

Amsterdam Projects



Management

1 Project name

Amsterdam Projecten op Locatie: 'Het Vondelpark–de Overtoom'

2 Contact

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3 Partner organisation

Educators at the Regional Training Centre of Amsterdam (ROCvA) and the Foundation for the Development of Curricula [*Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling*] (SLO) helped develop the educational material. The Alexander Foundation [*Stichting Alexander*] was tasked with developing an active, investigative approach to getting youngsters involved in the project. Various museums and archives in Amsterdam provided material for the Moving Box. In addition, the 'Het Nieuwe Werck' Foundation developed a follow-up project in association with Imagine Identity and Culture: Bijlmermeer projects on location.

4 Partner organisation type

Landscape and architecture; non-material.

5 Funding

The Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development [*Nationale Commissie voor Internationale Samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling*] and the VSBfonds, among others.

Medium

- Theatre, audio-visual equipment and museum objects, a catalogue and educational material.
 - Theatre played a leading role in the presentation of various historical narratives, as did language and audio-visual media.
- Non-material heritage and landscape, and architecture in the participants'

own environment.

▢ Project

- 1 *Aims / objectives* - To combine language learning with the cultural history of the participants' everyday surroundings; - To introduce newcomers and settled immigrants to the history of their city; - To help newcomers and settled immigrants feel more at home in the city; - To contribute to the development of a multicultural society. The aim of the 'Het Nieuwe Werck' Foundation was that students making their way home on the tram would not look out the window and see an incomprehensible city, but think back with fascination to a story associated with that particular location.
- 2 *Who it was for*
The public target group also constituted the participating target group, which consisted primarily of newcomers who were doing a Dutch language course or an introductory social studies course. The project was also suited to pupils in secondary education and those enrolled in their final years of primary education. The level of the course was adjusted to meet the individual needs of the relevant target group.
- 3 *What learning was involved*
The project was educationally oriented and thus involved cognitive learning. Social and psychological skills also played an important role in participants' recognition and appreciation of the diversity of the past.
- 4 *Which methodologies used*
Narrative. The narrative traditions of several cultures were employed in museum-related, theatrical presentations at specific locations in the participants' own surroundings.
- 5 *Where/when it was*
The 'Het Vondelpark–de Overtoom' project took place in and around Vondelpark in Amsterdam – mainly outside, but also in nearby buildings. Duration from 15 April 2002 to November 2002.
- 6 *Planning / preliminary work*
The founder of the 'Het Nieuwe Werck' Foundation felt the need to give participants the opportunity to experience the cultural history of the city, combining this with language learning. This need had arisen as a result of the experiences that he had acquired as a teacher of Dutch as a second language and as a developer of teaching methods, and his many years' experience at the KIT Children's Museum [*KIT Kindermuseum*]. 'Het Vondelpark–de Overtoom' was the first Project on Location to take place and to undergo an extensive preliminary assessment by external advisers.
- 7 *Any exhibition / art / artefacts involved*
Various museum objects and props were used in conjunction with the so-called Moving Box, employed during the recounting and acting out of the

various historical narratives.

8 *Any follow-up / longer-term contact with the target group*

There are plans to design language brochures to accompany the 'Het Vondelpark–de Overtoom' catalogue for various forms of education. In addition, the concept on which the project is based will be employed in a project on location carried out in collaboration with Imagine Identity and Culture: Bijlmer Projects (April 2004).

9 *Involvement of other partner organisation*

The foundation crew was multicultural. The actors and directors of Dutch and foreign heritage employed the rich oral traditions of their individual countries of origin, their own productions, means of creating suspense and use of objects. The course participants were divided up into small groups and had little to do with the organisational aspects of the project. Inconcrete terms, the project did entail a participatory process: the perspectives and oral traditions of various newcomers' cultures were incorporated into the project material. The degree of participation remained virtually unchanged throughout the project, although some forms were modified. The forms of participation will be evaluated and altered if necessary for future projects.

10 *Key words to reflect the concept of the project*

'I turn my city into stories. I give them a past. That's how I show respect.'

▢ Type of project

As the performances all pertained to experiencing the city out of doors, they spoke to nearly all the senses. Hearing and sight were the most important, however.

Website : www.hetnieuwewerck.org

▢ Roughly how many people were involved?

1 *As direct participants*

6,720 (4,560 from school and study groups and 2,160 from businesses and organisations)

2 *As indirect beneficiaries*

A total of 6,720 participants were expected. The project indirectly involved a minimum of 70,000 people.

3 *As staff*

A technical coordinator, business and organisational coordinator, production coordinator, graphic designer, museum designer, historian, editor and webmaster.

4 *Others*

In addition, four actors and two directors.

▢ Participants' ages

School-age children and adults.

▢ Disadvantage due to social or economic factors, discrimination or disability

1 *Economic disadvantage*

Unknown, although it is reasonable to assume that newcomers are at a greater economic disadvantage than the average person.

2 *Social disadvantage*

Unknown, although it is reasonable to assume that newcomers are at a greater social disadvantage than the average person.

3 *Belonging to an ethnic minority*

Yes

4 *Migration / Immigration issues*

Very diverse, newcomers to Amsterdam who were doing a Dutch language course or an introductory social studies course.

5 *Learning difficulties*

The participants were not fully proficient in Dutch and were enrolled on a course for that reason. It was unknown whether participants suffered from direct learning difficulties.

▢ Outcomes and lessons learned

1 *Participants' benefits and outcomes:*

The catalogue contained an evaluation form that the participants and those accompanying them filled out after the guided tour.

2 *Evaluation process*

Not yet available. An outline, project plans and the budget (December 2000) are currently available

3 *Overall learning points*

- *Collaboration between organisations:* The aim is to merge Amsterdam Projecten op Locatie structurally with the mandatory integration courses for newcomers. The foundation also hopes to provide various target groups and vocational training institutes (e.g. police schools, health-care training programmes) with tailored curricula. At this writing (2004), little was known about the long-term results of these plans.
- *A positive lesson* – perhaps not entirely new – should be emphasised here. Knowledge of the history of a particular location in a city helps a person in a strange environment feel safer. The place becomes a part of that person, as he/she knows its history, with which not everyone else is familiar. That person thus has an advantage over others – a positive development certainly worth striving for.
- *Description of the intercultural aspects*
The underlying objective was to introduce participants to the city using vari

ous oral traditions, a method that appealed to them, as they knew them from their countries of origin. Consequently, they were better able to relate to the city and to its past and could thus claim the surroundings as their own. The project managed to combine such traditions with Dutch traditions in an intercultural way. It used an engaging and innovative approach. This aspect was also apparent at the organisational level: through the collaboration with actors and directors from various countries of origin, the project provided fresh insight.