



Cultural Heritage Agency
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Shared past New perspectives

Shared Cultural Heritage programme 2017-2020



Introduction



An awareness of where we come from and whom we share our histories with gives new meanings to our shared past – now and in the future. This sentiment is at the heart of our Shared Cultural Heritage programme 2017-2020, which follows from the Netherlands' International Cultural Policy.

Our International Cultural Policy is based on the belief that international exchange is essential for countries to build a sustainable future together. Cultural heritage plays a vital role in this process. We all share histories with each other, and traces of our past can be found everywhere – from buildings or art collections to railway lines or shipwrecks. We all face similar challenges, too – such as how to keep our historic inner cities appealing places to live in and how to manage our cultural heritage sustainably.

In the years to come, international heritage cooperation will remain essential. When professionals form networks, learn from each other and work together on solutions for cultural heritage, we achieve something remarkable that goes beyond simply preserving what remains of the past. Rather, it involves giving new value to heritage in society. The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands is pleased to be able to contribute to this by encouraging and facilitating international connections, developing new knowledge and expertise together, and ensuring that the results of these projects are visible and accessible.

We have worked on so many wonderful projects around the world with our partner countries. These projects have created new perspectives on heritage itself, the people that safeguard it, and on society as a whole. We are proud of these partnerships. They are contributing to new insights and greater understanding between countries and cultures. Working together means accepting (and celebrating) a plurality of perspectives on the past. It requires being open to different approaches and solutions. Despite our differences, we search for – and indeed we find – shared interests.

We would like to thank our colleagues in the Netherlands and in our partner countries. As this publication shows, our work together has produced some compelling results. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts and we also hope that we can inspire other countries and partners to create their own partnerships.

A world of new possibilities for our cultural heritage, driven by new perspectives and transnational conversations, awaits.

**SHARED PAST
NEW PERSPECTIVES
HOPEFUL FUTURES!**

Susan Lammers
General Director Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands



NEW PERSPECTIVES
Suriname

NEW PERSI

Shared past - New perspectives

NEW PERSPECTIVES

New sound for unique heritage in Suriname

Sounds promising!

Impressive organs, timepieces, bells and carillons: Suriname has them all – especially in the capital city Paramaribo. Many of them are Dutch in origin. In 2014, a special partnership was launched between the two countries to help future-proof this “sounding heritage” (which includes tower clocks, carillons, pipe organs and the like). And that makes Stephen Fokké very proud. He is the director of the Suriname Built Heritage Foundation and has been involved in the collaboration from the start. ‘This unique form of heritage is taking on new significance in the local community.’

HOW IMPORTANT IS SOUNDING HERITAGE TO SURINAME AND CAN YOU GIVE US SOME REALLY GOOD EXAMPLES?

‘In Suriname, we have quite a lot of sounding heritage. That includes the beautiful pipe organs of the Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church, the Grote Stadskerk (Large City Church), the St. Rosa Church and the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral Basilica. Most of the organs were made in the Netherlands. The same applies to the tower clocks at the Ministry of Finance, the Diocese and the Suriname Water Company. In addition, there are various different bells, the carillon on Vaillantsplein and the chimes of the Jong A Kiem shop on Steenbakkerijstraat in Paramaribo. The owners and managers attach great importance to this sounding heritage. In 2018, they founded the Association of Sounding Heritage in Suriname. It also gives an extra dimension to the historic city centre of Paramaribo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and brings new opportunities for the community.’

WHAT STATE WAS THIS HERITAGE IN YEARS AGO?

‘In general, the state of repair of this heritage was mediocre to poor. The pipe organs in certain churches were maintained better, but none of the tower clocks was functioning. And the organ of the Grote Stadskerk in Paramaribo was no longer being used either. The carillon was still working, but it was in dire need of renovation. Action was absolutely essential, and now that action has been taken. That really means something for the future of this shared heritage.’

HOW DID SURINAME AND THE NETHERLANDS START TO WORK TOGETHER?

‘It all began with a request from the Surinamese Ministry of Finance to provide advice to repair and automate the tower clock in Paramaribo. Our Built Heritage Foundation did not have the expertise required to do that. So we contacted the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands because they were a long-standing partner of ours. That led to a fantastic collaboration on our shared sounding heritage, and our foundation now plays a leading role in that. The first action was to compile an inventory of all the sounding heritage and its status. Significant milestones have since been achieved within a relatively short period of time, thanks to a concerted effort. The partnership with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands is very pleasant and smooth. Specialist in clocks and organs Rudi van Straten is one of the driving forces behind this collaboration.’ >>>

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, AND WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

‘Following the inventory of heritage, we launched several initiatives. For example, we are rebuilding the Maarschalkerweerd pipe organ in the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral Basilica. It’s a multi-year project that professionals from both countries are working together on. In addition, we have set up the tower clocks project to restore the clocks that are no longer working. The first timepiece to be restored is at the Suriname Water Company in the town of Republiek. Surinamese and Dutch experts have also been looking into the condition of the Weigle organ, which was made in Germany. The organ’s owner and user – the Moravian Church in Suriname (EBGS) – would like the organ to be restored. Another great example – there is now a Multi-Year Plan for Clock and Organ Heritage in Suriname for 2017-2022, which means that we can carry out a systematic restoration over the next few years. And there are also initiatives to increase awareness about clock, carillon and organ heritage. Examples are the ‘Sounding Heritage in Suriname’ informative set of cards, a guest lecture for history students at the Anton de Kom University and articles in the media. And we also involve the local community in a number of ways.’

HOW IS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVED AND WHAT IMPACT IS THAT HAVING?

‘The input and motivation of managers and owners is essential. That’s where it all starts, because we can’t do anything without them. And clearly, that motivation is there! They are helping us and working with us on all fronts. The establishment of the Sounding Heritage Association is a great demonstration of this. It is also nice to see the collaboration between local craftsmen and experts from the Netherlands. That promotes knowledge transfer around renovation and maintenance and it also creates employment opportunities. But it is more than just that. The young Surinamese organists of the Organists Circle are also given the opportunity to learn organ music and carry out small-scale maintenance on the pipe organs. In this way, the restoration projects improve their prospects in a very concrete way. And the Roman Catholic Diocese has also launched an awareness campaign to increase support for the preservation of the Maarschalkerweerd organ.

That is also providing funds for reconstruction. Parishioners can adopt an organ pipe in honour of a deceased family member. The names of deceased loved ones are displayed on a panel in the basilica. That really makes the heritage part of the community. Another powerful example is the DIY organ project for Surinamese young people.’

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*‘My dream is that
our sounding heritage
can continue to ring
out forever’*

STEPHEN FOKKÉ

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WHAT DOES THIS PROJECT MEAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

‘The “Do It Yourself organ” is central to the project. It’s a wonderful initiative to help familiarize children with sounding heritage in a playful way. It is a kit in a box, designed especially for primary school students. They can put the organ together, listen to it and play it with the help of an organist. It has been successfully introduced in the Lutheran church. Just before the coronavirus pandemic struck, the DIY organ project was offered to the Sounding Heritage Association, which now manages it. Activities with the organ have been cancelled for now due to the pandemic. Hopefully we can start them up again soon. My dream is that our sounding heritage can continue to ring out forever. Especially now that the younger generations are becoming more aware of this unique heritage. That is also what we are trying to achieve through this valuable partnership between Suriname and the Netherlands.’

