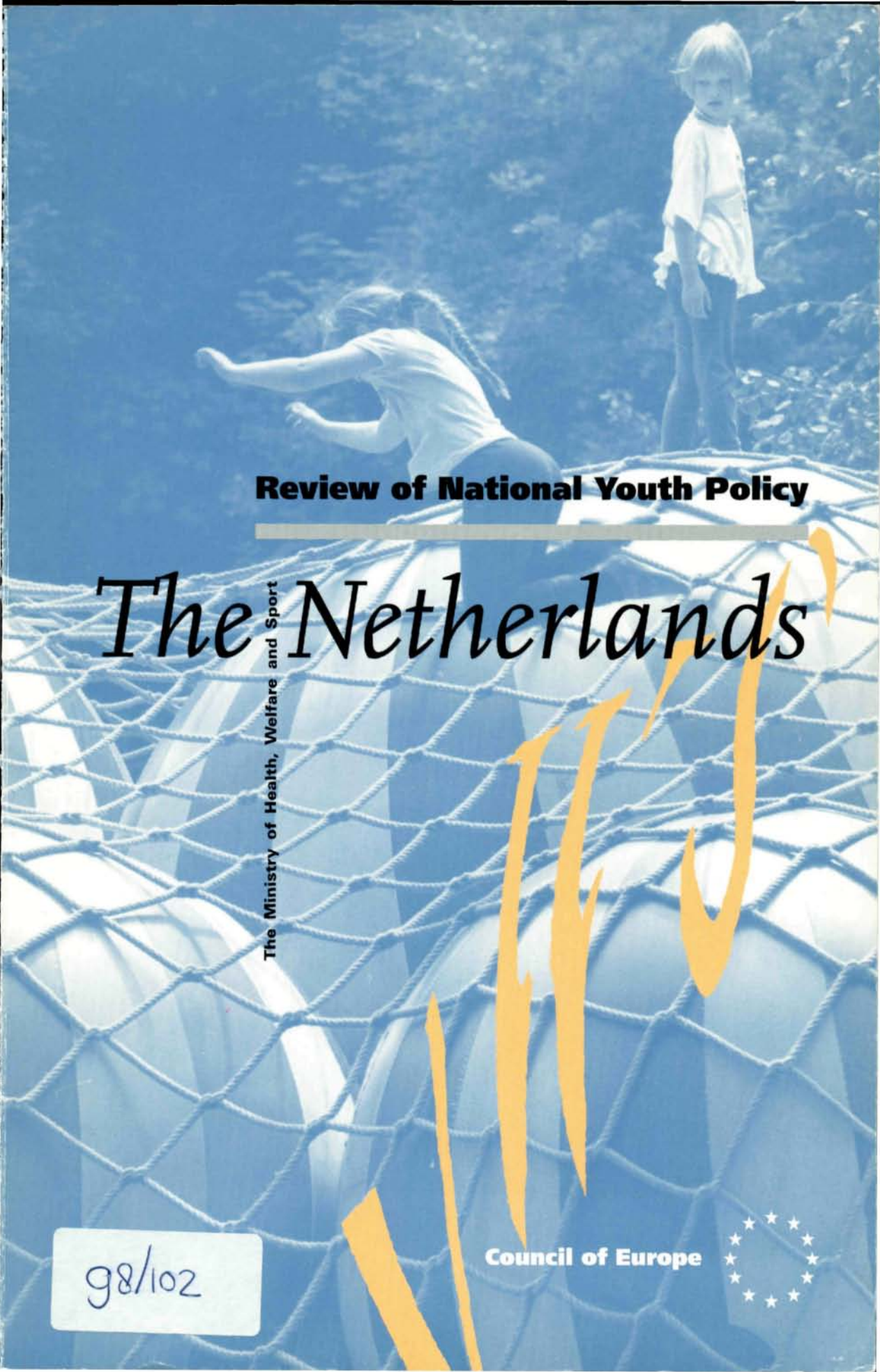

Review of National Youth Policy

The Netherlands

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Council of Europe

Council of Europe

The Netherlands

Review of National Youth Policy

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

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Preface

This report on Netherlands youth policy was commissioned by me at the request of the Council of Europe. Its member state youth ministers decided in Luxemburg 1995 to adopt the Finnish proposal for the years ahead to draw up comparative reports on member states' youth policies. The Netherlands has adhered to this initiative. The objective is to encourage reflection on youth policy, both in the country involved and at the European level.

Netherlands youth policy is in continuous change. Young people in the Netherlands grow up in a society which puts new and high demands on social competence, flexibility, technical skills, dealing with challenge, risk and multi-cultural environment. There is a heavy call on the ability of young people to manage themselves. Young people's own potential has become more challenged. A social position can be acquired -and lost- more easily than in earlier days. This entails new problems to young people. We must empower them - vulnerable youth in particular - to equip themselves for that. Society must not unilaterally put new demands on young people, but should be responsive and provide opportunities for them actually to participate and to integrate. A new divide must be prevented from emerging between those who manage and those who do not. Even more than previously, positive and wide-ranged youth policies are needed explicitly focusing on the contribution children and young people can make, for youth policy can only be brought about in partnership with youth!
Youth policy, and better coordination, will be highlighted more for the coming period. The challenge of better coordinated policy on children and young people is enshrined in this report that describes the scope and diversity of youth policy.

This report first dwells largely upon youth policy as it has developed historically. The report is divided into three sections and describes the many facets to this policy. Also informed by the request of the Council of Europe to give an impression as to how the Council's priorities have taken shape in the Netherlands, emphasis in the first chapters is on the role my ministry is playing in youth policy development. This format cannot detract from all efforts being made by other central departments based on their perspectives of youth. Inter-ministry cooperation is close in the fields of transition from school to work, child care, youth protection and care, social participation and parental support. In section III of the report you will find a wide description of youth policy around the themes: family and parenting, youth and education, leisure and culture, health and welfare, employment and economic independence, youth and safety and ethnic minorities.

In the context of Europe children and young people - taken to mean 0-25-year-olds - are ususally not covered as one entity by youth policy. But their linkage provides the advantage of integrated (preventative) youth policy-making. I think this largely outweighs disadvantages. Nevertheless we must keep alert to prevent certain age groups from being overlooked. In the years to come I shall give new incentives to child daycare, extracurricular activities and the social infrastructure for children and young people trying and to serve all ages in a balanced way.

The Inter-Departmental Youth Research Committee (CJO) had taken the lead in devising this report. It has commissioned Mrs. P.M. de Savornin Lohman, Mr. P.H. Kwakkelstein and Mr. A.G. van Dijk of *Van Dijk, Van Soomeren and Partners BV Research Bureau* to chart Netherlands youth policy. Members of *Sardes* staff organised two expert meetings on the future of young people. A committee of experts originating from the fields of science, policy and youth work - presided over by Mr. L.G.M. Bisschops - have supported the composition of this report and have commented usefully on it. Coordination of all these activities was in the hands of Mrs. D. Wilbrink-Griffioen of the *VWS Ministry* of Health, Welfare, and Sport.

Margo Vliegenthart
State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport.
1 October, The Hague, The Netherlands

General introduction

This report on Youth Policy in the Netherlands has three sections.

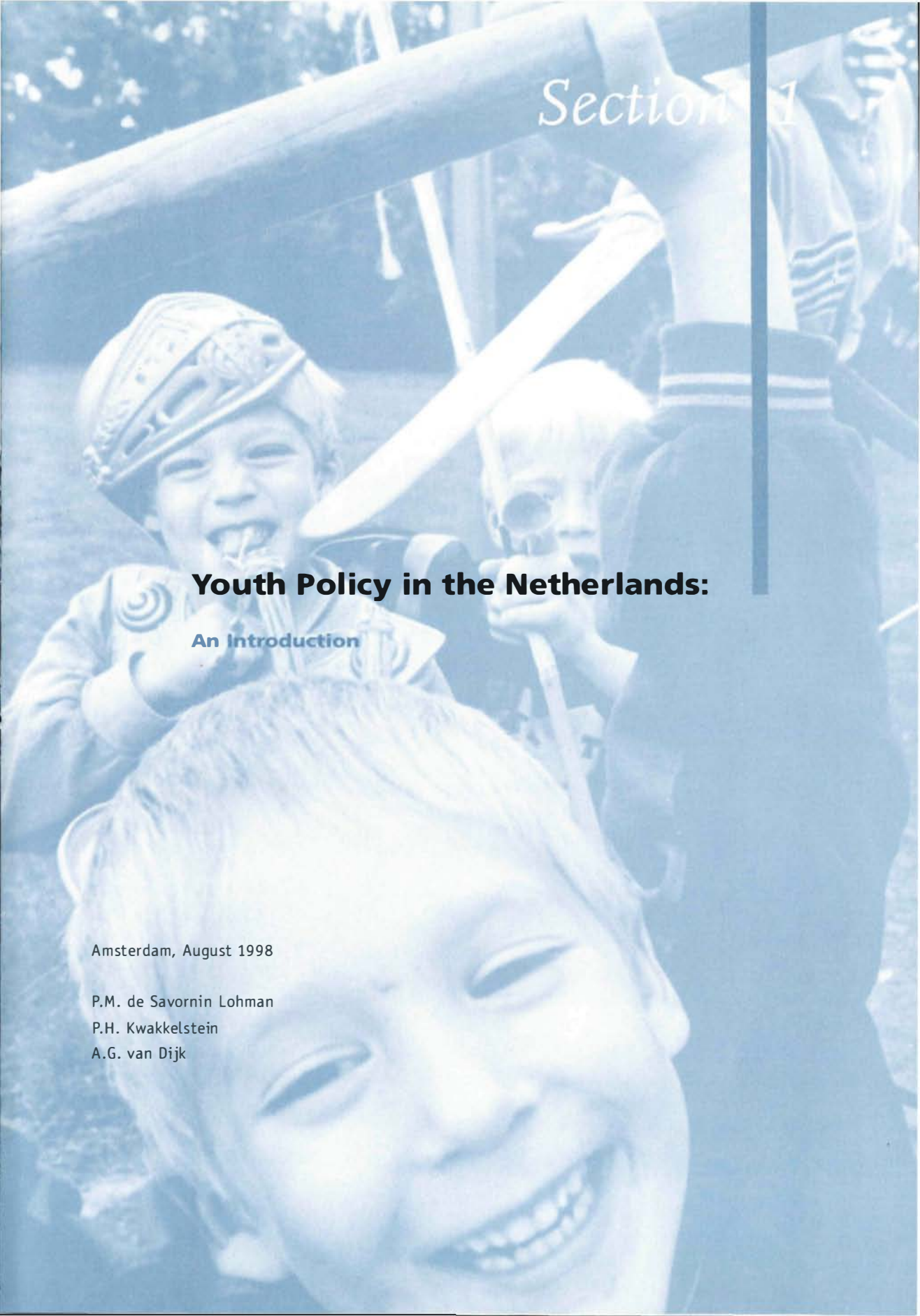
Section 1 contains a general overview of the past, present and future of national youth policy. The main focus in this section is on the role that the Ministry of VWS plays in the development of youth policy.

Section 2 deals with a selection of themes and issues currently relevant to Youth Policy in the Netherlands and to European Youth Policy developments.

Section 3 contains information on the characteristics of young people in the Netherlands and their living conditions. Moreover the policies and provisions directed at youth at national level is presented. In this section special attention is also paid to the youth policy activities of all the Ministries, that are involved with youth policy.

The information is organised around eight topics:

- family and upbringing;
- youth and education;
- leisure and youth culture;
- health and well-being;
- employment;
- economic independence;
- youth and safety;
- minorities.



Section 1

Youth Policy in the Netherlands:

An Introduction

Amsterdam, August 1998

P.M. de Savornin Lohman
P.H. Kwakkelstein
A.G. van Dijk

Contents

Introduction to *Section 1*

In the first section of this report on Youth Policy in the Netherlands a general overview of youth policy and the situation of youth in the Netherlands is presented.
Chapter 1 outlines the structure of youth policy in the government; and the distribution of responsibilities within central government and between different administrative levels (national, provincial and municipal).
Chapter 2 deals with the major characteristics of the context of the youth welfare policy: the structure and dynamics of the welfare state and the changes that took place in this system in recent decades.

As from chapter 3, attention is focused on the future. Chapter 3 first provides an overview of the current situation of youth as a basis for indicating which elements of the social situation of young people youth policy has to focus its attention on in the years to come. Following from these areas of attention, chapter 4 gives challenges for future youth policy. Here a distinction is made between the actual content of the challenges youth policy faces and the part national government will have to play in meeting those challenges.

1 Governmental youth policy today

In the Netherlands the term 'youth policy' refers to national policy relating to the entire youth population in the age range of 0 to 25 years[1]. Since the end of the eighties policy concerning young children (0-12 years old) has become part of Youth Policy in the Netherlands. The reasoning behind this broad conception of youth policy is that an effective preventive approach should not start with twelve-year-olds, but should also include preventive policy for young children and their parents.

Since national youth policy covers all policy areas relevant to young people it is inter-departmental. The Youth Policy Directorate (DJB) is a section within the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) that is specifically concerned with national youth policy for which the State Secretary of the VWS Ministry is primarily responsible.

In addition, several national government departments devise and implement policies for youth in their specific policy areas (such as education policy, labour market policy, health policy, housing policy, youth delinquency policy etc.). These specific youth-related policies are termed *sectoral youth policies*.

Policies devised by several ministries are termed *intersectoral youth policy*. The State secretary of VWS has a specific role in promoting and co-ordinating intersectoral youth policies.

Governments at other administrative levels (provincial and local government) also devise and implement youth policies. These are termed *provincial* and *local* youth policies.

1.1 National Youth Policy

Governmental Youth Policy Memoranda

In the last 25 years Netherlands Government has issued three interdepartmental Governmental Youth Policy Memorandums.

In 1969 the first one was issued by the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM), introducing for the first time the term 'youth policy'. This memorandum concentrated on young people in their leisure time.

In 1984 the Minister of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs (WVC) and the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) issued a second memorandum on youth policy. This was an interdepartmental policy document concentrating on the situation and perspectives of problematic youth.

In 1993 Mrs. d'Ancona Minister of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs (WVC) issued a third interdepartmental memorandum, entitled 'Youth Deserves a Future'.

This memorandum was presented as an incentive to new cohesion in youth policy, aimed at young Dutch people, in general.

Youth Deserves a Future (1993)

The third Memorandum states that a more positive view of youth is needed. Young people's own strengths must be challenged: their own potential and responsibilities. According to the government, national and local youth policy should centralise these own strengths and responsibilities in policy. 'Empowerment' of young people becomes the key objective in this vision. Government and society in general should create conditions for young people to enable them from early on to practice the roles, skills and attitudes that are relevant for their current and future participation in society. Such a vision allocates a central role to the encouragement of youth participation.
Within this framework national youth policy focuses on the enhancement of youth participation at all levels of society, on the development of a client-centred approach in all types of youth services (welfare work, child care, voluntary youth work), on further development of a preventive approach to youth problems, and on the strengthening of support systems for young children and their parents.

The government memorandum Youth Deserves a Future ends with a large number of policy intentions relating to three focal points:

1 *Promoting opportunities*

This includes policy intentions to:

- improve young people's legal position (also in the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children);
- enhance the function of youth information;
- strengthen the position of young people in the system of youth provision (welfare, care, and justice);
- intensify participation policy;
- multiculturalise, and combat discrimination;
- improve quality and quantity in the system of child care and parenting support.

2 *Prevention and combat of dropping out*

This includes policy intentions to:

- improve services to children and parents with family, parenting or development problems;
- prevent and combat health problems;
- prevent and combat dropping out of education;
- prevent and combat dropping out of the labour market;
- prevent and combat juvenile delinquency;
- improve services to young vagrants and to prevent vagrancy;
- prevent and assist with addiction-related problems.

3 *Monitoring*

The monitoring of developments in young people's conditions and in (national, regional and local) youth policies is a central government duty. This also includes programming and international exchange in the fields of monitoring and youth research.

The Youth Policy Directorate (DJB)

This is the section within the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) that is specifically concerned with youth policy. Its political mandate is to promote young people's opportunities, to prevent them from dropping out and to offer support for those young people who experience problems. Guiding principle in this process is 'confidence in young people 's own strength'.

In its provision-making policy the Directorate pursues an innovative policy focusing on cohesion and co-operation, matching supply to demand and improving the quality of services. The Directorate promotes renewal by developing and supporting innovative projects aimed at the development, testing, implementation and dissemination of new methods and instruments in the field of youth provision.

The DJB has three divisions:

— *General Youth Policy*
This division deals with: youth participation, national youth organisations, monitoring of trends in the situation of youth, international affairs concerning young people, youth research and youth policy and co-ordination of intersectoral youth policy.

— *Preventive Youth Policy*
Dealing with local preventive youth policy, day care for young children (0-4 years) and out of school care (4 and up).

— *Youth care*
Dealing with the reorganisation of the youth care system (implementation of the Act on Youth Care) and a number of specific problems in the youth care area such as child molesting and vagrant young people.

The Directorate coordinates its activities with other authorities and national agents through a number of structural consultations and networks, the most important being:

- regularly held meetings with Directors of the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Kingdom relations (BZK), Education, Culture and Sciences (OC&W) and Social Affairs and Employment (SZW);
- Structured Consultation on Youth Policy (GOJ): a broad platform presided by the VWS State Secretary where government officials of all administrative levels (national, provincial, local) and national organisations in the youth care field meet to discuss and co-ordinate youth policies;
- the interdepartmental Committee on Youth Research (CJO) that co-ordinates the national monitoring of youth trends and youth research and international affairs concerning youth research.

1.2 Sectoral and intersectoral youth policy

In addition to general youth policy, several other Ministries have devised policies for youth within their specific policy area or sector, e.g. education, health care, employment, urban planning, youth delinquency and legal youth protection. These policies are called *sectoral youth policies.*

Youth policy conducted by several co-operating ministries is called intersectoral youth policy. The Ministry of VWS has co-ordination in this area. Intersectoral policy is amongst others concerned with:

- promoting cohesion in the provision of services, thus creating a more comprehensive and integral peovision of services for young people and their parents;
- participation policy: promoting and supporting initiatives of young people and stimulating active participation of youth in activities in their direct living environment;
- children's rights and youth information: in order for young people to fully realise their own strengths and capabilities their legal position has to be defined sufficiently and they must have access to information.

Over recent years departmental national youth policies have increasingly become intersectoral, thus realising a more comprehensive approach to young people and provision making policy. This increased interdepartmental co-operation has resulted in the production of a number of interdepartmental policy memorandums on youth:

- the policy note 'Towards a solid basis' (1998), dealing with a comprehensive policy concerning child care and parenting support for disadvantaged children, produced by the Ministries of VWS, OC&W and BZK;
- the memorandum 'Life Long Learning' (1996), dealing with a new vision on formal and non-formal education, produced by the Ministry of OC&W (Education, Culture and Sciences), the Ministry of BZK;
- the 'CRIEM' memorandum, (1997) dealing with juvenile crime and ethnic minorities, produced by the Ministries of BZK and of Justice (see section 3 chapter 8). The Ministry of VWS has been involved in the production of this memorandum.

The importance of intersectoral co-operation is also reflected in interdepartmental policy programs such as Metropolitan Policy (see section 3 chapter 8) to combat disadvantage and safety problems in metropolitan areas and policies promoting educational renewal such as the Educational Disadvantage Policy Act (GOA) and the 'Broad School' concept (see section 3 chapter 3).

1.3 Provision policy in the Netherlands

The Netherlands possess an extensive network of facilities for children, young people and their parents. These facilities include:

- *public health services*
  ranging from general preventive health care to specialised children's hospitals;
- *youth welfare services*[2]
  covering general facilities such as day-care for children, socio-cultural youth work, libraries, sports and other leisure activities, as well as a wide range of preventive activities and projects geared to the provision of parenting support, information for young people and crime prevention;
- *educational facilities*
  the Netherlands has a differentiated and well organised education system, including educational facilities linked to youth care (e.g. special education for children with handicaps or learning/behavioural problems) and to preventive youth welfare policies (e.g. projects aimed at combatting educational disadvantage in young children, prevention of dropping out and non-attendance, safety in schools);
- *youth care services*
  covering a wide range of services and facilities for children with problems and their parents: child care, judicial youth protection and mental health youth care.

Given the size and differentiation of the infrastructure of youth services, provision making policy in this field is geared to enhancing co-operation, cohesion and harmonisation. Co-operation is required at the administrative level, because different ministries are responsible for the above mentioned services. This also includes promoting more coherence and consistency in the acts and regulations devised by the different ministries. Since the responsibility for youth provision has been largely decentralised, clear agreements have to be made between the various levels of government (central, provincial/ metropolitan and municipal) on the distribution of tasks and the allocation of responsibilities. Also co-operation and cohesion of services at the local and regional level is promoted by national government.

1.4 Distribution of responsibilities over administrative tiers

From the late 1980s on many duties concerning youth policy formerly attached to central government have been decentralised towards lower administrative tiers: provinces and, above all, municipalities.
Decentralisation includes responsibilities and duties in the fields of welfare, child care, youth care, preventive health care, education, employment and social services.

Decentralisation is phased and has not yet been completed: annually, new duties and responsibilities are still shifted from central government towards provinces and municipalities. Decentralisation of duties and powers towards provincial and local authorities is aimed at providing a wider policy scope for lower tiers to find appropriate responses to regional and local problems and wishes (see chapter 2 in this section for more information).
The decentralisation has lead to a marked change in the division of responsibilities and tasks amongst the different administrative levels. This requires the development of new forms of co-operation and accommodation between and amongst the different governmental tiers involved. This is an ongoing process.

Central government's youth policy responsibilities

In the field of youth policy all departments involved retain their own responsibilities and duties concerning youth.
For the VWS Ministry, responsible for national youth policy, the decentralisation process implies that its policy making function is converted into:

- promoting co-operation and mutual accommodation amongst the departments involved in youth policy (VWS, OC&W, Social Affairs, Justice, BZK);
- promoting co-operation and mutual accommodation between the different administrative tiers involved with youth policy (national. provincial/metropolitan, local);
- promoting the development of comprehensive youth policies by local and regional governments;
- stimulating innovation and experimentation in the welfare and care sector by initiating and supporting projects and programmes for the furthering and dissemination of innovative developments;
- monitoring trends in the situation of youth and in the development of youth policy and signalling new developments and problems;
- international contacts with the Council of Europe and the European Union and bilateral contacts in the field of youth policy.

Parallel to that central government retains a macro responsibility for the functioning of the youth system as a whole.

Tasks in this area are: developing, implementing and monitoring national laws and regulations, supervising quality of provision and maintaining the national service infrastructure of support, innovation and research in the youth field.
Central government confines itself to those tasks that cannot be dealt with at other administrative levels.

National advisory structure

In 1996 the existing, complex and highly specialised structure of advisory boards of national government was drastically reorganised. The Advisory Board on Youth Policy was one of the many specialised advisory boards that has been abolished.
Currently every department has one or two advisory boards, that each can advise central government on issues and policies concerning youth. The advisory board of the Ministry of VWS concerned with social policy is called the RMO (Board for Social Developments).

Responsibilities of provincial government

A new responsibility of provincial governments and the authorities of the three largest cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague (holding provincial status in this respect) is to implement the Act on Youth Care[3].
In addition, provincial and metropolitan governments are responsible for the provincial and metropolitan support organisations in the youth care system.

Responsibilities of local government

In the ongoing process of decentralisation local authorities are confronted with new responsibilities and tasks in the field of youth welfare, day care for children, youth health care, education, labour market policy and crime prevention. They also organise and fund activities concerning amateur art, artistic and cultural education, library work and sports.
Municipalities are responsible for the implementation of a number of national acts and schemes, such as:

- the Child Care Incentive Scheme (see section 2 chapter 4)
- the Collective Prevention Act, part of which is concerned with preventive child health care of 4-19-year-olds (see section 3, chapter 5);
- the Youth Employment Guarantee Act (JWG), recently integrated into the Act on Integration of the Jobless (WIW - see section 3, chapter 6).

In addition, local councils develop and implement welfare policies for specific target groups. For example, many of them promote and fund facilities and services for young people of foreign backgrounds, for young homeless and runaways, etc.
In the field of education local authorities are responsible for upholding the Compulsory Education Act, taking care of truants, offering compensatory programmes for children with educational disadvantage and additional courses for children of foreign backgrounds, for accommodating schools and for pupils' transport.
Moreover, local authorities are the board of governors for local public schools (see section 3, chapter 3).

Participation of young people

On all administrative levels efforts are made to enhance active participation of young people in the development and implementation of policies relevant to them.

This is done by organising national, regional and local fora (such as youth debates and youth councils) where policy-makers and young people meet and discuss youth concerns and policies (see section 2, chapter 1).

1.5 Overview of policy topics

The following scheme summarises globally the distribution of responsibilities and tasks in the field of youth policy and provision. The last column of the scheme shows which parts of this report contains more information on the relevant subject.

Distribution of responsibilities

Central government

Core tasks:

- conditioning the national system (laws and regulations, national support and research infrastructure)
- innovation: experimentation and dissemination of new methods
- monitoring trends and highlighting new developments and problems
- complementary responsibility for tasks that cannot be dealt with at other administrative levels

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)

general tasks concerning youth:

- co-ordination of the reorganisation of the youth care system
- overall responsibility for generic and intersectoral youth policy (GOJ and Meeting of Directors) — see section 1
- co-ordination of youth research (CJO)
- financing of supportive tasks, e.g. those carried out by the National Organisation for Care and Welfare (NIZW) and Netherlands Youth Information (SJN)

main policy areas concerning youth welfare:

- youth participation — see section 2, chapter 1
- voluntary youth work (LJO's) — see section 2, chapter 3
- child day care and after school care — see section 2, chapter 4
- parenting support — see section 2, chapter 4
- local preventive youth policy — see section 2, chapter 5
- youth care — see section 2, chapter 6
- sports and cultural education — see section 3, chapter 4
- youth health care, lifestyle — see section 3, chapter 5

Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science (OC&W)

general tasks concerning youth:

- supporting and organising the education system
- financial aid to students

policy areas relevant to youth welfare:

- pre-school and early school education for disadvantaged youth
- prevention of school dropping-out
- school safety projects

see section 3, chapter 3

Ministry of Justice

general tasks concerning youth:

- dealing with juvenile delinquents
- organisation of the child protection system
- crime prevention in co-operation with other agencies
- research into youth delinquency (WODC)

policy areas relevant to youth welfare:

- youth crime
- ethnic minorities and youth crime (CRIEM)
- metropolitan policy on youth and safety

see section 3, chapter 8

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK)

policy areas relevant to youth welfare:

- metropolitan policy on youth and safety
- ethnic minorities and youth crime (CRIEM)
- co-ordination of policies on ethnic minorities
- supporting political youth organisations

see section 3, chapter 8
see section 3, chapter 9
see section 2, chapter 3

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW)

policy areas relevant to youth welfare:

- youth employment guarantee act (JWG)
- incentive policy on youth employment (AAJ)
- labour reintegration of the disabled (REA)
- establishment of minimum youth wages
- laws and regulations on working conditions

see section 3, chapter 6 and 7

Provincial government

The Netherlands has 12 'provinces' (regions). In addition, the three largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague) hold provincial status for the administration of the youth care system.

provincial tasks relevant to youth welfare:

- implementing and financing the Act on Youth Care
- support of provincial/metropolitan support organisations
- limited (advisory) tasks regarding education

see section 2, chapter 6

Municipal governments

The Netherlands has 548 municipalities.

municipal tasks relevant to youth welfare:

- defining, financing and implementing local (preventive) youth policy

see section 2, chapter 5

- defining, (partly) financing and implementing local policy concerning child day care, out-of-school care and parenting support

see section 2, chapter 4

• defining, (partly) financing and implementing local educational policy	see section 3, chapter 3
• defining, financing and implementing youth health care	see section 3, chapter 5
• local policies on public order and safety	see section 3, chapter 8
• implementing metropolitan policy (25 municipalities)	see section 3, chapter 8

2 The context of today's youth welfare policy in the Netherlands

In order to promote clear understanding of the present situation and recent developments in the field of Netherlands youth welfare policy, some necessary additional information is given on the historical context of the welfare state and welfare system[4].

2.1 Developments in the seventies

The flourishing period of Netherlands caring 'welfare state'

In the post-war period the gradual increase in welfare reached its peak in the seventies. Economic growth was paralleled with a major increase in state-funded facilities for welfare and care. Also in the field of youth welfare and care the number and diversity of state-funded services and facilities steadily increased and diversified. In the seventies an extensive network of youth services and support provision was brought about.
Due to the fact that the creation of these facilities is traditionally rooted in the initiative of organised citizens, the growth in the welfare system was in-systematic and non-transparent.

The key importance of the Private Initiative of citizens (PI)

The welfare system in the Netherlands is rooted in the initiatives of groups of citizens erecting identity-based organisations for care, social cultural work and education.
In the post-war period most of the community-based organisations for welfare and care have developed into a professional, specialised and institutionalised sector supported by an extensive network of national umbrella and support organisations.
Although the government is the most important funder of activities carried out by these organisations, the latter have remained relatively autonomous as to their policies and activities. They also hold the independent legal status of foundation or association.
The relative autonomy of agencies with care and welfare functions implies that governments have to consult with these agencies and have to reach agreement with them on youth policy goals and priorities, in order to be able to develop and effectively implement a planned youth welfare policy.

Restructuring the system

In the course of the seventies a working party was installed to review the problems in the existing system of youth welfare and care (the Mik Committee).

This commmittee assessed the situation as follows:

- the youth care and welfare system is too fragmented and compartmentalised;
- welfare and care services often do not meet local needs and problems;
- the service users have (too) restricted impact on the facilities provided by of the agencies;
- governments have limited coordination possibilities and limited control over the expansion of the system.

The work of the Committee Mik laid a basis for two interdepartmental working parties that developed a new structure for the youth welfare and care system (see 2.2).

2.2 Developments in the eighties

In the eighties, owing to the economic recession, government had to make severe cut-backs in government spending, leading - among other things - to marked budgetary interventions in the field of youth provision. Affordability and (cost)effectiveness became increasingly important as criteria for the funding of social services.
In the same period (mid eighties) the responsibility for many welfare services was decentralised from central to local government.
The general aim of these measures was to restrict and redirect the duties of central government and to (re)allocate more responsibility to local and provincial authorities, to private enterprises and to the members of Dutch society.

Towards a caring society

This shift in central social policy was mirrored by a changed view of the role and responsibility of government for its citizens' social welfare. In the mid eighties the concept of the 'caring state', which had been central to social policy in the sixties and seventies, was replaced with the concept of the 'caring society'.
Within this new social policy the need for prevention of social problems was stressed.
The increasing dependence of people on social services needed to be counteracted, and primary responsibility for the social welfare of citizens was redirected to the citizens themselves.
Moreover, social services should become more responsive to the needs of their clients: a client-centred approach, directed at strengthening their clients' social independence was favoured.

Social youth problems

At the same time (during the eighties) a number of new and quite serious youth problems became manifest, such as increasing juvenile delinquency, increasing numbers of school dropouts and young homeless, and the marginalisation of ethnic youth.

As a consequence, political and public attention became more and more focused on combatting these social youth problems. At the local and national level the (limited) resources available for youth provision were reallocated to problem youth provision. Prevention and combat of juvenile delinquency and (school) dropping out became major issues for local youth policy.
This left little scope for local authorities to develop a generic and more positively oriented youth policy for all young people in the local community.
In the eighties national government installed two interdepartmental working parties to develop a new structure for the youth welfare and care system (IWAPV and IWRV). These working parties produced two important reports, outlining a new model.
The key concepts for the new system are:

- *harmonisation* of the system: breaking compartmentalisation and furthering coherence in service provision;
- *decentralisation* of responsibilities towards lower administrative tiers in favour of local/regional control and management.

It is expected that the shift of functions and duties to lower tiers will allow for a better functioning of the system (more effective and efficient) and better accommodation of care and welfare provision to the needs of the local community. Decentralisation of tasks in other fields towards local councils (such as education and labour market policy) enables them to develop an integrated youth approach.

2.3 A new role for local authorities

One of the main aims of the decentralisation of duties and powers towards local authorities is to provide them with a wider policy scope for identifying local problems and wishes and finding appropriate responses. Deregulation and financial discretion for local authorities are paramount in the decentralisation policy.
The main decentralising operations relevant to local youth policy are:

- In 1987 local authorities became, under the Welfare Act, responsible for the policies on child day care and out-of-school care, social cultural work, non-formal youth education and community work.
- In 1989 local authorities became responsible for tasks concerning preventive public health care, including preventive health care for 4-19-year-olds (Collective Prevention Act, see section 3 chapter 5).
- In 1992 elements of the labour market policy were decentralised, thus empowering local authorities to implement the Youth Employment Guarantee Act (JWG) (see section 3 chapter 6).
- Under the Temporary Act on Social Renewal (1994) local Councils became responsible for, among other things, social accommodation and out-patient addict care.

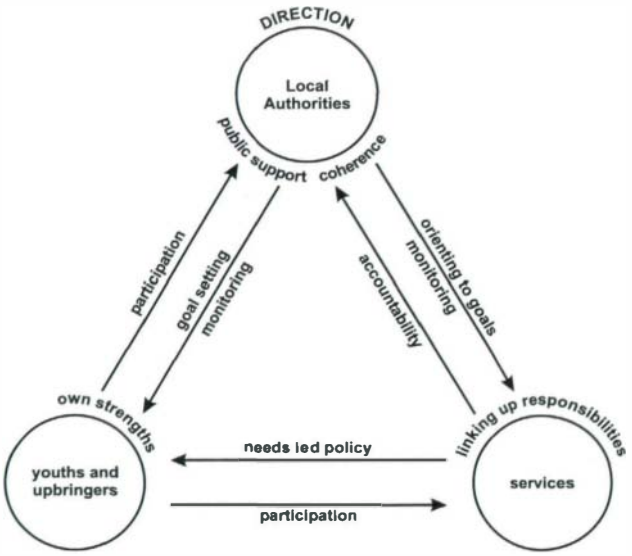
In the same year local authorities were given responsibility for local preventive youth services (Direction in Youth Care, 1994 - see section 2, chapter 5).

- In 1995 a number of duties in the field of education were decentralised to the local authorities, including the countering the tendency to drop out, elements of the policy on educational disadvantage (OA), and the provision and housing of education (see section 3 chapter 3).

A new challenge: direction

As the number of policy areas under local administrative discretion increases, local authorities are required to draw up their own policies and face new administrative challenges. This certainly also relates to the great importance attached to an integrated approach to current social problems in municipalities. Integral policy-making and implementing proceedings always require numerous other actors to be involved, such as; youth welfare, education, health care, housing, voluntary youth organisations etc.
The above outlined developments in the voluntary sector (becoming more businesslike and competitive) sometimes thwart smooth cooperation at the local level. Moreover, local authorities can less and less dispense with the input from local residents nowadays: citizens must also be allocated their position in policy development and implementation.

The ideal new relationship between (local) government, organisations in the field and residents can be displayed as follows:



The above model shows continuous dynamic interplay between citizens, voluntary organisations and government. It defines the desirable direction local policy should be oriented to, rather than actual local practice. So it is clearly an ideal type of model.

For the realisation of the model there needs to be:

- A cultural reversal within local councils and provision: young people must no longer be considered consumers of welfare goods but their co-producers. This demand-led method is a useful instrument for local authorities' direction of service provision.
- Greater social involvement of young people, requiring youth organisations to assume a catalysing function.
- Intersectoral co-operation within the local government organisation and inter-agency co-operation between local government and other agencies.

2.4 Provincial level: direction of youth care provision

Decentralisation of youth care

In 1990 the Act on Youth Care (WJHV) was introduced. This Act defines the facilities and services to which the act applies. It contains regulations concerning the organisation and implementation of voluntary youth care, youth protection[5] and juvenile criminal law. Moreover, the Act stipulates decentralisation of the planning and financing of regional and metropolitan youth care facilities to provincial and metropolitan governments. This decentralisation took place in 1992.

In 1994 it was established at the political level that decentralisation had indeed been implemented, but was not yet leading to the desired situation: a transparent and accessible system of youth care, operated (more) efficiently and (more) effectively. Early in 1994 the Lower House of Parliament passed a motion for central government to take concrete initiatives towards a national indicative framework in order to develop coherent youth provision in the age range of 0-18. Central government responded in the mid of 1994 by issuing the *'Direction in youth care'* memorandum. This elaborates in more detail the division of administrative responsibilities:

- Locally-based (preventive) youth care services fall to the discretion of local authorities - these shall develop locally-based preventive youth policy.
- Provinces and metropolitan regions are responsible for bringing about coherent curative youth care at the regional level and for their alignment with neighbouring sectors such as education, employment services and locally-based preventive youth policy. To this end they will develop *'regional visions'* on youth care, taking into account the activities and needs of the municipalities in the region.
- Central government is responsible for an orientating framework for local preventive youth services and regional (curative) youth care - in the quantitative as well as in the qualitative sense.

See section 2, chapter 6 for more information.

From 1992 provinces and metropolitan areas hold the responsibility for bringing about coherent provision of services in the field of child and youth care. The devolution of powers from central to provincial government was paralleled with a youth care reorganisation process directed by the provincial authorities.
Mostly large numbers of agencies were involved with partly overlapping services. In many regions over recent years these services have merged into large multi-functional organisations. Before this reorganisation process was finished the next challenge was already being faced: the setting up of regional youth care offices - central registration agencies, one in each region - for assessment services and referrals for treatment.
The setting up of these single door front offices is aimed at unequivocal channeled access to child and youth care.
In most regions the youth care offices find themselves in an initial stage and so the process of improved youth care access is still on its way.
A major focal issue in this process is also the alignment with preventive youth policies that are shaped at the local level.

2.5 Support by national government

National government (the VWS Ministry) has conducted an active policy aimed at supporting and facilitating the restructuring and renewal process in the field of welfare and youth care.

Support for local authorities

To support local authorities in the development of local youth policy two consecutive programs were set up:

- *Locally-based integrated youth policy*

  In the beginning of the nineties the VWS Ministry - together with the VNG (Netherlands Federation of Local Authorities) - initiated the 'Experimental areas of integrated youth policy' programme. A number of pilot municipalities received assistance with developing a locally-based youth policy. Accompanying research yielded bottlenecks and helped develop working models. The pilot projects demonstrated that integrated youth policy-making is a question of long-term tenacity. Based on the pilot experiences a 'programme-led youth policy' model has been designed as a step by step instrument for coordination by local authorities and implementing by the voluntary sector. Information from and on youth in the local community plays a key role here.

- *Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy*

  In 1994 a project team for the Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ) was set up, to develop and implement a 3-year national programme (1995-1998) aimed at promoting the development of preventive youth policy by local government.

This programme operates a broad interpretation of the concept of prevention[6]. Preventive youth policy should not restrict itself to stop youth problems from getting worse, it should also enhance general opportunities for all young people to interact with agents and participate in activities in their direct social environment. Stimulating social and political participation of young people in the local community is one of the key elements of the programme.

In a sense the OLPJ project team activities can be regarded as a continuation of the integrated youth policy scheme of the pilot areas. The latter emphasised trying out new ways of working and coordination models in *some* municipalities, whilst the OLPJ project team mainly highlights the creation of grassroots support and policy backing from *all* local authorities in the Netherlands. Chapter 5 in section 2 describes the OLPJ programme in more detail.

Support in the field of youth care

In recent years support for the reorganisation process has been highlighted. The *direction in youth care steering committee* has made an important contribution here.
The activities of this steering committee are reported in more detail in part 2 chapter 6.4.
Apart from that, several VWS Ministry initiated schemes aim at substantial youth care innovation, two examples of which being:

- the *Homelessness Prevention* project. Its objective is to develop a methodology for the prevention of young people at higher risk of drifting behaviour arising from their early leave from residential care and becoming homeless.
- the introduction of the 'families first' method in the Netherlands. 'Families first' means intensive, short-term home treatment for families in an emergency with a child at risk of being placed away from home. The projects have an inter-sector format. It appears from accompanying research that this methodology is successful: in 80% of cases out-of-family placement is prevented.

This last scheme properly illustrates the key concerns in the youth care field:

- promotion of intersectoral co-operation between youth care and local bodies involved with preventive youth policy;
- early intervention close to the residence of the clients to prevent heavier (residential) types of services from being used;
- a demand-led approach.

3 The situation of youth in the Netherlands: trends and issues for the future

3.1 Trends

Trends in modern society

Our society is undergoing incisive change which is, for that matter, not typical of only the Netherlands. Its characteristic material elements are rapid technological developments, shifts in production and labour patterns and relations, internationalisation and globalisation, and the influx of people from other countries and cultures (multiculturalisation). These developments have far-reaching consequences for the organisation of the community and citizens' daily lives, materially as well as socio-culturally. Key socio-cultural trends are ongoing individualisation and development into a pluriform and multicultural society.

