



# Memorable moments

Annual Report 2008



Cover photo:  
**Ladies on a swing**  
  
Photographer: Herman Lunenborg  
Centre: Ter Apel

Colophon

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A picture of a woman packing her things to move to the first place of her own in the Netherlands. A picture of a class of asylum seekers who are taking a course in Basic Dutch. A picture of asylum seekers’ children play-acting with one another. A picture of occupants going out of their way to do cleaning work in an asylum seekers’ centre. **These are the memorable moments at the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. This is the way things are here.** During work, a number of COA employees captured the day-to-day and special moments for this annual report. These memorable moments will show you what the year 2008 meant to COA, our employees and our occupants.

## Woman cleaning windows

Photographer: Marc Ritzen

Centre: Echt



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**2008 had a fair number of challenges in store for COA, such as the creation of sufficient capacity, the implementation of the General Amnesty scheme and the preparations for a new health care system for asylum seekers. At the same time, our organisation is undergoing significant changes. During the past few years, our focus was on structural adjustments in our organisation. By the end of 2008, a robust and, at the same time, flexible COA was a fact, and we were ready to take a new step, with plenty of room for the development of employees, expertise and collaboration.**



Our employees are eager to provide asylum seekers with high-quality reception in the form of accommodation and guidance. Their enthusiasm ensures that we are able, time and time again, to provide answers to the new questions which are asked of COA. Consider for example the successful implementation of the General Amnesty scheme. It is fantastic that 90% of the people who were granted asylum found a place to live by the end of 2008! In 2008, we endeavoured to strengthen our collaborative arrangements with our chain partners and other parties. COA is involved on both the front and back stage. The asylum seekers live with us, and we have meetings with them. If we lack the knowledge or experience falling within the scope of our core tasks, we will ensure that we acquire that knowledge. We nevertheless do not have to be able to do everything ourselves; we are happy to associate and enter into long-term relationships with organisations which complement us with their expertise. Our collective added value for occupants is enlarged this way. I am pleased that we invest in collaborative arrangements, together with, for example, local councils. This annual report gives a very good picture of what we at COA experienced in 2008. Our employees were eager to photograph their work and show you what we are really all about.

Nurten Albayrak-Temur, General Director

**COA responds very quickly and effectively to special situations. I observed this in 2008 during, amongst other things, fluctuations in the inflow and outflow. In March we found over 800 Chinese people on our doorstep within one single week. Not an easy task, but our employees were able to accommodate them. At times such as these, it is clear that COA always ensures that the reception of asylum seekers remains manageable for politicians and society at large.**

From my supervisory role, I look with great satisfaction at the way COA deals with developments. An organisation like COA finds itself on a road where new things keep cropping up. This includes new themes, such as the health services and the General Amnesty in 2008. It is typical for COA that developments are seen as opportunities, not as threats. The reception organisation seizes the opportunity to use its expertise in new areas, and to develop. That is a quality which has added value for society. So, in 2008, COA was asked, for good reasons, to analyse the group of approximately 9,000 people which had been granted asylum and were staying outside the central reception centres. There is a great deal of interest in the asylum issue in political circles and society at large. Nevertheless, COA usually stays away from news-coverage. The employees carry out their assignment thoroughly and skilfully. I can rest assured that the organisation carries out its duties in a responsible manner. In 2009, COA will again undoubtedly find new themes on its path. We were already aware of some of them towards the end of 2008, such as what is referred to as the “asylum letter” (a letter with proposals which the State Secretary for Justice sent to the Senate). Others will crop up unexpectedly. Dealing with change runs in our employees’ blood. I look upon COA’s course with confidence and an open mind.

Loek Hermans, Chairperson of the Supervisory Board in formation





# The photographers

## Marc Ritzen

Programme Supervisor Marc Ritzen has been working for COA for over 17 years. He currently works in the asylum seekers' centre in Echt (cluster Limburg). "I work with regular permit holders as well as occupants under the General Amnesty. My main task is to lead people with a residence permit to regular accommodation in the country. The thought of photographing the activities in an asylum seekers' centre in 2008 appealed to me. I also used to take a lot of photographs in the centres. The photographs I take now will allow me to make a good comparison of the images of different periods."



My photographs are particularly authentic and spontaneous. I do not photograph occupants who pose!"

## Jan Labree

"I am especially keen to capture the man at work or behind his work on film. That has always been my motivation when taking photographs." That is what Jan Labree, an education and training adviser at COA's training centre, the COAcademy, told. "I would like to photograph the pleasure people take in their work, their passions, what drives them and their attention for occupants"



That is exactly what I'm about, not only when taking photographs, but also in other activities. Pictures I took of occupants adorn the walls of COA's offices. "Those are the people for whom we do our work", that's the idea. As an education and training adviser, I work with colleagues on their passion and potential. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to work with colleagues in such a positive way."

## Herman Lunenburg

Sheltered Housing Supervisor Herman Lunenburg started working for COA in 2000. He has been working in the Temporary Reception Centre (tnv) in Ter Apel for more than three years.



"I would like to present the reader of the annual report a picture of the activities in a Temporary Reception Centre. We talk and write about it, but images could well speak louder than words. I make a special effort to represent the austerity of a Temporary Reception Centre. You cannot compare a Temporary Reception Centre with an asylum seekers' centre. I would like to reflect this in my photographs. I help occupants with their questions about the centre. You cannot compare the relationship between a sheltered housing supervisor and an occupant of a Temporary Reception Centre with that of a sheltered housing supervisor in an asylum seekers' centre, since occupants stay in a Temporary Reception Centre for a much shorter period of time."

## Jacqueline Lycklama a Nijeholt

Until 1 September 2008, Jacqueline Lycklama a Nijeholt worked as a case manager at COA, in the asylum seekers' centre in Emmen, cluster Drenthe & Overijssel. She then took up a new challenge at the Repatriation & Departure Service (DT&V), where she works as the overall coordinator. "I want to not only portray a centre with my photographs, but also the outside world of COA."



I show people that the world of asylum seekers and their reception extends beyond the asylum seekers' centre. I like the fact that you can capture the right, essential moment on a photograph. I also find it important to know the background of the situation of the person whose photograph I'm taking. It makes a photograph more valuable for me. At COA, I was already working with asylum seekers who were returning to their country of origin. The transfer to the Repatriation & Departure Service was therefore not large for me."

## Mariska Heijs

Her role as Cyprus Project Manager led Mariska Heijs, with her camera, to a location abroad. "I work at the Central Bureau in Rijswijk as adviser for the Office of the General Director. For example, I give advise on a wide range of subjects of an administrative, political or social nature. In addition, I became the Cyprus Project Manager in 2008. The photograph which is published in this report was taken in November."



