



*The aim of the Royal Institute for Linguistics and Anthropology is to collect and make accessible books and other documents, to undertake and to stimulate research, and facilitate the publication of books and periodicals about South-East Asia and Oceania, Indonesia in particular, and the Caribbean Area in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The headquarters of the Institute are in Leiden with an office in Jakarta.*

## Introduction

For the KITLV the year 2005 was marked on the one hand by the start of a series of new projects, and on the other by discussions about the organization and functioning of the institute. There is every reason to look back at the past year with satisfaction.

In the last months of 2004 a total of four subsidies were awarded to the institute, and in the year under review these led to new projects actually going ahead. NOW-Humanities granted fund for two new projects, the first being a socio-historical research project on Suriname in the twentieth century, with the title 'Suriname; The predicament of a multi-ethnic society', which ahead with the appointment of two postdoctoral researchers. The second project, 'Bringing history home; Postcolonial identity politics in the Netherlands', is a joint project shared by three KNAW institutes, the International Institute for Social History, the Meertens Institute and KITLV. One postgraduate researcher was appointed to each of the three institutes.

Furthermore, two projects funded by the 'Het Gebaar' Foundation began. The project called 'Indisch knooppunt' (Indies intersection) is intended to search for, list and make available in an easily accessible form sources from and about Indies history, and to create a new source about Indies organizations in the Netherlands in the form of oral history. This will be given an interactive dimension on the KITLV website. A staff member was appointed for this project. At the same time a start was made with the project for further opening up and digitalizing the photo collection. Two staff members were appointed for this project.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided funding from the HGIS programme (HGIS = Homogene Groep voor Internationale Samenwerking) to expand the pilot study 'The Atlantic world and the Dutch, 1500-2000', which began in 2004. The preliminary version of the website developed for this project was launched in the autumn.

Alongside these new externally funded projects in the areas of collection building and research, on-going activities were continued in all departments. Several matters deserve to be mentioned here in brief; they are dealt with at more length in the relevant sections of this Annual Report. These activities represent a showcase of the institute's work in the fields of administration, research, publication and making the collections more accessible. Under this last heading we find the digitalizing of fifty volumes of the *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* and twenty-five volumes of the *New West Indian Guide*. These can now be searched and are available for any interested person. The unique collection of Sino-Malay literature that the library holds has been microfilmed, and in this way these fragile little books have been preserved for the long term. The 'bestseller' for the Press was the memoirs of Johan Ferrier, who was an influential figure in the history of Surinam in the twentieth century. Remarkable for its form was 'Indië verteld' (The Indies told) which consisted of two CD-ROMs in which participants in the interview project conducted by the Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië (Oral History of Indonesia Foundation) told about their experiences in the period 1930-1950. More can be found in the Report about the research projects completed by David Henley and Gerry van Klinken, the first already published and the second in the press.

The discussion on organizational changes to the institute that began in 2004 was continued and finally led to a formal reorganization mandated to the management by the KNAW. At the end of 2005 the director gave his approval to the reorganization plan the project leader had compiled. The Workers' Council (Onderdeelcommissie) of the KITLV, a part of central KNAW workers' council (ondernemingsraad), finally approved the plan with some reservations. The new organizational structure was implemented on 1 February 2006.

Under the new structure the institute has three main departments in Leiden, namely Collections, Research and Press. A fourth department, located in Indonesia, is KITLV Jakarta. The management team consists of the director, the four departmental heads and the administrative manager. In this way the structure has been simplified compared with the earlier situation, where there were five departments and hence departmental heads in Leiden, viz. Archives and Images, Library, Caribbean Studies, Research and Press. The institute's mission remains unchanged, with regard to both the three main tasks and the two regional areas of special attention. The latter is expressed clearly in the English name of the KITLV, chosen several years ago, namely 'Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies'. In order to safeguard attention for Caribbean studies, an Expertise Centre for Caribbean Studies covering each section was set up.

The reason for the reorganization is not to be sought in problems, but lay in anticipated future developments. In view of two successive external evaluations (in 1994 and 1999) and the institute's reputation both within and beyond the KNAW, the institute can with good reason be seen as an organization that functions well and has a clear mission. Nevertheless, changes within the institute and in its institutional setting made it necessary to consider a limited reorganization. These related to shifts in the institute's mission, in particular strengthening research, new demands from users of the collections, the ambition to become a web-based centre of expertise, considerations of efficiency, and an increasingly competitive environment. It was expected that the reorganization would deliver an improvement in quickness of response and efficiency.

The choice to introduce this new structure was not taken lightly. It was discussed thoroughly with the KNAW, the academic committee and the board of the KITLV Learned Society, but in particular with the heads of the departments concerned, the Workers' Council and the institute's staff. Inevitably the reorganization regularly aroused feelings of concern and discontent, but when the decision had been taken at the end of 2005 it was finally possible to conclude this discussion. The reorganization will have no effect on the budget, and there will be no redundancies.

