

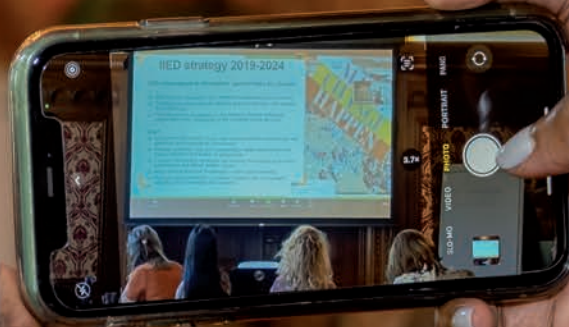
# KIT

2023

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**KIT Royal Tropical Institute is an independent centre of expertise and hospitality dedicated to sustainable development.**

Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, we assist governments, non-governmental organisations, and private corporations around the world to build inclusive and sustainable societies. Our experts provide research, advisory and training services focussing on global health, economic development, and gender.

Our campus in Amsterdam is one of the city's leading sustainability hotspots. It houses an education centre for students and professionals, including a graduate school in global health, an eco-friendly hotel, and complementary conference and events facilities. We are also home to SDG House: a thriving community of sustainability experts, social entrepreneurs, and NGOs with a membership of more than 70 organisations.



**KIT** Royal  
Tropical  
Institute



# To Transform the World, We Need to Start With Ourselves

**“We believe in a fairer and more inclusive world, and KIT is striving hard and collaborating with our partners to create a world that addresses the needs of everyone – regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or economic background.”**

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic shook the world, exposing the deep-rooted weaknesses and imbalances along economic, gender, and ethnic fault lines worldwide. But governments across the globe are failing to address the needs of our society, battered by crisis after crisis. In this void, civil society organisations like KIT are stepping up and initiating difficult conversations to bring about much-needed change. We believe in a fairer and more inclusive world, and we are striving hard and collaborating with our partners to create a world that addresses the needs of everyone regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or economic background.

Although co-creation and collaboration are crucial to bringing about this systemic change, to truly collaborate as equals, actors like us at KIT, need to change too. We need to be prepared to relinquish the power we’ve historically held, owing to our colonial legacy, only then, can we create a new space where peace and prosperity for people and the planet can flourish. And this calls for a new consciousness, a new way of thinking, wherein we work together to build the capacities of the individuals within our systems and partnerships, to envision and bring about the longed-for transformation.

Furthermore, I believe that the transformation of an organisation through the transformation of the individuals within is necessary to cure what ails our society today. I have personally undergone many such transformations, and I can tell you that they can be uncomfortable! One example comes to mind: the Black Lives Matter movement emerged when I was in New York, and I was asked to join a discussion panel for a well-known magazine to talk about the movement. To my disappointment, for the most part, the conversation remained superficial. So, I asked the moderator if I could make a statement. I simply said, “I’m a racist”. A hush fell over the room.

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**“We need to be prepared to relinquish the power we’ve historically held, owing to our colonial legacy. Only then can we create a new space where peace and prosperity for people and planet can flourish.”**

Henri van Eeghen

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“As a human being, racism is within me. Our upbringing programmes us to differentiate between people, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes consciously. We internalise these views as we go through life, maybe not intentionally, but it is there. So, to build a world of equity, we need to unravel our own prejudices first. While it may not be easy, it is essential,” I explained. I am aware that, if I want to contribute to a societal change, I need to be open to transformation too – and that awareness has allowed me to grow as an individual.



Looking at it from an organisational level, that’s also how we approach our work at KIT too. We’re willing to have uncomfortable conversations; we’re willing to go deeper rather than keep the discussion at a superficial level. The Power of Knowledge event that we held last year is a prime example of really delving into our role as an organisation in perpetuating systemic inequity and learning how to improve by listening to our peers and partners.

This vision, creativity, and commitment to change at the heart of KIT is evident in the many facets of our work, locally as well as globally. We’ve transformed our historical building into a hotspot for sustainable entrepreneurship and conferences; we’re developing and sharing knowledge in a multitude of ways; and we’re keeping the individual at the heart of our approach, even in our international projects – in some projects through the human-centred design approach.

This transformation, both on an individual and a collective level, is an exciting journey. Together with KIT, I’m looking forward to a global movement from monopolising power to distributing power; from having all the answers to being a creator of conditions in which the answers emerge; and from a single source of intelligence to a champion of collective wisdom. And I invite you to join us on this journey!

**Henri van Eeghen**  
CEO at KIT

# Since 2015, **KIT Royal Tropical Institute** has conducted over **650 projects** with partners in more than **120 countries**



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## Colophon KIT MAG

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# ‘We know who holds most of the power, and they need to change’

As a public health professional who has written several peer-reviewed articles, Dr. Samuel Oti is very vocal about the power imbalances that plague the practice of global health. He was one of the keynote speakers at the first Power of Knowledge event KIT in Amsterdam, co-hosted with Asfari Insitute, in Beirut, and EthiXpert in Johannesburg.

At the event, we examined how the North-South paradigm shapes the flow of knowledge adversely and how we can effectively move away from an imbalanced structure towards a more equitable one by creating equitable partnerships. We spoke to Dr. Oti about why this is such an important topic.

## Less and more powerful countries

To start with, Dr. Oti prefers to use the terms ‘more powerful’ and ‘less powerful’ countries, instead of the ubiquitous Global North and South often used when discussing the power imbalances within the international development sector.

“I don’t think it needs elaboration. But there’s a power imbalance that tends to play out between powerful countries and less powerful countries. Most recently, we’ve seen it with issues like vaccine distribution during the pandemic. We know who leads some of the most powerful global health institutions, and we know who makes the important funding decisions. I think it’s important for us to begin to talk about this disparity,” he explains.

## Contextual knowledge or technical knowledge?

“I like telling stories. Let me tell you a short story that highlights this,” he says. “In a village in rural Kenya, bed-nets treated with insecticide were distributed for malaria prevention. But this village was a fishing community, and they needed fishing nets at the time, so they quickly turned those insecticide-treated bed nets into fishing nets. Local nuances and local context matter, that’s why you need local expertise and local knowledge. Without it, the ramifications can be quite significant.”



*Dr Oti is the founding secretary-general of the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (NIERA), and an inaugural member of the Global Health Decolonization Movement in Africa (GHDM-Africa). He is the creator and host of MedxTek Africa – a podcast that showcases digital health and health technology innovations across Africa – and a Commissioner of the newly formed Chatham House Commission for Universal Health.*

**“Refuse to be part of collaborations that do not give equal opportunity and reward to the contributions of your African and UIGH (Under-represented in Global Health) counterparts.”**

*Dr. Samuel Oti*

## What needs to change?

“The Global Health Decolonisation Movement in Africa, which I am a part of, has developed recommendations for practitioners and institutions in powerful countries. They may seem like superficial things, but they can signal a change.”

Many of the recommendations Dr. Oti refers to ultimately advocate for equality: equality in all aspects of work. For instance, one of the recommendations states: ‘Reject “saviourism” in all its manifestations’. Refuse to be part of collaborations that do not give equal opportunity and rewards to the contributions of your

African and UIGH (Under-represented in Global Health) counterparts.

“It’s a question of co-creation. Often, there is a lack of transparency. They’ve already come up with an almost fully-formed idea and your job is to accept whatever they are offering and try to make it work. But for equitable partnerships, you need to co-create and you need to elevate your local partners, regardless of technical superiority. People in the context have what I call ‘contextual superiority’. I don’t advocate elevating one over the other. We should be put at par; we should look at each other as equals.”

**Trust-based funding and development**

Funding organisations can play an important role in creating this parity. According to Dr. Oti, “A lot of funders have invested resources strengthening local capacity. But they still don’t

seem to have confidence in those institutions. It is unfortunate that, even after building all this capacity, a funding agency will support an institution in a powerful country to do the very work they’ve been strengthening capacities for in a less powerful country.”