In modern society the impact of traditional institutions and classifying principles such as class/background, church and state (authority) has declined. New social mechanisms emerge instead. Transition takes place towards a society to which the individual's own responsibility and choices are central (individualisation).

The policy-based pursuit of each individual's economic independence and the economic growth have been conducive to the labour participation of young women in large numbers. This has consequences for the division of work outside and care duties within the family home. Care duties of (working) parents are increasingly being taken over by third parties, such as day care centres.

The arrival of people from other cultures and the widened scope for constituting one's own social identity, lifestyle and career have made the Netherlands a culturally pluriform country. The observance of social manners is less obvious, forms and norms rather being constantly negotiated (Dieleman, 1998).

Physical and social boundaries or limitations disappear: opportunities for physical and social mobility have considerably increased. Today we live in an 'opportunity-led society' where social success is ever more constituted by individual choices and competences (meritocracy).

But, at the same time, 'the road to succes' has become less clear: the traditional link between educational careers and security of jobs to match has disappeared. Education and training become more and more detached from future positions in the labour market (Hövells, 1996). Today's young people are increasingly forced into chosing their own direction and identity in an unclear and rapidly changing '(jobs-led) world'.

Trends in the situation of youth

Netherlands society and youth are prosperous in various respects.

The economy is flourishing. Surveys into young people's functioning in society show that the overwhelming proportion fare well or very well. They grow up with stable, harmonious family relationships, in good health and mental well-being, do well at school and have favourable prospects in the labour market[7].

Youth experts and policy-makers state on the basis of various research outcomes that 85% to 90% of young people in the Netherlands 'are just doing well'.

But it also appears from international comparative research into young people's welfare that their feeling of well-being is decreasing, in the Netherlands as well as in other highly developed countries. In this context also the higher incidence of risk behaviour of young people (smoking, alcohol and drug taking, violent behaviour) is sometimes mentioned as indicative of increasing stress and decreasing well-being in the youth.

Moreover, there is a group of young people showing a clearly less favourable development. They often have to contend with a combination of problems with their personal functioning, home conditions (family conflicts), school (truancy and dropping out) and the labour market (no prospects). A proportion of them are in touch with the youth care system: children with behavioural or developmental disorders, young people with serious psychological or psychiatric trouble, vagrant youth, young people with addiction-related problems etc. Over recent years the take-up of heavier types of youth care has steadily increased.

We also see children and young people drifting into more serious criminal behaviour: street violence, youth gangs and young people involve with organised (drug-related) crime are worrying examples of this.

In addition, dropping out of mainstream contexts and pathways (family, school, work) and violent and criminal behaviour seem increasingly concentrated amongst certain groups of migrant youth. It is called the ethnification of social youth problems.

Youth-related image building

Although research evidence conclusively shows the overwhelming proportion of young people in the Netherlands to be going well, public and political debate is often dominated by negative notions of youth. This is reflected e.g. in media reports on youth crime and violence, in decreased social tolerance of 'disruptive' youth behaviour and local youth policy still highly focused on problem youth.

This approach to young people as a problem group or as 'nuisances' reinforces and legitimises the thinking in terms of control of problems caused by young people and their conformity to the dominant (adult) culture.

The media have a specific role and responsibility in this respect: they can influence public opinion on youth in a negative way, and they can present young people themselves with (e.g. violence-related and unrealistic) images and information that might have unfavourable effects on them.

3.2 Consequences for young people

New demands put on young people

Young people are expected to map out their own development route in a complex, little transparent and rapidly changing context. This is translated into a 'package of demands' on them, such as: take your own initiatives, dare to run risks, make purposeful choices, and respond to change in your environment in creative and flexible ways.

Present day youth must seize opportunities and make choices, preferably the *proper* ones... This is quite demanding of young people's individual abilities and skills. Youth experts sometimes criticise our urging youth to become supermen and women.

Demands put on today's youth, moreover, are contrary to the fact that policy-makers and professionals do not or insufficiently view young people as fellow citizens and equal partners in the processes of policy development and implementation. Society seems to provide young people with insufficient space for practicing the skills and competencies that are considered so important for their future (see also section 2 chapter 1).

The process of seizing chances and making choices also requires high quality information given to young people about their prospects and the consequences of choices made. This information must be accessible, reliable and realistic (see also section 2 chapter 2).

More opportunities, more risks

Modern society not only provides opportunities but also entails risks.

Emphasis on individual success inevitably stresses and enhances the risk of failure. The divide between the successful and the non-successful, the 'winners' and the 'losers', threatens to become ever sharper.

Apart from that, risks are attached to the availability of stimulants (cigarettes, alcohol, soft drugs) and (some young people's) easy access to the 'quick money' of the criminal scene.

Research into young Dutch people has shown risk behaviour such as smoking and alcohol and drug taking to have increased over recent years. There are also indications that the engagement of youngsters in violent behaviour is increasing, although violent juvenile crime is still a small proportion of total juvenile crime as registered by the police (see section 3 chapter 8).

At the same time the age at which young people start with risky behaviour has decreased. Decreasing social cohesion and stability in the direct social environment, and increased anonymity are mentioned as causes that provide young people with more scope for rule breaking behaviour to which adults in their environment often do not or ineffectively react.

Growing cultural and normative pluriformity can lead to norm-related insecurity and ambivalence towards codes and limits of behaviour in both young people and adults.

Especially in less prosperous metropolitan areas there are many temptations for young people to compensate for potential failure in mainstream education or employment by seeking succes, status and money in a deviant, often criminal, lifestyle.
Dealing in a constructive way with the numerous risks and temptations of modern society challenges young people's own abilities. Amongst youth experts and policy-makers the question is debated how to tackle these risks and young people's risk behaviour. Too protective or patronising approaches do not fit in with the modern view of youth and youth policy.

Social exclusion in the opportunity-led society

Strong emphasis on individual opportunities and competences, characteristic of modern Dutch society and much of its central policy, entails the risk of neglecting processes of social inequality and exclusion. It appears from trend data on educational and labour market conditions and perspectives for young people (see also section 3 of this report) that some of them cannot keep up with today's opportunity-led society. In education and the labour market a group is emerging of disadvantaged youth with increasingly negative prospects. Estimates of its size vary from 10% to 15% of the total youth population.
The gap between these new 'losers' and young people who do cope ('winners') appears to be widening. Certain groups of migrant young people are predominant in the group of 'losers': there seems to be an ethnification of these social youth problems.
For that matter, the idea of crime and social disruption being caused *only* by the 'losers' is a misconception, even though these youngsters are predominant amongst young offenders.

Socio-educational gaps

Family, school and social environment (district/neighbourhood and leisure activities) have important formal and informal socio-educational duties towards young people. Various recent research studies show a considerable number of children growing up today in a so-called *socio-educational vacuum*. The upbringing surroundings of these children offer insufficient opportunities, support and infrastructure for sound development. Also young people themselves claim to be growing up in 'deprived upbringing conditions' (De Winter, 1998, see also paragraph 3.5 in this chapter).
The reasons for and backgrounds to these conditions are multiple:

— *The parents are 'absent' more often*
In an increasing number of families the parents are at work. Moreover, not all parents are actually able to support their children with the numerous choices they have to make. Lacking knowledge of modern Dutch society often plays a role here.

— *Increasing and competing demands on the educational system*
Within the current education system the development of individual competences and appropriate routes for pupils are much highlighted. This might be at the expense of the socio-educational objectives of education, such as learning how to function in a group or to be a responsible citizen.

At the same time, the pressure upon schools has grown to close socio-educational gaps caused by the decreasing or disappearing input from families, neighbourhoods and leisure facilities.

— *Decreasing social cohesion and increasing social isolation*

In many residential areas the time-honoured social cohesion, based on permanent physical proximity of peers, has disappeared or strongly diminished. Families withdraw behind their front doors, so that informal supervision and correction of rule breaking child behaviour in public fall away. This process not only occurs in social problem-ridden areas but also in affluent districts with many double-income households (new estates).

The absence of an informal supportive network can exacerbate the problems of families contending with parenting trouble. The families have to cope themselves in indifferent or even hostile surroundings. These families become increasingly dependent on professional forms of (parenting) support.

— *Inadequate youth facilities*

Youth welfare provision geared to leisure pursuits has been abolished or slimmed down in many municipalities. Quantitative as well as qualitative shortcomings play a role: especially access to vulnerable young people is often insufficient and youth provision and methods operated are insufficiently-based on a coherent socio-educational view of youth.

Also volunteer organisations for young people (autonomous youth work) have lost relevance and membership, although this seems to be turning at the moment (see also section 2 chapter 2).

All in all there are serious signals that the socio-educational infrastructure, in which quite a lot of children and young people are growing up today, shows a number of gaps in the general socio-educational network around youth.

This causes young people to seek more and more support and reference amongst themselves as peer group. This can be very positive, but might also turn out to be negative if one's peer group develops deviant and destructive ways and standards. For instance criminal youth gangs.

Finding answers to these problems

The problems and shortcomings identified cannot solely be solved by calling upon young people's and parents' own resources.

At least equally important is qualitative and quantitative enhancement of the socio-educational infrastructure around children and their families. In the years to come there will be given new incentives to child daycare, extracurricular activities and to the social infrastructure for children and young people.

But also coordination of youth policy is necessary, based on a comprehensive and intersectoral approach, and adequate information about local social problems, needs and possibilities.

3.3 Intersectoral issues for the future

In the programme of the interdepartmental Youth Research Committee for the years 1997-2001 (CJO - View of Youth, 1997) five issues are mentioned that will need extra intersectoral attention in the (near) future.
For each of these issues there will be a report issued in the autumn of 1998 on the starting conditions.
A policy committee will report on the direction of youth policy and youth research for the years to come on the basis of these reports.
The issues are:

1 Having the fun but not the trouble! Do young people count?

New demands are being put on young people. What is society's attitude towards young people, how are they valued, taken seriously, responded to and taken into consideration? Does society adjust its plans to take account of youth? And, on the other hand: how open are young people to society and how willing are they to contribute? How far all this is recognised is apparent from the extent to which children have a say in their upbringing within the family, from the sensitivity of schools to young people (school climate), the facility for parents to spend time with their children and to be actively involved with youth policy.
On the other hand, it is of relevance how far young people want to be actively involved with family activities, have a say at school and in youth policy, or contribute to society through volunteering and care for older generations. Is there mutual solidarity?

2 New winners - new losers! Preventing a divide?

Young people's own potential has become more challenged, with active contributions and choices expected. The tendency towards meritocratisation implies that a social position can be acquired more easily than in earlier days. Some young people would feel challenged by this to enhance their own power and opportunities. As appears from a completed education, well-functioning in the family, 'feeling fine', making one's own choices as to training / job whether or in combination with child-rearing and developing one's own life prospects. To other young people it means increased pressure and less well-being, more experimental behaviour (drugs etc.), early school-leaving and (long-term) unemployment. Recently, the WRR (Scientific Council on Central Policy) underlined the relevance of emancipation and participation as a means of preventing a threatening divide in this field in the Netherlands.

3 Ever younger, ever more passionate! Risky behaviour under control?

Being young today entails - more than ever - young people running risks and accepting challenges. On the other hand this is not without risks. Experimental behaviour has its limits.

A new view of this must be developed. What are the limits, where is the reason for concern? All kinds of signals become evident from increasing soft drug use, Ecstasy, heavy drinking, externalised problem behaviour and traffic accidents. These 'risky' lifestyles are often associated with youth cultures, a lack of self-control, change in upbringing norms and values, and decreased supervision because both parents are employed! What are the exact conditions? To what extent are the signals alarming or can they be regarded as a tolerable level of experimental behaviour?

4 Social integration at risk! Social cohesion preserved?

Integration is considered important for the individual as well as for society as a whole. The duty of integration is incumbent especially on ethnic minority young people. A large proportion of them manage to integrate into Dutch society keeping their own 'identity'. Others have more difficulty here, their parents sometimes explicitly not choosing to integrate. Relevant issues include the self-esteem of these youngsters and the degree to which they feel at home. It matters both how far integration can take place and how far they can grow up between two cultures whilst preserving their own identity.
They have to be prevented from feeling threatened, discriminated against and racially abused, through combatting this in all spheres of life (family, school, work, neighbourhood, sports, clubs and community centre etc.) and promoting social cohesion.

5 From bad to worse! Violence and crime diminished?

Self-advocacy is an important survival mechanism for young people these days. Violence and crime belong to the excrescence of this society. Ethnification plays a part. The role of youth cultures and conditions within the family is increasingly clearly acknowledged. Bullying and violence feature at school, in the street, in the sports ground, but also violence from adults against children, such as child abuse and intimidation.

4 Challenges for future youth policy

4.1 Challenges for future youth policy*

An opportunity-led approach for all young people

The starting point of youth policy in the Netherlands is that promotion of chances and opportunities of children, young people and parents must be paramount. This includes *all* children, young people and their parents and the *whole wide range of child development conditions.*

This wide view of youth and youth policy is in some way insufficiently reflected in present political and public debate in the Netherlands, its actual key political themes rather being 'crime' and 'employment'.

Nevertheless, child development conditions comprise more than crime and employment. Youth policy that is operated especially with the control-based instruments of problem led and risk-oriented prevention, repression and care neglects important chances.

If the starting points are that justice must be done to the *whole* development of children and young people, that they need protection *and* adventure, that they must learn how to adapt but also how to be critical and to resist, present policy is inadequate.

It appears from various well-documented observations that general child development conditions need attention: there are gaps in the formal and informal socio-educational network that should surround youth.

Young people themselves also claim that their development conditions are deteriorating: in a recent survey into their views of family and upbringing, a significant number of young people state that they are growing up in 'deprived upbringing conditions' (De Winter, 1998).

Striking the balance

The project team for the Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ) include in their recommendations that more attention is needed to development orientation within current local preventive youth policy. Youth policy should focus on the perceptions and situations of young people and aim at adjusting the conditions and offering alternatives and opportunities, so that they can develop in the best possible ways. Policy should target *all* young people.

Alongside that, preventive action remains necessary in respect of certain problems and risks young people might encounter. This type of youth policy is geared to the prevention of dropping out of mainstream careers (family, school, employment) and the reduction of risky behaviour e.g. relating to health or (road) safety.

■ This chapter is based on the researchers view, and also on two expert meetings about the future of youth and youth policy, and on policy documents.

The number of local authorities in the Netherlands concentrating on preventive youth policy has increased, which is partly due to the OLPJ project team. But it should be noticed here that development-oriented prevention is proportionally underrated.
The objective is to strike a balance and reach sound coherence between three types of preventive youth policy: problem-led prevention, risk-oriented prevention and development-based policy.
If this balance is found there will be sufficient attention for the needs of all young people as well as for the 10 to 15% of disadvantaged youth.

Development orientation is fully highlighted by the VWS Ministry as it appears from the OLPJ project team activities, and in the field of sports from those of the Youth in Motion project team (see section 3, chapter 4) and the national projects in the field of youth participation (see section 2, chapter 1). The development orientation is also important in the policy of the Ministry of OCW, for example in the measures to combat educational disadvantage (see section 3, chapter 3.12.1).

Reinforcement of the socio-educational infrastructure

The declared policy is also to be shaped in an improved and reinforced socio-educational infrastructure around young people and their families. This includes quantitatively and qualitatively sound basic provision (day care and out-of-school care) and parenting support. Also additional services for children and parents who need more attention should be available and accessible in basic provisions, such as development stimulation for children with educational disadvantage, and early support for children and families in trouble. These services are called 'basic-plus functions' and refer to actual government policy (the Ministries of VWS and the Interior) on reinforcement of the so-called 'social infrastructure' at the local level.

Back to socio-pedagogical education, care and leisure pursuits

But there is more: also 'opportunities' for young people to interact with others and participate in society must be enhanced, so that they learn to find their ways. Through participation and interaction children and youngsters get to know themselves and others, they discover rules, boundaries, (other) norms and values, they learn how to negotiate and to make choices. Mutual relationships with peers and especially with adults and the adults' world are crucial to this process. This requires enhancement of the *socio-educational role and quality* of education, child care and professional and volunteer youth work in leisure time, re-establishing contacts between youth and older local residents, and a fundamentally different approach to youth by authorities and organisations working with and for young people.

Improvement of inter-sector cooperation

Inter-sector cooperation is needed for the accommodation between service provision and young people's and parents' needs. In other words: inter-sector cooperation is a prerequisite for needs-led proceedings. Recent research shows increasing inter-sector cooperation between various local authority departments (such as those of welfare and education) and voluntary bodies in developing and implementing youth policy. Given the positive experiences, locally-based inter-sector cooperation can be expected to be expanded further in the years to come.
A new challenge is the alignment of local youth policy and provincial youth care.

Reduction of pressure on residential youth care provision

Over recent years, residential child and youth care services have been increasingly called upon. This being a heavy and expensive form of care, there are attempts to achieve its increasing load. In order to achieve this, it is important to pay attention to:

- more effectively accommodating care services and young people's and parents' needs.
- possibly using non-residential youth treatment alternatives, because help provided closest possible to the social environment (such as *families first*) proves the most successful.
- intensifying inter-sector cooperation between youth care services and bodies that are involved locally with preventive youth policy, because this is indispensable for achieving the above two policy objectives.

4.2 The governmental role in future policy

An important challenge for the years to come to central government and national bodies relevant to youth policy will be the facilitation at local and provincial level of an approach to young people and of a youth policy that meet the following conditions:

- *Needs-led*: service provision is matched to young people's wishes and needs.
- *Activating*: children and young people are no longer regarded as objects but as co-producers of youth policy and youth provisions.
- *Integrated*: compartmentalisation of sectors such as education, youth care and leisure should disappear in favour of more coherence between the various youth policy elements. In this context also explicit attention for the alignment between local and (translocal) regional youth policies is of great importance.
- *Pro-active*: policy that is not overtaken by events but based on up to date information about young people's situations and wishes, and on effective policy action.
- *Area-based*: Young people spend most of their time in their residential area. Youth services must outreach and be easily accessible to young people. This requires an area-based approach.

Over recent years the efforts of the VWS Ministry have mainly been directed at various administrative levels and relevant organisations to create support for such a policy conversion. At the same time organisational preconditions have been worked on, such as setting up Youth Care Offices (see section 2, chapter 6).

The facilitating role of the VWS Ministry

For further facilitation of this process the VWS Ministry is confronted with the challenge to operate the following functions and instruments:

- the creation of material conditions;
- changing of laws and regulations;
- support for the development of new initiatives and working methods;
- direct activation of young people;
- research and information service;
- international contacts (bilateral, Council of Europe and European Union);
- interdepartmental co-operation.

The creation of material conditions

Extra resources for youth provision are necessary in the coming years. Extra funds will be deployed for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the infrastructure of youth provision:

1 Expansion of child care provision in support of parents, and reinforcement of the socio-educational quality of these day care services.

2 Implementation of innovations within youth care provision.

Besides there are challenges like:

- further development of parenting and child development programmes.
- promoting youth participation at all levels of society, with special attention for participation of groups of vulnerable young people.
- activating youth work at local level which is geared to innovative initiatives and quality improvement.
- expansion of non-residential care towards a rather preventive and family-oriented approach and support for the frontline of youth problem prevention;
- development of curative youth care methods for early intervention to serious youth and family problems in or close to the young person's social environment;
- to meet aftercare needs.

It is important that the locally-based social infrastructures will be encouraged to improve so that the basis-plus function may be performed.

Changing of laws and regulations

Laws and regulations at national level can sometimes be an obstruction for the development of an effective youth-policy at local and regional level.
Therefore it is important that attention will be given to the question whether it is possible to change this kind of laws and regulations. In the following years the youth care act will be changed.

Substantial support

In recent years a youth policy innovation process has been set into motion at local level. Support is needed for the implementing organisations within this innovation process. In conjunction with the NIZW (Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare), the VNG (Association of Netherlands Municipalities) and other national support organisations, new working methods are being developed. Practitioners are being equipped through courses and training to implement these methods.
This had to be connected to the positive experiences with the innovation and dissemination of methods used in succesful earlier projects.
The basic model prescribes that innovative methods are developed and tested in a limited number of local pilot projects. The experiences in these projects can then be communicated to other municipalities through several channels (reports, newsletters, training, regional and national meetings). People involved in the pilot projects can play an active role in the dissemenation of experience and knowledge.
On national level there is also an information centre on youth policy which is a cooperative venture of the VNG, NIZW and SJN (Netherlands Youth Information Institute).

Involvement of young people

Youth participation will remain a spearhead of youth policy, also for the coming years. Obviously, social and political youth participation is mainly locally-based.
The VWS Ministry will directly and indirectly contribute to youth participation.
In the context of direct activation, the annual organisation of the national youth debate remains important (see for its description section 2, chapter 1). It is intended to have the preparatory initiatives for the coming youth debates locally supported in order to achieve a higher return.
In the context of indirect activation the national organisations for professional and voluntary community-based youth work have an important role. The local departments of these organisations can mobilise large numbers of young people.
In the years ahead the national youth organisations are challenged to increasingly focus on the facilitation of activities of local departments in the field of youth participation.

Research and information service

Identification of (national) developments and trends in young people is a key function of central government. This is carried out by institutes like:

- SCP (Social and Cultural Planning Office);
- CBS (Statistis Netherlands);
- the Interdepartmental Youth Research Committee (CJO);
- the Netherlands Youth Information Institute (SJN) with the Programming Board on Youth Research and Application (PCOJ);
- the Verwey Jonker Institute (VJI);
- the TNO/Prevention and Health Institute;
- WODC (Scientific Research and Documentation Centre of the Department of Justice).

The CJO will install a project group for a national monitoring system to be set up by the SCP (Social and Cultural Planning Office) and the CBS (Statistics Netherlands). Alignment with the local monitoring systems - as also being developed in the context of the Metropolitan Policy is important. The SJN and the PCOJ contribute to provincial and local authorities' access to information on youth and youth policy.
Active monitoring of international developments (EU, Council of Europe, OECD and the like) is also important to identify new developments.

Interdepartmental co-operation

Not only local government is compartmentalised; also inter-Ministry alignment leaves much to be desired. The OLPJ project team has established during its activities that from many Ministries (not only of VWS, also of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Justice, Education, Culture & Science, Social Affairs & Employment and Housing, Planning & Environment) a range of projects, experiments and accompanying platforms have been set up that are coterminous and sometimes overlapping.
The above Ministries acknowledge the necessity to promote integration and social cohesion by setting up comprehensive programmes for young people. But a coherent interdepartmental policy and common administrative instruments in this field are still lacking.

It's necessary that the succesful projects of recent years will be structural elements in youth policy for the years to come.

Effective central government contribution can further be enhanced if the authorities jointly realise solutions to youth policy issues, for which the way Netherlands Metropolitan Policy is implemented maybe can serve as a model.
The setting up of an interdepartmental Youth Steering Committee will facilitate this maybe.

Such a steering committee could have duties like:

- to encourage operating from one clear positive view on youth and youth policy;
- to show innovative initiatives to create a better social infrastructure for youth at local and national level;
- to monitor whether these initiatives yield the results aimed at, and to adjust if needed.

The above duties should be carried out according to a jointly planned and supported approach on behalf of the Ministries involved, under presidency of the VWS ministry. It is important for the Ministries involved to keep in touch directly with local and provincial developments, and with youth themselves.

Annex

Definitions of youth

Age limits in youth policy

Youth Policy in the Netherlands generally defines the age limits of 'youth' as: from birth to 25 years. In contrast to many surrounding countries young children (aged 0-12) are included in Dutch youth policies. Within the broad age range for children and youth a distinction is often made between:

- children of pre-school age (0-4);
- children of primary school age (4-12);
- youngsters/teenagers of age 12-18;
- adolescents/young adults of age 18-25.

Although youth policies are generally directed at young people up to 25 years old, some provisions for young people operate other age limits, such as that of legal adulthood (18 years) for services in the legal youth protection area and the age limit of 23 years in the area of voluntary youth care.

Legal age limits

From a legal point of view, there is not a single clear distinction between youth and maturity. Full adult status is reached in a number of steps.

12 At the age of 12 young people attain criminal liability: they can be prosecuted when they commit an offence.
Young people attain the right to be heard on certain decisions concerning their private lives, such as the choice which parent they want to live with after a divorce. Also a sexual relationship between an adult and a young person of 12 years or older is not prosecuted by the Public Prosecutor when the young person states that the relationship is on a voluntary basis.

15 Starting from the school year they have reached age 15 youngsters do not have to attend full-time education. They are allowed to enter the labour market on a part-time basis. They are, however, obliged to enrol in part-time education until they reach the age of 17.

16 Youngsters can enter into an employment contract without the consent of parents/legal guardians. Sexual relations between young people of 16 and older and adults are not illegal.

17 Young people are not obliged to attend any kind of education and can participate full-time in the labour market.

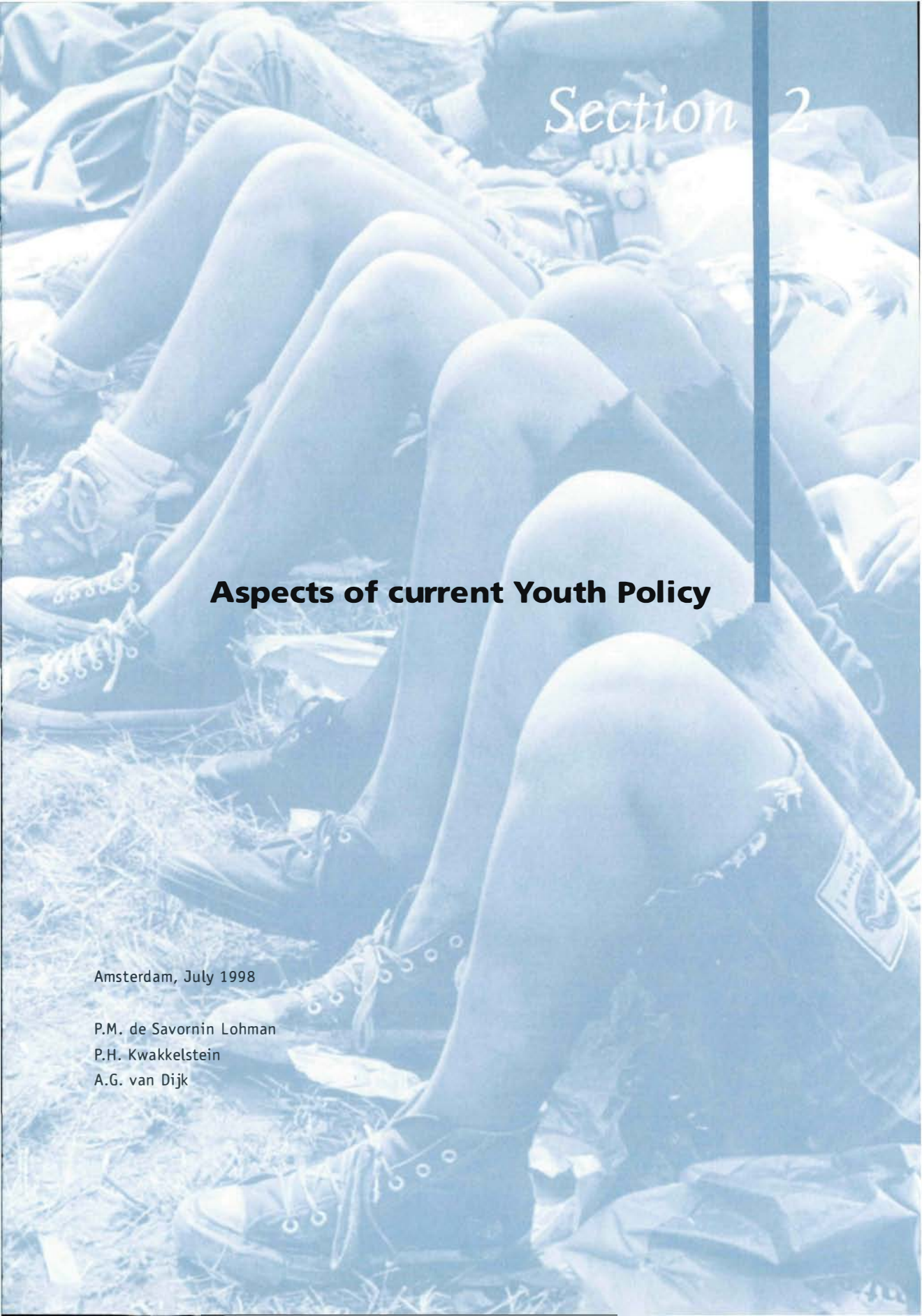
18 Young people legally become adults. They have the right to vote and to actively participate in politics. Parents/carers are no longer legally responsible for their children, but they do retain the responsibility for maintenance of their children.

21 Parents/carers are no longer responsible for the (financial) maintenance of their children.

23 Young people are entitled to minimum wages for adults.

27 Students are no longer entitled to financial aid for students.

For more information on the legal status and rights of children: see the report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, published by Defence for Children, The Netherlands (1998).



Section 2

Aspects of current Youth Policy

Amsterdam, July 1998

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Contents

Introduction to *Section 2*

This second section of the report deals with a selection of themes and issues currently relevant to Youth Policy in the Netherlands and to European Youth Policy developments. The themes presented do not cover the full range of activities and policy areas of central government's youth policy. On the other hand, some issues being discussed are not directly linked to present central policy priorities.

1 Youth participation

1.1 Introduction

Compared to earlier days young people know much earlier and better what goes on in society. They spend more time unsupervised by adults. Their more favourable financial position make them a key group of consumers in certain sectors of the commercial market (fashion, music, catering).
But can it be stated now that by these developments young people have acquired more solid positions in society? Has their participation in key social processes kept pace with this trend? An important question is how much impact the young generation has upon the 'adult world' that is their world as well.

A sharp generation

De Winter (1995) speaks of a 'sharp generation' currently growing up in the Netherlands: they are very well informed about what is going on in this world. But there is also a certain one-sidedness in the information young people obtain through numerous channels. They have insufficient social opportunities to apply acquired knowledge and information in practice and thus to collect new knowledge and experience related to the way people are associating, to democratic proceedings, to negotiation and respect of others' views and interests. Experimenting with these processes, according to de Winter, is not only important as regards their future citizenship as adults. If children are taught from early childhood on that they have a say and can participate in all things happening in their immediate living environment, they will develop an awareness of 'belonging', of being valued socially and of responsibility for and commitment to things happening around them. These are key conditions to developing good citizenship.
Nowadays young people, once matured, are expected to have acquired skills they were insufficiently able to practice in their childhood. And then they are frequently blamed: today's youth and young adults are alleged to hold inadequate morals, ignore social rules, be insufficiently interested in politics and be guided by their own interests and materialism.
This negative image of youth has contributed to policy and public debate focusing on social problems held and caused by youth.
This is passing over the possibility that the social climate today's youth grow up in might provide young people with insufficient opportunities to develop and manifest their positive abilities. It is children and young people's development of their 'social capital' that conceals their great future value for society. So far the account of de Winter.

Changing views of youth

Recent years show the tide turning in problem orientated ways of thinking about youth. Also owing to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, that entered into force in the Netherlands on 7 March 1995, more attention and support is emerging for youth participation as an important means to enhance young people's social ties with society, to activate them and to fashion a more positive, opportunity-led approach to them.

1.2 Brief history of youth participation in the Netherlands

It is not for the first time that the term 'youth participation' has been adopted by national youth policy. Also during the post-Second World War period (1945-1960), the late 1960s, and late 1970s / early 1980s this concept appeared in policy-documents. In each phase the concept was differently interpreted.

- In the post-war period emphasis was on 'enlightening' certain groups of 'de-railed' youth: to teach them in education what proper citizenship entails. The approach was top-down (imposed by government) and the approach to youth participation was problem-led, orientated to (re-)integration of perceived problem youth.
- The democratisation wave in the late 1960s triggered a fully new interpretation of youth participation. Paramount was the pursuit of a say for young people in political decision-making processes. The focus on youth participation emerged 'bottom up': it was the rebellious young people themselves (especially students) who demanded more influence. This movement has prompted government to adopt the promotion of youth councils (in municipalities, schools and universities) as one of the youth policy goals.
- In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a revival of the focus on youth participation. This was (fully in accordance with the spirit of the time) mainly viewed as a means to encourage young people's individual development and expression. Youth should be offered opportunities to elaborate on their own ideas, set up their own organisations and make their own choices.

In the mid 1980s youth policy was concentrating much stronger on problems of and from young people, and the issue of youth participation shifted to the background.

Renewed attention in the 1990s

From the beginning of the nineties new attention on youth participation was emerging in central policy. A number of developments were conducive to that.

- The new political line from the late 1980s and onwards, that highly stressed all citizens' own responsibility and strength to bring about quality of life in society and sound future prospects, could not neglect, of course, the group of young citizens. They too became subjects of activation and participation oriented policy.

- In 1995 the Netherlands ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, entailing the duty of drawing public attention to its contents.
- The Social Renewal policy that was introduced by central government in 1990 also gave an impetus to children and young people's participation by its emphasis on the self-advocacy of local residents. This included particularly their immediate living environment: their joining debates on planning and managing local youth provision, such as playing fields and haunts.
- Also the key issues of youth policy in the nineties, as stated in the Government Memorandum 'Youth Deserves the Future', were important factors in renewing attention to youth participation. Youth participation in that context is seen as an important instrument to enhance young people's ties with society and to challenge their own strengths.

Renewed attention to youth participation, for that matter, can be characterised as a 'movement' initiated by (central) government. This reflects the historical fact that the Netherlands does not have a strong tradition of involvement of youth in social and political affairs. With a few noticable exceptions, Dutch professional youth work and voluntary youth organisations traditionally have concentrated on the provision of recreational activities (play, sports, amateur art etc.) for young people in their leisure time. The basic orientation was to provide young people with their 'own' leisure facilities and activities, not to involve them in 'grown up' social and political affairs.

1.3 National policy and projects

1.3.1 National policy

In section 1 of this report it has been pointed out that youth participation is one of the key elements in today's national youth policy. Central government promotes youth participation in direct and indirect ways. Direct promotion occurs through the organisation of national media campaigns, the National Youth Debate and the Dutch Youth Award (see 1.3.2). Indirect promotion occurs through programmes supporting youth participation policy and activities at local level (see 1.4).

Central government regards youth participation as more than only passively 'taking part in' youth provision. Government wants to promote especially *active* participation of youth: *"Young people are given influence on and responsibility for their life sphere. Their age is taken into consideration and they are, step by step, being actively involved with organisations, activities and facilities in their immediate environment, namely family, education and leisure."* (VWS, 1998)

As examples of active participation are mentioned:

- membership of and active involvement with youth organisations, youth panels, school councils and the like;
- active involvement of youth with planning, operating and/or administrating youth services in the direct living environment, such as playgrounds, haunts, community centres and the like;
- political participation: participation in networks and organisations aiming at influencing government policy at central and/or local level (youth debates, youth councils etc.).

Active participation of young people requires efforts from themselves as well as from the organisations and authorities involved.
Passive participation (taking part in ...) is sometimes considered a stepping stone to more active forms of youth participation. From rather passive forms children and young people can be activated and guided to more active involvement. More emphasis on active youth participation should not legitimise cuts in more passive or consumer-based (leisure) youth provision.

In the past four years central and local efforts have been made to develop and operate an approach to young people that highlights their own strengths and responsibilities. But it is not plain sailing all the way. Besides resistance to youth participation from the system of the adult world, also a certain uneasiness with this issue is playing a role. One often does not know how to proceed in reaching and involving young people, how to communicate with them and how to handle points raised by them.
One of the instruments central government has deployed to promote the development of youth participation at the local level is its program on Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ), the activities of which are described in chapter 5 of this section.
Alongside that, various youth participation projects are being conducted at national level with state (VWS) support.

1.3.2 National projects

National campaign on Children's Rights

In compliance with obligations entered into from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the VWS Ministry waged a national information campaign in 1996 called 'Claim your rights by talking'. The campaign is targeting young people themselves but also local authorities and is encouraging them to inform children on their rights and duties.

National Youth Debate

On 20 November 1995 (also the international day of children's rights) the first National Youth Debate in the Netherlands was held. From then on the youth debate is annually repeated.

During the National Youth Debate a number of (100-200) young people in the age range of 10–18 enter debates with politicians and policy-makers.
On the agenda is a wide range of topics that are relevant to children and young people's interests, such as: education, safety, developing countries, environmental issues, etc. In a series of preparatory sessions with participating youth the agenda for the debate is set and proposals are prepared. Next, the collected proposals are further refined in an array of committees comprising one of the Ministers, various Members of Parliament and a number of young people. The outcome of all this is raised in the plenary debate, after which votes are taken on the proposals.
The second (1996) and third youth debate (1997) were of a similar format. In 1997 the youth debate was extended to include the regional level: prior to the national one, debates were held in each province between young people and one of the Ministers.
Proposals adopted in the past three youth debates are e.g.:

- there must be more safe playing fields for children;
- open access to sports and leisure provision for everyone;
- illegal (young) refugees should receive proper medical care;
- youth participation councils must be improved and modernised;
- the campaign against bullying at school must be improved and intensified;
- all schools must have access to the Internet;
- a national action programme must be made for youth participation.

Annual reports are made of the youth debates and circulated amongst Members of Parliament, the participants, youth organisations and youth workers all over the country.
The National Youth Debate in the Netherlands has been welcomed by young people themselves and by youth workers. It is regarded as an interesting way of establishing contacts and communication between youth and policy makers and politicians. Although there is no guarantee that proposals adopted by the participants in the youth debates will actually be carried out, several proposals are in the course of realisation.

Dutch Youth Award

In 1996 the Dutch Youth Award was founded to be granted annually, attached to the National Youth Debate. The award is devised to encourage children aged 6-18 in taking initiatives to improve the quality of their lives. Young people can submit project plans that are judged by a jury. The winning plans are awarded a grant for carrying out the plan.

1.3.3 National youth organisations

The Netherlands has a considerable number of national youth organisations, representing networks of locally-based voluntary youth organisations.
The more traditional organisations (often originated in the 1950s) are based around certain ideological or idealistic goals, religious identity, or certain leisure pursuits. There are also politically oriented youth organisations, such as youth sections of trade unions and major political parties and youth organisations that occupy themselves with the environment and the developing countries.

Finally, the pupils' and students' organisations can be mentioned, concerned with promotion of interests (trade union-like) as well as with political participation.
In 1996 many of the youth organisations have joined in a national umbrella-organisation called the Dutch Youth Group (NJG). This organisation supports the voluntary youth organisations at central and local level. It promotes innovation and improves quality through various projects. See chapter 3 in this section for more information on these organisations.

Many of the traditional youth organisations are initiated and managed by adults and concentrate on the provision and support of leisure activities for children and young people. These organisations are now becoming more attentive to active participation of youth in the policies and management of the organisation.
In recent years a number of new youth organisations have developed, that are initiated and managed by young people themselves. These organisations are more explicitly oriented towards the promotion of active participation of young people in 'adult' social and political affairs.
The most important ones are:

- *LAKS* – a national action committee on the promotion of youth participation in schools. The LAKS stimulates setting up pupils' councils at schools. It has prepared legislation on this subject, which was ratified by Parliament.
- *The Netherlands Committee on Multilateral Youth Work '31'* is aiming at the participation of young people and youth organisations in international fora where youth policy is on the agenda. They operate also in the Council of Europe, the UN and UNESCO.
- *National Youth Council on Environmental Health and Development* (NJMO) was founded following the 1992 UNCTED conference in order to set a debate in motion between government and youth on environmental policy and a sustainable society. The NJMO organises in that context numerous youth participation projects.
- *Codename Future*, finally, has derived from the NJMO in order to stimulate youth still at school to devise solutions for (environmental) issues in their immediate surroundings.

1.4 Youth participation at local level

Central government stimulates local authorities to concentrate on locally-based youth participation. One of its instruments is the projectteam on the Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ, see chapter 5 in this section). In the context of local preventive youth policy youth participation is regarded as one of the managing instruments local authorities may deploy in order to fashion local preventive youth policy.

In these local forms of preventive youth policy its key objectives are often summarised into the three Ps: Prevention, Participation and Prospect.

Youth participation: goal and means in local youth policy

Youth participation at local level aims at enhancing the commitment of children and young people's to the local community. To under-12s the direct social environment is paramount, whilst teenagers and young adults have wider commitments. Participation of children and young people can be manifested in various ways:

- their joining in discussions and thinking on local (youth) policy;
- their joining in the control or administration of (youth) facilities;
- their joining in implementing policy measures;
- their inventing and realising projects and measures to improve their own living conditions.

The core concept is that local authorities and local organisations concerned with young people must learn to take them seriously and to approach them as partners in processes of preparing policy, implementation and administration. Participation of young people in local social and political affairs heightens their commitment to and bonding with (local) society and provides them with non-formal training in citizenship.

Youth participation not only has favourable effects on young people themselves. Other parties involved - local government and organisations working with youth – may take advantage from enhanced communication with youth. It allows for improving the quality of policies and responds to a client-centered and needs-led approach on the part of authorities and (youth) organisations.

