



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

“PARTICIPATION”

THE NETHERLANDS



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



c/o Council of Europe :: Directorate of Youth and Sport :: F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France
Fax: (33) 3 88 412 778 :: E-mail: youth-partnership@coe.int :: www.youth-partnership.net

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1) Context of youth participation in your country

The Netherlands does not have a general definition of youth participation. The responsibilities for preventive youth policy (which includes participation) are laid down in various sections of Dutch law relating to youth. The participation policy aims at enabling young people to develop into independent and socially committed citizens, so they will be able to function effectively at school, work and society in general. The child's right to participate has been made concrete in areas such as education and youth care, but mainly as a user of services and facilities.

From January 2007, the former Welfare Act has been replaced by the Social Support Act, which aims at the participation of all citizens in society. Although the law is not specifically aimed at young people, they still are being affected by this law as one target directly aims at support for young people with developmental or behavioral problems and parents with parenting problems. Local governments have the decentralized responsibility to implement the Social Support Act in the Netherlands. (Youth) participation therefore should be shaped mainly at local level.

Some general examples of participation structures in the Netherlands are:

- Community work experience in secondary education.
- Client-councils within youth care institutions (Youth Care Act).
- Tools and training, e.g. peer-education as a method to stimulate youth participation

2. Structures of participation at local, regional and national level

2.1 Youth Councils

2.1.1 National Youth Councils

The Dutch National Youth Council (Nationale Jeugdraad) is an independent umbrella organisation of national youth organisations in the Netherlands, for young people between 12 and 30 years old. The Youth Council is dedicated to expand and improve youth participation in the Netherlands, both substantive and considerable. The Youth Council is of the opinion that young people should contribute, think along and take part in deciding about everything they consider important. Its members include political and leisure interest groups, those for young people of ethnic minority backgrounds and students unions. Twice a year the Dutch minister for Youth and Families meets the Dutch National Youth Council to discuss all kinds of policy issues

within the field of youth participation. See for member organizations:

www.jeugdraad.nl/lidorganisaties.php

2.1.2 Regional Youth Councils

In the Netherlands, there are 2 regional (provincial) youth councils supported by the provincial governments. In some other provinces there are also regional youth councils originated by initiatives of young people themselves or from youth members of political parties. It is however not clear how active these councils are at the moment.:

- The Provincial Youth Council in the province of Drenthe,

www.jongerenraadrenthe.nl

- The Provincial Youth Council in the province of Overijssel, <http://jro.vedor.nl/>

- Youth Network in the province of Limburg, www.jnl.org

- Your Zeeland is a website from the Provincial Government for young people of which the content is kept up-to-date by a youth press bureau, www.jouwzeeland.nl

- The Province of Gelderland has a regional youth council which consists of the youth members of the political parties in the province of Gelderland, www.in-spe.org

2.1.3 Local Youth Councils

All youth councils on local level in the Netherlands can be found on the next page.

They also have been gathered at the following website:

www.forumjongerenraden.nl/. This website is managed by the National Youth Council, and provides information for youth who would like to start a youth council in their own town or village.

Province of Drenthe:
Youth Platform Coevorden
Youth Council Emmen
Youth Council Hoogeveen
Youth Platform Noordenveld
Province of Flevoland:
Youth Council Lelystad
Youth Council Urk
Teenager Council Zeewolde
Province of Friesland:
Youth Council Boarnsterhim
Youth Advice Council Leeuwarden
Youth Advice Council Sneek
Youth Advice Commission Tytsjerkstradiel,
Province of Gelderland:
Youth Council in Spe
Youth Council Druuten
Youth Council Eibergen
Youth Advice Council Epe
Youth Council Nunspeet
Youth Council Renkum
Youth Council Ruurlo
Youth Council Veenendaal
Youth Council Wageningen
Youth Council Wijchen
Youth Council Winterswijk
Youth Council Zaltbommel
Youth Council Zevenaar
Youth Council Zutphen
Province of Groningen:
Youth Council Delfzijl
Digital Youth Council Eemsmond
Youth Panel Leek
Youth Council Zuidhorn
Province of Limburg:
Youth Network Limburg
Youth Council Beek
Youth Council Kerkenrade
Youth Council Kesse
Youth Council Maasbree-Baarlo
Youth Council Maastrichtl
Youth Council Margraten
Youth Council Meijel