**“There’s a power imbalance that tends to play out between powerful countries and less powerful countries. Most recently, we’ve seen it with issues like vaccine distribution during the pandemic.”**

*Dr. Samuel Oti*

Dr. Oti cites the ‘Trust-based Funding’ of Mackenzie Scott as a refreshing approach to funding. After months of research, her team of advisors identifies recipients, who then go on to receive unrestricted funding. In this case, the funders do not dictate the agenda for the organisation to follow.

**So, at the end of the day with whom does the onus of change lie?**

“I think it lies with the more powerful countries. They have more power, more agency, and more influence. They have the potential to influence things positively, simply because they hold the lion’s share of power. So, for me, I think that the answer is simple. But that doesn’t take away any responsibility from less powerful countries. They also need to think about how they can invest more in their own development. How can they deal with governance and corruption issues better? It’s not mutually exclusive.” ■

# THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE



*Welcoming our guests at KIT in Amsterdam.*



*The event was co-hosted simultaneously by EthixPERT in Johannesburg and The Asfari Institute in Beirut.*

*We kicked off the day with an opening address from Pascalle Grotenhuis.*



*Keynote speakers Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Dr. Zuleika Bibi Sheik, and Dr. Samuel Oti in a discussion panel.*



# Decolonising Knowledge is Painful and Necessary

**Knowledge is power and, for now, knowledge is dominated by the richest countries. With this annual symposium, KIT aims to join forces with people decolonising knowledge. The first edition took place in Amsterdam, connecting live with Beirut and Johannesburg.**



Keynote speaker Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg.

The speeches of the keynote speakers resound with undiluted anger and pain. Dead silence falls in the grand room decorated with carved wood when Kenyan, Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, points out the history of the KIT Royal Tropical Institute building, in Amsterdam. “You just have to dare to invite us here,” she says. “The research done here was based on ‘extraction’. All the splendour we see here was extracted from countries ruled and looted from here. The hardwood beams come from the rainforest – perhaps even the rainforest where my grandmother’s life was defined by knowledge gathered here. Under this wooden roof, as if it were yesterday.”

## Colonial pride

The location of the first edition of The Power of Knowledge could not have been more symbolically charged. Together with the Tropenmuseum, KIT is housed in fine, albeit discomfiting, architecture: one of the largest and most imposing colonial buildings in the Netherlands. It opened in 1926 as the Colonial Institute: a knowledge centre in the capital of a then-proud colonial kingdom.

But the organisers, speakers, and international guests are determined not to linger on resentment or anger. A steady revolution in the opposite direction has been taking place within the same walls for years: decolonising. The building and the institutions KIT houses have been working on this transformation since Indonesian independence. From the former heart of Dutch colonialism, international and intercultural cooperation is conducted daily. KIT houses research institutes, small NGOs – such as conservation organisations – and social entrepreneurs. And it has spun a web of funders, academic researchers, and public players who want to break the old patterns.

The annual Power of Knowledge conference is the latest initiative to bring together professionals concerned with equity in knowledge production, according to KIT’s knowledge director, Lindy van Vliet. “Decolonising knowledge,”

says Van Vliet, “revolves around three questions: who has access to the knowledge, who sets the agenda, and who validates the knowledge?”

## Vocabulary

It is remarkable that it takes a lot of effort to find the right words. This field is characterised by an urge to constantly redefine terms – and the old ones then have to disappear. Initially, ‘development aid’ was replaced by ‘international cooperation’. ‘Tropical medicine’, though still in vogue, now competes with ‘global health’. The ‘first, second, and third world’ triad was binned to be replaced by the ‘Global South’ and ‘Global North’.

Words matter: they determine how policymakers, funding agencies, and scientists think, but even the new words occasionally meet resistance. Like when someone from the audience interjects: “If we want to move towards equal cooperation and share knowledge in a fair way, if we want to get past colonial power relations, why are we approaching this with a new dichotomy between North and South? Who likes to see themselves as part of the North or South, and where exactly is the boundary? Let’s stop this practice as soon as possible!”

## Power dynamics

That kind of intervention sets the stage. Moderator and speaker, Sandra Alba, stresses the importance of this meta problem: as long as the creation and use of knowledge in the world is not equal, we will miss out on potential breakthroughs and innovations in all fields, even beyond health. It is not a symbolic conversation, but a dire necessity, Alba argues. “We simply live in a world created by Europe and America. That has adverse consequences, and we have to deal with that.”

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**“Decolonising knowledge revolves around three questions: who has access to the knowledge, who sets the agenda, and who validates the knowledge?”**

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Lindy van Vliet

Her fellow researcher Rutuja Patil agrees: “The existing power dynamics cannot be ignored.” It does not stop with just a change of vocabulary or expressing virtuous aspirations. A new generation of research leaders is bringing about change by introducing strong codes of ethics, such as the Global Act of Conduct. Or the Bridge guideline developed within KIT, which Alba and Patil present, for equal collaboration in epidemiological research. This was drafted based on input from 50 experts from around the world, who considered what research integrity and honesty should mean in practice, and on the basis of which guidelines equivalence can become concrete.

“A key point,” says Alba, “is that collaboration of researchers from the North with local researchers from the South is essential, because they know the environment and can better relate to the local stakeholders and communities affected by the research. If the research is in the hands of local researchers, it is likely to be locally relevant and therefore have more impact.” ■

*(This article has been translated from Dutch to English and shortened for brevity. The original article is written by Marc van Dijk, published by Vice Versa and can be found here: <https://viceversaonline.nl/2022/10/25/kennis-dekoloniseren-is-pijnlijk-en-nodig/>)*



# THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE



Dr Samuel Oti.



An engaged audience bursting with questions for our speakers.



After the plenary session, the participants could attend a workshop of choice hosted by our partners.

At the event, Eijkman Medals were awarded to two researchers who have made outstanding contributions to Global Health.



The symposium was sprinkled with cultural pieces, like this performance by Lisette Ma Neza and The Poetry Band.



We concluded a fruitful day with a bustling hall filled with conversations, drinks, snacks, and animated discussions.



# KIT is now Fossil-free

## The largest monument in Amsterdam leads the energy transition, thanks to years of collaboration with De Groene Grachten

Since 2013, KIT Royal Tropical Institute has worked with De Groene Grachten in efforts to make the monumental KIT building more sustainable. With the removal of the gas heaters from the building earlier this year, KIT's energy transition has achieved a milestone. The driving forces behind the collaboration are KIT's chief financial officer, Louis van de Berghe, and Suze Gehem, director of De Groene Grachten. *Nieuw Amsterdams Klimaat*, a publication of the City of Amsterdam, talked with Louis and Suze about the journey of making the city's largest monument fossil-free.



Louis and Suze in the Marble Hall showing some of the renovations.



We recently installed new efficient light bulbs in the Marble Hall, just one of the many renovations and energy efficiency adjustments we made in our building.

### Sustainable development

The Royal Tropical Institute is a knowledge centre and hospitality venue dedicated to sustainable development. The building first opened its doors in 1926. Comprising more than 32,000 square metres, it is the largest national monument in the City of Amsterdam. KIT houses the well-known Tropenmuseum and is home to SDG House: a community of experts, entrepreneurs, and not-for-profit organisations who, like KIT, seek to contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable world.

Talking about the start of his collaboration with Suze, Louis recalls: "In 2013, we got the idea to open up the building and make it more sustainable. We needed help, and we called De Groene Grachten, a company specialising in making historical buildings more sustainable, which was founded by Suze in 2012. At the time, Suze was looking for office space, which we had readily available. That was the beginning of our collaboration."



There are many rules for renovating and preserving monuments. And, because of KIT's size, almost every improvement or adaptation must be recreated for different parts of the building. Suze says, "These are the kind of challenges that De Groene Grachten has helped tackle since we moved here in 2013 as one of KIT's first tenants. For instance, when we made thermal images of the 2,200 windows, it became clear that a lot of heat was lost there. We advised they install custom-made screens behind almost all windows, which has helped reduce KIT's energy consumption."

**A challenge**

Louis: "It's a challenge to make a designated national monument more sustainable. One example is that we are not allowed to put solar panels on the roof if they are visible from the street. So, we are looking at other solutions. Perhaps we will put solar panels on the building that we own across the street, next to the Muiderkerk."

