

Groningen Confucius Institute Annual Report 2019

In 2019, the Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI) proudly fulfilled its plans and objectives in pursuing its mission of offering Chinese language and culture courses to affiliated and interested parties throughout the Netherlands as well as providing the wider public various opportunities to learn about China, Chinese language and culture. For instance, GCI organised the screening premiere of the documentary film *Tao — Fighting for Football in China*, directed by Dutch filmmaker Michiel Ebbing and published the booklet *Van Afbeelding Naar Schrift* (English name: *From Picture to Script*) in both Dutch and English introducing Chinese writing through twelve simple Chinese characters. In addition, GCI organised 3NTRY China events during the 2019 Amsterdam Dance Event and Dutch Design Week and developed a new tailor-made scholarship project for Dutch secondary school students.

1. Language and Education

1) Language Courses

- In 2019 GCI offered courses with six different levels to target learners from universities, secondary schools, primary school and the wider public. The course offering also included tailor-made courses and immersion course for learners from business, political and academic circles. The total number of learners was 2812, including 613 GCI students, 1870 students from 11 Confucius Classrooms, and 329 students from 3 GCI Teaching Points.
- The number of credit courses in universities substantially increased in 2019. GCI has been actively exploring collaborations with the University of Groningen, the Hanze University of Applied Sciences and the University of Amsterdam to offer more credit courses. We succeeded in providing 4 cooperative programmes of courses totalling 71 credits within graduate and undergraduate programmes, an honours degree and a minor programme.

2) HSK tests

During 2019, 8 HSK tests (Chinese Proficiency Test) and 4 HSKK (HSK Speaking Test) were held, with a total of 975 participants, an increase of 26% compared to 2018.

Exam	Date	Location	Participants
HSK	12 January	Amsterdam	86
HSK(K)	23 March	Ermelo; Alkmaar	88
HSK(K)	11 May	Rotterdam; Wassenaar	227
HSK	16 June	Groningen; Amsterdam; Arnhem;	259



		Zwolle	
HSK	22 September	Amersfoort	79
HSK(K)	13 October	Hengelo; Amersfoort	64
HSK	16 November	Nijmegen	77
HSK(K)	1 December	Eindhoven	95
Total	---	---	975

2. Key Projects of GCI

1) Cooperation with higher education institutions in the Netherlands

- GCI launched a number of educational programmes in collaboration with several Dutch universities. The Master's programme in International Relations, East Asians Studies track at the University of Groningen, jointly designed by GCI and the Centre for East Asian Studies Groningen (CEASG), had successfully entered into its third year of existence and it offered important opportunities for students interested in conducting research related to China. GCI also collaborated with CEASG in creating Chinese credit courses for undergraduate CEASG students. GCI designed Chinese courses for the World Language Programme of the University College Groningen. In Partnership with the Amsterdam Business School (ABS) of the University of Amsterdam, GCI launched a corporate training programme for enterprise managers, which was listed as a major high-end customised programme of ABS. With the Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, GCI jointly developed the *China Entrepreneurship* minor programme and the *China-Europe Business Talent* honours programme. Last but not least, GCI also offered Chinese courses to board members of *The Netherlands-Asia Honours Summer School (NAHSS)* that select excellent students in the Netherlands to experience China through their summer programme. All these educational projects have provided more platforms for Dutch students and enterprises to conduct research about China and to better understand contemporary China.
- GCI jointly held a "Chinese Cultural Day" event with the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars Groningen (ACSSG) and the University of Groningen, attracting 150 participants.
- GCI coordinated the *Seminar Sino Dutch business Development* with the Hanze University of Applied Sciences and the Saxion University of Applied Sciences.
- GCI was invited to participate in important meetings for Dutch higher education and other institutes, such as the *Netherlands Enterprise Agency* conference (during China Business Week), the annual conference of the Study Association of International Relations & International Organization at the University of Groningen (Clio), the Conference by [REDACTED], an organisation dedicated to intercultural learning and internationalisation activities, the Study Abroad Fair of the University of Groningen, and the opening ceremony of the Chinese School in Ermelo.