Youth Council Weert
Province of Noord Brabant
Youth Council Bergen op Zoom,
Youth Council Deurne
Youth Local Council Dongen
Youth Platform Etten-Leur
Youth Council Helmond
Youth Council Laarbeek
Youth Council Landerd
Youth Local Council Mill
Youth Advice Council Nest
Youth Council Oss
Youth Council Steenberg
Youth Panel Tongelre
Young Ambassadors Tilburg,
Youth Council Valkenswaard
Youth Council Veldhoven
Youth Council Woensdrecht
Youth Council Woudrichem
Youth Council Zegge
Province of Noord Holland
Youth Council Aalsmeer
Youth Council Alkemade
Youth Active for Amsterdam (JAA)
Youth Council Amsterdam de Baarsjes
Youth Council Amsterdam East
Youth Council Amsterdam South East
Youth Council Amsterdam Zeeburg
Youth Council Anna Paulowna
Youth Council Bergen (9%)
Youth Advice Group Beverwijk
Youth Council Den Helder
Youth Advice Group Edam/Volendam
Youth Advice Council Enkhuizen
Youth Council Haarlemmermeer
Youth Council Harenkarspel
Youth Council Heerhugowaard
Youth Platform Hoorn
Youth Council Niedorp
Youth Council Opmeer
Youth Advice Council Schermer
Youth Council Texel
Youth Council Velsen

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Youth Advice Council Wieringermeer
Youth Council Velsen
Youth Council Zaanstad
Youth Panel Zijpe
Youth Council Zwaag
Province of Overijssel:
Youth Council Hardenberg
Youth Council Rijssen-Holten
Youth Advice Council Vriezenveen
Youth Council Zwolle
Province of Utrecht:
Youth Council De Bilt
Youth Advice Commission Mijdrecht
Youth Council IJsselstein
Youth Platform Leersum
Youth Advice Council Maarssen
Youth Council Nieuwegein
Youth Council Oudewater
Youth Council Renswoude
Youth Council Utrecht
Youth Council Vianen,
Youth Council Woerden
Youth Platform Zeist
Province of Zeeland:
Youth Council Borsele,

Youth Council Tholen,
Youth Council Goes
Province of Zuid Holland:
Youth Council Alblasterdam
Youth Council Alphen aan de Rijn
Young Ambassadors Den Haag
Youth Council Delft
Youth Council Gouda
Youth Council Hellevoetsluis
Youth Local Council Leischendam
Youth Council Maassluis
Youth Council Oegstgeest
Youth Council Papendrecht
Youth Council Ridderkerk
Youth Council Rijswijk
Youth Council Rotterdam
Youth Council Rotterdam Hoogvliet
Youth Council Scheveningen
Youth Council Voorschoten
Youth Council Waddinxveen
Youth Council Wassenaar
Youth Council Wateringen
Youth Council Zoetermeer
Youth Advice Council Zoeterwoud

2.2 Youth Parliaments

In March 2007, a youth government (Jeugdkabinet) has been established. This is the first youth government in the Netherlands which has been initiated officially. Each young person can contribute by discussing about different subjects concerning the Netherlands' future. The Youth Government is an open, non-political initiative which is in constant contact with the Dutch youth by different activities and a learning programme.

Each year, a national youth debate is also being held in the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament, organized by the National Youth Debate Foundation, which is a part of the National Youth Council. In this debate, young people between the ages of 10 and 18 discuss with adult politicians (ministers and parliamentarians) about topics they consider important (<http://www.jeugdraad.nl/projecten.php?project=njd>). Concerning the regional youth parliaments, some of the 12 Dutch provinces run a kind of youth parliament which are all involved in preliminary meetings for the

national youth debate. Each year, ten schools (from the province of Friesland) participate in the Friesch Youth Parliament, at which more than 90 young people debate about different topics.

Also, each year a Model European Parliament is being organized by the provinces; a kind of a simulation game at which secondary schools can participate. One of the main participants at this game is the Foundation European Youth Parliament South Holland, which also organizes simulations of European Youth Parliament meetings for youth: www.ejpz.nl

There is just 1 local youth parliament: the Youth Parliament Leeuwarderadeel.

