



Annual Report 2007

After an independent existence of a century and a half as a society the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies/KITLV joined the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences/KNAW. What is clear, when we look at our statistics, is that KITLV has blossomed since its KNAW membership. The institute's budget increased from around € 2.35 million in 2000 to € 4.5 million in 2008. Third-party subsidies were a primary source of this substantial growth, while the budgetary contribution from the KNAW decreased correspondingly from 85 % to approximately 70%. But what effect is this growth spurt having on the institute? As for its mission, which was unaffected by the transition to KNAW-membership, third-party financing has not altered it, and it remains 'to collect and make available to the public books and other carriers of information, to conduct and stimulate research and the publication of books and journals on the languages, history, anthropology and other social sciences concerning Southeast Asia and Oceania, in particular Indonesia, and the Caribbean region'. The mission of the institute has been expanded to more expressly include postcolonial migrants within the Netherlands.



The first copy of 'Zo zijn onze manieren... Visies op multiculturaliteit in Nederland' offered by Peter Geschiere, professor African anthropology, University of Amsterdam, to drs. Ella Vogelaar, Minister for Housing, Districts and Integration, in the presence of the editors dr. Francio Guadeloupe (right) and dr. Vincent de Rooij (left).

Source photo: Marije Berkhouwer (Antillenhuis).

What effect is the growth spurt having on the resources of KITLV? A greater variety of shorter projects, more temporary staff, greater dynamism: thus a greater challenge. Yet it also means more pressures and a greater necessity to keep a close eye on internal developments, as

a look at the past year illustrates.

Though the entire institute is continually ranked as 'very good' by international evaluation committees, the collections invariably receive the even better ranking of 'excellent'; they are seen as internationally renowned unique top collections. The superlatives apply not only to the collections themselves and their uniqueness, but also to the quality of their management. All figures regarding the Department of Collections point to growth, not only the collections themselves and how they are managed, , but also the number of visitors to the reading room, even though electronic availability makes it increasingly easy to do a great deal of research at home.

Three aspects of collections management have demanded particular attention over the past years. First, there is the desire to keep abreast of the greatly increased book and journal production in the very furthest reaches of the Indonesian archipelago, in which the KITLV-Jakarta office in Indonesia plays an important role.

Second, developments in digitization and the increasing opportunities through internet offer new possibilities and challenges. Digitization of old sources – texts, but also images – brings these sources closer to potential users, wherever in the world they may be. An outstanding example of that is the Aceh project, funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences. Yet more and more information is digitally born and appears only on internet. Even a specialized library like that of KITLV must therefore remain alert and carefully weigh technical, financial and copyright issues. And all forms of digitization bring with them the obligation of guaranteeing a lasting means of storing information. Worldwide the field of information technology is in constant change. KITLV spends a great deal of energy in trying to keep up to date, as much within the KNAW as with its partners, such as the National Library of the Netherlands and international organizations.

Third, the shortage of storage space and its shortcomings have continued to be a cause for concern. Each year this matter becomes more urgent: since 2006 parts of the collection have had to be stored off the premises. Too little progress has been made in negotiations between the KNAW and the University of Leiden to be able to make concrete the planned renovations on the KITLV building.

In the past years KITLV Press has also undergone profound changes under the influence of ICT. Not only is it the production process that has been affected, but increasingly the manner in which publications are presented to the public. Printed books and journals still lie at the basis of Press publications, but more use is being made of digitization. New publications are presented on the website, where sample chapters may also be consulted. Naturally it is possible to order these publications through the website.

The term digitization in reference to the Press mostly concerns 'retrodigitization': for example, numerous volumes of *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* and the *New West Indian Guide* have been made available electronically on the KITLV website. These electronic files are fully searchable by keyword and are therefore a far more advanced research tool than the original printed versions. Institute staff and the board of the Learned Society are however also considering whether members shouldn't in the near future be allowed to choose a possibly cheaper subscription to the digital edition of the journals.

In 2007 KITLV Press ('KITLV Uitgeverij' in Dutch-language publications) published many books and three journals. Whereas *Oso; Tijdschrift voor Surinamistiek* is aimed at the general public, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* and the *New West Indian Guide* are recognized as top scholarly journals in their areas of scholarship. A recent survey by Australian National University, which ranked more than 500 publications dealing with Asia, led to the happy conclusion that together with only 34 other journals, *Bijdragen* merited an A+ rating – which placed it in the highest category.

The departments of collections and research began several projects funded by third parties in which researchers are building new digital collections. Examples are 'Indisch Knooppunt', 'The Atlantic World and the Dutch, 1500-2000' and the audiovisual archive of daily life in Indonesia. Just like earlier projects, such as the large interview project of the *Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië*, these projects result in new collections for research and in new research instruments. Yet these enormous collections cause conservation dilemmas that require finding new financial means and the redistribution of existing ones. The Department of

Collections has grown considerably and become more independent since 2000. At present, the majority of research staff are working for projects on a temporary basis rather than in a permanent position. The researchers who do have a permanent contract are more expressly expected to create new research projects and seek third-party funding, and the report from the research department testifies to the success of that strategy. The productivity of researchers affiliated with the institute, that is, full-time researchers, staff members whose position consists in part of research hours, and foreign fellows, is carefully monitored and measured. In the past year the total output was exceptionally high. Particularly new books by KITLV researchers Peter Boomgaard, Kees van Dijk (presented upon his retirement from KITLV), Gerry van Klinken and Henk Schulte Nordholt deserve mention. The most special publication of 2007 was, however, the long-awaited, three-volume two thousand page magnum opus by Harry Poeze, *Verguisd en vergeten*, a book about the life and times of Tan Malaka.

Because a large part of the third-party funded projects has consequences for operations at KITLV – supervising and monitoring the progress of these projects takes a great deal of time and requires a good overview – the management team gained assistance in the person of a staff secretary, a position that was created through the upgrading of the former secretarial position.

Overall 2007 was a good year for KITLV, the only blemish being the stalled negotiations over the renovations. It was a dynamic year for the institute, thanks in part to the many third-party funded projects and the new personnel they attracted. These subsidies are crucial to the scholarly reputation of the institute. The new staff also help to keep the institute fresh. Meanwhile, the 'core' of the institute, that is, the staff with permanent positions, in Leiden as well as Jakarta, continued to work with great dedication. As intern Annabelle Schouten observed upon her departure from KITLV: 'what is noticeable is that everyone is skilful and dedicated, inspired, even'. This is a wonderful compliment for everyone at KITLV.