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# Rotterdam, The Netherlands

a case study from:

Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities  
The Role of Cities and Businesses

| Teresa Juzwiak |



The Hague Process  
on Refugees and Migration



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## **Introduction of the Project and How to Read the Report**

In collaboration with Maastricht University's Graduate School of Governance, The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP) initiated a research project related to the economic and social integration of migrants and refugees in cities, focusing specifically on efforts undertaken by the private sector and city governments – both separately and in partnership – to provide protections and create greater opportunities in employment markets and communities.

The aim of this project is to ascertain how businesses and governments in eight global cities are contributing towards the integration of migrant and refugee populations, either through specialized outreach programmes, the provision of services or targeted funding of non-governmental organizations, and to what extent these contributions can be deepened or expanded. Perhaps a more important goal is to determine whether and how business and cities are currently working together to create opportunities for migrants and refugees and deepen their integration into society. If collaboration between the private and public sectors does not currently exist, the research identifies barriers and opportunities for potential partnerships.

The project consists of a number of components including a literature review highlighting the importance of urban migration flows, as well as the reality that it is at the local – increasingly city level - whereby migrants interact and experience the process of integration. In this context integration is defined at its most pragmatic, as a process in which migrants are empowered to thrive within the context of their destination – in part - with the help of a number of different local stakeholders. In addition to the literature review, fieldwork in eight countries was carried out to identify relevant stakeholders for qualitative semi-structured interviews. In total 56 interviews were conducted.

The results of the research will be released in a number of different formats. Firstly the main report - 'Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities' presents an overview of the research process and draws together the key findings of the project using data gathered from all cities. It is also intended to be a repository of information for interested parties and thus the good practices and partnerships identified are presented in accordance to the policy dimension to which they are most applicable. For example, if a reader is interested in looking at what stakeholders in other cities are doing to facilitate the cultural integration of migrants, the reader can check this section for clear examples of what is happening in the cities of study.

If the reader requires further information about a good practice or wishes to understand if there are enough similarities between cities to be a viable option to consider for policy transfer, then they can consult the accompanying case study reports. These are intended to act as stand-alone reports for an audience interested in the particular case of a city. For ease of reference, the cities included in the study are: Auckland (New Zealand), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Chicago (United States), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Lisbon (Portugal), Nairobi (Kenya), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), and São Paulo (Brazil).

## Introduction

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands. As a port and industrial city, its economic growth has led to large-scale migration, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Entzinger, 2012). Whereas the first migration waves originated from rural areas within the Netherlands, currently Rotterdam receives migrants from a great many countries. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Netherlands received Turkish and Moroccan migrants through the guest worker programmes. Additionally, for the last 20 years, the Netherlands has received a large number of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Somalia. Other immigrant groups include Eastern Europeans (who until recently suffered restrictions for taking up residence and employment), as well as Surinamese and Antilleans who arrived mostly as a consequence of prior political ties between their countries and the Dutch Kingdom. In view of these heterogeneous migration trends, it is believed that Rotterdam is home to 174 nationalities (City of Rotterdam, n.d.), and in 2010 only 52.3 per cent of its population was native Dutch<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, close to 70 per cent of Rotterdam's youth is of migrant origin (Council of Europe, 2012). This data is indicative of the challenges faced by the city regarding migrant integration, not only for first generation migrants, but increasingly for second and third generations as well.

Table 1. Key statistics The Netherlands and Rotterdam

	The Netherlands	Rotterdam
<b>Size (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	41,543 km <sup>2</sup>	1,193 km <sup>2</sup> (Municipality: 325km of which 1/3 is water)
<b>Population</b>	16,795,004	1,010,025 (Municipality: 616,473)
<b>Percentage of foreign-born population <sup>a</sup></b>	10.55%	21.83%
<b>Number of Refugees</b>	74,598 and 10,420 asylum seekers	3,840

<sup>a</sup> Foreign-born population refers only to first generation migrants.

Sources: CIA, 2013; Urban Audit, 2013; CBS, 2013; CBS, 2012; UNHCR, 2013; CBS, 2008.

<sup>1</sup> Native Dutch is defined as a person who was born in the Netherlands, having both parents also born in the Netherlands.

## Migration History

Rotterdam is one of the cities in the Netherlands with the greatest levels of migration, alongside other major cities located in the Randstad region, which includes Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam. Immigration to the Netherlands and more specifically, to Rotterdam, can be described in three main waves.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as a consequence of the city's thriving port and industrial economy, Rotterdam received migrants originating from the rural and southern parts of the country (Entzinger, 2012). In the 1950s and 1960s, demand for foreign labour by Dutch companies increased and recruitment was facilitated and monitored by the Dutch government. Recruitment was first aimed at Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain; and later extended to Greece, (former) Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Morocco. Rotterdam also experienced a significant flow from the former Dutch colonies, including the Antilles, Suriname, and Indonesia. This migration was characterized by mostly young males who arrived to perform temporary work, with no intention of settling. During these years, tens of thousands of labour migrants came to the Netherlands (Lucassen & Penninx, 1994).

