

# Netherlands

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## 1 National context

### 1.1 Population, economic and social characteristics

In 2013, The Netherlands has 16.8M inhabitants and the population is expected to increase during the next decades. Over the past decades, the average number of children per woman has decreased to 1.75 in 2012. As a result the population is relatively aging.

Table 1: Distribution of the ages: 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 Total x 1 000 10027 11417 12958 14091 14893 15864 16405 Males x 1 000 4998 5686 6465 6994 7358 7846 8112 Women x 1 000 5029 5731 6493 7097 7534 8018 8293 < 20 yrs. % 37,3 37,9 35,9 31,5 25,7 24,4 24 20 - 45 yrs. % 35,9 32,9 34 37,2 40,9 37,7 34 45 - 65 yrs. % 19,1 20,2 20 19,8 20,7 24,4 27,3 65 - 80 yrs. % 6,7 7,6 8,4 9,2 9,9 10,4 11 80 + years % 1 1,3 1,7 2,2 2,9 3,2 3,7

The coming decades, the immigrant population is expected to grow strongly, it is expected that in 2050 5.3 million immigrants will be living in the Netherlands. That equates to 30% of the total population. The share of Western immigrants in the total population will increase from 9% in 2005 to 13% in 2050. The share of non-western immigrants is expected to increase from 10% in 2005 to 17% in 2050. Non-Western immigrants are concentrated mainly in the big cities.

Table 2: Distribution of natives and immigrants per January 1st, 2009: Population groups  
Number Immigrants: 3.287.706, Natives: 13.198.081, Non-western immigrants: 1.809.310,  
Total population: 16.485.787

In general, non-western immigrants earn considerably less than natives. About 25% of all non-western immigrants have an income in the lowest income docile. The main reason is that a relatively high percentage of non-western immigrants do not graduate secondary education or graduated from a vocational school. Non-western immigrants have a 400% higher criminality rate compared to natives. The latest 2012 statistics show that 65% of all immigrants from Morocco and 55% of all immigrants from The Dutch Antilles have been arrested in relation to a crime before the age of 24.

## **1.2 Social security**

The current Work and Social Assistance Act was implemented in 2004. The act was designed to serve as a system of incentives targeting municipal authorities to help people with benefits and in finding work. The social security system of the Netherlands include a system for invalidity benefits and an unemployment insurance act. The social security system is regarded to be among the most generous systems in the world.

## **1.3 The Dutch economy**

The Netherlands is the 17th largest economy of the world. The GDP per capita is roughly \$42,000 which puts it in the top 10 of richest nations in the world. Between 1996 and 2000 the annual economic growth GDP averaged over 4%, well above the European average. Growth slowed considerably in 2001-05 as part of the global economic slowdown. 2006 and 2007 however showed economic growth of 3.4% and 3.9%. The Dutch economy was hit considerably by the ongoing global financial crisis and the ensuing European debt crisis. Several banks went bankrupt, and a number of others had to receive governmental aid. In 2009 the economy declined with 3.5%, followed by two years of mild growth. The Dutch economy is currently in a recession again, with an economic decline of 0.5% in 2012. Inflation is at 3.2% in February 2013. Unemployment has been relatively low compared to other EU nations for decades but after mid-2012 it has seen a fast increase and in February 2013 it has hit 7.7%. The Netherlands managed to maintain its AAA rating at least until March 2013 according to the three major credit rating agencies. Such success has fostered much interest in the Dutch “polder model”, short-hand for the system of policymaking by consensus among interested parties, and especially between employers and employees. The polder model, it is often said, demonstrates that economies can grow and jobs can be created without dismantling the rigid and generous European social-welfare system. Similarly, it is argued that consensus policies, agreed across the political spectrum (coalition government is inherent in the Dutch electoral system), are the best way of dealing with social problems.

