



British Council Netherlands

# A Year in Pictures 2024-2025



# Welcome to our Year in Pictures

2024 was a year of profound global change. Over half the world's population had the opportunity to vote in national elections, while many of us face economic challenges, growing insecurity, and fewer opportunities to connect and thrive. At times, these challenges can feel overwhelming, and it's easy to question whether our individual actions matter.

However, my experience this year with the British Council has shown me the power of connection. Where there is inspired leadership, there is the spark to act—and I have been deeply moved by the people I've had the privilege to meet through our work. I hope the images that follow capture not only what's possible, but also the importance of everyday interactions.

Cultural relations is, at its heart, about connection. It's about creating spaces of trust and mutual understanding—one classroom, lecture hall, theatre, town hall, gallery, embassy and meeting room at a time. It's not about perfection; failure is part of the journey. What matters most is the honest, ongoing commitment to values of inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism—where everyone has a seat at the table and a voice that matters.

This year, I've had the honour of leading a team that connected with over 100,000 people from Groningen to Maastricht and everywhere in between. Please enjoy our Year in Pictures, Netherlands. To our brilliant team—thank you. Your hard work, dedication, and passion is truly appreciated.

Jennifer Cosgrave  
Country Director

A woman in a black dress stands in a room with walls illuminated by vibrant, overlapping colors of yellow, orange, and pink. Her shadow is cast onto the wall behind her, and the floor is highly reflective, mirroring her and the colorful light. The scene is framed by a thin blue border.

We support peace  
and prosperity by  
building connections,  
understanding  
and trust between  
people in the UK and  
countries worldwide.

# British Council in the Netherlands

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. The British Council has been working in the Netherlands since 1945.

We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks, to get high quality education and gain internationally recognised **English** language qualifications.

We foster international dialogue between **education** institutions, **arts** organisations and policy makers in the UK and the Netherlands. We collaborate closely with our Dutch arts and education partners to identify and design specific activities and programmes in the Netherlands where the UK can add significant value.

## Management Team

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English



Education  
and  
Science



Arts  
and  
Culture

# Impact

The overview covers activities in the period January 2024 to March 2025.

We reached over **127.4k** people.

We supported over **20 UK universities** to engage in the Netherlands.

We engaged over **7,000 people** in cultural events.

Our education work directly engaged over **6,200 people**.

Over **17,700 young people** gained a British Council certified English language qualification.



# English Assessment

We work with schools and higher education institutes across the Netherlands to support English teachers that prepare students for the Cambridge exams.

In 2024-25, we delivered over **17,700 exams** in partnership with our delivery partners.

'I think the digital exam experience does help my students because it has so many advantages. During the test, they see how many minutes they've got left on the screen and it's also much easier to do the writing exam because there is a word count.'

One big advantage is that the students get the results much quicker and they are always really happy about that. When my students get their certificates, it means something. It means that they can work abroad, they can study abroad or go to an international university in their own country.'

Pepper Evers  
English teacher, Johannes Fontanus College



## English

# Teacher support

We participated in the **Nuffic Conference** in November 2024. The conference was attended by around **300 teachers** from all over the Netherlands.

At our stand we promoted the British Council's English language resources, cultural engagement projects and Cambridge exams.





## Education and Science

# Inclusive internationalisation

We support Dutch students to study abroad by empowering and informing those that advice them.

In partnership with [Nuffic](#), a **Policy Dialogue** about Inclusive Internationalisation was held in March 2024. The event attracted over **25 policy makers** from UK and Dutch higher education institutes and created a platform to share experiences as well as best practice from both countries.

Speakers included representatives from the Welsh exchange programme [Taith](#), [Higher Education Access Tracker](#) (HEAT) and [Leiden University](#). One of the outcomes is the creation of a toolkit that can be used by higher education institutes.

We chaired a **webinar for 45 agents and counsellors** from across Europe to ensure they had up-to-date information on visa entry, working in partnership with UK Visas and Immigration.