The second migration wave took place in the late 1990s as a consequence of labour market shortages, particularly in highly-skilled sectors of the economy. Among the migrants recruited were: IT professionals from India and Bulgaria; doctors from South Africa; nurses from Poland and Indonesia; scientists from China and managers from the United States (IOM, 2010).

Finally, the 2004 EU enlargement had important impacts on migrant flows for Rotterdam and the Netherlands. The government's initial restriction on the flows from the eight new member states (Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary) was only lifted in 2007. However, despite the barriers imposed, the country experienced increased immigration from Central and Eastern European countries throughout the 2000s. Prior to 2007, the main reason for migration to the Netherlands was family reunification (IOM, 2010). Since 2009, however, there has been an increase in labour migration, despite growing unemployment levels for both low and highly skilled workers. Nevertheless, some labour shortages remain and are responsible for attracting a large number of migrants who fill these specialized market need.

Currently, the largest migrant group in the Netherlands is made up of European citizens. However, the influx of third country nationals (non-EU citizens) has been increasing in all skill levels (IOM, 2010). As flows become more and more stable, the growth of migrant communities is attributed mostly to the growing second and third generations. In the long-run, fewer migrants are expected to settle in the Netherlands than in past decades, mainly due to the increased presence of Western migrants, who tend to be more mobile than non-Western migrants (Entzinger, 2012). Refugees and asylum seekers have also been a growing group for the last 20 years (CBS, 2012; OECD, 2011).

The city of Rotterdam consists of thirteen districts. The percentages of non-Western immigrants are highest in districts that are in or close to the city centre: Delfshaven (60 per cent),

Feijenoord (56.9 per cent), Charlois (46.1 per cent), Noord (38.6 per cent), Rotterdam Centrum (36.3 per cent), and Kralingen-Crooswijk (35.8 per cent) (Of total population in these neighbourhoods) (Demant, Maussen, & Rath, 2007). Other areas of migrant concentration include smaller towns in the periphery of Rotterdam, and the southernmost section of the city, where neighbourhoods are known for problems with crime and deprivation. It has been observed that newly arrived migrants tend to settle close to fellow countrymen in the city, which does not contribute to lessening the segregation status of different communities. However, effects of social improvement and inclusion in the labour market have been shown to lead to mobility within the city after the first arrival. For instance, many Moroccan and Turkish inhabitants tend to move within the city limits, from old buildings from the nineteenth and early twentieth century to post-Second World War buildings. Partially due to these ensuing movements, segregation in Rotterdam had decreased between 2000 and 2010 among immigrant groups; however, it has increased among the native Dutch (Scheffer, 2012).

The Rotterdam port is the dominant economic activity in the city and ensures employment opportunities for workers of all skill levels, both native Dutch and those with migrant origins. Most migrant workers however are employed in the agriculture, horticulture, hospitality, healthcare, tourism, research, ICT, and business management sectors. Labour characteristics differ significantly between native Dutch and migrant workers. For instance, migrants tend to have lower employment rates than native Dutch (Entzinger, 2012). Moreover, annual income levels of non-Western migrants are, on average, significantly lower than those of the native Dutch (21,200€, and 28,600€, respectively, in 2008). This could be one of the factors that induce many migrants to establish their own businesses, particularly if they reside in urban areas where migrant communities are established. Among common business initiatives are restaurants, clothing repair shops, and butcheries. However, small business ownership varies across migrant groups: in particular the Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani communities appear as well-established entrepreneurs (IOM, 2010).

Settlement is also influenced by labour market factors such as the company for which a migrant works and the level of income achieved. Employees with higher salaries tend to be more mobile and stay in the Netherlands for shorter periods of time. On the other hand, non-Western migrants with low salaries have a higher chance of remaining in the Netherlands (van Gaalen & Bloemendal, 2011).

## **Policy framework**

In the Netherlands, immigration matters concerning entry regulations and restrictions, visa concessions and authorizations are a competency of the national state. The national government's main tasks with regards to migration policies are the legal status as well as the enforcement of the law, tasks that exceed the capacity and responsibility of the local governments (Entzinger, 2012). However, one aspect of immigration policies has been shifted back and forth over the years between the national state and local authorities: migrant integration.



The first integration courses were introduced in 1998 when cities were given the responsibility of providing migrants with the necessary opportunities to participate in language and orientation courses. Courses were offered mainly to newcomers, but could also be attended by settled migrants, on a voluntary basis, and were financed by the local governments. Furthermore, no requirements were imposed regarding the language proficiency which had to be obtained at the end of the process (Klaver & Odé, 2012). In a second stage, the national government became extensively involved in fostering and monitoring migrant integration. It was only in 2003 that, as a consequence of a decentralization policy, integration responsibilities were once more handed down from the national government to local authorities. This is in line with the idea that cities must be responsible for the well-being of their citizens, which includes their integration into the city (Entzinger, 2012). With this decentralization, cities became responsible for providing and monitoring the integration framework, including language and civic courses, labour inclusion policies, and social assistance. During this time, municipalities often contracted private sector providers and NGOs to develop and implement such initiatives (IOM, 2010, part 2).

