

**THE ATLANTIC WORLD
AND THE DUTCH, 1500-2000**

Country Report Suriname

'The Atlantic World and the Dutch' (AWAD)

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1. Introduction

This report presents the overall results of the Suriname country study of ‘the Atlantic World and the Dutch’ (AWAD). It is based on the results of two pilot studies on immaterial heritage and material heritage respectively, and on a country workshop held in Suriname with representatives of the heritage institutions.

Based on the pilot studies and discussions during the workshop, the shared Dutch-Surinamese heritage is conceptualized as the heritage which was crystallized in intangible and tangible forms during the Dutch presence in Suriname. It is continually created and recreated by people and communities within and outside Suriname, in response to their social and economic environment and their conditions of existence. The implication is that the shared heritage is not synonymous with the (black) Atlantic World, because it includes the heritage of all the people, ethnic groups and communities since Dutch colonial time. This includes immigrant groups and their descendants in Suriname as well as their links to other regions in the world, in particular Asia.

Typical social, cultural and economic traditions of these immigrant groups were integrated and recognized in the celebration of the Queen’s birthday and related activities such as the konfryari fair. The celebration of the Queen’s birthday shows how the cultural heritage is being created and recreated by communities, in response to their social and economic environment and their conditions of existence. It provided people with a sense of identity while it sustained and developed the diversity of the Surinamese society. In addition, economic opportunities were created. This amalgamation of creating the shared cultural heritage and creating economic opportunities to survive, clearly demonstrates that culture cannot easily be separated from the urge for social and economic survival. Therefore, culture is a collective desire of a group to create, survive and develop, which is crystallized in the intangible and tangible heritage as a response to the changing environment.

The pilot studies were conducted from February to August 2006. The first pilot on the immaterial heritage is about the oral history expertise and material in Suriname, with focus on key issues, such as projects in the past, conservation and accessibility of material. Two case studies are presented to illustrate the meaning and practice of oral history: The first case is about an institution and the second is on the celebration of the queen’s birthday.

The second pilot on the material heritage consists of two parts. The first part is on archives, museums, libraries and documentation centers. The second part highlights the architecture, buildings and sites of Suriname. Two case studies are presented to illustrate the shared Surinamese- Dutch material heritage. The first case is on the archives of the districts commissioners in Suriname. The second is a case of the Foundation “Oranjetuin; an old burial ground that is situated in the heart of the capital Paramaribo.

The third source of this report consists of the findings of the AWAD country workshop in which representatives of heritage institutions participated. A total of 34 persons, divided over 22 organizations, participated in this activity that was held from July 13 to 15, 2006 in Paramaribo. The workshop objectives were:

- to develop an understanding of the Surinamese cultural field including the strengths and weaknesses;

- to develop an understanding in existing and preferred forms of cooperation;
- assessing priorities, how to achieve the objectives and how to guarantee continuities;
- to formulate future projects where an international orientation is expected.

The main components of the workshop were an overview of the project/website with the country pilots of ‘the Atlantic World and the Dutch (AWAD)’ (3 presentations); shared immaterial heritage Suriname-the Netherlands (2 presentations); shared material heritage Suriname-the Netherlands (4 presentations).

Representatives of heritage institutions evaluated their specific heritage area and three working group sessions were held followed by plenary discussions. Based on the presentations and discussions an overview was presented of priorities and contours of joint shared heritage projects in Suriname, followed by general conclusions. The workshop was closed with a presentation/ exhibition of traditional Creole ‘kotomisi’ dresses, and a dance performance on Surinamese and Latin music. Following the introduction, the report contains three chapters: Immaterial heritage, material heritage, conclusions and joint recommendations and future projects.

2. Immaterial heritage

In post colonial Suriname historical sources constitute a fundamental problem to understand the history and culture of this society from below. History writing and historical research are predominantly based on written sources, which often prevent an understanding of the social reality from the perspective of the people in the street. However, it is precisely the voice of the culturally diverse people that reflects the richness of material and oral sources as well as oral traditions of the Surinamese society. Today the use of oral history is more exception than a rule in formal education and local research activities. Oral history is defined as ‘the interviewing of persons or collectivities in the events of the past for the purpose of historical reconstruction. Oral tradition, described as ‘stories that societies have passed along in spoken form from generation to generation’, should be distinguished from ‘oral history’ (Ritchie 2003). This section gives an overview of products and projects in the past, and the conservation and accessibility of material in Suriname. The focus is on oral history training. Next two case studies are presented. The first case is about Cultuurstudies, a public sector institution, while the second case is an application of oral history to describe and analyze the celebration of the Queen’s birthday from 1940-1960.

2.1 Overview of products and projects

Prior to Suriname’s independence oral sources were used by foreign academics, such as Herskovits (1936), J. Voorhoeve (1975) and Richard Price. But local people also used oral sources, among others Andre Cirino, Andre Pakosi, Albert Helman, and U. Lichtveld. This tradition has not been institutionalized. However, a few government and civil society institutions had undertaken attempts to preserve oral history sources. An important initiative for institutionalization was taken in 1969 when the Minister of Education, established the Department ‘Culturele Zaken’. This initiative marked the beginning of preserving oral literature and history of the various ethnic groups by the state, and was continued in 1980 when the institute ‘Cultuurstudies’ was founded.

