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### Diversity policy in employment and service provision - Case study: Breda, the Netherlands

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**Publication date**

2009

**Document Version**

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

van Heelsum, A. (2009). *Diversity policy in employment and service provision - Case study: Breda, the Netherlands*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef091714.htm>

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# Diversity policy in employment and service provision

## Case study: Breda, the Netherlands



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# Background

## Brief history of migration to the Netherlands

The Netherlands was an immigration country in the 17th and 18th centuries; it was, at that time, a centre of trade and shipping and showed tolerance towards religious refugees. The proportion of immigrants, which stood at about 10% of the total population, diminished to a low level in the first half of the 20th century (Lucassen and Penninx, 1994). After the Second World War, emigration was dominant as new farmlands were discovered in the US, Canada and Australia. As Table 1 shows, a negative trend – signifying more emigration – in the 1950s turned into a positive trend – more immigration – in the 1960s.

Table 1: *Estimate of net number of migrants, 1950 to 2000 (in 000s)*

	1950–1955	1955–1960	1960–1965	1965–1970	1970–1975	1975–1980	1980–1985	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000
<b>Netherlands</b>	-123	-31	36	55	152	168	55	151	190	161

Source: *Migration Policy Institute (MPI), calculated from United Nations Population Division, 2001, 'World population prospects: The 2000 revision'*

The few immigrants who arrived in the period 1945–1960 came from the former colonies of Surinam in South America and Indonesia in southeast Asia. Surinamese elite tended to send their children to study in the Netherlands and Indonesians with one Dutch parent could retain their Dutch citizenship after the independence of Indonesia in 1949. Moreover, Indonesian army officials from the Moluccan Islands who had fought in the Dutch army in Indonesia had to be resettled in the Netherlands because they were not safe in Indonesia.

Around 1960, immigration levels increased. The first large influx was a result of the regulations pertaining to the independence of Surinam in 1975. While the independence was meant to curtail immigration, citizens of this former colony had the right to choose between Surinamese and Dutch nationality for five years, and half of the inhabitants of Surinam decided to move to the Netherlands. A second large flow of immigrants was caused by the booming economy and the need for cheap labour from the 1960s onwards. Factory and shipyard owners recruited so-called guest workers first in southern Europe, and later in Morocco and Turkey. After a period, their temporary immigration became permanent and their spouses and children also arrived. While the European Union (EU) was being further institutionalised, neighbouring countries – in particular Germany – also added to the number of immigrants.

In the 1980s, the Dutch economy declined and the first measures were taken to stop immigration. A considerable refugee population was growing in that period, initially from the then communist countries of the Soviet Union but later mainly from war-torn areas in the world: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and other countries. Since 2000, the number of Chinese and Polish immigrants has increased significantly and the number of Poles was expected to grow quickly from 2007 onwards.

The proportion of people with a foreign nationality in the Netherlands is stable at around 4.3% since 1997. The number of naturalisations – that is, people acquiring citizenship – increased from 12,800 persons in 1990 to 82,700 in 1996 and declined to 45,300 people in 2002, according to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, CBS).

Table 2 shows the largest ethnic groups on 1 January 2006 in three categories that are often distinguished in Dutch statistics, namely immigrants from western countries, from non-western countries and from refugee countries. On that date, the total Dutch population was 16,334,210, 13,186,595 or 81% of whom were considered as autochthonous or indigenous Dutch; it should be noted that anybody with one or two parents born abroad is not considered autochthonous.

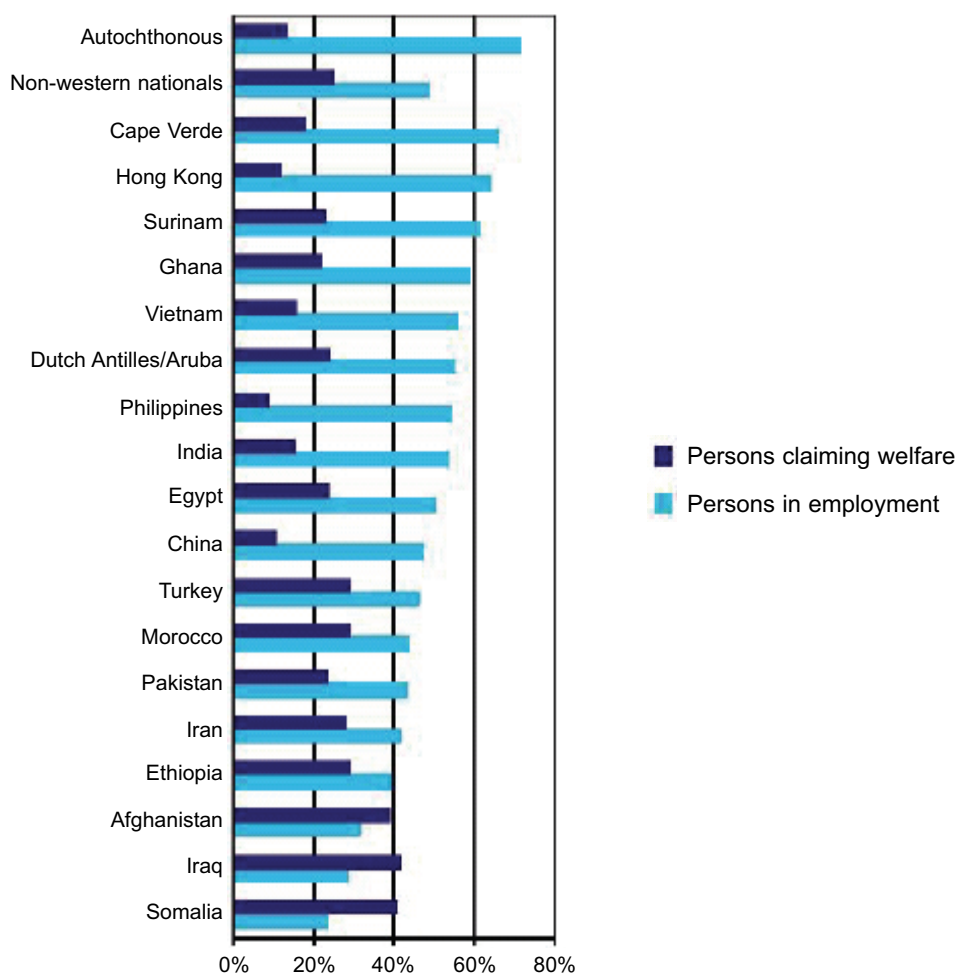
Table 2: Largest immigrant groups to the Netherlands based on country of origin and country of origin of parents, 1 January 2006

	Total no. of immigrants	1st generation immigrants	2nd generation immigrants
<b>Western countries</b>			
Germany	383,941	101,718	282,223
Belgium	112,222	35,887	76,335
United Kingdom (UK)	76,270	43,755	32,515
<b>Non-western countries</b>			
Indonesia	393,175	128,823	264,352
Turkey	364,608	195,947	169,661
Surinam	331,953	187,630	144,323
Morocco	323,272	168,566	154,706
Dutch Antilles	129,730	79,944	49,926
Former Yugoslavia	76,382	53,612	22,720
Former Soviet Union	46,058	35,343	10,720
China	45,568	32,332	13,530
Poland	45,568	29,731	15,833
<b>Refugees</b>			
Iraq	43,778	35,268	8,510
Afghanistan	37,307	32,049	5,258
Iran	28,781	23,638	5,143
Somalia	19,875	13,667	6,208

Source: *Statline, CBS*

As Table 2 shows, the older immigrant groups already comprise a large second generation. Within these groups, the male–female ratio is about 50%. The refugee populations consist of a larger degree of men – for example, 58% of the Iraqi immigrants are men and 53% of the Iranians are men. The relatively new immigrant groups – Poles and former Soviet citizens – include a larger proportion of women (both 60%). The distribution in age groups also depends on the time of arrival. Among Indonesians, an ageing population is increasingly apparent. The first Moroccan and Turkish guest workers are now aged in their 60s and 70s. However, not many older people are among the new immigrant groups, such as those from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. In general, the non-western immigrant groups have larger families than the indigenous Dutch population and western immigrants.

