

International Conference

Integrated Microfinance Management

Academic Perspective

“Universiteit Leiden (UL) – Universitas Padjadjaran (UNPAD): International Inter-University Cooperation for Advanced Development in science & Society”

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Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The successful cooperation program between Universiteit Leiden in The Netherlands and Universitas Padjadjaran in Indonesia has a long history which dates back to 1987, when a first “Letter of Intent” for scientific collaboration in the field of Anthropology and Ethnoscience was signed between Universiteit Leiden and Universitas Padjadjaran, followed by the joint organization of the significant *Pithecanthropus Centennial Conference and Exhibition* in Leiden in 1993 and the joint establishment of the first *Indonesian Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge* (INRIK) at UNPAD in 1994.

Following the joint celebration together with the Martha Tilaar Foundation of Indonesia’s *Fifty Years of Independence* in the Academy Building of Universiteit Leiden and the execution of the significant joint EU-sponsored Project on Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge Systems in Indonesia and Kenya (INDAKS), I had the honour to come to Bandung in 1997 to further substantiate the promising cooperation and sign a formal *Bilateral Agreement on Inter-University Cooperation* between our universities.

The Bilateral Agreement not only paved the way for further extension of cooperation, but also provided an impetus for collaboration between and among various disciplines and faculties of both universities.

In this way, in 2001, the joint interdisciplinary MSc Course on Medical Anthropology and Ethnobotany (MAE) started between the Social Sciences, the Medical Sciences and the Natural Sciences, delivering graduates from different faculties at UNPAD.

Since 2002, joint International Seminars have yearly been held at UNPAD in *Indigenous Knowledge Systems & Development, Health Promotion & Communication, and Bio-Cultural Diversity Conservation*.

In 2005, Universiteit Leiden, Universtas Padjadjaran and the Martha Tilaar Foundation joint their forces to organize under the auspices of the World Think Tank the International travelling Exhibition in 4 countries on *Jamu: Herbal Medicine for Health and Healing in Indonesia*, which attracted many students, scientists and the general public in Indonesia, Greece, The Netherlands and Singapore.

Also, in 2005, the Faculty of Medicine of Universitas Padjadjaran granted a prestigious *Honorary Degree* to Prof. Dr. Slikkerveer for his impressive achievements in the interdisciplinary field of the medical-social sciences, in particular in Indonesia.

At the same time, PhD candidates were selected to conduct PhD research in Indonesia and receive their Ph Degree from Leiden , supported by the Bilateral Agreement, and the first candidate has already defended her PhD Thesis in Leiden in 2010, and soon others will follow.

Meanwhile, in 2009, the ongoing Training and Research Programme in *Indigenous Knowledge Systems* at both universities in different disciplines such as agriculture, health, and communication pertained to the joint Project on the Development of a New master Course on *Integrated Microfinance Management for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in Indonesia*, witch received substantial support for 3 years from the Indonesian Facility of the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs.

This unique Program, in which Universiteit Leiden, Universitas Padjadjaran, the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania and the Indonesian Movement for Microfinance, advised by the Martha Tilaar Foundation and the Center of Excellence for Innovation and Management Development have been working hard to present to you today the results in terms of the new curriculum of the *New Master Course on Integrated Microfinance Management* which will be submitted as our request for accreditation by Prof.Dr. Ganjar Kurnia, Rector of Universitas Padjadjaran to H.E. Dr. Fasil Jalal, Vice-Minister for National Education of the Republic of Indonesia.

I was told, that in Indonesia there are certain reservations about the scientific character of multidisciplinary studies. Now I want to make some remarks on this subject.

First of all, I would like to stress that traditional view on science is mostly monodisciplinary in orientation. Of course, there are some exceptions, for instance medicine, but in most fields of studies there has been a primary drive towards the implementation of a monodisciplinary approach.

I can mention a large number of examples, such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, economics etc.

Nowadays, we discover, that it is not sufficient to explain phenomena only in society, but also phenomena in science.

Let me give some examples of this latest process. For instance: *Can there be life on other planets?*

To find the answer, we have to engage into multidisciplinary research strategies like astrophysics, biology and chemistry’.

Indeed, it is not enough only to enquire about the configuration of the universe, or the force of gravity, but also about the enigma of early forms of life and the interaction among the elements.

In other words, we need students, scientists and scholars who are open in their orientation, who are qualified to go beyond the boundary of their monodisciplinary field, and above all, they have to be prepared to work in a team.

In this context, another interesting development we observe in science is the emergence of the newly-developing field of life sciences, which is a successful combination of sciences such as medicine, biology, chemistry, but also advanced technology. Here I wish to refer to the recent collaboration between Universiteit Leiden and the Technical University Delft which have established an interdisciplinary programme of life sciences, the first in The Netherlands.

Perhaps, a new challenge for Universitas Padjadjaran and Institut Teknologi Bandung?

Another example is formed by the new Master Course of Integrated Microfinance Management. Microfinance used to be a pure monodisciplinary study in the discipline of economics.

While in the course of the 1990s, initially successful projects have been implemented, rendering a certain contribution to poverty alleviation and women empowerment, the beginning of this century shows that such approach is too narrow.

Microfinance remains restricted to the commercial and financial services provided to urban groups, while the rural segment of the population remains largely excluded from participation.

Such participation we have learned, is crucial for the success of realizing such basic objectives. For that, we need the cooperation from non-economic disciplines in order to penetrate into the broader context of the culture and community,

Therefore, I believe that this programme not only links up well with the present need from the society, but also responds to the scientific, educational demands from the intelligentsia, particularly in Indonesia.

Thank you very much