The ethnocultural plurality of the Surinamese society is reflected in the oral history projects and products. An overview of products of oral history and oral tradition per ethnic group and the contributions by local and foreign researchers shows the achievements and the white spots.

Andre Cirino, a Caraib, produced oral literature of the various indigenous groups in Suriname. From 1964-1968 he published the stories in a local newspaper. These stories were published in two volumes ‘Indiaanse Vertellingen’ in 1977. There is still a large unexplored field for oral history studies of indigenous people from the pre-colonial period until today.

Andre Kaposi used oral history for studies of the Ndyuka maroon (1999). He analyzes cultural, social, economic and political processes in the Ndjuka society from the end of the 18th century from the perspective of the maroon people. There is a need for this type of oral history studies to assess the dynamics of the societies of other maroon groups in Suriname.

Since the 1980s various publications of oral history and oral traditions were produced on East Indian and Javanese. The project *Language and Language behavior as a function of a multilingual society* gave birth to publications of east Indian oral traditions by Sita Kishna (1984; 1986) and publications on oral traditions of Javanese by Johan Sarmo and Hein Vrugink (1983; (1986;1987; 1988). The material of this project provides a source for other products.

In addition to projects individual researchers produced various publications on oral literature in particular of East Indian (Adhin, 1984), Mahabier, 1984; Marhé 1981/1982) and Javanese (Pawiroredjo 1988). There is still an enormous unexplored area of oral history sources of the first and second generation of East Indian and Javanese indentured workers that needs to be preserved through a broad based national inventory of this heritage.

There are many publications on various aspects of oral history and/ or oral traditions of Creole. These are about Creole folk songs (Comvalius 1935/1936 and 1939), stories in sranan tongo (Donicie 1958), different aspects of the Creole culture, such as the banya, anansi tori and sokopsalm (Aleks de Drie 1986), Creole folk tales (Dubelaar 1972), didibri tori and jorka tori (de Groot 1971), traditional Creole dresses (Henar-Hewitt; Putten & Zantinghe (1988), 'fosten tori'(Jong Loy 1987), anansi tori (Lichtveld 1984) and about Creole proverbs (Schouten-Elsenhout 1974).

Current oral history projects

Below is an overview of current projects by institutions on oral history.

Traktatenonderzoek

An oral history project about the treaties between the colonial government and the Maroon and indigenous people in the colonial period of Suriname from 1650 – 1975. This project is executed by the IMWO (Institute for Social Research) of the University of Suriname.

Bidesia project

Bidesia is an international project that involves three institutes and museums in India, Suriname and the Netherlands¹. It includes the material and immaterial heritage in these countries and clearly illustrates that the shared Dutch- Suriname heritage goes beyond the Atlantic World and includes the heritage of Indian indentured workers and their descendants in Suriname as well as their links in India and Holland. The project includes the development of an international exhibition and cultural exchange on the dynamics of migration based on participatory research and accompanied by cultural activities, social development and cultural identity in Suriname, the Bhojpuri region of India and Holland. The term Bidesia is used for Bhojpuris who left their native lands, mainly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India. In another meaning it refers to the folk tradition that was created in memory of this migration and the resulting non-resident Bhojpuri communities, which is given the name of *Bidesia folk tradition*. The project consists of three main components: Oral heritage, visual sources of the migration history; and material culture. The oral history project in Suriname has already collected some audio and visual material of stories of East-Indian indentured workers. There is a form of cooperation in Suriname between IMWO and Cultuurstudies in the sense

¹ The institutes are GB Pant Social Science Institute with GB Pant Museum Manav Vikas Sangrahalaya (Museum of Ethnography and Social Development) Allahabad; KIT Tropenmuseum - Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam; and Instituut voor Maatschappij Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (IMWO), and Surinaams Museum, Paramaribo.

that the latter makes available material of indentured workers collected before the Bidesia project started. The Bidesia material is not yet accessible for the public. Presently, preparations are being made for an exhibition in Allahabad on material heritage.

The Slave Route

The Slave Route is a recent oral history project of Creole, sponsored by the UNESCO. It resulted in an inventory of written and oral sources of African slaves in Suriname and is executed by the Nationale Commissie Slave Route (2006).

2.2 Oral history training

Local academic discussions on the meaning and use of oral history in Suriname started in the mid 1980s. Characteristic for this period are workshops, training, public lectures and seminars each focusing on one or another aspect of oral history theory and practice. Despite these activities oral history was not institutionalized.

