

DEVENTER BLIK: The History of Migrant Workers in Deventer from 1950 to 1990



Management

1 Project name

Deventer Blik: The History of Migrant Workers in Deventer from 1950 to 1990.

2 Contact

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3 Partner organisation

The Foundation for the Industrial Heritage of Deventer functioned as the project leader. Sikko Cleveringa of *Kunstcircuit*, the Leeuwenkuil planning office, and Zafer Aydogdou of the Deventer Expertise Centre for Integration developed the project. In addition, the following organisations took part in the project: Bureau Beeldtaal, the Historical Museum of Deventer [*Historisch Museum Deventer*], the Saxion Hogeschool of IJsselland, the Municipal Archives [*Stadsarchief*] and Atheneum Library [*Atheneumbibliotheek*], the Deventer Municipal Organisation for Foreigners [*Stedelijke Organisatie Buitenlanders Deventer*], the Cultural Council Foundation of Deventer [*Stichting Culturele Raad Deventer*], the

Photography Society of Deventer, Kampen IJssel Academy Foundation [*Stichting IJsselacademie Kampen*] and TOG Jeugdtheater. The following self-help organisations for ethnic minorities also supported the project: the Centro Italiano Committee [*Comité Centro Italiano*], the El Hogar Español Committee [*Comité El Hogar Español*], the Kurdish Cultural Centre Committee [*Comité Koerdisch Kultureel Centrum*], the Moroccan Committee [*Marokkaans comité*], the Moluccan Council of Deventer [*Molukse Raad Deventer*], the Masohi Foundation [*Stichting Masohi*], the Association Dedicated to the General Interest of Turkish Workers [*Vereniging Algemeen Belang Turkse Werknemers*] and the Bosna Association [*Vereniging Bosna*].

4 Funding

The Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation provided funding for the publication of the historical research. The Municipal Authority of Deventer helped fund the historical research, the book, the portraits and the neighbourhood project. The Mondriaan Foundation [*Mondriaanstichting*] funded the exhibition at the Historical Museum and the photo exhibition of the portraits. The Province of Overijssel helped fund the neighbourhood project. VSBfonds helped fund the historical research and the book. The Wesselings-van Bremen Foundation [*Stichting Wesselings-van Bremen*] provided funding for the educational project. IM Architecten was the general co-sponsor of the project.

D Medium

- Extensive historical research, culminating in a book in the archives of the Thomassen & Drijver canning factory.
- A double exhibition in the De Waag Historical Museum [Historisch Museum De Waag], which included Herinneringen in borduursteken ('Embroidered Memories'), an 18-metre-long piece of embroidery.
- A journalistic series of portraits in local and rural immigrant media. - *Blik-opener* ('Can opener'), photo portraits.
- A documentary produced by studio Beeldtaal.
- A theatre production called *De Vingerfabiek* ('The Finger Factory') put on by the Deventer Youth Theatre [*Deventer Jeugdtheater*].
- A children's book by René Berends.
- A neighbourhood project called *Blik op zondag en maandag* ('A Look at Sunday and Monday') designed by Kunstcircuit, resulting in a theatrical presentation, which included neighbourhood residents, and a book.
- An educational project called *Onvoltooid verleden tijd* ('Past Imperfect') for primary school pupils.
- The collection of material for the archives of the Foundation for the Industrial Heritage of Deventer.

In the neighbourhood project, theatre and language arts played a role. Non-material heritage was compiled and processed in tandem with historical archival research. Members of younger generations interviewed first-generation migrant workers in a personal way. The underlying objective was that the history of migration also constitutes common heritage.

▢ Project

1 *Aims / objectives*

Portraying the history of migration as common heritage.

2 *Who it was for*

the general public, all the inhabitants of the Dutch town of Deventer in particular.

3 *What learning was involved*

Social and psychological skills played a role in participants' identification with 'the other' and their ability to contextualise historical facts.

4 *Which methodologies used (if applicable)*

The narrative aspect was central to all the subprojects and coincided with the underlying objective of presenting a complete history. The neighbourhood project also allowed for neighbourhood residents to take part in various experiments.

5 *When it was*

The project was launched on 23 October 2003. The final subprojects will be concluded in the autumn of 2005.

6 *Planning / preliminary work*

The initiative group was made up of Gijs van Elk and Sam de Visser of the Foundation for the Industrial Heritage of Deventer [Stichting Industrieel Erfgoed Deventer], Zafer Aydogdou of the Deventer Expertise Centre for Integration [Expertisecentrum Integratiebeleid Deventer] and cultural manager Sikko Cleveringa. Zafer Aydogdou, the son of one of the first Turkish workers to be employed at the local canning factory, raised awareness of the importance of recording the history of first-generation immigrants. On 23 October 2003, the Foundation for the Industrial Heritage of Deventer kicked off the project with a meeting to collect personal experiences, information, photographs and other archival material. The high turnout also attested to the importance of such a project.

