



# yHEP Report 2021

KHuK Annual Meeting – 10.Dec.2021

on behalf of the yHEP management board

Alina Nasr-Esfahani, Anna Pollmann, Annika Thiel, Christian Grefe, [Elisabetta Prencipe](#), Valerie Lang

# What is yHEP

- yHEP = **y**oung **H**igh **E**nergy **P**hysicists Association
- Founded on 25.09.2016 ( → discussion started in 2015)
- Represent young scientists in Germany  
(PhD students, Postdocs, Fellows, Young Investigators, Emmy-Noether, Junior Professors w/o tenure-track...)
- More than 300 associated members up to now:  
physicists from **KET**, **KAT**, **KHuK**, **KfB** with non-permanent contracts
- 4 sessions, related to the 4 German physics committees
- <https://yhep.desy.de/>  
Please, subscribe as a member: it is free of charge! 😊

# Goals of yHEP

Understand the situation of young scientists



Improve the situation of young physicists



Improve environmental sustainability in science



Get involved in decision about the future of research



Create network of young scientists within/beyond research

# yHEP MB organization

- 4 panels formed, each one with a chair + deputy in the yHEP MB  
**!!new!! KfB**, after the new election in 2021 for the first time
- Quarterly newsletters sent to the whole yHEP community
- Regular meetings in the yHEP MB (6 members up to now; 8 from the next year)
- Next yHEP topical event planed on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec: *Future of HEP*

# yHEP Management Board 2021

K E T



MB chair

Valerie Lang

Akad. Rat a.Z.  
Uni Freiburg



Christian Grefe

Postdoc  
Uni Bonn

K A T



Anna Pollmann

Akad. Rat a.Z.  
Uni Wuppertal



Alina Nasr-Esfahani

PhD Student  
Uni Wuppertal

K H u K



Elisabetta Prencipe

Postdoc  
Uni Giessen



MB deputy chair

Annika Thiel

Jun. Prof.  
Uni Bonn

+2 members

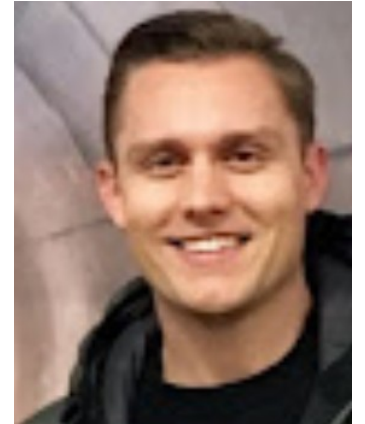


Who can vote?

All yHEP members  
Institutional email needed

# yHEP on social media

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/yhep/>
  - 48 followers up to now
  - Survey, questioning working conditions
  - Announcement of panel discussions
  - yHEP events

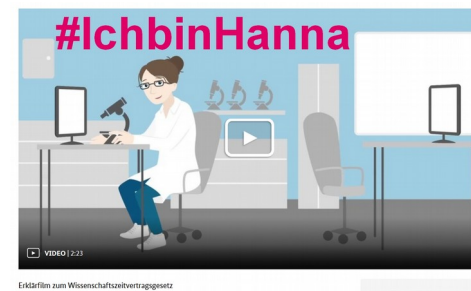


Rickard Ström

Postdoc  
DESY

# Understanding and improving: How?

# #ichbinhanna #ichbinreyhan

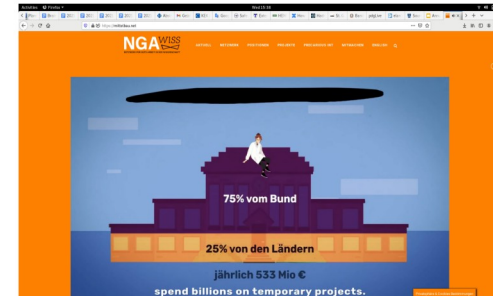


- Twitter trend among young researchers
- Protest against the situation of having **precarious contracts** in German universities (PhD and postdocs voice on twitter >22k twitters, in a very short time)
  - reason of the protest: **create uncertainty and prevent innovation**
- **Science Term Contract Act, 2007**: limited term contracts (max 12 years, 15 in Medicine). Then, self-supporting!
- BMBF: “Abolishing the **Science Time Contract Act** would not lead to more open-ended positions. Rather, scientific qualifications would only be possible for a very small group of people - so there would be fewer qualification and career opportunities” [1]
- Diversity: “Academics with children and foreign researchers whose residence permit depends on the employment contract could hardly afford to live with the uncertainty of temporary contracts and thus pursue a career in science. This has a **negative effect on diversity in research**”
- The constant fixed-term employment of employees makes long-term projects **almost impossible**



# #ichbinhanna #ichbinreyhan

- Discussion in public, with BMBF, etc. [2][3]
- “[...] the Science Contract Act [...] is a special fixed-term law law that regulates that researchers in Germany can be employed for a maximum of six years before and six years after completing their doctorate. After that, the time limit must be extended. But that does not happen due to a lack of jobs, so most of them are thrown out of the system by then at the latest - with all their qualifications and knowledge that are then **lost to science**.”
- Instead of doing research in peace, one has to keep writing new applications and proposals.
- Some proposals:
  - **realistic contracts**, at least long as a PhD term
  - people with a PhD who are willing to stay in research and/or able to write their own (first!) proposal: employed on **permanent basis**, or get a **clear transparent perspective**.



