

# Leiding moeten zij hebben : een geschiedenis van de sociaal pedagogische zorg voor mensen met een verstandelijke handicap in Nederland tussen 1900 en 1945

Citation for published version (APA):

Brants, L. (2004). *Leiding moeten zij hebben : een geschiedenis van de sociaal pedagogische zorg voor mensen met een verstandelijke handicap in Nederland tussen 1900 en 1945*. [Doctoral Thesis, Maastricht University]. Garant. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20040618lb>

## Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2004

## DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20040618lb](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20040618lb)

## Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

## Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

[Link to publication](#)

## General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

If the publication is distributed under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license above, please follow below link for the End User Agreement:

[www.umlib.nl/taverne-license](http://www.umlib.nl/taverne-license)

## Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at:

[repository@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:repository@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

providing details and we will investigate your claim.

Download date: 25 Apr. 2024

## Summary

The history of Dutch extramural care for people with a minor mental handicap between 1900 en 1945 cannot be separated from the origins of special education for mentally handicapped children, of which this care was seen as a follow-up. Therefore it was called 'after-care'.

Special primary education (BLO) and after-care started in a period in history when the image of mentally handicapped people was very negative, influenced by eugenic ideas that implied, amongst others things, that the feeble-minded were naturally inclined towards crime, alcoholism and prostitution because of their genetic make-up. There was a tension between eugenics on one side, which pessimistically assumed that the unwanted behaviour of the feeble-minded was hereditary and could not be changed in one generation, and the optimistic, positivistic attitude of neo-hygienism on the other side, which believed in the power of therapy and pedagogics.

People inclined towards eugenics stated that the only way to deal with the feeble-minded was to remove them from society and possibly prevent their procreation. On the other hand, the neo-hygienists stated that the risks of feeble-minded living in society could be decreased to an acceptable level by means of special education and support in society.

The first forms of aftercare were created just after 1900, when BLO-pupils started to leave school in substantial numbers. They were monitored conscientiously. The right of existence of BLO depended on the question, if former BLO-pupils were capable of living independently in society or not. The first results showed, that about one-third of them were able to manage indeed. The others, however, needed support. Their former teachers in BLO tried to provide that for them. They tried to find work for them and supported them when asked. But as time progressed, more and more pupils left BLO and the task grew to big for the teachers. They no longer could give adequate support.

In 1905 a test started in The Hague with support of volunteers. In 1913 a test started in Rotterdam with supplemental education. Both tests failed. A third test was held in the town of Dordrecht. The head of the local school for BLO, Adriaan Wepster, had to deal with several former pupils who were not suited for paid employment. He started up a small special workshop in which they could do adapted work in sheltered conditions. This test succeeded. The sheltered employment, which Wepster started in 1917, would be copied all over the Netherlands.

In Amsterdam a report was published in 1917, which dealt with the question of how the support of former BLO-pupils should take shape. The conclusion of this report, that became known as the 'Aftercare-report', was that it could best be given by a professional worker, a 'civil servant for social care', who would only deal with former BLO-pupils.

This first professional worker, Pier de Boer, was appointed in June 1921. In the next eighteen months he initiated a methodology that centred around work. By means of intensive support De Boer helped his pupils to acquire and retain paid employment.

In Haarlem, the next Dutch town that considered professional aftercare, De Boer was asked to become president of a commission that had to advise the town council in this matter. The commission wrote the 'Haarlem aftercare report', that further developed the methodology of aftercare. This report would become very influential and was a point of reference for aftercare in the next decades.

The Haarlem aftercare report described the components aftercare should consist of. Its nucleus was described as 'social care': finding jobs, support after finding a job and intervening when a former BLO-pupil was in trouble or under threat of getting into trouble. All the other parts of aftercare were derived from this core-task. When aftercare-pupils were not capable of doing paid work, then sheltered employment had to be created. In order to be able to control the activities of aftercare-pupils during evening hours, 'evening care' had to be created as well. In 1924, the aftercare in Haarlem became definite with the appointment of a civil servant for aftercare and the opening of a workshop for sheltered employment. Evening care had been taken care of at an earlier stage.

In the second half of the 1920s another four civil servants for aftercare were appointed in different towns in the Netherlands. Six more workshops for sheltered employment were started as well. Evening care was spread out much wider because it was for the main part joined with the schools for special education.

During this period, the methodology of aftercare was further developed, in which Pier de Boer, the Amsterdam aftercare-worker, played an important role. He focused on what he called 'guidance', which he thought was necessary for former BLO-pupils, to keep their place in society. In his vision, guidance had not as primary goal to protect aftercare pupils from society. They had to learn to deal with the hardships supplied by society in order to be able to accept their modest place inside it.

Most important means of maintaining aftercare pupils in society was either doing paid work or, if this was not possible, working in a sheltered workshop. Only those who were not able to work under any circumstances were allowed to be placed inside an intramural institution.

In the 1930s, the number of professional aftercare workers and sheltered workshops grew steadily, in spite of the problems caused by the Great Depression. This growth, however, lagged considerably behind the increase of special education in the Netherlands as a whole.

In the same period, for the first time most aftercare workers united in a national organisation, the Dutch Society for Aftercare Special Education (NVNBO). By uniting themselves, the aftercare became an important national player, especially with regards to competitive fields of action such as social psychiatry and the employment for the handicapped.

With respect to development of the methodology of aftercare, there was hardly any change in this period. Main cause for this was probably the enormous amount of energy that the aftercare workers had to put in maintaining their organisations under the difficult circumstances of the depression. In this period, eugenic thinking became more influential. For the first time, attempts were made to test eugenic propositions by means of research.

The involvement of the Netherlands in World War II meant that aftercare workers had to do their utmost to maintain their organisations. Moreover, the dramatic deterioration of social circumstances during the German occupation led to the aftercare workers becoming very anxious that their pupils would slip into a mass-lapse. This led to the workers extending their support of (forced) residential care, on a scale that was unimaginable during the 1930s.

The attitude of the aftercare workers towards the national-socialistic occupation of the country was in some ways naive. It was deemed unimaginably that the fascist ideology could in any way be dangerous to the mentally handicapped. So much so, that in the early years of the occupation a national register for current and former BLO-pupils was compiled. When the occupier wanted to gain access to this register at the beginning of 1944, the only way to avoid this was to destroy it.

The tension between neo-hygieneism and eugenics with regards to the feeble-minded continually played an important role in the first part of the twentieth century. The aftercare-workers showed, through their work, that the eugenicists were wrong. They proved that with proper guidance, a large proportion of the former BLO-pupils were able to function adequately in society and even contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. By doing so, the aftercare workers contributed to a change of image that existed in society about the feeble-minded in a positive way, a development that was further expanded in the years after World War II.