](mailto:thomas.favennec@lab-co.org)  
LinkedIn: /thomas-favennec



Carlos **FIERRO**

Facilitator

Quito, Ecuador

**Carlos Fierro** is a conservation biologist from Ecuador. He has extensive experience in both biodiversity management and conservation programmes, as well as in workshop facilitation and conflict management in Ecuador and other countries. He is fluent in both Spanish and English.

email: [carlosfierroalabarda@gmail.com](mailto:carlosfierroalabarda@gmail.com)



Dr Antonia Dorothea Elisabeth **FITZEK**

Resident Medical Doctor  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf

Hamburg, Germany

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**Dr Antonia Fitzek** was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1990 and graduated from medical school in Erlangen/Nuremberg in 2017. During her studies, she focused on completing her internships in foreign countries, including Ghana, the USA, France, the UK, Spain, and Switzerland. After graduating, she started her residency at the Institute of Legal Medicine (ILM) in Hamburg in 2017 and obtained her doctorate in 2020. Since joining the ILM, her academic interests and fields of research have included collaborations with other countries and institutions. These efforts have resulted in the full-scope establishment of a cornea tissue bank in Rwanda, for example, as well as interdisciplinary research projects focusing on tumour biology and the pathogenesis of infectious diseases with the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine.

email: [a.fitzek@uke.de](mailto:a.fitzek@uke.de)  
URL: [www.uke.de](http://www.uke.de)



Dr Alicia **FONSECA MUÑOZ**

Professor  
Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO)

Oaxaca, Mexico

---

**Dr Alicia Fonseca Muñoz** has been a part-time lecturer in the Department of Biology Sciences at Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca since 2012. In this role, she has taught undergraduate courses in bioethics, ethnobiology, medical entomology, the history and philosophy of biology, evolution, and microbiology. She has also organised and planned all the material presented in her lectures and graded, mentored, and evaluated her students. Her research interests include biomedical science, biological science, medical and forensic entomology, biotherapy using *Lucilia sericata* larvae, photochemistry, and ethnopharmacology. She also recently completed a research stay in the Department of Animal Biology at Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Brazil) from August to December 2018.

email: [afonsem@gmail.com](mailto:afonsem@gmail.com)  
ResearchGate: [/profile/Alicia\\_Fonseca](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alicia_Fonseca)  
URL: <https://larvaterapia.com/>

Dr Ivet Margarita **GIL-CHAVARRIA**

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Yeimi Nayeli **GUEVARA CONTRERAS**

---



Maximilian Borja **HAGEN**

Doctor  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Hospital Münster  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Münster, Germany

---

**Maximilian Hagen** has been responsible for the establishment of an examination algorithm for bone finds. He has already gained a great deal of experience in scientific work both at national and international conferences and in the course of his own publications. Mr Hagen covers the entire spectrum of forensic medical tasks at the Institute of Legal Medicine and has been involved in the its curricular teaching since the beginning of his employment there.

email: [maximilian.hagen@ukmuenster.de](mailto:maximilian.hagen@ukmuenster.de)  
URL: [www.ukm.de](http://www.ukm.de)



Dr Vera **HENNEFELD**

Coordinator of division Education and Culture  
Center for Evaluation (CEval)

Saarbruecken, Germany

---

Dr Vera Hennefeld is a sociologist and head of the Education and Culture Department at CEval GmbH as well as a long-standing lecturer in the 'Master of Evaluation' program at Saarland University. As project manager, she is responsible for the technical and methodological conception, implementation and quality assurance of all monitoring and evaluation projects in her field of work. In addition, she conducts evaluations, consultancy assignments and training measures herself and, in this context, also advises the DAAD on the conception and implementation of its impact-oriented monitoring (WoM).

email: [v.hennefeld@ceval.de](mailto:v.hennefeld@ceval.de)  
URL: <https://www.ceval.de>





### Dr Franziska **HOLZ**

Physician  
Institute of Legal Medicine Frankfurt  
University Hospital Frankfurt  
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

