**Children as targets and tools. Colonial governance in missionary civilizing projects in the Indo-Pacific World (1870-1962)**

Research project developed by Marit Monteiro and Geertje Mak (2016)

**Summary**

The central question addressed in the project is how children were targeted and instrumentalized in missionary colonial practices in the Indo-Pacific world (1870–1962).

A major issue for colonial governance was how to reach a population with an entirely other culture and language. Our internationally innovative claim is that colonial projects involving local or ‘indigenous’ children have been pivotal to surmount this problem.

The international literature on colonial history has increasingly pointed to the crucial role of the Christian missions in colonial projects, with long-lasting effects on the colonized societies. This project is the first to put the rich missionary sources central stage in the analysis of Dutch colonial governance.

The most recent insights in the mechanisms of colonialism elaborate on its international ‘webbedness’ and the importance of transference of know-how, people, and practices over space and time. This project takes up this challenge as it is the first to analyze the long-term interrelation of colonial projects in the Moluccas and Dutch New Guinea.

This project will result in a fine-grained analysis of the different ways in which children were made into targets and tools of colonial governance. Practices of *appropriation* (child removal), *re-organization* of family, sexuality and kinship structures as well as *instrumentalization* of the children involved after reaching adulthood will be analyzed.

The ethical issue of addressing children in aid and development programs is still pertinent. This project will relate a historical evaluation with current issues pertaining to children in such programs.