I would like to capture the small scale of the reception organisation on Cyprus. There is only one asylum seekers' centre, specifically for women and girls. The occupants have painted the houses themselves in pretty pastel colours. I took the photographs for the annual report, as well to show my Dutch colleagues what Cyprus looks like."

## Anneke Top

Local ICT Support Manager Anneke Top helps to answer questions and handles complaints for a number of centres in the clusters Drenthe & Overijssel and Gelderland. "As a local ICT support manager, I turn to my colleagues when there are complaints in the ICT area. This concerns problems which the help desk cannot resolve from a distance, it is usually concerning hardware. My work often takes me to the centres. That is where I prefer to take my photographs."



The nice thing about taking photographs for the annual report is that it is a specific assignment: present a picture of COA's work. Office impressions are often a bit less dynamic for a photographer. I have tried to capture action. That for me is the challenge."



# The photographers

## Miriam Willems

Case Manager Miriam Willems has been working in the asylum seekers' centre in Vught (North Brabant & Zeeland cluster) since 2005. She worked in various positions at COA since 1995.

"I believe that capturing the transfer of people from our reception centre to society is the biggest challenge of taking photographs for the annual report. For example, an occupant who goes to the Centre for Work and Income (CWI). I prefer to photograph "everyday things".



I particularly like to photograph spontaneous moments, people who do not feel that they are being watched. Pictures often speak louder than words. Because of the nature of this centre, my meetings with the occupants are focused on the orientation and integration stage."

## Nanda Hofman

Nanda Hofman has been working for COA since 1997. She became a case manager at the end of 2005, at first in the asylum seekers' centre in Musselkanaal, then, since April 2008, in the housing facility (odl) in Vlagtwedde (Groningen cluster). "Two weeks before I received the call to take photographs for the annual report, I bought a reflex camera specifically to photograph landscapes. The call stimulated me to focus specifically on people.



I discovered that this is where my interests lie; capturing emotions. We have beautiful occupants of course. African women with magnificently coloured clothes! As a case manager, I have private meetings with the occupants aimed at permanent repatriation. In this process, I also cooperate closely with chain partners, such as the Repatriation & Departure Service and the Aliens Police (VP). That makes my job so rich and varied."

## Remco Molkenboer

Remco Molkenboer is a sheltered housing supervisor in our orientation & integration centre in Gilze en Rijen (North Brabant & Zeeland cluster). Eleven years ago, he started in the same position at COA in the asylum seekers' centre in Ossendrecht.



"I seized the call to take photographs for the annual report with both hands to capture the various cultures in our reception centre. I also took photographs of the comings and goings of people. I sometimes spend a bit more time with the occupants in order to be able to make a good photo. For example, of a family leaving the reception centre, on their way to a new home. At a certain point, they simply forget that you are following them with your camera. In my position as a sheltered housing supervisor, I have a great deal of contact with the occupants. I assist them when they have questions about the ins and outs of living in the centre."

## Ulbe Hempenius

Ulbe Hempenius has been working at our Housing Department as a supervisor for the clusters Friesland, Flevoland and North Holland since May 2008. Before that, he worked for 10 years as a caretaker in our asylum seekers' centres in Sneek and St. Annaparochie. "For me, taking photographs for the annual report is twofold: For my job, I monitor the state of repair of buildings. After a year, I take another round of photographs for comparative purposes.



What I find appealing about taking photographs for the annual report is that I get to show what is going on in the country, and the kind of things my department does. My job as a supervisor is rich and varied. For example, I monitor the state of repair of buildings, outer walls and roofs and also inspect the ventilation of rooms and caravans. My job contributes directly to the safety and habitability in a centre."

## Nina Hoeve

"Giving advice and providing support in the area of communication, drawing up communication plans and helping to supervise our central communications policy. A few of the tasks of a communications consultant", is what Nina Hoeve told about her work at COA, where she has been working since October 2007. "I am involved in the Cyprus Project, Safety & Habitability and the Fire Safety Project. For the annual report, I give the reader a glimpse of our archives.



Images of an archive can be quite static. It is more interesting when a photograph captures movement. The employee on my photograph of the archives is so busy that he is no longer paying any attention to me. Because I chat with the people between shots on such occasions, they seem to forget all about me. That results in authentic images, and the colleague is really at work: "business as usual"."

## Hans Kalksma

"I never tire of working with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UMAs)", UMA employee Hans Kalksma told us. "The reception of UMAs forms part of the special reception, what it most certainly is. The future is uncertain for most of the young people.



We help the young people "get back on their feet" and, during the short period of time they live with us, give them as many resources as possible for building a decent life." Arabist and welfare worker Hans has been working for COA since 1995, the last four years of which in Drachten. He has been taking photographs for as long as 25 years, the last three years in a professional capacity. "Photographs should "grab" the viewer, by the stories they tell or the questions they raise. My photograph of the renovations in Drachten is symbolic. We help young people get back on their feet. Moreover, we also work on our organisation on a continuous basis."

**Safety and habitability determine the quality of reception. It is our duty to provide a safe and liveable environment, in the broadest sense of the word: ranging from fire safety, proper exterior lighting and empowerment training courses to the self-activation of occupants and the specific reception of special groups. For this reason, our employees have meetings with our occupants.**

In 2008, we had to contend with several fires in our asylum seekers' centres. The fact that these fires were successfully extinguished may be ascribed in part to the fire safety measures we took. Additional funds from the Ministry of Justice allowed us to continue protecting our buildings

with fire-resistant materials in 2008. Moreover, our employees know what to do in the event of a disaster. We undertake evacuation exercises on a regular basis, often in collaboration with local relief workers. In the beginning of the year, COA started with the protective custody

of risk groups. In this way, we wish to keep unaccompanied minor aliens (UMAs) who belong to the risk group of disappearing and possibly from falling victim to human trafficking or smuggling. Our occupants contribute to a liveable environment. Our sheltered housing supervisors encourage



the self-activation of asylum seekers. For example, they run the playroom or linen room, often together with volunteers. They also carry out cleaning work in the centres, pick up litter and help out with (garden) maintenance work. Activities for occupants also contribute to the living conditions in the centres. Activities are

particularly important for young people and children. On 3 March 2008, COA and the National Foundation for the Promotion of Happiness (Nationale stichting ter bevordering van de Vrolijkheid) signed an agreement to collectively reach a larger number of children in the reception centres.

**Living in a safe environment**

Photographer: Nanda Hofman

Centre: Vlagtwedde



Self-activation: ironing  
the linen for the kitchen

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer  
Centre: Gilze en Rijen



Under construction

Photographer: Hans Kalksma  
Centre: Drachten

Well-cared-for centres

In different centres in the country, contractors drive their trucks to the premises in order to carry out various large and small maintenance projects of COA. Maintaining the ventilation systems of buildings, paving a road and providing for proper lighting are some of the activities

undertaken. A number of asylum seekers' centres were repainted, such as the one in Drachten in the last quarter of 2008. Properly maintained buildings encourage the occupants to keep their environment tidy and liveable.



