



Call to Action

The Democracy School is looking for experienced partner organisations with an established and successful funding track record to jointly deliver our proposed *Africa Lecture Initiative* in 2024 during COP29. We are therefore inviting *Expressions of Interest* from suitably qualified candidates and their organisations.

Anyone interested in participating should first read the following three documents and refer to them explicitly in their *Expressions of Interest* (see appendix):

- Appendix 1: Africa Lectures - Project Summary
- Appendix 2: The Silent Lecture Concept
- Appendix 3: Silent Lectures Info Pack

In evaluating *Expressions of Interest*, we assess whether someone has grasped the *Silent Lecture* concept and is able to add value to the initiative through the skills and experience they would bring to it. For us to be able to assess a candidate's suitability, all *Expressions of Interest* therefore need to answer the following foundational questions satisfactorily:

- Is the applicant able to explain in his/her own words what a *Silent Lecture* is and why this **approach and methodology** would lend itself particularly well to the social, cultural and political context within which they operate?
- What specific **skills, experience and networks** would their organisation be able to bring to this initiative and why would this put them in a unique position to **add significant value locally**, where they are?
- How confident can we be that the information they provide is accurate and up-to-date and therefore really does reflect the contribution they would be able to make? Can they provide 'proof of knowledge and experience' through relevant references, well documented case studies and/or actual work samples?

In addition to *Expressions of Interest* from potential **Hosts**, interested in convening *Silent Lectures* as part of our *Africa Lecture Series*, we are *also* looking for *Expressions of Interest* from highly motivated operators for the following **Executive Roles** (areas).

- Operations (Lead Coordinator)
- Climate Migration Advocacy (Climate Migration Lead)

- Engagement & Participation (Engagement & Participation Lead)
- Documentation, Archiving & Digital Media (Digital Media Lead)
- Cultural Mobilisation (Cultural Mobilisation Lead)

The candidates selected for these roles will be invited to join the initiative as **Area Leads** and will be expected to contribute actively to the initiative's *Steering Group* at a pan-African level. In addition to their roles as *Area Lead* (climate migration etc) they will also be expected to host at least one *Silent Lecture* in their respective countries.

Hence, in addition to the above questions aimed at potential *Hosts*, anyone wishing to express interest in one of these executive roles as *Area Lead* will need to include in their *Expression of Interest* additional skills and experience relevant to the role they are interested in. This too of course needs to be backed up by concrete examples, and where possible by references from funders and/or former clients.

However, instead of providing detailed job descriptions for prospective candidates to respond to, we ask them to tell us from their perspective how they would approach these roles, based on the following inevitably incomplete information:

Lead Coordinator

- Coordinates all activities on the ground in Africa to ensure all *Silent Lecture* projects (host projects) progress on schedule and within budget.
- Reviews all proposals by prospective *Silent Lecture Hosts* on a rolling basis to establish viability and procedures for accomplishing their goals.
- Assists in developing *Silent Lecture* host budgets, monitors their performance and evaluates all host projects to ensure successful completion.
- Solicits input from all relevant/key stakeholders to avoid/minimise/manage potential conflicts, and to maximise stakeholder involvement at all levels.
- Meets with the *Steering Group*, as requested, to report on progress/problems, and to receive input and guidance regarding activities and their evaluation.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

Climate Migration Lead

- Convenes and coordinates the *Africa Lecture Initiative's Working Group (WG) on Climate and Migration*, which brings *Silent Lecture Hosts* together thematically; and builds relationships with other (external) climate and migration-related NGOs/partnerships across Africa and beyond.