However, in January 2013, an amended Civic Integration Act came into force, leading to an important change from the “extensive government involvement in fostering integration to a strong emphasis on individual responsibility” (Klaver & Odé, 2012, pg. 156). This new policy is aimed at centralizing integration requirements and procedures, removing all responsibilities from municipalities, while highlighting the migrants’ responsibility towards their own integration.

The new integration policy not only makes migrants responsible for their own achievements regarding language proficiency and knowledge of Dutch society, but imposes stricter controls and penalties for those who fail to pass the integration test. Migrants arriving in the Netherlands after January 2013 must arrange all aspects of integration, including payment of courses and examinations. In some cases, those with insufficient funds are entitled to government loans. According to the new legislation, integration efforts are also monitored from the start of the process, and migrants who fail to comply may lose their residence permits (with exception of asylum seekers) or be subject to a fine (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). Furthermore, according to the new legislation, migrants are obliged to pass the exam within three years of arrival to the Netherlands. In some cases, particularly for family reunification, language and civic integration exams may also be applied abroad, before arrival of the potential migrant. Another change concerning the role of municipalities is that before the 2013 amendment, they were responsible for determining who was subject to integration requirements, whereas this function has now been allocated to DUO (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap n.d., Ministry of Education, Culture and Science).

The January 2013 Act also extends the civic integration obligation by including a component to promote labour market participation. This includes recognition of qualifications and competencies obtained abroad. Furthermore, the Act increases the number of years in which migrants become eligible for participation in local elections, for qualification for naturalization, and to be able to maintain residence rights when applying for social assistance benefits from five to seven years of residence. Moreover, individuals who do not speak Dutch (including all European

citizens, third country nationals, and Dutch native) will not be eligible for social assistance benefit (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.).

With this new piece of legislation, integration policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, while migration and asylum remain under responsibility of the Ministry of Security and Justice (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). However, for migrants who started the process before January, 2013, local authorities are still responsible for providing and funding civic integration courses and exams (Blair, 2012).

Among the reasons cited by the Dutch government for this change in policy are: to encourage social entrepreneurship among the unemployed; improve parent involvement in child education and upbringing; tackle migrant youth unemployment; deal with discrimination; stimulate the acceptance of homosexuality among ethnic minorities and address forced marriage issues.

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the national normative legal framework and the institutional framework for immigration and refuge the Netherlands.

Table 2. National normative legal framework

Law	Content
<b>Besluit gelijkstelling niet-Nederlanders met Nederlanders (Algemene Ouderdomswet) (1985)</b>	According to this law Non-Dutch are equated with Dutch citizens before the ‘Algemene Ouderdomswet’ (General Old Age Act): after they have reached the age of 20 and lived in the Netherlands for at least fifteen years without interruption, or if they have lived in the Netherlands during the five years before reaching the age of 65 without interruption.
<b>Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen (1995)</b>	This law regulates the use of foreign labour force by Dutch employers. It is illegal for foreigners to work in the Netherlands without a work permit (unless exceptions are applicable).
<b>Vreemdelingenwet (2000)</b>	This law contains the Dutch regulations on access and residence of foreigners, border control, departure and deportation and the policy on asylum.
<b>Wet gemeentelijke Antidiscriminatievoorzieningen (2009)</b>	This law came into force to provide citizens with access to anti-discrimination services. The anti-discrimination services are organized at the municipal level and have the task to provide independent support to persons with complaints about discrimination, and to register these complaints.
<b>Wet Modern Migratiebeleid (2013)</b>	This law regulates admission to the Netherlands and has the aim of making admission procedures faster and more efficient. From the moment this law came into force, residence permits

	were be valid for a longer time period, which decreases administrative burdens for individuals and employers. The legislation also introduces a fine for employers who do not have the correct permits for their employees (max. €3000). Selectiveness is the basis of the Modern Migration Law.
<b>Nieuwe Wet Inburgering (2013)</b>	This law regulates the integration duty of foreigners in the Netherlands. Foreigners are obliged to integrate (pass the integration exam) in the Netherlands. The Dutch integration law is a renewed version of the earlier integration law (2006). The basis of the new integration law is own responsibility of the foreigner.

Sources: (Government of the Netherlands, 1985, 1995, 2000, 2013, 2014)

The Netherlands is signatory to most international conventions that affect the rights or migrants and refugees. However, it is yet to sign the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).

