

# Decentralization Day in pictures

A look inside the congress concept



**1** Graffiti artist Emile van der Wijst and youngsters working on the decor prior to the congress. His group made the house façades we put in front of the break-out rooms to create a village-like atmosphere. We liked the idea of involving people we would talk about at the congress. Furthermore, it would help avoid the criticism that Decentralisation Day is too expensive ('We don't get enough budget, and you spend our money on a posh congress.')



**2** Emil van der Wijst was present at Decentralisation Day to explain how the village setting was made and how (graffiti) art can help young delinquents give their lives new meaning.



**3** The central square in Congress Centre 1931 in the city of Den Bosch. From here all 16 congress rooms were within easy reach.



**4** The opening of the day: the mayor of Decentralisation Village (an actor) welcomed the participants and explained the day's programme.



**5** We turned the main stage into a cosy kitchen as the setting for a diverse 50-minute live talkshow hosted by Marceline Schopman. We had to draw the big picture at the beginning of the congress. But how to avoid a series of tedious Powerpoint presentations by experts? The talkshow format gave us the opportunity to do short interviews with several guests, using various styles of interviewing.

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**6** Marceline Schopman is well known for her previous work as a TV presenter, but she is also a city council member for Labour in her home city, Haarlem. She could use her own experience as a local politician in the interviews with her guests.



**7** The first guest was Jos van der Lans, a cultural anthropologist and journalist. He provided an historical context for the decentralisations. Jos stayed on the podium as a co-host with Marceline for balance. Marceline would maintain an optimistic atmosphere, while Jos would ask some more critical questions.



**8** On a big screen we showed pictures and videos for the interviewees to reflect on. For example: part of a documentary on a multi-problem family, with a parade of social workers coming by to try and help them. A rather painful look inside the parallel worlds of the authorities' bureaucratic reality and the daily reality of the families involved (e.g. use of jargon and difficult words a client doesn't understand at all).



**9** Scientist Philip Idenburg in a single slide showed his model of the ways to organise social care in communities.



**10** Time for interaction with the audience, halfway through the talkshow: the Big Decentralisation Quiz, with serious and less serious questions on the central theme. Most questions were introduced by a picture or video. Everyone in the audience stood and answered 'A' or 'B' by showing a green or red card. If the answer was wrong, they had to sit down. After eight questions, only three contestants were still standing to answer the final question.



**11** Example of a photo illustrating one of the questions: 'Marlou van Rhijn won two gold medals at the 2012 Paralympics. How were her prostheses financed? A) By the social support budget of the community of Purmerend or B) by a commercial sponsor. (Answer: B, by a commercial sponsor. Her titanium blades cost thousands of euros).

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**12** A discussion between three representatives from different communities of various sizes (Eindhoven, Zaandam, and Noordenveld). These three communities are so-called 'pilot communities' that have already organised the extra tasks that come with the decentralisation. On stage these front runners shared their experiences.



**13** The last talkshow guest was Emile de Roy, a young businessman from Amsterdam who has a great new effective model on low-cost, high-quality care at home, making use of social media and a network of trained students. He illustrated his innovative method with items he brought to the kitchen table, e.g. a cowboy hat (symbolising the traditional bureaucratic corporations that consider Emiles methods somewhat 'Wild West') and a kitchen scale (to weigh out marihuana for a client he eventually helped to quit).



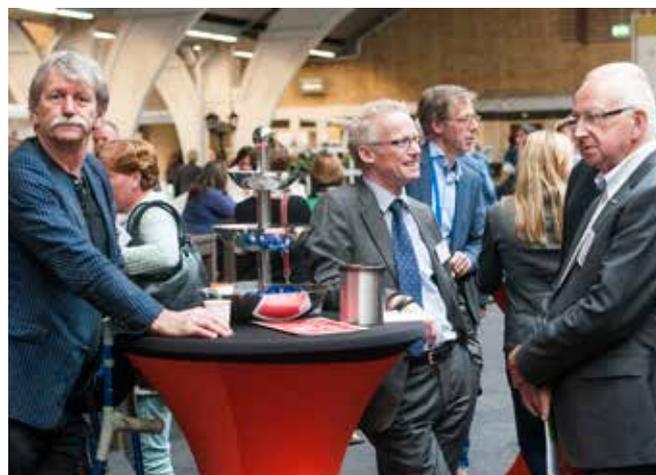
**14** Role play by actors of Het Consulaat acting out real scenes of local government representatives visiting persons or families in need of assistance. In our research we found that a lot of civil servants have no clue as to how these critical first visits ('kitchen-table conversations') work. We hired over 20 actors to play drunk fathers, disabled people who couldn't get out of their homes anymore etc. This allowed us to keep the groups small and give the role plays the intimate atmosphere of a home kitchen, and to let people participate. The audience could reflect on and intervene in the role play.



**15** After the role plays the civil servants were invited to discuss the role play and share their own experiences with the decentralisations.



**16** Participants could choose 2 out of over 30 short presentations by central government representatives on specific subjects. Central government has a lot of knowledge of social care. In these presentations they were able to transfer this knowledge to the communities who take over this social care.



**17** In between the various sessions, the participants had time to get to know each other and share ideas over a cup of coffee.

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**18** On the central square all Ministries, the VNG (Association of Dutch Communities) and other organisations were present to answer any further personal questions the participants might have.



**19** The plenary closing of the day's programme. The role plays, the videos etc. gave an look into 'real life'. But we still needed a real client with a real story to give the subject and the day a 'face'. We found Ellis. After great help from professional coaches she got her life back on track. Ellis' open and honest story touched the hearts of the entire audience. They were surprised to hear that one of the role plays earlier on the day was actually based on Ellis' story.



**20** Ministers, state secretaries, and the chairwoman of the VNG enter the stage to answer questions from the audience. During the day participants could write down their urgent questions and we presented the most important ones on-screen.



**21** Presenter Ruben Maes walked through the audience to get reactions to the answers.



**22** Change of audience: as the programme for the civil servants ends, aldermen and city council members enter the building for their respective (evening) programmes. By dividing the audience into three groups we could give each group specific answers to their specific needs.



**23** Dinner for the city council representatives started with a plenary role play.

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24 Experts from various fields gave presentations on the decentralisations in the social domain.



25 Ministers, secretaries of state and the chairwoman of the VNG were interviewed by presenters Ruben Maes and Bart Eigenraam.



26 The city council members and aldermen gladly took the opportunity to ask questions, with all room for critical ones.



27 Experts, ministers and secretaries of state went from table to table to speak with aldermen and city council members about their worries and answer any questions they might have. Communities also learned from each others experiences in these discussions.



28 Within a week, all participants received a copy of their own 40-page digital magazine containing interviews, reports, extra information etc. to help them take the next steps and relive the Decentralisation Day. For a full copy, see [http://issuu.com/manonmh/docs/magazine\\_ambtenaren\\_issuu](http://issuu.com/manonmh/docs/magazine_ambtenaren_issuu)



29 Participants could also relive the Decentralisation Day by watching an online video report. See: <http://vimeo.com/97426681>