



The City of Rotterdam

Intercultural Profile

1. Introduction

Rotterdam is one of Europe's great cities of trade and transaction and this has ensured, in recent decades, it has also become a great city of migration and cultural diversity. For decades too, Rotterdam has been a laboratory for testing new ideas and implementing policies for living together and has been, a source of inspiration for many, including one of the originators of the Intercultural Cities concept Phil Wood who conducted research in the city.

This is the report of the Intercultural Cities expert team visit to Rotterdam¹. The visit to Rotterdam did not follow the format which has been customary in the past within Intercultural Cities and, consequently, this report does not follow the usual model of Intercultural Profiles produced elsewhere. Firstly, the visit was preceded by a Dutch national conference on integration in the city, connected with the launch of a national review of migration and integration in the Netherlands as part of the international AMICALL project²; and was concluded with a Roundtable seminar involving a variety of local, national and international speakers. Secondly, the city had already completed the ICC Index³ and that document should be read alongside this one. In order not to duplicate it, this document does not follow a structure based around the 13 key theme of ICC. Instead it report is structured around the programme of the study visit to the city neighbourhoods, and around the agenda of the subsequent seminar. A second background document which may also be read in conjunction with this report is the recent comparative study of Rotterdam and Amsterdam written jointly by the University of Tilburg and Erasmus University⁴. Finally, it should be noted that Rotterdam has not yet formally sought membership of the ICC network.

2. National Context

To paraphrase the AMICALL national report on the Netherlands:

Currently, about 11 per cent of the Netherlands' population of 16.7 million are foreign-born and for that reason can be qualified as immigrants. One in five persons living in the country is either an immigrant or a child of an immigrant. The number of residents with „non-western origins“, as official

¹ This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 5 & 6 September 2012, comprising Irena Guidikova, Christine Lunde Rasmussen, Bruno Ciancio and Phil Wood.

² Consult the full AMICALL report at <http://tinyurl.com/9saj95l>

³ *Rotterdam: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index. A comparison between 49 cities.* Council of Europe, 22 August 2012

⁴ Han Entzinger & Paul Scheffer (2012) *The State of Integration in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.*

Dutch statistics call them, stands at around 1.9 million, well over one-tenth of the population. Among these „visible minorities “ three communities stand out in size: Turks, Surinamese and Moroccans, each numbering between 350,000 and 400,000. The Turkish and the Moroccan communities are legacies of the so-called „guest worker “ policies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most migrants from Surinam arrived in the 1970s, when this former Dutch colony acquired political independence. The end of the Cold War led to a significant growth of East European migrants and of asylum seekers, some of whom later acquired refugee status. Besides, growing numbers of Dutch and foreign residents find their spouses in other countries. In recent years, the number of highly skilled migrant workers has also increased, although many of them do not settle for good. Meanwhile, follow-up migration among the three largest communities, the Turks, the Surinamese and the Moroccans, is continuing, albeit at a much slower pace than before.

The development of Dutch immigrant integration policy at the national level is marked by discontinuity. ‘Minorities Policy’ in the 1980s had distinct multiculturalist traits, ‘Integration Policy’ in the 1990s had more universalist traits and, finally, the so-called ‘Integration Policy New Style’ as pursued since the turn of the millennium had distinct assimilationist traits. Han Entzinger argues the dominant idea in Dutch integration policy has now become that migrants are to blame for their slow integration. Therefore, efforts to step up this process should come from their side. Some lip service is being paid to the idea that integration should be two-sided and that the established population should also leave some space to the newcomers, but only a few concrete policy measures in the past decade have pointed in that direction. There is a general understanding that most of the new measures taken in the past ten years leave little or no room for a public recognition of the migrants’ cultural identity. Although the Netherlands has long been celebrated for its successful multiculturalist policies, this multiculturalist approach is widely dismissed as a failure nowadays in Dutch public and political discourse. However, remarkable differences in approach exist between the national and the local levels. While at the national level there is a radical turn from multiculturalism to assimilationism, this turn has been much less obvious locally. This may have to do with differing responsibilities at these two levels of governance. Moreover, national policies tend to be formulated at a higher level of abstraction than local policies, since it is primarily at the latter level where concrete issues have to be solved.

The three main levels of government in the Netherlands are the national level, the provincial level, and the municipal level. The country has 12 provinces and over 400 municipalities. Since provincial governments concern themselves mainly with areas such as environmental management, spatial planning, and recreation, that level is not very relevant in the field of immigrant integration. The municipal or local level, on the other hand, is extremely relevant, and increasingly so, as there is a trend towards devolution of responsibilities from the national to the local level, particularly in the field of social policy. Municipal authorities in the Netherlands deal with many policy fields, such as traffic, housing, social services, health care, sports, culture, water supply, and public schooling. These activities are largely funded through the national government; local taxes only provide a small part of a municipality’s budget. The main political actors at the local stage are the mayor, the aldermen (or deputy-mayors), and the municipal (or city) council. The Netherlands is one of very few European countries where mayors are not elected, but formally appointed by the national government, though the government usually follows the preference expressed by the municipal council (the „local parliament “). The mayor is the head of the local government, which consists of the mayor and the aldermen, i.e. the municipal executive. The mayor is politically responsible for safety and public order in the municipality. The aldermen hold responsibility for all other policy fields, such as economic affairs or education. They are elected by the municipal council and therefore have a stronger political mandate than the mayor has. As the electoral system at the local level is one of proportional representation – as is also the case at the national level – it happens rarely that one single party obtains a majority in a municipal council. Consequently, Dutch municipalities are nearly always governed by coalitions of several parties.

