



**Library of 100 Talents – Heerhugowaard,
Netherlands**

Monique Mosch
Library Kennemerwaard
Heerhugowaard, Netherlands

Karen Bertrams
Probiblio, Netherlands

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Abstract

In Heerhugowaard , a village 50 km north of Amsterdam, Holland, we realised a new kind of children's library, together with architects, children and artists.

The library is traditionally a very 'linguistic' institution, but many children learn and communicate in a non-linguistic manner.

The concept of the Library of 100 Talents finds its roots in the educational visions of Reggio Emilia and the theory of Howard Gardner. The Reggio vision calls it the 100 languages of children. Children can express themselves not only in speech but also in sounds, motions, colours, painting, building, moulding and many more ways. Based on this vision educators and artists haven been working for decades with young children in the children's centres of Reggio Emilia (Italy). Working together on thoughts, ideas, hypotheses and exchanging memories also offers many positive opportunities towards the development of the children's library. The children's abilities are the starting point in working with them: how intelligent is the child, what is his particular intelligence?

In the Library of 100 Talents the children are the librarian. The library of the future is in the first place a process of the way that children use information, create new contexts and share this with other children. This requires a different building, a building that makes it possible to organise and share information in new ways.

SLIDE 1

Heerhugowaard Library – Library of 100 talents.



“The town of Heerhugowaard is situated 50 km’s (kilometres) North of Amsterdam.

It has 48.000 inhabitants

85% of the children use the library

The new library opened in December 2006. The complete third and fourth floor is reserved for the Children’s Library, for children up to the age of 13. The building also houses the Town Hall.

The library co-operates with all 25 primary schools in the town. Dutch schools frequently lack a well-equipped school library. “

SLIDE 2 (Picture ; Artist - impression of the new designed library / townhall by architect Hans van Heeswijk, Amsterdam)



SLIDE 3 Library design by Montessori School , 2003



“In 2003 the Dutch Library Association, the VOB, took the initiative for a project aimed at modernising children’s libraries.

The name of this project was ‘**the library of one-hundred talents**’. Inspiration was taken from Reggio Emilia in Italy where children designed their own learning environment. This idea was elaborated on in a number of libraries. In addition to Amsterdam projects are being carried out in Roosendaal and Heerhugowaard.

This.... is the design for the ideal library, as seen by a think-tank of 8 to 12 year old pupils of a Montessorischool.

A Montessorrischool follows a special educational theory where much emphasis is laid on independent learning and personal development of the pupils “

SLIDE 4 Children participation in the library



“Our main question was: what is the role of children in the library? A question that arose from changes in the school curriculum and the digitisation of the environment that children are living in.

How do we keep the library interesting for children, so they see the library (and continue to do so) as a source for cultural experience, for stories and information? To make them return over and over again to make use of the collection and other services?

How do we get children themselves actively involved? “

SLIDE 5: Multiple intelligences ;



- linguistic
- logical - mathematical
- spatial
- musical
- bodily
- naturalistic
- interpersonal
- intrapersonal

“The Multiple Intelligences Theory of Howard Gardner is a learning theory we studied to innovate the children’s library.

Translated to the Heerhugowaard situation this meant: how do we give children the chance to participate in the design and furnishing of the new building. But also their ideas about the collection and how it should be presented!”

SLIDE 6 : MUSEUM OF THE CHILDREN – RITA BAPTISTE



“The Museum of the Children of Rita Baptiste in The Hague is set up according to the theory of multiple intelligences. We observed how, -with minimal instruction-, she stimulated children to be creative, to build things, to construct, discover, paint and describe things and in this way makes them learn things in more natural and easier manner. Like the old Chinese saying says: I see it- I know how to do it- I do it- I understand it. Everything is presented clearly and invitingly and logically; very instructive for our own branch!”

SLIDE 7 (image of a writing girl)



“It might be interesting to talk about our experiences with children participation; How do they view their library, what are their wishes, their ideas and what do they expect of the future? We visited 10 schools and brainstormed with 250 children from the age of 8 onwards on the subject of the new library.”

SLIDE 8 :