State of the art at local level

The term youth participation provides a positive outlook on youth and has a high social desirability value. Hence, many Dutch local authorities warmly welcome the notion.

Over the past few years in various local authorities a range of activities have been developed in the area of youth participation. The role played by the local authorities may vary from initiator or implementor to a role in the background as a facilitator or co-ordinator. In many cases youth work, education and, of course, young people themselves play leading parts in designing and executing activities.

Some examples of local activities are:

- youth media: e.g. publishing a special youth paper to inform youth on youth-related matters - one Dutch city (Almere) has a special youth radio channel;
- organising competitions or youth conferences to find out the wishes and ideas of young people;
- setting up a youth forum or council to advice local government on all youth-related affairs.

It is still hard to implement youth participation in a practice-based operable way.

A national inventory study into local authorities (DSP, 1996) suggests that over one-third of local authorities do not or hardly focus on youth participation. In about half of local authorities activities in terms of youth participation do take place, but are occasional and show little coherence. Some 10 per cent of local authorities (taking the lead) shape youth participation within the municipality in a more structured way.
A substantial proportion of local authorities in this survey did report they were becoming more active in the field of youth participation. Follow up research to be conducted in 1998 is to clarify whether local authorities are making progress in this area.

Instructive experience from the pilot municipalities

Current (OLPJ-related) experiments in eight pilot municipalities with structured ways of shaping youth participation within the local community show this process of working on youth participation to be a matter of trial and error. Bottlenecks and obstacles local authorities frequently come across:

- Taking youth seriously and communicating directly with children and young people require new ways of thinking and place demands on the internal organisation and the communication skills of administrators and officials.
  It is, certainly to young people, important that the agencies and authorities addressed by them respond rapidly and clearly to expressed wishes and needs. But the red tape reports machine of local government is often slow and external communication on internal decision-making is not always very accessible. Its consequence is that children and young people become disappointed and switch off: they begin to feel that joining the discussion is no use.
- Young people's own questions, wishes and needs do not confine themselves to youth services and policy in the narrow sense. If young people are given the floor, other issues will be raised such as environmental health, the combat of racism and discrimination, road safety, criminality, planning and quality of life in the living environment, the position of pupils in education and public transport. In many Dutch local Councils youth participation is part of the portfolio of the welfare department. Due to the still existing sectoral compartmentalisation in many local authorities welfare officials can exert only limited influence on policies in other sectors.
  'Taking young people seriously' actually requires inter-sector co-operation within local authorities, which is still underdeveloped in many towns.
- Another, more material, bottleneck is the risk of reaching only the privileged, socially independent (higher educated) and not – or only partly - those at a higher risk of dropping out. Although youth participation should be part of general youth policy, it is especially important that young people somewhat 'at a distance' from society and local government (especially ethnic minority youth) be reached and involved. If these groups are not involved, youth participation would overshoot the mark.

Hence, local authorities are in need of knowledge of methodologies and measures related to 'youth at risk': how can they involve them in the local community and municipal policy?

1.5 Cross-border youth participation / youth exchange

The Netherlands, being a small trading country, traditionally has a strong international orientation. All Dutch children are taught modern languages (English, French, German) in secundary education and for most children it is normal to travel abroad during their holidays. This could explain why concepts like 'internationalisation' and 'European citizenship' are not high on the (youth) agenda: having an international orientation is for most youth a normal part of growing up in the Netherlands.

Since 1988 youth exchanges take place in the context of the 'Youth for Europe' programme in the European Union. This involves group exchanges for and by young people in the age range of 15-25, organised from youth centres and community centres.
NIZW International Centre (former Exis, a department in the Netherlands Institute of Care and Welfare), also acting as the Dutch national agency for 'Youth for Europe', supports and encourages these exchanges.
The exchange programmes have particularly been set up for young people who have little or no chance - due to their social, economic or physical circumstances - to benefit from the increasing mobility facilities on offer, now that the European internal borders have been relinquished. Exchange programmes provide these young people with the opportunity of visiting a group of young people in one of the EU member states for 1 to 3 weeks and to host such a foreign group in their own country. Their active participation and own responsibility during the whole process of exchange – from preparation to evaluation – constitute a key principle of the exchanges.
Recent research into the quality and outcome of these youth exchanges (Mudde, 1995) shows that the exchanges exceed the expectations of young participants and their support workers. Contacts between young people from the various countries are rapidly established and often develop into close ties. Young people also prove very capable – and more so than their support workers – at dealing with language barriers, by using other than verbal ways of communication.
But the envisaged *participation* and own responsibility of youth during the preparation and operation of the exchange do not go without saying. The extent of young people's participation varies across projects and depends on supporters' preparedness to hand over responsibility to them. The young people themselves prefer support workers who are present in the background to call on if need be. It also appears that young people start to participate in a more active way if they more often join exchanges.

They note themselves that the exchanges produce e.g.: enhanced awareness of your own culture and social environment, more self-confidence and independence, more understanding of others. A large proportion of young participants state that the exchange impacts on their future development.
Participation in youth exchanges is demonstrably conducive to young people's awareness and personal development. Young people show on all points a more open mind-set and improved social and communication skills owing to an informal, inter-cultural learning process.
The report recommends future extension of the number of youth exchanges. Extra attention should be focused here upon local embedding of the exchanges and reaching the genuinely disadvantaged groups. This objective is not yet really being met.

1.6 Young people's input within (youth) institutions

Juveniles in residential care homes are a vulnerable group as far as their legal position is concerned. That is why over recent years measures have been taken to consolidate the legal status of this group. In 1996 the right to co-determination of service users in youth care and children under guardianship was statutorily laid down and the right of complaint in child care and protection services was extended to the sectors of day care and field social work. Furthermore, a bill is being prepared in order comprehensively to settle the legal position of young people staying in judicial institutions.

1.7 Conclusions

Local developments

In summary it can be stated that currently in the Netherlands there is a growing interest in and a positive attitude towards youth participation.
But practice is more rigid, due to bottlenecks and obstacles that cannot easily be removed. Particularly certain aspects of the government system, such as compartmentalisation of local authorities and the gap between young citizens and local authorities, are factors that will only change slowly. Youth participation could play a catalysing role in this kind of change processes.
Many local authorities, too, still lack knowledge of working methods and examples of good practice, particularly geared to involving 'youth at risk'.
The lack of a national tradition of youth involvement in 'adult' social and political affairs also plays a role here.

Vision and approach

On the basis of recent experiences in Dutch municipalities it can be established that youth participation can be instrumental in helping local authorities and local organisations to tailor their activities to young people's social environments, wishes and needs (quality improvement by a needs-led approach). Youth participation in this context plays a role as a new coordinating instrument for local councils and organisations involved with youth. On the other hand it can be stated that a more positive 'developmental approach' to youth participation is still underdeveloped. In the near future the question of what youth participation should mean to young people themselves should receive more attention at local level.

Reach and scope

Compared to many other European countries Dutch youth have a long standing tradition of *international* youth participation and exchange. Many Dutch children and youngsters are used to going abroad during their holidays and participation of Dutch youth in international exchange programs is relatively high. This probably explains why themes like 'internationalisation' and European citizenship are not high on the Dutch youth agenda. The number of children and young people currently involved with (more or less formal) types of *local, regional or national* youth participation is however limited. For youth participation to trigger the envisaged effects it should be allocated a more central place in local youth policy and in relevant organisations' programming (youth services, schools) than currently is the case.

Young people who are more 'distanced' from (local) society especially deserve more attention. For this group youth participation must not only be deployed as a preventive instrument to anticipate trouble. Youth participation should be a new and more positive way of repairing contact between the system world and these young people and creating new opportunities for them to develop their distinct individual or group profiles in a positive way.

2 Youth information

Youth information starts from the needs, interests and questions of young people themselves and aims to show them the way in our complex society. Providing young people with information at the right moment enables them to take informed choices.
In 1988 youth information became one of the priorities in Dutch youth policy. In recent years central government's involvement with youth information has diminished. Local government and national organisations, and especially the Netherlands Youth Information Foundation (SJN), are the core agents in this area.

2.1 Introduction

In the mid 1980s the term 'youth information' turned up in international debate on youth policy. Policy-makers and practitioners rapidly started to develop this notion in the Netherlands. Since 1990 a number of reports were issued with evidence on youth information.

Brief previous history

In 1985, the International Year of Young People, and in 1986 at an international conference of civil servants, the first seeds were sown of the Dutch youth information policy. Its first concrete outcome was the youth information guide "16 or so", that was issued for the first time in 1987 and has been updated several times since.
The term 'youth information' was a convenient rubric for policy-makers and practitioners under which they could shape their modern youth approach in a more present-day fashion. The policy change can best be characterised as further phasing out paternalising interference of adults with youth and enhancing a more neutral informing approach based on freedom of choice and young people's own responsibility for choices made or to be taken. It is presumed that youth information also has preventive effects: appropriate information can prevent the problems young people experience in the process of growing up.

Central government policy

In the late 1980s Dutch central government funded various projects in the field of youth information. In contrast to a number of other European countries – but in accordance with the Dutch decentralisation policy – central government is not prepared to create new local or regional services for youth information[8]. Youth information should be further developed within the infrastructure of existing youth services.

Youth information is seen as an instrument for developing out of these services a new way of monitoring youth and their own youth interventions.
A first step in that direction was taken by making an inventory of what was already being done by current services in the field of youth information. It appeared from this survey (v.d. Linden, 1989 and 1992) that many services were already concentrating on youth information[9] and that, despite this variety of providers, there was ever less fragmentation in youth information than was previously assumed. Many agents were already networking (co-operating and aligning).
The providers survey was followed by an extensive service users research (v.d. Linden, 1993) including 660 young interviewees. This demonstrated that the majority of young people are able to find the information they need. For the remainder of them (20% of troubled youth and youth at risk)
youth information does not work or is even counterproductive: if information was 'urged on them' their response would be contrary. Providing neutral information proved to be insufficient for this group: they need additional advice and support.

Facilities

Many organisations provide, as part of their activities, information for young people and/or their parents. In addition a number of facilities exclusively concentrate on the provision of information and advice to youth. The most important ones are:

— *Child helplines*
Children can call the child helplines (anonymously) to ask for information or to discuss their problems. The childline answers questions and refers children to other youth facilities. Childlines came into existence in 1979. At present some 30 (regional) childlines exist. Most of the childlines are run by trained volunteers. They are funded by provincial authorities and by private funds and donations.

— *Education line*
This is a national information line for children where they can obtain information, advice and support on a wide range of subjects concerning education. The education line is run by the APS and funded by the Minstry of OC&W.

— *Youth Advice Centres (JACs)*
These are locally-based centres providing information, advice and practical support for youngsters. In the seventies the JACs were initiated as a (critical) alternative to the traditional youth care and child protection system. Amongst others they were involved with helping young runaways and young psychiatric ex-patients. Nowadays most JACs are integrated in the local network of preventive youth provision. They receive limited local funding, and are mainly run by trained volunteers.

— *Youth Information Points (JIPs)*
See point 2.2 (below) for more information.

In addition, several national organisations support the development of youth information in the Netherlands (see 2.2 below).

2.2 Recent developments

Youth Information Points (JIPs)

In ever more Dutch municipalities local government and/or youth workers are setting up Youth information Points (JIPs). At the end of 1997 over 150 JIPs have been realised. The JIPs provide information and advice - easily accessible to youth – on a wide range of affairs relevant to young people. They cater for the age range of 12-25. Within JIPs often a large number of organisations are co-operating, such as libraries, schools, youth services, social consultancies and child care. Moreover, regional and regional networks of JIPs are developing.

There is a wide variety of approaches:

- some JIPs have created facilities for young people to compile information themselves, such as youth newspapers;
- in some JIPs young people are being involved in the provision of information;
- a number of JIPs also actively disseminate information amongst young people who do not call in, e.g. by spreading information via intermediaries;
- there are also mobile JIPs: youth information busses for rural areas.

In terms of type of organisation too JIPs are pluriform and varied:

- JIPs may be part of a welfare or youth service, of a school or (youth) library[10];
- some major municipalities have set up several small area based JIPs in addition to a JIP in the city centre.

Support and development

The development of youth information services is supported nationally by various organisations.

The Netherlands Youth Information Foundation (SJN), which collects, processes and disseminates youth information, holds a key position in this field. Alongside that, provincial support organisations are increasingly operating in this field. Additionally, there is a National Steering Group on Youth Information (since 1992) aiming at co-operation and mutual accommodation of the various regional youth information networks.

Youth information and new media

Young people grow up with new media such as the CD-ROM, CD-I, Infoprinter and digital networks, including the Internet. Hence, it is obvious that JIPs adopt these media, and that traditionally provided (mostly written) information increasingly makes room for digital information services. Some JIPs in the Netherlands have made a start with that. A Utrecht project shows that the presence of new media attracts also young people who otherwise would not easily enter a JIP (disadvantaged youth).

The Netherlands Youth Information Foundation (SJN) has developed an internet site for young people (DWiNK), where young people are invited to discuss youth policy plans and other issues of interest to them.

2.3 Youth information, youth participation and local preventive youth policy

There is a logical connection between youth information and local preventive youth policy. Youth information is to be considered part of *general* preventive policy: providing young people at the right moment with sound information or proper advice may stop them from overlooking opportunities or may keep their problems from escalating.
Apart from that, youth information is a prerequisite for *youth participation.* Active involvement of young people with processes in their social environment and/or developments in local policy and politics presupposes that young people are properly informed on local authority proceedings, organisations or agencies to be addressed and avenues by which influence can be exercised.
For local authorities this implies they have to learn how to communicate in a way that fits in with youth. Awareness is growing in local authorities that they are to make extra efforts in this area. E.g. some of them have a special 'youth version' made of their youth policy statement. Also in other ways, such as holding youth conferences or roundtables of youth and local politicians, local authorities help set into motion and deepen the dialogue between young people and local government.
A third possible connection between youth information and local youth policy is JIPs' information service to local government and local (youth) services on the questions, wishes and needs of young people. The JIPs may focus the attention of other locally involved actors upon new developments. It is not yet clear if this service is already being fully used at local level.
At this moment JIPs are developing towards local transfer points for and about young people. Local organisations feel the need for better co-operation between all sectors of work with young people; they want to know which problems occur and how they can be prevented.

2.4 Conclusion

At this moment youth information has no priority in central government youth policy. The policy intentions formulated in the eighties - to stimulate the development of the function of youth information within the existing infrastructure of youth organisations - have been achieved.
Central government involvement is accordingly limited to the (financial) underpinning for the national infrastructure for support and development of youth information (SJN).

3 Voluntary youth work

For over a century the Netherlands has had a widely varied range of privately initiated youth organisations that are still of a strongly 'private and voluntary nature' and fully, or for the most part, run by volunteers[11].
In order properly to distinguish this type of youth work from that of professional state funded organisations for children and young people, it is also termed 'autonomous' or 'volunteer' youth work.

3.1 History[12]

Origin

The basis of current volunteer youth work lies at the beginning of this century. In the previous century youth interventions were almost exclusively directed at charity care of orphans and vagrant and neglected children.
The end of the ninetieth century sees (partly owing to the industrialisation) a different attitude towards children and childhood.
This led to the foundation of playgrounds "... fenced-in gardens ... where children of the people - properly supervised in extracurricular hours - can enjoy themselves with games that both provide pleasant relaxation and sound physical training ...".
Despite the patronising tone towards children of 'the people' this also shows acknowledgement of the child's own identity and preparedness to protect children from pre-maturely entering the adults' world.
Around the turn of the century, alongside this, youth movements of a particular idealistic or ideological identity emerged in various European countries. Participants in this type of movement tended to be higher educated young people (students) walking and singing together and discussing a better world.
A third moving force to the emerging youth work has been the civilisation offensive: the education of young people by 'Christian virtues'.

Identity organisations

Although these organisations were termed *youth* organisations, they were erected and administrated by adults. Many organisations were actually youth branches of 'mother organisations', such as churches, political parties and idealistic movements. These youth organisations made for access to the adults organisation and internal missionary work was a major objective.

Apart from the transmission of values and norms, in a number of organisations emancipation of certain groups of the population (working class children, rural youth) was an important objective.
Also in the field of youth work - certainly in the pre-Second World War period - the denominationalism became clearly visible that is so characteristic of the Netherlands: there were separate organisations for Catholic, Protestant, liberal, social democratic and Marxist youth.
An exception was the scouting movement adopted from England: this a-political non-denominational youth organisation had primarily a clear aim of general education. By offering adventure to young people and, in addition, by teaching them all kinds of practical skills, it was hoped that young people would be brought up to be autonomous citizens. The methodology of scouting held a wide attraction and, hence, much of youth work in the first half of the twentieth century showed elements of this way of working.

Blossom period and turning of the tide

Youth work was flourishing between the two world wars and in the first years after World War II. During the best years a quarter of young Dutch were members of youth organisations.
In the 1960s the tide was turning; organised youth work had to compete with numerous other leisure pursuits on commercial offer or organised by the state-funded socio-cultural work.
Alongside that, secularisation and de-compartmentalisation in Dutch society started to affect youth work.
Hence, during the 1960s and 1970s, the structure of youth work changed incisively. A number of traditional organisations disappeared, others merged into larger, less identity-based organisations, and new youth organisations emerged, such as the organisations for young workers that connected with the trade unions.
The segregation of the sexes, as operated before the sixties in almost all youth work, was removed in nearly all organisations.

3.2 The present situation

The Netherlands still has a large number of youth organisations that for the main part are regionally, locally or area-based. Within the structure of current youth work the grassroots are clearly paramount: the basis is regional and local activity. Alongside that, there are a restricted number of national youth associations that make mainly facilitating contributions at local and regional level. Core duties of the national associations are: improving skills, developing methodologies and clerical and administrative support.

Nationwide co-operation

Since 1996 there is a branch organisation for youth work: the Netherlands Youth Group (NJG). The NJG foster the interests of organised volunteer youth work themselves concerned to develop projects on the encouragement of diversity and quality of youth work. The total number of children and youth covered by NJG affiliated organisations is estimated as 1 million (about 20% of the total youth population) who are supported by approx. 200,000 volunteers. The latter receive in turn support from a limited number of professionals.

Types of organisations

Within the existing network of youth organisations, a rough distinction can be made between five types of organisation:

- Philosophy-based and religious organisations
  Most of these organisations are directly related to a religious denomination. In addition, there are evangelical clubs particularly catering for non-Church young people (e.g. Youth for Christ).
- Interest organisations
  These include the youth departments of trade unions and organisations e.g. of rural young people, ethnic minority youth, students and young disabled. Their binding agent is a commonly felt interest, problem and/or political orientation.
- Political organisations
  These include youth departments of the main national political parties and a number of politically oriented youth organisations organised around themes like the environment, anti-racism etc.
- Play and interest organisations
  They include organisations offering certain methodologies in the field of sports, games, creativity and outdoor activities (such as Scouting) and organisations catering for certain areas of interest such as the study of nature, history, archaeology, technology, etc.
- Aid organisations
  An example of which being the Youth Red Cross.

Type of activities

The youth organisations provide through their members the following kinds of services:

- care of toddlers and children
- out-of-school care
- creative and cultural education
- emancipation training
- social skills training
- independent living support
- physical and sports education.

Not only participating children and youth benefit from youth work activities. Youth work activities are often designed to improve social conditions or to help local residents, which is a form of direct community participation on the part of young members themselves. Also to volunteers who take the lead in activities, their youth work involvement is meaningful in various respects. They learn how to manage, organise and communicate. This is partly an informal learning process but also a formal one through specific middle management training. Volunteer work might positively impact on someone's opportunities in the labour market. Unemployed volunteers derive social status and self-esteem from it. Many volunteers are (young) adults who used to join youth work activities in their childhood themselves.

3.3 Youth work funding

Funding of local bodies

Local youth work organisations are financed for a large part (some 40%) from young members' own funds. In addition, resources are obtained from activities (35%) and from grants from governments, foundations and companies (25%). It appears from research that the relatively small state grants are yet of great interest, because young participants' own contributions can thus be reduced to reasonable and accessible levels.

National funding

For several years the VWS Ministry has funded national youth work organisations through a combined granting system consisting of an establishment element (for apparatus cost) and a project element to be obtained by submitting plans. These plans must meet prescribed VWS criteria. They must be innovative and of a national nature or impact. Grants are also available for projects on the prevention of dropping-out and the encouragement of youth participation. Under this system a number of projects have been developed by the national youth work system to reach and integrate specific groups of young people, such as: young asylum-seekers, ethnic minority youth, young disabled and young offenders.
Political youth organisations (i.e. youth departments of national political parties) are funded by the Ministry of the Interior.

4 Child care, parenting support and educational support

In the Netherlands a wide variety of organisations provide support for parents in their care for children. The key provisions are:

- Child care services providing day care (0-4-year olds) and out-of-school care (4 and up) for the children of parents who are working or studying.
- Parenting support: activities directed at parents and families (parents and children) to enhance parenting skills. In addition to general parenting support provisions there are special programmes and projects targeted at families that experience specific problems in raising their children.
- Educational support: programmes aimed at young children (2-6 year olds) that enter primary school with educational disadvantages and/or children who are at risk of doing so.

The VWS Ministry is responsible for policy and provision in the fields of child care and parenting support. Educational support aimes at preventing and combatting early educational disadvantages, and thus is linked to educational policy, for which the OC&W Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences is primarily responsible[13].

In practice at local level many programmes offer a combination of parenting and educational support, and the distinction between those two kinds of support is often somewhat artificial.

4.1 Child care

Facilities

The main child care facilities in the Netherlands are: nurseries/creches (0-4 year olds), host parent projects and out-of-school facilities for 4-12 year olds.

In addition to this most municipalities (i.e. local welfare services) offer area based play-groups for little children (2-4 year olds). These provisions are not targeted at working/ studying parents and their opening hours are limited to a few hours a day. These play-groups do offer a meeting place for non-working parents of young children, and play a role in combatting social isolation of families with young children.

Alongside formally acknowledged child care provision, parents make use of various rather informal forms of child care. Recent research (Groot and Maassen van de Brink, 1996) indicates that child care belongs mostly to the informal sphere: 58 per cent of parents have arranged for unpaid sitting and 25 per cent make use of paid sitters. An estimated 165,000 people in 1991 were involved with child care, paid or unpaid (Pelzer and Miedema, 1992).

This number - given the increase in labour participation by women - is expected to have increased over recent years.

As regards the availability and regulation of general child care provision, the Netherlands has been lagging behind other European countries for years. Partly due to increased (aspiration for) labour participation by women, central government were put under pressure in the 1980s to conduct a more active policy on child care provision.

Child care Incentive Scheme

In 1990 the first (central) Child care Incentive Scheme was enacted by the Ministry of VWS. This scheme aimed at a marked expansion of the existing capacity of child care facilities. Within 4 years the existing volume of child care places (then about 20,000) was to be expanded by 49,000 places for children of women who were studying and/or (re-)entering the labour market.

The following facilities are included in the scheme:

- nurseries/creches (day care and half-time care for 0-4 year olds);
- host parent projects (care within homes of hosting parents);
- out-of-school care (for children aged 4-12).

Playgroups are not included in the scheme, since they do not target at working/studying parents.

A basic principle in the scheme is that the upkeep and extension of child care facilities is a shared responsibility of government, parents and employers - also financially. The incentive scheme entailed in practice that a government grant was attached to each new child care placement, to be paid to the organisation 'renting' the child care place (i.e. local government or employers). In the long run two-thirds of the places are to be financed by employers. Parents using the child care facilities pay a wage-dependent contribution to either their employer or local government.

At the end of 1993 the incentive policy goals set have been amply achieved:

- the number of child care places had increased to about 68,000 places (and is steadily increasing since),
- and in 75 per cent of Dutch municipalities child care facilities have been set up, financed by the three targeted funding streams (government, parents and employers).

Decentralisation

By 1 January 1996 central responsibility for the general child care facilities was transferred to local authorities and adopted in the Welfare Act. At the same time 17 per cent was cut from the national budget for child care facilities. The remaining 83% of the national budget was paid as a lump sum to local authorities, meaning that they are free to decide how to spend this money. At the same time tax measures were introduced, that allow companies to tax deduct 20% of their expenditure on child care for their employees.

The consequences of this decentralisation were monitored and evaluated by the VWS Ministry. The most important outcomes are:

- After decentralisation local authorities have maintained their efforts in this field. In 1996 a further growth of 5,000 child care places was achieved, mainly owing to a further increase in the number of employer-financed places.
- In 1996 national government has payed 41 million guilders (19 million ECU) to companies in tax rebates for their expenditure on child care for their employees.

It appears from these data that the policy of expansion of child care facilities set in motion by national government did not suffer from decentralisation to local authorities.

Persistent shortages

Despite considerable expansion of child care capacity there is still a shortage of child care vacancies. The estimated demand in the near future includes a need for at least 30,000 extra places for under-4s. Alongside that, there is a considerable demand for extracurricular care of school-age children (out-of-school care). This includes not just primary school pupils (4-12 years of age), but also secondary school pupils (13-17 years of age). Up to now, out-of-school care has hardly been addressed in the Netherlands.

Incentive Policy for out-of-school care

In 1997 the Ministry of VWS has launched an incentive scheme for out-of-school child care (4-12 year olds). The goal of this policy is to expand these facilities by 26,000 places (totalling 41,000 places) before the end of the year 2000. With this operation a budget of 224 million guilders (110 million ECU) is involved. The working principle is similar to that of the Child care Incentive Scheme.

Quality of child care

During child care expansion at the beginning of the nineties a burst of public debate on child care quality ensued. It was feared that rapid growth in the sector would be at the expense of care quality.

Decentralisation of child care to local authorities (1996) further evoked discussion as to how and on which level the quality of child care should be established and monitored. The fact that child care is a relatively new sector and very much in development further complicated this matter.

After ample debate national government has decided to implement a national standard for child care quality for a period of 5 years by means of national regulations binding on all provincial and local authorities (General Administrative Measure). This measure came into force by 1 January 1996. In the meantime a quality system is under construction, enabling local parties involved to regulate child care quality themselves.

4.2 Parenting support

The VWS Ministry regards appropriate, locally-based parenting support for parents of young children as an indispensable part of preventive youth policy. In the early 1990s it was established that the Netherlands sees numerous initiatives, organisations, projects and measures aiming at support for parents in their child-raising duties, e.g.:

- child health care services, play groups and primary schools - they reach almost 100 per cent of young children;
- nurseries/creches, out-of-school care, family social workers, youth welfare workers and home care services that reach a considerable part of the population;
- youth care provision and services for child protection that have contacts with problematic youth and their families.

For most of these organisations the provision of parenting support is not their core-business. Moreover, in most municipalities the offer of parenting support services is not co-ordinated. From the perspective of the client it is unclear what services the various organisations provide and who they should turn to with their questions and problems. Government, hence, holds the view that these conditions are in need of change. In 1991 the then WVC (Welfare, Health and Culture) Ministry formulated two starting points for parenting support:

- parenting support must be directed at enhancing parents' and children's own - potential and active involvement - instead of making them dependent on facilities and services;
- parenting support should respond to the culture and specific questions of parents (client-centred approach).

In short central government advocates a coherent, incentive and client-centred approach, starting from parents' own problem-solving capacity.

Parenting support experiments

In 1994 a national 'parenting support pilot project' was initiated. The objective of the project was - by means of seven locally-based experiments - to obtain insight into:

- the provision that should be made;
- the administrative conditions required to bring about such appropriate facilities;
- the conditions for these to be realised nationwide.

The parenting support concept that has been elaborated in the seven experiments is a good example of an innovative and comprehensive approach. The assignment to highlight the wishes and needs of parents requires a radical change in professional thinking; instead of the worker who used to know what is best for the family it is now the parent who is primarily considered the expert. The assignment to develop coherent and recognisable facilities requires the agencies involved to look beyond their own facilities and interests and to be prepared to collaborate and align with other agencies they had no contact or were competing with before.

The experiments have been extensively monitored and evaluated.
The evaluation study of the seven experiments clearly indicates that it is possible to enhance the quality of parenting support services through intensified co-ordination and co-operation (networking) between existing services in this field. Client satisfaction was enhanced by improving the client orientation of the services provided (tailoring). Clients' knowledge of the available services and clients' use of these services improved as well during the experimental period.

4.3 Support for children with educational disadvantages

Step in - step on - step up - step over

Since 1988 projects exist that cater for young children at risk of entering primary education with educational disadvantages.
Many projects concentrate particularly on children of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillian backgrounds in a range of subsequent 'stepping stone' family programmes for:

- 0-2-year-olds and their parents (*Instapje* - step in),
- 2-4-year-olds and their parents (*Opstapje* - step on),
- 4-6-year-olds (*Opstap* - step up)
- and 6-7-year-olds (*Overstap* - step over).

The latter two 'springboard' programmes are directly linked to primary education. The objectives of these projects are prevention of educational disadvantage, preparation for Dutch primary education and, subsequently, enhancement of the position of these children in the first phase of primary education. A family-oriented approach tries to reinforce supportive behaviour on the part of the parents. The projects are financed partly by the state and partly by local authorities, mostly as elements of local educational priority policy (OVB, now GOA - also see section 3, chapter 3).

4.4 Support for children and families at risk

Although the extent and quality of parenting and educational support has risen considerably over recent years, evaluation studies and reports from experts in this field indicate that the existing support facilities do not sufficiently tackle the problems of children whose emotional, social and cognitive development is seriously at risk. It appears that the groups that are most in need of the facilities are reached only piecemeal.
Moreover, the effects from interventions vis-à-vis more serious problem families and disadvantaged children are often disappointing - certainly in the longer term. It is hard to improve structurally the parenting practises and to mitigate the educational disadvantages of children from these families.

Involvement of other Ministries

In recent years other Ministries, i.e. the Ministries of OC&W , Interior and Justice, have taken a more active interest in this subject and have devised policies and programmes targeted at disadvantaged young children and their families.

- In its National Programme 'Life long learning' the OC&W Ministry state that the social and cognitive development of young children is of great importance to their ability to learn and develop themselves in the years to come. In early childhood the foundation is laid for employability in later life. Hence, part of the programme is a policy to enhance the quantity and quality of educational support programmes directed at young children of pre-school and early school age.
- In the interdepartmental government memorandum 'Delinquency in Relation to the Integration of Ethnic Minorities' (CRIEM, 1997), issued by the Ministers of the Interior and Justice, the importance of preventive integration of ethnic minority youth is stressed. One of the three policy strands connected to this policy aim is directed at the expansion, intensification and quality improvement of the provisions for educational and parenting support (see section 3, chapter 8 for more information).
- In two recent reports on 'Youth and family' (Junger-Tas, 1996 and 1997), published by the Ministry of Justice, the importance of effective parenting practises and supportive family conditions for young children are discussed in relation to the prevention of young people 'dropping out' at a later stage. In these reports it is suggested that preventive policies should direct more attention to young children and their family circumstances. A more outreaching, comprehensive and pro-active approach to children and families 'at risk' should be implemented.

These reports are discussed more extensively in section 3, chapter 8.

Thus, there is a general agreement that effective provision for parenting support and educational support are key functions in the preventive chain of provision for children and families. These should contribute to the empowerment of children and parents and to the prevention of children dropping out of mainstream provisions.

Interdepartmental Task force on Parenting Support and Educational Support (IWG/OO)

In 1997 the Ministries of VWS, OC&W and Justice have joined in a Task force concentrating on the development of a comprehensive policy concerning children in disadvantaged families.

The Task force has recently published a Policy Note 'Towards a solid basis' (1998). This note again stresses the importance of a coherent preventive approach towards children (and their families) whose emotional, social and cognitive development is at risk. The note acknowledges the aforementioned problems in the present situation in the field.

The policy note then concentrates on the question how the existing (general) provision of parenting and educational support services can be improved and intensified for the benefit of youth and families at risk.

The Task force states that at the present moment methodology is not the main problem: in recent years sufficient succesful programmes and methods have been developed and tested.
The main challenge at this moment is to implement these methods and programmes. Apart from enhancing the expertise of the professionals involved, this also calls for an extension of the existing capacity and a better organisation of the services at the local and regional level.
The policy note also deals with a major dilemma in this field: should participation in parenting and educational support programmes always be on a voluntary, self-motivated basis? At present there seems to be a gap between services for children/families that work on the basis of voluntary participation by their clients and compulsory, mostly judicial, interventions into the lives of children and their families when problems have got out of hand. On the basis of expert advice and research findings concerning the feasibility of targeting children at risk at a very early stage, the Task force concludes that care and support on a voluntary basis is to be preferred to non-voluntary aid.

Communities that care

According to the Task force targeting of groups at risk should be *area based*, e.g. concentrating on (urban) areas with a cumulation of social problems. To this end the prevention model *'Communities that care'*, that has been developed in the US should be adapted to and implemented in Dutch urban areas.
The policy-note ends with recommendations concerning the implementation of an area-based, intensified programme of parenting and educational support, targeted at youth at risk and their families. In 1998 a number of pilot projects will be implemented.

In the meantime measures will be taken to improve existing practices, to set up a national monitoring system, to intensify communication between local authorities and national supporting structures and to co-ordinate further amongst the Ministries involved.

4.5 Quality of support systems

Part of administrative innovation in the Netherlands is the notion that (private) field organisations themselves are primarily responsible for improving and monitoring the quality of their services. Central government has a macro-responsibility: monitoring developments and supporting the development of quality systems in the different sectors.
In recent years a number of projects have been initiated concerning the quality of parenting and educational support:

- development of a quality system for child care ('Small Capital');
- quality improvement of nurseries and the first phase (groups 1 and 2) of primary schools;

- quality improvement of pre-school and initial education ('PLAY');
- improved assessment of educational disadvantage (School Disadvantage Assessment Committee).

These initiatives are funded or otherwise supported by the Ministries of VWS and OC&W.

4.6 Conclusion

Child care facilities

In recent years the Dutch situation in the field of child care services, which had been somewhat lagging behind, has undergone a rapid improvement. The national incentive scheme for child care facilities has been very succesful and these facilities are still growing in number after decentralisation to local authorities. Meanwhile a quality system for child care facilities is being implemented.

In the years to come a comparable incentive programme will contribute to the extension of out-of-school facilities for schoolchildren aged 4 and up.

Parenting support

Since the beginning of the nineties public and policy-makers' attention to parenting support has increased considerably.

A recent inventory of local and regional parenting and educational support services (Bakker en Bakker, 1997) indicates that parenting support has become a 'booming business'; the amount and diversity of these services has undergone rapid growth. Even more important is the fact that the agents involved are increasingly willing to co-operate in local or regional networks. In a growing number of towns/regions one central 'access-point' for clients is created. The seven experiments on parenting support are role models in this development.

Children at risk

A growing body of research into the backgrounds of 'drop out' youth and on the processes involved in dropping out (especially in schools), as well as a growing public concern over the social problems of disadvantaged children and their families, has led to the development of policy measures directed at young children at risk and their families. It has become clear that the existing services in this field do not suffice for reaching these groups and, even more important, for keeping these groups in an comprehensive, long-term support programme.

The Ministeries of VWS, OC&W, and Justice have joined hands in an interdepartmental programme for parenting and educational support, targeted at urban areas with an accumulation of social problems.

This programme will be implemented by the new government to be installed after the elections of May 1998. The concept of 'Communities that care' plays a major role in this programme.

5 Local preventive youth policy

Direction in youth care

In 1994 central government determined in the 'Direction in Youth Care' memorandum that local authorities are responsible for direction in *locally-based (preventive) youth care services*. Provinces and metropolitan areas are to lead in the provision of *regional (curative) youth care*.

Central government confines itself to core duties (facilitation, monitoring and innovation) and provides, in conjunction with the other government tiers, an orientating framework. Promotion of *local preventive youth policy* is one of the spearheads in central youth policy. That responsibility rests with the VWS Ministry.

5.1 The policy framework

The starting document 'Prospects for young people – opportunities for local authorities' (VWS, 1995) sets out the view and principles of central government in the field of local preventive youth policy. First of all the document establishes that in most local authorities much is already being done in various contexts and sectors that can be considered conducive to preventive youth policy.

But this does not imply that there is a comprehensive approach to local preventive youth policy. Local authorities' approach to young people is mainly *problem and risk oriented.* When youth is on the agenda of local authorities at all, topics are combatting inconvenience from young people, addressing 'problem youth' and countering disadvantage in school children. According to central government (VWS) a more positive and development oriented approach is needed, directed at active participation of young people in the local community and the creation of new opportunities for young people, thus empowering them to develop a positive social identity.

In addition, the document states that most local authorities show little coherence in their preventive activities. A common view and policy framework charting objectives and measures in a coherent fashion are often lacking, as are clear views of and agreements on the roles and duties of the many different actors in preventive youth policy.

Local authorities are required in this total context to perform a 'directing' role, but how to achieve that is generally not clearly envisaged. Insufficient youth monitoring by local authorities, their modest supervisory power over some relevant actors (such as curative youth care) and their inadequate knowledge of methods and instruments make it hard for them to shape the directing role.

Altogether, the VWS Ministry painted in the starting document a rather gloomy picture of the local state of the art. But it must be realised that conducting a policy in this field is a new duty for local authorities. De-centralisation of duties to local authorities, which was started in the late 1980s, was not accompanied by extra resources to equip local authorities for the new duties and roles required from them.
The starting document is meant to fill this gap as a first helping hand to local authorities. Matters will be further elaborated through a project team for the Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ).

5.2 The project team for the Development of Local Preventive Youth Policy (OLPJ)

The OLPJ project team was installed at the end of 1995 for a period of three years by VWS' Deputy Minister and was given the following mission:

- To develop and advise on a broadly supported orientating policy framework for the promotion of and support for local preventive youth policy.
- To create support for preventive youth policy through contacts with appropriate networks of local, provincial and central governments, voluntary organisations and young people.
- To advise on actual projects, activities and measures that help central government effectively to support the development of spearheads in preventive youth policy.
- To take care of co-ordinated information for and communication with local authorities and youth (services).

The project also ensures alignment of its activities to policies in other policy areas, such as (local) education policy, youth crime policy and urban (metropolitan) policy.
In order to facilitate and support local preventive youth policy development, a total of 10.5 million NLG (4.3 million ECU) is allocated to the project team for a three-year period.

Three priorities

In elaborating its mission the project group has sought to base on existing knowledge, experience and developments within municipalities and on their current wishes and needs in that respect.
This has led to the choice of three priority areas:

— *Youth and prevention on the agenda*
This aims at enhancing public and political attention to youth at local level and support for a preventive local youth policy.

— *To administrate the services*
This concentrates on the question in what way(s) local authorities can shape their supervisory roles and on the design of instruments and models local authorities can use in this process.

— *To involve young people*
This is focusing on the question in what way(s) local authorities can allocate a structural place to youth participation ensuring young people have a say in locally-based youth policy. The aim is to design models and guidelines for local government that allow for structural concentration on youth participation.

In 1996 and 1997 methods and instruments for the three focus areas were outlined. Guidelines have been tried out in 18 'pilot municipalities' and will be issued in 1998 in their definite form. Also in 1998 over 100 Dutch local authorities are being offered support through 'tailored' advice and consultation, so that this can devise a course of action for local preventive youth policy.

Other OLPJ activities

Over and above to activities in the context of the three focus areas the project group has been working on improving and streamlining information services in the field of youth and preventive youth policy. This is being brought about in an alliance between three key data managers in this field: VNG (Netherlands Federation of Local Authorities), NIZW (Netherlands Institute on Care and Welfare) and SJN (Netherlands Youth Information Foundation).

In 1998 (third and last project year) the focus is on dissemination and transmission of collected knowledge and experience to local authorities and organisations occupied with local preventive youth policy. Alongside the dissemination of products that have been developed and of counselling local authorities, regional meetings are being organised – jointly with the VNG – on locally-based youth policy.

Also co-operation is sought with (national) organisations that can take over the torch from the project group after its termination, and support and encourage ongoing development of this policy.

Collated information and insights are laid down in an advice to national and local administrators. At the end of 1998 the project period will be completed with a final report and a concluding presentation.

5.3 State of the art in local authorities

Via a national survey of local authorities, the progress of local preventive youth policy development is being monitored. Comparison of evidence from 1996 (previous measurement) and 1997 (interim measurement) yields the following picture[14].

- The number of local authorities operating the three spearheads of the project group is on the increase. In 1997 all local authorities of over 100,000 residents have developed a youth policy.
  Two-thirds of local authorities with local preventive youth policies already explicitly laid down expect youth policy to be more prominent locally in the two or three years to come.