## Children absorbed in the shadow theatre

Photographer: Nanda Hofman

Centre: Vlagtwedde

## Activities for children

Growing up is not always easy for children of asylum seekers. Their parents sometimes make radical decisions. After all, they have applied for asylum and taken decisions which also have a great impact on the future lives of their children. Children of asylum seekers therefore deserve our special attention. We organise activities for them throughout the year. Together with the National Foundation for the Promotion of Happiness (Nationale stichting ter bevordering van de Vrolijkheid), children can for a short while emerge themselves in a world of fantasy. They play music or do play-acting, for example, together with the volunteers from the foundation.





Hoisted up into the air during  
an empowerment training

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer  
Centre: Gilze en Rijen



Empowerment training

Some people are more assertive than others. Someone who is less assertive might usually not feel safe. COA has been facilitating empowerment training courses for women and girls for many years. It gives them greater self-confidence. In 2008, we started to offer the training to boys and men.

The importance and awareness of assertiveness are the key components of the training courses. The course members practise a great deal with each other. For example, occupants have to literally let themselves be hoisted up into the air, trusting the other occupants not to let them fall. The training courses are given by around sixty of our own employees, all of whom have been trained and certified.



Repairs after a fire

Photographer: Ulbe Hempenius  
Centre: Dokkum

Damage control

A hole in the roof and black soot testify to a fire which raged in the asylum seekers' centre in Dokkum. In 2008, we had to contend with a number of fires, such as the one in Dokkum on 29 May. Swift action, a properly functioning in-house emergency and first-aid service and excellent collaboration with local relief workers ensured that the fires were successfully extinguished. The fire safety modifications kept the damage to a minimum. We adapted buildings in 2008, in order to prevent the spread of fire and smoke to other parts of the building. As a result, people will have more time to escape, and escape routes will remain intact. After a fire, we are attentive to the possible consequences for occupants and employees. The Reception management organises psychological support when this is called for. The Housing Department takes care of the repairs to the building.



Large-scale in-house emergency and first-aid service exercise

Photographer: Herman Lunenburg  
Centre: Ter Apel

Drills

22 May 2008. A fire in the centre spread very quickly. To complicate matters, the access roads were partially blocked. Fortunately, this concerned a simulated disaster in Ter Apel, which we organise throughout the country from time to time. Our occupants also take part in these kinds of exercises on a regular basis. The drill in Ter Apel was held at night, in order to test the deployment of the security staff and the response to an emergency call by COA employees. Two fire brigades and fifty volunteers from the Red Cross took part in it. The participating parties were very pleased about the proceedings of the exercise.





**The implementation of the General Amnesty scheme is a great challenge for COA. We live up to our ambition to prepare those occupants qualified for amnesty, to leave our reception centres in an adequate and timely manner. When we help them find a place to live in a municipality, the occupants' needs come first as far as accommodation, work, education and care are concerned. We collaborate closely on this with partners and other organisations.**

When we began to implement the General Amnesty scheme in June 2007, over 15,000 occupants qualified for amnesty, 12,500 of whom actually received a permit. During our meetings with people who had been granted amnesty, we shifted the emphasis from repatriation to integration. We encourage them to make proper preparations for social integration in their reception centre, so that they will be able to leave the centre

with the best possible prospects for a stay in the Netherlands. In addition to private meetings, we offer them a modular programme. By the end of 2008, 90% of those who had been granted amnesty had found their own place to live. COA frequently collaborates with other parties. In 2008, we put into effect the agreement which we concluded in 2007 with the Centre for Work and Income (CWI)

and the Dutch Refugee Council (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland). This collaboration resulted in, amongst other things, the organisation of job fairs across the country for people granted amnesty. In consultation with local councils and cooperative building societies, COA works to make the best possible match between occupant and accommodation, by combining its large administrative network with its knowledge of the occupant. The accommodation supply website which was improved in 2008, also benefits COA and local councils in ways that go beyond the General Amnesty scheme.

At the request of the Housing of Permit Holders Task Force, which oversees the implementation of the General Amnesty scheme, COA received an additional instruction on 30 October 2008: to identify the approx. 9,000 individuals, not staying in one of COA's reception centres, who disappeared or were about to disappear from the local councils' sight. By the end of 2008, 95% had been profiled, revealing that over half of them had already found their own place to live.

**Looking for work in the Centre for Work and Income (CWI)**

Photographer: Miriam Willems  
Centre: Vught



## Ready to leave for their own house

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer  
Centre: Gilze en Rijen

## Personal guidance for those who have been granted amnesty

People who have been granted amnesty are elated when they receive their residence permit. They are also happy when they receive the keys to their own house. However, happiness alone can't guarantee a successful start in the Netherlands. During our meetings with occupants, we focus on level of knowledge, work experience and education, ambitions, the family situation and whether or not someone requires special care. We check

if there are any obstacles, team up to look for solutions and, if necessary, refer people to (one of) our collaborative partners. Providing insight into the situation helps those who have been granted amnesty to make decisions, and to give shape to the preparations for their start in the Netherlands. Upon request, we provide assistance when applying for what could be referred to as a "personal civic integration budget".





Using the supply model to look for suitable accommodation in a municipality

Photographer: Nanda Hofman

Centre: Vlagtwedde



Tailor-made preparations with the modular programme

“Accommodation in the Municipality”, “Information on the Civic Integration Act” and “Portfolio” are examples of modules of the programme which people who have been granted amnesty can follow in a reception centre. As soon as the General Amnesty was announced in early 2007, COA began to develop a special programme. We know that there are large differences between the occupants in terms of background, ambition, work experience and level of knowledge. We are therefore developing a programme, consisting of several modules, which allows occupants to prepare for their social

integration in a personalised manner. They have the option of taking the TIWi (Toolkit Intake Civic Integration Act) test. This test establishes a person’s language level, and therefore clearly points out the kind of support this person needs in order to be able to prepare for their civic integration exam. In 2008, a large number of people who had been granted amnesty followed components of the modular programme. The “Accommodation in the Municipality” module is followed by practically everyone who has been granted amnesty.

**From the very beginning, we give a realistic picture of what is possible within the asylum procedure.**

**The meetings that our case managers have with our occupants regarding safety and habitability always focus on their own sense of responsibility, and how they are working on their future.**

**Depending on the stage of the asylum procedure, the meetings deal with a future in the Netherlands or in the country of origin.**

We start having meetings with our occupants immediately after they arrive in one of our reception centres. As from September 2008, the orientation stage includes a revised training. This new training has four components: “Realistic Assessment of the Personal Opportunities and Abilities”, “Orientation of the New Surroundings”, “Understanding of One’s Own Responsibility with regard to the Asylum Application” and “Preparing for Subsequent Processes”. Following the orientation stage, occupants will proceed with either the integration or repatriation stage. This will depend on the course of their asylum procedure.