**Dr Franziska Holz** studied human medicine at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen following working stays in Paris (France) and Antigua (Guatemala). As part of her studies, she completed internships in Lomé (Togo) and Castlebar (Ireland). For her doctoral thesis, she analysed bones from an ossuary discovered by chance during renovation work. The focus was on the development of biological profiles (sex, age at death, body height) and the analysis of injury traces on the bones, in particular with regard to their time of origin (pre-/peri-/post-mortal). Since 2016, Dr Holz has been undergoing further training to become a specialist in forensic medicine. Together with Dr Christian Birngruber, she worked as an international expert on behalf of the GLZ in Guadalajara (Mexico) in April 2019.

email: [holz@med.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:holz@med.uni-frankfurt.de)  
ResearchGate: [/profile/Franziska\\_Holz2](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Franziska_Holz2)  
URL: [www.rmif.de](http://www.rmif.de)



### Dr Eilin **JOPP-VAN WELL**

Forensic Anthropologist  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf

Hamburg, Germany

**Dr Eilin Jopp-van Well** is a forensic anthropologist who has been an associate in the Institute of Legal Medicine at the University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf since 2000. She is responsible for forensic anthropological / archaeological cases (forensic osteology and identification of exhumations, corpse search and recovery for police and public prosecutors) and forensic age determination of the living. She has been participating in annual summer schools in Kigali since 2016 as part of a DAAD project in Rwanda and is a lecturer for the National Police College in Musanze. She has also been involved in the documentation of human remains at the Murambi Genocide Memorial. In particular, this has included identifying features and categorising injuries (ante-, peri-, and post-mortem) and tissue damage.

email: [eilin.jopp@web.de](mailto:eilin.jopp@web.de)  
URL: [www.uke.de](http://www.uke.de)



Dr Eliseo **LÁZARO RUÍZ**

Senior Researcher  
Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales (INACIPE)

Mexico City, Mexico

Dr Eliseo Lázar Ruiz holds a Ph.D in criminal sciences and criminal policy and a master's degree in criminalistics from the National Institute of Criminal Sciences (INACIPE), as well as an M.Sc in scientific methodology from the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). He also completed advanced studies in oral litigation with a specialisation in forensic sciences at the California Western School of Law. He is the author of the books *The Expert in the Accusatory Penal System* and *Forensic Science and Cross-Examination*. One of his most relevant investigations in forensic science, "Blood Coagulation in Determining Time of Death", was published by the Ibero-American Academy of Criminalistics and Forensic Studies.

email: [eliseo.lazaro@inacipe.gob.mx](mailto:eliseo.lazaro@inacipe.gob.mx) | email: [eliseolazaroruizvp\\_13@hotmail.com](mailto:eliseolazaroruizvp_13@hotmail.com)  
URL: [www.inacipe.gob.mx](http://www.inacipe.gob.mx)



Dr Andres **LOPEZ-QUINTERO**

Associate Professor  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG)

Guadalajara, Mexico

Dr Andres Lopez-Quintero has been an associate professor at Universidad de Guadalajara since January 2019. He spent most of his academic career at the same institution, earning a bachelor's degree in biological and pharmaceutical chemistry, as well as an M.Sc and a Ph.D in human genetics. He also spent five months as a research fellow in the Institute for Diabetes and Obesity (IDO) at the Helmholtz Zentrum in Munich, Germany. His research interests include human genetics, association analysis, genetic diversity, forensic genetics, and the genomics/proteomics of human identification. His expertise lies in genetics, genetic markers, metabolism, obesity, type-2 diabetes, and chronic diseases.

