Youth employment measures

National youth employment measures

At national level the cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science are intensive concerning this policy issue. They aim to tackle youth unemployment and school dropout of young people. Firstly, the national measures will be described followed by regional and local measures.

Action plan; investing in equal opportunities

At national level there is a strong focus on the integration of young people in the labour market. There are top-level policy frameworks and initiatives to increase this integration. In September 2016 the Minister of Culture, Education and Science announced a new measure called Investeren in gelijke kansen [1] (Investing in equal opportunities). This measure aims to give children of low skilled parents the same opportunities as their peers with higher educated parents. In this measure attention is also paid to:

- A better transition from secondary vocational education to a university of applied sciences; for many students of vocational education it is a huge step to continue studying at a university of
applied sciences. Many of these vocational students drop out of school. To tackle this problem the Minister of Education, Culture and Science is investing €7.5 million to improve this transition. The Minister invites suggestions from students from vocational education and universities of applied sciences for a plan to tackle this problem. Better career counselling for vocational students is also one of the measurements (please see 3.5 Career Guidance and Counselling).

- Abolishing fees for educational selection in higher education; some studies like the Arts academy can charge students for selection. This is a selection fee paid by the student. It is mostly between €30 and €80, but the amount can increase to €150 for a selection day. Through this measure these studies will be accessible for all students.

- Innovation of education for equal opportunities; good education is available if it is innovative and improved. From September 2016 teachers and professors can submit an application for the first 10 Comenius grants of €50,000. The aim of this Comenius grant is to boost the improvement of higher education.

On October 31 2016 the collaboration Gelijke Kansen Aliantie (Equal Opportunities Alliance) was announced. During the launch of this collaboration, minister Bussemaker announced the measures. Within this collaboration teachers, parents, schools, employers’ and social organizations will strive for equal chances for children.

**Tackling youth unemployment at top-level**

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

**Regional youth employment plans**

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

The coordination of the approach is in hands of both the minister of Social Affairs and Employment and the minister of Education, Culture and Science.

The Dutch approach comprises:

- **Supporting youngsters who are looking for work after fulfilling school obligations.** They can register at Werk.nl (division of the Social Security Agency UWV). By registration they receive the general services of the e-support. The direct services consists of a list of vacancies, general tips for the resume, tips for finding work, competence tests;
• **Supporting youngsters who have left school without a basic qualification.** Young people who have not completed their education have, according to several studies, a weak position on the labour market. They have twice more chance to become unemployed. And when they have work it is often temporary work. This is why young people who do not have a basic educational qualification, are assisted by the municipalities to find their way back to school or onto the labour market (if education isn’t an option for them);

• **Supporting youngsters who are unemployed after a period of work and apply for an unemployment benefit.** These can register at Werk.nl and UWV guides them to work;

**Supporting youngsters who are unemployed and receive no unemployment benefit, they can ask the municipality for support.** The first 4 weeks the youngsters themselves have a search period. During this 4 weeks they have to make efforts to find a job or educational and training opportunities. The support they receive after 4 weeks is tailor-made.

In addition to the above, the Dutch approach comprises:

• **Good quality education,** with a strong focus on the actual practice and demands of the labour market, gives the best opportunities to prevent youth unemployment. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science focuses on improving the quality of education and that the curriculum is relevant for the labour market. Important is the cooperation between vocational education institutes and the employers. Employers can talk about the content of the curriculum through the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) (Stichting Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs & Bedrijfsleven SBB), a foundation for vocational education and employers. Important is also that the programmes offer sufficient traineeships and apprenticeships;

• **Career learning;** together with educational institutions and their partners, the government assists schools to develop tools to improve the career skills of students. These tools are directed at youth in order to improve their study choices, to develop their employee skills and make their job searches more effective;

• **Preventing early school leaving;** within the Dutch education policy there is the obligation for people up to the age of 18 to obtain a basic qualification (at least on an MBO-2 level or MBO senior secondary vocational education or a diploma for senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO). Young people between the age of 18 and 23 are assisted by their schools and monitored by the Regional Reporting and Coordination Centre (RMC) for early school leavers. The contact-municipality of a RMC region sees to it that young people are monitored until they have obtained a basic qualification;

• **City Deal;** Together with seven cities and their partners, the government has identified innovative solutions for problems (migrant) youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods might face when searching for work. These measures are focused on learning and career matching at work. In a number of cities youth unemployment is high, in particular in neighbourhoods were young migrants live. Migrant children are performing much better in education. For example, the number of higher trained young migrants doubled between 2003 and 2014 and more young migrants are in higher education. The education of many young migrants approaches that of
the native youth. However, the increasing educational success of young migrants translates into insufficient success in the labour market. Migrant young people have a much weaker labour market position than native youth. This means that these young people must be supported in making informed study choices, in order to enhance their employee skills, and to overcome negative perceptions or discrimination. They also need more assistance in the transition from education to work.

