



# Why do Libraries need buildings?

- Welcome / Introduction
- Presentations
  - Theo Kemperman
  - Olaf Eigenbrodt
- Panel Discussion
- Discussion with the audience





# The Role of Physical Spaces in Libraries - or - Why do Libraries need Buildings?

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# 1. City of Rotterdam



# Rotterdam



# Rotterdam – city of contrasts

- Population: 650,000
- Hyperdiverse: 178 nationalities, 100+ languages
- Dominant language: Dutch
- Second City
- City of workers
- 51% has a migration background
- Social, geographical & cultural divisions
- Challenges: inequality, inclusion, opportunities, common future



## 2. Rotterdam Public Library

# Urban context





# Public Library Rotterdam

Central Branch – 22,000 m<sup>2</sup>



# For all citizens and visitors of Rotterdam

- Mission: "To help Rotterdam residents to participate consciously, critically and actively in Rotterdam society."
- Largest cultural institution in Rotterdam  
2.7 million visits/year
- Budget: approx. € 23 million
- 700,000 objects, including 200,000 for schools
- 1,400 study/work spaces



# Presence: Physical and Digital

- Network: 21 branches covering most of the city  
– many as "Third Place"
- Library services for approx. 173 primary schools in Rotterdam ( $\pm 66\%$ )
- website: 1,1 million visitors
- branches: 2,7 million visitors

# 3. Libraries as Public Places



# Public Spaces

- Promotes community's well-being & happiness
- Open and accessible to all
- Spaces for meetings, workshops, community interaction
- Especially in a digital age, they provide opportunities to realise a variety of human rights, including participation in civic life, freedom of access to information, and cultural rights. They allow for a social, shared dimension to rights, going beyond the individual. (UN / IFLA)

# 4. Libraries as Third Places



# Third places

- 'First place' – home
- 'Second place' – work/school
- 'Third Place' – in between First and Second
  
- By design: free, inviting, informal hangout that cultivates essential social experiences in the company of like-minded people
- It never feels like a chore to spend time there. It's the next best thing to setting up camp in your own living room
- Important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement and a 'sense of place'

# 5. Place making

# Public Libraries as Place Makers in Today's Cities

- Urban development, planning and design: lively neighborhoods
- Attracting people, interesting places
- Place identity
- Resiliency – local economic regeneration
- Diversity and intergenerational equity



# 6. Platform Partners

# Library Platform Partners

- Libraries serve diverse functions and societal roles, for communities and individuals
- Many functions are provided with/by partners
- Libraries: platforms for partners
- $1 + 1 = 5$
- Shops, cultural partners, coffee corners, restaurants, counter functions, heritage






# Why do libraries need buildings?

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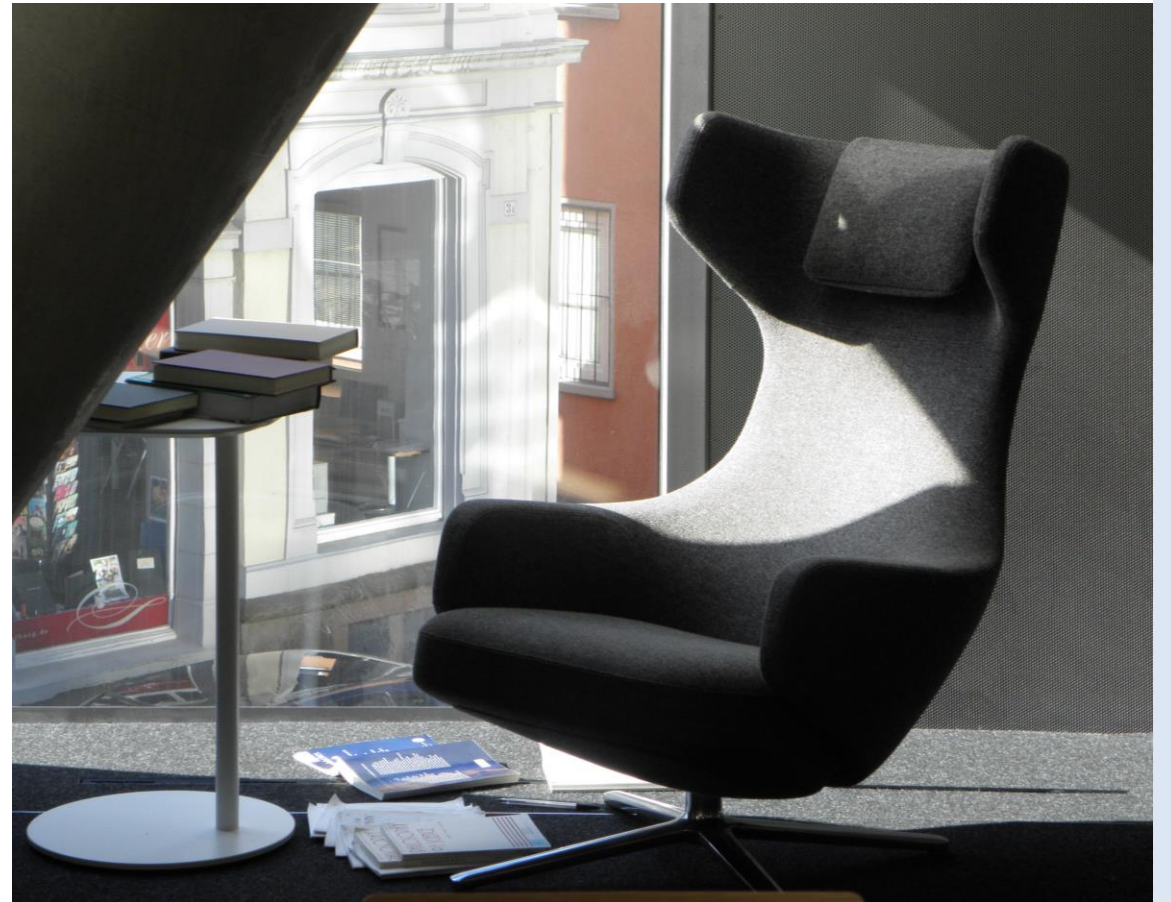
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- Open access
  - Electronic resources
  - Open online courses
  - Research data management
  - Digital humanities
  - ...

Do they?



# Space

- ♦ Learning
- ♦ Body and mind
- ♦ Constitution of knowledge
- ♦ Constitution of space
- ♦ Responsibility





# Place

- ♦ Collaboration
- ♦ Communication
- ♦ Consultation & support
- ♦ Access
- ♦ Atmosphere



# Identity

- Campus and placemaking
- Serendipity
- Third Place (?)



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