- Preventive youth policy, nevertheless, is still being defined by the majority of local authorities as prevention and early addressing of problems held or caused by young people. A minority of local authorities emphasise the creation and promotion of opportunities and challenges for young people (positive approach).
- Youth policy is becoming more and more of a structured integrated nature. In nearly two-thirds of local authorities the supervisory role is being adopted. Close co-operation emerges ever more often between services that are operating in the youth field. Nearly three quarters of local authorities with a youth policy have developed plans for bringing about more coherence in youth provision. Local authorities claim often to have an inadequate view of the existing provisions and of the needs and wishes of young people themselves.
- In nearly half of Dutch local authorities with a youth policy activities are being developed to spur young people into socially participating, mostly in the field of leisure and play facilities. In the political field young people are offered much fewer opportunities for active participation.

5.4 Conclusion

In recent years central government (OLPJ) and numerous local authorities have made concerted efforts to develop and implement local preventive youth policies.
From a quantitative point of view the development is positive: research shows an increase in the number of local authorities that have currently developed a preventive youth policy.
The importance of a local preventive approach to young people is largely accepted.
But if we look at the orientation of local preventive youth policy, combatting and monitoring problems caused by young people (crime, social disruption) and countering dropping out (of school) are still high on the local agenda.
Local preventive youth policy is still unbalanced in this respect.
However, local authorities are getting more aware of the fact that a parallel *general* youth policy should be conducted for the benefit of *all* young people in the local community, that is more oriented to creating new opportunities and enhancing young people's own strengths and possibilities.
In the years to come an active government policy, directed at stimulating and supporting local authorities to develop and implement a comprehensive preventive youth policy in which preventive policies are well balanced with a positive development orientation towards all youth.

6 Youth care

The Netherlands posess an extensive network of facilities for the care of children and young people who experience problems or shortcomings in their upbringing and growth towards maturity. This includes a wide variety of problems, such as family and parenting problems, child abuse, developmental problems, psychological problems and psychiatric disorders, mental and physical handicaps, addiction and behavioural problems.
Within the youth care sector a distinction can be made between:

- *voluntary care*: children and/or parents take the initiative to ask for help and they are free to reject or stop the help that is offered by the youth care facility, and
- *involuntary care* or child protection: care is assigned to children and/or parents on the basis of a court order. Assigned institutions for child protection intervene in family life when the fundamental right of the child to a healthy and balanced development is seriously threatened.

Voluntary youth care is available for youth from 0 to 23 years of age. Child protection applies to 0-18-year-olds.
Furthermore a distinction can be made between different types of facilities, depending on the area they provide for (local, regional, national), the type of youth problems they cater for and the type of services offered. See the annex to this section for an overview of youth care facilities.

6.1 Youth care innovation

In the post-Second World War period the number of organisations providing care and welfare services to children and young people have mushroomed. Especially in the 1960s the number and types of care facilities for children and young people increased rapidly. Inter-agency coherence was far away and administrative coordination of the various services left much to be desired.

Over the past 25 years the arrangement of the youth care system was highly debated in the Netherlands. The first impetus (in the early 1990s) to what would lead to radical reorganisation of youth care was given in the mid 1970s when the final report of the Mik working group was issued, entitled *'Youth welfare, towards a coherent policy'*. This report advocates, among other things, bringing about more coherence and co-operation between youth care agencies, but also with other facilities - such as schools - through regional networking. More systematic registration and exchange of information should also be included. Finally, proposals are made to decentralise large parts of youth care policy to provincial and municipal authorities.

In later reports of interdepartmental working parties, issued in 1984, these recommendations were refined and adjusted. Key elements of these reports were:

- The *as-as-as principle*: care should preferably be given near to home, in as light a form as practicable, during as short a period as feasible and in as early a stage as possible. This entails in practice a shifting emphasis from (heavy) residential care to (lighter) community-based preventive services.
- A *function-oriented approach* is advocated (instead of a provision-oriented one) as basis for public funding; the type of care needed should be centralised and not designed in the interest of the providing organisation.
- *Regionally-based alliances* should be set up, that are jointly to develop regional care provision in such a way that clients' needs can be met in the region.
- Things must be enshrined in a *Youth Care Act* that also provides scope for decentralisation of policy and provision.

6.2 The Act on Youth Care

Central government adopted the greater part of both working parties' recommendations. In January 1990 the *Act on Youth Care* fully came into force. Two relevant deviations from the recommendations and previous bills are, that not all youth-related care facilities were adopted into the Act[15] and that the proposed function-led approach was not adopted either: the facilities remained the basis for public funding.

The Act consists of regulations concerning the organisation and implementation of (voluntary) youth care, (civil law) youth protection and juvenile criminal law[16].

The Ministers of VWS and Justice share responsibility for implementing the Act on Youth Care, meaning they are jointly responsible for planning and financing the youth care facilities to which the Act applies. An exception is made for agencies for guardianship and family supervision and judicial institutions for young offenders, for which the Minister of Justice has sole responsibility.

One of the main aims of the Act is to promote a coherent supply of quality care that is matched to demand, well balanced and composed of various types of care, at a decentralised (regional/metropolitan) level. For this purpose many central government responsibilities, budgets and tasks are decentralised to provincial and metropolitan government.

The Act also introduces a uniform provincial and central government planning and budgetary funding system for all youth care facilities and regional support organisations. Central and provincial government plans are designed according to an evolving four-year plan, containing policy plans and basic budgets.

The Act further stipulates that regional fora have to be set up, in which representatives of child care facilities, guardianship and family supervision agencies, centres for out-patient mental health care (RIAGGs) and the child protection boards co-operate.

These forums advise the provincial and metropolitan authorities on the planning of regional youth care facilities.
In addition, requirements concerning quality of care and co-operation between care providers and clients (client-centred approach) are laid down in the Act.
Central government retains an over-all (macro) responsibility for a sufficient and good supply of youth care services. Central government stimulates activities and policies aimed at improving the quality of care. The Interdepartmental Inspectorate for Youth Care and Child Protection is responsible for inspection and supervision of the quality of youth care provision.

6.3 Radical reorganisation: decentralisation, growth in scale, reallocation and standardisation

Decentralisation of youth care was implemented in 1992. From then on, the twelve provinces and the three metropolitan regions have been responsible for the planning and funding of youth care as far as provided by regionally-based institutions. The state has kept its responsibility for a number of nationally operating institutions.
Parallel to decentralisation, and with a view to more efficient and more effective formats of provision, *growth in scale* (expansion) is being worked on, resulting in so-called multifunctional organisations for youth care.
At the same time, *reallocation* of provision is pursued to realise a more evenly spread supply of youth care services over the country.
A fourth and last facet of reorganisation relates to *standardisation*: developing standards for the cost price of different types of care based on a number of well-defined functions.
The drastic reorganisation in the early 1990s put youth care provision under serious pressure. All the more because reorganisation was accompanied by major budget cuts.

6.4 The subsequent step: Direction in youth care

In 1994 it was established at the political level that reorganisation had been implemented indeed, but was not yet leading to the desired situation: a transparent and accessible system of youth care, operated (more) efficiently and (more) effectively. The present structure still proved insufficient to make adequate connections within and between the sectors involved in youth care and between the youth care sector and adjacent sectors dealing with children and young people, such as education and the labour market.
Also the division of responsibilities and co-ordination of policies between provincial governments and local governments, who are responsible for local preventive youth policy, proved to be problematic.

Early in 1994 the Netherlands Parliament passed a motion for central government to take initiatives towards a national indicative framework in order to realise coherent youth provision in the age range of 0-18. Central government responded mid-1994 by issuing the government memorandum *"Direction in Youth Care'*. This memorandum elaborates in more detail the division of administrative responsibilities:

- Preventive youth policy falls to the discretion of local authorities - these are responsible for the development and implementation of locally-based preventive policies aimed at preventing children and young people from 'dropping out'. This includes youth participation, youth information, parenting support, day child care and out-of-school care, youth health care, local labour market policy and local education policy.
- Provinces and metropolitan regions are responsible for bringing about coherent (curative) youth care at a regional level. This includes ambulatory, semi-residential and residential youth care, child protection, family supervision (including fostering) and mental health services to young people. They are also responsible for their alignment with neighbouring sectors such as education, employment services and locally-based preventive youth policy.
- Central government is responsible for an orientating framework for local preventive youth policy and national and regional youth care planning - in the quantitative as well as in the qualitative sense.

It is also stated that access to youth care must be channeled per region through one single door: a one-stop Youth Care Front Office that all young people in need can turn to for referral and assessment.

Care providers themselves should translate their services into functions and *care programmes* built up of various functions. These programmes must be needs led. Guaranteed admission must be created for penal and civil court orders to be executed (legal youth protection).

Futhermore systems and regulations for quality of care and client involvement should be developed.

Steering group Direction in Youth Care

In 1995 a Direction in Youth Care steering group was installed to implement the policy set out in the Direction in Youth Care memorandum. Key tasks of the steering group are:

- development and implementation of a regional system of youth care front offices;
- improvement of information management;
- development of regional and national policy planning;
- development of care programmes:
- quality of care and client policy;
- development of a national circuit model.

A number of projects were initiated to realise these spearheads. The projects relate e.g. to improving the accessibility of youth care, improved youth care quality, the development of regional visions and improvement of policy information. Through developing appropriate systems of early detection and rapid intervention in youth problems, combined with more efficient assessment and placement (youth care front offices), there is an attempt to prevent young people and/or parents from entering either care too late – and thus needing heavier services – or having to make a long journey through the care system before finding the right kind of help.
The steering group ended its work in 1997 and was replaced by a working group, with the task to monitor developments in the projects and implement the results.

Care programming

The mandate of regional youth care facilities and the responsible authorities is to develop comprehensive regional care provision for youth. Their primary objective is the quickest possible (guided) return of young people to independent participation in society and use of mainstream provision.
An important prerequisite for this is the provision of tailor-made care, through programmes that match the clients' demands to the form of care most suitable for the client. The establisment of multi-functional organisations is essential for such an approach (VWS Policy Framework Curative and Preventive Youth care 1997-2000).

Regional visions

Provincial authorities are responsible for setting up regional fora for planning and policy development of youth care in that region. These fora should produce regional visions, i.e. an annual report on the situation and (care) needs of youth in that region and a plan as to how these needs will be catered for. Information from municipalities and locally-based youth provision about the situation and needs of local youth plays a central role here. The regional vision is an instrument to link up regional care provision and planning with locally-based youth problems and (care) needs.

Accessibility: the Youth Care Office

As indicated before, the traditional youth care system is characterised by a wide variety of separately operating bodies. This has resulted in widely varying procedures and criteria for admission and referral of clients. This situation has long impeded mutual accommodation, co-operation and co-ordination in service provision.
The Accessibility Project Group - set up by the Direction in Youth Care steering group - has identified and defined the functions flowing from diagnosis, assessment, allocation and placement. The regionally-based Youth Care Office, charged with fashioning better access to youth care and assuming its co-ordination, will adopt these functions. Such offices have opened in all regions of the country during the first months of this year (1998).

6.5 Bottlenecks in youth care: persistent shortages

Over recent years attention was repeatedly focused on the mounting pressure upon the youth care system, and particularly on problems with placement of youngsters in urgent need and/or in need of intensive forms of care.
It became clear that provision development did not parallel developments in client needs. The policy conducted since the 1980s was targeting at reducing the number of residential placements in favour of lighter forms of care (semi-residential and ambulatory care). Nevertheless, the number of youngsters with serious psycho-social problems did not decrease. On the contrary, their number is still on the increase.
In response to the capacity shortages highlighted the Cabinet and the VWS Ministry deployed extra financial resources by 1996. The aggregate of extra funds becomes available in instalments, up to over NLG 72 million (about 33 million ECU) in 1999. The lion's share (up to NLG 60 million, or over 27 million ECU) will be spent on capacity expansion in regional care. Emphasis is on intensification of ambulatory care, foster care and residential care.
Money has also been reserved for expansion of national residential provision: at the end of 1996 two new judicial juvenile centres have been completed and the number of places now total 1280. Further expansion is intended for about 1550 places in 1998.

This development is thwarting, for the time being, part of the policy objectives as enshrined e.g. in the 1990 Youth Care Act and the 1994 Direction in Youth Care memorandum from central government.
Nevertheless, reduction of 'heavy' youth welfare provisions in favour of 'lighter' youth care services continues to be the main objective of government policies. At the same time central government is aware that the needs of the residential sector cannot be neglected. Present policies therefore can be characterised as 'two track': allocating more funds to residential care on the basis of proved shortages in that sector, and on the other hand a policy that strongly promotes a shift from 'heavy' to 'lighter' forms of intervention.

6.6 Conclusion

Restructuring the system

Especially in the last decade major changes are being made in the structure and processes of the youth care system. The restructuring of the youth care sector and the development of new policies and working methods is an ongoing process, requiring intensive consultation, co-operation and co-ordination of all agencies involved.

At this moment it is clear that considerable progress has been made in the direction favoured by central government, such as the transformation of youth care facilities into multi-functional organisations, the implementation of regional fora for regional planning and policy development, the realisation of regional Youth Care Offices and the development of new methods such as programmes for tailor-made care and new types of early, ambulatory family-oriented care.
The increasing demand for intensive types of care (especially residential care) puts pressure on the youth care system and on youth care policy, aimed at reducing the necessity of these types of care in favour of types of care that reduce dependence of clients on care. This is one of the challenges the youth care sector has to deal with in the near future. Besides an important change of the Act on Youth Care has been planned for the coming years, for integrating the different systems of youth care more than before

Local Preventive Youth Policy and Youth Care

In the area of establishing closer connections between the youth care sector and adjacent sectors such as education, labour market and local preventive youth policy, a lot of work still remains to be done.
From central government's point of view preventive youth care is an integral part of locally-based youth policy (see chapter 5 in this section).
Central government has been advocating its view of the coherence between youth care and local youth policy - with growing emphasis over recent years – but everyday practice turns out to be of a rigid nature. Up to now, development of local youth policy on the one hand, and, on the other, reform of the youth care system have been relatively autonomous processes. Direction of these processes is conducted from different government tiers: provincial government for youth care, and local government for local preventive youth policy.
Although today local youth policy is on the agenda of nearly all local authorities, developments in municipalities are very divergent and differing in terms of pace and quality. It should also be established that local policy-makers' focus is mainly on the local situation, and that they are little aware of regional youth care developments.
Innovation of youth care is topical in all provincial authorities, but their involving the local authorities and benefiting from opportunities leave much to be desired. Innovation of youth care is too much regarded as a process within youth care itself. The actual realisation this year of 'Youth Care Offices' in most regions raises the question whether the provinces will assume a role of linking up local youth services and regional youth care. These offices are unmistakeably situated in common grounds of local and trans-local facilities, between local and trans-local policy, thus holding strategic positions. This has only partly been taken into consideration during the design of these offices and many of their staff only now become aware of this 'strategic role' between local and provincial youth policy, which may be expected to demand increased attention.
Central government is aware of the importance of this linking in order for the system review to be successful and its innovative objectives to be met.

Annex

Youth care services

Ambulatory facilities

— *Child help lines*
30 regional helplines that children can call (anonymously) to ask for information or present their problems.

— *Organisations for information on play and upbringing*
These organisations inform and advise institutions and parents in support of (their involvement with) the upbringing and education of children in the primary social environment.

— *Confidential Medical Centres for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (BVAs)*
Child abuse can be reported confidentially to these centres, or advice on the subject can be anonymously obtained from a BVA any time of the day. These centres attempt to find a solution for the problem of child abuse and its causes by referring to or involving other providers of care. The Confidential Medical Centres do not provide care themselves.

— *Advice centres for young people and their families*
These facilities offer psycho-social advice and support to young people between the ages of 14 and 20 and to parents and their children together.

— *Youth Advice Centres (YACs)*
These centres offer open care to children who have social or emotional problems by providing treatment, counselling and advice. They cover housing, financial and relational problems, often in respect of children who ran away from home or an institution.

— *Organisations for counselled living*
These organisations offer counselling to young people who live independently, aiming to increase their self-reliance.

Facilities for day treatment

— *'Boddaert' centres for out-of-school care*
These centres offer care outside school hours to (school age) children whose functioning is being hindered by psycho-social problems; and to their parents. In addition, there are centres directed at children who do not go to school, especially school dropouts with personal problems.

- *Medical day nurseries (MKD)*

  These centres offer care to young children whose development is threatened by disturbances caused by a combination of physical or mental and social factors. These centres offer a more multi-disciplinary care than do 'Boddaert' centres. They also have their own educational facilities for children of school age.

Residential (day and night) facilities

- *Observation homes*

  Homes for assessing the children's problems and personalities to determine which forms of care are the most suitable ones. In addition, care is offered both day and night.

- *Homes for upbringing and care*

  These homes raise and take care of children day and night. This care category consists of a great variety of facilities and consequent working methods. Among them are institutions for psychiatric care, vocational homes, and homes for special youth care, special training institutions and homes for unmarried mothers.

- *Homes for special treatment*

  In these homes, children with physical, mental, social or child development problems or disturbances that lead to socially unacceptable behaviour receive round-the-clock intensive treatment.

- *Medical children's homes*

  These homes provide medical treatment to children whose physical or mental health has been damaged or is severely threatened.

- *Boarding schools for very intensive treatment*

  In these homes, children with very severe behavioural problems receive treatment and 24-hour nursing and care. Such problems may go hand in hand with psychotic or neurotic disturbances.

- *Detention centres*

  These homes are solely intended for children who are placed there by the juvenile court judge for the execution of juvenile sentences, for preventive custody or because of very severe behavioural problems.

- *Facilities for crisis care*

  These are homes for temporary admittance of and round-the-clock care for children who have to be admitted with no further delay. These facilities include runaway homes.

- *Family homes*

  These are homes for upbringing and care, where an attempt is made to approach a normal living and family situation as close as possible and where care is chiefly aimed at a child's primary social environment.

Facilities in the field of foster care

— *Facilities for foster care*

These facilities offer children admittance into foster homes and support foster children, foster parents and (step)parents with parenting and care.

— *Foster home agencies*

These agencies prepare the placement of a child into a foster home. Foster home agencies are the main bodies for recruiting and selecting foster homes.

— *Institutions for therapeutic foster care*

These institutions provide very intensive support and counselling to children with severe behavioural problems in foster homes through specialised social workers.

Child protection facilities

— *Child care and protection boards*

The child care and protection boards are public bodies, which come directly under the Ministry of Justice. A board advises the juvenile court judge in cases of divorce or other events of the loss of the person taking care of the child. In addition, the board advises the public prosecutor in juvenile criminal cases. The board also supervises foster homes.

— *Guardianship and family supervision agencies*

The Dutch Civil Code describes the child care and protection orders, i.e. the family supervision order, suspension of parental authority and deprivation of parental authority. The court orders are carried out by the guardianship and family supervision agencies, which, in their turn, can call on child care facilities for assistance.

— *Guardianship agencies*

After ordering suspension or deprivation of parental authority, the judge can assign the child to a guardianship agency. The guardianship agency then has authority over the child instead of the parents and is consequently responsible for the upbringing and care of the child.

— *Family supervision agencies*

In contrast to the guardianship agencies, the family supervision agencies do not have formal authority over minors. Family supervision agencies do not operate instead of, but beside the parents. They supervise the minor and offer help and support to this minor and its parents.

Family supervision is aimed at stimulating parents to take on the task of bringing up their children in an appropriate way, whereas is the field of guardianship, long-term substitute homes often have to be provided.

— *Placement Bodies*

Care in foster homes and in (semi-)residential child care facilities has to be initiated by placement bodies. The purpose of this legal requirement is to prevent a child from being placed in care too readily.

Notes

Section 2

1 Description of legal and policy age limits concerning young people can be found in the annex to section 1.

2 In contrast to many other countries, in the Netherlands 'welfare' does not include social security.

3 The act applies to the care of 0-18-year-olds, the age group of 18-23 is described as 'focal' or 'attention group'.

4 In this chapter no attention is given to the role of youth organisations. Chapter 3 in section 2 deals with this subject.

5 Provisions for voluntary youth care are directed at 0-23-year-olds and include: foster care, ambulatory, semi-residential and residential care. The care is voluntary since the clients (children and/or parents) ask for help themselves and are free to refuse or discontinue the services offered to them.
Provision for child protection deals with 0-18-year-olds whose healthy development towards maturity is seriously threatened. In these cases the authorities intervene and a child care court order is made.

6 Importantly, the concept of prevention should unambiguously be defined for its unequivocal use by the various Ministries. This promotes mutual alignment and clarity.

7 See for the documentation of this the various chapters of section 3, where young people's conditions in the various life spheres are described, such as family, health, education and employment.

8 In addition central government finances the national support structure for the development of youth information on a local or regional level, see 2.2.

9 Listed are: education, public libraries, health service, youth and community work, youth police, social services and youth care.

10 The development of JIPs is interesting for libraries. Many libraries contend with decreasing numbers of (young) visitors and a number of libraries has used the JIP development to revitalise their ties with young people. Thus the function of libraries is also changing from 'loan facility' to 'meeting place' for young people.

11 It appears from a research study into organised youth work (van Vliet et al., 1993) how important the efforts of volunteers are in this field: of the total of invested hours approx. 98% are voluntary and less than 2% are paid.

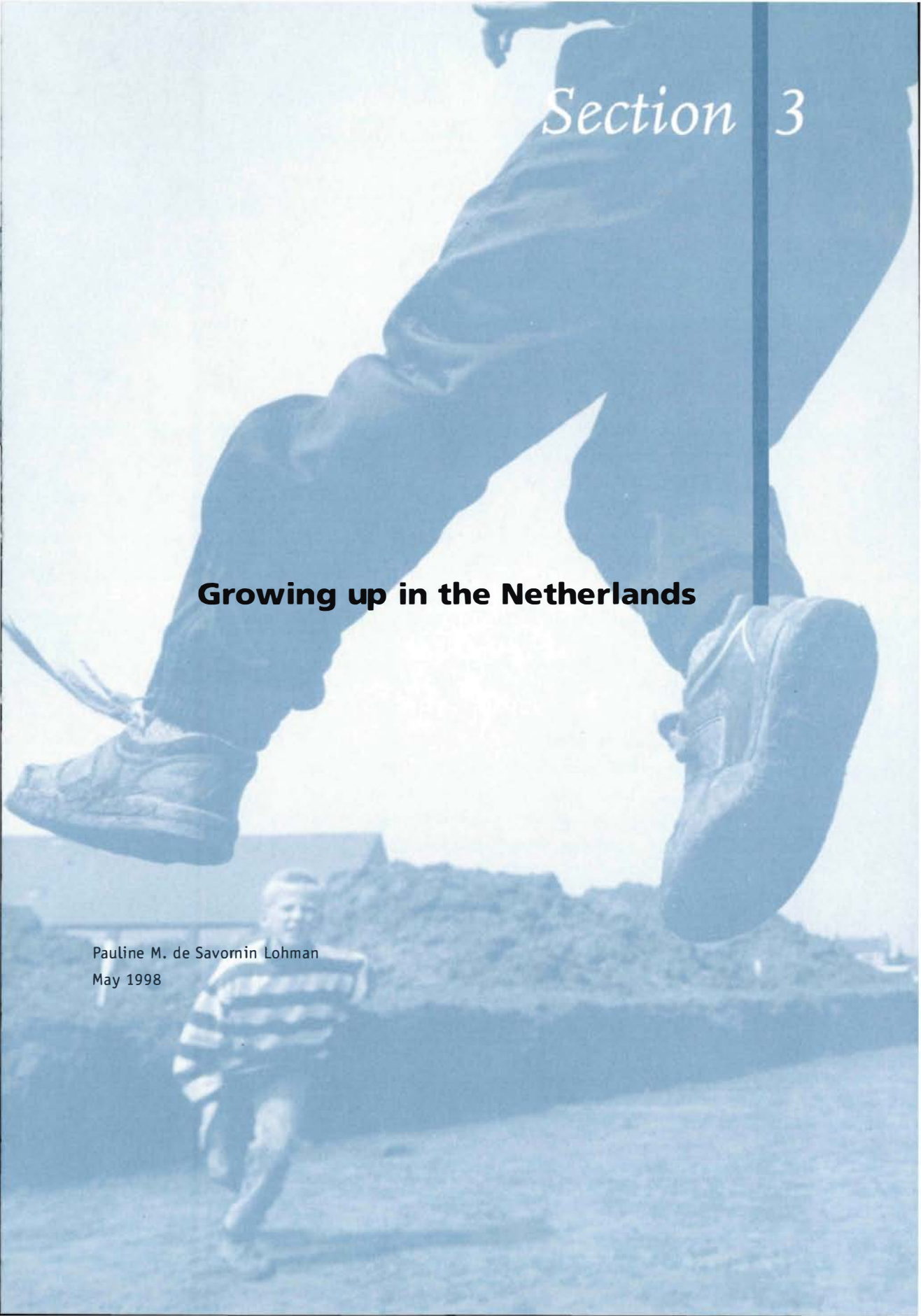
12 The information in this chapter is based on van Heek (1998, in print).

13 In this chapter the discussion of OC&W policies to combat and prevent educational disadvantages in schoolchildren is limited to a number of specific projects. Chapter 3 in section 3 presents a more comprehensive overview of OC&W policies in this area.

14 In 1998 final measurement will take place.

15 E.g. psychiatric (out-patient) child clinics and child and youth departments of RIAGGs (District Out-patient Mental Health Centres) do not section under this Act.

16 The *application* of child protection and juvenile criminal law measures, i.e. the grounds on which child protection orders and juvenile law sentences may be pronounced, are not part of the Act on Youth Care. These regulations are part of the Civil Code (BW) and the Criminal Law Code (WSR).



Section 3

Growing up in the Netherlands

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Contents

Introduction to *Section 3*

In this third and final section of the report on youth policies in the Netherlands, the reader will find background information on the characteristics of the youth, their living conditions, and policies and provisions directed at youth. The information is clustered around topics like the family, education, health, employmment, income, leisure, safety etc. On each of these topics the following information is presented:

- some basic facts and figures concerning the situation of youth in the Netherlands;
- a short description of national en local provisions for youth;
- an overview of relevant national and local policies.

This information enables the reader to understand and evaluate the trends, dilemma's and challenges that the Dutch society and policymakers on national, regional and local level are facing today. These trends, dilemma's and challenges are dealt with in previous parts of this report.

1 Demographic key figures

1.1 Number of young people and share of population

The Netherlands has 4.7 million residents in the age range of 0 - 25. This is the age group Dutch youth policy relates to. The proportion of this youth group of the total population is 30.6 per cent.

Table 1.1 Children and young people by age and gender (01-01-1997)

	abs.	% of total pop.	% of under-25s
males			
total	7,662,300		
0 - 4	501,735	6.55	20.26
5 - 9	492,671	6.42	19.89
10 - 14	461,431	6.02	18.63
15 - 19	473,006	6.17	19.10
20 - 24	547,217	7.14	22.10
females			
total	7,831,600		
0 - 4	479,171	6.11	20.17
5 - 9	471,116	6.01	19.83
10 - 14	441,696	5.63	19.59
15 - 19	450,783	5.75	18.97
20 - 24	532,742	6.80	22.42
males and females			
total	15,493,900		
0 - 9	980,906	6.33	20.21
5 - 9	963,787	6.22	19.86
10 - 14	903,127	5.82	18.61
15 - 19	923,789	5.96	19.04
20 - 24	1,079,959	6.97	22.25

Source: CBS (Central Statistical Bureau) Statistical Yearbook 1997.

1.2 Births

Annually, about 190,000 children are born. Compared to other countries in the Netherlands women's first birthgiving age is high: in 1995 it was 28.5 years.

Nearly 10 per cent of first-time mothers are aged 35 or up.
The number of children per women is rather low in the Netherlands: averaging 1.57 child per fertile woman. An increasing number of women (about 20 per cent) remain childless, an estimated half of them deliberately. We see a clear trend in the Netherlands towards delayed first-time parenthood, a choice for small families and an increased proportion of (deliberately or unintendedly) childless couples. Explanations to these tendencies are mostly sought in the following factors:

- widespread social tolerance of contraceptives;
- the trend of women's increasing opting for (higher) education and suitable jobs before having children;
- a heightened propensity of unintended childlessness by delays of the first child;
- there being insufficient childcare facilities in the Netherlands and relatively unfavourable maternity/parenthood leave regulations.

1.3 Developments in the age structure of the population

The consequence of these developments is a changing age structure of the Dutch population in recent decades. This development is characterised by:

- a 'de-greening process': on the one hand, a decline in the proportion of youth of the total population and,
- on the other, a ('greying') process of increased ageing of the elderly population share, also due to increased prosperity and improved health services.

One of the implications of these developments is that the demands on the system of social security (e.g. oldage pensions) and care (for the elderly) will rise, while at the same time the proportion of working and taxpaying population decreases. This puts a heavy strain on (the funding of) these systems.

1.4 Residents of immigrant origin

Residents of immigrant origin constitute an important factor in the development of the Dutch population. Part of this group is termed 'allochtoon (allochtonous)' in the Netherlands. Since this is a bit of a tongue twister, the term ethnic minority is used here alternated with (of) immigrant origin/background.
The major ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are people of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese or Antillean origin or background. It is hard to indicate the exact immigrant population share in the total population: much depends on the definition operated.

According to the broadest definition (at least one parent born abroad) the Netherlands has about 2.6 million of immigrant residents, making up 17 per cent of total population. A narrower definition (based on 'non-western birth country and nationality') results in a number of approx. 1 million immigrant-descended residents belonging to the so called ethnic minorities.
The table below provides an impression of the ethnic minority share of population based on the birth country of residents themselves and that of their parent/s (broad definition).

Table 1.2 Population, by country of origin, 1990 and 1996 (numbers x 1,000)

	1990	**1996**
Dutch originated residents	12,668	12,872
those of immigrant background (broad definition)	2,225	2,622
from:		
Turkey	206	272
Morocco	168	225
Surinam	237	282
Antilles/Aruba	81	94
subtotal	**692**	**873**
Indonesia	--	440
EU member states	--	769
remainder	--	539
subtotal	**1,533**	**1,749**
total population	**14,893**	**15,494**

Source: SCP Reports on ethnic minorities 1997.

It appears from table 1.2 that the number of immigrants in the Netherlands is on a more rapid increase than the number of Dutch originated residents.
The youth share of the population of immigrant background is higher than their proportion in the Dutch population as a whole: 38.5 per cent are under 25. This share will further mount in the years ahead due to a higher birth rate in this group and by family reunion-related immigration.

Immigrants – so also ethnic minority young people – live preponderantly in the four largest cities of the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). Their share of total population in these cities, hence, is considerably higher than the national average.

Table 1.3 **The (all age) share of immigrant populations in the 4 largest cities and the Netherlands as a whole (1996)**

	number of residents (abs.)	% Turks	% Moroccans	% Surinamese	% Antilleans and Arubans
Amsterdam	718,120	4.20	6.60	9.60	1.44
The Hague	442,505	4.94	3.94	8.97	1.05
Rotterdam	592,745	6.07	4.24	7.88	1.97
Utrecht	234,255	4.15	7.60	2.90	0.74

Source: CBS, Monthly statistic of the population, January 1997.

2 Family and upbringing

2.1 The situation

2.1.1 Some demographic data

Over recent years, politicians' and policy-makers' focus was increasingly on 'the family'. The family has not only been (re-) discovered as an important cornerstone of society, but as feeding ground for problems of and with young people as well.
This growing political and policy-based attention for the family is not reflected in demographic developments. The proportion of the 'classic' family (a couple with child/ren) of all households has steadily and rather dramatically declined during the past 30 years. The table below provides an impression of the development of various forms of cohabitation in the Netherlands.

Table 2.1 Households by composition (in percentages)

	1960	1981	1995
singles	12	22	31
couples without children (married or not married)	22	27	31
families with children	61	50	38
of which:			
. couples with child/ren	*56*	*43*	*31*
. unmarried couples with child/ren	-	*1*	*2*
. single-parent families	*5*	*6*	*5*
total number of households (x 1000)	3,130	5,111	6,516
typical size of household	3.56	2.76	2.34

Source: SCP Family report, 1997.

The decrease in the proportion of family households is mirrored by a considerable increase in the proportion of childless households and of single person households. The latter is partly caused by the process of ageing that increases the number of elderly single persons: 44 per cent of people aged 65 or up do not live with a family (any more).
Also young adults play a part by leaving their parental home and living first independently for a period of time before they enter cohabitation and/or marriage. Of parental home leavers, over 36 per cent first live on their own for a while.
The figures in table 2.1 on the division of cohabitation styles over households may readily distort the picture of the actual living conditions of the Dutch population and young people in the Netherlands. Figures on the *individual living arrangements* of the Dutch population demonstrate that 78 per cent of total population live in 'a family' group comprising: (marital) couples with children, single-parent families and (marital) couples without children.

Single-parent families

It appears from table 2.1 that the proportion of single-parent families in the total number of households has not really changed over recent decades. Nevertheless, the number of single-parent families in the absolute sense did double in the period 1960-1995 due to a growth in the number of households.

But the stereotyped view of ever more children growing up in single-parent families shows only partially correct. Of all 0-17-year-olds 9 per cent live in a single-parent family, 90 per cent in a two-parent family and approximately 1 per cent do not live in a family group (usually in a residential setting).

The *nature* of single parenthood *did* change over the last twenty years. In 1971 47 per cent of single-parent families were of widowed parents, whilst in 35 per cent of these families divorce had caused single parenthood. In 1995 the percentage of divorced single-parent families raised to 68 per cent. In the same period the percentage of single-parent families, the head of which was never married, mounted from 9 per cent to 23 per cent.

Divorce

In contrast to the prevailing picture in the Netherlands, it appears from statistics that the Dutch divorce propensity is relatively low compared to that in other northern, western and central European countries. The propensity of a marriage to end in divorce, nevertheless, did substantially increase over recent decades. In 1994 this likelihood was about 30 per cent.

Thus also the number of children involved with divorce has steadily increased through the years. Table 2.2 gives an overview.

Table 2.2 ***Number of under-21s involved with divorce, by the period in which the divorce took place.***

	x 1,000	per 1,000 minors
1960-1964	38.8	1. 7
1965-1969	51. 9	2. 1
1970-1974	97. 5	4. 1
1975-1979	137. 3	5. 8
1980-1984	135. 5	6. 0
1985-1989	158. 4	7. 6

Source: CBS (1996)

After the divorce 80% of the children stay with the mother, 15% stay with the father and 5% live elsewhere.

Stepfamilies

Quite a lot (40%) of the children living with a divorced parent are confronted with a stepparent and possibly with stepsisters and brothers. The average period between divorce and the formation of a new stepfamily is 4.5 years (CBS, 1996).

In the mid 1990's an estimated 110.000 children (0-18 years) are growing up in a stepfamily (Niphuis-Nell, 1997).

2.1.2 Family upbringing

The 'regular' child raising conditions

Various surveys into child rearing practices in Dutch families yield the following picture.

- The vast majority of Dutch families provide sound upbringing conditions, material as well as immaterial.
- There is little empirical support for the existence of the infamous 'generation gap' (Ter Bogt and van Praag, 1992): inner family relationships, according to parents and children, rather feature stability and harmony.
- The authority relationship in typical Dutch families is characterised by 'limited bargaining': 75 per cent of young people (aged 12-18) claim to have the opportunity of taking decisions on their own, although the opinion of their parent(s) must be taken into consideration. It appears from educational research that most families (of Dutch background) are marked by an `authoritative' child raising style balancing between control and support (Gerris et al., 1996 and Rispens et al., 1996).
- As regards the *views* of child raising and family life, Dutch parents turn out to be less modern and tolerant than is often assumed. In a European comparative research study into views of parenting, Dutch parents score 'moderate' rather than 'modern'[1]. Research amongst pupils, too, nuances the (self-)image of Dutch modernity and tolerance; the majority of young people subscribe to the statement that 'their parents are not so anti-authoritarian as they themselves think they are'. Overviewing the various surveys one may conclude that tolerance of deviant family patterns and adherence to autonomy have increased, but that the basic pattern of parent-child relationships is still founded upon the final authority position of the parents. Studies into actual interaction within families corroborate this picture (Du Bois-Reymond, 1997).
- Signals of a supposed raise in 'parenting uncertainty' in ever more parents - owing to old structures disappearing, rapid social change and isolation of families - are not confirmed in research studies. Parents assume an important child rearing role and consider themselves (reasonably) competent educators. Parents are 'upbringing optimists' rather than 'doubters'. That does not alter the fact that they regularly have certain queries or questions about raising children. But over 90 per cent of upbringers state to have sufficient informal contacts to discuss parenting or to obtain information about it. They also know how to address, if need be, professional support (Peeters and Woldringh, 1993).

In a recent study (Doornenbal, 1996) an alternative interpretation is given to the (alleged) parental uncertainty in families. This author regards 'permanent upbringing doubt' as a positive and essential element of modern child rearing. It means that parents are strongly committed to the upbringing of their children and are more aware of the interactive complexity between parents and children and of the necessity for mutual attuning.

All together, a positive picture emerges from the various research studies of the typical upbringing conditions in Dutch families.
They show the Dutch family as 'moderately modern', its mutual relationships as (mostly) stable and harmonious and its parent-child relationships as a 'limited bargaining economy'. Comparison to previous periods shows that acknowledgement of child autonomy has grown within families, that social and moral development is highlighted more, and that the parent-child relationships are more based on mutual affection than on parental authority over children.
But some critical comment should immediately be made to this positive picture.

- In nearly all research a quite constant respondent proportion was found to substantially deviate from the positive picture, mostly in the order of magnitude of 10-15 per cent of the research population.
  The same percentage recurs in studies into the 'youth at risk' share of the total group of youngsters.
  In one out of 8 to 10 families parenting conditions are less favourable, which is a proportion that cannot be neglected.
- Approximately all surveys are based on self-report - in most cases on parents' / carers' report. The risk of desirability bias is considerable in this type of research and probably increases as the educational level of parents under scrutiny is higher. A study into the relationship of parental views and actual behaviour proved there to be "little coherence between observed behaviour and behaviour reported by the parents" (Rispens et al., 1996). So the question is whether this could imply that these studies display highly upheld child raising *ideals* of parents, which do not always concur with actual practice.
- Large-scale surveys generally have high percentages of non-respondents (over 50 per cent) in which (parenting) problem families may prevail. This also leads to a positive distortion of the overall picture.
- In a number of surveys, moreover, non-Dutch background families are not or under-represented. These studies mainly relate to families of Dutch origin.

Child raising in specific family situations

In recent years a great deal of research has been conducted in the Netherlands into the consequences of child rearing in a number of specific family situations.

This research was challenged and focused in many cases by the public debate on potential detrimental effects from such family conditions to the child.
The key 'items' concentrated upon in recent years are:

- effects from substitute parenthood (adoption) and artificial parenthood (IVF, in vitro fertilisation) to the parent-child relationship;
- mothers' high first parenthood age;
- effects from same-sex parents (homosexual couples) to child development;
- working mothers making use of childcare and the effects to child development;
- effects from divorce, stepfamilies and single-parent families;
- effects from parents' (long-term) poverty and (long-term) unemployment.

It is true for nearly all these issues that the effects found from the conditions in question to the children concerned are either (very) small, varied and sometimes contradictory. Major mediating variables are (the well being of) the mother, the personal features of the child and the availability of social support in the environment.
For two features, however, clearer (negative) effects were established: divorce/single parent families and long-term poverty of the family.

Consequences of divorce

Research has shown that children of divorced parents have more emotional and behavioral problems than children of non-divorced parents. When these children grow up, they tend to have more trouble with maintaining relationships and they have a higher risk of their own marriage ending in divorce (De Graaf, 1996). The emotional and psychological impact of divorce is further mediated by a number of factors, e.g. the way the ex-partners deal with eachother after the divorce and the opportunities for the child to maintain contact with the other parent. Harmonious relationships between ex-partners also have a great influence on the ability of children to cope with the formation of a stepfamily.
Research findings also suggest that children of divorced parents are better off than children of non-divorced parents who continually have conflicts in their relationship. It seems that coping with conflict within the family is a great trial for children, and possibly a greater trial than coping with the fact that their parents do not live in the same house.
Another matter of concern is the fact that children from divorced parents and single parent families tend to achieve less in school (Dronkers, 1966) and tend to be more prone to juvenile delinquency and other forms of maladjusted behavior (Junger Tas, 1996). Researchers agree that this effect is mediated by a number of other factors, especially low income (or a sharp decrease in income as a consequence of the divorce), a low education level of the mother and social isolation of the family.

Consequences of poverty

Recent studies into the impact of poverty on the development and upbringing of children show that poverty of the family has a clear and negative impact on the social, cognitive and emotional development of the children in those families (2-12 year olds). The main mediating factor is parenting style: the parents in these families are more depressed, feel less competent as a parent and report to have less favourable relationships with their child/ren. Another factor of importance is the low level of participation of these children in sportive, social and cultural activities that could offer them additional support and socialisation that are wanting in the home situation (Engbersen, Vrooman and Snel, 1997).

Upbringing in ethnic minority populations

Of children up to 15, resident in the Netherlands, some 10 per cent are of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean or Aruban origin. The demographic family parameters of the major immigrant populations in the Netherlands differ some respects from Dutch family features.

