

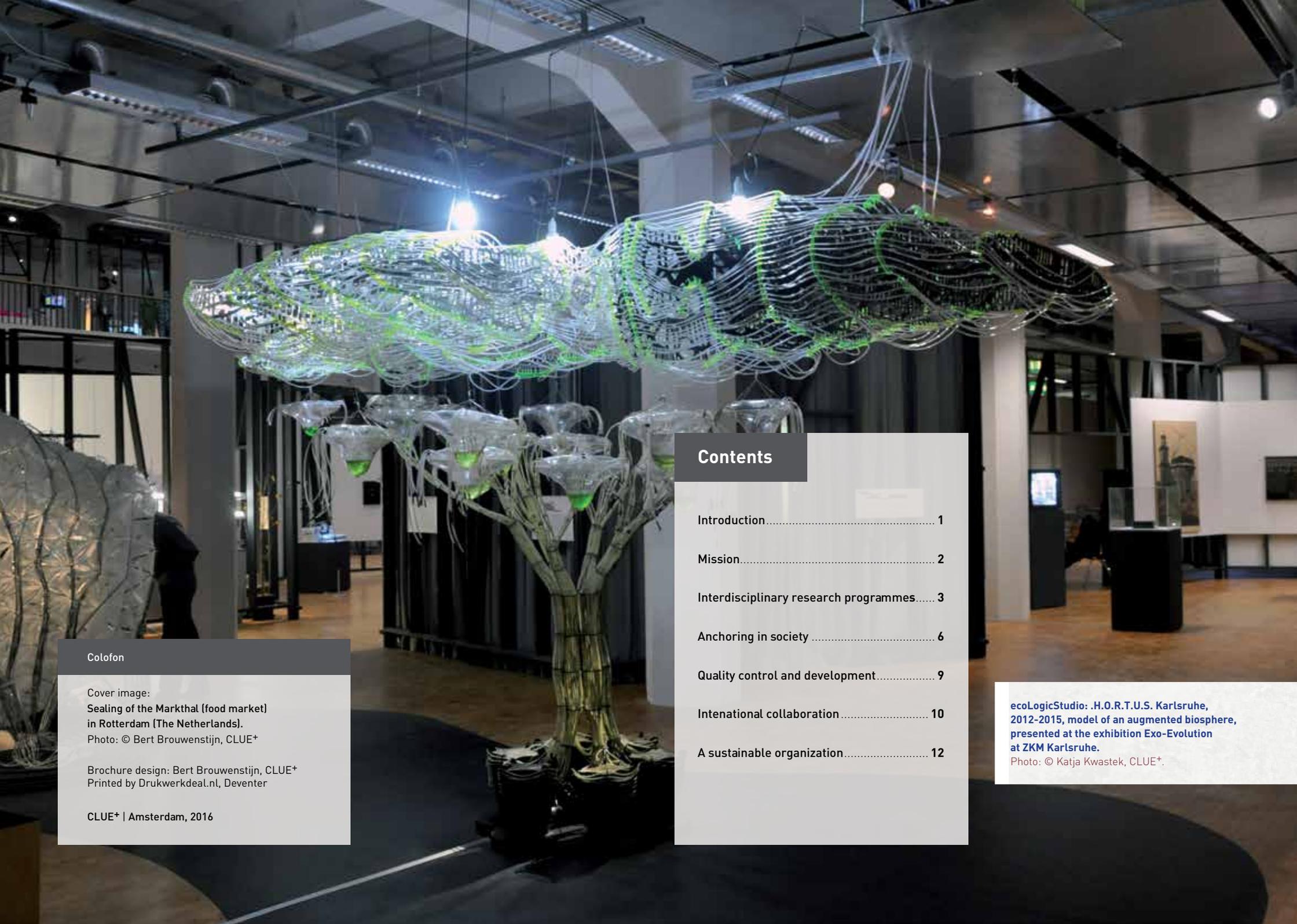
POLICY PLAN 2016-2020

CLUE⁺

RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR
CULTURE, COGNITION, HISTORY AND HERITAGE



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
AMSTERDAM



Colofon

Cover image:
Sealing of the Markthal (food market)
in Rotterdam (The Netherlands).
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ecoLogicStudio: .H.O.R.T.U.S. Karlsruhe,
2012-2015, model of an augmented biosphere,
presented at the exhibition Exo-Evolution
at ZKM Karlsruhe.

