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INFORMATION SHEET

VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

THE NETHERLANDS



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By: Maaïke Smid

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1. Volunteering of young people in the Netherlands

Give an overview on volunteering of young people (13 – 30) in your country on the national and regional level (in federal states) answering the following questions:

- Are there official national/regional recommendations (policies) concerning volunteering of young people?

The structure of the voluntary sector			
	Government	Support	Voluntary organizations
National	Administration and various government departments (Health, Welfare and Sport has primary responsibility) system responsibility and support (Social Support Act).	Movisie (Centre for social development), FORUM, CBS, SCP	National voluntary organizations and umbrella groups support their regional and local sections.
Regional	Provinces: support municipalities	Provincial Support Points / Community Development Centres	Regional voluntary organizations and umbrella groups.
Local	Municipalities (municipal executive have a statutory duty to inform the municipal council whether and, if so, what policy will be followed)	Local support points	Local voluntary organizations

Source: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

On the national level: Yes

On January 2007, The Social Support Act (in Dutch: *Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning, WMO*) came into force. This Act was put in the place of a number of other laws, such as the Welfare Act. The Social Support Act is a framework which municipalities may fill locally. The law sets 9 performance fields on which municipalities have to develop local policies. The Social Support Act is the basis for volunteering policies. Municipalities are responsible for carrying out local volunteering policies.

The knowledge function is provided by the national government. The knowledge concerning voluntary work is bundled within the Centre for social development, Movisie. Furthermore, the Netherlands Youth Institute (Dutch: *Nederlands Jeugdinstituut*) is the Dutch national institute for

compiling, verifying and disseminating knowledge on children and youth matters, such as Volunteering. For more information see their website: www.nji.nl.

On behalf of the former ministry of Youth and Family a proposal for a programme *Volunteering for and by young people and families* was developed. The programme, running from 2009 until 2011, aims to boost social integration and active citizenship in relation to child development and parenting. This process is also referred to as the strengthening of 'pedagogical civil society'. The programme also focuses on professionals from the Youth and Family Centres. They can use young volunteers or volunteers from families to strengthen the pedagogical civil society. Besides subsidizing projects targeted at volunteering, this programme also aims to create favourable conditions, support various parties and facilitate contact between them. Look for more information on the following website: www.vrijwillige-inzet.nl.

Starting in the school year 2011 – 2012 secondary school's students will be obliged to do community work for 3 months. This is not a usual internship, but more or less a kind of voluntary work, as the young persons don't get a salary or compensation for the work they do. The aim of this work placement for youth is to get acquainted with and contribute to the society. By doing such a placement, young people learn to participate in society, and it is important for their personal development. Young people work for instance in a home for elderly people, a hospital or at a children's farm. The work placement is part of the educational system of secondary schools and the educational programmes. Schools are free to set up their own requirements, which organizations must meet in order to be a good practice place for youngsters.

On the regional level: Yes

In many instances, the provinces play a supporting role, particularly with a view to aiding the smaller municipalities. They fund Provincial Support Points, and Community Development Centres. The support provided varies considerably from one province to the next.

On behalf of the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Movisie advises municipalities on the introduction of the basic functions. Municipalities can implement volunteering activities better by using these basic functions. It is recommended that each volunteer - in one form or another - can go to one or more persons within the municipality. The basic functions are as follows: 1) translating social developments, 2) connecting and agency, 3) strengthening, 4) spreading, and 5) embedding¹.

- *Is volunteering usually paid?*

There is no information available about the number of young volunteers who receive a fee for their work. An organization decides for itself whether or not to give a fee. The overall opinion is to reimburse the costs youth make for the project, for example travel expenses.

- *Is there any National voluntary service? Yes*

The Dutch association for volunteering organizations (in Dutch: *Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk, NOV*) is the leading organization within the volunteering 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 work as such. It has two kinds of members: organizations that perform voluntary work and those that fulfil a supporting or coordinating role. For more information see their website:

<http://www.nov.nl/eCache/DEF/1/22/793.html>

Youth Network

Members of the association NOV who work for or with young people, meet in the Youth Network. Together they exchange current developments, prepare for joint advocacy to get more youth involved in volunteering. Furthermore, the project 'in good hands' (in Dutch: *In veilige handen*), aims at the prevention of abuse of minors within an association or voluntary organization. The project supports organizations and volunteer organizations in preventing and dealing with sexual abuse. The goal is that minors are in a safe environment at the sport or hobby clubⁱⁱ. This project is funded by the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and is implemented on behalf of the NOV by Movisie.