real people behind the desk

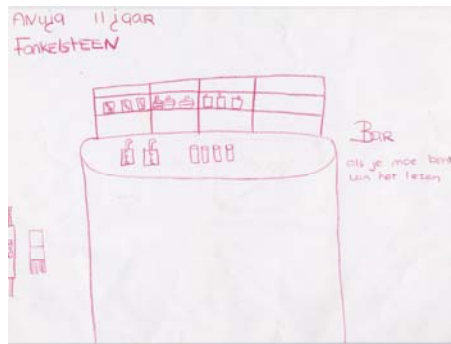
Cosy corners - small reading rooms – non-fiction room to work on projects - theme corners; horror – really happened – chill room (no access for parents!) – secret door – to chill & relax – nice atmosphere by using colours and soft background music – lights in the floors – heating Floor system – children’s department Upstairs – a whole Floor with only computers – most recent versions of MSN – bookshops with new & second hand books – book disco – Royal Library in the library – art room with only paintings - colour printers on every floor – cupboards that reflect the theme (heart for romantic books) – real people behind the desk (no robots!) , no self service – replace old books – more new books – more copies of popular books – safety for toddlers – a clean library– free internet - game hall with X-box , game cube, play station – only children’s books in the entire library – longer opening times – more books / media on sports, like skating – soccer field with artificial grass – faster computers – furniture to relax - sofa – plans – bar – museum – sauna – swimming pool - working with themes like Christmas, horror, music, animals – laptops – free chocolate bar – girls (2) and boys (2) can meet – TV – possibility to listen to music – candy shop – personal changeable library card – playing objects– shops – more copiers – living animals – labyrinth – possibility to see film fragments t)

“In addition to the more predictable results this also produced very surprising input, for instance their focus on hygiene, safety for small children and comfortable chairs. As a matter of fact, it is even for children not easy to let go of the standard concept of a library.

It is really noticeable how much children enjoy being asked for their opinions and ideas and seriously being listened to.

They would like to do that more often! “

SLIDE 9: (Drawing of a bar – for when you are tired of reading!)



“Mentioned and drawn a lot: the possibility for a quick snack or something to drink. A library visit in Holland lasts on average 7 minutes ! People don’t even bother taking their coat of. That should be better.... “

SLIDE 10: (Drawing of separate spaces for boys and for girls)



“Girls apparently like to have a space just for girls; boys never mentioned this. Dating in the library was also mentioned (2 boys with 2 girls). “

SLIDE 11: (Drawing of a little train to sit in while reading...)



“It is very touching to notice that older children find it of their own accord important that the surroundings for young children are safe, clean and inspiring. There should be no sharp-edged table corners or shelving; toddlers should not go near the lift unattended... etc. “

SLIDE 12: MASTERCLASSES: Journalism – Architecture – Advertising – Secret Agents – Presentation – Web Design

“The children made suggestions. We subsequently translated these and carried on from there.

We organised master classes where professionals worked with 12 interested children on relevant subjects. “

SLIDE 13 : Stephanie Haumann for Hans van Heeswijk, Architect



“Stephanie Haumann, the interior designer, working with Hans Heeswijk, the architect of the building tells the children with illustrations how they designed the building. Afterwards the children built a scale model on a scale 1: (to) 50 of the 3rd and 4th floor to get a better insight in the way their library is going to look. “

SLIDE 14: (pictures of the children working)



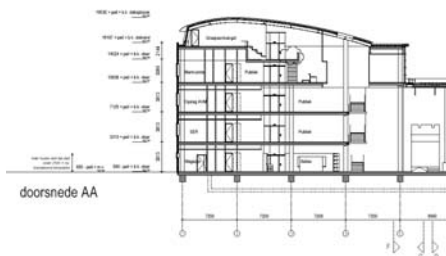
“Here you see the group of young architects working very concentrated! “

SLIDE 15 : (Masterpiece!)



“Very traditional; the boys are more interested in this subject than the girls, but all of them are equally proud of the result! “

SLIDE 16 : (Image of cross-section of the building)



“This is the cross-section of the building. During the process of designing and building it is not very easy to imagine how the rooms will look.
As can be seen on this picture the children will have to cross the whole of the library to get to the children’s department.
There is however a reward at the end..!
From above they can look down and view and experience the whole of the library and the grounds surrounding it.”

SLIDE 17 : (picture of the building-in-progress)



“The dome was one of the suggestions of the children that actually is realised.
It will serve them as a lookout!.”

SLIDE 18 : (Picture of designer Marieke van Diemen & the children that worked with her)



‘I wish to give them an idea of design’ says Marieke van Diemen, artist and designer. With a variety of materials that she brought along, the children built some very original shelving and cupboards.”

SLIDE 19: (pictures from cupboard-designs by the children)



“The shape of the cupboard reflects the content
Cupboards stimulate curiosity and encourage action
To the left a cupboard for young children with recognisable characters from books, to the right a cupboard inspired by a climbing wall, with adventure books.”

SLIDE 20: (pictures from cupboard-designs by the children)



“Rounded shapes, colours, soft touch. The girl on the right works in another master class on a atmosphere card for the section DREAMS

These colours and preferred materials will later be seen on the 4th floor
Furthermore there will be a depot-wall (for normal shelving of the 70% of books that are not shelved in ‘theme-islands’), chill out places, room for presentations, quiet areas and noise areas. “

SLIDE 21: (Pictures Atelier van Lieshout)



“High on the children’s wish list is a ‘secret space, no access for parents’ This space will be realised in co-operation with one of Holland’s best-known artists of today: Joep van Lieshout. This picture shows work from his workshop: the ‘satellite of senses’ and ‘rectum, small’. Enlarged organs of pvc you can climb into”

SLIDE 22 : (picture of the children's editorial office for their newspaper "Biebkidz")



"KIDSWEERK, is a Dutch national weekly newspaper for children from 8 years and older. We invited editor Steven Stol to work with a group of 12 children and come up with 'something' to dream along and to communicate about the new library.