Table 2.3 Some parameters of households, by ethnic group

	Turkish	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antillean	Dutch origin
percentage of families with children amongst all households	86	64	53	43	31
average number of children by household with children	2. 2	3. 3	2. 0	1. 8	1. 8
percentage of single-parent families amongst the families with children	9	5	40	52	11

Source: ISEO (SPVA '94)

Research into child raising in ethnic minority families is still scarce, methodologically still under-developed and sampling is of a modest size. So the outcomes can only provide a qualitative picture of ethnic parenting styles. Having said that, the research outcomes can be summarised as follows:

- Compared to the 'mainstream' Dutch upbringing styles, ethnic minority child rearing places more stress on obedience and respect and the use of discipline based and punitive parenting techniques. This parenting style is not common in all ethnic groups: it relates mainly to the Turkish and Moroccan parenting styles.
- Upbringing in immigrant families is often more gender specific. Upbringing goals for girls differ from those for boys.

- Cognitive child development is less explicitly monitored, although parents do have high ambitions for their children's educational careers. But they tend to see the school as primarily responsible for the scolastic achievement of their children. This is especially true for Turkish and Moroccan families.
- In Creole and Antillean families single parenthood (of the mother) and early motherhood (of teenage mothers) are quite pervasive. The authority over the children rests far more with the mother. Academic development and independence of children are more stimulated than is the case in Turkish and Moroccan families. The importance of sound education - also for girls - is highly valued.

Traditional ethnic minority parenting styles can generate sources of conflict in an individualising Dutch society, where equivalent roles of males and females progressively go without saying. Especially immigrant-descended girls can experience tension between the standards of their parents and the demands put on them by Dutch society. Boys are better able to avoid this conflict because they enjoy greater behavioural freedom.

Although it is widely recognised that immigrant families generally provide much warmth and security to their children, it is a matter of concern that the cognitive development of ethnic minority children is generally lagging behind that of Dutch-born children, even when the latter belong to the socio-economically deprived groups. This disadvantage - according to researchers - relates to the family as the context to the informal learning process: usage of their (non-Dutch) mother tongue plays a part here, but also the type of skills the child acquires at home under parental guidance. Ethnic origin is of autonomous impact here, separate from the family's socio-economic status (Leseman et al., 1995).

2.1.3 Problem situations in families

It has been stated above that some 10-15 per cent of families deviate from the positive (self-)image of Dutch families' upbringing conditions. This means that about 230,000 to 350,000 families have less favourable upbringing conditions. But one can hardly indicate the parameters of these families on the basis of collated research evidence: the (cor)relation between family features and parenting trouble is often weak or not unequivocal.

This section will display in a different way the size of some family problems that almost certainly exert pressure upon children's growing up and parents' well functioning.

Poverty

It has been indicated above that poverty - and especially long-term poverty - has demonstrable unfavrouable effects upon child development. According to recent estimates about 265,000 children ar part of a household that has to live on a *low income* (SCP, 1998). Part of them live on or below the poverty line; actually, they cannot meet their primary needs.

Research also reveals that single-parent families much more often than two-parent-families belong to the very low income groups. In the low income group about 50% is a single parent family (Van Praag and Niphuis-Nell, 1997).
In the group of 'poor families' ethnic minority households are also over-represented. Especially families of Surinamese, Antillean or Aruban origin are involved. The overlap with single-parent families is considerable: especially amongst Surinamese and Antilleans single motherhood is not unusual.

Table 2.4 Poverty in households by ethnicity[1], in percentages, 1995

	% households below subsistence level[2]	% households below perceived poverty line[3]
Turkish /Moroccans	14	7
Surinamese /Antillean (incl. Arubans)	16	15
Of Dutch origin	4	8
Remainder	6	12

1 Based on country of origin of the parents (broad definition).
2 The income is too low for meeting current basic needs.
3 Based on the appreciation of the amount that people themselves perceive as sufficient to live off.

Source: Engbersen et al., 1997.

Addiction of the parents

It is estimated that 25,000 children grow up in a family where there are alcohol problems. The estimated number of children in families where both parents are drug addicts is 5,000 to 8,000. In the early 1990s social workers have drawn attention to the mounting number of babies born drug addict: according to experts a minimum of 1,000 babies annually are affected (Van Kampen, 1996).

Abuse and neglect

In the Netherlands since the 1970s there is a countrywide network of agencies specialising in the issue of child abuse in the broad sense (including neglect and sexual abuse): the confidential medical centres (BVAs).
These centres register reports of (suspected) child abuse, give advice and guidance to those involved and if need be launch an investigation into the reported cases.
In 1996 BVAs received nearly 15,000 reports of alleged child abuse.
BVA register data show an annual increase of 10 per cent in the number of reported cases of abuse, from 1972 to the year of 1994. From then on the rise is less rapid. But this increase does not tell much about a possible increase in the size of the problem: it is probably more due to the widespread reputation of the centres and the enhanced societal openness to the problem.
The number of reported cases with the BVAs show, according to experts, only the 'tip of the iceberg': the actual incidence of child abuse is probably a multiplication of the amount reported.

Further analysis of reported cases in 1995 results in the following picture of these problems:

- a quarter relate to physical abuse, 18 per cent to sexual abuse;
- over one-third (36) of cases relate to 'emotional abuse' such as affective neglect (20 per cent) and/or mental abuse (16 per cent);
- 1 in 11 reported cases (9 per cent) involve physical neglect of children (remainder/combinations: 12 per cent);
- single-parent families (26 per cent) and stepfamilies (15 per cent) are relatively over-represented.

In a national survey amongst Dutch school pupils 7 per cent of the respondents (aged 12-18) claim to have been physically abused by their parent(s). Sexual abuse by parents or relatives is reported by 2 per cent. Converted to the total youth population (12-18-year-olds) this amounts to about 93,000 victims of physical abuse and 21,000 victims of sexual abuse (lifetime prevalence).

Running away and vagrancy

In the late 1980s public concern about young homeless in the Netherlands was growing. Research into size and nature of this group yields the following data (Ministry of WVC, 1993b):

- Annually approx. 30,000 youngsters run away from home. This involves not only those fleeing the parental home, but also a considerable amount of runaways from residential (care-)settings. The majority of this group returns over time or are sheltered elsewhere.
- But there is a group of 6,000 to 7,000 young people who do not find a permanent shelter: the genuine homeless drifters[2].
- Boys are preponderant in this group and over a quarter belong to an ethnic minority population. Their age averages between 15 and 18, their educational attainment is low and the school career is troublesome. Alcohol and drugs use is frequent as is offending (burglary and theft).

Most drifters have (very) problematic family backgrounds.

Child and youth protection

When parents "fail to provide and nurture their children in such a way that the latter are likely to suffer significant moral or physical harm", the judge may release or deprive the parents of parental responsibility. Then, the authority is transmitted to a relative or - if that is not feasible - a guardianship agency. At the end of December 1995 over 5,000 youths (under 18) were placed under guardianship. The majority of them reside in a foster family. The proportion of supervised children placed in a residential home has steadily decreased over recent years.

A less incisive order the judge can impose is the supervision order (OTS). This entails that the parents are allocated a social worker of a guardianship agency who supervises the upbringing situation. An OTS, averagely, lasts for three years. Their number has sharply risen in recent years: from 11,000 in 1988 to nearly 17,000 in 1995. Half of OTS children (52 per cent) live at home, the remainder live in a foster family (17 per cent), a children's home (20 per cent) or in other living arrangements (11 per cent).

Summary

In the table below evidence on the size of (serious) parenting problems is summarised.

Table 2.5 Data on the size of parenting problems

total number of families with children in the Netherlands	2.3 million
10%-15% families with less favourable child raising conditions	230,000 - 350,000
poverty	
. children (0-18) in low income and poor families	265,000 children
families with addicted parent(s) (1996)	30,000 - 33,000
abuse/neglect	
. BVA reported families (1996) (annually)	15,000
. survey into young people:	
physical abuse (lifetime)	93,000
sexual abuse (lifetime)	31,000
homeless drifters (1991)	6,000 - 7,000 young
youth protectors	
. minors under guardianship (1995)	5,000
. minors under supervision OTS (1995)	17,000

The numbers in this table, of course, cannot be added up: the various problem groups are likely to overlap substantially. National research is still lacking in the Netherlands that charts the problem sets in families against various combined problem indicators.

2.2 Policy and facilities around family upbringing

The starting point of Dutch policy on family upbringing is parents' primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children within the family.

Nevertheless, national and local government provide certain supplementary facilities that support parents in their child rearing duties. The key facilities are:

- leave arrangements;
- facilities for childcare (nurseries, creches, out-of-school care);
- parenting support.

Public child and youth health service too can be regarded as a provision of parenting support. These are discussed separately in chapter 5 of this section. Policies and facilities concerning childcare and parenting support are described extensively in section 1 (chapter 5).

2.2.1 Leave arrangements

Over recent years central government have laid down a number of regulations aiming at:

- enabling parents to better reconcile employment and care;
- better balancing the still existing inequitable division of paid and unpaid (care-) work between men and women;
- alleviating the trouble experienced by women returners in the labour market.

These regulations include extension of current leave arrangements and the introduction of a number of new ones.

Maternity and paternity leave

- Current maternity regulations for employed pregnant mothers were extended in 1990: instead of 12 weeks (6 before and 6 after confinement) women were allocated the legal right to a 16 week leave continuously paid for 100 per cent (4-6 weeks before and 10-12 weeks after confinement).
- By 1 January 1998 self-employed women and independent female professionals are entitled to a 16 week maternity benefit. The size of the benefit is means-tested and comes to a maximum of 100 per cent of the legal minimum wage.
- The partner of the woman is allowed a for 100 per cent paid paternity leave of (usually) two days.
- The employer of the pregnant mother is legally imposed not to endanger her health and pregnancy by the nature of duties and working conditions. The employer must also provide the opportunity for the mother to breastfeed her baby.

Parenthood leave

Since 1991 the Netherlands has a Parenthood Leave Act that enables employees with an under-4 child to take an unpaid parenthood leave for up to a maximum of 6 months, provided that the remaining working time amounts to 20 hours a week. It appears from interim evaluation of the Act (Spaans and van de Werf, 1994) that the take up of the leave arrangement is not quite living up to the expectations and that considerably more women (27 per cent) use it than men do (11 per cent). Hence, the effect to re-distribution of paid and unpaid work is considered to be small. Recently (July 1997), the regulations have been extended: the minimum limit of workings hours (20) was abolished and the age limit of the child was raised to 8.

Care leave

The opportunity to take a longer leave to care for or nurse ill home-mates (including children) has not been regulated by law in the Netherlands. Agreements on that matter are left to the social partners: employers and employees.
A number of collective wage agreements, though, have adopted related arrangements, but these turn out to be under-used owing to far-reaching financial consequences and the effects on pension building and social security.

2.2.2 Childcare and parenting support

Policies and facilities concerning childcare and parenting support are described extensively in section 1 (chapter 5). Below the content of this chapter is summarized.

Childcare facilities

In recent years the somewhat backlagging Dutch situation in the field of childcare services has undergone a rapid change. The national incentive program for childcare facilities has been very succesfull and these facilities are still growing in number after decentralisation to the local authorities. Meanwhile a quality system for childcare facilities is implemented. In the years to come a comparable incentive program will contribute to the extension of child day are and out-of-school facilities.

Parenting support

Since the beginning of the nineties the public and policymakers' attention for parenting support has increased considerably.
A recent inventory of local and regional parenting support/educational support services (Bakker et al., 1997) indicates that parenting support has become a 'booming bussiness': the amount and diversity of these services has undergone a rapid growth. Even more important is the fact that the agents involved are increasingly willing to cooperate in local or regional networks. In a growing number of towns/regions one central 'entrypoint' for clients is created. The seven experiments on parenting support are rolemodels in this development.

Children at risk

A growing body of research on the backgrounds of 'drop out' youth and on the processes involved in dropping out (especially in schools) as well as a growing public concern over the social problems of disadvanteged children and their families, have led to the development of policymeasures directed at young children at risk and their families. It has become clear that the existing services in this field do not suffice in reaching these groups and, even more important, in keeping these groups in an comprehensive, longterm support program.
The Ministeries of VWS, OC&W and Justice have joined hands in an interdepartmental program for parenting and educational support, targeted at urban areas with an accumulation of social problems.

This program will be implemented by the new government that will be installed after the elections of May 1998.

2.3 Conclusion

Upbringing conditions in the family

- A reasonably positive picture emerges from various surveys of the 'typical' upbringing conditions in Dutch families. In most families the material and immaterial circumstances are favourable and child rearing proceeds with minor problems and conflicts. In about 10 to 15 per cent of families upbringing conditions are less fortunate.
  But some criticisms can be made of the validity and representativeness of these surveys.
- The Dutch parenting style can be characterised as a 'limited negotiation economy', seeking balance between parental control and support for children's autonomy. Maintaining sound affective relationships with their children is a major value to parents - alongside 'exercising' authority. Dutch parents, for that matter, seem to be less 'modern' than they themselves think they are. Also internationally, the Dutch parent turns out to be moderate (between modern and traditional) if tolerance of deviant family patterns is concerned.
- Various studies into the effects of specific (deviant) parental or family features to child development do not yield clear indications of their impact on children. This with the exception of divorce/single families and long-term poverty in families: these do have demonstrable unfavourable effects.
- It appears from (qualitative) research into upbringing styles in ethnic minority families - apart from the great diversity, here too - that certain upbringing features may result in tense conditions to the children involved. Upbringing values in the family are sometimes at right angles to demands put on the children by the Dutch society.
  The cognitive delay of children from immigrant families relates to ethnic differences in upbringing styles. This makes for a different context to informal learning.
- From various sources indications can be obtained of the nature and size of poorly functioning families in terms of upbringing and care of children. But the various estimations remain rather isolated, because little is known about the combination or association of various indicators.

Provision and policy

In the Netherlands the family is regarded as the primary upbringing environment for children.

The parents are considered primarily responsible for child rearing within the family context. Government holds a reticent attitude here. Aversion of governmental intervention in citizens' private domain is strongly rooted in the Netherlands. Family and family life belong to this 'sacred' private domain.

As regards family upbringing government have two key functions:

- provision of support and facilities for parents in performing their upbringing duties;
- intervention into families who fail in providing for their children in such a way that the latter are likely to suffer significant moral or physical harm (child and youth protection).

Childcare support

Over the past 5-10 years government is pursuing a more active policy in the field of childcare for young children (0-4-year old) and (recently) out-of-school care for 4-12-year olds. The number of places in childcare has increased considerably. At the same time arrangements were made for ensuring and monitoring quality of childcare.

Legal provisions in the field of maternity, paternity and parenthood leaves have expanded as well.

Parenting support

Parenting support is a 'booming bussiness'. Government enhances the effectiveness and quality of these services, see for instance the seven experiments. Recently a policynote is launched that tackles the problem of targeting youth at risk and their families.

Notes section 3/2

1 Among other things in this survey, tolerance of non-traditional households and intentionally unmarried motherhood have been inquired (Hallman et al., 1991)

2 Under 25s are involved not having had permanent accommodation for at least 3 months. In addition, there is a considerable group of 'day drifters' who do have permanent (sleeping) accomodation.

3 Youth and education

This chapter briefly examines the Dutch education system for children and young people. The description of this broad field is necessarily concise and confines itself to:

- basic information on the principles and structure of the Dutch education system;
- some figures on the participation of youth in the education system;
- and recent trends in educational policy, with special attention to those trends that bear a direct relationship to (local) youth policy in the areas of welfare, care and prevention.

Those interested in a more comprehensive overview of the Dutch education system and governmental policies in this field, are referred to the Dutch Annual Report on education systems in the EU and EEA countries, published by the EURIDYCE Unit of the Netherlands.

3.1 Basic principles of education in the Netherlands

Freedom of denomination and organisation

An important feature of the Netherlands education system, as enshrined in par. 23 of the Constitution, is *freedom of denomination and organisation*. This means that parents are entitled to erect schools on the basis of religious, philosophical, educational and teaching principles. This basic right has resulted in the Netherlands to a wide range of schools of divergent denominations. This is also termed *'compartmentalisation (verzuiling)'*.

Within this total, two main groups can be distinguished: *public* and *private* schools. Public schools are of a neutral nature: they are accessible to all children and not bound to a certain 'orientation'. Private and public schools are put on a par as for funding. This is stipulated in par. 23 of the Constitution. This entails that private schools, provided that they comply with statutory requirements, can claim the same financial grant aid as public schools can.

Within the private schools can be distinguished between denominational schools based on a religious foundation and general private schools based on philosophical or certain educational and teaching principles. Also public schools, for that matter, can be based on specific educational and teaching principles: the Netherlands have a relatively large number of Jena plan, Montessori and Free (anthroposophical) schools.

Schools for private education are free to provide education according to their own beliefs. This freedom is restricted by the qualitative standards set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W).

These standards apply to all types of education, relate to matters such as the subjects to be covered, the core objectives and examination programmes, the number of teaching hours per year, required qualifications and competences of teachers, co-decision of parents and timetabling and report duties.

Decompartmentalisation in education

The compartmentalised structure, that has been so characteristic of Dutch society for years, is still apparent in the domain of education. Given its deep embedding in the law and regulations, the process of secularisation and decompartmentalisation has as yet had little impact upon the infrastructure of education.

In the past few years, nevertheless, a process of decompartmentalisation did occur within private education: in numerous places schools from various Christian denominations are merging into one general Christian school. Recently, a new denomination is emerging within education: Islamic education.

3.2 Structure and organisation of education in the Netherlands

Compulsory education

Children in the Netherlands are obliged, from the moment they reach the age of 5 until the end of the school year they turn 16, to participate in full-time (5 days a week) education. Thereafter, education is partially compulsory up to age 18. The compulsory school career consists of 8 years in primary education, followed by a minimum of 3 years in further education. Things are statutorily laid down in the Compulsory Education Act.

Types of education

In Dutch education the following types of school can be distinguished:

- primary education for children aged 4-12 (see section 3.4);
- secondary education for children aged 12-16/18 (see section 3.5);
- higher education for students from age 18 (see section 3.6);
- vocational education and adult education (see section 3.7);
- special education and special secondary education for children aged 3-20 in need of a special educational or remedial teaching approach (see section 3.8).

Alongside that, the Netherlands has various facilities for children of pre-school and early school age (2-6 years) aimed at combating educational disadvantages. These facilities are no part of the formal education system. They are discussed in section 3.12.1 of this chapter.

Educational facilities

The Educational Facilities Act (WOV) that came into force in 1987, allocates facilitation duties to a number of bodies mentioned in the Act.

Services are involved that are supportive to the functioning of the education system as a whole and services in the fields of research, test development and curriculum development.

Educational guidance

Particularly primary schools can call on educational guidance or advice agencies (SBDs) with educational and teaching-related questions. These services are regionally based and it is amongst their duties to examine individual pupils who are perceived as problematic. Based on that assessment teachers are advised on how to handle the particular child. The agencies examine about 25,000 pupils annually.

By 1 January 1997 local authorities became responsible for maintaining the SBDs and their quality.

Administrative organisation of education

The administrative responsibility for education has been divided amongst different parties: central, provincial and local government and the schools themselves (school boards).

- Central government or the Minister of education, culture and science heading the OC&W Ministry of the same name – steers and monitors education by means of law and regulations. Main central duties are to ensure structured costing, facilities for public education, supervision, examination and financial aid to students. Central government also promotes innovation in education and coordinates science policy. Education is decentrally supervised by the Inspectorate of education, under the aegis of the OC&W Minister.
- The provinces have mainly supervisory and arbitration duties: their role relating to educational administration and content is only a restricted one.
- Local authorities have two functions in the field of education: local government is the administrator for all schools and, in addition, is the competent authority as board of governors of public education. Not until recently, local authorities can detach this latter duty as a statutory or private form of administration.
- Private schools have their own boards of governors (of the association, foundation or Church body).

3.3 Key features and developments in educational policy

3.3.1 Basic features of educational policy

To ensure sound education is one of the core duties of government. Responsibility for educational policy rests with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Expenditure on education makes up some 14% of aggregate state spending.

Core duties of education, according to central government are:

- to contribute to pupils' personality building as part of their schooling;
- to contribute to social and cultural education, preparing pupils for democratic citizenship and responsibilities;
- to contribute to vocational preparation and participation in the labour market.

The enhancement of young people's opportunities for social participation, therefore, is an important element of education. The pursuit of yet closer alignment of education to the demands in the labour market is one of the reasons for recent innovations in the education system.

Traditionally, *combating inequality in opportunities* is another key strand of educational policy. Owing to cohort studies initiated in the mid 1960s, evidence is now available of the relation between scholastic achievement and the milieu of origin, as it developed over a 25 year period. It appears from this research that the direct effect of social background on children's school careers has declined: the choice of secondary education after primary education has become increasingly consistent with actual educational attainment of the children – regardless of social background. In that sense education has met its emancipatory goals. But there is a snake in the grass: the same research demonstrates that the indirect effect of social environment (i.e. the higher the stratum, the higher the achievement) has become more pronounced in the same period of time (SCP, 1992).

In Dutch education special provision has been made for *young people of immigrant backgrounds*, e.g. focusing on the first reception of children arriving in the Netherlands through family reunion (often not til school age) in order for them to be taught in their own language and culture, to be taught Dutch as second language (NT2) and for cross-cultural learning.

3.3.2 Innovations in education

Vision development: from teaching to learning

Rapidly changing society places new demands on people, so also on education. Information and knowledge are soon outdated and, at the same time, are increasingly accessible through the new media. In modern society it becomes ever more important to hold particular attitudes and skills, whilst the significance of acquiring bare information is shifting more to the background. In the education sector the question has much been debated over recent years how education should respond to these developments. The outcome of this debate can be summarised as follows: the above three core functions of education remain unchanged, but the view of how they are to be realised is starting to change. Transmission of knowledge and cognitive development have long been central to education. Today, non-cognitive qualities and skills are more highlighted, such as collegiality, independence, sense of responsibility, flexibility, immunity to stress, working discipline and accuracy.

In other words: education's main focus has long been on the 'head' and today's education is striking the correct balance of 'hand, head and heart' – an equilibrium between intellectual, emotional, social, expressive, technical and manual skills.
Concrete elaboration of this philosophy is reflected by the Basic Education Act, which came into force in July 1993, and by the development of a 'studiehuis' (study house) for the second phase of secondary education.

Administrative reform

Education was reputed to be over-regulated because of numerous statutory requirements. Schools used to be rather limited in their actual policy scope, headmasters being secretaries rather than executives. In the past ten years much has been set in motion to restore autonomy in schools, the role of the authorities changing from prescribing formats and proceedings to clear-cut describing the targeted returns from education. To strengthen this, the actual policy scope had to be widened and management had to be enhanced through economies of scale in large-scale merger operations.
Examples include regional platforms (RO) for vocational training and adult education, building large comprehensive schools and the Equipment and Access Operation in primary education. The new administrative units were given discretion of budgets to be allocated not to them but to the service providers. For instance the post-qualifying training budget has been converted in recent years from provision-led tot needs-led. At the same time investments have been made for enhancing the management qualities of heads of school. Schools are increasingly challenged to account tot the outside world and, primarily, to the parents for the policy conducted and its outcome. The publication of school marks is a great topical interest. The first example has given rise to intensive public debate in the past few years on the benefit of and conditions to exposing school results to publicity.

3.4 Primary education (4-12 year)

Basic facts and figures

- Upon reaching age 4 children can be admitted to primary school. On turning 5 they reach compulsory school age.
- Passing through primary school takes up to a minimum of eight consecutive years. Children mostly are divided into year groups (group 1 through 8).
- In the school year 1994/1995 approx. 1.5 million children attended primary schools: 95% of them in mainstream primary education and 5% in special primary education (see section 3.8). The number of children in mainstream primary education has declined over the past ten years due to a decreased growth in the population.

- Of over 7,300 primary schools (1996) 35% belong to public education and 65% to private education including Roman Catholic schools (29%) and Protestant schools (30%).

Objectives

The general objective of primary education is to enhance emotional and intellectual development, creativity, acquisition of indispensable knowledge and of social, cultural and physical skills. Education starts from the viewpoint that children grow up in a multi-cultural society.

A number of core objectives have been set nation-wide for primary education. These objectives constitute a general indicative framework for all schools of primary education (public and private) and are adjusted every 5 years.

The national core objectives for primary education are in line with those for basic education in secondary schools.

Pupils of foreign backgrounds

The proportion of immigrant originated pupils in primary education has sharply increased in recent years and will grow even further in the years ahead.

In the school year 1995/96 over 13% of primary school population (mainstream education) were of ethnic minority backgrounds including pupils of predominantly Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese origin. Due to the fact that immigrant groups concentrate in the large cities the proportion of ethnic minority pupils there is significantly higher than the national average. Their share may increase up to 50% and, sometimes, to nearly 100% of the primary school population.

Table 3.1 **Pupils in mainstream primary education, school year 1995/96[1]**

	abs.	%
Total	1,477,052	100
Of Dutch background	1,279,937	86.6
Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds	197,115	13.3
of which:		
Turkey	*46,281*	*3.1*
Morocco	*42,525*	*2.9*
Surinam	*36,921*	*2.5*
Dutch Antilles/Aruba	*9,883*	*0.6*
refugees	*14,379*	*1.0*
remainder	*47,126*	*3.2*

Source: CBS, Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands, 1996, page 101.

3.5 Secondary education

Reorganisation of secondary education

In the late 1960s far-reaching reorganisation of secondary education was set in motion. Old types of school were replaced by the current ones that can roughly be categorised into vbo (pre-vocational education), (k)mbo (short secondary vocational courses) and avo (general secondary education. These reorganisations were paralleled with economies of scale whereby different types of school were merged into one establishment (comprehensive school). The introduction of a 'bridging year' (first secondary year) allows for intermediate transfers to other school types.
In doing so, the first step was taken towards more integration between various school types, and to easier halfway switches for pupils to follow their own pathways in education. This connected up to the increased attention on individual development of young people within the education system.

Basic facts and figures

- After leaving primary education (on average at age 12) young people pass on to secondary education. In principle, they can choose from four types of education[2]:
  - pre-vocational education (vbo, duration 4 years);
  - junior general secondary education (mavo, duration 4 years);
  - senior general secondary education (havo, duration 5 years);
  - pre-university education (vwo, duration 6 year).
- Secondary education has a first phase and a second phase.
  The first phase of secondary education includes the four-year courses of vbo and mavo and the first three years of havo and vwo. The second phase of secondary education includes the school years 4-5 of havo and the years 4-6 of vwo.
- In secondary education 18% of schools belong to public education, 32% are Roman Catholic and 26% Protestant; (the remainder of private schools: 24%).

3.5.1 The first phase of secondary education

The first phase of secondary education is of a founding nature. In recent years, modernisation and harmonisation of this first phase have hard been worked on. The introduction of 'basic education' is of key relevance to Dutch educational policy and its implementation is an important innovation of educational practice.

Basic Education Act

Since 1993 policy is directed at realising – within the wide scope of secondary education – a uniform basic package of knowledge and skills that are to be acquired by all pupils in the age range of 12 to 15. Therefore, a list of 15 subjects has been compiled to be adopted by basic education. In addition, the core objectives of basic education are set every five years by central government and legally laid down.

The core objectives define the desired capacities in the areas of knowledge, insight and skills. If these core objectives are met, pupils should be able to successfully participate in their social environment, in education, in work situations and further in society. The core objectives are roughly defined: elaboration by learning activity is at the discretion of the school.

Work with core objectives is intended to safeguard secondary education's scope for connecting properly with the requirements of changing modern society. Efforts are also made to have the core objectives of basic education align with those of primary education, in order for transfers from primary education to secondary education to proceed smoothly. Finally, basic education is intended to postpone the moment children have to make their choices for particular further education or training.

Changes in vso/vbo/mavo: pathways development

Over 60% of pupils in secondary education follow first pre-vocational education (vbo) or junior general secondary education (mavo).

A smaller proportion pursue pre-vocational training in special education (vso) involving over half a million pupils. A large part of this population, after obtaining the certificate, pass on to forms of vocational education. Many of these pupils, however, turn out to fail in further education that is not properly aligned with the preparatory routes of vso/vbo/mavo. Recently, (in January 1998) proposals to alter rather substantially the current system have been passed through the Lower Chamber of Parliament.

Key changes are:

- Vbo and mavo remain, but will more expressly be arranged as pre-vocational education (vmbo). As a means for that three coherent *learning pathways* are introduced that link with the core objectives of basic education, secondary education and qualifications for further vocational training. There will be theory pathways preparing for senior secondary vocational education (mbo) or senior general secondary education (havo), practical, trade-oriented educational routes leading to short senior secondary vocational education (kort-mbo) and a mixture thereof.
- Pupils with handicap or learning difficulty who are currently in special secondary education (vso) are, where possible, integrated into regular education. The schools receive extra facilities for *educational pathway support* for these pupils and other pupils in need for it. Therefore, alliances are being set up between vso and vbo/mavo schools.
- There will be extra facilities of *practical education* geared to pupils who are expected not to move on after vbo/mavo to further education.

By 1 August 1998 this so-called *educational pathway system* will be implemented.

By that date, also a nation-wide system has to be in place of alliances between secondary (vo) schools and special secondary (vso) schools that are, in conjunction with local government, to shape practical education and educational pathway support (see also section 3.8).

3.5.2 Second phase of secondary education

The second phase of secondary education include the school years 4-5 of havo and the years 4-6 of vwo (pre-university education). In 1998 a number of educational innovations will be implemented in this second phase. Major elements in this innovation are:

- Introduction of four educational 'profiles' from which students have to choose one on entering the fourth grade. The profiles are: culture and social science, economics and civics; nature and health; nature and technics. Each profile contains a common part (45%), one part that is specific for that profile (30%) and one optional part (25%).
- Development of the second phase into a new type of teaching and learning: the 'studiehuis'.

Introduction of these innovations imply fundamental change in organisation and practice of the second phase of secundary education.

The 'studiehuis' concept means that students in this phase will become much more independent in choosing their subjects, in planning their educational activities and in working (alone or in groups) on specific projects. The role of the teacher will accordingly change from teaching the class to supporting students, either in groups or individually. Key objective of this fundamental change is to better prepare these pupils for the next phase in their education (hbo school or university) and for their future functioning as independent individuals in society and in working environments.

Participation in secondary education, general and vocational ((k/mbo)

In the school year 1994/95 over 1.2 million young people were in different types of full-time secondary education.

Over 876,000 (72%) were in general education. Nearly 290,000 pupils (24%) were in types of vocational education: mbo (secondary vocational education) or short mbo (kmbo).

Over 36,000 pupils (3%) participated in forms of special secondary education (vso).

Table 3.2 Participation in secondary education (general or vocational)

school year 1994/95	number of pupils	%boys	%girls	% share in total pupils population
mainstream education				
including:				
· pre-vocational (vbo)	210.345	59	41	17
·secondary vocational (k/mbo)	289.778	52	48	24
· general (mavo/havo/vwo)	666.018	48	52	55
special education (vso)	35.596	67	33	■
Total	1,202,737	51	49	100

■ Relating to full-time participation in education. Apart from that a small group (4%) participates in part-time education.

It appears from the table that girls (slightly) more often participate in higher levels of secondary education. Boys are slightly predominant in the junior vocational types of education (vbo and (k)mbo). Also other evidence shows there to be a girls recovery operation in education in the Netherlands. From the eighties, the average education level of girls raised more rapidly than that of boys. Also girls' average achievement is higher than boys'. Girls are currently (slightly) ahead of boys. These gender differences in school careers and achievement are even more significant in certain ethnic minority groups. Girls in these groups are higher achievers than boys are.

3.6 Higher education

Higher education in the Netherlands is divided into:

- higher professional education (hbo);
- university education (wo) divided into a first phase and a second phase.

To qualify for entering hbo young people are required to hold an mbo, havo or vwo diploma. Entering university (academic) education requires, in principle, a vwo diploma. Many (notably science) universities have added extra requirements to students' vwo subjects. This entails in practice that vwo pupils already have to anticipate and 'get in lane' for academic further education at around age 16.

In the school year 1994/95 over 400,000 people participated in higher education[3].

Table 3.3 Participation in higher education (1994-1995)

school year 1994/95 of students	number of students	% males	% females	% share in total
Higher professional (hbo)	221,967	52	48	100
- agriculture	9,127	71	29	4
- technology & science	52,242	86	14	24
- economics	64,535	57	43	29
- health care	18,065	20	80	8
- social professions	24,448	23	77	11
- child education	37,111	30	70	17
- arts	16,439	45	55	
University (wo)	185,215	54	46	100
- agriculture	5,273	58	42	3
- science	13,727	68	32	7
- technology	26,411	84	16	14
- economics	28,652	75	25	15
- law	28,206	50	50	15
- health	18,067	41	59	10
- social sciences	34,738	36	64	19
- language and culture	29,383	35	65	16
- education	748	56	44	0
Total (hbo + wo)	**407,182**	**53**	**47**	

Males are (still) slightly outnumbering females in higher education, but the number of females seems to surpass soon.

The gender pattern in students' choices of subjects/specialisation, though, is often still a classic one:

- (young) males predominantly opt for agriculture, technology, economics or science;
- (young) females predominantly opt for language/culture, social sciences or health (care).

Nevertheless, some shifts can be established in these traditional choices: for instance, an increasing number of young women opt for science; in (traditionally male-dominated) medicine female students are in the majority; a similar development occurs in law studies.

The group of young people passing on from secondary education to higher education (hbo and wo) has steadily increased in recent years.

The total number of students in higher professional education (hbo) has doubled in 15 years. University education (wo) shows a more moderate growth. In the period of 1990-1995 the number of wo students has even slightly declined.

Table 3.4 **Development of numbers of students in hbo and wo (1980-1995)**

	hbo		wo	
	number of students *	index	number of students**	index
abs.				
1980	131,900	100	147,900	100
1985	211,600	160	166,700	113
1990	246,900	187	178,700	121
1995	259,300	197	172,800	117

* full-time and part-time students as well
** only full-time students (over 90% van the total)

Source: CBS Statistical Yearbook 1997

3.7 Adult general education and vocational training

Adult education

In the nineteenth century all kinds of facilities emerged for general education and development of young and adult citizens, mostly in the private (non-statutory) sector. The state has long been little involved in this form of education. Not until the eighties of this century the first steps were taken towards its legally defining by means of the Adult Education Framework Act (KVE).

Vocational education

Also in the field of vocational education statutory regulations have long been restricted and the impact of the private sector (employers) has been great.
Only in 1968 senior secondary vocational education (mbo) was adopted into the Secondary Education Act. From then on this sector has seen a number of far-reaching legal adjustments including the sector building and renewal operation in secondary vocational education (SVM) as enshrined in the SVM Act in 1990.
Part-time mbo and the apprenticeship system (part-time compulsory vocational education for young people aged 16 and 17) were adopted in 1993 into the Vocational Courses Act (WCBO).

The Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB)

Only by 1 January 1996, on enacting the Adult and Vocational Education Act, both kinds of education were coherently embedded in a statutory framework. This Act replaces the above Acts, each governing only one part of the sector.
The WEB is aimed at creating more coherence in the various forms of education within the sector of vocational education and adult education. For instance in 1997 a national qualification system for vocational education was enacted distinguishing between two different learning pathways. Also adult education courses are accommodated in a separate course model in which a number of levels relate to courses in vocational training.

In order for this new system to be implemented Regional Education and Training Centres (ROCs) are being set up in which the various education providing agencies are participating. Through the ROCs tailored education for students will more effectively be provided and demands in the labour market can be incorporated.

Employment Service Act

In 1997, alongside the WEB, a new Act on employment services came into force. Under the new Act the core business of employment services is focusing on services to hard to place jobseekers. One of the means available is to provide schooling. The new Act governs, among other things, branch-based education for the unemployed, the Vocational Orientation and Employment Centres (CBBs) and the Adult Vocational Training Centres (CVVs). They relate to protected employment channelling and schooling for hard to place jobseekers.

Participation of young people in adult education and vocational education

National statistics on participation of the young (adults) in adult education provision are not available. Table 3.2 in section 3.5.2 does show figures on youth participation in senior secondary vocational education: mbo and kmbo. It appears from the table that about one quarter of pupils in further education (excluding higher education) are in vocational courses of (k)mbo.

3.8 Special education

Basic facts and figures

- In the Netherlands there are about 1,000 schools for special education, catering for children who, one way or another, are unable to participate in mainstream education. There is special primary education as well as special secondary education (vso). Children can enter special education from age 3 and can stay on there up to the maximum age of 20.
- Of schools for special education 27% belong to public education and 73% to private education.
- The average number of pupils per school amounts to 120.
- The most important types of special education are:
  - education for children with hearing, seeing and/or speech disabilities;
  - education for physically handicapped, chronically ill and hospitalised children;
  - education for children with educational and/or learning difficulties (mlk, zmlk, zmok and lom) and for toddlers at developmental risk (iobk).
- Over 110,000 children are in forms of special education. Boys are highly over-represented (68% van the population). In recent years also the proportion of ethnic minority pupils has increased in special education.

Developments and innovation in special education

Special education has developed in the Netherlands as a sector more or less separate from mainstream education. Whilst - as a consequence of demographic developments - the number of young people in mainstream education have steadily decreased in recent decades, the number of pupils in special education has risen by some 15% in the past 10 years. Furthermore, it appears from research that children once entered special education only rarely pass on to mainstream further education (Tesser, 1996).

These developments have prompted government to design policies on closing the gap between mainstream and special education and on reducing the number of applications for special education.

Primary education: Back to School Together Again (WSNS)

Since the fifties an ever growing number of children was considered to need mor educational care than mainstream education could offer. These children were referred from mainstream education to special education for children with behavioural and/or learning difficulties. This has triggered an undesirable spiral movement: the high costs of special education put the budget for equipping mainstream primary schools under pressure. This makes these schools even less capable of taking care of difficult pupils and causes even earlier and more frequent referrals to special education.

The Back to School Together Again campaign, launched in 1991, aims at breaking through this spiral movement, for instance by creating alliances between primary schools and schools for special education. Primary schools will thus be allocated extra capacity and facilities in order to be able to maintain and support problem children within mainstream primary education. The project has lead to a national network of alliances between mainstream schools and schools for special education.

In 1994 the WSNS Starting Act was launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W) as an extra incentive to inter-school cooperation. The Act governs an approach of ambulatory support for pupils in special need, the setting up of regional referral committees to assess whether or not pupils should enter special education, and a widened scope for admissions to mainstream primary education. From 1995 supplementary measures were taken to standardise the percentage of pupils who can be referred from primary education to special education. The standard is set at 2%. Thus released resources will be allocated to special services in mainstream education.

The new Primary Education Act (WPO), coming into force by 1 August 1998, has adopted measures to further bridge the gap between mainstream education and special education for children with learning and/or behavioural difficulty (lom, mlk, iobk).

Pupil-based financing

In addition to special education for children with learning disabilities and behavioral problems (lom and mlk), the Netherlands has a large number of highly specialized schools for children with specific handicaps, be it mental, sensory or physical.

In cooperation with these schools and parents of pupils, government is working towards a clustering of these schools in socalled Regional Education Centres (RECs). Attached to this, the possiblity will be introduced for parents of these pupils to make their own choices concerning the preferred type of education for their children. They can either send their child to an REC or they can choose to send their child to a regular school, with additional support provided by the REC.
After application for this facility (to an independent committee of experts), parents receive a 'voucher' that enables them to negotiate with the (regular) school on the necessary extra help and expertise that is needed for their child.

Cooperation of vso (special) with vbo and mavo (mainstream)

Also special secondary education (vso) will more closely align and cooperate with mainstream education (vbo and mavo). In 1998 special secondary education for children with learning and/or behavioural difficulties (vso-lom/mlk) will be adopted into the Secondary Education Act. In each region vo/vso alliances will be set up to be joint by all schools for vbo, mavo and vso. From these alliances three educational pathways will be offered through which pupils can obtain a diploma that provides them access to further education.
Within these alliances in principle all pupils should be accommodated: also those in need of extra support in obtaining a diploma. The alliances themselves have to develop facilitating structures to ensure pupils' extra support.
In order to meet the needs of pupils who are yet incapable of obtaining mainstream qualifications, despite extra support, a separate route will be introduced: the *labour market oriented* pathway.
For financing the facilitating structure and the labour market oriented pathway a services budget is available that is allocated by the Ministry to the vo/vso alliances. The schools will jointly decide how the money will be spent.

3.9 Educational careers

Young people spend much time in education, in terms of hours spent weekly on attendance and homework as well as measured by years of life. An increasing number of young people stay on in education after compulsory age (16). Currently, over 90% of 15-19-year-olds are in education. Of 20-24-year-olds nearly 50% are in education[4].
Young people thus enter the labour market at an ever older age: in 1980 one-third of school-leavers were aged 20 or over, at present nearly two-thirds are aged 20 or over on entering the labour market. This increase is even sharper in the number of female pupils and students: the percentage of female school-leavers in the age of 20 and up inclined over the period of 1980-1996 from about 25% to 60%.

