



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in the Netherlands

2021

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

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Netherlands

Youth Policy in the Netherlands

Responsibility of the National Government

Youth policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS). In the scope of this Youth Wiki and the eight themes of the European Youth Strategy it is important to mention that the Ministry of VWS works together with three other ministries related to various fields of care and welfare for children and young people: the Ministry of Justice and Security (concerning youth protection and probation), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (concerning schools, other educational institutes and cultural education) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (concerning preschool, leisure time, labour and income).

Legal rules and regulations

Various acts are important for policy and measures for youth in the Netherlands: the Youth Act (2015) to address needs for preventive and specialized care; the Social Support Act (2015) to stimulate participation and citizenship; the Participation Act (2014) to stimulate participation in the labour market; and the Appropriate Education Act (2014).

Local youth policy

The implementation of youth policy has been decentralized to the municipalities. Since 2015, individual Dutch municipalities carry responsibility for the whole range of care for children, young people and families in need of support and assistance, including mental health provisions. Important for local policy are the Participation Act (2014), the Youth Act (2015) and the Social Support Act (2015).

The municipalities manage a wide range of services for children and families, from universal and preventive services to specialized - both voluntary and compulsory - care for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age. Each municipality bases its local youth policy on what is needed and available at local level, preferably together with citizens and stakeholders in their own local settings. Youth policies related to the eight themes in the Netherlands are described in general in the following chapters, illustrated with numerous national and local examples and projects.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

Special feature

The Netherlands is a densely populated country. It covers a small geographical area (41.543 km²), bordering the North Sea in the West, Germany in the East and Belgium in the South, and accommodates a population of around 17,5 million people (January 2022, [Statistics Netherlands](#)). Most people live in the west of the Netherlands in the 'Randstad', an area between the four major cities: Amsterdam (capital), The Hague (seat of Government), Rotterdam and Utrecht. The Caribbean islands of [Bonaire](#), [Sint Eustatius](#) and [Saba](#) are part of the Netherlands as special municipalities (since October 2010). The Netherlands is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands which also comprises the countries of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In the Netherlands, governance is shared between the national level, the provincial level in twelve provinces and the municipalities (345, as of 1 January 2022, [Statistics Netherlands](#)). Quite a complicated governance challenge, not only in the field of youth.

Highlights

Before 2015 services for youth were fragmented, financial streams differed and the system was ineffective. Reforms were needed to better streamline services and approaches and to adapt them to local needs. This led to a transition and transformation of youth services and the decentralization from national and provincial to local policy. The Dutch municipalities have been made responsible for the whole continuum of welfare, support and care for all citizens, including children, young people and families in need of help.

This has been a major opportunity for transforming policies and services towards integrated approaches. The decentralization of national and provincial responsibilities has taken place. Evaluations in 2018 and 2020 showed that more time is needed to also transform policies and services. The transformation continues to be permanently monitored, to see how the system works to benefit all children and young people in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the new Cabinet (2022) is expected to decide about future adjustments to the [Child and Youth Act](#) to keep the youth care system manageable, as both the demand of youth care and municipal budget deficits have grown in recent years.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

In the Netherlands, the term youth is applied to children and young people from 0 up to the age of 25. In 2021, there were almost 4.9 million children in this age group: children (0 – 12 years) and young people (12 – 25 years). This is 28% of the total population of 17,5 million inhabitants. As in most other industrialized countries, the proportion of youth in the total population is decreasing.

Youth policy focusses on preventive and specialized guidance, care, and support for children and young people. Different legal frameworks apply, depending on a child's age and the type of support needed:

- The age of maturity in Dutch law is 18 years.
- Compulsory education is from 5 to 16 years. Primary school starts at the age of 4 and finishes at the age of 12.
- Secondary school starts at 12 years until the age of 16 - 17. If no starting qualification is reached, children are obliged to continue education until 18 years. (A starting qualification means having gained at least a senior general secondary education (HAVO) diploma or a secondary vocational education (MBO) level 2 diploma. See also paragraph 3.1.)
- The national preventive youth health care programme is offered to all children and young people up to 18 years. This programme is part of the [Public Health Act](#) that applies to all citizens.
- The promotion of child and youth participation is a part of local active citizenship policies. The corresponding [Social Support Act](#) applies to all citizens, including youngsters.
- Children and young people until 18 years old can receive preventive and specialized support and care according to the [Child and Youth Act](#). If needed and wished for, youth care and foster care that started before a young person's 18th birthday may be extended to their 23rd birthday.
- Public health and (mental) health care for mature citizens is regarded as adult care, with the aforementioned exception of extended youth care and foster care.

Paragraph 1.2 lists all legal frameworks concerning youth. More information can be also found on the [Dutch governmental website](#), in the [Youth monitor](#) or [on the website of the Netherlands Youth Institute](#).

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

One law for all types of youth care

The [Child and Youth Act](#) (2015) regulates how youth care should be addressed at the local level. It is a parliament's bill approved on the 1st of March . The act regulates the municipal responsibility for prevention, support, help and care for youth and their parents regarding growing up, parenting, youth mental health problems and disorders, child protection and youth probation. The Child and Youth Act came into effect on the 1st of January 2015. It is the successor of the [Youth Care Act](#) (2005-2014) and it incorporates regulations that previously were integrated in other laws. Through the Child and Youth Act national and provincial responsibilities have been transferred to the municipal level. There is no specific period of time the act will cover. In paragraph 1.3 more information is given about the decentralization and the accompanying transformation of all support and care for children, youth and families for which the Child and Youth Act provides the legal basis.

Different laws concerning Dutch youth

The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) forms the basis for all rules and regulations concerning youth in the Netherlands. The needs and rights of young Dutch people are addressed in different laws and the governance responsibility has been decentralized mostly since 2015. There is not one encompassing law, but there are nine relevant laws:

Local responsibilities

- Prenatal education, youth health care, and collective health promotion and prevention; [Public Health Act](#) (2008).
- Stimulating participation and citizenship; [Social Support Act](#) (2015).
- Addressing needs for preventive support and specialized care; [Child and Youth Act](#) (2015).
- Stimulating participation on the labour market; [Participation Act](#) (2014).

National responsibilities

- Access to education for all: Educational acts such as the [Act on Primary Education](#) (2016) and the [Act on Secondary Education](#) (2016).
- Access to education for children with special needs: [Appropriate Education Act](#) (2014); also a local responsibility for municipalities to streamline the collaboration between special education and mainstream schools within the regions.

Responsibilities of health insurance companies and care administration offices

- Treatment of physical and sensory illness and disabilities; [Health Insurance Act](#) (2005).
- Long-term care for citizens with mental disabilities, physical illness or disabilities and/or sensory disabilities who are in need of 24/7 care or supervision; [Act on Long-term Care](#) (2014).

Scope and contents

Services

The municipalities now steer a wide range of services for children and families, ranging from universal and preventive services to the specialized (both voluntary and compulsory) care for children and young people between 0 and 18 years. Also social services are now part of the responsibility of local municipalities with the view towards further integrated approaches.

Revisions/updates

Evaluations of the Child and Youth Act

According to article 12.2 of the [Child and Youth Act](#) (2015), in 2018 the Ministers involved had to send to Dutch Parliament a report about the effectiveness and effects of the act in practice. This first [evaluation of the Child and Youth Act](#) showed that since the act came into force most changes made could be characterized as transition, as both legal and financial structures had been transferred to the local level. By January 2018 the act's transformation goals still had to be achieved for the most part. The [evaluation report](#) stated that more time is needed to fully implement the act. In 2020 [the Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) drew similar conclusions. According to the institute, the decentralization's and transformation's expected outcomes had not been fulfilled yet (see also paragraph 1.3).

Paragraph 1.3 describes the decentralization and transformation that are regulated in the Child and Youth Act.

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Paragraph 1.3 describes the decentralization and transformation that are regulated in the Child and Youth Act.

Revisions of the Child and Youth Act

The [tender regulations](#) in the Child and Youth Act will be adjusted in fall 2021. During tender procedures municipalities will no longer be obliged to commission the care provider offering the lowest-priced care.

The [Modification of Place of Residence Principle Act](#), which adapts the Child and Youth Act, will come into force on 1st January 2022. From then on the municipality in which a child or young person is registered as citizen will be financially responsible for care provided under the Child and Youth Act. In case of residential care, this will be the municipality in which the child or young person was registered immediately before receiving residential care. From 2022 on financial responsibility will no longer be based on the place of residence of the legal guardian.

Cabinet also prepares a new Improvement of Availability of Care for Youth Act that will come into effect in 2023 and will revise parts of the Child and Youth Act. Long-term cooperation between local authorities and care providers on a supraregional scale should improve the availability and continuity of specialized youth care, child protection and youth probation.

Expected revision in the future

Budget cuts in combination with a risen demand of youth care have set explorations about adjustments of the Child and Youth Act into motion. Since the decentralization in 2015, municipalities have experienced large gaps between their annual budgets and the costs of providing support and care for children, youth and their families. In 2020 the national government together with the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten; VNG) commissioned [Andersson Elffers Felix](#) (AEF) to investigate the need for a structural additional budget for municipalities. AEF stated in its report

'[Stelsel in groei](#)' (System in development) that annually municipalities were 1.3 till 1.5 billion euro short on their budgets to provide all support and care under the Child and Youth Act. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 Government announced extra temporary funding for the years 2019-2022 as well as future negotiations with municipalities about long-term measures to keep the youth care system manageable.

The Steering Committee measures financial manageability Child and Youth Act (Stuurgroep [maatregelen financiële beheersbaarheid Jeugdwet](#)) has examined three scenario's to adapt the Child and Youth Act: no change, diminishing municipalities' obligation to provide youth care or completely removing the obligation from the Child and Youth Act. In all three scenario's a structural larger budget for municipalities is expected to be needed. In April 2021 the [State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) sent the steering committee's report to Dutch Parliament, with the [message](#) that the new Cabinet should decide about adjustments to the Child and Youth Act.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

Decentralization policy

Since January 2015, all Dutch municipalities ([352 on January 1st 2021](#)) are responsible for the whole continuum of welfare, support and care for all citizens, including children, young people and families in need of help. The decentralized responsibilities relate to all types of services, including youth mental health.

Before 2015, responsibilities in welfare and care for all citizens, including children and young people, were divided between local, provincial and national authorities. Services were fragmented, financial streams differed and the system was ineffective. Reforms were needed to better streamline the services and approaches and to adapt them to local needs. The aforementioned decentralization has been a major shift in transforming policies and services towards integrated approaches.

[The transition in the youth care system did not stand alone](#), but was connected to policy, budget cuts and decentralization measures in the fields of long term care, employment and education. In paragraph 1.2 more information is given about the national Child and Youth Act (2015) that provides the legal basis for the decentralization and the accompanying transformation of all support and care for children, youth and families.

Scope and contents

Aims of the transformation

The following transformation goals set in the [Child and Youth Act](#) (2015) are meant to achieve more coherence between the youth and social domains:

- Facilitating ownership, empowerment and self-reliance of all citizens, including young people;
- Creating needs-based services;
- Better approach to prevention and early interventions;
- Support, help and care for all citizens;
- Integrated methods;
- Mental health support and support for disorders;
- Cost effectiveness;
- Care made-to-measure;
- Involving children and families in policies and services.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

Ministries involved

National governmental responsibilities for children and young people belong to 4 different ministries:

- [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#)
 - youth policy and most specialized services for families and children
 - social support towards active citizenship for all
- [Ministry of Justice and Security](#)
 - mandatory child protection measures
 - juvenile justice policy and related institutions, juvenile criminal justice
- [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#)
 - all educational matters
- [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#)
 - labor related measures, including the [Childcare Act](#) (2005) for childcare centers and playgroups
 - work and income for according to the [Participation Act](#) (2015)

Revisions/updates

First evaluation of the Child and Youth Act

As described in paragraph 1.2, the first [evaluation of the Child and Youth Act](#) in 2018 showed that since the act came into force most changes made could be characterized as transition. In January 2018 the act's transformation goals still had to be achieved for the most part.

Evaluation leads to action programme

In response to the report and discussions with key stakeholders the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport launched the [action programme Taking Care of Youth](#) in 2018. The programme aims to continually improve youth care, child protection and youth probation to ensure that children, youngsters and their families timely receive adequate care. The programme focuses on better protection for children whose development is at risk, better access to youth care and raising more children at home or, if necessary, in family-like care environments. It also aimed to provide all children with the opportunity for optimal development and to improve support for vulnerable youngsters towards independence. The final focus is investing in the expertise of youth care professionals. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Minister of Justice and Security together report to parliament about the programme's progress twice a year.

Second evaluation

In 2020 the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) concluded that five years after a decentralization took place in the fields of social support, youth care and employment support, its expected outcomes had not been fulfilled yet. More empowerment, ownership and self-reliance of citizens and more support by their social networks appeared to be less feasible in practice than assumed. Vulnerable children and youth did not receive the specialized care they needed and municipal expenses surpassed budgets.

More information about the decentralization and the transformation in the Dutch youth care can be found in the publication Children and youth support and care in The Netherlands (2015) of the Netherlands Youth Institute.

The [Netherlands Youth Institute](https://www.nji.nl/en) gives information about the Dutch youth policy on www.nji.nl/en

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

National public authorities

General elections took place on 15th March 2021, which were won by the outgoing Cabinet, a coalition between the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy ([VVD](#) – Liberal party), Democrats 66 ([D66](#) – Liberal party), Christian Democratic Appeal ([CDA](#) – Christian democratic party) and Christian Union ([CU](#) – Christian-democratic party). After the general elections, the aforementioned political parties started negotiations to form a new government. On 28th October 2021 the Dutch formation record of 225 days was broken. The mediators charged with forming a new government announced, in a [letter to the President of the House of Representatives](#) on 11th November 2021, that they expected that it would be a matter of weeks for the negotiations to be in an advanced stage. The outgoing Cabinet governs the country until the newly formed government has been installed. The next Dutch general elections will take place in 2025 to elect all 150 members of the House of Representatives. More information can be found on the English pages of [the Dutch governmental website](#).

As stated before in paragraph 1.2, four ministries are responsible for various aspects concerning youth in the Netherlands:

- [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#): Overall youth policy, the Child Helpline ([Kindertelefoon](#)) and confidential counselling for youth care clients ([AKJ – vertrouwenspersonen in de jeugdhulp](#)). The minister is responsible for all domains of the Ministry. The State Secretary also has Youth in his portfolio.
- [Ministry of Justice and Security](#): juvenile justice policy and related institutions.
- [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#): all educational matters in the Netherlands.
- [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#): labour related measures, including the [Childcare Act](#) for the childcare services and playgroups.

Main themes

Regional alliances of municipalities

All responsibilities of the provincial authorities in youth policy have been transferred to the municipalities in 2015. Municipalities now organize support and care for children and youth on a local, regional or supraregional scale, depending on the type of care. For municipalities it is necessary to cooperate on a (supra)regional level because they are too small to perform all tasks themselves. Municipalities have therefore formed [42 regional alliances](#) to organize residential care, foster care and crisis care. Multiple regional alliances collaborate to offer child protection measures, youth probation, specialized care and secure care.

Municipalities

All municipalities organize preventive support as well as primary care by multidisciplinary neighborhood teams on the local level. In addition most municipalities organize ambulatory care, which is a form of specialized care, locally. Policy plans for prevention, youth care, child protection measures and youth probation are written by municipalities periodically. The plans encompass the vision and goals, coherence in youth policies, aimed results, monitoring and outcome criteria.

The municipal council determines the local policy outlines and monitors whether the Municipal Executive (the mayor and the aldermen) performs its legal tasks and carries out the council's plans properly.

The National Agency for Youth

There is no national agency for youth in The Netherlands.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

There is a cross-sectoral inter-ministerial approach and cooperation between the staff members youth from the aforementioned four ministries (par. 1.2) on the subject of youth:

- [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#): Overall youth policy and most specialized services for families and children. The minister is responsible for all domains of the Ministry. The State Secretary also has Youth in his portfolio.
- [Ministry of Security and Justice](#): juvenile justice policy and related institutions.
- [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#): all educational matters in the Netherlands.
- [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#): labour related measures, including the Childcare Act for the childcare services and playgroups.

This cooperation is not formalized and does not have a legal framework. On an average of once every two weeks informal meetings take place. Staff members of the four ministries participate on a voluntary basis, inform each other and exchange information about trending youth topics. It is a follow up of the cooperation they already had, when there was a ministry for Youth and Family in the Netherlands (2007-2010).

During meetings staff members decide together on policy matters and set the agenda in youth matters. At every meeting one of the participants gives a presentation about a current subject. There is opportunity for discussion and asking questions.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has the lead. This is not hierarchal. There is a contact person at the ministry who prepares the meetings. It is considered effective for networking. Trending topics are for example the transition of youth care, youth help, institutional youth care and youth policy information.

Information from the national government

The national government has system responsibility in accordance with the [Child and Youth Act](#). This also concerns the provision of public information and facilitation on the subject of youth matters. On the [website of the national government](#) (in Dutch: Rijksoverheid) information is given about youth policy in the Netherlands. One category of themes concerns [youth and family](#) (in Dutch: familie, jeugd en gezin) and offers 24 subjects on the theme. Among them Youth protection, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Security and Justice, and Youth care, which is the joined responsibility of both the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Co-operation on facts and figures

The [Child and Youth Act](#) (2015) rules that municipalities have policy information at their disposal to be able to form their own youth policy. The [National Youth Monitor](#) gives policy information and an insight into the use of youth care and the application of youth protection and youth rehabilitation.

Each theme offers research figures about various subjects. The health and welfare theme for example offers information about the number of children that smoke or are overweight. The data are categorized according to age, sexe and origin or region.

The National Youth monitor is commissioned by the ministries for:

- Health, Welfare and Sports
- Education, Culture and Science
- Social Affairs and Employment
- Security and Justice

[Statistics Netherlands CBS](#) executes the National Youth monitor and draws up a yearly report.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political commitment to evidence-based youth policy

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for the knowledge chain between the government and the youth research community. The [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) is commissioned and financed by the ministry for collecting, validating and dispersing knowledge about youth matters that can support professionals in the field and help municipalities shape their local youth policy. In 2020 the Netherlands Youth Institute was asked by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport to create a [web page](#) for children, youth, parents, professionals and policy makers to give them information, advice and tips about [living and working with the coronavirus](#) including governmental decisions to reduce the spread of the virus.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

[ZonMw](#) is the national funding organization for health research and care innovation throughout the entire knowledge chain from fundamental research to implementation. Together with its primary commissioners (the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the [Dutch Research Council](#)) it designs and funds research and innovation projects, for example in the areas of prevention and youth. In these projects academic institutions and centers of practical expertise, together with policymakers citizens and patients, conduct research, develop, test and implement innovations. Relevant ZonMw programmes are described below ('Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field').

ZonMw cooperates with other stakeholders such as the Netherlands Youth Institute and in so called academic youth laboratories (bringing together research, policy and service providers, more information under budget allocations). A yearly conference on youth and research is organized bringing together policy makers and researchers.

National Statistics and available data sources

Statistics and reports about youth policy

[Statistics Netherlands](#) is the national office for statistics (in Dutch: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek – CBS). Youth care providers and certified care organizations provide CBS with data about children and youth receiving support and care. CBS processes these data into statistical information and reports. With this information the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice and Security can supervise the effects of the youth care system.

Youth policy information tools

On the website of the national government various tools are made available, such as:

- A video with explanation and background of youth policy information [uitleg en achtergrond van beleidsinformatie jeugd](#)
- An information protocol on how to provide data about youth policy to Statistics Netherlands and which definitions to use: [Informatieprotocol beleidsinformatie jeugd](#).

Other information on the website is provided about youth care in municipalities, quality of youth care, tackling sexual abuse in youth care and data on the different types of youth care.

Figures about youth policy support

The development of coherent youth policy requires coherent information. This is available in the national [Youth Monitor](#). This monitor informs policymakers, researchers and others about the latest developments in the situation of young people in the Netherlands. The Youth Monitor is a digital database with publications and figures about children and youth from 0 to 25 years of age. The information is clustered in five themes:

- Health and welfare
- Young people and family
- Education
- Labor
- Safety and justice

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

National Policy Programmes on youth to foster evidence based policies

- Programme: [Academic Youth Laboratories](#) (2009-2017). ZonMw (the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development) funded six academic youth laboratories that developed knowledge for the youth sector. The laboratories resulted in products and interventions that benefited the strengthening of the (former) Centres for Youth and Families, the (indicated) youth care and youth mental health services and/or a coherent chain of care. From 2010 to 2014, the focus was on research and development. In the period 2014 to 2016, dissemination and the use of results were the spearhead of the youth laboratories. Budget: 9.45 million.
- Programme: [Academic Laboratories Transformation Youth](#) (2014-2020). This ZonMw programme supported 12 academic laboratories in which municipalities, centers of practical expertise, universities and universities of applied sciences as well as parents and young people together addressed a variety of issues related to the transformation of care and support for children and youth. Among other things, the laboratories resulted in (policy) advice, interventions, methods, manuals and educational materials for an improved pedagogical climate, effective prevention, better access to specialized care, support for children in poverty and a safe pedagogical environment. ZonMw provided specific funding to transfer the knowledge gained to non-participating support and care organizations, municipalities and educational institutes. Budget: 6.3 million.
- Programme: [Regional Youth Knowledge Laboratories](#) (2019-2024). Stakeholders in the fields of practice, policy, research and education, parents and young people in 15 regional laboratories work on solutions for regional youth issues, like strengthening everyday parenting, improving cooperation between youth care providers and young people's social networks, normalizing mental health problems, reaching and supporting vulnerable young people, improving opportunities for youth in deprived areas and raising youth in family-like care environments. Budget: 8.5 million.
- Programme: [Working Effectively in the Youth Sector](#) (2012-2019). The mission of this programme was to increase, compile and disseminate knowledge on promoting the psychosocial development of children and adolescents. Among other things, the programme resulted in insight into effective interventions, guidelines and instruments for empowerment, parenting support, multi problem families, youth with mental disabilities, victims of lover boys and child abuse. Budget: 22.9 million.
- Programme: [Longitudinal Effect Monitor Youth Care Plus](#) (2011-2020). The programme has been developed on behalf of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, directorate of Youth with input from relevant organizations. Goal was to identify the progress of

the so-called youth care plus (compulsory youth care in a locked ward) and to stimulate its quality. The first stage of the programme consisted of designing and implemented the longitudinal monitor. During the second stage the monitor's results were interpreted and the monitor was adjusted. Budget: 2 million.

- Programme: [Youth Health Care Guidelines 2013-2018](#) (duration: 2012-2018). The programme led to further professionalization and standardization of youth health care through the development and revision of guidelines, collaboration guidelines and products for youth health care professionals. Budget: 6 million.
- Programme: Youth Health Care Guidelines 2019-2024, that elaborates on the Youth health Care Guidelines 2013-2018 programme. Budget: 6 million.
- Programme: [Sport Impuls Youth in Low-income Neighbourhoods](#) (2014-2018). Goal of the programme is to stimulate youth up to 21 years to achieve sustained levels of physical activity. Over 1000 projects received funding. Budget: 5.3 million. A similar program, for reducing obesity in children, is [Sport Impuls a Healthy Weight through Sport \(2013-2018\)](#). Also over 1000 projects were funded. Budget: 2.8 million.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

National level

Because four ministries (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport; Ministry of Justice and Security; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment – see paragraph 1.3) are responsible together for all youth related policies, the public expenditure allocated to youth is hard to define. However the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) and the [Ministry of Justice and Security](#) (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid) are responsible for support and care under the [Child and Youth Act](#). The Child Helpline ([Kindertelefoon](#)) and confidential counselling for youth care clients ([AKJ – vertrouwenspersonen in de jeugdhulp](#)) are directly funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Other types of support and care for youth is financed by municipalities.

Cabinet decides about ministerial budgets. These budgets are determined annually by Cabinet, described in the national government's budget plan ([Rijksbegroting](#)) and presented to the nation on [Prince's Day](#) (Prinsjesdag) on the third Tuesday in September (the State opening of Parliament).

From national to local level

The national government's budget is connected with the amount of funding available for municipalities. With regard to the [Child and Youth Act](#), Central government provides municipalities with a budget to execute their tasks under this act. This budget is part of a general payment from the municipal fund ([gemeentefonds](#)), which covers part of municipalities' total expenses.

- An individual municipality's share from the municipal fund depends on the characteristics of the municipality as well as how much the municipality can collect annually by taxing: An individual municipality's budget is based on more than 60 characteristics, like the number of inhabitants, the number of young people, the number of people entitled to receive benefits and the area in which a municipality is located. The budget is compiled by funding for each resident, for each young person, et cetera. The larger the ability to tax, the smaller a municipality's share from the municipal fund.

Central government informs municipalities three times a year (in May, September and December) about the size and the division of the municipal fund.

Additionally, in 2019, 2020 and 2021 Government announced extra temporary funding for the years 2019-2022, because of municipal budget shortages. See paragraph 1.2 for more information about these budget shortages and other measures taken.

Local level

As described above, municipalities annually receive a general payment from the municipal fund ([gemeentefonds](#)). This payment includes funding for support and care under the Child and Youth Act and is not allocated. Municipalities are free to choose how they spend their funding on youth. Therefore, the expenditure differs between municipalities. [Andersson Elffers Felix](#) (AEF) in its report '[Stelsel in groei](#)' (System in development) calculated the total municipal costs of support and care related to the Child and Youth Act to be between 5.4 and 5.6 billion euros in 2019.

Municipalities decide about:

- Access to support and care for children and youth.
- Whether support and care is executed by themselves or by external care providers. (Often care providers are commissioned to offer support and care to children and youth.)
- The way external care providers are commissioned: through grants, public contracts or Open House (an agreement with all parties that meet the criteria and want to provide support and care at a set rate). A tender procedure precedes a public contract or Open House agreement.
- Which care providers will offer support and care.
- The way support and care are financed: focus on effort (unit price per hour or day), result (unit price per client successfully helped) or population (a fixed price for support and care for the population as a whole in a certain area).
- Additional quality criteria for care providers (besides the criteria mentioned in the Child and Youth Act).

The factsheet [Outsourcing youth care by municipalities \(Inkoop jeugdhulp door gemeenten\)](#) (only in Dutch) of the [Public Procurement Research Centre](#) and the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut) explains funding by municipalities in more detail.

What is funded?

More information about national programmes on youth to foster evidence based policies is given in Paragraph 1.6.

Financial accountability

As mentioned before (in this paragraph), because four ministries are involved and the fact that local expenditure differs, it is hard to say something in general about financial accountability. This needs further exploration.

At the local level municipalities are accountable to the municipal council. Support and care providers in turn are accountable to the municipalities that have commissioned them. The exact accounting methods and criteria are agreed upon in the grant decision, public contract or Open House agreement, depending on the way these recipients of public funding are commissioned as well as the way support and care by them is financed (as described above).

Use of EU Funds

Information about the use of EU funds is given in paragraph 1.8 Cross-border cooperation with European countries.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

European Dimension of youth policy

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is the ministry to contact for international relations and organizations. Under the authority of the ministry, the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) carries out several international activities and act as the Dutch correspondent for the EKYP, the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policies of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport has cross-border cooperation in the youth field through different European channels:

EU and the Council of Europe

Concerning youth policy the ministry has, like all other EU-countries, cross-border cooperation with the EU and the Council of Europe through the Permanent Representation. There is exchange of information, knowledge and good practices about the subject of youth policy, and the ministry sees the Youth Wiki tool as a good service instrument for this exchange. There are no obligatory EU rules and regulations on how to shape youth policy in your country. Each country is responsible for its own youth policy.

The Youth Directorate of the ministry disseminates the information on the youth programmes of the EU and the Council of Europe to all relevant Dutch organizations in the field.

[The Netherlands EU Presidency 2016](#)

During its EU presidency in the first half of 2016 the Netherlands' guiding principles are a Union that focuses on the essentials, a Union that focuses on growth and jobs through innovation, and a Union that connects with civil society. The Netherlands will be focusing on four priority areas: migration & international security, Europe as an innovator & job creator, sound finances and a robust Eurozone, and ahead-looking climate and energy policy.

Youth issues

The Netherlands EU Presidency describes the focus on [youth issues](#). It states that there is little European legislation governing education, youth, culture and sport. The member states mainly deal with these areas themselves. The EU will facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information and experience. It mentions Erasmus+, Europe's grant programme that supports education, youth and sport.

During its EU Presidency, the Netherlands will focus on the following issues on education and youth:

- How can we better align the education system with the labour market? What kinds of knowledge and skills do students and citizens need in a changing society?
- How do we ensure that our secondary vocational education and higher education systems are geared to the future? How do we create more scope for talented learners, and for various kinds of open and online education? What do lifelong learning and internationalisation mean in practice?
- What role can education and youth work play in integrating migrants and refugees? How can we convey our common values and combat radicalization?
- How can youth work help combat violent extremism among young people?
- How can we ensure that young people with mental health problems can participate in society, whether within the community, the world of education or the labour market?

- How can we initiate a structured dialogue between member states on the theme of 'Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe – Ready for Life, Ready for Society'?

European Social Network (ESN)

The [European Social Network](#) (ESN) is a network for local public social services in Europe. The ESN has more than 120 member organizations in 35 countries, including national associations of directors, departments of social welfare within government, regions, counties and municipalities, funding and regulatory agencies, universities and other research and development organizations. The [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) participates in a peer review and compiles a country profile on child care services in the Netherlands.

The report 'Investing in Children, Improving Outcomes', with the implementation of children's services in The Netherlands and 13 other EU countries will be launched at the final meeting of the project group during the European Social Services Conference 20-22 June 2016 in The Hague.

International cooperation

UN

Through the EU-presidency (from January to June 2016 - see above) the Netherlands is the official spokesman of the EU in talks with the UN. In July Slovakia will take over the EU-presidency for the second half of 2016.

According to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, both the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Safety and Justice report every 5 years about the situation of children's rights in the Netherlands.

OECD

The Dutch government has cross-border cooperation with the OECD about early childhood, children's rights and wellbeing.

1.9 On-going debates and reforms

Decentralization

The decentralization of all youth care from the national and the provincial governments to the local authorities, and the transition into a more preventive youth policy, is under constant debate since its start (January 2015). The first evaluation of the Child and Youth Act in 2018 showed that since the act came into force most changes made could be characterized as transition. In January 2018 the act's transformation goals still had to be achieved for the most part. In 2020 the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) concluded that more empowerment, ownership and self-reliance and more support by social networks appeared to be less feasible in practice than assumed. Vulnerable children and youth did not receive the specialized care they needed and municipal expenses surpassed budgets. [The corona crisis enlarged the pressure on mental health care.](#)

Cabinet prepares a revision of parts of the Child and Youth Act, in which it regulates the long-term cooperation between local authorities and care providers on a supraregional scale that should improve the availability and continuity of specialized youth care, child protection and youth probation. [In April 2021 Cabinet made 1 billion euro extra available for municipalities to solve current bottlenecks in youth care.](#) Cabinet states that fundamental choices need to be made about the scope of the Child and Youth Act and the execution by municipalities and their freedom to make policy choices.

Youth care after 18th birthday

The transformation all youth care is challenging for young people in youth care after their 18th birthday. Starting from that age their surroundings change: the involvement of

guardians and youth care services end at the age of maturity. Suddenly the youngster is in charge, and has to formulate his or her own help request and solve his or her own problems. The Social Support Act applies from that age and has less possibilities in comparison with the Child and Youth Act. Young people just out of youth care tend to fall between two stools. [Therefore, under certain conditions municipalities have the authority to extend the duration of youth care until young people are 23 years old. Also since 2018 foster care automatically lasts until a foster child's 21st birthday, unless the youngster decides to leave foster care before he or she turns 21.](#)

Read more (in Dutch) about the support of vulnerable [youth in their transition to adulthood and independence](#).

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Special feature

48 percent of young people aged between 15 and 25 years participate in voluntary work, for example in sports clubs, schools, care and nursing, youth organisations and in religious or philosophical organisations. There is no national stand-alone law on youth volunteering. Volunteering for all citizens, including youth, is part of the [Social Support Act](#) (2015) and promotes informal and formal social systems. The national government supports all voluntary activities. For example, the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) subsidises the **Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organisations** ([Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk](#)). Municipalities are responsible for the voluntary activities of their citizens and act as brokers to facilitate them in their own initiatives.

Highlights

Since March 2020 all young people between 14 and 27 years old can voluntarily donate an amount of time to do social service ([maatschappelijke diensttijd](#)). Young people can work in a variety of sectors: nature & animals, sustainability, engineering and IT, politics and government, education, media and culture, sports, safety, and welfare and care. Social service takes at least 80 hours in a maximum of 6 months. Participants receive supervision, often training, and a certificate or other reward afterwards. Read more about social service in paragraph 2.4.

2.1 General principles

Historical developments

No stand-alone law

There is no national stand-alone law on youth volunteering in the Netherlands. The national government stimulates all voluntary activities, but municipalities are responsible. Voluntary work is part of the kind of activities Dutch people are involved in. This voluntary work is bound to certain laws and regulations, all concerning compensation, accommodation, insurance and whether and how many hours somebody can work as a volunteer.

The focus of the Dutch government is access to education and work. There is no 'third road' to volunteering. Volunteering is part of the [Social Support Act](#) (2015) (in Dutch: Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning – Wmo) and stimulates informal and formal social systems. The Social Support Act gives municipalities the assignment to connect with initiatives of citizens.

Historical developments

Voluntary activities in the Netherlands has a history of many years. It is important to define what is meant by voluntary activities. In her article [Jongeren en vrijwilligerswerk: een verhaal over motivatie](#) (Young people and voluntary work: a story about motivation) (2004) Linda Bridges Karr gives an overview of available literature on the subject. Lucas Meijs, professor of volunteering, civil society and businesses at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) states in his foreword to the article that this research shows only a limited insight into the motivation to do voluntary work, but the article forms a promising onset to new research and development in practice.

In her article Karr speaks mainly about forms of voluntary efforts that look like formal organized voluntary work. This term is applied throughout the article.

Many young people in the Netherlands were at that time (2004), and still are, enthusiastically active in a great diversity of forms of voluntary activities. In her article Karr describes that there was also a general image: young people are less active and are less interested in doing voluntary work than grown-ups.

Karr shows in her article that the general images of young people showing less interest in doing voluntary work does not correspond with the experiences of young people and young people's organizations in practice. As it turned out, general knowledge about voluntary work was lacking. That is why the effort to stimulate young people to civic participation was high on the agenda at that time. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) called for a special regulation that would reach 19,000 young people in 3 years.

Civic internship

Together with the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) they stimulated the development of various ways to let young people get acquainted with voluntary work under the title 'civic internship' (maatschappelijke stage):

In 2007 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science made an amount of 30 million euro extra available for civil internships and volunteers. Municipalities with a secondary school could count on 15 million euro to help students find an organization to do their civil internship. Another 15 million would be divided between all municipalities and was meant to boost volunteering, such as civic internship. About 195.000 students were supposed to find a nice and educational internship in the environment of their school, village, town or city.

From the schoolyear 2011-2012 the introduction of civic internship was obligatory in vocational and secondary education. As of the schoolyear 2014-2015 civic internship is not obligatory anymore. Schools themselves can decide if they want to have civic internship as part of their curriculum.

The voluntary civic activities of young people got a lot of attention in those years. The general opinion was that a favorable image among young people will stimulate them automatically to participate in voluntary activities. As a result there was an increase of marketing campaigns, that aimed at improving the image of voluntary work.

Research about motivation (1999)

Some Dutch practical researches discussed the motivation of young volunteers. These studies are mostly quantitative, based on predesigned categories of motivations. For example, in their background study Maatman, De Poorter en Van der Gugten (1999) point at a classification of motivations used in a research about young people and their participation in sport clubs: relational motives, personal development motives, recreational motives, intrinsic motives and external/expressive motives.

Pedagogical civil society - Programme about volunteering for and by youth and families (2009-2012)

[Voluntary activities for and by youth and families](#) (Vrijwillige inzet voor en door Jeugd en Gezin). That was the title of a 4 year programme (2009-2012)) that stimulated the active

role of citizens in civil societies such as neighbourhoods and districts in towns and villages, in raising and growing up to strengthen a pedagogical civil society. The programme wanted to improve co-operation and exchange between municipalities, youth care, welfare and volunteer organizations in the area of active citizenship about raising and growing up.

It was a successful programme that resulted in a great many projects, products and research, all compiled on the website. The last issue of the magazine [Vrijwillige Inzet](#) (Voluntary Activities) (June 2012) highlights all aspects of the programme, the use of it, and its possible follow-up. One article in the magazine (pag. 42-53) contains a dialogue between Lucas Meijs and Micha de Winter, two professors with expertise in the field of volunteering. They concluded: *'The pedagogical civil society is completely self-evident.'*

In the advice 'Investing around children' the [Council for Health and Society](#) (Raad voor Gezondheid en Samenleving) had introduced the concept of the pedagogical society three years earlier and in 2012 it was a common term. The advice formed an important basis for the programme.

The programme was financed by [ZonMw](#) The Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development, commissioned by the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) and [NWO](#) The Netherlands Organization for Scientific research.

Recent research about volunteering

[Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#) published the research paper [Vrijwilligerswerk: activiteiten, duur en motieven](#) (Arends and Schmeets, July 2018) (Voluntary work: activities, duration and motives). Over a period of 6 years (2012-2017) the response of 45,695 persons was available and analyzed.

Almost half of the population (48,5 percent) of the Dutch population of 15 years and older said in 2017 that they had been active as a volunteer for an organization or union, at least once a year. This percentage is fairly constant since 2012. About 50% of all young people is involved in voluntary work. Most volunteers are active in sports clubs, schools, youth organizations, religious or philosophical organizations and in care and nursing. Volunteers spend an average of 4,5 hours a week doing voluntary work, with most hours (4.9) being spent in youth organizations and the least hours (1.5) in the neighbourhood.

There are strong differences between population groups:

- Volunteers are more likely to be found in the middle aged groups;
- Men and women spend about the same time in voluntary work, but differ in the type of organizations they are active in: Women are twice as active in schools and in care, while men are more active in the area of sport and youth work. Men put more time in voluntary work than women;
- Higher educated people are more active as a volunteer than lower educated people, but for less hours a week;
- More than half of the volunteers with a Dutch background do voluntary work, while people with a Western and non-Western migration background are much less active.
- People of religious or philosophical denomination are more active than others, of which members of the Protestants Church Netherlands and Reformed Church are most active.
- In less urbanized communities more volunteers are active than in strongly urbanized communities.

In conclusion, results show that level of education, age and religious denomination are most relevant for doing voluntary work.

The majority of volunteers are regularly working as a volunteer, mostly every week. Voluntary work is often incidental for the neighbourhood and for schools. Young people in the ages of 15 to 19 are more often incidentally active than older people.

According to the volunteers themselves the kind of work they do is mostly organizing and coaching, 'something else' and administrative tasks, depending on the type of organization

Young volunteers (15-19) mostly organize activities, give training or 'something else – not specified'. Young people are less inclined to continue the voluntary work than older people.

Most of the volunteers come in contact with voluntary work through the organization they work at, through family, friends, or acquaintances, or through work or study. The most important reasons why people do voluntary work is because they like it and they enjoy doing something for somebody else. Volunteering because it helps to find a job plays a role only to a minority of volunteers.

Definition(s) and concepts

Volunteering, voluntary activities, voluntary work

To define voluntary work [Movisie](#), Netherlands centre for social development, uses the 2008 definition of Civiq (the former organization on volunteering, now part of Movisie): *Voluntary work is work that gets done unpaid and voluntarily for the benefit of other people or the (quality of) the society in general, in an organized setting.*

In their theme card on volunteering (april 2016) Movisie talks about volunteering in a broader sense, also including non-formal activities such as citizens initiatives. Six years ago the focus was on all organized forms of volunteering, whereas starting from 2015 citizens are supposed to take the initiative themselves. That meant a change in the main functions and focal points of municipalities. They now act as brokers to facilitate citizens in their own initiatives. Two developments are significant, both asking for the full participation of all citizens:

- In the **care** for people that have care needs and demands the support given is the link to the social systems of a client. A person's own coping competences and sense of responsibility are important factors in this form of volunteering.
- Also there is attention for the development of **active citizenship** and a so-called 'Do-democracy' wherein citizen's own initiatives are being stimulated.

Volunteering is participating Movisie developed a theme card about [Participation](#) (2017). It describes volunteering and voluntary work as a means of participating in society. Doing voluntary work for example, provides a sense of esteem and lesser feelings of stress and loneliness. In Chapter 5 Participation all aspects of youth participation are described.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Over 5.6 million Dutch people are active in the voluntary effort sector. Society as a whole benefits from their unpaid activities.

Coordinating role

The Department Social Support (in Dutch: Dienst Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has no special policy concerning voluntary work among young people. Volunteers policy is decentralized. The department does have a coordinating role concerning voluntary work in the Central Government. This means that the department deliberates and discusses about relevant developments within the Central Government and with external actors in the field of voluntary activities and work.

Other ministerial departments are also part of the volunteers work. For example, the Ministry of Safety and Justice gives special attention to volunteers in the police force and

the fire brigade. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment focuses on the link between paid labour and voluntary work.

As part of its coordinating role the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport subsidizes the volunteers umbrella organization [NOV](#) (more information under subheading 'Actors' in this paragraph).

Local context

Most of the voluntary work takes place within the local context in municipalities, in the combined action between volunteers, volunteers organizations, local organizations, companies and local government. The Dutch government puts in every effort to help remove legal bottlenecks and other limitations for volunteers, and works on innovating and facilitating volunteers policy. This cabinet invests in the collecting and dispersing of knowledge, information and good practices about volunteers and voluntary work, for example via [Movisie](#) Netherlands centre for social development (see par. 2.1) and [NOV](#) Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organizations (more information under subheading 'Actors' in this paragraph).

Volunteering close by

Besides Movisie and NOV the cabinet supports thirteen national volunteers' organizations in care and welfare in the three years programme Vrijwillig dichtbij (Volunteering close by). Goal is to equip volunteers in care and welfare with tools about all aspects of volunteering and to be able to anticipate changing demands. The thirteen organizations work on better local cooperation and offer training and (individual) coaching to volunteers.

Main actors

The Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organizations (NOV)

[NOV](#) is the leading organization within the voluntary effort sector of the Netherlands. NOV has 350 member organizations that work with or for volunteers. NOV is unique because it is the only organization in the Netherlands geared to strengthening voluntary effort and work. It has two kinds of members: organizations that perform voluntary work and those that fulfil a supporting or coordinating role.

Main tasks:

- To serve the interests of the voluntary effort sector.
- NOV is the spokesperson and lobbyist of Dutch voluntary work and as such a serious discussion partner of politicians, government officials and other policy-influencing parties. NOV provides advice, both solicited as well as unsolicited.
- To provide a major stimulus to the voluntary effort. NOV works towards more public recognition of voluntary effort, but its name is also used in innovative initiatives.

NOV focuses on the voluntary effort sector as such. The member organizations determine NOV's future policies, and they are invited to make maximum use of the networking role of the NOV.

Netherlands centre for social development (Movisie)

Movisie is the Netherlands centre for social development. Their mission is to promote the participation and independence of citizens by supporting and advising professional organizations, volunteer organizations and government institutions.

Main tasks

Five themes are central to their work: effectiveness; professionalization; participation; combating and preventing domestic and sexual violence; social care.

The expertise of Movisie ranges from active citizenship to client participation, and from combating domestic and sexual violence to effective interventions in the social sector.

The organization collects knowledge from abroad, to gain international inspiration and to place developments in the Netherlands in a broader international context.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

As stated before in paragraph 2.1 there is no national stand-alone law on youth volunteering in the Netherlands. The national government supports all voluntary activities, but municipalities are responsible. Voluntary work is part of the kind of activities Dutch people are involved in. This voluntary work is bound to certain laws and regulations, all concerning compensation, accommodation, insurance and whether and how many hours somebody can work as a volunteer, as outlined in paragraph 2.4.

The focus of the Dutch government is access to education and work. Volunteering is part of the [Social Support Act](#) (2015) ([Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning 2015](#)) and stimulates informal and formal social systems. The Social Support Act gives municipalities the assignment to connect with initiatives of citizens.

Since March 2020 all young people between 14 and 27 years old can voluntarily donate an amount of time to do social service. This way, [central government](#) stimulates young people to discover, use and develop their skills and talents, to meet new people, to contribute to society, to strengthen civil society and to make choices for their future. See paragraph 2.4 for more information.

Scope and contents

There is no national strategy on youth volunteering in the Netherlands. As said before the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) is the responsible ministry on volunteering in general. The official information about volunteering can be found on the [governmental website](#) (only in Dutch).

Rules for volunteers and volunteer organisations

For volunteers and volunteer organisations various rules apply. A volunteer with an unemployment benefit for example, is obligated to apply for paid work. Also rules concerning the working conditions (in Dutch: [Arbo](#)) can apply. And there are behaviour rules to tackle sexual harassment and abuse within voluntary organisations. More information can be found under 'Regulations for volunteers and volunteers' organisations' ([Regels voor vrijwilligers en vrijwilligersorganisaties](#)) on the [governmental website](#).

Characteristics of youth volunteering

[Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#) published the research paper [Vrijwilligerswerk: activiteiten, duur en motieven](#) (Voluntary work: activities, duration and motives) (Schmeets and Arends, July 2020). Over a period of 6 years (2013-2018) the response of more than 45.000 persons was available and analyzed. Almost half (48 percent) of the Dutch population of 15 years and older said in 2018 that they had been active as a volunteer for an organization or union, at least once a year. This percentage is fairly constant since 2013. 48.4% of all young people were involved in voluntary work. Most volunteers were active in sports clubs, schools, care and nursing, youth organizations and in religious or philosophical organizations. Volunteers spent an average of 4.4 hours a week doing voluntary work, with most hours (5.1) being spent in social care and the least hours (1.4) at school.

Support to young volunteers

In some cases young people get compensated for their voluntary work by the organization they work for. Also, under certain conditions they are exempted from paying income tax. Information about working as a volunteer and taxes can be found on the website of the [Tax and customs administration](#) (Belastingdienst).

Quality Assurance (QA)

[The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) has a coordinating role regarding the national policy for volunteer work. Several [laws and regulations](#) apply to different aspects of volunteer work:

- The Act on Working Conditions.
- The General Data Protection Regulation.
- A police record check (free of charge) for volunteers working with vulnerable people.
- A volunteering fee exempt from income tax, with a maximum of € 1.800 a year.
- Specific rules for volunteers on benefits.
- [Rules of conduct and a road map](#) to prevent and talk about inappropriate behavior in volunteer organizations, like bullying, sexual intimidation, aggression or discrimination. The products have been developed by the Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations (Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk).

The [Association of Dutch Volunteer Organizations](#) improves the quality of volunteer work by, among other things, offering manuals for the recruitment of volunteers, drafting a volunteer policy and volunteer management to volunteer organizations.

A social service programme for young people has been developed and is described in this section under 'Funding'. The development of social service projects in the experimental phase has been monitored. Their monitor's results and recommendations for further improvement of social service have been described in the evaluation report [Past the experimental phase: social service in the future](#).

Target groups

At national level Dutch government has made efforts to promote the opportunities and benefits of volunteering among all young people. Apart from social service, there are no measures taken to enhance the participation of specific groups of young people in voluntary activities.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

As mentioned before there is no national programme for volunteering in the Netherlands. The government does support volunteering activities in general but municipalities and ngo's are responsible for the execution of volunteering efforts and work.

