**Press release – Düsseldorf, 29 April 2014**

**On the 100th birthday of founder Lisa Maskell**

**Gerda Henkel Foundation supports young scholars in Africa and Southeast Asia with 2.5 million euros**

**Largest international programme for doctoral students in the Foundation’s history**

**The Gerda Henkel Foundation is providing 2.5 million euros for a fellowship programme supporting young humanities scholars from Africa and Southeast Asia. This is the largest international funding initiative for PhD students in the Foundation’s history. With the programme, the Gerda Henkel Foundation wishes to remember its founder Lisa Maskell (1914–1998), who would have turned 100 tomorrow, 30 April. The programme aims to strengthen universities in the partner countries and counter the outflow of qualified young academics. Initially 25 doctoral candidates primarily from Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia will in the coming years receive a three-year “Lisa Maskell Fellowship” at the renowned Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The *Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences* at Stellenbosch University is coordinating the programme. In the coming months the Gerda Henkel Foundation plans to expand the Lisa Maskell Fellowship programme and set up, together with universities in Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, a focal point for the support of doctoral students in Southeast Asia. In total, the Foundation is providing funding for “100 scholarship years”.**

“Supporting young academics was very important to our founder,” says Dr. Michael Hanssler, Chair of the Executive Board of the Gerda Henkel Foundation. “Unlike most German donors she expressly stated that her legacy was also to be used to support foreign researchers. It is this wish we aim to live up to with the Lisa Maskell Fellowships.” Further information on the programme is available on the Internet at http://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/fellowships\_eng/.

**Faces of young scholars – the “100 Doctoral Students” initiative**

In the almost 40 years of its existence, the Gerda Henkel Foundation has awarded scholarships to over 1,000 doctoral students. In a second initiative in honour of Lisa Maskell the Gerda Henkel Foundation Office has invited 100 former PhD scholarship holders to look back on the time when they were working on their dissertation. For many of them, completing their doctorate marked the start of an academic career. Starting on 30 April, for 100 days one of “100 Doctoral Students” will share their personal experiences every day: http://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/eng.

**Lisa Maskell** (1914–1998) set up the Gerda Henkel Foundation in June 1976 in memory of her mother Gerda Henkel (1888–1966) as a private, non-profit foundation in Düsseldorf. Lisa Maskell was the granddaughter of factory owner Fritz Henkel, who founded the company Henkel & Cie. in Aachen in 1876. In 1878 the company was relocated to Düsseldorf, the present headquarters of Henkel AG & Co. KGaA. The Gerda Henkel Foundation Office has been domiciled to this day in the home of the founder’s parents at Malkastenstrasse 15 in Düsseldorf. Gerda Henkel came from the well-known Janssen family of artists in Düsseldorf, and as a student of sculptor Ewald Mataré, Lisa Maskell also had a great affinity for the arts and cultural sciences. She dedicated her Foundation to promoting the humanities, particularly the historical sciences History, Archaeology, Art History, Historical Islamic Studies, and the History of Law.

The **Gerda Henkel Foundation** is a private, non-profit organization independent of the present-day Henkel AG & Co. KGaA and headquartered in Düsseldorf. Since its establishment, the Foundation has supported some 6,000 research projects worldwide with over 120 million euros. The Gerda Henkel Foundation is active in Germany and internationally. When distributing funds, it gives particular consideration to projects that offer qualified young researchers the opportunity to engage in academic work and advance their professional training.