- In close consultation with both the initiative's *WG on Climate and Migration*, and our *Digital Media Lead* (see below), develops the initiative's climate migration advocacy strategy and coordinates the development and dissemination of advocacy, communications and outreach material.
- Advises on the development, implementation and monitoring of our *Hosts'* respective advocacy plans and liaises with our initiative's *External Relations Lead* to translate advocacy outcomes into concrete policy briefs suitable for external consumption, including by COP29 participants.
- Meets with the *Steering Group*, as requested, to report on progress/problems, and to receive input and guidance regarding activities and their evaluation.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

Engagement & Participation Lead

- Convenes and coordinates the initiative's *WG on Youth and Minority Empowerment*, in which all *Silent Lecture Hosts* participate.
- In close consultation with the initiative's *WG on Youth and Minority Empowerment* develops the initiative's youth and minorities empowerment strategy, and coordinates the development and dissemination of best practice materials around 'empowered participation' (guidelines, case studies etc).
- Advises on the development, implementation and monitoring of our respective *Hosts'* mobilisation strategies and liaises with the initiative's *Artistic Director* to translate insights and outcomes into case studies on bottom-up empowerment for external consumption, including by COP29 participants.
- Meets with the *Steering Group*, as requested, to report on progress/problems, and to receive input and guidance regarding activities and their evaluation.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

Digital Media Lead

- Convenes and coordinates the initiative's *Documentation, Archiving and Digital Media WG*, which brings together all *Silent Lecture Hosts*
- In consultation with the *Documentation, Archiving and Digital Media WG* develops and delivers a training plan to strengthen host projects' ability to document and effectively disseminate their material in line with local objectives and the initiative's climate migration and empowerment goals (see above).

- Advises on and supports the documentation, online archiving and strategic dissemination of all *Silent Lecture* processes and projects across Africa.
- Meets with the *Steering Group*, as requested, to report on progress/problems, and to receive input and guidance regarding activities and their evaluation.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

Cultural Mobilisation Lead

- Convenes and coordinates the initiative's *WG on Cultural Mobilisation*, which brings *Silent Lecture Hosts* together around cross-/cultural and artistic practices and interests; and builds relationships with other (external) arts and culture-related groups, organisations and networks across Africa and beyond.
- In consultation with both the *WG on Cultural Mobilisation*, and the initiative's *Artistic Director*, develops the initiative's cultural mobilisation strategy and coordinates the development and dissemination of sector specific (arts and culture) communications and outreach material.
- Advises on the development, implementation and monitoring of our *Hosts'* respective cultural mobilisation plans and liaises with the initiative's *Artistic Director* to translate mobilisation outcomes into documentary formats (publications etc) aimed at an international/global audience.
- Meets with the *Steering Group*, as requested, to report on progress/problems, and to receive input and guidance regarding activities and their evaluation.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

About *Working Groups*: The purpose of all *Working Groups* is to link all *Silent Lecture* projects 'horizontally', so that communication can flow easily and openly not only up and down, between host projects to the *Steering Group*, but also laterally, between host projects. Each *Silent Lecture Host* will be required to join each one of these groups and participate in all of their group meetings. Since it will not be possible for all *Silent Lecture Hosts* to always travel to group meetings, *Working Group* meetings will be held virtually via Zoom. This not only saves money, but also allows us to scale up the initiative without any cost constraints. In the beginning, each *Working Group* will consist of *Area Leads* only (remember, each *Area Lead* also needs to host a *Silent Lecture* and therefore is also a project *Host*). As we roll out the initiative, the number of group member will grow in line with the number of *Silent Lecture* projects we take on. Subject to funding and our ability to grow this initiative, there is no

upper limit and we can well foresee a situation, where in the final days before our synchronised *Silent Lecture* during COP29 our *Working Groups* grow very large. Since it is the *Area Leads* that chair and support their respective *Working Groups*, this will require additional digital facilitation skills on behalf of the *Area Lead* to successfully convene and facilitate large *Working Group* (Zoom) meetings.

Since the roles of **Host** and **Area Lead** are distinct and very different, they will be remunerated separately, based on the specifics of each role and, with regards to hosting, the number and size of *Silent Lecture* events delivered. This means that a *Host* who delivers multiple large event will earn more than someone who is only organising a single small *Silent Lecture*. It also means that *Area Leads* will effectively receive two separate fees, one with regards to their executive role, and one for hosting one or more *Silent Lectures*.