The socioeconomic status of immigrants from neighbouring countries is either similar to the level of indigenous Dutch people or better. However, the socioeconomic standard of non-western immigrant groups is generally poorer than the Dutch level. This is particular true for the former guest workers from Morocco and Turkey and for refugees. Nevertheless, this general remark is not true for every ethnic group. Figure 1 shows the proportion of people working and/or on welfare for each ethnic group. Welfare includes social security benefit, unemployment benefit, health benefit or disability allowance.

Figure 1: *Persons in work and/or on welfare, 15–65 years old, 2004 (%)*

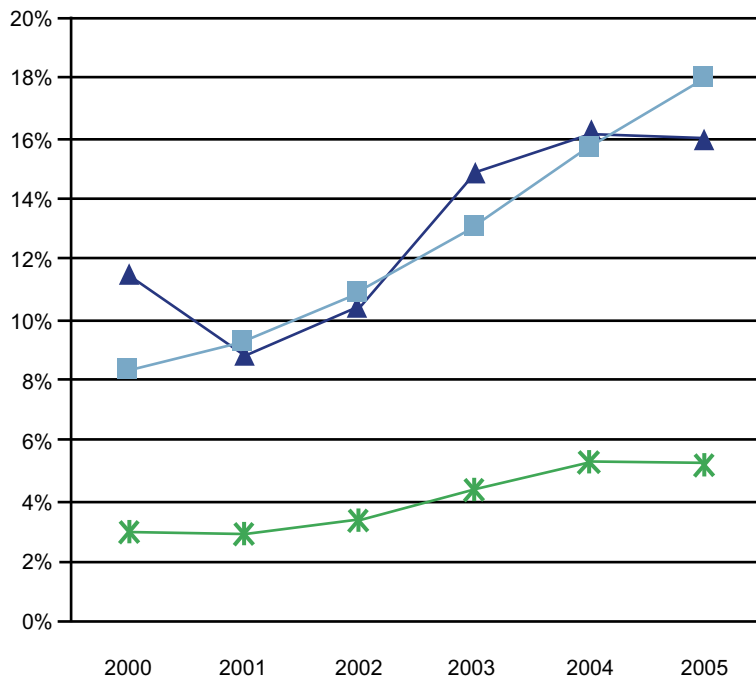
Source: *Research and Documentation Centre (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, WODC), Ministry of Justice, Integratiekaart 2006 [Integration monitor 2006], p. 26, based on information from the Social Statistical Database (Sociaal Statistisch Bestand, SSB) of CBS*

As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of working people is, among all ethnic groups, larger than the share of those on welfare, except for Afghani, Iraqi and Somali refugees. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work until they receive their refugee status. The highest proportions of working people and the lowest shares of those on welfare are found among Dutch people, and among those from Hong Kong, the Philippines and China. Although the three refugee groups from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia are the most problematic in terms of lack of work, not all refugee groups have a larger proportion of people on welfare than working: for example, this is not true for Vietnamese refugees (who arrived relatively earlier) and Iranians.

The four largest non-western immigrant groups – Turks, Surinamese, Moroccans and Antilleans (see Table 2 above) – receive relatively more often a very low net social security benefit, as a basic sum to survive. On the other hand, indigenous Dutch people are more often eligible for a higher net unemployment benefit, as a percentage of their last income. The Turkish group includes more people claiming a disability allowance than on social security benefit.

As Figure 2 shows, the unemployment of Dutch people is considerably lower than that of non-western immigrants and their children. It is of some concern that this situation does not improve for the second generation of immigrants, though it should be noted that not all ethnic groups have a second generation.

Figure 2: *Unemployment among Dutch people and first and second generation non-westerners, 2000–2005 (%)*



Note: ▲ non-western immigrants first generation; \* Dutch; ■ non-western immigrants second generation.  
 Source: WODC, *Integratiekaart 2006*

## National policy context

Rijkschroeff et al (2004) divide Dutch national policies concerning immigrants into three phases. The first phase in the 1970s was a categorical policy focusing on specific fields. For example, special provisions were made for Moluccan ex-soldiers; in fact, Moluccan neighbourhoods still have certain privileges. The Surinamese, who were not expected in such large numbers, were supported by welfare associations on an ad hoc basis, paid by several municipalities. In the 1970 document ‘Nota Buitenlandse Werknemers’ [Document on migrant workers], guest workers were encouraged to retain their identity and culture of origin in order not to have difficulties on return to their home country. Due to the assumption that the workers’ stay would be temporary, no attempts were made to provide Dutch language courses or information on Dutch society. A long-term consequence is that the language proficiency of these low-educated workers is still often limited.

The second phase of immigration policy started with a 1979 publication by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, WRR), which led to the first policy document – entitled ‘Minority policy’ (‘Minderhedennota’, 1983). The Dutch government realised that the stay of guest workers was no longer temporary and the thinking in relation to immigrants shifted more towards worry and concern. This policy phase was directed at stopping a trend that immigrants were acquiring a permanent disadvantaged social position, and measures were taken in the spheres of education and the labour market. Integration was considered a two-sided process and the policy document highlighted the importance of respect for the cultures of immigrants. There was a positive attitude towards the rights of religious groups, for instance with regard to establishing mosques and Hindu temples.

Rijkschroeff et al (2004) call the third phase ‘integration policy’, starting in 1989 with the WRR document ‘Allochtonenbeleid’ [Immigrant policy]. Papers like ‘Contourennota Integratiebeleid Etnische Minderheden’ [Outline of integration policy for ethnic minorities] (1994), ‘Investeren en Integreeren’ [Investment and integration] (1994) and ‘Kansen krijgen, kansen pakken’ [Getting opportunities, seizing opportunities] (1997–1998) aimed to motivate and mobilise immigrants to learn the Dutch language and adjust to the local culture. Professional courses became obligatory for newcomers. The problems of the children of immigrants in the educational system became clearer and were targeted.

A fourth phase started around 2001 when representatives of politically conservative parties became minister for integration and immigration: first Hilbrand Nawijn of the now defunct Pim Fortuyn List (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF) and then Rita Verdonk of the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, VVD). Both were known for having anti-immigrant standpoints. Many proposals to limit the rights of foreigners to levels below those of Dutch people were discussed in the Dutch House of Representatives (*Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*); however, implementation was not always realistic because the inequality of the law was too evident. The debate in the media became harsher and more unfriendly towards immigrants, and many of them felt very uncomfortable. This period lasted until the elections of 2006. The new government that took up office in 2007 seems to have a friendlier approach to immigrants.

The latest Law on Integration and Citizenship (*Wet Inburgering*), effective from 1 January 2007, led to substantial changes for the municipalities as they have become more responsible for supporting immigration guidance, as will be discussed later in the chapter on diversity in service provision.

Concerning equal treatment, the General Law on Equal Treatment (*Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling*) applies in the Netherlands since 1994 and is designed to stop discrimination.

At national level, a diversity policy in employment and services is currently not used. In fact, even the term ‘diversity’ is not used although the advisory Social and Economic Council (*Sociaal-Economische Raad*, SER) has written a section on diversity policy in its recent advice on young immigrants in the labour market (SER, 2007).

From 1997 to 2003, this situation was different: there was an obligation for all companies and institutions to register the number of immigrant staff members, according to a law to encourage the labour participation of immigrants (*Wet Samen*). The data were published on a website. However, from 31 December 2003 onwards, this law was abolished by the conservative government because many employees did not want to be registered as not being Dutch and many companies did not register. Currently, registration is no longer obligatory.



# Profile of Breda

## Brief description of the city

Breda is a medium-sized city in the southern part of the Netherlands, with a population of 170,495 inhabitants on 1 January 2007 (Onderzoek en Informatie (O&I) Breda). It acquired the official status of a town with town rights in 1252 around the castle of Breda. In the 14th century, it was surrounded by a defence wall and canals.