Publications: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%5BLopez-Quintero+A%5D>

email: [andres.lopezq@academicos.udg.mx](mailto:andres.lopezq@academicos.udg.mx)  
ResearchGate: [/profile/Andres\\_Lopez\\_Quintero](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andres_Lopez_Quintero)  
URL: [www.cucs.udg.mx](http://www.cucs.udg.mx)

Dr Jaime Alfonso **MAYORAL VÁSQUEZ**

---



Dr Lumila Paula **MENÉNDEZ**

Principal Investigator  
Department Anthropology of the Americas  
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

Vienna, Austria

---

Dr Lumila Menéndez is a biological anthropologist who focuses on studying human evolution and biocultural diversity in the Americas. More broadly, her scientific interests are concentrated in human evolution, imaging methods, theoretical biology, and ancient expansions. She completed her studies in anthropology and natural sciences at the University of La Plata (Argentina), along with postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Tübingen (Germany) and the Konrad Lorenz Institute (Austria). She is currently leading a project funded by the German Research Council (DFG) that is based at the University of Bonn and focuses on studying morphological variation to evaluate the role of random and non-random processes in shaping the morphological diversification during the peopling of the Americas.

email: [menendez@uni-bonn.de](mailto:menendez@uni-bonn.de) | Twitter: @lumilapm  
ResearchGate: [profile/Lumila\\_Menendez](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lumila_Menendez)  
URL: [www.iae.uni-bonn.de](http://www.iae.uni-bonn.de)



Anja **MUNZIG**

Project Manager  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Bonn, Germany

---

**Anja Munzig** is a project manager in the development cooperation division at the DAAD. She joined the DAAD in 2008 and has been responsible for scholarship holders from Pakistan and Brazil. Since 2013, she has been working as a project manager in higher-education cooperation projects carried out with the GIZ in the department “Development Cooperation – Institution Building in Higher Education” (P31). In the past, Anja Munzig worked for the German-Brazilian research cooperation programme NoPa and the German-Bangladeshi Higher Education Network for Sustainable Textiles (HEST). She is now involved in the German-Ecuadorian Research Program on Biodiversity and Climate Change (CoCiBio) and the German-Mexican University Collaboration to Promote Academic Exchange between Forensic Doctors in Mexico and Germany (CoCiMex).

email: [munzig@daad.de](mailto:munzig@daad.de)  
URL: [www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)



Maximilian David **MURCK**

Head of Project  
Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Mexico City, Mexico

---

**Maximilian David Murck** graduated with a master’s degree in international strategy and economics from the University of St Andrews (United Kingdom). Before joining the German international development organisation GIZ, he worked as a strategic management consultant and was an international consultant to the World Bank. Currently, he is head of the GIZ project “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico”.

email: [maximilian.murck@giz.de](mailto:maximilian.murck@giz.de)



## Prof Dr Karoline **NOACK**

Professor  
Department of Ancient American Studies  
University of Bonn

Bonn, Germany

**Karoline Noack** received her habilitation and PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin. Currently, she is professor in Anthropology of the Americas and Ethnology at the University of Bonn. She is also speaker of the Transdisciplinary Research Area “Past Worlds and Modern Questions” and principal investigator of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies. Her research specializations are ethnological provenance research in European museums and collections, material culture studies, visual anthropology and gender studies. Her regional focus has been on Andean countries, especially Peru and Bolivia, but also on Mexico in a transnational context. Here, she continues to work on processes of transculturation in a historical perspective and their transcontinental relations.

email: [knoack@uni-bonn.de](mailto:knoack@uni-bonn.de)  
URL: <https://www.uni-bonn.de>



## Prof Dr Benjamin **ONDRUSCHKA**

Director  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf

Hamburg, Germany

**Benjamin Ondruschka** is a full professor for forensic pathology. He chairs the Institute of Legal Medicine and is managing director of ForEx GmbH at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf Germany. The institute being one of the largest forensic departments in Europe provides full forensic services including forensic pathology radiology toxicology genetics anthropology entomology age assessment and clinical forensics for the Hamburg metropolitan area. Ondruschka’s research is focusing on fatal traumatic brain injury biomechanics of human head tissue layers and cardiopulmonary resuscitation-related injuries. He received various prizes for his research and teaching in Germany and New Zealand. Ondruschka is a board member of the German Society of Legal Medicine.

email: [b.ondruschka@uke.de](mailto:b.ondruschka@uke.de)  
ResearchGate: [/profile/Benjamin\\_Ondruschka](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Benjamin_Ondruschka)  
URL: [www.uk.de](http://www.uk.de)



