



Center
of Excellence
in Finance

Center of Efficiency in Finance Educational Lobby

Name: CEF lobby upgrade
Architect: Arhitektura Jure Kotnik
Design coordination: Urška Zrinski, Jana Repanšek
Furniture: Mizarstvo Aleš Skodlar, Artline d.o.o
Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia
Project year: 2015
Completion year: 2015
Cost: 7.000 €

Center of Efficiency in Finance (CEF) is an educational institution that shares knowledge and experience in banking and finance through workshops, seminars, tailored trainings, certification programs, and conferences. Their highly focused programs provide guidance for current and future tasks in reforming public finance and strengthening central banking.

Perceiving learning as creative, future-proofed, supportive, bold, challenging and fun, the client strived for an environment that would support such an educational process. CEF's postmodern ambient inside a formal state building thus clearly called for an upgrade, starting with the design of the dull central lobby. It functions as the hub of the building where training participants gather: it is a place to rest during coffee and lunch breaks, browse the internet, relax, and chat to one another.

CEF's transformation included reducing obsolete existing elements in order to create a contemporary educational space, carefully selecting and adding new elements, and transforming some existing ones. For instance, one of the central pillars in the lobby was converted into a blackboard to become an informal learning surface. The few flower pots at the entrance were renamed a Micro Botanical Garden – a transformation that adds to a more relaxed atmosphere and has been seen to elicit witty self-reflection unusual for the serious semi-government sector. Minor graphical interventions on walls and chairs were done in the same spirit. The kitchenette windowsill became a small library, and a fish tank appears as a screensaver on the large TV, which has a calming effect on visitors. Of the new elements, nooks with information about workshops and CEF work were added into the lobby as well as a winners' podium that can be used as a bench, chair or working space during workshops.

Another novelty is the tailor-made office traffic signs that act as conversation triggers and initiate informal contacts among people. The signs also help relieve the visitors' minds and take their brain into another realm of thinking. They were introduced because a relaxed and informal learning environment stimulates the brain to memorize more information and better connect the different pieces of the puzzle. Other small interventions in the offices – such as table tennis, office yoga and transformation of the interpretation booth into a Skype booth – add to the quality of the working environment at CEF, while the renovated lobby offers a new learning experience and is said to quickly loosen-up the traditionally reserved bankers and officials.

“Office traffic signs suggest activities, trigger conversation, connect people, relax the atmosphere, and therefore contribute to the learning ability and learning experience.”



RELAX AREA

According to the British Psychological Society, a relaxed and informal learning environment stimulates the brain to memorize more information and better connect the different pieces of the puzzle.



THINK OF YOUR DREAM HOLIDAY

Did you know that daydreaming about your ideal holidays helps reset the brain and get it ready for further mental exercise? What is your favorite travel destination? If you had unlimited financial resources, where would you go? Who would you take with you?



MICROBOTANICAL GARDEN

You don't have to be an environmental psychologist to understand that plants look attractive. But dig a little deeper beneath their beauty and you'll discover many of their benefits. A recent research tells us that interior plants are good for buildings and people as they help reduce stress and create a feeling of well-being. They also reduce levels of certain pollutants, such as benzene and nitrogen dioxide.



OFFICE YOGA

Regardless of age or fitness level, studies show that taking time for exercise provides serious mental benefits. Have you had a rough day so far? Then take time to exercise and relax. Yoga is a great way to do both while allowing you to work on your flexibility and strength.



KLINGON CONVERSATION AREA

You have surely heard of Esperanto. The Klingon language is the second most spoken constructed language in the world. It is used by the fictional Klingons in the Star Trek universe. This sign means success in the Klingon language. How do you say success in your language?



THREE DEEP BREATHS ZONE

Do you pay attention to how you breathe? Avoid shallow breathing and stimulate breathing that allows you to relax. Start with taking three deep breaths. We guarantee you will relax. If you are about to give a presentation, make sure you repeat this exercise several times.



WHAT DO YOU SEE?

This image represents one of the ten cards of the Rorschach test. The Rorschach test is a psychological test in which a subject's perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analyzed using psychological interpretation, complex algorithms, or both. Some psychologists use this test to examine an individual's personality characteristics and emotional functioning.



NO-WIFI ZONE

Are you one of those people who will use every given moment to fiddle with your smartphone? Can you not spend a minute without checking e-mails, browsing the Internet and playing games? While the Internet can be a great learning space, its excessive use can lead to investing less time in building relationships and chatting to people. This area stipulates networking and nurturing friendships.

Photo captions:



Office signs, blackboard pillar and nooks in the central perspective.



The blackboard pillar represents a new learning focal point in the lobby.



The formerly dull lobby is now a space for relaxed communication and workshops.



The blackboard pillar is also used for banquets, breakfasts and as a message board.