3 Participation in representative democracy

3.1 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a political party or political youth organizations

Name PJO	Abbreviation	Parent party	Members	Comments
<i>SGP Youth</i>	<i>SGPJ</i>	<i>Political Reformed Party</i>	12.330	
<i>PerspectieF</i>		<i>Christian Union</i>	2203	
<i>Young Democrats</i>	<i>JD</i>	<i>Democrats 66</i>	1730	
<i>RED, young within SP</i>	<i>ROOD</i>	<i>Socialistic Party</i>	3039	
<i>Youth Organization Freedom Democracy</i>	<i>JOVD</i>	<i>People's Party for Freedom and Democracy</i>	1391	<i>Oldest one, founded in 1948</i>
<i>Christian Democratic Youth Appeal</i>	<i>CDJA</i>	<i>Christian Democratic Appeal</i>	1300	
<i>Young Socialist within PvdA</i>	<i>JS</i>	<i>Labour Party</i>	1305	
<i>DWARS</i>		<i>Green Left</i>	1047	
<i>Young Fortuynists</i>	<i>JF</i>	<i>Pim Fortuyn List</i>	180	
<i>Communist Youth Movement</i>	<i>CJB</i>	<i>New Communist Party</i>	unknown	<i>Founded again in 2003</i>
<i>Young Right</i>		<i>New Right</i>	unknown	
<i>YOUNG</i>	<i>J@L</i>	<i>Onafhankelijk.nl</i>	unknown	<i>Separated from Leefbaar NL</i>
<i>Young New Limburg</i>	<i>JNL</i>	<i>Party New Limburg</i>	unknown	<i>Just active in province of Limburg</i>
<i>PINK!</i>		<i>Party for the Animals</i>	unknown	<i>in formation</i>

A Dutch PJO (Political Youth Organization) can get a subsidy from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, when its parent party is being represented in the Second Chamber (Dutch House of Representatives). The subsidy is provided to the parent party, (which is obliged to pay a fixed part to the PJO), based on the number of members the PJO has. The Ministry restricts the subsidy for youngsters till the age

of 28. PJO's handle this differently: the JS accepts for instance people till 27 years old, while a lot of SGPJ's members are older than 28 years old.

Besides this, the Ministry requires a PJO to be organized independently from its parent party, but still maintain formal ties with the parent party. This aspect does vary among PJO's: some PJO's want to be 'free', while others have a formal legal independence only. As each important party has its own young division, each youngster who is political active is a member of such an organization. There are very few youngsters who are members of the parent party itself.

3.2 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a trade union

Just a few youngsters are members of a trade union, and this percentage keeps declining. In 2007, in total 1878200 people in the Netherlands were members of a trade union. Only 82500 of them were younger than 25 years old, which is only 4,4%. (Source: CBS)

According to a research in June 2007, this is 11% of the total amount of young people.

The biggest trade union in the Netherlands, FNV (Federation Dutch Trade Union) has a special division for youngsters, known as FNV Young. The main target of this youth network is to look after the interests of youngsters concerning labor, care and income. Each FNV member under the age of 35 automatically becomes a member of FNV Young. So, it's not possible for youngsters to become a member of FNV Young itself, but one has to be a member of one of the departments within the FNV.

The second trade union in the Netherlands, the CNV, has a special young division too.

This division has about 1400 members, and is an independent organization; it is possible to become a member of the young division itself.

3.3 Percentage of young people (in total and by gender) who are members of a youth non-governmental organisation, which are not trade unions, political parties or political youth organisations.

Not that many young people are members of NGO's. 39% of all youngsters at the age of 18 tot 25 years old are members of a specific club in relation to sports, hobbies and leisure activities. 15% of all youngsters are a member of an organisation

relating to their church and 13 % to a charity. 12 % is a member of a students' association, while only 6% is a member of a neighborhood association.

4. Existing support measures, of national, regional or local scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms. Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO participation

Within the political field, the political youth organisations receive funding from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdoms, as being described in part 3.1.

Concerning NGO participation; the ministry for Youth and Families structurally subsidizes the Dutch Youth Council, as a representative of bounded and non-bounded youth. The Council is the only organisation which normally gets a subsidy on national level. All other youth organisations who get a subsidy receive this decentralised, by province or municipality.

At the moment, the Ministry of Health, Care and Sports also provides a national subsidy for the Neighborhood-Education-Sport Impulse (BOS). 226 municipalities get a subsidy with which they can finance different projects for youth, in order to promote a healthy lifestyle.

4.1 Which financial actions on national level aimed at certain specific groups of young people exist?

Although institutional subsidies from youth organisations have disappeared, the subsidies for organisations for disabled young people are still there.

Besides this, 23 volunteering projects receive funding from the Ministry of Youth and Families with the "Temporarily statutory regulation for and by youth 2007-2008" With this subsidy, 16.300 young volunteers within those projects are being stimulated to become involved in local volunteering, and to expand their knowledge in organisations.

5. The vote

5.1 Is voting obligatory?

No

5.2 Age of the right to vote

All persons from eighteen years on living in the Netherlands legally for more than five years.