## **1.4 Description of the types of education and training (formal and informal)**

The Dutch education system features many different types of schools, each offering a curriculum geared to pupils' needs. Primary and secondary education are fully funded by the state. Higher Education is becoming more costly, but remains at a relatively low cost level. Students are offered loans that they will have to repay to the Dutch government after

graduation. Secondary education paves the way for vocational or higher education. The higher education system aims to provide top-quality teaching and training at professional or academic level. Special education is provided to pupils with learning and behavioral difficulties. Primary schools (age 4-12) are primarily small schools that typically employ 10 to 20 staff members. In most schools, the staff consist of a dedicated school head, a part time secretary (for larger schools) a part time concierge and the teachers. Teachers are graduates in pedagogy and have obtained a bachelor's degree in educational sciences. Teachers in primary school teach all subjects. The school head usually is a former teacher. Most school heads can spend 100% of their time leading the school. Besides pedagogical leadership, they are in charge of the daily activities, often mandated by school boards. Most primary schools are a part of a collective. These "bovenschoolse stichtingen" foundations or associations could manage up to 80 primary schools. These boards appoint the school heads and offer assistance with regards to general management, accounting and legal issues. Most primary schools are using learning methods that are offered by publishers. A learning method prescribes the activities that a teacher needs to do to achieve the learning goals. In this respect, primary school teachers have limited possibilities to change their learning methods. There are only a few primary schools that experiment with student centric learning, although over 200 schools have implemented iPads in their classes. These devices generally support current learning methods of the publishers. Secondary schools (age 12-18). At age 12, the students make an important decision. At that age, students may opt for a school that offers general education or vocational education to become craft men like painters, carpenters, metal workers. General education is offered in three levels: middle, higher and pre-academic. Graduates from middle level general education may opt for further vocational education, higher level general education graduates are qualified to go to a level 2 university (4 years; bachelor) and pre university graduates can attend a level 1 university. Secondary schools are typically much larger schools. Most of them are independent institutions that employ a professional management staff. Most schools have the authority to change their learning methods but are still very much depending on publishers and methods. Teachers teach a specific subject (Geography, History, English, etc) and usually obtained a master degree in their subject. Teachers have also obtained a teaching qualification before they start teaching at a secondary school.

Table 3: Overview of the Dutch school system  
 Primary education yrs. Secondary education yrs. Tertiary education Yrs.  
 Primary schools 8 Lower technical education 4 Further technical colleges 4  
 General education: middle 4 Further technical and general colleges 4  
 General education: higher 5 Universities level 2 (bachelor) 4  
 General education: pre academic 6 Universities level 1 (masters) 5

## 1.5 Practices and organisations

### Teacher training and continued professional development

Teachers in primary education are graduates in pedagogy and have obtained a bachelor's degree in educational sciences. These studies are offered by Level 1 and Level 2 universities, qualifying for Bachelor and Masters Degrees. Teachers in primary schools teach all subjects. Teachers in secondary education often have a master's degree in their specific subject and completed pedagogical courses as well. School leaders support teachers in their professionalization by asking from teachers to write Personal Development Plans, which are central in the yearly performance interviews. Professionalization and training mostly takes place in company. Teachers also participate in internal and external networks for teachers. By law 10% of the time of teacher is reserved for personal professional education. The Dutch

Institute for Masters in Education offers Masters and PHD courses for teachers in secondary education. Since February 2012, teachers can enrol themselves on a voluntary basis in the teacher register. To be able to do so, they have to meet certain quality demands, such as kind of teacher training and minimum number of teaching hours. This teacher register invites and supports teachers to work on their professionalization and personal development.

### **School heads training and continued professional development**

There are many training institutes for school leaders at universities and professional academies. Up till now, not many school leaders follow professional learning before becoming a school leader. Mostly, they take courses at the beginning of their career as a school leader. However, in primary education, this will be changing as a result of the new developed requirements for registration. For primary education, a proposal has been made for obligatory registration of school leaders and requirements for registration. These requirements are: • A training for school leaders based on the five new basic competences for school leaders. • Participation in continuous professional development. • Provable reflection on one's own professional practice. • Signing a code of conduct.

School leaders are trained in innovation and change management, usually project approach. Many schools use various tools, models and systems to improve their quality: EFQM, INK, IIP, etc. Next to project management skills, the Dutch government encourages school heads to visit conferences, seminars and join networks of school leaders to learn how to implement new policies. There will be a transitional period of five years for school leaders to meet these requirements. The most well-known institute that offers school heads qualifications (master's degree) is the NSO in Amsterdam.