Funding

Social service [Central government](#) stimulates young people to use their talents in providing an amount of their time to do social service and with it to make civil society stronger. By doing social service young people can learn something and at the same time contribute to society. Government finds it important that all young people are able to serve a period of time in social service, no matter their education, background or stage of life. After consulting young people about their views and ideas on how such social service period should look like, pilot projects have started in 2018 to experiment with social service. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) is responsible for the development of social service. [ZonMW](#), the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development, has assessed the subsidy requests for experimental projects for social service, with the help of a panel of young people and experts. The projects should be compliant to the wishes of young people. That was an important criterium in selecting the projects, and young people's assessment was decisive in granting the subsidies. 38 projects have been chosen that started from the middle of September 2018. About 13,000 young people went ahead

with a period of social service. There was lots of choice in the kind of social service. Young people could work in care, sports or culture, in rural areas and even at sea.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

[Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#) published the research paper [Vrijwilligerswerk: activiteiten, duur en motieven](#) (Arends and Schmeets, July 2018) (Voluntary work: activities, duration and motives). Over a period of 6 years (2012-2017) the response of 45,695 persons was available and analyzed. Almost half (48.5 percent) of the Dutch population of 15 years and older said in 2017 that they had been active as a volunteer for an organization or union, at least once a year. This percentage is fairly constant since 2012. About 50% of all young people are involved in voluntary work. Most volunteers are active in sports clubs, schools, youth organizations, religious or philosophical organizations and in care and nursing. Volunteers spend an average of 4.5 hours a week doing voluntary work, with most hours (4.9) being spent in youth organizations and the least hours (1.5) in the neighbourhood.

Support to young volunteers

In some cases young people get compensated for their voluntary work by the organisation they work for. Also, under certain conditions they are exempted from paying income tax. Information about working as a volunteer and taxes can be found on the website of the [Tax and customs administration](#) (Belastingdienst).

Quality Assurance (QA)

A social service programme for young people is developed in 2018 and described in this section under 'Funding'. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) has ordered a research office to monitor the developments of the experimental projects that have started within the frame of this programme. They want to appoint the operative elements in the big variety of projects. In the beginning of 2019 the amount of projects will be extended. Mid 2019 it will be decided how the social service programme will continue, based on the experience during the pilot projects. For their contribution during social service young people can get a volunteer fee. They can also get a certificate or references, which can be helpful in finding a job.

Target groups

At national level Dutch government has made efforts to promote the opportunities and benefits of volunteering among all young people. There are no measures taken to enhance the participation of specific groups of young people in voluntary activities.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

Implementation of the Youth in Action programme (2007 to 2013)

The European subsidy program Youth in Action funded international group exchanges for young people, international volunteering and other international youth projects for young people from 13 to 30 years, including seminars and networking activities. Youth in Action also provided opportunities for international training and meetings on cooperation and knowledge exchange between volunteers and professionals in the youth sector.

Impact study

The Netherlands Youth Institute has studied the impact of Youth in Action (2011). The study shows that participation in Youth in Action has impact in several respects, young people, project managers and organizations, too. Participating in Youth in Action increased young people's European awareness, they believe their chances on the labour market have

increased and they grew regarding their personal development and skills. You can find the study (in Dutch) [here](#).

Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) on the national level

[Erasmus+](#) is the European Commission's Programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for mobility of learners and staff and cooperation across the education, training and youth sectors and is easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules and a structure which aims to streamline the administration of the programme.

Erasmus+ will give people the chance to study, train, undertake work experience and volunteer abroad with the aim of boosting skills and employability, particularly amongst young people, in The Netherlands.

Erasmus+ agencies in The Netherlands

The grant programme Erasmus+ is carried out by two national agencies: the National Agency Erasmus+ Education & Training and the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth. EP-Nuffic, CINOP and the Netherlands Youth Institute together form the National Agencies, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The National Agency Erasmus+ Youth is part of the Netherlands Youth Institute. They combine efforts to support professionals in the youth sector in improving the participation, growing up and education of young people in the ages of 13 to 30 years.

Eurodesk - Youth information

[Eurodesk](#) is an international non-profit association created in 1990. As support organization to the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) Eurodesk is one of the most comprehensive and most accessible sources of free youth information about international learning mobility opportunities. Eurodesk is present in 34 countries. In these countries, Eurodesk Centres help multipliers in their work to carry out Eurodesk's mission: 'to raise awareness among young people on learning mobility opportunities and encourage them to become active citizens.'

The Dutch Eurodesk Centre is [Go-Europe](#). The site has a separate section with information on all aspects and possibilities of voluntary work abroad. One possibility is European Voluntary Service (EVS). Subsidized by the European programme Erasmus+ EVS offers opportunities for young people aged between 17 and 30 to do voluntary work abroad in Europe for the duration of two months up to one year.

The [European Youth Portal](#) offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. It gives information around eight main themes, covers 34 countries and is available in 28 languages.

Dutch EU Presidency

From January 1 to June 30, 2016, the Netherlands holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the twelfth time. Priorities are: a strategic agenda for the EU in times of change, job creation through innovative growth and connecting to social actors. During the EU presidency, the Netherlands chairs the Council meetings and takes the lead in negotiations between Member States. The Netherlands also promotes the interests of the Member States in negotiations with the other European institutions on new legislation.

Structured dialogue

The Dutch Youth Council (NJR), together with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Netherlands Youth Institute is involved in a large-scale European project, the [Structured Dialogue](#). The Structured Dialogue is a European initiative involving all Member States in a dialogue between young people and policy-makers. This concerns extensive

consultations with young people about different themes, which are processed in a report to be discussed at a European Youth Conference. The goal of this project is that both Europe and local parties develop youth policy together and that youngsters and policy-makers exchange knowledge on youth policy on a European level.

Every six months there is a different theme for the Structured Dialogue. In this cycle (January 2016-July 2017), the theme is "Ready for life, ready for society". At every EU Youth Conference, the frames will be outlined for the next two conferences. Because of the Dutch EU presidency, the Youth Conference took place in Amsterdam (4-7 April, 2016) and was organized by the Dutch Youth Council, together with the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#).

Other programmes

This section needs to be explored further.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

EVS volunteers in the Netherlands

The Erasmus+ Youth Programme has a special agreement on cultural exchange for EVS Volunteers with the [Immigration and Naturalization Service](#) of the [Ministry of Safety and Justice](#). That means that a number of Dutch non-governmental organizations have the legally recognized status to host volunteers from abroad, for an agreed period of time.

Volunteers from non EU-countries are obliged to apply for a visa, whereas EU-citizens are not.

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

NOV

As part of its coordinating role the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport subsidizes the volunteers umbrella organization [NOV](#) (more information in par. 2.2 under subheading 'Actors'). NOV is the advocate organization for voluntary work in the Netherlands and is discussion partner in politics and with the government.

They aim to raise awareness about voluntary work and have a special focus on youth voluntary work with their campaigns. They do this for example, by supporting municipalities to make optimum use of local possibilities in voluntary work. On their [website pages about youth policy and voluntary work](#) NOV promotes the support of municipalities and youth organizations to help each other -even with limited resources- to give children the chance to grow and develop. The place where you grow up is very important for your development, according to them. NOV recognizes the wish of municipalities to create and maintain a positive living environment, with optimum developing opportunities and plenty activities. According to NOV this will help children to become stable young people with a sense of responsibility.

Action points for youth voluntary work

NOV provides municipalities with a set of action points. Voluntary work for youth must:

- be well thought-out and have a prominent position in youth policy;
- be available for all children and young people;
- connect youth with other target groups;
- give space, and result in fewer rules;

- have arrangements for minimum wage earners, also for youth work;
- be well insured.

Scouting Netherlands

Scouting is the largest youth organization in the Netherlands with over 100.000 members. Some other facts and figures:

- 1 in 5 children in the Netherlands is or has been a member of Scouting.
- There are over 1000 Scouting groups in the Netherlands.
- One or more Scouting groups are active in 80% of all communities.
- 75% of volunteers in Scouting Netherlands is younger than 25 and spends an average of 8 hours a week on Scouting.
- 25% of volunteers in Scouting Netherlands is also a volunteer in another organization.

Importance of scouting youth volunteering

The website offers a whole section of [information for children and youth about all positive aspects of volunteering](#), with the slogan 'be a volunteer and develop yourself'. They have a scouting academy where the voluntary group leaders can learn to guide children and youth in their development, while engaging in scouting activities.

Key initiatives

National and local Dutch organizations want to attract young people to work as volunteers within their organization. Some examples:

- The Dutch Red Cross [Rode Kruis](#) has a programme to attract children to volunteer through school campaigns. On their website they have a section [for schools and "What can you do?"](#).
- The [Oranje Fonds](#) (Orange Fund), a social welfare fund that invests annually about € 30 million in almost 7,000 social initiatives in the Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, has the following project: '[Groeien en B\(l\)oeien van jonge talenten](#)' (Growing, blossoming and getting the interest of young talents). The aim of this project is to attract more sustainable young volunteers. The focus is on making voluntary work more attractive through making better use of the talents of young volunteers.
- The local project '[Hart voor Zwolle](#)' is a foundation in the municipality of Zwolle that connects young volunteers to vulnerable citizens.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

The Department Social Support (in Dutch: Dienst Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has no special policy concerning voluntary work among young people. Volunteers policy is decentralized. Skills recognition for (young) volunteers is one of the activities of NOV, the Dutch umbrella organization for volunteering, they work on commissioned by the ministry.

See also par. 2.2.

Existing arrangements

[Youthpass](#) is a European tool that is used in European programmes for the recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field and is developed on the European level. The Dutch government has given approval on the European level to use the tool and the programme connected to it in the Netherlands.

By decision of the European Commission, Youthpass is valid as of 1 January 2007. That is, Youthpass Certificates can be issued to participants in projects funded by the 'Youth in Action' programme (2007-2013) and Erasmus+ Youth programme (2014-2020).

The National Agency of Erasmus+ Youth in the Netherlands promotes the use of the tool for all young people that participate in Erasmus+ mobility projects.

2.8 On-going debates and reforms

At this moment there are no governmental on-going debates or reforms concerning youth volunteering in the Netherlands. See paragraph 2.3 for more information about the recently developed social service for young people between 14 and 27 years old.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Special feature

The Dutch government is actively involved in promoting that young people leave school with a diploma and are able to find suitable jobs. The government takes policy measures and cooperates with both the business world and the education sector to achieve this. Municipalities focus on supporting young people without a diploma or the necessary starting qualifications. Stimulating participation in the labour market is based on the [Participation Act](#) (2014). The Act is meant to help all people (including youth) with or without work restrictions to find suitable jobs.

Developing entrepreneurial skills is part of the curriculum of Secondary Vocational Education.

Highlights

For students of Secondary Vocational Education a 'learning-by-doing' educational route has been developed. It combines working and learning in companies acting as learning environments. The [Scientific Council for Government Policy](#) (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid – WRR) calls for policies aiming at [social cohesion in education to foster equal opportunities for all youths](#). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science stimulates easier transition between different kinds of schools, to learn from each other's experiences, awareness of all involved, and space to experiment.

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

The Dutch government is actively involved in taking care that young people leave school with a diploma and are able to find a suitable job. For this the government takes policy measures and cooperates with both the business world and the education sector.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)

In [2020](#) over 817.000 Dutch young people between the ages of 15 to 27 years were not in education and 151.000 of them (18.5 percent) did not have a job. 167.000 young people left education without a so-called [start qualification](#), which means not having gained at least a senior general secondary education (HAVO) diploma or a secondary vocational education (MBO) level 2 diploma. 67.000 (40.1 percent) of these 167.000 young people did not have a job, compared to 12.1 percent of the young people that had gained a start qualification.

In 2019 there were 70.000 NEETs without a start qualification. Almost 32.000 (45%) of them wanted to be employed, but could not find a job. Almost 39.000 (55%) of the NEETs without a start qualification were also not available for the labor market for various reasons. Most reasons mentioned were health problems and disabilities and having to take care of a family or household. (Source: [Centraal Bureau of Statistics CBS Statistics Netherlands](#)).

Youth unemployment due to the corona crisis

The corona crisis negatively affected the youth unemployment rates in the Netherlands. The number of young people (15 till 25 years old) in employment reduced by 139.000 between February and May 2020. The youth unemployment rate raised from 6.3 percent in February 2020 to 11.3 percent in August 2020, after which it slowly decreased to 9.4 percent in February 2021.

Definitions and concepts

Municipalities support young people without a diploma or the necessary start qualification. For youngsters so-called learning companies (in Dutch: leerbedrijven) have been developed as an educational route to combine studying and working, in the sense of learning by doing.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science have taken various actions in 2020 and 2021 to tackle and prevent youth unemployment as a result of the corona crisis:

- A regional approach to youth employment.
- Local support for vulnerable young people and young people without a start qualification.
- A tool for local authorities to track young people who are not entitled to benefits.

Schools and municipalities receive extra funding to stimulate further education and to support young people in finding jobs.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Dutch government policy has a focus on youth employment and education for young people, but also on entrepreneurship, which will be discussed later on in this chapter. The government took a number of policy measures to tackle the problems with youth unemployment and to make education possible for all young people. In the next paragraphs the policy measures will be presented.

Labor market

Stimulating participation in the labor market is based on the [Participation Act](#) (2014). Everyone who can work but needs support in getting a job falls under this act. The act is meant to help all people (including youth) with or without work limitations in finding a suitable job.

In the Netherlands the re-integration policy is carried out in a decentralized way. The government establishes the frameworks and makes funds available to municipalities and the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch: Uitvoeringsinstituut WerknemersVerzekeringen; [UWV](#)). The municipalities and UWV are co-responsible for guiding jobseekers (including young people) towards an unemployment benefit, a training and/or a job during short-term and long-term unemployment.

The Dutch labor market is divided into 35 labor market regions (in Dutch: [arbeidsmarktregio's](#)). Regional and local stakeholders are well informed about local labor market circumstances. They are able to provide, if necessary, custom-made support to

unemployed people. This regional approach is the outcome of a process that started already in 2009 to create cooperation structures of stakeholders at the regional level in order to address unemployment issues.

Ministries involved

Since 2009 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science have taken extra measures, in addition to the already existing generic policy, to tackle youth unemployment as a result of the economic crisis. It is a joint approach with UWV, municipalities, employers, schools, social partners and youths themselves. See for further information paragraph 3.6.

Also, since 2020 the aforementioned ministries have taken various actions to tackle and prevent youth unemployment as a result of the corona crisis. Read more about this approach in paragraph 3.1.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs is the main actor for the areas of entrepreneurship and economic policy.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment works together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on the issue of the transition between education and the labor market and on cooperation between education, companies and government in order for young people to find suitable jobs. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has partnerships with education institutes and business companies in order to find suitable traineeships and apprenticeships. In the following paragraphs the cooperation between these actors will be discussed.

Agencies

The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER)

The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands [SER](#) advises government and parliament on the directions of the implementation of socio-economic policies. Since October 2015 SER has an active youth platform. With this platform the SER wants to structure youth participation within its activities. The Youth Platform meets a couple of times per year. The members discuss general topics and participate in specific consultation processes.

Youth Trade Unions

Youth trade unions can influence central policies through consultation. For example:

- [FNV Jong](#) (Federation Netherlands Trade Union - Young). This is an organization for and by young people. Since 2006 the FNV has a seat at the Social and Economic Council SER.
- [CNV Jongeren](#) (Christian National Trade Union – Young people).

You can read more about these organizations in the section 'the main non-public actors' in this paragraph.

Initiatives by young people

Young people have organized themselves in several initiatives to gain specific political attention to youth matters:

- [Coalitie-Y](#) (Coalition-Y): This cooperation of young people has been named after generation Y or the millennial generation. Initially founded by political party Christian Union and 6 youth organizations, now 38 organizations that represent young people have joined the initiative. Coalitie-Y gains political attention to urgent issues faced by young people, like a lack of financial security because of flexible employment contracts, and presents solutions to the Dutch government.

- [Jongeren Denktank Coronacrisis \(Young People Think Tank Corona Crisis\)](#): A joint initiative of the [SER Youth Platform](#) and [Coalitie-Y](#) to advise Cabinet about solutions for young people during the corona crisis, also regarding youth unemployment, opportunities for new workers on the labor market, re-training and extra training, young people with creative and cultural professions and the transition between education and work.

Main actors

Main **governmental actors** involved in policy making on youth employment:

- [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#): Responsible for labor market policies.
- [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#): Ensures that everyone gets a good education and is prepared for taking responsibility and independence.
- [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy](#): Committed to ensuring an excellent entrepreneurial business climate, by creating the right conditions and giving entrepreneurs room to innovate and grow.
- [Netherlands Enterprise Agency](#): Encourages entrepreneurs in sustainable, agrarian, innovative and international business. It helps with grants, finding business partners, know-how and compliance regarding laws and regulations. The aim is to improve opportunities for entrepreneurs and strengthen their position.
- Municipalities and the [Arbeidsmarktregio's](#) (Labor market regions).

Main **public actors** involved in policy making on youth employment:

- [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten; VNG).
- [Werkgevers Servicepunt](#) (Employers service desk). This is a cooperation between [UWV](#) (Employee Insurance Agency), municipalities, schools and several knowledge centres;
- The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands [SER](#).
- [Dutch National Youth Council \(Nationale Jeugd Raad\)](#).
- Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labor Market ([SBB](#)): Determines which companies can call themselves accredited work placement companies.
- Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemers Verzekeringen [UWV](#) (Employee Insurance Agency).
- Municipalities' councils aldermen (in Dutch: wethouders).
- Regionale Meld en Coördinatie punten [RMC](#) (Regional Reporting and Coordination Centers): The are 39 RMC's for reporting of early school leavers. The centers follow school leavers between the age of 18 and 23 until they have obtained their basic qualification.
- Dutch [Inspectorate of Education](#) : Responsible for the inspection and review of schools and educational institutions.
- [Inspectorate SWZ](#) (Social Affairs and Employment): Works on honest, healthy and safe work and income for all citizens.

Main **non-public actors** taking part in the regulation and implementation of youth employment:

- Schools
- Schoolboards
- Sector councils, such as:
 - [Association of Universities in the Netherlands \(VSNU\)](#).

- [The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences](#) (Vereniging van Hogescholen).
- [Dutch VET council](#) (MBO Raad).
- [Secondary Education Council](#) (VO-raad).
- [Primary Education Council](#) (PO-Raad).
- Representation bodies for students:
 - [Landelijke Studenten Vakbond \(LSVB\)](#) (National Students Union).
 - [Dutch National Students Association](#) (Interstedelijk Studentenoverleg; ISO).
 - Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs ([JOB](#)) (Youth Organization Vocational Education).
 - Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren ([LAKS](#)) (National Action Committee Students secondary education).
- Temporary employment agencies.
- Employers' organizations: Important for the implementation of youth employment and entrepreneurship policies. These employers' organizations will be discussed in the next paragraph on Entrepreneurship.
- [CNV Jongeren](#) (Christian National Trade Union – Young People) is an independent trade union for young people. CNV Young People is connected to the [National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands](#) (Christelijke Vakbond Nederland) that has over 335.000 members.
- [FNV Jong](#) (Federation Netherlands Trade Union - Young) was established in 2012 and is an independent trade union for young people. FNV Young is connected to the [Federation Netherlands Trade Union](#) that has 1 million members.
- [Coalitie-Y](#) (Coalition-Y): A cooperation of 38 youth organizations.
- [Jongeren Denktank Coronacrisis \(Young People Think Tank Corona Crisis\)](#): A joint initiative of the SER Youth Platform and [Coalitie-Y](#).
- Research institutes, such as [Statistics Netherlands](#) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek - CBS). Research institutes enable people to debate about social issues based on reliable statistical information.

Consultation of young people

Thanks to several (youth) councils young people have opportunities to express their concerns on topics such as employment and entrepreneurship. The following are examples of councils which represent young people in these topics:

- [FNV Jong](#) and [CNV Jongeren](#) are both youth trade organizations that try to influence the government on topics such as youth employment and entrepreneurship. As stated above, young people can for example contact FNV Jong if they encounter problems at work. The position of FNV Jong in the Social Economic Council gives them the right to advise the government directly.
- Another example is the [Dutch National Youth Council](#) (Nationale Jeugd Raad). In chapter five 'Youth Participation' the role of the National Youth Council in participation processes is explained.

Outcomes of consultations

In 2021 the [Jongeren Denktank Coronacrisis \(Young People Think Tank Corona Crisis\)](#) presented its advice about support for young people during the corona crisis to the Dutch

prime minister: [En nu... daden!](#) (And now... actions!) Among other things the report contains advice about improving young people's chances on the labor market.

In 2019 the Youth Platform of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) published the report [Hoge verwachtingen: kansen en belemmeringen voor jongeren in 2019](#) (High expectations chances and obstacles for young people in 2019), which also has a chapter about youth employment.

[FNV Jong](#) (Federation Netherlands Trade Union - Young), which has a seat in the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands ([SER](#)), helped to develop a consultation report about equal chances on the labor market for non-Dutch youth.

Policy monitoring at the national level

Evaluation at the national level

The programmes and policy measures of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment are being evaluated. In 2019 the Ministry of Finance published a policy review about the national policy for [young people with \(a risk to\) poor employment prospects](#). In 2015 [Panteia](#) monitored the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment's regional approach against youth unemployment: [Monitor regionale aanpak jeugdwerkloosheid](#). The ministry's previous Action Plan Youth Unemployment, prepared in 2009, was evaluated in 2011, also by Panteia: [Samen in actie. Evaluatie Actieplan Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Acting together, Evaluation of the Action Plan on Youth unemployment).

Evaluation at the regional level

Some of the previous regional Action Plans of the period 2014-2015 were also evaluated at regional level. An example is the [Evaluatie Actieplan Jeugdwerkloosheid region Rijnmond](#) (Evaluation Action Plan Youth Unemployment region Rijnmond). After the evaluation of this Action Plan region Rijnmond FNV Jong lobbied to renew the policy and the measures.

Monitoring and policy evaluation

All [ministries](#) (Evaluaties van beleid = Evaluations of policy) are required to frequently evaluate their programmes and their acts. In their budget proposals the ministers present the evaluation studies they are planning. The outcome of the evaluation is reported in the annual report. The reports are discussed in Parliament.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

Future demands in the labour market

- The [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) ([Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau](#)) (SCP) is a government agency that conducts research into the social aspects of all areas of government policy. The main fields studied are health, welfare, social security, the labour market, and education, with a particular focus on the interfaces between these fields. The reports published by SCP are widely used by government, civil servants, local authorities and academics.
- The [Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek](#) (CBS) ([Statistics Netherlands](#)) publishes reliable statistical information which responds to the needs of Dutch society. They identify, for example, future demands in the labour market.

Skills development

Vocational education and training (VET) and the labour market

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Netherlands is called [Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs](#) (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education). There is a forecasting system

for MBO. On 1 August 2015, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science handed over their national advisory role to a new foundation: [Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven](#) (SBB) (Cooperation organization Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market).

SBB is responsible for most of the labour market research, development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies. The aim is to find a fit between secondary vocational education and the labour market.

The 17 single sector 'knowledge centres' have been reorganised into 8 broader sector chambers:

1. Engineering and the built environment;
2. Mobility, transport, logistics and maritime;
3. Health care, welfare and sport;
4. Commerce;
5. ICT and creative industries;
6. Food, agriculture and hospitality;
7. Business services and security;
8. Specialist expertise.

The legal tasks of SBB for the vocational education sector and the business world are as follow:

- Recognition and support of so-called 'leerbedrijven' (learning companies);
- Maintaining of the qualification structure of the sector;
- Providing information about labour market and suitable cooperation with education and training possibilities.

Advise and information

SBB provides information on forecasting. The organization has an advisory role. They can advise the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Economic Affairs on the convergence between the secondary vocational sector and the labour market. SBB provides information to the secondary vocational education. They want to ensure good cooperation between schools and learning companies, and make sure that there are enough learning companies in the regions.

Non formal education

Information about non formal education is usually available at branche level. For information about the validation of non-formal and informal learning within vocational secondary education students can address school directly.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science focuses on [Loopbaanoriëntatie en Begeleiding](#) (LOB) (career guidance and counselling). In a sector agreement this ministry and the [VO Raad](#), a secondary education council, agreed on a mandatory inclusion of career guidance and counselling in secondary and tertiary education.

In [Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs](#) (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education) career guidance and counselling is obligated by law. With the ([MBO Raad](#)), the Dutch VET council, the ministry carried out an improvement plan and created a service point for implementation of products, materials and services, for improving and professionalising career guidance

and counselling services within the VET schools and support the transitions of students in education. The availability and quality of relevant career guidance information on VET improved by developing relevant websites and information tools and using them in career guidance.

Policy measures

The programme [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Tackling Youth unemployment) contains policy measures to tackle youth unemployment. This programme is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and Education, Culture and Science.

City Deal

One policy measure to address youth unemployment is to cooperate with schools. This measure is called the City Deal and is an example of career guidance within schools. Career guidance helps young people to make good decisions regarding education and their profession. It also helps them to find jobs and prevents students from leaving school without a diploma. It makes the transition of education to labour market easy. Because of this, young people are better prepared for their future. The Team Tackling Youth unemployment wants to do this by improving LOB activities together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, local municipalities, councils and individual schools:

1. A better preparation in school. LOB does not exist yet in every secondary school and not every student from tertiary education is satisfied with LOB. The two ministries want to improve this.
2. Creating a more LOB-minded environment. To develop students' LOB competences a LOB environment is essential. Students will gain real life experiences via work placements.

More information on career guidance and counselling

For more information please visit [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Tackling youth unemployment). According to the ministry this website will not be available anymore after medio 2017. More information in Dutch on LOB in secondary education you can find on the site of the VO Raad (Secondary Education Council) on [this page](#). More information about LOB in [Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs](#) (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education) you can find at the website of the [LOB servicepoint](#).

Funding

Better connections with the labour market

In addition the Cabinet took measures for better connections with the labour market. These measures are for tertiary education. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has introduced a duty of care labour market prospects for schools, which demands that education has to have good labour market prospects. To achieve this goal, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has also set up a [Regionaal Investeringsfonds mbo](#) (Regional Investment fund on secondary vocational education). The ministry wants to stimulate the cooperation between education, the public sector and the business world and invests 100 million euro for this purpose. There is no information available in the link with the national Guarantee's scheme.

Tackling youth unemployment

According to the [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Tackling youth unemployment) public career guidance targeting young people takes place within formal education institutions. Every pupil has a mentor. They can coach pupils when necessary. Also a school dean can advise on how to approach the study and future career opportunities. No information was found on informal education providers. However the business sector is an important actor for offering work places to students. To achieve this the ministries started a partnership with the business sector.

[The Dutch government](#) (only in Dutch) does not only focus on students in secondary schools, but has also developed measures for students in secondary vocational education. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for these policy measures. You can read more about these policy measures in the following paragraphs.

Policy on school dropout

The LOB (career guidance and counselling) applies to all pupils. But there is also a policy that targets specific groups in the youth population. According to a [news report](#) (only in Dutch), which was published in 2016 on the website of the Dutch government of April 2016 approximately 66000 young people under the age of 27 were in a vulnerable position in the labour market. Although school dropout decreased massively in the last couple of years (from more than 70.000 yearly towards less than 25.000 in 2015) this number asked for extra focus upon this group. The minister (Lodewijk Asscher) of Social Affairs and Employment and the minister (Jet Bussemaker) of Education, Culture and Science announced in November 2015 that they will make policy arrangements with municipalities to help young people find a job and to tackle school dropout.

Reducing youth unemployment

As mentioned above, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has set up a [Regionaal Investeringsfonds mbo](#) (Regional Investment fund on secondary vocational education) to improve the connection between education and the labour market in vocational education. In this way youth unemployment can be reduced. [The budget](#) (only in Dutch) of the fund is € 100 million for the period 2014-2017. From 2018 the [ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (only in Dutch) will reserve a maximum of € 30 million (from educational advance funds) which can be used for students to facilitate the step towards higher education. Through regional cooperation the ministry aims for a better fit between secondary and vocational education to higher education, and eventually a better fit with the labour market.

Quality assurance

Encouraging career guidance and counselling

In 2013-2014 several projects were carried out by the [VO Raad](#) Secondary Education Council. These projects encouraged secondary schools to create a quality improvement in career guidance and counselling in secondary education, to enable students to direct their own careers.

These LOB projects were evaluated on the basis of questionnaires, interviews and reports. The projects and activities that had been evaluated are:

- Online courses;
- Encouragement and guidance;
- Deployment of ambassadors.

At the end of April 2014 the VO council and the Cabinet reached a [sector akkoord VO](#) (sectoral agreement secondary education) on futureproof secondary education. They agreed that performance indicators will be used to monitor LOB (career guidance and counselling) by using the indicators 'study successes' and 'satisfaction measurements'. This will be used among former pupils who are preparing for their future education. The main outcomes of the LOB evaluation will be used to improve LOB activities.

LOB in future

The Minister and the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science want to further improve career guidance and counselling of students at schools. The focal point will be on strengthening the cooperation between the various educational sectors. As mentioned before, in secondary education several projects were carried out by the [VO Raad](#) (Secondary Education Council) between 2009 and 2014 that served as booster to put LOB

on the agenda of all schools. Almost all schools formulated a vision on LOB and many teachers were trained in LOB-talks.

Lifelong guidance / LOB

[Euroguidance](#) is the organization for the innovation of Lifelong Guidance / LOB. Their aim is to improve mobility and provide relevant information about the Dutch Lifelong Guidance/LOB and the European Lifelong Guidance policy and developments. Their website and [Euroguidance.com](#) contain many relevant documents on the policy and results of Lifelong Guidance in the Netherlands and Europe.

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships

According to a policy officer, coordinator Traineeship programme national government of the Dutch [Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations](#), there is no information on how traineeship programmes are developed in the public sector. This means that this coordinator does not have information on how municipalities and provinces fill in their traineeship programmes. In the [Traineeprogramma](#) (Traineeship programme of the national government) trainees have the same rights as public servants.

Official guidelines on apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in the Netherlands are combined with training at institutes for [secondary vocational education](#) (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs - MBO) or [universities of applied sciences](#) (hogescholen - HBO). Secondary vocational education students following the work-based pathway (beroeps begeleidende leerweg – BBL) of their course do not study fulltime. Instead they work three or four days a week at a work placement company and receive theoretical education at school one day a week. For students at universities of applied sciences similar work-study programs (duale studies) exist.

The Act on Adult and Vocational Education ([Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs](#)) and the Act on Higher Education and Academic Research ([Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek](#)) contain the legal conditions for apprenticeships in secondary vocational education (MBO) and universities of applied sciences (HBO). For example, secondary vocational education students may only apprentice at accredited work placement companies that meet the requirements of the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market](#) (**Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven**): The workplace is safe, the tasks match the student's educational training and a competent supervisor mentors the student.

The Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market develops and maintains the [qualification structure](#) for apprenticeships in secondary vocational education (MBO) and [accredits work placement companies](#). Educational institutes are responsible for the whole educational process including apprenticeships. A student's college for secondary vocational education concludes a binding apprenticeship agreement with the student and the work placement company. The aforementioned educational acts do not regulate apprenticeship allowances and salaries, however collective labor agreements may apply.

Guidelines on cooperation among social partners No information has been found concerning guidelines on cooperation between social partners.

Participation in traineeships by specific target groups

The national government does identify specific target groups. For example, according to the policy officer of the [Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations](#), a project class has been established at the [Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management](#) existing of highly educated refugees. Local traineeships for specific target groups also exist, for

example the [Inclusion traineeship](#) of [Utrecht University](#) (Universiteit Utrecht) for refugees. However, no information could be found on the website link with the Youth Guarantee scheme.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

According to the policy officer at the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations the Traineeship programme national government is well known among young people. Every year a large number of students or graduates apply for this traineeship. Therefore they do not need to actively promote this traineeship programme.

Recognition of learning outcomes

The recognition of outcomes varies considerably. For example, the [Traineeprogramma](#) (Traineeship programme of the national government) lasts for two years. After 1,5 year trainees get a final review. If the trainee functioned very well, they may be offered the possibility of paid employment. Apprenticeships are part of formal education ([secondary vocational education](#) (MBO) and [universities of applied sciences](#) (HBO)), which means that students have to meet their educational institutes' criteria to complete their apprenticeships and to obtain their diplomas. Another formal way to recognize learning outcomes is the Recognition of prior learning ([Erkennen van Verworven Competenties](#) - EVC). The Foundation Labor market and Education Fund ([Stichting Arbeidsmarkt en Opleidingsfonds](#), please see below for more information) makes it possible for organizations, e.g. municipalities, to [start an EVC course for their employees](#). See paragraph 6.4 for more information about recognition or prior learning (the experience certificate).

Funding

Public funding is available for municipalities to support their traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. The [Stichting Arbeidsmarkt en Opleidingsfonds](#) (A&O fonds Gemeenten) (Foundation Labor market and Education Fund) supports the sector in the fields of labor market and Human Resource Management policy. The activities of this foundation contribute to more dynamic and creative municipalities. There is no further information found on the source of public funding at the top-level and the use of EU funding.

The strong growth of the ageing population makes the intake of young people in the public sector very important. The Foundation Labor market and Education Fund stimulate this movement for municipalities by commissioning research and offering a podcast about how to keep young people on board of the municipal organization as well as by organizing the 3-2-1-Co! contest to put innovative ideas into practice. The foundation also distributes different [general subsidies for innovation](#), which municipalities can apply for and that can be used for a project made-to-measure to make the municipal organization more appealing to young officers.

Quality assurance

Unfortunately no information has been found on quality assurance. As mentioned earlier in this paragraph, the traineeship programmes in public organizations vary. This makes it difficult to discover which quality assurance is applied to schemes of traineeship.

The [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) has provided an assessment framework (toetsingskader) that among other things describes the requirements that students must meet to earn their diplomas. In the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market \(Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven\)](#) **employers and educational institutes together** develop and maintain the [qualification structure](#) for apprenticeships in secondary vocational education (MBO). The requirements for one or more vocational education courses are outlined in so-called [qualification files](#) that are part of the qualification structure. Educational institutes for vocational education formulate their curricula on the basis of these qualification files.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

National youth employment measures

At the national level the cooperation between the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid) and the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) are intensive concerning this policy issue. They aim to tackle youth unemployment and school dropout of young people. Firstly, the national measures will be described followed by regional and local measures.

Action plan; investing in equal opportunities

At the national level there is a strong focus on the integration of young people in the labor market. There are top-level policy frameworks and initiatives to increase this integration. In September 2016 the [Minister of Culture, Education and Science](#) announced a new measure called [Investeren in gelijke kansen](#) (Investing in equal opportunities). This measure aims to give children of low skilled parents the same opportunities as their peers with higher educated parents. In this measure attention is also paid to:

- A better transition from secondary vocational education to a university of applied sciences; for many students of vocational education it is a huge step to continue studying at a university of applied sciences. Many of these vocational students drop out of school. To tackle this problem the Minister of Education, Culture and Science has invested €7, 5 million to improve this transition. The Minister invited suggestions from students from vocational education and universities of applied sciences for a plan to tackle this problem. Better career counselling for vocational students is also one of the measurements (please see 3.4 Career Guidance and Counselling).
- Abolishing fees for educational selection in higher education; some studies like the Arts academy can charge students for selection. This is a selection fee paid by the student. It is mostly between €30 and €80, but the amount can increase to €150 for a selection day. Through this measure these studies will be accessible for all students.
- Innovation of education for equal opportunities; good education is available if it is innovative and improved. Since September 2016 teachers and professors can submit an application for Comenius grants of €50,000 till €500,000. The aim of this Comenius grant is to boost the improvement of higher education.

On October 31 2016 the collaboration [Gelijke Kansen Aliantie](#) (Equal Opportunities Alliance) was announced. During the launch of this collaboration, minister Bussemaker announced the measures. Within this collaboration teachers, parents, schools, employers' and social organizations will strive for equal chances for children. In 2020 the [Investeren in gelijke kansen](#) (Investing in equal opportunities) programme was extended to more municipalities.

Furthermore, the Equal Opportunities Alliance was given an active role in the National Programme Education ([Nationaal Programma Onderwijs](#)) that was launched on 17th February 2021. This €8.5 billion support programme for primary, secondary, secondary vocational and higher education is aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students who are struggling due to the corona crisis and the measures taken by Cabinet to reduce the spread of the virus (e.g. school closures and online education). As part of the National Programme Education, the Equal Opportunities Alliance expands its activities to support municipalities. For example, the alliance will expand the use of expert pools and regional coordinators who can advise municipalities and help them design and implement measures. The alliance will also expand the number of participating municipalities from the current 50 or so to approximately 100 municipalities over time. Existing networks and structures between

municipalities, education and other partners will be utilized as much as possible and connected to the local context.

Tackling youth unemployment at top-level

In paragraph 3.2 Administration and Governance, an important measure of the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) to tackle youth unemployment was discussed, namely the [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Initiatives to prevent and tackle youth unemployment). This top-level measure aims to tackle youth unemployment and to integrate young people to the labour market. Several important stakeholders, such as municipalities, educational institutions, UWV and employers (organizations) are involved at regional level to make sure that young people can gain work experience and can find jobs.

In 2020 Cabinet sent a [letter to Parliament](#) about additional measures to tackle problems, including youth unemployment, due to the corona crisis. Cabinet made available €3.5 million extra for the regional coordination described above. In addition the letter to Parliament contained measures to support school leavers in their transition towards further education or work. Municipalities and schools received €80 million to offer support during students' final year, to offer support in finding a job (if necessary combined with further training or refresher training) and to provide after care. The [general third support and recovery package](#) provided by Government during the corona crisis was also available for municipal service, crisis support by [regional mobility teams](#) and additional work-based training at secondary education level, in order to guide young people towards further education or work.

Regional youth employment plans

Each of the 35 labour regions have also presented regional plans with involvement of local stakeholders which contained concrete ambitions and objectives to be undertaken. Plans of sectoral partners support the regional plans.

The coordination of the approach is in the hands of both the [minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) and the [minister of Education, Culture and Science](#).

The Dutch approach comprises:

- **Supporting youngsters who are looking for work after fulfilling school obligations.** They can register at [Werk.nl](#) (division of the Social Security Agency UWV). By registration they receive the general services of the e-support. The direct services consists of a list of vacancies, general tips for the resume, tips for finding work, competence tests;
- **Supporting youngsters who have left school without a basic qualification.** Young people who have not completed their education have, according to several studies, a weak position on the labour market. They have twice as much chance to become unemployed. And when they have work it is often temporary work. This is why young people who do not have a basic educational qualification, are assisted by the municipalities to find their way back to school or onto the labour market (if education isn't an option for them);
- **Supporting youngsters who are unemployed after a period of work and apply for an unemployment benefit.** These can register at [Werk.nl](#) and UWV guides them to work;
- **Supporting youngsters who are unemployed and receive no unemployment benefit, they can ask the municipality for support.** The first 4 weeks the youngsters themselves have a search period. During this 4 weeks they have to make efforts to find a job or educational and training opportunities. The support they receive after 4 weeks is tailor-made.

In addition to the above, the Dutch approach comprises:

- **Good quality education**, with a strong focus on the actual practice and demands of the labor market, gives the best opportunities to prevent youth unemployment.

The [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) focuses on improving the quality of education and that the curriculum is relevant for the labor market. Important is the cooperation between vocational education institutes and the employers. Employers can talk about the content of the curriculum through the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market](#) (**Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven**), a foundation for vocational education and employers. Important is also that the programmes offer sufficient traineeships and apprenticeships;

- **Career learning**; together with educational institutions and their partners, the government assists schools to develop tools to improve the career skills of students. These tools are directed at youth in order to improve their study choices, to develop their employee skills and make their job searches more effective;
- **Preventing early school leaving**; within the Dutch education policy there is the obligation for people up to the age of 18 to obtain a basic qualification (at least on an MBO-2 level or MBO senior secondary vocational education or a diploma for senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO). Young people between the age of 18 and 23 are assisted by their schools and monitored by the Regional Reporting and Coordination Centre (RMC) for early school leavers. The contact-municipality (municipality with a coordinating role) of a RMC region sees to it that young people are monitored until they have obtained a basic qualification;
- **City Deal**; Together with seven cities and their partners, the government has identified innovative solutions for problems (migrant) youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods might face when searching for work. These measures are focused on learning and career matching at work. In a number of cities youth unemployment is high, in particular in neighbourhoods where young migrants live. Migrant children are now performing much better in education. For example, the number of higher trained young migrants doubled between 2003 and 2014 and more young migrants are enrolled in higher education. The education of many young migrants approaches that of native youth. However, the increasing educational success of young migrants still translates into insufficient success in the labour market. Migrant young people have a much weaker labor market position than native youth. This means that these young people must be supported in making informed study choices, in order to enhance their employee skills, and to overcome negative perceptions or discrimination. They also need more assistance in the transition from education to work.
- **To help young people to find a more sustainable job**, the government invests in finding the best match for work, connecting stakeholders and making appointments, together with municipalities, UWV and their partners. Together these stakeholders aim at improving services to employers and how to look for job openings. Employers are key partners in tackling youth unemployment. Not only do they provide jobs, but they also function as role model, coach and tutor.
- **To match youngsters without starting qualification with work and training** the government stimulates cooperation between municipalities and (temporary) employment agencies. These agencies tend to have a lot of job openings for the lower educated.

Integration of migrant youth in the labor market

The [Minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid) launched the programme Further Integration in the Labor Market ([Verdere Integratie op de Arbeidsmarkt](#)) in November 2018. The programme comprises eight pilot projects in which effective interventions are determined that improve the integration of citizens with a non-western migratory background in Dutch society. Two pilot projects are aimed specifically at young people:

- Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) pupils: how to support these pupils in their decisions about continuing education, taking into account their future opportunities on the labor market.
- Secondary vocational education (MBO) students: how to support equal chances in finding a first job or internship.

Other pilot projects investigate measures aimed at all citizens with a non-western migratory background including young people, for example counteracting prejudices during recruitment and selection processes and improving labor market positions by combining working and learning.

Researchers, municipalities, employers and the educational sector have collaborated in these pilot projects. The two projects aimed specifically at youth will be evaluated in 2022. All lessons learned are incorporated in a follow-up programme.

Collaboration between education and labour market

In the Netherlands the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) handed over the central advisory role to a new foundation in August 2015: the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market](#) (**Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven - SBB**). The SBB is now responsible for labor market research, the development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies. Vocational education and business, trade and industry collaborate within SBB to provide students with the best possible practical training with a view to gaining employment.

Dissemination of information

In the Netherlands there are large-scale outreach strategies to disseminate information about job opportunities. Municipalities have a jongerenloket (youth counter) for young people between 16 or 18 and 27 years. Young people with questions related to education, income and work can approach the youth counter in their municipality. An example is [Jongerenloket Rotterdam](#). There is no national framework for the dissemination of information.

Disabled young people; Job agreements and Quota

The government also pays attention to disabled young people, who find it difficult to work or to find a job. However, the measures described below are for a larger group including disabled young people. In 2013 the Cabinet Rutte II decided in the [Sociaal Akkoord](#) (Social Agreement) to tackle unemployment. Within this Social Agreement employers agreed to create 100,000 jobs and the government agreed to create 25,000 extra jobs, the so-called [Banenafsprak](#) (Job agreement). The two actors, employers and government, are responsible for reaching the goals in the Job agreement. If the goals are not met and the promised jobs are not created then the [Wet Banenafsprak en Quotum arbeidsbeperkten](#) (Job Agreement and Quota People with Labor Disabilities Act) will force every employer, who has more than 25 employees, to employ an agreed percentage of people of the target groups mentioned in the Job agreement. Employers will be fined with €5,000 if the jobs are not filled by these targeted people, among them disabled youth.

Proefplaatsen (Trial jobs)

The intervention [Proefplaatsen](#) (Trial jobs) gives disabled (young) employees receiving social benefits the possibility to work as a trial employee. The duration of the trial jobs are two months and the employees continue to receive social benefits. During these two months the employer does not pay wages. This intervention makes it possible to see if the (disabled) employee can handle the tasks. Moreover, during the trial placement the productivity of the potential employee can be assessed. If the productivity of the potential employee is low, then the employer can claim [loondispensatie](#) (wage dispensation). Employers can claim this wage dispensation if the employee receives benefits from [Wajong](#). The Wajong arrangement is for young people who are completely unable to work.

With this intervention government aims to foster employment of disabled youth with a Wajong benefit in the private and public sector.

Internship and employment discrimination

In recent years the Ministries of [Social Affairs and Employment](#) (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid) and [Education, Culture and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) have undertaken a variety of actions against internship and employment discrimination. The main measures are mentioned in paragraph 3.11.

Other measurements

For further top-level measurements please see the website of the Programmaraad, [Samen voor de Klant](#) (Together for the Client). This is a large-scale cooperation between different organizations such as the Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten [VNG \(Association of Dutch Municipalities\)](#) and the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch: Uitvoeringsinstituut WerknemersVerzekeringen [UWV](#)) that aims to support municipalities and the 35 labour market regions to improve the provision of services to jobseekers and employers.

Regional and local measurements

Besides national measures a lot also happens at the regional and local level. Some examples:

- **Tailor-made route** Another project that has a focus on youth work is [Traject Op Maat](#) (T.O.M.) (Tailor-made route) which is described by the Netherlands Youth institute. T.O.M. is an initiative of the municipality of Den Bosch for young NEET's between the ages of 16 and 27 years. Through this process young people are supported in education and a job. The youth work in the municipality takes the lead in the implementation.
- **Matching vulnerable young people with the labour market** The Minister of Education, Culture and Science aims for a regional cooperation between education, municipalities and employers. The Netherlands Youth institute has published the report '[Arbeidstoeleiding kwetsbare Jeugd. Participatie in de samenleving](#)' (Matching vulnerable young people with the labour market. Participation in society), which also provides governmental recommendations. This report describes five good practices of secondary vocational schools and the cooperation with municipalities. The report can be used as a guideline by schools and municipalities for regional cooperation to tackle school dropout and provide better links with the labour market.
- **Job coaching for graduates** The [Graafschap College](#) in Doetinchem, Groenlo, Winterswijk en Terborg guides vulnerable students, who have finished their secondary vocational education (MBO), towards the labor market. All recently graduated students receive a phone call to discuss what their plans are for the future. Students who do not know how to find a job are offered support by a job coach of the [School-ex programme](#). The job coaches support young people in applying for jobs and help them by using their network in the regional business community. Job application training, resume checks and vocational testing are part of the School-ex programme too.
- **Youth work in the picture** The (academic) members of the Netherlands Youth institute in 2015 published a report called '[Jongerenwerk in beeld](#)' (Youth work in the picture). In this report they describe a local initiative in the municipality of Almere. This initiative, [Learn2Work](#) (only in Dutch), is a learning and working project supported by youth work. It helps young people with multiple problems to structure their lives. The municipality of Almere is one of the actors providing grants.

There is a general law targeting all employees. Young people are relatively often employed through a flexible labour contract. With this Work and Security Act the government has created a better balance between permanent and flexible terms of employment. Employees with a temporary contract will sooner receive permanent contracts and will

have more job security. This measure also applies to young people with a temporary contact.

Both regular and temporary employees receive a transition fee under certain conditions in the event of dismissal, and the unemployment benefit focuses more on the resumption of work.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

There is a general law targeting all employees. Young people are relatively often employed through a flexible labor contract. With this Work and Security Act ([Wet werk en zekerheid](#)) (2014) the government has created a better balance between permanent and flexible terms of employment. An [evaluation of the act](#) by [SEO Amsterdam Economics](#) (SEO Economisch Onderzoek) in 2020 showed that more temporary job contracts are converted into permanent contracts, that more employees stay employed and that employees with a temporary job contract have been given more job security. This measure also applies to young people with a temporary contact.

Both regular and temporary employees receive a transition fee under certain conditions in the event of dismissal, and the unemployment benefit focuses more on the resumption of work.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

No information has been found about the reconciliation of private and working life for young people.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

The initiatives mentioned earlier are mainly funded by the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) and the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) when related to education. The wage dispensation for example is funded by the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch: Uitvoeringsinstituut WerknemersVerzekeringen [UWV](#)).

Quality assurance

As mentioned above, the [Banenafspraak](#) (Job agreement) can be seen as a tool to measure whether the targets are achieved.

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

Erasmus+ programme use for vocational opportunities in the Netherlands

The Erasmus+ programme provides a lot of vocational training opportunities to young people. It makes it possible for young people to follow a traineeship or education abroad. By participating in an Erasmus+ programme young people can also develop entrepreneurial skills. But Erasmus+ does not support business creation. Young people can however use their new skills in developing a business themselves. The business network [Young Startup](#) (only in Dutch) can help new starters to find working space.

Nuffic, focus on higher education

Another programme that stimulates cross-border mobility in vocational opportunities is [Nuffic](#). They focus on higher education. Students can study abroad at another university. Nuffic also provides an overview of funds for young people from abroad. According to an employee of the Erasmus+ office guidance is available for young people who want to go abroad. Pre-departure training and a database of opportunities are also available. Young entrepreneurs can get qualified for the programme [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#). This

programme is an initiative of the European Union and provides opportunities to gain experience and work for a maximum of six months in a small or medium sized enterprise.

