



Cultural Heritage and Education

**Section “Humanities and
Educational Research”**

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Introduction

To meet the social challenges of our age, one must first acquire knowledge of the historic and cultural foundations of human co-existence. Research conducted in the fields of the humanities, cultural studies and educational science generates this knowledge and communicates it to the public at large. This represents a fundamental contribution to our understanding of our complex society.

The **Humanities and Educational Research** Section of the Leibniz Association pools the expertise of leading research institutes in the fields of educational sciences and linguistics, history, cultural and literature studies with their expert knowledge of different parts of Europe in their global context; the expertise of institutions offering and continuously developing key research infrastructures; and the expertise of major research museums with unique collections relevant to the humanities, cultural studies and the history of technology.

The institutions belonging to the section collaborate with one another within a close network and focus on three key thematic areas.

In the first key area, the **Potential of Education**, the institutes specialising in education research take an interdisciplinary approach to examining comprehension and learning during all stages of life. They take into account both individual factors as well as familial and institutional conditions. Large-scale empirical studies make it possible to examine developmental processes across a subject's entire lifetime. The data is scientifically prepared and made accessible on a permanent basis by research data centres. Studies that take an experimental approach allow for a detailed analysis of how humans process information when communicating and learning. Furthermore, the institutes in this section work together to examine media and informal learning environments and develop new teaching formats. A wealth of new areas of research is also provided by the digital workplace and the so-called fourth industrial revolution, which are addressed by the institutes.

In the second key area, **History as a Contemporary Resource**, the institutes focusing on history, cultural, linguistic and literature studies collaborate with the research museums to study historic change and the cultural dimensions of social spheres of knowledge and activity. The unique combination of archaeological, historic and linguistic expertise and the especially broad historic and spatial spectrum make it possible to examine human thinking, communication and design from the infancy of human

history through to the present. At the heart of this key area are the processes and dynamics of change. For example, the research is in part dedicated to the change of cultural identities, borders of belonging, forms of conflict, migration and the relationship between humans and the environment.

The third key area, **Cultural Heritage and Digital Change**, deals with the question of how cultural heritage can be presented and represented in the digital age. The section does not view its research and information infrastructures merely as repositories of knowledge. Instead, these are intended to be vibrant hubs for dialogue firstly between the disciplines themselves and, secondly, between the spheres of research, media, politics and the general public. These infrastructures include major surveys such as the National Educational Panel Study, large language corpora, unique archive holdings and important collections. With their exhibitions, the section's five research museums create informal learning spaces and make their research results accessible to the general public. Sustainable research data management guarantees the permanent digital availability of data, sources and objects. The institutes thereby shape new approaches in museum-based communication and the presentation of knowledge in educational science, linguistics, history and art history. Furthermore, they provide important impetus to the current discussions within the Digital Humanities.

The Potential of Education

Economic development, cultural diversity and social cohesion form the **basis of social prosperity**. Education is a central resource for generating this prosperity, as it enables social, political, cultural and professional participation. **Access to knowledge** and knowledge-based resources is crucial to the success of a person's educational biography. But not only that: access to the relevant, valid information and to the infrastructures that offer this information, as well as the willingness to receive information, is a key pillar of modern societies, in which critical thinking and sound judgement are supposed to form the basis for political decision-making processes.

Educational research within the Leibniz Association is based on the human lifespan, focusing on **all educational stages from early childhood to advanced old age**. Particular attention is paid to the transitions between the various stages. In its analysis of life courses, educational research incorporates individual cognitive, motivational, social, linguistic and emotional conditions, as well as factors relating to the institutional and family environment. This allows insights into the conditions under which developmental processes in education can be successful.

Learning environments both **within and outside of the school context** that offer opportunities for success equally to all where possible are key prerequisites to professional and social participation. This is why the section's research takes account of the great heterogeneity of learners. It focuses on issues of inclusion with regard to school students, as well as approaches to integrating into the education system people from different ethnic, religious, social and cultural backgrounds. In addition, Leibniz institutes conduct research into how language skills in German as a lingua franca can be fostered and how the content of other subjects and domains can be taught in appropriate language. This includes research questions such as how teachers' awareness and professionalism can be increased further.

Another key condition for professional and social participation is the ability to handle **analog and digital media** skillfully and use them in a meaningful way. The institutes specialising in educational and school textbook research therefore focus on the linguistic and cultural codification of educational media. They examine how teaching has been transformed as a result of changes in media, from the blackboard to the tablet and through to the internet. Drawing on their findings, these institutes design and operate scientifically grounded and tried-and-tested learning environments.