One of the AWAD activities in Suriname was an oral history training that was held in April and May 2006. It consisted of an 'in house' theoretical part and practical fieldwork. A case study about the celebration of the Queen's birthday was done in the context of the research theme 'Transitions during colonialism 1940-1960'. To obtain oral data informants were selected at the training, taking into consideration the objectives of the research theme and the criteria for selection, such as age, diversity of social class, ethnicity and district. The oral material collected consisted of interviews of persons aged 65- 85 in one urban and two rural districts.

The results of the oral history interviews were discussed and lessons were learned through feed-back with theory and methodology. Most interviewers had no problems to create a positive atmosphere for interviewing. However, a principal problem was how to deal with disturbing interviewer-**interviewee** interactions. In some cases the perspective of the narrator was dominant and different from the purpose of the interviewer. During the discussions at the training feed-back was given how to deal with such problems.

Recording of oral interviews was done with Mp-3 recorders and cassette tapes. The main limitation was that all recorders had only one -mostly built-in-microphone. One of the interviews was done without a recorder as the narrator did not feel at ease while recording the interview. As most time of the training was invested in interviewing and summarizing the interviews, less time was left for transcribing and digitalizing the material.

Discussions during the training showed that there are two ways of using oral history in Suriname. The first takes the collectivity and the second the individual as the unit of analysis. The latter approach focuses often on individual life stories. It is used by researchers who examine urban or rural topics, such as survival strategies of women.

The approach that takes the collectivity as the unit of analysis has been used in particular for the study of communities in the interior. An example is 'First Time', a study about the genesis of the Saramaka Maroon in the second half of the 17th century to mid 18th century by Richard Price. This approach is also part of the oral history tradition developed by Cultuurstudies in the 1980s.

One of the conclusions of the oral history training is the need for a follow-up training, with emphasis on processing, transcription and conservation of data.

2.3 Oral history case studies

Two case studies were conducted to understand the problems and practice of oral history in Suriname. The first case about institutions, illustrates in depth current activities, collections, expertise, needs and problems regarding oral history and the preservation, restoration and accessibility of the shared cultural heritage. The second case on the celebration of the Queen's birthday illustrates how important dimensions of the shared intangible cultural heritage can be identified and understood through oral history.

Case Study One: 'Cultuurstudies'

Of all the intangible cultural heritage institutions Cultuurstudies - a governmental institution - distinguishes itself in two ways. First, it has the longest professional tradition of activities with regard to the shared Dutch-Surinamese intangible cultural heritage. Second, the institute has developed a tradition and an infrastructure that reflects the broad cultural diversity of the society. These two points justify making a case study that sheds some light on the results, capacity, problems and needs of this institute.

From the beginning Cultuurstudies organized the intangible cultural heritage along cultural lines. The institute distinguished several cultural groups and initially for each of these specific personnel was recruited. This means that the data collection, recording and documentation are also based on the cultural groups, among others East Indian, Javanese, Maroons and Indigenous people. Recording of oral interviews and music was traditionally done with reel to reel tapes, and later cassette tapes. Since the 1990s there is a strong decline of the capacity and consequently of data collection, recording and documentation.

Most of the written, oral and visual material is preserved in the wooden office building of Cultuurstudies in the historical center of Paramaribo. Due to a shortage of professionals a part of the oral material is not systematically described. Most of the material is not in a good state for life-time preservation. The majority is kept on reel to reel tapes, cassette tapes and slides (dia's) that are vulnerable to humidity and moulding. Consequently, the quality of an important part of the material is deteriorating.

Case Study Two: The celebration of the Queen's birthday

The Oral History pilot case study on the celebration of the Queen's birthday gives some insight in social and cultural processes during colonialism from 1940-1960 and identified expected and unexpected forms of the shared Dutch- Surinamese intangible cultural heritage. Three aspects of this heritage can be distinguished: The official celebration on the Queen's birthday; the 'konfryari' fair; and economic opportunities.

The shared Dutch- Surinamese cultural heritage is reflected in oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, festive events and traditional craftsmanship. This case demonstrates that the Atlantic world is not synonymous with the Black Atlantic and includes the heritage of other groups such as the Asian indentured workers and their descendants in Suriname. Typical social, cultural and economic traditions of these immigrant groups were integrated and recognized in the celebration of the Queen's birthday and related activities such as the konfryari fair.

The celebration of the Queen's birthday shows how the cultural heritage is being created and recreated by communities, in response to their social and economic environment and their conditions of existence. It provided people with a sense of identity while it sustained and developed the diversity of the Surinamese society. In addition, economic opportunities were created. This amalgamation of creating the shared cultural heritage and creating economic opportunities to survive, clearly demonstrates that culture cannot easily be separated from the urge for social and economic survival. Therefore, culture is a collective desire of a group to create, survive and develop, which is crystallized in the intangible and tangible heritage as a response to the changing environment.

The study revealed similarities as well as differences between the rural and urban regions in the nature of the heritage. It sheds also light on other processes in the Surinamese society, such as the cultural and social links with neighboring Anglophone Caribbean societies, Guyana and Trinidad, resulting in active participation by people of these countries.