Table 3. Institutional framework at the national level

<b>Governmental Institution</b>	<b>Mandate</b>
<b>Ministry of Safety and Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Safety and Justice is responsible law enforcement in the Netherlands</li> </ul>
<b>De Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND) (the Immigration and naturalization service)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes decisions on behalf of the Ministry of Safety and Justice based on the applicable regulations</li> <li>• Coordinates and handles regularization-, naturalization- and asylum applications</li> <li>• The IND is an executive body of the Dutch immigration policy</li> </ul>
<b>Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes decisions on behalf of the Ministry of Safety and Justice based on the applicable regulations</li> <li>• Is responsible for the execution of the return policy, directing the return of foreigners who have no right to stay in the Netherlands</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the integration and adoption of foreigners in the Netherlands</li> <li>• Responsible for compliance with the laws on labour affairs</li> <li>• Responsible for the availability of anti-discrimination services</li> </ul>

<b>De Arbeidsinspectie (Labour inspection)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the control on the compliance with the law on Foreign labour and Law on minimum earnings and minimum vacation benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Anti-discriminatie Bureaus (Anti-discrimination Agencies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationally set up agencies where people can report discrimination, get support and advice how to deal with discrimination</li> <li>• Helps the government prevent and combat discrimination</li> </ul>
<b>Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service established by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)</li> <li>• Responsible for directing the integration of foreigners that have integration duty after the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2013, want to be naturalized or want to integrate voluntarily</li> <li>• Arranges the national integration exams</li> <li>• Supplies loan for foreigners to pay for their integration course (only for courses approved by Blik op Werk)</li> </ul>
<b>Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (SCP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National organization for scientific research on societal and cultural topics (also on integration and immigration)</li> <li>• Formally the SCP is a body of the Ministry of Civil Health, Well-being and Sports</li> </ul>

Despite the switching responsibilities given to municipalities at different periods of time regarding migrant integration policy, Rotterdam is known for having pursued its own integration policy for decades. Although cities have no competency over the legal status of migrants, they are able to act in a number of socio-economic areas that deeply impact on the lives of migrants in the city (i.e. housing, social services, healthcare, sports, culture, water supply, and public schooling (Council of Europe, 2012; Entzinger, 2012).

Rotterdam has a single harmonized policy for all its citizens, regardless of origin or ethnic background, in which all are considered as part of a collective urban community. In fact, Rotterdam abolished policies focusing specifically on migrant integration, in order to develop and implement policies that promote participation. It is considered that integration policies do not apply anymore, as more than half of Rotterdam's population are immigrants.

The main topics in Rotterdam's participation [integration] policy are the prevention of high concentrations of migrant populations in the same area, the implementation of a vigorous civic integration policy, the systematic and professional support of immigrant organizations to include them in the policy-making process, as well as the reduction of Islamic extremism and participation through organizations (Entzinger, 2012).

According to Entzinger (2012), integration policies in Rotterdam have been consistent over years, despite changes in the local government composition. However, as a consequence of the latest Civic Integration Act of 2013 and the lack of funds available due to the global crisis, the city government has reduced the number of institutions that deal specifically with participation. In accordance with its participation policy, fewer institutions are needed to provide services aimed at all its inhabitants. Some institutions, however, remain active, such as the expat desk, an NGO combating discrimination and an NGO that engages in dialogue. Whereas the budget for the expat desk has remained the same over recent years, the budget for civil society has decreased. In Rotterdam, education and attracting talent are perceived as highly important for city development.

## Methodology

The sample for Rotterdam was created through a combination of web search and respondent referrals. In some cases, those who were asked to participate did not feel that their work was relevant to the research question. In total six qualitative interviews were conducted (table 5). Five were conducted in person and one by telephone. These include three interviews with the city government, two interviews with civil society and one interview with the private sector (table 6). Unfortunately, the private sector is not well represented in this sample. For instance, recruitment agencies such as Randstad or initiatives by major companies such as Shell are lacking. Shell for instance offers “relocation packages” that offer employees various services that touch upon integration in Rotterdam. The recent reduction in the number of active organizations in the field of migrant and refugee integration within the city of Rotterdam was also a major constraint towards obtaining relevant information for this study.

Table 4. Response rate for Rotterdam

City	Contacted	Replies	Rejections	Non-replies	Interviewed	Interview response rate
Rotterdam	18	11	5	7	6	55%

Table 5. Sample size by category in Rotterdam

Respondent Type	Number of Interviews
Policy Maker/Municipal Administrator	2
Practitioners	1
Businesses	1
Civil Society	2
Total	6

## Findings

The tables below depict the systematization of the main results from the policy review and interviews. Table 6 categorizes the programmes and services offered by the interviewed institutions aimed at facilitating the integration of migrants and refugees. The table follows the policy dimensions determined for this study: social, cultural and religious, legal, political, and economic.

The low number of initiatives identified in Rotterdam (n=18) could be attributed to the recent change in strategy of the city government, according to which integration is no longer an issue to be addressed by the city government. Most of the initiatives fall under the social and the cultural dimensions, including aspects such as dialogue and connecting people (n=3) and housing (n=2), for the first; and language courses (n=4), for the latter.