We prepare occupants who have received a residence permit for their social integration. We do this under the authority of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (the Minister of Housing,

Communities and Integration). The holders of a residence permit are offered a training. In 2008, the language component was given by various education providers. At the end of the year, we switched to our own language instructors.

During the repatriation stage we work together with a large number of parties, to show asylum seekers ways of shaping their repatriation. We will continue to develop our collaborations with the Repatriation & Departure Service (DT&V), the Aliens Police (VP) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). After the summer of 2008, we will team up to elaborate on new Repatriation and Departure Guidelines.

During the year, we met within the Platform for Sustainable Return. This led us to express the intention, together with

the IOM, the Dutch Refugee Council (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland), Cordaid, Nidos, Pharos, Samah, the Foundation for Restored Trust in the Future (Stichting HIT), the Global Cooperation Foundation (Stichting Mondiale Samenwerking) and HealthNet TPO, to set up a joint Front Office in 2009. Possibly with the aid of Adeona, our own digital knowledge portal, we will gain access to a comprehensive network which will allow us to prepare our occupants for sustainable return.

**Occupants discuss their preparations for repatriation or integration with the case manager**

Photographer: Nanda Hofman  
Centre: Vlagtwedde





Attending class in an  
asylum seekers' centre

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer  
Centre: Gilze en Rijen

Our own programmes and  
training courses

A few occupants concentrate on their lessons basic Dutch. This is part of the orientation programme we revised in 2008. They become acquainted with the Dutch language and society, and are given a realistic picture of the course of their asylum procedure. We prefer to give the programmes and training courses on the various stages: orientation, integration and repatriation, ourselves. We know our occupants best; we know their background, the cultural differences and the sensitivity of the

topics involved. We therefore understand their needs, which gives us an edge when providing tailor-made solutions. In 2008, we carried out a pilot in the asylum seekers' centre in Middelburg in which our own trained employees taught the NT2 language course, which is part of the Preparing for Integration module. It is a success, and a sufficient number of programme supervisors have in the meantime been trained and certified. As from 1 January 2009, we will no longer outsource language instruction.



Gaining work experience  
with metalworking

Phographer: Jacqueline Lycklama a Nijeholt  
Centre: Emmen

Gaining experience for the future

He proudly shows his work. This occupant puts in a few hours a week as a welder at an engineering plant. He is not the only one who works a number of hours a week. Their work contributes to their self-reliance, giving them a better chance of finding a job when they leave the reception centre.

This also applies to an employer's work-training programme. Some occupants manage to apply their experience and start their own small business. Whether they remain in the Netherlands or return to their own country, their experience is bound to open more doors.



**Due to an increase in the inflow, the expiry of administrative agreements and our push for quality, we were faced with great challenges in 2008. We managed to realise sufficient capacity for the short term without making any concessions to the quality of the reception or accommodation. This can be ascribed in part to the good collaboration with local councils and the flexibility within our own organisation.**

We have the necessary experience to deal with changes in the inflow and outflow. Notwithstanding, it remains a challenging aspect of our work, since the solutions

for an acute increase in demand are often relatively expensive, and not always of the right quality. We are therefore doing our utmost to enhance our flexibility. A buffer

allows us to act immediately in the event of additional inflow. In 2008, we intensified our contacts with local councils. Due to the expiry of administrative agreements, we teamed up to look for additional capacity. In March, we suddenly required a great deal of additional accommodation. Within a few days, as many as 800 Chinese people reported to the application centre (ac) in Ter Apel – in addition to the usual inflow. Thanks to the efforts of our employees, their experience with large fluctuations, and with the assistance of local councils, we were able to realise the required capacity expediently. This year, COA developed our vision for capacity and property. We aim to develop a number of existing centres, or centres which are to be newly acquired, in a sustainable manner. We will realise this as of 2009. Centres will qualify on the condition of an agreement with the local council for the short term or for an indefinite period of time.

