

Sustainable building connects worlds

'It is all about connecting the pieces'

Together with an international group of colleagues, architects, builders, engineers and professionals, a meeting at the Floriade Expo was recently organized by the City Coalition in collaboration with the City Deal.



Peers meet each other: nine nationalities, four continents

At the Floriade, the often 'imaginary' forms of circular and biobased construction turn into a reality: tangible and perceptible forms. This way, the question changes from *if* it is possible, to *how* we can put this way of building into practice. Colleagues from the Netherlands and nine other countries were brought together and paid a working visit to various Floriade pavilions. A reciprocal discussion took place about circular and biobased building forms from the Netherlands to Yemen. This internationally oriented connection and reflection has led to a real heart-to-heart conversation between colleagues about sustainable building in the 21st century.

Haimanot Belay, intercultural connector, brought the group together in an opening and closing ritual in the large greenhouse where the Ethiopian pavilion is located. While enjoying an Ethiopian coffee and tea ceremony, space was created for everyone to share his or her story and thus make the connection with each other as colleagues. The tour of the Expo took the participants along the Exploded View, the Natural Pavilion and the Growing Pavilion. The group also visited the country pavilions of Qatar and the UAE as a number of people from the group had an affinity with them. This has led to an interesting conversation about the major challenges we face, such as drought, heat, energy, agriculture and cities as consequences of climate change, among other things.



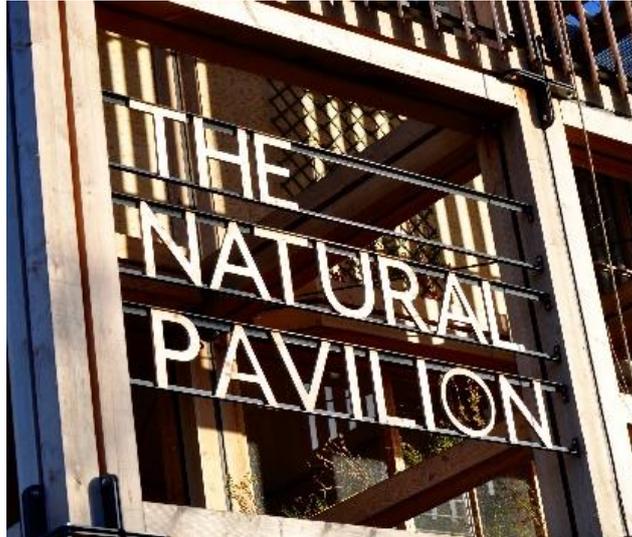
Ethiopian Coffee ceremony held by Haimanot Belay

"For me this was an amazing experience and inspiration to drink coffee together, with experts from different cultures and urban planning backgrounds, in a circle of life." – Hanna Lára Pálsdóttir (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations)

Seeing and experiencing different biobased methods that were applied in the pavilions and the story behind [the Exploded View Beyond Building](#) with 100 biobased materials, the group got inspired. This led to a conversation about which nature-inclusive construction methods exist in, for example, Yemen, Ethiopia, Chile or Syria. Often a symbiosis takes place between the old known and new innovation. Much is already possible, affordable and feasible.

"I do say this was a chance for me as a newcomer to The Netherlands, to really discover the new technologies that are being used in the domain of construction and sustainable cities. As I came to discover that the engineers behind the Floriade Expo come from different backgrounds, this gave me hope as a mechanical engineer to find ways to participate in future projects like this one."
– Kamel (Mechanical engineer at Prysmian Group)

In the [Natural Pavilion](#) Xander de Bruine, program manager of the Dutch Innovation Experience, told about the story behind the development of this circular pavilion of the national government. Not only biobased building materials, parametric design, prefab and data innovations form the connecting piece of the building, but also the connection between the entire value chain. These were essential for achieving the sustainability objectives. The costs, quality and model design of the building were given as a starting point and condition at the front end in the tendering process.



Not only by this group but also more broadly [in the world of architecture](#), the Natural Pavilion is much appreciated. The 'Connecting Piece' that is the key to success of the construction and creation of the Natural Pavilion is a beautiful metaphor for new building forms but also for social building and international cooperation. The Floriade shows that innovation through (inter)national cooperation can be the key to success. This certainly announces a new building culture.

This meeting, as an initiative of the [Stadscoalitie](#), [the Dutch Innovation Experience](#) and the [City Deal](#), has ensured that international colleagues who might never have been able to meet each other in the professional field have been brought into contact with each other and each other's cultures. Thanks to this meeting at the Floriade, a number of people are exploring further cooperation, as colleagues among themselves but also between companies and professionals. The resulting inspiration offers opportunities for the future. Because in order to create a sustainable living environment, we need new perspectives, visions of the future, and stories.

We would like to share this connection with you. Would you like to be part of this as a City Deal partner in the future, would you like more information about the coalition, or are you looking for new coalition partners? More information via:

www.stadscoalitie.nl