

Captivated by Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery



Management

1 Project name

Geboeid door het Zeeuws slavernijverleden ('Captivated by Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery')

2 Contact

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3 Partner organisation

Activities planned in connection with the Year Marking Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery were organised by a project group that collaborated with the Centre for Visual Art of Vlissingen [*Bureau Beeldende Kunst Vlissingen*]; COS Zeeland, a provincial centre for international cooperation; the Roosevelt Study Centre [*Roosevelt Studiecentrum*]; the Foundation for the Cultural Heritage of Zeeland; Scoop; the Middelburg Monument Foundation [*Stichting Monument Middelburg*]; the Surant Foundation [*Stichting Surant*]; the Surantar Foundation [*Stichting Surantar*]; the Uit in Vlissingen theatre brochure; the History and Archaeology Working Group [*Werkgroep Historie en Archeologie*] of the Royal Society for the Humanities of Zeeland [*Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*]; the Zeeland Archives; the Library of Zeeland [*Zeeuwse Bibliotheek*]; and the Maritime Museum of Zeeland [*Zeeuws Maritiem MuZEEum*]. Coordination and external communications were entrusted to the Foundation for the Cultural Heritage of Zeeland. The Director of the Zeeland Archives, R.L. Koops, served as the chairman of the project group.

4 Partner organisation type

Archives.

5 Funding

The programme of activities held during the Year Marking Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery was made possible thanks to financial contributions from the collaborating partners, as well as the Province of Zeeland, the Municipal Aut

hority of Middelburg and the Mondriaan Foundation in Amsterdam.

▢ Medium

- An exhibition of archival records, museum objects and visual and audio material. An expedition through the city was organised in conjunction with the exhibition. Paintings were also incorporated into the narrative exhibition.
- Types of heritage: primarily archival records. 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

The aim of the project was to acknowledge the legacy of slavery and to give it its proper place in history. Additionally, in 2004, the Slavery Abolition Year, the Zeeland Archives [*Zeeuws Archief*] saw a unique opportunity to draw public attention to the archives of the Middelburgschse Commercie Compagnie ('*Middelburg Trading Company*').

2 Who it was for

The general public (broad and varied).

3 What learning was involved

Primarily social and psychological skills, as well as spatial, motor, logic and mathematical skills were required. Linguistic skills were needed mainly for operating the computer program.

4 Which methodologies used

The expedition called *Geboeid door het Zeeuws Slavernijverleden* ('*Captivated by Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery*') was educational in nature and took a narrative approach. In addition, basic knowledge was tested using quantitative questions. Because of its interactive approach, the expedition was also experimental in nature. The exhibition organised by the Zeeland Archives adopted a primarily narrative approach.

5 Where it was

The exhibition was put on at the Zeeland Archives from 3 July 2004 to 8 January 2005. The expedition took participants past a number of sites and buildings in the Dutch town of Middelburg. The project also comprised eleven subprojects.

6 When it was

From 3 July 2004 to 8 January 2005. The Slavery Monument of Zeeland was unveiled on 1 July 2005.

7 Planning / preliminary work

In 1999, the National Platform for the Legacy of Slavery [*Landelijk Platform*

Slavernijverleden] was founded, which in turn led to the erection of a national slavery monument and the establishment of the National Institute for the History and Heritage of Slavery of the Netherlands [*Nationaal instituut Nederlands slavernijverleden en erfenis*] (NiNsee), a knowledge centre. UNESCO proclaimed 2004 the 'International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Its Abolition'. The Dutch Province of Zeeland played a large part in the history of slavery, a fact rarely stated in history books. For this reason, the Foundation for Zeeland's Legacy of Slavery [*Stichting Zeeuws Slavernijverleden*] wished to break the silence by organising activities ranging from drama and musical performances, exhibitions and the erection of a monument.

8 *Any exhibition / art / artefacts involved*

The exhibition included drawings, manuscripts, utensils and an African statuette.

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

There is sure to be a follow-up to the project as a whole in Zeeland. The legacy of slavery will finally become a recognised part of the history of Zeeland. But the objective was also to link the theme to current issues, e.g. what is freedom, to what degree is freedom an inalienable right?

10 *Involvement of other partner organisation*

Migrant organisations collaborated on the project. The view of descendants of slaves was adopted in almost exactly the same way in the subprojects.

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

'I am invisible, you know, because people do not want to see me.' (Eddy Campbell, Chairman of NiNsee, as quoted in Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*.)

D Type of project

Sight and hearing played a role in the exhibition. The expedition spoke to all the senses.

Websites : www.zeeuwsarchief.nl and www.zeeuwsslavernijverleden.nl

D Roughly how many people were involved?

1 *As direct participants*

The exhibition was designed for a general audience, and the expedition was aimed at school-age children.

2 *As indirect beneficiaries*

The exhibition and the expedition were well attended; in addition, lesson material was regularly downloaded from the www.zeeuwsslavernijverleden.nl website.

3 *As staff*

As main contacts: Roelof Koops, Director of the Zeeland Archives (chairman of the project group) and Evie Malawauw of the Foundation for

the Cultural Heritage of Zeeland [*Stichting Cultureel Erfgoed Zeeland*].

▢ Participants' ages

At the time of this writing, the age ranges of visitors to the exhibition were not yet known. Youngsters enrolled in their final years of primary education and their first years of secondary education, as well as adults, took part in the expedition.

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

1 *Social disadvantage*

None in particular.

2 *Belonging to an ethnic minority*

Most of the visitors were not members of ethnic minorities. The participants in the consultative process represented diverse historical ethnicities.

3 *Migration / Immigration issues*

Various, but this was unintentional. The main aim was to reach the younger inhabitants of Zeeland.

▢ Participants' needs

In 1999, the National Platform for the Legacy of Slavery was founded, which ultimately resulted in the erection of a national slavery monument and the establishment of NiNsee, a knowledge centre dedicated to the history of slavery. People both of Dutch and of foreign heritage are members of the National Platform. The underlying objective of the project was to acknowledge that the history of the Netherlands and that of certain ethnic minorities are inextricably bound.

▢ Outcomes and lessons learned

1 *Evaluation process*

Given that, at the time of this writing, the project was still under way and certain aspects still had to be developed, no evaluation was available.

2 *Collaboration between organisations*

The Foundation for Zeeland 's Legacy of Slavery will continue to exist. The collaboration between various organisations, including migrant organisations, in a working-group structure was considered promising as regards future efforts.

3 *Collaboration between target groups and organisations*

The project allowed the group who see themselves as descendants of those who were enslaved to come to the fore. This collaboration will continue subsequent to readings and discussion groups. 3Collaboration between target groups and organisations: The project allowed the group who see themselves as descendants of those who were enslaved to come to the

fore. This collaboration will continue subsequent to readings and discussion groups.

Embarrassment about the legacy of slavery originates from a certain self-satisfaction, which in turn leads to a silent denial. That embarrassment is a hidden claim on moral superiority and gratifies one's own ego. Instead, people must acknowledge the legacy of slavery as a common historical experience, as a shared past. This does greater justice to the feelings of the descendants of those who were enslaved. Acknowledgement allows the community as a whole to begin processing the legacy of the past and the pain that it brings with it. The pain is stored in our collective memory and is felt as a great injustice. The legacy of slavery cannot be swept under the carpet. New historical perspectives must continually be sought. To this end, eyes and ears alike must remain open for new sounds from groups that have been invisible for too long. (for more information, please see E. Campbell 's speech at www.slavernijverleden.nl).