



Introduction to the KITLV Annual Report for 2019

In mid 2019, it had been five years since the KITLV, following a major reorganization, had made a fresh start as a new, exclusively research-oriented KNAW institute, incorporated into the Leiden university environment. The 'new' institute started out with a very modest budget, but also with lofty ambitions. In addition, it had a PhD programme jointly funded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and Leiden University.

At the end of this first five-year period, there was every reason for the KITLV to feel satisfied. An international assessment of the institute in 2018 rated it as 'excellent'. This was not only an exceptionally good result in comparison with the KNAW's sister institutions, but also in terms of the history of the KITLV itself. The evaluation committee assessing all KNAW and NWO institutes in terms of the contribution they make to the 'portfolio' held by the Dutch and international knowledge landscape rated the KITLV as being valuable and appropriate in this arena. While the institute started out with the ambitious objective of earning an additional 50% on top of its allocated budget from externally won research funding, the fact that it achieved double this amount in 2019 is a telling reflection of the KITLV's success.

Grants were obtained partly through organizations that regularly fund the institute, in particular the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO); so far, the KITLV has not been successful in European fundraising, and this remains a concern. In addition, substantial government funding was obtained in recent years for projects exploring the colonial past of the Netherlands. The largest new contribution to the research portfolio was the arrival of the research group of Spinoza Prize winner Corinne Hofman, who set up a new programme looking into native Caribbean heritage research in 'CaribTrails'.

The end of the first five years was also marked by conclusions and farewells. A number of research programmes were completed: 'From clients to citizens? Emerging citizenship in democratizing Indonesia' (KNAW/SPIN), 'Confronting Caribbean challenges' (NWO), and David Kloos and Tom Hoogervorst's Veni projects. A handful of PhD programmes were virtually completed and the expectation is for this to lead to five KITLV researchers receiving their PhDs in 2020.

On their retirement, we said farewell to Willem van der Molen and Henk Schulte Nordholt, with both occasions marked by a symposium. For Schulte Nordholt, this also meant stepping down from the institute's management team, in which he had played the indispensable role of Head of Research since 2005. At his farewell, he was awarded the high honour of Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion in appreciation of his great achievements in the study of Indonesia and for Dutch-Indonesian scientific cooperation. Schulte Nordholt – who, incidentally, is continuing to work on various projects as a guest researcher – was replaced in the MT by David Kloos.

Along with Schulte Nordholt, three other researchers were awarded prizes. David Kloos received the Social Science Book Prize from the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) for his monograph entitled *Becoming Better Muslims* (Princeton University Press, 2018). The documentary *Intranquillities: Voices from Haiti*, co-produced by Kasia Mika, was awarded the British Doctoral or Early Career Film Award by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Valika Smeulders received the Black Achievement Award in the Education and Science category.

This certainly does not mean that we are now resting on our laurels. Over the year under review, a handful of research proposals were submitted for funding, new PhD students were recruited, and, of course, all our researchers worked on their own research projects, with senior researchers continuing the tradition of dedicating a great deal of their time to the supervision of younger researchers. The development of a new line of research ('Governance of climate change'), which will seek a better understanding of the impact of climate change on local societies and ways to bolster social and political resilience in both South East Asia and the Caribbean, has the potential to be of great importance. This line of research, of obvious relevance to society, strives to identify a regionally comparative and interdisciplinary approach to this subject matter.

In 2019, the KITLV presented itself to the outside world by organizing several seminars, along with a large number of workshops and lectures. While such events are largely scientific in nature, public meetings were also organized in order to boost the social impact of our work. The KITLV uses these different approaches in its efforts to make a relevant contribution to debates on what the country's colonial past means today.

The KITLV is an institute with a relatively small group of permanent staff, a large number of researchers on temporary contracts (PhDs and postdocs), and also fellows and interns. Unifying what is in many ways such a varied group of employees takes effort. The employee survey conducted during the year under review once again showed that KITLV employees very much enjoy and are committed to their work at the institute. The most important concern is that the workload is perceived as being heavy and that overtime is the rule rather than the exception, as is also the case at universities and other academic institutions.

The institutional embedding of the KITLV entails regular consultation with the KNAW, Leiden University and the University Library, as well as with the board of the KITLV Members Association. Since the reorganization in 2015, consultations have always been productive and harmonious. The KITLV is satisfied with the way in which the University Library took over the management of the collections. The regrettable but inevitable reduction in the number of expert collection staff was offset by an improvement in the accessibility of the collections, particularly where digital services are concerned. Working with the Members Association, several public meetings were organized. The Members Association was sad to lose honorary member Merle Ricklefs, a prominent Indonesia expert and greatly valued friend of the KITLV, at the end of 2019.