

"www.meertalen.nl" by the Dutch Public Library Association

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Introduction

Many children in the Netherlands have another mother tongue than Dutch. To learn the Dutch language, it is important that these children keep in touch with stories, music, poetry from different sources like books, CD and video. In their own language and in Dutch. The site www.meertalen.nl (= www.multilanguages.nl) provides information about materials and projects for all intermediaries who wish these children to grow up in a multilingual environment.

In January 2002 I was asked to take the co-ordination and editing of the Data bank Multilingual Materials. I am specialised in intercultural children's literature. I wrote two books how work in school and day-care centres with intercultural picture- and storybooks. In September 2002 the site www.meertalen.nl went online and every week we make shore that news about multicultural and multilingual reading and reading promotion, education and resource is published on the site. The latest products and projects are also added to the database. During the construction of the site, we had to choose an URL for the site. We chose **www.meertalen.nl** that stands for: www.multilanguages.nl.

What is the main purpose of this site?

On the site you can find a data base of projects and products in the field of linguistics and reading promotion. This site is build for intermediaries who work or live with children whose mother tongue is another than Dutch. These children live in the Netherlands or Flanders and speak Dutch as a second (or third) language. The intermediaries work or study in different fields such as: libraries, primary and secondary schools, bookstores, day care centres, children's shelters, asylum seekers centre's, teacher training colleges, etc. Also parents who raise their children in their own language or bilingual are more than welcome to visit this site.

How can you navigate through the site?

First we go to the **homepage**. Here you find an illustration of Jan Jutte, a Dutch illustrator who won several prizes such as the Golden Busch, the most important literary illustrators prize for children's books in the Netherlands. The drawing depicts several children from different cultures standing on a globe. From the ice care they receive books. All in Juttes very recognisable style.

On the next you find the buttons linking to the different categories:

- News
- Products & Materials
- National organisations and institutions

- Projects & Methods
- Tips & Links
- Colofon

When you click on ‘**News**’ you will find short messages and announcements.

Products and materials forms the biggest part of this data bank. This part and the Projects data base are split into the following age categories:

- babies and toddlers from 0 till 1 years old
- pre-schoolers from 2 till 4 years old
- group 1/2 primary school age group 4 to 6 years old
- group 3/4 primary school age group 6 to 7 years old
- group 5/6 primary school age group 8 to 9 years old
- group 7/8 primary school agegroup 10 to 11/12 years old
- secondary school age group 12 to 18 years
- intermediaries pre-school age
- intermediaries primary school age
- intermediaries secundaire school age

Under **Products & Materials** you can find all kinds of multilingual materials which are available for the public market in the Netherlands. Books, picture books, music, poetry, songs for children from 0 to 18 years. Some of the primary materials are bilingual, but most of them are made in one single language other than Dutch. For intermediaries there is background information such as secondary literature about items like multilingualistic, intercultural education, reading promotion, foreign languages of immigrants in the Netherlands, teaching materials for primary and secondary schools, products which are specially made for reading programs for immigrants, etc. In this database you can also search with a search engine.

National organisations and institutions: Here you find institutions which make teaching materials and give counselling and support to all the intermediaries for whom this site is made.

Under the button **Projects & Methods** you can find reading programs. They are developed for immigration children who have to learn Dutch as a second language and who are serious linguistically deprived. These reading programs are made in the languages of the largest group of immigrants such as Turkish, Arabic, Berber and Papiament. All the materials related to these programs are accessible in the products & materials data base of this site.

Under **Tips** you can find several bookshops in the Netherlands and abroad which specialise in a single language such as Chinese, Moluccan, German, Finnish, etc.

Here you can also find **Links** to other sites which are quite handy if you want to know something about multilinguistic issues or reading programs.

In the **Colophon** are the main data and a possibility to e-mail remarks and questions.

In this database there are at this moment 750 products in 37 languages, specified in 14 types of products (book, CD, music etc.). There are 48 links and 33 multilingual projects and methods.

Lets take a practical look at the site by means of some examples.

I am a literature teacher at a secondary school and I want to read some poetry suitable for teenagers in a foreign language. I click the button Products & Materials and click further on Voortgezet onderwijs, (= secondary school). I choose the compilation: *Voor jou mijn lief* (= For you my love) from Jacques Prévert. The poetry is translated in Dutch by Wim Hofman and very suitable for first graders.

As you can see there aren't much multilingual materials for teenagers and youngster in more languages in normal bookshops. If you want to buy books in English, French, Spanish and German you have to go to a well stocked bookstore in the larger city'. Children from Turkey and Morocco usually go to the public library. The public libraries provide large collections in their languages (Turkeys and Arabic).

A second example. I am a developer of teaching materials for primarily schools in general. I wish to know how to make intercultural teaching materials in which I take language acquisition in account. I look again under Products and Materials and click on the button 'bemiddelaars basisonderwijs' (= intermediaries primary schools). On page 3 I find: Kieskleurig, handleiding intercultureel lesmateriaal. This book is also printed in English: A Colourful Choice. Handbook for intercultural teaching materials.

A third example: I work in a day-care centre where many children are linguistically deprived. We wish to participate in a multilingual reading- and language program. I click on the button Projects & Methods and search under the next button 'peuters' (= pre-schoolers). On the site we choose Circus Kiekeboe, which is a combined program. Short films on national television or video and books in the major immigrant languages. At this point I view the content of the project and materials. The related one's are primary literature for children, secondary literature for intermediaries and parents and videotapes. There is a link to another site where I can find additional information.

A fourth example: I want to buy some Croatian picture books for the son of my friend. She is from Dubrovnik in Croatia. I go to Extra tips and links and search for bookstores. I am linked to a list where I find the Croatian bookstore in Zagreb where I can order books to be send to the Netherlands. I can also order books from the Bosnian bookstore in Wuppertal, Germany. This list of bookstores you will find in your conference map.

If I want to buy a picture book in the Netherlands, I can also look in the database Products & Materials. I choose 'searching' and mark Serb-Croatian. Then I click 'search' and I find two books in Croatian which I can buy in the Netherlands.

These examples show the versatility of the site. This conference is focussed on acquisition of multilingual collections in public libraries and the marketing of library services to multicultural populations. Many immigrants and intermediaries have not found their way to the public library. [Www.multilanguages.nl](http://www.multilanguages.nl) is an excellent opportunity to find information about reading and reading promotion in our multilingual society in and outside the library.