The sections **research museums** act as communication centres. Their collaborations with educational researchers encompass **visitor research** and the sustainable communication of knowledge and expertise through exhibitions and events, for example. The joint aim here is to make new inroads into and further develop the specific potential inherent in informal educational settings.

In the interest of transparent and replicable science, the Leibniz Institutes in the field of education have set themselves the task of providing a **broad spectrum of research infrastructures**. The services offered range from the collection of primary data to repositories for the reuse of data and literature databases for researchers and offers for the general public.

Leibniz Institutes from the “Humanities and Educational Research”, “Economics, Social Sciences, Spatial Research” and “Life Sciences” Sections of the Leibniz Association have joined forces with other university-based and non-university-based partners to form the Leibniz Education Research Network – LERN. The aim is to pool the expertise of each individual institute. Joint research projects are conducted in thematically focused centres of excellence on “Early Childhood Education” and “Museum Education”. Large, collaboratively generated databases form a cornerstone of these projects.



The research conducted within LERN is organised into five key areas:

- Acquisition of competencies and professionalisation
- Knowledge and participation
- Education and equity
- Returns to education
- Educational monitoring and information

In addition to its research activities, LERN provides practitioners and policymakers in education with access to practical knowledge.



History as a Contemporary Resource

Our era is shaped by rapid social change, new conflict situations and fundamental technical, economic, ecological and demographic changes. In order to meet these challenges, it is important for any modern society to know its **cultural foundations** and understand **historical contexts**. How we interpret the past is key to understanding present-day conditions and formulating ideas for the future. In terms of political action and **social orientation**, it is vital critically to reflect on history and to question skillfully our assessment of it. This includes the contexts of artistic creativity, technical innovations, the use of resources, and the changes in how knowledge is generated and transferred.

In this arena, the Humanities and Educational Research Section makes accessible a broad spectrum that ranges from **excellent basic research** through to many different forms of **communicating historical and cultural content**. Its institutions offer expertise in history, cultural history, archaeology, linguistics and literature. Their focus is on contemporary history, modern European history, Jewish history, research into Eastern Europe and Muslim societies, the history of religion, and the analysis of educational media.

The institutes specialising in history, cultural studies and linguistics engage with cultures of remembrance and the everyday, as well as with the history of the Holocaust's impact, representational forms, and the structures of societies during different phases of historical development. They also tackle political continuity and disruption from a historical perspective. They engage with such **issues as security, conflict and violence, migration and mobility**, and research into important questions within the history of science, knowledge and technology. Another key area is the relationship between humans and their environment, from the infancy of human development through to the present day. Human perception, thought, creation and activity is described and classified against the backdrop of social, cultural, religious, technical, political and economic change. This provides the **tools for interpreting the present**. As a result, it is possible to include geographical comparisons when researching key questions, thereby making a fundamental contribution to a better understanding of globalisation processes and their historical basis.

The section's institutes conduct research into both **material culture and the knowledge inherent in objects**, as well as processes of interpretation and symbolisation, combined with questions concerning the

history of collection, transfer and restitution. Many of the results from this historic and linguistic research are incorporated into the **exhibitions of the research museums** and other institutes with unique collections. Research processes and methods are also presented. This allows people of different ages, backgrounds and levels of education to see, feel and otherwise experience these complex interconnections.

In the *Leibniz Research Alliance Value of the Past*, 21 Leibniz Institutes from the sections “Humanities and Educational Research”, “Economics, Social Sciences and Spatial Research” and “Life Sciences” are working together with external partners. The alliance combines expertise from the historical, cultural, literary, social, technical and life sciences and enables joint research projects.

The research focus is on works that explore the **processes of value formation and value competition** in dealing with the past in order to better understand the power of interpretation and the historical transformation of value attributions. To this end, the network examines the political, cultural and material dimensions of practices of valorization related to the past from European, global and cross-epochal perspectives. The interdisciplinary research alliance advances the theoretical development of a past-centred concept of value and at the same time strengthens the relationship between research and the communication of history as well as the **dialogue between research and the public**.



