



Personnel development programmes at the National Library of the Netherlands (KB)

Els van Eijck van Heslinga

&

Dick Langbroek

(Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), / National Library of the Netherlands
The Hague, Netherlands

Meeting:

128. Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 76TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND ASSEMBLY
10-15 August 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden
<http://www.ifla.org/en/ifla76>

Abstract:

Talent development and international cooperation are key terms for future success in our sector.

The greatest threat we face is not competition from Google or others, but the expected shortage of talented staff. Ageing and shortages in the labour market will create problems for us unless we anticipate these developments in time, in other words, now.

Investing in attracting and developing staff is the way the KB tries to anticipate to this problems.

Both the creation and implementation of trainee programmes as well as investing more than previously in training and development of current (older) staff have therefore been spearheads of personnel management policy within the KB since 2007.

In this way we think that it is possible to successfully invest in young talent and in the development of current staff, and this leads to the necessary rejuvenation of personnel.

Introduction to presentation:

In the coming ten minutes I will try to convince you that we must cooperate internationally in order to ensure that also in 2020 we will have sufficient well-qualified staff in house to shape and manage the library of the future.

Paper:

Talent development and international cooperation are key terms for future success in our sector.

The greatest threat we face is not competition from Google or others, but the expected shortage of talented staff. Ageing and shortages in the labour market will create problems for us unless we anticipate these developments in time, in other words, now.

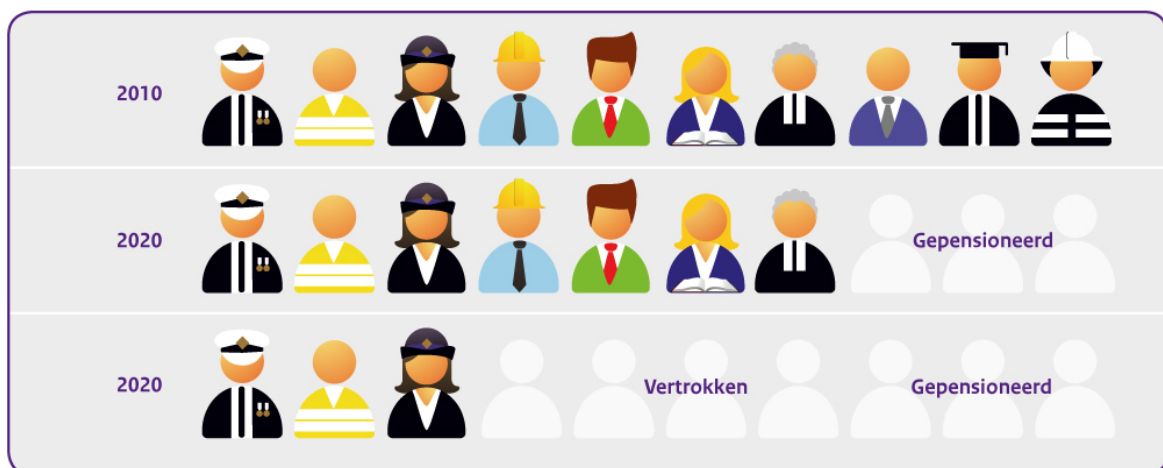
Anticipating by investing in attracting and developing staff

Since 2009 insight into the expected shortage of staff in the coming decennia has increased.

For the public sector in the Netherlands, to which education and research and therefore also the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB) belong, we expect that the outflow will be 70% in the coming 10 years!!

Translated into a picture:

(Vertrokken=Left Gepensioneerd = Pensioned)



Source: *De grote uittocht* (The great exodus)
VSO, Samenwerkende Centrales Overheid, Min BZK

In addition, the available labour force will decrease in absolute numbers: Statistics Netherlands (CBS) expects for the Netherlands a reduction in the labour force, rising to a decrease of over 500,000 people in 2030 in relation to 2010. According to the CBS, in twenty years' time there will be approx. 200,000 less young people and 500,000 less people of working age.