Parallel to the number of years spent in education also young people's average education level is on the increase:

- the proportion of pupils leaving education at the lowest level (primary and maybe some years of secondary education) declined from over 20% in the early 1970s to 10% in the nineties;
- in the same period the number of school-leavers from the higher level types of education also rose;
- and the number of young people leaving education without qualifications has declined accordingly. The decrease in school-leavers without diploma to 10% already stabilised in the mid 1980s and has remained stable since.

Through the steady rise in the average education level, this 10% of school-leavers without qualifications become increasingly disadvantaged (SCP, 1997 Youth Report).

Learning and working

As young people stay on longer in education, their transfer to the labour market will shift towards an ever older age (over 20).

Admittedly, a considerable proportion of youngsters who are still in education do collect already work experience in side lines and holiday jobs. Approx. 30% of 15-19-year-olds still in education hold also jobs that are often of a modest size: up to 12 hours a week. Of the group of 20-24-year-olds still in education 56% also have a side job. Nearly half of this group (44%) parallels part-time education to a job of 34 hours or over[5].

Also young people who are officially not allowed to do paid work turn out often to moonlight: 28% of 12-14-year-olds are sidelining with like car washing, babysitting, and the like. Most pupils and students who are also working do so for financial reasons. They may gather work experience that improves their prospects of opportunities in the labour market (NIBUD, 1994).

3.10 Bottlenecks in education

Educational disadvantage

A number of children enter primary education with educational disadvantages and are hampered to fully participate in education. Language problems are often involved, or restricted abilities for play, cooperation or independence.

Research demonstrates that children's educational disadvantage relate to characteristics of the family, such as educational, vocational and ethnic backgrounds of the parents. Based on this evidence, central government grants extra resources to schools with disadvantaged pupils, the so called educational priority policy (OVB, see section 3.12.1).

Early school-leaving

Some 60,000 young people annually leave education before successfully completing the programme. But far from all these young people are unfit for or disadvantaged in labour market: in most cases they are sufficiently qualified – also without a diploma (starting qualification) - to obtain a job.

It is estimated that about 20,000 – 25,000 of these young people are considered genuinely disadvantaged in the labour market: they include pupils who only managed primary and/or special education (about 10,000 annually), and 'drop-outs' who switched off without obtaining any qualification. Pupils of immigrant background are at higher risk of joining this group of dropouts than are young Dutch people. This is especially true for young male Moroccans in socially deprived areas in the cities. Also pupils with poorly educated parents are more likely to drop out (SCP, 1997 Youth reports).

Non-attendance

A self-report survey into secondary pupils (1994) indicates that quite a few pupils sometimes or regularly are truanting: a quarter of pupils truanted in the past month once or twice (13%), 3 to 5 times (7%) or even 6 times or more. Truancy relates to pupil's age (the older the more often), to the degree of satisfaction with school, and to characteristics of the family: children from one-parent families and pupils in trouble at home are often truanting. If schools do not respond to truancy in a rapid and consistent manner the child's bonding with school starts to weaken and truancy will become ever more frequent, finally ending up in early leaving.

Bullying and violence at school

School turns out not always and for everyone to be a safe community. In recent years attention has increasingly been focused on bullying and violence in schools. In the 1990s various surveys were conducted into violent, disruptive and bullying behaviour of pupils in primary and secondary education.

A first tentative study revealed that 20-25% of primary and secondary school pupils regularly become victims of bullying (Mooij, 1991). A more recent and more representative survey yields lower percentages: 9% of 4-7-year-olds are regularly bullied and 16% of 8-11-year-olds. It also appeared that victims of bullying often themselves join bullying others (Peeters and Woldringh, 1994). Recent research into violence in schools shows that 15% of pupils have become victims of physical violence from schoolmates (Mooij, 1994).

3.11 Young people's views of school and education

National and regional research into pupils provides some evidence on young people's own views of the school and education they are in.

- A generous majority of pupils (some 75%) appear to like the school (very much). About one quarter do not like the school, even hate it.
- Most pupils assess the atmosphere at school as positive, but another group (15-20%) is dissatisfied. Girls and younger pupils are the most positive on the school climate. Immigrant pupils are more negative about it than the Dutch-originated. Also junior levels of secondary education (vbo and mavo) appear to be more negative in their judgement of the atmosphere than are the senior levels (havo/vwo).
- Most pupils are motivated to participate in education: they arrive in time (75%), do not find it hard to go to school (60%) and attend without aversion (67%). It applies also here that young pupils and girls make up the most highly motivated group, whilst ethnic minority pupils are (slightly) lower motivated than those of Dutch origin. Pre-university (vwo) pupils and senior secondary vocational (mbo) pupils are the most highly motivated.
- Most pupils feel that their education is useful for their future studies and careers (85%). But not all pupils are optimistic about their prospects of education and/or work: 9% think they have little chance of getting a job after leaving education, 9% are not very hopeful to find pleasant further education or employment after leaving school. Nearly 30% prefer not to think about their own prospects after leaving school.

3.12 Local educational policy and local preventive youth policy

Local authorities are also allocated a directing role in the field of primary and secondary education and empowered for it by decentralised policy duties and accompanying resources, comprising:

- responsibility for the educational guidance agencies;
- responsibility for parts of adult education (basic education for specific target groups);
- education on vital ethnic minority matters in primary education;
- the resources for NT2[6] and educational priority areas;
- accommodation (buildings) for primary and secondary education.

Alongside that, central government encourages local authorities to devise a comprehensive local educational policy with explicit link to local youth and welfare policies.

An increasing number of local authorities are developing these inputs and setting them down in a local educational policy document.
There is, of course, a relation between local educational policy and local preventive youth policy.

A number of policy measures designed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science are of particular relevance for linking local preventive youth policy with educational policy. These measures are briefly described below.

3.12.1 Combating educational disadvantage

Since the second part of the seventies central government has been conducting a policy on combating learning disadvantages in children entering primary education: the educational priority policy (OVB-Act). By 1 August 1998 a considerable part of this policy will be delegated to local government.

Educational priority policy (OVB)

The policy on countering educational disadvantage has been stipulated in the National Policy Framework of the 1993-1997 Educational Priority Policy. The OVB objective is to equip schools to accommodate and bring up to standard children who start education with disadvantage. Key OVB target groups are immigrant pupils and pupils with poorly educated parents. Educational priority policy is conducted along two lines:

- *Schoolbased:* a certain 'weight' is attached to each child in primary and secondary education based on a number of social background features.
  The sum of pupils' weights, provided this exceeds a certain treshold value, determines the extra facilities made available foor the school. This way it is acknowledged that the school has relatively many pupils with a high risk of (further) educational disadvantage.
  In primary education over 40% of pupils qualify for extra facilities in the context of combating their educational disadvantage; in secondary education this is about 11%. Nationally, approx. a quarter of OVB pupils are of ethnic minority background. This percentage is significantly higher in the major cities.
- *Area-based*: a number of areas with concentrated deprivation problems are allocated supplementary funds by central government. There are 44 such OVB areas. In these areas cooperating schools and welfare agencies are allocated extra funds for supplementary activities. These activities are to comply with the National Policy Framework.

Apart from that, the 26 municipalities with the highest numbers of ethnic minorities and new arrivals receive extra resources for initial reception of new arrivals and follow up activity, with special focus on NT2 (Dutch as second language teaching) and girls of immigrant backgrounds.

It appears from evaluative studies that the OVB policy is only partly successful: many of these children do not succeed in catching up their initial delay (Tesser, 1996). On the basis of their poor educational attainment the majority of these pupils pass on to junior levels of secondary education (vbo or mavo).

The Educational Disadvantage Policy Act (GOA)

By 1 August 1998 policy on combating educational disadvantage will largely be decentralised towards local authorities. This has been laid down in the Educational Disadvantage Policy Act (GOA). By the enactment of the GOA the national area-based OVB policy has been abolished. The resources for OVB areas are now allocated to local authorities.

The schoolbased OVB grants remain upheld. The schools in receipt of these funds shall state how they are going to deploy these resources.

The Ministry of Education has stipulated in the GOA National Policy Framework (1998-2002) that local government is obliged to improve starting conditions of pupils entering primary schools. Creation of effective pre-school and initial education provision is a keynote.

Local authorities in receipt of a substantial amount of resources for combating disadvantage (at least NGL 0.25 million)[7] have the statutory duty to draw up jointly with local education staff (public, private and special), a *educational disadvantage plan*. Schools are to deploy their resources in line with that plan.

3.12.2 Combating of dropping out of school

About 60,000 pupils leave education before qualifying for a certificate. A large part of them find a job or a placement in a training course. Annually, approx. 10,000 young school-leavers remain out of work and do not rejoin education. They make up the hard core of youth unemployment.

Central government announced in 1992 (the memorandum 'A well-prepared start') to try and reduce this hard core in 6 years time by 60%. Policy is directed at a comprehensive approach to young dropouts.

Therefore, a Regional Report and Coordination Centre on Early School Leaving (RMC) is to be set up in each municipality by cooperating local governments, where early leavers are registered, guided and returned to mainstream secondary education or practical training.

In the course of 1998 a nation-wide and comprehensive safety net must thus be realised to identify and receive early school-leavers, who will next be guided back to mainstream secondary education (VO) or be placed into a scheme preparing for the labour market.

It is to be expected that also conversion of vso, vbo and mavo into a pathway learning system will be conducive to the prevention of school dropping out. It is particularly pupils from this type of educational background who tend to drop out of further education.

3.12.3 Youth and safety

The Safe School

School features more and more significantly in children's lives, in their everyday existence. School in this context is often called a second upbringing environment (after the family).

At the same time, indications and concerns about deterioration of the school climate – the atmosphere in school – are also rising. Particularly the problems of 'bullying' pupils and teachers are then involved or on the increase, violent behaviour sometimes taking very extreme shape. In response to this, in the fall of 1995, central government launched a 4-year campaign to promote safety in primary and secondary schools. Within primary education the campaign concentrated particularly on bullying; in secondary education also the battle against violent behaviour is included and other forms of delinquency and insecurity in and around schools.
The point of departure of the campaign is not only that safety in schools is to be countered by technical measures, but strongly relates to how teachers and pupils associate, to the internal organisation of the school, to interaction between school and parents/carers and to cooperation between school and other facilities.

3.12.4 Integration of services: the 'Broad School' concept

An innovative development, that is presently recieving much attention in the Netherlands, is the concept of the 'Broad School'. This means that the school(building) is used as a basis to integrate other area-based services, such as services in the area of parenting support, preschool educational support, child day care, playgroups for preschool children, preventive child health services, informal education, voluntary youth organisations, police surveillance etc.
By concentrating area based services and activities in the school building the threshhold for children and their parents to employ these services is reduced. Furthermore this situation can give rise to closer co-operation bewteen the services.

Notes section 3/3

1 The table shows the number of so-called Cumi-pupils (Cultural Minority pupils). This is a well defined group of ethnic minority pupils for whom special facilities are available.
2 For children who cannot be admitted into one of these regular forms of education there are parallelling forms of special further education: special secondary education (vso).
3 Higher education is, in principle, open to all age groups. Evidence on participation in higher education by age group is not available. In practice the participation of adults (aged 25 and up) is small.
4 For comparison: in 1980 under 75% of 15-19-year-olds were in education or training, of 20-24-year-olds this percentage was 21%.
5 Those on work for over 12 hours a week are rated amongst the labour force in the Netherlands.
6 Dutch as second language teaching.
7 Relating to approx. 30% of all Dutch local authorities. For the remaining local authorities drawing up a local plan is not a statutory duty.

4 Leisure, youth culture and sports

4.1 Research evidence on leisure pursuits of young people

Children and young people, as against to 10 years ago, have more time of their own not to be spent on compulsory school attendance, homework, side jobs and domestic chores. Typically, schoolgoing youth have about 40 leisure hours a week to be spent at will. Parallel to that, leisure tends to be spent more outside the family home. Also due to the growing number of working mothers youngsters spend more time in formal or informal out-of-home accommodation, in friends' homes and outdoors with friends or by themselves.

4.1.1 Children (aged 4-11)

Just like in other countries most children of 4-7 years of age in the Netherlands spend their leisure time mainly on indoor play (at home, with playmates or host parents) and in the immediate environment of the family home. In addition, children often watch TV. On average they spend over 100 minutes a day watching TV. From about age 8 computer and sound equipment have come to assume an ever bigger place in children's leisure. Outdoor leisure spending is partly organised, especially including sports club memberships: approx. 60 per cent of children aged 9-11 are member of a sport association.

A back seat generation?

There are also indications of children's leisure being more and more 'pre-programmed' by the parents. The latter find it no longer safe to have their children play in the streets unattended. Play with other children occurs by appointment at one of the children's homes. In addition, the children join courses and clubs. These children are termed 'the back seat generation'. They are children taken to-and-fro by car for playing appointments, courses, and the like. These children are actually under permanent adult supervision: just having a nice time in the streets is hardly possible. How many children actually are growing up under these circumstances has not yet been established by research.

4.1.2 Young people (aged 12-24)

The following picture emerges from various research studies into leisure pursuits of young people.

Sports

Doing sport is the most popular leisure pursuit of young people: in various studies 50-60 per cent of them report doing sport regularly, boys more often than girls.
As they grow up (and especially after age 15) interest in doing sport declines. Girls switch off younger (around age 12) than boys do.
Of 16-19-year-olds less than 50% are doing sport. Of 16-24-year-olds only 30% is sufficiently physically active according to national health criteria.
In recent years participation of youth in organised sports has declined quite a lot. This is partly due to the trend towards doing more individual sport. In addition, the number of young people not engaged in any sportive activity is also on the increase.
The decrease in sports participation of young people is especially marked with the four largest cities in the Netherlands. Youngsters that relatively seldom join organised sport are those of ethnic minority background.

Friendships

After doing sport associating with friends is the most frequently reported leisure pursuit. Girls spend more time on it than boys do.
Secondary pupils of advanced level (VWO, pre-university education) have more close and school bound friendship networks. In pupils of lower levels of education friendship relations are more of a volatile and loose nature: these youngsters often drift from one group to another. Separation between school and leisure is often stark with these young people.

Going out

Strongly related to youth friendships is going out: visiting pubs, discos and dance parties in small groups. Going out behaviour gets going in the first years of secondary education (12-15 years of age). Pupils in junior education transfer from school-, family- and friends' parties to the 'real' rave scene at a younger age than do pupils of higher education.
From age 16 raving becomes less frequent. The highly educated go out more often than the lower educated, to whom going out is mainly a weekend occupation.

TV, video, radio

Watching the box or video comes third after doing sport and friendships/going out: 60 per cent of young people are daily watchers for often several hours. But watching TV is no 'favourite' leisure pursuit to young people: it is done when not having anything else to do. The more serious friendships, cultural interests and hobbies young people have the less often they watch TV. Alarming signals of alleged 'American situations' in the Netherlands as regards young TV watchers are contradicted by empirical findings.
Many of the young listen daily to the radio: percentages from various research studies vary from 56 per cent to 80 per cent. Pop stations are by far the most popular: classical music and informative stations and programmes are little listened to.

New media and computer games

No national data are yet available on the popularity of computer games and new media (e.g. Internet) in young people. But everything points at these new types of leisure pursuit to hold great attraction for young people. Tentative figures indicate that young people spend a lot of time on the new media. The steady increase in the number of households possessing a (game) computer, PC and/or Internet connection will most likely lead to a further increase in the use of these media by young people.

Reading, music, cultural activities

- Most young people sometimes read the newspaper, 20 per cent never read a paper. About one-third of young people report to read books and/or magazines regularly. The gender difference is great: 50 per cent of girls read, about 15 per cent of boys do. Magazines and relaxation literature are by far most popular. It is remarkable that young people do not restrict themselves to the youth oriented magazines: adult magazines too are snapped up. A very limited youth group (10-20 per cent) reads literary books.

  Young people in higher education read over a wider range (of newspapers, books, and magazines), more often and more than young people from lower level education do.
- Approx. 25-40 per cent of young people listens to music of their own stock (CDs, records, and tapes). Figures on the proportion of young people making music themselves vary from 10 per cent to 35 per cent. Only a few young people report to regularly visit concerts (including pop concerts).
- Other cultural activities, such as going to theatres, cinemas and museums are mentioned by a very low percentage of young people. Those who do report it are relatively often girls in senior (VWO, pre-university) education.

Political, ideal and religious/philosophical activities

- In recent years it was established time and again that today's young people have little interest in politics, i.e. in 'official' parliamentary politics. If asked for their favourite political party many young people hold a somewhat conservative and distant attitude. Most of them vote for one of the major parties, just left or right of the political middle. A great deal of young people – also the higher educated: 25 per cent - state not to feel affiliation with any political party. Only 3 per cent are members.

  Nevertheless, a large part of the young do reflect upon 'major' political issues such as the third world, peace and security and discrimination. But young people feel more attracted to extra-parliamentary action and activities, such as demonstrations and pop festivals with a political message, than to conventional parliamentary politics.

- In the *non-material sphere* we see a contrast between the concerns and interests young people claim to have and their actual behaviour. Numerous participation and opinion surveys into young people reveal that they feel strongly engaged with themes like environmental health, peace and security, racism and discrimination, human rights, poverty, problems of developing countries, and the like. The organisations occupied with such ideal objectives, though, are hardly attracting these young people: negligible shares of young people are members of or working for this type of organisations. Also in this field young people seem to be more enthusiastic for occasional and one-off activities (actions, manifestations, projects), but they do not like to bind themselves to organised collectives.
- Young people differ from the elderly by a high degree of 'non-believers'. Giving up faith occurs at a younger age than in earlier days – young people less often delay this until leaving home. Churchgoing is less declining in the Calvinist church of Dutch reformed churches, which succeeds to hold on to relatively many young. Church leaving in the current generation is not paralleled to transfers to alternative denominations, ideological movements and organisations. The vast majority of Dutch secondary pupils do not rate themselves to any ideological or religious orientation or movement.

4.2 Youth cultures and youth styles

The phenomenon of youth (sub)cultures is not new: famous Dutch predecessors of the current youth culture were 'nozems (rowdies)' or 'vetkuiven' (greasers) of the 1950s, the 'provos' and 'hippies' of the 1960s and the 'punkers' of the 1970s. Still, the youth culture as it has developed in the Netherlands during the past 10 years can be considered unique in a number of respects, for youth culture saw never before such an enormous diversity of 'styles'. Current youth culture features unheard of pluriformity, multicolouredness and 'liquidity'.

An inventory of the various youth cultural styles (Janssen and Prins, 1991) yielded a list of even 100 different style names. Two years later a similar study was published counting 59 different style names (St. Alexander, 1993).

But young people are very creative in inventing names for styles. In both studies all overlapping names have been sifted out. Thus, 11 styles were left in 1991: punk, college, disco, alternative, hardrock, new wave, Rastafari, skinhead, mainstream, rockers and football supporters. The 1993 study yielded as basic styles: hiphoppers / rappers, housers, kakkers (pompous bastards), skinheads, normal, gringers and stuudjes (bookworms).

In two years time not only the style names have substantially changed. The various style-related music and ways of dressing have been altered as well. Moreover, many youngsters turn out to be far from 'style committed': they enjoy being punker one day and something else the day after. Blending all kinds of style elements is also largely prevalent.

Most researchers of modern youth culture come to the conclusion that the old function and meaning of 'style' has been eroded. In previous decades, style represented idealistic notion assets or a critical message to society. But to present-day youth, according to the researchers, style is 'pure form' – uncharged quoting from the past. The many and easy style changes young people are making – also termed *style surfing* – are considered a typical post-modern phenomenon. The connection between style and ideology seems to be lost: style has become exterior - pure form, without contents.
Various researchers establish that nowadays' youth culture is much less polarising and more conformist than it was the case in previous decades. Young people are also prepared to adapt if necessary, e.g. in obtaining or keeping a job. Social manners too have become more flexible; there is much less 'in-group' awareness within the various subcultures. Youth cultures are no longer isolated from the ordinary: they are subordinate to the ordinary.
An explicit exception to this picture is constituted by the so-called *gabbers* – the only youth style that can be called typical Dutch. Gabbers are definitely no style surfers, but always gabbers. They have their own meeting places, festivals and music. Gabbers also polarise more than other young people do: they distinguish their profile against other youth groups' and evoke more aggression.

Black youth culture

The great importance of music, dancing, fashion and going out in Dutch youth culture provided Surinamese-Creole youngsters with an opportunity to conquer their own separate place in (parts of) the leisure scene. They have acquired high status within that scene by contributing new styles also adhered to and admired by Dutch majority youth (e.g. break-dance, rap, hip-hop, bubbling). The great impact from the American youth culture – with its Afro-American elements – has certainly contributed to that. This relatively favourable position of Creole youth in the leisure circuit is in stark contrast to their position in fields like education and employment. This enhances the feeling in Creole youth that their major prospects of social success lie in the leisure sphere: in show business, fashion or sports. But reality is that careers in these fields are only feasible to relatively few individuals. Yet, positive appreciation of ethnic black symbols within the music and dance culture can in the long-term have favourable effects to Dutch society's accepting and valuing of (in the Netherlands mainly Creole) blacks (Sansone, 1993).

4.3 Facilities and policy

Socio-cultural facilities and policy

The importance of voluntary youth work and of (state funded) socio-cultural facilities, that used to play an important role in young people's leisure time has diminished in the last decades.

Young people nowadays are more reluctant to bind themselves to organised collectives. There are, however, noticable exceptions to this trend, e.g. Scouting Holland is very much alive and kicking.

As far as leisure spending for the older age groups (16 and up) is concerned, commercial services have partly replaced the traditional (voluntary or state funded) provisions.

For the younger age groups and for teenagers the activities of local and area based social and socio-cultural facilities still play a role in their leisure spending. Also, in many towns local libraries are actively targeting children and teenagers, many of them have a special youth section and organise various activities for local youth.

A mayor change in the socio-cultural policy for young people took place in the eighties. In this period the old idealistic, but also patronising, view of youth leisure as an opportunity to mould and 'enlighten' young people, was abandoned. It was agreed that the provision of general recreational activities should be left more to workings of the market place.

The economic recession in the eighties also forced local government to reconsider their expenditure on general recreational activities and facilities (area-based socio-cultural youth work). Budget cuts and increased manifestations of local youth problems urged local government to redirect attention and budgets to preventive approaches aimed at problematic youth and youth at risk in the local community. Social education, prevention of dropping out of school, channelled job preparation and crimeprevention thus have become increasingly important in the activities and goalsetting of local youth facilities funded by local government.

TV and new media: Children's exposure to violent and frightening material

The increased number of violent material on TV and in videotheques and the often very cruel computer games in the commercial market are of great concern to many people in Dutch society. Not only parents of children themselves, but educators and researchers point at the detrimental effects from such material. Children not only imitate the aggressive behaviour, they also become afraid of what they see.

The increased availability of Internet (in schools, libraries and at home) also entails new risks. Children may not only face unsuitable or unpleasant information, they also might come across people through Internet with less favourable intentions.

Regular appeals from society are being made to central government in order to restrain exposure of this material to children and young people.

Dutch government holds a reserved attitude in this field. Firstly, because state censorship is against the constitution. Central government argues for a self-regulatory system instead:

- by the branch organisations that deal with videos and computer games;
- and by parents themselves, who should monitor their children's TV and video watching behaviour and their use of Internet.

It is under research at the moment how the current classification system of videos can be improved and refined.

Also the possibilities are investigated of a technique that enables people to scramble or block undesirable material on TV ('the violence chip').

Sports: Youth in motion

Research into young people (aged 15-25) has demonstrated that the traditional offer of sports and physical training as provided by sport associations, schools and clubs is no longer attractive to young people. Particularly disadvantaged and ethnic minority young show relatively low participation in organised sports.

Besides that, it is established that agencies and organisations concerned with the welfare, education and care of youth make insufficient use of sports and motion as helping instruments to child development. In 1996, based on these insights, the deputy Ministers of subs. the VWS Ministry of public health, welfare and sports and the OC&W Ministry of education, culture and science have established for a 4-year period the 'Youth in Motion' task force.

This task force has analysed the reasons for the decrease in sports participation by Dutch young people. The main reasons are:

- many youngsters are too busy to be involved in (organised) sports: they increasingly have jobs and obligations in addition to school activities;
- sport facilities have become less accessible; physically (locations) and financially;
- the possibilities for playing and doing sports informally in the living environment have decreased: there is little 'free space' in Dutch towns;
- sports and physical exercise have a low priority with many local authorities, and, consequently, little money is allocated to it;
- many young people, particularly the age group of 16 and over, do not feel attracted to the 'product' and atmosphere of traditional sport associations;

In addition to this, the traditional organisations for sports and physical exercise do not cooperate amongst themselves and with local authorities. Modernisation and structuring of these local bodies is one of the main focuses of the 'Youth in Motion' project. Schools should also be more actively involved in these local innovations. The national 'Youth in Motion' task force stimulates the local development of innovative sports policy by funding local experiments, handing out instruments and materials to local agents, etc.

4.4 Conclusion

Changing patterns in leisure spending

Dutch young people's leisure spending has definitely changed in recent decades. Recreational activities used to be practised in – organised or informal – groups, and many leisure pursuits of young people took place in the public sphere: on the streets, in the sports fields, in youth organisations and the like.

Today, leisure is spent more individually and has often opted out of the public sphere, away from adult interference and supervision.
Young people bind themselves less to fixed social organisations and contexts. The prevailing pattern seems to be youth participating in different informal groups of various compositions for jointly doing sport, shopping, going out and just hanging around. Parallel to that, more time is spent indoors, on listening to music, watching TV and playing computer games.

The meaning of youth cultures

The term 'youth culture' has altered its significance. On the one hand, there is an increased diversification in youth culture, which is particularly expressed in a wide variety of clothing and music styles. On the other, young people identify less with a particular style: style surfing is in. And these styles are not so much an expression of a particular ideological orientation or socio-cultural identity, they seem to be 'pure form'.
The emancipatory meaning that certain youth styles may have to participants is interesting. Particularly to young Surinamese and Antilleans, positively valued symbols of black culture may help build a positive social identity.

Policy and facilities

Compared to 20 years ago, state interference with and expenditure on leisure pursuits of young people have decreased.
Technical, social and economical developments have created room for commercialisation and individualisation of leisure spending of youth.
The economical recession in the eighties also played a part: the available budgets were redirected to preventive provions aimed at problem youth and youth at risk.
This trend applies especially to youth of age 16 and up. For younger children, local and area based leisure activities organised by volunteer or subsidised socio-cultural organisations, have retained most of their meaning and value.
A recent governmental spearpoint in this field is the Youth in motion program, aimed at enhancing participation of youth in sportive activities.

5 Health and wellbeing

This chapter deals with young Netherlands' physical health and mental wellbeing. Firstly, some research data will be presented.
Next, we will shortly dwell upon Dutch facilities concerned with health youth services. The description is restricted to the fields of preventive youth health services, care of disabled and care of addicts.
Alongside that, the Netherlands has a wide range of *youth care facilities.* These are described in chapter 6 in section 2 of this report.
Also *child protection* plays a part in protecting children and young people from certain risks which may be of a physical nature – such as parental physical abuse or neglect. The services in the field of child protection are described in chapter 8 in this section (3) of the report.
This chapter ends with a description of innovative tendencies within youth health policy.

5.1 Childrens' health status[1]

Children in the Netherlands are generally in good health. Since the end of the nineteenth century, child mortality rates have dropped rapidly. In European countries, the infant mortality rate ranges from 4 to 9 per 1,000 live-births. In 1994, the Netherlands was one of the nine countries with the lowest rates (6 per 1,000) in Europe.
Because of the absence of diseases in most children and because of the good nutritional status in the Netherlands, Dutch children are among the tallest in the world. The median height of 20 year-old girls in 1994 was 1.70 metres. The figure for 20 year-old boys was 1.83 metres.

Births

In the fifties and sixties some 240,000 children were being born annually in the Netherlands: the "baby boom". In the seventies, the number of births decreased again tot 171,200 in 1983. Subsequently, there was another increase to 199,700 in 1991. The number seems to be stable at present. It is expected that the birth rate will decrease to 179,000 in 2010.
Of all Western countries, the Netherlands has the highest percentage of home births (31% in 1993). The high percentage of home births and the low perinatal mortality in the Netherlands is exceptional from an international point of view.

The Dutch obstetrical system is based on the philosopy that reproduction, including delivery, is a natural process which should occur spontaneously, without anaesthesia and with a minimum of operative procedures. For this reason, home birth is preferred for normal delivery.

Chronic conditions and handicaps

In the last 25 years, the perinatal mortality rate has more than halved from 18.6 in 1970 to 8.9 per 1,000 births in 1995. The decreasing mortality rate has led to an increase in the total number of children with a chronic, physical disability or handicap.
Not only better care and reduced mortality, but also the increasing number of multiple births and premature births are leading to an increase in the prevalence of chronic deseases and handicaps. This increase will produce, in turn, an increase in adults consulting the health care system and will, in future, lead to a higher prevalence of chronic disease at older ages.

Asthma

Twenty per cent of children aged 4-17 have a physical handicap. Of these, 90% have pulmonary problems. In the Netherlands, the number of children with asthma increased. At the age of 4-6, 11% of children have asthma. A higher percentage of children of Dutch parents have asthma than children of Surinamese, Moroccan or Turkish parents. Twenty per cent of regular non-attendance at schools is caused by astmatic complaints.

Vision

4% of children aged 0-9 and 12% of adolescents aged 10-19 wear spectacles. Families with children with severe visual disabilities are offered advice and support at home by institutions for blind and visually-impaired persons. When the children start participating in regular infant groups, ambulatory support is available for the personnel of these groups. Most parents decide to send their children for regular education. Nowadays, children who attend schools for the visually disabled are less likely to live there. For the most part, school resources are geared towards the provision of ouotpatient assistance. This includes ancillary resources, as well as ambulatory care in the regular education setting.

Hearing

At the age of 9 months, a hearing test is offered by the pre-school health service. Annually 7% of children fail the test. All of them are referred to general practitioners. If a child proves to be hard of hearing or deaf, the family is offered home help. For several years, parents and children receive intensive assistance in learning to communicate. The younger the child, the easier it is to overcome communication problems. Deaf children can attend special schools, until they are able to visit, with help, a regular school.

Developmental problems

In the Netherlands, there are schools which provide special education for children with learning of behavioural problems and for children who are physically disabled. All independent rehabilitation facilities (i.e. facilities which are not part of a hospital) have initiated programmes for giving early guidance to families with children who have motor disabilities. Through these programmes, children can participate in infant groups which are linked to multidisciplinary treatment, involving physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, doctors specialised in rehabilitation, educationalists and social workers.

Mental deficiency

In 1994 an estimated 31,900 children aged 0-19 were suffering from a mental handicap. About 14,000 children in this group are severely handicapped. At the end of 1991 1,876 children aged 0-14 and 5,798 aged 15-24 were living in institutional care facilities for the mentally handicaped.

5.2 Psychological well-being

From various self-report studies into secondary school pupils aged 12-20 (SCP, Social Cultural Planning Office, 1992, 1994) a picture can be derived of psychological wellbeing in this youth group. Some outcomes are:

- 1 in 5 to 6 youngsters (16-18 per cent) often feel depressed;
- 12-20 per cent suffer from regular or frequent feelings of loneliness;
- 20-30 per cent hold not very positive self-images;
- over 40 per cent suffer from fear of failure and or other feelings of uncertainty;
- 6-10 per cent are sometimes or often considering suicide and about 5 per cent have made one or more attempts;
- young people, when troubled, worry mainly about their own future (57 per cent), educational achievement (58 per cent), appearance (39 per cent) and (former) love affairs (38 per cent).

What are these results telling us?

Given the age stage these young people are in, it is questionable if the percentages found should cause concern: having feelings of loneliness, uncertainty, fear and/or depression is, per se, a normal element of this tumultuous life stage.

But the rather steady more frequent occurrence of negative feelings in certain groups does constitute a matter of concern. It is true for nearly all investigated factors that they occur stronger and more frequently in:

- girls;
- boys of ethnic minority origin;
- boys in junior education (particularly LBO, pre-vocational training).

These groups show a lower level of mental wellbeing and a higher level of mental vulnerability.

5.3 Riskfull behaviour

5.3.1 Smoking, drinking and drug use

In the Netherlands, every four years since 1984, a national representative survey is conducted into mainstream pupils aged 10 and above directed at measuring the prevalence of smoking, drinking, drugs use and gambling. Emphasis is on measuring lifetime prevalence ('one-off' use) and actual prevalence (use in the 4 weeks prior to the survey). The key results of the 1996 research study (Kuipers et al, 1997) are summarised below.

Smoking

About half of boys (49 per cent) and girls (46 per cent) under scrutiny have once smoked. Over one-fifth (22 per cent) of them are still smokers – sometimes or at a daily basis. In the group of 12-year-olds and up 7 per cent smoke 6 to 20 cigarettes and 1 per cent over 20 cigarettes on a daily basis. The number of cigarettes smoked rises as age rises. Pre-vocational VBO and senior secondary HAVO pupils are the most frequent smokers. Comparisons with previous research data show the downward trend that in the period of 1988-1992 started to turn upwards again. There are more young smokers, they start earlier and smoke more cigarettes a day. Girls show a higher increase than boys do.

Alcohol use

Over two-thirds of school attending boys (74 per cent) and girls (63 per cent) have once consumed alcohol. In senior levels of education the percentages are some 10 per cent higher than in the junior levels.
Of the group aged 12 and up over half (52 per cent) consumed in the last 4 weeks. Actual use is higher with boys (56 per cent) than with girls (48 per cent). Particularly 16/17-year-old boys and post-18s appear to drink (very) frequently.
The development of alcohol use in recent years is comparable to that of smoking: after a fall during the period of 1988-1992 alcohol use is on the increase and the starting age of alcohol consumption is on the decrease. Also quantities per session have increased, where boys drink 2 to 3 times the number of glasses girls would drink[2]. This fact corresponds to social signals of heightened prevalence of public drunkenness in young people.

Drugs

In recent years, we see a clear change in kinds of substances used by young peple as well as in the patterns of drug use.
Heroin has lost its popularity amongst youngsters, while the use of cannabis, XTC (and other synthetic drugs) and hallicinogenous mushrooms (paddo's) has increased.

Youngsters use the drugs mainly in their leisure time, while going out, and in most cases their drug use is occasional, recreative and experimental. This doesn't mean their use is without risks. They often combine several different drugs, or they use drugs in unfavorable circumstances (heath, crowds, etc.). This kind of drug use is closely linked to youth and outgoing culture.

Preventive policy is targeted at objective information about drugs to youngsters, in school and in national campaigns;

- protective measures in clubs and bars concerning safety, health and transport;
- support for parents.

Recently policy is aimed at devising a comprehensive approach to reach all youngsters (users and non-users) with a differentiated package of information.

Cannabis

Fifteen per cent of all pupils have once used cannabis, boys (18 per cent) outnumbering girls (12 per cent). Of pupils aged 12 and up, 21% has used cannabis at least once (boys 25%, girls 17%).

Eleven per cent of pupils aged 12 and up has used cannabis in the past 4 weeks (boys 14 per cent, girls 8 per cent). Frequent use (over 10 times in 4 weeks) occurred in 2.5 per cent of these pupils. Secondary (senior) HAVO pupils use most, followed by pre-vocational VBO and (medium level) MAVO pupils who use least.

Pupils' cannabis use steadily increased since 1984. The share of one-off users rose during 12 years from 5 per cent to 21 per cent, girls more rapid than boys. Actual use too, has proliferated and doubled with girls since 1992. Frequency of use also increased.

Harddrugs and (hallucinogen) mushrooms (paddo's)

One-off use of these substances is significantly lower than that of cannabis. The percentage of pupils aged 12 and up, who have used these drugs at least once, varies from 1% (heroin) to 5,6% (XTC). About 5% of these pupils have tried amphetamines and/or paddo's at least once. Actual use of harddrugs (last 4 weeks) is as follows: heroin 0.5 per cent; cocaine 1.1 per cent; paddo's 1.5 per cent; amphetamine 1.8 per cent and XTC 2.2 per cent.

Boys have used harddrugs about twice as many as girls. Using harddrugs is least prevalent in the highest level of secondary schools (VWO pre-university education).

Synthetic harddrugs

Diminished use of 'traditional' harddrugs (particularly heroin) by young people is partly associated with new drugs that have entered the market. These are more popular amongst young people than heroin.

Especially young people's use of the XTC harddrug and some allied synthetic drugs is an alarming development. These drugs can rather easily be made and it is not simple for authorities to control the production of and trafficking in drugs.

Moreover, various signs point at the fact that organised crime has more and more engaged in the production and sale of these new synthetic drugs over recent years. Drugs of unsafe or even dangerous composition will thus more often enter the market.
Drug counsellors respond by offering opportunities of having the XTC (and allied drugs) tested for purity after purchase. Thus, users are prevented from serious health risks caused by adulterated and dangerously composed drugs.

Tranquillisers and barbiturates

About 10 per cent of pupils have once used a tranquilliser or a sleeping pill. The actual use is lower: 3.6 per cent for tranquillisers and 1.7 per cent for barbiturates. The take up is higher with girls than with boys.

Background characteristics

Closer data analysis shows a lower occurrence of smoking, drugs use and gambling amongst senior secondary pupils (VWO, pre-university). But this group does consume alcohol above the average level. Social context too plays a part: prevalence of nearly all types of behaviour is related to substance use of friends and/or parents and to parents' attitude towards substance use. There is also a positive association between drug use, outgoing behaviour, committing (petty) crime and truancy. Girls drink less than boys do, use less substance(s) and gamble less frequently; this counts the other way round for smoking and use of tranquillisers and barbiturates. No significant effects have been found from parental un/employment and ethnic origin.

5.3.2 Sexual behaviour

In the Netherlands in 1995, 40% of the 16-17 year-olds and 50% of the 18 year-olds (boys as well as girls) have engaged at some time in sexual intercourse. The percentage of girls aged 16-19 using the pill increased from 26.7 in 1985 to 43.8 in 1995. During first sexual intercourse, 70% use a condom, 37% use the pill (with or without a condom), and 15% take no preventive measures. With increasing age, condom use diminishes in favour of oral contraception, thereby raising the risk of sexually-transmitted disease. There are national information campaigns relating to adolescents and sex. The pill is advised for contraception and condoms are recommended for the prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases.

In the Netherlands, sexually-transmitted diseases are annuallly diagnosed in approximately 10 persons per general practitioner (with a caseload of 2,000 people on average). Youngsters aged 19 of less constitute 8.5% of all patients with a sexually-transmitted disease, 25% are young adults aged 20-24.
In 1995, nine 15-19 year-olds and thirty-two 20-24 year olds with syphilis were reported to the Health Inspector. The figures for gonorrhoea were 71 and 281 respectively.

The number of teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands is very low. In 1994, 1.6% of all births in the Netherlands occurred in mothers under 20 year of age, as compared to 12.9% in the USA in 1991.

The abortion rate in adolescents is also very low. In 1995, 0.4% of all abortions performed in the Netherlands involved girls aged less than 15 and 12.4% involved adolescents aged between 15 and 19.
In 1992, 4.2 abortions were performed per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 and 43.3 abortion were performed per 100 pregnancies in girls aged 15-19. This abortion rate has been attributed mainly to the general openness regarding questions of sexuality and to the ample availability of, and easy accessibility to, contraceptive services in the Netherlands.

5.3.3 Accidents

Accidents at home or around the home

Every year, 10-20% of 1-11 year-olds have accidents for which medical assistance is required. Boys are more prone to accidents than girls. Three out of four accidents occur at home. Half of the accidents for which medical assistance is asked are caused by falling.
In 1993, hospital admission for an accident around or at home was necessary in 13,005 children 14 or under. Admissions were caused by falling (46%), poisoning (15%), penetration of the body by a foreign object (3%), suffocation (2%), drowning (1%) and burns (1%).
In the same year, 75 children under the age of 15 died as the result of an accident at home or around home.

Traffic accidents

From 1975 onwards, the use of a helmet when riding a moped became obligatory. From that year onwards, adolescent mortality rates decreased rapidly.
In 1995, 69 children aged 1-14 died as a result of traffic accidents. In the Netherlands, most people own a bicycle. Separate cycle paths are common. Nevertheless, cyclistes are frequently involved in traffic accidents. Children are particularly prone tot cycling accidents, in part because their stage of physical development is inadequate to enable them to ride a bicycle safely.
In 1990, 2,839 children aged 0-14 were admitted to hospital as a result of traffic accidents (46% of them were cycling at the time of the accident) and 82 children aged 1-14 died in traffic accidents (39% of them were cycling).

5.4 Youth Health Facilities

Public health care includes three clusters of tasks: care for individual patients, care of groups at risk, and collective prevention.
In the Act on Collective Prevention Public Health (WVPC) that came into operation in 1989, a number of tasks and responsibilities in the area of collective prevention were decentralised to municipalities.