The projects conducted in the network come from three central research perspectives. They are concerned with:

- the **historical production of evidence** through language, media, performative practices and memory institutions (museums, archives, and memorials), especially in the digital age, and
- the political, social and **historical space-time constructs**, for example on the basis of self- and external descriptions of Europe, institutional, literary and artistic memory sites, as well as human-nature relationships in the Anthropocene, and
- the formation of history in the course of value negotiation and value creation, as reflected in the **valorization and utilization of pasts** in public space.



The *Leibniz Lab Disruptions and Transformations* is an innovative format of science communication. It brings together the research of 28 Leibniz institutes from the sections “Humanities and Educational Research”, “Economics, Social Sciences and Spatial Research” and “Life Sciences” and aims to **learn from past crises and upheavals for the present and future**. In particular, the dynamic changes after 1990 are linked to those of the present. The transformation of the economy, the environment and political cultures was at the forefront of this development. The lab combines the extensive knowledge of the participating institutes to analyze how to deal with social disruptions. This results in new transfer formats for politics, the public and society, for example through interactive exhibitions and contributions to social media. In the spirit of citizen science, there is dialog-oriented communication with different target groups. Citizens are actively involved in the research and communication process.



Cultural Heritage and Digital Change

We are currently experiencing **rapid change within the knowledge society**. Digitalisation is transforming the ways in which we learn, communicate and perceive things. Likewise, the way that knowledge is acquired, stored and managed is also undergoing change. Institutions that conduct research into how knowledge is generated and preserved are reacting to this with a change in research focus, working practises and forms of communication.

Section “Humanities and Educational Research” institutes and research museums are taking on a key role in shaping the digital change. They are developing new research questions and concepts for innovative communication platforms and digital infrastructure offerings. Their **outstanding collections** include objects, books, images, videos, documents, and digital as well as analogue archive material. They are repositories of knowledge through which such things as **common practices, cultural signatures, communication forms and trans-cultural links** from different epochs are passed down.

The section’s institutes and research museums use their specific expertise in order to safeguard and conduct research into this knowledge and make it accessible to academia and the public. In this regard, they are also setting important trends within the Digital Humanities. Their central tasks are to establish **digital knowledge resources** as the basis for collections-based research, and to publish this in as openly accessible a manner as possible. To this end, data are recorded, and academically processed collections and linguistic corpora are digitalised.

The synergies within the section, the Leibniz Association as a whole, and beyond make it possible to generate **solutions to the challenges of digitalisation**, and to interlink the collections. The lead project for this is OSIRIS (Open Collection, Information and Research Infrastructure) consortium. Under the leadership of the Leibniz Association, it aims to create an integrated and scalable digital research infrastructure that taps into the potential of the large German **research collections**, which include around 160 million natural, technical and cultural-historical objects. Supplemented by the diverse collections of living cultures in bioresource centers, they represent a large part of the global natural, technical and cultural diversity. By establishing an interdisciplinary, universally and permanently accessible knowledge store and its use in transdisciplinary contexts and formats, the foundations are laid for fact-based solutions to societal challenges and completely new research questions are made possible.

Like the Leibniz Association as a whole, section “Humanities and Educational Research” is strongly involved in the development and operation of the *National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI)*. More than half of the section’s institutes are members of consortia in the humanities and social sciences, with two of them bearing particular responsibility as lead institutions for the *Text+ and NFDI4Memory* consortia.

With regard to digital change in education, the section’s institutes are leading participants in the generation of **large-scale research databases**. This especially includes the National Educational Panel Study. The institutes are also key partners in **international educational performance studies** such as PISA, ICILS and TIMSS, which regularly record and document returns to education in the form of linguistic, mathematical, scientific and digital skills. The recurring **national education report** is coordinated by a section institute. Finally, various institutes are integrated into the federally funded digital competence centers, whose goal is to comprehensively qualify teachers in the use of digital media in the classroom.