Unlike many other immigration countries in Europe, citizenship is not generally considered the primary distinguishing factor between migrants and the native population in the Netherlands. Rather, ethnic origin tends to be more relevant as a means of differentiating between ‘them’ and ‘us’, not just in the

public perception, but also in policy making. The Dutch have even constructed a term for this: the Greek-based word allochtonen refers to those people whose ethnic roots lie outside the Netherlands and who, for that reason, can be differentiated from autochtonen, the native Dutch. An interesting, but unresolved question is whether an allochtoon can ever become autochtoon and, if so, at what stage in the integration process, or even after how many generations. The statistical category niet-westerse allochtonen includes both first-generation migrants and persons born in the Netherlands, but with at least one parent born in a „non-Western “ country, i.e. in Africa, Central and South America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey (CBS, 2008). It should be noted that the term allochtonen is not uncontested and controversy surrounding the concept has led several municipalities to abolish the use of the term in recent years.

3. Local context

Rotterdam is the second-largest city in the Netherlands and one of the biggest ports in the world. The population of the city amounts to 617,347 inhabitants. The largest ethnic group – people born to parents of Dutch origin – makes up 52.4% of the city’s inhabitants. Yet, by 2009 around 46% of Rotterdam’s residents were of immigrant background. About 70% of the city’s youth have migrant origins.

The largest minority groups originate from Surinam (8.7%), Turkey (7.8%), Morocco (6.5%), the Antilles/Aruba (3.6%) and Cape Verde (2.5%). The remaining migration flows originate from EU (6.4%), other Western (4.6%) and non-Western (7.5%) countries. It is estimated that the number of Muslims in Rotterdam approximates 13% of its population. Half of the Muslim population has Turkish roots, while a quarter is of Moroccan descent and the rest are from a variety of backgrounds, including Surinamese, Bosnian, Indonesian and Pakistani .

As of April 2011, 174 different nationalities and 550,834 persons with Dutch citizenship, including those with dual citizenship, were recorded in Rotterdam. 72.6% of Rotterdam’s residents holding Dutch citizenship were born in the Netherlands. Second-generation migrants represented over one-fifth of the city’s population.

In 2009, the average income per household was € 29,400 in Rotterdam, and € 34,300 in the Netherlands.

4. Study Visit

The format of this section is to provide the City Council’s description of each project visited (written in *italics*), followed by the comments of the team. The tour took in two districts of Rotterdam: Feijenoord, an area south of the river with multiple deprivation and high ethnic diversity, and Noord, a similar district just to the north of the city centre. All the projects visited fall within the scope of the policy entitled *Participation, the Choice of Talent*, which aims to develop the talents of all citizens with specific focus on those who need help in making the first step in a new direction.

The policy of the City of Rotterdam is to take the energy and initiatives of citizens and social parties in the city as a starting point and reinforce these where necessary. Urban citizenship and civilian strength are central in this respect.

Primary school Bloemhof

“Bloemhof is a primary school with an extended day programme, during which all children take extra lessons. It concerns the following subjects: English, Visual Arts, Swimming, Dancing, Judo (part of the pilot of physical integrity), Philosophy, Music, Languages (including Turkish, Arabic or Creative Dutch), Sports & Games,

Gardening, and Technology. As the school offers this day programme, all children have judo lessons. Judo is a cornerstone of our children's development. One of the aspects of self-respect is stimulated at school by means of the restaurant: by looking after yourself – with a good and healthy diet – you automatically build up your self-respect. The food used at the restaurant is grown at the school's gardens, where children can see for themselves how fruit and vegetables grow. All gardens include a herb corner, where children can smell and taste where the flavours of their food come from.

As for Philosophy, these are additional lessons for the children in groups 6, 7 and 8. It allows them to see the relations between the various activities. This automatically develops into a type of 'ecosophical lessons': children will understand that you need to look after yourself to be good at sports (i.e. judo), which is why you need to eat properly (restaurant) and in turn why you need to look after your garden (ecology). That is how children learn to see the relations between the various activities."

This school visit left a strong and abiding impression. The resident advisor on policy matters, Henk Oosterling from Erasmus University, gave a compelling and unequivocal account of the philosophy which underpins everything which is done here. The school sets out to take the children beyond the solipsism and hyper-individuality that it believes modern life imposes, encouraging them to think relationally, and see themselves as nodes in a network, and as responsible actors in the world around them.