Historically, Breda is an army garrison town. It has several institutes for middle and higher education in the army and even a small, but unique in the country, military academy since 1828 in the castle. These institutions were established as a result of the connection with the royal family for over 750 years. Many historical buildings, in the centre of town (castle, cathedral, harbour and gardens) and outside the town (country houses and hunting grounds with facilities) also result from the royal connection. These buildings have since become tourist attractions.

Breda's city centre is compact, the surface is well used and the density of building is quite high. From the 1950s onwards, the city expanded its borders, large new housing areas were built and several villages and industrial areas were incorporated into the city area. Furthermore, over the last decade, new neighbourhoods have been established. Former villages, which now belong to the Breda municipality, have retained their special village culture and character. However, the housing projects completed in the 1950s now need improvement. The map of Breda outside the city walls resembles a patchwork of industrial, housing and green village areas.

Breda has always been a centre of trade. Because of its central position in the province of North Brabant in the south of the Netherlands, on the dividing line between north and south of the country, and located between the big harbours of Rotterdam in the west of the Netherlands and Antwerp on the Belgian coast, Breda has become an ideal place for establishing headquarters of international companies. Some industry had developed in the region, such as textiles, chemicals, chocolate, beer and fruit products (juices, canned fruit and soft drinks), but almost all of them have since closed down. There were no big factories in the area attracting low-skilled workers. This is one of the main reasons why Breda has only about 10% of non-western inhabitants. Breda is currently trying to establish itself as a modern, high-tech and cultural city. The high-tech and creative technical industry is progressing rapidly and thus Breda would like to promote itself as 'game valley'. In recent times, a 'gaming academy' was set up in order to train future game designers. In addition, Breda aims to develop its logistics services, knowledge industry and hospitality industry.

In terms of cultural amenities, Breda has one of the biggest theatres in the region, which attracts people from far afield. The cultural scene in the city is still somewhat conservative, although this has been changing slowly over the last few years. Experimental forms of art and theatre are not often found in Breda, in contrast to Tilburg, which lies about 35 kilometres east. Breda does not have a university, which may explain the conservative, somewhat 'bourgeois' culture. Breda is a middle-class town. Statistical research shows that Breda is often typically representative of the perfect average of life in the Netherlands.

Breda has a central function in the region of western Brabant, in terms of shopping, social services, hospitals and cultural facilities. It has a fast train connection with Rotterdam and Antwerp and the new High Speed Line (HSL) will pass through the city. When the HSL is completed, it will provide Breda with excellent connections to the cities of Antwerp, Brussels, Paris and Barcelona.

Breda is the first city to be met after crossing the main rivers that divide the north and the south of the Netherlands. The south has a reputation for being more laid back, which is related to the practice of Catholicism and a more 'Burgundian' lifestyle. This means that the local people like to enjoy good meals, drink and like to party. This profile contrasts with the calvinist culture that rules the north. Breda is known for its abundance of bars and indeed its annual carnival.

## City's migrant population

Table 3 shows the current ethnic composition of the population of Breda. As at 1 January 2007, about 10% of the population of Breda consisted of non-western immigrants, including the second generation immigrants with at least one parent of immigrant origin, while another 10% of immigrants were of western origin.

Table 3: *Composition of Breda population, 1 January 2007*

	Number	Percentage
<b>Dutch</b>	135,808	79.7
<b>Turks</b>	2,866	1.7
<b>Moroccans</b>	5,007	2.9
<b>Surinamese</b>	2,052	1.2
<b>Antilleans</b>	2,017	1.2
<b>Refugees</b>	302	0.2
<b>Others, including western immigrants and Moluccans</b>	22,443	13.2
<b>Total</b>	169,883	100

Note: The figures add up to slightly more than 100% due to rounding of data.

Source: Research and Information Service of Breda (*Onderzoek en Informatie Gemeente Breda, O+I Breda*)

The gender division of the ethnic groups shown in Table 3 is equal in nearly all cases, except among indigenous Dutch people and among 'others' where more women can be found, many of whom are from eastern Europe and South America.

A specific characteristic of Breda, compared with most other Dutch cities, is that it has a Moluccan neighbourhood. In 1951, soldiers in the former Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*; KNIL) stationed in Indonesia were demobilised in camps in the Netherlands. The Dutch government requested that several cities establish neighbourhoods for these Moluccan people, since they wanted to stay together and thought that they would one day get the chance to move back to the independent Republic of South Moluccas (*Republik Maluku Selatan*, RMS). Between 1963 and 1966, 93 houses were constructed in Breda for this specific group, followed by another 15 houses in 1982. Currently, 130 Moluccan families live in an area of Breda called De Driesprong, which also has a Moluccan Evangelical Church and a community centre. The fact that the Moluccan community in the city comprised ex-soldiers and their wives and children made them feel at ease in a town like Breda with a military tradition. Because of the military academy in Breda, the city was one of the few places in the Netherlands that these people could identify with. To date, Moluccans have refused to take up Dutch citizenship. The Moluccan community signed an agreement with the local authorities to ensure that their culture and way of life is respected in light of the special historic circumstances. Breda is one of the 70 Dutch municipalities to have a Moluccan neighbourhood.

The second significant immigration was of Antilleans, Moroccans, Surinamese and Turks. Of course, Moroccans and Turks came to the Netherlands to find work, or were selected by the numerous agencies that 'imported' foreign labour. Breda is a so-called 'Antillean city' because more than 1% of the population comes from the Antilles in the Dutch Caribbean.

The immigration of refugees over the last decade is a consequence of national policy. When asylum seekers receive their refugee status, their names are forwarded to municipalities throughout the country, which are obliged to provide them with suitable housing outside the normal waiting lists.

The age structure of the larger immigrant groups is very different from the average in Breda. In particular, high percentages of young Moroccans and Turks live in Breda; for instance, 62% of Turks in the city are younger than 29 years of age, and 33% are younger than 14 years of age, while the proportions of young people among Moroccans is relatively similar. Among Surinamese people, 27% are aged between 10 and 27 years. In addition, half of the immigrants from the Antilles are aged between nine and 29 years.

Overall, 30% of Antillean and Surinamese people live in a single parent family, often with only the mother present. On the other hand, only 17% of them live in a two-parent family. In relation to the Moroccans and Turks, over 50% of them live in a complete family unit, with both the father and mother present.

The socioeconomic position of Antilleans, Moroccans, Surinamese, Turks and refugees is in general not very good. Most of the migrants have a low income and depend on social housing. They are also more often unemployed. Compared with the percentage of the total population, these ethnic groups are 1.4–2.8 times more often unemployed. When taking into account the fact that a lot of migrant women are not working, the rate of unemployment among these groups is even higher.

Unemployment among people over 40 years of age is particularly high, compared with local Dutch people. People in this age group are often unemployed or in receipt of disability benefit for a longer period and thus have limited chances to find work again.

Information on the Moluccan group is taken from a different source. In a ranking of all Breda's deprived neighbourhoods, the Moluccan neighbourhood is ranked in 23rd position, while the neighbourhood where most Moroccans live appears to be at the top end of the list. This shows that the position of Moluccans in Breda has relatively improved over the last 20 years.

### City authorities

Breda has a broad coalition of four left and centre political parties comprising the Dutch Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA), the Christian Democratic Alliance (*Christen Democratisch Appèl*, CDA), Green Left (Groen Links) and the local party Breda '97. There are six city aldermen. The diversity policy is partly the responsibility of the alderman for Social affairs, the Labour market, Well-being, Integration, Residential and Land Development, Breda cooperating companies (*Bredase Samenwerkende Bedrijven*, BSW) and Accommodation.

In the organisational structure, diversity policy is the responsibility of the Department of Well-being. The diversity policies are basically written and executed by one person, who is in constant discussion with all of the colleagues required for specific topics. Although it is a difficult job, the city official has room for manoeuvre, since the person will be well acquainted with the bureaucracy and can access other departments more easily. Moreover, the policy implemented by the alderman is officially set out by the city council, so the alderman can use that as a starting point.

