**“First International Conference on History Education in Africa” (Durban, 8-9 December 2015)**

On 8 and 9 December 2015, Prof Johan Wassermann and Dr Denise Bentrovato organised the “First International Conference on History Education in Africa”. The event was hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in Durban, South Africa.

With the title “Teaching and Learning History in Contemporary Africa: Past, Present and Future”, the Durban conference was the first of its kind. The event elicited stimulating discussion and reflection on the state of history education in Africa and the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching and learning history across the continent. The conference covered a wide range of relevant political and practical issues related to curricula, textbooks, pedagogy and classroom practices, and teacher education at both primary and secondary level, as well as history education in informal settings. It thereby provided a snapshot of existent and emerging knowledge and debates in this field and raised new questions for future research.

The conference gathered an impressive international group of 50 early-career and senior scholars as well as teachers and teacher trainers. As many as 19 different nationalities from Africa, Europe and the Americas were represented at the event. Participants came from South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, the United States, Canada, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland.

Preceded by a keynote address on “History Education for Democratic Participation”, delivered by American Professor Keith Barton, the papers presented at the conference drew upon a large variety of contexts, disciplines, theories and methods. The highly interdisciplinary nature of the conference was a marked feature of the event. Its participants were specialists in such varied fields as Education and Curriculum Studies, History, Political Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies, Development Studies, Anthropology, Psychology, and Religious Studies, to mention a few.

The rich variety of papers presented in Durban were organised around a number of thematic panels running concurrently in parallel sessions. Key themes addressed across the various panels included:

1. Textbook representations of colonialism and postcolonialism in Africa and beyond
2. Teaching sensitive issues in South Africa, with a focus on Apartheid and the Holocaust
3. History education, conflict and peace in Africa
4. History education, gender, and human rights in Africa
5. The politics of history teaching in Africa
6. The status of history teaching in Africa, and its place within national curricula
7. History teachers’ views and experiences in classrooms in Africa, with a focus on their epistemologies, and the challenges and dilemmas faced in the classroom
8. History teaching aims and strategies in Africa (including e-learning), and the impact of specific teaching practices on pupils’ learning, particularly on historical thinking.

The conference concluded with a final session, during which opportunities for future cooperation were discussed by the participants. In view of enhanced exchange and cooperation within and across borders, this final session marked the official launch of the *African Association for History Education* − AHE-Afrika.