

# Program of the Brussels Meeting – 6-8 May 2019

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## Monday 6th May

**Venue:** Muntpunt Library (Munt 6, 1000 Brussel)

10.00-10.30 *Coffee - Welcome and practicalities*

10.30-12.30 Steering Group meeting

Parallel program on the kamishibai by Lien Hemerijcks, Art Basics for Children

12.30-13.30 *Lunch and coffee*

13.30-13.35 Re-welcome

13.35-13.50 Feedback/feedforward: all partners briefly present their reflections since the Turku meeting

13.50-14.30 Presentation – Reading Brussels: a young, diverse, small world city

*By Eefje Vloeberghs (Sint-Joost-ten-Node Library)*

14.30-15.15 Presentation – Family literacy from theory to practice: an introduction

*By Sanne Vanhellemont (Linc vzw)*

15.15-15.30 *Coffee*

15.30-16.15 Presentation – Family literacy: possibilities, good practices and pitfalls concerning reading promotion with and for low literate parents

*By Ludwig Willaert (Centre for Basic Education Brusselleer)*

16.15-17.00 Library visit and projects for babies and toddlers (Boekstart & Talieloe)

*By Christina Roelandt (Muntpunt) and Anneke Verbeeke (Ukkel Library)*

17.00-18.30 Steering Group Meeting

## Tuesday 7th May

**Venues:** Elsene Library (Sans Soucistraat 131, 1050 Elsene)

Elzenhof Community Centre (Kroonlaan 12, 1050 Elsene)

Foyer (Werkhuizenstraat 25, 1080 Sint-Jans-Molenbeek)

Bel Mundo (Henegouwenkaai 41, 1080 Sint-Jans-Molenbeek)

8.30-9.00 *Coffee - General welcome and practicalities*

9.00-10.00 Library projects: Focus on best moments

*By Nicoleta Vandeputte (Huis van het Kind), Kathleen Bollue (Sint-Pieters-Woluwe Library), Carmen Fernandez (Sint-Lutgardis School), Asma Ould Aissa and Nathalie Verstrynghe (Elsene Library)*

- 10.00-10.45 Presentation – Reading promotion at school: storytelling and parental involvement  
*By Muriel Van Eeden and Dennis Pauwels (Brussels Education Centre)*
- 10.45-11.00 *Coffee*
- 11.00-11.15 Walk to Elzenhof
- 11.15-12.30 First Manual workshop: presentation and discussion of the results of the survey
- 12.30-13.30 *Lunch and coffee*
- 13.30-14.00 Visit Elzenhof Community Centre
- 14.00-15.00 Public transport to Foyer
- 15.00-17.00 Presentation – Foyer’s experience with diversity and multilingualism  
*By Patrizia Civetta and Hilde De Smedt (Foyer)*
- 19.00-23.00 *Celebration dinner* at Bel Mundo restaurant

## **Wednesday 8th May**

**Venues: Art Basics for Children (Gaucheretplein 13, 1030 Schaarbeek)**

**Sint-Joost-aan-Zee Primary School (Grensstraat 67, 1210 Sint-Joost-ten-Node)**

**Sint-Joost Library (Grensstraat 2, 1210 Sint-Joost-ten-Node)**

9.00-9.30 *Coffee - Welcome and practicalities*

9.30-10.30 Visit Art Basics for Children

10.30-10.45 *Coffee*

10.45-12.00 Presentation - Preschool reading approaches

*By Anne Lambrechts, Esra Aslan and Nicoleta Vandeputte ( Elmer vzw-Huis van het Kind)*

12.00-13.00 *Lunch and coffee*

13.00-13.30 Public transport to Sint-Joost-aan-Zee

13.30-14.30 Family literacy in practice: “Welcome in the classroom” at Sint-Joost-aan-Zee primary school

*By Hilke Andries, Rein Callewaert, Katrien Maes and Ine Meersman (Centre for Basic Education Brusselleer)*

14.30-15.30 Final Workshop Manual

15.30-15.45 *Coffee*

15.45-16.00 Walk to Sint-Joost-ten-Node Library

16.00-17.00 Library projects: Focus on parental involvement and diversity

*By Eefje Vloeberghs (Sint-Joost-ten-Node Library), Anna Kennis (Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe Library) and Birgit Delporte (Schaarbeek Library)*

17.00-17.15 Short evaluation of the Brussels Meeting

# Report of the Brussels Meeting

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## Monday 6th May

We all met on Monday morning in the centre of Brussels, at Muntpunt Library. It was nice to see everyone again, as we are getting to know each other better by now. But, besides socializing, there was work to do and we started right away with a meeting of the Steering Group, while the other members of the group could visit a presentation about kamishibai – the small Japanese theatre where illustrated plates are shown while someone tells the story (quite literally!) behind it.



After lunch the meeting started for real, with a presentation of the Brussels context by Eefje Vloeberghs, librarian of the Sint-Joost-ten-Node library and participant in the ODR-project. She explained the complex political structure of Belgium and of Brussels, and sketched the particularities of Brussels, a bilingual city with an extremely diverse population, where a big gap exists between poor and rich inhabitants.