Legal framework

Social security is available for (young) workers who are staying in the Netherlands. This is arranged by the [Employee Insurance Agency](#)

Rights and obligations concerning the entry and stay of young foreigners

For European citizens there is no specific work permit or work visa requirement. For non-European citizens the [Immigration and Naturalisation Service](#) (Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst IND) has an overview of the requirements to stay in the Netherlands for individuals, students and business representatives.

Supporting entrepreneurs

The Dutch government supports innovative start-ups and helps them to develop. The [government](#) supports innovative enterprise in a number of ways:

1. **Increasing the scope for finance** The government has various financial schemes for: - entrepreneurs wishing to expand their businesses quickly; - innovative entrepreneurs.
2. **Promoting cooperation between researchers and the private sector** The government is working with the private sector.
3. **Reducing the regulatory burden** The government is taking steps to reduce the regulatory burden on entrepreneurs. These include granting permits more quickly - or even automatically - and making greater use of digital technology.
4. **Developing IT tools** Providing government services online reduces the regulatory burden on entrepreneurs. It also offers unlimited scope for new products or for making business processes more efficient.
5. **Helping entrepreneurs access networks** Good networks help businesses grow. The government is using the following tools to help entrepreneurs build solid networks: - Trade missions abroad. By conducting trade missions abroad, the Netherlands can access new foreign markets. The focus here is on emerging markets like Brazil and India. - Enterprise forum. This is the government's one-stop shop for entrepreneurs, where they can access services from a range of agencies, including the [Chamber of Commerce](#) (KvK), the [Tax and Customs Administration](#), the [Road Transport Agency](#) (RDW) and [Statistics Netherlands](#) (CBS).
6. **Better links between education and the labour market** The government also wants to establish better links between education and the labour market. It is important for young people who have finished their training to find a job quickly and that there are enough skilled workers for companies.
7. **Better cooperation with the franchise sector** The government and the franchise sector created a code of conduct. An independent disputes committee will also be established. These measures should improve cooperation in the sector and prevent issues like unfair distribution of income between the entrepreneur (franchisee) and the owner of the trading name (franchisor).
8. **Retail Agenda** Customer behaviour and preferences are changing. More and more purchases are being made online. The government's 2015 Retail Agenda describes these and other developments in the retail sector. It also lists the 20 agreements reached between the government and the retail sector. These include new ideas on combined zoning for shops, cultural

establishments and hospitality businesses, and additional training for shop workers.

Unfortunately, there is no information found on the existence of specific tax arrangements applying to young people from another EU country coming to work in the Netherlands.

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

No information about a policy framework concerning development of entrepreneurship competence is found.

Formal learning

The curriculum of the [Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs](#) (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education) has been adjusted with the introduction of options that offer the possibility to directly learn entrepreneurial skills. On the website of [Ondernemend Nu](#) (Entrepreneurial Now) information is given about this new development.

An MBO education consists of a qualification part, enriched with one or more optional parts. The student can broaden his or her skills and gain more in-depth knowledge about a certain subject. The student is obliged to take an exam on the optional subjects but cannot fail as yet. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science wants to make optional subjects obligatory for getting a diploma, starting from 2018.

An optional subject get regional connection, to enable the student to strengthen his or her position on the labour market in sectors that are strongly represented in the region. E.g. for the harbour of the city of Rotterdam or the watersport industry in Friesland (a northern province in the Netherlands). An optional subject can also be directed towards moving on to a higher level in the MBO school or to Hoger Beroepsonderwijs (HBO) (Tertiary Vocational Education), also known as University of Applied Sciences.

Platform Education 2032

As mentioned earlier in this chapter Platform Education2032 advised the Cabinet to design new, forward looking curricula. The Netherlands Enterprise Agency and [Jong Ondernemen](#) (Young Entrepreneur) developed an advice report on this topic in which they indicate that entrepreneurial education should be a basis for the future curriculum. There is an intensive cooperation between different partners such as sector organizations from education and business community to ensure relevant entrepreneurship education.

Fiscal consciousness

The [Tax authority](#) (Belastingdienst) has developed a [Lespakket 'Ondernemen en belastingen'](#) (teaching package 'Entrepreneurship and taxes') for students in secondary schools to increase their fiscal consciousness. It is developed in cooperation with the [Vereniging van leraren in de economisch-maatschappelijke vakken](#) (Vecon) (Association of teachers in economical-societal subjects), [the Dutch Order of Tax Advisors](#) (Nederlandse Orde van Belastingadviseurs NOB) and the [Ministry of Finance](#). Another teaching package developed is called ['ondernemingsvormen en belastingheffing'](#) (business enterprise design and taxation). This package contains a manual for teachers, assignments and a summary of the theory.

Non-formal and informal learning

The Erasmus+ programme is a large-scale initiative that gives young people the opportunity to develop their skills and competences. In the [Edison Entrepreneurship project](#) education organizations and MBO schools from The Netherlands ([MBO Raad](#) - the Dutch VET council), [Alfa college](#) - an MBO-school, and the [Nationaal Expertisecentrum Leerplanontwikkeling](#) - Netherland Institute for curriculum development) and Austria, Ireland, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

No information is found on this subject.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

Business creation

The government developed a set of measures in order to create a favourable environment for business creation. Funding opportunities to create a start-up can be found on [Netherlands Enterprise Agency](#) (only in Dutch).

Eco-system and innovations

One of the important Dutch initiatives is [StartupDelta](#) (in English). It intends to strengthen, connect and grow the thriving and competitive start-up eco-system of the Netherlands, making it the best place to start and grow innovative companies. It is an initiative of the main [innovation centres](#) (in English) in The Netherlands, the ministries of Economic Affairs and Education Culture and Science and the start-up community.

The StartupDelta has [three major actions](#) (in English):

- Capital, example: Establish a strong business network.
- Network, example: Opening up governmental procurement for start-ups.
- Talent, example: Launch 'entrepreneurship' as part of professional and academic education.

Access to capital

Ambitious Entrepreneurship Action Plan The [Dutch government](#) (in English) wants to help ambitious start-ups and other entrepreneurs to grow quickly. Start-ups are new businesses that have only recently been launched. Fast access to networks and finance are vital for them. They want to reach this through the Ambitious Entrepreneurship Action Plan. It is important that start-ups have better access to capital, knowledge, innovation and the global market. To achieve this and help entrepreneurs, the government has earmarked €75 million.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

Young entrepreneurs

The business foundation [Jong Ondernemen](#) (Young Entrepreneurs) plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship for young people. The foundation Young Entrepreneurship aims to inspire young people and challenge them to build an enterprising future. This happens through educational programmes and experience based projects for all education levels. Young Entrepreneurs cooperates with private organizations like the ABN AMRO Bank and the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy](#).

Examples of the activities of Young Entrepreneurs:

- Young Entrepreneurs is the Dutch partner of the global [Social Innovation Relay programme](#) in which secondary education pupils are challenged to develop a socially innovative concept that addresses a social or environmental problem and contributes to a better world. After a classroom programme and an assessment of the concepts developed, the top 20 teams are supported by a mentor of financial services company [NN Group](#) to turn their concept into a feasible plan. The best team from the Netherlands will participate in the global competition.

- Schools for secondary vocational education (MBO) can participate in the [SPEED-You-UP entrepreneurship programme](#), which is supported by the European Union. The objective is to reduce the number of dropouts and NEETs. Students participate in teams and discover their talents, experience what it is like to start their own business, develop entrepreneurial skills and develop their own business idea that meets the needs of their environment. Teachers, entrepreneurs and professionals offer guidance and coaching.
- During [Student Company](#), students at universities of applied sciences set up and run their own company during one academic year. They divide positions, determine the target group, brainstorm about their product, write a business plan, sell shares and keep financial records. Students experience in a practical way what it is like to run their own business. They discover their talents and develop important skills. Students participating in the programme can also participate in events like the [Start-Up Festival](#) and [Pitch Battles](#).

For more information about the activities of Young Entrepreneurs please see [programma's](#) and [events](#).

Contest for young entrepreneurs

Each year, young entrepreneurs from the northern provinces of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe compete to receive the Young Entrepreneurs Award (Jonge Ondernemersprijs). The award comes with extra prizes, such as a master class, an advisory programme and membership of the Young Northern Entrepreneurs network ([Jonge Noordelijke Ondernemers](#)). Part of the contest programme are video pitches, assessments and business visits. The contest is sponsored by the provincial authorities, municipalities, businesses and service providers for entrepreneurs.

Networks and partnerships

The [Dutch government](#) (in English) is helping entrepreneurs to access networks because good networks help businesses grow. All entrepreneurs are offered access to [Business.gov.nl](#) ([Ondernemersplein](#)), the online place where entrepreneurs can access services from a range of agencies like the [Chamber of Commerce](#) (Kamer van Koophandel) and the [Tax and Customs Administration](#) (Belastingdienst). Specific information is offered to young entrepreneurs, like [students](#).

Another important network at the national and regional level is the largest employers' organization [VNO-NCW](#) (in English). VNO-NCW represents the interests of Dutch business and industry and provides a range of services to its members. VNO-NCW strives to represent its members' interests by promoting a high quality business environment and investment climate in the Netherlands, with a view to boosting the competitiveness of Dutch industry. VNO-NCW also maintains special links with a variety of other organizations. These include the five regional employers' associations affiliated to VNO-NCW. These associations represent regional business interests, provide services to their regional members and encourage networking between those members.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Equal opportunities in education

An important current debate is the equal opportunities debate in education, but also on the labour market. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science initiated the programme Equal Opportunities ([Gelijke Kansen](#)). Read more about the programme in paragraph 6.10.

Internship and [employment discrimination](#)

10 percent of the students looking for an internship [experience discrimination](#), according to research executed by The Netherlands Institute for Social Research in 2020. For young people with a (non-western) [migration background](#) it takes more effort to find an internship and their job applications are rejected more often compared to students without

a migration background. Because internship discrimination may play a role, in recent years the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and Education, Culture and Science have undertaken a variety of actions against internship discrimination. Among other things, research to effective interventions against internship discrimination, an investigation of the differences in chances on the labor market for higher education students with and without a migration background, the implementation of a hotline and a reporting app, a campaign and training for companies, schools and secondary vocational students in the LOB/Equal Opportunities ([LOB/Gelijke Kansen](#)) project.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment initiated the Action Programme Job Discrimination 2018-2021. The programme focusses on supervision and maintenance, research and instruments, and knowledge and awareness. One of the target groups are people with a non-western migration background, including young people. **Effects of policies and the corona crisis on young people**

As mentioned in paragraph 3.2, young people have organized themselves in Coalition-Y ([Coalitie-Y](#)) and the [Young People Think Tank Corona Crisis \(Jongeren Denktank Coronacrisis\)](#) to gain (political) attention to urgent matters faced by young people due to government policies and measures taken against the spread of the corona virus. In April 2021 issues like youth unemployment and a lack of financial security because of flexible employment contracts were still under debate.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Special feature

Policy aspects of social inclusion are the responsibility of three ministries: the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#), the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#), and the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). There are three national strategies that foster social inclusion for all youth. They concern tackling poverty, financial support by municipalities and education. They are described in Paragraph 4.3. Other main challenges to deal with are the social inclusion of young people with disabilities and the decentralization of social policy.

Highlights

Government and private organizations have taken several steps to tackle labour market discrimination, to safeguard democracy, to prevent radicalization and extremism and to promote young people's rights (Paragraph 4.5). Youth work plays an important role in social inclusion of young people. Most youth work happens at local level and in each municipality it is organized differently. The municipality provides subsidies to youth work organizations. Programmes at local level are mostly directed towards young people at risk.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

People with a disability

In 2016 the [Human Rights Institute](#) (College voor de Rechten van de Mens) (please see paragraph 4.2 for more information) published the report '[Insight in inclusion](#)'. The ratification of the VN-agreement makes it compulsory that (young) people with a disability have more access to their rights. It turns out that paid work, education and living independently are nearly impossible for people with a disability. This is one of the reasons that this group has a considerable disadvantage in society.

Decentralization of social policy

Following the above the Human Rights Institute in 2015 in their [annual report](#) (only in Dutch) published the results of the annual monitor of the human rights in the Netherlands. Every citizen should have an opportunity to participate in society and not be excluded. In the report the Institute describes the problems related to the decentralization of the social domain. This reform has a big impact on citizens, especially ones in vulnerable positions. The Human Rights Institute gives some recommendations to local and national government to foster the rights of these citizens in a vulnerable position.

Growing up in poverty

A third main challenge is formed by children and young people growing up in poverty. The [Netherlands Youth institute](#) (only in Dutch) presents the figures on poverty in families. In 2015 almost 225,700 children lived in households receiving social benefits. In the past five years a constant rise can be seen of the number of children living in households with social benefits. In 2010 this concerned around 197,380 children.

Youth unemployment

On November 3, 2016 [Statistics Netherlands](#) published the following findings on young people and unemployment. A lot of young people not in education (niet-onderwijsvolgend) and without basic qualification are unemployed. In 2008 approximately more than 70 percent had a job, but in the meantime this has decreased to less than 60 percent. Statistics Netherlands also report that, after the economic crisis, it is hard for young people to find a job even if they have a basic qualification. Having a basic qualification means that one has at least a certificate at vocational level or secondary level. In the table below percentages are given of young people at work without (zonder) and with (met) basic qualification

Rising inequalities

In 2014 the [Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid](#) (WRR) (Scientific Council for Government Policy) (in English) and [Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau](#) (SCP) (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research) (in English) published the report '[Gescheiden Werelden](#)' (Separated Worlds) (only in Dutch). In their report, they state that different societal developments increase the unequal chances of young people in society and education. People with different educational levels have less contact with each other and have different views on issues in society. In the Youth Wiki, in chapter 3, paragraph 3.6 'Integration of Young People in the Labour Market' and in this chapter 4, paragraph 4.3, you can read more about the policy measure 'Investing in Equal opportunities' by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Refugees

In 2015 there was a sharp increase of refugees coming to the Netherlands. The increase presented challenges to local administrators and citizens in residential areas. Also their participation in society was a challenge. The [ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) (only in Dutch) strives for early activation of (unemployed) refugees. The minister of Social Affairs and Employment will change the procedures to help refugees with no legal status to do volunteer work.

Homeless young people

Another main challenge is the number of homeless young people. The age range of these homeless young people is between 18 and 23 years old. [Statistics Netherlands](#) (only in Dutch) presented figures on this topic. It is emphasized that in the age range of 18 – 30 years old homeless young people with non-Western migrant background are younger than homeless young people of Dutch origin.

Main concepts

Appropriate education

A concept which is important in the Netherlands when describing social inclusion concerns 'appropriate education' ([passend onderwijs](#)). This was introduced in August 2014. Appropriate education is a new method of teaching which focusses on providing education for pupils that need extra help. The goal of this appropriate education is to make sure that all pupils find a suitable place in regular education. The implementation of appropriate education is well underway around half of the action period (2014-2020). You can read more about appropriate education and its results so far in Chapter 6. Education and Training, paragraph 6.2 (internal link).

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The responsibilities concerning social inclusion are divided over several ministries. Each ministry works in different policy areas. Government policies are to a large extent implemented at local level.

Main actors

There is not one top-level authority responsible for social inclusion. Several ministries contribute with their policies to fostering the broad concept of social inclusion:

- [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#)
- [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#)
- [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#)

The main public actors involved in policy making

Please see chapter 1, 2 and 3 for other public actors involved in policy making. The main public actors below are not directly involved in policy making. They are, however, important in the Netherlands because they carry out research, monitor and advise governmental institutions.

The Ombudsman for Children [Kinderombudsman](#) monitors whether children's rights are adhered to in the Netherlands by the central and local government. But also by private organizations in education, childcare, child welfare and health care. The Dutch parliament appointed Margrite Kalverboer as the Netherlands' ombudsperson for Children, on 20 April 2016. Recently, in September 2016, this [Ombudsman](#) (only in Dutch) tried to involve children and young people to talk about their concerns and their opinions on the kinds of arrangements they need. On November 8 2016 the Ombudsman for Children published a report. You can find this report in paragraph 4.5 Young People's Rights.

The [Human Rights Institute](#) (College voor de Rechten van de Mens) explains, monitors and protects human rights, promotes respect for human rights (including equal treatment) in practice, policy and legislation, and increases the awareness of human rights in the Netherlands.

[Statistics Netherlands](#) ([Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek](#) - CBS) publishes reliable statistical information which responds to the needs of Dutch society. They identify, for example, future demands in the labour market.

The [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau – SCP) is a government agency that conducts research into the social aspects of all areas of government policy. The main fields studied are health, welfare, social security, labour market and education, with a particular focus on the interfaces between these fields. The reports published by SCP are widely used by government, civil servants, local authorities and academics.

[Movisie](#) is the Netherlands centre for social development. Its mission is to promote the participation and independence of citizens by supporting and advising professional organizations, volunteer organizations and government institutions. One of the key issues it focuses on is 'Emancipation and Inclusion'.

The [Netherlands Youth Institute NJi](#) gives information about the Dutch youth policy on its [English pages](#).

The main non-public actors involved in policy making

Please see chapter 1, 2 and 3 for other non-public actors involved in policy implementation. Other main non-public actors are:

Children's rights coalition ([Kinderrechtencollectief](#)). This is a coalition of different children's rights organizations that want to promote the rights of children. The coalition consists of:

- [Defence for Children Netherlands](#) (only in Dutch);
- [Nationale Jeugdraad](#) (National Youth Council) (only in Dutch), which is an umbrella organization of youth councils in The Netherlands;
- [Unicef Netherlands](#) (only in Dutch);
- [Save the Children Netherlands](#) (only in Dutch);
- [Bernard van Leer Foundation](#), investing in solutions for healthy child development;
- [Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland](#) (only in Dutch) wants to support the development of vulnerable children all over the world.

Consultation of young people

For more information on consultation of young people please see chapter 5 Youth Participation.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

All [ministries](#) (only in Dutch) are required to frequently evaluate their policies. The ministers report on the evaluation studies they are planning in their budget proposals. The outcomes of the evaluations are reported in the ministries' annual reports. Specific information evidence-based research and analyses has not been found.

[Statistics Netherlands](#) ([Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek](#) - CBS) and the [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) ([Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau](#)) (SCP) also provide information about the impact of policies. This information can be used by the government to develop new policies or to adjust them. [Statistics Netherlands](#) (only in Dutch) provides figures on poverty and social exclusion.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

The concept of social inclusion contains a number of policy aspects with responsibilities of different ministries. For the policy area 'education' the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for poverty policy. In short, there is no one ministry responsible for Social Inclusion. In this section four national strategies will be presented.

1. [National strategy; poverty projects](#)
2. [National strategy; broad approach to debts](#)
3. [National strategy; financial support and tax measures](#)
4. [National strategy; education](#)

Scope and contents

1. National strategy; poverty projects

Between 2014 and 2019 the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) financially supported 94 projects of (social) organizations, that combatted poverty and debts. In this time period an estimated number of 300.000 people in poverty and/or with debts have been reached. The projects had to focus on vulnerable people, especially on children growing up in poor families, young people with financial problems, single parents and non-Western households. The [annual subsidy budget](#) to support poverty projects was 4 million euros. In 2020 and 2021 the budget was spent on upscaling and preserving projects as part of the campaign 'Do you get of out it?' ([Kom jij eruit?](#)) in 2020.

Type of document: Regulation

Time of introduction: 30 June 2014

Timeframe: until now

Name: Regulation from the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment to promote activities providing a sustainable contribution to combating poverty and indebtedness (Regeling van de Staatssecretaris van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid van 30 juni 2014, 2014-0000087456, ter stimulering van activiteiten die een duurzame bijdrage leveren aan het tegengaan van armoede- en schuldenproblematiek)

Regulation modification end date subsidy period for projects of the Regulation for [...] and debt problems, in view of the corona crisis (Regeling wijziging einddatum subsidiabele periode voor projecten ex Regeling ter [...] en schuldenproblematiek, in verband met de coronacrisis)

Web-link: <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0043685/2020-06-23>

2. National strategy; broad approach to debts

In 2018 Dutch government launched the [Action Plan Broad Approach to Debts](#) 2018-2021 that contains 40 measures with the aim to prevent so-called problematic debts, to support people with debts and to collect money in a careful and socially responsible way. The ministries, municipalities, private and social organizations involved joined the Cooperation Broach Approach to Debts. In 2020 Cabinet made another 146 million euros available for locally provided help with debt problems, in response to the financial challenges of households because of the corona crisis.

The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment aims to continue the action plan after 2021.

Type of document: Action Plan

Time of introduction: 2018

Timeframe: until now

Name: Action Plan Broad Approach to Depts 2018-2021

Web-link:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/armoedebestrijding/documenten/publicaties/2018/05/23/actieplan-brede-schuldenaanpak>

3. National strategy; financial support and tax measures

Since 2017 Dutch government spends 100 million euros annually on [poverty reduction for households with children](#). 85 million euros is spent by municipalities to support families in poverty. The rest of the budget is divided between national poverty organizations, the action programme [Tel mee met taal](#) to improve citizens' mastery of the Dutch language, and projects aimed at children of poor families living on the Dutch Caribbean islands. The budget provided can be used for necessary school materials, sports activities, music lessons, supplemental training , school trips, et cetera.

In addition, several tax measures have been implemented and family allowances have been raised to increase the income of low-income families.

Type of document: Letter to Parliament by the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment

Time of introduction: 1 April 2019

Timeframe: until 2021

Name: Letter to Parliament ambitions regarding child poverty (Kamerbrief ambitions kinderarmoede)

Web-link:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/armoedebestrijding/documenten/kamerstukken/2019/04/01/kamerbrief-ambities-kinderarmoede>

4. [National strategy; education](#)

Below you will find information on the regulation in the area of education and equal opportunities.

In chapters 3 and 4 inequality in education was emphasized. This is also described as a main challenge. On October 31 2016 the minister of Education, Culture and Science presented the action plan [Equal opportunities in education](#) (only in Dutch) in which measurements and the collaboration [Gelijke Kansen Alliantie](#) (Equal Opportunities Alliance) (only in Dutch) were presented. The Minister aims for more equality by a better transition in education, investing in link-up programmes between education levels, and so on. Specific target groups have been identified in this action plan, for instance young people with disadvantages, who have little opportunity to continue their studies. In 2020 the programme was extended to more municipalities. Read more about the programme in paragraph 6.10.

Type of document: Action Plan

Time of introduction: 31 October 2016

Timeframe: until now

Name: Action Plan Equal opportunities in education (Actieplan Gelijke kansen in het onderwijs)

Web-link:

https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2016Z19888&dd=2016D41062

Responsible authority

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is the responsible authority for the national strategies on poverty projects, a broad approach on debts and financial support and tax measures as mentioned above.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is the responsible authority for the national strategy on equal opportunities in education. The ministry cooperates with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and municipalities (through the association of municipalities, VNG). School leaders, team leaders and teachers participate in communities to develop and share knowledge around specific topics.

This action plan builds on existing policy. The past years the ministry of Education, Culture and Science invested in a good qualitative education system in the Netherlands

Revisions/Updates

1. National strategy; poverty projects

This regulation did not undergo major revisions or updates.

2. National strategy; broad approach to debts

This regulation did not undergo major revisions or updates.

3. National strategy; financial support and tax measures

This regulation did not undergo major revisions or updates.

4. National strategy; education

This regulation did not undergo major revisions or updates.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

Appropriate education and other inclusive educational programmes

Chapter 6 describes several measures to include vulnerable young people in education. One example is [appropriate education \(passend onderwijs\)](#), which means that schools have to offer a well-matched form of education to every pupil enrolled at their school. If a school cannot provide the education required, it is obliged to propose a better offer at another school that is part of the same regional school partnership. Paragraph 6.2 provides more information about appropriate education and its evaluation.

Inclusion on the labour market

In chapter 3, and specifically in paragraph 3.6, you can find programmes for vulnerable young people to enhance their participation in employment and entrepreneurship. [Learn2Work](#) (only in Dutch), for example, is a learning and working project supported by youth work. You can find more about this project in paragraph 3.6.

Poverty programmes

A number of (general) poverty reduction programmes and measures are described in paragraph 4.3.

Inclusion of people with mental and intellectual disabilities

The programme 'Extraordinary Ordinary, National Programme for the Handicapped' ([Gewoon Bijzonder, Nationaal Programma Gehandicaptten](#)) is an initiative of the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport). The implementation is being done by [The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development](#) (ZonMw). This programme has a direct connection with the UN treaty and focuses on greater participation and empowerment of disabled people. This includes a focus on young people with disabilities. In the 'Extraordinary Ordinary' programme scientists, professionals in care, welfare and education, (representatives of) people with (mental) disabilities, informal carers and other stakeholders develop, spread and apply knowledge to improve care and support for people with a mental disability, multiple disabilities or an acquired brain injury. The goal is to enable people with intellectual disabilities and other conditions to function more independently and confidently in society, for example, to work and learn. This programme was introduced in 2014 and has a timeframe of ten years.

Examples of projects that are part of the programme:

- Social participation by young adults with mild intellectual disabilities ([Maatschappelijke participatie door jongvolwassenen met LVB](#)): A study that examined whether buddy projects (Maatjesprojecten) and circles of friends (Vriendenkringen) led to independent participation of young adults with mild intellectual disabilities in society. Duration: 2018-2018.
- Language for everyone in Maastricht ([Taal voor Allemaal in Maastricht](#)): young people with mild intellectual disabilities investigated how the municipality of Maastricht could

adjust its communication to make it understandable for all citizens. Information products have been renewed and tested. Municipal employees have been trained to communicate comprehensibly. Duration: 2017-2018.

- Learning together ([Samen Leren](#)): clients with (intellectual) disabilities are trained to give guest lectures to secondary vocational education students about their support needs. Duration: 2020-2021.

Funding

The programme 'Extraordinary Ordinary, National Programme for the Handicapped' ([Gewoon Bijzonder, Nationaal Programma Gehandicaptten](#)) receives € 8 million, from the budget of the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) and the [Ministry of Justice and Security](#) (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid). There is no further information on the funding of this programme.

Quality assurance

The Extraordinary Ordinary mid-term evaluation report ([Gewoon Bijzonder tussentijdse rapportage](#)) of the programme 'Extraordinary Ordinary, National Programme for the Handicapped' ([Gewoon Bijzonder, Nationaal Programma Gehandicaptten](#)) (only in Dutch) was published in February 2019. This was requested by the ministry of [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) and was conducted by [The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development](#) (ZonMw).

The mid-term evaluation showed many results of the first stage of the programme, gathered on the [project pages](#) of the separate research projects. During 5 rounds of grants, 35 projects in total were funded with € 5.8 million in total. Two rounds of grants focused specifically on young people: care and support for young people with mild intellectual disabilities and the prevention of young people with mild intellectual disabilities getting into the criminal justice system. It was concluded that the second stage should focus on implementation of results, specifically aimed at municipalities, courses in secondary vocational education and at universities of applied sciences, and families and social workers of people with disabilities.

The monitoring of the projects continues until 2024. A final evaluation is expected in 2024.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

In 2015 the [minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) (only in Dutch) announced that a special team will be established at the Inspection of Social Affairs and Employment to tackle labour market discrimination. The team has the duty to research whether employers have a policy on discrimination. If this is not the case, employers are obliged to develop a policy against discrimination and can be fined if they do not comply.

On 31 May 2016 the [minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) (only in Dutch) launched an anti-discrimination campaign. The campaign focused on the recruitment process of new employees. The campaign wanted to make employers and HR professionals aware of their subconscious prejudices and how these can be dealt with. The ministry of Social Affairs and Employment also launched the [website on discrimination](#). This website provides information for employers and schools. The picture below is an example of an anti-discrimination campaign ("Cross out discrimination"). It says "I did not get an internship" (Ik kreeg geen stage) and "Cross out discrimination" (Zet een streep door discriminatie).

Young people's rights

The [Kinderombudsman](#) (Ombudsman for Children) (in English) is concerned with children between the ages of 0 and 18. It is an independent institute existing since 1 April 2011.

The Ombudsman for Children provides advice to the government and Parliament regarding laws and policies that have an effect on children's rights. On November 8 2016 the [Ombudsman for Children](#) (only in Dutch) published a report about the situation regarding the transition of the social domain. This report is about the impact of the transition of the social domain on children. The Ombudsman for Children argues that municipalities and providers of youth care services should implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A second, private initiative that fosters young people's rights was initiated by the [Kinderrechtencollectief](#) (Child rights collective) (only in Dutch) (please see paragraph 4.2). They published a website www.kinderrechten.nl (www.rightsofachild.nl) where a lot of information is can be found on law and rights.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

In 2014 the ministers of Security and Justice and Social Affairs and Employment presented the [Actieprogramma Integrale Aanpak Jihadisme](#) (Action programme Integrated Approach against Jihadism) (only in Dutch). The goals of this Action programme are threefold:

- Protect the constitutional state
- Suppress and weaken the jihadist movement in the Netherlands
- Remove the breeding ground for radicalization.

In 2016 the Netherlands Youth institute published a report that was commissioned by the ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Security and Justice. This report is called the (Quickscan Radicalization) (only in Dutch) and research took place in 11 municipalities. This report relates how professionals and volunteers cope with (almost) radicalized young people, how they observe these young people and what they do to prevent young people from radicalization.

The [minister of Education, Culture and Science](#) (only in Dutch) and the State secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport asked Naima Azough to be a special reporter to prevent extremism. Till the end of 2016 she will collect good examples and barriers. She will discuss her findings with experts, to enable the debate on this issue between youth care workers, social workers and education professionals.

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

In December 2015 a bill was submitted to the House of Representatives by the minister of [Security and Justice](#) (in English). The bill '[doorstroming huurmarkt](#)' (movement in rental housing market) (only in Dutch) extends the possibility for temporary tenancy agreements.

The [Rent law](#) (only in Dutch) first had provisions only for elderly people, disabled people and students. This new bill extends the scope with new tenancy agreements for PhD students, large families and young people. This [bill](#) (only in Dutch) has been accepted by the House of Representatives.

There is also a special [top-level measurement](#) (only in Dutch) for young people who are not able to live on their own. The target groups are:

- Young people under the age of 18 with no fixed abode.
- Young people who return to their own community after having stayed in youth care (for instance following a placement in care).
- Young people with mental disabilities.

In February 2016 a new Law (only in Dutch) entered into force that makes it possible for young people between 18 and 23 years to get a temporary tenancy agreement for a maximum of five years (with a possibility of two years extension). During this tenancy period young people will continue to be on the list of people seeking housing, which will increase their opportunity to get subsequent housing. The [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) (only in Dutch) presents a few examples of municipalities implementing this law. One of them is the municipality of Veenendaal which has a promotion fund for realizing affordable youth housing. It finances the subsidies of the Starters arrangement for initiatives. Recently an initiative was subsidized for building new houses for young people with autism, so they can have their own living rooms. For more examples, please visit the Netherlands Youth Institute website.

Social services

On 23 February 2016, the Team [Tackling Youth unemployment](#) (only in Dutch) invited 20 young people to come up with ideas to develop measures against discrimination of young migrants. Team Tackling Youth unemployment will use the ideas of these young people in their measures.

Young people between 18 and 23 years old can get financial assistance for rent payment. This is called the [huurtoeslag](#) (extra rent allowance) (only in Dutch). This can be applied for when:

- The person lives together with a partner or co-occupant who also claims the financial assistance .
- The minimum rent is € 226,98 and the maximum is € 389,05 a month.
- The collective income is not more than € 29,325 a year.

Health care

The [Youth Act](#) outlines the following about youth care. The care and support for children and young people is no longer part of the health care assurance. All treatments of children and young people up to 18 years are paid for by the municipality in which they live.

In the report of the [Ombudsman for Children](#) (only in Dutch) the Ombudsman points out that the access to youth care is not optimal. Most of the times children and their parents do not have any idea where they can get help. Or they have to wait too long for help and meanwhile the problems get worse.

For counselling and psychological services children and young people can approach the [Kindertelefoon](#) (Children's phone) (only in Dutch). They can use the on-line forum to find an answer to their question, but they can also talk over the phone with a volunteer or professional.

Financial services

The Dutch government pays attention to the debt position of young people. The State Secretary of the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in 2015 wrote in a [Kamerbrief](#) (letter to Parliament) (only in Dutch) that in the year before more than half of young people (18-27 years) were in debt. The policy of the government on access to credits is making young people more aware of the risks. It is precautionary and informative. Young people in a vulnerable position form a target group, but students are also at risk. They can get easy access to student loans. The State Secretary tries to make these students aware of the risks involved in high loans during their college years.

Quality assurance

In 2016 the minister of [Housing and the Central Government Sector](#) (in English) writes in a [Letter to Parliament](#) (only in Dutch) that an evaluation of the 'Doorstroming Huurmarkt' Act will take place after five years. No information has been found for other inclusive

services. However, please see paragraph 3.2 Policy monitoring and evaluation for more information.

The Ombudsman has an important role in monitoring the rights of children in the Netherlands. As you can read above the recently published report describes the observations.

Since the beginning of 2015, all Dutch municipalities are responsible for the whole range of care for children, young people and families in need of support and assistance. The transition relates to all types of services, including mental health provisions. The municipalities now manage a wide range of services for children and families, ranging from universal and preventive services to specialized - both voluntary and compulsory - care for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age.

The ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Security and Justice commissioned the evaluation of the Youth Act. [ZonMw](#) will guide the evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted by a consortium existing of NIVEL, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research, Netherlands Youth institute, the Legal Faculty of the University of Leiden, and Foundation Alexander.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

Several governmental sources have been consulted, but no information has been found regarding national policies or legal frameworks on youth work related to social inclusion. An expert on youth work from the Netherlands Youth Institute confirms the absence of a national policy. A lot of youth work happens at the local level, under the responsibility of the municipality and there is also informal youth work, church or community based.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

There are no main youth work programmes on the national level directed at vulnerable people. However, the social service programme for all young people between 14 and 27 years old also supports vulnerable young people to discover, use and develop their skills and talents, to meet new people, to contribute to society, to strengthen civil society and to make choices about their future. See paragraph 2.3 for more information about this social service programme.

Most youth work happens at the local level and in each municipality it is organized differently. The municipality provides subsidies to youth work organizations. The programmes at the local level are directed at young people at risk. In the past youth work organized a lot of activities for young people at risk. This has changed, because now these young people themselves are expected to take the initiative. Youth workers have to stimulate them to take responsibility for themselves. In December 2020, Cabinet provided municipalities with 58.5 million euros to organize activities for young people, especially for vulnerable young people. The budget was also meant to reach and support youth at risk in deprived neighborhoods.

The lectureship [Youth Spot](#) (only in Dutch) is an example of an existing cooperation between youth workers, teachers, researchers and students. In this lectureship knowledge and practice meet and are used for research and innovation in education. Youth Spot aims to implement their projects in a mixed team of youth workers, teachers, researchers and students. In addition to this, Youth Spot provides workshops and lectures.

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

Scouting is the largest voluntary youth organization in the Netherlands. Please see chapter 2 for more information. Besides voluntary youth work there is also professional youth work involved in the social inclusion of young people.

The main ways of evaluating youth work happen at the local level. Professional youth work presents an offer to the municipality or gets an assignment from the municipality. The report [Jongerenwerk in beeld](#) (Youth work in the picture) of the Netherlands Youth Institute states that municipalities cooperate with youth work. The municipality uses the knowledge of youth workers regarding (vulnerable) young people. The report claims that there should be more clear arrangements between these two actors. It also states that interim consultations take place concerning the situation of young people in the municipality and whether reforms are needed.

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

[Youth spot](#) (only in Dutch) has the aim to professionalize youth work. The lectureship develops education tools and describes methodologies. No other information was found on training and support for youth workers.

[Beroepsvereniging Jong](#) (only in Dutch) can be seen as a national youth workers association. It aims to stimulate youth work in the Netherlands and to support youth workers.

The [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) (in English) is also engaged in training and the support of social inclusion programmes by organizing meetings, workshops and publishing reports.

Financial support

No information was found on financial support. This has been confirmed by the expert of the Netherlands Youth institute.

Quality assurance

There is no specific national quality assurance for youth work related to social inclusion.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

On the annual [Budget Day](#), every third Tuesday in September, the government announces its plans for the coming year, described in the Budget Memorandum. Here you will find brief outlines of the [Budget Memorandum](#) (in English) and a summary of the [Budget Memorandum](#) (in Dutch) for 2022.

On Budget Day 2021, [Government](#) was outgoing, as the formation of a new cabinet was still in process after the national elections of March 2021. Therefore the Budget Memorandum presented did not contain major policy changes, except for some targeted investments. Social inclusion related developments and investments for the year 2022 onwards are summarized in this paragraph.

Coronacrisis related measures

The [Budget Memorandum](#) for 2022 states that the coronacrisis has hit vulnerable groups in Dutch society harder: school pupils, young people, the lower educated, employees with flexible labour agreements, people with a migration background and people with labour disabilities. For example, young people have had a harder time due to school closures and uncertainty about their job prospects. Pupils from a lower socio-economic background have caught up less on school after schools reopened. The lower educated in general have a higher chance of a serious course of corona disease, have fewer opportunities to work

from home and have less job security. The latter also applies to employees without permanent labour agreements.

[Cabinet](#) has launched the National Programme Education ([Nationaal Programma Onderwijs](#)) in 2021 aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students struggling mentally. See also paragraph 3.6. Additional measures were taken to tackle youth unemployment, through an extension of the Action Plan Youth Unemployment ([Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#)). Specific attention is given to pupils in practical education and special secondary education, recently graduated secondary vocational education students and school drop-outs. Read more about these measures in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.6. Furthermore, the Budget Memorandum mentions the grant programme 'NL continues to learn' ([NL leert door](#)), wherein (self-)employed people and jobseekers of 18 years and over are offered training, guidance and career development advice free of charge.

In the future differences between employees with permanent and flexible labour agreements should be reduced to create more job security. The connection between education and work should be further improved as well.

Benefits

Low income households in the Netherlands are entitled to healthcare benefits, rent benefits, supplementary child benefits and/or childcare [benefits](#). In recent history a large number of childcare benefit recipients have become victims of the strict approach of the [Tax and Customs Administration](#) (Belastingdienst). False allegations of fraud resulted in forced repayment of entire allowances, which drove families into severe financial hardship.

[Cabinet](#) has taken further measures in the giant operation to recover the mistakes of the Tax and Customs Administration and to compensate its victims. The [Budget Memorandum](#) for 2022 announces that compensation will be extended to children, ex-partners of victims and victims of similar failure regarding other benefits. Short-term improvements of the benefit system will be executed by the outgoing cabinet. Larger revisions will be decided upon by the new cabinet.

The present system of healthcare benefits, rent benefits, supplementary child benefits and childcare benefits is too complicated, according to the outgoing cabinet. A simpler benefit system should give households more financial security. Minimum wages should be increased as well.

Other social inclusion related measures

More measures that also apply to young people are introduced in the [Budget Memorandum](#) for 2022:

- Tax-reduction measures are aimed at citizens with social minimum incomes, single-income households, families and social housing corporations.
- [Paid parental leave will be extended](#), in accordance with a new European guideline, which enables employed parents to combine work and care for children.
- A reform agenda for the Dutch youth care system is prepared by [Government](#), the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten; VNG), care providers, client organisations and professionals in order to offer all children, young people and families appropriate care when needed and to keep the system financially manageable. The new cabinet will decide about future adjustments to the [Child and Youth Act](#). See also paragraph 1.2.

Future measures

The [Budget Memorandum](#) for 2022 describes additional developments that will not be addressed by the outgoing cabinet, but will need to be concentrated on in the near future:

- The Dutch educational level is under pressure. Not all pupils can keep up with their peers and educational results lag behind internationally. The number of teachers as well as the quality of teaching and school management should be enhanced.
- [Cabinet](#) states that a shift from illness and care providing to health and care prevention is needed. This will also increase people's ability to work and will give children an equal start. Improved educational quality, working conditions and housing quality are expected to contribute to a healthier population too.

5. PARTICIPATION

Special feature

There are many ways in which young people in the Netherlands can participate and let their voice be heard in political and governance structures. Government aims to stimulate active citizenship of all youth. Young people have to be 18 years old to vote or become political representatives. The National Youth Council ([Nationale Jeugdraad](#) NJR) is a youth advisory board in which young people participate. There are youth councils at local level and youth councils in residential youth care institutions (Paragraph 5.3). The National Youth Council is subsidized by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and cooperates with them.

Highlights

Participation and active citizenship of young people is stimulated through formal, non-formal and informal learning. Some municipalities have a youth mayor or a youth council in which children of 12 to 18 years can voice their ideas and wishes. Social and civic competences are being stimulated. The action committee LAKS voices the opinions of high school students. All vocational education institutes, universities of applied sciences and universities have student councils. There are partnerships between formal education providers, youth organizations and youth work providers. The central objective of the [Foundation Weekendschool](#) is to inform and motivate young people to help them broaden their perspective, increase their confidence and strengthen their ties with Dutch society (Paragraph 5.7).

5.1 General context

Definitions and concepts

Social domain The Netherlands is a [constitutional monarchy](#) a decentralized unitary state with a parliamentary system. Since January 1st 2015 the social domain has been decentralized. This means that municipalities are now responsible for the social domain, which includes youth care (see par 1.2).

What is youth participation?

Youth participation is the active engagement of young people. Three ways of youth participation can be distinguished:

Vertical youth participation (formal) – youth is formally involved in decision-making processes. This happens by means of voting, political membership, through youth councils and student unions. This occurs on international, national, local, community and institutional level. In this chapter the majority of information concerns vertical youth participation.

Horizontal youth participation (informal) – the participation of youth in sports, school, creative activities, etc. This happens mostly through voluntary activities. More about this type of youth participation can be read in chapter 2. Voluntary activities.

Diagonal youth participation (formal/informal) – this is a mixture between vertical and horizontal youth participation. Informal ways of youth participation are used to give young people a say in their daily environment.

Client participation

A key principle of the Youth Law is based on the ability and strength of clients to give direction to their lives and to solve problems independently as much as possible. Care professionals can provide support when needed. More about client participation can be found in paragraph 5.4.

Institutions of representative democracy

At the [national level](#) (in English) the King is the head of the Dutch state and forms the government together with the ministers. King Willem-Alexander has been the head of state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands since 2013. The Prime Minister is head of the Cabinet (Ministers and State Secretaries).

The [Parliament](#) (in English) consists of a Senate and a House of Representatives. It monitors the government and is responsible, with the government, for enacting legislation. Legislation only becomes effective after it has been passed by Parliament. The government and individual ministers are accountable to Parliament. The Netherlands has a multiparty system. Every four years a new Parliament is chosen.

At the [regional level](#) (in English) the [Netherlands](#) has 12 provinces that represent the administrative layer between [national government](#) and [the local municipalities](#), carrying responsibility for matters of subnational or regional importance.

The government of each province consists of three major parts:

- Provinciale Staten ([States-Provincial](#)) is the provincial Parliament elected every four years. The number of members varies between 39 and 55 (as of 2015), depending on the number of inhabitants of the province. Being a member is a part-time job. The main task of the States-Provincial is to monitor the work of the provincial government.
- Gedeputeerde Staten ([Provincial-Executive](#)) is a board elected from the members of the States-Provincial charged with most executive tasks. Each province has between three and seven deputies, each with their own portfolio. The task of the Provincial-Executive is the overall management of the province.
- The Commissaris van de Koning ([King's Commissioner](#)) is an official appointed by the Crown who presides over the States-Provincial as well as over the Provincial-Executive. The Commissioner is appointed for a term of six years, following which reappointment for another term is possible.

At the regional level Dutch municipalities have the right to cooperate with each other. This so-called [Gemeenschappelijke Regeling](#) (Joint Arrangements Act) (only in Dutch) is a regulation between the municipalities. This can be used for joint action on any matter for which municipalities have authority.

At the [local level](#) (in English) the municipal council and the size of the municipal council depend on the number of inhabitants of the municipality: the maximum is 45 seats (large cities) and the minimum is 7 seats as in the smallest municipalities. The municipal council supervises the College van Burgemeester en Wethouders (municipal executive board i.e. mayor and aldermen), questions, criticizes and opposes when necessary and expedient. And if the municipal executive board does not do what (the majority of) the council wants, the council can send the entire municipal executive or an individual alderman home.

For more information on the institutional representatives of the Netherlands please visit the website of the [Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten](#) (VNG) (The Association of Dutch Municipalities) (only in Dutch). The Association of Dutch Municipalities is a public agency and represents the interests of all Dutch Municipalities.

The [Kieswet](#) (Electoral law) (only in Dutch) contains the main legal principles concerning the elections. These legal principles are divided into national, province and local:

National: The [Tweede Kamer](#) (The [House of Representatives](#)) (only in Dutch) has 150 members, elected for a four-year term. Elections are also called after a dissolution of the House of Representatives. All elections are [direct](#), except for the [Eerste Kamer \(Senate\)](#) ([in English](#)), which has 75 members, elected for a four-year term by provincial councillors on the basis of proportional representation at the provincial elections. Voting is not compulsory ([in English](#)).

- The voter must possess Dutch nationality
- The voter may not be debarred from voting

Province: The members of the [provincial council](#) are elected directly once every four years. Voting is not compulsory.

- The voter must be a resident of the province concerned on election day
- The voter must possess Dutch nationality
- The voter may not be debarred from voting

Local: In the Netherlands, elections for the [municipal councils](#) (only in Dutch) take place once every four years. Voting is not compulsory.

- The voter may not be debarred from voting
- The voter must have been a resident of a Dutch municipality on nomination day, as evidenced by the [Basisregistratie Personen](#) (Basic Registry Persons) (only in Dutch)

The [Kiesraad](#) (Electoral Council) ([in English](#)) has an overview of the elections of the Tweede Kamer (House of Representatives). [The votes are cast as follows:](#)

- Polling stations are open from 7.30 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. Only special polling stations may open their doors at an earlier time. No station may be open after 9.00 p.m. As many polling stations as possible, but no fewer than 25% of the total number, must be in buildings accessible to voters with physical disabilities and be in a location that is easy to reach for such voters.
- Everyone who is eligible to vote will receive an invitation to cast their vote by mail at their home address no later than fourteen days prior to Election Day. This invitation includes their poll card. The poll card allows the voter to cast their vote in the polling station of their choice within the municipality's borders. Holders of a voter card may cast their votes in any municipality in the Netherlands.
- Voters unable to cast their vote in person on Election Day may have their vote cast by proxy. In the Netherlands it is possible since 1928 to vote by proxy (in Dutch: stemmen per volmacht) for example for citizens who are unable to vote in person, because they are on vacation abroad, ill or in custody. There are two ways of voting by proxy: by handing over the poll card, which is signed by both voters. The voter who has the proxy will have to show his ID and a copy of the ID of the person he votes for by proxy. Or by written request, until five days before the voting day, and addressed to the mayor of the municipality in which the voter is registered.
- All voters casting their vote must show identification. Any such identification may not have been expired by more than five years.

For more information about the Dutch elections please visit the website of [Kiesraad](#) (Electoral Council) ([in English](#)). The Electoral Council consists of seven members. These members are appointed by Royal Decree for a period of four years, and can be reappointed twice. They are appointed on the basis of their expertise in giving advice on the Election Law and elections.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

The age limit for voting is 18. At this moment there are no plans to lower the age of voting and there are no special provisions for young people in the electoral law and rules.

The turnout of young people in the [national elections](#) in 2012 was 71%. The age range of these voters was between 18-25 years. The overall population turnout was 74,6% in 2012.

In the latest national elections of March 2017 the [overall population turnout](#) was 89,1%, which was the highest turnout since 1989. [Statistics Netherlands](#) published about the outcome of the national elections in March 2017: 'Political commitment in the Netherlands' ([Politieke betrokkenheid in Nederland](#), CBS, December 2017). Political participation by voting has risen compared to the years before. An important incentive for political participation is interest in politics. One of the outcomes is that the youngest voters (18-25 years) are more political active eg. in demonstrations and campaigns compared to people of 65 years and up, but they vote less often.