### **Innovation consulting**

There are a number of organization that offer consulting and support for innovations. Among them are:

- The Dutch principal association: The AVS is school leaders association offering legal assistance and consulting for innovation. AVS employs about 40 highly qualified professionals.
- The Dutch employers' organization: The VO-Raad is an association that represents the majority of secondary school boards. Their aim is to improve quality of education. The VO Raad also negotiates working conditions with the Dutch government.
- CBE consulting. Organisation focussed on innovation in schools. Relatively small company with a relatively highly successful program: High Performance Schools
- APS. Organisation focussed on innovation in schools. Relatively large company with expertise on leadership, pedagogy and student centric learning
- KPC. Focuses on innovation of education. Relatively large organisation with a strong focus on student centric learning. This company occasionally works for the Dutch government on several research topics
- CPS. Organisation focused on quality of education. This organisation focuses on a few aspects of Lifelong Learning.

## **2. Policy environment**

The Dutch government facilitates and controls schooling to a great extent: by law and finance, curriculum, state exams and publishing policies on a number of issues. The Ministry of Education and Science publishes policy papers, which are translated by the boards of school governors in a mission and vision for their schools. School heads disseminate this vision to the teachers and together school heads and teachers translate this to the school goals.

The policy imperatives for primary and secondary education are mainly focused on higher student achievements, especially with regard to literacy and numeracy (Ministry of Education, Culture & Science, 2007; 2008). Other focus areas are drop outs, innovation, security, inclusion, norms and values. The government has aligned its educational objectives in order to achieve a higher PISA rating in 2015. Currently, the government moves away from giving 'directives' and content in the curriculum are left to schools. The government advocates (Commissie Dijsselbloem) that educational innovation should be initiated by the educational social partners like the PO-Raad and VO-Raad (councils for primary and secondary education)

### **Strategic Objectives**

The defined strategic focus areas are:

- Core content (Languages and Maths) and innovation
- Individual talents (high performing students)
- Citizenship
- The role of the teacher
- Cost control

### **2.1 Policies on key competencies in LLL**

There is no direct reference to Lifelong Learning in the context that learners should be taught to become independent, lifelong learners. Instead, the Dutch government emphasizes its commitment to increased knowledge of languages and maths. The VO Raad do recognize that education should focus on facilitating and enabling the individual learner in order to decrease the drop out rates in secondary and higher education. Their key focus point are: • Duration of the education will be based upon individual progress • Organisation of education based upon knowledge and progress, not upon age and classes • from the school perspective, there is a moderate to high awareness that Lifelong Learning is vital for the future. However, most school heads and teachers do not know how to implement this and a percentage of teachers also resist to change.

## **2.2 Policies on ICT in the learning process**

Main features of the local, regional and national policy documents and strategies concerning education policies on ICT in the learning process The Dutch government focuses on ICT in the learning process. The main focus is to support and improve current learning methods. There is no reference in innovative learning practices like student centric learning or flipping class rooms. There is however, a certain focus on the development of digital courses. The initiative Wikiwijs aims to enable and stimulate teachers to develop and share digital courses with their colleagues.

## **2.3 Policies on creativity and innovation**

Main features of the local, regional and national policy documents and strategies concerning education policies on creativity and innovation: Innovation is mentioned as one of the main focus areas of the Dutch government. However, there is no vision behind the innovation message. The most innovative aspects of the current educational policies are the implementation of the ICT platforms like Wikiwijs.

## **2.4 Policies on intercultural learning skills**

Main features of the local, regional and national policy documents and strategies concerning education policies on intercultural learning skills Intercultural learning skills is not mentioned as a separate strategic objectives of the Dutch government. The policies that recognise intercultural differences are primarily focused on reducing dropout rates and enabling students with special needs. Reducing dropout rates is seen as the best way to offer non-native persons with equal opportunities in the current society. ICT is mentioned as a vehicle to offer more personalized education. Teachers should be able to recognise different learning styles.