# EIAE Insight Event: Achieving inclusive internationalisation

On 6 March 2025, the European Association for International Education ([EAIE](#)) launched a new event series titled 'EAIE Internationalisation Insights', aimed to convene local gatherings and bring together mid-to senior-level professionals, academics and policymakers to discuss key themes. The first edition was organised in collaboration with Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education, and focused on the topic of 'achieving inclusive internationalisation.'

Aminata Cairo opened the event with a keynote on the 'wealth of stories'. Struan Campbell, Head of Education at the British Council was part of the first panel session about drawing inspiration from experimentation and shared **good practice examples from the UK**. The event also included a panel on how to tackle some of the complexities of equality, diversity and inclusion. The session closed with a game for international officers to support them how to start a conversation on inclusion within their institution.

**Over 100 participants**, including international officers, diversity officers and other higher education professionals, attended the event.







## Education and Science

# Positioning the UK as a study destination

In November 2024, we participated in the annual [Go Abroad Fair](#) at the Jaarbeurs in Utrecht. The fair was attended by over **12,000 students and counsellors**.

At our stand students could learn more about studying in the UK and also about the IELTS test.

We supported a **delegation of Scottish universities** to prepare them for their visit to the Netherlands. In partnership with Nuffic, we organised a webinar about the Dutch education system and we introduced the Scottish universities to Dutch secondary schools.



# Engaging UK Alumni

In 2024, we launched a national **Study Abroad Mentoring Programme**, in partnership with [Nuffic](#) and [ECHO](#). The programme is designed for pupils and students in the Netherlands who aspire to study abroad, but face challenges and barriers that make this goal seem out of reach. Our free programme provides personalised guidance, support, and resources to help them overcome these obstacles.

The programme is led by UK Alumni who are trained as mentors. We trained **10 UK alumni** based in the Netherlands as mentors in 2024. These trained mentors began their mentoring sessions with young people in 2025.

The Study Abroad Programme is part of our partnership agreement with Nuffic to **increase international opportunities for students** in the Netherlands as well increase the diversity of students that take up study abroad opportunities.





# UK Alumni Reception

We celebrated 80 years of educational and cultural relations between the UK and the Netherlands at the Residence of the UK Ambassador in The Hague. Over **75 UK Alumni** from all over the Netherlands joined us for this networking opportunity.

Guests were addressed by a range of speakers, including British Ambassador to the Netherlands Joanna Roper, Dutch Ambassador for International Cultural Cooperation, Dewi van de Weerd, Curator and multidisciplinary artist Jacquill G. Basdew and British Council Director Jennifer Cosgrave.







## Education and Science

# Creating inclusive research environments

In November 2024, we hosted the **N8 European Research Culture Conference** in Amsterdam. The two-day conference was organised in collaboration with the [N8 Research Partnership](#), the [UK Science and Technology Network](#) and the [British Embassy](#) in The Hague.

We brought together a delegation of **25 professionals** from universities, research institutes, research funders and missions from several European countries - including the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, France, Italy and Finland. Delegates engaged in discussions on **cultivating an equitable culture** where all researchers can thrive.

The conference also served as a platform to explore practical ways for driving and implementing change at both local and European levels.





# Growing Partnerships

Following the UK's association with Horizon Europe, Universities UK International ([UUKi](#)) undertook visits to six European countries to strengthen collaboration between the UK and its European counterparts. The Netherlands is the UK's fifth-largest research partner in Europe.

In November 2024, a **high-level UUKi delegation** travelled to the Netherlands to explore opportunities for partnerships between UK and Dutch universities and research organisations. The visit focussed on celebrating the association with Horizon Europe, discussing shared priorities and **establishing a platform for future collaboration.**

In partnership with the British Embassy and the UK Science and Technology Network, we connected the UK university delegation to Dutch universities.