2) Innovative cooperation with Dutch secondary schools



- GCI continues to explore creative ways for cooperative education with Dutch secondary schools. In 2019, in addition to the current 11 Confucius Classrooms and 3 teaching points, GCI searched for partners in the provinces of Groningen and Friesland to provide needed support to schools in these two regions where there is to this day no established Confucius Classroom or teaching point. GCI also provided Chinese calligraphy series course and Chinese language and culture module courses for Dutch secondary schools, while also designing new workshops for specific target groups, such as children with dyslexia.
- In cooperation with Jilin University, GCI designed a tailor-made four-week scholarship programme for secondary school students in 2019, which attracted 13 students from 5 different secondary schools in the cities of Rotterdam, Wassenaar, Eindhoven, Amersfoort and Ermelo.
- GCI has given comprehensive support to Dutch secondary schools in developing their China programme. For example, GCI has carried out a pre-trip training programme for the Groningen International High School delegation to China for 5 consecutive years, conducted over 20 cultural experience workshops for elementary and secondary schools in many Dutch provinces and cities which involved nearly a thousand students, organised the summer camp to China for Confucius Classrooms twice, jointly held the Spring Festival celebrations with GCI teaching point, recommended Confucius Classrooms students to apply for the Confucius Institute Scholarship.

3) GCI cooperation with the Dutch government, enterprises and social institutions in 2019

- Based on the continuous, strategic cooperative partnership with the Chinese Cultural Centre in The Hague, GCI has been exploring to co-establish a Teaching Centre and an HSK Test centre in the near future.
- GCI cooperated with the City of Amsterdam and [REDACTED] to hold the 3NTRY China events during the 2019 Amsterdam Dance Event and the Dutch Design Week. During these events, GCI held China talks and Chinese calligraphy workshops, inviting Dutch, Chinese and Swiss artists, scholars and professionals of different fields to explore cutting-edge Chinese developments in science, technology, economy, culture and art. The events attracted large audiences of over ten thousand people.
- GCI attended the Nuffic Stakeholder Meeting, and the Network Chinese Conference to explore the future development of Chinese education in the Netherlands and discuss potential future cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Education and other institutions.
- GCI has maintained in 2019 the strategic cooperative partnership with [REDACTED].
- GCI cooperated with [REDACTED] and offered custom business Chinese courses to their 5 foreign senior executives.
- GCI has cooperated with the iDeal Future Chinese International School in Amsterdam and 3 teachers from GCI offered Chinese lessons to 4 classes, with a total of 13 hours per week in 2019.
- GCI has assisted the Municipality of Groningen and the Province of Groningen on different occasions on aspects of translation and interpretation.



- In collaboration with Amsterdam musicians, GCI organised a music salon featuring a live performance by the Chinese band *Zhaoze*, which combines electric Guqin playing (a traditional seven-stringed Chinese zither) with modern post-rock music.
- 4) Establishment of GCI media platform and cooperation with Dutch and Chinese media
- The GCI e-journal, *Global China Insights*, has been continually expanding its readership through electronic publishing. In 2019 GCI initiated a cooperation with the German magazine [REDACTED] to digitally publish high quality articles.
 - GCI held the Groningen Premiere of the documentary film *Tao — Fighting for Football in China* at the Groningen Forum, a cultural centre in Groningen. Since 2017, GCI has cooperated with the Dutch media company [REDACTED] by translating and proofreading the subtitles of this documentary.
 - GCI was interviewed by China Radio International for a featured article on GCI playing the pioneer role of promoting the Mandarin Proficiency Test and establishing the first overseas training and test centre.
 - During 2019, GCI continued to post weekly updates of news, clips and pictures on mainstream social media websites and platforms, and gained wide attention and spread. In addition to GCI's official website and TikTok, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, GCI's Wechat was officially launched, attracting around 100 followers within a short period of time.
 - GCI activities received coverage from over ten Dutch and Chinese media outlets, including Xinhua Net, CRI Online and EUC Media.

3. Projects with the Headquarters

- In 2019, GCI held 2 external and 1 internal Chinese teacher training programmes. Firstly, during the 2019 Chinese language teacher training programme, experts from China, the UK and the Netherlands as well as experienced local teachers were invited to share their insights about Chinese language teaching skills, which was highly praised by attendees from the Dutch local and Chinese schools. Secondly, upon request by the Chinese school in Emmen, GCI offered a full day tailor-made programme for their principal and teachers focusing on Chinese courses for transnational young learners. Thirdly, GCI organised an internal teaching programme, where teachers and experts from the Language Centre of the University of Groningen were invited to give lectures and workshops on current teaching methods, intercultural communication in second language acquisition and designing course materials and practical exercises to improve the quality of courses offered by GCI.
- In 2019 GCI recommended 6 Dutch local teachers to apply for the Overseas Chinese Teachers' Training Programme in China and all of them were accepted at participating Chinese universities.
- GCI published the booklet *Van Afbeelding Naar Schrift* in both Dutch and English. In collaboration with different German institutions, GCI was able to deliver both versions of the booklet with



