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Saamaka uwii: Saramaccan medical plant knowledge, practices and beliefs for local health care in Suriname

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*‘The future belongs to those who believe in the
beauty of their dreams’* (Eleanor Roosevelt, 1957)

Curriculum Vitae

Charlotte van 't Klooster was born on the 27th of June 1975 in Naarden, The Netherlands. In 1994, she finished her high school education in Naarden. After this she completed two Master's programs; Biology (specialization tropical ecology/ ethnobotany, Free University of Amsterdam) in 2000, and Medical Anthropology and Sociology (University of Amsterdam) with honors (cum laude) in 2009.

From 2001 to 2003 she worked as an independent researcher at the National Herbarium of the Netherlands (Utrecht Branch) on Surinamese plant names which resulted in the book 'Index of Vernacular Plant Names of Suriname'. This self-written project was primarily funded by the late His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands with whom she was in contact since her biology studies, and the Alberta Mennega Foundation. After this, she also completed a postdoctoral study in Education and Communication specifically on Biology (Free University of Amsterdam, comparable to the new Master's program Biology track Education and Communication) in 2004, in the Netherlands.

In 2004, she accepted a job as PR-communication advisor at the Department of Management and Public Relations, Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences of the Free University of Amsterdam. During this work she received the international certificate (IPMA-D) for Project, People and Finance Management and was a member of the University Council for the Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences. In 2008 she left her job, deeming it necessary to improve her knowledge and research skills in the field of anthropology. This background gave her the opportunity to combine knowledge and practices from different fields of study.

She has been conducting fieldwork since 1998 in the interior of Suriname among the Carib (Indigenous community) and the Saramaccans (Maroon community). For her Biology Master she conducted an awareness/education program for the BIOTOPIC foundation (funded by WWF) in collaboration with STINASU (Foundation for Nature Conservation in Suriname) and STIDUNAL (Foundation for Sustainable Nature Management of Alusiaka) in the Galibi Nature Reserve. For this, she received funding from the late His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and a number of other self-raised funds. For her Master in Medical Anthropology and Sociology, she conducted a research in the interior of Suriname among the Saramaccan Maroons about medicinal plants for local health care. She graduated end of November 2009, after which she moved to India where she lived with her husband for one year in their organic farm.

In February 2011, she accepted a four-year research position at the Amsterdam International School for Social Science Research (AISSR) at the University of Amsterdam where she participated in the EU funded Multi-disciplinary University Traditional Health Initiative (MUTHI project) to build sustainable research capacity on plants for better public health in Africa (Mali, South-Africa and Uganda). Within this role she was responsible for developing the work packages on Ethnobotany & Medical Anthropology, and IPR & Ethics, and training the participants. She was further responsible for presenting the results of the work package Ethnobotany & Medical Anthropology at the yearly consortium meetings and writing the milestone and delivery reports to the EU for both work packages. Within this project she collaborated with the Global Initiative for Traditional Systems of Health Foundation for the promotion of traditional medicine in Africa.

In 2012 she was requested by the Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre for a project to organize a presentation by a traditional healer from Pikin Slee for the TEDx conference on the Future of Health in Maastricht 2012. Towards the end of 2013 she returned to India with her husband and two children to live a sustainable life on their organic farm. She continued working for the MUTHI project out of India till it finished end of 2014.

In February 2015, she accepted a Fellowship on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) at the Centre of Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL). This Indo-Norwegian bilateral cooperation project was administered by the National Biodiversity Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. She was responsible for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and provided need-based advisory services to the above-mentioned Ministry, in relation to access and benefit sharing of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. In 2016, she did not extend her project with the Indian Government, instead she chose to work as an external PhD researcher for the Leiden University Medical Center, in cooperation with Naturalis Biodiversity Center, to complete her work on the traditional knowledge of the Saramaccan Maroons living in Suriname.

Since her return to India, Charlotte and her husband have been running an organic farm (Jacob & Klooster Farms) where they, among other activities, conduct children education programs (based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals) for the Dutch organization Designathon Works. Now that her doctoral research on Saramaccan traditional knowledge is completed, she is ready for accepting new scientific challenges.

List of Publications

Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A., Haabo V., Van den Berg, M., Stoffelen P., and T.R. Van Andel. 2021. African elements in Saramaccan Maroon plant names in Suriname. *Botany*. Special issue on ‘*Ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology of the Americas*’ (online available via <https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/10.1139/cjb-2021-0066> per 26 July 2021, to be published in the special issue to Botany in March 2022).