The latest elections for the municipal councils were held in March 2018, with an overall population turnout of 55%. The elections for the European Parliament in May 2014 had an overall turnout of 37,3%. No information could be found on the turnout of young people in these latest local and European Parliament elections.

Young people as political representatives

Following the [constitutional reform](#) of 1983, the minimum age to become eligible as a member of the Tweede Kamer (The House of Representatives) was decreased to 18 years. There is no quota of seats reserved for young people. Almost every political party has a youth wing of which young people between 14 and 27 years can become members.

Examples are:

- [ROOD](#) (RED) (only in Dutch) is formally affiliated with the Socialistische Partij (SP) (Socialist Party) and is dependent upon the political party.
- De [Jongeren Organisatie Vrijheid en Democratie](#) (The Youth Organization Freedom and Democracy) (only in Dutch) is formally affiliated with the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) but is independent.

More information about Dutch political youth wings can be found on the website [parlement.com](#) (only in Dutch). The age range of the members of the [Tweede Kamer](#) (House of Representatives) (only Dutch) varies from 31 to 66 years.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

In the Netherlands there is no youth parliament at the national level. In recent years possibilities for more participation of young people in politics and policies have been investigated. After consulting young people in 2019 and 2020, the Minister and the State Secretary of the [Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) (Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties) concluded that the majority of the young people did not want a national youth parliament as such, but preferred another type of structural participation. In 2020 and 2021 possibilities for suitable forms of youth participation in national and local policies were explored by the Minister of the [Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) and the [Number Five Foundation](#) in co-creation with young people. This was still in process by December 2021. More information is given in paragraph 5.10.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

At the local level and within youth help and care institutions

Various youth councils exist at the local level, e.g. the Youth council in the municipality Bergen op Zoom ([Jongerenraad Bergen op Zoom](#)). To boost youth participation on the local level the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut), the [Dutch National Youth Council](#) (Nationale Jeugdraad), the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten), the [Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) and the [Number Five Foundation](#) published the Guide to durable youth participation ([Handreiking duurzame jongerenparticipatie](#)) to inspire and motivate municipalities to structurally facilitate youth participation.

Almost all residential youth help and care institutions have a youth council, e.g. the Youth council of youth help organisation Cardea ([Jongerenraad Cardea](#)) that provides services in 2 youth care regions. These youth councils work together in the Youth welfare council ([Jeugdwelzijnsberaad](#)), the largest platform of youth councils in youth help organisations in the Netherlands.

National Youth Council

The [National Youth Council](#) (Nationale Jeugdraad - NJR) is a youth advisory board in which young people participate. More information:

- Structure

The National Youth Council is an umbrella organisation of youth councils for young people between 12 and 30 years. It was established in 2001 after an [official letter](#) (4 July 2001) (only in Dutch) from the State Secretary to the [House of Representatives](#) (Tweede Kamer). In the letter the cabinet advised to start a national youth council, because of the importance to improve youth participation. The State Secretary stated: *“Youth participation gives the opportunity to children and young people to think along and join in the conversation. It is an instrument to better involve youth in society and let them take responsibility. Youth participation is an end not a means. The National Youth Council can be an important link in youth participation policy.”*

The National Youth Council is not part of the Dutch constitutional structure, but is supervised by the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) and cooperates with this ministry.

- Composition

In 2021 the board consisted of 7 people. There is no information on the age range of the board. Candidate members can apply for a position in the board by sending an e-mail to the organisation. The sitting board is not involved in the selection of new members. The National Youth Council is an alliance of 39 youth organisations. They select the board and the 8 youth representatives ([jongerenvertegenwoordigers](#)). Youth representatives form the link between young people and (political) institutions. They seek out opinions and ideas of young people and discuss them with policy makers.

- Role and responsibilities

The objective of the National Youth Council is to stimulate and support youth participation at the national and local level. On an international level the National Youth Council also has an important role to provide youth representatives in European bodies and the United Nations. Youth representatives represent the voice of Dutch young people at the General Assembly of the UN, the European Union, UNESCO and the Climate and Sustainability Conferences. The Youth Council also advises national as well as provincial and local governments and other relevant organisations on youth policy.

- Funding

The National Youth Council receives public funding from the central level (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport). The board of the National Youth Council is financially accountable to this ministry.

National youth panels

The national government installs temporary youth panels with regard to specific policy themes that affect young people. For example, a panel of ten youngsters with personal experience of being homeless advises the State Secretary of [Health, Welfare and Sport](#) on the progress of the Action Programme Homeless Youth 2019-2021 ([Actieprogramma Dak-en Thuisloze Jongeren 2019-2021](#)). In 2021 the Minister of [Education, Culture and Science](#) (Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap), the State Secretary of [Health, Welfare and Sport](#) and the [National Youth Council](#) (Nationale Jeugdraad) discussed the foundation of a new youth panel on mental health (Jongerenpanel mentale gezondheid). The new panel should help Government to shape its mental health policy. The structure, composition, role and responsibilities of temporary youth panels vary as a blueprint does not exist. The ministries involved fund their youth panels.

Higher education student union(s)

Dutch Students Union ([Landelijke Studentenvakbond - LSVb](#))

- Structure

The [Dutch Students Union](#) ([Landelijke Studentenvakbond](#)) has been an important representative of Dutch students in higher education since 1983. The local student unions wished to have a voice at the national level and this gave rise to the establishment of the Dutch Students Union. The local unions play an important role. They are the representatives of students and they identify problems that must be addressed at the national level. The local unions also decide on policy through the General Assembly of the Dutch Students Union.

The union has regular discussions with spokespersons in the education field from [the Senate](#) (in English) and [the House of Representatives](#) (in English) and with civil servants at the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). For many years the Dutch Students Union has been an official interlocutor in the Studentenkamer (Students room). The Studentenkamer is a public consultation between the Minister of Education, the Dutch Students Union and the [Dutch National Student Association](#) (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg - ISO) (see below). The union also meets with educational institutions, the [Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences](#) (Vereniging Hogescholen) and the [Universities of the Netherlands](#) (Universiteiten van Nederland).

- Composition

There are five student members in the board. They work fulltime and receive an administrative grant of €1,500 per month (net amount) for their activities plus compensation for expenses like travelling expenses. The board members are responsible for the policy of the union. In addition to the board a team of volunteers is active. The Dutch Students Union has 18 paid staff members and a few interns. Interested students can apply for a position on the board by sending an e-mail to the organisation. The selection committee is responsible for the distribution of functions.

- Role and responsibilities

The union represents the interests of students in higher education. They are active in a wide range of [themes](#) (only in Dutch) that affect students. A few examples are: Quality of education and housing of students.

- Funding

The Dutch Students Union is subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Information is not available on the amount of funding they receive.

Dutch National Student Association (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg - ISO)

- Structure

In 1973, the [Dutch National Student Association](#) (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg) was founded in Amsterdam as a national umbrella organisation for five university student councils from different cities in the Netherlands. These students felt the need to discuss affairs and exchange information with fellow student council members from other cities. It represents the interests of students in the Netherlands. Like the Dutch Students Unio, the Dutch National Student Association regularly meets with spokespersons of the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#), political parties and the [Universities of the Netherlands](#) (Universiteiten van Nederland). The student association has 40 member organisations ([lidorganisaties](#)), together they represent more than 800,000 students in higher education. These organisations are local students groups, councils and unions of universities and universities of applied sciences. Together they form the General Assembly, the highest body.

- Composition

The [board](#) consists of 5 members and is responsible for the policies of the Dutch National Student Association. The association has 14 staff members who help on several topics. There is no information available on the age range of the board.

- Roles and responsibilities

The Dutch National Student Association represents the interests of students in all universities and universities of applied sciences. It aims to make sure that education is accessible for all people who are motivated and have the intellectual capacities to complete an education, regardless of socio-economic and financial background. The board consults with students, politicians and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

- Participation

The student association aims to strengthen the role of students in participation. It provides information to students about their legal rights and obligations and where they can find this information in legal documents. In the study year 2018-2019 a pilot project of the Budgetting and Accounting Method (methode Begroten en Verantwoorden) was launched to support participation councils to read and discuss their educational institute's budget plan. The association also provides information about the status of students' participation in the Participation monitor ([Medezeggenschapsmonitor](#)). The Dutch National Student Association is also involved in the [National Desk Quality Agreements](#). This desk provides participation councils with information about investments in the quality of education at universities and universities of applied sciences, which were enabled by repealing the basic study grant in 2015.

- Funding

The student association is subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Information is not available on the amount of funding they receive.

Youth Organisation Vocational Education (Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsopleiding - JOB)

- Structure

The Youth Organisation Vocational Education ([Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsopleiding](#)) was founded in 1999 by the National Action Committee School Pupils ([Landelijk Actie Komitee Scholieren](#)) (see below for more information about the action committee). The Youth Organisation Vocational Education is active at the national level, but is not part of the Dutch constitutional structure.

- Composition

The [board](#) consists of 5 members between 17 and 20 years old. The organisation has also 7 [policy and project officers](#).

- Role and responsibilities

The Youth Organisation Vocational Education is only for students in secondary vocational education. They represent the interests of these students, but also act as an advisory and support office. The board consults with politicians and with the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) on issues that matter to students. Two examples of how the organisation represents the interests of students:

- In 2016 JOB worked together with the foundation Cultural Youth Passport ([stichting Cultureel Jongerenpaspoort CJP](#)) (only in Dutch) to make a culture card (cultuurkaart) available to secondary vocational education students. With this card vocational education students also are entitled to fee reduction for visiting museums and all kinds of cultural events in the whole country.
- In 2010 JOB started the project 'Your decision is included' ('Jij Beslist Mee'), to stimulate participation of students in vocational education. In March 2011 this resulted in the obligation of all vocational education institutions to have a working Central Students Council (Centrale Studentenraad CSR). This gives vocational education students the opportunity to participate and have a voice in the Boards of Schools.
- Funding

The Youth Organisation Vocational Education is subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Information is not available on the amount of money they receive.

School student union(s)

National Action Committee School Pupils ([Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren - LAKS](#))

- Structure

In 1984, the National Action Committee School Pupils ([Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren](#)) was founded in Amsterdam by a few pupils to improve the legal status of pupils in secondary education. Thanks to the action committee it became mandatory by law that all schools have a student charter. This was achieved in 1993. The action committee is active at the national level and is highly independent.

- Composition

The [board](#) consists of 7 members. The members are all pupils in secondary education. The age range is between 15 and 19 years. For the establishment of a new board the selection committee ([Sollicitatie Commissie](#)) selects the new members. After selecting new members the selection committee presents them at the spring assembly.

- Role and responsibilities

The National Action Committee School Pupils represents the interest of pupils in secondary education. Pupils can reach the action committee if they have questions concerning secondary education. Exam candidates in secondary education can call the Final Exams Complaint Hotline ([eindexamenklachtenlijn](#)) if they have questions or complaints about the conditions of their examination.

- Funding

The action committee is subsidised by the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). Information is not available on the amount of funding they receive.

Other bodies

There are no other bodies of participation.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

There are no formal mechanisms of consultation. Most of the consultation takes place in an informal process. The only formal mechanism of consultation is the legal framework which encourages student's participation in their educational institution. This is discussed in paragraph 5.7 Non-formal and informal learning.

At the top level, mostly by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, young people are being involved in consultations on topics that concern youth, but there is no law regulating this. The consultation by other Ministries is very limited, according to the director of the National Youth Council. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is now focussing on youth participation at local level so that measures or policies can be proposed if needed. Because of the decentralization of the social domain including youth policy and services, all municipalities are responsible for their youth consultation. But the degree of attention for youth participation in decision-making processes varies between municipalities. A problem that municipalities encounter is how to stimulate youth to participate in decision-making processes. The Dutch municipalities are, however, required to monitor the transition of the youth domain. The [Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten](#) (VNG) (Association of Dutch Municipalities) reports that in 2016 municipalities must work with client experiences studies Youth and the Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning (WMO) (Social Support Act). The outcome of this research provides an indication of the quality of help and support within the Social Support Act and the Youth care Act.

Client participation

A key principle of the Youth Law is based on the ability and strength of clients to give direction to their lives and solve problems independently as much as possible. Care professionals can provide support when needed. In line with this principle and bearing in mind the explanation of the Youth Law, it is stated that adolescents and parents are given more influence on the quality of care being offered to them. The underlying idea is that the influence of clients is necessary to organize appropriate care that meets the wishes and needs of clients and their social environment.

The extent to which the participation of clients is successful is strongly depending on the attitude of managers and professionals of youth care institutions. Also a shared view and vision on client participation and the way to carry this out are important factors.

Other Mechanisms

The [Monitor Transitie Jeugd](#) (Transition Youth Monitor) (only in Dutch) is an initiative of six client organizations. These client organizations represent the participation and advocacy of clients in all relevant youth and family services, such as youth help, care for youth with physical and intellectual disabilities, chronic illness or mental disorders, and in education. This monitor, launched in January 2015, conveys signals of parents and young people concerning the changes in the field of youth, youth protection and juvenile probation to local interest groups, municipalities and government. The combination of signals from parents and young people provides valuable information for improving policies. Another level of mandatory consultation concerns youth care. The Youth Law (2014) ([Jeugdwet](#)) (only in Dutch) prescribes the consultation of youth in youth care.

Youth councils

At the national level a few important councils play a role in consulting young people. As mentioned in chapter 3 Employment and Entrepreneurship, the FNV Young (FNVJeugd), a youth trade union, has a seat in the Social and Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad SER). In this position FNV Young can advise top-level institutions on behalf of young people. Another council is the National Youth Council ([Nationale Jeugdraad](#) NJR) (for more details see 5.3.1), which represents youth interests at the national and local level. The National Youth Council can be seen as a [policy instrument](#) to achieve youth participation.

This was one of the goals when this council was established. An example of activities organized by the National Youth council is the National Youth Debate ([Nationaal Jeugddebat](#)) (only in Dutch) that was held in 2016. It took place in the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) where young people under 18 met with Dutch politicians. The dialogue concerned topics of interest to young people. The politicians can subsequently consider including the wishes of young people in their policy choices.

The main methods for consulting young people vary at the national and local level. There may be more focus on participation within ministries and municipalities. The actors mentioned above can have some influence on activities, for instance through the National Youth Debate. A good example is the [Platform Onderwijs2032](#) (only in Dutch) in which the future of the Dutch education system was discussed with a view to a better connection with the labour market. The director of the National Youth Council stated that this consultation process was helpful. The National Youth Council was asked for its view and the director claims that their perspectives were taken into account and their input will be used.

Youth participation at local level

At local level young people can participate in the municipal council meetings and debate topics that interest them. According to the director of the National Youth Council there is a problem with representation. Disadvantaged young people often participate less, so the outcome is not representative for the whole group of young people. The National Youth Council is cooperating with municipalities to design a consultation structure to tackle this problem. A good example of a consultation method can be found in the municipality of Schiedam: The Little Embassy ([De kleine Ambassade](#)) (only in Dutch) is a foundation with several projects on child and youth participation and consultation. The foundation has organized a children's town council. This was a first in the Netherlands. Children are invited to give advice to the municipality in different policy areas.

Actors

The following actors are involved in the mechanisms of consultation. However, according to the director of the National Youth Council, participation of youth is done on the basis of themes such as sustainability etc.

Youth actors:

- [The National Youth Council](#) (only in Dutch)
- [Jeugdwelzijnsberaad](#) (Youth welfare council) (only in Dutch); is an exchange between youth councils of youth care institutions in the Netherlands.
- [Jongerenraad](#) (youth council) (only in Dutch); According to the Jeugdwet (Youth Law) (in art 4.2.4 Youth law) Dutch youth care institutions are required to have a youth council. Student council (primary education and secondary vocational education); As of March 1, 2011, every school is required to have a central student council. This happens at local level.
- [Taskforce Kindermishandeling](#) (Taskforce Child abuse) (only in Dutch). The Ministry of Security and Justice together with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport have developed the Taskforce Child abuse to redirect the approach of child abuse.
- [Het Landelijk Actie Komitee Scholieren](#) (LAKS) (National Action Committee Students) (only in Dutch).
- [FNV Young](#) (please see chapter 3 Employment and Entrepreneurship) (only in Dutch)
- [CNV Young](#) (please see chapter 3 Employment and Entrepreneurship) (only in Dutch)

Specific target groups:

- The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport does no longer have a policy focusing on specific target groups such as immigrants.

- The National Youth Council, however, does focus on immigrants and concerns itself with young disadvantaged people. The programme of the National Youth Council is a success with this target group because they participate actively.

Public authorities:

- The municipalities are the key public authorities in youth consultation processes.

Additional stakeholders:

- Schools can play a role in consulting young people. As mentioned above, all vocational and secondary vocational school are required to have a student's council.
- Youth foundations such as The Little Embassy ([De Kleine Ambassade](#)) and Raaz culture participation in the municipality of Zaanstad ([Raaz Zaanstad](#)) (only in Dutch) provide a link between the municipality and young people. Through their activities young people have an opportunity to participate.

Information on the extent of youth participation

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is collecting data on young people's participation. The ministry has commissioned the task to [Verwey-Jonker Instute](#) (in English), a research institute, to collect data on youth participation and consultation on local level. The new Youth Act calls on municipalities to involve young people in decision making processes. The Ministry wants an evaluation of the state of affairs and wants to know what kind of problems municipalities encounter. The first results of this research were presented on 2 June 2016 by the researchers. At this meeting they presented a few good practices, such as the activities of The Little Ambassade and [Raaz Zaanstad](#) (only in Dutch) in the municipality Zaanstad. Raaz supports young people wishing to set up a local initiative. Raaz also has a youth advisory council that advises the municipality on policy issues. In September 2016 the study '[De staat van jeugdparticipatie in Nederland 2016](#)' (The state of youth participation in the Netherlands 2016) (only in Dutch) was published by Verwey-Jonker Institute.

Outcomes

The research conducted by Verwey-Jonker Institute included a questionnaire in 122 municipalities. Some findings:

- From 2015, after the transition of the social domain, more budget has become available for youth participation, especially in municipalities with more than 50.000 inhabitants.
- Municipalities that involve young people in designing or implementing public policies have doubled; from 40% in 2009 to 73% in 2016.
- The percentage of municipalities that involve young people in youth care has increased from 13% in 2012 to 52% in 2016.
- Part of the municipalities that still are not involving young people in youth participation, do have the intention to arrange this. But because of the transition in the social domain the municipalities needed to focus on this first.
- There are differences in the size of municipalities. Small municipalities are often less active and have less budget than larger municipalities.
- More municipalities are designing youth participation at a higher level. This means that young people have a real voice in it; participation and stimulating own initiative.
- As in 2009, youth participation shaped by a group of youth representatives in municipalities and by organizing panels or debates.
- Social media are used more frequently now to reach the target group.

For more results please read the study '[De staat van jeugdparticipatie in Nederland 2016](#)' (The state of youth participation in the Netherlands 2016) (only in Dutch).

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

[Idebate](#) is a large-scale initiative for young people who are difficult to reach. Idebate organizes debates at national and international level. It aims to promote mutual understanding and respect and to strengthen democracy worldwide. It does this by encouraging local debate and active citizenship through debate trainings and organizing (inter)national debate exchanges.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

There is no national strategy to increase the political participation of youth. However, as mentioned above (in 5.4.3), the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is researching the state of affairs in municipalities. The Ministry will take measures on the basis of these findings. Although there is no national strategy, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is concerned with youth participation. The establishment of the National Youth Council in 2001 and the Ministry's cooperation with it shows that it strives to increase youth (political) participation. According to the director of the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is open to new ideas, but the outcome of their input is not always visible. The Ministry does involve the Council in a lot of issues, which is hardly the case within other Ministries. The National Youth Council, however, strives for even better youth participation that should be included in a national strategy.

Scope and contents

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Monitoring and evaluation

Revisions/Updates

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

There is no legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organizations.

Public financial support

The funding of community-based organizations differs. Usually the province and municipality provide subsidies to organizations or initiatives. For example the Municipality of Rotterdam financially supports the [Buddy project](#) (only in Dutch). Another example is the [Oranje Fonds](#) (Orange Foundation) (only in Dutch). The Orange Foundation financially supports social initiatives for youth such as buddy projects, thus promoting contact and communication between groups of people. The [Erasmus+](#) programme also offers an important opportunity for Dutch organizations and young people to access funding for education, training, mobility and volunteering (for this last subject, also see Chapter 2. Voluntary activities).

The types of activities that are supported

The types of activities vary from cultural to educational. But there is also a focus on activities for young people that should result in paid jobs. The [Buddy project](#) (only in Dutch), mentioned above, is an example. It is a cooperation between municipalities in the

region Rijnmond (the region of the river Rijn estuary, near Rotterdam), and the employment agencies Randstad and Unique. This project originated from the [Regionale Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (2014) (Regional Approach Youth unemployment) (only in Dutch) and supports unemployed youth to find a job.

A second type of activity is Scouting Netherlands (See chapter 2). Young people can meet and become involved in projects.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

Scouting Netherlands has developed an initiative that stimulates the participation of [refugee children](#) (only in Dutch). In 2012, the [Oranje Fonds](#) (Orange Foundation) (only in Dutch) for their programme Kansen voor jongeren (Chances for youth), selected twenty volunteer initiatives that focused on early school leavers from 18 to 23 years.

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

In 2003 the [Onderwijsraad](#) (Education Council) (only in Dutch) proposed to implement citizenship in a legal framework. This advice was conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The Onderwijsinspectie (Inspectorate of Education) has a monitoring function in this field. There is a policy framework regarding social and civic competences, but the educational institutions are free to work out these subjects at their own preference.

An [examination of the Inspectorate of Education](#) (only in Dutch) led to a few important conclusions that should be mentioned here. Firstly, generally the schools score positive in the field of social and civic competences. But, secondly, there are schools that do not work very purposefully towards achieving social and civic competences.

Because of this the State Secretary answers in the [Kamerbrief](#) 2016 (only in Dutch) (Letter of the House of Representatives) that he will investigate this and will ask for advice. This all has resulted in a Platform called [#Onderwijs2032](#) (only in Dutch) ([#Education2032](#)).

More information on this Platform can be found on their website: www.onsonderwijs2032.nl

This [advice](#) (only in Dutch) in [#Onderwijs2032](#) ([#Education2032](#)) is based on societal dialogue, the current Dutch Education field, international examples and scientific insights. At the request of the Platform, the [OECD](#) has also written papers on four themes:

- Knowledge and skills for learning and working
- Social tools
- Personal development
- Principles for designing a curriculum

What framework of reference for social and civic competences is used and which target groups are defined

In 2003 [the Onderwijsraad](#) (Education Council) suggested to legally establish citizenship. The advice [Onderwijs en Burgerschap](#) (Education and citizenship) was implemented in 2003. In 2004 the Education Council aimed to bring European Citizenship to the attention of the general public. In secondary education knowledge of Europe is a key subject. After having implemented the law, the minister of Education, Culture and Science asked for an evaluation. In 2011 the Education Council examined in which ways schools can be supported in their civics education tasks. With the report of the Inspectorate of Education, these conclusions resulted in the Platform [#Education2032](#). Please see previous section for information on this platform.

No specific target groups have been defined. The publication of the [Onderwijs Inspectie](#) (Inspectorate of Education) (only in Dutch) focuses on all pupils. However, they do mention that increasing these competences will help a specific group such as non-Dutch children to overcome some disadvantages they have.

Formal learning

The [Inspectorate of Education](#) (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) in its report '[The State of Education in the Netherlands 2013/2014](#)' (De Staat van het Onderwijs: Onderwijsverslag 2013/2014) reports that most schools meet the minimum requirements for civics education. But there is little development in civics education. Schools have the freedom to fill in their own curriculum with regard to civics. There is hardly any information in laws and regulations about the content of civics education. Teachers and school directors indicate that there is little to support civics in the formal education curriculum. In 2015 the [Inspectorate of Education](#) (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) reported that the way in which schools interpret civics education meets the minimum legal requirements in most schools. However in the upper secondary education most schools have insufficient knowledge of pupils' progress, if any, on the subject and do not know enough about where pupils stand and how they develop concerning this subject.

With regard to this, the State Secretary responded to the Letter of the House of Representatives ([Kamerbrief](#)) (only Dutch) number 2015Z07022 as follows: "This issue is sent to Platform #Education2032." ([#Onderwijs2032](#)) (only in Dutch).

It is difficult to say whether citizenship is a separate subject or integrated in curricula. As mentioned earlier, schools have the freedom to give substance to this themselves, but citizenship has to follow the legal frameworks.

According to a news item of the Inspectorate of Education of April 2015 ([Nieuwsbericht | 10-04-2015 | 00:00](#)) (only in Dutch) there is a focus on children's social development. It is acknowledged that social and societal competences prevent school dropout, stimulate learning and lead to more job opportunities. These competences are important for good coping strategies in society, and are crucial for a democratic society.

Other main learning objectives are to developing knowledge of topics such as political and societal citizenship. There is also a focus on subjects that concern citizenship, such as solving conflicts and using arguments to debate issues.

Non-formal and informal learning

There is no national law or regulation on non-formal or informal learning. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science focuses on topics related to formal learning, such as the quality of education. Municipalities, however, can support organizations providing activities that stimulate non-formal or informal learning.

However, top-level policy regulations or guidelines exist requiring or encouraging pupils' and students' participation in decision-making in their educational institutions. This is also the only formal regulation in the field of youth participation.

- In higher education and universities, participation in decision-making is required by law. These rules can be found in de [Wet op Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek](#) (WHW) (the Law on Higher Education and Research) (only in Dutch). [Artikel 9.37. lid 1](#) (only in Dutch) of this law states the following rule: If a university has more than one faculty, every faculty has to have a faculty council in which students participate.
- In secondary education a pupil's council is not required by law. Pupils over 13 years can join the representative advisory council.
- In secondary vocational education a students' council is required by law since 2010. In 2010 the [Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs](#) (Law on education and vocational education) (only in Dutch) was modified and accepted this new framework.

[The Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren](#) (LAKS) (National Action Committee Pupils) (only in Dutch) made a manual for schools. This manual is a roadmap with information on how to set up a student's council. LAKS gives also trainings to student's councils on how to plan and hold meetings.

Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society

In chapter 2 you can find information about the provisions that form a part of national curricula to take part in activities serving the community outside school. This information in chapter 2 is about the maatschappelijke stage. Since August, 1 2014 this is no longer mandatory in secondary education. Since 2018 the government is developing a so called social service ([Maatschappelijke diensttijd](#)). The social service offers time and space in which young people work for someone else and discover and develop their own talents. It is also an opportunity to gain experience and perhaps get a clearer picture of future perspectives. Social service also offers the opportunity to bring people from different backgrounds and ages closer together.

Recent national or large-scale policy initiatives and programmes giving pupils/students the opportunity to participate in citizenship-related activities/projects outside school.

The projects of [Erasmus+](#) give pupils and students opportunities to participate in citizenship-related projects outside of school. Other examples of citizenship-related activities are organised locally or regionally. For example in the municipality of Amsterdam there is a participation project named [VoorUit](#) (Forward) (only in Dutch). In exchange for housing students provide social work for 10 hours per week in the neighbourhood in which they live. The purpose of VoorUit is to contribute to strengthening social cohesion of the neighbourhood by involving residents.

The director of the National Youth Council suggested that abolishing the basic grant for students will lead to discouraging participation in projects outside school such as volunteer work. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has an arrangement for a student scholarship that is related to educational activities. Students at universities can join the board of their students association. These students get an administrative grant (bestuursbeurs). Because only a small group of students can claim a position in these boards, other students are excluded from participating in these activities.

Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organizations and youth work providers

On the national level the focus is on cooperation with partners, such as for instance the [RAAK-regulation](#) (only in Dutch). Colleges, businesses and professionals can reinforce each other by working together on innovation issues. The aim of the programme is to encourage research leading to strengthening of knowledge and use of knowledge in universities and the public sector.

For the RAAK-regulation there is financial support. Per RAAK-project organizations can request an amount of € 700.000,-

National/top-level programmes establishing, encouraging or supporting education projects related to the promotion of civic and social competences;

As mentioned earlier the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) does not have a national programme for initiatives related to non-formal learning. It focuses exclusively on formal education.

However, on 23 August 2016 a focus group took place on the topic of '21st skills'. The [European Commission](#) works with EU countries to strengthen 'key competences' – knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help learners find personal fulfilment and, later in life, find work and take part in society. To explore these skills in the Netherlands, the National Youth Council invited different organizations such as the Ministry of Health,

Welfare and Sport and the municipality of Amsterdam. The topics discussed were concerned which life skills young people need in this dynamic society. So there is a focus on initiatives concerning social and civic competences.

Specific target groups whose participation in civic education projects is especially encouraged (e.g. young people with a migrant background);

There are specific target groups whose participation in civic education projects is encouraged. The projects of Erasmus+ Youth focus on youth in NEET (Not in education, employment or training). Also young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are a target group in several municipalities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, The Hague etc.).

Another example on how specific groups can be reached is the Weekendschool. The central objective of [the Foundation Weekendschool](#) (in English) is to inform and motivate young people. They have three objectives:

- Broaden Perspectives
- Increase Confidence
- Strengthen ties with Dutch society

Young people of disadvantaged neighbourhoods voluntarily participate in the curriculum. The young people become acquainted with different disciplines of culture, science and society.

Sources of public funding available for the development of such projects/youth work initiatives.

- European:

[Erasmus+](#) (in English)

- National:

[Jeugdcultuurfonds](#) (Youth Culture Foundation) (only in Dutch). This is partly public and partly private funding. E.g. theatre classes and creative courses

[Oranje Fonds](#) (Orange Foundation) (in English)

[Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie](#) (Foundation for Culture participation) (in English)

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

As stated above the Inspectorate of Education oversees the quality of formal learning. In short, there is no quality assurance for non-formal learning. However, there is an organization that can authenticate the experiences made in non-formal or informal learning. This is called the [Erkenning van verworven competenties](#) (EVC) (Acknowledgment of prior learning) (in English). The Youth pass and Europass also provide a quality assurance for non-formal learning.

Educators' support

Specific websites, guidelines, handbooks and other pedagogical material and tools supporting educators;

[Het Nederlands Jeugdinstituut](#) (The Netherlands Youth Institute) (in English) is the Dutch national institute for compiling, verifying and disseminating knowledge on children and youth matters, such as child abuse, youth work, youth care and parenting support in the Netherlands. The Netherlands Youth Institute has, for example, developed pedagogical materials and tools to support educators and youth workers.

Networks or events organized to support citizenship education and the development of social and civic competences.

A programme has been developed for primary schools to promote social competence and democratic citizenship. This programme is called the [Vreedzame School](#) (Peaceful School)

(only in Dutch). It considers the classroom and the school as a community, in which children are heard and feel noticed, given a voice, and in which children learn to take decisions together and resolve conflicts. Children feel responsible for each other and for the community, and are open to the differences between people. The [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) has published a detailed report of the Vreedzame School.

The [Vreedzame Wijk](#) (Peaceful District) evolved from the Vreedzame School. A lot of districts in the Netherlands are working with this programme, which is a pedagogical approach, and offers citizenship skills to children. Thanks to this programme they get a voice and learn to consider different topics. They also learn how to interact positively with each other.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

In the Netherlands there are important information providers related to raising the political awareness of young people. This includes the provision of information about democratic rights and values. The first public body that is responsible for this is [ProDemos](#) (in English). It is called the House for Democracy and the Rule of Law. Their job is to help explain the systems that govern democracy and the rule of law, and to show what citizens themselves can do to exert political influence – at the municipal, provincial, national and European level. For schools Prodememos organizes political excursions, guest teachers, roleplays and lesson material on current topics related to democracy and rule of law. The second public body is the youth wing of political parties, with campaigns that make youth aware of their rights. [ROOD](#) (RED) (only in Dutch) is the youth wing of the political party Socialistische Partij (Socialist Party). This youth wing is active in setting up panels about the rights of students. The two information providers have a contact centre (also online) that young people can access to receive information. Both organizations receive public financial support.

There is, however, no top level framework for youth information and counselling structures. The National Youth Council states in its [policy report 2016-2020](#) (only in Dutch) that a consultation law/framework should be adopted. This consultation law/framework should describe that policymakers have to consult youth.

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

Currently the Netherlands has no major youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights. A few years ago youth-targeted information campaigns existed. However, there are awareness raising actions such as the Liberation festival ([Bevrijdingsfestival](#)) that targets a young audience by appointing young artists and bands as ambassadors of freedom ([ambassadeurs van de vrijheid](#)). Every year on [4 May](#) the Dutch commemorate the victims of war. On [5 May](#) the Dutch celebrate the fact that they were liberated. These two days carry the theme of democracy.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

In the Netherlands there are initiatives and projects that promote the intercultural dialogue of young people from different cultural backgrounds, but not at the national level. In paragraph 5.4 the large-scale initiative [Idebate](#) was mentioned. This intercultural dialogue also takes place through schools. Another example is [Model United Nations](#) (only in Dutch) in which students can participate. [The conferences](#) (in English) are experiential learning programmes that provide students with a better understanding of the inner workings of the UN and a forum to practice skills in diplomacy, negotiation, critical thinking, compromise, public speaking, writing, and research.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

As mentioned in paragraph 5.8.1 there is no top level policy framework or guideline on transparent public communication targeting young people. Usually politicians call on commercial communication agencies to disseminate their views. Public communication experts have little knowledge of how to approach young people and are hardly aware of resources and channels that could be used.

In the absence of such a framework, the National Youth Council plays an important role in raising awareness, by lobbying the government, but also through the so-called [Jargonbrigade](#) (only in Dutch). This is an activity organized by the National Youth Council. The board of the Jargonbrigade consists of eight young people. Their aim is to make politicians speak more plainly and clearly. Most politicians use abstract and complicated language making it difficult for young people to understand and to join in the discussion. Therefore once a year the Jargonbrigade, during the [General Political Debate](#) (Algemene Beschouwingen) in September, visits the House of Representatives to assess the language used by politicians. Politicians who use clear language get a Clear Language award (Klare Taalprijs). Politicians who do not use clear language get an Unclear Language award (Zwetsprijs). This activity is not supported financially by the government.

No information has been found regarding national or large-scale programmes on providing training for policy makers at various levels to provide suitable and youth-tailored communication.

5.9 E-participation

No top-level legal framework exists that encourages young people to participate in political processes electronically, even though public administrations may encounter problems with other communication paths.

Quite some municipalities offer online information possibilities to young people. For example [JoU 030](#) for young people in Utrecht, [JIP Nieuw-West](#) in the area of Nieuw-West in Amsterdam, [Young Originals](#) in Amsterdam (a special forum for young people that offers coaching, networking, inspiration and events), [JIP Rotterdam](#) in Rotterdam and [JIP Haaglanden](#) in Den Haag, Delft and Zoetermeer.

In her dissertation '[Young, Online and Connected. The impact of everyday Internet of Dutch adolescents on social cohesion](#)', a national study on the relationship between e-participation and youth political engagement, Marjon Schols, who obtained her doctorate at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam in 2015, claims that social networks such as Facebook are tools to increase social cohesion. For example, youth networks can mobilise other young people to participate online and offline in political activities.

5.10 Ongoing debates and reforms

Youth participation in national politics

In recent years possibilities for more participation of young people in politics and policies have been investigated. In its final report [Lage dijken, hoge drempels](#) (Low dykes, high thresholds) in 2018, the State Committee Parliamentary System (Staatscommissie parlementair stelsel) concluded, among other things, that there was insufficient attention to the interests and ideals of underrepresented groups in Dutch democracy, like young people. The committee advised to install a youth parliament. [After consulting young people in 2019 and 2020](#), the Minister and the State Secretary of the Interior and Kingdom Relations concluded that the majority of the young people preferred another type of participation. In May 2020 the [Minister](#) began to have weekly discussions with youngsters between 16 and 24 year old about issues that matter to them. Also the [Number Five Foundation](#) and young people together explored the possibilities for youth participation,

on the national and the local level. Their findings have been published in the report [Bondgenoten in de democratie](#) (Allies in democracy). In response to this report, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations sent a [letter to Parliament](#) in Spring 2021 in which she announced the start of six pilot projects, for example to support municipalities to develop youth participation methods and to establish youth councils that co-develop national policies with administrators.

As mentioned in paragraph 3.2, young people have organized themselves in [Coalitie-Y](#) (Coalition-Y) and the [Jongeren Denktank Coronacrisis](#) ([Young People Think Tank Corona Crisis](#)) to gain (political) attention to urgent matters faced by young people due to government policies and measures taken against the spread of the corona virus. For the first time in history, representatives of youth organizations were invited to share their views during the formation of a new Dutch cabinet in Spring 2021.

Youth participation in local politics

Many municipalities still struggle with the decentralization of the social domain. Most of them have little expertise as yet of how to involve youth in decision-making processes. In 2018 the [Netherlands' Ombudsman for Children](#) together with ten youth organizations wrote a [letter](#) (in Dutch) to newly elected city councilors to ask them to involve children and young people in planning and executing municipal policies. In 2021 the Netherlands Youth Institute, the [Dutch National Youth Council](#), the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#), the [Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) and the [Number Five Foundation](#) published the Guide to durable youth participation ([Handreiking duurzame jongerenparticipatie](#)) to inspire and motivate municipalities to structurally facilitate youth participation.

Positive youth policies

Although positive youth policies have been promoted for over a decade and many best practices have been implemented, municipalities' financial problems (due to budget cuts and an increasing demand for youth care) [delay a total transformation](#) of the Dutch youth care system including supporting young people's normal upbringing and the development of their skills and talents.

Participation on the labor market

The Netherlands experience ageing of the population (vergrijzing). It is to be expected that young people will be required to work longer because there will not be sufficient pension funds to allow for early retirement.

Gap between higher and lower educated people

The gap between higher and lower educated people is increasing. The Dutch Education Council indicates that the [early selection process](#) in the educational system is one of the reasons. The council advises in its report [Later selecteren, beter differentiëren](#) (Select later, differentiate better) of 2021 to adapt the educational system: postpone the moment of selection to the age of 15 (instead of the age of 12), arrange classes with pupils from all levels in the first three years of secondary education and offer education on different levels in classes in primary and secondary education. [The new Cabinet will respond to this advice.](#)

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Special feature

A distinctive feature of the Dutch education system is that it combines a centralised education policy with decentralised administration and management of schools. The [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en

Wetenschap) lays down statutory requirements for [early childhood education](#), [primary](#) and [secondary](#) education and [secondary vocational education](#). It also lays down the framework within which higher education institutions ([universities of applied sciences or HBO institutions](#) and universities) have to operate, but it is the responsibility of the competent authority of each institution to expand on the government framework in the teaching and examination regulations (paragraph 6.2). The aim of the Appropriate Education Act ([Wet op het passend onderwijs](#)) (2014) is that all children are placed in a school that fits their qualities and capacities.

Highlights

The National Programme Education (Nationaal Programma Onderwijs) was launched in 2021 and is aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students during and after the corona crisis (paragraph 6.3).

New school curricula for (special) primary and secondary education are prepared. They must adequately match developments in society and education and create more coherence between the various educational objectives (paragraph 6.10).

The Equal Opportunities Alliance ([Gelijke Kansen Alliantie](#)) (only in Dutch), is an initiative of the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (2016). The alliance promotes equal opportunities in education for all children. A corresponding programme exists since 2018: Investing in equal opportunities ([Investeren in gelijke kansen](#)) (paragraph 6.6).

[Government](#) (Rijksoverheid) has initiated three websites to stimulate digital citizenship of young people, being maintained by the [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#): [Mediawijsheid.nl](#), [HoeZoMediawijs.nl](#) and [Netwerkmediawijsheid.nl](#) (paragraph 6.8).

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Equal Opportunities Alliance

On the 31st of October 2016 the Equal Opportunities Alliance ([Gelijke Kansen Alliantie](#)) was announced. During the [launch of this collaboration](#), both Minister Bussemaker and State Secretary Dekker of the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) announced the measures. This collaboration of teachers, parents, schools, employers and social organizations strives for equal opportunities in education for all children.

Various studies of the [Inspectorate of Education](#) of the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#), the [Netherlands Scientific Council of Government Policy](#) WRR, the [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) SCP and [OECD](#) showed that children with the same talents do not always have the same opportunities in education. Their chances of good education are determined in part by the education level of their parents or the support their parents are able to offer. Instead of decreasing, the differences between children increase when they start school. Some bottlenecks are the transition between school types and the lack of support for children with low educated parents.

Funding

In 2017 the Ministry reserves a budget of € 25 million for the improvement of equal opportunities in education; in 2018 this will be € 32 million, in 2019 € 30 million and as of 2020 € 26 million per year.

More information about the Equal Opportunities Alliance can be found on the website Equal Opportunities ([Gelijke kansen](#)), an initiative of the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). (See also paragraph 6.6)

Early school leaving

Tackling early school leaving – Truants Pact

A national discussion group of public actors and representatives of three Dutch ministries ([Education, Culture and Science](#); Health, Welfare and Sport; [Security and Justice](#)) are meeting regularly to discuss how to reduce early school leaving. Their common goal is to achieve that no youngster stays at home without education or training for no longer than three months.

In June 2016 a national agreement was drafted: the so-called 'Truants Pact' ([Thuiszitterspact](#)) and signed by all the members of the national group. The members committed themselves to shared agreements about cooperation and support and shared measures to tackle early school leaving. This Pact is discussed in more detail in paragraph 6.3.

NEET - young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training

In 2014 over 800,000 Dutch young people between 15 and 27 years old were not in education or training and 183,000 of them (22,9 percent) did not have a job. From this last group four out of every ten young people were not looking for a job and were also not available for the labour market for various reasons. Most reasons mentioned were health problems, being unable to work, or – mostly young women - because they had to take care of family or household. (Source: [CBS Statistics Netherlands](#)).

More information about tackling this youth unemployment of NEET young people in education and training is given in paragraph 6.3.

Organisation of the education and training system

Primary education

Most children start primary school at the age of 4, although they are not required by law to attend school until the age of 5. Primary school lasts till the age of 12 (average).

Secondary education

When leaving primary school at the age of about 12, children are able to choose between three types of secondary education: (1) VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education: four years); (2) HAVO (senior general secondary education: five years); (3) VWO (pre-university education: six years).

Most secondary schools are combined schools offering several types of secondary education so that pupils can easily transfer from one type to another.

Secondary vocational education

VMBO education leads pupils to a specific occupation. After completing VMBO at the age of around 16, pupils can go on to secondary vocational education (MBO). Pupils who have successfully completed the theoretical programme within VMBO can also go on to HAVO.

Higher (tertiary) education

HAVO graduates and VWO graduates can opt at the ages of around 17 and 18 respectively to continue to higher education. A large number of HBO universities of applied sciences (hogescholen) in the Netherlands are government-funded. Others are officially registered but do not receive government funding. There are many universities in the Netherlands offering a broad range of programmes of study, several universities of technology and a number of universities that specialize in a limited range of academic sub disciplines.

Special education

In addition to mainstream primary and secondary schools we also have special education. There are three types of schools in special education:

- *Special (secondary) education*: separate schools for children with disabilities of such a kind that they cannot be adequately catered for in mainstream schools.
- *Special primary education*: for children with learning and behavioural difficulties who – temporarily at least – require special educational treatment.
- *Practical training*: pupils who are unable to obtain a VMBO qualification, even with long-term extra help, can receive practical training, which prepares them for entering the labour market.

Read more at the [webgate of Euridyce](#).

Main concepts

Centralized education policy and decentralized administration and management

A distinctive feature of the Dutch education system is that it combines a centralized education policy with decentralized administration and management of schools. With due regard for the provisions of the Constitution, central government creates enabling conditions for education through legislation that applies to both publicly and privately run institutions. The involvement of the provincial authorities mainly takes the form of statutory supervisory and judicial duties vis-à-vis public and private schools alike. As the local authority for all schools in the area, the municipal authorities have certain statutory powers and responsibilities with respect to both public and private schools.

All schools, both public and private, are governed by a legally recognized competent authority. The competent authority is the body responsible for implementing legislation and regulations in schools. The competent authority or school board of publicly run schools is the municipal authority. Since 1997 the municipal authorities have been able to choose the form the competent authority takes. The competent authority or school board of a private school is the board of the association or foundation that maintains it. Read more on the [webgate of Eurydice](#).

Official definition of early leaving from education and training

[Early school leavers in the Netherlands](#) (voortijdig schoolverlaters) (only in Dutch) are pupils and students who leave school without a so-called 'basic qualification' (startkwalificatie). This is a diploma at the level of senior general secondary education (HAVO), pre-university education (VWO) or senior secondary vocational education (MBO 2). Young people who leave school without a diploma have fewer opportunities to find jobs, are more subject to crime and have higher care costs. Central government, schools and municipalities try to prevent early school leaving. Central government wants to tackle early school leaving by funding programmes that stimulate young people to get a basic qualification. Every year the government makes about € 140 million available for regional approaches (more than € 80 million) and rewards for schools based on their good results (more than € 57 million).

Maximum 20,000 early school leavers in 2021

The government aims at a maximum of 20,000 new early school leavers in 2021. The number of school leavers decreases each year. In 2015-2016 22,948 young people left school without a diploma, while in 2002 there were still 71,000 early school leavers.

In Europe, the Netherlands are among the leaders of reducing early school leaving. When comparing the 28 EU member states as a whole (11% average), the Netherlands has a relatively low percentage of early school leavers (8,2%). This means that the European standard of 8% has almost been reached. (Source: [news item of the central government](#) of 21 February 2017)

At its website central government offers an overview of early school leavers per region, municipality or school in facts and figures ([Feiten en cijfers schooluitval](#))

Whether and how non-formal education is defined in the country

Non-formal education in the Netherlands is defined in an [official government document](#) of as follows:

"All learning activities that evolve in the course of one's life to improve one's knowledge, capabilities, and competences from a personal, civic, social and employability perspective."

("Alle leeractiviteiten die gedurende het hele leven ontplooid worden om kennis, vaardigheden en competenties vanuit een persoonlijk, burgerlijk, sociaal en/of werkgelegenheidsperspectief te verbeteren.")

School attendance

School attendance for Dutch children is compulsory from the age of 5 years until they have a 'startkwalificatie' (basic qualification) or when they become 18 years of age. The basic qualification may be a HAVO, VWO (secondary education) or MBO level 2 (VET education) diploma. For students from 5 to 16 years this is called 'leerplicht' (compulsory education) and for 16 to 18 year olds this is called 'kwalificatieplicht' (compulsory qualification).

Compulsory education (5 – 16 year olds)

All children between the ages of 5 and 16 years old who live in the Netherlands have to go to school. This also includes children with a different nationality and children of asylum seekers and foreigners. Most children go to school at the age of 4 years, but they are not obliged to until they are 5 years old. Parents of 4 year olds do not get fined when they keep their child at home. The education obligation starts from the first day of the month following a child's fifth birthday. From that moment on parents are liable to punishment when their child does not attend school.

Compulsory qualification (16 to 18 years)

Youths between 16 and 18 year old who do not have a basic qualification, are obliged to attend full day education to get compulsory qualification. They are not allowed to work full time, unless they attend professional guided learning [beroepsbegeleidende leerweg \(bbl\)](#). There are two varieties: in one learning track the student follows most education in school. In the other track a student works in a company and goes to school 1 or 2 days a week.

Compulsory education and compulsory qualification and all the conditions related to it are laid down in the [Law on Compulsory Education](#) (1969, renewed from the 1st of January 2017).

Read more [here](#) (Dutch only).

Sometimes a child can be exempted of compulsory education. This is only allowed in exceptional cases such as a funeral or a marriage. It can also happen that a child is unable to go to school because of physical or psychological reasons.

End of compulsory education

Compulsory education lasts until the end of the school year. A young person who becomes 16 year during a school year has to finish the school year first. A school year in the Netherlands runs from the 1st of August until the 1st of August the next year. When a child has followed school education for at least 12 school years, compulsory education is finished automatically. Skipping a school year counts as a fully followed school year.

Why compulsory education?

According to national government compulsory education is one of the measures to prevent school dropout. The measure has to increase the opportunities for young people to start at the labour market. Read more on the [governmental website](#) (only in Dutch).

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Partnership between education and youth care

All children and young people have the right to the best opportunities to develop themselves. Preconditions for this are the cohesion between and the good quality of upbringing, education, support, help, care and guidance. This requires close cooperation between all parties concerned, to work on a comprehensive offer for children and young people.