Aurora Marcela **PEREZ FLOREZ**

Forensic Advisor  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Mexico City, Mexico

---

**Aurora Marcela Pérez Flórez** has a degree in biology and a master's degree in physical anthropology. She is currently studying for a doctorate in physical anthropology at the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) in Mexico. Her main areas of interest are bone trauma and the analysis of violence. She has been trained in the analysis of bone trauma during different research projects in Colombia, Mexico, and the United States. She has also participated in various national and international congresses and published articles on the analysis of bone trauma. In 2019, she was invited to the University of Alaska at Anchorage (USA) to work as an instructor affiliated with the Department of Anthropology. She currently works as a forensic advisor for the German international cooperation organisation GIZ in Mexico.

email: [aurora.perezflorez@giz.de](mailto:aurora.perezflorez@giz.de)  
URL: [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

---

Karla **QUINTANA OSUNA**

Commissioner  
Comisionada Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas



### Dr Mirsha Emmanuel **QUINTO-SÁNCHEZ**

Associate Professor  
Forensic Science Institute  
National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

Mexico City, Mexico

Dr Mirsha Quinto-Sánchez is a biologist from the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo. He holds a master's degree in physical anthropology from UNAM and a doctorate in natural sciences from the National University of La Plata (Argentina). He has published 26 articles and 11 book chapters on subjects such as anthropological biology, forensic anthropology, and applied radiology. He has directed and advised undergraduate theses in physical anthropology, biology, and forensic science. His lines of research deal with human craniofacial variation, human identification protocols, the management of pantheons and mass graves, and methods for the determination of sex and ancestry. He is part of Mexico's National System of Level-1 Researchers and currently works as an associate professor of forensic science in the Faculty of Medicine at UNAM..

email: [mirsha@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx](mailto:mirsha@cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx)

URL: [www.cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx](http://www.cienciaforense.facmed.unam.mx) | URL: [www.laofunam.com](http://www.laofunam.com)



### Prof Nallely Elizabeth **RAMÍREZ CORONA**

Medical Expert  
Instituto Jalisciense de Ciencias Forenses  
Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG)

San Pedro Tlaquepaque Jalisco, Mexico

Prof Nallely E. Ramírez Corona graduated from the University of Guadalajara with a master's degree in forensic sciences with a focus on expert opinion and legal medicine. She is currently an expert in forensic medicine at the Jalisciense Institute of Forensic Sciences. She is also undergoing international training with the Foundation of Forensic Anthropology of Guatemala (FAFG) on the search for and identification of missing persons. Her interests include subjects related to femicide and human identification techniques.

email: [nallelyrmzc@gmail.com](mailto:nallelyrmzc@gmail.com) | email: [rcnallely@hotmail.com](mailto:rcnallely@hotmail.com)

URL: [www.udg.mx](http://www.udg.mx)

## Mirko **SCHILBACH**

Deputy Head of Mission  
German Embassy

---



## Carla **SCHNEIDER**

Junior Technical Advisor  
Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico Programme  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Hamburg, Germany

---

**Carla Schneider** graduated with a bachelor's degree in international communication and translation from the University of Hildesheim in 2015 and worked as a trainee as junior project manager in the field of technical translation. In 2020 she obtained a master's degree in Latin American studies from the University of Hamburg. Currently, she is a junior technical advisor for the GIZ project "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico".

email: [carla.schneider@giz.de](mailto:carla.schneider@giz.de)  
URL: [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)





Dr Citlalli Ixchel **TREVIÑO GOMEZ**

Forensic Medical Expert  
Fiscalía General del Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza (FGE)

Saltillo Coahuila, Mexico

Dr Citlalli Ixchel Treviño Gomez graduated with a bachelor's degree in medical science from the University of Monterrey in 2008 and went on to obtain a master's degree in forensic sciences from the University of Murcia in 2012. Since 2015, she has been working at Fiscalía General del Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza as a forensic doctor in the human identification team as part of the state's exhumation programme. In 2017, she also began serving as a professor of forensic medicine at La Salle University. That same year, she started working in exhumation throughout the state of Coahuila, where she has been involved in the identification of more than 31 people using different techniques (in particular based on DNA).