**A large number of Chinese people at a table in the dining room of a temporary reception centre**

Photographer: Herman Lunenburg  
Centre: Ter Apel

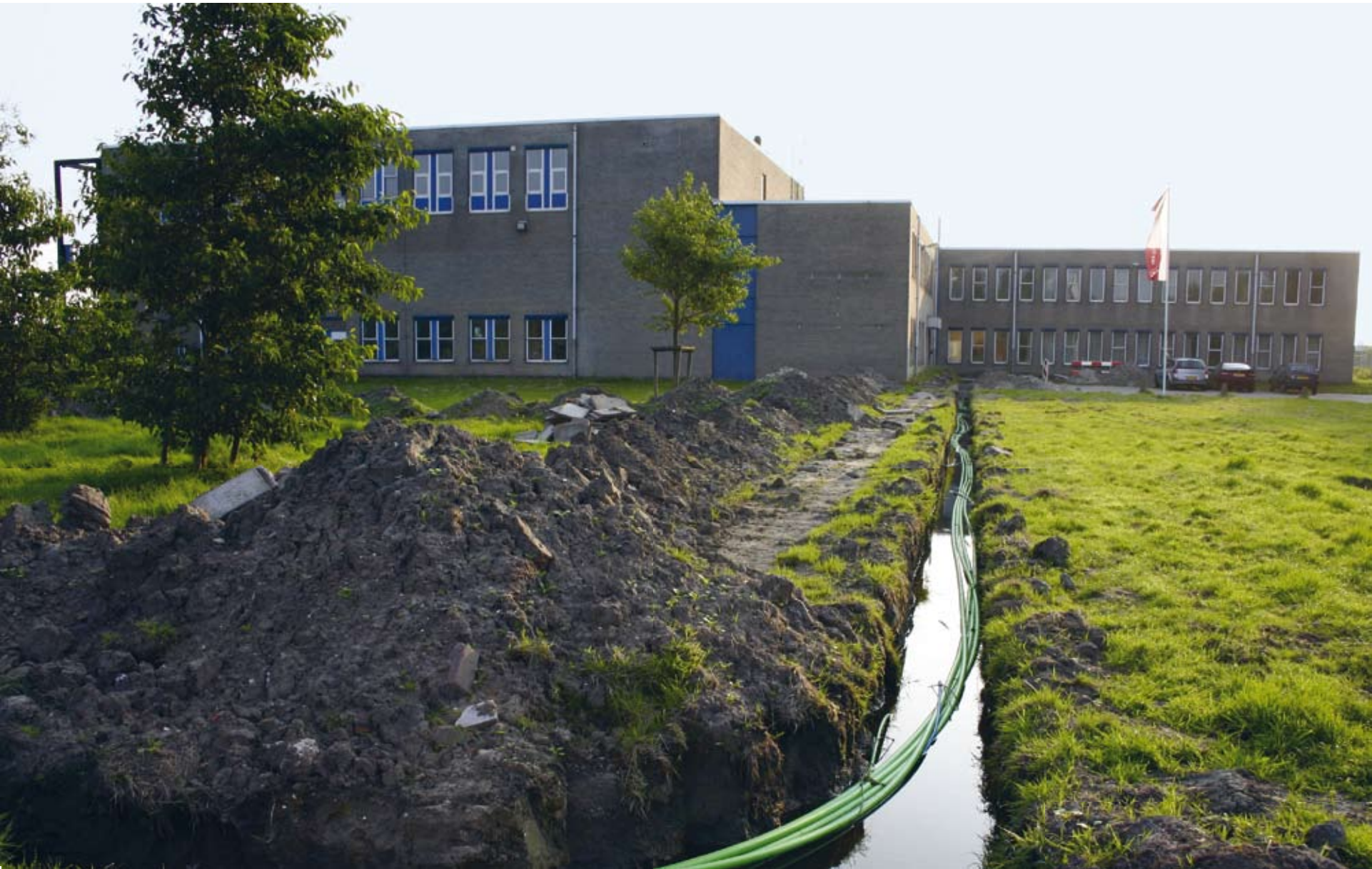




Preparing for the opening  
of a new centre

Photographer: Ulbe Hempenius

Centre: Katwijk



Opening and closing

The semi-permanent buildings of the former asylum seekers’ centre in Schagen (cluster North Holland and Flevoland) were dismantled in August 2008. What remains are the panels and floorboards in our depot, a new designated use of the grounds for the local council and the memories of employees and occupants. On account of the expiry of administrative agreements with local councils, we had to close six centres and bid farewell to the local community. Together with

various local councils and provinces, we are working hard to come up with solutions for the short-term and long-term needs. Discussions focus on our push for quality. COA organises meetings for neighbours together with the municipalities where we open or reopen centres. In 2008 we will open five (temporary) reception centres, including azc (asylum seekers’ centre) Katwijk. Page 52 provides a list of our centres, together with the changes in 2008.



Departure to another centre.  
Is everyone on the bus?

Photographer: Herman Lunenburg  
Centre: Ter Apel

## The dynamics of the temporary reception centre

Out of the blue. In the third week of March, approximately 800 Chinese people reported to the application centre (ac) in Ter Apel. Within the shortest possible time, COA employees from the entire organisation made arrangements to increase the capacity of the temporary reception centres (tnv). This included arranging household effects, the transport of the Chinese people to the new temporary reception centre, additional deliveries by suppliers and the installation of a kitchen in a single day. This proves once again that, irrespective of the size of the group we suddenly find at our door, “no” will not be our response. The assistance of the local councils also allows us to act swiftly.

Unfortunately, time constraints do not always allow us to communicate in the way local councils and neighbours have come to expect from us. Towards the end of March and in early April, when the inflow reached its peak, on average about two hundred people reported to us every day. After that, the inflow stabilised at two hundred a week. Because we witnessed a steady increase in the inflow during the year, we also required additional tnv capacity for a longer period of time. The additional capacity was located elsewhere in the country. We used busses to transport asylum seekers from Ter Apel to their temporary place of residence.





**For many years, asylum seekers were able to consult on their health problems with the nurses from the MOA Healthcare Department at the centres. This will change on 1 January 2009. As from this date, health services for asylum seekers will tie in as much as possible with the way in which health care has been organised for Dutch citizens.**

“The care for asylum seekers should correspond with our regular health care as much as possible” is the principle which the then ministers Verdonk and Hoogervorst confirmed on behalf of the government on 12 October 2006. As from 1 January 2009, COA will comply with this

request. In 2008, we prepared thoroughly for the new health care system for asylum seekers. We did this with the involvement of all the stakeholders in the medical health services and asylum chain, in order for the changes to be endorsed. One of the principles of the vision which

we have developed on the health services for asylum seekers is for the responsibilities to be clearly assigned. Public health care has been entrusted to the Municipal Health Service (GGD). This will continue to be the case in 2009. With regard to curative health care, in February 2008 COA initiated a search for a commissionee through a European tendering procedure. We awarded the contract to the health insurer Menzis in June. In the second half of 2008, we collectively prepared the transition. Our occupants remain our priority. Care should remain accessible and within travelling distance. During the last quarter, COA employees worked intensively on the practical implementation. They provide information and information materials to the occupants so they know how to access health care. As from 1 January 2009, a significant number of nurses from the MOA Healthcare Department will work as primary care assistant practitioners or at the Access Central phone line. As a result, our wish to preserve the knowledge and expertise of the MOA Healthcare Department with regard to the care for asylum seekers has been fulfilled.

### Visit to the GP

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer  
Centre: Gilze en Rijen





## Preparing for the new health care system

All the relevant organisations in the medical health services and asylum chain are closely involved in the changes of the health care system for asylum seekers. We wish to garner support for our vision. To that effect, we tested its feasibility among the stakeholders at an early stage. In private meetings and at stakeholder meetings, they provided input which allowed us to fine-tune our vision and its elaboration. They appreciate COA's involvement. In 2008, COA issued eight newsletters containing information on the planning and progress, decisions and agreements and the practical implementation of the new system.

Towards the end of 2008, employees informed the occupants about the way in which, from 1 January 2009 onwards, they will be able to call on the health services on their own initiative, in practically the same manner as Dutch citizens do. There will be an Access Central phone line, and they will be able to visit a GP nearest to the asylum seekers' centre. The GP will work together with a primary care assistant practitioner who has been put in charge of the health care for asylum seekers. Employees are taking steps enabling them to familiarise occupants with the range of care options, without performing any care duties or carrying out any medical procedures.

### Maternity care in an asylum seekers' centre

Photographer: Nanda Hofman

Centre: Musselkanaal



TB screening at an  
asylum seekers' centre

Photographer: Jacqueline Lycklama a Nijeholt  
Centre: Emmen

Public health care for asylum seekers

Asylum seekers report at the Municipal Health Service's (GGD) Tuberculosis-bus, where they undergo preventive screening. It is a familiar sight at an asylum seekers' centre. A distinction is made between curative health care and public health care. Public health care includes, for example, infectious disease control (including TB screening) and gaining insight into the state of health of an asylum seeker on the basis of an epidemiological registration and analysis. In 2008, we met with the Municipal Health Service about the organisation of the public health services after 1 January 2009.