- *What is the legal / financial (fiscal) / social security status of volunteers ?*

The Social Support Act obliges municipalities to support volunteering. Municipalities get the space to organize support to the volunteer themselves.

From 2009, the government sets annually an amount of € 4 million available for securing volunteers through the Municipalities Fund. This allows municipalities to take out a collective insurance against the risks that the volunteers face during their work. This makes it easier for volunteer organizations to recruit people and reduces administration time and expenses.

2. Main actors and networks

- *Who are the main actors (institutional and NGOs) in the field of volunteering of young people on the different levels?*

National:

National Youth Council

The Dutch National Youth Council (in Dutch: *Nederlandse Jeugdraad, NJR*) is an independent umbrella organization of national youth organizations in the Netherlands, for young people between the age of 12 and 30. It started its work in 2001 with the financial support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. Currently, it also receives project grants from other departments, local governments and organizations. The National Youth Council represents more than 25 national youth organizations including political youth organizations, student organizations and social organizations and is a member of the European Youth Forum. The National Youth Council is responsible for:

- improving youth participation at the national and local level;
- advocating the best interests of young people and youth organizations.

The National Youth Council is an active member of the Dutch national working group for the Structured Dialogue within the renewed Framework of the European Youth Strategy . In this group, it collaborates with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and other stakeholders. For more information visit the website of the National Youth Council: www.njr.nl

The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (in Dutch: *Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, SCP*) is a government agency which 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 academicsⁱⁱⁱ. Volunteering is one of the fields the SCP is focusing on.

Regional:

The support provided by the provinces differs significantly from one to the next. An example of a project on the regional level is the voluntary efforts by vulnerable youth at the Regional Training Centres (in Dutch: *Regionale Opleidingen Centra, ROC*). This project focuses on voluntary efforts by and for vulnerable young people at Regional Training Centres. Students who attend the Level 1 course 'Labour market qualified assistant' (in Dutch: *Arbeidsmarkt geKwalificeerd Assistent, AKA*)

because they have not attended a secondary vocational training and youth who have dropped out of school. These young people often have negative experiences with society and low self esteem. Through this project, they learn their own strengths and qualities and use them to work for society. By participating in the project, about 1000 people in 10 municipalities within two years time are introduced to volunteering in a way that matches their talents, hobbies and interests. This is done by making use of young people (peer approach) and coaches (college students or professionals from companies or municipalities) in a buddy approach^{iv}.

Local:

Many municipalities in the Netherlands have a Volunteer Centre at local level. The website <http://www.vrijwilligerscentrales.nl/> gives an overview of all the Volunteer Centres in the Netherlands.

- *Are any organizations in this field specifically targeting youth (as participants in [voluntary activities and voluntary services](#))?*

The website www.ikbengeweldig.nl (I am great) is a campaign of the National Youth Council, which aims to promote volunteering among young people. It offers information, inspiration and 'great things' to do by young people themselves. For example, the implementation of a major project developed by youth or a small gift like repairing someone's flat tire. On this website youngsters can see what other people are doing, they can post their own project, but also apply to jobs in professional organizations. For example, the Red Cross or Amnesty International.

The project [VETvrijwillig](#) (awesome volunteering) aims at promoting volunteering among young people. [VETvrijwillig](#) is a project within the municipality Enschede. Several secondary schools within this municipality participate in the project. On the website, students can find traineeships within the area. For more information see the website: <http://www.vetvrijwillig.nl/>

Volunteer organizations want to reach and involve more young volunteers. [iVolunteer](#) is a project developed and implemented by youngsters themselves. The goal of the project is to recruit young volunteers for ten organizations in The Hague and Rotterdam. For more information see the website:

http://www.movisie.nl/125224/def/home/jongerenparticipatie/publicaties/publicaties_/ivolunteer/

- Do networks and/or co-operations exist for supporting volunteering of young people in your country?