Photo: © Katja Kwastek, CLUE+.

Introduction

From CLUE to CLUE+

CLUE+ began in 2008, as CLUE, the interfaculty institute for research of the heritage and history of the Cultural Landscape and Urban Environment of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The aim was to unite researchers from various scientific fields to work on these themes in joint, interdisciplinary projects. It turned out to be a successful formula, which was confirmed by the findings of successive international research inspections. In 2014, this acknowledgement was formally recognized by the participating VU faculties, which selected CLUE for a growth scenario, using the same formula, but with a much wider, re-defined focus and with sufficient critical mass to meet future challenges. On January 1 2015 CLUE+ was inaugurated.

Focus and mass

The new focus of CLUE+ is on culture, cognition, history and heritage. In these fields four challenging research themes have been carefully delineated

to accommodate interdisciplinary and diverse research groups:

- Landscape, heritage and society;
- Global history, heritage and memory;
- Paradigms of creativity;
- Knowledge formation and its history;

Since its new start, more than 300 researchers of all ranks have joined the institute, ranging from PhD students to full professors. Their disciplinary background is in various domains like history, art and culture, philosophy, theology, heritage studies, archaeology, architecture, urban planning, economy, geology, geography, spatial sciences and social sciences. They come from the participating VU faculties of Humanities (FGW; secretariat), Theology (FGL), Earth and Life Sciences (FALW), Economics and Business Administration (FEWEB), Social Sciences (FSW) and Law (FR). Moreover, many prestigious national and international institutions and researchers have joined the institute or collaborate closely in joint projects.



Challenges and ambitions

With a series of excellent evaluation grades, the institute has already proven its strong track record. However, CLUE+'s ambition reaches beyond such assessment procedures. What truly matters is to identify and face the core challenges of contemporary science and society. This policy document presents our vision on these matters and formulates our strategy for the next five years.

Gert-Jan Burgers,
Director CLUE+



Research area of the Plakari Project, near Karystos (Greece).

Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+.

Mission

Culture, cognition, history and heritage are central concerns of contemporary society, of relevance to all social domains and on all geographical scales. The VU interfaculty research institute CLUE⁺ brings together ambitious researchers in various phases of their research career, and from a wide variety of academic disciplines, to jointly investigate these concerns, reflect upon societal challenges and formulate strategies for addressing those challenges. Positioning itself within the general VU profile, CLUE⁺ focuses on challenges in the realm of global connectedness, sustainability and governance.

With interdisciplinary projects addressing these topics in novel ways and with innovative methodologies, CLUE⁺ aims to provide an inspiring research climate for talented young academics as well as for senior and top researchers. Its international orientation makes it an ideal partner for fellow research institutes and for public organizations active in the arenas of culture and cultural policies, history and heritage, both within Europe and neighbouring regions.

In the context of this mission, CLUE⁺ has set the following targets, in terms of policy, content and institutional development:

- Interdisciplinary research programmes;
- Anchoring in society (individual, local, national, global);
- Quality control and development;
- International collaboration;
- A sustainable organization.

These targets are presented in further detail below and coupled to ambitions, that also align with policy plans and reports of the Dutch Ministry of Education & Science, NWO and VU University (e.g. Final Report of the Committee for Sustainable Humanities, VU Strategic Plan, National Science Agenda). This policy paper presents a strategy for the realisation of these ambitions as well.