Suze: "Under Louis' leadership, KIT is undergoing a major transformation. The first heat pumps have arrived, LED lighting has been installed, and all the kitchens are equipped with induction cooking appliances. The latest sustainable development is the green roof that we installed on top of the museum's depot, in collaboration with Rooftop Revolution. We collect and store water there, so we use less in summer. Anyone who still fears that a green roof will leak should know better by now. It can be done, even on top of an art collection!"



*Above the depot of the Tropenmuseum, we installed a blue-green roof last summer. Blue-green roofs store or dump water based on weather predictions, helping manage use during periods of droughts or heavy rainfalls.*

***"In 2013, we got the idea to open up the building and make it more sustainable. We needed help, and we called De Groene Grachten."***

*Louis van den Berghe*



*Suze Gehem, of De Groene Grachten, and Louis van den Berghe, KIT's CFO.*





In the spring of 2023, we removed the gas boilers from our premises, making KIT the largest monument in Amsterdam to turn off the gas.



The start signal of the construction of our new underground thermal storage system (WKO), which together with heat pumps will heat our premises in the winters to come.

***“As of this year, KIT will be fossil-free. We have removed the gas heaters and are installing electric heat pumps and thermal energy storage.”***

*Louis van den Berghe*

### **Fossil-free**

An alarming report on climate change released last year led Suze and Louis to step up their ambitions and decide that KIT should become fossil-free as soon as possible. The gas heaters have now been removed from the building. There will be a thermal storage system and heat pumps, that will not only heat and cool the entire KIT building, but also the KIT hotel building, which is currently being renovated.

Louis: “As of this year, we are fossil-free. We have removed the gas heaters and are installing heat pumps and thermal energy storage. In the summer, we’ll pump warm water into the ground. Insulated by the soil, the water will stay warm. In winter, we’ll use this water to heat the building. Heat pumps help raise the temperature of the water high enough to heat





In our inner courtyard lies the Tropentuin, a neighbourhood vegetable garden managed by one of our SDG House Residents, De Gezonde Stad.

the entire building. Conversely, we store cold water in the winter with which we can cool the building in the summer.”

Suze: “What is happening here sets an example. Having the ambition is step one, but actually doing it, and at this pace, is fantastic to see. KIT had set itself the goal of being gas-free by 2030. But, last year, all the alarm bells went off when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its latest report on the state of climate change. This was so disturbing that we asked ourselves: ‘Why wait until 2030?’. We decided to act now.” ■

**“What is happening here at KIT sets an example. Having the ambition is step one, but actually doing it, and at this pace, is fantastic to see. If it can be done here, it can be done anywhere.”**

Suze Gehem

*(This article has been translated from Dutch to English and shortened for brevity. The original article is written and published by Nieuw Amsterdams Klimaat and can be found here: <https://www.nieuwamsterdamsklimaat.nl/actueel/koninklijk-instituut-voor-de-tropen-en-de-groene-grachten-verduurzamen>)*



Renovation of the Tropenhotel is currently under way, with the hotel expected to open in 2024.

# It Starts with a Seed

Good quality seeds can have a massive impact on a country's growth and its people's well-being. In this interview, we talk to Boudy van Schagen, an expert on the seed sector at KIT, about the waves the humble seed has been making through The Private Seed Sector Development Burundi (PSSD) project.



Boudy van Schagen.

## Why is the seed so significant?

Good quality seed is a cornerstone for agricultural productivity. With good quality seeds, you can grow more on the same area of land. The productivity of common crops like maize and beans is very low, and there is a significant potential for improvement. By using good quality seeds, farming families can have a bigger and better harvest. Of course, just having good quality seeds is not enough. Other things – like using good farming techniques and good soil fertility and having easy access to local markets – are important, too. But farmers must have quality seeds to benefit from there.

**Before the PSSD project that started in 2019, KIT was also working in Burundi with its predecessor – the Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD Burundi) project from 2014 to 2018. Why has it been so important to work in the seed sector in Burundi for almost 10 years?**

Burundi is a densely populated, small, hilly country. The average farm is very small and there is significant poverty, food insecurity, and seasonal hunger. More than half the children under five are stunted – one of the highest rates in the world. There is

potential for improvement, but few farmers use quality seeds that could improve their productivity. There is simply not enough of it available to farmers. At the start of our projects, many farming families did not really understand the benefits of buying quality seeds, and they 'recycled' seed from the previous harvest instead.

be developed and nurtured. So, the project incentivised and supported Burundian and international seed companies to pilot innovations related to seed production and sales. PSSD also focused on the development of sales strategies tailored to farmer household requirements. And, as KIT, we have been providing technical advice, documenting, and sharing learnings from the project.

**“The improvements have ultimately resulted in a twenty-fold increase in the number of farmers buying quality seed from PSSD-supported companies and sales outlets since 2019.”**

Boudy van Schagen

## How did the PSSD (and ISSD) project contribute to changing this?

PSSD recognised that solving the multi-faceted nature of the problem required an approach that engaged actors from the government, private sector companies, and farmer- and seed-producer organisations. The government does not have the resources or capacity to meet the needs of all farmers, and an emerging private sector – seed companies and seed multipliers – needed to

## Why should we be taking note of this project?

By taking this integrated approach, ISSD, and PSSD have addressed deterrents (and enablers) across the seed value chain. Now, the seed system is significantly more efficient, reducing costs and time. The improvements have ultimately resulted in a twenty-fold increase in the number of farmers buying quality seed from PSSD-supported companies and sales outlets since 2019.

## Have there been any changes in policies?

Yes, now policies and regulations allow the private sector to complement and supplement what was till only very recently the sole purview of the government. Consequently, the availability of foundation seed in Burundi has doubled. This will certainly have a positive impact on food security in the country and for farming households.

## Now that the project has concluded what are you looking forward to?

It's important to build on the progress we've made so far. So, we are hoping to continue building on the achievements of ISSD and PSSD Burundi with our partner, IFDC. We aim for a new project to help scale up the impact to a critical mass and create a stable, well-performing seed sector. ■

## Sustainable Economic Development

KIT uses its expertise to improve livelihoods, strengthen food security, and increase the economic resilience of individuals and communities in low- and middle-income countries. We compile, analyse, and develop knowledge on sustainable economic development. Our holistic approach to sustainable development is practical and grounded in the local context. We operate at the intersection of theory and practice and between policy and implementation, translating evidence-based insight into meaningful social, and economic impact.

Our team of experts supports businesses, government services, and civil society organisations to improve their practices and maximise their impact on sustainable development. Our staff combines their content expertise with the ability to offer a diverse suite of advisory services, including policy and programme design and implementation, evaluation and impact assessment, capacity building through coaching, and knowledge management.



# Nestlé – Tackling Child Labour in Cocoa Supply Chains

**Chocolate manufacturers face fierce criticism for child labour in their supply chains.**

In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, where about 60 percent of the world's cocoa is grown, poverty among cocoa farming households is a key driver of child labour. KIT is working in Côte d'Ivoire with Nestlé, IDH, the Rainforest Alliance, and International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) on the Income Accelerator Programme (IAP), to tackle child labour, decrease poverty, promote diversification, and push for more gender equality in the cocoa supply chains.

“The world's largest food producer hopes this innovative \$1.4bn plan – involving direct pay-outs to African cocoa farmers – can tackle the poverty that is the root cause of child labour,” wrote the *Financial Times* in their article on the now well-reported initiative.

## Taking a more holistic approach

The initiative is built around four annual conditional cash transfers to stimulate behavioural change. In addition to encouraging school enrolment, the IAP aims to tackle child labour by increasing the income of cocoa farming households toward the living income benchmark. This is achieved by promoting the adoption of good agricultural practices and income diversification with activities outside of cocoa and stimulating agroforestry for increased productivity. For each of the four conditions met, cocoa farming households will receive around €100. Those who meet all four conditions receive a €100 bonus. That adds up to a total of €500 a year – more than a fifth of the income of an average cocoa farmer in Côte d'Ivoire, who, according to KIT's research, earns around €2,100 a year. The money will be sent via mobile money accounts, with half going to the husband and half to the wife, allowing women to spend or invest the money as they see fit.