Table 7 lists and describes all of the partnerships identified through the interviews. In Rotterdam only nine partnerships were identified, most of which are between civic society, universities and knowledge centres. Only one public-private partnership was identified relating to agreements made between the city government and recruitment agencies in order to provide migrants with language courses and vocational training. During the interviews, the city government expressed the desire to pursue partnerships with major organizations such as Shell or Unilever. The Expat Desk also expressed interest in developing partnerships with the business sector, however, noting the difficulty due to the fact that governmental organizations are not allowed to have preferences regarding the provision of services or supplies. Other partnerships in the city involve third actors and public institutions (n=7).

Table 6. City policies, programmes and services provided to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees according to policy dimensions retrieved from the interviews in Rotterdam

Typology	Stakeholder	Social	Cultural	Legal	Political	Economic	Observations
Policy-maker	Expat desk	Connecting people Housing	Language	Registering		Bank account	
	City government		Language courses (to parents)	Integration courses/registering			Much involvement in schools
Practitioner	n/a						
Business representatives	Recruitment agencies		Language			Professional Training	
Civil Society	Day of Dialogue	Dialogue	Cultural information				Funded by city government
	RADAR	Dialogue	Anti-discrimination training		Advocacy		Funded by city government
	Knowledge Centre for Diversity						Funded by city government
	VluchtelingenWerk	Housing	Language	Legal status		Employment	

Table 7. Partnerships for migrant and refugee integration programmes in Rotterdam

Stakeholder	Partner	Typology of partner	Benefit / Service	Description of Partnership
City government	Recruitment agencies: Tempo Team	Public-Private	Language, Professional training	Agreement
	RADAR	Public-civil society	Research	Funding
	SPIOR	Public-civil society		Funding of specific project
	Knowledge Centre for Diversity	Public-civil society	Research	Funding
	Day of Dialogue	Public-civil society		Funding
	Erasmus university	Public		
RADAR	Local schools	Public		Parent involvement
	Police	Civil society-public	Diversity management Training	RADAR delivers a service
	ICT company	Civil society-private	Diversity management Training	RADAR delivers a service

### City Government

Rotterdam has a long tradition of promoting integration policies at a local level. More recently, the city has changed its strategy by abandoning its integration policies and by focusing on the facilitation of participation. The central theme in this new approach is: ‘All Rotterdammers take part in and feel part of the city’, regardless of ethnic origin or background. This policy doesn’t target any specific groups of migrants, and no longer differentiates between first and second generations. Furthermore, little differentiation is made between refugees and labour migrants.

The city of Rotterdam has been committed to cultural diversity since 1998 in terms of using the potential of an ethnically diverse population with different talents. Some examples of practices that have been previously in place include the attention given to the composition of city administration and public administration staff, as well as the interest in encouraging immigrant organizations to participate in the policy-making process. In comparison with other major Dutch cities, minorities in Rotterdam are more socially and politically involved, partly due to their capacity to act collectively through organizations.



This has been particularly observed among Islamic communities, which are also perceived as being less extreme than in other parts of the country (Uitermark, 2010, pg. 280)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, in the Feijenoord area of the city a project was implemented by the city government in cooperation with the regional NGO “Stimulans” to increase immigrant voters’ participation in elections and politics. This was achieved through the establishment of a political café, information meetings and discussions with migrant organizations and migrant candidates, election broadcasts in six different languages, as well as interviews and articles in local newspapers and posters of migrant candidates (Hamburger, 2003).

Among the few initiatives that are still in place delivering services specific to migrants, one of the most prominent is the Expat Desk. Established by the municipality in 2008; its objective is to minimize the existing bureaucracy and difficulties encountered by highly skilled migrants when settling in the city. According to the respondent from the Expat Desk, it is very important that highly skilled migrants settle quickly in order to be able to start work, as soon as possible. The Rotterdam Expat Desk, the second of its kind, modelled on the one in Amsterdam, works directly with migrants and with human resource departments in big international companies. Relocation agents and the Expat Desk work together for big clients, in order to provide migrants with appointments and other matters, given the ability of the Expat Desk to book priority appointments at city hall. The Expat Desk also offers services targeted at non-EU citizens while they are still abroad. It is important to note that the services offered by the Expat Desk are not considered ‘integration services’ since the highly skilled usually do not constitute a group with integration duties; however, they may still be interested in learning the Dutch language and the way of life.

The Expat Desk offers its services to individuals directly, and at the same time targets human resource departments of internationalized companies. Currently, approximately 80 per cent of the targeted companies are now clients of the Expat Desk, which provides its services free of charge and without discrimination. Some of the areas in which the Expat Desk aids migrants are: legal procedures, housing, education, health care assistance, banking, and insurance, among others. Research indicates that client satisfaction rates with the services provided are 81 per cent. Despite recent budgetary cuts in integration initiatives, the budget for the Expat Desk has remained the same until the date this study was conducted (Rotterdam Investment Agency, n.d.).

The Expat Desk indicated interest in forming future partnerships with the private sector; however, this is not a simple matter, once government organizations are no longer allowed to show preference for specific service suppliers. Some of the future partnerships include collaboration with brokers, language institutes, and childcare facilities.