## **2.5 Level and kind of investment**

What level and kind of investment is currently being deployed into key competencies in LLL, ICT in the learning process, creativity and innovation, intercultural learning skills? The Dutch government currently invests an additional 400 M Euros per year to improve education. This budget will be used to fund activities related to the following strategic objectives: • Core content (Languages and Maths) and innovation • Individual talents (high performing students) • Citizenship • the role of the teacher • Cost control

## **3. Past and current initiatives and projects in Schools**

The Dutch government encourages local initiatives. The below mentioned projects are all in initiated by the education field

## **3.1 Digiwijs**

The Dutch government focuses on ICT in the learning process. Digiwijs is one of the most important initiatives of the Dutch government. Digiwijs is a platform on which teachers publish and share electronic course materials with their colleagues. In May 2013 over 70.000 different courses are published on Wikiwijs. The aim of Digiwijs is to become the preferred community of innovative teachers and the platform for electronic content for all subjects and classes in primary and secondary education. Digiwijs is not focused on learners and can therefore not be compared with initiatives like to Khan Academy

## **3.2 www.Verschillenalskansen.nl**

There is a debate how 21<sup>st</sup> century learning will look like but there are a few initiatives that focuses on student centric learning. The most well-known initiatives are and verschillenalskansen.nl and entreprenasium.nl. Verschillenalskansen.nl (differences are chances) is a school collective that focuses on individual students and their personal learning competences. Their shared understanding is Human Dynamics. Human Dynamics <sup>TM</sup> provides insight into the origin of differences between people, recognize these differences and uses this insight as the starting point of the improvement of educational processes.

## **3.2 www.Entreprenasium.nl**

The Entreprenasium collective focuses on 21th century learning like learning skills, creativity, citizenship, leadership and entrepreneurship. At Entreprenasium the students are in charge of their own education. They draft a self-designed learning path and combine it with building their own company during their school careers. Currently, the Entreprenasium collective consists of 12 secondary schools.

## **3.3 Snappet**

Snappet offers tablet computers that supports current learning methods offered by publishers. The Tablet includes electronic content and ultimately replaces school books in the class room. Snappet.org claims that over 200 schools are currently using tablets in their class rooms.

## **3.4 De sterrenschool**

Furthermore there is a movement called “the Star school”. The star school offers education that tailored to the needs of the parents and the children. De sterrenschool is a concept for primary schools. The basic principles (stars) are:

- A sterrenschool offers education to that is tailored to the needs of parents. If parents work from 9 to 5, the sterrenschool offers education from 9 to 5. Parent may choose when to have holidays. They may even opt for 4 or 5 days education per week.
- A sterrenschool offers personalized education. Student and their personalized learning abilities are at the centre of education
- A sterrenschool only employs academically educated teachers. A major focus is fluency in languages, reading and maths.
- A sterrenschool is an active member of the local community, offering their facilities to community members
- ICT is regarded as the back bone of education

### **3.5 High Performance Schools**

High Performance schools is an initiative of CBE. Participating schools are committed to become high performing schools. The main objective of the program is to realize individual potential of each student.

### **3.6 Steve Jobs schools**

This relatively new educational concept focus on lifelong learning. Its main goal is to prepare learners to the increasingly changing economies and society. Their purpose is to acquire learning skills, creativity, curiosity, an innovative attitude and flexibility. ICT and primarily I pads (hence the name) are the back bone of this new educational concept. In August 2013, 10 schools will start with this innovative learning concept.

### **3.7 Technasium**

Technasium is an initiative to include more technical oriented courses in the curriculum of secondary school of higher and pre academic level. Its main objective is to encourage students to pursue a technical career. Technasium is an innovative approach to education, with open ended projects, individual research and design in an open lab environment. The courses encourage students to be independent, innovative learners. Teachers of the consortium work together and write and share courses among each other. In May 2013, about 80 secondary schools have implemented this project. [www.technasium.nl](http://www.technasium.nl)

### **3.8 Cloud school**

Cloud school is a project that is initiated by the VO Raad. It is an educational approach based upon personal learning styles built in a portal environment. The portal offers a personalized approach for learners and includes an ELO, a community that develops content and the already developed courses. It is a personalized approach and an alternative to the current, books based learning methodologies offered by publishers. Cloud School may the most large scale project in the Netherlands. [www.cloudschool.nu](http://www.cloudschool.nu)