7 *Any exhibition / art / artefacts involved*

Under the supervision of a visual artist, a number of Turkish women incorporated the stories of their lives and their own history of migration into a large piece of embroidery. The Photography Society of Deventer [Deventer Foto Kring] also put on an exhibition of photo portraits.

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

The Integration Department of the Municipal Authority will continue to support the objectives of the project in the future. The project clearly had

an impact on the entire province and reinforced similar projects in other provinces. A final conference on the Deventer Blik project is planned.

9 *Involvement of other partner organisation*

The project participants were divided into a consultative group, a project group, a project-management team and an historical research unit. From the preparation period onward, frequent consultations were held with the self-help organisations. An emphasis on personal narratives served to encourage participation; the target group chose the various subjects and perspectives themselves. Finally, an interview project took place in which the third-generation descendants of migrant workers interviewed members of the first generation.

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

(these will appear as a header with your project title)

'If you never look anyone in the face, nothing ever happens.' (Vincenzo Messina)

D Type of project

The exhibitions, the making of the film and the interview process appealed specifically to the senses of hearing and sight

Website : www.deventerblik.nl

D Roughly how many people were involved?

1 *As direct participants*

The initiative group was made up of four people, who were also involved in organising the project. The project included many subprojects; it is therefore difficult to determine the exact number of direct participants. The primary participating target groups (who were migrant workers in 1974) consisted of approximately 450 people.

Former native-Dutch workers from the city of Groningen and the province of Drenthe and post-war migrant workers from Turkey, Italy, Spain, Morocco and the Molucca Islands, as well as former managers, members of the Management Board and union representatives from the canning factory, and members of the public.

2 *As indirect beneficiaries*

Since the project will continue into 2005, attendance figures have yet to be determined. There are dozens of direct participants via the supporting self-help organisations.

3 *As staff (e.g. museums educators and those in charge of the project in the different museums.)*

These vary according to the subproject. As previously mentioned, the initiative group consisted of four people. Twelve organisations took part in the project; these included a museum, library, photography society, planning office and staff.

▢ Participants' ages

Nearly all the participants in the primary group (former factory workers) were over 65. The project as a whole also focused on younger generations.

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

1 *Economic disadvantage*

It was clear from conversations with former workers that most first-generation migrant workers had an average or below-average income.

2 *Social disadvantage*

First-generation migrant workers have suffered real social disadvantages, particularly in the past, owing to the factory (mass lay-offs) and the government.

3 *Belonging to an ethnic minority*

Various. The target group consisted of first-generation migrant workers from the Molucca Islands, Turkey, Italy and Spain.

4 *Migration / Immigration issues*

Various. The target group consisted of first-generation migrant workers from the Molucca Islands, Turkey, Italy and Spain.

5 *Unemployment*
Mass lay-offs in the 1980s largely determined the participating target group's social position. Nearly all the primary participants had retired by the time that the project took place.

▢ Participants' needs

In Deventer, few traces of the recent history of Turkish migration have been saved. Zafer Aydogdou, the son of one of the first Turkish migrant workers at the canning factory, wanted to fill this gap in the collective history. He did so by raising the matter with the Foundation for the Industrial Heritage of Deventer, where the project was further developed. Aydogdou's initiative illustrates the wide need for a voice, a listening ear and an open eye felt by individuals with a dual identity.

▢ Outcomes and lessons learned

1 *Participants' benefits and outcomes:*

At the time of this writing, no evaluation was available.

2 *Overall learning points*

- *Collaboration between organisations:*

The project also reinforced future collaborative efforts between the Municipal Authority and the various self-help and cultural organisations.

- *Collaboration between target groups and organisations:*

One example is the Kunstcircuit ('Art Circuit') neighbourhood project, in which Gonnie Kleine and Alied van der Meer sought contact with former factory workers. It is still too soon, however, to determine whether such

initiatives will continue in the long term.

- *Collaboration between the various groups:*

An exhibition at a series of community centres is currently bolstering interaction and cooperation, but here, too, it is still too soon to comment on long-term implications.

At this stage (the final subprojects must still be concluded), no lessons learned can be clearly identified. The enthusiasm of the participating target group does testify, however, to the success of this broad approach at a fundamental level (focus on various perspectives on the collective history) and as a multidisciplinary method and an organisational process (broad-based consultations with cultural and self-help organisations and other parties like the municipal government).

One pitfall involved approaching the target group. As was evident from the neighbourhood project, some of the former factory workers were distrustful because of matters that had transpired in the past. Such pitfalls are also apparent outside the realm of this particular project. Consequently, it is always advisable to work with intermediaries and to do a preliminary in-depth analysis.