5.4.1 Youth health service (JGZ)

Since many years the Netherlands has an extensive system of preventive youth health services (JGZ) for 0-19-year-olds. The responsibility for this JGZ was in 1989 (Act on Collective Prevention Public Health) decentralised for the main part towards the municipalities. Implementation rests with municipal district health services (GGD's) and home care services.
The JGZ is divided into two sections, operated by different organisations and financed from different funding streams.

- Preventive care for under-5s, provided by consultancies for babies and toddlers, as part of home care services. These agencies cater in principle for all (actually 97 per cent of) under-5s in the Netherlands. Children's development is monitored, children receive there due vaccinations, and parents can get advice on care and nurture of the child. These services are free of charge and publicly funded (AWBZ, General Exceptional Medical Expenses Act).
- JGZ care of all 4-19-year-olds that is provided by the school medical services, attached to the GGD's. Every other year all school children are screened (from age 5 to age 13) in order for possible developmental or health problems to be detected. The school medical services cover 90-100 per cent of youth. This part of JGZ is funded by the municipalities.

The existence of two separate sections within the preventive youth health care has been subject of political discussion in the nineties. Members of parliament suggested in 1991 that the (national) responsibility for the preventive health care of 0-4 year olds should also be decentralised to municipalities. This could create better opportunities for local authorities to devise an integral preventive health policy for 0-19 year olds.
Since this would require a drastic reorganisation of the existing system, the secretary of state responsible for JGZ decided to await the outcome of two evaluation studies into the functioning and quality of the existing system. In 1994 the statesecretary has decided not to decentralise the JGZ for 0-4-year-olds, but to give this part of JGZ a 'status aparte' within the national funding scheme for medical costs (AWBZ). In addition several measures were taken to promote co-operation between the JGZ-provisions on the local level, development of a comprehensive youth health care policy by local authorities, standardisation of local youth health care programmes and the introduction of a comprehensive 'Dossier JGZ' for all children aged 0-19.

5.4.2 Care of young people with a handicap

Dutch policy in this area is aimed at highest possible participation in society of people with handicap to their own abilities. Admission and stay in residential institutions is discouraged in favour of other forms of community and/or day care in support of people with disabilities shaping their existence in mainstream society. Flexibility of support programmes is encouraged.

Enhancement is being pursued of the availability and (also physical) accessibility of mainstream provision to disabled people.

People with a mental handicap

There are over 43,000 young people with mental disabilities in the Netherlands. A large part of these young live at home, which is stimulated by central government.

Those living at home have access to out-patient services and day centres. Annually, approximately 24,000 home based mentally handicapped have contact with specialised field workers (SPD, social educational service), whilst some 8,000 use day provision. About 8,000 people with mental handicap live in residential institutions for care of the (most profoundly) mentally handicapped.

For the mildly handicapped special homes have been set up, accommodating about 2,000 residents.

In 1995 the National Society for Care of the Handicapped (NVGz) has published a report on the problems of young people with a minor mental handicap. The report stresses the fact that these young people experience specific problems and obstacles in their participation in present day society.

Part of this group has additional disadvantages - an unstable family background, insufficient social skills and/or behavioral problems - and they are at risk of developing more serious psychiatric problems. The size of this group is estimated at 2500 to 3000 youngsters (up to 21 years of age).

For these young people specific facilities are available: 22 orthopedagogic centres, with a total capacity of about 2000 places. These facilities have long waitinglists and the average waiting time for help is one year. The facilities are concentrated in certain regions of Holland.

The report suggests a number of measures to combat the placement problems in this field. The Dutch government has recently launched an Action Program to improve the infrastructure of facilities and provisions for this group of young people. The program includes extension of the number of places in orthopedagogic centres, intensification and extension of non-resident care and improvement of preventive measures.

5.4.3 Care of young addicts

The Netherlands has a country-wide network of regionally based agencies providing specific care and out-patient services to people with addiction problems (CADs, consultancies on alcohol and drugs).

In addition, there are 12 clinics for residential addict care with a capacity of about 1,000 beds.
Alongside these specialist services there are numerous projects and agencies concerned with addict counselling, such as street corner work, general hospitals and psychiatric clinics.
Only of the CADs (non-residential care) is known how many young people with addiction problems have enrolled. The group of young addicts have different problems from clients aged 25 and up: drug addiction is more often prevalent in youth (66 per cent, against 44 per cent over 25s) as is gambling addiction (20 per cent against 6 per cent), whilst relatively few young ask for help with alcohol addiction (13 per cent against 49 per cent in the older group)[3].
The latter, though, cannot be considered an indication of young alcohol addicts being on the decrease. Partly owing to the wide social acceptance of alcohol use, it takes much longer for the user and his/her environment to acknowledge possible alcohol addiction problems.

Research shows that approx. 75 per cent of all addicts in the Netherlands are being reached by the (addicts) services.
In addition to support for people with breaking their addiction circle (kicking their habit) the services gear also to people who do not succeed in mastering their habit. With this group the reduction of health risks, social rehabilitation and inconvenience to the immediate environment is of primary concern. This includes also the methadone programmes for heroin users and the provision of clean needles for intravenous use of harddrugs in order to prevent the transmission of AIDS and hepatitis B amongst drug users.

5.5 Youth Health Policy

Within the framework of national youth health policy special attention is paid to:
- socio-economic health inequalities (SEGV);
- prevention of smoking, alcohol and drug-abuse;
- AIDS and STD;
- promoting healthy behavior;
- monitoring of youth lifestyles.

Socio-economic health inequalities (SEGV)

Alongside the general preventive health care government directs a specific focus on particular groups and problem sets: especially to reduce socio-economic health inequities (SEGV). Presently, commissioned by the SEGV Program Committee, research is being conducted into causes and backgrounds of SEGV and into the effectives of interventions directed at the reduction of these socio-economic health inequities.

In december 1997 the Program Committee SEGV has reported to the parliament on present and future activities. Although these activities are general in nature, some projects initiated or supported by the Committee are targeted at youth: i.e. prevention of dental problems and prevention of (starting with) smoking by youngsters.

Prevention of smoking and drinking alcohol

The cabinet is aiming at reduction of the availibility of cigarettes and other tabacco products, particularly to young people. A prohibition on sales to children under 18 is in preparation. A smoking ban has been introduced in public transport and in public buildings. Sales restrictions and smoking bans are combined with health education, e.g. a national anti-smoking campaign (*Smoking - a deadly sin)* and a national programme aimed at realising smoke free schools.

Sensible alcohol consumption is promoted through educational campaigns for the general public and for specific target groups. *Drink wrecks more than you want* is a well-known slogan. An interactive computergame gives young people an understanding of the dangerous aspects of alcohol.

Prevention of addiction

The regional Alcohol and Drug Clinics (CAD's) and Municipal Health Services (GGD's) run various educational programmes on the risks of addiction to alcohol, drugs, medicines or gambling. These programmes are aimed at young people.

Evaluation of an educational programme at schools (The healthy school) indicates that pupils partaking in the program are less inclined to smoke, drink alcohol or use (soft) drugs then a control-group of non-participants.

The Bureau for Education on Drugs also produces information material and provides education on the effects and consequences of the use of soft and hard drugs, and has opened a special drugs helpline for that purpose. There are also helplines for alcohol and tabacco.

AIDS and STD

In the Netherlands there is considerable attention for the prevention of AIDS and STD (sexually transmitted diseases) and for the promotion of social integration and acceptance of people with AIDS or HIV. Campaigns in this area are carried out by private organisations such as the AIDS Fund, the HIV Association and the Foundation for the Prevention of STD.

Promoting healthy behavior

Through various national campaigns healthy (low fat) eating is promoted.

Through the national programme *Youth in Motion* youth is stimulated to take part in organised sports and physical exercise activities (see chapter 4 in this section).

Monitoring youth lifestyles

National government stimulates local agencies in the area of preventive youth health services to regularly investigate the health condition of local youth through epidemiological research and surveyresearch into the lifestyles of youth. This information can be used to identify and effectively target risk groups.

Notes section 3/4

The information in this section is based on the report Child Health in the Netherlands (TNO, 1997).
These differences occur around the age of 14 - under that age boys and girls drink equally much (or little).
Source: IVV/CVO: National Alcohol and Drugs Information System (LADIS), 1998.

6 Employment

6.1 Introduction

Young people in the Netherlands are allowed to do paid work from age 15[1]. The number of young workers (15-24 years) has steadily decreased over the past 20 years. In 1975 approx. 1.1 million young people belonged to the labour force – which declined in 1995 to 0.9 million.

This is partly due to demographic developments: the number of 15-24-year-olds declined in the same period by 10 per cent. It is also partly due to the fact that young people stay on longer in education. All together, youth labour participation[2] decreased from 56 per cent in 1975 to 45 per cent in 1995 (SCP, Report on Youth, 1997).

While youngsters join the working force at a later age, the amount of schoolgoing or studying youngsters who have side jobs has risen steadily. Almost half of pupils in secundary education have one or more side jobs. On average they spend 9 hours a week on paid work.

Girls and employment

As compared to other western-European countries, the Netherlands traditionally has a low rate of women employment. This has begun to change in recent years: in 1975 women's participation rate was slightly over 30 per cent, in 1996 it has risen to nearly 50 per cent[3]. During the same period men's labour participation slightly declined: of 82 per cent in 1975 to 77 per cent in 1996.

The differences found in the adult population between males and females in their participation in the labour market have also been found, to a lesser degree, in the age group of 15-24.

6.2 The transfer from education to the labour market: school-leavers

In the Netherlands is meant by 'school-leavers': 15-35-year-olds leaving fulltime education and become available for the labour market. The vast majority of school-leavers (about 90 per cent) belong to the age group 15-24.

In 1995 the whole group comprised approx. 200,000 people. Of these school-leavers 75 per cent have obtained - on leaving education – at least a diploma at medium vocational level (MBO).

Some 10 per cent of school-leavers have obtained no diploma at all after primary and/or special education. These early schoolleavers or dropouts are lacking sound starting qualifications for the labour market.
Ethnic minorities are over-represented in this group. This is especially true for young Moroccans: nearly 40 per cent leave secondary education without any qualification. Of the remaining minorities (Turks, Surinamese, Antilleans) about 30% leaves school without qualifications (Tesser and Veenman, 1997). The total share of the largest 4 minorities in the group of disadvantaged in the labour market amounts estimably to 20 per cent (Veendrick, 1993).

6.3 Young people (aged 15-24) in the labour market

As stated before, the number of young workers in the labour force (employed or jobseeking) has steadily decreased over recent years. Despite this, their unemploymentrate has remained at about the same level: 12-13 per cent. This includes young unemployed who did not register as jobseekers with a jobcentre. The unemployment rate for the aggregate Dutch labour force amounts to 7 per cent in 1995.

Table 6.1 **Data labour market, 15-24-year-olds**

	1987	1995	1996
	number(x 1000)	number(x 1000)	number(x 1000)
population aged 15-24	2,447	2,012	1,955
labour force	1,162	894	880
employed (over 12 hours per week)	1,009	776	772
unemployed	154	118	108
	(%)	(%)	(%)
labour participation*	47	44	45
unemployment rate	13	13	12

*Percentage of young people (aged 15-24) with a job of at least 12 hours a week against the total population of 15-24-year-olds.

Source: CBS Statistical Yearbook, 1997.

The relatively high youth unemployment rate has multiple causes.
First, few school-leavers appear to find a job immediately after leaving school – they are unemployed for an average of 10 months after leaving education.

In addition, young people are very mobile in the labour market. This is partly voluntary (frequently changing jobs in order to explore the market: job-hopping), partly involuntary: young people are more often employed on the basis of short-term contracts. They are also most likely to become redundant through cutbacks, because they have the least years of service (last in first out). Hence, youth unemployment in the Netherlands is very sensitive to economical fluctuations.

6.4 Employment conditions

Although young people constitute a vulnerable group in the labour market (having a high risk of becoming unemployed), they have a relatively low risk of long-term unemployment. The majority of young people out of work find a new job within a few months. It helps that they are less particular about the nature, contents and conditions of work: they object less to marginal, boring or dirty work and are also more prepared to shift working or to work irregular hours (SCP, 1996).

The bottom of the labour market

Lacking work experience and being more prepared to accept less attractive work, young people are overrepresented in jobs on the bottom of the labour market. They more often than older workers do low-skilled and/or flexible work; nearly 25 per cent of young workers have a flexible labour contract, against 9 per cent of total workforce. Young workers are found mainly in (retail) trade, catering, horticulture and industry.
Yet, future prospects for most young people who start from the bottom of the labour market are not bad: they are relatively likely to move upwards in the long term to higher and better paid jobs (De Beer, 1996).

Stress at work

It appears from recent research into work pressure, stress and health in employees under 30 that young people face a great number of stressing factors at the working place. They report that their work is physically and mentally straining. Particularly young women rather frequently report health problems (NIPG/TNO, 1994).

6.5 Prospects in the labour market

Type of education and prospects in the labour market

The Labour Research Centre (ROA) draws up five-yearly prognoses of the demand for labour force and the prospects of school-leavers, specified by level of education.
The most recent prognoses (1995 - 2000) show significant differences between the various types of education and the labour market prospects of school-leavers.

To school-leavers from advanced levels of education (higher and university: HBO and WO) the prognoses are favourable, but they are moderate or poor for young people with junior levels of education. Exceptions are the MAVO (ordinary secondary) schools (with reasonable prospects) and the care section of VBO (pre-vocational education).

Young people with poor opportunities in the labour market

All in all, two – partly overlapping – groups of young people can be identified that have significantly less favourable opportunities in the labour market:

- early school-leavers (low- or unskilled);
- migrant-descended youth.

Of immigrant young people relatively many are low educated (60 per cent have up to VBO/ MAVO levels) and unskilled (30 per cent have only primary education). Of Dutch-born these percentages are subs. 40 per cent and 7 per cent.

Low- and unskilled young people in the Netherlands have diminishing opportunities in the labour market. They are also ousted from jobs they actually qualify for by young people with higher education: nearly three-quarters of employees in occupations that require little schooling (primary education is sufficient) is over-educated for the job (De Beer, 1996). Besides that, these young people have to compete with pupils and students working in unskilled or low-skilled jobs as sidelines.

6.6 Youth and labour: national policy

The labour market policy of central government aims at the highest possible participation of citizens in the labour market.

As regards young unemployed, a *comprehensive approach* is pursued: a system channelling *all* school-leavers and young unemployed as rapidly as possible towards a job or (follow up) training.

Employment services

The Netherlands has a nationwide network of employment services (RBAs), regionally based and governed by tripartite administration of government, employers' organisations and trade unions. The RBAs, among other things, have regional job centres whose main function is mediating between jobseekers and the regular labour market and channelling towards preparatory or various facilities for participation in the labour market, such as vocational training centres.

Youth-related facilities

In the years 1987-1997 the AAJ incentive policy on youth employment and the JWG Youth Employment Guarantee Act as part of the AAJ were particularly relevant to the group of young unemployed.

These schemes have recently (1-1-1998) been integrated in the WIW (Act on the Integration of the Unemployed).

Other (general) facilities

To the young disabled (those unfit for regular work) the WSW Disabled Persons' Employment Act and the Act on Re-/Integration of the Disabled (REA) are relevant. Local authorities are responsible for implementation of the AAJ, JWG and WSW. Responsibility for the REA rests with the National Institute of Social Insurances (Lisv). Parallel to that, the Netherlands have implemented a specific ethnic minority policy, aimed at raising the level of labour participation of ethnic minorities.

Local authorities and employment policy

As regards labour market policy, a policy was designed in the late eighties that vested more responsibility with municipal government and the regional employment services (RBAs) to address local and regional unemployment problems. Amongst others, these agents can reduce local (youth) unemployment by creating subsidised additional jobs. These additional vacancies are partly funded from social benefits and partly from state grants.

6.7 1987-1997: AAJ and JWG

AAJ: Incentive Policy on Youth Employment

In 1987 the incentive policy on youth employment (AAJ) was enacted aiming at local authorities' prevention and combat of (long-term) youth unemployment. The AAJ target group is constituted by all young people who have registered as jobseekers with a job centre.

Local authorities are expected to make extra efforts for these young people in order to be able to lead them to a job and/or a place in mainstream (further) education. Provision to these young people depends on the young person's specific conditions (tailored provision) and might – apart from mediation – consist of offering choice-of-career tests, job interview training or vocational training courses.

Youth Employment Guarantee Act (JWG)

Young unemployed under 22 and school-leavers under 24 who are registered as jobseeker with a jobcentre over a continuous period of a minimum of half a year and a maximum of one year, are transferred to an agency for the implementation of the youth employment guarantee Act (JWGO). The young are employed by the JWGO, then mediated towards a JWG job, or (if not yet feasible) towards a transitional programme preparing them for a JWG job.

This way, central government aims at creating a comprehensive safety net for young school-leavers and unemployed, the starting point and final objective being that all young people are either in mainstream education or regularly employed (or both).
In 1994 and 1996 evaluations were conducted of the workings and effects of the JWG Act (Olieman et al., 1996).
Evidence of the job centres reveals that the influx of young unemployed into the JWG scheme has steeply increased, and thus the importance of the JWG as a safety net for young unemployed. Particularly young adults (21-22) - including those of immigrant origin - benefit from the JWG.
Opening the market sector has had a favourable effect particularly on the transfer of poorly educated young males (21-22) to mainstream employment.
AAJ's reach amongst immigrant groups is below the average level: 61 per cent. Yet the importance of JWG as a safety net for ethnic minorities is considerable: about 34 per cent of immigrant-descended youth end up in the JWG scheme, against 22 per cent of young people of Dutch origin. Nevertheless, 22 per cent of immigrant-descended youth remain long-term unemployed (of Dutch origin: 9 per cent). So the JWG somewhat improves the relatively poor labour market position of young immigrants, but still these youngsters do not equal the position of the young with Dutch backgrounds.

6.8 1998: Introduction of the WIW

Implementation of the Unemployed's participation Act of government (WIW)

By 1 January 1998 the WIW came into force. This Act of government has a twofold objective:

- promotion of rapid transfer of jobseekers to the regular labour market;
- providing a 'final' provision to those unfit to (full) participation in the mainstream labour market.

Alongside grant-aided vacancies the WIW provides scope to local authorities for shaping locally based 'social activation' of the prospectless in the labour market. Social activation aims at the provision of a meaningful existence to these people and at the maintenance and enhancement of their links (commitment) with (to) society.
The WIW target group is very broad, not only including young people but also unemployed adults, the unfit for regular work, those on benefits and the like.
The WIW has clustered all kinds of regulations that currently are still governed by separate Acts. One of the objectives of the Act is to better streamline the various regulations and to create a more transparent structure.

Enhancing the role of local and regional agents

In addition, through implementation of the WIW, local authorities and regional emplyment services (RBAs) are allocated more policy discretion (and responsibilities) to conduct a more active employment policy themselves. The WIW provides local councils much more scope for designing creative solutions to the local employment problems. One might think of:

- unlimited deployment of benefits for job creation;
- development of a comprehensive local approach to young unemployed;
- relaxation of the rules for the payment of additional work;
- creation of work experience placements.

The twofold WIW objective can be specified by local authorities and regional agents: they may prioritise or emphasise elements. But councils have the duty to maintain the comprehensive youth employment approach. The comprehensive approach applies also to the young disabled (REA).

The various scheme-related funding streams are clustered for practical reasons into one 'Employment Fund' for local authorities. The AAJ, JWG and REA are adopted into the new Act. The WIW provides a fixed basic amount per vacancy. Local authorities receive annual budgets for additional costs to the benefit of long-term unemployed and young people.

6.9 Other (general) facilities

6.9.1 Supported Employment Act (WSW) and Act on the Re-/Integration of the Disabled (REA)

Central government enhances - through various Acts and Regulations – labour participation of people unfit for regular work. These Acts and Regulations are of a generic nature and not specific for young people.

WSW

For people with physical, intellectual or mental disability that incapacitates them for full mainstream labour participation separate adjusted employment facilities exist, popularly called 'social workshops[4]. This sheltered or supported work provision has since a few years to be market oriented: part of WSW costs must be earned from workshops' own production. In 1996 over 87,000 people with handicap were on WSW-jobs, only 4% of them being under-25s.

REA

By 1 July 1998 a new Act comes into force to further improve labour participation of people with handicap. The Act governs - among other things - improvement of disabled people's training, job preparation and job channelling. In addition, cost reimbursement for the employer on employing disabled people has been simplified and improved.

6.9.2 Acts and Regulations for ethnic minorities

Central government has been pursuing a reduction policy on ethnic minority unemployment. A new Act will presently come into force: the SAMEN Act (Stimulation of Immigrants Labour Participation, its acronym meaning TOGETHER). This Act is not specificly geared at young people but does have relevance to this group.
The Act actually entails extension and intensification of current policy. The core of it is the obligation of all major companies and organisations (of a minimum of 35 employees) to realise a proportional representation of employees of non-Dutch backgrounds. Therefore, they are to state in their annual reports how many immigrant employees they have and what measures they will take to promote a proportional participation of minorities.

6.10 Conclusion

Position in the labour market

Labour market data show that young people's labour market positions and prospects have significantly improved over the past 10 years. Various factors contribute to this:

- employment has proliferated all over through the Dutch favourable economic development in recent years, which has also favourable effects on youth employment;
- young people's staying on longer in education reduced the share of unemployed in the age group of 15-24;
- and the JWG scheme is conducive to a further decline in the youth unemployment rate.

Labour market policy

Over the past ten years the labour market policy on youth has rather drastically changed in a number of respects.

- A much more powerful policy has begun to counter youth unemployment, thus widening their opportunities for entering the labour market as well as raising the pressure on young people to do so.
- Deployment of social benefit funds for job creation is a major reform to labour market policy. This enables local and regional agents to develop an active local and regional employment policy.
- The role of municipalities in the war on local unemployment has been reinforced. The enactment of the WIW has been a great impetus.

Still, the position and prospects of the 'hard core' in the group of young unemployed are not always favourable. This group consists in large part of young early school-leavers, who enter the labour market without starting qualifications. Ethnic minority young people prevail in this group.

It is not yet clear how far the policy conducted and the recent innovations of it, will lead to structural improvement of the labour market position and prospects of this 'difficult' group.

Notes section 3/6

1 Children under-15 are allowed to work only exceptionally and under strict conditions. This is stipulated in the Working Hours ACT (ATW) and Further Regulations of Child Labour.

2 The proportion of young people is concerned who have or seek a job of at least 12 hours a week against the total number of young people (aged 15-24)

3 Only women (aged 15-64) who work a minimum of 12 hours are included here.

4 Alongside that there are also WSW placements in independent companies

7 Economic independence

Economic independence of every individual (young) adult is a key value in modern Dutch society. In Dutch government policy of recent years time and again the importance of each citizen's individual economic independence is stressed. This chapter deals with the following aspects of economic independence of Dutch young people:

- minimum youth wages;
- social security;
- financial aid to students.

Labour market policy on youth is, of course, a major issue when considering young people's economic independence. A separate chapter (6) in this section has been devoted to this.

7.1 Minimum youth wages

Establishing the wage levels of employees is a matter of negotiation between employers and employees, to be laid down in Collective Wage Agreements (CAOs). The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) settles the statutory bottom lines of gross (minimum) wages to be paid by employers. These bottom lines are binding to employers, and annually adjusted.

At settling statutory minimum wages a distinction is made between employees aged 23 and up (one standard amount applies to them) and youth aged 15 up to and including 22. An age-related *minimum youth wage* is applied to the latter group. For 1988 the following minimum amounts to the 15-22-year-olds was settled by the SZW Ministry.

Table 7.1 Gross minimum youth wages by 1 January 1998

age	percentage of the minimum wage of 23-year-olds and up	per month in NLG	per month in ECU
22	85.0	1,934.90	879.50
21	72.5	1,650.30	750.14
20	61.5	1,399.90	636.32
19	52.5	1,195.10	543.23
18	45.5	1,035.70	470.77
17	39.5	899.10	408.68
16	34.5	785.30	356.95
15	30.0	682.90	310.41

ource: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), 1998.

When we compare the minimum youth wage development over the past 10 years with the minimum wage development of persons aged 23 and up the following picture emerges.

Table 7.2 ***Development of minimum wages 1978-1998***

		Minimum youth wages							
	Minimum wage of adults (23-year- olds and up)	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15
1978	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1982	118	115	111	107	101	99	97	100	103
1986	119	109	101	94	90	86	85	86	89
1990	120	110	102	95	90	87	86	87	90
1994	130	119	110	102	97	94	93	94	97
1998	136	125	116	108	102	99	98	99	102

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), 1998

The table shows that the minimum wage for adults has risen more and more steadily than young people's. This difference increases as their age is lower.
Statutory minimum wages, though, tell us little about the actual income from labour: many young people earn over minimum wage. On the other hand, minimum wages are indicative of young workers' relatively weak position in negotiations with central government and employers' organisations. Minimum youth wages are also significantly more sensitive of economic fluctuation – e.g. see the fall in the late 1980s. Young people remain a vulnerable group in terms of labour market position as well as of income position.

7.2 Unemployment benefits and social security

Social security benefits

From age 18, those without work, can claim social security benefits. Young people who are fit for work have to register at the regional job centre. During the period of looking for work, they can claim social security benefits (RWW). After 6-12 months unemployment those under age 23 are transferred to the JWG-scheme (see chapter 6 in this section). Young people who are unfit or unprepared for the labour market (e.g. teenage mothers, youngsters with serious psychological or psychiatric problems and drug addicts) are admitted to the ABW scheme. For the ages 18 to 20 ABW and RWW benefits are about 35% of the benefit for the over-20s. This amount is certainly insufficient for establishing or maintaining economic and material independence.

Unemployment benefits

Young workers who involuntarily lost their job can claim unemployment benefit (WW) for up to 6 months, amounting to 70 per cent of the minimum youth wage for their age.

Thereafter, they can apply for RWW or ABW benefits.

Take up of benefits by young people over recent years

The recent policymeasures to combat youth unemployment (see chapter 6 in this section) should, in theory, lead to a reduction in the number and proportion of young people on RWW and ABW benefits.

The use of WW-benefits (for working young people after involuntary discharge) varies with economic fluctuations. The relatively favourable position of young people in the labour market should however express itself in a lowering of the proportion of youngsters on WW-benefits, as compared to the total population of those on WW-benefits (15-65 year olds). Statistical data of the CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics) confirm these expectations.

Table 7.3 **Use of ABW, RWW and WW benefits by young people (15-25/26 year-olds), 1987 - 1996.**

	number (x1000)			as % of total population of users (15-65 years)		
	ABW	RWW	WW	ABW	RWW	WW
1987	-	-	33	-	-	20,6
1989	24	123	28	12,6	40,0	15,8
1991	22	91	39	12,4	28,9	17,0
1993	19	85	58	11,5	27,4	16,3
1995	17	77	41	10,6	23,7	10,3
1996	-	-	34	-	-	8,9

Source: Ministery of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), 1998.

Table 7.3 shows that there is a marked decrease of young people on RWW-benefits (those that are fit for work but are unemployed). The number and proportion of those on ABW-benefits have decreased as well, although not as much is the case for RWW.

The figures for the WW show a positive development in the position of youngsters relative to other agegroups: their share in the total population of WW-clients has decreased sharply - especially in recent years.

7.3 Student grants

Generally, young people enter higher and university education around age 18. Although it is embedded in Dutch legislation that parents hold a maintenance duty towards their children for up to 21 years of age, Dutch central government has a long-standing system of financial study aid to all 18-27-year-olds who are still in education. The height of the grant depends, among other things, on student's living conditions: those living in the family home receive considerably less than young people who have left home.

In 1986 the Netherlands has introduced a new grants system for students in secondary vocational (MBO) and higher and university education (HBO and WO): the Student Grants Act (WSF).

Since its introduction this system has been adjusted on several occasions. The average amount available per student has steadily declined. The length of period covered by grants has shortened from 6 years in 1986 to currently 4 years.
The decrease in the study grants for students do not neccesarily imply, that student's financial dependence on their parents has increased.
Research shows that quite a lot of students solve their financial problems by working on the side. This combination of studying and working may have an important function in the educational process if the sidelines are relevant to the curriculum, which, however, is not always the case.
Central government (the OC&W Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) is presently exploring measures to create a wider scope for students to combine work and study in a more positive and educational manner.

7.4 Conclusion

In chapter 6 of this section it has been established that young people's labour market position and prospects are developing in a favourable direction.
The favourable economical climate and government's active labour market policy on youth unemployment both contribute to the positive developments in this field. Government policies to create a comprehensive approach to youth umemployment have been implemented and are quite succesfull in channeling young people towards a job or training.

In this chapter it was evidenced that the reliance of young people on social security and unemployment benefits has accordingly decreased.
In recent years young students have experienced a gradual decrease in the amount of money they recieve as a basic study grant. Research indicates that many students enhance their financial position by working on the side.

Although the general picture is positive, there are reasons for some caution.
Several factors indicate that young people still have a relatively vulnerable postion as far as their labourmarket prospects and financial security (minimum wages) are concerned.
Young people on the labour market remain vulnerable to economical fluctuations.
Moreover, there are indications that the favourable economic developments do not really improve the position and prospects of those at the bottom of the labour market. The gap bewteen those who are already doing well and those who are less fortunate or successfull seems to be widening.

8 Youth and safety

This chapter deals with the role young people play in the Dutch crime safety policy. In this policy area young people have long been considered actual or potential offenders. Only recently the fact is highlighted that young people themselves are victims of crime and suffer from unsafety in their environment. The phrase 'youth and safety' is used to make clear that appropriate policy in this field should take both sides of the picture into consideration.

Below, first some evidence will be presented on the Dutch situation in the field of youth and safety. Next, we shall pursue the key developments in preventive and repressive policy on youth and safety and on the main actors and facilities concerned with youth and safety.

8.1 Some evidence on nature and size of juvenile delinquency

8.1.1 Self-reported delinquency

Various national self-report surveys into children, teenagers and young adults show the following.

- Of children under 12 only a tiny proportion commit criminal offences. Offences such as vandalism, shoplifting, graffiti, threats of violence and battering are reported by a maximum of 6 per cent of children (Van der Laan, 1997).
- Some 35 per cent - 40 per cent of Dutch schoolgoing teenagers (aged 12-17) committed one or more crimes during the past school year (Junger-Tas et al., 1990, 1992 and 1994). The vast majority of this group, nevertheless, commit relatively petty crimes. The major 5 are: faredodging, vandalism, shoplifting, graffiti and harassment. Self-reported youth crime has stabilised from the 1980s.
- Approx. 35 per cent of young adults (aged 18-25) committed a criminal offence in the last year.

  From self-report surveys a picture emerges of juvenile delinquency as an age-related phenomenon primarily motivated by seeking boundaries, kicks and status among friends. This type of behaviour is most prevalent in 15-6-year-olds, steadily declining thereafter. In the Netherlands this type of juvenile delinquency is also termed 'crime the passage'.

Besides this, there is however a small group of persistent offenders: the 'hard core' of juvenile crime. Estimates vary from 2 to 7 percent of youth aged 12 and up. This group is responsible for approx. 50% of all crime committed by youth. The crimes these young people commit are opportunistic (financial gain) and the use of violence is on the increase (e.g. streetrobbery, armed robbery of shops etc.).

Violence and bullying in schools

In the 1990s various self report studies were conducted into violent, disruptive and bullying behaviour of pupils in primary and secondary education.
A first tentative study revealed that 20-25% of primary and secondary school pupils regularly become victims of bullying (Mooij, 1991). A more recent and more representative survey yields lower percentages: 9% of 4-7-year-olds are regularly bullied and 16% of 8-11-year-olds. It also appeared that victims of bullying often themselves join bullying others (Peeters and Woldringh, 1994). In yet another (national) selfreport survey of schoolgoing youth 8% of the pupils claims to be bullied on a regular basis by other pupils.

8.1.2 Police encounters

It is possible to take out the teenage group aged 12-17 from the police register, because they are separately registered 'under criminal age' with different rules applicable (penal youth justice)[1]. The category of 18-24-year-olds sections with adult criminal justice and cannot easily be taken out of the police register. Accordingly, the data below relate exclusively to the age group of 12-17.

Crime rate

A limited proportion of crimes commited by youth is recorded by the police and an even smaller share leads to arrests and interrogations of a young suspect. The number of minors under criminal age arrested by the police and 'interviewed' on suspicion of a criminal offence, has nearly uninterruptedly inclined from the late 1960s to the mid 1980s. From the mid 1980s to 1995 the percentage of young people having an encounter with the police has stabilised around 3.5 per cent - annually some 40,000 police encounters of minors.
In 1996 the number of police encounters of minors rose sharply from about 41,000 in 1995 to almost 51,000 in 1996. Criminal offence-related police encounters of minors thus rose from 3.8 per cent (1995) to 4.7 per cent in 1996.
The increased number of minors' (12-17) police encounters probably partly reflects increased attention for juvenile delinquency of the police and of other agencies and organisations (van der Laan, 1997). But part of it may very well be a real increase in juvenile crime.

Type of committed offences

Evidence on the nature of the offences through which minors encounter the police shows some alarming developments. Although the large bulk of juvenile crime consists of property offences (65 per cent) and 'vandalism and breach of peace' (20 per cent), the number of registered violent offences by young people has significantly increased: from 3,500 in 1985 to 6,500 in 1995 and nearly 8,000 in 1996. Further analysis of violent youth crime shows that 'abuse and threats' (58 per cent) and 'theft with violation and blackmail' (29 per cent) are predominant.

This increase in violent youth crime is not an isolated phenomenon: adult violation is on the increase as well and similar trends have been found in other European countries (Junger-Tas, 1996).

Possibly increased sensitivity to violence and decreased social tolerance of certain types of violence (e.g. within the family) play a part as well: this leads to a more active investigation and prosecution policy in this field.

Offender characteristics

- In the group of under-age suspects interviewed by the police, young people from the four largest cities are significantly overrepresented. The proportion interrogated minors in these metropolitan areas is four times national average.
- Registered crime of girls more than boys' has risen over recent years, but it constitutes still a modest proportion of minors' police encounters (12 per cent). In this group of female violators many are of ethnic minority (Surinamese and Antillean) girls.
- Evidence on registered police encounters of young immigrants in the four largest cities reveals that young people have three times more police encounters than youth of Dutch backgrounds.

  Registered crime of ethnic minority youth in the four largest cities is highest amongst young Moroccans and Antilleans and lowest amongst young Turks and Surinamese. The latter two do not deviate much from young Dutch-born (BIZA Ministry of the Interior, Integral Safety reports, 1993 and 1994). Young Antilleans and Moroccans commit not only more crimes than other groups, they are also more prone to use violence.

8.1.3 Disposal of youth cases by police and justice

Over recent years the way the police deals with juvenile offenders has substantially changed. Informal disposals by the police (ticking off and sending away) have declined, in favour of the use of the Halt disposal (see section 8.3). Halt disposals are operated at first-time police encounters of minors (first offenders).

Judicial proceedings concerning youth are changing as well. Cases are less often 'barely dismissed'[2], and the number of imposed settlements, summons and community sentences is up[3].

Data on disposal of juvenile offenders by the police and the public prosecutor suggest a more formal and drastic disposals of young offender-related cases. This too fits in with current policy (recommendations of the Van Montfrans Committee).

8.2 Young people as victims of (juvenile) delinquency

The following table shows young people's average propensity of becoming victims of crime.

Table 8.1 Percentages of young (15-24) victims and of the total (over-15s) population, by offence (1994)

	aged 15-24	total
sex offences	3.8	1.6
abuse	4.0	1.5
threats	7.1	3.9
bicycle theft	15.8	5.6
pick pockets	3.2	2.1
other crimes	7.3	3.8
residual damage	11.6	5.5

Source: CBS 'Legal protection and safety survey', 1994.

The table shows the percentage of young victims of all offences to be above the national average. A large part of them are victimised by young offenders, e.g. in cases of violence. Sometimes offenders and victims cannot be distinguished e.g. in fights.
Besides this vulnerability of young people plays a role: research into violence at school shows that particularly less assertive children are more likely to be victimised by violence.

No research has been conducted yet into the impact of crime on feelings of (in)security in young people. But youth participation projects do demonstrate safety and fear of crime to be 'hot items' to many a young.
The national pupils' survey shows as well, that delinquency is of major concern to many young people: (un)safety is ranking third as matter of concern, after pollution and unemployment (NIBUD, 1994).

8.3 Services

Young people aged 12-17 come under criminal youth justice. Within the judicial system a number of services are occupied with minors under criminal age.

- *Police*

  Until recently, police forces in the Netherlands were operating departments specialised in youth affairs. After a nationwide police reorganisation, these departments have disappeared from most forces in 1995.

Although the expertise on youth is not lost, it is less well organised. This - according to many - is inconsistent with the increased policy concentration on youth crime. Hence, it is now being advocated to re-introduce the youth specialism into regional police forces.

— *Halt offices*

The Netherlands has a nation-wide network of locally or regionally based Halt offices. These offices carry out the so-called Halt disposals: a provision whereby young first offenders can avoid prosecution by doing community service.

— *Hard core projects*

In a number of Dutch cities specific projects for 'hard core' juvenile delinquents have been set up. These projects aim at social rehabilitation of delinquent youth and prevention of young people entering the hard core group. The Ministry of Justice provides support for a number of these projects. A recent evaluation of 5 of these projects indicates that these projects are quite successfull in improving the social situation and prospects of these youngsters and in preventing relapse in criminal behaviour.

— *Child protection*

In the Netherlands the regional Councils for Child Protection are responsible for the implementation of court orders in the field of child protection. The Councils used to deal with civil duties, such as guardianship and custody inquiries and advice in cases of divorce and alleged neglect or abuse of children by their parents or carers.

For some time, the Councils have also been allocated an explicit role in criminal cases where the juvenile involved is not the victim but the perpetrator (suspect). The Councils are required to provide early assistance to young people arrested by the police and to report on their findings to the youth judge. Therefore separate units are being set up within the Councils. Cooperation with the police and the Public Prosecutor is currently developing.

— *Youth probation service*

In 1997 youth probation services dealt with 3,583 young people (up to 17 years of age). The number of clienst of these services is increasing rapidly (1995: 2,938 clients).

The youth probation service has emerged from the voluntary sector. The Netherlands has not yet an evenly spread nation-wide probation network for young offenders. Setting up such a network is one of the spearheads of justice policy in the field of juvenile delinquency.

A national protocol has been developed, in which the activities of the Council for Child Protection, guardianship agencies, and youth probation are co-ordinated. Also regional platforms are set up, to co-ordinate youth probation activities.

— *Institutions for young offenders*

Minors can be placed on court order in a community home for young offenders. This type of provision distinguishes between custody centres and treatment centres. Custody centres are intended to (temporary) custody, youth detention or waiting periods before admission into youth treatment centres. Custody jcentres are used for a small part for emergency placements of juveniles under supervision. the treatment centres are divised for the execution of the PIJ criminal court order (Placement in a Youth Institution) and for treatment of serious problem youth under a civil court order (usually supervision) to the discretion of the judge. From the early 1990s the capacity of both types of youth institutions has expanded by about 70%. Nevertheless, prognoses for the years ahead show substantial shortages. The extent of future capacity expansion is this year on the agenda of the formation of a new Cabinet. Over recent years particularly the proportion of immigrant youth in the custody centre population has significantly increased. Moroccan young people make up about 25 per cent of the total population of judicial youth institutions.

Table 8.2 **The number of minors (12-17) in institutions for young offenders**

	1992			1995		
	Shelters	**Treatment centres**	**Total**	**Shelters**	**Treatment centres**	**Total**
Total (100%) absolute	1,881	383	2,264	1,809	573	2,382
Of Dutch origin	43	60	46	34	60	40
Of immigrant origin	55	40	53	66	39	59
comprising						
. Moroccans	28	13	25	28	11	24
. Surinamese	9	8	8	13	10	12
. Turks	7	3	7	8	4	7
. Antilleans	4	4	4	6	5	6
Remainders	8	12	9	10	10	10

Source: Annual figures of judicial institutions, 1992 and 1995. Ministry of Justice, Section of judicial institutions, 1993, 1996.

8.4 Policy on youth and safety

Combating juvenile delinquency belongs to the duties of police and justice, provided that the offender is aged 12 or over. The Child Protection Council is responsible for the under-12 offenders.
Nationally, the responsibility rests with the Ministry of Justice (that includes child protection).
Prevention and combat of youth crime has been one of the spearheads of central justice policy since the 1990s.

Developments in justice policy

In the early 1980s change was set off in justice policy that can be characterised as a *socialisation of the law*. Other, non-judicial, actors are increasinlgy involved in and made responsible for lawmaintaining tasks. The contribution demanded from these actors can be characterised as 'upholding the standards': local government, actors in the voluntary sector, but also individual citizens and young people themselves are more challenged with their own responsibility for bringing about and maintaining a secure society to all involved.
On the other hand, we see, particularly in recent years, that government hold *more active and assertive attitudes* towards combating juvenile delinquency. 'Tolerance' has been clearly restricted.