The school does not set out to achieve 'integration' directly. It believes this will be achieved as a by-product of a process which emphasises good education, participation and communication. It encourages the acquisition of skills, both manual and social, and intercultural competence is highly valued. The methods seem to work as the school roll has grown by about 60% and is now full, whilst attainment has risen well above local and national averages. In general, across the city's school system, the level of drop-outs remains a source of concern, but *Bloemhof* has proved successful in rehabilitating drop-outs from other schools. The school has benefited from a wider 10 year programme to co-ordinate city services in the Kop van Zuid area, called Pact of the South, which has invested €10 billion on special measures. The team wondered if the *Bloemhof* experiment is considered to be successful, have measures been taken to share the learning with other schools in the city? Also whether the City would be able to mainstream the learning from the Pact of the South programme to ensure the benefits continued in a period of budgetary austerity.

In Rotterdam, with its multicultural population, nearly all the schools in multicultural districts have appointed one or two parental involvement officers, who make an effort to strengthen the educational partnership between parents and school. All Rotterdam schools pursue an active parent policy, which focuses on education-supporting behaviour. At the *Bloemhof* school, this parent policy has taken shape as follows:

there are about 30 parents per day assisting as volunteers. The involvement of parents in school life is one of the key elements of intercultural approach in education since it helps build trust between the teachers and families increase the understanding of teachers of the cultural context of pupils, reaffirm parent's educational role and responsibility, and help bring parents of migrant background closer to the city's system of institutions in general by breaking down apprehension and alienation.

Whilst impressed with *Bloemhof* the team were left with the question of how representative it is of the school system as a whole in Rotterdam. This is an experiment which has worked for its local environment but is there the political and financial will to replicate it across the city? Is this form of intercultural schooling simply something which is done to 'problematic' groups and districts, whilst middle class and white children follow a very different curriculum? After all, excessive individualism is absolutely not a problem exclusive to migrants. And cultural competence is a skill required even more by the majority than by the minority if Netherlands is to become an intercultural society.

Vliegwiel

“Project Vliegwiel Feijenoord (Flywheel Feijenoord) is a project of city district Feijenoord. Vliegwiel is a network organisation for women and girls in the heart and surroundings of district Feijenoord, who wish, can and are allowed to develop. The project's aim is to empower women. Examples of local activities and programmes are: Taal dichtbij (Language Nearby), a project for improving practical language skills; Voel je goed met diabetes (Feel Good with Diabetes), for teaching people a healthy way of dealing with this disorder; and Milieucoach worden? (Become an Environmental Coach?) are lessons about valuable savings on money, raw materials, energy and the earth. Other projects are Balietraining (Information Desk Training) and Feijenoord beweegt (Feijenoord on the Move).”

Vliegwiel presented another example of how the Pact of the South has enabled a variety of needs and services to be co-ordinated more effectively, such as health, employment, neighbourhood relations and language. In general this was impressive.

Taal dichtbij!

“The municipality of Rotterdam has approximately 97,000 inhabitants with an insufficient proficiency of the Dutch language. This prevents them from fully participating in Dutch society. In practice, the standard language programmes fail to reach part of these Rotterdam inhabitants. After completing a language course, part of them moreover need a further course focusing on day-to-day use of the Dutch language: Praktisch Nederlands.

Taal Dichtbij! is a low-threshold, community-based, language programme. The courses treat situations taken from the participants' daily lives. Voluntary organisations, general and sports clubs as well as self-organisations form an important pivot within this project because they are low-threshold and far-reaching. These organisations bring in the participants and facilitate the courses.

A Taal Dichtbij! course comprises 24 weeks. The participants take 2.5-hour classes three times a week.

The lessons are given by professional teachers in Dutch as a foreign language. They are supported by volunteers with a sufficient proficiency of Dutch reading and writing, have experience with the target group, and have an affinity with teaching. The lessons are low-threshold because they are given at the local community. Initially Taal Dichtbij! is a pilot aiming at parents and child carers in the 7 districts of the programme Kwaliteitssprong op Zuid (Quality Leap at Zuid). The pilot will run for 24 weeks.”

Besides learning the Dutch language, participating in society is also central in the course. This can be achieved by a more active involvement in the school of the children or by contributing more actively in the neighbourhood, etc.

During the courses, parents are made aware of the importance of parent involvement in the school and the impact of their own "language behaviour" on that of their children. For instance, parents are encouraged to read to their children at home. They can do this in Dutch, but certainly also in their own language. The basic principle is that the children grow up in a language-rich environment. This has a positive influence on the Dutch language acquisition of the children.

Full Engagement

“The municipality of Rotterdam is responsible for providing incomes to approximately 35,000 inhabitants living on social assistance. This group mainly consists of people not being able to find a paid job due to insufficient of education and/or work experience. This has resulted in many of them adopting a passive attitude and in a decrease in their personal perspectives. They have very little contact with people outside their close family, have psychosocial problems and have increasing health problems. Immigrants use the Dutch language less and less actively. In turn this reduces their chances of finding a job, while their lives end up in a downward spiral.