The interview with the Expat Desk also revealed that expats often start integration initiatives of their own, where both expats and native Dutch meet to exchange cultural knowledge and perceptions. Some of these meetings may be in the form of a cooking course or other recreational activities.

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<sup>2</sup> *Apud* Entzinger, 2012

Since the 1990s, the municipality subsidizes SPIOR, a platform of Islamic organizations. As previously discussed, Rotterdam is known for engaging minority organizations in the policy-making process, and SPIOR represents 42 organizations, including communities of women and youth organizations, in the decision-making process, particularly regarding diversity issues. SPIOR has previously been involved in policies for the building of mosques and regulation and improvement of housing situation for Islamic communities.

Furthermore, after the 9/11 the Netherlands witnessed an increase in discrimination against the Muslim population, despite extensive anti-discrimination legislation. This, together with the deaths of Pim Fortuyn<sup>3</sup> in 2002, and Theo van Gogh<sup>4</sup> in 2004, led the city to address Islam as an obstacle for integration policy. For this purpose, the project “Islam and Integration” was implemented between 2003 and 2005, aimed at increasing the interaction spaces and information sharing between Muslims in Rotterdam and other communities. The project organized a series of expert meetings and public debates, also known as ‘Islam Debates’, attracting a large number of high profile politicians, scholars, and experts, as well as individuals from all backgrounds (Demant et al., 2007). The topics discussed were as diverse as the height of the minarets of new mosques, education and the current economic situation (EUMC, 2006). The debates resulted in the so-called ‘Rotterdam Code’, a code of conduct for all Rotterdammers, aimed at fostering mutual respect among citizens of different backgrounds.

Currently SPIOR only receives a small budget for projects, and is funded by the government through the “*Kennis Center Diversiteit*” (Knowledge Centre Diversity).

As was evidenced through the interviews, the city government works closely with local schools (more than required by the national government), since education is considered to be key for both Rotterdam’s development, as well to increase participation of immigrants. Parents of migrant children are often involved in schools, where they not only aid their children and engage with their education, but also take the opportunity to learn the Dutch language and make contact with other parents. Currently, a programme called “*Goed, Beter, Best*” (Good, Better, Best) places a father, a mother, or sometimes even a grandmother in the classroom together with the child to incentivize joint learning. The results of this programme have been positive, once (grand) parents become more and more motivated to learn the language and participate. This programme is run mostly on a voluntary basis, due to the lack of funds.

The city also demonstrated interest in cooperating closely with universities, as they constitute both centres for education, as well as for knowledge transfer, and are able to produce research on topics of interest to the city, particularly migrant welfare and integration.

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<sup>3</sup> Black, I., & Osborn, A. (2002, May 7). Assassination stuns Europe: Dutch far right leader gunned down. *World news | The Guardian*. Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/07/politics.thefarright>

<sup>4</sup> BBC NEWS | Europe | Gunman kills Dutch film director. (2004, November 2). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3974179.stm>

In spite of the local efforts, the city of Rotterdam has been greatly impacted by the recent changes to the Civic Integration Act that became effective in January, 2013. This new policy apart from setting stricter integration requirements, decentralizing the integration course and examination system and placing more responsibilities on migrants themselves, also has budgetary consequences for cities. According to the new provisions, the budget allocated to cities for immigrant integration will be reduced from 197 million Euros in 2012 to zero in 2014 (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). Some of the respondents viewed the withdrawal of funding as a step back from previous accomplishments in migrant and refugee integration and detrimental to future efforts. Other concerns raised by this policy regard the loss of residence permit for migrants who fail to complete the civic integration test and the increase in the number of irregular migrants in the city, as a possible consequence. Moreover, migrants may feel less encouraged to pursue courses beyond the levels required for integration, given the high cost that is placed on them from the beginning of the integration process (Klaver & Odé, 2012).

Although local authorities are no longer responsible for providing language and civic integration courses, four of the seven identified stakeholders offering integration services to migrants provide language courses. In Rotterdam, language is considered one of the most important aspects of integration. However, the fact that migrants must now bear all costs associated with their integration, including language courses, may be an opportunity for more informal language support systems to emerge.

Rotterdam also has a long established tradition of cooperating and engaging in knowledge transfer networks with other cities around the world. Initially this was done by 'twinning' with other cities, both in developing and in developed countries. These bilateral agreements had the objective of fostering communication and cooperation between different cities. In 1992, Rotterdam was twinned with 30 cities, many more than the average Dutch city (City of Rotterdam, 2010). However, in the late 1990s, the twinning concept was abandoned in favour of more multilateral cooperation models, such as the global city networks. For instance in 2006, together with the European Commission and Eurocities, Rotterdam initiated the Integrating Cities conference, which was aimed at improving dialogue between major European cities, focusing on the city as the central point of interaction for all. Rotterdam is also involved in the Social Affairs Forum of Eurocities, in the Global Forum on Shared Societies and the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty.