Office traffic signs as conversation triggers and activity regulators.



Graphic messages, and a small windowsill library.



CEF moment corner with a mobile winners' podium.



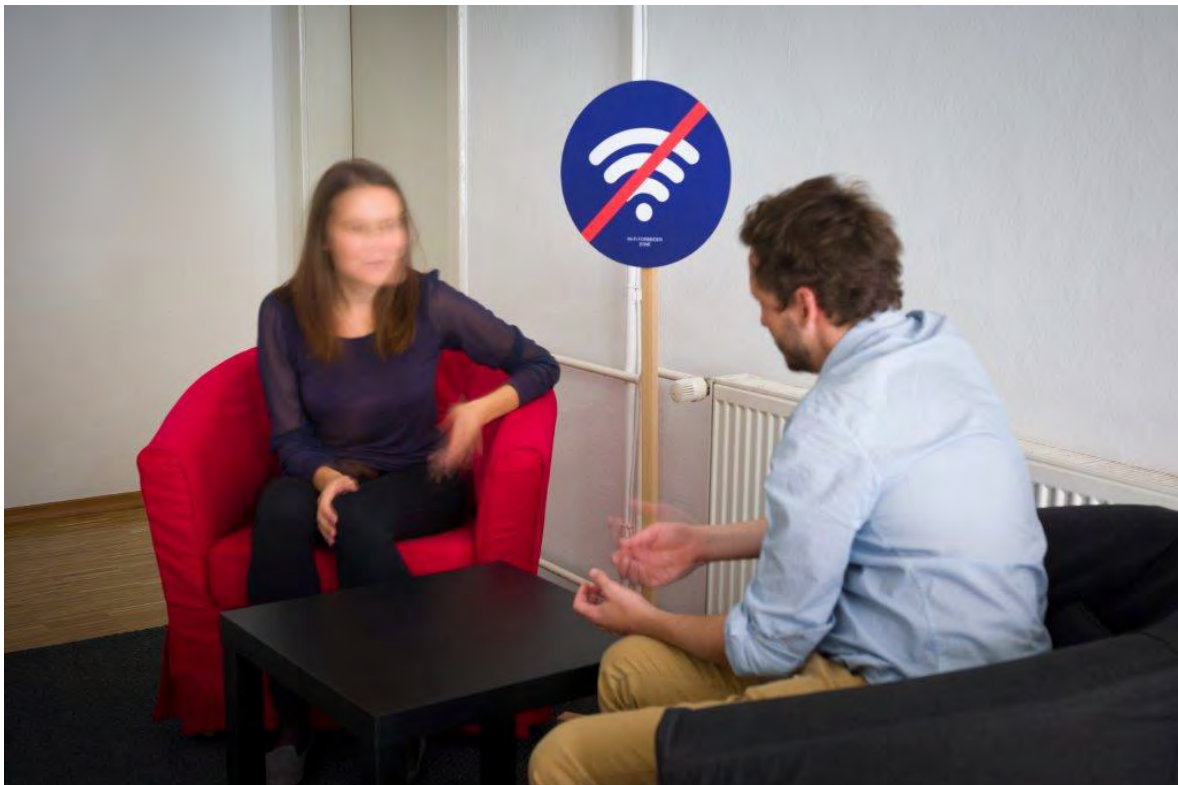
Big classroom numbers, for people who handle big numbers.



Small office interventions on the upper floor.



Spicing up office area with Office yoga.