A major area of research shaped by research museums is the direct result of **academic assessments of exhibitions**. Exhibitions are the expression of research results, and can convey to visitors the procedures and open results involved in research and introduce them to academia by **showcasing research**. Digital media can here serve to bridge divides. They represent modern forms of vision and communication, and help visitors to decipher objects. Digital media in exhibitions can bring con-



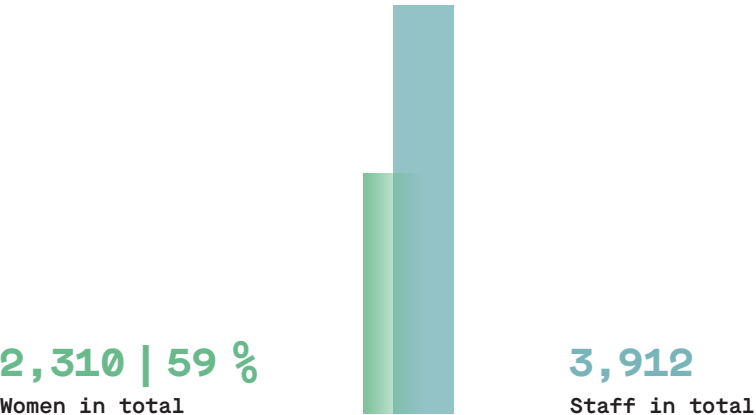
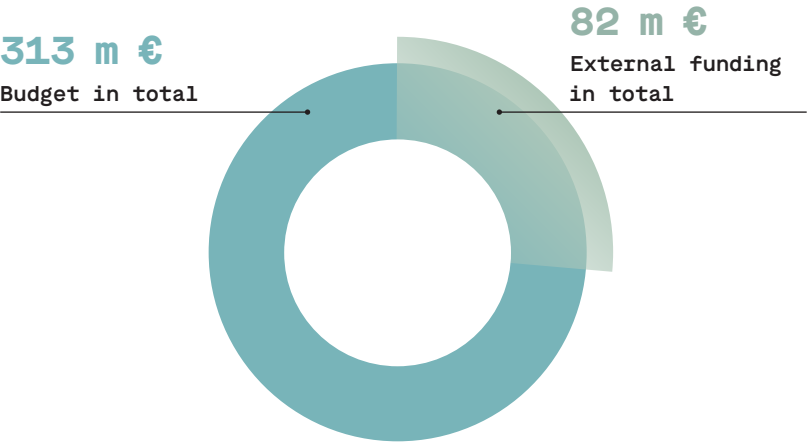
texts to life, highlight functions and help to simulate and model—namely in such a way that the objects themselves remain the central focus.

Exhibitions create spaces of knowledge in which the questions posed by research museums and educational research meet and complement each other. They are an important instrument for communicating knowledge from research to the public. Knowledge transfer plays a major role in the activities of the section's institutes. In the face of the **great challenges of our time**, they want to contribute to social debates with their own initiatives, provide food for thought, and open up spaces for reflection. In the context of the tendency towards “post-truth”, **knowledge of the cultural and historical foundations** of social development is crucial. The institutes and museums of Section “Humanities and Educational Research” see creating and imparting this knowledge as their central task for the future.



The Section “Humanities and Educational Research” in Figures

Last Update: December 2024



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2,297

Researchers in total

1,375 | 60 %

Female researchers



298 | 13 %

International researchers

264

Doctoral researchers in total

164 | 62 %

Female doctoral researchers



334

Researchers in executive positions in total

150 | 45 %

Female researchers in executive positions



23 Leibniz Institutes of the Section “Humanities and Educational”



BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

- **IDS** Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim
- **IWM** Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, Tübingen

BAVARIA

- **DM** Deutsches Museum, München
- **GNM** Germanisches Nationalmuseum – Leibniz-Forschungsmuseum für Kulturgeschichte, Nürnberg
- **IfZ** Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History Munich – Berlin
- **IOS** Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg
- **LifBi** Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories, Bamberg

BERLIN

- **ZAS** Leibniz-Centre General Linguistics, Berlin
- **ZfL** Leibniz Centre for Literary and Cultural Research, Berlin
- **ZMO** Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin

BRANDENBURG

- **ZZF** Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

BREMEN

- **DSM** German Maritime Museum – Leibniz Institute for Maritime History, Bremerhaven

HESSE

- **DIPF** DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education, Frankfurt on the Main and Berlin
- **HI** Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe – Institute of the Leibniz Association, Marburg

LOWER SAXONY

- **GEI** Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute, Braunschweig

NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

- **DBM** Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum – Leibniz Research Museum for Georesources
- **DIE** German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning, Bonn

RHINELAND-PALATINATE

- **IEG** Leibniz Institute of European History Mainz
- **LEIZA** Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie, Mainz
- **ZPID** Leibniz Institute for Psychology, Trier

SAXONY

- **DI** Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow, Leipzig
- **GWZO** Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, Leipzig

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

- **IPN** Leibniz Institute for Science and Mathematics Education at the University of Kiel

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