## Education and Science

# Model North Sea Neighbours Conference

Dutch and British students from a range of UK universities took part in the 2024 Model North Sea Neighbours Conference (Model NSN). Held on 22 November at the Dutch Embassy in London, the Model NSN simulated of the annual bilateral North Sea Neighbours Conference between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The North Sea Neighbours Conference is an annual bilateral meeting between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands where governments, businesses, and research institutions come together to find creative solutions to shared challenges. The model NSN conference offered **30 young people** the opportunity to gain more insight into bilateral cooperation through keynote lectures, mini-workshops and a simulation of the bilateral dialogue.

‘It provided an invaluable opportunity for me to really immerse myself in the real diplomatic scene, with a bunch of contingent incidents happening along with the ongoing conference, which I have never experienced before.’

Participant, Model North Sea Neighbours 2024



# Promoting inclusion in dance

The British Council and [Holland Dance Festival](#) have joined forces to promote inclusive dance education by fostering knowledge exchange and professional development.

Through initiatives such as the **DanceAble Symposium** and a Teacher Training Course in collaboration with Stopgap Dance Company (UK), this partnership has created valuable opportunities for dance educators to enhance their skills, engage with new methodologies, and support greater accessibility in dance. By bringing together **over 100 experts and practitioners**, we are shaping a more inclusive future for dance education.

Being able to tap into the knowledge that has been developing in the UK for a long time has been central to our collaboration, bringing together experts from the UK and the Netherlands.

‘Collaborating with the British Council has been instrumental in expanding our reach and impact. Their expertise and network have helped us connect with UK professionals of the highest level, thus enriching our approach to inclusive dance education and creating lasting change in the sector.’

Irene van Zeeland  
Inclusion Specialist, Holland Dance

## Arts and Culture

‘For the first time been able to join a dance class and follow the instructions of the teacher one on one, since he was in a wheelchair himself. I did not have to create my own ‘translations’ of the movement.’

Dancer who uses a wheelchair to dance



# Promoting inclusion in theatre

In October 2024, we supported the **No Limits Festival**, a partnership between [STET](#) and [HNT Onbeperkt](#). The festival aims to present leading theatre performances to Dutch audiences, provide a platform for professional disabled artists, and foster education and discussion about the future of accessible and inclusive theatre in the Netherlands.

The No Limits festival was a weekend full of diverse and curated international theatre by **professional disabled artists**. The international line-up included Jess Thom, Blue Badge Bunch and Johnny Cotsen from the UK.

'We were thrilled to have the support of the British Council for our festival. They made it possible to show the great work UK disabled artists are doing at the moment. Jess Thom's keynote was of immeasurable value and provided the necessary inspiration and knowledge that will really help the Dutch cultural sector grow in its accessibility and inclusion of artists with a disability. We're looking forward to more international exchange in the future!'

Tom Dello, Artistic Director STET

## Arts and Culture







# Supporting UK artists in the Netherlands

In March and April 2024, we worked in partnership with the [Bonnefanten Museum](#) to support the exhibition 'What Freedom Is To Me' by internationally renowned UK artist **Sir Isaac Julien**. The ambitious solo exhibition was the biggest presentation of Julien's work to date and his first retrospective in a Dutch museum.

As part of our partnership with the **Bonnefanten** we screened three of our More Films For Freedom short films during museum night, which attracted over **6,000 visitors**.

In May 2024, we supported the exhibition The Wood for the Trees at the **Kröller-Müller Museum**. The exhibition featured works by four artists, including **Andy Holden**, who explore the relationship between humans and nature through their art in distinct and compelling ways. As part of the exhibition, visitors participated in walks and activities held in the sculpture garden.

More than **175,855 people** visited the exhibition and engaged in one or more activities.

In partnership with the [Kröller-Müller Museum](#) we organised a performance **Lecture on Bird Song**, attended by about 200 visitors, presented by UK artist Andy Holden and his father Peter Holden - a world-renowned ornithologist.