email: ixcheltg@gmail.com  
URL: [www.fiscaliageneralcoahuila.gob.mx](http://www.fiscaliageneralcoahuila.gob.mx)



Dr Marco Antonio **VELASQUEZ GUERRERO**

Forensic Odontologist  
Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO)

Oxaca, Mexico

Dr Marco Antonio Velasquez Guerrero is a forensic odontologist at the General Prosecutor's Office of the State of Oaxaca..

email: eliseo.lazaro@inacipe.gob.mx  
email: eliseolazaroruizvp\_13@hotmail.com

**Prof Dr Marielle VENNEMANN**

Head of Section Forensic Molecular Biology  
Institute of Legal Medicine  
University Hospital Münster  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Münster, Germany

---

**Prof Marielle Vennemann** is a forensic molecular geneticist with 19 years of experience in her field. She studied anthropology with a focus on human remains. In addition to herself, her laboratory currently comprises three technicians and three scientists. The lab performs routine forensic case work involving crime scene traces and the identification of deceased individuals. One of the current focuses of its research is on molecular age estimation using epigenetic signatures. In addition, the lab is now in the process of implementing massive parallel sequencing. This technology makes it possible to predict the hair-, skin-, and eye colour of an unidentified person and analyse their biogeographic origin.

email: [marielle.vennemann@ukmuenster.de](mailto:marielle.vennemann@ukmuenster.de)  
ResearchGate: [/profile/Marielle\\_Vennemann](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marielle_Vennemann)  
GoogleScholar  
URL: [www.ukm.de](http://www.ukm.de)

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Prof Dr Ramón <b>BONILLA VIRGEN</b> Coordinator of Medical Speciality in Legal Medicine University Center for Health Sciences (CUCS) Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG) Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico	15	Dr Ivet Margarita <b>Gil-Chavarria</b> Yeimi Nayeli <b>GUEVARA CONTRERAS</b> Maximilian Borja <b>HAGEN</b> Doctor Institute of Legal Medicine University Hospital Münster Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster Münster, Germany	19 19 20
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Ilona <b>DAUN</b> Programme Manager Section P31 – Development Cooperation: Structural Programmes for Higher Education Institutions German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Bonn, Germany	16	Dr Franziska <b>HOLZ</b> Physician Institute of Legal Medicine Frankfurt University Hospital Frankfurt Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main Frankfurt am Main, Germany	21
Prof Carlos Enrique <b>DÍAZ OTAÑEZ</b> Head of Research and Education Institute of Forensic Sciences (INCIFO) Mexico City, Mexico	16	Dr Eilin <b>JOPP-VAN WELL</b> Forensic Anthropologist Institute of Legal Medicine University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf Hamburg, Germany	21
Thomas <b>FAVENNEC</b> Executive Director Lab-Co Mecanismo Extraordinario de Identificación Forense (MEIF) Mexico City, Mexico	17		
Carlos <b>FIERRO</b> Facilitator Quito, Ecuador	17		

Dr Eliseo <b>LÁZARO RUÍZ</b> Senior Researcher Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales (INACIPE) Mexico City, Mexico	22	Karla <b>QUINTANA OSUNA</b> Commissioner Comisionada Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas	26
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Dr Lumila Paula <b>MENÉNDEZ</b> Principal Investigator Department Anthropology of the Americas Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn Vienna, Austria	23	Mirko <b>SCHILBACH</b> Deputy Head of Mission German Embassy	28
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Aurora Marcela <b>PEREZ FLOREZ</b> Forensic Advisor Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Mexico City, Mexico	26		

## IMPRINT

### Organiser and Publisher

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)  
Kennedyallee 50  
53175 Bonn  
+49 (228) 882-0  
www.daad.de



### Project Coordination

Ilona Daun  
daun@daad.de  
Anja Munzig  
munzig@daad.de  
Institution Building in Higher Education  
Development Cooperation and Transregional  
Programmes  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

MICHEL International Relations & Services, Berlin  
Rebecka Michel

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