# Approaches to diversity

## Historical background

Breda's current integration policy is set out in the latest policy document entitled 'Integration Agenda 2005–2006' (*Integratie Agenda 2005–2006*). This policy document was based on the 'Integration monitor 2004', which comprises research data on the ethnic groups in Breda and an overview of the ongoing and possible future projects and the policy document 'Couscous met Appelmoes' [Couscous with applesauce] from 2000.

As the author of the documents explains, the policy is still based on three principles from 2000: equality of cultures, equal chances and opportunities and reciprocity. Although it uses the definition of integration from the 2004 report presented by the Blok Commission (*Commissie Blok*), it is fully based on the concepts and thinking of a diversity policy.

Both the integration monitor and the policy document consist of the following four main chapters:

- housing – note that the word 'wonen' in Dutch means both housing and living, so this includes neighbourhood work and safety;
- work;
- care – subdivided into education, well-being and health;
- culture – including performing arts.

Subjects like political participation, migrant associations or religious services for migrants are integrated into these chapters. Apart from these four main chapters, another chapter is also included that states that the implementation of the policy will concentrate on the neighbourhoods that are subject to restructuring and that have a high concentration of immigrants. Because of the combination of problems in these areas such as poor quality housing, lack of safety, unemployment and school dropouts, one objective should be to offer coherent services at neighbourhood level. A direct consequence of the diversity thinking is that another chapter is devoted to multiculturalism in service provision, mainly with regard to the local administration itself. This includes the proposal to set targets on the number of immigrant staff and a project on developing multicultural competences among employees. The last chapter on 'communication' also focuses on multicultural competences and aims to build public support for the policy.

All chapters have lists of projects that have been either already implemented or will be required in the future, citing their goal, the responsible department and partners, as well as the source and amount of funds required for each project. Not surprisingly, the largest list of projects and allocated funds are found under 'care' and 'well-being'.

A separate document, entitled 'Dunya', has been written in 2004 on immigrant women, because of the involvement of the Dutch government's Committee for Participation of Women of Ethnic Minority Groups (*Participatie van Vrouwen uit Etnische Minderheden*, PaVEM). It contains a breakdown of demographic and socioeconomic information, the so-called 'Participation agenda', and a list of planned projects with possible sources of funding. The Dunya approach focuses on language and work. Plans include language lessons at home for women who find it difficult to get out of the house, efforts to attract more women to participate in language programmes through schools and kindergartens, and follow-up language courses – so-called 'Taal-plus' – if language proficiency after the first course is not sufficient for labour market participation. The work programme in Breda includes: supporting 10 higher-educated women in their search for work, leading at least eight women to do voluntary work, establishing 50 work placements by organising an employer breakfast, furnishing an information centre with computer access for women.

Another tool, which was introduced by PaVEM, was the local ‘P-team’ where ‘P’ represents participation. This group comprises 10–15 women with different cultural backgrounds, who advise the local authorities and organisations on cultural diversity and integration policy. Breda was the first city to have established such a P-team.

The policy seems politically left oriented, which shows in the choice of the main subjects included. The criterion for success is usually the participation rate in the different fields of activity. The city council, city mayor and aldermen have tried to counterbalance the negative imaging in the national policy of the last government, even when representatives of their own political party proclaimed it. The national integration policy of the last two governments was contested in Breda: these governments concentrated on restrictions on immigration and compulsory requirements in the areas of language and integration. The negative image of Muslims and the blunt statements of Dutch politicians like Ms Verdonk of VVD and the conservative political party leader Geert Wilders of the Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV) in the media added to the creation of a negative attitude. Islam and the visible expressions of this religion were arduously discussed. A growing resistance among Dutch people towards immigrants and a growing resistance among immigrants against this policy lead to an increasing gap between both groups. In some cases, immigrants withdrew into their own groups, in extreme cases to fundamentalist Islam. The principles of the current government are, however, more positive.

Breda wants to encourage, and has always proclaimed, a positive view on immigration. The belief is that Breda is a city where everyone can feel safe, welcome and respected. It wants to provide opportunities, facilitate dialogue and include immigrants in policymaking, the labour market and politics. In some cases, the city has ignored the national policy. According to city officials, working on diversity policy was not easy under these circumstances. The diversity policy at the local level had to fight against national negative imaging. Fortunately, the current government is more positive towards immigration and integration policy and a positive view has always been supported within the Breda municipality.

The media has often criticised the achievements of the diversity policy. Since many journalists are white males, they are not always convinced of the need to diversify. But as a city representative states, their comments can be used to mirror the efforts made by the municipality. The diversity officer uses comments in the media creatively to direct the process along the right path.

### Policy objectives

In general, the purpose of the diversity policy is to provide conditions for everyone to practice shared or active citizenship. All citizens should have equal access to the means that are necessary to achieve this objective. Shared or active citizenship represents the willingness to actively contribute to society, where citizenship reflects participation. In other words, it means that inhabitants of Breda have the liberty and the possibility to participate in all aspects of life. The general political opinion has always been that integration has to take place in daily life, in close relations with people – thus, at school, at work and in the streets. This resulted from the necessity to contribute to the mere execution of integration laws in a creative way.

The national policy focuses on so-called ‘non-western immigrants’, which refers to people who were or one of their parents were born in Africa, Latin America, Turkey or Asia with the exception of Japan and Indonesia (CBS definition, quoted from Jennissen and Blom, 2007). Breda’s diversity policy does not target certain ethnic or religious groups, but reasons from the perspective of the management of diversity. When data show that ethnic or cultural groups are falling behind in relation to certain aspects, targets can be formulated in this regard, but in the realisation of projects this difference is not made. To achieve policy targets, an extra effort is made to reach out to groups with the highest non-participation rate.

## **Responsibility: elected representatives and officials**

The person who is politically responsible for diversity policy is the alderman for Social affairs, the Labour market, Well-being, Integration, Residential and Land Development, BSW and Accommodation. The Mayor of Breda also takes political responsibility on some occasions. For instance, when the contract for the pilot ‘Toolkit participation’ project (part of PaVEM) had to be signed, the mayor wanted to do this himself, because he realised that it was desirable and politically valuable. It often takes considerable effort on the part of the diversity officer to present proposals in such a way to gain the interest of the mayor and other politicians.

Within the city council, there is no commission on diversity policy, because diversity policy is an inclusive policy, which has to be implemented in all policy areas.

As already explained, the official in charge of diversity policy works in the Department of Well-being. Since 1 April 2007, the name of this department has changed to ‘Social Development’. All departments have a ‘sector director’, who can be held responsible for the service provision within that department. It is the director’s job to provide team leaders and heads of sub-departments with the required tools to implement policies. A general directorate board takes decisions that directors have to implement.

## **Collaboration with social partners and non-governmental organisations**

Social work is carried out by a privatised foundation in Breda, which has used professional support paid for by the municipality to provide advice on methods to adopt a multicultural approach. The same is true for the Foundation for Social Work for Elderly People, which also provides input in relation to the methods used.

The Support Organisation for Volunteering and Sport, also a privatised foundation, started earlier – in 2004 – and put diversity at the top of its agenda after two foundations on volunteering and sport merged. This organisation aims to make training in sports clubs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) more diverse. NGOs were the first organisations that had to prove that they are ‘diversity proof’ in order to get their annual grants. Cooperation with migrant associations is important in this process. Migrant organisations also need to work on their own diversity strategies, which is usually not an easy task as they are usually established to assist one single immigrant community.

## **Policy and practice on monitoring progress**

The first monitoring process was set up in 2004. This can be considered an initial measure as the intention was to measure all variables again in 2007. Data were taken from the municipal statistical department and from national reports. The municipal statistical department has added the variable ‘ethnicity’ to its dataset in order to make tables and calculations using this variable possible.

To extend the monitoring process in the 2007 round, some qualitative research has been added. Focus groups were held on social participation and contacts were established between Dutch and other ethnic groups. The main problem encountered was a lack of funding for research, as in other cities. Research costs incurred by the statistics department of the city have to be funded internally, in this case by the diversity department, and usually there is very little money available for this purpose.