**Dealing with change is part of COA. Our organisation is equipped for that. In 2008, we made the final steps in structural adjustments. This will allow us to handle downsizing and growth without having to make any further structural changes. Against the background of peace, quiet and space which thus ensued in the organisation, we continued to work on the organisational development in 2008, paying extra attention to the development of the COA employees and their expertise.**

COA continues to provide adequate solutions for the demand for accommodation and support for asylum seekers in a safe and liveable environment. The capriciousness of the asylum flows calls for a robust and, at the same time, flexible organisation. We answered this call with a structure which consists of operational units which adapt themselves to situations of growth and downsizing and strategic units with a fixed formation. In 2008, COA made the final adjustments to this structure. In 2008, we transferred the strategic activities of the Housing Department to the new Property & Capacity Department. Our reception organisation adapts itself to changes in demand, on the assumption that there will be fewer than 20,000 occupants in 2008 and 2009. The organisation will therefore be downsized from twelve to eight clusters for a period of two years from 1 January 2008. The ancillary services have been merged in order to be able to support all the departments in an effective and efficient manner. They will eventually develop into a shared service center. The organisational development which was initiated could not have happened without the introduction of SAP in 2007, the system for the ancillary processes. We familiarised ourselves with the system in 2008. It provides us with a greater amount of management information.

We keep a much sharper eye on the financial legitimacy, for example by carrying out internal audits on a quarterly basis. This has enabled us to spend more time on staff development, in particular on sharing and securing (the availability of) knowledge. In 2008, we opened our own training centre, the COAcademy, where employees share knowledge with each other. On a European level, we share knowledge with sister organisations and countries on Europe's

external borders. In March 2008, we launched the internal Reception help desk, securing the availability of knowledge within the reception organisation. To support the reception process, employees answer questions and distribute available information.

### Preparing for a meeting

Photographer: Anneke Top

Centre: Schalkhaar







## In the COA archive

Photographer: Nina Hoeve  
Centre: Rijswijk

## In control

Fingers rattle across the keyboard, invoice after invoice is picked up and processed in the SAP system. In the beginning, the system which COA introduced in early 2007 still felt new. In 2008, we became so accustomed to SAP that we improved the accounts payable process, shortening the term of payment. As from 2008, we are keeping a sharper eye on the financial legitimacy. We now

carry out internal audits on a regular basis. We invest in internal planning & control, and clarify the roles and responsibilities in the financial process. A proper administration should go hand in hand with orderly records. Quite a bit of work is done in the COA archives. Document after document is shelved. Three kilometres of records were processed in 2008.



## Training at the COAcademy

Photographer: Jan Labree  
Centre: Almere

## In-house knowledge

A “school” for, and run by, our own employees. In early 2008, our own training centre, the COAcademy, opened its doors. It is the place where our employees share knowledge with each other. Together with the COAcademy, employees develop training courses for their colleagues, such as “Legal Aspects of Our Work”, “Political Arena” and “Coaching Permit Holders”. In a number of cases, our employees also give the

training courses themselves. This way, our in-house knowledge will become available to everyone. In addition to our own training courses, the COAcademy provides access to external and in-company training courses. Moreover, the training centre oversees the wealth of knowledge which our organisation possesses.



# Asylum reception outside the Netherlands

Cyprus does not have a central reception facility. Asylum seekers receive a financial contribution upon entry, and look for accommodation themselves. This means that it is hard to keep track of these people. There is only an asylum seekers' centre for vulnerable groups, such as single women. According to the Asylum Service Cyprus, COA can make a valuable contribution towards the improvement of their asylum system. For this reason, we have been working specifically on the Particular Pressures Cyprus (PPC) project since September 2008, in collaboration with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the Asylum Service Cyprus. This initially involved working visits and the exchange of information and knowledge. The project analyses the Cypriot Reception Model and makes proposals for improvements and, possibly, training courses.

This is one example of our international cooperation in 2008. Another example is Norway, where four of our employees went to work on a secondment basis for a number of months starting on 1 August. Their expertise will be of use in the new centres which Norway had to open due to a rapid increase in the inflow. We exchange a great deal of knowledge

with European sister organisations in the ENARO (European Network of Asylum Reception Organisations) network. In 2008 we expanded the exchange

at an individual level with the groupwise transfer of knowledge, and with methods of group-investigation. We share our expertise with countries which recently

experienced a heavier strain on their asylum system, such as Slovakia, Croatia, the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. With our experience concerning the reception

of invited refugees, we united a number of European countries in the Durable Solutions project in order to widely share our knowledge on this subject.

## A spot in the shade in the asylum seekers' centre on Cyprus

Photographer: Mariska Heijs  
Facility: Cyprus





# Balance

## Exploitation report

	Realisation 2008*	Realisation 2007*
Total income	468,854	467,717
Employees	138,016	138,906
Equipment	152,655	125,790
Interest and depreciation	21,461	20,170
Medical expenses and MOA	101,246	102,057
Programme expenses	59,117	72,211
Total expenditure	472,495	459,134
Net operating result	-3,641	8,583
Result downsizing	-6,475	-8,997
Incidental health care costs	-27,165	-3,326
Contribution Justice incidental health care costs	17,223	-
Remaining net operating result	-20,058	-3,740

\* values x € 1,000

## Assets

	31-12-2008*	31-12-2007*
Fixed assets		
Intangible fixed assets	3,825	5,938
Tangible fixed assets	181,904	160,974
Current assets		
Receivables	30,788	29,598
Liquid assets	25,175	93,476
Total fixed assets	241,692	289,986

## Liabilities

	31-12-2008*	31-12-2007*
Equity capital	7,365	28,810
Assets at the disposal of the Ministry of Justice	-	1,921
Equalisation account	84,887	67,124
Provisions	71,705	53,906
Current liabilities	77,735	138,225
Total liabilities	241,692	289,986

\* values x € 1,000

## Reception Centres in 2008

azc\* Aalten, azc Adelhof, azc Alkmaar, azc Almelo, azc Amerfoort, azc Apeldoorn-NoordWest, azc Appelscha, azc Arnhem-Vreedenburgh (Zuid), azc Arnhem Klein Warnsborn, azc Azelo, azc Baexem, azc Beilen Camp Boszicht, azc Bellingwolde 'De Grenshof', azc Burgum, azc Crailo, azc Delfzijl, **azc Den Ham De Blekkenhorst**, azc Den Helder, azc Dokkum, azc Dongen, azc Drachten, azc Dronten, **azc Duinrell**, azc Echt, azc Eindhoven, azc Emmen, azc Geeuwenbrug, azc Geeuwenbrug AMOG, azc Gilze en Rijen, azc Grave, **azc Gulpen**, azc Heerlen, azc Hunzepark, azc Katwijk, azc Leersum, azc Leiden, azc Leukermeer, azc Leusden, azc Luttelgeest, azc Markelo, azc Middelburg, azc Mookerheide Jachtslot, azc Musselkanaal, azc Nijmegen, azc Oisterwijk, azc Oude Pekela, azc Rotterdam, **azc Rotterdam Hotel Amar**, azc Sambeek, **azc Schagen**, azc Schalkhaar, azc 's-Gravendeel, **azc Soesterberg**, azc Sint Annaparochie, azc Sweikhuizen, azc Ter Apel, azc Utrecht, azc Venlo, azc Vlagtwedde, azc Vught, azc Wageningen, **azc Winschoten (Schutse)**, azc Winterswijk, azc Zweeloo