5.3 Please describe, who is entitled to vote in national, regional and local elections

In the Netherlands, there are 5, sometimes 6 kinds of elections: the European Union, the state, the 12 provinces, the water boards, the municipalities and in some cities (like Amsterdam) for neighborhood councils.

Basically, all persons who have reached the age of 18 years and are living in the Netherlands for more than 5 years are entitled to vote in municipal elections. This principal includes foreigners who are staying in the Netherlands legally for at least 5 years. Dutch people who are staying abroad don't have the right to vote in the local elections (municipalities).

Concerning regional and local elections, just inhabitants are entitled to vote.

5.4 Requirements for being entitled as a candidate in national, regional and local elections (age, nationality, etc.)

All persons from eighteen years on, and living in the Netherlands legally for more than 5 years could be entitled as a candidate. Exception is the municipal elections, where persons younger than 18 can be elected but may not take seat until their 18th birthday. Candidates at the national elections (state) are chosen from party lists resulting in proportional representation.

6 The elections

6.1 In the election of the European Parliament, the number and percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total and by gender)

Currently, there is no information available about the number and percentage of young voters in the Netherlands. Basically, each person (male and female) from 18 years on has the right to vote, and they don't have to register. It's up to them whether they vote or not.

In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population voting

In total 39, 1% of the Dutch enfranchised citizens at that moment voted in the last European elections. There is no breakdown of the young persons voting available.

6.2 National indicators of participation in polls

6.2.1 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total, by gender and by age groups)

Currently, there is no information available about the number and percentage of young voters in the Netherlands. Basically, each person (male and female) from 18 years on has the right to vote, and they don't have to register. It's up to them whether they vote or not.

6.2.2 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population who has voted

In total 80, 4% of the Dutch enfranchised citizens at that moment voted at the national elections in 2006

6.3 Regional and local indicators of participation in polls

6.3.1 In regional and local elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote

Currently, there is no information available about the number and percentage of young voters in the Netherlands. Basically, each person (male and female) from 18 years on has the right to vote, and they don't have to register. It's up to them whether they vote or not.

6.3.2 In regional and local elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population voting

The last regional elections (provinces) were being held in 2007, at which 46, 3% of the enfranchised citizens voted.

The last local elections (municipalities) were being held in 2006, at which 58, 6% of the enfranchised citizens voted.

6.4 Number of young people elected at the national, regional and local level: overall and by gender (specify age range)

There are a few young people who are being elected in different elections. On national level, there are a few young people who are a member of the Dutch Lower House: Martijn van Dam, male, 27 years old, Labour Party – Eske van Egenschot, female, 27 years old, People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy – Krista van Velzen, female, 30 years old, Social Party. Also, a well-known person in Dutch politics is Tofik Dibi, who is a member of the Dutch Lower House for GreenLeft. He is only 27 years old. Farshad Bashir of the Social Party is with 20 years of age the youngest member of the Lower House ever.

On regional level, 9 of the 12 Dutch provinces do have a few young members. The total amount of young members is 23; 14 males and 9 females. Their ages do vary from 20 till 28 years old. Most of them belong to the Labor Party (9) and the Christian Democratic Appeal (8). 3 youngsters belong to GreenLeft, and the remaining ones represent each one political party: People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, Democrats 66 and the Socialistic Party.

On local level, there are also a few youngsters active. The councils of the municipalities Eindhoven, Hardinxveld-Giessendam and Losser do have some young members. They belong to the Socialistic Party, a local party and the Labor Party respectively.

7 Actions, programs, and financial or social support that promote the participation in the system of representative democracy, in particular to young people under the age of 30?

The national youth council operates a website (www.stemjong.nl) which is aimed at encouraging young people to participate in the democratic process. The same counts for the website www.youknow.nl, although this website has a more broader content, as it is focused at youth participation on different subjects.

Also, on the provincial level, some youth panels have been established, which advise the provincial politicians about certain subjects. By doing this, youth are being involved in decision making about subjects they consider important.

Another general example is the annual award for the ‘Young Councilor of the Year’ introduced by the Association of Netherlands Municipalities.

The Institution for Public and Politics (IPP) aims at involving people at politics and society. Within this context, the institute does organize some projects specifically aimed at youngsters. Some big ones are “The Hague Gallery”, “Familiar in town hall” and young ambassadors.

Firstly, the IPP offers a program to secondary schools called “The Hague Gallery” (De Haagse Tribune). Pupils visit The Hague and do their specific project, depending on their level; for instance be politician for one day or viewing political history.