As the theme for the Brussels meeting is “Family literacy”, we were first of all introduced to this concept by two people from organisations working on different forms of literacy.

First there was Sanne Vanhellemont of Linc vzw, who gave an introduction to the concept of literacy and the



different forms of literacy. What does it mean, to be “high” literate or “low” literate? There are many forms of literacy and one person can be high and low literate at the same time, in different fields. Sanne presented some of the family literacy programs of Linc, mostly with people that are ethnically and culturally diverse and speak a variety of languages. She highlighted their findings that are in many aspects the same as those of ODR, e.g. about the importance and role of books in these projects: the steps that come before are more important!

After Sanne came Ludwig Williaert of Brusselleer, a Brussels organisation for adult education, and a close partner of the Brussels libraries. They also participate in ODR. He tells us that “literacy is the competence to acquire, process and use information correctly, to be able to cope with language(s), numbers, data and ICT. Literacy is essential to be able to act independently and become self-reliant, to participate in our society and to develop one’s personality.”

The people with whom Brusselleer is working are vulnerable adults with limited learning skills and literacy/language skills and often low educated. They have a different perception of literacy and learning, but

they are 'strong by experience'. Brusselleer focusses on what they know and can, while working with them on learning skills, communicative skills, numeracy skills and digital skills.

He showed us some of their projects, like ICT-workshops (digital skills) with adults who are following a job training, or Ministad (Mini city), where several public places are reconstructed, like a post office, a supermarket, a library, a restaurant etc.. and where adults not only exercise literacy skills, but also executive and social skills.

The last activities of this day were a presentation of some library projects with babies and toddlers, e.g. Bookstart and Talieloe. Christina Roelandt of Muntpunt Library tells us about their work with Talieloe, a project that accompanies vulnerable families with children from age 0-3 with reading promotion, language development and education. It brings together a variety of partners like *Huis van het Kind*, children's daycare centres, ...

Anneke Verbeeke, the librarian of Ukkel, tells us how they work on Bookstart in the municipality of Ukkel. They have a different approach in that they do not expect the parents to come to the library for the book bags. The librarians themselves go to the nurseries and set up a close partnership with the people there, so that the same approach is used by everyone with whom the parents and babies come into contact.

She also explains how the exchanges in the ODR project inspired the library to set up a small library in a social apartment building, and how this library is managed by some teenagers who live there.

## Tuesday 7th May

### *Library of Elsene*

On Tuesday we met in the library of Elsene, another one of the 19 municipalities of Brussels. Several library projects are presented:

#### 1. Book bags

The library and primary school worked together to develop the "Biba books". These are small backpacks filled with 4 or 5 picture books about a certain subject. The books have varying degrees of difficulty, and are accompanied by some simple games. Central here is the participation of the parents: it's they who work with the book bag at home and they who give feedback to the school teacher.

#### 2. Reading Line & Book dance

The "Reading Line" is the collection of all reading promotion tools developed by libraries and other organisations. For every age the libraries try to develop specific tools to inspire and stimulate reading pleasure. A catalogue of all these tools is sent to all the primary schools so that the teachers can choose what they will use in the classroom.



One of these tools is the "Book dance", a method to stimulate reading for children from age 7 to 10. They walk around a circle of chairs that each have a book on the seat, and stop three times to sit down and look at the book they find on their seat. This way, they get to look at books they didn't choose themselves, and form an opinion about them. They learn to talk about books and listen to what others tell about their books.

### 3. Multilingual collection and reading aloud:

Nathalie Verstrynge, librarian of the Elsene library, and Nicoleta Vandeputte sketch what is typical about this municipality, and explain the reasons for choosing a multilingual book collection: give parents the chance to develop their home language and enrich it with stories and reading aloud which will enlarge the vocabulary of the written word. Two times a month they organise reading hours in other languages by volunteers. Every year, there is also Brussels Reads Aloud, a city wide multilingual reading aloud campaign week.

Last but not least Muriel Van Eeden (Brussels Education Centre) shows us how they work at a Waldorf school with parents who speak other languages, by playing a fairy tale with puppets. A good example of empowerment and parent involvement, combined with the appreciation for the home languages and the development of fantasy.

#### *Elzenhof*

We now leave the library to go onto a nearby Community Centre. There, a first manual workshop takes place, after a short session with feedback from the partners on the meeting in Turku.

After lunch we are welcomed and shown around by Rik Fobelets, the director of the Community Centre. He explains the way this centre works, with a strong focus on parents with young children. They have projects like the Babytheek (library for baby things), Café-O-Lait (meeting moments of parents with young children, have a drink, do an activity), Babyboost (meeting moments for mums/future mums and midwives), a consultancy bureau etc.

#### *Foyer*

Then it's time for another location change. This time we go to the other side of the city, in de municipality of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek. There we are welcomed by Hilde De Smet and Patrizia Civetta of Foyer, a non-profit organisation that was founded in 1969 as a youth centre. Now it is a integration centre that is active at the local, regional and international levels, focusing on social cohesion and on the empowerment and integration of people of immigrant background. Hilde and Patrizia work specifically on multilingualism; the fact that in many Brussels families not one or two languages are spoken, but sometimes up to four or five. Instead of regarding this as a problem, Hilde and her co-workers see this as a true personal and societal asset and want to maximise plurilingualism in the education of children with an immigrant background.