Appendix

Appendix 1 | Africa Lectures



The **Democracy School** (Germany), together with its partners, is currently developing a pan-African initiative to coincide with COP29 in order to set a spectacular sign that cannot be ignored and creatively draws attention to the challenges and crises arising from **climate-induced migration**.

The idea is to convene a large number of so-called **Silent Lectures** on the same date simultaneously across Africa during COP29, and to share both messages from and coverage of these gatherings with both the participants of COP29 and the wider world via 'climate ambassadors' on the one hand, and social media on the other. In parallel, a silent *Solidarity Lecture* would be held synchronously at COP29 itself.

There is great interest in this **intervention in Africa**. Expressions of interest have already been received from numerous local organisations in different countries and the number of potential African partners wishing to participate continues to grow.

The initiative has been conceived as a **transcultural art project** that aims to create a transcontinental **social sculpture** in a Beuysian sense through synchronized, yet locally grounded *Silent Lectures* of various sizes. Since this intervention offers an extremely wide spectrum of stakeholders, with vastly different cultural and political orientations/backgrounds, the opportunity to get involved creatively, and thus identify with the project personally, it will have a significant impact far beyond the art world itself. Out of this intervention a pan-African grassroots climate movement with global reach can develop and both find and raise its voice.

From a European perspective, the initiative provides a much-needed opportunity to proactively participate at various levels, together with our **African partners**, in an **international dialogue** on climate, migration and their consequences, and to jointly place these issues within the **global context** of COP29. In so doing, all sides will gain a much deeper understanding of the challenges Africa will face in coming years and thus will be better able to identify areas where **international cooperation** has the greatest positive impact from an economic, social and environmental point of view.

We are **now seeking** expressions of interest from leading African activists with well-documented senior leadership experience in programme management, climate migration, engagement and participation, digital media and/or cultural mobilisation. Anyone interested, and in case of questions, please feel free to get in touch.



Silent Lectures, as conceived and developed by **Nicodemus**, at their most basic, consist of people coming together in peace to jointly **contemplate in silence** something that matters to them: a loss, an injustice or a victory for example.

Each *Silent Lecture* is **delivered by a convener** whose task it is to name the 'thing' (injustice etc) that is to be contemplated and to act as a focal point for the group during their contemplation.

Silent Lectures can take place in almost any context, including at political demonstrations, cultural events or religious gatherings, but are in themselves **neither political nor religious**.

Anyone can give a *Silent Lecture*. All it takes is an issue and a place where that issue resonates so much it can be summarised in one word and still be understood by most, if not all.

Example

Nicodemus convened his inaugural *Silent Lecture* at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin-Mitte (Germany) on 19 June 2022. The topic he invited people to contemplate was silence itself. To promote this event, Nicodemus wrote to numerous arts organisations, NGOs and the press. He also engaged with the Jewish community and invited prominent members of that community to participate in the Silent Lecture.

On the day, he arrived early (wearing his white 'Art Nicodemus' baseball cap, so that people would recognise him), greeted the people who 'came for the lecture' and, once everyone had arrived, start with a brief introduction to get people settled in...

Afterwards, he invited everyone to participate in a discussion at the nearby Memorial to Homosexuals persecuted under National Socialism (in Tiergarten), thus enabling those who participated to share their experiences.

The documentation of this event is published in full at unruhe.eu/notes. A further example, our *Belfast Lecture on Compassion*, is described and documented at silentlectures.org.

Format

Silent Lectures are site-specific performance lectures and, as such, a minimalist form of live/performance art or postdramatic theatre, where no more than one word or, in exceptional circumstances, a phrase is whispered, shouted or otherwise voiced.

Beyond that, there is a lot of flexibility. For example, it is usually advisable to add a brief introduction, so that people know what to expect and to allow for a discussion afterwards, so that people can share their thoughts and feelings.



