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This bimonthly English-language newsletter covers a broad range of Foyer activities.

Welcome the spring 2014 edition of Foyer's International Newsletter!

[Lees het volledig artikel](#)

Castellers Building Community

[Lees het volledig artikel](#)

Diversity and its value for schools: the Maledive Project

[Lees het volledig artikel](#)

Touring Molenbeek with an MP3 player: "This is the Star Trek among audio tours"

[Lees het volledig artikel](#)

Welcome the spring 2014 edition of Foyer's International Newsletter!

Spring is here, and that is an excellent occasion for exploring our garden to take a look at new buds and flowers, which this time take the form of a promising community initiative, a new European language project and an original presentation of the many riches of Molenbeek. We do not forget our hardy perennials, however, such as the Roma Service, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary.

[Terug naar het overzicht](#)

Castellers Building Community

BIS Foyer, Foyer's sports team, has - literally - given rise to the very first Belgian human tower building club: Castellers Bxl Foyer, under the direction of Catalan artist Marta Meix Garcia. The tradition of building human towers originated in the towns of Catalonia.

Working together to complete a castell is a good way to build community: cooperation is essential, and it takes people of all ages, shapes and sizes and a variety of skills - some will need to use their strength, others their flexibility or their sense of balance. Castellers Bxl Foyer is therefore open to all, from age 6 upwards. Participants need not be athletes, since everyone can play a useful part by taking up their small but vital place within the structure.

The club is part of a larger project called *Kastelli*, run by community development organization Samenlevingsopbouw and Foyer, in cooperation with several partners from around the popular Abattoir market area in the Brussels municipality of Anderlecht. Every week, tens of thousands of

shoppers visit the Abattoir premises. This is both the belly of contemporary Brussels and a piece of Brussels heritage in a neighbourhood that deserves to be placed in a positive light for a change.

In May 2015, the Kastelli project should culminate in a show directed by Kris Kaerts, who was also responsible for the *Crossing* theatre project in 2011-2012. Several hundreds of people living in Brussels will take part in the show. They will march to the tune of a variety of brass bands and carry around puppets that will represent "Brussels Today". Finally, all participants will gather to build human castles that will show Brussels hyperdiversity in all its glory.

The baseline of the project will be "*Dragen en verdragen/Porter et supporter*" - "to bear" in its literal and in its metaphorical sense.

Photographs of the training sessions can be seen on [Castellers BXL Foyer's facebook group](#).

[Terug naar het overzicht](#)

Diversity and its value for schools: the Maledive Project

In January the second network meeting of the Maledive-project ([Diversity in Majority Language Learning](#)) took place at the [ECML](#) in Graz. The project started in 2012 and will conclude in 2015. It focuses on majority language (e.g. French in France, Polish in Poland,...) teacher education and aims at providing concrete tools and study modules based on plurilingual approaches.

This project wants to move away from prevailing monolingual approaches to majority language teaching and teacher education toward an enriched view of educational possibilities in which diversity is perceived as a potentiality rather than a deficiency.

Integration Centre Foyer is an associate partner in this project. Its long experience in the field of diversity, education, multilingualism and language awareness benefits the outcomes of this project.

During the network meeting the project website was revised. We had a look at the modules provided so far and discussed in groups how they could be improved. At the moment three study modules are being constructed for the teachers, one on 'managing diversity', another on 'building on prior skills' and the last one on 'developing pedagogy'. There were also two inspiring presentations from Canada: Patricia Lamarre: [Recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity in Canadian schools](#): a brief overview of research, policy and stakes and Gail Prasad: [Creating plurilingual "identity texts" in the mainstream classroom](#): a multi-site study in Toronto's English and French schools.

The major output will be a review (with bibliography) of practice in teacher education for majority language teachers, models with a sample of teaching materials to illustrate good practice and guidelines for teacher educators promoting an intercultural and plurilingual approach by teachers teaching the school language as a subject.

[Terug naar het overzicht](#)

Touring Molenbeek with an MP3 player: "This is the Star Trek among audio tours"

"Do you own a smartphone or an MP3 player? Good. It's time to take it on a walk through Molenbeek. And no, you will not end up with a black eye. Instead, you will get a fresh look at a town that has gotten something of a bad rap.

Last year, vzw Foyer joined forces with [D*Tours](#) to develop a guided walk through the historical part of Molenbeek. For it's high time that outsiders actually experience the municipality in order to form their own opinion on it.

Radio presenter Annabelle Van Nieuwenhuyse is the voice of the Dutch and English versions of the tour, whereas comedian Ben Hamidou is your guide for the French version.

"Molenbeek is a laboratory", "a crossroads of different cultures", "a village with a priceless cultural heritage", "a melting pot" - even "a stew". It could make you hungry. For over an hour, the guided tour takes you along some of the most attractive buildings, but also along some of the most useful ones. [...]

You step into the shoes of an immigrant if you walk into a legal advice service, and turn into a local as you turn a corner pretending to know where you are headed.

We stop a woman in the street. "Until five years ago, people were somewhat shocked when I told them I lived in Molenbeek. That is no longer the case today: more and more people who live in Brussels move to the districts on the other side of the canal, because house prices here are still more or less affordable. The enormous variety of colours and people is actually a good thing for these neighbourhoods. And alright, the bags are part of the deal (points to rubbish lying around on the street)."

"To many people in Brussels, the canal remains a psychological boundary," says Charlie Dupont, who co-authored the script. "This is meant to be a gentle push across the bridge, so that they can see for themselves how this part of the city lives. In a way, this is the Star Trek among audio tours: the unimaginable becomes possible on your journey. We give you the soundtrack, and the unique, surreal and sometimes touching images automatically appear as you start walking. Together they make up the ever changing film of Molenbeek. The experience is different every time."

Audio guides are available at Foyer, Werkhuisstraat 25, Molenbeek or at the reception of Hotel Meininger, Henegouwenkaai 33. The guided tour is also available for download at www.foyer.be.

(Based on an article in De Standaard, 1 February 2014, by Sarah VANKERSSCHAEVER.)

[Terug naar het overzicht](#)