# Connecting Culture

As part of their tour in the Netherlands, the [Birmingham Royal Ballet](#) announced that His Majesty King Charles III is the Company's new Patron, the role previously held by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The announcement was made during a celebration of the King's official birthday, held in The Hague at the residence of the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Joanna Roper CMG. This special occasion was one of the highlights of **Birmingham Royal Ballet's tour in Rotterdam**, featuring Black Sabbath - The Ballet.





# Ajamu X at Melkweg EXPO

We supported the exhibition 'This Is The Truth: The Black Queer Masculine Through a Reclaimed Lens – A Prelude' at the Melkweg EXPO, held during Pride 2024.

The exhibition aimed to acknowledge and celebrate the rich and dynamic reality of Black queer existence. It showcased the works of Clifford Prince King, Lyle Ashton Harris, Marvel Harris, Stephen Isaac-Wilson en Ajamu X, and D'Angelo Lovell Williams. The intimate exhibition offered a contemporary portrait of **Black queer masculinity**—one that is deeply personal to the featured artists.

We provided mobility support for UK artist Ajamu X to host a conversation on Black queer masculinity, attended by over 100 people. The exhibition attracted by **more than 1,000 visitors**. This exhibition has led to the Tate Modern in the UK hosting an in-conversation between Ajamu X and Dutch curator and artist Jacquill G. Basdew.



Arts  
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# North Sea Untamed

In February 2025, the British Embassy hosted a screening of 'North Sea Untamed', a film by Peter van Rodijnen. The filmmaker shared the backstory behind the film and its depiction of the fascinating underwater world of the North Sea that remains largely 'unknown' to most people.

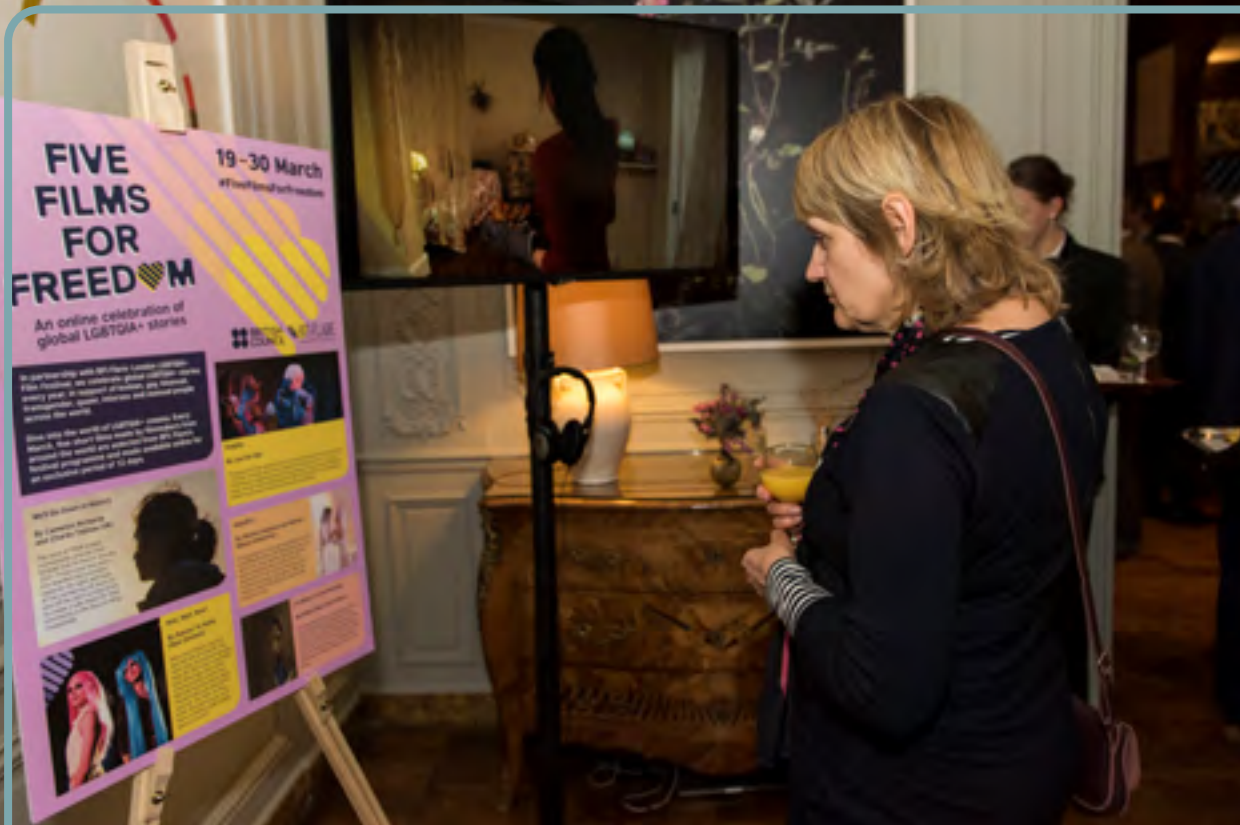
As part of the event an expert panel explored how the **UK and the Netherlands can work together** to balance economic activities and the energy transition in the North Sea, while fulfilling their shared responsibility to preserve its fragile natural ecosystems for future generations.

