



The Dutch Centre for Nursing History: the Florence Nightingale Institute (FNI) in 2015

About us

The Florence Nightingale Institute (FNI) is the most important knowledge centre for the history of nursing and caring in the Netherlands, within the broad spectrum of health care. The FNI researches, collects and distributes knowledge of this history. We do so by stimulating (scholarly) research, by offering educational material and by sharing our unique heritage. Our activities are based on the conviction that knowledge of the history of health care will stimulate self-confidence and professional pride in (future) nurses and care givers. For the general public, it is important to learn and experience that the professionals at your bedside are indispensable in Dutch health care. Our motto is: the future of nursing is built on the past. For more: <http://www.fni.nl/i/1362/the-future-of-nursing>

The Dutch Centre online

The website [fni.nl](http://www.fni.nl) is freely accessible to anyone interested in the history of nursing and caring and contains a hoard of information. Dozens of thematic files have been assembled from hundreds of items containing information, visual and audio material, film clips, objects, stories and education. Navigation of the website is possible by swiping and scrolling. All information can be shared with others and visitors can react interactively. The website is completely responsive and can therefore be consulted on all devices. Communication with the target group is conducted through an active social media policy. Within the foreseeable future, the most important files on our website will be available in English. At this moment, a short impression can be found on <http://www.fni.nl/english>

Spearhead Research

Research is a FNI spearhead. In this field, the FNI collaborates closely with the Sister Vernède Foundation in order to digitise hundreds of ego documents by nurses. In 2015, the FNI finished two important projects:

1: A research project into the life and death of nurse Rosa Vecht. As far as we know, she is the only Dutch nurse who was a casualty during World War One. As a private Jewish nurse, she first worked in Antwerp and later on at the hospital in Veurne, also in Belgium. During this bombardment of Veurne on 23 January 1915, she was killed by shrapnel. She was 33 years old. On 23 January 2015, the Florence Nightingale Institute honoured this brave nurse by laying 33 red roses under the Menin Gate in Ypres, on the occasion of the Last Post Ceremony. The results of the research have been used in the thematic file on Rosa Vecht at <http://fni.nl/moedige-meid-in-oorlogstijd>

2: The second project consisted of research into the 125 year history of the 'Maandblad voor Ziekenverpleging'. This 'Monthly' was founded in 1890 and was one of the first professional periodicals for nurses in the world. In 1890, the journal was conceived by two trend-setting women, who each in her own way played an important role in the professionalisation of nursing. Anna Reynvaan was one of the seven first registered nurses for the "White Cross" nursing association and would go on to establish a trendsetting nursing education in Amsterdam. Born a gentlewoman, Jeltje de Bosch Kemper was not a nurse herself but a



feminist and therefore an advocate of paid work for women such as nurses. For a long period, these two ladies were members of the editorial board of the Monthly, which still exists. In this jubilee year, the FNI supplied columns, an interview and a special issue. A thematic file was also made at <http://www.fni.nl/een-eigen-vakblad-tvz>

Spearhead Education

FNI believes that the history of health care (nursing, caring, public health) deserves a proper contemporary treatment in education. Nurses and care givers have played a vital part in social developments, from 1880 on. To prepare students for this role, they can profit from knowledge of the development of their future profession. This is what we contributed in 2015:

1: To start out, we made a survey of requirements among nursing teachers at the level of intermediate and higher vocational education. We have visited 20 institutions and interviewed the teachers according to a fixed format. Questions were posed such as: in what way do you treat history at this moment, do you think this subject is important for students, how would you teach it and what could the FNI contribute in this respect? In the course of these interviews, it became clear that the teachers thought the subject was important but that they did not have modern, online material at their disposal to make it engaging. Another conclusion was that the subject is not obligatory and is therefore not readily selected by students. Teachers also indicated that they wished for the subject matter to be available in easily manageable chunks which they could then interpret themselves. Subsequently, we processed this important information into a work plan which became the basis of [fni.nl](http://www.fni.nl)

2: As a result of these interviews the FNI acquired a subsidy of €225,000 and went to work to develop suitable, modern educational material. After orientation, expertise for the subject matter and the didactical approach was hired. The FNI developed a set of 22 educational assignments, see <http://www.fni.nl/opdrachten-voor-het-onderwijs>. These assignments, unfortunately until now only in Dutch, are suitable for the two levels of education. The assignments can be found online, are freely accessible, and vary in educational goal, in format and in length. The teaching suggestions were developed on the basis of activating didactics and each assignment was supplied with an extensive toolkit with instructions and reading suggestions for teachers. This information is behind a wall and can only be accessed by teachers who have first registered with the FNI. During a national conference for nursing teachers, the educational modules were presented. Teachers could immediately apply for their use.

Spearhead Heritage

The FNI's historical collection consists of objects, photos, certificates, documents, textbooks and unique objects such as an original letter by Florence Nightingale, a number of Florence Nightingale medals and a collection of 1,000 badges, from 1880 on. On closing its physical museum in 2013, the FNI had its collection digitised professionally to be exhibit online. The collection itself was stored in the depot near the FNI office in Culemborg. Ongoing works on the collection consists of:

1: In 2015, we have further categorised our collection to be incorporated in the official registering museum sytem Adlib. A number of objects, accompanied by relevant information, was processed into theme files at [fni.nl](http://www.fni.nl). Thus, the FNI website meets the requirements of a



museum and was indeed recognised as an official museum by the Dutch Museum Society. We are registered and are thus the first online museum in the Netherlands.

2: Heritage should be shared. Therefore, we developed a mobile exhibition that can be rented by educational institutions and hospitals. We make this pop-up exhibition to size and according to the accents of the institution renting it. In this way, the collection travels through the whole country for the public to enjoy it. This exhibition was already on show at the Prinsengracht Hospital in Amsterdam and will shortly be at a caring organisation that celebrates its 140 year jubilee. Our prime exhibit, the demonstration doll of district nurse Antje Stieltjes from 1898, will then go 'on tour' for the first time.

Communication

Apart from our online strategy, we think it is important to remain visible to the public and to our target group. This is how we accomplish it:

1: To stimulate the experience, we organise the already mentioned pop-up exhibitions, historical fashion shows and lectures. On 12 May, International Nursing Day, the FNI opened the Amsterdam Stock Exchange by sounding the gong, together with six American student nurses. Now that the FNI is online, communication with the target group is of the utmost importance. For that reason, we are very active in social media, to establish a community of people interested in the history of nursing and caring. In this respect, we are always looking for connections with international developments. The monthly online newsletter is delivered to 6,000 contacts, we have almost 2,000 Twitter followers and our Facebook page has some 800 likes. We regularly update our blog. All of this needs to grow!

2: We also make ourselves heard through the printed press. For instance, we have a monthly column in Nursing, a professional journal with 45,000 subscribers. A glossy, Zin in Zorg, was published, for which the FNI supplied the visual material. We made the summer issue of the PGGM, the National Pension Fund for the health care, as well as a contribution to the 150 year jubilee of the Emma Children's Hospital in Amsterdam.