The Institute for Multicultural Development (*Instituut voor Multiculturele Ontwikkeling*, FORUM) is working on a local integration chart. This will become a computer programme that withdraws data from the CBS database on one specific municipality, making these local data accessible to other municipalities.

### Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt

The general implementation of Breda's integration policy is quite effective and successful. This is most likely a result of the dedication, persuasive power and strong networking capacity within the municipal administration of the diversity manager. From an outsider's point of view, it seems excessive that the diversity manager is required to carry out the necessary tasks alone. The diversity manager's knowledge and probably a large part of the network would disappear if the manager decided to take up another job. A challenge for Breda is to secure the diversity policy by involving more officials, councillors and aldermen and to extend it to more departments in the municipality. Some managers do not know enough about diversity, but one cannot expect that a single person can initiate everything alone.

Another challenge that Breda faces is that politicians, managers and the media do not treat special policies as very urgent when no serious problems or tensions are evident between ethnic groups. Compared with other cities, Breda has a limited proportion of non-western immigrants. When a national plan concerning immigrants and diversity was launched, and Breda was invited to participate, it took the diversity officer's extreme effort to convince the responsible alderman of the importance of Breda's participation in this project. One of the partners asked in despair: 'does a murder have to take place before we can proceed?'. Bringing politically responsible persons together with the policy target group is a key element of making projects work. Establishing a personal bond between politicians, policymakers and immigrants helps to ensure that policies work better: the problems become less anonymous, and the actions and power of these individuals make the situation clearer and more real.

### Potential future policy development

One of Breda's priorities in the future will be to present a positive image of cultural diversity, contrary to the recent negative portrayal of the city in the national press and media, which have been presenting cultural diversity as a source of problems. Although the diversity policy is high on the political agenda, many details need to be clarified and implemented. Currently, civil servants receive training in the areas of diversity and inclusion policy. Training and a process of multiculturalism is also promoted at the level of local institutions and organisations. In this regard, it is intended that quality demands on multiculturalism become a requirement for subsidies or assignments.

# Employment policy, practice and outcomes

## Profile of city employees

The city of Breda employed 2,165 persons in 2006. Many services have been privatised in the last 20 years and get contracts from the municipality. Table 4 shows the number of employees in the city's different administrative departments.

Table 4: *Official positions and actual occupancy levels, by department, 31 December 2006 (full-time equivalents, FTE)*

Organisational department	Official positions (no. of FTE)	Actual occupancy levels (no. of FTE)
Board of Directors ( <i>Directieraad</i> )	4	4
Cabinet of the mayor ( <i>Kabinet</i> )	8	10
Concern ( <i>Concern</i> )	22	23
Clerk ( <i>Griffier</i> )	9	8
Chamber of Finances ( <i>Rekenkamer</i> )	1	1
Department of Civil Affairs ( <i>Afdeling burgerzaken</i> )	35	34
Department of Taxes ( <i>Afdeling belastingen</i> )	31	32
Department of Public Communication ( <i>Afdeling publiekvoorlichting</i> )	3	3
Department of Development and Information ( <i>Afdeling Ontwikkeling en Informatie</i> )	21	19
Library ( <i>Bibliotheek Breda</i> )	63	60
Cultural centre De Nieuwe Veste	59	59
National Museum of Graphic Arts ( <i>Nationaal Museum voor Grafische Kunst</i> )	12	11
Breda's Museum	21	18
Department of Economic Affairs and Project Management ( <i>Vakdirectie Grondbedrijf, Economische Zaken en Projectmanagement</i> )	51	43
Department of Municipal Development ( <i>Vakdirectie Stedelijke Ontwikkeling</i> )	127	110*
Department of Environment ( <i>Vakdirectie Milieu</i> )	47	43
Department of Culture ( <i>Vakdirectie Cultuur</i> )	12	12
Department of External Space ( <i>Vakdirectie Buitenruimte</i> )	276	246
Department of Governance of Corporations ( <i>Vakdirectie Beheerbedrijven</i> )	183	159
Department of Social Affairs ( <i>Vakdirectie Sociale Zaken</i> )	215	200
Department of Well-being ( <i>Vakdirectie Welzijn</i> )	41	40
Department of Companies Control ( <i>Accommodatiebedrijf</i> )	56	48
Other departments**	14	13
Fire brigade	104	172
United companies ( <i>BSW bedrijven</i> )	137	134
Shared Service Centre	362	328
Total number of FTE	1,914	1,830

Notes: \* Includes the voluntary fire brigade; \*\* Includes regional departments, department of human resources, support and control.  
Source: *Social Year Report Breda*

As Table 4 shows, the largest department is the Shared Service Centre, followed by the Department of External Space and the Department of Social Affairs. No information is available on the number of immigrants in these departments. Table 5 presents data on the municipal staff of Breda for 2005 and 2006, according to the number in employment, age, contract duration, number of part-time staff, gender and salary scale.



Table 5: Key figures on municipal staff of Breda, 2005–2006

	2005	2006
Official positions (FTE)	1,947	1,914
Actual occupancy levels (FTE)	1,805	1,830
Percentage of non-occupied jobs	9.2%	9.5%
Number of staff members	2,139	2,165
Mean age (years)	43.5	44.1
Mean contract duration (years)	12.6	12.0
Percentage of part-time staff	39.1	39.9
Percentage of part-time staff	58.0	58.0
Percentage of women	42.0	42.0
Salary scale 1–5 (no. of employees)	617	599
Salary scale 6–10 (no. of employees)	1,156	1,176
Salary scale 11 and higher (no. of employees)	366	390

Note: FTE = full-time equivalents.

Source: Personnel Department Breda

As Table 5 shows, there is a small overrepresentation of men among Breda’s municipal staff: in 2006, 58% of staff (1,255 workers) were men and 42% (919) were women. People stay a significant amount of time – on average 12 years – in municipality jobs. As in most municipalities, the largest category of officials can be found in the intermediate salary scales (6–10). The mean age of officials in 2006 was about 44 years, which is slightly higher than the mean working age (40 years). As shown in Table 6, the 40–49 age group is also relatively large.

Table 6: Municipal staff, by age group, 2006

Age groups	No. of staff
< 25 years	45
25-29 years	132
30-39 years	524
40-49 years	745
50-55 years	384
56-59 years	282
60-64 years	48
> 65 years	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,165</b>

Source: Social Year Report Breda

After the obligatory registration through the national law ‘Wet Samen’ was abolished on 1 January 2004, Breda continued to ask new employees about their ethnic origin, but the related data were no longer presented in the Social Year Report. Data for this report were received from the city administration human resources (HR) department. However, it should be noted that the HR department is not obliged to answer questions on ethnicity of employees and some employees prefer to be registered as Dutch.

The large majority of the officials of the council of Breda are Dutch, while only 87 of the 1,873 staff are non-Dutch. Therefore, the total percentage of ethnic minority staff members is only 5%, which is considerably lower than the 20% average of Breda's population – no data were available on the percentage of immigrants in the workforce. Unfortunately, data are not broken down in relation to the different ethnic groups.

## Employment diversity policy

Breda has no employment policy towards diversity. The responsible politician, the head of the municipal staff (town clerk) and the head of the HR department state that diversity of staff is an important issue, but no special efforts have been made to attract new employees from migrant groups for several reasons. On the one hand, there was no urgency to perform such efforts, no problems with the services provided, no request from citizens and no lack of applicants for jobs. Secondly, the fact that six personnel departments merged into one in March 2006 distracted attention from more strategic issues in human resource management (HRM) to the basic organisational process – paying salaries, supporting resignations and new appointments. Thirdly, after the 'Wet Samen' was abolished, the right-wing attitudes of the national government did not make it easier to promote immigrant staff's rights – although Breda's officials say that this has not influenced policy a lot, it has not encouraged thinking about the issue either.

It is probable that a diversity policy for the city council's personnel will be formulated in the near future, since the officers in charge all recognise the importance of establishing a diverse workforce. First, it is seen as a positive message to the immigrant community that the city administration also works for them; secondly, it will be easier to reach all sections of the population this way through their networks. It would be logical to use the percentage of immigrants in Breda's population as a target.