Late in the year KITLV was evaluated by an international academic committee set up by the KNAW and chaired by Professor Frans Hüsken. This was a regular evaluation and followed on those in 1999 and 2004, when the committee's opinion had always been distinctly positive. The committee made site visits in Jakarta and Leiden.

In preparation for the evaluation, the institute published a very extensive self-evaluation report, under the title 'Deep roots, maturing shoots'. Every aspect of KITLV's work receives detailed attention in this report. From this self-evaluation report an almost fifty percent increase in the institute's budget between 1999 and 2005 can be seen. This growth resulted from an increase in the contribution of the KNAW, noteworthy successes in attracting external funding and an improvement in the sales figures of the Press. The proportion of the total budget allocated to research increased from seven to twenty percent. The concluding remarks of the self-evaluation have been reproduced in the box below.

All through the colonial period, the legitimacy of KITLV was more or less self-evident. In contrast, the postwar, postcolonial era presented us with new challenges. We had to change with the times – and this is indeed what we have managed to do. KITLV emerged as one of a limited number of prominent institutions of area studies all over the world. As such, the institute became increasingly professional, acquiring a strong international reputation way beyond its original colonial roots.

As the legitimacy of area studies increasingly became a subject of scholarly debate in the 1990s, and the number of university staff and students in our fields sharply decreased, we have had to face yet another challenge. Much of the recurrent criticism on area studies is legitimate. The field of area studies has often suffered from narrow-mindedness indeed. Few serious scholars today will refute the necessity to study any specific geographical area from a truly interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. Yet even while we rethink the groundings of area studies, we are convinced that local knowledge – our *raison d'être* – is a prerequisite for serious interdisciplinary and comparative area studies. Luckily, this awareness seems to be making a comeback in academia.

When it comes to influencing the coming and going of these debates over the groundings and legitimacy of area studies, our own agency is limited. We do have proven though to be proficient in weathering such challenges. Indeed, our postwar history is one of ambition, persistent consolidation and growth. We implemented many innovations in our collections and Press while adhering to the highest standards. We finally developed our own research capacity to the point that now we are a serious international player. It is particularly in the latter field that we face major challenges – not the least being the need to keep clear from a narrow-minded approach to area studies.

Our ambition is to maintain the outstanding international repute of our collections and our Press, and to acquire a similar standing in the one field where we are relatively new, research. This ambition implies that we aim to be a far more dynamic institution in ten years' time than we were a decade ago.

Over the past few years, many innovative decisions have been made and have been implemented or are being implemented at this moment. We find the organization is on a steady course towards more flexibility while maintaining its high quality and productivity standards. Our major challenge for the next few years is to see to it that these innovations will indeed become firmly grounded in our work. We will invest the appropriate time in monitoring change, assessing which measures do bear fruit and which do not. For the possible latter cases, we will reformulate our policies. The next mid-term self-evaluation, in 2008, will be an appropriate, but certainly not the first or only occasion to establish where we succeeded and where we need to further rethink our policy.

In sum, we think KITLV is on track. We nurture our firm roots – our longstanding expertise and international reputation when it comes to our collections and Press. And we work equally hard to let our new shoots – particularly our research – thicken and mature. Hence the title of this self-evaluation report: Deep roots, maturing shoots.

Judging from the first presentation at the conclusion of the site visit in Leiden, it appears that the committee's opinion will be very favourable. However, a further report and consideration will have to wait for the annual report for 2006. The financial position of KITLV is good and the management is sound, as can be seen from the financial statement which is included in the annual report.

Some progress was made with the consultations between the KNAW, KITLV and the University of Leiden on the situation regarding accommodation, but a final settlement of the conditions under which the university will accommodate the KITLV is still awaited. Because of this the expansion, which is essential in view of the urgent lack of office and storage space, has still not been undertaken, but the phase has now finally been reached in which consultations with the municipality of Leiden can be commenced. In anticipation of concrete results the canteen had to be converted into an office for researchers and temporary storage outside the institute was prepared for parts of the holdings that are seldom consulted and do not belong to the core of the

collection.

Since the transfer to the KNAW in 2001, the KITLV has been more and more integrated into the academy. As is indicated in 'Deep roots, maturing shoots', the institute has done well with this change in status. In general, consultations with the board of the KNAW went excellently, but on the other hand it has to be said that direct contacts with the Trippenhuis, where the KNAW is located, are limited to only a handful of KITLV people. Consultations between the management and the academic committee set up by the KNAW under the chairmanship of Professor Vincent Houben also proceeded excellently.

The same can be said of the collaboration with the board of the KITLV Learned Society. It is worth noting that in the past year, against the trend of earlier years, the number of members rose considerably. The increased membership is due to the growing number of people interested in the Caribbean, a picture that matches the pattern of recent years.

To the great pleasure of the members and staff of the KITLV, HRH Princess Máxima of the Netherlands let it be known that she was willing to become Patroness of the KITLV Association, as successor to her father-in-law HRH Prince Claus of the Netherlands, who passed away in 2002.