

ROOTS GUIDE

THE DUTCH STORIES

THE PITCH

'Who am I? And where do I belong?' In this rapidly-changing, fast-paced world, these questions have come to increasingly bewilder us. Somewhat ironically, we are both more connected to *and* more disconnected from one another than ever before. Overwhelmed by it all, many of us crave ways in which to *genuinely* connect, and re-connect, with the people and places around us. We sense that we not only need to *see* the world differently but also to *be* in the world differently.

Roots Guide: The Dutch Stories is a novel tool developed to help us do this. Taking the form of an interactive, reflective travel guidebook, *Roots Guide* invites us to undertake both outer and inner journeys by revisiting what we think we know about life in the Netherlands, starting on our very own doorsteps. Through visual and personal stories, it welcomes us into the lives of our *Roots Guide* hosts, more than 60 people from diverse backgrounds.

Learn about what brought our hosts to the places in which they live and their experiences of these places. And, along the way, get fantastic travel tips and recommendations that shed new light on the wonder, weirdness, struggles, and joy that portray contemporary life in the country we call home.

Roots Guide is for everyone who lives in the Netherlands and is curious to explore themselves and their place in this country in a new way. Experience and connect with people and places just next door or all the way across the country, ones you thought you already knew like the back of your hand, ones you've never heard of, and perhaps even ones you may have feared.

Through in-depth stories, trip suggestions and guided multisensory reflective activities specially designed for its readers, *Roots Guide* opens us up to different ways of seeing and being in *our* Netherlands, not *the* Netherlands as some mythical fixed place and culture to which we either do or don't belong. Are you ready to begin your journey?

GUIDEBOOK STRUCTURE



Typical Dutch?

- Trace the migratory roots of the greatest Dutch icons
- See how our hosts relate to 'typical Dutch' elements and attitudes in their everyday lives
- Reflect on the extent to which your own beliefs, practices and experiences fit notions of 'typical Dutch'-ness



Getting here

- Trace the inner and outer journeys our hosts undertook to live in different parts of the Netherlands
- Discover what journeys your family and friends have made
- Consider the role of place and mobility in your own sense of self and belonging over time



Getting around

- Find out how our hosts navigate everyday life in different parts of the Netherlands
- Compare what both they and you have encountered in navigating life here with experiences in other countries



Getting away

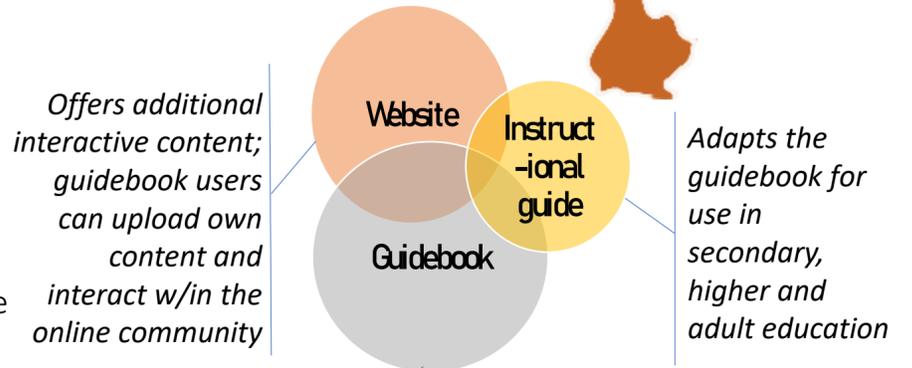
- Discover how and where our hosts seek out meaning, joy, fun, escape and relaxation in different parts of the Netherlands and beyond
- Map out the places, foods, activities, connections and events that make you feel good and examine what underlies them

WHO WE ARE

Over 60 amazing co-creators throughout the Netherlands with diverse internal and international migration backgrounds are supported by our production team: social entrepreneurs Ingi Mehus and Daniel Wurpel (Pocket Stories); documentary photographer Rehab Eldalil; cultural geographer Meghann Ormond (Wageningen University & Research); and designer Hamzah Kashash.



PROJECT FORMAT



Connects users through personal stories to our diverse hosts and the places meaningful to them; activates users to reflect on their own beliefs, practices and experiences

PROJECT BACKGROUND

While tourism is widely used to reinforce dominant collective identity narratives, it also has significant potential to challenge, complicate and shift them. Indeed, education experts have increasingly embraced travel-related experiential learning for its potent capacity to foster deeper holistic understanding, multi-perspectivity and empathic connection.

Because nearly everyone is a tourist these days (over 80% of people in the Netherlands travel for leisure at least once per year), our team has crafted a novel educational tool for social inclusion that takes the form of a travel guidebook to help make 'the strange familiar and the familiar strange'. It aims to enable users to acknowledge (1) the transnational lineages of what may on the surface appear 'purely' Dutch and (2) distinctions between dominant national heritage/identity discourses and more personal, lived and local experiences and meanings of places, relations and events.

Roots Guide uses counter-mapping techniques to advance the simple yet powerful notion that people with migration backgrounds can speak with authority about the places in which they live. Our local hosts are intra- and internationally-mobile people whose voices and experiences have been traditionally un(der)represented and/or exoticised in conventional guidebook representations. It is through their stories that we are invited to actively reflect on and re-evaluate dominant, essentialised and worn-out narratives about what and who is 'Dutch' and to de-centre and enrich them with more contemporary and realistic framings of life in the Netherlands today.