Excavations of the Porticus Aemilia Project, Rome (Italy).
Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE⁺



Interdisciplinary research programmes

Challenges

CLUE⁺ cherishes research of the highest standards, beginning at the level of the participating disciplinary fields. However, key to CLUE⁺ is the recognition that its four central research themes demand a broad, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. For instance, studies of the effects of globalization touch on cultural and religious diversity as much as on the world economy and information technology. Likewise, defining the role of built heritage in our living environment requires the input not only of heritage specialists, historical geographers and archaeologists, but also of experts in public administration, spatial economists and planologists. The joining of forces and cooperation of various disciplines is crucial to CLUE⁺.

Ambition

Within this trend, CLUE⁺ seeks to extend its role as an incubator for interdisciplinarity, bringing together researchers and students from various disciplines and scientific fields in order to facilitate and stimulate interdisciplinary research. This will also lead to methodological innovation. CLUE⁺ has a keen interest in the development of ICT both in terms of tool development and in terms of interdisciplinary research method. In this respect the VU Network and Spinlab Institutes are CLUE⁺'s natural partners.

Strategy

The increased quest for interdisciplinarity has been an important driving force behind the expansion of CLUE into CLUE⁺. This extension allows us to bring in a more diverse community of researchers and more research tools, and it means we can research new, larger-scale themes and perspectives in order to further develop our knowledge. In

order to retain focus and cohesion in the research, the four central overarching thematic programmes will be developed as follows:

1 | Landscape, heritage and society

This programme is focused on the heritage, historical development and present-day transformation of regions, cultural landscapes and urban environments, on the historical background to current spatial and environmental issues and on the changing role and meaning of cultural heritage in our living space and in society in general. Governance policies and economic strategies related to heritage and cultural landscapes are also central concerns, in particular those aiming at sustainable societies. Moreover, in this programme spatial digital techniques are being refined and tested, such as remote sensing, 3D modeling and geodesign tools. Major questions tackled include the following: What theories and tools can be used to study and preserve landscapes and heritage? How can heritage values be captured and evaluated? How can they be



Expert meeting religious leadership with Islamic spiritual leaders, VU February 2016.
 Photo: © Daniëlle Roeleveld, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

sustainably integrated in regional development?

2 | Global history, heritage and memory

This research theme is concerned with the question how large-scale social, economic, ecological and political changes, such as climate change, the rise of global markets, industrialization, urbanization, the rise of world religions or transformation processes with respect to colonial and postcolonial state and nation building, resonate in heritage formation and memory politics. Such overarching changes are being studied in Europe, Asia, Africa and

the Americas from Late Antiquity up to the present postcolonial times, in relation to practices of memory and processes of heritage formation. Some of the major questions are as follows: To what extent do large-scale social, economic, ecological and political changes have a different impact on heritage and memory? How can these variations in time and space be explained? In what respect do postcolonial historiographies of nation building differ from, or feed into heritage politics?

3 | Paradigms of creativity

This programme focuses on the question how cultural production and exchange have developed in the last

centuries in a context of “creativity.” Creativity is researched not only in terms of the individual producer’s search for inspiration, authenticity, and art, but also in terms of the social-political surroundings in which innovation and originality have been recurrently promoted as key aspects of an industrial and post-industrial society.

The theme is interdisciplinary from the outset; while a focus on mediation affords close cooperation with anthropology, audience research, and psychology, the societal and institutional embedding of creativity is researched in cooperation with organization

science, law, and economics. Main questions include the following: How have our expectations of originality and innovation changed over time? What does ‘being creative’ entail in an age of remix and reproduction? How do individuals and communities shape themselves materially and symbolically? How does creativity relate to cultural norms and traditions?