The result is 'BIEBKIDZ'

The whole edition, 5000 copies in full colour, is financed with contributions from local advertisements of local stores, such as a candy store, the pet shop, the bookshop and KIDSWEERK and will be distributed among all Heerhugowaard schoolchildren.

SLIDE 23 (picture of the first edition of 'Biebkidz')



"Logo, title, fonts, colours.... Everything is designed by the children themselves. And what are they dreaming about? A library summer camp with disco, and sleep over in the library."

SLIDE 24 : (artist impression architect third floor library)



“Conclusion ; Children greatly appreciate involvement in the library in a number of different ways. They love it and are proud of the results. The library becomes very much **their own** library and they inform each other.”

SLIDE 25: Programming . For schools, individual children, parents and professional intermediaries. Co-operating with ...



“Apart from a suitable building and attractive design the most important question is: What has the library young children to offer and what can children use the library for? The library is actively involved in creating a central position: by co-operating with the educational field and other organisations but also by working with professionals who can stimulate the children’s curiosity in many different ways.

And of course, everything originating from the children themselves, like for instance with BIEBKIDZ. “

SLIDE 26 (pictures of different children's interactive musea)



“We are inspired by the programming and communication of various museums.

‘DO NOT TOUCH’ It’s action time for pupils and teachers.

NEMO, the Science Museum in Amsterdam has interactive exhibitions. By handling and especially touching(..!) everything, science and technology springs to life

‘ROOMS OF WONDER’; the teens department of the City Museum in The Hague.

The Rooms of Wonders are thirteen cabinets with different themes surrounding the ‘DISPLAY’, where hundreds of objects from different collections of the Museum are on display. Not in a art-historic fashion but sorted by colour or motive

WHAT IS THE JUNIORLAB

Come and visit the Junior Lab of the University Museum Utrecht. Sit down at the nail bench; turn the taps of the shower wide open or put your hand in the biscuit tin. In the Junior Lab things aren’t what they seem to be. How come? Discover it by experimenting with your senses, sound and vision. Just like scientists 100 years ago. Viewing their instruments you learn about the experiments they did.

ARTIS:

A picture of an elephant fishing apples and other sweets out of the water. “

SLIDE 27: (picture Theatre Wederzijds)



“Sound performance by Theatre WEDERZIJDs. The library offers space for other activities. Re-inforcing her own network and programming. We can also be a Platform for Schools. “

SLIDE 28: (picture 'Letterbeast' & children printing)



“Co-operating with artists and scientists in programming is important. They inspire children intensely.”

SLIDE 29 : (picture drawing boy)



“Surprise on the amazing effects of working with crayons on cardboard. This little boy was genuinely amazed at his own creative talents. During the Children’s Bookweek;(in Holland this is ten days in October with a central theme each year; this year’s theme was ‘magic’) the library worked for the first time with artists. They stimulated the children to make works of magic and put them on show. That month 500 works of art were on show in the library, ranging from self-portraits to magic stones and witches brews.”

SLIDE 30 : (some magic self portraits)



Magic self portraits made by pupils. They take their own productions to the library. We collect, make accessible and available.

SLIDE 31 : (Images: The 100 talents expedition: a year full off surprises and discoveries in the new library)



“Instead of the traditional annual programming for the schools, together with a group of children we organised a 100 talents expedition, where children on an individual basis or in a group got acquainted with a variety of aspects of the library, the possibilities and the collection.

Children bring and take, participate in activities, present the most beautiful and interesting part of the collection.”

SLIDE 32 (Images: The 100 talents expedition: a year full off surprises and discoveries in the new library)



“The library works customer-orientated, the children’s role is of inspirator, hostess, journalist, client, organiser. “

SLIDE 33: (MISSION STATEMENT)

“The library of 100 talents is a place where children ...

- **Have access to an extensive media collection of different types**
- **Participate in developing and organising activities**
- **Put the best material on show and make them accessible**
- **Can prepare their school work and assignments and present them**
- **Have a perfect place to study or chill out; together or alone**
- **Search for information in various ways, together with professionals from the world of science, technology and culture**
- **Exchange experiences and inform each other**
- **Must be, to know what goes on in Heerhugowaard and surroundings**
- **Can carry out surprising activities with artists, technicians, scientists etc.**
- **Can inspire each other in the ‘secret house’**
- **Come back over and over again “**

SLIDE 34: **Make books & films & document what you think & do!**
(Cover of the book about his project: Je kan hier overal heen bijna |

