

Graduation studio Design for Health & Care in an inclusive environment 2023/2024

What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track (A, U, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The inclusive design of the built environment goes against obstruction and exclusion of people, and instead creates opportunities for all users, individually and as a group. This is in line with the housing of inclusive education. The architectural is strongly intertwined with the pedagogical in school design. This graduation project focuses on identifying the needs of inclusive education in the physical education environment. Primary schools are a foundation for a strong society and should therefore be well designed at all levels.

How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

Through research, the needs for inclusive education were identified. Existing literature was used, but working on inclusive education is a process that needs to be given meaning and shape from the bottom up, within its own context. Therefore, there is a need to look into practice to learn about housing for inclusive education lead to very useful result for the design.

During design, it appears that outcomes of research conflict. For example, how “shape the space” quickly conflicts with “cleay layout”. It is up to the designer to make a choice. The design phase a very important phase besides the research and can return to earlier recommendations and research results. Therefor design is also part of the research.

How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

The first semester had a careful work approach. The literature was well chosen and became the basis for the research. The main source of information was the fieldwork. Two sites were visited for two days each. One day the focus was on kids, the other on staff. The same methods were applied at both sites. This mostly led to confirmation, but sometimes to new insights. The following period was for carefully organising all the results of the study and leading to a clear set of 20 guidelines.

The second semester was more disorganised, which resulted in not always careful work. This led to illogical design choices that had to be returned to later. As a result, much of the research did not initially come into its own in the design. But the extra time led to a final result in which research and design complemented each other.

How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project?

The Werkagenda by OCW (2023) states that housing requirements for inclusive education are needed for school buildings so that municipalities can include this in their policies and IHP. Therefore, research on designing inclusive school buildings is valuable, confirmed in an interview HEVO on 20 October 2023, one of the leaders in housing advice for inclusive education. Various parties are involved in education housing; government, municipalities, national councils, collaborative associations, foundations, boards, schools, teams, developers and architects, they all benefit from research and design on inclusive education and the physical education environment. The graduation project is not only about designing inclusive architecture where all students can learn, but also tells a story about the position of education in society. In which a school building should respond to the diversity that society and life has to offer.

How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

My graduation project is an example of how research can be translated into design. It strongly depends on the context, where in this project the existing building created opportunities and obstacles. In addition, in the Netherlands there is freedom of school foundation how you design your education and the vision of pedagogy. In addition, educational systems and the vision of school building are different abroad. Therefore, the design cannot be copied blindly by another school. However, the graduation project can look at how the translation of user needs into physical design choices was made.

How does your research and design reacts on the current building stock in the Netherlands?

The building has always been one of the excuses why children are rejected from regular primary schools in their neighbourhood. The 2 inclusive primary schools where the fieldwork was done are new built. Currently in the Netherlands, there are many school buildings from the post-war period, which are strong in need of renovation. Therefore, for the design assignment is chosen to renovate an existing post-war primary school to make visible that and show how inclusive education is also possible in existing buildings.

How is your graduationproject prepared for the future?

Education is always in transition, both because of a changing curriculum and the changing school population that inclusive education entails. The building is designed according to current needs, as is this graduation project. But through diversity, flexibility and multifunctionality, it tries to cope with changes in education as much as possible. And in this way also guarantee inclusive education in the future.