\*asylum seekers' centre      **orange** = closed in 2008      blue = opened in 2008

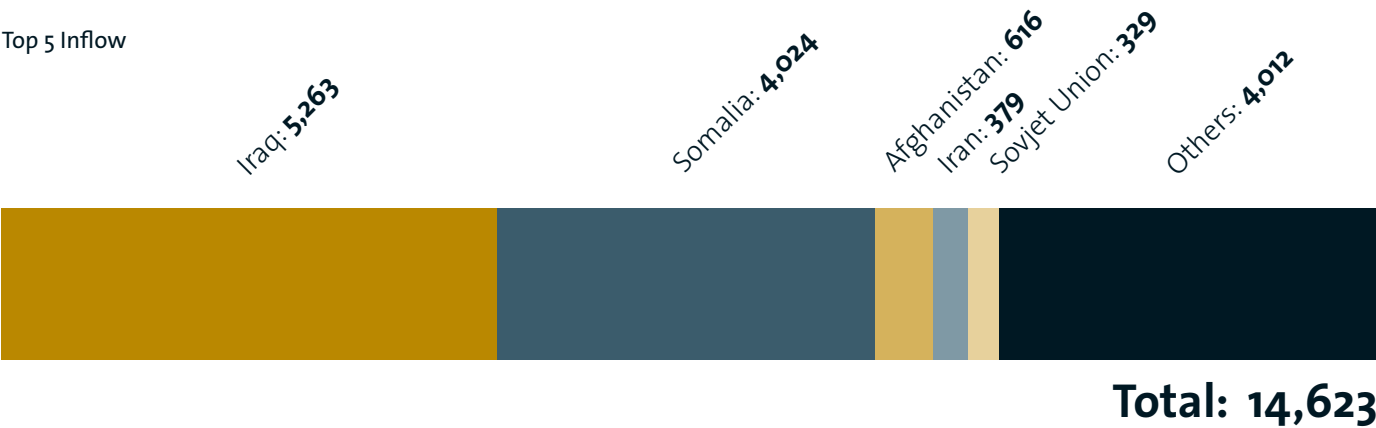
## Developments in the Reception

### Inflow Central Reception from 2000 to 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Inflow	33,634	25,273	12,916	8,548	5,324	5,394	7,772	8,977	14,623

### Inflow Central Reception 2008

Top 5 Inflow

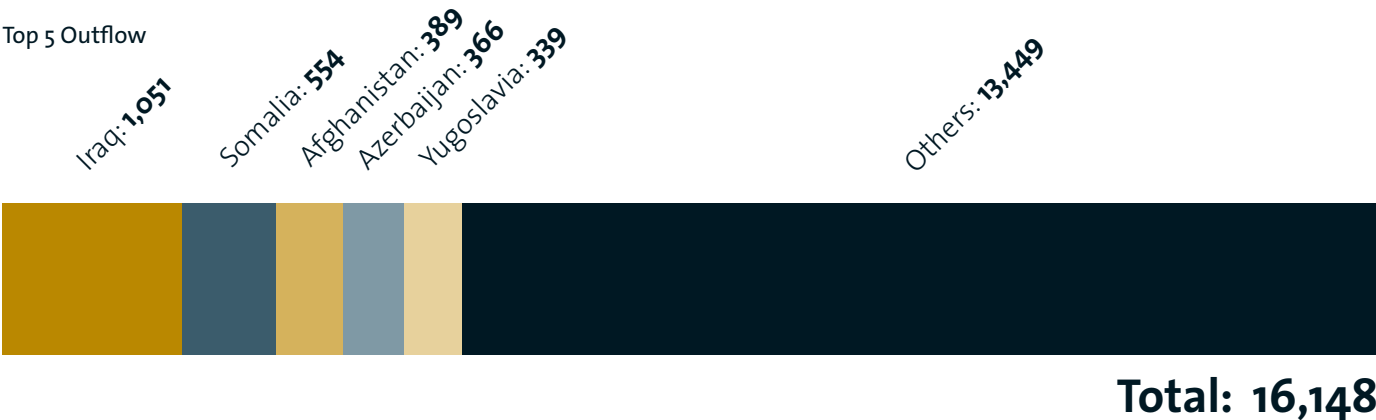


### Outflow Central Reception from 2000 to 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number	19,940	19,625	26,936	25,490	16,955	17,177	13,190	10,308	16,148

### Outflow Central Reception 2008

Top 5 Outflow



Back to the EU Member State where the asylum application was submitted (Dublin Convention)

Photographer: Marc Ritzen

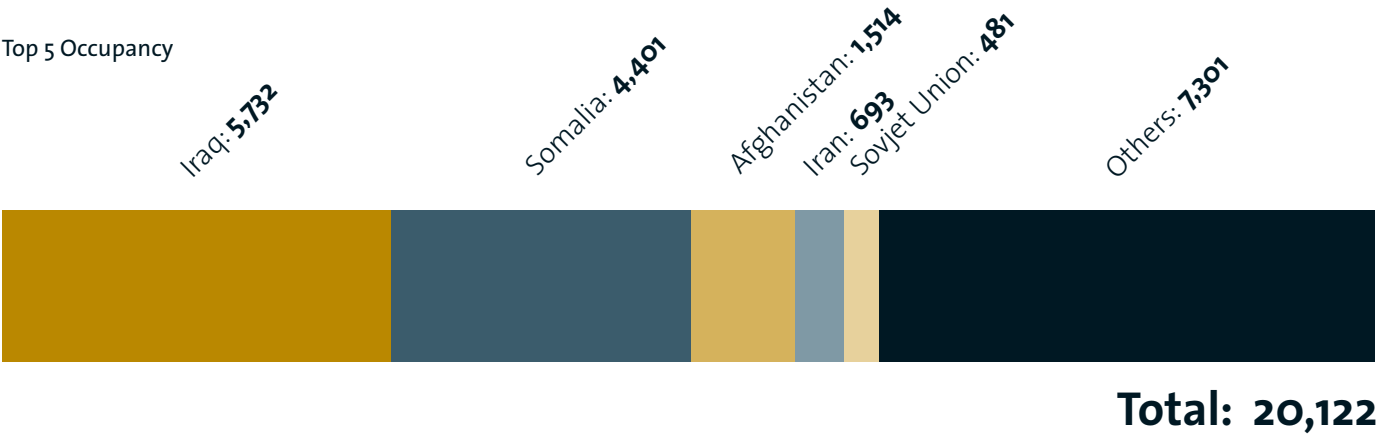
Centre: Echt



Occupancy Central Reception from 2000 to 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Occupancy	78,246	83,801	69,752	52,714	40,761	28,730	23,232	21,698	20,122