This can be visualised and experienced in “Talen mijn gedacht”, an interactive exposition about multilingualism for parents and children, in which questions are explored like: “In which situation do I use which language? What feelings do I link to a certain language? What are the advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism?”

### **Wednesday 8th May**

#### *Art Basics for Children*

On Wednesday we find ourselves in the ABC house, a space of 1800 m<sup>2</sup>. It is situated on the border of art and education: it is a laboratory for aesthetic experiences, creative development and artistic awareness.

In a presentation by Lien Hemerijckx we learn that it all started with the book collection of Gerhard Jäger, the founder of the ABC house. From his vision and passion for art and education, and out of his search for stimulating books and play materials, this space came into being.

From the presentation: “Everyone is entitled to a ‘poetic life’. With this ideal in mind, ABC uses the artistic process as a step towards dialogue, and as a reflective tool for young and old to use as support in integrating art into everyday life. To this end, we collect the most inspiring books, ideas, visuals, materials and media in the field of art and education, and unlock that collection in various ways (studios, workshops, publications, etc). The idea is that everyone, regardless of age or background, is able to experiment in and with the collection. This experimental approach should also integrate into everyday reality. In addition, ABC is working on strategies to inspire (future) teachers, through informal learning experiences, to teach in a more artistic and personal way. We are working on a new, interdisciplinary teaching culture in which art (education) is woven into all areas of the curriculum.”



After a coffee break Esra Aslan presents the working of Elmer to us. Elmer is a neighbourhood service for childcare. It provides occasional care for children between 3 months and 3 years old, when parents follow a vocational training programme, are registered as a job seeker with the local employment agency, want to find a job or suddenly find a job.

Nicoleta Vandeputte gives an enthusiastic report of how a “Huis van het kind” (House of the Child) works. This is a partnership of organisations

that work in the field of child care, wellbeing, health care, educational support, leisure etc., and try to support families in a way that encompasses the whole range of life.

### *Sint-Joost-aan-Zee primary school*

This primary school is our next stop. After another Manual workshop we are introduced to a project of Brusselleer: “Welkom In de Klas” (Welcome in the classroom”). The main ambition of this project: how do you engage parents in the school?



It is an experiment in 8 schools, following the example of Rotterdam: Thuis in Taal (At home in language).

– The Home in Language approach helps teachers to build a reciprocal relationship with parents step by step and to shape cooperation to support the child's language development.

– every week at the same day, same hour, only 15-20minutes

- parents are welcome the first 15/20 minutes to join the child in class, they sit together in pairs, and get a task to do, so that the two of them are interacting.
- The aim is to stimulate parent-child interactions
- Teachers' model how they promote talking to children by following children, giving positive feedback and by asking (open) questions that challenge children to think and tell. Parents are encouraged to gain experiences themselves and to give priority to talking without taking over the activity from the child. The teacher helps parents to direct the child towards the activity and not too much towards the end result.
- The experiment goes very well until now, they reach 85% to 100% of all parents

We take part in the experience as Brusselleer gives us games to play that they play with low literate families, a game that triggers comfort, confidence, where you choose yourself what you want to talk about.

### *Library of Sint-Joost-ten-Node*

The last part of this day takes place in the nearby local library, where we discover yet two other library projects: Boekenbende aan Huis and the multilingual collections.

#### Boekenbende aan Huis

Birgit Delporte and Anna Kennis (of the libraries of Schaarbeek and Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe) present the long-running project « Boekenbende aan Huis » (« Book Squat at Home »). It is a collaboration between libraries, colleges and primary schools/kindergarten. The students go once a week into the homes of vulnerable families with young children, to read to the child, play games etc. This is part of their college training. The schools select the families and communicate the idea of the project and the practicalities. The libraries support the students in their choice of books and their role as storyteller/reader. The student has to go to the library with the family – the idea is that the parents see that their children enjoy being read to, and are shown the means to do it themselves.



#### Multilingual collections

Eefje Vloeberghs and Els Patoor give a short account of the approach of the Brussels libraries toward multilingual collections. From experience we learned that, if you want to reach the people that speak a certain language, you have to involve them from the beginning. This is shown in the trajectory that Eefje and two other librarians made to start an Arabic collection. All three municipalities have an important Arabic-speaking population, and from the beginning the libraries reached out to organisations and associations like Arabic language classes, Arabic cultural associations, organizations for integration, as well as to individual users or non-users of the library. They looked for people who were interested to think along about the collection, make suggestions, and help with their expertise. In this way a collection came into being that reflects the interests and wishes of the target group. Also a lot of promotion was made all over Brussels, and a whole day of activities and festivities launched the collection two years ago. It is a lot of work and requires a continuing effort and follow-up, but the collection is well-used, and people that before couldn't be reached come to the libraries.