Moreover, Rotterdam maintains close ties with the so-called 'countries with special bond', namely, Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, Dutch Antilles, and Cape Verde. Initially, these countries were referred to as origin countries, since most of the migrant population in the Netherlands was born in one of them. However, with the increase of the second and third generations, it was decided that this term no longer reflected the reality of the population. Cooperation with the aforementioned countries include initiatives for economic development, socio-cultural cooperation, and concrete projects relating to knowledge transfer and experience by municipal departments, cultural exchanges, and trade relations.

Interview respondents in Rotterdam also reported working in close collaboration with Amsterdam and other Dutch cities regarding specific programmes for integration, such as the Expat Desk and *Stitching Nederland in Dialoog* (Foundation The Netherlands in Dialogue).

## **Businesses**

Rotterdam is a dynamic city and an economic hub, with the capacity to attract both low and highly skilled migrants, to fill labour market shortages, increase competition and improve creativity. Businesses, therefore, and particularly in the absence of a government sponsored comprehensive integration policy, constitute an important actor to ensure the well-being of both newly arrived migrants and of those that are already settled. Many of the big international companies provide own programmes for migrant integration through relocation services or their own human resource department (i.e. Unilever, Shell, Erasmus University, and many of the port related companies).

Additionally, a number of private institutions address migrant integration issues through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), such as: The Start Foundation creates and preserves employment opportunities, while also facilitating access to the labour market for disadvantaged individuals or those who have limited access to the labour market in the Netherlands, including migrants<sup>5</sup>. Joulz is also a private corporation that supports projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods under their CSR banner<sup>6</sup>. Ecorys, a research and policy oriented institution also supports an initiative of the municipality of Rotterdam to improve living conditions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Rotterdam south<sup>7</sup>. KPMG, a company that provides audit, tax, and advisory services, sponsors and judges the ECHO Awards, a national incentive for immigrant talent winners<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, it is important to note that recruitment agencies greatly affect immigrant integration in, as was pointed out by respondents. The city government raised the issue that recruitment agencies and housing organizations are not taking any responsibility in assisting migrant workers, resulting in a number of problems regarding integration. The government refers mainly to Polish migrants and the new migration flows from Bulgaria and Romania. This type of worker: temporary and from the European Union, is not required to fulfil integration requirements, and is not targeted by the Expat Desk. In order to mitigate such effects, the city government now has Polish employees working throughout the city to inform Polish workers about the “importance of registering, housing and education”. In addition, the city government is considering subsidizing recruitment agencies, so that they can assist with language courses, legal matters and training.

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<sup>5</sup> Start Foundation - About us. (2013). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from [http://www.startfoundation.nl/english/about\\_us](http://www.startfoundation.nl/english/about_us)

<sup>6</sup> ISSUU - Joulz magazine “Joulz en MVO” by Joulz. (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from [http://issuu.com/joulz/docs/joulz\\_magazine\\_april?e=5009060/2162288](http://issuu.com/joulz/docs/joulz_magazine_april?e=5009060/2162288)

<sup>7</sup> Effectieve interventies voor Rotterdam Zuid - Ecorys Nederland. (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://www.ecorys.nl/nl/related/page/106>

<sup>8</sup> Echo Award. (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://www.echo-net.nl/vervolg.php?id=9>

### Third actors

One of the main issues in Rotterdam regarding migrant integration that was raised by interviewees, as well as being well documented in the literature, is that of discrimination. Close to 15 per cent of Rotterdammers feel discriminated against, Moroccans (26 per cent) and Turkish (24 per cent) being the groups that most suffer from it. However, 11 per cent of the native Dutch population also report feeling discriminated against (Entzinger, 2012). These numbers are a cause for concern, considering the high levels of non-Dutch native population that resides in Rotterdam and the diversity of its population.

Aiming to combat such issues, in 1983 RADAR<sup>9</sup>, one of the first anti-discrimination agencies in the Netherlands was founded under an initiative of the City Council. RADAR is responsible for registering and monitoring all discrimination complaints. Moreover, aiming to promote equality and combat discrimination, the organization engages in research, analysis and reporting. Besides this, RADAR offers advice and support to citizens, as well as workshops and training courses on empowerment. It has been established for over 30 years, a period in which it has been responsible for tackling institutionalized discrimination.

The organization receives between 400 and 500 complaints a year and according to data provided by RADAR, the Moroccans and Antilleans are the communities that most experience discrimination. One of the most common forms of discrimination occurs in the city's nightlife, since bars and discos have discriminatory policies for access. This is of particular concern because separating migrants into different social settings or not giving them equal treatment will greatly affect integration.

RADAR also sees great advantage in engaging in partnerships, both to increase their funding opportunities and to deliver services to diverse populations. Half of the organization's operations are funded by the government. However, due to budgetary constraints RADAR also seeks funding from European organizations and the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna. Eventually, the organization will receive funding from other international funds or from other municipalities who request specific services. Other partnerships include a current project with an ICT company that addresses integrity, norms, and values. RADAR also works with the police through training programmes. This is particularly important given that a number of complaints issued relate to the police and their attitude, especially towards young people.