Moukoro, P.P., Togola, A., de Jong, J., Diallo, D., Smestad Paulsen, B., and **C.I.E.A. Van 't Klooster**. 2020. Ethnobotanical survey of plants used by traditional health practitioners for treatment of schizophrenia spectrum disorders in Bandiagara, Mali, West Africa. *Journal of Herbal Medicine* 24: 100402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2020.100402>

Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A., Haabo, V., and T.R. Van Andel. 2019. Our children do not have time anymore to learn about medicinal plants: How an ethnobotanical school assignment can contribute to the conservation of Saramaccan Maroon traditional knowledge. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 18(11): 1-47. <http://ethnobotanyjournal.org//index.php/era/article/view/1431>.

Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A., Haabo, V., Ruyschaert, S., Vossen, T., and T.R. Van Andel. 2018. Herbal bathing: an analysis of variation in plant use among Saramaccan and Aucan Maroons in Suriname. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 14 (20). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13002-018-0216-9>

Bodeker, G., Weisbord, E., Diallo, D., Byamukama, R., Sekagya, Y., and **C.I.E.A. Van 't Klooster**. 2018. African medicinal plants & traditional medical knowledge: Access & benefit sharing in the context of R&D. In *African Indigenous medical knowledge and human health*. Edited by C. Wambebe. CRC Press, Boca Raton. pp. 65-87.

Prip, C., and **C.I.E.A. Van 't Klooster**. 2016. The Nagoya Protocol on access to and benefit sharing: User-country measures and implementation in India. FNI report 2. <https://www.fni.no/getfile.php/131690/Filer/Publikasjoner/FNI-R0216.pdf>

Sandilyan, S., and **C.I.E.A. Van 't Klooster**. 2016. The other sides of invasive alien plants of India—With special reference to medicinal values. *Journal for Nature Conservation* 31: 16–21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2016.02.005>

Van 't Klooster C., Van Andel, T., and R. Reis. 2016. Patterns in medicinal plant knowledge and use in a Maroon village in Suriname. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 189(2): 319-330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2016.05.048>.

Anywar, G., **Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A.**, Byamukama, R., Willcox, M., Nalumansi, P. A., de Jong, J., Rwaburindori, P., and B.T. Kiremire. 2015. Medicinal plants used in the treatment and prevention of malaria in Cegere Sub-county, Northern Uganda. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 14:505-516. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17348/era.14.0.505-516>

Diarra, N., **Van 't Klooster, C.**, Togola, A., Diallo, D., Willcox, M., and J. De Jong. 2015. Ethnobotanical study of plants used against malaria in Sélingué subdistrict, Mali. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 166: 352-360. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2015.02.054>

Hughes, G., Blouws, T., Oluwaseyi, A., Davids, D., Mbamalu, O., **Van 't Klooster, C.**, De Jong, J., and D. Gibson. 2015. An ethnobotanical survey of medicinal plants used by traditional health practitioners to manage HIV and its related opportunistic infections in Mpoza, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 171: 109-115.<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2015.05.029>

Unnikrishnan, P. M., Suneetha, M.S., Timoshyna, A., Graz, B., Leaman, D., Bussman, R.W., Hariramamurthi, G., Shankar, D., **Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A.**, Bodeker, G., Sekagya, Y. Hiemstra, W., Gomez, F., and B. Verschuuren. 2015. Traditional Medicine (Chapter 5). *In* Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health: A state of knowledge review. *Edited by* World Health Organization and Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity. ISBN 978921508537. pp. 180-196. <https://www.cbd.int/health/SOK-biodiversity-en.pdf>

Bodeker, G., **Van 't Klooster, C.**, and E. Weisbord. 2014. *Prunus africana* (Hook.f.) Kalkman: the overexploitation of a medicinal plant species and its legal context. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 20 (11): 810-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1089/acm.2013.0459>

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Ngarivhume, T., **Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A.**, de Jong, J.T.V.M., and J.H. Van der Westhuizen. 2014. Medicinal plants used by traditional healers for the treatment of malaria in the Chipinge district in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 159: 224-237. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2014.11.011>

Van Andel, T.R., **Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A.**, Quiroz, D., Towns, A.M., Ruyschaert, S., and M. Van den Berg. 2014. Local plant names reveal that enslaved Africans recognized substantial parts of the New World flora. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (50): E5346-E5353. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/PNAS.1418836111>

Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A. 2011. 'Saamaka Uwii'. Het belang van medicinale, aromatische en cosmetische planten voor de Saramaccaners in het binnenland van Suriname. *Oso Tijdschrift voor Surinaamse taalkunde, letterkunde en geschiedenis* 30(2): 248-266 [in Dutch].

