



WESTFÄLISCHE  
WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNSTER

Institut für Ethnologie

WWU | Institut für Ethnologie | Stadtstraße 21 | 48149 Münster

Prof. Dr. Josephus D. M. Platenkamp  
Geschäftsführender Direktor

## – VORTRÄGE AUSWÄRTIGER GELEHRTER –

**Auf Einladung des Instituts für Ethnologie  
der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität**

spricht

**Dr. Willem Vogelsang**

International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden

**am Mittwoch, den 18.12.2013, um 16:00 Uhr**

zum Thema

**A cultural advisor with the Dutch and American  
military forces in southern Afghanistan, 2008-2010**

am

**Institut für Ethnologie  
Stadtstraße 21, 48149 Münster  
Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

**Zu diesem Vortrag sind alle Interessierten herzlich eingeladen.**

Die Rektorin  
der Universität  
Prof. Dr. U. Nelles

Der Dekan  
des Fachbereichs  
Prof. Dr. J. Heidrich

Institut für Ethnologie  
Prof. Dr. H. Basu  
Prof. Dr. J. D. M. Platenkamp  
Akad. Rätin Dr. A. Schneider

## **A cultural advisor with the Dutch and American military forces in southern Afghanistan, 2008-2010**

Dr Willem Vogelsang\*

From mid-2008 until early 2011, I worked for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Dutch/Australian, and later with the American/Australian Task Force in Uruzgan, southern Afghanistan, as their cultural and regional advisor. Having worked in and on Afghanistan as an archaeologist, historian, journalist, museum curator and army officer since the late 1970s, I was confronted with the enormous intercultural problems between a mainly very conservative Afghan population on the one hand, and the Western forces and diplomats/foreign aid workers on the other. Compounding the problems were the internal differences of the Afghans themselves, but also among the foreigners. In my talk, which will be very personal, I will try to sketch my work in Afghanistan, give a brief introduction to Afghanistan's recent dramatic history, the ups and downs of our work, the Afghans' perception of the foreign presence, the differences between the many foreign groups working in southern Afghanistan, try to look ahead at the future of this country, and propose some lessons that could, and indeed should be learnt.

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