The ***Silent Lecture Series*** is a global collaboration between activists and artists, that connects and highlights struggles and movements around the world in a celebration of our shared humanity. It's overarching purpose is to unite, to nourish and to amplify. The initiative was originally conceived and developed by **Nicodemus** and is coordinated at the global level by the **Democracy School**.

Context

The world is in the grip of multiple global crises: from climate change and economic nationalism, to droughts, poverty and the growing threat of global recession. Whilst these crises do need our collective attention, there are countless concurrent local crises and longstanding unresolved local conflicts that also deserve international attention and need resolution. It is within this wider context of local versus global challenges that Nicodemus has conceived the *Silent Lecture Series*.

DIY Guide

The *Silent Lecture Series* is a globally distributed, collaborative event. In principle anyone can do a *Silent Lecture*. All it takes is **an issue** (or complex of issues) and **a place** where that issue resonates so much that it can be summarised in a single word and still be understood by many, if not all (see also unruhe.eu/silent-lectures). Given the site-specificity of *Silent Lectures*, they need to be **framed and developed locally**.

Silent Lectures are acts of solidarity, of shared grief, joy or anger. Their poetic force lies in the simplicity and authenticity of the format used. When thinking about hosting a *Silent Lecture*, a number of elements need to be considered by the host. These are:

- **Project participants & audiences:** There are three groups involved, all three are important: local participants, local audiences and the host's global audience.
All participants and local audiences are drawn from local communities and affiliated movements. They are politically aligned, emotionally supportive and share the host's concerns. The host's global audience, which we reach through the internet and other media, is heterogeneous and not necessarily sympathetic to the host's cause.
- **A specific topic:** A widely shared concern that deeply matters to local participants and local audiences, a loss, pain or injustice for instance, that can be expressed in a single word or phrase and still be understood by everyone.
- **A particular place:** A historic site that embodies/reflects the concern in question, a place where the chosen topic resonates. *Silent Lectures* are site-specific events.
- **Documentation:** A process that allows the host to document photographically the context (topic), development (process) and staging (site) of the *Silent Lecture*.

- **Contextualisation:** A mechanism for commissioning up to three papers or articles from local authors that contextualise the *Silent Lecture* and its topic.

Of these five elements, two deserve further consideration. These elements are the host's local participants and audience and the need for engaging writers.

Silent Lectures work only when the local participants and audience are fully invested emotionally in the development of 'their' *Silent Lecture*. In some cases, we achieve this by organising a series of workshops. Through these workshops we are able to reach deep into the local community (our local audience) and collaboratively frame and distil the topic for a given *Silent Lecture*. The workshop participants in that case are not only 'the ears', but also 'the eyes' of the initiative, documenting photographically the entire process, including the staging of the *Silent Lecture* itself. However, there are also less formalised ways of building consensus. It all depends on the budget, historical context and how well integrated the local host is into the target community.

Since *Silent Lectures* are essentially silent contemplations of locally shared concerns, and since an appreciation of the context within which these concerns are embedded is an important element of the work at the global level where a knowledge of these issues cannot be taken for granted, we recommend inviting up to three writers to engage with the proposed initiative from different (artistic/cultural, historic etc) perspectives. All writers involved need to be briefed on the particulars of the project and must have full access to the documentary material collected (photographs etc). If they are based locally, they should also observe some of the workshops/outreach conducted and be invited to attend the *Silent Lecture* they write about.

Papers/essays submitted by local hosts for inclusion in *Silent Lecture* publications should be approx. 1,200 words long, aimed at a global audience and submitted in English, so that they can be published alongside the documentation of the event they cover on both silentlectures.org and unruhe.eu. Local hosts that are participating in our *Silent Lecture Series* are of course welcome to publish any material (writing and documentation) generated in this process through their own channels as well.

Contact us

Anyone interested in hosting a *Silent Lecture*, please get in touch using the contact details provided in the footer. Anyone interested in attending one, please consult our blog for a *Silent Lecture* near you. We are happy to assist in whatever way we can.

We look forward to hearing from you.