At the same time, there has been a political shift and people are now asked to do something in return for receiving income assistance. In 2011 an additional statutory obligation was added to receiving social security benefit: people had to do 20 hours of voluntary work a week. Several pilots have furthermore been started, where client managers coach people receiving benefits. Persons receiving benefits need to find voluntary work themselves, which can be any type of voluntary work. The contact person at the department of Social Affairs coaches these persons throughout the procedure and checks if they meet this obligation. As part of this project,

we will meet Naima Draoui, Client Manager at the department of Social Affairs at the Bloemhof district, where she coaches 200 persons, which are mainly women."

The project is about making use of the talents of job seekers, also if they have been receiving benefits for a long time (10 years or longer is no exception). In such cases, activation and volunteer work help to return to a daily routine, develop contacts outside the home, gain experience, contribute to good health and increase opportunities to get paid work. This is the primary approach taken by Rotterdam. In addition to the right to a benefit, citizens also have a duty that is emphasised more, as a means to activate job seekers and starting from the philosophy that citizens should make a first move to develop their ability to cope or work on their advancement.

In Rotterdam, a more general approach is taken, particularly because in districts such as the Bloemhof district, 80% of the population is of non-Dutch origin and therefore a target group approach is no longer relevant.

Walk through Katendrecht

"This is an example of an all-comprising approach. Katendrecht is a success story at a physical level. The all-comprising approach was adopted by the municipality, sub-municipality and housing associations. It was a district with many safety problems and was known as a red-light district with a notorious reputation, as a poor area. Today, Katendrecht no longer has the status of a problem district. Recent renovations have improved safety and stability in the district. The safety index has gone up. The measures for making the area more attractive to more highly educated people, have had effect. Renovation, new build, zero-tolerance approach, socioeconomic approach and cultural education were combined. Students will carry out research into the success factors of this area."

Katendrecht is an example of dockland revitalisation and deliberate gentrification which has now become a familiar feature of many European port cities. The area had been a stronghold of traditional Dutch working class life and then became an area of high crime and a transient and very mixed population. Long-standing residents are pleased the crime has been tackled but are less at ease with their new middle class neighbours. Indeed, if there is a need for intercultural bridge-building here it is across class rather than ethnic lines.

People in Katendrecht are actively working on this: various initiatives have been taken by residents to build bridges between old and new: for instance, an employment project was started that helps the original residents find paid work by offering services to "double-income" families (domestic services, ironing, running errands, etc.). "Meetings" between old and new residents are also encouraged through cultural events (nacht van de kaap/night of the cape, etc.).

As in other areas, Rotterdam assumes the role of facilitator in these initiatives. The municipality is actively looking for initiatives from the bottom up that may contribute to this goal. The municipality consults with residents who have started initiatives and examines how it can support them. The residents' own power and energy is central in this respect.

Kook met mij mee!

"This programme (Cook with Me) uses the power of primary school pupils for promoting a delicious and sustainable diet among their peers, parents and other local residents. Every year 180 primary school pupils in groups 7 and 8 take part in a varied programme consisting of cooking lessons, tastings, field trips to organic farms, e-learning facilities and local community dinners."

It was very interesting to travel to the Agniesebuurt in the Noord district of the city to make a comparison with what we had seen in Feijenoord in the morning. We were, of course, charmed to meet Hans Kevezee and his team who have pulled off a remarkable achievement at *Kook met mij mee!* Food should be, and has been in the past, an important medium for binding communities and generations together and for connecting them with strangers. At least in northern Europe, though, these qualities have been sacrificed in pursuit of speed, efficiency and profit. It was heartening

therefore to see a project which aroused such enthusiasm for cooking in young people, and in such a prominent neighbourhood location, and also to see it developed as a social enterprise by a group of neighbours with the backing of the City and large companies.

Oogst met mij mee!

“The programme Oogst met mij mee (Harvest with Me) is an extension of Kook met mij mee, and introduces participating school children to how the vegetable ingredients used during the lessons actually grow. A previously neglected plot of land located between four blocks of flats at Vijverhofstraat, was cleaned up and transformed into a community garden. Children help out with sowing, growing and harvesting various vegetables and edible flowers, and learn all about sustainable city gardening in the process. Financing: the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation; sub-municipality Noord and funds provided by companies.”

Our comments above can be echoed here. It was particularly good to see that whilst Mr Kevezee initiated this project, he has now taken a step back and most of the decisions and workload are undertaken by neighbours, mainly local mothers.

Both projects are, for the moment, funded to a large extent privately by Mr Kevezee who remains the powerhouse behind their success. He is planning to withdraw at some point and hopes that the sustainability of the venue and the associated community garden can be ensured. However, it is hard to be sure since the level of involvement of residents in associations and other forms of collective management of community life in the Noord seems to be very low. This was mentioned by several of the people we met, including district elected officials and civil servants.