Appropriate Education Act

The aim of the Appropriate Education Act ([Wet op het passend onderwijs](#)), which came into force on the 1st of August 2014, is that all children get placed in a school that fits their qualities and capacities, also when they need extra support. That is why schools in the same region work together in a partnership. The law says that these partnerships are obliged to have a supporting plan with at least agreements on:

- The level of basic support available at the schools;
- The way the support system is organised in and between the schools;
- The distribution of means.

According to the Appropriate Education Act a partnership of schools is also obliged to adapt their support plan to the municipal policy plan. Sometimes it is necessary for education, youth care and the municipality to adjust their responsibilities and actions concerning the individual support of a child.

A school has to offer every pupil enrolled at the school a well-matched form of education. This is compulsory by law. If the school cannot provide the required education it is obliged to propose a better offer to the parents at another school within the partnership.

Funding

All schools, including schools for special education, receive a set amount of money for basic costs per registered pupil. The partnership of schools also receives an additional budget for extra support, related to the number of pupils in the partnership schools together. Before the Appropriate Education Act entered into force (1st August 2014) the means for extra support were distributed unevenly throughout the country.

Evaluations of appropriate education

The introduction of appropriate education has improved the organisation of support for pupils and students. The organisation of support for pupils is less complex and less rigid and, in most regions, there are sufficient facilities to support various groups of pupils. Most parents and pupils are satisfied with the support provided. However, schools' duty of care does not always prevent parents from continuing to look for a suitable place themselves. The effect of the new Act on Appropriate Education on pupils and students cannot be properly determined. These are the conclusions of the final report of a five-year evaluation study ([Eindrapport evaluatie Passend Onderwijs](#)) (2020) by researchers of the Kohnstamm Institute ([Kohnstamm Instituut](#)), the [TIAS School for Business and Society](#) of [Tilburg University](#) and [KBA Nijmegen](#).

The researchers experienced difficulties in determining whether pupils receive more tailor-made support since the implementation of appropriate education. In their report *The state of education 2020* ([De Staat van het Onderwijs 2020](#)) the [Inspectorate of Education](#) (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) also concluded that since the introduction of appropriate education, there is a lack of insight on the national level into pupils who need extra support. This makes it difficult to determine to which extent pupils are being offered appropriate and effective support at school and what barriers they encounter.

In addition, the Kohnstamm Institute, the TIAS School for Business and Society and KBA Nijmegen found that schools appreciate their freedom to organise support. Consultation between education and youth care takes place, but in practice education and youth care are often two separate domains. Schools experience difficulties in making arrangements with youth care providers about support for pupils: they have to deal with changes in youth care teams, with a lack of clarity about the coordination of care, and with waiting lists for examination and treatment. Furthermore, schools and parents are troubled by discussions about cost bearing. Especially schools for special education experience these challenges. The Inspectorate of Education shares the conclusion that organising extra support has become more complex due to the decentralisation of youth care in 2015. The inspectorate's report also shows that special education schools have more pupils with more complex problems.

25 measures to improve appropriate education

In 2020 the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Media ([Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#)) announced 25 measures to improve appropriate education, in response to the outcomes of the aforementioned five-year evaluation study ([Eindrapport evaluatie Passend Onderwijs](#)) of the Act on Appropriate Education ([Wet op het passend onderwijs](#)). Concerning cross-sectorial cooperation, schools must better use the expertise of youth care services. Schools, municipalities and (youth)care organisations will have a legal obligation to make a plan to offer appropriate education to pupils and their parents. The letter Evaluation and Improvement Strategy Appropriate Education ([Kamerbrief Evaluatie en Verbeteraanpak Passend Onderwijs](#)) that was sent to Parliament on 4th November 2020 lists all measures taken.

Alignment with support and care under the Child and Youth Act

With the Child and Youth Act ([Jeugdwet](#)) (see for more information paragraph 1.2) municipalities are responsible for all support, help and care for youth. In line with this law, municipalities write policy plans for prevention, youth care, child protection measures and youth probation periodically. The plans encompass the vision and goals, coherence in youth policies, the aimed results, monitoring and outcome criteria.

- According to the Child and Youth Act the municipal youth policy plan has to aim at, among other things, prevention and early detection, and the strengthening of the educative climate in families, neighbourhoods and schools. Communication and connection with the education sector are necessary. Municipalities are therefore obliged to coordinate their youth policy plan with the support plan of the primary and secondary schools' partnership in their municipality. Coordination of the youth policy plan with vocational education is desirable, but not legally required. If professionals deem this necessary, the municipality has to consult with youth care organisations and educational institutes about individual treatment and support. This applies to primary, secondary and vocational education.

Funding

Central government provides each municipality with basic funding per youth to pay for all support, help and care related to the Child and Youth Act ([Jeugdwet](#)). According to an objective distribution model some municipalities receive extra budget based on risk and protective factors, such as poverty or psychiatric problems of parents. Paragraph 1.7 explains this in more detail.

Pilot projects to better combine care and education

In a pilot project the national government, together with initiatives in which care and education are combined, examines custom-made solutions to better arrange both care and education for youth with (considerable) needs. Between May 2021 and June 2022, 15 living labs ([proeftuinen](#)) that offer a combination of education and care are supported by the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) and the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport). The living labs should generate

customised solutions for youth who need additional care and educational support. The results will be used to improve services, funding and legislation for these children and young people.

Financing care during school hours for youth with complex needs is simplified through collective funding instead of separate financial flows for different types of care. This is also examined in a pilot project.

More information

The online file on 'Connecting education and youth care' ([Verbinding onderwijs en jeugdhulp](#)) on the website of the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut) provides best practices, tips, quality indicators and information about the connection between education and youth care for municipalities, partnerships, school boards, schools for secondary vocational education (MBO) and youth care organisations. More information about appropriate education can be found on the [English website](#) of the national government as well as the [governmental website in Dutch](#). Information on funding and all laws and regulations concerning the youth sector in the Netherlands is described in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.7 as well as the factsheet 'Find your way in the laws of the youth system' ([Wegwijs in de wetten van het jeugdstelsel](#)) (2015) of the Netherlands Youth Institute.

Governance

Main Executive and legislative bodies

Overall responsibility for the education system lies with the State, specifically the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the State Secretary (junior minister) for Education, Culture and Science. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science lays down statutory requirements for [early childhood education](#), [primary](#) and [secondary](#) education and [secondary vocational education](#), and has overall control of adult general secondary education ([VAVO](#)). The government lays down the framework within which higher education institutions ([higher professional education](#) and [universities](#)) have to operate, but it is the responsibility of the competent authority of each institution to expand on the government framework in the teaching and examination regulations. The provincial authorities' role in education is limited to supervisory and legal tasks. The administration and management of primary and secondary schools and schools for secondary vocational education is organized locally.

General administration at regional level

The Netherlands is divided into 12 provinces. The involvement of the provincial authorities mainly takes the form of statutory supervisory and judicial duties. The Provincial Council ensures the availability of adequate numbers of publicly run primary and secondary schools and acts as the appeal body for private schools with regard to decisions taken by the municipal authorities. With regard to the management of schools and the curriculum, the role of the provinces is limited, partly because they cannot be the competent authority of an educational institution.

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

There is no national strategy concerning early leaving from education and training.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

Policy on school dropout

The [national government](#), schools and municipalities together take measures to help young people to resume their school career. The strategy to tackle early school leaving ([aanpak voortijdig schoolverlaten](#)) consists of three components:

1. Schools for secondary education and secondary vocational education themselves prevent early school leaving as much as possible.
2. Municipalities approach young people when they leave school without a starting qualification or if they play truant often.
3. Schools and municipalities cooperate on a regional level in 39 Regional Report and Coordination Centres ([Regionale- Meld en Coördinatiepunten](#)). All regions have a plan with measures, like extra preventive support for young people at schools by youth work or youth care professionals and coaching to help young people to make informed study choices.

Central government allocates money for all components of this strategy.

The aims of the strategy are:

- To diminish the number of school drop-outs by 3,000 in 2024 compared to the 2019-2020 school year, which means a maximum of 20,000 new school-leavers in 2024.
- To guide early school leavers back to school or work.
- To help young people in vulnerable positions to make the transition to further education or a job.

For the period 2020-2024 the [Minister of Education, Culture and Science](#) (minister van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) will give specific attention to:

- Parental involvement.
- The connection between multi-faceted problems of youth and their parents and early school leaving.
- The legal expansion of the Regional Report and Coordination Centres' target group to 23- to 27-year-olds.
- Data sharing between municipalities, schools and other relevant partners.
- Agreements with employers organisations to prevent students leaving education without a diploma.
- Streamlining the strategy with measures taken as part of the Pact for youth not in education (see below).

The letter to Parliament about the progress of the strategy on early school leaving ([Kamerbrief over voortgang aanpak voortijdig schoolverlaten](#)) of the 12th of February 2021 outlines these measures in more detail.

National pact for youth not in education

In 2016 the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) and the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport) concluded a Pact for children and youngsters not in education ([Thuiszitterspact](#)), with the sector organisations for primary and secondary education (the [PO-Raad](#) and the [VO-raad](#)), the [Ministry of Justice and Security](#) (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid) and the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten). The goal of the pact was that in 2020 no child or youngster would be at home without a suitable offer for education and/or care. The parties involved agreed to stimulate and to support municipalities and school partnerships (see paragraph 6.2) in every region to realise a comprehensive strategy for children and youngsters not in education.

In January 2020 [Cabinet](#) sent a [letter](#) to Parliament (only in Dutch) to declare that despite all efforts, the goal of the pact had not been reached yet. Additional national measures were taken:

- To expand the definition of children and young people not in education in order to include all of these youth.
- A national registration of school absence with real-time figures and the average amount of school absence days.
- To legally enable school partnerships to receive school absence figures from the school absence register.
- To improve cooperation between care and educational institutions to offer more children and youngsters with ailments, illnesses and disabilities the support they need.
- An adjustment of the statutory exemption of education in the Act on Compulsory Education ([Leerplichtwet](#)): Exemptions can only be approved based on severe physical and mental illness and can never be the result of a lack of an appropriate offer of education.
- To improve access to and the organisation of (specialised) youth care as well as regional cooperation.
- Research about (the prevention of) permitted school absence.

Corona crisis related measures

In 2020 [Cabinet](#) sent a [letter to Parliament](#) about measures to tackle problems due to the corona crisis, including early school leaving. Cabinet made available € 8 million extra for the period 2020-2021 for the aforementioned Regional Report and Coordination Centres ([Regionale- Meld en Coördinatiepunten](#)) to execute their regular tasks, to support former school drop-outs who are expected to lose their jobs or have already lost them and to increase cooperation with regional partner organisations. Corona crisis related measures to integrate young people in the labour market are outlined in paragraph 3.6.

On 17th February 2021 the National Programme Education ([Nationaal Programma Onderwijs](#)) was launched. This €8.5 billion support programme for primary, secondary, secondary vocational and higher education is aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students who are struggling as a consequence of the corona crisis and the measures taken by Cabinet to reduce the spread of the virus (e.g. school closures and online education). This national programme targets the cognitive, executive as well as the social-emotional development of youth and therefore may contribute to the prevention of early school leaving. Schools receive extra funding and support for two years to identify the needs of individual pupils and to take appropriate action. Municipalities receive extra budget to offer additional activities to stimulate the cognitive, executive, social and emotional skills of pupils, in cooperation with schools, childcare, (youth health) care, libraries and other parties.

Vocational training and the job market

An important part of the vocational educational training programmes consists of working and learning in practice, known as work placements. The organisation responsible for this programme is the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market](#) (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven). The foundation advises the ministers of [Education, Culture and Science](#) and of [Economic Affairs and Climate Policy](#) on ways to link vocational education and the job market. They differentiate between practice placements and apprenticeships. More about this educational route of learning by doing can be found in paragraph 3.5.

Employment support

The strategy on early school leaving is related to youth employment measures, like the Action Plan Youth Unemployment ([Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#)), which are explained in paragraph 3.6.

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Public career guidance targeting young people takes place within formal education institutions. Every pupil has a mentor, who can coach him or her when necessary. Also a school career adviser can counsel pupils on how to approach their studies and future career opportunities. No information was found regarding informal education providers.

The business sector is an important actor for offering work placements to students. To achieve this the ministries started a partnership with the business sector. Read more about this in chapter 3.4 Career Guidance and Counselling.

The Dutch [government](#) (Rijksoverheid) does not only focus on students in secondary schools, but has also developed measures for students in secondary vocational education ([Betere aansluiting mbo op arbeidsmarkt](#)). The Ministry of [Education, Culture and Science](#) is responsible for these policy measures. You can read more about these policy measures in the following paragraphs.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

In a letter to Parliament about the progress of the strategy on early school leaving ([Kamerbrief over voortgang aanpak voortijdig schoolverlaten](#)) of the 12th of February 2021 the Minister of [Education, Culture and Science](#) announces to streamline the two national strategies on early school leaving and on youth not in education (as described above). Specific attention will be given to adjusting education and care through the Improvement Agenda Appropriate Secondary Vocational Education ([Verbeteragenda Passend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs](#)) (October 2020).

In January 2020, [Cabinet](#) declared in a letter to Parliament about youth not in education ([Kamerbrief over thuiszitters januari 2020](#)) to improve cooperation between care and educational institutions to offer more children and youngsters with ailments, illnesses and disabilities the support they need. Pilot projects to better combine care and education were launched. Read more about these pilot projects in paragraph 6.2.

No more information on cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions could be found.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

Experience certificate

The Experience certificate ([Ervaringscertificaat EVC](#)) describes one's abilities, knowledge and work experience. When people have worked for a long time already, they might work above their level of education. They are able to do more and they know more than their diplomas lead to expect. It is possible to recognize this knowledge gathered into an Experience certificate. It strengthens people's position in the labour market. People not currently working or without a diploma can also apply for an EVC.

Applications for an EVC take place at a recognized EVC provider nearby, often an education institute but possibly also a branch organization. The costs of an EVC can (partly) be paid by the employer, or the local employment agency or local social services. The costs of an EVC are tax deductible.

Information and guidance

Learn and work

The programme Learn and work ([Leren en werken](#)) (only in Dutch), supported by the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#), exists since 2009. Its aim is to strengthen the connection between education, the training market, the job market and job opportunities. Focal points are to improve workplace learning (learning while working), career counselling and the use of the Experience certificate ([Ervaringscertificaat EVC](#)), which describes one's abilities, knowledge and work experience. Above, in this paragraph, EVC is explained in more detail. To better connect these fields there are one or more Learn and work counters in all 35 Labour market regions ([Arbeidsmarktregio's](#)) in the Netherlands. For more information about Labour market regions please see Chapter 3. Employment and Entrepreneurship, par. 3.2 Administration and Governance.

Learn and work counters

Learn and work counters ([Leerwerkloketten](#)) are regional meeting places of education, entrepreneurs, employers and government (municipalities and the Employee Insurance Agency - Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemers Verzekeringen [UWV](#)). They develop activities, arrangements, products and services and give independent advice to pupils, students, workers, job-seekers and employers.

The Learn and work programme is financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Regional partners support the Learn and work counters in their region. The national Learn and work team works together with other relevant national stakeholders.

Quality assurance

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

In this section, Cross border-mobility is interpreted as internationalization.

Internationalization in education [Nuffic](#) is the Dutch organization for internationalization in education, from primary and secondary education to vocational and higher education and research. Their ambition is international experience for every pupil and student. The Nuffic head office is in The Hague and they have 11 offices around the world. Together with national and international partners, they strive to further the development of pupils and students, as well as the development of teachers, professionals and organizations. Nuffic provides information about scholarships, internationalization, diploma recognition, study and work in the Netherlands and capacity building.

Cross-border learning mobility in higher education

In the publication [Outgoing student mobility in Dutch higher education, 2015-2016](#), Nuffic elaborates on cross-border learning mobility of students in higher education. In 2013-2014 approximately 13.700 internationally mobile Dutch students officially enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree programme abroad. This amounted to exactly 2% of the total number of students enrolled in higher education in the Netherlands, putting the Netherlands' outgoing degree mobility ratio at 2 in 100 students. Around two thirds of these students received a Dutch government grant or loan during their studies abroad.

Trends over time in mobility of higher education

The Nuffic publication points out that, in general, the Netherlands has seen an upward trend in degree mobility since 2006-2007. The sudden drop in the total number of outgoing degree students in 2013-2014 was at least partially due to a data quality issue. Over time, the number of Dutch degree students enrolling in programmes at a master's level has gone up. Since 2009, the number of students enrolled in bachelor's programmes abroad

has grown 40% to 6,900. By comparison, the number enrolling for master's degrees has since grown 100% to 3,100. Furthermore, given that master's programmes average around half the duration of the typical bachelor's programme, outgoing mobility for '1st-year' Dutch degree students abroad is much higher at the master's level.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Governmental interest

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science ([Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap](#)) (OCW) is the responsible ministry for cross-border mobility in education.

The Ministry aims to stimulate international experience for students and devotes special attention to the subject of education and internationalization on the central government [website](#).

The government encourages students to study or do an internship abroad as it will benefit Dutch economy. This includes students in higher education as well as in vocational education. On its website, the Government states that there is a need for well-educated employees with international experience to maintain the Dutch role in the world economy. By studying or doing an internship abroad, young people learn about and get to know other languages and cultures. At the same time, they learn what distinguishes their own country from others and what connects countries with each other. Also, foreign experience helps students to find a job more easily.

Many colleges and universities offer exchange programmes with foreign educational institutes. A student can study abroad partially or full time. About 17% of Dutch students in higher education studies abroad partially, and about 2,3% full time. In vocational education, almost 6% of the students follow full education abroad. Most of them engage in a (short time) internship abroad.

Holland Scholarship

Together with universities and colleges the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science distributes 1536 scholarships every year in the [Holland Scholarship](#) programme (only in Dutch). They are:

- 768 scholarships for talented international students outside the European Economic Area (EEA), [Europese Economische Ruimte \(EER\)](#), who want to study for a bachelor or master degree in the Netherlands;
- 768 scholarships for Dutch students who want to study, do an internship or research in a country outside the EEA.

Next to this, the cabinet creates other possibilities for internationalization for Dutch higher education. With the [Bill on Stimulating internationalization of higher education and scientific research](#) (only in Dutch) the cabinet unfolds their plans on the subject. With passing the law the cabinet wants to set rules and regulations for the following:

Promotion rights: to have the authorization to promote a scientist with a 'doctor's' degree;

- To allow Dutch institutions for higher education to ask permission to cater an educational path abroad;
- To allow universities and colleges to lower or remit college fees for students who are embarking on a combined study in the Netherlands and abroad;
- To be able to equate the Dutch degree of 'doctor' with the common PhD degree abroad;
- To enable students to study abroad with financial support of their institutions' profiling fund.

The Bill applies as of 1 September 2017, except for the possibility to allow Dutch institutions for higher education to ask permission to cater an educational path abroad. In 2018 the starting point of this part of the Bill will be published.

International experience for students in vocational education

The central government feels that more vocational students should be able to gain experience abroad. The EU-programme Erasmus+ offers extensive possibilities. Besides that, as of 2015 there is a national budget of € 5 million each year for the international exchange of students and teachers. This is part of the [excellence programme](#) (kwaliteitsplan) for vocational education.

Erasmus+

A budget of almost € 500 million has been set aside for 7 years (2014-2020) for the internationalization of Dutch education as of December 2013 by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. This was announced in the national news and published on governments [website](#) (only in Dutch) on 10 December 2013. The money was put into the European programme Erasmus+. The budget is meant for exchange programmes in education, language education and internships through which both students and teachers in primary, secondary, vocational and higher education can acquire knowledge abroad.

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

New coalition

In a [news item](#) published on their website (26 October 2017), Nuffic reports about the inauguration of the new cabinet of that day: Rutte III. This is the third period of Prime Minister Mark Rutte to lead the Netherlands and again as the Minister at the [Ministry of General Affairs](#). Despite the fact that the debate about the government statement still had to take place that week, Nuffic stated that one fact was clear: internationalization will be getting a lot of attention in the new coalition. Foreign students will still be welcome. The new cabinet wants to make Dutch higher education more attractive for international students. The easy access has to be kept. For Dutch students, it has to become easier to study abroad.

English language

The new cabinet will see to it sharply that the law on education institutes only using English language with added value and sufficient quality, is applied correctly. Besides that, there has to be a sufficient number of institutes offering education in Dutch. Nuffic endorses this initiative and appreciates the use of English in education as a positive development. Good education in a foreign language offers students the possibility to improve their language proficiency and expands their view on the world. However, it is important to carefully consider an appropriate balance between Dutch and English with attention to language proficiency, international competences and application per field of expertise.

Mobility of young people and youth workers

Key action 1 of the programme Erasmus+ stimulates the mobility of young people and youth workers in Europe. Young people boost their chances by participating in youth exchanges and volunteer projects. Subsidy is also possible for the professional development of youth workers by means of training and network activities.

Quality assurance

In the article [Quality assurance and internationalization](#) (November 2017), Nuffic writes that quality assurance is steadily gaining importance in the field of internationalization. Internationalization is no longer regarded as a goal in itself, but as a means to improve the quality of education. At the same time, proof of any connection between internationalization and the quality of education is limited. In the article, Nuffic gives information about three items that cover aspects of quality assurance:

- Manual of Quality Assurance in Internationalization, by EAIE (June 2010);
- GIQAC (Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity) partnership, by the World Bank and UNESCO (2008);
- Checklists to measure internationalization developed by [Inholland University of Applied Sciences](#) in the Netherlands (2009), in accordance with the EQUIS accreditation standard, that allow schools to measure ten different aspects of internationalization. The results are categorized in five different phases or levels of internationalization. The lists can be used as a baseline measurement with internationalization activities.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

General approach for equal opportunities in education

The Equal Opportunities Alliance ([Gelijke Kansen Alliantie](#)) (only in Dutch), an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, was launched by both Minister Bussemaker and Secretary of State Dekker in October 2016 in [a letter to the Lower House of Parliament](#). Together with stakeholders within and outside the educational field, the Alliance promotes equal opportunities in education for all children. The Alliance is a partnership between teachers, parents, schools, employers and civil society. Main targets are smoother transitions between school types, learning from each other, awareness raising, and space to experiment.

The corresponding Investing in equal opportunities ([Investeren in gelijke kansen](#)) programme (2018) aims to give children of low skilled parents the same opportunities as their peers with higher educated parents. The national government collaborates with municipalities on joint multi-year Equal Opportunities agendas that comprise agreements about analysing data, conducting research and executing experiments and local interventions. This is performed in cooperation with schools and social organisations. The agendas are attuned to the local situation and problems in a municipality. School leaders, team leaders and teachers have the possibility to participate in communities around a specific theme in which knowledge is developed and shared. Part of the programme too is a [toolkit](#), being offered to municipalities, schools, other educational institutes and social organisations which enables them to enhance equal opportunities.

Equal opportunities as part of the National Programme Education

The Equal Opportunities Alliance ([Gelijke Kansen Alliantie](#)) was given an active role in the National Programme Education ([Nationaal Programma Onderwijs](#)) that was launched on 17th February 2021. This €8.5 billion support programme for primary, secondary, secondary vocational and higher education is aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students who are struggling due to the corona crisis and the measures taken by [Cabinet](#) to reduce the spread of the virus (e.g. school closures and online education). As part of the National Programme Education, the Equal Opportunities Alliance expands its activities to support municipalities. For example, the alliance will expand the use of expert pools and regional coordinators who can advise municipalities and help them design and implement measures. The alliance will also expand the number of participating municipalities from the current 50 or so to approximately 100 municipalities over time. Existing networks and structures between municipalities, education and other partners will be utilised as much as possible and connected to the local context.

Transitions between school levels

The Act on Equal Chances on Transition to HAVO and VWO ([Wet gelijke kans op doorstroom naar havo en vwo](#)) (2020) gives pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) and senior general secondary education (HAVO) pupils, who have obtained their diploma and meet certain demands, the right to continue secondary education at a higher level at

the school of their choice. However, transitions between school levels provide a major bottleneck. Parents with a lower education run a risk of making further education choices for their children that do not do justice to their children's talents. These parents have little or no experience and insufficient knowledge of the possibilities of the Dutch education system. That is why the ministry decided to invest in so-called Switch classes ([Schakelklassen](#)) (only in Dutch). In the transition between primary and secondary education it concerns children who do not get stimulated at home or have language or learning disadvantages. In pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) pupils may participate in a so-called Switch programme (Schakelprogramma) where they prepare themselves for the first year of senior general secondary education (HAVO) or secondary vocational education (MBO). Universities of applied sciences (HBO) offer transition programmes to secondary vocational education students, for example a [three month programme](#) (only in Dutch) for future technical students at [Windesheim](#). (See for an explanation about Dutch school types paragraph 6.1.2).

Research

Evidence of various studies, among others of the [Inspectorate of Education \(Inspectie van het Onderwijs\)](#), [the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy WRR \(Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid WRR\)](#), [the Netherlands Institute for Social Research SCP \(Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau SCP\)](#) and [OECD \(OESO\)](#), shows that children with equal talents do not have equal opportunities in education. Their opportunities are partly determined by the level of education of their parents and the support they can provide for their children. Instead of decreasing, the differences sometimes can grow when children go to school.

Support for low-skilled parents

An amount of € 1.3 million is assigned to the programme 'Count me in with language' ([Tel mee met taal](#), 2022) (only in Dutch). Parents with limited language skills will be trained, coached and supported in parenting.

Students as role model

On 6 July 2017 former Minister Bussemaker of [Education, Culture and Science](#) launched the [Students-4-Students campaign](#) (only in Dutch). Students in higher education are coaches or role models matched to students in secondary vocational education (MBO) or to students who just started higher education. Their aims are to achieve a better flow and less dropout in and towards higher education. A yearly budget of € 1 million is available for this campaign. The project runs from 2017 to 2022.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

Knowledge centre

The Knowledge Centre Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion in secondary vocational education ([Kennispunt MBO Gelijke Kansen, Diversiteit en Inclusie](#)) is an (online) platform of the [Dutch VET Council](#) (MBO Raad) that started in October 2020. It offers information, advice, experience and practical examples about equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion to all educational professionals and schools in secondary vocational education. Eight VET-schools receive extra support in addressing specific issues.

Internship discrimination

10 percent of the students looking for an internship experience discrimination, according to [research](#) executed by [The Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) in 2020. For young people with a (non-western) migration background it takes more effort to find an internship and their job applications are rejected more often compared to students without a migration background. Because internship discrimination may play a role, in recent years the Ministries of [Social Affairs and Employment](#) (Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid) and [Education, Culture and Science](#) have undertaken a variety of actions against internship discrimination. Among other

things, research to effective interventions against internship discrimination, an investigation of the differences in chances on the labour market for higher education students with and without a migration background, the implementation of a hotline and a reporting app, a campaign and training for companies, schools and secondary vocational students in the LOB/Equal Opportunities ([LOB/Gelijke Kansen](#)) project.

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

Middle vocational education (MBO)

As previously described in Chapter 3, Paragraph 8, the government is striving to make vocational education more attractive and accessible for students. Since the newly installed cabinet Rutte III (26 October 2017), the government has put forward several new plans to improve the quality of vocational education and the connection and transition between the lower, middle and higher levels. This includes the improvement of skills for innovation. New plans are presented on the [governments website](#) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences:

The cabinet has expressed that they want to stimulate the transition in vocational education from lower level (VMBO) to middle level (MBO) and from middle level to higher level (HBO). It wants students with MBO level 1 and 2 to finish earlier, when they complete their lower level vocational education (VMBO). This is stated in the coalition 'Faith in the future' ([Regeerakkoord 'Vertrouwen in de toekomst'](#)) (10 October 2017).

Furthermore, the cabinet wants to introduce a vocational certificate for students in middle vocational education (MBO) who have not completed their pre-entering or level 2 diploma. The certificate should show what a student has learned until then. Students with a vocational certificate have to be enabled to get a diploma later on.

In new budget rounds for the connection between middle vocational education (MBO) and the labour market (12 October 2017), the budget has been allotted to 9 partnerships. The partnerships are collaborations between MBO schools in the fields of care and welfare, building, media, entrepreneurship and security. They receive a total budget of 9 million to improve the connection between MBO education and the labour market. With this budget the total investments of business, education and government in this round is about 27 million euro.

Some examples of partnerships that receive part of the budget are:

- Regional Education Centre (ROC) of Twente together with the Twente Care Academy. Twente is an area in the province of Overijssel in the North of the Netherlands. The partnership is an innovative learn-and-work, practice and test environment.
- Techniek College Rotterdam, a partnership of the Albeda College and the Zadkine College in Rotterdam. They get the funds to improve the connection between their Practorate Cloud Engineering ICT and the companies involved.
- The educational programme 'The Rotterdam Plus' of the Albeda College, Zadkine College and Hoornbeek College to provide more employees with a MBO level 2 education with jobs in nursing homes in the region of Rotterdam.

Regional Investment Fund MBO ([Regionaal Investeringsfonds MBO](#))

The target of the Regional Investment Fund of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to better prepare MBO students for the current and future labour market, by introducing them to and letting them work with state of the art technics and methods during their study. 103 partnerships have already been established in the Netherlands. Partnerships of schools and companies have two possibilities to send in their plans and apply for financing next year. The first round is in January 2018.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

Non-formal and informal learning

The Erasmus+ programme is a large-scale initiative that enables young people to develop their skills and competences. See Chapter 3, Paragraph 8 for more information.

There are no national initiatives for fostering innovation through non-formal and informal youth work apart from the Erasmus+ programme.

Innovation in youth work

The method Youth Organizing is an example of an innovate method for urban youth work. The method has been analysed and the workable elements of the method were identified and described to be transmissible to improve the quality and the effectiveness of youth work in general.

The Youth Spot Lectorate of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences published the report [Onderzoek naar Youth Organizing als specifieke methodiek van het grootstedelijk jongerenwerk](#) (Researching Youth Organizing as a specific method of urban youth work) (2017). The authors describe how youth workers and their organizations in Amsterdam, Haarlem and Zaanstad use Youth Organizing as a method in urban youth work. The results are positioned in literature and form the basis for an evidence-based method description of Youth Organizing in youth work.

Academie van de Stad (Academy of the City)

Students of the Minor Creativity and Innovation of the Amsterdam Academy of Applied Sciences came up with ideas to motivate young people from two neighbourhoods in Amsterdam, de Pijp and Rivierenbuurt, to actively participate. They pitched their ideas to a jury of employees of the municipality, Academie van de Stad and a youth worker. The students came up with reactive and innovative ideas, such as 'Spray to spray' for pupils of primary schools to write positive and negative comments about their neighbourhood on banners, and an app to discuss and chat with other young people from the same neighbourhood. Selected as the best idea was 'The River & Pipe games', a series of games with obstacles. This race between various teams of young people from the same neighbourhood is played twice a year. In each game, they find an answer to a question of the municipality. The teams are followed in an online series. The winner will help the municipality to implement the solution. The city council decides how they are going to use the students' ideas.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

The [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) is responsible for national policy on media. The [national government](#) helps parents and educators to educate children in dealing with media as outlined in this paragraph.

Dutch Digitalisation Strategy

There is no national strategy on media literacy and safe use of new media, but there is a general digitalisation strategy that pays attention to media literacy. Since 2018 all national policies concerning digitalisation are collected in the Dutch Digitalisation Strategy 2021 ([Nederlandse Digitaliseringsstrategie 2021](#)), in coherence with the Dutch Cyber Security Agenda ([Nederlandse Cybersecutiry Agenda](#)) and the Agenda Digital Government ([Agenda Digitale Overheid: NL DIGIbeter](#)). The Dutch Digitalisation Strategy 2021 focuses on artificial intelligence, the use of data, digital skills and inclusion, digital connectivity, digital

resilience, digital governance and digital cooperation on different governmental levels. It specifically targets youth by increasing school curricula.

One aim of the strategy is that youngsters possess proper basic IT and information skills and are 'media wise' (in the Netherlands, media literacy is called 'mediawijsheid', which translates into media wisdom and which is defined as the ability to access media and to understand, critically evaluate, create and communicate media content). Digital literacy and practical skills will be incorporated in the new school curricula for primary and secondary education, that were still in development in 2021 (see paragraph 6.10). An action plan for the digitalisation of education is prepared, which should increase the quality of digital education. Teachers will receive targeted support and digital teaching resources will be improved. Another aim of the Dutch Digitalisation Strategy 2021 is that institutes for secondary vocational education and higher education improve students' digital skills as well as the transition from education to the labour market. Among other things, lecturers are trained and supported to digitalise education. Lastly, in a living lab, the [University of Tilburg](#) (Universiteit van Tilburg) examines the influence of digital resources on the balance between work and private life, school performance, social relations and welfare. The aim is to further develop courses and other services to enhance digital skills.

Facts and figures

Use of social media among young people

According to [Statistics Netherlands](#) (Centraal Bureau Statistiek [CBS](#)), almost all Dutch young people between 12 and 25 years old (99,7 percent in 2019) have access to internet facilities. 96 percent of Dutch youngsters used the internet (almost) every day in 2019 (compared to 93 percent in 2015). The use of laptops, tablets and mobile phones increased between 2014 and 2019, the use of PC's and desktops decreased. 96 percent of the young people were active on social media, both in 2014 and 2019. Internet phone calls were clearly more common in 2019 (78 percent) than in 2014 (47 percent). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are popular social media platforms among Dutch youngsters. In 2018 girls used the internet more often for social networks than boys did.

Digital literacy rate

Young people between 12 to 25 years old have become more proficient in using the internet, computers and software compared to 2015, reported [Statistics Netherlands](#) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS](#)). The digital competence of young people was determined by results in four sub-areas: Communication, information, computers/online services and software. Having more than one skill in a sub-area meant having more than basic skills in that sub-area. 72 percent of young people had more than basic skills in 2019, up from 63 percent in 2015. These rates are significantly higher than compared to the over-25s age category. In 2019, Dutch young people ranked second on digital literacy among European young people. Read more about the digital literacy rate on the website of Statistics Netherlands: More young people are digitally literate ([Meer jongeren digitaal vaardig](#)) (only in Dutch).

Media use

The Digital News Report the Netherlands 2021 ([Digital News Report Nederland 2021](#)) of the [Dutch Media Authority](#) (Commissariaat voor de Media) shows that in 2021, 9 out of 10 young people used social media to learn about the news, to spread news and to comment on news. Although mainstream media and professional journalists are the main news suppliers on social media like Twitter and Facebook, they compete with alternative news channels and influencers. Compared to senior citizens, young people visited news websites or apps less and more often used a search engine to visit a news website or to search for news items. Two-third of the young people between 18 and 24 years old used news collection websites to access news. 80 percent of young people weakly watched news video's and two-third listened to podcasts monthly, mainly on Spotify and YouTube. The portion of young people that trusted news on social media increased slightly in 2021.

Young people expected news media to pick a certain point of view in case of doubt, instead of staying neutral.

Media literacy

72 percent of the young people between 18 and 30 years old consider themselves capable of recognizing fake news, but thinks that only 16 percent of the other Dutchmen shares that capability. This is reported by the [Dutch Media Authority](#) (Commissariaat voor de Media) in The Digital News Report the Netherlands 2021 ([Digital News Report Nederland 2021](#)). More young people than senior citizens doubt the trustworthiness of the news and that number keeps growing. Doubt is young people's basic attitude towards news. They have grown up with a large scale of digital resources and they do not trust any truth immediately, in principle. They consider trustworthiness as a process they own themselves, similar to defining 'an opinion' that can be adjusted based on new information.

However, in the Monitor Digital Literacy Secondary Education 2021 (Monitor Digitale Geletterdheid Voortgezet Onderwijs 2021), teachers in secondary education (with pupils between 12 and 18 years old) rate their pupils' literacy skills a 5,5 on a scale from 0 to 10. This rate is even lower at schools with predominantly disadvantaged pupils: 4,1.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Dutch schools are not obliged to have media literacy and online safety education in their curriculum. Attention to digital literacy, including media literacy, in the current Dutch school curriculum is fragmented and not very coherent. Elements of media literacy (for example information skills, recognizing imaging and insight in the role of mass media in the political decision-making process), are part of the exam goals of the social studies class, an obliged subject for all pupils at secondary school ([maatschappijleer VMBO](#), [maatschappijleer HAVO](#), [maatschappijleer VWO](#)). The optional subject social science ([maatschappijkunde](#) in secondary vocational education and [maatschappijwetenschappen havo](#) and [maatschappijwetenschappen vwo](#) at the higher levels in secondary education) deepens the knowledge and skills obtained.

Although schools do not have an obligation to teach their pupils about media literacy and online safety, they are strongly advised to do so. Many schools are already working to improve the digital citizenship of their students. Meaning that students are aware of social media and use it in a responsible way. This also includes responsible citizenship with regard to the use of internet, cell phone and other media.

[SLO](#) (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling) serves as the national institute for curriculum development for primary, special, secondary and vocational education in the Netherlands. Together with schools, SLO develops continuous learning in digital literacy that pays attention to media literacy, information literacy, computational thinking and basic IT skills. Curriculum frameworks have been created, so-called learning trajectories have been developed and appropriate teaching aids have been sought. SLO's Digital Literacy Subject Portal ([Vakportaal Digitale Geletterdheid](#)) describes the latest developments.

[SLO](#) (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling) is involved in the current development of the new school curricula for primary and secondary education, in which digital literacy will be included. The relevant bill is expected to be sent to Parliament in 2024. See paragraph 6.10 for more information.

Dutch Media Literacy Network

The [national government](#) helps parents and educators to educate children in dealing with media. Therefore, the [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) (Netwerk Mediawijsheid) was established in 2008 at the initiative of the government. The network aims to provide all Dutch citizens with a framework they can use to become more media literate in order to increase their full participation in society. Being 'media literate' means possessing the knowledge and skills to be able to function consciously, critically and actively in a multi-media world.

The [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) helps children, young people, parents and educators to use media safely and responsibly. It also explains the possibilities to use media, organises public campaigns or workshops and carries out research on media use. The network is an expertise centre that links the activities of various organisations in the area of media literacy and promotes cooperation between them. The following five organizations are at the centre's core:

- [Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision](#) (Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid - [NIBG](#));
- Information Society Platform (Platform voor de InformatieSamenleving - [ECP](#)) (only in Dutch);
- [National Library of the Netherlands](#), ([Koninklijke Bibliotheek](#)), Institute for the Public Libraries Sector;
- [Expertise centre for ICT in Education](#) ([Kennisset](#));
- [Dutch Public Broadcasting Company](#) (Nederlandse Publieke Opmroep – [NPO](#)).

These organisations all cover a specific area within the media literacy playing field: raising awareness, providing educational materials and manuals, giving workshops, having projects and doing research on the safe use of media. Additionally, the [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) works with a growing number of network partners. Since 2008, more than 1,100 organisations have registered as network partners. Among the latter are libraries, schools, media producers, museums, research institutes, publishing companies and more. The free network membership enables these organisations to meet, exchange expertise and develop new initiatives.

The [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) provides information to the public and media literacy professionals through three websites:

- [Mediawijsheid.nl](#): about safe and smart use of (digital) media. For each topic, visitors are pointed out to relevant organisations, companies and institutions for more information and/or help. The website aims to reach a broad audience of young people, adults, seniors, educators, caregivers, teachers and people working in government and semi-government, press and business. The website contains specific information for [schools](#), as outlined below.
- [HoeZoMediawijs.nl](#): for fun, safe and smart use of (social) media, aimed at children and youngsters from 10 years old.
- [Netwerkmediawijsheid.nl](#): an online platform for network partners and other professionals in the field of media literacy.

Mediawijsheid.nl: information for schools

[Mediawijsheid.nl](#) (only in Dutch) provides information for school leaders and school boards on how to give media literacy a permanent place in the school:

- Brochures, for example the 'Manual Digital Literacy 2021-2022' ([Handboek Digitale Geletterdheid 2021-2022](#)) for school boards.
- Serious games.
- Educational lessons ([lesmateriaal](#)) for professionals in childcare, primary education, secondary education, secondary vocational education, higher education and special needs education. Also lessons on specific subjects like cyber bullying and online manners, programming and computational thinking, news/fake news and information skills, copyright in relation to presentations and projects, use of smartphones for biology classes; digital images literacy. To know what a media literate pupil or student must know or be able to do, a competence model on media literacy has been developed: [Mediawijsheid Competentiemodel](#).
- On the website of Mediawijsheid two examples are given of search engines:

- ‘Your search engine’ (Jouwzoekmachine.nl) takes children’s reading level into account. It gives relevant information for 6 to 15 year olds.
- [Wikikids](#) is a Wikipedia for children containing educational articles that are adjusted to their age.
- Library and reading skills. The library is the expert area for searching, finding and critically assessing information. Two examples on the information libraries give about media literacy:
- On [Webdetective](#) (only in Dutch) children learn to develop a critical view on information.
- The website ‘Innovation library’ (Innovatiebieb.nl) (only Dutch) is a platform for libraries to share ideas, knowledge and materials about innovation and to learn from each other. Also examples of innovative projects and initiatives on media literacy are given, such as the Action programme ‘Count me in with language’ ([Tel mee met taal](#), 2022) (only in Dutch) of the [national government](#).
- According to MediaWijshheid.nl reading skills are essential for media literacy. Libraries play an increasingly important role in stimulating, supporting and facilitating Dutch people in the area of (new) media. They will become the houses of media literacy.
- Copyrights: On the website MediaWijshheid.nl information is also provided about copyrights ([Auteursrechten](#)) (only in Dutch) on internet and social media.

Do your digi-thing course (Doe je digiding)

Schools may use the teaching materials of the Digi Stronger Foundation ([Stichting Digisterker](#)). This foundation aims to support young people, adults and refugees in communicating digitally with the government and governmental organisations. The foundation has developed a training programme for young people from 15 until 18 years old in [pre-vocational secondary education](#) (VMBO) and [secondary vocational education](#) (MBO): Do your digi-thing! Youngsters and the digital government ([Doe je digiding! Jongeren en de digitale overheid](#)). Participants learn to apply for and to use [DigiD](#) (the digital identification method needed to make arrangements electronically with the government, educational institutes, healthcare institutions, et cetera), to apply for a passport or identity card, to file income tax returns, to apply for study grants and study travel cards, to apply for health insurance, to open a bank account, to shop online, to have their scooters and cars insured, et cetera.

Age limits

Another way in which the [national government](#) helps parents and educators to educate children in dealing with media is through age classification of television programmes, movies and computer games. ‘Watch wisely’ ([Kijkwijzer](#)) warns parents about the age at which a programme or movie can be harmful to watch. All productions receive an age-related advice. Kijkwijzer uses symbols that show the topic of the advice, e.g. violent content, discrimination or use of foul language. The packaging of almost all computer games contains an age advice too: the international [PEGI](#) (Pan European Game Information). This advice points out until which age a game can be harmful, e.g. because it contains gambling, violence or foul language.

In addition, broadcasting companies have to take the young viewers’ age in consideration with their daytime programming: they can only broadcast programmes with the age advice of 12, 14 and 16 year after 8 PM and before 6 AM; programmes with the advice of 18 year should be broadcast after 12 PM and before 6 AM. Shops, cinemas and video libraries are not allowed to offer 16+ productions to young people below that age.

The Netherlands Institute for Classification of Audio-visual Media [NICAM](#) (Nederlands Instituut voor de Classificatie van Audiovisuele Media NICAM) develops the standards for the advice concerning age. NICAM also deals with complaints people might have about the wrong use of the Kijkwijzer advice producers might use. About 3,000 companies are members of NICAM, either directly or through branch organisations:

- Public and commercial broadcasting companies
- On demand services
- Film distributors, DVD distributors and cinemas
- Video libraries
- Game distributors
- Telecommunication operators

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

The role of libraries

Many libraries organise activities to help citizens to use a computer and other devices. For example through drop-in consultations during which media coaches teach children, youngsters and adults about the possibilities and risks of digital media and devices. This to ensure that they can use apps, games and toys connected to the internet safely. Libraries may use the tools of the Digi-Things Desk (Digidingen-Desk) of the Digi Stronger Foundation ([Stichting Digisterker](#)) to establish drop-in consultation hours. As explained above, the foundation also has developed a training programme for young people in [pre-vocational secondary education](#) (VMBO) and [secondary vocational education](#) (MBO): Do your digi-thing! Youngsters and the digital government ([Doe je digiding! Jongeren en de digitale overheid](#)). Libraries, just like schools, offer this training programme.

The programme Library and basic skills ([programma Bibliotheek en basisvaardigheden](#)) of the [National Library of the Netherlands](#) (Koninklijke Bibliotheek) and the Foundation of Collaborative Provincial Support Institutes ([Stichting Samenwerkende POI's Nederland](#)) supports libraries in organising these activities.

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

Tackling online bullying

In the annual 'Week Against Bullying' ([Week Tegen Pesten](#)), 18th to 22nd September 2017, the theme was: 'Online bullying. Deal with it!' During this week teachers were supported with tips and tools to prevent and tackle online bullying. They cooperated with parents, the school team and the students. The [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) and its partners organised many activities to take place in that week. Some examples:

- In the lesson 'Whatshappy' problems with chatting were discussed. It challenged students to make agreements on how they can communicate decently with each other.
- The youth theatre show 'Like' by theatre group PlayBack was all about friendship, group pressure, being excluded, bullying and the influence of social media. Students were confronted with the emotional results of bullying.

Education as a means to enhance (online) fake news resilience among young people

After Donald Trump was elected 45th president of the United States of America, discussions started about the influence of (online) fake news, also in the Netherlands, showed the [Dutch Media Authority](#) (Commissariaat voor de Media) in its [Media Monitor 2018](#) (Mediamonitor 2018). Following these discussions, the Dutch Minister of the [Interior and Kingdom Relations](#) (Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties) took several measures to prevent and tackle disinformation and fake news as well as to raise awareness among citizens. An example of the latter is the online and radio campaign 'Stay critical' ('Blijf kritisch') around the provincial elections in 2019, aimed at the general public including young people. The [Dutch Media Literacy Network](#) (Netwerk Mediawijsheid) was granted a budget to develop initiatives to further increase media literacy among young people and adults. The network in collaboration with [Kennisset](#), [Sound and Vision](#)

(Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid) and the Practical Lectorate Media Literacy ([Practoraat Mediawijsheid](#)) launched the 'A good conversation about wrong information' (['Goed in gesprek over verkeerde informatie'](#)) campaign targeted at young adults in training to work in education, care, welfare and media.

The circulation of fake news and disinformation increased to such levels during the corona virus pandemic that the [World Health Organization](#) called it an *infodemic*, an overabundance of information with deliberate attempts to disseminate wrong information. In response, the Dutch [government](#) informed the public in general: Why does fake news exist on social media ([Waarom staat er nepnieuws op sociale media?](#)), Check list 'Is this information real?' ([Checklist 'Is die informatie echt?'](#)) and [Tips for recognizing misinformation and false content](#) ([Tips om desinformatie en nepnieuws te herkennen](#)).

Many Dutch organisations developed educational tools to enhance media literacy among youngsters. Three examples: [Utrecht University](#) (Universiteit Utrecht) and [SIDN Fund](#) (SIDN Fonds) developed a toolkit with, among other things, [educational measures](#) to increase media literacy. The School & Safety Foundation ([Stichting School & Veiligheid](#)) gives advice on its website about how to deal with tensions and discussions at school ([Corona: spanning en discussie op school](#)), for instance in case of pupils sharing conspiracy theories in the classroom ([Complotten in de klas. Hoe ga je daar als docent mee om?](#)). [Sound and Vision](#) (Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid) offers workshops and training to teachers to support them in increasing their pupils' media literacy concerning information about the corona virus and measures taken: [Nepnieuws en desinformatie in tijden van corona](#). The workshops and training focus specifically on techniques and mechanisms behind news, fake news and disinformation as well as how to deal with an overload of information.

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

Here are examples of Dutch organizations that provide information and counselling to raise awareness about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work:

Social Work Netherlands ([Sociaal Werk Nederland](#))

Sociaal Werk Nederland is the branch organization for social work in the Netherlands. It works together with their members, social work organizations, to strengthen social work. Its goals are:

- To integrally support people in their self-empowerment and social participation, with their own strength and with the help of the environment;
- To stimulate active citizenship and connect volunteers and citizens, informal and formal networks and professionals;
- To offer help or make help available if self-empowerment is lacking.