We found that the shared Dutch- Suriname oral history should be conceptualized much broader than the black Atlantic heritage. The celebration of the Queen's birthday justify that the Asian heritage should be included. But also international projects such as the Bidesia are in support of this broad conceptualization.

The use of oral history for the study of konfrijari is justified for written sources neither report substantial information of this event in a way, nor analyzes the social, cultural and economic dynamics of this shared Dutch- Surinamese intangible cultural heritage. Local newspapers² gave only announcements about the official celebration, the program of festivities and brief results of competitions. In some years the information in newspapers was restricted to the program and official ceremonial activities by the colonial government.

However, the case study also shows how oral and written sources can be used in a complementary way. An important question is why the konfrijari was maintained in August, although the colonial government had changed the celebration date of the queen's birthday in 1949 from August 31 to April 30. We found that some of the reasons obtained from oral sources for maintaining the August celebration of konfrijari until the 1970s, are confirmed by written sources. One of the written sources is a newspaper article in 1964 that cites a fragment of a speech by the governor Currie, who said that the celebration was concentrated around 31 August because 30 April coincided with the rainy season. We also found that the reasons for maintaining the August celebration of konfrijari, obtained from oral sources, are complemented by written sources. The latter sources add that the people and many foreigners were used to the august celebration of the konfrijari. Thus, the case study also illustrates the complementary use of oral and written sources.

² We examined de West from 1948-1974 and de Ware Tijd from 1957- 1974.

2.4 AWAD Workshop and case study on music

Music is a good way of looking at the shared heritage of Suriname and the Dutch. Most of the musicians were trained in the first part of the 20th century and the 1960s in Holland. Composers such as John Helstone, Lou Lichtveld, Eddy Snijders and Eddie Vervuurt were either trained in Holland or worked most of their lives there. In some cases the heirs of the composers own the music. It is not known under what condition the material is kept. There is reason to worry about it.

It was recommended to do research on the mutual influence of Caribbean music in Suriname.

2.5 Recommendations and future projects immaterial heritage

A few public and private institutions are engaged in oral history in Suriname, of which most are looking at a specific ethnic group and/ or theme of the Surinamese society. Most of these institutions are professionally ill-equipped and have an inadequate infrastructure for preserving the material and making it accessible.

In contrast with the few institutions involved in oral history, there exists a large unexplored field of oral sources. Among others the oral sources of the Jewish who arrived in Suriname in the 17th century, and of Chinese and Lebanese people. Furthermore, there is still an enormous potential of oral history sources of the first and second generation of Asian indentured workers which needs to be preserved through a broad based national inventory of this heritage. From a thematic point of view there are various unexplored fields for oral history, such as traditional and folk music, food culture, popular art, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and oral traditions and expressions.

Below is an overview of priorities and recommended projects on immaterial heritage.

Music collection of the National Army

A first step of this project is to make an inventory of the colonial and post colonial music collection of the National Army, as well as the condition of the material.³ One of the interesting collections is that of the military bandmaster. The material of the National Army has a great relevance not only for the links with the Netherlands but also for other foreign influences on the Surinamese music. In this regard the pre-World War II musical styles in Germany might be of particular interest. In addition to oral history research this project should also look at local newspapers and other written sources. Local institutions to be involved are the Nationale Volksmuziekschool, Lisibeti Performing Arts and Cultuurstudies.

Musicological links between Suriname and the Caribbean

This project aims at assessing the musicological links between Suriname and the Anglophone Caribbean (particularly Guyana, Trinidad and Barbados), but also with French Guyana. The Celebration of the queen's birthday case study pointed at the important participation of artist from Guyana and Trinidad at the annual konfryari (fair) in Suriname. Barbadians probably influenced the Surinamese Creole (kaseko) music. There is also a historical French connection.

³ At the Awad country workshop Herman Snijders said that (according to a first impression) the material is in a bad condition

In the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century French prisoners fled from the French penal colony (French Guyana) to Suriname. Among these persons were excellent musicians who influenced the Surinamese kaseko music.⁴ Institutions to be involved in this project are the Nationale Volksmuziekschool, Lisibeti Performing Arts and Cultuurstudies.

Oral history training

A project to make oral history an important part of curricula of higher education. In the first phase oral history can be made part of the training of students at the history department of the Advanced Teachers College (IOL). The department has already approved this suggestion and decided to start a course in oral history in the academic year 2006-2007. In the second phase a technical infrastructure for oral history training should be developed at the history department of the Advanced Teachers College, IOL. Expertise is needed for implementing digital and conservation technologies, as well as to necessary skills.

More Autonomy and Institutional Strengthening Cultuurstudies

The purpose of this project is to transform Cultuurstudies into a national center of oral history. The first step is to transform this institution into a foundation with legal personality. The second step consists of upgrading and building a research capacity including the technical infrastructure and recruit professional and academic human resources. The third step entails linking with other institutions as regards specific oral history fields, such as music, traditional dresses, oral traditions etc. In this stage Cultuurstudies should develop into a national center of oral history, playing a key role to coordinate public and private sector activities and collections.