Van 't Klooster, C.I.E.A. 2009. Medicinal, aromatic and cosmetic (MAC) plants for local health care and bio-cultural diversity conservation in the Saramaccan village Pikin Slee in Suriname. MSc thesis. University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam. <http://dare.uva.nl/cgi/arno/show.cgi?fid=167792> (accessed 20.06.15).

Van Andel, T.R. and **C.I.E.A. Van 't Klooster**. 2007. Medicinal plant use by Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam. In *Traveling cultures and plants. The Ethnobiology and ethnopharmacy of human migrations. Edited by A. Pieroni and I. VandeBroek*. Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology 7: 122-145.

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Rozema, J., Oudejans, A., Houter, N., Schoonheim, H., Walraven, I., **Van 't Klooster, C.**, Van de Staaij, J., Tosserams, M., De Bakker, N., Van Beem, A., Stroetenga, M., Broekman, R., Van Heerwaarden, L., Nelissen, H., Aerts, R.

1999. Responses of plants from a dune grassland ecosystem in the Netherlands to solar UV-B filtration and supplementation experiments. *In* Stratospheric ozone depletion: the effects of enhanced UV-B radiation on terrestrial ecosystems. *Edited by* J. Rozema. Backhuys, Leiden. pp. 203-225.

Most relevant Symposia/Conferences/Workshops

2017. 58th Annual meeting of the Society for Economic Botany, Braganca, Portugal. Living in a global world: Local knowledge and sustainability. Presentation: 'Patterns in medicinal plant knowledge and use in a Maroon village in Suriname'.

2015. Community-to-community exchange and capacity development workshop for traditional knowledge holders on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), as part of its Biodiversity and Community Health (BaCH) Initiative. Bangalore. Coordinated by UNU-IAS and the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, the Transdisciplinary University (TDU) of the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Tradition (FRLHT), the UNDP Equator Initiative, the National Biodiversity Authority of India.

2015. National AROGYA EXPO 2015, Kerala, Trivandrum. Organized by World Ayurveda Foundation, Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India and R.G. Centre for Biotechnology.

2015. Consolidating workshop CEPBOL, Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law: Sharing experiences on Access and Benefit Sharing. National Biodiversity Authority. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Chennai, India.

2013. Workshop Ethnobotany and Retrospective Treatment Outcome (RTO) studies. MUTHI project. Makerere University, Makerere, Uganda.

2013. Workshop Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): Memorandum of Understanding. Makerere University, Makerere, Uganda.

2012. TEDx Maastricht Conference on the 'Future of Health' initiated by the Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre, Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

2012. 13th Congress of the International Society on Ethnobiology (ISE), Montpellier, France. Presentation: 'The forest has eyes: The role of traditional stories in biodiversity conservation and cultural resilience'.

2012. Workshop Ethnobotany and Medical Anthropology. MUTHI project. Makerere University, Makerere, Uganda. Presented on Ethnobotanical & MA research methods and research case study Suriname.

2011. Workshop Traditional Medical Knowledge & Intellectual Property Rights. MUTHI project. University of Bamako, Bamako, Mali. Presentations: Case Study: Kani tribe (India) and Traditional Medical Knowledge & IPR regulations.

2002. Symposium Integration of Traditional Healthcare in Modern Healthcare in Suriname (CARAPA)

2002. Symposium Conservation of Nature in the Guiana Shield (IUCN & Conservation International), Paramaribo.

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I would like to thank the late His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for the pleasant meetings at the Soestdijk Palace discussing the importance of traditional knowledge. As promised, I continued my scientific journey into a PhD to contribute to the preservation of traditional knowledge of the Saramaccan Maroons in Suriname, which is now finalized.

I would like to thank my mother and sister who have supported me during my life to keep following my dreams. My sister Nathalie, you have supported me in so many ways, from my childhood onwards. For this I am truly very grateful. This PhD is as much yours as it is mine. I would further like to thank my brother in law Ingmar, my aunt Marion, cousin Dennis, and my extended family members Janneke, Nicolette, Bas, Henk, Magda, Ramon and Chantal for their love and care.

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It always seems impossible, until it's done
(Nelson Mandela, 2001)