BVjong

[BV Jong](#) strives to guard, strengthen and stimulate children and youth work in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it lobbies for the interests of the professionals in general and for the preconditions for working professionally. Currently (October 2017), BV Jong is renewing its communication policy and developing new strategies to build networks and create a wider support platform among children and youth workers.

Youth Spot

The [Youth Spot research group](#) of the Amsterdam Academy of Applied Sciences investigates how youth work must innovate to retain its connection to young people and

society and at the same time improve in terms of professionalism and effectiveness. The research group focuses on three issues:

- development-oriented approach;
- diversity;
- participation.

Netherlands Youth Institute

The Netherlands Youth Institute is the Dutch national institute for compiling, verifying and disseminating knowledge on children and youth matters, such as child abuse, youth work, youth care and parenting support in the Netherlands. Main aim is to improve the development of children and young people by increasing the quality and effectiveness of the services rendered to them and their parents. In the NJi information file [Kinder- en jongerenwerk](#) (Children and youth work) children and youth workers can find tips and tools they can use in their work. Nji can help to improve children and youth work with:

- Research and advice;
- Getting a quality mark;
- Training, method description and implementation.

Awareness raising initiatives

National Day of youth work

On the 25th of April 2017 the national Day of youth work ([Dag van het Jongerenwerk](#)) took place at the Amsterdam Academy of Applied Sciences. The day was organized by the Lectorate Youth Spot, BV Jong, Netherlands Youth Institute, Movisie, Social Work Netherlands and Verdiwel, with the support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The event was a work and exchange meeting of, by and for 250 youth workers from all over the Netherlands. Central theme of the day was 'Connecting': the youth worker connecting young people in the neighbourhood; connecting network partners such as the neighbourhoods police officer, social team, school and work; connecting youth workers with each other.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

New school curricula

[Government](#) (Rijksoverheid) is working on updating the school curricula for (special) primary and secondary education, together with teachers, school leaders, scientists and other experts. The curricula are described in educational objectives that consist of core objectives ([kerndoelen](#)) for primary education, special (primary) education, and the junior phase of secondary (special) education and attainment targets ([eindtermen](#)) for the senior phase of secondary (special) education. Government states that the curricula currently used by schools no longer adequately match developments in society and education and too little coherence between the various educational objectives exist. Government bases its statement on the proposal 'Building blocks for a revised curriculum' ([Bouwstenen voor een nieuw curriculum](#)) of teachers and school leaders united in [Curriculum.nu](#) which was followed by four [advice reports](#) (only in Dutch) of the scientific Curriculum Committee ([CurriculumCommissie](#)). The new curricula must better prepare pupils for the future.

The draft core objectives will be tested during a pilot in the school years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 at a number of schools. After a final advice of the scientific committee, the definitive core objectives for primary education and the junior grades of secondary education will be submitted to the [House of Representatives](#) (Tweede Kamer) in a bill in 2024. Gradually all subjects and related exam programmes for the senior phase of

secondary (special) education will be adjusted, to start with the subjects that need updating most urgently: Dutch, modern foreign languages, mathematics, social studies and beta subjects. These subject renewals will start in early 2022. During a pilot project the new exam programmes will be tested at a number of schools.

More information about the new school curricula can be found on the website of the Dutch government: Curricula for the future ([Curriculum voor de toekomst](#)).

Ongoing debates

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education

On 16th March 2020, Dutch schools closed for several months in a response from Cabinet to the rising infections with the new corona virus. Most pupils and students had to rely on distance learning. This first school closure was the start of periods of lockdowns and online education, alternated by periods in which schools were opened with or without additional measures such as part-time online education, adapted group sizes, wearing face masks in the hallway and quarantines for infected persons or whole classes. Additionally, final exam requirements in secondary education were loosened in 2020 and 2021. School closures in secondary vocational education and in higher education lasted longer than in other types of education.

Despite all efforts made by school leaders, teachers and parents to offer appropriate education in times of a severe health crisis, the [Inspectorate of Education](#) (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) had concerns about the quality and continuity of education. It stated in its report The State of Education 2021 ([De Staat van het Onderwijs 2021](#)) that pupils and students were not able to learn and develop themselves optimally. Existing problems in education were enlarged. Also, many students experienced studying at home as difficult, worried about their study progress and said to be more distressed and to show more symptoms of a depression, concluded the [Minister of Education, Culture and Science](#) (Minister van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap) in a letter to parliament about the consequences of COVID-19 on secondary vocational education and higher education ([Kamerbrief over gevolgen COVID-19 in mbo en ho](#)).

As mentioned in paragraph 6.3, the National Programme Education ([Nationaal Programma Onderwijs](#)) was launched on 17th February 2021. This €8.5 billion support programme for primary, secondary, secondary vocational and higher education is aimed at the recovery and development of education, catching up on study delays and the support of pupils and students. The programme targets the cognitive, executive as well as the social-emotional development of youth. Study progress and mental health will be monitored by the Dutch government as the COVID-19 pandemic still unfolds.

Teacher shortages

There are teacher shortages in primary, secondary and vocational education, with the highest shortages in the Randstad (a conurbation in the central-western Netherlands consisting primarily of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht and their surrounding areas). According to [Government](#), there specifically is a lack of secondary education teachers in subjects like German, mathematics and computer science and a lack of secondary vocational education teachers in care and engineering subjects. Many older teachers retire and the intake of new teachers is too low. Yet there is no national insight into the actual size and regional spread of teacher shortages, wrote the [Inspectorate of Education](#) (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) in its report The State of Education 2021 ([De Staat van het Onderwijs 2021](#)).

[Government](#) has taken measures to increase the inflow of new teachers (eg. study grants and discounts on tuition fees), to maintain current teachers (eg. 50 hours of coaching and study time for teachers) and to organise education differently (eg. subsidies for developing innovative types of education and adjusting teacher training). The newly installed Government (January 2022) announced in its coalition agreement ([coalitieakkoord](#)) that the expansion of labour contracts of part-time teachers will be stimulated. Additional

measures will be taken to make working in education more appealing, for example by lowering the work pressure.

Read more about teacher shortages in secondary education and secondary vocational education ([lerarentekort in het voortgezet onderwijs en middelbaar beroepsonderwijs](#)) on the website of the Dutch government.

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Special feature

[The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(VWS\)](#) is the main governmental authority responsible for youth health and wellbeing. However, local implementation and responsibility, for example for youth (mental) health care, often lies with municipalities. Every four years the Ministry of VWS publishes a national Health Policy document, in which the main strategies and themes for the next 4 years are described. In the latest document, three themes were mentioned involving extra attention for youth, namely healthy weight, substance use and sexual health (Paragraph 7.4). Since the introduction of the new Youth Act (2015) more attention is called to the prevention of diseases and problems of young people and parents in the field of health and wellbeing.

Highlights

Over the last years, the concept of positive health became more dominant in the Netherlands, supported by the Dutch government (Paragraph 7.1). One of the Dutch government's aims is to encourage healthy lifestyles in children, especially those growing up in low-income families. Different initiatives are taken to achieve this goal, for example the National Youth Sports Fund (Paragraph 7.3). In the past years, more attention has also been paid to mental health. At the end of 2016, the Ministry of VWS presented the multi-annual Depression Prevention Programme. Youth is one of the target groups within the programme (Paragraph 7.5). National information campaigns are also active within the depression prevention programme, such as the 'Signs of depression campaign'.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

There are changes in the health condition of young people in The Netherlands. This shows in the regular national survey [Health Behaviour in school-aged Children](#), and the [Growing up healthy: Youth Health Survey](#) (RIVM, 2014), which will be described later. The most important change between 2001 and 2013 is the decrease in substance use. Young people up to 15 years old showed a particularly strong decrease in smoking, drinking and cannabis use. However, there is an increase of young people that drink heavily. Dutch young people are also the happiest ones of all European young people. The incidence of bullying has declined, especially in secondary education. Condom use has increased since 2001. Furthermore the number of child abuse reports has increased between 2005 and 2010. There are no significant other changes in the lifestyles of young people since 2000. Being overweight and drinking alcohol remain the most important health problems of youth in the Netherlands.

National surveys

There are three (inter)national surveys that assess the state of health of young people. These are the national [Youth Monitor](#), which is conducted every year, the (international) [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children HBSC](#), conducted every four years, and the [Health Monitor Youth](#), also conducted every four years.

- Health is one of the topics questioned by the national [Youth Monitor](#), which focuses mostly on smoking behaviour. Other topics are school, labour and crime. The [Annual Report Youth Monitor 2016](#) shows that in the period 2011 to 2015 one-third of young people aged 18 to 24 smoked regularly or occasionally. Over one-fifth smoked daily. The national Youth Monitor is an initiative of the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports \(VWS\)](#) and [Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#).
- [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children HBSC](#) is a World Health Organization collaborative cross-national survey, conducted in 45 countries across Europe and Northern America. In this survey the health, well-being, behaviour and social environment of youth between 11 and 16 years is being studied. The [latest research](#) was conducted in 2013. Results from 2013 concerning health and well-being show that the vast majority of Dutch youth are very satisfied and happy with their lives. In general, Dutch youth also have pretty healthy lifestyles, since a large majority is member of a sports club and has regular breakfasts and healthy food habits. The results also show a decrease in substance use (drinking and smoking) among Dutch youth.
- The [Health Monitor Youth](#) (2015) provides an insight in the lifestyle and well-being of pupils in secondary education. All 25 regional GGD organizations (the term GGD is explained in 7.2) in the Netherlands distributed questionnaires in second and fourth grades in secondary education in 2015, based on a randomized sample. Almost 100,000 pupils answered questions about their health, psychosocial well-being, social media use, gaming, bullying, sports, smoking and drinking. The main results are described briefly on the [government website](#) (only in Dutch). About 9 out of 10 young people feel healthy. They see their health as good or very good. Most young people feel resilient, e.g. they will not easily let themselves be persuaded by others to do things they do not want to do. Around three-quarters of young people do sports weekly at a sports club or organization or in a gym, but only a minority (20%) meets the standard of exercising at least one hour a day. A majority of young people have breakfast on 5 or more days a week (more than 80%). Fifteen percent of pupils have at one time smoked a cigarette. The number of pupils that smoke daily is lower: about 5 percent. Eight percent smokes every week but not every day. There is a big difference in education level with regard to smoking: students in lower secondary education smoke a lot more often than students in higher secondary education. About 1 out of every 10 young people reported that they have been bullied in the past 3 months. Less than one third of this (3%) is structural bullying, i.e. 1 or more times a week. About 8% of the young people have an increased risk of problematic use of social media, especially girls. Five % of young people run a risk of problematic gaming, especially boys. About 1 in 8 pupils have had sexual intercourse, boys more often than girls. More than half of the pupils who had sexual intercourse always used a condom. In 2019 this survey will be conducted again. The results and monitoring data are presented on the website, which is the gateway to information about health and disease, risk factors, care and prevention of the entire Dutch population. The website has been developed and coordinated by the [National Institute for Public Health and the Environment RIVM](#). Nation-wide experts, research institutes and universities have contributed to the website in their field of expertise. The website was commissioned by the Ministry of VWS.

Main concepts

Positive health

For many years the definition of health of the [World Health Organization](#), first used in 1948, was an important definition in the Netherlands. This definition is: 'Health is a state of full physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease'. However, in 2009 discussions developed within the scientific field and with stakeholders about the concept of health and well-being in the Netherlands. Following these discussions, the concept of positive health was introduced in 2012 by Machteld Huber. The concept of positive health focuses less on the absence of disease and more on the strength of human beings. [The full definition of positive health is: 'Health is the ability of people to adapt and](#)

[to choose their own direction in the light of physical, emotional and social challenges of life](#). This definition is mentioned on the website loketgezondleven.nl, which is a governmental website about health for all age categories. The Dutch government also supports this more positive and broad concept of health and wellbeing, as mentioned in [the health policy letter](#). Government not only views health as a goal in itself, but also as a way to achieve other goals, such as 'more self-determination of life', 'quality of life', 'being able to participate in society' and 'making use of social networks'. This also fits in with the objectives in the broader social domain, participation, self-direction and self-reliance.

Health insurance

It is mandatory for everyone who lives or works in the Netherlands to have health insurance, also for children. It is obligatory to have a basic health insurance, which covers the standard care of for instance a general practitioner (GP), a hospital or a pharmacy. For most care in basic insurance, an own risk budget is applied, which was 385 euros in 2016 and 2017. The coverage of the basic insurance is decided by government and may change every year. Parents or caregivers should take out insurance for their (younger) children until the age of 18. This is all described in the [Health Insurance Act](#) of 16 June 2005.

Facilities

In the Netherlands there are different services for health and well-being at local level. Important services are community health services (GGD, explained in 7.2), Youth Health Care, GPs and consultation clinics for mothers with young children. These will be described later in this chapter.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports

The main actor involved in policy-making in the field of health and well-being on national level is [the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(Ministry of VWS\)](#). This Ministry is responsible for health, welfare and sports for all age categories, including youth. The Ministry describes their motto as follows: 'The Netherlands healthy and well'. The ambition of the Ministry of VWS is to keep everyone healthy as long as possible and to restore the sick to health as quickly as possible. The Ministry also seeks to support people with physical or mental disadvantages and promotes social participation. Every four years the Ministry publishes a health policy paper, in accordance with [the Public Health Act \(Wpg\)](#). In this health policy paper, goals and strategies for the entire Dutch population for the next 4 years in the field of health are described.

With regard to public health, the Ministry of VWS encourages people to adopt healthy life styles: to exercise more, to refrain from smoking, to use alcohol in moderation, to practise safe sex and to eat healthy. People who have problems with their health should be able to call on their general practitioner (GP), the hospital or other forms of health care. They are insured for this care and therefore have a right to health care (see 7.1). Together with health insurers, health care providers and patients organisations, the Ministry of VWS ensures that there are sufficient facilities and that people have enough choice.

As regards welfare, there are groups of residents in the Netherlands benefit less from the welfare state. They are not economically independent or do not take an active part in society. In collaboration with other ministries, such as [the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) and [the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#), the Ministry of VWS strengthens the social infrastructure. See also the heading cross-sectoral cooperation. Volunteer work and youth care are important parts of the social policy.

Being active in sports promotes health, provides social contacts and contributes to self-development. The 'sports mission' of the Ministry of VWS is to make it possible for

everyone to play sports. In addition, the Ministry also focuses on and funds top-level sports, so that the Netherlands can perform well in international competition.

GGD-GHOR and GGD

[GGD GHOR Nederland](#) is the Association of Community Health Services (GGD's) and Regional *Medical Emergency* Preparedness and Planning (GHOR) offices in the Netherlands. Their task is to look after the interests of the 25 GGD's and GHOR-offices, to promote public health and safety and to improve the quality of public health.

GGD's and GHOR-offices contribute to guarding, improving and protecting the health of the Dutch people. GGD GHOR Nederland supports those activities by:

- Representing the 25 local GGD's and GHOR-offices and their interests with local government, political and national social organizations;
- Offering a platform for the GGD's and GHOR-offices to meet and discuss ideas;
- Acquiring and executing projects that offer support to the way GGD's and GHOR-offices operate or contribute to the implementation of new policy areas.

The Netherlands has 25 local community health services (GGD's) divided over the country. The community health services will assist all 17 million citizens in the Netherlands, in all provinces, districts, cities, communities and streets. They aim at preventing health risks and advancing the health of all citizens, including youth. Preventing health risks means that the community health services focus on preventing that people fall ill and have to see a general practitioner or go to a hospital. All Dutch municipalities have the task to protect, control and promote the health of their inhabitants. To carry out these tasks, municipalities have community health services. There are close to 400 municipalities in the Netherlands which are responsible for 25 community health services. This means that one community health service is often directed by several municipalities jointly. The tasks of the community health services are not always identical, since every municipality commissions specific tasks to the GGD, which are specified in the municipal memoranda about local policy on community health.

Nevertheless, all Dutch community health services have a number of uniform tasks. These tasks are specified in the law: the Public Health Act (Wpg). Every GGD is required to carry out at least the tasks described in this act. In brief, the tasks of the community health services are:

- Child health care
- Environmental health care
- Socio-medical advice
- Periodic sanitary inspections
- Public health care for asylum seekers
- Medical screening
- Health education
- Community mental health care

Youth health care

Youth health care (jeugdgezondheidszorg, JGZ) is the responsibility of the local municipalities. In 241 Dutch municipalities youth health care is performed by the GGD. The GGD examines children at [child consultation clinics](#) and at schools (primary and secondary education). During a child's first 3 years, there are around 12 contact/examination moments, when children also receive vaccinations. During primary education there are two contact/examination moments and in secondary education usually another two. The GGD also provides information on health, childraising and child development. The GGD works closely together with schools, police, care institutions,

neighbourhood teams and the municipalities. In addition, the GGD is often part of the local Youth and Family Centre and for instance supervises child day care.

In other municipalities, the JGZ is housed in separate care organizations, independent foundations or combinations including the GGD. In the Netherlands, municipalities also have the responsibility to ensure that youth mental health care is available.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

In the field of youth health and well-being the Ministry of VWS and other ministries cooperate. There is for example cooperation with [the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#). They cooperate among others in the area of sports, since they both support the [national Youth Sports Fund](#). They also cooperate on promoting health in schools and childcare centres. The Ministry of VWS also cooperates with [the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is for example responsible for curricula for sports education in schools and also works towards promoting health at schools and childcare centres. There is also cooperation between the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and [the Ministry of Security and Justice](#), for instance on the joint responsibility for substance use policy. There is also cooperation with [the Ministry of Economic Affairs](#), for example on the economic significance of sports and health.

There is also cooperation between [the National Institute for Public Health and Environment \(RIVM\)](#) and the Ministry of VWS. The RIVM conducts scientific research on behalf of government. The health policy paper, that the Ministry of VWS has to publish every four years and which is mentioned in the first paragraph of 7.2, is also based on scientific research conducted by RIVM on the state of health and well-being of the Dutch population.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

There is no national strategy regarding the role of sport for young people and encouraging youth fitness and physical activity. However, there are general national policies regarding sport, fitness and physical activity. These are described in the policy document/letter sport: [‘Sport and physical activity in Olympic perspective’](#) and in the policy document [‘Health policy’](#), mentioned in section 7.2. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(VWS\)](#) is responsible for both documents.

Sport and physical activity in Olympic perspective

The [policy letter ‘Sport and physical activity’](#) was published in 2011 and outlines the main focus points for sport and physical activity for the government period 2012–2017. The three main elements of this policy letter are: (a) sport and physical activity in the neighbourhood, (b) to excel in sport and (c) the Olympic ambition of the Netherlands.

a) Sport and physical activity in the neighbourhood means that all Dutch residents have a suitable sports and mobility offer available in their own neighbourhood, which is safe and accessible. To achieve this goal, the following points are worked on:

More sport and mobility opportunities available on location (schools, sport fields, work locations, health and welfare institutions);

- Fewer obstacles to the use of accommodations and guidance;
- More local human resources, that enhance sport associations and establish connections between sports and the neighbourhood, school, after-school care and well-being;
- More public-private cooperation;
- Setting up sports facilities at rehabilitation centres;
- Paying attention to talent recognition.

b) The Dutch government supports the ambition of the sport sector to make the Netherlands one of the top 10 sporting countries in the world. This top 10 ambition is a guideline for top sport programmes that qualify for government funding. In the period 2012-2017, investments were made in:

- Providing an income to (disabled) top athletes and high potentials;
- More and better top sport medical assistance and better connections between education and the Centres for Top sport and Education (CTO's);
- Professionalization of top sporting events, more social and economic spin-off and more focus on event policy;
- A proportional and effective anti-doping policy for top sport.

c) The government supports the Olympic ambition of the Netherlands and aims to organize the Olympic and the Paralympic Games in the Netherlands in 2028. The economic significance of sport is also mentioned here, meaning the ambition to further develop the economic and social values of sport. The government wants to strengthen the contribution of sport to the economy.

These main elements and key objectives of the policy paper link in with one guideline of [the EU Physical Activity Guidelines](#), namely to encourage 'sport for all', which is in line with the key element sport and physical activity in the neighbourhood of the policy letter. There are no other clear connections between the policy objectives/strategies and the EU Physical Activity Guidelines.

No specific target groups within the Dutch population are mentioned. The Ministry of VWS is responsible for the policy documents, but there is no legal or administrative framework that regulates the efforts of different policy partners and investors in sport policy. Municipalities are primarily responsible for spatial planning and sports accommodations and take responsibility for stimulating sports and physical activity at local level. The implementation of the sport and physical activity policy may therefore vary between municipalities. The Ministry of VWS also invests in sports by funding programmes and initiatives.

It is not clear if monitoring of this policy letter takes place, since it is not mentioned in the document or anywhere else. There are also no major revisions/updates of the policy document. The period of the document ends this year. It is to be expected that when a new Cabinet has formed in the Netherlands, a new version of this document will be developed.

Sport in national document health policy

[The national health policy](#) is renewed every four years, published by the Ministry of VWS. The latest policy was published in 2011 and had a timeframe from 2011-2015. There is an update of the policy in the form of a letter from the Ministry of VWS to the House of Representatives. In this short letter the Ministry primarily proposed to continue the policy of 2011. That is why the policy from 2011-2015 regarding sport will be discussed here. Later in this section, major revisions/updates will be described.

There is only limited focus on sport in this health policy document. The small part about sport overlaps with the policy letter 'sport and physical activity in Olympic perspective', described above. The health policy document outlines that government wants all people to be able to play, move and play sport in their own neighbourhoods. It is the government's aim to have a suitable, safe and accessible sports and mobility offer for every Dutch resident in their own neighbourhood. Government also states that it is important for municipalities to cooperate with local partners and to present neighbourhoods as good locations for play and sport. There is an emphasis on safe environments for playing sports and physical activity, where there is no place for intimidation, violence and vandalism. For more information, see [the policy letter 'sport and physical activity in Olympic perspective'](#).

The main goal of the national health policy fits in with the guideline 'sport for all' of the EU physical activity guidelines. No specific target groups are mentioned. Municipalities are an important partner for the government with regard to health policy. No monitoring, assessment or evaluation of this policy is available.

However, there is an update of the policy document running from 2016-2019. This is a short policy letter to the government, since positive trends in public health made it unnecessary to aim for major policy changes. In addition to the health policy from 2011-2015, in 2016 a new programme for sport injuries prevention was launched and [the Dutch standard Healthy Movement](#), which describes how much time people should spend on physical activity, was updated.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The Dutch government promotes a society in which sporting values are respected and everyone has the chance to lead a healthy and active life. One of its main aims is to encourage healthy lifestyles in children, especially those growing up in low-income families.

Government Programme on sport and physical activity close to home

The government wants to make it easier for people to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle, for instance by providing sports facilities close to home or making physical activity easy to combine with work or school life. To this end, the government has set up [the Programme on sport and physical activity close to home](#). This programme is aimed at all age categories. Its three main elements are:

- Neighbourhood sport motivators

Neighbourhood sport motivators (previously known as 'sport liaison officers') are tasked with motivating people of all ages to take up sport or become more physically active. The motivators not only operate in the sports sector (e.g. at sport clubs), but also in the social sector (e.g. education, care institutions, or child care). Extra funding has been made available to municipal authorities for recruiting neighbourhood sport motivators. Municipalities will also contribute from their own funds. In 2015 371 Dutch municipalities were participating. The community sport motivators are funded by the state for 40% and the other 60% is funded by the municipality or other local organizations. In the Netherlands there are approximately 4.800 (fulltime and part-time) community sport motivators.

- Sport Impulse: grants for sport and exercise projects

Sport Impulse grants are intended for sports clubs, fitness centres and other sports providers to set up activity programmes for sedentary or low participation groups. The main requirement is that they work together with local neighbourhood partners such as schools, care institutions, childcare centres and the business community. The projects must be aimed at one of three target groups: sedentary people, overweight children, and youth in low-income neighbourhoods. The maximum grant period is two years. After that, the activity should continue without government funding.

- Sharing expertise

There are several ways in which municipal authorities and sport providers can learn about motivating people to become more physically active, for instance regional meetings for sharing knowledge and the annual expertise day at national level. Central government has made agreements with the sport sector and municipal authorities about activities in the Programme.

The Programme was launched in 2012 and continued officially to the end of 2016, but seems not to have ended yet. The Ministry of VWS is responsible for this national programme. Partners are: [Federation of Municipalities \(VNG\)](#), [Dutch Olympic Comity * Dutch Sport Federation \(Nederlands Olympisch Comité * Nederlandse Sport Federatie,](#)

[NOC*NSF](#), [the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development \(ZonMw\)](#) and [the Knowledge Centre for Sport Netherlands](#). The Ministry of VWS is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the overall Programme. It monitors both the extent to which objectives have been achieved and the contribution of the various components of this programme, namely the neighbourhood sport motivators and the Sport Impulse. Monitoring of the various components of the programme is based on a limited number of indicators. The results have not been published yet.

The Programme has a connection with guideline 6 of the EU physical activity guidelines, which states that 'particular attention should be given to projects and organisations which allow a maximum of people to engage in physical activity, regardless of their level of performance. The overall aim of the programme is to stimulate sports for everyone close to home. It also fits with guideline 7, which states that 'appropriate management and evaluation mechanisms should be in place to ensure a follow-up that is in line with the objective of promoting 'sport for all'.

Youth Sports Fund for low-income families

Everyone should be able to lead an active and healthy life, including children growing up in low-income families. To make this possible, the government supports [the Youth Sports Fund](#), which helps children who would like to join a sports club but whose parents cannot afford the membership fees.

In order to give more children from low-income families an opportunity to be active in sport, the Ministry of VWS, together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, in 2016 made a total of 5 million Euro available to the Youth Sports Fund for a period of 2 years. With this impulse from the government, the Youth Sports Fund aims to reach a total of 25,000 children from low-income families in two years by providing them with a sport membership. In addition, the local youth sports funds are strengthened. In 2016 the Youth Sports Fund offered 49,466 children a sport opportunity. The Youth Sports Fund foundation started in 2011 and has no end date. There is no information available about monitoring and evaluation.

There is no connection with the EU Physical Activity Guidelines.

Turn-Over

[Turn-over](#) is a sport programme that supports young people to go back to school or to enter the labour market, by way of sport. Over 70% of participants gets a job, goes back to school or starts attending vocational education. The programme has no end date and is implemented in several cities in the Netherlands.

On the website of the foundation Turn-Over, the policy plan for 2017 to 2019 is presented. The main goal is to provide professional guidance and intensive coaching, from the heart, to young people and (young) adults, to support them both physically and mentally, and motivate them in the next steps in their life, to do (volunteer) work and/or to achieve new competencies, and doing everything that relates to or may be helpful for this.

Turn-Over wants to help youth and (young) adults who are vulnerable, at risk and have problems, adults to take next steps in their lives, for instance (volunteer) work, school, or self-employed entrepreneurship by means of the proven successful Turn-Over prevention programme. The program is especially aimed at:

- Young people on benefits;
- Young people at risk of dropping out of school or work;
- Young people who dropped out of school;
- Vulnerable young people;
- Young people without starting qualifications;
- Young people who no longer want to/are able to/dare to go to school;

- Young people with criminal behaviour.

The ambition of Turn-Over is to train youth and (young) adults from various target groups, with different backgrounds or issues, with the Turn-Over programme and methodology at national level, from 2019 onwards. The foundation receives funding from municipalities and (semi)governmental organizations, if the municipality or (semi)governmental organizations wish to implement the programme. The programme uses sport as a way to support vulnerable youth and help them take up their responsibilities and their lives.

There is no connection with the EU physical activity guidelines. There is no information available with regard to monitoring and evaluation.

Fit & Skilful at school ([Fit & Vaardig op school](#))

This programme consists of physically active math and language classes for primary school children. The classes are given three times a week in school. Every lesson spends 10 to 15 minutes on math and 10 to 15 minutes on language. The calculation and language level of the classes matches the Dutch computational and language methods (Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 of primary school).

The digital school board plays an important role during these lessons, for the physical exercises and the language and calculation assignments are visualized on the digital school board. The pupils answer to a math or language assignment with a physical exercise. For example they spell a word by jumping with each pronounced letter or they answer to the calculation assignment 2×3 by jumping six times. In between the exercise movements they carry out basic movements. For example, they jog in place while they think about an answer.

During a two years experimental study into the effects of the Fit & Skilful programme, it became clear that pupils who participated in the Fit & Skilful lessons developed significantly higher math skills than pupils in regular lessons. Language skills improved more than math skills, but there was no significant difference between groups until after two years. No further evaluations have been planned for the programme. No specific target groups are being addressed within the programme. The programme shows the relation between physical activity and learning, and thereby the importance of physical activity. There is no connection with the EU physical activity guidelines. Information about public funding is unknown.

Physical education in schools

Physical education and sport in schools in general and vocational education at upper secondary level is incorporated in curricula. [In 1995 the standards for physical education in upper secondary education were formulated.](#) Schools must provide physical education in every school year (independent of level) and spread it over the weeks in the school year. It should be "practical movement activities in such a form that the content meets the requirements in terms of quality, intensity and variety as laid down in core goals and exam programmes". Schools are free to determine how to implement this in contact time and lessons. Usually schools will have 2 to 3 physical education classes per week.

At the request of the National Society for Physical Education, the education inspectorate has outlined guidelines by type of school in 2014. If a school adheres to all the rules, the number of hours for physical education at school is average 2.5 for preparatory vocational secondary education (vmbo), 2.2 for senior general secondary education (havo) and 2 for university preparatory education (vwo), based on classes taking 50 minutes and 40 school weeks per academic year. The number of physical education classes in secondary school decreases in higher grades.

[Research indicates the following average scheduled time in minutes per week for physical education:](#)

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Vmbo bbl/kbl	156	136	109	97		
Vmbo gl/tl	151	127	110	96		
Havo	147	121	108	99	66	
Vwo	145	116	105	98	90	58

Vmbo = Preparatory vocational secondary education

Bbl/kb = basic vocational track / advanced vocational track

Gl/tl = combined track / theoretical track

Havo = senior general secondary education

Vwo = university preparatory education

There is a [national programme available to support starting teachers](#). This includes physical education teachers at secondary schools. This programme is one of the programmes to help solve the teacher shortage in secondary education. No other pedagogical tools and support are provided for teachers responsible for physical education in general secondary education.

In secondary vocational education (Mbo) there are no compulsory weekly sports classes. Since the introduction of the [Education and Vocational Education Act](#) in 1996, physical education and sport are no longer anchored in the curriculum. However, in 2008 government has established an incentive programme to promote that 5% of contact time consists of physical education and sport. In 2014 91% of secondary vocational education schools had a sport offer available for their students. To help teachers create a sports curriculum for Mbo students, [the database 'Vitaal mbo'](#) offers basic materials for creating a programme for sport, movement and vital citizenship for Mbo students.

Regarding tertiary education, no top-level curricula or policies exist. In general, there are no physical education lessons in higher education (Hbo schools) and universities.

There are no top-level guidelines, recommendations or large-scale initiatives on the inclusion of physical activities outside the curriculum but within the school day and on extracurricular sports activities in secondary education. There are some lower secondary education schools that offer extra sports classes for interested students, but this happens at schools' own initiative and no such initiatives are known at higher secondary level schools.

Collaboration and partnerships

There are no top-level initiatives that support collaboration and the formation of partnerships between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sport organizations in order to promote youth fitness and physical activity among young people. It is expected that schools, municipalities, youth workers, health professionals and sport organizations cooperate at local level, but those initiatives differ for every municipality.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition in national document health policy

[The national health policy](#) is presented every four years by [the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(VWS\)](#). This policy was described in section 7.3 addressing sports as a national strategy. Section 7.3 also describes the publishing date, timeframe, update and type of document. The policy for the period 2011-2015, regarding healthy lifestyles and nutrition, will be discussed here. Later in this section, major revisions/updates in the policy from 2016 to 2019 will be outlined.

In [the 2011-2015 health policy document](#) of the Ministry of VWS, a special subsection mentions healthy lifestyles of youth. The introduction of this subsection mentions that the government wants to stimulate healthy behaviour and the development of resilience. They do not want to keep all possible temptations out of sight of young people, but they strive towards the implementation of broad lifestyle interventions, programmes and activities.

There are three themes that pay extra attention to youth in the coming years, namely healthy weight, substance use and sexual health. The part about healthy weight stipulates that efforts concerning healthy weight are important, because overweight young people are at greater risk of developing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease and all disadvantages that these diseases bring. In addition, overweight children experience more social exclusion through being bullied and being unable to join the group. This also has an impact on their psychological and emotional development. The government therefore invests in positive attention to a healthy and responsible dietary pattern as well as a safe, responsible place for sports, play and exercise in the lifestyle of youth. The motor skills of children have significantly worsened over the last two decades. Focused attention to a safe and responsible movement pattern in the form of injury prevention is required. Sports can help to make young people more resilient. Activities for young people who want to have a healthy weight should be available at close range, easy and attractive.

Substance use is another theme. The document explains that substance use at an early age increases the risk of addiction, is harmful to the developing brain and sometimes also causes acute health damage. Other consequences are reduced cognitive capacity, concentration disturbances and social damage such as school failure and unemployment. The risk of these consequences increases when using starts at an earlier age. Among vulnerable youth, excessive drug use is often a sign of broader issues, such as psychosocial and behavioural disorders, frequent truancy, nuisance and criminal behaviour.

The government wants to tackle addiction risks due to the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs with a coherent approach, for example through [the Healthy School and Drugs programme](#), which is described later in this chapter. The Ministry of VWS encourages all schools to be completely non-smoking. There should be a close relation between preventive programmes and care. But the link between stakeholders in for instance addiction care, mental health care and youth care could be better.

In 2011, young people between 14 and 18 started with an interactive online programme at school. This programme provided not only with information about the facts on alcohol, smoking and cannabis, but also insight into mechanisms such as group pressure. It taught them skills to stay with their own choices and offered healthy alternatives. It is unknown whether this programme is still being used.

The last theme is sexual health. Also with regard to sexual health, stimulating resilience and promoting healthy sexual behaviour are of great importance. Young people should have the opportunity to have relationships voluntarily, safely and pleasantly, and to prevent issues such as sexual coercion, STD's and unwanted pregnancies. Four values are central to sexual health:

1. Autonomy: The right to make one's own choices in developing one's sexuality without someone else deciding;
2. Resilience: to be able to clarify what you want and what you do not want in sex and to have the skills to act on those preferences;
3. Realization of reciprocity and respect: sexual health not only relates to personal health but also to the health of the other. The individual freedom of one person is limited to where another person's freedom is being damaged;
4. The right to access to information and to quality assistance whenever needed.

Government's responsibilities in the field of sexual health are promoting good aid, the punishment of perpetrators and the protection of victims of sexual offences, providing information about sexual health, prevention of STD's and unwanted pregnancies, and promoting resilience among youth. This relates to all young people. There is no additional investment into the sexual health of people with a disease or mental or physical disability or preventing stigmatization of people with HIV. There are no targeted policies for specific groups in the youth population.

Specific information about the implementation is not available, but it is to be expected that schools, sport clubs and municipalities are responsible for implementing programmes and that the Ministry provides the programmes and support. The Ministry is responsible for the national elements. Before drafting the policy document for the next four year period, the Ministry evaluates the previous policy, but it is not clear how this is done.

National policy document 2016-2019

There is a [new health policy document](#) for the period 2016-2019. In this document, government mentions that it will continue the elements described in the 2011-2015 policy. so government keeps stimulating a healthy lifestyle for the whole Dutch population. Offering healthy food is also part of that goal. Mid-2016, the packaging of tobacco products received terrifying pictures and warnings. [The 'Schijf van Vijf'](#), a guideline for healthy nutrition, has been updated in 2016 based on new Healthy Nutrition guidelines. The Ministry keeps supporting the municipalities to stimulate a healthy lifestyle for their residents by offering support with programmes such as ['Young People at a Healthy Weight'](#) and ['Sport and Movement in the Neighbourhood'](#) (described in section 7.3). The Ministry keeps connecting with education, the environment, work and care agencies to improve health. There are no major updates/revisions of the previous policy document. Regarding evaluating and monitoring of this policy document, the Ministry works together with national knowledge institutes on presenting figures on the VWS policy about public health.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

Healthy School approach

[The healthy school approach \('Gezonde school'\)](#) is a good example of a broad national programme that connects 'education' and 'health'. It results in more health benefits, fewer health differences and better educational performances. The healthy school approach encourages schools in primary education, secondary education and secondary vocational education to address healthy lifestyles at school. Schools can work on one or more of the following themes:

- Physical activity and sports;
- Smoking, alcohol and drug prevention;
- Well-being, relationships and sexuality;
- Hygiene, skin and teeth;
- Indoor environment, nature and physical safety;
- Media wisdom;

- Hearing impairment.

Schools with an outstanding performance in one or more of these themes can apply for the Healthy School certificate. The approach consists of four elements, namely education, environment, signalling and policy. If all four elements of a theme have been taken into consideration, it is considered an comprehensive approach.

There are several ways in which schools can work on (one of) the themes:

- Schools can start working on a healthy lifestyle with the assistance of the website of the healthy school approach. The information on the website is current and agreed with the extensive network of partners.
- During the course of the programme, a support offer is available for 1750 schools, consisting of a sum of € 3,000 for working hours or the use of a Healthy School activity. When granting support, there is a focus on the most vulnerable children.
- Schools designate a Healthy School Coordinator, who is in charge of health promotion and a contact point within the school. All Healthy School Coordinators have been trained.
- Schools can use the advice and support of Healthy School Advisers of the 25 GGDs. The Healthy School Advisers also receive training.
- Schools that want to show that they excel in health promotion on one or more of these themes, can apply for a Healthy School certificate for those themes.

The Healthy School programme focuses on all schools, paying particular attention to schools with a vulnerable student population. These can be children from families with low social economic status and children in special (primary and secondary) education. The current programme runs from 2017 to 2020, but it already existed several years before that. In these years, about one third of all Dutch schools already addressed one or more themes within the programme. Also almost 1,000 Healthy School certificates were handed out. With that number the ambition for this previous period was achieved. The goal for the period 2017-2020 is to reach another 1,650 schools that have not previously made use of the support offer.

The Healthy School approach is a partnership. The programme seeks to connect with programmes and projects that are also aimed at health and education. The Ministries of VWS, [Education, Culture and Science](#) (OCW), [Social Affairs and Employment](#), and [Economic Affairs](#) together fund the Healthy School programme. Together they initiated and instructed the Steering Committee Healthy School approach. [the primary education council](#), [secondary education council](#) and [secondary vocational education council](#), [the RIVM Centre Healthy Life](#) and [GGD GHOR Netherlands](#) are represented in the Steering Committee. These organizations are responsible for the implementation of the programme for 2017-2020. They do so in close cooperation with regional GGDs, health funds, trade unions, social organizations and knowledge institutes in the area of healthy lifestyle. The progress and quality of the programme are monitored to report to the Ministries.

Youth on Healthy Weight (JOGG)

[The Youth on Healthy Weight \(JOGG\)](#) approach is an integrated approach in which local partnerships between private and public parties aim for a healthier weight among young people (0-19 years), in areas where the incidence of overweight is high. Under the umbrella of the municipality, public and private parties, such as schools, sports clubs, general practitioners (GPs), neighbourhood supermarkets and housing associations work together. This local collaboration leads to better sports, exercise and play facilities in the area, and calls for more attention to nutrition and physical activity. The JOGG approach is carried out by municipalities that join the National Youth on Healthy Weight Organization. This foundation is committed to a healthy environment in which young people and adults live and work, such as the school, the district, the sports club and the workplace. The approach exists since 2010 and is not limited in time.

Youth on Healthy Weight offers three themes nationally: Free Moving, just do it; Drink Water; and Vegetables ... Put Your Teeth In!. Youth on Healthy Weight also actively promotes the Healthy School Canteen, [Healthy School programme](#) (described above) and, through the Healthcare Nutrition Agreement, introduces schools to a healthier dietary supply at schools.

Currently one third of Dutch municipalities participate in the approach. The JOGG municipalities help each other, exchange knowledge and experience and support each other. To get started with the JOGG approach, a municipality signs a cooperation agreement with Youth on Healthy Weight. It stipulates that the municipality will use the JOGG approach and that Youth on Healthy Weight provides support. The municipality appoints a JOGG director for at least 16 hours a week and a JOGG policy officer for 4 hours. The municipality pays an annual fee in order to make use of the support for young people on healthy weight, consisting of advice, knowledge, materials, training and a wide network. The foundation also receives a project grant from the government. Every year the foundation reports to the board and the Ministry of VWS.

Monitoring and evaluation are important elements of the JOGG approach. JOGG municipalities keep an eye on what happens within the approach and its impact. This allows municipalities to inspire the local network, justify their efforts and, if necessary, adjust them. Youth on Healthy Weight offers support in monitoring and evaluation to the municipalities. In order to map the main objectives and programme goals of youth on healthy weight on a broader level, an evaluation plan for 2015-2020 has been developed. A progress report is made annually.

Healthy school and drugs

[The Healthy School and Drugs program \(DGSG\)](#) is for schools that want to pay attention to prevention of alcohol, tobacco and drugs use. DGSG has existed for over 20 years and was developed by [the Trimbos Institute](#). The impact of DGSG is wide-ranging. In addition to providing information to students, attention is paid to good school policies and the involvement of parents. The programme pays special attention to signalling and supervising students with problematic alcohol or drugs use. This joint approach in school makes young people less vulnerable in the areas of alcohol, smoking and drugs use. DGSG is part of the [national Healthy School](#) programme described above.

DGSG is available on request for the upper levels of primary education, in consultation with the local GGD or addiction care institutes. In addition, DGSG is available for secondary education, special secondary education and for secondary vocational education. The programme focuses on both students, parents, and school staff. There are no specific target groups within the youth population. The programme provides a form of universal prevention. Different aims have been formulated for the three different education levels. The goal in primary education is 'to prevent students from using tobacco and alcohol'. The goal in secondary education is 'to encourage students to delay alcohol use until at least 18 years old and to not use tobacco and drugs. The goal in secondary vocational education is 'to prevent, limit and reduce smoking, excessive alcohol use and drug use among young people'.

The healthy school and drugs programme (DGSG) consists of 4 parts. Schools benefit most from the programme if all components are implemented together. These are the following: Awareness-raising classes, involving parents and caregivers, creating and managing good policy, and identifying and counselling students using substances (problematically). Various programmes are carried out within the DGSG approach, for example 'the students' alcohol use prevention' programme.

The national government funds the programme. An impact study of the effects of the healthy school and drugs programme has been conducted (2009-2013). The results made clear that the programme had no effect on the development of substance use in adolescence. The advice was to renew and redevelop the programme. The expectation is

that this has happened, but no further information is available. It is unclear also whether the effects of the programme will be monitored and evaluated again.

Long live love (lang leve de liefde)

[Long Live Love](#) is a programme about love, relationships and sexuality for secondary schools and vocational schools. The method makes use of three sets of teaching materials: Long Live Love for general secondary education (second year), Long Live Love for higher secondary education (4-5th year) and Long Live Love for vocational education. The teaching materials allow teachers to help students safely enjoy their emerging sexuality when they are ready. It enables them to educate students while developing their attitudes and skills with regard to relationships and sexuality. The Long Live Love themes are: puberty, falling in love, relationships, homosexuality, what you want, drawing the line and assertiveness, the internet, online predators, the first time, problems with sex, getting help, safe sex, condoms and contraception. There are no specific target groups within the youth population.

Each set of teaching materials consists of six online lessons. Each lesson takes a minimum of 50 minutes to complete. The duration also on the class, class reactions and whether the subject concerned is particularly relevant for this class. It is important to follow the order of the lessons as prescribed and to use all the available materials. The teaching materials have been developed to be used together and cover all the themes relating to relationships and sexuality. The lessons have been developed in such a manner, that they cover some themes of the mandatory biology curriculum.

In the Long Live Love series of lessons the following issues have been taken into account:

- Young people with diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Differences in values and principles relating to sexuality;
- Diversity in the way young people start relationships;
- Differences between boys and girls;
- Young people from different regions.

In 2014 an effect evaluation was conducted with positive results. It is not known if there will be more monitoring and evaluation studies. The programme has been commissioned by the Ministry of VWS. Funding sources are unknown.

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

Health education

Health education is not part of the curriculum of schools at upper secondary level and is not mandatory. However, health is often part of the mandatory biology lessons in school. Besides, schools can choose if and how they pay attention to health education. Programmes like the Healthy School approach described above encourage schools to pay attention to health and offer support to schools. Topics that are addressed in such programmes are: nutrition, physical activity and sports, smoking, alcohol and drug prevention and well-being, relationships and sexuality. Teachers can use available programmes such as [the Healthy School approach](#) and [the Healthy School and Drugs programme](#).

Sex education and personal relationships education

Sexual education has been compulsory for primary and lower secondary education and special education since the end of 2012. [The Ministry of OCW](#) wants to prevent not only forced sexual acts and unacceptable behaviour, but also negative attitudes and reactions to homosexual behaviour. Instead government wishes to promote respectful behaviour and sexual resilience among students. However, in upper secondary level sexual education is not mandatory and not part of the curriculum. Schools can decide themselves if and how they pay attention to sexual education and personal relationships in upper secondary

level. There are also programmes available that teachers can use for sexual education and personal relationships, for example '[Long live love](#)'. Schools can also use [the Healthy School approach](#) to pay attention to sex education and personal relationships.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

WE CAN young

Within [WE CAN Young](#), active youngsters (change makers) increase the awareness and positive attitude of other young people in the area of sexual and relational resilience, gender inequality and gender violence. Peer education, peer activation and peer mobilization are the strategies used. Peer education means that peers provide other young people with information and increase their awareness. In peer activation, change makers actively work on the topics by designing various actions for other young people. Peer mobilization involves the execution of the proposed actions and the transfer of the underlying message. The intention is to continue this process so that the young people who are reached become change makers too. Local project leaders guide and encourage the change makers in the process of education, activation and mobilization.

The project, which ran from May 2012 to the end of 2014, was conducted in 15 municipalities and was supported by a project team from knowledge centre [Movisie](#). The age of the group reached with the project was between 12 and 23. There were no specific target groups within this population. The results were monitored by Movisie between May 2012 to 2014. [The results](#) are that young people, in their own opinion, have more knowledge of the topics addressed within the project. Some participants also experienced a change in their attitude towards the topics. No other monitoring or evaluation research has been conducted. The project continued in 2016, but has ended at the end of 2016. The project was funded by the Ministry of OCW, because it relates to violence against women, one of the main emancipation policy themes of the Ministry at the time.

MIND young academy

[MIND Young Academy](#) is a school project for students in lower secondary education and secondary vocational education, with the aim to make psychological problems an issue for discussion in class.

During the lessons, attention is paid to the following points: recognizing mental health issues, talking about psychological distress and knowing what to do if you suffer from it.

The lessons are given by peers who have had their own mental problems or experienced psychological problems in their environment. These so-called peer educators talk to students about common psychological complaints. Their message: just talk about it, because you're not the only one. During the lesson, a mini-documentary is shown in which two peer educators are introduced.

The fact that peer educators share their own stories, creates a safe atmosphere in the classroom. As a result students who have been experiencing psychological problems for a long time finally dare to share this in class. There is recognition and understanding. There are also many young people who dare to take the step to seek help after the project.

The project started at the end of 2016 and is an initiative of the organizations [MIND](#) and [Diversie](#). There is no information on duration. The project receives no public funding. The project is made possible among others by crowdfunding actions. There is no information about monitoring and evaluation, or about results so far.

Kikid

[Kikid](#) is a Dutch organization specializing in peer education projects on different topics.

All activities of Kikid are aimed at making young people feel good about themselves and the way they are, and to raise their awareness of the enormous power and influence they have themselves on their happiness and success. This will make them stronger and help them make the right choices in life. Kikid develops projects designed for talking with young

people about important themes, such as alcohol and drugs, relationships and sexuality, money and debt, social media, group pressure and (cyber) bullying. These projects are aimed at students in secondary education. There are no specific target groups within that group of youth.