# The “Berlin” solution



- The Ministry of Education justified the temporary positions by stating that research always needed new impulses [4]
- S. Kubon: “This argument that only constant fluctuation creates innovation has been around for decades without ever being scientifically verified. According to this logic, professors should not be deferred....” “[..]this absurd situation, then in my opinion this is anti-human and anti-science”

S.Kubon is a research associate at the History Department at the University of Hamburg. A.Kubon, A.Bahr and K.Eichhorn created [#ichbinhanna](#)

This logic burns out generations of good scientists

Overall, science is a precarious system worldwide

- On 02.09.2021 the new Berlin Higher Education Act passed:  
**Unlimited position of postdocs.** Is this a *step forward* or a *step back*?

**HANNA AND REYHAN DON'T NEED "HELP", THEY NEED FUTURE PROSPECTS AND PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION** → **We need a structural change**



# Working situation of early career researchers

- Payment for PhD students → yHEP recommends  $\frac{2}{3}$  positions
- Important to attract good PhD candidates and be competitive
- Supported by KET and KhuK

<https://www.ketweb.de/stellungnahmen/e308231/Text-PhD-v2.3.pdf>

- Dark side: not considered with increase in funds by BMBF
  - strong recommendation to stick with the proposed payment →
  - how to handle this is left up to group leaders
  - exactly the situation we (yHEP) wanted to avoid → need to do proselytism

# Working situation of early career researchers

- Late funding **notifications from the BMBF** this year, **2021**
- Difficulties for people on non-permanent contract and/or foreign researchers, i.e. yHEP members
  - unemployment, visa issues, health insurance, possible need to move, issues with loans, etc. but most important, it appeared as a sign of non-respect through non-permanent researchers
- Proposal: **at least 3 months** in advance need notification to properly deal with various regulations
- Protest letter sent to the BMBF in November 2021, pointing out the implication for non-permanent researchers
- Non-public informative letter sent around yHEP community
- Coordinate KET an KHuK on this action
- Apparently Covid19 affected the work at BMBF, and produced delays
- Need time now to decide how to proceed

# Working situation of early career researchers

- DFG applications (research grants, Emmy Noether,...): it takes longer time than usual
- In average, one has to wait more than 8 months to get an answer
- DFG Head Office very responsive, and available for any clarification, any time
- Extension was possible, due to Covid19 pandemic: very much appreciated!

[https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/info\\_wissenschaft/2021/info\\_wissenschaft\\_21\\_25/index.html](https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/info_wissenschaft/2021/info_wissenschaft_21_25/index.html)

[https://www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/announcements\\_proposals/2021/info\\_wissenschaft\\_21\\_25/index.html](https://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/announcements_proposals/2021/info_wissenschaft_21_25/index.html)

# Working situation of early career researchers

- How did Covid19-pandemic restrictions affect the life of scientists?

Heavy duty to pay for young researchers:

- frustration
- delays at any level: papers/deadlines/contracts, etc.
- preoccupation about their future in research, after m.sc or PhD term
- most affected category: women (with children)
  - lack of/closing baby day-care plays a big role!

- Unequal effect of Covid19 pandemic in science [5]

“COVID-19 has not affected all scientists equally. A survey of principal investigators indicates that **female scientists**, those in the ‘bench sciences’ and, especially, **scientists with young children** experienced a substantial decline in time devoted to research. This could have important short- and longer-term effects on their careers, which institution leaders and funders need to address carefully.”

# Environmental sustainability in science

- This year was named as “**Year of environmental awareness**” by CERN [6]
- Statement from yHEP, 2020:  
[https://yhep.desy.de/sites/sites\\_custom/site\\_yhep/content/e61887/e122133/yHEPStatementonenvironmentalsustainabilityinScience\\_final.pdf](https://yhep.desy.de/sites/sites_custom/site_yhep/content/e61887/e122133/yHEPStatementonenvironmentalsustainabilityinScience_final.pdf)
- New document will be ready and published soon
- Positive feedback to our statement → this is a start, but not the conclusion!
- Effort from everybody is needed
- Sustainability in HEP: workshop in June 2021 [7]  
→ closing statement signed by **494 scientists**
- Presentation at the annual KET meeting, this year
- *Physics Today* mentioned yHEP work on environmental sustainability

## A sprinkling of scientists prioritizes behaviors to counter climate change

Can steps like less travel and more talk advance science and serve as an example to the public?