One of the challenges facing the Municipality of Rotterdam with regard to this type of projects is how to increase the sustainability of the project. How can we ensure that the project remains a success, even if the initiator has stopped? How can good projects also be used in a wider context in the city?

Duimdrop Ammersooiseplein

“In short Duimdrop is a programme for lending toys to children aged between 4 and 14. Duimdrop aims to make the squares safe and nice places again for exercise and playing games, which gives children the opportunity to play outside again. Toys are lent by Duimdrop managers based at a converted sea container.”

Duimdrop is a good example of one of those projects where the state has intervened to initiate the kind of activity that a generation or two ago would have been the private preserve of families and communities. It is a little sad that something so basic as outdoor play needs to be encouraged, and depressing to think that it might never happen in the future unless the state intervenes. Inevitably, the state can no longer afford to intervene at this level so *Duimdrop* is now under threat.

The challenge is to find a way for retaining this service in a more sustainable way, which draws upon the untapped social capital of the neighbourhood rather than the public purse. Has there been enough community development work to prepare the ground for this or will *Duimdrop* be simply swept away by budget cuts before an alternative model emerges? The key question may not be ‘can we afford to have this project’ but ‘can we afford not to have it’ if, two years down the line, the district returns to high levels of youth delinquency, and more expensive prevention methods such as the criminal justice system.

DRIFT at square Schout Heijnrichplein

“The approach for this square was about redevelopment with sustainable participation of local residents. The Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT) at Erasmus University is working on making the Agniesebuurt more sustainable. There are ambitious plans with respect to ecological, economic and social structures in the

district. In the short term (in 2013) the sub-municipality plans to tackle the Schout Heijnricstraat to make this 'transition area' a greener space. At the same time, this is a good opportunity for reinforcing the structure of the district. "

Could this be the answer to the questions we have just raised above? Transition Management is a complex and rather esoteric methodology and whether it can be transferred from the theory of Erasmus University to the practice of Agniesebuurt remains to be seen, but this is a bold experiment. Echoing the experience in Bloemhof, we were intrigued to see that high level academic thinking was being applied to street level issues, and Rotterdam is to be applauded for trying out new ideas, particularly in these difficult times.

Of course, the accusation often heard from professionals in the Netherlands is that the country suffers not from a lack of innovation but perhaps an excess of it. That is to say there is a failure to fulfil the mundane tasks of embedding good ideas into sustainable practice, because people's attention is always distracted by the next new idea coming along. Whether this is true or not the Netherlands can no longer afford the luxury of unlimited social experimentation and must take a rigorous approach to finding what works and putting it into action. With Transition Management Rotterdam is taking a deep and systemic approach to a complex web of inter-related social issues whose outcome may not be apparent for many years. Will the city allow it the time it needs to fulfil its promise?

Opzoomer Mee: local conversation lessons

"Local resident Nazha Chafia gives Dutch conversation lessons to women of the local community. This is an initiative of the local residents which was facilitated by Opzoomer Mee. The pilot spanned 4 weeks and is repeated thanks to it being so successful. Rotterdam has a rich tradition in initiatives by local residents. The municipality gives local residents the opportunity to develop initiatives themselves. The mayor and aldermen wish to use these initiatives for impulses which are in better line with the problems at the community, district or street. The municipality of Rotterdam works with the programme Opzoomeren and community-based plan Buurtgerichte aanpak. Together with various local forces and partners, the problems and challenges in an area are tackled with and especially by the local residents themselves. The expertise and service centre of community initiatives Opzoomer Mee facilitates the implementation."

This is a welcome project because it makes the process not simply an end (and an obligation) in itself, but as a means to personal encounters which are a key to building trust and a sense of belonging, as well as opening up a host of other opportunities.

Project Mentaliteitsverandering

"The project Mentaliteitsverandering (Change in Mentality) involves children aged 7 to 12 in cleaning the area around their blocks of flats, entrance halls or homes in exchange for pocket money. The activities include removing paper waste, sweeping and removing chewing gum. The children do this in teams headed by a coach. The children receive €2.50 per hour and work no longer than two hours in a row. The main aim of the pocket money project is to raise awareness among children and to change their mentality. By offering pocket money, children learn that 'it pays' to work and they learn how to handle money."

Portiekaanpak

"The project Portiekaanpak (Entrance Hall Plan) is a plan involving local residents to improve the living conditions of the entrance halls of blocks of flats, and to implement lasting improvements. It is about empowerment, based on the power of the local residents to put sustainable solutions into practice."

As we understand it a company entitled Mijn Wijk in Balans, led by a local entrepreneur, has won a contract from the City to initiate a range of projects in the area, including the two above. This is a rather radical measure to influence not just the physical and economic circumstances of a district but also its underlying cultural values. Some might find it controversial to introduce a system which

financially rewards children for taking care of their neighbourhood, but others would say that if normal processes of neighbourhood reciprocity have broken down then it is a necessary alternative. As with all examples of 'value change', the outcome will only be known in the long term. If it re-engages a younger generation with a sense of responsibility for their surroundings and each other it will have succeeded, but if it produces a generation of mercenaries it may have less desirable consequences. Some of us have previous experience of the Mixen aan de Maas project, which paid migrant and non-migrant strangers to befriend each other, so this is clearly a Rotterdam tradition, and we conclude pragmatically that 'if it works it's right'.