This is not the first initiative aiming to eliminate child labour from the cocoa value chains. Nestlé and other companies pledged to eradicate child labour almost two decades ago. But it is the first time a programme is taking a holistic approach to address the multiple causes of child labour that usually fall under the radar. As the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Sharing (MELS) partner on this programme, KIT's role is critical. As our advisor Jaap Voeten told *The Times*, “Twenty years ago, a lot of businesses were [into] window dressing. These days, companies are much more scrutinised by NGOs and on social media. You cannot get away with a story that doesn't hold.”

At KIT, the project is being led by Rik Habraken and Oumou Diallo. Rik explains that, “In practice, we identify and communicate insights, best practices, and learnings to the implementing parties of the IAP. These are based on the quantitative and qualitative evaluations we've conducted since 2021 on the pilot project in Côte d'Ivoire, which included 1,000 households. We then provide practical recommendations to Nestlé and the other partners on how to best adapt the programme for optimum impact.”

To that end, the two advisors recently held a workshop in Abidjan where they gathered all of Nestlé's suppliers involved in the implementation of the IAP. As one of the key learnings from the pilot has been that knowledge-sharing



*In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, where about 60 percent of the world's cocoa is grown, poverty among cocoa farming households is still a key driver of child labour.*

among partners is crucial to the programme's success, at the workshop, suppliers were encouraged to share their experience with the IAP and join the learning platform set up by KIT to foster their collaboration.

## Knowledge sharing to lead the way

The workshop also provided the opportunity to clarify the role of certain partners in the implementation of certain pillars. For example, “Most of the suppliers were not fully aware that ICI was in charge of verifying the actual school attendance. This is important, as households and schools need to be aware of the documentation; they need to have it available so they can demonstrate their children's school enrolment. We have planned more such learning workshops in the next few months, and we will also publish the baseline report and interactive dashboard,” says Oumou.

**“The world's largest food producer hopes this innovative \$1.4bn plan – involving direct pay-outs to African cocoa farmers – can tackle the poverty that is the root cause of child labour.”**

*Financial Times*

Despite the well-rounded coverage this project has received in the international media, the general mood of the news media reporting on the project is sceptical. As per *The Economist*, who also wrote about this project, “In most countries where rural folk have dramatically improved their lives, they have done so by moving to cities and finding better-paid jobs there. Encouraging them to remain in the countryside and grow more cocoa than people want to eat is an unlikely path to prosperity.”

The scepticism is understandable, but it seems that the European Union is working on rules that would require companies to prove that all their cocoa beans are free of child labour by 2024. As Europe has the highest demand for cocoa in the world, these laws, once they come to pass, will have a significant impact. Chocolate manufacturers, not just Nestlé, will need to have the mechanisms in place to tackle the problem and demonstrate their efficacy. And, since we've been working in this field for years, we look forward to sharing our knowledge and leading the way. ■

# Witness in Stone: An Online Tour of KIT's Colonial Past

KIT has launched a website where you can learn more about our colonial past by taking a **virtual tour of our building**

**KIT has a colonial past. We are a society that was founded in 1910 as the Colonial Institute. Our building, a national monument that opened its doors in 1926, is lavishly decorated with as many as 200 works of art that served to enshrine the institute's colonial history and mission.**

Through a virtual tour of 14 of the most notable decorations in our building, the website 'Witness in Stone' critically examines our colonial past. The tour also features visual commentary by artist Brian Elstak, who responds to the decorations in 14 drawings. Witness in Stone is available in English and Dutch and is a joint publication of KIT and the Tropenmuseum. By offering the tour online, KIT wants to enable as many people as possible to become acquainted with the colonial history of our building. The virtual tour also shows parts of the building that are usually not accessible by the public.

While our work today is far removed from the colonial ideas that are enshrined in the decorations in and around our building, we believe it is important to reflect on the origin and meaning of the stories that surround us. KIT sees it as part of its mission not only to maintain the building as national heritage, but also to open up the colonial past that lives on in our building, and to tell new stories that differ from the glorious national history that the founders of the Colonial Institute imagined.

## A brief history of KIT and the Tropenmuseum

In 1871, Koloniaal Museum, the world's first colonial museum, opened its doors in Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem. This museum displayed objects from the Dutch colonies in 'the East', primarily from Indonesia, as well as Suriname and the various Caribbean islands in 'the West'. Centuries of violence, territorial expansion, and exploitation had transformed these areas into what were known uncritically at the time as 'wingewesten' (exploitable regions), feeding the Dutch national pride.

The museum was an initiative of the Nederlandsche Maatschappij tot Bevordering van Nijverheid en Handel (Netherlands Society for the Promotion of Industry and Trade). Slavery had only recently been abolished: in 1860 for Indonesia and 1863 for Suriname and what has been known as the Antilles; and the formerly enslaved would remain under state supervision until 1873. The first contract workers were being recruited from India, then a British colony, to work on plantations in Suriname.

The colonial museum emphasised the colonies' enormous economic potential in raw materials, natural resources, and local crafts. The aim was to stimulate the import of products and to explore their usefulness to Dutch industry, strengthening the Dutch economy through profits from transportation, textiles, foodstuffs, (rattan) furniture, rubber, quinine, and much more. The Maatschappij wanted to 'introduce' the Dutch population to such products and enterprise. They also wanted to teach visitors about the cultures, religions, and practices of people in the colonies who were living under Dutch rule, or who had been sent there as contract workers from other colonial regions. In this way, they hoped to interest young men in a colonial career.

## The Colonial Institute

In less than half a century, the Koloniaal Museum expanded into an institution of national importance, creating a need for more space. In the fall of 1910, the museum accepted a proposal by the Vereeniging Koloniaal Instituut – an association founded by several influential citizens in collaboration with the Ministry of Colonies and the City of Amsterdam, among others – to establish a more imposing colonial institute in the capital. Similar institutions later arose in various locations throughout Western Europe, such as the Imperial Institute in London, Palais des Colonies in Tervuren, Musée des Colonies



The Lantern Entry



Response by artist Brian Elstak



## THE ROYAL TROPICAL INSTITUTE, A BUILDING AS COLONIAL LEGACY

WITH A VISUAL REFLECTION BY ARTIST BRIAN ELSTAK

witness  
in  
stone

ONLINE TOUR



in Paris, and the Kolonialinstitut in Hamburg. The objectives of the Koloniaal Instituut were to promote colonial 'science', healthcare, and economic and technological 'development'.

Construction of the Colonial Institute began in January 1916. Most of the construction was funded by Dutch companies and private parties with links to the colonial empire. Enterprises with financial interests in the then-Dutch East Indies were most open to the new Institute's relevance, resulting in a greater focus on the region. In the autumn of 1926, Queen Wilhelmina declared the building officially open.

### Architecture

The Vereeniging Koloniaal Institute had engaged the Van Nieuwerkerken family of architects to handle the design and construction of its new building. The Van Nieuwerkerken father and sons named the project De Behouden Reis (safe journey). They drew inspiration from Dutch historical examples, particularly castles in the Dutch Renaissance style of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is visible in the multicoloured stone (stairwell) facades, the ornamentation, and the use of buttresses and stylised anchor plates.

The architects made use of modern materials, such as concrete, and the design included a modern electrical system and alarm installation. The design was criticised by other architects, who considered the lavish, ornate style to be overly traditional, old-fashioned, and expensive. They also thought the design lacked balance and unity and didn't fit its surroundings.

However, the historicising style and decorative detailing were purposeful: the Van Nieuwerkerkens believed that architecture should combine both art and craft. The style was seen as characteris-

tically Dutch and commemorated the nation's 'glory days'. The architects collaborated with artists from their own network, such as Louis Vreugde (1868–1936) for the sculptures, and Willem Rejters (1858–1930) for the relief carvings, which were partially based on drawings by W.O.J. (Wijnand) Nieuwenkamp (1874–1950).

### Symbolism

A Committee for Symbolism ensured that the sculptures and paintings expressed the Institute's mission. There are over 200 decorative elements altogether. The ornaments symbolise the Institute's founding and areas of activity, events from colonial history between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries, and (social-cultural) life in the Indonesian archipelago. In spite of the intended soberness, the building is embellished throughout, from the door handles to the toilets. Everywhere you look are depictions of plants, flowers, animals, religions, agriculture, crafts, and historic events with colonial connotations.