(Leeftijd=Age
65 jaar en Ouder = 65 and older
20 tot 65 jaar = 20 to 60
0 tot 20 jaar = 0 to 20)

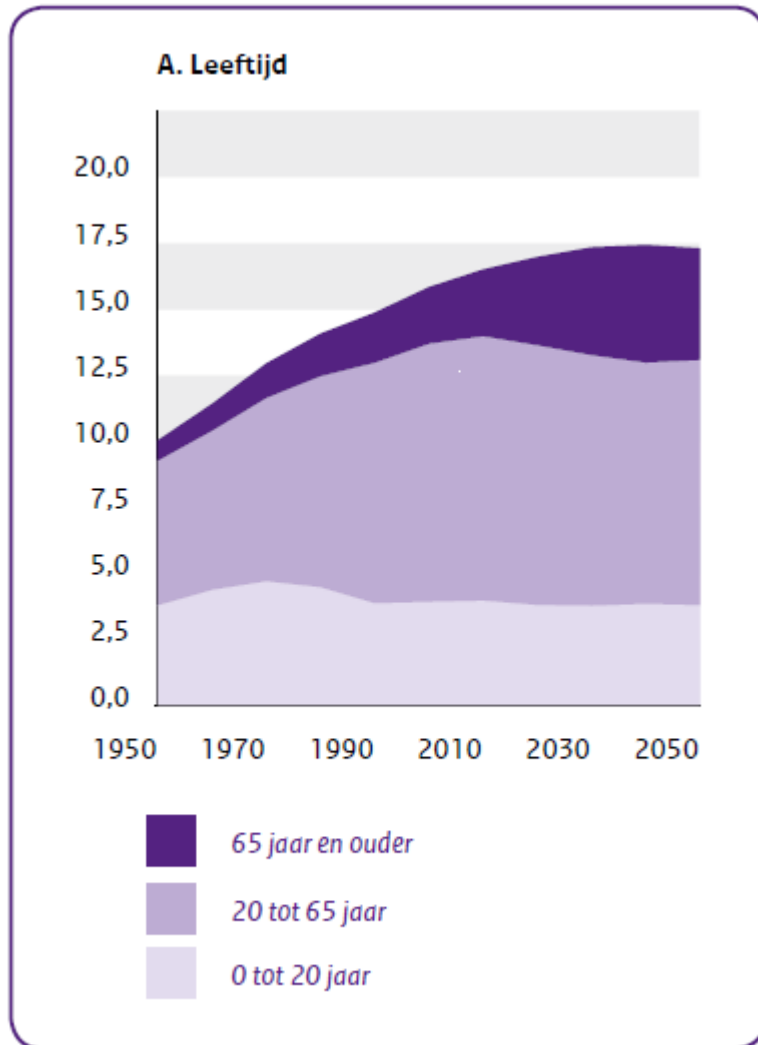


Figure 2, taken from
De grote uittocht: VSO, Samenwerkende Centrales Overheid, Min BZK

On the one hand, therefore, an estimated 70% of the working population will leave, on the other there will be a decrease in the available labour force. The shortages in our sector would seem to be inevitable. We expect that in other european countries , and probably also a lot of other contries outside europe, the developments will be similar.

This makes the importance of focusing on recruiting, retaining and developing young, talented members of staff all the more apparent. Both the creation and implementation of trainee programmes as well as investing more than previously in training and development of current (older) staff have

therefore been spearheads of personnel management policy within the KB since 2007.

Trainee programmes.

In 2007 we began to develop and implement a trainee programme for young professionals.

The programme lasted two years and consisted of substantive components and a training programme aimed at personal development. Nine young members of the KB's staff participated in this first group, all of whom are still currently employed by the KB.

A second group, in which 2 staff members of a scientific library are also taking part, started at the beginning of 2010. The aim of this is to develop the curriculum in such a way that the programme becomes a trainee programme suitable for all 14 scientific libraries plus the KB (united in the Netherlands within the consortium UKB), so that they can also take part in it together. In this way we create an attractive career perspective for our scarce young members of staff that is not restricted to their own library but encompasses all the scientific libraries in the Netherlands.

In addition, within the framework of LIBER, an initiative is being developed to organise on European level a Young European Professional group, which offers a platform on European level for talented and ambitious members of staff. This places career perspectives in a European context as well and increases the attractiveness of the library sector as an employer. It is our aim to enable young members of staff in our sector to work easily in different libraries within Europe.

Management trainee programme.

During the process of selection of trainees in 2007 it became clear that there was another group of young staff members within the KB who wished to take part in such a programme, but who had worked for the KB for more than 5 years. In consultation with managers it was decided to initiate a programme for this group with the aim of training them for management positions within the KB.

Following the first positive experiences with the trainee group, the selection process to compile this group of staff members was initiated immediately after the summer of 2008, which eventually resulted in the selection of 8 staff members.

