



Policy plan Imagine IC

2017-2020
(Abridged version)

POLICY PLAN IMAGINE IC (ABRIDGED VERSION)

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Heritage – Our View

In today's Amsterdam, there are ever more people who know less of each other. The certainties of yesterday are no longer the certainties of today. Living together inevitably leads to friction. At the same time, a new daily life arises offline and online. By means of participatory heritage work, Imagine IC intends to document present social relations. To document them and to improve them – by realizing negotiations between people with highly varying backgrounds who will discuss the heritage of their time, identify it, and, in doing so, will gain insight into other people's positions and ambitions (empathy).

In and from the Bijlmer neighbourhood (Amsterdam-Southeast) – where we are located – we make sure that a growing number of Amsterdam residents have a voice in the heritage of their city.

We do so in two ways:

1. in numerous collection events every year, we document the daily lives of more than 2,000 city residents. This includes the collection visits and collection workshops of secondary school students (from the so-called vmbo and other levels) and students taking vocational training (mbo). In our collection activities, we also intend to permanently establish the varying meanings of the items entering our collections – in other words, we document the arguments supporting their heritage destination. The result of our collection activities is shown in presentations to a large audience (over 100,000 people) all over the city.
2. in our method events and publications, we and 1,000 heritage professionals explore ways of making people participate in the city's heritage. In doing so, we make intangible heritage an integral part of the collection method and of the Amsterdam collection. More specifically, we and our permanent and project-based partners are in the process of developing the notion and method of “emotion networks”, a concept we started working on in the period 2013-2016. The development of our dynamic heritage education, or “heritage wisdom”, is part of this concept.

For the heritage field, our collections and exhibitions constitute cases contributing to the development of participatory collection methodology. For a wider audience, they turn Imagine IC into an amalgam of archive, museum and debate centre in the neighbourhood.

Range and Marketing

Imagine IC does not so much reach an audience *with* its programme, but rather realizes a programme together with an audience. As a participatory heritage institution, we work with

1. heritage makers in the city. These are local residents, pupils from primary and secondary schools and students taking vocational training (mbo). “Making heritage” refers to our dynamic heritage view, in which heritage is a qualification “we” attribute to movable and immovable tangible and intangible items in our lives. In view of the fact that “we” are changing, we must make sure that everybody (will participate(s) in that destination. Among the heritage makers, one also finds “heritage doers”. “Doing heritage” refers to intangible heritage, i.e. collective practices in everyday life, like the feast of Saint Nicholas or ritual slaughter. The term “collective” does not preclude controversy, especially not in our city in the present day. Think, for instance, of the character of Black Pete from the feast of Saint Nicholas.
2. heritage workers in the city, the country and the world. These are employees of heritage institutions, historical circles and cultural societies, students taking heritage training and researchers working in the fields of heritage and related disciplines like anthropology and history. Imagine IC joins up with these heritage workers to turn intangible heritage into an active and integral part of the collection of the city.

To realize a stronger and more intensive involvement, we aim for the preservation of our relations with all the participants and a further enlargement of the impact on heritage professionals. We use both online and offline channels to realize this aim. To enlarge the impact on heritage professionals, we organize (among other things) shadow days for heritage students and a new flagship seminar series, entitled “Stadsgevoel” (“The Feel of the City”). We have seven permanent partners – the OBA (Public Library), Amsterdam City Archives, the Reinwardt Academy, the Tropenmuseum, the Amsterdam Museum, CBK Zuidoost (arts centre), and Bijlmer Parktheater – who ensure an exponential growth of our range and our impact. We put this to practice by directing our attention to participants and public in the three sectors of Amsterdam Southeast (our location), and (teamed up with the OBA) in the surrounding neighbourhoods. We also focus on the city centre of Amsterdam, this being the (primary) location of all partners.