People regarded by the founders of the Institute as 'heroes' of the VOC (Dutch East India Company, officially United East India Company), such as colonial civil servants and the Institute's founders, feature visibly throughout the building. The glorification of such people and the Dutch nation state, like their depictions on the building, is becoming increasingly less self-evident and more controversial.

### Three departments

The Koloniaal Instituut contained three departments: Trade, Ethnology, and Tropical Hygiene. The latter shared a laboratory building with the University of Amsterdam in Oosterpark. It focused on public health in the Netherlands and the colonised territories, and conducted

medical research on the prevention and control of diseases. Additionally, the Department of Tropical Hygiene explored and developed programmes to promote a healthier life in the colonies. Though indigenous medical knowledge was appropriated for the development of medicine, it was barely, if ever, acknowledged.

The other two departments collected objects from the colonies and disseminated knowledge about raw materials, natural resources, the people and their cultures, languages, and practices. This was used to train civil servants and company workers destined for the colonies. Each department had its own space within the museum. Educating the public was another important policy objective, which was achieved through the display of objects in the museum and the provision of information packs to Dutch schools. In these ways, the Koloniaal Instituut played an important societal role in spreading colonial thinking and the preservation of the colonial system.

### A new name, a new purpose

The Koloniaal Instituut continued its work to a limited extent through the start of the Second World War, until it closed in 1944. Part of the building was used to house the German police. As early as the final months of the war, the Board of Directors was already pondering a new name for the Institute. The directors expected that, with the 1941 Atlantic Charter and the intended post-war establishment of the United Nations (UN), the term 'colonial' would cease to be acceptable. Furthermore, a new name was not enough; the Institute also needed a new purpose. To emphasise the inseparability of the Netherlands, Indonesia, and the West Indies, they opted for 'Indisch Instituut' (Institute of the Indies). Then, in 1945, the Republic of Indonesia unilaterally declared its independence, although it took another four years of negotiations and armed conflict for the Netherlands to accept this. It was time for another change of course. In 1950, the Institute was renamed Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT Royal Tropical Institute) and the museum became the Tropenmuseum.

The focus shifted from the colonies to 'achieving the great task that the Western countries have set themselves with regard to the tropics and promoting the Netherlands' economic development'. The new Institute and museum would fall under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly development aid, and they concentrate fully on the support and promotion of such projects. This change in circumstances also affected the Tropenmuseum. In the 1960s and 1970s, it organised exhibitions to present and explain 'all the various facets of development issues to the general public, entirely in line with the development process's own dynamic character'.

### Training centre and theatre

In the following decades, KIT added a new hotel and a training centre for visiting experts on agriculture and healthcare in the Global South, among other guests. This training involved programmes for tropical doctors and so-called technical assistants and volunteers – experts who were to spend shorter or longer periods working on agricultural projects or for government organisations in what was then called the ‘Third World’. A Tropentheater was launched to highlight the works of artists from these ‘developing countries’. This was followed by a children’s museum. A major renovation in the 1970s provided the museum with a new, ‘low threshold’ entrance, as museum accessibility had become a hot topic, both literally and socially. A new underground collections depot was added in 2000, along with an entirely new training centre on the Linnaeusstraat, behind the former Muiderkerk tower.

### SDG House

As a consequence of the 2010 economic crisis and subsequent debate about the use of the national budget for development aid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided in 2014 to stop funding KIT. The theatre and library closed and the library’s heritage collections passed to Leiden University. However, KIT continued its activities as a knowledge repository for sustainable agriculture, public health, and gender in the Global South, and the building entertained around 70 organisations in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship.

In 2018, Kofi Annan, then-secretary general of the United Nations, dubbed it ‘SDG House’: a gathering place for experts, professionals, and entrepreneurs who are working towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

### Foundation National Museum of World Cultures

Due to these developments, the Tropenmuseum and KIT formally cut ties in 2014. The museum’s collection is now owned by the national government. The museum itself has merged with Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden and the Afrika Museum in Berg and Dal, to become the Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (foundation National Museum of World Cultures, NMVW). In 2017, the NMVW entered a structural collaboration with Stichting Wereldmuseum Rotterdam (Worldmuseum).

After almost a century together working towards the same mission, the Tropenmuseum and KIT are now separate institutions. However, our shared colonial past, memorialised in this building, continues to connect us, as does our shared vision regarding more equitable and sustainable futures.



Raden Ajeng Kartini.



Response by artist Brian Elstak.

## Raden Ajeng Kartini

*Louis Vreugde (1868–1936)*

Kartini (1879–1904) held the honorary title of ‘Raden Ajeng’, denoting an unmarried female descendant of a noble Javanese or Maduran family. She was committed to improving the status of women and children. Kartini had been educated as a child, and was aware of the importance of schooling. Her subsequent efforts concentrated on educational opportunities for Indonesian girls. To this day,

Kartini is an example for many, especially women, in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Her birthday, 21 April, is the national holiday Hari Kartini, and in 1964 she was declared a National Hero of Indonesia.

Education was an important tenet of the Dutch Ethical Policy for the archipelago in the first half of the twentieth century. However, there were only a few schools, and these were often segregated by ethnicity. Indonesian nationalists, who opposed Dutch domination, argued with increasing vigour for the importance of an

anti-colonial education. Eventually, they set up their own Taman Siswa schools.

Raden Ajeng Kartini is depicted twice within the building: a wooden statue in the former library’s reading room and a bust above the central arch in the museum’s Lichthal (Hall of Light). In the latter, Kartini is flanked by a student, likely a Javanese girl, and a teacher, a Javanese woman with a quill and pen. In the same hall across from Kartini is a statue of Queen Wilhelmina, a worthy counterpart to this powerful personality.



## J.P. Coen and the 'Golden Age'

*Hendrik Paulides (1892–1967)*

The former Ethnography department's stairwell features a portrayal of Jan Pieterszoon Coen. This is the only time that he is rendered in full height. By the main Mauritskade entrance, and on the ground floor above the museum elevator, head-only portraits show him as the seventeenth century governor-general of the Dutch East Indies.

For a long time, Coen was considered a national hero in the Netherlands, founder of Batavia (now Jakarta), and a symbol of the so-called 'Golden Age'. Hendrik Paulides adheres to this one-sided view. Coen's portrait represents the beginning of three centuries of Dutch colonialism. Every landing of the stairs to the other three floors serves to bring history a century closer to the current day. Symbolically, they could even represent steps in Western progressive thought. Those who hired Paulides certainly regarded the colonial past in this light.

Paulides created the fresco when there was no contact with Indonesia, during the time that the Netherlands was under occupation by Nazi Germany and the Japanese were occupying Indonesia. Paulides's quote from Coen's 'Dispereert niet' ('Do not despair ... greatness is achievable') may well have been intended to encourage his Dutch contemporaries.

By now, many people have changed their perspective on Coen. Not only is Coen now seen as a prototype for colonial violence, but at the time Paulides was also unaware that a war of independence would follow Japan's capitulation. The Netherlands refused to accept the Republic of Indonesia's unilateral declaration of independence, leading to a decolonisation process that was accompanied by the use of great military force, huge loss of human life, and mass migration.

These developments inspired a reassessment of the Koloniaal Instituut's reasons for existence, and it had to reinvent itself. As it was unclear what would happen after the Netherlands' liberation, the last portion of the fresco was left unfinished. To this day, a section of the wall remains empty, arguably awaiting the last painting to conclude this colonial history that began with Coen downstairs. ■



*J.P. Coen and the 'Golden Age'.*



*Response by artist Brian Elstak.*

## Gender

KIT's international Gender team is dedicated to achieving gender equality and transformative change in food security, natural resource management, energy, finance, agribusiness value chains, and health systems. Extensive experience in organisational change, capacity development and learning, knowledge management, and applied research is coupled with gender knowledge.