Kikid works based on the power of young people; 'they are the experts who know how to really reach young people'. Therefore Kikid's theatre programmes are developed with young people and performed by young people. The peer educators are close in age to the young people who participate in the programmes. Each team of peer educators consists of very different highly involved people. They receive an intensive didactic training from Kikid so they have the knowledge and specific skills to play the performance and be good conversation leaders in the classroom.

Research has been conducted to study the effects of one of the projects developed by Kikid, namely [the programme Benzies & Batchies](#), in combination with the training I love me. Both have already been carried out at schools for a couple of years. These programmes aim at prevention and reduction of unacceptable sexual behaviour and have a positive impact on young people's views on unacceptable behaviour. The attitude, standards and trust in pupils' own ability regarding unacceptable behaviour has improved. No research was conducted on other projects of Kikid. Regarding funding, the Ministry of VWS and the Ministry of OCW are described as partners of the organization, but it is unclear if and how much public funding they receive. See [the website](#) for all projects on the different topics.

Collaboration and partnerships

There are no known top-level initiatives that support collaboration and the formation of partnerships between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sport organizations in order to promote youth fitness and physical activity of young people. It is expected that schools, municipalities, youth workers, health professionals and sport organizations cooperate at local level, so collaboration is different in every municipality and with varying stakeholders.

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

In general the Ministry of VWS decides on the actions in the field of health and wellbeing. Other partners are responsible for implementation. [SOAAIDS](#) is an organization that disseminates information in national campaigns about sexual health, funded by the government. Different age categories can also find information there. The website [sense.info](#) is another example of a website where young people in particular can find information about sexual health and personal relationships. They can also seek contact with professionals when they have questions or need help or advice. Sense has been developed by [SOAAIDS](#), [the GGD](#), [a knowledge institute](#) and the Ministry of VWS. Sense also has consultation hours, where young people can ask questions, get help or advice and sometimes can get a pregnancy test or SOA test.

Another important website for youth is [jouwggd.nl](#). This website deals with wider issues than sexual health only, since it also offers information about health in general (e.g. nutrition, lifestyle, physical activity, relationships, body, emotional wellbeing, substance use and media). There is also the possibility to ask questions by chat or email. It is unknown if and how much financial support these initiative receives.

Besides the Sense consultation hours, Dutch youth have the possibility to go to their general practitioner (GP) for information and counselling. The GP is also able to refer them to other professionals for help . There is no top-level framework regarding youth information and counselling structures.

Information campaigns

NIX18

[NIX18](#) (in English: nothing 18) is a large-scale information campaign initiated by the Ministry of VWS and other national partners, such as [GGD GHOR](#), [NOC*NSF](#) and [the national Lung Fund](#). The aim of the campaign is to raise the social standard 'don't drink and smoke until you're 18'. Youth up to 18 are the primary target group of the campaign, but it is also aimed at society at large. Everyone should think it is normal that young people do not smoke and drink before the age of 18. This campaign is accompanied by some important changes in policy. . Since 2014 it is forbidden to sell alcohol or tobacco to people under 18. Young people under 18 are also not allowed to be in possession of alcoholic beverages. The campaign makes use of [a website](#) aimed at young people and their parents. They can find information there, for example facts on substance use and how parents can make agreements with their children about drinking and smoking behaviour. The campaign was also broadcast on radio and television.

The campaign was specifically aimed at:

- Parents with children between 13 and 17 years;
- Young people between 13 and 17 years;
- General public (18+).

This campaign took place in 2016. The website still exists, but no further information has been broadcast on radio and television. The campaign was monitored and evaluated. [The results](#) show that almost all young people under 18 say they never smoke (95%). This percentage is higher in 2016 compared to 2013 (88%). Besides, a larger number of young people say they do not consume alcohol (64%) compared to 2013. More young people and parents find it normal to not smoke and drink until the age of 18. About three-quarters of parents agree with this social norm. However, the majority still thinks it is acceptable if young people under 18 drink in moderation.

Signs of depression

[The large-scale campaign](#) Signs of depression was active from September till December 2016. This campaign is part of [the multi-annual Depression Prevention programme](#), which is described as a national strategy in 7.5. With this campaign the Ministry of VWS wants to lower the threshold to talk about depression. In addition, the campaign aims to make people more positive about offering help and seeking help in cases of depression. The campaign targeted all Dutch people over 18 years (general public) and people "involved" in depression: (potential) bystanders, victims and risk groups (young women aged 18-35 and young people aged 13-18).

The campaign strategy was addressing the subject depression and breaking the taboo around depression. In addition, it presented the signs of depression and how to recognize them. Eventually it aimed to make it easier to find information about depression. Information can be found at <http://www.omgaanmetdepressie.nl>. This website was also referred to in the campaign statements.

TV and radio ads were distributed to reach a wide audience and raise awareness. These ads also featured in cinemas and in social media. In the radio ads various signs of depression were mentioned. Web messages were disseminated with information about the occurrence of depression. The online messages focused on the risk groups.

[The results of the campaign](#) show that the general public recognizes more signs of depression. More people want to seek help or offer help in case of a depression.

There is still a taboo on talking about depression. Three quarters of the Dutch population finds it difficult to discuss this topic. Two-thirds of people find it normal that they can talk to friends or relatives about depressive feelings. After the campaign, depression was discussed more often. There is also a more positive attitude towards starting a conversation about depression.

7.5 Mental health

National strategies

There is no general national strategy addressing the mental health of young people. However, the government declared two focal points in the field of mental health, namely suicide and depression. There are two national government documents to address the mental health of the whole population: a national agenda on suicide prevention (2021-2025) and a multi-annual Depression Prevention Program (2017-now). Both are published by the [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(VWS\)](#). In addition, positive health and performance pressure among youth are mentioned in the [national health policy 2020-2024](#) as a focal point for the coming years. These three strategies are outlined below.

National agenda suicide prevention

In October 2020 the State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport announced the third [national agenda on suicide prevention](#), for the period of 2021 to 2025. It is a general national agenda without specific target groups. The primary aim of the agenda is to slow down the increase in prevalence of suicides and to design actions to achieve that aim. The newest national agenda on suicide prevention elaborates on the goals and activities of the first two national agenda's. The first national agenda was launched in 2014.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has mainly a facilitating role within the [national agenda suicide prevention](#), and partners are responsible for the implementation. The Dutch foundation [113 suicide prevention](#) has a coordinating role in implementing the agenda and monitoring its progress.

The agenda mentions that suicide is the first cause of death among young people between 10 and 25 years. To national agenda contains several goals to better reach youth, for example by improving the safety on social media and by executing the prevention programme Strong Teens & Resilient Minds (STORM) in schools. Also teachers (or members of the care advisory teams at schools) in secondary education should be able to recognize suicidal signals, know how to act and have a good view of the risk groups. Suicide prevention should be a part of the safety policies of educational institutions. Therefore, a suicide policy for schools has to be developed and implemented.

Multi-annual Depression Prevention Programme

At the end of 2016 the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, in cooperation with other stakeholders and partners, presented [the multi-annual Depression Prevention Programme](#). Before the start of this programme, [research provided an insight into the 6 risk groups for depression](#) which are also the target groups of this multi-annual programme. Youth are one of the target groups. There are no specific target groups within the youth population.

The programme officially started in February 2017 and runs for at least 5 years. The aim of this multi-annual Depression Prevention Programme is to significantly reduce the incidence and impact of depression, especially in the high risk groups. A decline of 30% by 2030 is (too) ambitious, but it is the goal the Dutch government ultimately wishes to achieve. To do so it is necessary that more people from high risk groups are reached with depression prevention activities.

For the youth target group, the following actions have been defined:

- Awareness: work already started;
- Prevention and early detection: (more) actions are needed;
- Guidance towards (preventive) interventions: (more) actions are needed;
- Training, guidelines and manuals: work already started;
- Innovation and projects by target group: already started, but more actions are needed;

- Support and self-management: more actions are needed;
- Research and monitoring: more actions are needed.

It is not clear if the selection of these actions is based on an evaluation or other research. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is working on these action points, together with stakeholders and partners, such as client organizations, relevant occupational groups, branch organizations and knowledge institutes. The programme also mentions that addressing the awareness of depression among youth can be done within the [healthy school approach](#) (described in paragraph 7.4). Depression fits in the theme 'wellbeing' of the healthy school approach. Schools are paying more attention to the absence of pupils at schools, together with youth care professionals and parents/caregivers. In these contacts, underlying problems of absence such as depression can become clear and can be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

[GGD GHOR Nederland](#) (the national association of municipal public health organizations), the [Trimbos Institute](#), the [Nederlands Centrum Jeugdgezondheid](#) (Dutch Centre for Youth Health Care) and other partners developed the road map [Rondom Jong](#) for suicide prevention. The road map helps professionals to improve their cooperation around youth with symptoms of depression.

By 2021, the Ministry and partners will assess whether the programme has sufficient impact and what adjustments or additions are required. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for public funding.

National health policy

Current developments in education and society are regarded to have negative effects on youth's mental health. The [national health policy 2020-2024](#) mentions that performance pressure, the role of social media and the study loan system may increase the risk for youth to develop psychological problems like depression, sleeping problems and stress. In its national health policy, Government has formulated two ambitions for 2024 to improve youth's mental health:

- To have knowledge about the nature, size and determinants of young people's mental health. The [National Institute for Public Health and the Environment](#) will streamline research executed by research institutes in order to make research outcomes comparable. The institute will also conduct a large scale quantitative investigation of mental health problems among students in higher education. The [Trimbos Institute](#) and [GGD GHOR Nederland](#) (the national association of municipal public health organizations) will examine the use of alcohol and drugs in same population group.
- Adolescents and young adults experience less performance pressure in their lives through enhancing mental health skills and stimulating mental health through the physical and social environment. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport will strengthen each other's policies. The Trimbos Institute will disseminate knowledge about health skills. On the local level a joint approach by organizations is stimulated, youth's tenability and resilience are enhanced, pressure among secondary school pupils is lowered and children at risk are offered selective prevention programmes.

Improving the mental health of young people

113 Suicide Prevention

[113 Suicide Prevention](#) is the national Dutch suicide prevention center, mainly financed by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. 113 is targeted at the whole Dutch population, there are no specific target groups within the population. The organization has been active as an independent care provider since September 2009. It employs psychologists and psychiatrists and a large group of fully trained volunteers, which allows 113 to provide round-the-clock confidential support through chats and phone calls. 113 works in close cooperation with the mental health institutes' crisis centers. Together, these professionals

are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week across the Netherlands for crisis talks, psychological treatment or referral to a medical practitioner.

The mental health services of 113 include:

- Crisis chat (a direct opportunity to talk online to a trained volunteer);
- Crisis telephone help line (a direct opportunity to talk to a trained volunteer by phone and, if necessary, to a professional);
- Chat therapy (a maximum of 8 online chat talks with a professional);
- Self-help course (an independent online course aimed at reducing suicidal tendencies);
- Consultation by telephone (the opportunity to pose a brief question to a professional in a session lasting a maximum of ten minutes);
- Self-tests (questionnaires to fill in which offer an indication of the severity of one's troubles and symptoms (an anxiety and depression test and a test that measures suicidal tendencies);
- Training programmes for professionals about suicide prevention and treatment.

113's [annual report 2018](#) describes that in 2018 there have been increases in the number of people with suicidal thoughts that were helped by 113. Most of them were helped by chat.

In addition to its mental health services, 113 describes itself as change agent and center of expertise: it leads the National Suicide Prevention Agenda and establishes [Suicide Prevention Action NETworks](#) (SUPRANET Care, SUPRANET Community). Activities in these areas include:

- The development and dissemination of training opportunities for medical staff, other professionals and gatekeepers in society;
- Tracking the implementation and sharing of evidence-based suicide intervention best practices within large healthcare institutions, using standardized monitoring instruments and methods;
- Implementation of multilevel multimodal suicide prevention measures in 10 regions, in line with the European Alliance Against Depression (Optimizing Suicide Prevention Interventions OSPI);
- Data-driven quality and safety improvement projects in a network currently numbering 16 mental health hospitals.

113 has also a strong international orientation through participation in the European Alliance Against Suicide and their role in the International Zero Suicide Movement.

113 continuously develops its work by researching the effectiveness and reach of its mental health services together with its partners, namely the [VU University of Amsterdam](#) and the [mental health institution GGZ inGeest](#). Together they have initiated [SURE-NL \(Suicide Research the Netherlands\)](#), a scientific consortium aimed at lifesaving suicide research.

Peer learning Participation of young people with mental health issues

This [international peer learning project](#) on the participation of young people with mental health issues was an initiative by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, in response to the Dutch presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016. During the Dutch presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Netherlands, together with Finland, invited colleagues to participate in European peer learning in the field of young people with psychological problems. About eight countries participated in the peer learning. It was a cross sectoral peer learning with the aim to strengthen the participation of young people with mental health issues. The aims of the peer learning were:

- To share practices and knowledge in the areas of successful youth policy, practice (programmes and interventions) and the active involvement of young people with mental health problems in order to increase successful policy and practices;
- To use the knowledge acquired to increase effectiveness of policymaking and practice in the countries involved;
- To explore the possibilities for increased cooperation between the countries of the peer learning group;
- To disseminate the knowledge acquired amongst EU member states.

The peer learning took place in three multiple day seminars. The first seminar in Amsterdam in 2016 focused on setting the scene for youth work, mental health services and participation of young people, resulting in 'a mental health informed youth work and a youth involved mental health'. The second seminar in Helsinki in June 2017 focused on education of youth workers and the role of social media. The result was: 'Educating professionals, peers and making the best of what social media has to offer'. The third and last seminar took place in Rotterdam in November 2017. Issues explored were what young people's needs are and what support they need to be able to stay in school or participate on the labor market, looked at from the perspective of young people with support from youth work and mental health services. All presentations of seminars can be found [on the website of The Finnish Association for Mental Health](#).

The project had a duration of 2 years. The target group of the entire project were youth with mental health issues. The main partners of the third seminar were: the Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport, the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#), the [Dutch National Youth Council](#) in cooperation with the [Dutch Association of Mental Health and Addiction Care \(GGZ NL\)](#), [Sociaal Werk Nederland](#), [Jongerenwerk Op Zuid](#) (local organization for youth work in Rotterdam) and the participants of the other seminars. It was organized in close cooperation with the Finnish Ministry and the [Finnish Association for Mental Health](#). For the Netherlands, the project was financed by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Strong teens and resilient minds

Given the immense impact of suicide on the environment and the high rates of mood problems among young people, it is extremely important to pay attention to suicide prevention. Therefore [GGZ Oost Brabant](#) with various partners in the south of the Netherlands started [the Strong and Resilient Teens Minds project \(STORM\)](#) to pay more attention to these topics. The project focuses on early identification and addressing of depressive complaints among young people in secondary education. This project stimulates the development of resilience and positive self-esteem. The overall aim is to prevent depression and suicide among young people. The STORM project offers multiple interventions for young people.

The STORM-project is mentioned in [the multi-annual Depression Prevention Programme](#) as a good practice in preventing depression among young people. The STORM project is a collaboration between GGZ Oost Brabant, [GGZ](#), [the Trimbos Institute](#), secondary education schools, municipalities and local partners. Specific information about funding is unknown, but the project is probably funded by local municipalities with public funding.

There is [scientific research](#) into the results of the STORM-project. This research took place from 2015 until 2020. The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the (cost) effectiveness of the prevention programme Op Volle Kracht ('at full strength') for adolescents with elevated depressive symptoms. This is one of the programmes that can be offered within the STORM project. The secondary objective of the study was to define child related factors associated with the effectiveness of the programme. Participants in the study were selected by screening pupils in the second year of secondary education on depressive symptoms. Pupils with a high suicide risk were referred to specialist care. Pupils with elevated depressive symptoms were invited to participate in an intervention

programme of the STORM-project. No results of the STORM-project have been published yet.

Mental health of youth during the corona crisis

During the corona crisis the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport launched the Support Center for Corona Concerns ([Steunpunt Coronazorgen](#)), an online information and refer center that gives information about mental health during the COVID-19 crisis and a list of care and support providers. A specific page is dedicated to [youth with concerns](#). The page contains advice about how to deal with worrying, designing a daily schedule and staying physically healthy as well as ideas for activities and links to websites with more information, hotlines and self-help apps.

We are also seeing more evidence that the corona pandemic have a big impact on the mental well being of young people. The expectation is that we will see more policies around this during the coming years.

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

As described in the [Youth Act](#), municipalities are responsible for prevention and early detection of young people facing health risks. Municipalities are responsible for the offer of (preventive) interventions and for facilities in their municipality that are able to identify young people at risk, for instance schools, consultation clinics, child day care, youth work, youth health care, GGD, specialised mental health care (GGZ), neighbourhood teams and/or centres for youth and family.

[The most recent policy document](#) regarding youth health care was presented in 2009. This document describes that all municipalities have to offer youth health care to children from 0-19 years and their parents. This care is framed in the basic task package of youth health care. Together with the new Youth Act in 2015, [a new basic task package of youth health care](#) was introduced. The purpose of this renewal was to modernize the basic youth health care package based on new scientific insights and social developments, and to better align it with the system changes for youth, as a consequence of the new Youth Act. Municipalities are responsible for ensuring that the new youth health care package is available and actively offered to all children and adolescents up to 18 years. They implement it together with the [Youth Health Care \(JGZ\) organizations](#). Before 2015, there used to be both a universal part and a customer tailored part, but this has been abolished and included in the Youth Act. A contact moment for adolescents has been added as a task to the basic youth health care package. There is a structural offer available to young people from the age of 14. In any event, activities must be available focusing on healthy weight, smoking, alcohol and drug use, sexual health, sport and physical activity, internet use and game addiction, resilience, depression and school absenteeism. The new basic youth health care package indicates which activities should be available to all children and young people. Carrying out specific programmes or (group) activities after identifying risks or problems is not part of the basic package. These programmes and activities, carried out when risks or problems have been detected, are partly covered by prevention in the Youth Act.

The following tasks form part of the basic youth health care package:

- Systematically follow the physical, psychosocial and cognitive development of children and adolescents;
- Assess development in relation to the social, pedagogical and physical environment of the children and young people and the family in which they grow up;
- Identifying problems and early detection of specific disorders on time;
- Providing preventative information, advice, instruction and guidance;

- Descale care and normalize by providing information, advice and support or by conducting a few meetings to support and reassure parents, if necessary;
- Assess whether additional support, help or care is needed and get the right care or help right away;
- Collaborate with professionals in schools, preschool facilities, youth care, obstetricians, maternity care, general practitioners (GPs) and other curative care providers, neighbourhood teams and other relevant stakeholders;
- Advising municipalities and schools on collective measures / activities based on analysis of data obtained.

As mentioned in 7.2 , youth health care is in most municipalities performed by the GGD. More information about youth health care can be found in 7.2.

There is no other top-level policy or legal framework on early detection or identification of young people at risk.

Stakeholders

As described above, municipalities are responsible for providing the facilities in their municipality that are able to identify young people at risk. Municipalities decide which stakeholders carry out this task but usually it is carried out by the GGD. For early detection and identification and good care and support it is important that stakeholders cooperate at a local level. Therefore cooperation takes place with professionals from education, preschool facilities, GGD, youth work, youth health care, obstetricians, consultation clinics, general practitioners (GPs), other care providers and neighbourhood teams. Dependent on the municipality and the local situation, other stakeholders may be involved. The role of the stakeholders involved may also differ from one municipality to the other. The GPs and paediatricians have the possibility to directly refer youth to specialized youth care, which is described in the [Youth Act](#).

Guidance to stakeholders

The [Dutch Centre of Youth Health Care \(Nederlands Centrum Jeugdgezondheid, NCJ\)](#) has developed a [toolbox](#) as support for the youth health care professionals at executive, policy and management levels. Also a [national professional framework](#) has been developed to support the youth health care package. The framework describes the JGZ contacts for the various developmental stages of a young person, as they have to be offered within the basic youth health care package. The national professional framework and the toolbox can be found on the website of the NCJ. NCJ also offers other ways of support to professionals in youth health care. Professionals in the field can also seek support from other professionals, for example from the GGD or from local Centres for Youth and Family.

[The Netherlands Youth Institute](#) also supports youth workers and other professionals. For example, [they presented 11 tips for better collaboration at local level](#), between for example youth workers, municipalities, schools, police and neighbourhood teams, including descriptions of good-practices.

Trainings and events are often organized at a local level by local stakeholders.

Target groups

There are no specific target groups within the youth population identified by the policy framework as being particularly at risk.

Funding

Local municipalities receive funding from government for the organization and the performance of youth health care and early detection and identification. Municipalities themselves decide how to allocate the money, which organizations will carry out the youth health care tasks and how much funding they will receive.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

Youth in View

To achieve good youth health care (JGZ), [the Dutch Centre Youth Health Care \(Nederlands Centrum Jeugdgezondheid, NCJ\)](#), collects data on JGZ in the Netherlands. Youth nurses, for example working at a GGD, child consultation clinic or hospital, monitor their information about the youth they see. [The monitor Youth in View \(Jeugd in Beeld\)](#) collects all this data and presents it to the JGZ, municipalities and researchers with the aim to improve youth health care and to display trends in the health and well-being of youth. [The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport \(VWS\)](#) asked NCJ to develop such an instrument. The system was developed in 2011 and has no specific timeframe. No specific target groups within the youth population are addressed. The Ministry of VWS is responsible for funding. Information about monitoring and evaluation is unknown.

Project Hoofdzaken (Affairs of the head)

[Hoofdzaken](#) is a project of [the National Youth Council \(NJR\)](#) that brings together young people who have experienced mental health issues. These young people all received treatment within [youth mental health care \(youth-GGZ\)](#). They discuss how young people with mental health issues can fully participate in society. They have, from their own experience, listed the major bottlenecks within the youth GGZ and suggested solutions. Examples of these bottlenecks and solutions are:

- Combating stigmatisation and taboos by providing information and online platforms;
- Solutions made to measure and collaboration to create opportunities in education when young people get stranded in schools because of mental health problems.

At both national and international conferences and meetings they discuss these bottlenecks and share their experiences. In this way (care) professionals and policy makers get a better understanding of the experiences of a young person receiving or having received youth GGZ treatment. At the same time they begin to understand how the relation between youngsters and care could be improved. Young people need to be involved to address bottlenecks and to make structural improvements in youth GGZ.

The NJR will continue and further develop this project in 2017 and 2018. Every year, a group of young experts by experience is trained by NJR trainers. Information about public funding and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are unknown.

Patients associations

In order to improve the access to youth health facilities for young people, there are specific patients associations for young people. Well-known diseases like cancer have specific young patients associations. An example is [the Foundation Youth and Cancer](#) that has a [website](#) on which young people can share information and seek contact with other young people that experience the same disease or have relatives/close friends that are ill. The website also provides information for young patients on various themes, for example school and study.

[The Anxiety, Compulsion and Phobia](#) Foundation also has a [specific website for young people](#) where they can share their stories and experiences, get in contact with others and find information about various disorders. Information is also provided about seeking (professional) help and support.

In cooperation with [the Rheumatism foundation](#), the independent foundation [Youth-R-Well.com](#) has been set up. This online platform provides information and experiences from young people between 16 and 30 that suffer from rheumatism. They also organise events for young rheumatism patients.

The patients associations for well-known diseases described above are examples of specific patients associations for youth, but there may be more. These associations provide

examples of how to make health facilities more friendly for young people. The timeframe and outcomes of these initiatives are unknown. The associations are aimed at youth with a specific disease or sometimes youth having relatives suffering a disease. Information about public funding is unknown. Information about monitoring and evaluation is also unknown.

ExPex

The aim [of ExPex](#) is to improve youth (health) care from the perspective of young people themselves. This is done by employing and training experts by experience. These experts by experience are young people that received youth (health) care/support themselves. ExPex facilitates and stimulates them to be trained as experts by experience, so they can contribute to youth (health) care, by setting up projects, giving advice and sharing their expertise. ExPex was initiated because young people in youth (health) care often asked for someone who had had the same experience and could serve as a role model. The first group of ExPex was trained in 2014. The ExPex youth are mostly employed as buddies to other young people and/or consultants of institutions and government organizations. Information about public funding and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation is unknown.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Since the introduction of the new [Youth Act \(2015\)](#) more attention has been paid to the prevention of diseases and problems of young people and parents in the field of health and wellbeing. This is due to the fact that more prevention is one of the transformation goals in the Youth Act. Municipalities try to pay (more) attention to prevention, when this was not already happening. Various knowledge institutes have, in cooperation with other partners and municipalities, developed a so-called 'prevention matrix'. This matrix helps municipalities and local youth health organizations to organize prevention in their municipality. [The Netherlands Youth Institute](#) presented various materials in the area of prevention on [their website](#), for example a description of the matrix and the matrix itself, information about legislation and regulation in the context of prevention, good practices in prevention and publications regarding prevention.

More attention is also being paid to the transition from youth to adulthood at the age of 18. Young people between the ages of 16 to 27 who are not able to develop into adults independently or with support from their network, need special attention and support from municipalities. The [new Youth Act](#) (2015) changed the situation of these vulnerable young people. The Netherlands Youth Institute among others is actively engaged with this theme and offers knowledge and support to professionals and municipalities to help this group of vulnerable young people between 16 and 27 years. The knowledge and offer of support services for municipalities and professionals are accessible on [the website of the Netherlands Youth Institute](#).

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Special feature

The government does not mention young people as a specific group with regard to its efforts around creativity and culture, but they do issue programmes that are specifically developed for children and youth in primary, secondary and tertiary education (Paragraph 8.2). According to the Law on specific culture policy ([Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid](#)) (1993) the Minister or the Secretary of State of Culture issues a culture policy notice every four years. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) distributes the budget for cultural organizations in the so-called cultural basic infrastructure ([culturele basisinfrastructuur - BIS](#)) (Paragraph 8.3).

Highlights

It is not compulsory for schools to offer education in culture and creativity. However, the [Council for Culture](#) (Raad voor Cultuur) and the [Education Council of the Netherlands](#) (Onderwijsraad) think schools should make it part of their curriculums (Paragraph 8.5). The [National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts](#) (Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst LKCA) works on improving the quality of cultural education, both in and out of school. They see three main trends: Young people find new ways of expression, with hip-hop becoming increasingly mainstream; Digitalization has a major impact on young people's cultural participation with social media taking up a lot of their time; Young people prefer to learn about art through tutorials and share culture via Internet.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

The National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts ([Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie Amateurkunst](#) LKCA) identifies the following main trends:

New ways of expression

Hip-hop is becoming increasingly mainstream. It represents a huge youth culture that contains many cultural expressions, such as music, rap, graffiti, DJ'ing, and many forms of hip-hop dance. Spoken word is a hit. This way of writing poetry and reciting originates from the hiphop scene. Next to this, there are numerous other popular cultural expressions: from pop music to drawing, from LARP (Live Action Role Play) to Indian dance, from circus to vlogs.

Digitalization and social media

Digitalization has a major impact in three ways:

- Young people learn through and about their forms of arts via internet (tutorials);
- Young people share culture via internet or get inspired by others;
- Cultural participation is decreasing among young people because of competition with social media. Social media takes up a lot of their time.

Decrease in cultural participation

In general, sports and cultural participation among young people in the ages of 12 to 19 years decreases, but this process has accelerated over the past few years: in 2017 49% of young people participated in some kind of cultural expression as compared to 58% in 2013. Mostly they make music (29%), followed by visual expression activities (24%), media such as photography and film (20%), dance (16%), creative writing (12%) and theatre (10%).

More informal groups

Another general trend in Dutch society is that people are less inclined to join a union or club: 68% of young people that practice some kind of arts are not members of a club or other association. More often, they organize themselves in an informal way; they are more interested in temporary projects or 'festival-like settings'.

All figures are derived from the monitor on amateur arts 2017 [Kunstzinnig en creatief in de vrije tijd 2017](#) (Artistic and creative in leisure time) (LKCA, 2017). This report contains the most recent figures and information about cultural trends among young people

Between 2010 and 2020 more young people participated in cultural, arts and heritage activities than other age groups, especially in arts activities, according to the Netherlands Institute for Social Research in its report What do people have with culture? ([Wat hebben mensen met cultuur?](#)).

Main concepts

Government view on cultural policy

Cultural policy in the Netherlands is based on the premise that the State should not be the judge of what is art and what is not. Artistic development has therefore been the responsibility of private citizens and a large number of foundations, many of them related to culture. Over the years, the government has gradually assumed the role of moderator of cultural activities, apart from being the largest patron of public art and culture. Arts and culture were introduced into the governmental portfolio in 1918, with the formation of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences (Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen - OKenW). Ever since, there has been a department for Arts and Culture, with a minister and/or a state secretary responsible for the cultural portfolio. Since 1994 arts and culture are part of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. More about this one can read in the Compendium Cultural Policies & Trends (Chapter Netherlands/ 1. [Historical perspective: cultural policies and instruments](#)) (2017).

What is cultural education?

Cultuurconnectie (Culture Connection), the branch organization for professionals in arts and culture (also see Paragraph 8.1), describes [cultural education](#) as follows:

“Through cultural education people learn about and with culture. Cultural education encompasses various forms of culture-oriented education, or uses culture as a means of learning. Here, culture is a collective term for arts, cultural heritage and media. People develop cultural competences and talents. They do not only learn about culture, but also develop cultural skills and an open attitude towards culture.”

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Policy making in the field of youth creativity and culture in the Netherlands, primarily takes place on the level of education. The government does not mention young people as a specific group with regard to its efforts around creativity and culture, but they do issue programmes that are specifically developed for children and youth in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Three levels of governance

In the Netherlands, as with other policies, three governance levels are involved in cultural education and cultural participation:

1. National Government

In the creativity and culture sector the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science \(Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap OCW\)](#) is the responsible ministry. The Ministry states that it works towards a smart, capable and creative state. OCW promotes high quality education for all citizens and promotes independence and responsibility. In other words, everybody must be able to experience culture and teachers, artists and scientists must be facilitated to contribute to this aim.

Council for Culture

The [Council for Culture](#) (Raad voor Cultuur) is a body established by law to advise the Dutch Government and Parliament on arts, culture and media. The Council gives recommendations regarding cultural policy in the Netherlands. Usually, the Council draws up these recommendations at the request of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Every four years, the Council presents its recommendations on the perennial, government-subsidized, cultural institutions. The recommendations are not binding; the Minister has the final say about which institutes are eligible for subsidy.

Cultural survey

In '[The Cultural Survey](#)' (2014), the Council for Culture outlines trends and developments in the Dutch cultural sector, and concludes that cultural policy is facing a number of fundamental challenges. Based on the conclusions drawn in 'The Cultural Survey', the 'Agenda for Culture' advised the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) on salient points of cultural policy, the government term 2017-2020 and further ahead.

Agenda for culture

In the [Summary of the Agenda for Culture](#), the Council describes challenges in different areas and urban regions and makes several suggestions for changes in policy. (see also 8.1 'Main trends'). At the end (page 4), the Council for Culture states: "Although not always cost-neutral, these are necessary measures that respond to the challenges of the cultural sector; the government cannot simply expect the private sector to assume their financial role as cultural supporters. An investment agenda has been included which outlines the realistic financial consequences of our recommendations, and indicates a necessary annual investment of approximately 29,5 million euros."

2. Provinces

Interprovincial Agreement

The Provincial States ([Provinciale Staten](#)) and the Interprovincial Agreement ([Interprovinciaal Overleg – IPO](#)) promote the policy on creativity and culture. IPO represents the twelve Dutch provinces and is the discussion partner at the various governance levels: central, provincial and municipal. IPO discusses current issues and closes agreements for example with regard to the policy of the restoration of national monuments which is being decentralized from the central government to the provinces. IPO is also concerned with the financing of new tasks of the provinces after the decentralization. Culture is one of IPO's nine fields of policy. Youth is not a specific target group in the IPO culture policy. However, IPO does discuss youth policy issues and the tasks that have been decentralized from the central government to the governance level of the provinces and the municipalities. This is described in other chapters (e.g. Chapter 5. Participation and Chapter 7. Health and Well-being), but not relevant here.

IPO offers the provinces a platform to stimulate innovation and exchange of knowledge and best practices. The aim is to contribute to the quality, effectivity and efficiency of public administration.

In the coming period (2018 and further) IPO aims at:

- Cultural heritage (archaeology, monuments, cultural history);
- Media (libraries, archives, regional broadcasters);
- Arts (infrastructure).

3. Municipalities

Association of municipalities

Through the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten - [VNG](#)) the 380 Dutch municipalities ([CBS, 1 January 2018](#).) discuss and draft policies on creativity and culture.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Load balancing between the three governance levels

Provinces and municipalities have no legal responsibilities with regard to cultural education and cultural participation. The balance of loads is based on (non-legal) agreements between the Ministry, IPO and VNG.

- The national government is responsible for the following aspects of cultural education:

- The financing and the legal framework;
- The educational assignment to cultural organizations with the national budget;
- National support (innovation, knowledge and networks) and culture funds.

The provinces play a part in second line support. They promote quality by means of expertise and take care of regional dissemination, distribution, mediation and innovative projects.

The municipalities take responsibility for the actual encounters and practical execution, in close cooperation with schools and culture providers. They facilitate:

- An extensive and coherent cultural offer for schools;
- Mediation of offers;
- Connection inside and between schools;
- Agreements with schools (e.g. for the Local Educational Agenda (Lokaal Educatieve Agenda));
- A budget for cultural education in leisure time.

Apart from the agreements mentioned earlier the three governance levels occasionally make agreements about specific subjects, such as the administrative framework Culture and Education. Source: website [National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts](#) (Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst LKCA), in 8.5 [20-10-2017]

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

The Law on specific culture policy ([Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid](#)) of 11 March 1993 states that the Minister or the Secretary of State of Culture issues a culture policy note every four years which forms the basis for subsidizing culture in the coming period.

BIS: Basic infrastructure for culture

The Ministry of OCW distributes the budget for cultural organizations in the so-called cultural basic infrastructure ([culturele basisinfrastructuur - BIS](#)). The BIS for 2021 – 2024 can be downloaded from the website page of the [national government](#). The division of the yearly budget of € 375,46 million is summarized in one clarifying [infographic](#). The organizations are divided into different categories, such as podium arts, museums, visual arts, creative industry, amateur arts and culture education, films, literature and supra sectoral organizations.

BIS focuses on cultural organizations that have a specific function in the national cultural framework, or assume a core function in the regional and urban infrastructure. This includes cultural funding organizations, such as the [Cultural Participation Fund](#) (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie). Financing the BIS falls directly under ministerial responsibility. The regulation of the Law on specific culture policy mentioned earlier in this paragraph stipulates that at least one organization on amateur arts and culture education must be part of the BIS' cultural basic infrastructure. It is also regulated that BIS has to include nine organizations for youth performing arts. In the other arts disciplines, there is no special focus on youth. However, one of the requirements to get subsidized is to have targets for culture education and participation.

Extra money for cultural activities

Besides their legal tasks, the government grants extra money for cultural activities in education, by means of the culture budget as well as the education budget. For example:

- In the so-called [Prestatiebox](#) (performance box), the government sets aside an extra budget for primary and secondary education. In 2018, € 282 million was reserved for primary education, and € 296 million for secondary education. On top of a lump sum schools receive a budget to use, among others, for language and mathematics; science and technics; culture education in primary education; talent development; professionalization of teachers and school leaders.
- The programme 'Culture education with Quality' (Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit) of the Cultural Participation Fund is financed from the culture budget.

Sources: National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts ([Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie Amateurkunst](#) LKCA)

Government vision

In June 2019, the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport published the [Uitgangspunten Cultuurbeleid 2021-2024](#) (Principles culture policy 2021-2024). The document contains the principles for the cultural policy for the period 2021-2024 and for the national basic infrastructure, meaning the selected cultural institutions to receive state funding. The principles on which the culture policy is based are:

1. Broadening and renewing the basic infrastructure, to include new genres and reach more target groups.
2. A strong cultural sector with fair payments and terms of employment.
3. Culture of and for everyone through stimulating cultural participation, immaterial heritage and culture education.
4. Culture without borders through international knowledge exchange.

In December 2018, the [Council for Culture](#) had given its recommendations for the aforementioned policy principles and grant applications: Advice culture system 2021-2024: Culture nearby, close to culture ([Advies cultuurbestel 2021-2024: Cultuur dichtbij, dicht bij cultuur](#)).

In September 2020, Minister Bussemaker sent her letter [Prinsjesdagbrief BIS 2021-2024](#) with [attachment](#) (Opening-day of Dutch Parliament Cultural Basic Infrastructure 2021-2024) to Parliament. In this document, she explains her division of subsidies among the institutions in the national infrastructure for the period 2021-2024. In total, 113 cultural institutions and 6 funds receive an amount of 413 million euro per year. An additional 482 million euro extra is spent in the first 6 months of 2021, to financially support the cultural and creative sector during the corona crisis.

In December 2019, a [policy framework on international cultural policy](#) was published by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Foreign Affairs.

Government formed after the national elections of March 2017

The new coalition of VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal), D66 (Democrats '66) and Christenunie (Christian Union) have presented themselves on 10 October 2017. Culture Connection ([Cultuurconnectie](#)) (also see paragraph 8.1) made a summary of the coalition's text with a special focus on culture to inform their members. The coalition mentioned specific regulations for culture:

- Investments in culture will grow from € 25 million in 2018, € 50 million in 2019 to € 80 million in 2020 and € 80 million in 2021. With this funding the toughest bottlenecks and the biggest problems in the sector can be tackled and the cultural infrastructure can be strengthened.
- The Geefwet will continue.
- For heritage and monuments, the cabinet will grant a one-time amount of € 325 million for the coming four years. Among other things, empty churches can be renovated and made available for other purposes. Private owners can keep counting on governmental support, either through fiscal deduction or subsidies.

- Visiting the Rijksmuseum (Government Museum of Arts) will be part of a compulsory activity for all children in the Netherlands.

In 2021 a new Cabinet will be formed, following the national elections in March of that year.

Source: Culture connection [Cultuurconnectie](#).

Scope and contents

In an official letter to the House of Representatives about the cultural basic infrastructure ([Prinsjesdagbrief BIS 2021-2024](#); Opening-day of Dutch Parliament Cultural Basic Infrastructure 2021-2024)) the Minister of Education, Culture and Science announced the following regarding youth and culture:

Youth theatre and dance: The ministerial regulation offers space for 13 youth theatre and dance companies. The youth companies were mentioned by name in the [annex](#) (page 2).

- Reading and attention for literature

The Minister aims to stimulate reading by young people by an extra investment in supporting agencies, the organization of a literature festival and further integration of literature policy.

- Special attention to youth

The [Cultural Participation Fund](#) (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie) (see also Paragraph 8.1) will develop a separate multi-year assortment for youth. All cultural companies that have received funding are asked to pay special attention to new groups like youth.

The Cultural Participation Fund contributes to high-grade culture education, especially for children, to spot and coach future top talent in the Netherlands and to develop an innovative, attractive and sustainable offer for active culture participation. In the period 2021–2024 the fund combines its activities in three programmes, as mentioned in its policy plan Culture makes it ([Cultuur maakt het](#)). The activities in these programmes that are specifically aimed at young people are mentioned below

1. Multi-annual support of national talent developers, support of talent development in regions and talents in informal environments.
2. Executing the programme Culture education with quality '21-'24 in primary and secondary education and post-secondary vocational education. Stimulating a modern assortment that matches young people's needs and renewing culture education

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy on creativity and culture for young people in the Netherlands is the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) ([Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap OCW](#)). The Ministry states that it works towards a smart, capable and creative Netherlands. OCW strives to provide high quality education for all and wishes to prepare all citizens for independency and responsibility. It wants everybody to experience culture and intends to enable teachers, artists and scientists to do their job.

Revisions/updates

We have no information available about revisions or updates.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts ([Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst](#) LKCA)

LKCA works for everyone who is committed to education and participation in culture and arts, both within the education system and beyond. Anyone working in or involved with these sectors can benefit from the expertise and opportunities for active knowledge exchange that LKCA offers. This includes a wide range of people, like art teachers, internal culture coordinators and coaches, education officers within cultural institutions, policy officers, politicians, researchers, school managers, administrators in the education sector and in umbrella organizations for the amateur arts. Volunteers working in amateur arts can also consult LKCA for information.

The activities of LKCA are categorized under ten themes:

- Renewing culture education by Curriculum.nu;
- Promoting culture in post-secondary vocational education;
- Renewing extracurricular culture education;
- Stimulating culture in special needs education;
- Programme Culture Education with Quality (Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit)
- Promoting diversity and inclusion
- Connecting culture, care and welfare
- Strengthening the voluntary sector
- Programme Culture Participation (Cultuurparticipatie)
- Supporting municipalities in developing policies

Prince Bernhard Culture Fund ([Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds](#))

The Prince Bernhard Culture Fund supports culture, nature and science in the Netherlands. The fund stimulates special initiatives and talents with financial support, expertise, awards and scholarships in more than 3,700 projects each year.

Cultural Youth Pass ([Culturele Jeugd Pas](#) CJP)

CJP aims to introduce culture to all people from 18 to 30 years old. The organization encourages and inspires people to embrace culture by offering discounts on (film)festivals, concerts, theatres and museums. They promote cultural events by highlighting a careful selection in magazines, newsletters and on their website. For more than 60 years they have been organizing cultural events and working together with cultural partners.

Youth Fund Sport and Culture ([Jeugdfonds Sport en Cultuur](#))

The foundation enables children of 4 to 18 years old from families with low budgets to attend lessons in the fields of arts and culture, and sports. A request for funding can be submitted by independent mediators, often professionals from local social service organizations who are already involved with the family.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

Boekman Foundation ([Boekmanstichting](#))

The Boekman Foundation is an institute for arts, culture and related policy. The institute collects, analyzes and disseminates data and information about the culture sector, and stimulates and facilitates the culture debate.

The [Boekmans quarterly series of books about arts and sports, number 112](#) (autumn 2017, only in Dutch, not freely available, research by Maïke Kooijmans) highlights the value of arts and sports in her article 'De opgetelde waarde van sport, kunst en cultuur' (The value of sport, arts and culture). According to the [editorial](#), the worlds of sports and arts have many interfaces. Both are popular leisure time activities and both depend on volunteers. The editor argues that governments should combine forces. On a local level, themes like youth development, the social cohesion in neighborhoods, physical activities and finding purpose can be integrated and tackled in combined projects, wherein the participant is always central.

Cultural Participation Fund (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie)

The Cultural Participation Fund promotes cultural participation. This fund's principle is that everyone deserves the chance to be involved in culture in their own way. At school and in their free time. Cultural activities can be fun, bring people together and make stories visible. Culture shapes everyone. And vice versa: everyone, in whatever form, helps to shape culture.

Culture Connection (Cultuurconnectie)

Culture Connection is the branch organization for culture education, amateur arts and the work of volksuniversiteiten (people's universities, see later on in this paragraph). Culture Connection wants to contribute to the future of culture education. The 143 members are: arts centers, volksuniversiteiten, schools of music and provincial support organizations for arts and culture. Together with and on behalf of the members, Culture Connection takes a stand and formulates solicited and unsolicited advice about various themes and topics.

Volksuniversiteit.nl

The so-called Volksuniversiteiten (which translates into 'people's universities') form the largest language institutes of the Netherlands, based on 75 locations throughout the country. Together they offer courses in more than 30 different languages. Apart from language courses, they offer a wide variety of courses on creativity, arts and culture, social and communication skills, man and society, food and drink, and many computer courses. The courses are accessible, instructive, versatile and affordable. The set-up is diverse: there are large Volksuniversiteiten in the bigger cities with thousands of students, middle sized ones, and some in smaller towns and villages with a few hundred students.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Interest in archeology

As part of the latest [evaluation](#) of the Law on Archaeological Monuments care ([Erfgoedwet](#)), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissioned a quick scan about the visibility of archeology to the Dutch public. The quick scan '[Inventarisatie publieksbereik archeologie in Nederland](#)' (only available in Dutch) was executed by [SiRM](#) and [DSP-groep](#) and was finished in 2021. The report describes that in 2014 31 percent of the 12 till 19 year olds visited a history or archeology museum in the year before and 9 percent of the young people in this age category visited an excavation. Both percentages are lower among young people than among children between 6 and 12 years old, but the museum visit percentage among young people is higher than in the total Dutch population of 6 years and older. Archeologists also observe less interest in archeology among youth and young adults than among children up to 11 years old.

Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

The [Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands](#) (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, RCE) helps other parties to get the best out of Dutch heritage. The agency lists, preserves, develops (sustainably) and provides access to the most valuable heritages in the Netherlands. It is the link between policymakers, academics and practitioners, and provides advice, knowledge and information as well as performs certain statutory duties. One of the agency's target groups is youth.

Two examples of their projects are:

- Mapping Archaeology

The [Rijksmuseum van Oudheden](#) (RMO) and the [Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands](#) have made a map of an archaeological time travel through the Netherlands, from prehistory (300,000 years ago) until and including the Second World war. Archaeology on the map ([Archeologie op de kaart](#)) shows the most interesting discoveries and locations in the Netherlands. Every map of each period is illustrated with photos, films, drawings and 3D-reconstructions. The application is a product of the RCE programme on Improvement activities in archaeology, that followed the evaluation of the Law on Archaeological Monuments care ([Erfgoedwet](#)) in 2011. Archaeology on the map mainly targets young people. The map offers easy access to the archaeological richness of Dutch soil and all the discoveries and stories that are part of it. The periods of Archaeology on the map are connected to the Canon of the Netherlands, an important reference in Dutch history education. The website of Archaeology on the map is meant for advanced stages of primary education and the first years of secondary education. Teachers can use the website as reference, and students can find a wealth of information for their own projects.

- World famous in your own country

The outcome of an evaluation by order of the [Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands](#) (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed RCE) in 2014 was to increase awareness about world heritage in the Netherlands. A baseline measurement (by [Kantar Public](#)) showed that the UNESCO World Heritage is not high on the agenda of Dutch people. 60% of young people in the Netherlands had never heard of it. A campaign was launched with the motto: 'Our world heritage is world famous... Coming soon to the Netherlands'. There were television commercials, promotion on the Holiday Fair, new visitor centers were opened and touristic route markers were improved. A small mobile home went on tour with twenty souvenirs designed by students of various design colleges. Two years later, at the end of 2016, the follow up research showed that 84% of Dutch people of 18 years and up had then heard of world heritage (which was 79% in 2014), 1 in 3 people saw the campaign on television and more teachers talked about world heritage in school. More results are shown in these [infographics](#).

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Culture and creativity in formal education

It is not compulsory for schools to offer education and capacity building for young people in the field of culture and creativity. But both the [Council for Culture](#) (Raad voor Cultuur) and the [Education Council of the Netherlands](#) (Onderwijsraad) think schools should, in some way, make it part of their curriculum. In their advice [Cultuureducatie: leren, creëren, inspireren!](#) (Culture education: learn, create, inspire!) (June 2012), which was requested by the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science, both councils concluded that culture education has nothing more than a marginal spot in the school curriculum. Teachers lack tools and do not feel competent to discuss the subject. The cultural sector that they usually turn to is unclear and incoherent. According to both councils culture education should be at the heart of education. They stress that it is important that schools teach culture education and include their local network in the process. The councils give the following main recommendations and suggest a step-by-step approach:

- Give schools more grip on the content of culture education;
- Stimulate expertise in schools;
- Turn the cultural infrastructure into a service for schools.

The advice led to the programme Culture Education with Quality ([Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit](#)) of the [Cultural Participation Fund](#). The programme is aimed at pupils in primary education and improves the collaboration between schools and cultural organizations as well as the expertise of teachers. In addition it contributes to the development of continuing learning lines and 21st century skills.

Governmental support

The government appreciates the importance of culture education. On their [website](#) the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) ([Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap OCW](#)) points out that culture education is essential for the transformation of young people into discerning adults. Lessons in literature, theater, media or heritage are not just fun, they are also essential for the general forming of children. Through culture education children develop their talents, and learn to understand the value of arts. Arts can stimulate historical awareness and challenges students to develop a creative, inquisitive attitude. Also, cultural organizations contribute to culture education.

Digitalization

Digital information and social media are important tools in education and can help children and young people to acquire cultural and creative competences. This requires media literacy and online safety. As already pointed out in Paragraph 6.8, schools are not obliged to have media literacy and online safety education in their curriculum, but they are strongly advised to integrate these themes. Many schools are already working to improve the digital citizenship of their students. This means that students are aware of social media and use it in a responsible way. This also includes responsible citizenship with regard to the use of internet, cell phone and other media.