3. Material heritage in Suriname

The material heritage of Suriname is directly linked to the Netherlands. In the most fundamental way the ties between these countries continue to be strong. Whether it is language, architecture, sites, cooperation in the field of archival work or otherwise 300 years of history cannot be forgotten or dismissed. It is also evident that the countries will be involved in all kinds of projects because part of the Dutch material heritage can be found in Suriname and at the same time the former colony will continue to depend on funding and expertise to execute some of the plans. A brief summary of projects from the 1960s is useful because it gives an indication where the priorities lay in the past. Those from the 1990s are the more current ones showing the kind of projects that are initiated now. These, incidentally, are conducted by two independent countries. This complicates the situation. Past and present sensitivities have to be reckoned with. After this section of the report, the two case studies will be presented together with the summaries from the 4 presentations on material heritage during the workshop

⁴ According to Herman Snijders one of these French musicians was the violin teacher of Lou Lichtveld

3.1. Overview of projects

In the 1960s Suriname was autonomous in internal affairs but in reality the Dutch government could still influence political and cultural processes in the country.⁵ The Surinamese government had taken the initiative around 1961 to preserve the buildings and architecture of the historical downtown of Paramaribo.⁶ Taking financial responsibility to work on plans to restore buildings and sites did not become part of long term objectives of the government. This made it almost impossible to actually do something about monuments, buildings and sites. A major project that began to take shape after 1965 was the restoration of Fort Zeelandia, a old fortress in the center of the city. The Dutch had selected it and Dutch money and expertise made it possible to recreate a piece of colonial architecture. After the painstaking work had been finished, the fortress became a museum.⁷ In the field of architecture, buildings and sites this project highlights the period and shows the influence of the mother country in selecting and executing cases of historical significance.

The second pilot regarding archives, museums, libraries and documentation centers had no spectacular project as a showcase of the mutual heritage of Suriname and the Netherlands. Nevertheless smaller ones were important in developing and stimulating an awareness of a common historical trajectory. A mission researching the archives was undertaken even though the result did not lead to a clear policy. It would take many more years before archives were placed on the political agenda. A Dutch cultural foundation, Sticusa (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking) subsidized the libraries and bought paintings, photographs and other products from Surinamese artists.⁸

In the 1980s the two countries did not see eye to eye because a military regime in Suriname dominated the political scene. Ironically these were years in which Suriname invested quite a lot in cultural affairs. The regime created a Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. At the same time they decided to close down Fort Zeelandia as a museum which was a major blow to all those interested in developing the cultural heritage of the country. The return of a civilian government in 1987, but more so the 1990s, saw an increasing awareness that in the relation between Suriname and the Netherlands, commonalities deserved more attention than just the emphasis on differences.

In the case of architecture, buildings and sites two important projects were executed. In 1993 two Dutch experts assisted the Surinamese government in preparing a report to be submitted to the Unesco.⁹ Suriname wanted its historical downtown area to be on the world heritage list of this international organization. It took some time but the

⁵ The so called Statuut was signed in 1954 giving the Suriname government and the Netherlands Antilles internal self government. Only foreign affairs was decided by the Netherlands. In reality, the financial dependency meant that the Dutch still had a voice in these territories.

⁶ See Landsverordening, February 16, 1963.

⁷ This same period also saw the publication of two books that became classics on the architecture of Suriname. Temminck Groll (1973) and others told the story of buildings and sites till 1940 while Fontaine (1972) gave a very detailed account of Fort Zeelandia including the whole restoration process.

⁸ Part of the art work bought in this period was given to the Suriname Museum in June 2006.

⁹ This report was called Paramaribo: Image of the past, vision of the future. In 1997 it was submitted to the Unesco

country succeeded. In June 2002 part of the capital Paramaribo passed the nomination and became part of the world heritage list of the organization.

Another project came as a present in 1995 when Suriname celebrated its 20th anniversary as an independence country. The Dutch financed the restoration of the abandoned Fort Zeelandia so that it could again be used as a museum. This was another successful project that helped to restore good will between the two countries. Dutch aid also made it possible to inaugurate the completely restored depot of the museum in 2006.

Other projects related to buildings and sites were aid to Fredriksdorp to restore a building to accommodate tourists and generate funds to further develop this plantation. Dutch expertise also helped to draw up the initial plan to restore the wooden Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Archives also profited from the maturity in the relation between the two countries. A microfilm project and the availability of expertise led to a plan to professionalize the archives in Suriname in the 1990s. Eventually an even more ambitious plan would be developed

In the case of libraries the Dutch and their Surinamese counterparts initiated a project in which part of the development aid went to 4 institutions so that they could order books to update their collections.¹⁰

3.2. Current Projects

The most significant current project is a new building for the National Archives. It should be ready in 2009. In relation to this, ongoing training programs are upgrading personnel and management. The growing digitization initiatives are also important to increase the exposure of the work being done in the archives and the possibilities for people all over the world to know what can be found within the walls of this institution.