Grounded in feminist principles, our approach emphasises transformative and participatory learning, where we invite partners to critically reflect on their gender ambitions and progress to date. We offer a deeply rooted understanding of how gender dynamics affect and are affected by our clients' work and organisations, across sectors and contexts, and have contributed to the field for more than 30 years.

# Nespresso Catalysts for Gender Transformative Change

**Agronomists' influence on farmers, vis-à-vis good agricultural practices, is widely recognised. However, their crucial role in facilitating social change in farming communities often goes unnoticed.**

This learning programme strengthens the capacity of Nespresso agronomists to analyse, understand, and address gender inequalities in the socio-cultural contexts where they work. It supports agronomists in using a gender lens to understand power relations and to act as catalysts for gender transformative change. Merging Nespresso's vision with KIT's expertise, the co-created, flexible methodology is continuously refined to meet the diverse needs of agronomists in the countries where Nespresso operates.

The programme spans four to six months and is underway in more than 11 countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It is implemented by local trainers who translate abstract gender concepts into the lived reality of agronomists and farmers. Across three modules, agronomists develop an awareness of gender inequalities and are sensitised to the critical role of women in coffee production: learning for action, learning in action, and learning from action. The programme design is rooted in KIT's extensive experience with learner-centred, adult education methodologies that have participants' experience and knowledge as core. New and sometimes complex ideas are introduced and then applied to agronomists' daily work using real-life examples, practical assignments, and on-the-job mentoring. Space is created for critical reflection, including on personal biases. The training programme has been contextualised and fully implemented in six of the countries where Nespresso operates, both face-to-face and virtually.



Nespresso Agronomist in Action.

Photo: Marije van Lith de Leende

Together with Nespresso's gender strategy and efforts since 2015, this training programme has significantly contributed to agronomists and country managers showing more openness to and interest in gender equality. Subsequently, gender equality is becoming a priority area in yearly plans, new initiatives specifically for women farmers and their husbands are being set up, and farm visits and training invitations are more inclusive. ■

## Behind the scenes: Launching a new hub for our gender work in Colombia!

**KIT's Gender team, in collaboration with the Global Health and Sustainable Economic Development teams, has been working hard at establishing and strengthening partnerships with organisations working in agriculture, health, economic development, and sexual and reproductive health and rights in Colombia.**

"Along with our partners, we hope to launch a new hub for our work as KIT in Colombia and the region in 2023," said Sandra Quintero, our gender specialist based in Bogota.

The time is ripe for such a development. Colombia's government has begun to move closer and

more actively towards inclusive policies and is keen to make Colombia a leader in the global fight against climate change.

We already have many firm partnerships in place in the region. In January this year, three advisors from KIT joined Sandra Quintero in Bogota to

strengthen existing relations and establish new partnerships with several Colombian organisations – including Colombian and Dutch NGOs, private companies, academic institutions, government agencies, and the Dutch Embassy.

The Colombian government is adopting a stronger feminist approach to foreign policy. And KIT can, in partnership and solidarity with local organisations, be instrumental in influencing impactful development work and social justice! ■



# Improving the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Curriculum for Health Workers in Mali

**It's difficult for young people in Mali to exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). This can have serious consequences on their quality of life. Many young people suffer from a high rate of adolescent fertility, early marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting, often resulting in illness and death.**



Teacher and students at Ecole de Santé 'Amadou Garba Koita' en Mopti.

**A**lmost one in three young people fall pregnant before they turn 18. This shows that they lack adequate information on sexuality," explains Prisca Zwanikken, a Senior Public Health Advisor and Curriculum Expert at KIT. Healthcare providers play an important role in addressing the sexual and reproductive health problems that young people and adolescents face, but they often don't have the latest training to address the SRHR needs of youth adequately.

The four-year FORCE project, that KIT was a part of, was a collaboration between public and private health schools to integrate the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth into the curriculum of nurses, midwives, and other health workers. By doing this, we wanted to improve the sexual and reproductive health of youth and adolescents.

"This project is unique. For the first time, we have a public-private partnership which also fits with

***"This project is unique. For the first time, we have a public-private partnership which also fits with our policy that education programmes should be harmonised and of good quality. This project allows for the exchange of experience, and it is a win-win situation."***

Dr. Ba

our policy that education programmes should be harmonised and of good quality. This project allows for the exchange of experience and it is a win-win situation. Honestly, this touches us because all our experience is valued," said Dr. Ba Sidi Yaya, president of the Association of Private Schools in Mali, at the launch of the event in 2019.

Although the pandemic loomed over much of the project period, we still managed to hold informative workshops and develop publications on gender inequalities and youth SRHR. The objective of the workshops in particular was to

strengthen the schools' approaches to SRHR by adapting curricula and teaching methods to the diversity of Mali's youth and adolescent population, as well as to other target groups.

At one workshop on gender and social inclusion for teachers and managers of project partner schools, the facilitator, Dr Lalla Fatouma Traoré, from the University of Mali, remarked that "The newly acquired knowledge and skills will be used to improve quality in the delivery of lessons and to enrich the courses on gender and social inclusion with aspects related to gender inequalities and health, a first for many teachers."

FORCE was financed through the Orange Knowledge Programme (OKP) by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, run by NUFFIC and carried out by a consortium of partners in Mali and the Netherlands.

At the conference to mark the end of the project, Marchel Gerrmann, ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, applauded the results achieved by all those involved in the project. "It has been widely proven that skilled human resources are the backbone of any good health system. To have this 'scarce commodity', it is essential to strengthen the initial training mechanisms received in health schools. It is for these reasons that we congratulate the completion of the project, whose achievements have inevitably addressed certain concerns," he said.

Looking ahead, Prisca, who has been leading the project, said, "Teachers at public and private schools will need to be trained in sexual and reproductive health with the newly revised curriculum, as well as in competency-based

approaches in learning and teaching. We have provided this training in Mopti, Koulikoro, and Sikasso, and now they need to be rolled out throughout the country. We also started a small new project on improving the quality and quality assurance of the training at the public and private schools, that will also need to be rolled out to all the schools in Mali."

"We hope that, with all these activities, the youth will receive better services, avoid untimely illness and death, and ultimately the health of the population of Mali will improve," she adds. ■

# Human-Centred Design for Safe Pregnancy and Childbirth

**Women should have access to adequate maternity services when they are pregnant. But this is unfortunately not always the case.**

**T**o redesign and improve access to maternity services for people in Chad, DRC, Pakistan, Côte D’Ivoire, and Niger, KIT is working on a project funded by the World Bank. ‘What do the users want? What needs to change?’ We’re asking these crucial questions to members of the communities – particularly those in hard-to-reach areas. In collaboration with Butterfly Works and local partners in the project countries, we will present the respective Ministries of Health with advice and development possibilities that respond to the users’ needs and at the same time are financially feasible.

What sets this one-year project apart is the fact that we’re putting the users at the heart of our research. “Evidence has also shown that tackling individual issues, such as improving facilities or having more human resources for health services, without putting the women who need these services at the centre, is not enough,” says Ingrid Zuleta, KIT’s advisor working on the project.

## Global Health

**At KIT, we envision a world where everyone can realise their full health potential. We pursue this mission with expertise in health system strengthening, epidemiology, health education, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, we work to improve equity in global health.**

**To do so, we partner with local and national governments, humanitarian agencies, NGOs, and other international and local organisations, to offer targeted advice, research, and fresh insights based on a deep knowledge of the local context.**

**Our multidisciplinary Health Unit consists of health professionals with knowledge of and experience working in low- and middle-income countries around the world. We facilitate locally-led reform of countries’ healthcare models and strategies. True to our commitment to ‘Leave No One Behind’, we have specific expertise in health systems in fragile contexts, including those affected by conflict, natural disasters, or climate change.**

## The arduous journey from home to hospital

So, we’re working on re-designing the maternal services using human-centred design (HCD), and it’s the first time this approach is being used within this context. “At KIT, we have worked extensively with HCD, but mostly in education and agriculture. This project is a combination of HCD and development aid. And, given our breadth of experience working with fragile and conflict affected settings, we know that there’s no on-size-fits-all solution.” explains Ingrid.

