



# CLUE+

## Research Institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU Amsterdam) is unique in the Netherlands in that most of its research takes place in interfaculty institutes, or iOZI's (Interdisciplinaire Onderzoeksinstituten). The aim of creating such umbrellas is to enhance interdisciplinarity. CLUE+ is one of these iOZI's. It started in 2007 as CLUE, the interfaculty institute for research into the heritage and history of the Cultural Landscape and Urban Environment. In 2015, the scope was widened to include research on culture and cognition and its name was adapted to CLUE+. It is currently composed of over 250 researchers from six VU faculties, i.e. Humanities (secretariat), Religion and Theology, Science, School of Business and Economics, Social Sciences, and Law. Also, many smaller research centres have joined, such as the Stevin Centre, the Abraham Kuyper Center, the Environmental Humanities Centre and the Migration and Diversity Centre.

### MISSION AND STRATEGIES

CLUE+'s mission is to be a centre of excellence for research into today's most pressing societal challenges linked to VU Amsterdam's *Connected World* profile theme. The institute's main aim is to create an inspiring and stimulating research environment that unites researchers from various faculties to answer questions related to the *Connected World* theme from an interdisciplinary perspective, with societal impact, and according to the highest international standards. To fulfil this aim, CLUE+ has set itself a series of strategic goals over the period 2014 - 2019: (1) creating new mass; (2) enhancing interdisciplinarity; (3) anchoring in society; (4) sustaining and developing excellence; (5) international collaboration; (6) a viable and open organization.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question CLUE+ wishes to explore is how people around the world have grown more and more connected, due to globalization, migration or digitization. The institute emphasizes the historical dimensions of globalization and networks, and researches the *Connected World* from a philosophical, technical, cultural, and social point of view. The societal challenges central to CLUE+ research are inspired by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and range from global climate change and migration movements to local democratic manifestations; these challenges demand an increasingly broad vision, with a clear place for culture, cognition, history, and heritage.

### RESEARCH PROGRAMS

CLUE+ research is clustered in five programmes:

- Landscape, heritage, and society;
- Global history, heritage, and memory;
- Paradigms of creativity;
- Knowledge formation and its history.
- Text, culture, religion, and heritage (added in 2019)

To allow for flexibility, all programmes have interlocking sub-themes (e.g. religion, conflict, migration, environment, and the digital world, *inter alia*), which all involve close collaboration between different disciplinary research

# FACTSHEET 2019

Founded: in 2007 as the  
Interfaculty Institute CLUE

## Participating faculties:

- Humanities (secretariat)
- Religion and Theology
- Sciences
- Law
- School of Business and Economics
- Social Sciences

## Funding:

Direct funding VU: €225.000  
Research grants: €2.139.000  
Contract research: €3.693.000

## Scientific staff: 115,26 fte

Full professor: 17,92 fte  
Associate professor: 7,23 fte  
Assistant professor: 15,86 fte  
Postdoctoral researcher:  
12,79 fte  
PhD candidates: 57,16 fte  
Other: 4,3 fte

## Supporting staff: 0,9 fte

## Grants 2014 – 2019

### National

NWO Zwaartekracht: 1  
NWO Talent Programme: 7  
NWO Investment grant Large: 1  
NWO Open Competition: 7  
NWO PhD in the Humanities: 17  
NWO Asia: 2  
NWO Other: 20

### International

ERC grants: 2  
EU ITN: 2  
EU Interreg: 1  
EU Erasmus: 1  
EU Europlanet: 1  
EU H2020: 4  
John Templeton Foundation: 3

Other grants: 23

groups within CLUE+, as well as with international, national, and local partner institutions from various scientific fields.

## COLLABORATIONS

CLUE+ researchers lead or participate in extensive national and international collaborations, including academic networks and formal consortiums with public partners (e.g. heritage boards, governmental institutions, municipalities) and private partners (e.g. SMEs, NGOs, foundations). Most of the international collaborations concern joint participation in research projects and programme grants (e.g. NWO, Hera, Marie Curie ITN, Templeton World Charity Foundation), joint papers and conferences, exchange of PhD candidates and staff, software and data exchange, policy development, or consultancy. To further facilitate consortium and network building with international partners, CLUE+ funding facilitates seminars, conferences and network meetings, and active participation in international research agendas and calls.

### EXAMPLE 1:

#### RESEARCH GROUP EPISTEMIC PROGRESS IN THE HUMANITIES

One of the most successful examples of the academic achievements of CLUE+ in the period under scrutiny is that of the research group on Epistemic Progress in the Humanities, working under the umbrella of the programme of Knowledge Formation and its History. The group has recently been awarded a number of large grants: Catarina Dutilh Novaes received an ERC-CoG for a project on social epistemology, Rik Peels received an ERC-Starting grant for a project on the epistemology of fundamentalism, and René van Woudenberg, Jeroen de Ridder, and Rik Peels received a Templeton grant for a project on epistemic progress in the university. With these grants, the group has been able to appoint 8 PhDs and 8 Postdoctoral scholar researchers. Together with the senior researchers, they investigate ethical issues that are at the very heart of academia. Major attention is paid to the institutional conditions and arrangements that foster good academic research and prevent questionable research practices. The group also studies the conditions under which group efforts in research are likely to lead to better results than research by single individuals, and is set to investigate what, if anything, sets the Humanities apart from the natural and social sciences, as well as, more generally, what progress in the Humanities can look like.

### EXAMPLE 2:

#### TERRANOVA & HERILAND ITN PROJECTS

Shining examples of the added value CLUE+ can provide as an incubator of successful interdisciplinary research are the two European projects that have started in 2019: TERRANOVA and HERILAND. Both are successful collaborations of staff from various VU faculties, Humanities, Science, Social Sciences and Economics. Both have won a Marie Curie Innovative Training Network (ITN-) grant worth EUR €4 million. The first project, coordinated by Sjoerd Kluiving, is called *TERRANOVA: The New Learning Initiative between Humanities and Science*. This project aims to contribute to identifying major historical shifts in resource use and energy regimes and to train professionals able to facilitate the future transition to a low-carbon society. TERRANOVA trains 15 PhDs in a consortium consisting of 25 universities, companies, and NGOs across 13 European countries. The second ITN at CLUE+ is coordinated by Gert-Jan Burgers and Niels van Manen and is called *HERILAND. Cultural Heritage and the Planning of European Landscapes*. It is a consortium consisting of six key academic organizations, with 22 partners in civil society and business. Heriland trains 15 PhD's to plan and design sustainable heritage landscapes. By doing this, HERILAND will establish a new pan-European, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research and training standard.