The Suriname Museum has joint programs as well with institutions in the Netherlands. Ongoing work to produce a complete inventory of the collection, in particular books and photos, continues to be done and joint exhibitions also highlight this cooperation.

The Anton de Kom university library also receives help in their drive to make the book catalogue available on the web. All of these projects emphasize the mutual cooperation to safeguard shared heritage.

¹⁰ The 4 libraries were the Anton de Kom University library, the library of the Suriname Museum, the General Library for students and the library of the Cultural Center Suriname. They were able to profit from the Dutch development aid, because money was allocated to order books in Dutch bookstores. In the end it also included book cases and assorted material to store the books. The project enabled libraries to update their collections, to subscribe to relevant journals and modernize all aspects of the work in general.

3.3. Case Study One: Archives of the District Commissioners

The archives of the district commissioners are an important case in the shared or mutual heritage of the two countries. The districts were part of a plan to restructure the way the local government in the colony functioned after the abolition of slavery in 1863. The district commissioner was the representative of the central government. These documents illustrate the way day to day life in these places was lived. A multi-cultural society took shape under the guidance of the colonial office but at the same time the people had to deal with each other. The introduction of non Christian and non Western indentured laborers from Asia complicated an already complicated situation. However, the country did not fall apart and this fact alone is worth looking at. Surrounding colonies like British Guiana experienced a severe crisis in ethnic relations in the early 1960s, and it is still suffering the after shock of these disturbances in the new millennium. Why is it that this did not take place in Suriname? A careful study of the documents of the district commissioners might provide some - not all – the answers to this question. Communities were never completely homogeneous, not one group dominated completely. Several groups vied for a place in society. This case study shows that many important documents remain in Suriname and need to be studied.

3.4. Case Study Two: ‘Oranjetuin’

The Oranjetuin Foundation was a project of the Rotary club Paramaribo when it celebrated its 35th anniversary in 1988. This old burial ground had the graves of many of the elite of the country and was in use on and of for more than 200 years. The plan to make a genealogical research center and paths where visitors could walk through the graveyard received support from the Rotarians and the community in Suriname. Outside support also helped launching the project. The first step consisted of an inventory of all the people buried there. Networks of the members of the board of the foundation led to valuable documents of work done in the past. A list produced by Oudschans Dentz was a good start.¹¹ More than enough good will existed for the ideas the foundation brought forth in the first few years. However, almost 18 years later most of the plans have not yet materialized. This project shows the difficulty to develop such an undertaking when money is not readily available and the professionals to study all aspects of the plan are not easy to find. A lot of information became available which is good but to carry out ambitious plans is another thing. Cooperation amongst the different actors in this case sounds easier than reality allows the outsider to believe. Maintenance of the graveyard in a tropical climate is another headache that needs to be addressed constantly. Studying this project show the difficulty in carrying such a difficult undertaking to its successful end.

¹¹ In 2006 the Suriname genealogical foundation published this list. The foundation in Suriname had digitized the list and had added the remaining information of people buried in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. The Dutch publication, *Grafzerken en Suikerwerk*, is relevant because it included information on tombstones in Guyana as well. Moreover, as the Surinamese database is not available yet, this book helps and informs those interested in genealogical research on their way. It also emphasizes the importance of the Oranjetuin. The foundation could most certainly use this kind of positive exposure.

3.5. AWAD Workshop and the case study Material Heritage

Four presentations highlighted different aspects of the material heritage of Suriname. The case of the archives clearly focused on the shared heritage. Dutch city archivists were instrumental in training personnel, and assisted in creating a website of the National Archives. Ongoing projects relate to conservation and restoration of documents and people have to be trained in acquiring these skills. Digitizing and microfilming continue to be an important aspect of the work being done. Moreover, with the new building within a few years it will be possible to bring back archives that are outside the country.¹² Establishing an audiovisual unit is another priority because the archives also have sound recordings that need to be listened to. International contacts with regional Caribbean and world organizations are also being developed. A knowledge center not only for Suriname but other countries as well is just one out of many new projects. These developments show that studying the archives of the district commissioners fit into the new leadership of the National Archives and it certainly looks promising for the future.

The Foundation “Gebouwd Erfgoed” was established to prepare all the necessary documents for Suriname to be nominated on the world heritage list.¹³ The government decided not to liquidate this foundation after the work had been done. It created a limited liability company where monumental government buildings will be part of. These will be renovated and used for commercial purposes generating funds to continue working on other buildings. One of the problems of the foundation is the lack of personnel who can produce detailed inventories of monuments and buildings in the whole country and not just the capital. Work done by several individuals have produced newspaper articles and photos making clear that valuable remains can be found all over the coastal area, particularly the old plantation sites.¹⁴ Future projects will have to do continue the inventories.

