

Leeuwarden, 28 February 2019

Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven: 'Investing in culture pays!'

Impressive results for LF2018 presented

Friesland has never had so many visits as it had in 2018: 5.4 million. The economic impact is estimated to be at least 230 to 320 million euros. More than 10 percent of the Frisians actively participated in the Capital of Culture Year, almost 70 percent felt involved in the projects, and the average score given by the Frisians for LF2018 was 7.4 out of 10. The results announced by Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 on Thursday, 28 February reflect a resounding success.

Ingrid van Engelshoven, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, was delighted with these figures: 'Friesland, and Leeuwarden in particular, are making me a proud Minister of Culture. Last year, Friesland had us enjoying the arts in every form whatsoever. Its fantastic programming of activities and events has increased the support for art and culture both within and outside of our country. Investing in culture pays!'

Director Tjeerd van Bakkum concluded that most of the objectives listed in the bid book issued in 2013 had been achieved. The investments realised, originally estimated at 74 million euros, turned out to be 104.5 million euros. According to research findings, the economic impact (calculated to include the spending generated by extra tourists, visitors and the extra revenue from the cultural sector) provided Friesland with an additional 230 to 320 million euros. 'An amazing achievement.'

Satisfaction scores for the events were almost always higher than 8. With its 430,000 visitors, The Giants of Royal de Luxe rated a score of 8.6. Almost 1600 international collaborations took place; these involved artists, students, theatre companies, companies and museums from 87 countries. This figure is more than five times the goal of establishing at least 300 collaborations.

Visits

The number of visits to the LF2018 projects came out to about 5.4 million. The projects held in foreign countries generated another 800,000 visits. About 51 percent of the visitors came from Friesland, 42 percent from the rest of the Netherlands, and 6 percent from other countries.

'Last year, everyone could see, hear and feel what our province is able to accomplish. Friesland is an Open Community', observed Sietske Poepjes, Deputy of Culture for the Friesland Provincial Executive. 'Together, we have achieved tangible results that can serve as a basis for further endeavour. No longer just promising words on paper but real outcomes that touch our hearts, bring a smile to our lips, and also amaze us. Published research by the Frisian Cultural Planning Office and released today show that 68 percent of the people living in Friesland felt involved with LF2018. About 10 percent of the population served as volunteers: twice as many as the objective in the bid book. Young people (ages 4 to 18) were involved 193,807 times in projects in the main programme.

'2018 was a great success and a first step to a better Leeuwarden and Friesland', stated Sjoerd Feitsma, Leeuwarden's Alderman for Culture. 'Now, we have to persevere: with the efforts of volunteers that was far above expectations last year, with our flourishing cultural tourism, and with the fact that we have now found our place in many European networks. We can make good use of all these factors to build on our year as the Capital of Culture.'

The main programme (60 projects) devoted a lot of attention to sustainability: locally produced food was served at 80 percent of the projects. Much consideration was also given to the reuse of materials

and renewable energy. The programme attracted more than 30 percent of the people with ‘little interest in culture’ to one or more projects. Ticket sales for events in the main programme – estimated at 4 million euros in the bid book - actually brought in not less than 20 million euros.

The bid book addressed policy issues such as biodiversity, language, poverty and renewable energy. Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 was committed to bringing about social change. Art and culture have demonstrated their capacity to support this objective.

LF2028

An update about the *legacy* of LF2018 was issued on Thursday. Lieuwe Krol and Sjoerd Bootsma will be working as planners alongside people in the cultural field, civil society and government agencies on developing a new and inspiring programme for the coming years.

The mienskip (community) as well, will again be called upon to develop initiatives that will contribute to solving social issues and creating a robust cultural climate in Friesland. Definite plans will be presented at the end of June, but a number of projects for the bridging year of 2019 have been revealed on Thursday. These plans include a nomination for the title of UNESCO City of Literature, an on-site production given by the young theatre producers of Skoft&Skiep, a new edition of the 2018 Storytelling Evening, Adje Lambertsz, Fuerza Bruta and Writer’s Block.

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