In 2002, during a period of social tension regarding immigration, integration and management of diversity within the city, the first Day of Dialogue was held in Rotterdam. This event was aimed at bringing people from different backgrounds together to share experiences and ideas. The initiative was a success with close to 24,000 attendees, and was repeated again the following years. Currently, the Foundation *The Netherlands in Dialogue*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Radar - About RADAR. (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://radar.nl/read/radar-english>

<sup>10</sup> Over Nederland in Dialoog. (n.d.). Retrieved January 29, 2014, from <http://www.nederlandindialoog.nl/Over-Nederland-in-Dialoog/>

made up of 80 municipalities that organize the Day of Dialogue. Each year, the dialogue addresses a different theme with the objective of increasing shared knowledge and improving cohesion among people. A number of stakeholders participate in the dialogues, including museums, churches, mosques and Hindu temples, banks, and other businesses. Yearly, the project counts on a 30,000 Euro budget that covers operation and logistics costs. In Rotterdam, unlike other cities, the city government is the main source of funding and potentially business corporations will also contribute. The event, however, is a voluntary initiative.

The Foundation has engaged in a number of partnerships to bring the dialogues to specific groups. For instance, in a joint project with SPIOR, 50 Muslim youths were interviewed about their lives and their relationship with the city of Rotterdam. Rabobank has also recently implemented a project in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature and Foundation The Netherlands in Dialogue, targeting young people, creating dialogues on environment, life-style and sustainability. Another partnership involves the supermarket chain Albert Heijn, which organized a dialogue table, as a part of the Day of Dialogue events.

## **Conclusion**

In the recent past, Rotterdam implemented many programmes and projects on integration. However, in the last year, due partially to the implementation of the amended Civic Integration Act, many projects and programmes stopped being operational and only a handful of actors remain active in the field of integration or what Rotterdam calls “participation”. The city recently changed its strategy by abandoning its integration policies and by focusing on the facilitation of participation. Integration is no longer considered to be relevant, due to the fact that more than half of the population are immigrants. The city government therefore opted for including migrants in mainstream policies, as opposed to targeting individual groups or types of migrants. On the other hand, the national government has also limited the services offered for integration and removed the responsibility from municipalities. In that way, migrants are responsible for their own integration. The lack of consistent programmes and services to facilitate migrant integration, both upon arrival and after settlement, at either the city or national level could be an area of concern.

Currently, there is uncertainty regarding the situation of migrants in Rotterdam. While a small number of organizations still exist and aim to facilitate participation of migrant groups and several ad-hoc initiatives have been reported throughout the last few years, a large gap has been left. This gap could be an opportunity for businesses (employers and recruitment agencies) to engage in the integration of migrants given their interest in hiring a diverse workforce and achieving optimal skill-matching. On the other hand, some of the provisions contained in the amended Civic Integration Act could deter migrants from participating in city life. For instance, removing residency rights for those who fail to accomplish the integration exam, and increasing the years of residency necessary to achieve certain rights as voting in local elections, applying for citizenship, and requesting social

benefits. The new focus on membership and status as opposed to performance and equality resembles immigrant control as opposed to actual integration policies (Klaver & Odé, 2012).

While services available to immigrants are limited and the budget destined to civil society has been dramatically reduced, the budget for the expat desk has however, remained the same over recent years. The city of Rotterdam considers the attraction of skilled labour and talent as highly important. In accordance with Rotterdam's internationalization and diversity, the city government would like to explore further partnerships with major international organizations such as Shell and Unilever as a strategy for development and attraction of highly skilled migrants. However, this focus on the highly skilled contradicts the policy of "participation" and non-targeting of migrants which has been adopted by Rotterdam, in recent years. The Expat Desk, although not considered to be delivering integration per se, clearly targets highly skilled and expats in the services they deliver, while other more vulnerable groups have been deprived of specific programmes. In light of this, the distinction made between types of immigrants and the resulting discrimination are still problems to be addressed.

There were some good practices identified through the interviews. For instance, the investment of the city government in education and specifically the involvement of parents of migrant children have shown positive results in helping parents of migrants to learn the language and increasing their involvement in their children's education. The Expat Desk also constitutes an interesting initiative by the city government, once it is capable of providing services both to individuals and companies. Although not considered an integration service, the Expat Desk aims to make arrival and settlement easier and faster for highly skilled migrants. This model could be scaled up to include assistance to other groups of migrants, including temporary workers, asylum seekers and those who arrive through family reunification.

One last challenge that must be addressed in the future is that of the growing second and third generations. Rotterdam has already taken steps forward by eliminating the distinction of policies between different generations of migrants. However, in a context where third generations are searching for an identity, ideas such as who is 'native Dutch' and who is an 'immigrant' will have to be reconsidered (Scheffer, 2012).

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