



From left to right: Meine Stoker, Cathelijin Sperber, Ruud Jansen and Eric de Vetten

Future-proof expansion within a challenging framework

1,500 students. More than 200 dedicated teachers. And 60 unique nationalities, collectively speaking over 40 languages. The International School Eindhoven (ISE) provides primary and secondary education, primarily to children of expats and knowledge workers in the Brainport region.

Meine Stoker (Chairman of the Board of ISE and the SILFO educational group) and Eric de Vetten (Director of Quadrant4) have been working together on ISE's housing since 2010. Ruud Jansen (Housing Consultant at SILFO) quickly joined the collaboration, followed later by Cathelijn Sperber (Project Manager at Quadrant4). The first expansion of ISE took place in 2017. The second is happening now. It's the perfect time for this team to discuss both the project and the underlying DBFMO contract.

Meine: "ISE was originally designed for 1,100 students, including the first expansion, but we've now reached 1,500. This new expansion is essential to provide these students with challenging and innovative education. Think of a theater, modern lunch facilities, and innovative learning spaces. We're making a significant quality improvement."

Ruud: "The biggest increase in student numbers has been in secondary education. We lack sufficient practical spaces and sports facilities that meet the needs of 2025, such as an urban sports facility. This was also a clear request from the Municipality of Eindhoven. The new building near the entrance will cater to the need for a spacious, inspiring area to accommodate large groups of students and visitors for events, lunches, and breaks."

The project consists of three subprojects:

- Construction of a new entrance building
- Renovation of the original garage building (Building K), maintaining its 'raw character'
- Redesign of the campus

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Cathelijn: "You want to accommodate various individual wishes within the bigger picture. That's challenging. There's always demand for more. What we're doing now is focusing much more on multifunctionality. That's a key focus in the redesign. With Building K, instead of demolishing, we're aiming to maximize the use of what's already there and preserve it in an innovative way."

Meine: "Enhancing flexibility is crucial because the world will look completely different in ten years. We need to be prepared for that."



“Eric and I are critical friends to each other. It requires a foundation of mutual respect.”

– **Meine Stoker**

CHALLENGES OF THE DBFMO CONTRACT

DBFMO stands for Design, Build, Finance, Maintain, and Operate. This public-private partnership (PPP) contract was chosen in 2010 at the explicit request of the Municipality of Eindhoven to make the project feasible. However, ISE is now experiencing the complexities of this contract model.

Eric: “What we see now is that the behavior of students, teachers, and staff is difficult to predict over long periods. Needs from 15 years ago are vastly different from today’s needs. Additionally, the gap between the interests of students and those of the stakeholders behind the DBFMO consortium is far too wide. They primarily think in terms of returns and risks, whereas we focus on user needs. That makes constructive collaboration difficult.”

Meine: “A rigid contract with a 30-year term is proving problematic. Just look at developments in sustainability and energy consumption compared to 2010. You know, I already thought it was a bold decision by the Municipality of Eindhoven back then. Unfortunately, my opinion hasn’t changed based on our experience.”

Eric: “Because of this contract, we’re also locked into specific construction and maintenance partners. With major modifications, there’s no market competition.”

Ruud: “Together with Cathelijn and Eric, we oversee project preparation and management, ensuring accountability for funds spent to the municipality. However, there are challenges within the contract. There are far too many variables—ISE alone has about 60. Risks associated with these variables get offset against each other in the contract, which isn’t a viable solution.”

LONG-TERM COLLABORATION ADDS VALUE TO A LONG-TERM CONTRACT

Ruud: “A long-standing collaboration means we know exactly who is best suited for what. Eric’s extensive knowledge of this contract is something I could never acquire, especially given its complexity and his involvement in its formation.”

Eric: “It’s helpful that Meine and I have been involved from the start. We’ve built an extensive archive of documents that are crucial for the Municipality of Eindhoven. What needs to happen in 25 years? Which renovations have been carried out? Who pays for what?”

Meine: “This is essential. We need to keep all stakeholders focused and ensure the contract is fulfilled as effectively as possible—regardless of Quadrant4’s involvement. Our extensive archive is crucial for that.”