Youth participation is encouraged in many ways. The government finances programmes designed to promote commitment to and by young people. Furthermore, many funds contribute to projects in which young people play a role. The introduction of community work allow hundreds of thousands of young people to participate actively in society.

Movisie

Movisie facilitates and supports youth organizations that want to integrate youth participation into their organization.

Movisie gives advise about:

- youth marketing
- youth volunteering policies
- promoting youth participation in an organization
- recruitment of youth
- methodology descriptions of youth participation^v

Youth in Action

The European subsidy programme 'Youth in Action' finances international group exchanges for youth, international voluntary work, and other international youth projects for young people aged 13 to 30 years, including seminars and network activities. 'Youth in Action' also provides opportunities for international trainings and meetings about cooperation and knowledge exchange between volunteers and professionals in the youth sector. The programme will run from 2007 to 2013^{vi}.

Dutch association for volunteering organizations

Dutch association for volunteering organizations (in Dutch: *Vereniging Nederlandse Organisaties Vrijwilligerswerk, NOV*) is the leading organization within the voluntary effort sector of the Netherlands. See paragraph 1 for more information.

- What is the legal / financial (fiscal) status of organizations promoting volunteering?

Organizations promoting volunteering are financed by NGO's. Furthermore they gain financial support through provision funding form the government and fundraising.

The Dutch association for volunteering organizations cooperates with a law firm in the city of Utrecht. This firm makes their legal services available for non-profit organizations that have insufficient resources for legal assistance by lawyers. The firm offers legal assistance at reduced rates. Given the location of the firm it is connected to voluntary organizations in the province of Utrecht and for the Dutch association for volunteering organizations itself.

3. Promotion of volunteering of young people

- Which methods among the ones listed below are used more often to promote volunteering of young people in your country?

By national policies:

- Advertisement campaigns

European Year of Volunteering

2011 is the European Year of Volunteering (in Dutch: *Europees Jaar Vrijwilligerswerk, EJV 2011*). Many municipalities, voluntary organizations and volunteer centres organize additional activities in the European year of Volunteering. Furthermore, the National Coordinating Body of the EJV 2011 in the Netherlands has also drawn up a national action plan. For more information on the following website: http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.nl/?content=/7/Over_het_Europees_jaar

NL DOET

This is a government funded annual campaign designed to promote awareness of the voluntary sector. NL DOET is a sequel to Make a Difference Day which started in 2005. In 2010 about 150.000 Dutch people participated on this day. The promotion of this day is done by putting up posters at railway stations, secondary schools, universities and vocational colleges and besides busy streets. Furthermore, NL DOET is promoted on radio and television. For more information, please look at the following website: www.nldoet.nl.

- Education

The most important initiative taken to promote voluntary work is the introduction of community work experience, as explained in paragraph 1. Starting in the school year 2011 – 2012 secondary school's students will be obliged to do community work for 3 months.

- Youth information centres

The National Association of Youth Information Points offers online advice for youth who want to volunteer. The website offers information about the different forms of volunteering and some advice on insurance and links to other websites^{vii}.

- funding of NGOs

The Dutch National Youth Council (NJR) started its work in 2001 with financial support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. Currently, it also receives project grants from other departments, local governments and organizations. More information about the National Youth Council can be found in paragraph 2.

By NGOs:

- Advertisement campaigns

The website www.ikbengeweldig.nl (I am great) is a campaign of the National Youth Council, which aims to promote volunteering among young people. More information about the advertisement campaigns can be found in paragraph 2.

- Youth information centres

There are 10 Youth Information Points on the local level in the Netherlands which are part of the National Association. Some of these Youth Information Points offer online advice on volunteering.

- *Which among the following methods of recognition of volunteering of young people are used in your country?*

- European Youth Pass

The Youth pass is a tool for participants of projects funded by the Youth in Action Programme to describe what they have done and to show what they have learnt^{viii}. More information about Youth in Action can be found in paragraph 1.