We had many questions about this project which time simply did not allow for. For example, to what extent is the company motivated by a genuine desire to improve its own neighbourhood, and to what extent by profit? Is this a company which will seek to grow its business model and win tenders in other parts of the city or even beyond, and if it does this will it still retain its eye for local detail? Again, is there a framework for exchanges and learning between the people leading various projects so that good ideas can spread and cross-fertilise?

Gasten aan Tafel

"The project Gasten aan Tafel (Guests at the Table) is an initiative to get young people to actually sit at the table of socially successful people in Rotterdam. Administrators, businessmen and sportsmen talk with young people about not only their dreams and ideals, but also their experiences, behaviour, problems and the solutions they might have. The purposes are to establish relations between young people and people who have been successful in Rotterdam, to stimulate young people in their school or working career, to make their social environment safer by means of voluntary work, and to structure their spare time."

The team enjoyed this opportunity to engage directly with young people and get to understand a little better their hopes and fears. Conversations with some of the youngsters raised many issues. Some were clearly future community leaders in the making, and this project offered them valuable openings into the networks of adult businesspeople and politicians. This will repay the city handsomely in future years. However, not all of the opportunities provided will directly benefit the city. For example, one lad of migrant background we spoke to couldn't wait to leave the city and the country in order to make his fortune because he saw limited opportunities in his home town, and he was using *Gasten aan Tafel* as a stepping stone.

Indeed we heard several suggestions during the day that the business community does not reflect the diversity of the city and certain sections of it remain impermeable, for example the harbour-related economy. It seems rather ironic that whilst Rotterdam is the largest port in Europe, handling goods and people from across the globe, its own recruitment and human resources practices are much less cosmopolitan. If projects like *Gasten aan Tafel* can help to break these barriers of misunderstanding they will serve the city well. An alternative scenario for Rotterdam would be that because its labour market lacks high skill and professional jobs in comparison to Amsterdam, Antwerp or London, it risks losing its most talented young citizens of all ethnic backgrounds.

Another topic for conversation was the "ethnic" targeting of programmes for young people to help them find employment. Most participants agreed that an ethnic focus not only triggers interpretations that stigmatises target communities as being unwilling or unable to find work. For this reason, Rotterdam has opted for a general policy. Tailor-made solutions are only applied if the general policy is inadequate. The *Gasten aan Tafel* project was started in the context of the policy with respect to Moroccans and Antillians, as part of a programme of the Department of Safety to reduce problems with Antillian and Moroccan young people. In principle, the *Gasten aan Tafel* project was aimed at Moroccan young people. This approach was abandoned soon after its start. The project is now open to all young people. The project provides tailor-made solutions for problematic youth.

5. Roundtable Seminar

Our participation in the seminar and the opportunity to read the Entzinger and Scheffer report gave us an excellent grounding in the demographic and socio-economic factors affecting Rotterdam and the policy standpoints from which the City approaches them.

A strong impression we took away is that Rotterdam is wrestling with the formation of a new vision and way of working. Having moved away from multiculturalism and experienced a decade of hard-line and top-down integrationist approaches, can the city now find a new way which takes account of its emerging reality as a global city of super-diversity? At the national level the Netherlands is locked into an increasingly obscure and out-dated discourse summed up by the language of *autochtonen* and western and non-Western *allochtonen*. This fails to account for the increasing cultural mixing in the cities and the emergence of multiple identities as the norm for many people. It also lacks an answer to the factor that economic and educational class distinctions are now becoming as, if not more, significant than ethnic distinctions in determining individual life-chances and the structure of cities. Rotterdam cannot afford to be dragged down by this false consciousness so needs to construct its own new narrative of local citizenship.

Presently Rotterdam hovers between an analysis based upon group identity and one focusing on local identity. The Entzinger/Scheffer report argues that whilst certain specific factors still require a group-focused approach (for example above-average obesity in Turkish people), it would in most cases be better to stop thinking about citizens according to the country of origin of their parents or grandparents. Rotterdam, as an idea and a way of life, is clearly a source of great pride for its residents and the challenge now for the City is to achieve an equivalent level of pride and identification in local neighbourhoods. The report points out that presently Amsterdammers express much greater pride in their immediate neighbourhoods than do Rotterdammers. We interpret the specific choice of projects to which we were conveyed during our visit to suggest that the City is keen to rectify this situation, and to be seen to do so.

However, old habits die hard and this was brought home to us by a specific comment during the visit. When we asked about conditions and activities of people from Chinese background, the official reply back to us was that as the Chinese were not considered a problem, the City had little knowledge of, or connection with, them. This would suggest that whilst an ethnic group-based analysis is no longer the one and only approach in the City, it is still part of the mindset. This is alarming because it keeps diversity as an issue in the box marked 'problem' and pathologize people who are not considered to be part of the mainstream. Rotterdam needs to set out a new definition of what it means to be a mainstream Rotterdammer.

It was encouraging to note the evidence that whilst Amsterdam is seeing increasing segregation and a growth in crime, in Rotterdam the direction of travel is the other way. Rotterdam has taken a distinctive policy approach and it is good to see that this may be now paying dividends. It is even more important for the City to clearly understand which policies under what circumstances have proved to be the most effective, and this will require robust and regular monitoring and evaluation. We understand that the *Safety Index* and the *Hot Spot* approach have been particularly effective. It would be very interesting to learn whether and how these policies can be developed to support the City's aspiration to be more intercultural. We would hope that Rotterdam's participation in the ICC Index might help it in this process.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

We identify the following areas for special attention:

- **Leadership and Co-ordination**

It is reassuring to see the responsibility for taking a public lead on migration, integration and intercultural issues is vested in a senior politician at deputy-Mayor level. However, we were left in some doubt as to how a common strategy is evolved and implemented across the City Council and with its partners. Indeed we were left in some doubt as to whether the City has an active strategy document to guide its progress away from the past, problem-oriented, approach and towards an asset-based position. Perhaps the Participation, the Choice of Talent policy fulfils this requirement but as we have not had access to the document we cannot say.

Organisation structure is important too. We would not advocate the formation of a distinct department with lead responsibility but we would suggest the need for a cross-departmental co-ordinating group, which is also in close communication with key players in business, the media and civil society. If Rotterdam is moving towards a more intercultural approach, then it must change the rhetoric and the language with which diversity is discussed, from one of deficit and coercion to one of opportunity, advantage and encouragement. Otherwise there is the danger in the highly inclusive and dispersed Dutch system of politics, that contradictory and confusing messages may be projected. We would like to see the city's political class become more outspoken in their advocacy of diversity advantage. Were Rotterdam to join the ICC we would wish it to adopt a strategy and action plan which more explicitly stated how it will act to encourage Interculturality and diversity advantage. The City may find it useful to look at the Intercultural Plan produced by Barcelona City Council.

It may also be necessary to ask why minorities do not participate in the processes of local democracy and why the Council does not reflect the ethnic make-up of the city. The achievements of Oslo city council may be instructive in this regard.

- **Welcoming strategies**

We recognise that a very active programme – *Welkom in Rotterdam* – operated for 7 years and was only recently terminated. This was presumably due in part to the fact that the Netherlands has seen a considerable reduction in the number of new migrants, and a belief that integration efforts should be concentrated more upon longer term residents. However, it would seem to us that there will never be a time when such a major industrial, commercial and educational city as Rotterdam will not attract large numbers of newcomers, whether from elsewhere in the Netherlands, the EU or the world. As such there will always be a need for services which help people with their first difficult weeks of arrival in a strange town. First impressions are powerful and can influence the relationship between a resident and their city for many years to come. Of course mandatory classes in Dutch may well contribute to the effective survival and functioning of a foreigner in the city, but this is not the same as a warm welcome offering social, psychological and economic connectivity.

- **Media relations**

Rotterdam scored particularly low in the ICC Index in this category, to such an extent that we might have expected to have been given the opportunity to explore the issue further during our visit. Unfortunately it was not built into the programme but we would recommend this become a key part of the City's work programme if it joins ICC. We would suggest beginning by taking a look at the Council of Europe's project SPARDA (Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realise the diversity advantage). It assessed the perceptions of migrants, public authorities and the media to

each other, encouraged dialogue between them and highlighted examples of good practice in the formation of joint working relationships and strategies⁵.

We think it is vital for Rotterdam to change the nature of the discussion around diversity, from it being seen as a drain on resources to an advantage. The City needs to assemble powerful evidence-backed arguments and then use the media more effectively to make the case, particularly to those sections of the indigenous white working class who are currently receptive to anti-diversity messages.

- **Business and labour market**

Rotterdam is Europe's largest and most dynamic port, base but it doesn't have the cosmopolitan feel of a global trading city. This is partly because airports have replaced seaports as the main point of connection but, nevertheless, the City should ask itself whether it could be doing more to engage with the with port to capitalise upon the vast two-way movement in goods, people and ideas. And the port authority should be asking whether it can do more to ensure its recruitment and human resource practices could be better attuned to the diversity of the city's population.

There is evidence suggesting the Netherlands has lost migrant entrepreneurs to other countries because the regulatory environment is considered restrictive and inflexible⁶, and we have spoken to traders in the Afrikaanderwijk who would concur with this. The City might ask itself whether it can do more to remove the impediments to entrepreneurship. The University and Business School may prove a useful key to energising and bringing diversity to the local business world. The City might begin by conducting an audit of the untapped resources, skills and connections in migrant communities.