Central concepts in current justice policy on youth crime are:

- early identification of (potential) delinquent behaviour in young people;
- a rapid, consistent and clear reaction to this delinquent behaviour;
- appropriate sanctions and sound probation and aftercare in order to counter relapse.

By means of a large number of measures and (model) projects – among other things in the context of Youth and Safety - early identification and intervention as well as more appropriate responses (criminal justice based or not) to youth crime are currently being improved.

8.4.1 Youth Crime Policy Scheme

In January 1995 the Ministry of Justice, in close co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior, launched a policy scheme on juvenile delinquency. This policy scheme entails a package of measures to bring about, jointly with other ministries and local authorities, a balanced preventive and repressive approach to youth crime. National government concentrates on its core duties: monitoring, quality improvement and innovation. A great deal of these measures are executed by the police, the Public Prosecutor and the Council for Child Protection under the Metropolitan Policy.

In the annex to this chapter the key measures and projects in the field of youth crime are briefly described.

8.4.2 Memorandum 'Delinquency in relation to ethnic minority integration' (CRIEM, 1997)

Already in the 1980s researchers and practitioners established that particular groups of ethnic minority young saw alarming (violent) delinquent behaviour and involvement with organised (drugs)crime.

It took some time before this issue could be publicly and politically debated. The issue was in 1996 again highly focused upon by politicians and the media, this time triggered by statements of two criminologists interrogated by the parliamentary investigation committee on 'Methods of Prosecution'. They stated that certain ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in organised crime. Signals of concern given out on ethnic minorites and their contribution to crime prompted the relevant Ministers - subs. of the Interior and of Justice – to commission research into the association between ethnic minority integration and crime as a symptom for failing integration of certain groups (of young people). This has resulted in a report, recently issued. The memorandum defines and analyses the problems.

Then, proposals are made for a better approach to the problems. In addition to a number of general measures to improve police and justice quality, particular attention is paid to the development of a *preventive integration policy*. This is elaborated in three policy strands.

- Policy geared to ethnic minority young people who encounter with the police for committing crimes.
  It is proposed to develop a nation-wide comprehensive approach to this group by providing individually based support programmes (programme support) aimed at the integrated tackling of the (dropping out) problems of related youths. The objective is to repair young person's ties with society (school, family, and work).
- Policy geared to *youth at risk*: combat and prevention of truanting behaviour and early school leaving in ethnic minority youth. In this field too, a comprehensive approach must be developed, starting from the condition that each (ethnic minority) youngster is either schoolgoing or working.
- Policy directed towards *ethnic minority pre-school children* (under-5s) to prevent them from being already backward on entering primary education. So this is mainly about expansion, intensification and quality improvement of the provision on development stimulation (combating backwardness in command of the language and other scholastic skills) and upbringing support (parental guidance with the upbringing and care of children).

In the memorandum much importance is being attached to the improvement of local authority direction in this field. School is considered a general key facility that can play a central role in promoting social cohesion and creating accessible provision to all district residents on information, schooling, accommodation, recreation, sports and social services.

8.5 Metropolitan Policy on Youth and Safety

In 1995 the 21 medium-sized cities (G21) and the Cabinet ratified the Metropolitan Policy (GSB) Covenant. Before, in 1994, the four largest cities (G4) had ratified a similar Covenant.
This wide ranging covenant described the target level for a four-year-period (to 1999). An important element of this Metropolitan Policy is combatting youth crime. At national level the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior are responsible for the local elaboration of the Youth and Safety theme by the 21 GSB-involved municipalities.

8.5.1 Previous history

In the beginning of the nineties, during the third period of the Lubbers Administration youth crime was put higher on the political agenda. Alarming reports on pervasive and violent juvenile delinquency, particularly in ethnic minority youth, triggered political action: the Cabinet installed the Youth Crime Committee, better known as the Montfrans Committee (after its chairman). The analysis of the committee showed parties still working at cross purposes, insufficiently concentrating on effectively operating an early, rapid and consistent response to youth crime and lacking sufficient or structured youth crime prevention measures by agents involved with young people. The committee expressed its concern about the loss of youth expertise in regional police forces due to the reorganisation of the police apparatus. In addition, streamlining of community-based sentencing was recommended. Young people who do not properly serve their community sentence should rapidly be imposed a custodial sentence.

In 1995 none of the four Youth and Safety partners (local authority, Police, Public Prosecutor, and the Council for Child Protection) were conducting structured policy on combatting youth crime. Policy measures, if any, were occasional and ad hoc. Hence, networks for youth and safety, inter-agency consultation or joint policies with common aims and tools were underdeveloped. Local government, the Public Prosecutor and the police conferred in local (tripartite) platforms, but did not involve the Council for Child Protection and other agents.
It was clear that a lot of work needed to be done by the local key parties to implement the recommendations of the Youth Crime Committee.

Thus, apart from the role of central government, particularly the efforts of local government became decisive for tackling youth and safety related problems.

8.5.2 The national framework

The Youth and Safety policy has a process- and organisation oriented and a substantial dimension. Organisationally, improvement of judicial and non-judicial inter-agency and actors cooperation and alignment is much highlighted.

The substantial dimension of this policy draws upon the view that policy should be based upon the chain of developmental stages all young people go through when progressing into maturity. The most important stages in this range are: family, school and work. Socially vulnerable young people have a heightened propensity of somewhere dropping out of this chain and turn into a deviant direction. Within the chain special (preventive) attention is needed for the vulnerable transitions between the various stages: it is just there that society loses sight and grip of young people. The organisations and agencies playing a role during the various stages of the development chain are stated to have *linked up responsibilities*. Each has proper responsibilities and duties, which is to be respected, but all have additional joint responsibilities of *linking up* their actions for the youth involved. From the perspective of the young person, attention must be continuous and the approach must be coherent and consistent.

8.5.3 Policy in the context of Youth and Safety

In the various urban action schemes certain clusters of projects can be distinguished, based on the development chain and relating to upbringing, school, work, leisure and child care.

Alongside that, there are clusters around combatting crime, improving the information position of those involved and 'adjusting' relevant organisations for properly responding to policy developments.

Prevention

Measures of a preventive nature are directed in all cities to risk groups and first offenders, often including information projects in schools, 'School Safety' projects, parenting support and leisure facilities.

A typical example of preventive measures is the Extracurricular Care Plus projects in the city of Utrecht. In these projects small groups of - especially Moroccan – children in trouble at school or at home are supported after school several times a week. These children, in addition to doing their homework, acquire social skills in these projects.

Enhancement of the judicial chain

The upsurge in (youth) crime in the Netherlands has not been mirrored by a proportional expansion of the judicial apparatus. The consequence is that many offences remain unsentenced, even when the offender is known.

Particularly to juvenile perpetrators, who are still experimenting with rule breaking and delinquent behaviour, this absence of rapid, consistent and clear social responses to their behaviour is not good. It may lead them to drift further into the criminal scene.
The enforcement of the local justice chain, accordingly, is an important element to GSB policy on the issue of Youth and Safety.
Key concepts in that context are: early, rapid and consistent responses to youth crime and disposal proceedings appropriate to the (potential) young offender and the crime committed.

— *Early, rapid and consistent*
Numerous measures ensure that the organisations involved dispose more young offender-related cases within a reasonable period of time. Here emphasis is on the so-called 'inconvenience offences': crime affecting above all the citizens and causing their feelings of unfafety (pick pockets, theft out of or from cars, burglary). It is pursued that criminal behaviour of young people is always responded to.
Development of a client monitoring system (CVS), youth monitoring systems centrally storing evidence on youth and young offenders, must stop them from slipping through the judicial net time and again.

— *An appropriate response*
In responding to youth crime the tenets of retribution and redress are not paramount. The response has primarily a corrective purpose: prevention of relapse and contribution to social rehabilitation of the youth. To that end a number of alternatives to traditional punishment (detention, fines) have been developed, especially the pedagogic and the community sentences are relevant here. The number of youth-imposed pedagogic and community sentences has significantly grown in the past years.

Approach to school dropouts and school atmosphere

The stricter approach to rule breaking does not restrict to inconvenience offences. Research proves there to be a clear association between (signals of) dropping out of school (poor achievement, truancy, early leaving) and delinquent behaviour. Recently, hence, a number of GSB cities have considerably tightened the judicial response to non-attendance (breaking the compulsory education Act).
New pedagogic sentences are being developed, especially directed towards regular truants. Their parents are summoned to appear in court and are imposed fines or other court orders. Alongside that, preventive measures are taken particularly targeting at improving educational achievement and enhancing young people's commitment to school.

In addition, the national Safe Schools programme has been launched, aiming at the prevention and combat of violence, bullying and other aspects of unsafety in and in the surroundings of the school (see chapter 3 in this section).

Programme support

It has become clear that a substantial proportion of youth crime is committed by a relatively small group of young people. We mean the so-called 'hard core' of juvenile delinquents: young people (preponderantly boys) who have and cause problems also in other spheres. These young are often (very) poorly educated, unemployed and have a poor social outlook. Committing offences and being involved with (organised) crime are attractive ways to them of yet acquiring money and status.
In this group ethnic minority young people (particularly Moroccan and Antillean boys) are overrepresented.
Research and practice have demonstrated that these seriously troubled young people can only be diverted into mending their ways if one decides for individual routes towards their return to mainstream contexts (school, work, family). These young people are therefore to be intensively guided and supported, but in a least dependent making way.

Family support and crime prevention

In the 'Youth and Family' report, commissioned by the Minister of Justice (Junger-Tas, 1997), an integrated area based family & youth policy is advocated. Well defined 'risk groups' in problem districts should be offered intensive parenting support already at an early stage, and if need be with some urging.
The recommendations are based on the analysis that some research based child and family characteristics can be identified, that are sound predictors whether a child is likely to commit crimes as a teenager or to display other forms of deviant behaviour that relates to dropping out from mainstream social networks. It is established at the same time, that those labelled risk group often under-use or do not use services of parenting support and child development encouragement. Therefore it is envisaged that justice and other local allies, such as child care and family services, must develop more prophylactic and outreaching approaches in order to timely intervene in families where 'things go wrong'.
An inter-departmental working party has been commissioned to advice on options of early and targeted intervention in these at risk families (IWG/00, see section 1, chapter 5).

8.5.4 Progress in the municipalities

The four largest cities (G4)

Interim reviews of the Youth and Safety issue show that particularly the four largest cities have made progress towards central policy based direction. Quantitative enlargement of youth crime disposal and expansion of new type responses (community/pedagogic sentences and HALT disposals) are being brought about.

Qualitative aims like the provision of school and work prospects to all young people is pursued by all parties. The most important result of these efforts is highly improved cooperation between the partners and a stronger coherence in policy.
Apart from that, the targeted locally based approach to groups of very problematic, delinquent young people seems to be fruitful.

Example: The Hague

The 'Van Campenplein clean and safe' project has developed a target approach to a problem group of Moroccan boys in one of the deprived areas of The Hague. These boys caused serious inconvenience in the area by harassment of residents, burglary in dwellings and cars and drugs dealing. Joint efforts of police and district organisations have diverted this group of 40 young people into individual support programmes aiming at return to school, work, or useful leisure pursuits. The probation service is involved with this individual programme support. A first evaluation shows that the boys have really been diverted off the streets: inconvenience has been stopped.

The medium-sized municipalities (G21)

Although the targeted level of the first policy schemes in these cities is slightly lower than in the four metropoli the Youth and Safety partners in the fifteen medium-sized cities at the start of the covenant – even more than in the four metropoli – had first to invest much in (re-)organisation, cooperation and setting up smooth inter-agency criminal justice procedures. The organisation of Youth and Safety policy in most of the fifteen medium-sized cities – in deviance of the four largest cities - is embedded in the metropolitan policy structure. This entails that, generally, no structered consultation has been set up at policy level between local government, the judicial partners and child and youth care. But implementation of the covenant lagged behind that of the four metropoli, so the organisation is still being developed. In some cities, nevertheless, occasional meetings are held with several partners participating.

The remaining Dutch local authorities

Following from the advice of the Youth Crime Committee funds are now available to non-metropolitan cities for youth and safety projects. As a total 45 applications have (partly) been granted. Selection was made against application requirements made in the related scheme.
The contents of the applications can be divided into six categories:

1 *Information*
This includes education of young people and parents on drugs and alcohol, parenting support, and information by Halt (on first offenders).

2 *School adoption*
This includes police officers visiting schools, also for information, but in many municipalities as a separate project specifically involving the police.

3 *School-related activities*
These include projects of homework support, dropping out prevention, truancy tackling, after school care, and transition to further education or a job.

4 *Youth and community work*
Many applications relate to engaging young people, street workers and youth and community work.

5 *Facilities*
These include haunts, youth meeting points, play and skating facilities, and the like.

6 *Networks, youth intervention teams, youth information points*
Activities are included that bring relevant actors together. The one-stop (front) office idea is often attached to it: referral of a troubled young person to a relevant agency may follow.

The majority of applications relate to early prevention.

Results from the approach up to now

The covenant has played an incentive role in a number of respects. It has highlighted the Youth and safety issues and widened local support. Youth crime, in the meantime, is high on the agendas of both the local organisations and local politics. This enhances the opportunities for effective youth policies.

At the same time, the covenant has financially allowed for more flexible cooperation and for implementation of this policy. Furthermore, it has properly installed the implementation process of the recommendations from the Youth Crime Committee. The terms 'early, rapid and consistent' have become guidelines for actual policy improvement. This incentive is reflecting in some results that have been achieved. The Halt disposals (for first offenders) increase according to plan. The streamlining of criminal disposals by means of the 'officer model' seem to bear fruit. Reported cases with the Council for Child Protection are on the increase.

One of the objectives – a reduced number of police encounters by young people – is not being met. The question is whether or not this is to be regretted (in this stage). The attention of the police for young people – also owing to the covenant – has become greater, which can positive be rated, given the general objective. Young people more often encounter the police before they really get into trouble. The contacts between police and school are exemplaric, but also those between parents of truants and the Public Prosecutor. These contacts are all in line with the objective of the covenant.

Time is not ripe yet to answer the question if the positive developments will actually lead to a reduction in youth crime. Generally, the metropolitan covenant has, for the first time, put the combat of youth crime on the standing agendas of local government and the non-statutory sector and prompted structured efforts towards a coherent policy. Sufficient reasons for continuing the Youth and Safety Policy.

8.6 Conclusion

Evidence on youth and crime

- Committing petty crimes has in the Netherlands become more or less part of young people's process of growing up. Most young stop it as they grow older; this is sometimes termed 'crime de passage'.
- The 'hard core' of young offenders – those who display persistent and opportunist crime behaviour – are few: estimates vary from 2 per cent to 7 per cent of youth aged 12 and up. This group is responsible for approx. 50 per cent of all youth-committed crime. There is an increase in violent offences.
- Immigrant-descended young people produce one and a half to three times the crime rate of young people of Dutch origin under comparable socio-economic conditions (Leeuw 1997). Particularly amongst young Moroccans and Antilleans offending takes alarming shape – also due to its often-violent nature.
- Police figures on youth crime show a sharp rise from 1995. This suggests increased attention and activities in the field of juvenile delinquency on the part of the police or other agencies and organisations involved, and does not show an actual rise in youth crime.
- Disposal of reported youth crime has become 'tougher' and more formal in recent years. This applies to the police approach as well as to judicial disposals. The number of Halt disposals and of youth imposed community sentences has sharply risen in the past few years. This is in line with current policy on juvenile delinquency.

Policy on juvenile delinquency

In today's Netherlands youth crime prevention and combat are much highlighted and invested in.

Policy, more than it used to be, is framed in the context of preventing young people from dropping out by providing them with prospects. Youth crime is then considered a signal of a young person's propensity of dropping out or being a dropout already. Policy efforts of both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior and local authorities are concentrating on three key strands:

- prevention and prospects offered to all young people;
- early detection of problems in young people and rapid intervention when youth is liable to get into trouble;
- stricter enforcement of rules with young people by the police, justice departments and other relevant actors.

This entails to the Ministry of Justice and the judicial organisations that their scope must be (far) beyond their own domain: close cooperation with social services, education and other youth provision is absolutely indispensable for the policy to be successful.

Judicial and non-judicial inter-agency cooperation must finally be shaped at a local and regional level. The Ministry of Justice tries and encourages local developments in this field through model and pilot projects.

Metropolitan policy

Also the GSB, of which Youth and Safety is one of the issues to be implemented by the (25) local authorities involved, has given an extra impetus to the realisation of a coherent locally based approach to juvenile delinquency.
GSB experience related to Youth and Safety shows that, particularly in the four largest cities, beautiful new things are emerging. The medium-sized municipalities are still behind this development.

Crime and ethnic minorities

In addition to that, metropolitan problems around ethnic minorities and crime are ever more highlighted. Policy on that (CRIEM) is currently being elaborated in a number of experimental projects.

Annex

Policy Measures on Youth Crime (1995)

— *Local integrated approach to youth crime*
Since the 1980s, as described above, important incentives have been given in various ways (Administrative Prevention, Social Renewal, and Metropolitan policy) to the development and implementation of an integrated locally based preventive policy on (youth) crime.
The Ministry of Justice is encouraging that development, e.g. by support for a number of pilot prevention projects in municipalities aiming at local bodies' networking for the sake of an integrated approach to youth crime. These local authorities are developing in these networks a wide-ranging and integrated package of measures directed at the early detection of problem behaviour in young people and the formulation a common an unambiguous response to it.

— *Improved information on youth crime*
Through various measures the information function of authorities and other actors involved in the field of juvenile delinquency is being improved. Improved policy information on youth crime at national, regional and local levels, as well as improved data on individual youths with problem behaviour (client monitoring system – CVS) are included.

— *Crime prevention and parenting support*
An interdepartmental working party (IWG/00) is deliberating the development of a coherent and effective area based upbringing policy that aims at early preventing dropping out and non-social behaviour of young people. The approach is concentrated on areas and families at risk.

— *School and crime*
The Ministry of Justice is involved with the (education) policy to counter truancy and early school leaving. In addition, the Ministry of Justice is developing, in consultation with other local authorities and actors involved, models and instruments for crime prevention in primary and secondary schools (The Safe School, see also chapter 3 in this section).

— *Violence and the media*

Information campaigns, symposia and expert meetings alert educators and those in the video branch to the potential detrimental effects from violent and deterring audio-visual products on youth. As regards the video branch, a self-regulating system is advocated. Harmonisation and improvement of a classification system for audio-visual products is currently being worked on.

— *Problem issues of the under-12s*

Children under twelve fall outside criminal youth justice and, so, cannot be criminally prosecuted. Possibilities are currently being figured out of getting this group more in the picture (through police registration), as is improvement of the (non-penal) police response to delinquent behaviour of this group.

— *Approach to the hard core*

A small group of young people account for about 50 per cent of youth crime. These persistent offenders are termed the 'hard core' of young criminals. In 10 local projects methodologies are being designed to address this hard core of young people. The various types of intensive individual support are concerned, geared to the enhancement of social participation and integration (school, work, and relationship with the parents). Reviews show that the projects are succeeding rather well in countering relapse in these young people.
That is why extension of the number of hard core projects is pursued.

— *Innovation and stimulation of crime prevention*

In judicial organisations (Public Prosecutor, probation service, child protection, victim support, Halt) crime *prevention* is often still insufficiently paramount. The Ministry of Justice tries with a number of projects and measures to enhance the 'prevention awareness' in these organisations (e.g. development of visions, preventive action schemes, and model projects).

— *Investigation and prosecution*

During the 1993 police re-organisation process the explicit youth specialism was abolished as such and integrated into the general (basic) police services. But it appears in the meantime that this was conducive to appropriate disposals of youth cases. Currently is being investigated how the youth specialism of the police can be improved or reinstated.
A number of measures taken are to improve youth case disposals of the Public Prosecutor. The measures relate to: shortening the transmission time (rapid response), standardisation of disposal (consistent response), extension of the number of community sentences (appropriate sanctions), conducting regional analyses of juvenile delinquency, equipping a Youth Prosecutor and improving communication between the Justice Department and partners.

— *Enhancement of the role of child protection in criminal trial*

The penal signalling and informing duty of the Child Protection Council turns out in practice only partly to show up well. Comparison of the number of prosecutor-recorded indictments against minors with the number of Council-completed criminal case forms shows the Council to take action in only one third of cases (Van Montfrans, 1994).

The Ministry of Justice tries to raise the report percentage with a number of measures (aiming at: 100 per cent in the year 2000).

— *Sanction policy*

Sanctions imposed on young delinquents must not lead or contribute to further weakening of young people's social ties with society. That is why adjusted sanctions are being developed and encouraged that are (preferably) even contributory to enhancing these ties. Particularly pedagogic and community sentences are concerned. In addition, the possibilities of night detention are being explored enabling the young person to continue participation in society (particularly school).

— *Judicial institutions*

The capacity of judicial institutions has been expanded in the past few years. Alongside that, quality is being improved of the execution of sentences.

— *Youth probation*

There is no uniform and nation-wide system yet of services to young convicts (youth probation). This is currently being worked on.

Notes section 3/8

1 Offenders under-12 do not yet come under criminal justice, and police encounters of under-12s are not (yet) systematically recorded by the police.

2 Bare dismissal means that the Public Prosecutor decides not to bring the case before court. It may concern so-called bare dismissals (entailling informal cautioning) or a dismissal under certain conditions. The most frequently imposed conditions are: settlement (paying the fine), paying damages to the victim and serving a community sentence.

3 In recent years annually some 22,000 to 24,000 indictments of minors under criminal age (12-17 jaar) were passed on to the prosecutor. Related to the size of the total under-age population over 2 percent were involved.

9 Minorities

9.1 Introduction

The Dutch population consists for about 17% of 'minorities': people born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad. According to this (widest) definition over 2.6 million Dutch belong to a minority group.
Central policy distinguishes between a number of specific target groups the integration policy is directed at.
On the basis of origin the following populations are rated amongst the minorities: Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccans, Antillians and Arubans, Tunisians, Greek, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Capeverdians, Chinese and Moluccans. Recognised refugees, permit holding asylum seekers, caravan dwellers and gypsies are also rated to the minorities. The major part of refugees and asylum seekers originate from non-industrialised countries.
The largest four minorities in the Netherlands by origin are: Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccans and Antillians/Arubans. They make up some 6% of the total population. These groups are also frequently termed 'allochtonous' (Greek for: born elsewhere, a tongue twister for the non-Dutch). Ethnic minority policy and research in the Netherlands concentrate predominantly on these four groups.
The use of the concepts of 'minority' and 'allochtonous' might suggest that one homogenous population is involved, which is far from being the case. Within and between these groupings there are great differences (e.g. by age, religion, class) that, hence, also imply policy consequences.

9.2 Young minorities in figures[1]

The proportion of young people in ethnic minorities is much higher than that in the Dutch originated population: of Turkish and Moroccan residents about 65% are under 30. Of Surinamese and Antillians 60% are under 30, (of Dutch-born: 40%).
This raises the relative share of minorities in the group of young Dutch people also above average: about 1 in 4 children (aged 0-15) is of foreign origin and some 10% belongs to one of the four major minorities. Table 9.1 shows a breakdown.

Table 9.1 **Population (x 1000)**

	10-14 year			15-19 year			20-25 year		
	1990	1995	differ-ence	1990	1995	differ-ence	1990	1995	differ-ence
Turkey	19	25	6	24	23	0	26	33	7
Morocco	21	25	4	18	24	6	15	23	8
Surinam	21	26	4	23	23	-1	25	28	2
Antilles/Aruba	7	9	2	8	8	0	10	11	1
subtotal	68	85	16	73	77	5	77	94	17
total population	900	904	4	1,107	921	-186	1.264	1,146	-118

Source: CBS (1995, 1996) SCP-processed (Tesser and Veenman, 1997).

Four largest cities

Ethnic minorities are highly overrepresented in the four largest cities of the Netherlands:

- of children (aged 0-14) in these cities 55% belong to a minoritygroup, 39% are Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillian/Aruban.
- of adolescents and young adults (aged 15-29) in the four largest cities 40% belong to a minority; 25% belong to one of the four largest ethnic minority groups.

The first versus the second generation

It is often being presumed that problems experienced by immigrant populations in education and on entering the labour market, are mainly occurring in the so called 'first generation': people born elsewhere who have immigrated into the Netherlands at an older age. The children of these people, born and growing up in the Netherlands (the second generation) are supposed to better speak the Dutch language, to be more familiar with Dutch society and to more easily move in education and in the labour market.
Therefore, it is useful to know the proportions of the first and second generations in ethnic minority young people:

- of Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese under-15s 85-90% belong to the second generation, of the Antillians approx. 70%;
- of 15-19-year-olds the proportion of the second generation is below 35% (Moroccans) and over 50% (Turks and Surinamese); Antillians: 43%.
- in the age group 20 -29 the share of the second generation is small; this is most true for Turks and Moroccans (under 10%) and somewhat less for Surinamese and Antillians (around 20%).

For that matter, the number of first generation immigrants is still increasing due to the fact that partners for young Turks and Moroccans are being looked for in the country of origin (family building).

9.3 Ethnic minority youth and identity

To many first generation immigrants the country of origin and belonging to an ethnic (minority) group are important elements of their social identity.
It is not yet clear if this will also be true for the second (and third) generation of children currently growing up in the Netherlands.
It is very well possible that these young people will join the social mobility processes inherent in the Dutch majority population. The term 'ethnic minority' will then not apply to them any more as a social classification criterion.
Indications of a declining significance of the *country of origin* to the second generation of Turks and Moroccans can be derived from, e.g., their initiatives to set up Islamic organisations in which ethnic minorities from different countries of origin jointly participate, such as sport clubs, students associations and schools (Penninx et al., 1995).
Thus a group of young people will emerge with a new orientation to their parents' country of origin as well as to the Dutch society they grew up in.
These young people manifest themselves as 'new' citizens in a 'new' multi-cultural society.

9.4 Social mobility: educational careers and prospects of employment

Being successful in education and in the labour market is crucial for the social mobility of ethnic minority young people. The Social Cultural Planning Office (SCP) has recently conducted an in-depth study into the employment opportunities of young people of the four major immigrant populations in relation to their educational qualifications. (Tesser and Veenman, 1997). Existing qualitative and quantitative research evidence was analysed[2] and the authors came to the following conclusions.

School careers

Young immigrants' educational achievement is - on average - significantly lower than that of Dutch originated young people. But there are great differences between the various minority populations. Young Turks and Moroccans show a considerably poorer education profile than do young Surinamese and Antillians/Arubans. The profile of Dutch-born young people of immigrant backgrounds, the second generation growing up in the Netherlands, is significantly better than that of those arriving at a later age. Particularly, the proportion of unqualified youth is much lower in the second than in the first generation.
In the preparatory stage for the labour market ethnic minority pupils differ from Dutch-born pupils by higher numbers of unqualified school-leavers and by relatively ineffective school careers. The difference becomes apparent in the first three years of secondary education.

The major causes of undue unqualified school-leaving and ineffective educational careers in ethnic minority young people are:

- Initial backlogs occurring in primary education.
- Half-way newcomers, school age children who enter education during the curriculum and are lacking a solid basis, such as young Antillians, particularly, and young newcomers in the context of family reunion, family building or asylum seeking.
- Most immigrant parents' inability to actually support their children with their school careers, the effects of which are reinforced by inadequate advice from teachers, notably on deciding the type of school in secondary education.
- A strong orientation to the country of origin, in some portions of the immigrant population. Theze pupils tend to interrupt their school careers for a temporary return to the country of origin.
- Sombre perspectives on the future in certain groups of young people, who see few prospects of a job and are facing high unemployment in their social environment (family, friends, neighbourhood).

Immigrant pupils who do not drop out of education perform at the same levels as pupils of Dutch origin. Part of them acquire access to the highest forms of education, be it to a lesser degree than Dutch-born pupils do. Ethnic minority girls are more successful in education than boys.

The transition to employment

Despite improving employment rates young people still have great difficulty in obtaining appropriate regular jobs, especially ethnic minority young people and school leavers. This is added by the fact that only small shares of young Turkish and Moroccan women participate in the labour market. Nevertheless, not the whole picture of young immigrants is negative. The job prospects for young Turkish men and young Surinamese women are only slightly poorer than those for young people of Dutch origin. Long-term unemployment is steadily decreasing amongst young Surinamese and Antillians/Arubans. But the perspectives of young Moroccans are not favourable and the prospects of young Antillians/Arubans grown up elsewhere are downright poor. An equitable division of employment opportunities, referring to the beginning of 1996, would require about 30,000 more jobs for young people originating from the four major minorities than are now actually available.

The unfavourable labour market position of immigrant youth is partly due to frequent school-leaving without qualifications. But there are also other factors: a traditional orientation to the household that prevents Turkish and Moroccan girls from participation in the labour market; a poor relationship with the job centres; contacts with illegal circuits; and, last but not least, discrimination in the labour market.

To immigrant boys - lacking parental supervision and prospects of full participation in Dutch society – easy access to a sizeable criminal market is considered an important barrier to their inevesting serious effort in finding a regular job.

The illegal circuit offers many temptations for those boys, e.g. an easy way to satisfy their often expensive wishes and gain an alternative social status.

Vocationol career

The positions of immigrants in jobs is more unfavourable than those of the Dutch majority in various respects. Ethnic minorities with individual features similar to those of Dutch backgrounds are more often in the lowest rated jobs, in contrast to the second (often young) generation. They hold comparable positions to Dutch colleagues' with the same characteristics. Nevertheless, it is established that young Turks and Moroccans hold lower positions in the labour market, but this can be explained from individual qualities such as education and work experience (Dagevos, 1997).

Ethnic minority young people have strategies of job seeking that differ from those of Dutch-born applicants. The medium of advertisements, an important means for finding a job, is hardly relevant to young Turks and Moroccans. They, rather than Dutch originated youth, are confined to flexible contracts and temporary jobs, as are also Surinamese and Antillian/Aruban young people.

As regards the type of work, there is little difference between young Surinamese and Antillians/Arubans and young Dutch people. Turkish and Moroccan young people show a more traditional minority profile: they work more often in industrial and technical trades.

9.5 Central ethnic minority policy

9.5.1 Brief history

The first Minorities Memorandum (1983)

When the 1970s were making clear that a large part of immigrants to the Netherlands would permanently stay, central government devised an ethnic minority policy. In 1983 the first Minorities Memorandum was issued announcing an equal opportunities policy for individuals and groups of foreign origin to obtain equitable positions and to fully develop themselves. It was elaborated into three objectives:

- emancipation and participation in society;
- reduction of social and economic disadvantages;
- improvement of legal positions and the combat of discrimination.

The policy was interdepartmental and its coordination was vested with the Ministry of the Interior (BiZa).

Criticism of the memorandum (1987-1989)

In the late 1980s a governmental advisory council established that the ethnic minority policy conducted was not bearing enough fruit (WRR, 1987).

Although there were immaterial successes, insufficiently so in the fields of housing, education and employment. The WRR pointed at the risk that the lack of opportunities and perspectives would persist in next generations (WRR, 1989). In a governmental response the Cabinet labeled this situation as unacceptable (1990) and advocated great efforts in the fields of education, labour and immigrant policies (sheltering new immigrants over school age).

State of the art 1994

An intermediate ethnic minority policy review (Annual Survey 1994) prompted politics to establish not only progress (e.g. in ethnic minority employment) but still highly alarming conditions for those of immigrant origin. Current policy was assessed to require new foundations in view of other recent trends e.g. permanently high immigration rates (particularly of asylum seekers) and the alarming (inter)national recrudescence of far-right politics and ethnic discrimination. Integration and participation of *all* populations in the major cities and coherence in quality of life, safety and employment should be more highlighted.

This implied a shift from target group policies towards area-based policies in order to address (deprivation) problems in an integrated way.

This made the BiZa Ministry of the Interior issue the document on *Outlines of Ethnic Minority Integration Policy* in the same year (1994).

9.5.2 The Outlines Document

The Outlines Document adopted the original integration goal of the 1983 policy, be it adjusted to actual societal and administrative trends (notably, decentralisation of central duties towards other bodies and tiers). The Outlines Document is a general policy framework for numerous other social actors. Key elements in the document are:

— *Emphasis on citizenship*

The Cabinet operates the concept of *citizenship* as a leading principle for a new view of the presence in the Netherlands of people from different cultures.

Citizenship is taken to mean: the right to equitable treatment, full participation in Dutch society with all inherent rights and duties and mutual responsibilities of citizens.

Stressing one's own responsibility, on the one hand, challenges all citizens and non-statutory bodies to jointly shape the multi-cultural community. It entails, on the other hand, that ethnic minorities are expected to meet the conditions to full participation – such as learning the Dutch language and getting to know Dutch society.

- *From minorities policy to integration policy*
  The term 'minorities policy' is replaced in the Outlines Document by 'integration policy' to stress the point that social integration of minorities should be directed at their full participation in the community. It entails mutual acceptance with indispensable efforts from both the new residents and Dutch society.

- *More emphasis on the effectiveness of general policy*
  Improved effectiveness of general measures is central to social integration policy: ethnic minorities must be able to fully and equally benefit from mainstream provision. Targeted policy in favour of certain minorities is always temporary and supplementary to generic policy. Specific policies are only conducted where generic policy is obviously inadequate and structurally blocking immigrants' access to society.

- *Focus on concentration and deprived areas*
  Common locally directed approaches to problems in certain deprived areas of ethnic minority concentrations will be intensified. This will provide more financial room for the large cities.

- *Extra focus on young people of immigrant backgrounds*
  This group is made a policy spearhead. Measures in education, in the labour market and on the combat of crime must prevent this second generation from becoming a 'lost generation'. After all, certainly in the metropolitan areas, ethnic minority young form a great part of the economic and social motor of future society.

9.5.3 The 1998 Minority Policy Note

The Minorities Survey is annually published listing the issues of central policy on minorities. Key areas indicated are: the settling-in policy (BiZa Ministry of the Interior), employment policy (SZW Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment), education and culture policy (OCW Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), housing policy (VROM Ministry of Housing, Planning and Environment), policy on health, welfare and sport (VWS Ministry) and judicial policy (Ministry of Justice).

The general tenor of the note is the increasing integration of minority policies of the various ministries into general policy. There are no longer specific policies, but a generic policy with specific focus groups.

The lion's part of the policy measures - mentioned in the note and (also) relating to ethnic minority young people – is described in the remaining thematic chapters of this section, and is not repeated here.

9.6 Local minorities policy

In the Dutch cities minorities are concentrated in certain areas, often those built around 1900 or in the 1950s and 1970s with many low rent houses. Recently, the Social and Cultural Planning Office has stated that one cannot yet speak of segregation areas but they can be called concentration areas, problem-ridden: high unemployment, urban run-down, absence of economic activity, crime, drugs inconvenience, little socio-cultural and social work facilities, imbalanced populations and lacking social cohesion.
Social renewal and metropolitan policy are to help reactivate and rebuild these districts. Locally based policy has been conducted – first in the context of immigrants or integration policy and now also as part of neighbourhood and area management – to improve the position of the ethnic minorities.

Until the mid 1990s many local authorities operated a minorities policy. This was characterised by independence, emphasis on the setting up and enhancement of minority organisations and a central role for the welfare sector at the implementation. The starting point was that emancipation of ethnic minorities is mainly to be shaped though welfare organisations.
Nowadays local governments conduct facet policies, whereby ethnic minorities are focus groups for policy on employment, housing, education, welfare, health, district control and sport. Welfare departments of local authorities are often allocated the task of coordinating local minority policies.
Furthermore, the nature of this policy has changed and is called integration policy, which centralises participation in general networks. Self-organisations must concentrate on wider participation of ethnic minorities in mainstream provision. In addition, local governments take the view that newcomers' being sheltered and settling in are important means to prevent (greater) social disadvantage. Monitoring and individual programme support are supplementary here.

Local social policy

Neighbourhood directed local policies, though general in scope, connect smoothly with this development. These policies aim at improving quality of life in the direct environment, not only including physical aspects (cleaning and maintenance) but social aspects as well (social integration). A wide range of measures have been taken and projects carried out (Local Social Policy, Min. of VWS, 1998).
Three supplementary strategies are regularly practised, notably:

- focussing on youth as the key group for integration (parents are also engaged in joint and reciprocal activities by projects for children);
- the 'quality of the neighbourhoud'- approach as a means of enhancing social cohesion;
- turning the community centre into a multicultural haunt.

Such measures are directed at Dutch- and non-Dutch-born residents. The relatively high number of votes for far-right parties during the local elections of 1994 (e.g. in Rotterdam 13.7%, in Amsterdam 9.7%) has also prompted these initiatives. In the meantime local far-right parties have been taken the wind out of their sails; at the 1998 local elections only one municipality saw an extreme right delegate returning to the Council.
The degree to which local political participation of ethnic minorities has been promoted is unclear. The poor immigrants' turnout at the 1998 local elections is remarkable.

9.7 Facilities

Although minorities are confined to mainstream provision for their functioning in society, organisations are still being built around their own culture, ethnicity and religion. Self-organisations are active in various fields at the national level and even more at a local level. This process is in line with the old Dutch system of people organising themselves around a specific subject, such as faith (denominations, compartmentalisation).
In the 1990s central government introduced a policy on clustering nation-wide self-organisations.
The expertise in the field of ethnic minorities has been collected in the Forum Institute on multicultural development.

Central government attaches great value to minorities' participation in category-based club or social life, because self-organisations are supposed to be able to actually promote their grassroots' participation in Dutch society and thus contribute to integration. At local level, especially Moroccan and Turkish youth organisations have this potential. There are also VWS funds to be allocated for the promotion of national volunteer organisations of ethnic minority groups.

Religion is an item many members of immigrant populations organise themselves upon. The Islam is a great spiritual movement to a considerable proportion of the minorities. Mosques and mosque associations exist in many larger municipalities in which minorities organise themselves. Local authorities establish more and more contacts with these organisations. Central government pursue the policy here of improving communication between representatives of Dutch society and imams.

9.8 Conclusion

In recent years the Netherlands has developed into a multi-cultural society. The number of people of ethnic minority backgrounds residing in the Netherlands is substantial, especially as far as young people are concerned.

The major part of young metropolitan residents are of ethnic minority backgrounds and their increase is to be expected.
Older immigrants are more oriented to their country of origin, but the second generation show more orientation to both their parents' country of origin and the country they themselves grew up in. Hence, in the Dutch multi-cultural society multi-cultural young people are living.

Further, the question is raised if ethnic young people are fully participating in that community. A number of relevant aspects show this still to be a long way to go.

- The ethnic minority education level is lower than that of Dutch-born youth, but young people growing up here are better educated than those arriving at a later stage of their lives.
- The ethnic minority youth unemployment rate is higher than that amongst young Dutch people.
- Ethnic minorities have more often the lowest rated jobs in the labour market. This is also true for second generation youth, but their disadvantage is caused by lower education, less work experience, and the like.

National and local policies have shifted from minorities policy towards integration policy, meaning that this policy intends promoting full participation in society. That this aim is not yet being met appears from the above evidence and e.g. from the low turnout of ethnic minorities during the 1998 local elections.
At the local level area-based policies are being implemented. Various initiatives intend to improve the quality of life in areas where ethnic minorities and Dutch-born residents live together. The relationships between the different populations are highlighted and young people are targeted. The fact that the extreme right-wing parties have been wiped out by the past local elections is indicative for the favourable development of these relations. But the preponderance of many ethnic minorities in areas of great accumulating problems remains an alarming fact. Active policy on improvement of the position of these groups, hence, remains high on the agenda.

Notes section 3/9

1 Evidence in this section is derived from the SCP report on Young Ethnic Minorities (Tesser and Veenman, 1997). In this report the youth limit is laid at the age of 30.

2 The reporters notice here that these different sources sometimes lead to contradictory conclusions. The quantitative evidence often shows a more positive picture than can be derived from the qualitative sources.

Composition of the National Expert Group

Mr L.G.M. Bisschops	President
Ms J.M. Klunder	Ministry BZK
Ms M.H.M. van Oostrom	Ministry SZW
Mr M Schuttert	City of Deventer
Mr H.H. Hoek	Ministry VWS
Mr C.L.M. Meuwese	DCI
Mr C.J. Bakker	NIZW
Mr P.M.M. Bonke	IPO
Mr P.Th. Van Heek	NJR
Ms M. du Bois-Reymond	R.U. Leiden
Ms G.E. Acton	Regiopolitie Utrecht
Mr M. Weekenborg	Ministry OCW
Mr J.J.J. Kloprogge	Sardes
Mr L.H.A.M. van de Kerkhof	VNG

Secretariat: Ms D. Wilbrink-Griffioen and Ms P. de Savornin Lohman

Council of Europe

The Netherlands

Review of National Youth Policy

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport