

STRATEGY PLAN

2023-2026

CLUE⁺

RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR
CULTURE, COGNITION, HISTORY AND HERITAGE



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
AMSTERDAM

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Colofon

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CLUE+ | Amsterdam, 2023



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Introduction

CLUE+ is a centre for research into today's most pressing societal challenges, linked to Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's *Connected World* theme. The main questions that we explore are how people around the world have grown more connected due to globalization, migration, and digitization, and how disconnection can be countered. CLUE+ researches the Connected World from a historical, philosophical, cultural, and social point of view. In doing so, the research institute provides a unique platform for academics in multiple faculties to meet each other and engage in dialogue, particularly those in the cultural, social, and spatial sciences. The numerous interdisciplinary research projects under the CLUE+ banner prove the continuing success of our grassroots approach to collaboration across the academic landscape. We also strive to create an open, safe and inclusive environment to optimally equip researchers to contribute to society's main challenges.

With this Strategy Plan, CLUE+ is entering its third phase. After the institute was founded in 2008 as an interfaculty institute for landscape

and heritage research, it quickly grew into a lively research community with impactful research projects. In 2015, a "+" was added to the original name, signposting the expansion of the institute to include a wider range of research fields and a much larger group of active researchers. In the years that followed, CLUE+ established itself as a mature institute with many relevant partnerships and joint projects with government agencies, cultural institutions, NGOs, artists, and businesses in the Netherlands and abroad.

CLUE+ is now entering a new phase, heralded by the introduction of five new research programmes on interdisciplinary themes, each led by a pair of established researchers with various backgrounds in 2021. These programmes support CLUE+'s ambition to be an inclusive community for early-stage and senior researchers. With its projects and activities, CLUE+ aims to contribute to public debates on pressing societal challenges even more than before. Public debates on Black Lives Matter, the war in Ukraine and the ongoing climate crisis, for instance, can benefit from critical per-

spectives based on established lines of research in the wider humanities field at VU Amsterdam. The VU theme *Connected World* will inspire CLUE+'s calls and activities over the coming years. Through its activity funds, seed money, and fellowships, CLUE+ hopes to stimulate future collaboration and research on initiatives and, it will continue to serve as an incubator of societally relevant interdisciplinary research.

*On behalf of the management team,
Gert-Jan Burgers, Director, and Linde Egberts, Research Strategy Advisor of CLUE+*

Connected World theme image.
Photo: © Unsplash.

Mission

The study of culture, cognition, history, and heritage plays a key role in the world today, as it shows us how societies function and how contemporary challenges are framed and managed. CLUE+, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's interfaculty research institute, brings together researchers with all levels of experience and from a wide variety of academic disciplines and backgrounds. It aims to foster societally relevant and impactful academic research by investigating and reflecting on societal challenges together, as well as formulating strategies for addressing these challenges.

CLUE+ is particularly focused on global connectedness, in line with the university's Connected World profile theme. For our researchers, global connectedness is also about questions of disconnection and inequality that are inextricably part of a globalizing world. CLUE+ researchers address the political history of transnational trade, for example, as well as social injustice in contemporary decolonization debates and the relationship between local heritage and international climate mitigation planning.

With interdisciplinary projects addressing these topics in novel ways and with innovative methodologies, CLUE+ aims to build an inspiring research community. Its international orientation makes it an ideal partner for academic insti-

tutes and for public organizations concerned with social and cultural policy, both within Europe and beyond. In the context of this mission, CLUE+ has set itself the following policy, content and institutional development goals:

- Further developing our **interdisciplinary research** programmes;
- Anchoring **research in society**;
- Supporting **talent and knowledge exchange**;
- Expanding **international cooperation**;
- Striving to foster a **diverse, sustainable, and caring organization**.

These goals are presented in further detail below and linked with ambitions that align with policy plans and reports of the Dutch Ministry of



Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+



Landscape transformation. The E39 Highway in Norway. Photo: © Unsplash 2023

Education & Science, NWO and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (e.g., Curious & Committed, the country's current scientific policy, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the National Science Agenda, and the 2022 SSH Sector Plans). This long-term strategy also consists of concrete plans for achieving these ambitions.