“Many of people believe humans could move to another planet,” says Adrienne Cool, a professor at San Francisco State University who studies globular clusters. “That narrative is out there, and part of our job as astronomers is to counter it, to make clear that there is no Planet B.” A few years ago, Cool was “struggling with the contrast of spending time and mental energy thinking about things that are so far away when what’s happening here on Earth is so urgent.” She, colleagues, and students resolved to work toward climate sustainability.

Meanwhile, in June 2019, astronomers in Europe gathered for a conference in Lyon, France, recalls Leo Burtscher, a staff astronomer at Leiden University. “There was a heat wave, and a group of us started talking about high temperatures being the new normal and how we are contributing to climate change,” he says. “I see it as irresponsible, ethically and professionally, to burn fossil fuels for astronomy.” Over Twitter, the group launched a sustainability movement for astronomers.

In October 2019 the nascent grassroots organizations in the US and Europe merged to form Astronomers for Planet Earth.



**THE BLUE MARBLE.** Scientists and their institutions are mobilizing to avoid the worst predictions for the planet if climate change continues unabated. (Composite image by NASA/NOAA/GSFC/Suomi NPP/VIIRS/Norman Kuring.)

# yHEP recommendations on improvement of environmental sustainability in science



Computing and buildings

Environmental awareness training

Travel compensation / Green travel  
(CO<sub>2</sub>-compensation)

Conference organisation

Greenest means of transport and additional ways to travel

Teleconferences

Reduced travelling

Purchases, funds and resource management

Canteens



# Network and Events

- yHEP annual meeting in parallel with DPG, 15 March 2021 (virtual)
  - Interesting discussion and feedback. Suggestion: social media
  - A linkedin page was created
- Planning the next annual meeting in parallel with DPG 2022: organization started
- Virtual *Get-together*, 7 May 2021
  - Organized through gathertown
  - Well received
- Panel discussion *Future of HEP*, 16 December 2021, h.19:00-20:30
  - Discussion of advantages/disadvantages of new collider projects
  - need and possibilities of sustainability in science; connections to the field of big data
  - Our panel speakers:  
Prof. Karl Jakobs, Prof. Tilman Plehn, Prof. Michael Düren and PD Dr. Jeanette Lorenz
- Please, join us if interested: <https://lists.desy.de/sympa/subscribe/yhep-members>

# Summary and Conclusion

- yHEP very active
- Your contribution/feedback is needed and welcome!
- New management board election concluded on 09.12.2021 (yesterday!)
- Become a member! sign up to the mailing list <https://yhep.desy.de/>
- Contact: [yhep-info@desy.de](mailto:yhep-info@desy.de) <https://www.linkedin.com/company/yhep/>
- Read more about us/documents: <https://yhep.desy.de/e61887/>

[Charter of the yHEP association](#)

[Recommendations for improvement of working conditions regarding family life](#)

[Recommendations on improvement of environmental sustainability in science](#)

# Summary and Conclusion

- Election concluded, yesterday. **New representatives 2022:**

## **KAT**

Alina Nasr-Esfahani	Uni Wuppertal	1 <sup>st</sup> representative
Leonel Morejon	Uni Wuppertal	2 <sup>nd</sup> representative

## **KET**

Valerie Lang	Uni Freiburg	1 <sup>st</sup> representative
Michael Lupberger	Uni Bonn	2 <sup>nd</sup> representative

## **KHuK**

Annika Thiel	Uni Bonn	1 <sup>st</sup> representative
Farah Noreen Afzal	Uni Bonn	2 <sup>nd</sup> representative

## **KfB**

Felipe Peña	DESY	1 <sup>st</sup> representative
Pardis Niknejadi	DESY	2 <sup>nd</sup> representative



# References

[1] <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/twitter-aktion-ichbinhanna-protest-gegen-zeitvertragsgesetz-100.html>

[2] <https://mittelbau.net/>

[3] <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/gesellschaft/ichbinhanna-101.html>

[4] <https://en.spress.net/interview-working-conditions-at-universities-anti-human-and-anti-science-chain-contracts-overtime-and-a-lack-of-prospects-under-the-hashtag-ichbinhanna-scientists-mobilize-against-difficult-wo/>

[5] Nature Human Behaviour 4, 880–883 (2020) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-0921-y>

[6] <https://home.cern/news/news/cern/cerns-year-environmental-awareness>

[7] <https://indico.cern.ch/event/1004432/>