Occupancy Central Reception 2008



Somalian woman with her son in building 31

Photographer: Remco Molkenboer

Centre: Gilze en Rijen



Playing a game of chess with concentration

Photographer: Nanda Hofman

Permit holders who have been granted amnesty

Total number of permit holders who have been granted amnesty in the reception centres according to age: Centre: Vlagtwedde

On 1 January 2008

Age	< 18 years old	18-65 years old	> 65 years old	Total
	2,613	4,923	131	7,667

On 1 January 2009

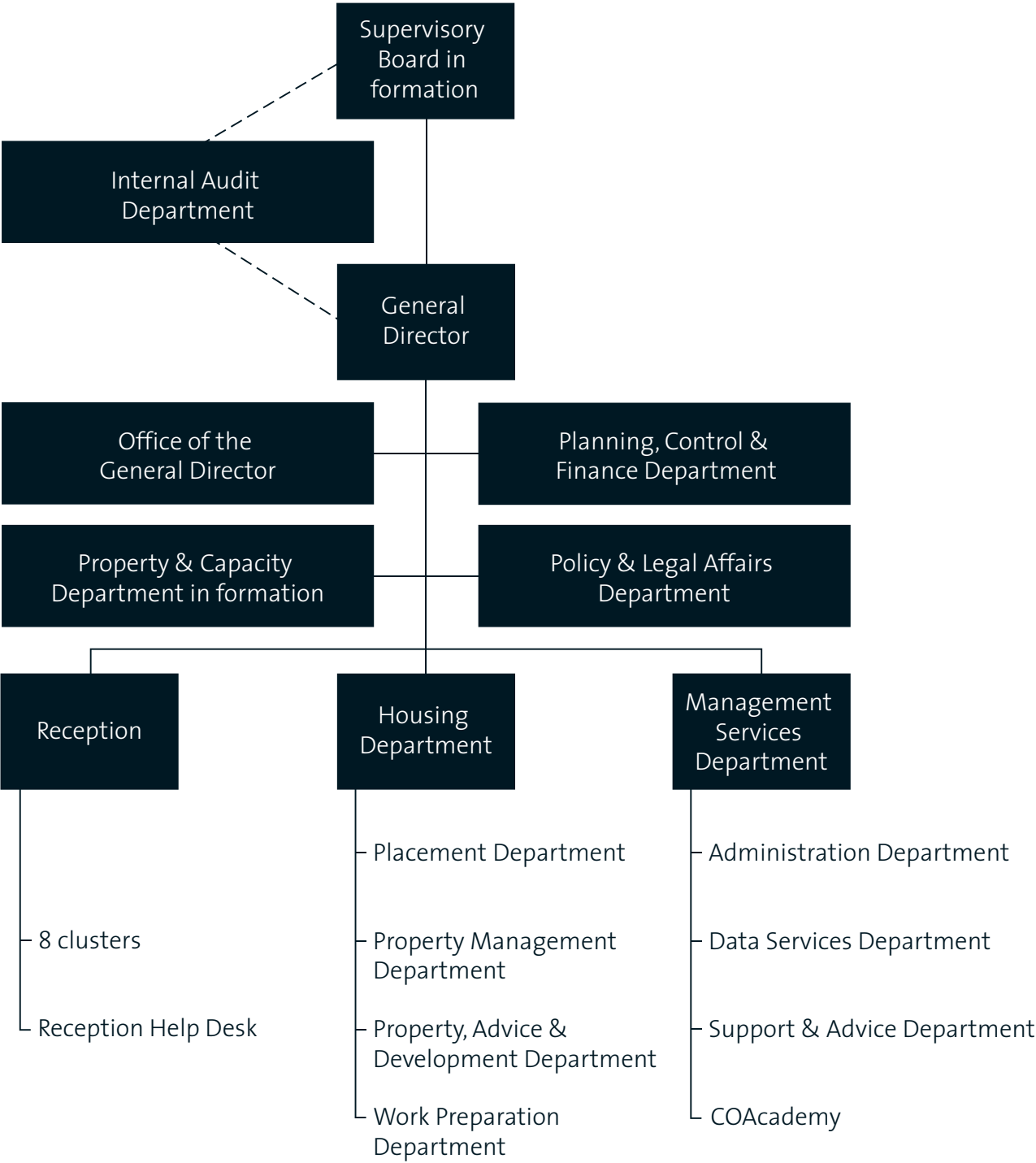
Age	< 18 years old	18-65 years old	> 65 years old	Total
	391	821	20	1,232

Permit holders who have been granted amnesty and the programme which was followed (reference date: 1-1-2009)

Number of participants Modular Programme	6,509 persons
Number of allocated personal social intregation budgets	705* persons

\* personal social integration budget (pnb) = A budget which is made available to persons who are entitled to a pnb for their social integration. “persons who are entitled to a pnb” is understood to refer to permit holders who come under the Settlement of the “old” Aliens Act’s estate scheme (General Amnesty), who are staying in a reception centre as from 1 January 2008 and who are not expected to find accommodation in the municipality in the immediate short term.

Organisation Chart



Board 2008

Loek Hermans	Chairperson
Jaap Bezemer	Vice-Chairperson
Anne-Wil Duthler	Secretary
Rein Willems	Member and Chairperson of the Audit Commission
Adjiedj Bakas	Member
The board of COA acts as a supervisory board in formation	

Managing Body on 31 December 2008

Nurten Albayrak-Temur	General Director
Ed Heijnen	Managing Director of Operations
Jelle van Netten	Director of the Planning, Control & Finance Department
Caroline Herlaar	Director of the Policy & Legal Affairs Department
Petra Ginjaar	Director of the Office of the General Director
Hans Poot	Director of the Property & Capacity Department in formation
Mirjam Huisman	Director of Reception
Herman van der Meulen	Director of the Management Services Department
Frank van Engelen	Director of the Housing Department
Gerard Wolters (out of employment since 6th December 2008)	Head of the Internal Audit Department

Employees 2008

	2007	2008
Staff in Employment # Employees	1,705	1,603
Staff in FTE Employment	1,538	1,447
Number of Women	915	868
Number of Men	790	735



# Our vision

For Dutch society, we are the reception organisation which ensures the smooth reception of aliens. We do this by providing safe accommodation, a means of existence and tailored programmes.

# Our mission

We ensure in a professional manner that people in a vulnerable position are accommodated and supported in a safe and liveable environment, in order for the reception of aliens to remain manageable and justifiable for politicians and society at large.

## Occupants in front of the asylum seekers’ centre in Echt

Photographer: Marc Ritzen  
Centre: Echt