Entrepreneurship and Administration

Imagine IC aims for a firm embedding of intangible heritage in the cultural infrastructure of the city, and for a strong position of the city in the national (and international) field(s) of intangible heritage. To realize this,

1. we intend to strengthen our capacity for the development of a participatory collection methodology. We will do so in the form of an interaction between our two hands-on “laboratories”: the empirical collection laboratory with heritage makers and heritage doers, and the theoretical lab focusing on method development with heritage workers and heritage professionals;
2. we will expand our network and our permanent partnerships. Partners provide efficiency because their practice widens our laboratory space and because through them, our products will reach an audience.

The entrepreneurship of Imagine IC becomes apparent in its ambition to cooperate in order to procure innovation. Imagine IC is an R&D partner for the heritage field. In every company, the R&D department costs money. This is no different in our case – or is it? Imagine IC is not a company with an R&D department. We are an R&D department. As a consequence, the earning capacity of our entire organization is limited. The return on investment is intended for the field that is supposed to realize a heightened involvement of new public. They contribute to our exploitation. However, the matching does not cover the integral cost.

For this reason, we strongly promote fundraising on behalf of the joint programmes. This choice is partly motivated by the fact that the direct revenues are low. This is mainly because our exhibitions (set up in cooperation with the OBA) are freely accessible. The approachability of the public libraries is regarded by us as an investment in a large audience participating in and getting acquainted with heritage in the various “poles” of the city. In 2017-2020, the self-acquired revenues will remain at a level of 25 percent.

Administration and Change

We intend to pursue the gradual increment of capital of the previous period (2013-2016). Nonetheless, the limited earning capacity and small-sized capital constitute a risk. For this reason, both the administrative board and the director are urging for realization. In their midterm evaluation (2015), the City Council of Amsterdam concludes that we succeeded in our efforts. This is encouraging in view of the two greatest changes since 2013-2016, which put a distinctive stamp on the planning for 2017-2020:

1. we will strongly focus on R&D, which will be the centre of our attention. Our own collection and exhibition spaces will provide the relevant samples and discussion pieces. This leads us to the conclusion that there is no need to hold on to a private, exclusive exhibition space. Consequently, as of the spring of 2017, the space will be shared with the OBA after the removal. In our new house, we will share one multifunctional floor, which will offer a decompartmentalized programme in relation to heritage: on the crossroads of archival, museal and library activities.

2. as far as content is concerned, intangible heritage will remain our focus, but given existing relations to international theories in this field and our museal and archive partners, we will also include the material aspects of intangible heritage in our approach (e.g. life in the city is also determined by the physical space you are in, and in order to perform rituals, we usually need tangible objects). Sharing a premises with the OBA gives us the opportunity to proceed with the aforementioned decompartmentalized approach by adding a fourth, classical heritage discipline: library activities and book collections.

Our Position in the Chain and in Society

In the (cultural-historical) heritage field of the city (and outside), Imagine IC is a(n)

1. knowledge platform in the field of intangible heritage. This is a heritage field in development. There is an increasing demand for our programmes and products;
2. expert in the field of participatory collection. This is the collection method for intangible heritage, and museums and archives also show an increasing interest in participatory collecting;
3. partner in the field of “action heritage”. This implies that we intend to deploy heritage work, exhibitions and collections for the benefit of social agendas and improvements;
4. inspiring place for heritage in the neighbourhood. In its own location, Imagine IC is in the centre of metropolitan society.

The Bijlmer is our city centre of Amsterdam. It is our neighbourhood, our case for the city. In cooperation with our partners, we extend our work to other neighbourhoods – to other metropolitan cases. And it is the people taking part in the collection activities in the neighbourhoods of the city, the people supporting and driving the development of collection methodologies who make it all happen. They are the innovative force of Imagine IC in our (cultural-historical) heritage chain. Thanks to them, our R&D moves bottom-up. Thanks to them, Imagine IC is one of a kind.

With them and our permanent and project-based partners, Imagine IC realizes six exhibitions every year, including a multimedia installation about youth culture and a shift in the permanent exhibition (Showcase of Southeast). The permanent exhibition excepted, our exhibitions are regularly transferred to other OBA branches, to schools we cooperate with during project weeks and workshops, and to locations of other (permanent) partners.

We are looking forward to the job! Will you join us?

**The people from Imagine IC,
January 2017**