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***“Evidence has also shown that tackling individual issues, such as improving facilities or having more human resources for health services, without putting the women who need these services at the centre, is not enough.”***

*Ingrid Zuleta*

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Our primary goal is to reduce maternal mortality by designing a system where the person in need of maternal health services has access to a comprehensive service that includes blood transfusions and surgical expertise (CeMONC). These services are not part of the basic emergency obstetric and newborn care (BeMONC) that is often more widely available in these countries.

As we aim to make these services accessible to even those living in hard to reach areas, we will also create a geospatial analysis of the health facilities. Essentially, we will measure the travelling time to these CeMONC facilities, should they need surgical assistance or transfusions, which is often the case when there are complications.

“Another thing that comes with our analysis will be a visualisation of the user’s journey. People will have different priorities when they need to access maternal healthcare. We don’t want to stereotype or leave out certain users, so we’re also careful to highlight the different user journeys,” says Ingrid. For example, in many cases, people faced with an emergency tend to go for the more familiar ancestral medicine option. Hence, we will need to, and are taking, ancestral medicine into consideration as well.

An approach like this also highlights the limitations of a more traditional approach looking at health systems from solely a supply perspective. For many people, the journey to adequate healthcare is a geographical as well as a cultural challenge, and by taking the HCD approach we hope to ensure that we address both these challenges. ■





# FCAS

Centre for Health Systems in  
**FRAGILE & CONFLICT**  
AFFECTED SETTINGS

## Centre for Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict Affected Setting

The KIT Centre for Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings brings together the interdisciplinary work of over 50 experts in global health. Through applied research, evaluation services, and capacity development, we aim to empower people, strengthen health systems, and improve universal access to quality healthcare in regions affected by violence and precarious governance, where basic goods and services are highly limited.

We consider the contextual complexity of these fragile settings – starting from an in-depth understanding of the root causes of the challenges – and focus on strengthening domestic or local institutions and actors that can drive change.



**KIT** Koninklijk  
Instituut  
voor de Tropen

# Working with WHO on Strengthening the Health Workforce in Europe

**WHO/Europe and KIT held their first-of-its-kind training course on health workforce leadership and management in Europe in Copenhagen earlier this year. It would turn out to be far from business as usual but in a good way. This training aims to support experienced government decision-makers to improve their human resources for health (HRH) leadership skills. The word 'experienced' would appear to be crucial.**

**T**he World Health Organization Regional Office of Europe (WHO/Europe) and KIT have launched their first-of-its-kind training course on health workforce leadership and management in Europe. This initiative breaks away from the norm, offering an opportunity for experienced government decision-makers to enhance their human resources for health (HRH) leadership skills.

The pressing health workforce crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has laid bare the vulnerabilities of healthcare systems worldwide, shining a spotlight on the critical need for effective governance, mobilisation of all actors involved and HRH stewardship. With this in mind the new training course was centred on strategic planning, improving motivation, and empowering experienced government decision-makers to excel in their roles and to drive meaningful change in HRH in their countries. Participating government officials came from five countries: Armenia, Georgia, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

At the start of the course, WHO regional director for Europe, Hans Kluge, emphasised that the pandemic showed the crucial need to improve the availability, sustainability, and well-being of the health workforce.

## Tailoring the course for impact

"While WHO had previously developed a comprehensive HRH course for high-level managers, customisation was key to ensuring maximum relevance and impact," says Irina Wagner, project lead and trainer from KIT. To achieve this, the course material underwent fine-tuning and contextualisation, aligning it with the specific needs and challenges faced by the participating health managers. The team at KIT, spearheading this crucial step, conducted additional research in the five countries.

Although the five countries differ in the structure of their health systems, they also share common HRH challenges, such as the alarming out-migration and brain-drain of healthcare professionals. This poses a significant threat to the delivery of adequate healthcare services, particularly in remote and rural areas. Therefore, the course focused on ways to attract and retain healthcare workers. The course also paid special attention to issues of HRH planning.

## Embracing a new approach: empowering adult learners

This course was not business-as-usual. Irina and her KIT colleague, Marjolein Dieleman, believed that experienced high-level managers demanded a different educational approach. They applied adult learning principles, emphasising practical application, open discussions, and the exchange



Participating government officials came from five countries.

of best practices across borders. Through role-playing exercises and stimulating simulations, the participants actively engaged with the material, learning from one another's experiences, and constantly evaluating how insights from other countries could be applied to their own contexts.

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***"While WHO had previously developed a comprehensive HRH course for high-level managers, customisation was key to ensuring maximum relevance and impact"***

*Irina Wagner*

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## The moment of truth: from training to action

The five-day course, held at the WHO/Europe premises in Copenhagen in February 2023 was just the beginning of an impactful journey. Participants returned to their respective countries with a 10-week assignment—a chance to implement their newfound knowledge and skills to tackle a relevant HRH issue. Throughout this period, KIT trainers offered unwavering support, guiding, and motivating the participants as they navigated the challenges of real-world implementation. This level of guidance is different from most other courses we give, says Irina. In May the participants returned to Copenhagen to present their plans. Irina and her colleague Marjolein looked forward to the day, which was also a moment of truth – a chance to see the impact.

The success of this training programme has paved the way for similar trainings which are envisaged in other countries in the near future. At KIT we remain ready and excited to continue. ■



# 'Abolish the Pink Tax' and Other Viral Dutch Campaigns by the Issue Killers Traineeship

The Issue Killers Traineeship is a 12-week programme for students and young professionals to work together and create advertising campaigns to raise awareness about urgent social issues. TheRockGroup and KIT created this programme, while KIT and the advertising agencies Fama Volat and TBWA/NEBEKO support it.

Throughout the programme, the trainees receive training and coaching from experts on advertising and sustainable business to learn how to plan a campaign. For example, in the last edition, Femke Slegers, from the successful Reclame Fossilvrij (Advertising Fossil Free) campaign, and Jerry Afriyie from the critical Kick Out Zwarte Piet campaign, shared their experiences with the trainees. For one day a week, the trainees then work in a multidisciplinary team to develop their campaigns.

The traineeship is now in its third edition, and several campaigns from past editions have garnered extensive media attention.

## Weg met de Pink Tax!

Products marketed to women are frequently more expensive than similar products for men. For example, pink razor blades are €1.50 more expensive than black razor blades, yet both share a similar design and structure. This additional €1.50 is referred to as the 'Pink Tax'. But it's not just razor blades: these extra costs are applied to a lot of products, from perfumes and deodorants to children's toys. Products marketed to women are, on average, seven percent more expensive than similar products marketed to men, resulting in women spending hundreds of Euros more each year. The goal of the 'Weg met de Pink Tax/Abolish the Pink Tax' campaign was to raise awareness of this issue.

The team created a video in the style of the popular Dutch consumer programme 'De Keuringsdienst van Waarde', where they called stores and producers and asked them why there was a price difference between similar products. This video quickly went viral and prompted the team to create a website with information. The campaign has since been featured in prominent Dutch newspapers, podcasts, television shows, and it has been shared or commented on social media by many Dutch celebrities and public figures.

Djoeke Klaphake, an Issue Killers Trainee, says, "We are very happy we can spread our message about the Pink Tax in large Dutch news programmes, like Nieuwsuur (Newshour), and create more awareness about this topic. We would like to continue this campaign and we want to work with businesses that care about changing these unfair prices.

***"We noticed that a lot of stores have already silently removed the price differences between the products we highlighted in our campaign"***

Djoeke Klaphake

We also noticed that a lot of stores have already silently removed the price differences between the products we highlighted in our campaign. We want to work with these companies to bring about systemic changes and abolish Pink Tax completely."



Abolish the Pink Tax.

## Stop met Bankhangen!

Many banks use your money to invest in harmful industries, like fossil fuels or the weapons trade. The 'Stop met Bankhangen!' campaign tries to raise awareness of this and encourages people to switch to a more ethical bank. The campaign advocates for removing your money from these banks and opening an account at a more ethical bank, so you can make sure your savings aren't invested in these industries. As part of the campaign, the team created a website informing curious readers about how different banks invest your savings. They also provided options to make it easy for people to make the switch easier. Their widely shared video and tongue-in-cheek Christmas and Valentine's cards urging family and friends to make the switch was featured in several Dutch newspapers.