4 | Knowledge formation and its history

Knowledge is a key concept and an instrument of high value in contemporary society. This research theme addresses the societal relevance of processes of



Street art documented in the Challenging Testaccio Project, Rome (Italy).
Photo: © Gert Jan Burgers, CLUE+



St Mary's Lighthouse on the north east coast of England.
Photo: © Rita Hermans, CLUE+.

knowledge formation by means of critical reflections on the nature of knowledge, its possibilities and limitations, and by reflection on the very idea and ideal of the university. The effects of scientific production on normative patterns in society as a whole show the societal impact of processes of knowledge formation as (trans)formations of normative orders. The research theme aims at integrating high-standard disciplinary research into an interdisciplinary setting.

All themes include several interlocking and cross-linked sub-themes (e.g. religion, conflict, migration, the digital world *inter alii*); they all involve close collaboration between different disciplinary

research groups within CLUE+, as well as with partner institutions from various scientific fields, internationally, nationally as well as in the context of the so-called *Amsterdam Academic Alliance* between the VU University, the University of Amsterdam and other academic institutions located in Amsterdam.

Anchoring in society

Challenges

In the Netherlands as well as in the rest of the world, the academic agenda has been hallmarked by an ever increasing emphasis on science and society. In this context,

researchers are stimulated to consider the way their work benefits society, and how their research contributes to insights into fundamental societal questions and phenomena. This is especially relevant for CLUE+. Today's important questions demand an increasingly broad vision, with a clear place for culture, history and heritage. Culture, defined in its broadest sense, from tangible objects to lifestyles and knowledge systems, is unique to mankind, and it is increasingly being recognised as pivotal to human identity, health care and sustainable society in general. Also, understanding the histories, heritage and religious backgrounds of refugees or minority groups is a prerequisite for successful social

inclusion policies and an important weapon against xenophobia, extremism or ethnic conflict.

Ambition

CLUE+ aims to meet such challenges in an innovative and sustainable way and to explore new society-driven research questions. In the spirit of VU, this means CLUE+ should offer opportunities for both fundamental and applied research, focused on deepening knowledge and addressing societal questions. Furthermore, CLUE+ will aim to reinforce its societal profile and objectives in the areas of communication and knowledge use and exchange.

Strategy

All research carried out by CLUE+ staff members is inspired by societal themes, whether on the exchange between artistic creativity and philosophy, the history of political ideas, religious diversity or postcolonial legacies of the imperial past. On top of this, societal anchoring is an important overarching concept within the four main themes discussed above, which are all based on relevant societal fields. Furthermore, each of these themes also addresses to some degree one of the four profile themes of VU University: Connected World, Governance and Society, Science for Sustainability and Human Health and Life Sciences. Research is also inspired by the Dutch National Science Agenda and the European Grand Challenges.

In order to guarantee societal impact of its research projects, CLUE+ collaborates with a range of partners, governmental institutions, NGOs, SMEs, museums and other stakeholders. For this purpose, we explicitly target Public-Private Partnerships, as well as other consortiums and other types of

cooperation. The city of Amsterdam is a natural point of reference for joint ventures (e.g. with museums such as the Amsterdam Museum, Maritime Museum or *Tropenmuseum* and institutes like the International Institute of Social History IISH), but collaborations also include national and international partners like the National Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) or the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation center. In congruence with its aim of anchoring in society, valorization is a leading principle in CLUE+ research projects, to be further stimulated by input of more funds and support. Major valorization activities include:

- outreach, from public lectures to television documentaries;
- participation of CLUE+ researchers in public debates;
- free access to research results;
- consultancy for both public and private partners;
- development of tools for communication and exchange of information between academics, public partners and stakeholders;
- participatory community-based research.



Cover image of the Amsterdam Slavery Heritage Guide, part of the Mapping Slavery Project. Façade of residence at Rokin 64, Amsterdam. Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+.



**The Rietveld-Schröder House in Utrecht
(The Netherlands).**
Photo: © Koos Bosma t.

Quality control and development

Challenges

The extension of the scope of the CLUE+ programme brings with it an inherent risk of loss of focus, so by implication quality control is considered of the highest importance. Moreover, CLUE+ actively stimulates talent by promoting excellence. Supporting talent is a sine qua non for scientific renewal, as well as being essential for maintaining the international position of the institute and VU research.

Ambition

CLUE+ aims to promote talent development more than before by providing more funding opportunities to which CLUE+ staff can apply and by explicitly guaranteeing a high-quality, inspirational research environment.

Strategy

CLUE+ researchers have leadership positions in European and international research programmes and assessments, and have excellent publication records. Moreover, they manage to attract important external funding. To guarantee the continuation of this success, cooperation, cohesion and focus are required. In the context of this mission the thematic programmes addressed above have been given a central position, allowing the institute to focus its attention on specific scientific research. Within the programmes, new research proposals are developed and applications prepared. Here, quality and output are also carefully monitored according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021, which prescribes the methods used to assess research conducted at Dutch universities.

Each programme has a coordinator. They are arranged in four to five smaller groups, which address current research problems from different disciplinary angles, and search for starting points for an



Excursion to the new Amsterdam metro line under construction.

Photo: © Krien Clevis.

interdisciplinary approach to these problems. They cooperate in research projects, exchange ideas on the latest developments in their fields, discuss

the results of PhD research, write co-authored publications and organize conferences, courses, debates and seminars. This is important, for



Footsteps Africa Project. Village elder from Mlalo, one of the larger villages of the former Usambara kingdom (Tanzania).
Photo: © Frans Huijzendveld, CLUE+.

example, for young researchers, such as PhD candidates and post-docs, allowing them to cooperate in inspiring surroundings with 'similar minds' and supervisors that share their academic interest, so that they can use this as a basis from which to look for cooperation with fellow researchers at other institutes. The best way to achieve this is in research groups with a limited size. Besides, it is in relatively small research groups that academic innovations are best achieved and creative ideas for new projects and proposals are introduced.

To further stimulate talent development, CLUE+ coordinates courses, tutorials and internships in close collaboration with the graduate schools of the participating faculties. Moreover, junior researchers are given the opportunity to publish in CLUES, an international scientific series in the fields of culture, history and heritage, edited by CLUE+. Another stimulus is the CLUE+ incentive fund for junior researchers, which offers grants for writing research proposals and for organizing seminars and conferences, and which provides ample opportunities

to participate in, establish or maintain national and international networks and consortia.

International collaboration

Challenges

World-leading research must cross borders, both figuratively and literally. This is evident in research agendas, which are becoming increasingly internationally oriented, and which are often guided by the EU and other international organizations. In this light it is essential to expand international networks and research opportunities.

Ambition

CLUE+ seeks to make full use of the opportunities in this area, and accordingly it will work to present itself as a stage for debate and cooperation between Dutch academics and the rest of the world. The ambition of CLUE+ is to achieve and consolidate a leading position in international networks relevant to its research themes.

Strategy

World class research is important, in this respect, but it is not sufficient. The institute must maintain an extrovert and transparent profile and conduct boundary-breaking research that moves beyond national patterns of thought. It must also have a clear focus on cooperation and exchange, and CLUE⁺ research leaders are already working towards this goal through large-scale research projects that are excellent vehicles for an international approach to research. They lead or participate in extensive national and international collaborations - academic networks (e.g. with the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of the Indonesian Gadjah Mada University and the South African Western Cape history department), but also consortia with public partners (e.g. heritage boards, governmental institutions and municipalities, from the city of Nijmegen in the Netherlands to Mesagne in Italy) and private partners (e.g. NGOs, foundations and companies, like Geodan or the architectural studio ABDR Associated Architects). Most

of the international collaborations concern joint participation in research projects and programme grants (e.g. NWO, KP7, Hera), joint papers and conferences, exchange of PhD students and staff, software and data exchange, policy development or consultancy (for an overview of CLUE⁺ partners see www.clue.vu.nl). To further facilitate consortium and network building with international partners, CLUE⁺ organizes seminars, conferences and network meetings, and it actively participates in international research agendas and calls (e.g. Marie Curie, Horizon 2020, Joint Program Initiatives). CLUE⁺ also maintains partnerships with a series of Dutch research institutes abroad (notably the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome (KNIR), the Dutch University Institute for Art History in



Representation of John Steel, an allied paratrooper, hanging from a church in St-Mère-Église (France).
Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE⁺.

Florence (NIKI) and the Netherlands Institute in Turkey/Istanbul (NIT), which offer an ideal, temporary research base for CLUE⁺ researchers to expand international networks. Together with the KNIR, CLUE⁺ also organizes a yearly international summer school for graduate students in Rome on the themes of World Heritage, Urbanistic interventions

and the City of Rome. With highly motivated students attending from all over the globe, it is an excellent incubator for talent.



Using a Total Station measuring device in the Geraki-Project near Sparta (Greece).
Photo: © Mieke Prent, CLUE+.

A sustainable organization

Challenges

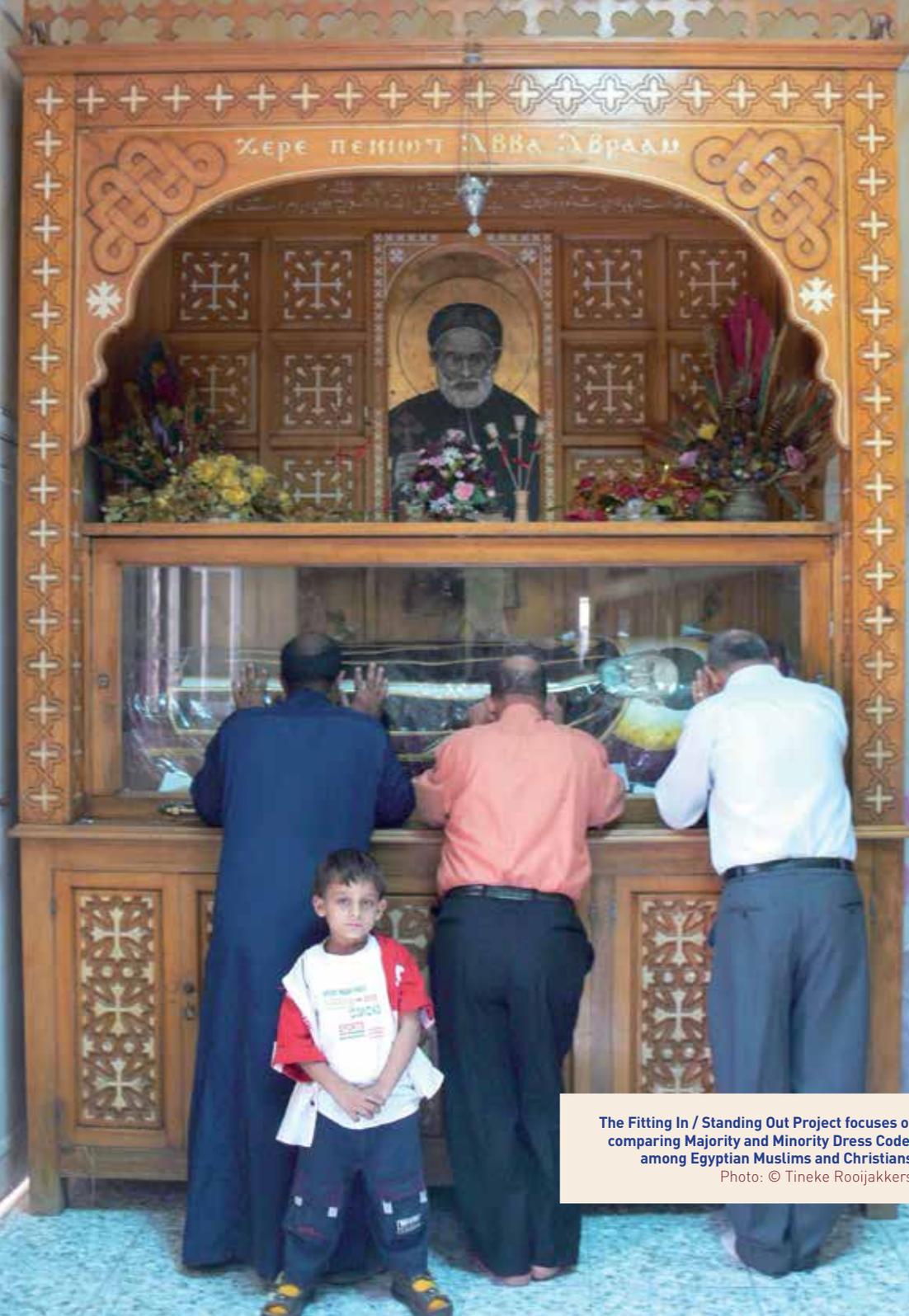
Sustainability is a key word in the realities of modern business, and this is no different in the academic world. Showing intellectual and societal value is an important factor for sustainability, but it must not be the only factor. The organizational structure and functioning of the institute are equally decisive in order to guarantee sustainability and to safeguard cohesion and an inspiring research climate.

Ambition

CLUE+ is a vital conglomeration of researchers, rooted in the successful formula of the old CLUE. The latter has more than justified the investments made by the faculties. It is the task of CLUE+, as well as the faculties, to guarantee, or even enhance the stability of the institute.

Strategy

Crucial to the success of CLUE+ is its research community. Basically, the institute operates as a network-like organization, with a plurality of research groups dynamically interacting and defining innovative, interdisciplinary research lines. Along these lines, the overarching programmes are indicative, not determinative. New challenges are welcomed, and overlaps and collaborations between the programmes are stimulated, and in order to promote this, the programmes facilitate smaller units, each with their own Principal Investigator. These groups organize themselves, build their networks and arrange conferences and debates around themes that often crosscut those of the overarching programmes. Moreover, this is the level where PhD supervision and mentorship is most intense and where young talented researchers are discovered.



The Fitting In / Standing Out Project focuses on comparing Majority and Minority Dress Codes among Egyptian Muslims and Christians.

Photo: © Tineke Rooijackers.

Internal cohesion between the various research groups is secured by a well-defined management structure.

The deans of the participating faculties, together with the director, make up the board of CLUE+. The director is in charge of the day-to-day running of the institute, with the support of a manager (the director of operations in the Faculty of Humanities, which is the coordinating faculty) and a policy officer. Together, they ensure that the institute's philosophy and policy is turned into practice, overseeing the budget, registering scientific output and making sure that performance targets are met. They are also in charge of PR and communications, as well as liaising with the participating faculties. Moreover, with the help of the four programme coordinators, the director stimulates discussions and debates, innovations and grant requests, performs quality controls and keeps up the institute's relations with its most important scientific and social partners.

The director of CLUE+ and the four coordinators also ensure that the institute's main focuses and profile are kept intact.

This policy document has been written with that intent and it is an important step in the direction of fulfilling CLUE+'s ambitions; it sets out the major targets and strategies with which the institute aims to reach its research and valorization goals for the coming years, i.e. through focused, interdisciplinary programmes, anchoring in society, international collaboration, and quality control and development. Success in meeting these targets will be the collective merit of the CLUE+ research community.

About CLUE+

CLUE+ is the interfaculty Research Institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. It brings together researchers from a wide variety of academic disciplines, to work on joint projects, reflect upon societal challenges and formulate strategies for addressing those challenges. With interdisciplinary teams, working in novel ways and with innovative methodologies, CLUE+ aims to provide an inspiring research climate for talented young academics as well as for senior and top researchers. Its international orientation makes it an ideal partner for fellow research institutes and for public organizations active in the arenas of culture, history and heritage, both within Europe and neighbouring regions.

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