- **To help young people to quicker find a more sustainable job**, the government invests in a better matching for work, connecting stakeholders and making appointments, together with municipalities, UWV and their partners. Together these stakeholders aim at improving services to employers and how to look for job openings. Employers are key partners in tackling youth unemployment. Not only do they provide jobs, but they also function as role model, coach and tutor.

- **To match youngsters without basic qualification with work and training** the government stimulates cooperation between municipalities and (temporary) employment agencies. These agencies tend to have a lot of job openings for the lower educated.

**Collaboration between education and labour market**

In the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science handed over the central advisory role to a new foundation, Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven (SBB) (Organisation for Vocational Education and Labour Market) (in English) in August 2015. The SBB is now responsible for labour market research, the development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies. Vocational education and business, trade and industry collaborate within SBB to provide students with the best possible practical training with a view to gaining employment.

**Dissemination of information**

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

**Disabled young people; Job agreements and Quota**

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

The intervention Proefplaatsen (Trial jobs) gives disabled (young) employees receiving social benefits the possibility to work as a trial. The duration of the trial jobs are two months and the employees continue to receive social benefits. During these two months the employer does not pay wages.

This intervention makes it possible to see if the (disabled) employee can handle the tasks. Moreover, during the trial the productivity of the potential employee can be assessed. If the productivity of the potential employee is low, then the employer can claim loondispensatie (wage dispensation). Employers can claim this wage dispensation if the employee receives benefits from Wajong. The Wajong arrangement is for young people who are completely unable to work. With this intervention government aims to foster employment of disabled youth with a Wajong benefit in the private and public sector.

Mentoring

Link2Work is an example of a successful project which for now only works in the city of Eindhoven. It started as an initiative involving many stakeholders such as the Social Economic Council, social partners and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In the region of the municipality of Eindhoven partners strengthen existing mentor and peer-to-peer projects. Link2Work has a strong focus on connecting with the labour market and is able to use the business network of these stakeholders to help young people to get to the next level in finding a job. Members of these business networks are the business mentors for these young people. Mentors can support young people with their job applications or they can offer a work place.

Other measurements

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

Regional and local measurements

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

- **Youth work in the picture**

  The (academic) members of the Netherlands Youth institute in 2015 published a report called Jongerenwerk in beeld (Youth work in the picture). In this report they describe a local initiative in the municipality Almere. This initiative, Learn2Work (only in Dutch), is a learning and working project supported by youth work. It helps young people with multiple problems to structure their lives. The municipality of Almere is one of the actors providing grants.

- **Tailor-made route**
Another project that has a focus on youth work is **Traject Op Maat** [19] (T.O.M.) (Tailor-made route) which is described by the Netherlands Youth institute. T.O.M. is an initiative of the municipality of Den Bosch for young people between the ages of 18 and 23 years. Through this process young people are supported in education and a job. The youth work in the municipality takes the lead in the implementation.

- **Matching vulnerable young people with the labour market**

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science aims for a regional cooperation between education, municipalities and employers. The Netherlands Youth institute has published the report *‘Arbeidstoeleiding kwetsbare Jeugd. Participatie in de samenleving’* [20] (Matching vulnerable young people with the labour market. Participation in society), which also provides governmental recommendations. This report describes five good practices of secondary vocation schools and the cooperation with municipalities. The report can be used as a guideline by schools and municipalities for regional cooperation to tackle school dropout and provide better links with the labour market.

**Flexicurity measures focusing on young people**

There is a general law targeting all employees. Young people are relatively often employed through a flexible labour contract. With this Work and Security Act the government has created a better balance between permanent and flexible terms of employment. Employees with a temporary contract will sooner receive permanent contracts and will have more job security. This measure also applies to young people with a temporary contact.

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

**Reconciliation of private and working life for young people**

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

**Funding of existing schemes/initiatives**

The initiatives mentioned earlier are mainly funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science when related to education.

The wage dispensation for example is funded by the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch: Uitvoeringsinstituut WerknemersVerzekeringen UWV [16]).

The initiatives mentioned earlier are mainly funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science when related to education.

The wage dispensation for example is funded by the Employee Insurance Agency (in Dutch:
Quality assurance

As mentioned above, the Banenafspraak [9] (Job agreement) can be seen as a tool to measure whether the targets are achieved.