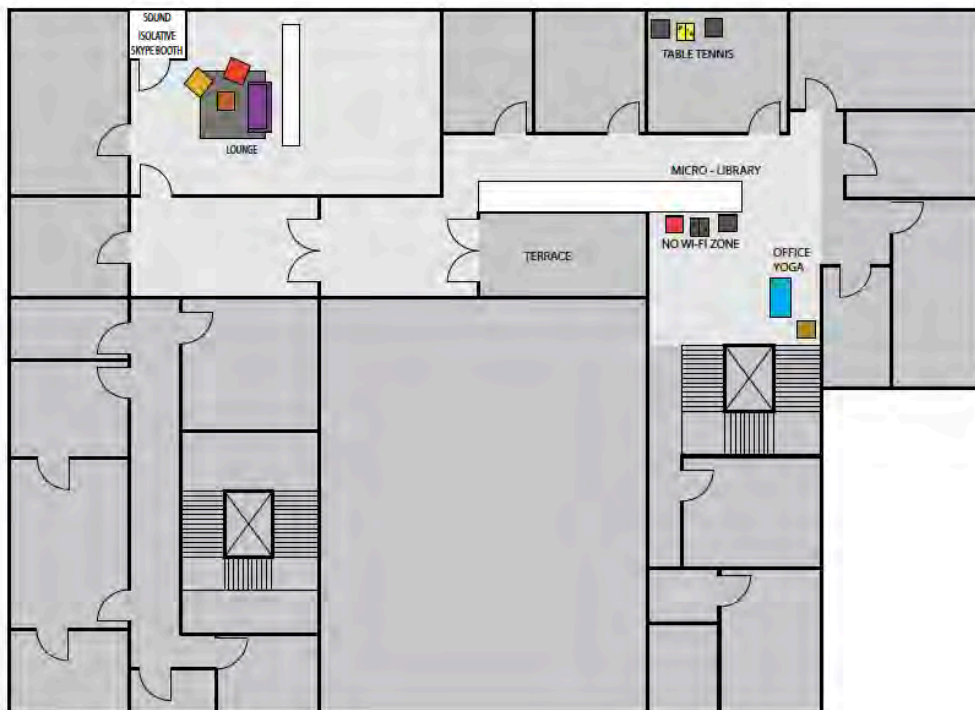


A retreat from computers and smartphones to enjoy the good old conversation.



GROUND FLOOR

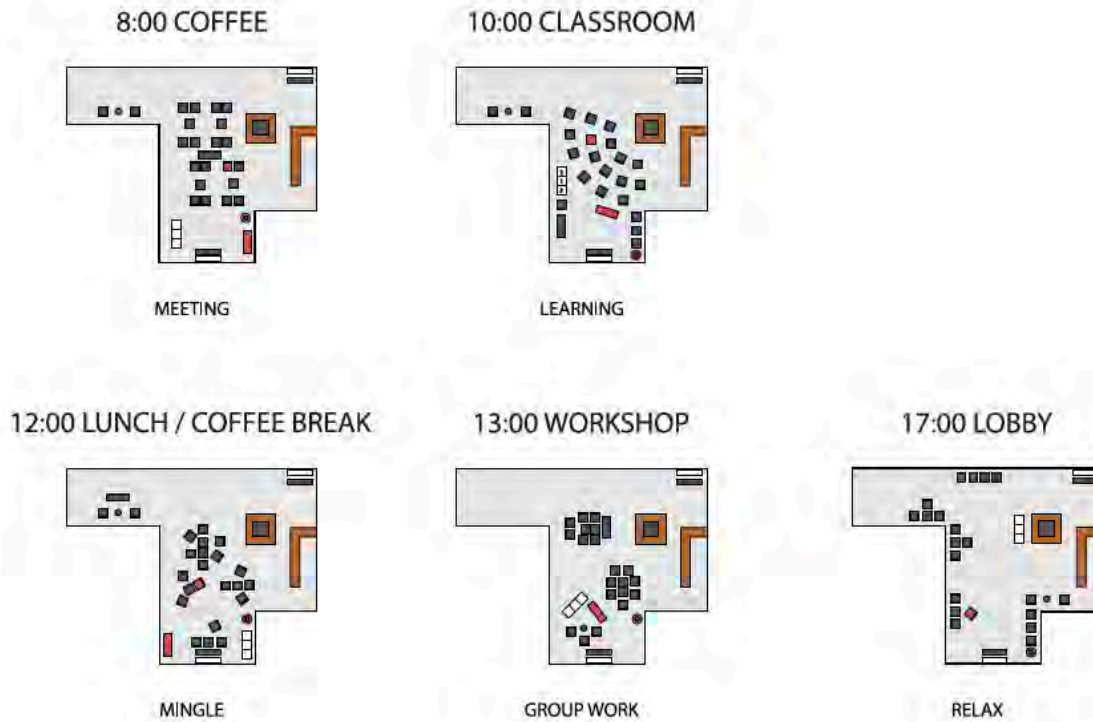
Lobby floor plan



FIFTH FLOOR

Upper floor interventions.

CEF BY TIME



Changes of the lobby through the day.

“CEF classrooms renamed – Instead of classrooms having the usual numbers 1–4, classrooms numbers have been changed to big figures with a meaning behind them, as people in finance should be able to handle bigger numbers.”

1221	In 1221 Eustace of Fauconberg became Bishop of London. He was also named Lord High Treasurer and is believed to have been the first modern minister of finance.
1657	Europe’s earliest modern-style banknotes were introduced by the Bank of Stockholm. The notes, available to the general population, promised a fixed sum to the holder. The bank was established in 1657 by Johan Palmstruch.
2001	The CEF was established in 2001 under the Stability Pact for South East Europe by the Slovenian Government at the initiative of the Slovenian Ministry of Finance and in close cooperation with other ministries of finance in the region.
2812	On December 28, 2014 the Agreement on Establishing the Center of Excellence in Finance entered into force. The number 2812 is future proofed to demonstrate the CEF’s commitment to remain a leading learning institution.