- **Language policy**

We are aware that in the past there had been a policy to encourage mother tongue learning and this has been perceived to have failed and has ceased. Our issue, however, is a rather different one, which asks questions of the cultural and linguistic competence of the whole of society and not just the minorities. We are aware this is an issue across the Netherlands and perhaps lies at the heart of the debates which have unsettled the country over the last decade. It would be encouraging to see Rotterdam stand out from the national orthodoxy on this issue through a policy which encourages the learning of minority languages, adopting the incentive that this can open up new opportunities for international trade and diplomacy in a city which, after all, relies upon these things as its life-blood.

⁵ See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/sparda/default_en.asp

⁶ See for example Van Liempt, I. (2010) *"And then one day they all moved to Leicester": the relocation of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK explained*. Population, Space and Place, 10.1002/psp.605

**PROGRAMME of the ROUNDTABLE on INTEGRATION
6 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**Venue: Rotterdam City Hall
Coolsingel 40, room 3.15**

- 09.00 Arrival and registration
- 09.30 Introduction to the programme and objectives of the roundtable, Prof. Han Entzinger, Professor of Migration and Integration Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- 09.35 Introduction of the participants
- 09.40 The state of integration in Rotterdam, Korrie Louwes, Vice-mayor for Labour Market, Higher Education, Innovation and Participation
- 09.55 Intercultural Cities Programme, from concept to policy, Phil Wood Philip Wood Associates Ltd
- 10.10 Questions and Answers
- 10.25 Rotterdam Intercultural Cities Index Report, main findings and recommendations, Irena Guidikova, Head of Division of Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue and Manager of the Intercultural Cities programme.
- 10.40.1.1 Reactions and input from the floor
- 10.55 Feedback on the Rotterdam field visits, Christine L. Rasmussen City of Copenhagen, Commission of Employment and Integration Bruno Ciancio, University of Modena & Policlinico of Modena,
- 11.10 Coffee break
- 11.25 Discussion based on the ICC Index report
- 12.15 The way forward
- 12.25 Final remarks, Korrie Louwes.
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.00 End of the programme

**PARTICIPANTS at the ROUNDTABLE on INTEGRATION
6 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Venue: Rotterdam City Hall

Host: Korrie Louwes, Vice-mayor for Labour Market, Higher Education, Innovation and Participation

1. Christine L. Rasmussen - City of Copenhagen, Commission of Employment and Integration
2. Bruno Ciancio - University of Modena & Policlinico of Modena,
3. Phil Wood - Philip Wood Associates Ltd,
4. Irena Guidikova, - Head of Division of Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue and Manager of the Intercultural Cities programme
5. Clem McCartney, - Advisor to the Shared Societies Project of the Club de Madrid
6. Dr Ben Gidley - ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford
7. Ana Feder - Project Officer Migration & Integration, Eurocities
8. Toralv Moe - Senior advisor - business development and diversity, Department of Cultural Affairs and Business Development, Oslo
9. Murat Altunbas - Policy advisor EU-Affairs
10. Rabiaa Bouhalhoul - Programme manager of the department of society; the city programme MeerDoen
11. Mirjam Harika - Manager at the department of society; main areas participation, citizenship & welfare
12. Eveline Kentie - Senior advisor at the department of society; main areas integration and citizenship
13. Susanna Verboon - Information Officer of the city of Rotterdam
14. Paul Hoop – Senior advisor International Affairs for the social sector
15. Petra Zwang - Manager at the department of society; main areas Education
16. Oscar Douenburg - Senior advisor at the department Labor and Income
17. Vera Ronteltap - Programme manager at the department of health services Rotterdam
18. Marloes Nooijens - Senior advisor at the Safety Executive Board of Rotterdam
19. Maarten Molenbeek - Spokesman and information officer of the city of Rotterdam
20. Alice Vlaanderen - Head of division Jongerenloket Rotterdam (department of social Welfare for youth)
21. Marie Louise de Bot - Programme manager Employment at the department of City Development
22. Anne Marie van der Wiel - Director of Activation and Welfare at the department for Social Development Rotterdam
23. Karima Bouchtaoui - District director of Oude Noorden and Agniesebuurt
24. Rinske Schuttevaar - Project officer at the department of society
25. Han Entzinger - Professor of Migration and Integration Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam
26. Paul Scholten - Associate professor Public Policy, Erasmus University Rotterdam
27. Nienke Bethlem - Senior advisor, representing the ministry of Foreign Affairs
28. Jeanette Nijboer - Head of division Citizenship and Diversity of the city of Amsterdam
29. Marianne Vorthoren - Director of Expert Centre for Diversity Rotterdam
30. Cyriel Triesscheijn - Director of Expert Centre for Equal Treatment Rotterdam
31. Gerda Nijssen - Director of Expert Centre for Emancipation Rotterdam
32. Abdelkader Salhi - Chairman of the foundation Attanmia
33. Liane van der Linden - Director of the organization Kosmopolis Rotterdam