- Certificates

People gain a lot of experience and knowledge at work, in voluntary work or in their spare time. If people do not receive a diploma for this, the Experience Certificate (in Dutch: *ervaringscertificaat*, *EVC*) shows their abilities. With this certificate people can sometimes skip some parts of their curriculum or complete their training earlier. People can also use the Experience Certificate for a job application to show what their experiences are^{ix}.

- Credits in the formal education system

Starting in the school year 2011-2012 students will be required to carry out 30 hours of community work as part of their education. See paragraph 1 for more information.

□ Awards

1. The International Award for Young People

The International Award for Young People is a challenging programme for young people aged 14 to 25. The purpose of the foundation is to offer all young people the opportunity to develop themselves through activities in five different areas:

- Community Involvement
- Sport
- Individual Talent
- Expedition
- Residential Project (Gold only)

Depending on age and the time young people spend on the project, they can receive a Bronze, Silver and/or Golden award after completion of all parts within 3, 6 or 12 months respectively^x.

2. Children's Ribbons

Some Dutch municipalities work with children's ribbons, for example Amersfoort, Nijmegen and Oss. In Nijmegen, all children between 4 and 12 years of age voluntarily working for the city of Nijmegen or a citizen of Nijmegen can receive a ribbon. For example, a child who helps others on the long term, or a child who makes a special contribution that is important to society or the city.

In short, the children's ribbon is for every child that is an example for others^{xi}.

□ They are valued in the CV

Volunteering is a good way to gain work experience. The reason young people can not find paid work is often lack of experience. By volunteering or internship youngsters can make their résumé more interesting and distinguish themselves from others. It is sensible to do an internship or volunteer during ones studies. This way young people can avoid a gap in their résumé and give their career a boost from the beginning. While reviewing résumés, employers judge extracurricular activities and work experience as very important^{xii}.

- What obstacles to young people's engaging in volunteering exist and how are these faced by national policies ?

Distinction needs to be made between those obstacles that hinder all volunteers and those obstacles that are problematic specifically for young people. Most of the general obstacles are derived from legislation and regulations that, although not intended to regulate the voluntary sector, do have implications for the sector; in most cases, such implications are primarily for voluntary organizations and thus have an indirect effect on individual volunteers. Increasingly, this issue is receiving attention, partly as a consequence of the government's wish to reduce the administrative burden.

The obstacles that prevent young people in particular from participating in voluntary work tend to be quite different. The main problems are lack of familiarity with the voluntary sector and reluctance to try and become involved in voluntary organizations staffed predominantly by adults. There is also the practical problem that many organizations are not attractive to young people, either because of the nature of the work on offer, or because of the setting. Often, the work done within voluntary organizations is difficult for young people to relate to or unsuitable for people in the early phases of life, who naturally tend to prefer working with their peers^{xiii}.

4. Mobility of young volunteers

- Is there any national monitoring of how mobility of young volunteers takes place? No

Organizations make these arrangements themselves. There is no national policy on the monitoring of young volunteers.

5. Sources of information

ⁱ www.movisie.nl/127843/def/home/vrijwillige_inzet_/basisfuncties_vrijwilligerswerk

ⁱⁱ <http://www.nov.nl/eCache/DEF/1/08/819.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.scp.nl/english/Organisation/About_SCP

^{iv} <http://www.bmcjeugd.nl/index.php/2010/08/vrijwillige-inzet-voor-en-door-kwetsbare-jongeren-binnen-regionale-opleidingen-centra-rocs-via-de-slinger-jongeren/>

^v <http://www.movisie.nl/135125/def/home/jongerenparticipatie/ondersteuningsaanbod/>

^{vi} www.youthinaction.nl

^{vii} <http://www.jip.org/nl/node/318>

^{viii} <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

^{ix} www.ervaringscertificaat.nl

^x Zie http://www.award.nl/over_de_award/projectinformatie.html

^{xi}

http://www2.nijmegen.nl/gemeente/burgemeester_wethouders/burgemeester/Onderscheidingen_en_jubilea/kinderlintjes

^{xii} <http://www.carrieretijger.nl/carriere/solliciteren/banenjacht/vrijwilligerswerk-of-stage>

^{xiii} Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Report on the EU Youth White Paper priority voluntary activities.