



## Zur Erinnerung. Ein Kulturzentrum in Eipomek

Ulrike Folie und Gugi Gumilang, 2014, 11:03 min., German

*Images often say more than words. This video by Ulrike Folie and Gugi Gumilang gives an account of the opening of a museum in Eipomek, which is closely linked to a research project initiated exactly 40 years ago by the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin.*

*The aim of the project was to access a—from a European perspective—“blank spot of the earth.” To this end, 40 scientists of various disciplines, including linguists, ethnologists, physicians, dentists, biologists, and zoologists, were to systematically and in an interdisciplinary way explore the Eipo valley and its population in the central mountains of Papua. Their work for the most part ended in 1976, when two earthquakes caused extensive damage to the Eipo valley. Only the linguist Volker Heeschen visited the Eipo in the following 38 years regularly. 2008 Wulf Schiefenhövel also began with regular visits again.*

*40 years later, in early June 2014, several scientists from that time traveled once more to the mountainous region of New Guinea to inaugurate a museum, a cultural center, in Eipomek. It was built under the direction of the researcher in the field of humanities Wulf Schiefenhövel with financial support from Berlin (Department for Foreign Affairs) and Oksibil at the site and in the style of the old men's house, which had been destroyed by the earthquake, in the village of Mungkona. It was prompted by the question that several older men asked Wulf Schiefenhövel, whether they could be given back their history which had been so elaborately documented by the Germans.*

*More than 60 films and over 650 artefacts from Eipomek are in the Department of the South Seas and Australia of the Ethnologisches Museum. Many of these objects were displayed in the show “Steinzeit – heute. Forschungen im Bergland von Neuguinea” (1979). Returning the knowledge about the population and their stories is the basic idea behind the foundation of the museum in Eipomek. Books, pictures and films are brought back to where they originated, and the inhabitants can place the objects relevant to them in their museum.*

*“Adat punya tempat, arat sudah dibawa,”/“A place of culture, the ‘magic’ was already taken along [to Germany],” as Laik Malyo, a resident from Dingerkon, stated in a conversation. How will the inhabitants use the museum in the future? Will it endure in the rough climate of the Eipo valley? Does it serve the study of history on site or the realization of the dreams and ideas of European researchers and travelers?*