The future of education

Since 2014 several steps have been taken to revise the curriculum of primary and secondary education. Advice has been given by different actors. First, the Platform Education 2032 (Platform Onderwijs 2032) consulted the central government about the future of fundamental education. The main aim was to present a vision on the knowledge, skills and competences that students must acquire in the light of future developments in society. The final report, [Consultation by Platform Education 2032](#) (2016) (only in Dutch), gives an outline of a future proof primary and secondary education in the Netherlands. Education aimed at stimulating curiosity and creativity, and that contributes to the personal development and forming of responsible citizens that can handle diversity. This kind of education will help students to find their way in the digital world. The proposed fixed base for education includes languages Dutch and English, calculation and mathematics, digital literacy, citizenship and 'knowledge of the world'. In addition, education must contribute to the development of interdisciplinary skills and competences preparing students to participate in society, and supporting them in lifelong learning and the forming of their personality. For example, learning skills, creating, critical thinking, problem solving abilities and effective collaboration.

Second, in 2019, teachers, school leaders and experts, united in [Curriculum.nu](#), proposed suggestions for the revision of the curriculum in primary education and the junior grades of secondary school. The development team Arts & Culture advised to give more attention to artistic expression and the development of creativity on the one hand and the role of arts and culture in society and their own development on the other hand. Also, these both sides of arts and culture education should be intertwined.

Third, the Scientific Curriculum Committee has advised the Minister of Education, Culture and Science about Curriculum.nu's proposals in its report [Tussenadvies 1 Kaders voor de toekomst](#) (Mid-term advice Framework for the future) and [Tussenadvies 2 Goal and space](#). The committee has advised to elaborate on Curriculum.nu's advice concerning arts and culture and to give more attention to cohesion, broad skills, global themes and diminishing overload. The Committee has written a draft assignment to expertise center [Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling](#) ([SLO](#), Foundation for Curriculum Development) to execute the next

step in determining the concrete curriculum goals and final exam programmes. Also, the revision of the curriculum for the senior grades in secondary education will be started in 2021.

Specialized training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

The publication *Base for Culture education. Manual for the future of culture education inside and outside schools* ([Basis voor Cultuureducatie Handreiking voor de toekomst van binnen- en buitenschoolse cultuureducatie](#)) (LKCA, October 2016), discusses a number of main principles of culture education:

- Equal chances for cultural development for every child of 0 to 18 years;
- Culture education with a continuous learning line and integrated in the curriculum;
- Connection between inside and outside school learning;
- Introduction of culture and talent development;
- A culture-rich learning and living environment.

Next to this, the manual (Chapter 4 Planning steps, Paragraph 4.4, pages 29-32) renders descriptions of the qualification of teachers, educators and others in the cultural field. According to the authors a 'combination officer' should be appointed to connect culture education inside and outside schools. Now, combination officers (also called 'culture coaches') are mainly facilitated by municipalities and central government. Culture coaches are contact persons inside schools and outside schools (e.g. educational workers of cultural organizations). The exact role of a culture coach depends on the local context.

Culture education inside and outside schools is connected by a continuous learning line and the lesson content. The authors of the manual suggest that all schools and culture providers use the learning framework, learning plans and guidelines. Governments can stimulate this by making the use of the learning line and guidelines a condition to get funding.

Providing quality access to creative environments

Manifest

In their Manifest for Culture education ([Manifest Cultuureducatie](#)) the branch organization for professionals in arts and culture [Cultuurconnectie](#) (Culture Connection) (see also Paragraph 8.1) stresses that culture education is essential for development and connection. The Manifest recommends that the following investments in culture education are necessary to create the right conditions for young people:

- Integrate culture education in the school curriculum for all young people from 4 to 18 years and offer the programme 'Culture education with Quality' (Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit) of the Cultural Participation Fund (see above) to all young people. Allocate a steady amount of 10 euro per year per student for arts and culture, to connect the rich learning environment of our national heritage and the arts sector with education in a natural way.
- Make culture accessible for all children with ample possibilities to develop culture skills during after school hours, also supported by art teachers and artists. Devote special attention to families that live in poverty and often experience difficulties in offering their children the opportunities they need.
- Invest in good facilities and use a national framework for agreements about a nationwide infrastructure for basic cultural facilities inside and outside schools, which clearly specify all responsibilities between government, education and cultural providers.

For information about public funding for the acquisition of cultural and creative competences through education and training see paragraph 8.3.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

No information has been found about developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities in formal education. Chapter 3 Employment and Entrepreneurship, Paragraph 3.6, presents the website of [Jong Ondernemen](#) (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and Young Entrepreneurs).

Jong Ondernemen is a foundation that supports schools with practical entrepreneurial programmes. Creativity is one of the competences students learn to develop in these programmes. Here, however, there is no mention of the use of cultural competences.

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

On its [website LKCA](#) gives 13 tips to art professionals on how to include youth, and especially youth in care, in creative arts within the new Youth Law. Municipalities have to fill in youth care services at a local level and are looking for cooperation partners with good initiatives. This offers opportunities, also for art professionals. The following tips are given:

1. Think about three central questions:
 - a. How do you strengthen young people's self reliance to prevent or delay specific care questions?
 - b. How to make youth aware of problems and care issues in time to be able to support before problems get bigger?
 - c. How can you improve the own strength of youth, their families and social environment?
2. Zoom in on one or more policy theme's.
3. Be aware of the innovative character of the cooperation with care and welfare services.
4. Look at what other art professionals are doing within the new Youth Law.
5. Broaden your own work field.
6. Look into participative art projects.
7. Check if your local municipality is open to art interventions.
8. Convince your municipality about the power of art inventions.
9. Start with an open reconnaissance.
10. How to make a project plan.
11. Find cooperation partners.
12. Arrange the budget.
13. Read the manual on successful inclusive culture projects.

For information about young entrepreneurs and stimulating entrepreneurship in general, please see Chapter 3 Employment and Entrepreneurship.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

As mentioned before in other parts of this chapter about culture and creativity the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) ([Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap OCW](#)) believes that it is important to make the relationship between culture and other social domains more visible. The Ministry's web page on culture provides an overview of government involvement with Dutch culture policy. There is no specific information about culture for young people, but programmes and projects for and by young people are included in the good practices that are presented on the website. Examples of new technology promoting creativity and innovation:

- Culture on campus – UT Eindhoven

The [University of Technology Eindhoven](#) has a special programme and a Studium Generale about culture. The university aims at good academic forming in an intellectually and culturally stimulating environment. Technology and culture come together in public debates, joint projects with artists, films, workshops, exhibitions, music and theater in and around the campus. Each academic year, their [Studium Generale](#) offers students and workers a diverse cultural programme with new and innovative initiatives.

- Gaming for study points – UT Twente

The University of Technology Twente has many culture-oriented projects, like for example High Tech Human Touch, [Gaming for study credits](#) and [culture on campus](#). Culture on campus offers many activities like performances, lectures, concerts, theater, exhibitions and courses. With the [culture courses](#) UT Twente wants to boost the creativity of students and workers. Also, many courses are available at the sports center, from running to yoga.

The course Gaming for study points is a serious game where students work in groups on asset management. In various rounds of the game students have to take management decisions to make a fictional pharmaceutical company more viable and valuable. The group that designs the most valuable company wins the game.

- Culture sensitive design – UT Delft

The [University of Technology Delft](#) offers many activities in the fields of culture and technology, such as courses about Dutch culture, design, lectures, presentations (e.g. about the Council of Culture at local broadcasting) and the combination of sports and culture in a newly renovated center on campus. In the [Culture sensitive design](#) online programme for both students and designers, the participants' potential for innovation in new product and service design is stimulated. Participants are challenged to use their cultural sensitiveness and understanding.

- [Professor of Culture – UT Delft](#)

For ten years, the [University of Technology Delft](#), appointed a Dutch writer or practitioner of music, visual arts, film and photography, and performing arts to be that year's [Cultural Professor](#) and to work together with students on an assignment. This Cultural Professorship consisted of open lectures, as well as several master classes for students only.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

Children and young people today are referred to as the digital generation. Young people prefer internet to search for practical information about cultural organizations instead of relying on offline media such as newspapers or magazines. This was one of the main findings of the research '[How cultural is the digital generation? The use of internet for cultural means among teenagers](#)' (only in Dutch) of the [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) (2011).

Trends

To make access to culture easy and attractive for young people is equally important to other information providers in the social and cultural domain. This becomes clear in the publication 'Trends in society. Developments in the areas of demography, economy and information in the social and cultural domain' (2014) of the [National Library of the Netherlands](#). Young people need to be well prepared for the future labor market. Next to literacy, other skills and competences like cooperation, creativity, digital literacy, communication, problem solving ability, critical thinking, social and cultural skills are becoming more important.

Social learning

'Trends in society' describes how learning has become more of a social process that happens in co-creation and by collaborating and sharing with others, also known as social learning. [Fablabs](#) and Makerspaces are informal learning environments with machines for children to get acquainted with technology in a playful way. New knowledge and experiences are shared on online platforms. Fablabs and Makerspaces offer a space where collaboration, creativity, technology and 'hand and head work' come together. Knowledge does not get transferred in a formal school-like manner, but by creating something together.

Fablabs and Makerspaces

Some libraries offer Fablabs and Makerspaces to attract young people to create things together using digital and physical tools and 3D printers. For example:

- Makersbase: "Let's inspire each other and create new things!"

In a creative workplace in the back of the central library in Breda, modern and traditional techniques come together, such as 3D-printing, software programming, laser cutting, film and animation. [Makersbase](#) offers a variety of activities for different target groups, private persons and schools. Makersbase is a programme of [Nieuwe Veste Arts Centre Breda](#) and the Municipality of Breda. The programme is specifically targeted at young creators aged 12 to 24 years. They offer workshops like Vlog and Video, for 12 to 16 years, to develop the skills of a real vlogger in 10 lessons, or [Coderdojo Breda](#), for 7 to 17 years, to learn computer programming.

- Education

Nieuwe Veste Arts center Breda believes that young people from the age of 12 years and older should be introduced to new developments in the area of media and technology. An example is [Programming with the Code Qube](#) for the advanced grades of primary education and the first years of secondary education. Children learn how to make their own website step by step with HTML and CSS.

The corona crisis boosted online access to culture

The online accessibility to culture has risen quickly since the start of the corona crisis in the Netherlands in March 2020. Museums, theatres, art galleries, choirs, music clubs and other cultural organizations and associations were forced to close their doors or to limit their number of visitors, because of the measures governments took to reduce the spread of the corona virus. They developed a wide range of digital alternatives to their regular activities: digital rehearsals, online concerts, lessons on social media, virtual museum tours, vlogs, podcasts, home programmes with video's and challenges, phone calls by poets and manuals for your own online home exhibition, to name a few. The National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts ([Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst](#)) listed many of these digital cultural initiatives.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

The website of the [National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts](#) (Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst LKCA) offers information on the synergy between public policies and programmes. This includes a short historical overview about the synergy between culture policy and education policy throughout the 20th century:

- Education and Culture were not always part of the same department. In the past, for almost 30 years (between 1918 and 1965) arts, sciences and education belonged to the same ministry. They separated when Arts was moved to the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work. It wasn't until 1994 that Culture and Education were united again in the same ministry. Culture education became part of the national culture policy with the [policy note Culture and School](#) (1996) (only in Dutch). One year later a programme under the same name followed. This programme reconnected culture and education and earned culture education a firm spot in government policy. The current programme 'Culture education with Quality' (Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit) of the Cultural Participation Fund (see also Paragraph 8.3) is the follow up of Culture and School.
- Culture education is a part of culture policy, but is sometimes presented as 'artistic orientation' in primary education. Arts education and creative arts (CKV) in secondary education fall under education policy. Culture education, like the programme Culture education with Quality, gets funded out of the culture budget. This also includes the € 11.50 per student per year for culture education that schools receive from the Prestatiebox (Performance box).

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

No information was found about partnerships between culture and creative sectors, youth organizations and youth workers.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

Debate about intensifying the connection between culture and sport

The website of the [Boekman Foundation](#) (Boekmanstichting) reports about a closed meeting in February 2017, organized by the [Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences](#), about the combination of sports and culture. Thirty scientists, policy makers, researchers and other professionals in the fields of sports, culture and education debated about the connection between sports and culture with regard to talent development and vulnerable youth.

Research of the [Netherlands Institute for Social Research](#) (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Tiesen-Raaphorst et al. 2016) shows that the worlds of sports and culture cannot be separated easily. However, apart from collaborations on a local level, collaborations on a policy level are not very common. The two guest speakers concluded that there is still a long way to go. They expressed the need for extra money and appealed to everybody to make contact with their target groups and to get inspired.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

- Van Gogh connects

An example of a programme about cultural diversity is Van Gogh connects ([Van Gogh verbindt](#)). How can the [Van Gogh Museum](#) in Amsterdam reach local young people with Surinam, Turkish, Antillean and Moroccan backgrounds more effectively? That is the main question of this four-year learning programme. Together with the target group the museum develops forty activities to research how the museum can be more effective in reaching young people of 18 to 30 years with diverse migrant backgrounds.

The aim of Van Gogh connects is not only to reach a new group of visitors, but also to measure the social impact of culture participation. The social value of culture is a well-known fact, but there is hardly any knowledge about how this can be measured. For this research, the museum joins forces with the [Impact Centre ICE of Erasmus University Rotterdam](#). Together with ICE and Fonds 21 the Van Gogh museum will share knowledge, experience and results with other culture organizations and the science field in order to enhance social responsibility in the museum world.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

One contact point for youth Introduce one contact point for integral youth policy, including culture and sports for all young people. That is what cultural and sports organizations wrote in [a letter](#) (dated 15 May 2017) to the informer of the new cabinet at the time, minister Edith Schippers.

Consultation on the future of cultural participation [LKCA](#) (National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts Netherlands), organized an extensive consultation round in the work field of culture about the future of cultural participation ([Basis voor Cultuurparticipatie, Een agenda voor actieve cultuurparticipatie in de toekomst](#), LKCA, 2017/ Base for Cultural Participation, An agenda for active cultural participation in future). The agenda for the future that was drawn up at the consultation is based on societal trends and ambitions in the cultural sector. In particular, young cultural professionals were invited to share their views on the future of cultural participation.

Challenges Challenges for the coming years are: secure the accessibility of performing arts; allow bottom-up initiatives to grow; give technology a place; and contribute to social questions with arts and culture. Young people especially point out that diversity and inclusion need to be addressed through cultural participation in a natural way, that there has to be opportunity for talent development, that funds should operate more transparently and be more accessible and especially that existing systems should be more open.

Integral and multi-disciplinary systems After the municipal elections of March 2018 and with the new national government (presented on 26 October 2017) the expectation of LKCA is that integral and multi-disciplinary systems will be emphasized even more. This is very much in sync with the inventory of methods which use arts and culture to reach young people in the social domain. This inventory is a running LKCA project.

Value of sports, arts and culture The value of this combination is well described, for example by Maike Kooijmans in her article 'Talentgericht werken met kwetsbare jongeren. De opgetelde waarde van sport, kunst en cultuur' (Talent-oriented work with vulnerable youths. The value of sport, arts and culture) from the [Boekmans quarterly series of books about arts and sports number 112](#) (autumn 2017, only in Dutch), also mentioned in Paragraph 8.4.

Europe in Perspective – international training The aim of Europe in Perspective: International Co-operation in Cultural Learning is to create new transnational and European professional development opportunities that strengthen the capacity of those working in schools as well as in non-formal arts and cultural education to develop more intercultural understanding and European awareness. In order to achieve this, a multinational modular training concept is to be developed and tested in the field. The

steering group consists of [LKCA](#) Netherlands, and national cultural education centres from Germany, England, Hungary, Austria and Scotland.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

Special feature

The main public authorities that are involved in policy-making in the field of youth and the world are [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) and [the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#). Dutch schools are obliged to pay attention to the topic of citizenship, laid down in the Act Active Citizenship and Social Inclusion (2006). However, more attention could still be paid to this topic and schools experience difficulties in fulfilling this task (Paragraph 9.4). A national study (2015) showed clearly that youth behave in a more sustainable manner than in previous years, when research was also conducted. See Paragraph 9.1 for more information about the research.

Highlights

In the Netherlands, municipalities have a growing interest in the concept of Child Friendly Cities. In Child Friendly Cities, municipalities value and actively promote the participation of children and youth. They can for example have a children's mayor. Regarding youth and the world, the National Youth Council (NJR) is an organization with multiple initiatives. They facilitate exchanges on global issues and citizenship at domestic and international level. They for example facilitate and organize the National Youth Debate and the Night of the United Nations.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

Eramus+

At a global level, youth can participate in [Erasmus+](#) Youth. [Erasmus+](#) enables people to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. [The programme's main aim](#) is boosting skills and employability in the Netherlands, among young people in particular. Erasmus+ also supports transnational partnerships between Education, Training and Youth institutions and organizations to foster collaboration and connect the worlds of Education and Work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe. It also supports Dutch national efforts to modernize Education, Training and Youth systems.

In the field of sports, Erasmus+ funding supports projects that focus on the development, transfer and implementation of innovative ideas and practices in sports at European, national, regional and local levels. It also aims to increase collaborations between sports organizations and tackle issues like intolerance, discrimination, doping and match-fixing in sports. In short, Erasmus+ facilitates youth collaborations at a global level.

[From 2021 until 2027, the European Commission has a budget of 26,2 billion euros for Erasmus+](#). The priorities of the new programme are making an impact, inclusion, digitalization, participation and Green Erasmus+ (sustainability, environment and climate). The programme is connected to the [EU Youth Strategy](#), its three core areas of action (engage, connect and empower) and the [European Youth Goals](#).

UNESCO Schools

In their curriculum, [UNESCO schools](#) structurally address themes that are central to UNESCO policy. These include: peace and human rights, intercultural learning, durability and global citizenship. In the Netherlands, there are 61 Dutch schools for primary education, secondary education, post-secondary vocational education and teacher's training colleges with the UNESCO school label.

Child Friendly Cities

The [Child Friendly Cities Initiative](#) (CFC) works to guide cities and other systems of [local governance](#) towards the inclusion of children's rights as a key component of their goals, policies, programmes and structures.

The role of local governments in the fulfilment of children's rights was officially placed on the agenda in 1992 in Dakar, Senegal, when the Mayors Defenders of Children Initiative was launched by UNICEF. Within this framework, a wide range of child-centered activities and programmes took shape and were initiated at a local level.

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative was launched in 1996 to act on the resolution that was passed during the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Conference declared that the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance.

A movement of child friendly municipalities started flourishing in low, middle and high-income countries and an increasing number of cities promoted and implemented initiatives to realize children's rights. The CFC Initiative is active alongside other related efforts such as UNESCO's Growing Up in Cities and UN Habitat's Safer Cities. Several factors underlie the growing interest in CFC:

- The increasing number of children living in cities versus the limited structures and capacities of these cities to respond to their needs;
- A general trend in governmental decentralization;
- A growing interest in community approaches to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- And the recognition that civic engagement and child participation are key ingredients to good governance.

In the Netherlands, municipalities have a growing interest in child friendly cities. A number of municipalities is already working on becoming a child friendly city or have already become a child friendly city. Child Friendly Cities value and actively promote the participation of children and youth. Often, these cities have a children's mayor and council.

The Dutch Child Friendly Cities goals for 2021 are:

1. Further development of the barometer, a tool to investigate the areas of children's lives that could be improved.
2. Preserving Child Friendly Cities to guarantee the goals and principles of CFC.
3. Expanding the CFC platform, for example by a new communication strategy and sharing best practices.
4. Retaining and expanding the network of municipalities and other parties involved.

Also Child Friendly Cities in the Netherlands, the [Dutch National Youth Council](#) ([Nationale Jeugd Raad](#)) and the [All about Health](#) network (Alles is Gezondheid) initiated the Movement from Prevention towards Potential ([Beweging van Preventie naar Potentie](#)). This movement of municipalities, youth workers, schools, employers, parents, children, young people and others promotes a shift in the approach of all children and youth: a positive approach with a focus on their strength, talent and development including regarding them as equal partners.

The [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#) (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten - VNG) provides more information about the CFC Initiative on its [website](#).

Youth interest in global issues

Kaleidos research 'Youth and the world'

In 2015, [Kaleidos Research published a study about youth and the world](#). The research focused on sustainable behavior of youth, with special attention for global citizenship

among Dutch youth (12 – 17 years). The study shows that young people behave more sustainably than they did in the three previous years, when research was also conducted. Young people bought more second-hand items than in previous years, showed a more sustainable attitude with water and threw away less food. Also, more youth discussed the environment and environmental issues with friends or family. Nevertheless, more youth kept their phones plugged in, even when they were already charged. Furthermore, Dutch youth did not share their opinion about global issues online as much as before. One third of them preferred to travel by car with, for example, their parents, instead of riding a bike. The study concluded that there was an overall positive trend towards more sustainable behavior, but more awareness and changes were necessary.

In terms of the refugee problem, young people were more self-conscious about interdependence of world issues than two years before the report was published. More youths believed that countries like the Netherlands should help development countries with finding solutions for their problems. However, young people still felt that their own role and responsibility with regard to global problems was very small. Most young people did think that it is dangerous to neglect nature and that we should take care of it. All results are described in [the research report](#).

Climate change

Since the end of the 2010s young people all over the world, including the Netherlands, have demonstrated against the insufficient governmental measures against climate change. For example Dutch secondary school pupils united during a [Climate Strike](#) (Klimaatstaking) and the Young Climate Movement ([Jonge Klimaatbeweging](#)), consisting of more than 50 youth organizations in the Netherlands, organizes campaigns and lobby activities.

Young people have a more positive attitude towards Europe

Young people are more positive about Europe and cultural diversity than older generations, according to a [report](#) by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) distributed in 2021. Online communication across borders is also more common for young people up to 35 years of age. They maintain contacts with foreign people by use of social media or email three times as much as older people and more often they buy products from foreign websites.

Education in citizenship

In 2016, the [Netherlands Initiative for Educational Research \(Nationaal Regieorgaan Onderwijsonderzoek NRO\)](#) published [a research on the role of schools with regard to citizenship of pupils](#). It appears that many schools and teachers were still searching for ways to integrate citizenship in education. The study resulted in a recommendation for teachers, school leaders and policy makers on the inclusion of citizenship in education. Important elements of citizenship education are: a positive school climate, a curriculum broad approach to citizenship, a coherent didactic and pedagogical approach, attention for values, a coherent programme and a supportive environment.

[Also in 2016 the Inspectorate of Education concluded that often the lessons on citizenship depend on the teacher and that results remain unclear](#). Four years later a new study by the same inspectorate showed that the current framework for citizenship education should be adapted to clarify the expectations concerning the basic values of the democratic constitutional state and attention for the constitution. See the report [Burgerschapsonderwijs en het omgaan met verschillen in morele opvattingen](#) (Citizenship education and dealing with differences in moral opinions).

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Foreign Affairs

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) is the main governmental authority responsible for youth's contribution to global processes. The Dutch government is all for sustainable economic growth in development countries. Also, it promotes global stability and security and respect for human rights. The government believes they will achieve the best results if they focus on the fields in which the Netherlands excels, for example water management and food security. The 4 main themes of Dutch development collaboration policy are:

- security and the rule of law;
- water management;
- food security;
- sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In each of these four themes, issues like equality for women, environment and climate play an important role. More specific information about these themes and the government's activities is available at www.government.nl.

International Public Goods (IPGs) also play a major role in Dutch development collaboration policy. IPGs are international issues or goods that affect all of us, or goods that should be available to all. Take clean air, for example. Everyone uses air and is affected by air pollution.

We have not found specific information about youth and youth collaboration at a global level.

Education, culture and science

Also involved in policy-making in the field of youth and the world is [the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science \(OCW\)](#). They are responsible for stimulating international exchange programs and supporting students financially to go abroad.

The Dutch government finances several parties that facilitate exchanges for youth and youth collaboration at global level. Examples are the European programme [Erasmus+](#), [Nuffic the Dutch organization for internationalization in education](#), the [Bologna Process](#), [Neth-ER Netherlands House or Education and Research](#) Neth-er and [Unesco schools](#) (only in Dutch).

Next to this, municipalities, schools and other parties are free to address youth collaboration at a global level in their own way. They are not tied to government regulations in this area.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

It is safe to assume that the Ministry of OCW and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs work together, but there is no specific information about existing mechanisms. The national agencies of Erasmus+ are executed by [Nuffic](#), [CINOP](#) and [the Netherlands Youth Institute](#), by order of the Ministry of OCW and [the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports \(VWS\)](#). This leaves no doubt about collaborations with the Ministry of VWS and these executive partners.

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

National Youth Council

[The National Youth Council \(NJR\)](#) (introduced in chapter 5) facilitates exchanges about global issues at a domestic level and internationally. At a domestic level, the NJR has launched multiple initiatives:

- [EU-youth conference](#): During the Dutch presidency of the European Union (January – June 2016) [the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports \(VWS\)](#) and NJR organized the EU-youth conference in Amsterdam. More than 100 young people and policy makers discussed European youth policy.
- [The night of the United Nations \(VN\)](#): Dutch youths can sign up for free for this night, where young people discuss topics like peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. Discourse is stimulated through different working methods, like interviews, debates, movies and lectures. The night of the VN is organized by NJR annually. [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), as an important partner in the organization, is also present during the event.
- [National Youth Debate](#). At the National Youth Debate, young people are invited to share their view and their solutions for various problems in our society. Secondary school students visit the provincial house and form teams with assigned roles for each pupil. Together they try to convince policy makers of their ideas. After this day, one small team is selected to attend the National Youth Debate at the House of Representatives in The Hague with national parliament members. The debates at the provinces are organized several times per year.

Young Climate Movement

[The Young Climate Movement](#) unites the votes of more than 30 different youth organizations to influence climate and sustainability policies. They strive to include everyone, especially youth, in the transition to a sustainable world. Among other things, they do this by influencing politicians and policy makers. The Young Climate Agenda is an initiative of the Young Climate Movement. In total, more than 60 parties have contributed to its future vision on climate. [The agenda is published on the website](#). The movement aims to organize two major events each year. In 2017, they hosted the #ClimateCandidate campaign and organized the Young Climate Summit on 21 October 2017.

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

- [Structured Dialogue](#)

Every six months, youth and policy makers from every member state of the European Union come together for a structured dialogue. The aim of this event is to stimulate that youth policy, both in Europe and at a national and local level, is developed together with youth. Every 1.5 years there is a new theme, the theme for January 2016 – July 2017 was 'Ready for life, ready for society'. The structured dialogue offers a serious podium to exchange views, knowledge and experiences between youth and policy makers at a European level. The recommendations from the conference in October 2016 in Slovakia are summarized in [a report](#).

- [Youth representatives](#)

Every two years the National Youth Council elects eight new youth representatives. These young representatives represent the view of Dutch young people at [the United Nations General Assembly](#), [the European Union](#), [UNESCO](#) and [the Climate and Sustainability Summit Conferences](#). To prepare for this, the youth representatives travel through the

Netherlands to collect the opinions of Dutch youths. They present these opinions and views during the international conferences they visit. The representatives work in couples, one couple per theme (UN, EU, UNESCO and climate and sustainability). Each couple is supported by a team of volunteers to help them. In addition, the volunteers also start initiatives and projects about the themes and the representatives, for example to run at schools and universities in the Netherlands.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Formal learning

In the context of formal learning, youths are often offered information about the climate, climate changes and sustainability in school. These topics are often part of the curriculum and taught in classes like geography, general sciences, physics, chemistry and biology. Human rights are sometimes discussed under the umbrella of history, philosophy and people and society. We have no information on the recommended learning time and the main learning objectives. It mostly depends on the teacher and the school in which way and how extensively the topics are discussed. Dutch schools are obliged to pay attention to the topic of citizenship, enshrined in [the Act Active Citizenship and Social Inclusion \(2006\)](#). However, there are still discussions if and how school can pay more attention to (global) citizenship. See Paragraph 9.7 for more information.

Non-formal learning

[National Youth Council \(NJR\)](#) brings different projects on global issues to schools. For example, [the working group Young & Sustainable](#), described in subsection Informal learning, offers guest lessons at schools about sustainability. In the field of human rights and the rights of children, there are different organizations that offer guest lessons. These organizations work together in [the Platform Human Rights Education](#) and can help schools to integrate human rights in the school's curriculum. The organizations [Amnesty International](#), [Anne Frank Foundation](#), [UNICEF](#), [Movies that Matter](#) and [HVO](#) can provide human rights education at school, for example in the form of a guest lesson. [The Liliane Fund](#) can give a guest lesson about Children's Rights and about disability. Amnesty International, [Centre for global education \(CMO\)](#) and UNICEF also offer information for students who want to write a thesis or give a presentation about human or children's rights at school. There is no information about specific target groups for similar projects. Information about public funding is also unknown. We assume that some of these organizations are private organizations and some of them (like the NJR) receive government funding. Information about quality assurance mechanisms is unknown.

- Educator's support

Some organizations within the platform Human Rights Education also provide human rights education trainings to teachers. The organizations that offer these trainings are: Anne Frank Foundation and Movies that Matter. These three respective organizations even organize a training day together. Teachers can also find information online at [the website of the platform](#) and the websites of the participating organizations. For example, UNICEF offers information for teachers about [Children's Rights in the classroom](#) and methods to discuss this topic.

Informal learning

NJR programmes

- [World = U Food Tour](#). In 2017 and the beginning of 2018 a food tour travels through the Netherlands. Key questions during this tour are 'How can we guarantee that everyone has enough food now and in the future? And how do we build sustainable food chains?' There are three conferences during which youths between 16 and 25 years old discuss these topics with other youths and local entrepreneurs. They put their talent

into thinking about solutions and actions for the food issue and discover how they can make a difference, both in their own neighbourhood and worldwide. The results of the Regional Food Tours will be presented at a national event in 2018.

- [Work group Young and Sustainable](#). This workgroup of NJR consists of about twelve young people between 18 and 26 years old. They develop guest lessons and projects for young people of all ages. Thus, they aim to reach all youths in the Netherlands and introduce sustainable development. The workgroup regularly participates in various events, workshops and seminars. In addition, there is extensive collaboration with other sustainable organizations and companies. To realize all its plans, the workgroup meets every two weeks in Utrecht.

Platform Human Rights Education

- Websites of the organizations within the Platform: The websites of the organizations offer specific information for pupils and students. For example, [the website of CMO](#) offers information for primary and secondary education students.
- Television broadcasting: The TV shows '[het Klokhuis](#)' and [Zaplive](#) often pay attention to global issues. They specifically target young people. Klokhuis and Zaplive are part of Amnesty International and UNICEF and are broadcasted at public channels, meaning they are also supported by public funding.
- Festivals, movies and actions: Amnesty International organizes multiple activities for young people per year. [The International Documentary Movie festival Amsterdam](#), Movies that Matter and Amnesty organize the National Children's Rights Day. [The Liliane Fund](#) focuses on the right to education for peers with disabilities in developing countries who are incapable of attending school ('Wij trekken aan de bel'). Movies that Matter organizes a film festival, where education on global issues is part of the programme.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

There are no youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues. There have also not been any campaigns on global issues for a broader audience, conducted or funded by top-level authorities since 2010.

Information providers

The Dutch government is responsible for the distribution of information on global issues, also among young people. [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) is responsible for development work and international cultural collaboration, and subsequently they are expected to provide information about these topics. [The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) is likely to be involved in government activities aimed at global issues in education. There is no information on other public authorities responsible for providing information.

There are several non-public information providers where young people can turn for information. The organizations from the Platform Human Rights Education offer information for children and youth.

The [foundation NCDO](#) promotes global citizenship in the Netherlands through research, information and events on global themes and sustainability. For children, the foundation publishes [SamSam](#). Samsam explains global issues to children, by reporting about their peers in other countries and making them visible. With reports, interviews and infographics (knowledge) and teaching assignments (attitude and action perspective) Samsam teaches primary school pupils. It is possible to subscribe to SamSam magazine and children can also get information and watch short videos [on the website](#). For youths and adults, the foundation publishes [OneWorld](#). OneWorld.nl is the largest Dutch journalistic website about the people and the world. OneWorld Magazine is published ten times a year. The main topics in OneWorld are sustainability and climate, migration and human rights. The OneWorld website offers articles about the different topics. NCDO also conducts research through [Kaleidos](#). Kaleidos is a research agency and conducts research on global issues in

the Netherlands. They investigate how the Dutch relate to the world and to global issues. NCDO publications can be found at [the website](#).

Key initiatives

Initiatives conducted by public authorities are unknown. The projects on global issues of the National Youth Council are described in 9.3. The Platform Human Rights Education, also described above, addresses fundamental human rights. The Foundation NCDO distributes information by SamSam, OneWorld and Kaleidos, described above. There is no information on other initiatives. In none of the described initiatives there is a specific target group within the youth population.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

- [Involved in Outside, involving young people in nature](#): This project is an initiative [of the Association of Forest and Nature Conservation Owners \(VBNE\)](#). The aim is to motivate young people from 12 years and older to be more involved with nature. Nature organizations and land and nature owners are linked with young people or organizations. In secondary education, citizenship is part of the curriculum, and participating in Involving Young People in Nature is a form of active citizenship. On the website, different projects are described, for example 'exploring nature with elderly citizens' and 'Help the ranger with the local campaign *dogs on a lead*'. Information about a timeframe, funding and outcomes is unknown.
- The project Woesteland is part of [The Institute for Nature Conservation Education \(IVN\)](#). Woesteland is a project for youth from 12 – 30 years old. Woesteland organizes activities. These activities, mainly during holidays and work weekends, are aimed at shaping sustainable development by doing voluntary work in nature. The food at these projects is vegetarian and organic. All activities of Woesteland are organized by and for young people. The activities are coordinated by volunteers. Woesteland originated in 2005. Woesteland is financed by IVN and [The National Post Code Lottery](#). The project has no timeframe. Information on outcomes is unknown.

Green production and consumption

We have no information on programmes or actions on green production and consumption.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

- [Foundation International Volunteer Projects \(SIW\)](#). This foundation connects young people and adults to voluntary work projects abroad. The foundation has projects on different continents and volunteers can choose between group projects with volunteers from all over the world or tailor-made projects. SIW executes more than 2000 projects in 70 countries worldwide. The foundation does not receive any structural funding and works mostly with volunteers and donations. SIW was founded in 1953. We have no information about a timeframe or outcomes.

Development cooperation activities

- [European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#). The European Voluntary Service is part of the European Erasmus+ programme from the European Union and provides voluntary work in Europe for young people between 17 and 30 years old. Throughout Europe there are hundreds of organizations and projects that work with volunteers from EVS. The options and themes are very diverse: from nature conservation to sports programmes and

music schools, with target groups like, for example, (deaf) children and young people, elderly, minorities and animals. In general, participants work abroad for a period of 6 – 12 months. EVS is part of the Foundation International Volunteer Projects. We have no information on timeframe, outcomes and funding.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

Many secondary schools organize discussions on (global) citizenship education. Citizenship is integrated in the curriculum of schools (9.4), but more than a few schools experience difficulties fulfilling this task. There is no ultimate effective method to address (global) citizenship. Sometimes schools only pay little or minimal attention to the theme. [The Dutch Platform Education 2032](#) wrote a plea for a strong anchoring of citizenship education in education in 2016. This should be followed up with the government and schools. Expected is that in the future (global) citizenship will have a stronger position in the school's curriculum.

10. YOUTH WORK

10.1 General context

Historical developments

General Context

Central government does not supply a fixed definition of youth work. For this chapter the following definition is used as point of departure:

Youth work is a social work profession within the educational framework, in which workers aim to counsel young people who need support in reaching adulthood in society. (Metz, 2017, p. 235).

Most important in youth work is its ambition to enable all young people to develop their talents and to offer them tools to participate fully in society. In principle youth work is a basic provision for all young people. The target group of youth work consists primarily of young persons between the ages of ten and twenty-three, with a lower socio-economic background. The need of young people for support is leading. In addition there is a specific offer for girls and young people in vulnerable situations (such as for instance young people with a disability or who are showing maladjusted behaviour). This offer aims to prevent young people growing up in multiple risk situations from being confronted with problems at home, in school or in their leisure time, by giving them more attention and an offer of inviting activities. If a youth worker considers that he or she is not able to help the young person due to the seriousness of their situation, they are authorized to refer the young person to the right authority.

Changes in youth work

In 2009 an inventory of the use of youth work in the Netherlands took place. Since then the decentralisations in the social domain caused multiple changes. Therefore ten years after new research was conducted to show how Dutch municipalities design their youth work nowadays: '[Náást de jongeren De Staat van Professioneel Jongerenwerk in Nederland](#)' [Standing by young people. The state of professional youth work in the Netherlands] (2019) by [Verwey-Jonker Institute](#).

Approximately half of current youth work providers have been addressed through a questionnaire. Youth work nowadays seems to have more objectives than in 2009, aimed at supporting young people in becoming adults. Ten years earlier there was a stronger focus on recreation and leisure. Current youth work is characterised by a mix of

ambulatory and individual work and work related to groups and accommodations. There was hardly any individual youth work in 2009, while in 2019 half of the municipalities provide separate girls work. On average more young people are being reached than in 2009, more through social media than through individual attention. In 2009 it was observed that youth work had considerably increased compared to the year 2000. This does not seem to have been the case in the previous ten years, although it was expected that municipalities would organise more preventive and ambulatory youth care after the decentralisations.

The research respondents find that there are opportunities for a future increase in the visibility of the profession. Youth work can become much more meaningful if municipalities invest in:

- A (personal) approach of young people in order to allow for early signalling and care provision;
- Youth work in schools, youth work through social media, girls work and specific individual care. These are emergent methods;
- Further elaboration of the youth participation theme.

What is youth work? A developmental approach

Youth work is an accessible basic provision in the leisure time of all young people, which guides them on their way to adulthood and active citizenship. Young people have the opportunity to participate in group activities. In addition youth work offers young people individual support, information and advice when needed. Youth work differs from youth care in its developmental approach. The youth work target group consists of young people in vulnerable situations. They have initial, light or serious problems. They may be growing up in poverty, be bullied or discriminated against, have limited social networks, may not be doing well in school or may be growing up in families with parents who are overburdened or not available.

Youth work and children's work Youth work is for young people from 10 to approximately 23 years old. In cities this concerns primarily, though not exclusively, young people in vulnerable positions. In rural areas youth work generally aims at all young people. It shows an overlap with children's work that aims at children between 4 and 12 years old. There is a tendency for youth work to focus increasingly on children from 10 onwards who have outgrown children's work. This supports the transfer to secondary education.

Especially for girls There is separate girls work for girls, because girls are often not reached by youth work, and because there are parents who do not allow their daughters to participate in mixed-gender youth work. Girls work defines its results and aims in terms of specific girls' issues such as resilience, sexuality, lover boys, teenage motherhood. The work can be organised in activities for girls only and by paying attention to girls in mixed activities.

Source: [De Waarde\(n\) van het jongerenwerk](#), Dr. Judith Metz ['The value(s) of youth work', Dr. Judith Metz. Inaugural lecture on Tuesday 8 October 2013 by Dr. Judith Metz, lector Youth Spot - Youth work in big cities, at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Dept. of Society and Rights.]

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

10.3 Support to youth work

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality manual

In 2018 the Improve youth work! Practical manual to improve the quality of youth work ([Verbeter jongerenwerk! Praktisch handboek om de kwaliteit van jongerenwerk te verhogen](#)) was published by [DSP-groep](#) and the [municipality of 's Hertogenbosch](#), with funding from the [Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport](#) and in collaboration with other partners like youth organizations. The manual is based on the competence framework [Quality Youth Work](#) for the further development of youth work, published by the European Commission. The Dutch manual has mainly been written for youth workers, policy makers and the management of youth work organizations to develop the quality of youth work.

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

[Youth worker](#) is a profession in the Netherlands for which extended training is needed. Several national frameworks and standards apply to youth work.

Competence and job profiles

A competence profile contains all the skills a youth worker needs to possess, for example for promoting the participation of youth in society, creating a safe environment, working with an intercultural target group and organizing activities. The competence profile is used a framework in the education of youth workers, as a tool in human resources and as a frame of reference for youth workers. Two relevant competence profiles for Dutch youth workers are:

- Competence Profile Youth Worker ([Competentieprofiel Jongerenwerker](#), only in Dutch). It contains a description of the profession, the field of work, the context of youth work, specific methods, levels of youth work, relevant trends in society, policy and among youth, the core business of youth workers and the competences youth workers need.
- Professional Competence Profile for the Social Worker in Welfare and Social Services ([Beroepscompetentieprofiel voor de sociaal werker - Welzijn en maatschappelijke dienstverlening, only in Dutch](#)). This is a general competence profile for social workers in welfare and social service, but it applies to youth workers as well.

In the collective labor agreement for welfare and social services ([CAO Welzijn en Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening](#)) the job descriptions of social cultural workers may apply to youth workers.

Professional association and professional code

[BVjong](#) is the professional association for child and youth workers and published a [professional code for child and youth workers](#) in 2014. The code is a guideline for situations in which a moral decision needs to be taken.

Professional registers

Although there is not one professional register for youth workers, they can register themselves as a social worker at [Registerplein](#) or as a youth and family professional at [Stichting Kwaliteitsregister Jeugd \(SKJ\)](#), depending on the organization the youth worker works for or the demands of the funding municipality.

Police record check

All people professionally or voluntarily working with vulnerable people, like young people, are required to undergo a police record check in order to obtain a so-called Declaration About Behavior ([Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag](#)). Youth work organizations will ask their new employees to apply for this police record check at [Justis](#), the screening authority of the Ministry of Justice and Security.

Reporting code on child abuse and domestic violence

The Act on the mandatory reporting code domestic violence and child abuse ([Wet verplichte meldcode huiselijk geweld en kindermishandeling](#)) requires organizations and independent professionals in education, health care, child care, social service, sports, youth care and justice to have a reporting code and to stimulate using it in the case of (suspicions of) child abuse or domestic violence. Youth workers must act according to their organization's reporting code.

Education, training and skills recognition

Social Work studies

There is no specific course for youth workers, although in higher education there are minors in which students can specialize in youth work. Many youth workers have obtained a bachelor degree in [Social Work](#) or one of its predecessors at a university of applied sciences or have followed the [Social Work level 4 course](#) in post-secondary vocational education. Youth work organizations may offer their youth workers refresher courses to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date.

EVC trajectory

Another option is the so-called [ECV-trajectory](#) in which people who do not have obtained the correct diploma but can demonstrate their competences developed at school, in work or privately, receive a certificate of experience after their demonstrated competences have been officially recognized. Such a certificate allows them to work as a youth worker. For youth workers the [EVC-procedure for bachelor degree youth and family professionals](#) is relevant.

Mobility of youth workers

Career Budget

The collective labor agreement for welfare and social services ([CAO Welzijn en Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening](#)) rules that employees receive a Career Budget ([Loopbaanbudget](#)): 1,5% of their monthly salary. Employees, like youth workers, and their employers together decide about the purpose of this individual budget. This could [for instance](#) be a career orientation trajectory, coaching sessions, a specific course, an internship or job shadowing in another organization. The main objectives of the Career Budget are the ongoing development of employees and employees staying sustainably deployable.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Currently no new policies or reforms of existing policies concerning youth work are expected.

However in response to the further course of the corona crisis additional programmes or initiatives that involve youth work might be taken. During the corona crisis in 2020 and 2021 Cabinet already invested large sums of money to support young people's wellbeing and their educational opportunities and Cabinet specifically mentioned youth work:

- € 58.5 million was made available to municipalities to organize corona-proof activities for young people and possibilities to meet others during the winter of 2020/2021. Part of the budget of this [Youth Package](#) was meant to allow youth workers to reach vulnerable youth in disadvantaged areas.
- € 40 million was made available in February 2021 for a [support package](#) for national and local support of youth's social, physical and mental wellbeing. The aforementioned extra budget for youth workers to reach vulnerable youth was extended until the end of 2021.
- € 8.5 billion was spent on a [National Education Programme](#) 2021-2023 to offer children and young people equal educational opportunities and to tackle educational disadvantages due to school closures and online education. Among other measures schools have the possibility to use part of their budgets make use of youth work to support pupils' wellbeing.

Ongoing debates

Youth work revived during the corona crisis in 2020 and 2021. Young people and a wide range of actors in the field of education, social services, youth work, youth care and youth mental health care have asked for political attention to the impact of lockdowns, social distancing, school closures and online education on young people, to their needs and to the importance of youth participation in shaping policies that affect young people. Youth work as part of the solution was specifically mentioned by these actors. For example, when young people rioted against the curfew in January 2021, the [Netherlands Youth Institute](#) emphasized that [youth workers' preventive approach](#) should be utilized to reach young people. When the [National Educational Programme](#) was introduced, national knowledge institutes [Pharos](#), the Netherlands Youth Institute, the Corona Expert Group of School Psychologists of the [Dutch Association of Psychologists](#), the [Dutch Center on Youth Health](#) and [Trimbos Institute](#) argued for [using the expertise of local organizations](#), like youth work organizations.

Cabinet has acknowledged the importance of youth work by extra one-time investments in youth work (see 'Forthcoming policy developments' above). Whether structural investments on the national or local level will follow, remains unclear and may also depend on municipal budgets. However, research by the [Youth Spot lectorate](#) of the University of Applied Sciences of Amsterdam showed that [youth work contributes to the wished for transformation of the youth care sector](#) as described in the [Child and Youth Act](#). (See chapter 1 for more information on the act and its transformation goals.)

GLOSSARY

Cultuurcoach: Culture coach. It is a person who combines both working in school with working for a cultural organization.

Cultuur onderwijs: Cultural education. [Cultuurconnectie](#) (Culture Connection), the branch organization for professionals in arts and culture, describes the concept as follows: *"Through cultural education people learn about and with culture. Cultural education encompasses various forms of culture-oriented education, or uses culture as a means of learning. Here, culture is a collective term for arts, cultural heritage and media. People develop cultural competences and talents. They do not only learn about culture, but also develop cultural skills and an open attitude towards culture."*

Doe-democratie: Do-democracy: Citizens' own initiatives are being stimulated. [Movisie](#), Netherlands centre for the social development, has developed a [model](#). The model helps citizens to act, think and decide together.

Kinderombudsman: Ombudsman for Children monitors whether children's rights are adhered to in the Netherlands by the central and local government.

Leerbedrijf: Learning company. Companies offer students a chance to learn to work in practice and what is expected of them. A professional practice coach of the company guides the students.

Maatschappelijke stage: Civic internship. Mostly part of the curriculum of schools in secondary education. For some years civic internship was obligatory by the government. It has been non obligatory for a few years. The coalition of the new cabinet (26 October 2017) wants to make it obligatory again.

Mantelzorg: Literally it means 'Cloak care'. Care given by informal care givers to a loved one, family member, friend or neighbour.

Mantelzorger: Informal caregiver.

Niet-formeel onderwijs: Non-formal education in the Netherlands is defined in an [official government document](#) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science as follows: "*All learning activities that evolve in the course of one's life to improve one's knowledge, capabilities, and competences from a personal, civic, social and employability perspective.*"

Positieve gezondheid: Positive health. The concept of positive health focuses less on the absence of disease and more on the strength of human beings. [The full definition of positive health is: "Health is the ability of people to adapt and to choose their own direction in the light of physical, emotional and social challenges of life"](#). This definition is mentioned on the website loketgezondleven.nl, which is a governmental website about health for all age categories.

Startkwalificatie: Starting qualification. On the government website it is explained: A starting qualification is a diploma HAVO, VWO, MBO level 2 or higher. Government wants that more students get a starting qualification. That is why students in the age of 16 to 18 years are obliged to get this qualification.

Voortijdig schoolverlaters: [Early school leavers in the Netherlands](#) are pupils and students who leave school without a so-called 'basic qualification' (startkwalificatie).

Vrijwilligerswerk: Voluntary work. [Movisie](#), Netherlands centre for the social development, uses the 2008 definition of Civiq (the former organization on volunteering, now part of Movisie): "*Voluntary work is work that gets done unpaid and voluntarily for the benefit of other people or the (quality of) the society in general, in an organized setting.*"

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