Some small initiatives to promote diversity have taken place: certain work placements for training have been reserved for immigrants and money has been reserved to organise work experience placements and training for students in the various administrative departments. Moreover, two training sessions were held for 25 employees and policymakers in 2006 and 2007. These 25 employees were supposed to become the vanguard in a new attempt to boost the diversity policy.

## Challenges in developing and implementing policy

A challenge in Breda is that a plan has been drafted for implementing the diversity policy, but the implementation has actually to a large extent not taken place. Although a concept policy plan was already effective in 2002, which several departments received positively, the implementation never started because of excuses and financial and organisational problems. The fact that the plan was not structured and not linked with the general policy is probably an important reason for its lack of implementation. In 2000, every department had its own HRM bureau, and the diversity manager had the impossible task to convince them all to participate in and to motivate them for collective action. In 2006, the newly merged HRM department was busy with the basic processes of job rating and administering salaries. The time now seems right to formulate clearer targets and to start evaluating directors on results achieved.

The need to implement a personnel diversity policy is broadly accepted, but it is not actively implemented. It therefore depends on the incidental initiatives. First, the city council and the board of directors should take this as an important spearhead, so that a consequent and structured policy can be written and introduced. Approached from the viewpoint of quality management, diversity management should be an obligatory part of a modern management style. This is acknowledged, but it was not (yet) actively transferred into targets or behaviour. However, in the 'Participation Agenda 2008–2010', which was expected to be presented to the city council in January 2008, targets on traineeships, employment and career planning are included.

Some opposition to diversity policy was also apparent. Some people claim that the city's administrative departments are equally accessible for everyone and that 'newcomers' have to adapt to the dominant culture. This opposing opinion appears to be among a minority of individuals, but it should be noted that all people are not open about their views. In the lower levels of the organisation, many people simply do not realise that the organisation is not equally accessible for immigrants nor that it tends to produce a replica of itself by having only men aged 40 years or older in its application commissions. For instance, according to the employees' council, as they never receive complaints about these kinds of issues, they therefore assume that application procedures are fair and that there is no need for extra attention to be paid to such issues. According to the diversity officer, the fact that a diversity policy has not yet been implemented is due to laziness among the city administration, combined with the feeling of a lack of urgency.

Some of the managers at intermediate level find a diversity policy completely unimportant and probably undesirable. On the other hand, some managers make an effort, without a clear-cut policy, to find immigrant staff members for the services mostly directed at immigrants. Securing further support for this kind of policy seems necessary.

### Recruitment, training and promotion

In general, there is no policy to recruit immigrants from channels other than the usual ones. It is known that not many immigrants apply for positions advertised in newspapers. Managers are supposed to give preference to internal applicants and those affected by reorganisation, but as one of them explains: 'it is easy to avoid such rules when you really want a Moroccan girl working at the counter'. The coordinator of a department that directly serves immigrants explains that the department has taken care to employ some immigrants from the main groups living in Breda, avoiding the rule on internal applicants. The coordinator thinks that a policy is not necessary to achieve this. The department in question has succeeded in finding suitable people for certain roles and takes care that one group does not dominate the other.

For positions at Breda's Information Counter (*Loket Wegwijs*), people are chosen for these jobs who can empathise with the types of people who visit the counter, who have a lot of patience to understand the people they help, and who have good language skills and can carry out other tasks if necessary. Most of the current staff are Dutch, although there is also one Moroccan girl employed and one Moroccan trainee.

Training is offered for unemployed people and students for periods lasting from two months to half a year with a specific assignment at the end of the training. Internal training is also organised to raise the skills level of current staff members and to develop the skills of talented young people. However, there are no special courses organised for immigrants.

The head of the HR department suggests that a high achievers course for a mixed group of 12 newcomers and 12 existing employees could be a positive step; the department believes that this would be a way to break the existing pattern. The newcomers would have a guaranteed job at a higher level after the course and would get some practice on the job.

Promotion of available jobs takes place at schools, universities and other educational institutions, but not specifically in migrant circles. The head of the HR department remarks that the educational institutions have a considerable number of young immigrants enrolled, but this does not reflect in the applications to the municipality. Regarding the 40 work placements for students each year, very few foreign nationals ever apply. This suggests that the image of the municipality as an employer is rather negative: a low paying employer, which does not offer extra bonuses like company cars and mobile phones. Under the current economic situation, commercial companies are more attractive to potential job applicants.

## Equal pay and working conditions

Rules on qualifications and employment conditions are the same for all employees. If unfair situations occur, a complaint procedure is possible or a procedure in the court.

## Harassment

Within the municipal organisation, some officers receive complaints confidentially. Not many complaints are related to ethnic issues among staff. The coordinator of the Information Counter, which provides information to the public on welfare, citizenship courses for immigrants, and all forms of care and well-being, has a policy on harassment by customers. At the counter, for example, welfare recipients of a more problematic background can arrive, such as those suffering from mental problems or anti-social behaviour. When racist comments are made to staff by a customer or harassment takes place, employees can refuse service and even call security and have the customer removed from the building.

## Accommodation of cultural and religious needs

At present, the Breda administration does not have a prayer room for Muslims. Most arrangements for religious needs are agreed directly between heads of departments and employees themselves. For example, during Ramadan – an Islamic religious observance – some Muslims arrange to leave work earlier or take days off, and these arrangements are usually not a problem.

## Health and safety

The official language used by the municipality is Dutch. Leaflets with safety instructions are not translated into any language other than English. In the 1980s, Turkish and Arabic translations existed, but these are not necessary anymore. Currently, most immigrant employees speak Dutch. In fact, they are not hired if they are not proficient in Dutch.

## Induction and language tuition

Since a large proportion of new immigrants are obliged to follow the newcomer programme in the Netherlands and the rest can voluntarily join, there is no special introduction or language programme within the municipal administration for newcomers. The obligatory course encompasses language training and social orientation.

## Recognition of qualifications

Within the EU, attempts have been made to standardise diplomas but not from countries outside the EU. The process of accreditation of diplomas is not arranged at municipal level. In the Netherlands, two organisations work together on evaluating foreign diplomas: the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (Nuffic) and the Association of Centres of Expertise on vocational education, training and the labour market (Colo). These two entities cooperate in the Information Centre for Credential Evaluation (*Informatiecentrum Diplomawaardering*, IcDW).<sup>1</sup> When people are working, this service costs €113. Because unemployed immigrants usually arrive at the Centre for Work and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.idw.nl/index2.html>

Income (*Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen*, CWI), the latter can arrange a free diploma accreditation for them through the above institutes. For protected education titles, the professional groupings have their own rules about foreign diplomas; information is provided by the Dutch National Contact Point, formerly known as the Information Centre for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (*Informatiecentrum Richtlijn Algemeen Stelsel*, IRAS), within Nuffic. Complaints regarding incorrectly evaluated diplomas can be sent to the IcDW.

Many applicants to the municipality actually have Dutch diplomas. Application commissions do not only look at diplomas but also take into account relevant experience of individuals; in this regard, diplomas are not always the most important factor.

### Complaints

The municipality has an internal general complaints regulation. Employees can submit complaints about all kinds of subjects through this procedure and they are treated in the same manner. As explained earlier, certain staff members may talk about confidential issues. It can be expected that every department will have such a person.

### Special initiatives

The diversity officer arranges informal 'meet and greet meetings' between staff members and groups of immigrants. For instance, in the summer of 2007, some 60 representatives from African organisations attended a meeting organised at the municipal building. Another meeting was due to be held with Moroccan nationals in the autumn of 2007. The aim of these meetings was to promote cultural awareness among staff members through direct contact with immigrants. Multicultural awareness training, however, is not enough; it is necessary to develop practical knowledge among officials. A relation between people has to develop in order for them to communicate well. Through these meetings, officials have the opportunity to talk directly to immigrants and to help answer any questions they may have. In this way, officials learn to understand a bit more about the immigrants, develop personal contacts with people in immigrant communities and they are also more easily identified within the municipal organisation by these African representatives when they need assistance.