The Foundation “Behoud Kathedraal” is a good example of the many obstacles that a major project has to overcome before objectives can be reached. Comparisons with the Oranjetuin are many. The renovation of the wooden Roman Catholic Cathedral has gone through many stages, some of them influenced by politics. In the end money donated by the European Union will make it possible to finally save this beautiful structure. The foundation has indicated that the church will be multi-functional after renovation. Apart from weekly mass, they will also organize cultural activities such as concerts. The Cathedral and the Oranjetuin can learn from each other how to go about to generate funding and expertise.

The museums in Suriname have all exhibited material on the shared heritage of Suriname and the Netherlands; whether its history in general, numismatics, or military artifacts. The Suriname Museum carries the largest collection, and also the most significant one on all aspects of the country’s history, ethnography, literature, textiles, archeology and photography. They have profited from the cooperation with the Dutch but the trajectory followed has not been an easy one.

¹² In his article Hassankhan (2006) made clear that archives brought to the Netherlands in the first half of the 20th century were not given to the national archives over there. They still belong to Suriname.

¹³ The foundation was established in August 1997.

¹⁴ The photos can be viewed on the website of the national archives. Articles are published in the Daily De Ware Tijd.

The unstable political situation in the country led to Dutch demands that also reflected upon their willingness to finance projects even if they were not directly linked to politics. Renovating the storage facilities of the museum is a good example of a project going through so many stages that it almost was not finished. However, the more stable situation in Suriname has stimulated the Dutch to initiate projects that have benefited. But lack of qualified personnel and a small annual budget made it impossible for the museum to do all the necessary work on collections and come up with complete inventories. This has not been solved yet and in this the museum can relate to many of the cultural institutions in Suriname who have the same problem.

3.6 Recommendations and future projects Material Heritage

The different foundations all share a number of common problems and obstacles that have to be solved otherwise they cannot achieve their objectives. The pilots on material heritage and the presentations at the AWAD workshop in Suriname have brought to light these problems but have also tried to address possible solutions. The following were mentioned.

- To share the experience and expertise of the different foundations regarding finance locally and internationally, and expertise needed to write a good proposal.
- To create a forum to share all the expertise in regard to conservation, training personnel and establishing networks locally, regionally and internationally to come up with solutions.
- To look at both successes and failures. This is necessary because foundations need to be aware of the many pitfalls in executing projects that might be worthwhile in every sense of the word but will fail if the same mistakes are made as their predecessors.
- Cooperation in as many ways as possible. Digitization is on the agenda of many institutions and foundations. It would be more effective if knowledge is shared.
- Linking projects to economic opportunities is a way to overcome financial restrictions. In the case of monuments and sites, restoration will be effective if the buildings will be used to generate money that can be invested in other projects.
- More emphasis should be on education. Being aware of the material heritage itself is a step in the right direction. Getting young people involved in these projects is an important way of creating a future where the community will feel responsible for all aspects of the country's heritage.
- AWAD can help in making people aware of the many projects through their website. This website needs to be supported by the participants. Information on projects can be brought together so that more people know what is being done. This may lead to join activities and networks that can only increase the relevance of the projects.

4. Joint Recommendations and projects

The two pilot studies aimed at compiling a systematic inventory of the relevant shared tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Suriname; initiatives concerning record management and preservation; current and planned research projects; current and planned projects pertaining to the oral legacy of the Dutch presence in Suriname. A principal recommendation pertains to establish an adequate physical location and management of the AWAD project.

A detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses of projects executed in the last 5 to 10 years should be made in a separate study. A basic, preliminary overview based on the AWAD project results in the following assessment. Projects such as restoring the wooden Cathedral and updating the National Archives succeeded with external funding. The Suriname museum succeeded in the end, but it took much longer due to the political tribulations between Suriname and the Netherlands. Restoring the Waaggebouw and the Hendrikschool worked out well, but local funding was involved. The Oranjetuin, on the other hand, has been an ongoing struggle for the last 18 years. Cultuurstudies managed to publish important books on oral history such as the publication and CD on Banya, but conservation of their material is much more difficult.

An immediate follow-up of the Awad workshop and the pilot studies is to organize a meeting with all participants. Prior to this meeting a report of the country workshop will be completed and distributed among the participants.

The meeting is meant to discuss cooperation between institutions and or projects as well as new initiatives in the areas of material and immaterial heritage.

1. A strategic plan will be one of the first priorities of the institution that will execute the AWAD project. Cultuurstudies should have a central position in such a plan. This institution distinguishes itself by a long tradition of activities and research with regard to the shared Dutch-Surinamese intangible heritage and also by taking into account the broad cultural diversity of the society. However, one should consider the actual problems and needs of this institute such as the weak infrastructure and the poor professional and academic human resources. However, the material collected over the years is extremely valuable and should be preserved under better circumstances.

The National Archive, though better equipped than Cultuurstudies, is conserving heritage rather than operating as a research institute. The university has an academic potential that is largely underutilized. Therefore, it is recommended that these three institutions cooperate, utilizing the strengths and potential of each of the participating organizations.