Mees van Milligen de Wit, an Issue Killers Trainee, explains, "There is already a lot of information available about switching banks: one in five people in the Netherlands are thinking about switching their banks. Our goal with this campaign was to make people stop doubting and start acting, by informing them about the harmful industries that are supported by their savings and giving them easy access to the tools needed to switch banks." ■

## Stop met Bankhangen!





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*I have been involved in research for 10 years and wanted to expand my role in informing policy and advocating for change. As part of the master's in public health course at KIT, I chose the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights track. This educational opportunity has empowered me to return to my home community, contribute meaningfully, and give back to my government. The scholarship fund has been instrumental in allowing me to pursue my dreams. We [her and prospective scholarship applicants] greatly rely on the support of generous individuals. Therefore, I encourage donors to continue their contributions toward helping people make their dreams a reality.*



***Darlen Dzimwe Chiyamwaka – former KIT master's student***

# SDG Traineeship Programme



Trainees working together in the KIT building.

**Increasing numbers of businesses are working towards the SDGs and are committed to a new economy based on sustainability and inclusivity. At the same time, young people are highly motivated to work within the broad domain of sustainability, but many lack the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue this career path.**

**T**he SDG Traineeship programme offers young people and organisations the perfect opportunity to develop further in the field of sustainable business operations and entrepreneurship. This programme connects young people and organisations in both the private and public sectors to make concrete contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. Throughout the 15-week traineeship programme, trainees spend one day a week working in teams on a project related to SDGs at one of the participating companies. The SDG Traineeship is a collaborative project between SDG House and SDG Community member 'TheRockGroup'.

We spoke to some participating companies and (former) trainees about their experiences with the SDG Traineeship:

## **Renate Smit**

**Project leader at Ondernemershuis Deventer/SDG House Stedendriehoek, client SDG Traineeship (edition 4 and 5)**

"At Ondernemershuis (The Entrepreneur House) Deventer, we support all types of entrepreneurs: people who are thinking of starting a business, people who just started, and entrepreneurs who want to grow their businesses. We are entrepreneurs ourselves and know how to make a new business successful. Since 2010, we have been supporting the entrepreneurs

in our region with independent advice on entrepreneurship. We think that the SDGs are important for any business, because we believe that changing the world must start with contributing to this change yourself. It is why we decided to become an SDG House with our partners for our region in the east of the Netherlands last year. Of course, we immediately joined the SDG Traineeship as a client!

We asked the trainees from the last edition how we could better support the SDGs within our organisation. We want to practice what we preach and see how we can increase our contribution. The trainees also developed a step-by-step guide that helps us support entrepreneurs who want to improve their contribution to the SDGs.

We are actively working with this toolkit at the moment. It's important that anything the trainees do has practical results. We also hired one of the trainees from the last edition to help us work on this; she now supports entrepreneurs in achieving their business and sustainability goals.

The really nice thing about the SDG Traineeship is that you have very motivated young people from different backgrounds working with you. They all come with unique skills and experiences. Since they are already actively involved with sustainability in their own lives, they also bring a fresh new perspective and energy with them. And that is something we really appreciate and look forward to.

The trainees get good guidance from their coaches as part the traineeship itself and, at the end of the 12 weeks, we have a real concrete result we can use within our company. Overall, it has been a very pleasant and valuable experience for us."



# About TheRockGroup

*“We believe that fair and sustainable business can and should accelerate the transition towards a sustainable economy and society.”*

TheRockGroup works on different levels, each focused on offering tailor-made services to help different stakeholders take a proactive role in this transition.

TheRockGroup is (co-)initiator of the SDG Traineeship and Issue Killers program and as such (co-)responsible for running the programs, development of the educational aspects of the programs and in guiding and training the trainees. The training that TheRockGroup provides to trainees focuses on effective collaboration, consultancy skills, sustainable career development and campaigning.



## Jasmin Gerritsma

**Former SDG trainee (edition 4), team Gemeente Súdwest-Fryslân**

“After my studies, I knew I wanted to be more actively involved with sustainability, but I didn’t have a clear idea of what I wanted to do. Of course, you can change your habits to practice sustainability in your personal life, but I wanted to know if I could also work in this field.

Joining the SDG Traineeship, and working on a sustainability assignment for a client, helped me gain valuable hands-on experience. By working in a multidisciplinary team, I learned what my strengths and weaknesses are. It helped me find answers to the questions I had, and it gave me a lot of valuable practical experience. The certification at the end is a nice validation of the skills and knowledge required to work on these types of assignments.

It was interesting to work with the municipality as a client. I hadn’t considered working for a government organisation like a municipality before, but I really enjoyed it. The traineeship helped me find out if this is the type of work I’d enjoy doing as a career. I can certainly recommend this traineeship to people who would like to work towards the SDGs.”

***“I believe that creating more awareness about sustainability within companies is very important for the future, and I think that this traineeship is a step towards achieving this.”***

Tessa Assies



## Tessa Assies

**Hestia Kinderopvang, client SDG Traineeship (edition 4 & 5)**

“This will be the second time we join the SDG traineeship as a client. We are a children’s daycare centre that has existed for 20 years, and from the start, sustainability has been important to us. Originally, our focus was mainly on the so-called ‘green’ aspect of sustainability, like using sustainable materials at our locations. Now, we have expanded our focus to how we can treat each other and the planet sustainably as well.

The first group of trainees started with us in early 2022, and we asked them how we could better incorporate sustainability and the SDGs into our policy and practices.

It was interesting to see how the inspired, highly motivated young trainees worked on these challenges for us. They all come from different backgrounds and each of them brings their particular set of skills and competencies. I believe that creating more awareness about sustainability within companies is very important for the future, and I think that this traineeship is a step towards achieving this.

I think day-cares have an important role to play in creating more awareness. After all, we are raising a new generation and we hope that with our attention to sustainability and the SDGs, this new generation will grow up also caring about these topics.”



One of the locations of Hestia Kinderopvang.

## Gana Radoeva

**Current SDG trainee**

“I’ve been trying to decide what to do after finishing my masters here in the Netherlands, figuring out my career path, and seeing if I want to stay in the Netherlands or move back home to Bulgaria. For me, the work I do must have a positive impact on the world, whether it’s on people or the environment. I also want to try things out before diving into the real workforce. The SDG Traineeship is a great combination of these two things. I hope the traineeship will help me develop skills to further my career.

I’m only six weeks into the traineeship, but I’ve already had some great experiences. I feel the work we do is making a positive impact on the world, and it is helping me decide what I want to do after my studies. For instance, I didn’t think I wanted to get into consultancy; however, now after gaining experience in sustainability consulting, I enjoy it. It is different from what I imagined the world of consulting would be like.

I’m really enjoying the balance between academic and practical business knowledge that we are getting in the training and guidance from the SDG Traineeship itself too. I appreciate that we can learn, grow, and fail in a safe environment during this traineeship while working on a real business case for our client.” ■



# Hospitality for a Sustainable Future

Perched on the edge of Amsterdam's Oosterpark, the KIT campus is one of the city's great hospitality venues, featuring a hotel, a café and restaurant, and world-class conference and events facilities. Our hospitality services are an integral part of KIT's mission to make the world more inclusive and sustainable. This is reflected in all aspects of the hospitality operation: from the food we serve and the suppliers we use, to waste management and the social employment programme that we support. The proceeds of our hospitality services contribute directly to projects undertaken by our advisors in global health, economic development, and gender equality.



*In the summer, KIT's inner courtyard is used as a place to relax, work, and meet during the week.*

*In the evenings and on the weekends, large gatherings and events can be held in the courtyard.*



*Our professional staff make sure you have a pleasant visit.*

*An overview of KIT's premises.*







Our monumental building has increasingly served as a studio for television programmes, a backdrop for commercials, or as a film set.



Large conference audiences can be hosted at The Queen Maxima Hall.



Or even a musical performance, like this Candlelight Concert.

Our imposing Marble Hall is perfect for networking during your conference... ..wedding ceremonies, parties, and much more!