Direct contact with, for instance, the official working with elderly people gives foreign nationals the opportunity to make direct phone calls to the official and to ask questions if necessary.

### Monitoring

The Breda municipality registers the ethnic background of staff members, making it easier to identify to what extent they are underrepresented in higher salary scales. The system of 'exit talks' when an employee leaves the organisation makes it possible to find out if immigrants leave earlier and for specific reasons. Possibilities to find out whether or not immigrants leave the organisation for specific reasons have not been introduced. It is expected that this area will receive more attention in the near future.

### Impact of policy and lessons learnt

The Breda municipality has a lot of good intentions, but lacks clear and definite agreements within its administration. It has made efforts to build up a coherent HRM policy since the establishment of a central department, making it more possible for the situation to improve in the near future. It has proved difficult to secure this process within the organisation. This is mainly due to a perceived lack of urgency for such a HRM policy, a lack of insight among some

managers regarding why activity is needed, the automatic tendency of the organisation to replicate itself without being aware of it and probably also a fear that more conservative staff members or outsiders might protest and draw the attention of the media. In theory, immigrants have equal chances in the municipality, but in practice a large-scale change of attitude is necessary.

As the head of the personnel department remarked, one can try to establish general guidelines on the issue of diversity policy, but the organisation is somewhat unruly – in terms of making promises but not delivering on them – because not all members of selection committees are convinced of the usefulness of such a policy. However, it appears that without clear targets and designating responsibility to different people, there are no positive outcomes. It is important to implement both of these strategies at executive level – for instance, colleagues feel that they need someone who understands the Moroccan culture to work at the information counter, or someone who organises Turkish cultural shows to work at the cultural department – and at managerial level to determine the philosophy and the future perspective. When combining different strategies and skills within the municipality, the chance of successful policy implementation increases.

# Diversity in service provision

## Services provided and contracted out

The services that are directly provided by the municipality are:

- general civil administration, passports and documents;
- information centre on all municipal products;
- social security, both financial support and job seeking support;
- tasks relating to the Law on social support (*Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning*), like provisions for disabled and elderly people such as availability of wheelchairs or domestic help;
- immigrant arrival and integration – provision of information, estimation of ability for different course levels, referral to a suitable course, checking if immigrants pass the citizenship exam and control of payments.

The services that are contracted out to other organisations include:

- education – all schools including integration and language courses;
- health – apart from the usual services (general practitioners, hospitals, psychiatry, geriatrics), a regional organisation provides information, carries out research and is active in preventive healthcare and healthcare for special groups such as schoolchildren. It signs a contract with the Breda municipality and other cities in the region specifying its products;
- social work – offering social work and social and legal counselling for all citizens. Specialised workers with different ethnic backgrounds are employed. There are no further special services for migrants. The city of Breda, which is the biggest financier, does not put special demands on service provision concerning specific ethnic or cultural groups;
- social-cultural work – offering social-cultural activities in all neighbourhoods and support to volunteers who want to organise such activities. It also looks after the interests of special groups. The city of Breda, which is the biggest financier, demands a substantial contribution to the development of a multicultural society. However, this is not yet formulated according to the SMART (specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, timely) principles;
- housing – social housing (with monthly rents below €615) is managed by social housing corporations. The municipality does not have a lot of influence in this area, except when it cooperates in neighbourhood restructuring plans;
- care for homeless people: this form of care is organised in the same way as social work.

## Diversity policy in services

In the past, categorical services existed, but with the growing number of immigrants, it has become clear that all municipal services have to work according to a diversity policy and be able to serve migrants and non-migrants. Understandably, Dutch language courses are only offered to immigrants, but most other services are available to everyone. Active promotion of a multicultural society has become an important aspect of the municipal policy. Services can apply for support on multiculturalism, both in terms of advice and financial support.

As a result, the diversity policy targets all the citizens of Breda. In order to reach out to all of the different groups and individuals, public initiatives have been implemented that aim to bridge the gap between migrants and service provision.

Moreover, the provision of information and guidance are promoted and financially supported. Examples in this regard include the following:

- the P-team – where P stands for participation – comprises a group of women from different cultural backgrounds who advise the municipality and other public service providers on their policy and implementation. The team also organises information meetings for women on different subjects, and encourages women to participate and organise informal information desks in close proximity to women in the neighbourhoods where they live;
- the migrant council comprises men and women from different cultural backgrounds who provide individual information and counselling, organise information meetings for people on different subjects in their local neighbourhoods and address special migrant interests;
- the Platform for Migrant Parents and Education (*Allochtone Ouders en Onderwijs*) informs parents about the education system, encourages parents to be active in the schools where their children attend and makes them aware of their rights. It also strengthens the bond between parents, children and education, seen from the perspective of cultural diversity, and solves structural problems, together with parents and schools – such as dropping out of school without a diploma, as well as cultural clashes between teachers, children and parents.

## Employment profile of service providers

No data were available on the employment profile of service providers.

## Access to services

Specific services such as language education are made available to most of the poorer immigrants; in fact, a language course is obligatory for them. Obligatory language education does not apply to people with temporary study visas or temporary work contracts. It is possible that immigrants who work for a number of years in the Netherlands do not speak any Dutch, unless they choose to attend a course and pay for it themselves. A problem has arisen with the new national Law on Citizenship (which came into force in January 2007), because the rules are very complicated: for example, many subgroups such as unemployed people, mothers and those aged 55 years or more have different arrangements. The law also carries a financial risk for immigrants. An immigrant who fails to pass the required exam within one and a half years has to pay €3,000, while the fee for not joining the course amounts to several hundred euro. The exam is difficult for low-educated immigrants. Although most immigrants like to take language lessons, they do not like the financial risk involved.

In the case of immigrants requiring Dutch translation when consulting a doctor, at the hospital, at a police station or anywhere else, the national Interpretation and Translation Service (*Tolken- en Vertaalcentrum Nederland*, TVCN) can be contacted by phone.

Translating written material and information leaflets has been abandoned, because previous experience has shown that this did not work. In the 1980s, all information leaflets were translated into English, Turkish and Arabic. However, this effort proved ineffective: first, because low-educated Turks and Moroccans did not read the leaflets in Turkish and Arabic, since these groups were more oriented towards using oral communication, and secondly, because the number of languages required has increased significantly, making it simply impossible to translate information into all of these languages.



The Breda municipality acknowledges that barriers still exist to services for certain citizens. Solving this problem is actively promoted. In the coming years, diversity and multiculturalism will become a criterion for service providers, and those that fail to make an effort in this regard may lose (part of) their budgets.

### Monitoring of access and outcomes identified

Breda has no specific monitoring system for access to its services. For the different services, there are different means to monitor access. In some cases, formal and informal client panels have been set up. The Department of Social Services for instance has an official client board, in which migrants are represented. Migrant organisations are also represented in the support group for the Social Support Act (*Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning*, WMO), which also has an important monitoring task.

Participation of immigrants in general surveys is very low. For example, a study on social work and general health had such low participation figures among immigrants that it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions on their views.

There are also no specific data available on outcomes. While data exist in relation to the use of general social work, no specific data are available on satisfaction among migrant clients. In general, based on reports from the staff in the municipality's different organisations, as well as on reports from migrant customers and from migrant organisations, there still appear to be barriers in service provision. If this concerns essential services like income or housing, people usually find a solution, but they are not always satisfied and positive about it. In particular, when it concerns bureaucratic services like complaints about housing or particular neighbourhoods, people feel they are not taken seriously – this was the outcome of interviews carried out by the diversity officer among a focus group during the summer of 2007.

### Cultural awareness of staff

The mayor, the town clerk and the head of the municipality's human resources department attribute a high level of importance to diversity policy, a multicultural approach and an inclusive policy. When considering the answers given by different staff members on different salary levels, it becomes clear that some workers are much more interested in the topic than others. In departments where direct contact with immigrant clients takes place, cultural awareness is usually better than in departments where they never have the chance to meet immigrants. Not all executive staff members and heads of departments are interested in this issue. The good intentions of the people working in the diversity department are not always understood or even refused at some organisational levels.