The discussion was facilitated by British Council Director Jennifer Cosgrave.



Arts  
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# Five Films For Freedom 2025

To celebrate 80 years of cultural and educational relations between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands we hosted a reception at the British Ambassador's Residence in The Hague in March 2025. The event was attended by **over 100 key stakeholders** from the arts, culture and education sectors.

The reception showcased a range of our work, including the 2025 **Five Films For Freedom** shorts. The LGBTQIA+ themed films are part of the annual online programme of short films the British Council organises in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival, celebrating global stories in support of LGBTQIA+ communities across the world.



Arts  
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# DutchCulture and the British Council

In March 2025, [DutchCulture](#) and the British Council Netherlands signed a **new three-year collaboration** aimed at deepening cultural relationships between the UK and the Netherlands.

The collaboration between the British Council and DutchCulture will see an increase in information and guidance for UK and Dutch artists and cultural professionals to help them navigate mobility and connect between the UK and the Netherlands. The project will also aim to increase the number of connections between UK and Dutch arts universities and academies.

‘The UK and the Netherlands remain strong partners in international cultural cooperation. As DutchCulture we are committed to ensuring artists and creative professionals can access the information and skills they need for international collaboration. This agreement with the British Council will allow us to bring together our skills to deliver meaningful change for a new generation of artists.’

Kristen van den Hul, Director DutchCulture



Arts  
and  
Culture







## Our Vision for 2025-26

By 2025-26, we will have further strengthened the relationship between the Netherlands and the UK in Education, English and Arts and Culture. We will build active and sustained connections, challenge mindsets and enable greater trust and mutual understanding between people and organisations. In 2025-26 we will:

- Set up a new **Strategic Education Board** with UK and Dutch higher education institutes;
- Organise the 11th Science Lecture in partnership with the Natural History Museum, now called the **Doggerland Lecture**;
- Work in partnership with **Nuffic and ECHO** to deliver our mentoring programme;
- Work with Nuffic to **match UK and Dutch higher education institutes**;
- **Support** UK and Dutch universities to build new partnership;
- Work with **DutchCulture** to deliver our strategic plans;
- Support the Nuffic **Dean's Day**;
- Work with EUNIC partners to deliver the **Zoöp Connections programme**;
- Share and celebrate **Five Films For Freedom**;
- Continue to offer **English Language Assessments** in the Netherlands;
- Further build on our relationships with our partners and key stakeholders in the Arts, Education and English Language Assessment sectors.

Sign up for our [newsletter](#) to receive monthly updates.

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