The options for the institutional location of the project are:

The National archive, the Museum location Commewijnestraat, Cultuurstudies, the Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed and the University. The decision-making for the institutional location of the project should be based on criteria and preconditions for adequate management, conservation, and accessibility of oral and material heritage. The criteria are:

- i. Technical-equipment (computer hardware , digital recorders, software, scanners etc)
- ii. Physical infrastructure (Accommodation, Electronic security, brand security, dehumidifier, etc)
- iii. Expertise

- a. Experts to update, process and make the material accessible
 - b. Expert for research , data collection and transcription
- iv The possibility to provide small grants to do preliminary research
- Cultuurstudies has a tradition for research, transcription and service delivery. However, at present this institution lacks professional expertise in research. The University and the National Archive are relatively better equipped as regards the first and second criteria. In addition, the University could develop expertise to digitalize the material and make it accessible. After various deliberations the University is selected for the institutional location of the project.

2. A detailed and separate evaluation should be made of recent projects to list strengths and weaknesses. Why were some projects more successful than others? What were some of the local strengths that led to the timely execution of a project and what were some of the weaknesses that might have led to stagnation and possible failure. An example of a successful project is the upgrading of the archives in a relatively short time. On the other hand, the museum project took much longer than had been scheduled because politics intervened.

3. An awareness campaign regarding the tangible and intangible heritage of Suriname needs to be developed. It can be done in cooperation with institutions in the Netherlands. Both governmental and non governmental organizations in Suriname must be involved. The main focus should be on preserving and recording this invaluable heritage.

4. Introduction of an annual heritage information day to make the population aware of the rich cultural traditions of Suriname. In relation to this a website can be created with regular news items and newsletters sent digitally. It should also be used as an exchange on activities all over the country in relation to heritage.

5. Youth cultural guides can be trained to give tours on the cultural heritage to local and international people. In this way they can earn some money but they will also gain knowledge regarding their history and culture. These tours can be combined in a number of ways. A building can be visited and stories surrounding the whole site can be told or presented in a short play.¹⁵

6. Crash digitalization project Cultuurstudies. This project is meant to digitalize important oral material that is in a precarious condition, among others:

- a) 50 winti-songs
- b) slides of pagni's (traditional maroon textile): An option is to link with the KIT Tropenmuseum project of Maroon textile collection.
- c) digitalizing the library using the WINISIS software that makes it possible to link with the National library system. Coordination by the University of Suriname is recommended.
- d) digitally linking of valuable oral material and databases of Cultuurstudies with the National Archive of Suriname or the Surinamese Museum.

7. Trails in the Society. A project that highlights the different trails through the society:

¹⁵ A recent example is a DVD production in which Cynthia McLeod told episodes of Suriname's history and schoolchildren re-enacted some of the events.

a) the Plantation Trail: A chain of historical sites particularly outside Paramaribo, with focus on plantation life from 1650-1950. Dimensions that could be reactivated are historical research, museum exhibitions, restoration and preservation, tourism and transport; education.

b) the Anansi Trail: A material and mental trail across the ethno-cultural diversities through the country of places and memories related to oral traditions (stories, music, rituals, cosmology, etc). Anansi could be the logo and have the function of figurehead with regional and international (Caribbean and African, also Asian but the under a different name such as the Kantjil stories of the Javanese)) recognition. In addition, new lines of research based on oral history and oral tradition should be activated. This could have a spin-off on popular culture; use of new mass media (internet- & TV productions). The different oral projects, collections or products outside institutions, such as “Fosten Tori” by Harry Jong Loy and by Alex de Drie, and radio talk shows by Harold Braam that are often kept at home could be important sources for such a project. Institutions in Suriname to be involved are among others Cultuurstudies, Stichting Surinaams museum, the National Archive, Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed and KDV/ Unie van Architecten.

8. Commewijne heritage project: the purpose of this project is to preserve principal dimensions of the immaterial and material heritage and to make it accessible for a broad public. The project will cluster different heritage projects and sites, such as the Open Air Museum New Amsterdam, Marienburg with the sugar company, Frederiksdorp, and a few other interesting old plantations. A direct link will be made between the material and immaterial heritage.

An example of this link is the transformation of the Marienburg sugar company into a museum, with a physical and a social-historical dimension. Oral history products of indentured workers and the social conditions of the working class are examples of interesting aspects of the immaterial heritage. An important advantage of this project is that a link can be made with research¹⁶, education and commercial tourist activities. Institutions in Suriname to be involved are among others Open Air Museum New Amsterdam, Stichting Surinaams museum, the National Archive, Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed and KDV/ Unie van Architecten, Cultuurstudies. In addition other actors need to be involved such as the District Commissioner and important entrepreneurs in the district such as van Alen.

9. A center to facilitate all the activities regarding cultural heritage and related to microfilming, digitizing and transferring sound and pictures to more long lasting ways of conservation

¹⁶ The doctoral thesis by Gerard Alberga (in economics at the University of Suriname) focuses on tourism and economic opportunities. This is an example of research that links heritage and commercial tourist activities.

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