Some measures to raise cultural awareness were taken. Policymakers could follow a cultural awareness training initiative. Two large external service providers, in the areas of social work and social work for elderly people, received extra support on their multicultural programme. The two providers can become examples for other institutions. At present, the municipality is developing a programme to increase the multicultural awareness of all its service providers. Thus, it organises meetings between policymakers, service providers and groups of clients. It seems that the municipality is succeeding better in its efforts to promote training among service providers than within its own organisation.

### Discrimination against service users

Article 1 of the Dutch constitution states that discrimination on all grounds – race, belief, religion, gender and political conviction – is legally forbidden. The law states that: 'All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.'

Breda co-finances the local anti-discrimination bureau. People can make a complaint at the bureau when they feel discriminated in any way. The bureau can also support legal procedures.

## Special initiatives

Breda has established a Fund for Social Development (*Fonds Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*, FMO) amounting to €10 million for the next four years to support initiatives for citizens, with the following main goals: encouraging citizens to submit ideas for initiatives in their neighbourhoods, increasing social cohesion and supporting groups with difficulties. Once the funding for the social development plan ceases, it has to develop into a sustainable service, which means that the plan has to be either profitable on its own or taken over by a service provider. Since 1 January 2007, a team appointed by the municipality had already received 117 ideas from different communities, many of which were submitted by migrant associations and related to improving the situation in neighbourhoods where immigrants live. The opportunity to submit ideas to the municipality was advertised at an information meeting among migrant associations. When someone comes forward with a project idea that looks attractive, the officials help to develop it into a well-written proposal with an allocated budget. This gives people of all educational levels the opportunity to put forward ideas. For example, one proposal, called '*Spraaksaam*' ('Speak together'), was devised by a teacher and aimed to invite mothers into the classroom and to involve them in their child's lessons. In this way, immigrant mothers feel less isolated, are more involved with their child's school performance and get to know other active mothers in the neighbourhood. Eventually, they might also become interested in joining the activities carried out by other active mothers.

The initiatives of migrants themselves to support their own group in getting information and fair treatment are very important. NGOs and migrants associations involved in such processes can play an important role, firstly in relation to their own members, but secondly in supporting the development of competences in other organisations, including the municipality.

The fact that this actually happens has been highlighted in a local newspaper article entitled 'Natives from Breda also have to integrate', which focused attention on a debate about the local diversity policy. Immigrants and their organisations have managed to convince the municipal institutions that they also have to make adjustments.

## Impact of policy on access to and quality of services

As in the rest of the Netherlands, a previous categorical approach towards ethnic groups has been abolished. For instance, this approach assumed too easily that all Turks had the same needs and all Moroccans had the same needs and that a Christian (Armenian) Turk or a non-religious Kemalist family did not fit into the overall picture and had difficulties to be understood. It led to stigmatisation, which influenced the opinion of these groups among the general public.

The current view towards service provision increasingly focuses on a tailor-made approach. Services should be able to deal with all kinds of clients, and therefore to work from a multicultural perspective. Diversity policies are part of this approach.

The fact that so many services have been privatised in recent times in the Netherlands gives the municipality the chance to request conditions for service providers to work in a diverse manner. In some instances, this can work positively, but there are also examples where increased competition has led to a chaotic offer of service, which is difficult to control. The example of the privatisation of language courses shows that new small organisations can present themselves very well on paper, but in practice some of them lack professionalism and the required equipment to carry out the tasks

required. These have replaced the former monopolist Regional Educational Centre (*Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum*, ROC), which used to run the language courses professionally. The de-professionalisation of language education is taking place throughout the Netherlands, not only in Breda, due to the national policy introduced in January 2007 of forcing municipalities to create competition and offer cheap language courses. Even though 19 girls who studied Dutch at one of Breda's 12 new language institutes signed a petition because they were unhappy about the unprofessional manner of the organisation, this did not prevent the municipality from awarding the institute in question a new contract as it was the cheapest bidder. Under the policy introduced in 2007, it has become more difficult for the municipality to control all of these small companies and to standardise the quality of the service provision.

# Key challenges and lessons for CLIP

The Breda administration has become aware that some form of registration of ethnic background is needed to monitor the municipality's workforce. Although Breda has had a registration policy in place for many years, it is not putting the information to good use.

Breda's high-level officials have many good intentions when it comes to its own personnel. However, the city municipality lacks clear objectives and designated persons who can be held responsible within its own administration. The ongoing attempt to set up a coherent HRM policy seems to be a step in the right direction. Securing the process within the municipal organisation is the next point of focus. Some managers are not yet convinced of the value of hiring immigrants among their staff. The fact that services can improve for all citizens with the input of immigrants is not so obvious for all Breda's officials. Some of them also fail to recognise that the municipal staff is a blueprint of the wider Breda workforce. A streamlined philosophy is necessary from management down to the lower levels in the rank of officials. However, the opinions of those in the lowest ranks must also be heard, as these workers report on problems that they encounter in terms of understanding some of the people they need to help. Altering the staff composition is a subtle process that is not going to work without broad understanding of why it is necessary.

Communication and information are central concepts for the Breda municipality. Old channels of providing information – such as flyers, newspaper advertisements and written promotional material – are not as effective as intermediary networks like the P-team (participation team) and the ambassadors' network. Relations have to be built between city officials and immigrants, through direct contact. The 'meet and greet' gathering, where 60 African immigrants met some 40 officials, and directly talked about their needs, is an example of expanding practical knowledge about the cultures of immigrants and developing 'real' relationships with clients.

Establishing a tailor-made approach is important in the provision of services, while the group approach in the past assumed too much similarity in ethnic groups. General translations of information, which have failed in the past, have been abolished in favour of listening carefully and trying to understand each individual. This is an important principle in all areas of service provision, not only in education and labour provision, but also in relation to social and cultural work.

With the increasing privatisation of government institutions and the increasing number of private companies and organisations competing for government contracts, monitoring service provision carefully is of the utmost importance. The ongoing changes at national level make this difficult. The fact that the quality of service provision is deteriorating in, for instance, language institutes must be prevented. However, this is a problem that has been identified on a national scale, and is not something specific to the Breda municipality.

The idea of encouraging citizens' involvement and using their ideas regarding ways to spend municipal finances has gained ground in many Dutch municipalities. The Breda municipality is reaching out to its population, and citizens can decide together on what they find important. Although this kind of temporary funding often discriminates against low-educated people in other cities, in Breda the number of ideas coming from immigrants is relatively large. Also, in these cases, monitoring is important. Secondly, it is important to ensure that the often low-educated foreign citizens do not get confused by the vast amount of services, organisations and initiatives. In general, Dutch bureaucracy is not easy to grasp and the establishment of more offices does not improve the clarity of the system. Reaching out to citizens can have the opposite effect for immigrants: sometimes, it is not clear to which office they need to go with a particular question.

Overall, Breda is very positively oriented towards immigrants and its general diversity policy is working well. Fortunately, the policy managed to avoid the antics of anti-immigrant politicians at national level. The staff diversity policy of the municipality will most likely see some improvements in the near future, as initiatives in this regard are already on the agenda. Service provision is already quite good in the Breda municipality, although the increasing number of institutions might prove to be too complex for low-educated immigrants.

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# List of persons contacted

The following people were interviewed from 24–25 September 2007:

Ria Bolink, representative responsible for diversity affairs within the Breda municipality

Nico van Mourik, Town Clerk (*gemeente secretaris*), Head of municipal administration

Roy Hildenbrant, Head of Human Resources within the Breda municipality

Jan Franken, Project leader of the Fund for Social Development (*Fonds Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*, FMO), which supports initiatives of citizens

Richard Hoetmeer, Head of Well-being, Information Service, and Integration of Immigrants

Erik-Jan Voeten, member of employee council (*Centrale Ondernemers Raad*)

Ger Emmerink, member of employee commission within the Department of Social Affairs

Genie Hendriks, Policy coordinator for the Social Support Act (*Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning*, WMO) – the law on social support of, for instance, elderly or disabled people

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