This management trainee programme focuses on Project Leadership and Personal Leadership, always in combination with modules in the area of communication. In the programme less attention is paid to the substantive aspects of working at the KB, on the assumption that the participants due to their working experience already have a broad understanding of these substantive aspects. If an individual requires more knowledge in this area, this gap is addressed in an individual programme. Thus, this management trainee programme is aimed more at leadership than the trainee programme.

Modules dealt with were aimed at developing management skills and personal leadership skills. The group of management trainees were themselves involved to a large degree in the content of the programme.

A first group of trainees has completed the programme in the meantime. Within the framework of the UKB (consortium of Dutch scientific libraries) an initiative was developed in 2008 to develop and execute a programme for this target group UKB-wide. This led to the start at the end of 2009 of a trainee programme for staff of scientific libraries and the KB, staff with potential for heavier management and directorate positions.

The programme is a combination of substantive and skills training, and entails very high-quality input from all participating libraries and affiliated institutes.

Structure and content of the Young Professional Programme

The Young Professional Programme is structured along two broad lines: knowledge and skills

The programme contains knowledge modules on the following subjects:

1. Getting acquainted with the library and information sciences
2. Strategy and policy
3. Organisation studies and projects in organisations
4. Innovation and knowledge management

7. Training

The KB concluded an agreement with an external training agency to supply training in the field of personality development.

The programme consists of training sessions, on four consecutive half days, in the area of Personal Effectiveness, Project Leadership and Personal Leadership, always in combination with modules in the area of communication.

In addition to the usual support by the trainee's own manager and Human Resources all trainees in the course of 2008 were assigned a KB-coach – a manager (other than their own) whom they could turn to. Our initial impression is that most of the trainees experienced the support of this coach as a welcome addition, also to their network within the KB.

In the case of the programme that has recently started we have opted to have the trainees from the programme begun in 2007 function as coaches.

Career service centre

This was started in May 2009 so that we do not yet have any results to report. The aim is to ensure that groups of staff members, of whom we know that they will in the medium term be confronted with substantial change in their work, remain employable within or outside the KB.

These groups of staff members will, due to change within work and organisation, be given work with a different content or will need to find a different position. Often this change is related to digitisation and increased efficiency in the framework of the development of the digital library.

Example: making catalogue entries using metadata supplied electronically.

This gives rise to an imbalance: too many people who employ traditional methods of working, too few people who can work on and in the digital library.

By offering career facilities we wish to train or retrain these members of staff in time so that they can remain employed, within or outside the KB.

Results until June 2009:

- Average age of KB population has decreased by 1 year
 - 2006: 45.15
 - 2007: 45.03
 - 2008: 44.09
- Trainees: all still employed, 5 to management.
- Outflow of individual staff members: 12 persons.
- The beginning of a culture change.

In early 2010 there was a slight increase of the average age, but the number of young employees is nevertheless increasing.

Conclusion:

It is possible to successfully invest in young talent and in the development of current staff, and this leads to the necessary rejuvenation of personnel.

Discussion:

The greatest threat we face is not competition from Google or others, but the expected shortage of talented staff.

Invest in talent development now, and cooperate internationally on this issue to make ourselves attractive employers.

The average age of the participants of this IFLA conference is X. If at next year's IFLA conference the average age is higher than or equal to X+1, IFLA will disappear in 10 years' time.

Investment in the development of knowledge and skill should in the coming 10 years constitute a minimum of 3% of the personnel budget per year.

Every IFLA working group, board and committee should have at least one member younger than 30 and at least 2 members of between 30 and 40.

The Netherlands is dejuvenating, ageing, changing colour and living alone more often

The population of the Netherlands has changed enormously in the past 60 years. In the second half of the 20th century the population grew from 10 to 16 million people. The growth started with a 'baby boom' in the years after the Second World War. Because of increased prosperity, better housing, healthier food and better health care people lived increasingly longer. The composition of the population also changed. The number of young people remained more or less stable whereas the number of people of working age grew by almost 80%. But especially the number of elderly people rose enormously (see Figure 4a). Ideas about the role of women in the family and in society changed, more women went to work and after the 'baby boom' the number of children per woman decreased. Young people left home earlier, less people married and old people continued to live on their own longer. As a result of this the number of people living on their own increased enormously.

Demographic developments:

- Ageing
- Immigration and emigration
- Reduced labour force
- Dejuvenation