The second well-known project is “Familiar in Town hall” (Wegwijs in het gemeentehuis). This project puts youth into contact with local politicians, and aims to involve young people in politics. For one day, youth from 14 to 19 years old are simulating the local council and young people can experience what local politics is about, and discover how the municipal policy is being established.

The IPP also coaches young ambassadors for municipalities. These ambassadors inform, consult and activate young people within their own municipality. The ambassadors have a direct line with the municipality, and are being appointed for a specific period. Before starting, it has to be made clear what kind of results the ambassador’s contribution should have. .

In some municipalities, secondary schools do some kind of research for a specific problem within their own municipality. This research culminates in a youth initiative, which is submitted to the local council. The IPP also supports this kind of research.

8 Learning to participate

8.1 Existing actions and mechanisms within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate. Please also list related guidelines and teacher training programs aiming at integrating citizen’s education into the curriculum

In the Netherlands, all children aged 4 to 16 are obliged to attend full-time education. Starting in the school year 2011 – 2012 also secondary school’s pupils will be obliged to do a 3 months community work experience. This is not a usual internship, but more or less some kind of voluntary work, as the young people don’t get a salary or compensation for the work they do.

The aim of this work placement for youth is to get acquainted with and contribute to the society. By doing such a placement, young people learn to participate in society,

and it is important for their personal development. Young people work for instance in a home for elderly people, a hospital or at a children's farm.

The work placement is part of the educational system of secondary schools and the educational programs. Schools are free to set up their own rules, which a certain organisation has to meet in order to be a good practice place for youngsters.

Some pupils form part of the schools' consultative councils, alongside parents and teaching staff. Every school is required by law to have a pupil's charter, stating the rights and obligations of pupils. Many schools, particularly the secondary ones, also have a pupil's council, although this is not a legal requirement. Furthermore, there are various national organisations for school children and students. For those in secondary education, the National Pupils Action Committee (LAKS) exists, while there are two major students unions too. For students in vocational training there is the Young People's organisation for Vocational Education (JOB). All those kind of organizations are being funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

8.2 In which fields, other than formal education, do actions and/or support – or national or regional scope – exist, which aim at promoting learning to participate amongst young people? What is the nature of these actions/this support? Give examples of good practice.

In the Netherlands, the implementation of the United Nations Convention of the rights of the child (CRC) has been clearly defined in the Dutch youth policy. Youth participation, as one of the main parts of the CRC, is associated with having a certain degree of freedom and with taking initiative. Several formal structures are being stimulated in order to improve youth participation, for instance youth councils and youth panels.

Also, efforts are undertaken for young people who have left school and are looking for work: the Youth Unemployment Taskforce seeks to encourage young people, municipalities and employers to participate in projects in which young people learn and work.

WhoZnext is a government-subsidized project, by the Dutch Institute for Sport and Physical Activity. The aim of WhoZnext is to ensure that young people begin or continue to engage in sports.

Besides this, Amsterdam's municipal authorities have published a manual on youth participation and communication to initiate knowledge exchange on youth participation projects. (www.jeugd.amsterdam.nl)

Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth and Families will introduce an annual youth award to the municipality with the best youth participation initiative. It will also set up an agreement with municipalities with ways to promote youth participation.

Of course, one of the main aims of the NYC is youth participation. Therefore, the NYC has launched a website, www.youknow.nl. At this website, youngsters can see how they can participate on different fields in society, i.e. politics, international cooperation, youth councils etc.

8.3 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at certain specific groups of young people?

No; just young people in general.

8.4 Describe other, informal ways young people choose to participate in your country?

Youth have different opportunities to participate active in politics. This can vary from being a member of a ginger group till taking part at a petition. A research concerning the interaction between youth and democracy in June 2007 shows the following result, as a percentage of total youngsters:

	<i>18-19 years</i>	<i>20-22 years</i>	<i>23-25 years</i>	<i>Lower education</i>	<i>Secondary education</i>	<i>Higher education</i>
<i>Taking part in a Petition</i>	31	38	42	19	33	46
<i>Being active in an organisation</i>	17	15	20	9	10	25
<i>Boycott products</i>	12	14	19	10	12	20
<i>Taking part in a demonstration</i>	8	13	13	6	9	15
<i>Come into</i>	11	10	13	5	10	14

<i>contact with politicians</i>						
<i>Wearing a badge for campaign</i>	10	11	10	8	9	13
<i>Being active in a political party</i>	3	3	5	4	2	5
<i>None of these</i>	54	49	40	65	57	34

(Source: Research youth and democracy, June 2007)

www.forumdemocratie.nl/files/File/rapporten/rapport%20jonge%20burgers%20en%20democratie.pdf