Interdisciplinary research programmes

Challenges

Even though **interdisciplinarity is recognized as a key component of knowledge innovation, marshalling it in academic organizations has proven to be challenging. For instance, studies of the effects of globalization touch on cultural and religious diversity as much as they do on decolonization debates and the world economy. Likewise, understanding the cultural, historical, and social dimensions of climate change requires contributions from scholars of history, environmental humanities, and heritage**

studies, at the very least. CLUE+ has established itself as a successful and sustainable network that has turned this challenge into its key strength by cutting through many disciplinary and institutional boundaries within Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and beyond.

Ambition

At CLUE+, we believe that cooperation between diverse researchers from a multitude of fields and backgrounds is necessary for developing new academic insights with new methodologies and applications. The institute's explicit aim to connect researchers and their various approaches in order to stimulate interdisciplinarity in their research. CLUE+ seeks to extend its role as an incubator for interdisciplinarity, with the VU Network Institute being a natural partner. With its focus on culture, cognition, history, and heritage, CLUE+ puts into practice the ambitions of the 2022 SSH sector plans that emphasize the urgency of interdisciplinary research in the field of cultural heritage and identity.

Strategy

CLUE+ aims to stimulate this interdisciplinary research environment by further developing our five interdisciplinary research programmes. These programmes bring together researchers from many different backgrounds who share similar thematic research interests. In our carefully curated events, we stimulate cross-fertilization, feedback, and mutual support. As a starting point, we ask researchers what they need to elevate their research to the next level, whether that is a speed-dating session to broaden their network or a course on grant writing. Each programme organizes a series of activities to cater to these needs. The five programmes are:

1 | Inclusive Landscape Transformations

This programme fosters transdisciplinary research into landscape transformations past and present. It stimulates critical



Environmental Humanities. The Dutch fighting the water.
Photo: © Nationaal Archief, The Hague, The Netherlands.

analysis of landscapes and spatial interventions focusing on power relationships, inclusivity, participation, and emancipation. The myriad ways in which history and heritage are interwoven with these processes of change are also a key research interest.

The emerging climate crisis, the global pandemic, and the growing digitalization of society have profound effects worldwide and challenge our current ways of life. These trends and their effects have also raised awareness of the disparities between different groups in society in terms of access to high-quality living conditions and participation in

decision-making. Landscapes – as material and cultural manifestations of society – are a crucial level at which these disparities can be addressed. Knowledge about landscape transformations and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are vital.

The scientific field of landscape research has grown enormously in recent decades, with a variety of disciplines offering new perspectives and methods, and interdisciplinary programmes seeking to arrive at a more holistic understanding of a multitude of topics. This programme seeks to contribute to this booming field and facilitate inclusive

landscape transformation by building a community of researchers from a variety of scientific domains, conducting applied research in close collaboration with engaged societal partners, and developing comparative perspectives on inclusivity amidst current and historical landscape transformations.

2 | Environmental and Health Humanities

This research programme joins humanities approaches with human-nature relations, health and medicine, and emotions and senses. Recognizing that history, society, and culture shape all these domains, the interdisciplinary fields

of Environmental Humanities, Medical and Health Humanities, and the History of Emotions and Senses bring new cutting-edge perspectives of urgent issues, from climate change and public health to individual wellbeing, helping us understand the past and learn lessons for the future.

In current research projects, we explore how Dutch culture defined its relationship with water and coped with drought in the past, and work with museums and cultural institutions to shape new relations between humans and the natural world. In collaboration with heritage institutes, we consider how collecting and interpreting ‘forgotten’ diseases such as



Environmental Humanities. Climate change and sustainability.
Photo: © Unsplash 2023



The Maritime Museum in Amsterdam. Photo from the Dutch Slavery History Guide. Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn.

AIDS influences the management of emerging disease threats today. With the WHO, we analyse how to adapt global policies to local circumstances. Through historical research we can explain how emotions are culturally diverse and analyse 'new' trends such as the democratization of society, affective economies, or emotional regimes (emocracies). With computer science, chemistry, heritage science and industry partners we develop cutting-edge techniques in smell recognition and olfactory museology.

3 | Globalization, capitalism, Colonialism

Movements of people, their artefacts, and ideas across space and the connections between societies that arise out of those movements are

inherent to the human condition. Acceleration of such movements across the globe and the deepening impact this has had on local societies was at the root of our current age of globalization. The economic and political contexts in which these development took place have been shaped profoundly by the emergence of capitalism as the dominant form of economic life and the process of colonization and de-colonization as key aspects of today's nation-states. Both capitalism and colonialism have spawned great social dynamism, as well as severe inequality in income, wealth, and opportunities, while creating or reinforcing important forms of social exclusion based on class, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Unequal patterns

of globalization, capitalism, and the long legacies of colonialism also play a formative role in some of today's most urgent societal problems, from climate change to the global rise of authoritarianism, and from the imposition of severe and often deadly forms of policing borders to the difficulties that societies across the globe face in integrating their divisive histories of violence, colonialism, slavery, and other forms of coerced labour into more just visions of the future.

4 | Knowledge in Context

Knowledge and reliable information are central to almost all sectors of contemporary society. The Netherlands is sometimes called a knowledge economy; democracy needs a

knowledgeable citizenry; technological innovation requires R&D and scientific knowledge production; and reliable information is a key ingredient for well-functioning journalism, medicine, law, government, and other sectors of society.

Researchers involved with the 'Knowledge in Context' programme work on fundamental and applied questions about knowledge and its production, maintenance, distribution, and use, as well as questions about the processes that undermine knowledge in society. They employ both systematic and historical perspectives in doing so.

Knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is also part of life in a broader sense.

It has helped to shape humanity's past and will continue to shape the future of humanity and life on our planet. It informs human curiosity and speaks to perennial questions of meaning, purpose, morality, religion, and worldview. How can the sciences and humanities contribute to answering the big questions – both perennial ones and those raised by contemporary global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity, and geopolitics – and how have they done so in the past? Does scientific inquiry have limits and, if so, what are they?

5 | Traces of the Transcendent

This programme fosters inter- and transdisciplinary research into the interplay between religion and other cultural manifestations – past and present. The focus on "transcendence", in all its iterations and myriad understandings, allows for a broad scope of perspectives and methodological approaches – historical, theological, linguistic, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological. In doing so, it hopes to stimulate the critical analysis of meaning and meaning-making. The ways in which people look for meaning and grapple with changing

approaches to understanding the transcendent are a key focus of this research programme.

Climate change, the rapid pace of technological advances, growing radicalization, and increasing polarization are clear and present threats facing societies and individuals worldwide. How do people face these threats? What role does belief play in how, where, when, and why people address these issues? How have people used beliefs and practices drawn from an understanding of the transcendent in the past? What does the transcendent even mean in our current world? To take just one example, Artificial Intelligence raises pressing questions about sentience and what it means to be human. Do robots have a conscience? What are the ethical implications of living with them in the future?



Traces of the Transcendent. What role does belief play? Photo: © Unsplash.



Globalization.
Photo: © Unsplash 2023.

Anchoring in society

Challenges

In the Netherlands and in the rest of the world, the academic agenda has been hallmarked by an ever-increasing emphasis on science with a strong relationship with society. In this context, researchers are encouraged to consider how their work benefits society and contributes to insights into fundamental societal questions and phenomena. Under the banner of 'Open Science' a broad set of actions are taken to make research outcomes more available at an earlier stage and in an easier and broader fashion. This is especially relevant for CLUE+, as today's important questions demand an increasingly broad vision, with a clear place for culture, history, religion, and heritage. More and more people are starting to recognize the pivotal role of culture, defined in its broadest sense, from tangible objects to ways of life and knowledge systems, for understanding and addressing major challenges like climate adaptation and sustainability. Additionally, understanding the histories, heritage,

and religious backgrounds of refugees or minority groups is a prerequisite for social inclusion and an important weapon against xenophobia, extremism, and ethnic conflict.

Ambition

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 imperial pasts. CLUE+ aims to meet such societal challenges in an inclusive, transparent, and sustainable way. In the spirit of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, this means CLUE+ offers opportunities for both fundamental and applied research, focused on deepening knowledge and addressing societal questions. Furthermore, CLUE+ aims to reinforce its societal profile and objectives in the areas of communication and the utilization and exchange of knowledge. Each of the five research programmes addresses specific societal concerns while also



Social inclusion.
Photo: © Unsplash 2023.

raising awareness of new ones, such as the cultural perception of the fires that are becoming increasingly common in North-west European landscapes. Furthermore, each

of CLUE+ research programmes also translates Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's *Connected World* profile theme into specific subtopics, like reflections on connections between



Resilient societies.
Photo: © Unsplash 2023.

academia and society, or critical analysis of the role of digital sensors in mass surveillance.

Many pathways of the National Dutch Research agenda are related to CLUE+ objectives, such as Resilient Societies and Between Conflict and Cooperation. Funding bodies ranging from NWO to the EU are also increasingly prioritizing projects within these scopes. CLUE+, with its insistence on interdisciplinarity, societal embedding, and valorization, can be seen as a targeted answer by the participating faculties to fully seize these opportunities.

In congruence with the merger of NWO's domains of Social Sciences and Humanities (aptly called the SSH domain), CLUE+ is particularly interested in exploring new crossroads between the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences, e.g., through its Environmental Humanities Centre, which stimulates conversations among the humanities and the natural and social sciences about environmental crises.

Strategy

CLUE+ researchers also work with a wide range of public and private partners in society. We consider this a key feature of the institute, which will be emphasized even more in the years

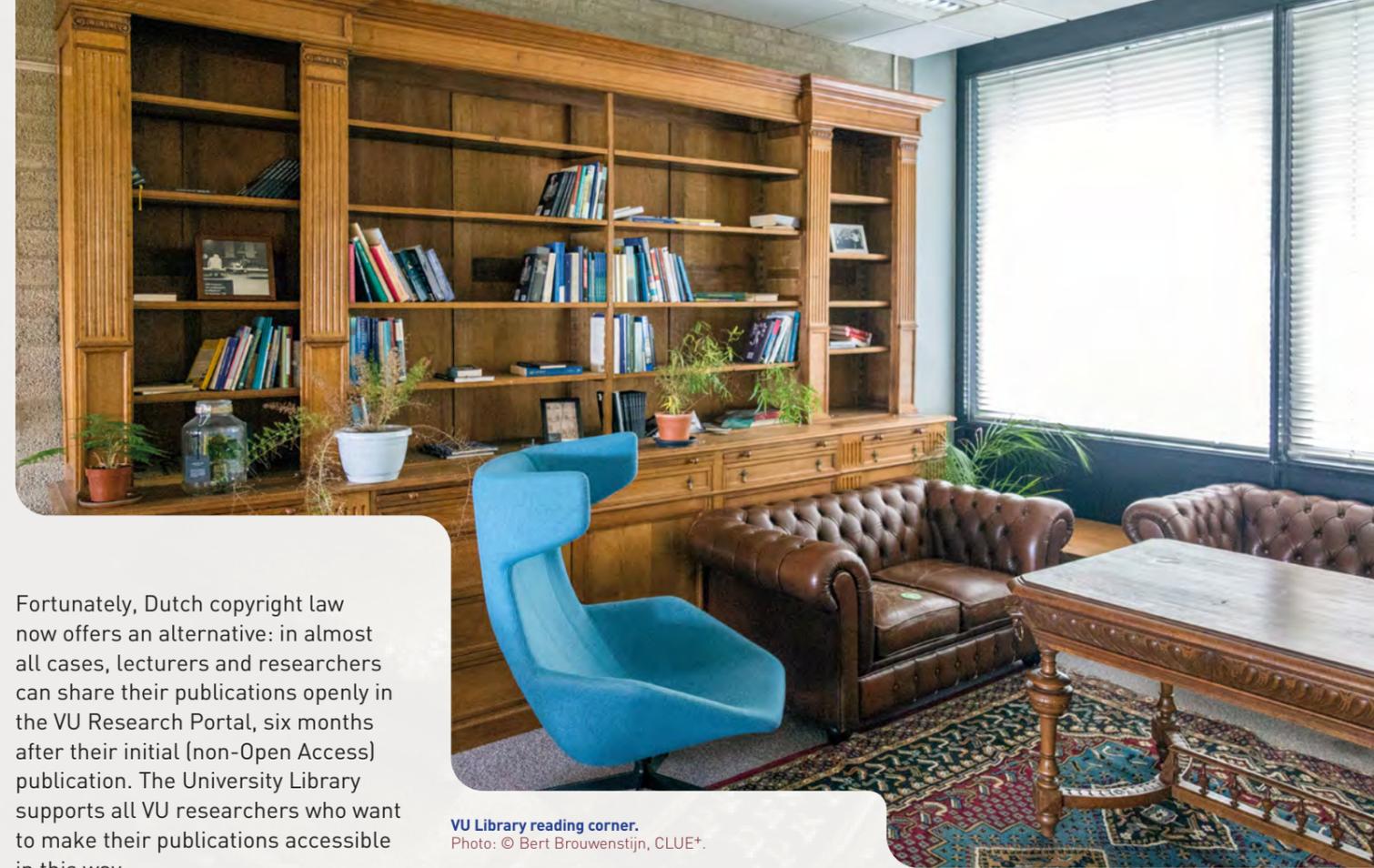
to come. Ways in which we stimulate dialogue between CLUE+ researchers and other members of society include:

- CLUE+ funding competitions on societal challenges;
- co-creation and co-design of projects with stakeholders, including citizens;
- projects focused on citizen science, communication and exchange of information between academics, public partners, and stakeholders;
- outreach activities, from public lectures to television documentaries;
- participation of CLUE+ researchers in public debates;
- consultancy for both public and private partners.

Driven by its aim of being anchored in society, Open Science is becoming an increasingly important principle in CLUE+ research projects. We consider data sharing and Research Data Management (RDM) to be essential elements of research integrity and closely follow VU regulations in this regard, with University Library experts working on the implementation of a plan built on FAIR principles at a university-wide level. We guarantee safe storage by adhering to the IT security and safety protocols of the university network. Secure data server facilities are available to store audiovisual data and large datasets requiring High-Performance Computing. Publications and links

to corresponding data are made available through the University Library's Research Information System. All research groups have good internal coding and data storage guidelines for safe and accurate data storage and data sharing within and between research groups. The faculties have their own privacy officer for research and a data steward who assists researchers in drawing up Data Management Plans and answers questions about research involving personal data.

Special attention will be paid to Open Access (OA) publications by encouraging all researchers to publish in excellent journals with OA. In this, we follow the ambition of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam to make all publications accessible to everyone, in accordance with Plan-S of a coalition of international research funding agencies. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has Open Access publishing agreements with many publishers at no extra cost for researchers. However, these agreements do not yet cover all types of publications and journals.



VU Library reading corner.
Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+.

Fortunately, Dutch copyright law now offers an alternative: in almost all cases, lecturers and researchers can share their publications openly in the VU Research Portal, six months after their initial (non-Open Access) publication. The University Library supports all VU researchers who want to make their publications accessible in this way.

In order to guarantee that its research projects have societal impact, CLUE+ collaborates with a wide range of partners, particularly government institutions, cultural institutions, citizen groups, and NGOs that busy themselves with the societal challenges on which CLUE+ focuses. The city of Amsterdam is a natural point of reference for joint ventures (e.g., with museums such as the

Amsterdam Museum, Maritime Museum, and Tropenmuseum, as well as institutes like the International Institute of Social History IISH), but the institute has also collaborated with national and international partners such as the Dutch Agency for Cultural Heritage (RCE). Commercial consultation has not had a prominent place within CLUE+ thus far, but we

are exploring opportunities to expand our societal impact through this more commercially oriented type of cooperation.



Supporting talent and knowledge exchange

Challenges

'Research excellence' has for quite some time been defined predominantly as an achievement of individual scholars, based on quantitative frameworks, research publications, quotations, and funding. Some of the negative consequences of these approaches are high work pressure and slow diversification of the scientific community, if there is any diversification to speak of at all. Moreover, it is questionable whether this culture of recognition leads to higher-quality knowledge and more relevant research output. In the past few years, a shift has started to emerge to promote diversity and inclusivity in academia. The achievements of individual scholars should still be rewarded, but contributions to teaching, management, teamwork, and a healthy work-life balance are slowly finding their ways into frameworks for funding and promotion opportunities. This is particularly

important, as the COVID-19 crisis has isolated many academics and has prompted unequal setbacks among different groups within the academic community, often increasing inequality. It remains challenging, however, to make these considerations of inclusivity and social equality concrete and transparent throughout the academic system.

Ambition

CLUE+ supports this shift towards a redefinition of academic excellence. Over the past few years, the institute has also shifted its focus from an emphasis on individual talent development towards inclusive community-building and teamwork in a high-quality, inspirational research environment. We aim to further lower the threshold for young academics, promote interdisciplinary teamwork and valorization activities, and stimulate knowledge exchange with academics and societal partners in the Netherlands and beyond. By doing so, CLUE+ explicitly supports Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's vision

The Light Hall at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Photo: © Tropenmuseum Amsterdam.

Overview of CLUE+ related activities in 2022. Photo: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+.

on Recognition and Rewards (2020), as well as national and international agendas for a diverse and inclusive academic world.

Strategy

Secondly, CLUE+ will keep approaching grant applications as a team effort, which has seen us secure external funding in the past and means that CLUE+ researchers now have leading positions in European and international research programmes and assessments. To guarantee the continuation of this success, we need cooperation, cohesion, and focus. The thematic focus of our programmes allows for targeted activities to foster the development of new research ideas and cooperations in a supportive setting. The VU Grants Office is an important partner in supporting applicants during the application process. Thirdly, CLUE+ has built a close partnership with research and graduate schools, consisting of summer courses, honours classes, masterclasses, tutorials, and workshops (e.g. on the NWA) at the intersection of training

example, for young researchers, such as PhD candidates and post-docs, as it allows them to work with 'similar minds' in inspiring surroundings.

For the coming years, CLUE+ will work on achieving these aims in several ways. Firstly, we have reshaped the five research programmes into thematic, open sub-communities with bottom-up and interactive programming. This has already led to a demonstrably higher level of engagement in our events as well as participation in calls for funding. In the future, this should result in engagement of an even more diverse group of scholars, from multiple faculties and backgrounds, who jointly shape and evolve the programmes through their engagement. Programme members 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

Dutch Institutes abroad. From left to right, KNIR (Rome), NIA (Athens), NIT (Istanbul) and the NIKI (Florence).
Photos: © CLUE+



and research. This way, researchers become acquainted with CLUE+ at an early stage and find an interdisciplinary platform for exchanging ideas, building networks, and taking initiative in a supportive environment. Moreover, CLUE+ will scale back its focus on excellence and quantifying past achievements in its calls for seed money funding.

International collaboration

Challenges

CLUE+ strongly cherishes an international research culture, which facilitates collaboration and information exchange in international (research) projects; the institute actively contributes to the formation of a climate appropriate to investigate the major societal challenges of our time from a global, multifocal perspective (incl. non-Western perspectives); from migration to multiculturalism and from globalisation to climate change. These challenges

require to think beyond national scientific and cultural frameworks. Accordingly, our research agendas are increasingly aligned with those of the EU, Unesco and other international organizations.

Ambition

CLUE+ has a proven track-record in successful international research cooperation and seeks to make full use of the opportunities in this area. The institute serves 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 programmes.

Strategy

CLUE+ researchers already work in smaller and 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 history department of the University of the Western Cape in South Africa), but also consortiums with public partners (e.g. heritage boards, governmental institutions and municipalities, from the city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands to Mesagne in Italy) and private partners (e.g. NGOs, foundations, and companies such as Geodan, NiNsee or 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, please visit www.clue.vu.nl).

To further facilitate consortium and network building with international partners, CLUE+ organizes seminars, conferences, and network meetings, and actively participates in international research agendas and calls (e.g.,

Marie Curie, Horizon 2020, Joint Program Initiatives). The Institute also has partnerships with various Dutch research institutes abroad (notably the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome (KNIR), the Dutch University Institute for Art History in Florence (NIKI) and the Netherlands Institute in Turkey/Istanbul (NIT), which offer an ideal temporary research base for CLUE+ researchers to expand their international networks. Together with the KNIR, CLUE+ also organizes an international summer school for graduate students in Rome on the themes of World Heritage, participatory planning, and the City of Rome.

A diverse, caring, inclusive, and sustainable organization

Challenges

CLUE+ fosters a vibrant, open and inclusive academic culture. The institute is a vital conglomeration of researchers that thrives on the stability we have

been able to provide for a growing number of researchers. Stimulating opportunities for our researchers starts with a sustainable organization that embodies the values of the research and academic community it stands for. As interdisciplinary cooperation is vital for the development of meaningful knowledge, network-like organizations like CLUE+ are key in bringing researchers together across institutions and disciplines. Even though the CLUE+ research institute has been able to establish and expand its activities over the past fifteen years, building a healthy and sustainable organization remains challenging. Therefore, social safety, social care, and inclusivity are and always will be important concerns. Moreover, the increasing awareness of the environmental impact of academic activities challenge CLUE+ to reconsider how we foster knowledge exchange, printed publications, and travel.

Ambition

The organization of CLUE+ aims to strike a healthy balance between a lean organizational core team and

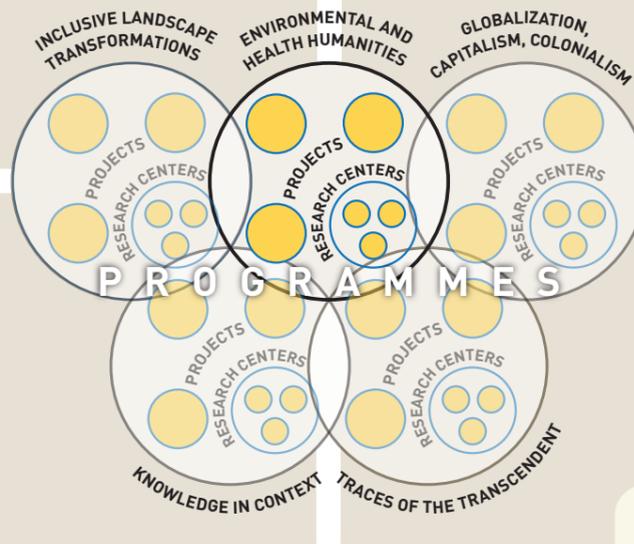
CLUE+ IN A NUTSHELL

ORGANISATION

- BOARD-FACULTIES
- MANAGEMENT TEAM
- GRADUATE SCHOOLS
- SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES
- ETHICS COMMITTEES

THEMES

- CONNECTED WORLD AND OTHER VU PROFILE THEMES:
 - SUSTAINABILITY
 - GOVERNANCE
 - INCLUSIVENESS
 - DIVERSITY
- NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA (NWA)
- H2020 / HEUROPE
- SDG'S



STRATEGIC GOALS

- MASS AND FOCUS
- INTERDISCIPLINARITY
- ANCHORING IN SOCIETY / IMPACT
- EXCELLENCE / TRAINING
- INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK
- VIABLE AND OPEN ORGANISATION

PARTNERS

- ACADEMIC PARTNERS
- HERITAGE BOARDS
- MUSEUMS
- NGO'S
- BUSINESS
- CONSULTANCY
- MEDIA
- PLANNING AGENCIES
- ADMINISTRATIONS

an increasingly democratic and participatory management approach. CLUE+ aims to become more approachable and participatory in terms of programming and will deploy new communication strategies to support this low-threshold approach. Another aim of the institute is to implement the sustainability policy of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

CLUE+ Organisation structure
Image: © Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+

Strategy

The institute operates as a network-like organization, with a plurality of research groups interacting dynamically and cooperating within five innovative, interdisciplinary programmes. New challenges are welcomed, and overlaps and collaborations between the programmes are stimulated. These groups organize themselves, build their own networks, and arrange conferences and debates on themes that often crosscut those of the overarching programmes.

Cohesion between the research programmes is secured by a well-defined management structure. The deans of the participating faculties, along with the director, make up the board of CLUE+. The director and research strategy advisor are in charge of the institute's day-to-day operations, with the support of the faculty and a Policy Officer. Together, they ensure that the institute's philosophy and policy are put into practice, oversee the budget, register scientific output, and make sure

that performance targets are met. They are also in charge of PR and communications, as well as liaising with the participating faculties.

Since 2021, the five research programmes have been headed by two researchers from different fields, and one of each pair also has a place on the management team. CLUE+ strives to strike a healthy balance in terms of which disciplines, genders, and age groups these ten scholars represent. Diversity in terms of cultural backgrounds remains a point of attention. This is important, as CLUE+ adheres to the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam principle of 'inclusive excellence' by organizing diversity-sensitive activities and focusing on intercultural competences, as well as by pursuing a personnel policy in which diversity plays a central role at all levels of the organization.

Moreover, attention will be paid on strengthening identification with CLUE+ within the constituent research centres of the institute (e.g., Environmental Humanities Centre, Migration and Diversity Centre, Ethos)

through targeted seed money and other incentives and encouraging them to play an active role in CLUE+'s strategy, ranging from proposing research projects to analysing academic culture, outreach, and public debate). The research institute will also enhance its approachability by organizing an interactive, annual members' day and launching a new, more accessible website to improve the visibility and availability of the people behind CLUE+.

With regard to safety, CLUE+ complies strictly with Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam policy and best practices, with the university committing to being a safe workplace and offering its students and employees a healthy climate. To that aim, it has clear protocols, including roadmaps for managers and help matrices, and central and faculty-specific confidential counsellors. Moreover, all staff in management positions have recently been invited to participate in practical training sessions that will help them recognize signals of unwanted behavior and learn what to do in such situations. In the same vein, most managers

follow courses on inclusiveness, leadership, and integrity.

As for research integrity, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and CLUE+ fully subscribe to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. For breaches in academic integrity, there is a VU academic integrity complaints procedure. Moreover, several of its research groups actively examine research environments, competition, integrity, ethics, and the effects of our integrity policy. One of the most active groups in this respect is the Abraham Kuyper Centre, with ongoing, multiple-grant-winning projects on epistemic responsibilities, research integrity, and scientific progress.



Organisation

CLUE+ is represented by the following people:

Director
Gert-Jan Burgers

Chair of the board
Susan Legêne

Research strategy advisor
Linde Egberts

Policy officer
Rita van der Schriek-Hermans

Programme leads

Linde Egberts & Niels van Manen
(Inclusive Landscape Transformations)

Kristine Steenbergh & Erin la Cour
(Environmental and Health Humanities)

Pepijn Brandon & Babs Boter
(Globalization, Capitalism, Colonialism)

Jeroen de Ridder & Ab Flipse
(Knowledge in Context)

Bert-Jan Lietaert Peerbolte & Jessica Roitman
(Traces of the Transcendent)

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