- accessible texts and colourful illustrations, rendering the origin of Chinese characters easy to understand by a wider public.
- GCI has been pushing forward the new sinology programme, such as the joint publishing of the Dutch version of the book *Songs of Chu* with Amsterdam University Press. The author of the book, Jeroen Struive, is the Chinese teacher of GCI's Confucius Classroom at Kandinsky College in Nijmegen.
- GCI launched the project of designing its own textbooks for young learners. Teaching materials are being collected and the textbooks are at the time of writing this report in the first stage of design.
- GCI joined the Preliminary of 12th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Secondary School Students in the Netherlands and funded a student from GCI Confucius Classroom at Petrus Canisius College in Alkmaar, Inge Sijpheer. As the 3rd prize winner of the competition, Ms Sijpheer got the opportunity to take part in the 2019 final competition in China.
- In 2019 GCI recommended 5 students to apply for various Confucius Institute Scholarships. Two candidates received the one-year Confucius Institute Scholarship, and one candidate received a scholarship for the Master's Degree in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTC SOL).
- GCI organised 1 Confucius Institute Summer Camp and 2 Confucius Classroom Summer Camps, in which nearly 70 students have participated.
- GCI held the Spring Festival Reception on 8 February 2019 in Groningen Grand Theatre, gathering nearly 100 participants in different fields of politics, business, culture and education from the Netherlands and China to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year. The event also celebrated Chinese culture with live performances and an interactive pub quiz, a feature greatly appreciated by the audience.
- GCI held the 2019 annual Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival at the Chinese garden in Hortus, Groningen, which attracted over 700 visitors from the Groningen province and other adjacent places. The event was launched with an opening speech by Mr. Luo Ping, the Education counsellor of the Chinese embassy in the Netherlands, and included live performances and various workshops.

4. Further activities in field of business

'Continuation of what we have started in 2018', that was GCI's motto and purpose for 2019. In other words, the main items of the year plan 2019 have not drastically changed because the execution of a new strategy is a long-term endeavour.

In 2019 GCI laid the foundation for a business development programme in the bio-based economy. The joint efforts of GCI partners during the first Sino-Dutch Bio-based Business Conference on 12 December 2018 led to a number of initiatives that will be further developed in 2020.

The December conference in 2018 was also used to introduce 2 new GCI partners: Tianjin University and the Saxion University of Applied Sciences. During the 13th Global Confucius Institute Conference held in 2018 in Chengdu, first contacts were established with the Confucius Institute at Lancaster University



(UK), which also showed interest in bio-based economy. Naturally, the collaboration with our strategic and CI Partner, Communication University China (CUC), will continue in the way that is so familiar to both of us.

In the context of the bio-based economy, we have carried out various activities involving new companies around that theme. Examples include:

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] and the Energy and Security Engineering Department at Tianjin Chengjian University, China.
- Tianjin University, China; Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Brain & Technology Research Group (Enschede, Deventer and Apeldoorn, NL); [REDACTED].

Another theme which came from Chinese business partners is support for elderly care. The University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) and the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen often receive Chinese delegations with requests for this support in training and education of Chinese professionals in elderly care. This type of business development project is also relevant to GCI's role of bridging Chinese culture and learning with health professionals in collaborative Chinese-Dutch educational projects.

By working in specific areas such as bio-based economy and elderly care, GCI exemplifies how business development can lead to new leads and assignments to fulfil its mission.

Furthermore, GCI organised business activities for the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars in Groningen (ACSSG). Among many other activities, the Chinese Cultural Day, organised by ACSSG with support from GCI is an important platform to further engage communication and interaction between Chinese and Dutch people. The platform has enabled Dutch people to get further acquainted with Chinese culture as well as with economic and social developments in China, which ignited a wish and passion to learn Chinese.

One key issue described in GCI's 2019 year plan, which remains and transferred to the year plan 2020 is the issue of green leadership and the circular economy, more specifically the development of a training model which can be used in organisations towards sustainable change. In addition to change, GCI found that bridging different cultures in an international context is a determining factor for a successful green economy. In 2020, Hanze UAS and GCI pursued building the training model to be used by companies to boost innovation for a circular economy and green growth.

