

## Local Social Inclusion from the Dutch point of view

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### Introduction

In 2007 the Dutch government began with the 'neighbourhood approach'. The need for this approach came forth of the growing gap between privileged and underprivileged neighbourhoods. This has serious consequences for the economic power of regions, for social cohesion within cities and the opportunities of residents in the neighbourhoods. Doing nothing was not an option.

The problems in neighbourhoods, on which policy making is focused, are not only socially or physically or economically or demographically, but have multi-dimensional character. For example, the average household income is over 25% lower than the national average and unemployment is high. In these districts more people have a lower education level. Residents in these areas have a less healthy and die six years earlier than average.

Coalitions on the local level are primary responsible. Residents, corporations, municipalities and other partners, together make and implement community action plans. The national government is a partner and supports local action. The Minister for Housing, Communities and Integration is responsible to coordinate en facilitate actions. The goal of the neighbourhood plans is that deprived areas grow towards the urban average in 8 to 10 years.

At a local level social- and well-being services are more and more organised around the principles of promoting personal autonomy, cooperation of organisations based on shared perspectives and goals, stimulation of participation and area based approach (territorial specificity). As for the general goal and the specific contents of the programme, this is difficult to measure.

The general goal of the programme is to stimulate measures for social inclusion through a model of intervention in collaboration with all the agents of the territory. At a city level, the municipality provides a policy framework. Together with the relevant organisations, a working plan is defined (including a financial support). This process mostly occurs at the city level and only occasionally on a regional level (e.g. homeless).

The content of the programme seems to be an elaboration of the guiding principles and therefore relevant for a city. The content seems not new in itself and the added value is probably found in the process more than in the content.

## Potential transferability of the programme

At the national level the following elements might be of interest:

- Outcome Monitor developed by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).
- 'Leefbaarometer' (quality of living barometer). This gives municipalities and counties online information about the situation of all neighbourhoods.
- The division of roles of local authorities and the national government
- The ways in which knowledge transfer is put in practice. This is amongst others, done by experiments on several key subject initiated by the national government and by independent experts visiting the cities involved.

At a local level there are possibly a couple of possibilities:

- working on social inclusion on a regional level would give the municipalities more insight in each others problems and solutions: a learning experience
- treating social inclusion in the framework of a programme with a well-elaborated underlying structure, obliges to measure the coherence of approaches and the added value. It would definitely stimulate cooperation because it seems a process of co-creation.

The disadvantage would be that it seems a rather analysis and policy driven method. A city needs operational force in order to tackle all the problems. If one adds to this the foreseen budget cuts, It is not very probable that much time can be spent on policy and analysis.

Taking into account the experience in the Netherlands there certainly are specific issues that we think could be useful in the context of the Catalan programme? We have tried to use this comments paper to give an overview of the Dutch approach and highlighted several locally used measures to give examples of what we do to fight social exclusion. We conclude this comments paper with a note of important questions about programmes/plans for social inclusion at local level that are being raised and debated in our country

## How powerful is the local level?

Because of its short distance to citizens, the municipality is the authority par excellence to identify the problems of individual people. Municipalities have the duty of care to improve the living situation of all people and take measures aiming vulnerable people to participate on an equal basis with others. Because of their freedom of policy, municipalities are able to provide tailored solutions in the local poverty and participation policy.

The Social Support Act demands that on a local level clients advise in the domain of welfare, sport, disability, voluntary work, social support etc. The Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB) grants a minimum income to anyone legally resident in the Netherlands who has insufficient means to support himself. In the administrative agreement with the Association of Dutch

Municipalities (2007) arrangements have been made about co-operation and coordination between the national government, the provinces and the municipalities, for instance with regard to promoting participation in all domains of society and in the field of youth care.

The budgets for combating poverty nor for participation and welfare in the Municipalities Fund have not been earmarked because municipalities have included other instruments apart from special subsistence benefit in their local poverty policy which they also finance from the Municipalities Fund. Examples include remission of local charges, debt counselling and participation-encouraging measures such as local discount passes. As of 1 January 2009 the Participation Budget is introduced. By combining the three existing budgets for reintegration, education and civic integration, municipalities can deploy means more effectively to help people. It is possible to provide technical aids, housing provisions, accessible public transport etc. The manner in which municipalities deploy these instruments, is within the power of the municipality. The national government does not enter into it.



**gemeente Eindhoven**

### Participation in the city of Eindhoven

Eindhoven is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Netherlands with a population of 220.000 inhabitants. The city and its region are economically transferring from former headquarters of Philips to Brainport region: high tech industries requiring high-skilled (migrant) workers. As in every city there are inhabitants who live in unfavourable conditions. It is the role of the city to take in one way or another care of these people. The group of vulnerable people is roughly 10% of the population of Eindhoven. By vulnerable people we mean: unemployed people, migrants, elderly people, the lowly-literate, the physically and chronically ill people, unqualified young people, children in poor households and the homeless.

The ambition towards the inhabitants lays in the word participation: the city want to create, facilitate solutions that enable people to become socially and economically independent. For if they are, they will be able to take care of themselves and even more: take care of people around them. The underlying assumption is that a sustainable job is the best way to reach this independency. The unemployment rate in Eindhoven in June 2010 is 8.8%, compared to a 64% average for the Netherlands as a whole. For these 8000 people, a range of activities is organized. They focus partly on the social dimensions. In that case the well-being department is leading and activities are often area-based. Examples are: empowerment of migrant women, literacy training, outreaching multi-problem approach and social cohesion in specific areas (social restaurant. Activities also focus on reintegration towards a paid job. Job schemes focus on competences, job training, social skills and gaining experience.

For both types of activities, social and economical, the participation ladder tool was developed. The advantage of this tool is that it allows personal monitoring (of growth) and also gives insight in the stages that are most needed and/or organized. Since the city is free to allocate the budget, it is therefore possible to shift money to activities dealing with the most urgent need of people and society. In for example 2010-2011 the budget will largely be allocated to stage 5 and 6 because of the relatively high unemployment rate has to be tackled.

The Participation-ladder			
			6.economically independant
		5. Paid work (with support)	
		4. unpaid work (voluntary, subsidised)	
		3. participation in organized activities	
		2. Social contacts outside the household context	
1.socially isolated			

Another asset of this tool is that it allows different services to operate from the same set of goals and monitoring targets. Idealistically this will lead to a better consistency and coordination of all activities aiming at participation. Since cities in general, and Eindhoven in this case, will face major budget cuts in the coming years, it is of extreme importance to use the available money in the most effective way.

### Type of partnerships, with special attention of the position of NGOs

It appeared from the consultations of the National Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Promote Participation (NAP 2008) that the municipalities themselves as well as other players indicated that there is more and better co-operation in the municipalities between the various institutions and the municipal services themselves. In order to realise the ambitions in the 'Children take part!' covenants (see Eindhoven example), the social services, for instance, have to co-operate with the departments active in education, sport and culture.

### Children take part: breaking the circle of poverty in Eindhoven



Lots of financial and educational possibilities are offered to people who are poor (120% of the legal minimum wages). Special attention is paid to children because Eindhoven wants all the kids to be able to grow up normally and be able to participate. The city helps e.g. Parents with the costs of schoolbooks and a computer. But is this really the answer?

Eindhoven signed the covenant 'Children take part' and developed since then activities that contribute to more sustainable participation. Culture and sports are in particular the vehicles to help kids from poorer backgrounds to develop themselves together with other kids. The city founded 2 funds: the sports- and the cultural fund. They give out financial support, not to the parents but directly to the sport- or cultural activity.

Since 2 years about 400 children have been able to sport or perform cultural activities thanks to these funds.

It was also put forward that the benefits culture can only be addressed by a household-wide or, better still, a neighbourhood-wide approach. The municipalities which set up neighbourhood action plans did so in most cases in consultation with other departments, such as economic affairs and spatial planning, in order to engage them as well in combating poverty and promoting participation. Gradually co-operation with private organisations is also coming more into the picture (some cities like Groningen and Delft have a Poverty Pact, a joint offensive of the municipality and social organisations in the town aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion). Eindhoven has introduced a poverty ambassador (see below).

#### Poverty ambassador Eindhoven

Over the last years the city organised so-called 'poverty debates'. All stakeholders (professional organisations, NGOs and citizens) underlined the statement that tackling poverty is a responsibility of all. The city therefore installed a special Taskforce Poverty (wide stakeholders representation) that had to come up with recommendations on how to obtain a good poverty strategy, involving all stakeholders and addressing the main obstacles. The Taskforce delivered 9 recommendations. Together they form the framework for a city wide poverty strategy.

1. ban poverty: set up a 10 years programme. Pay attention to monitoring and measuring;
2. make a poverty pact: coalitions with stakeholders, roundtables on poverty, experience based policy development;
3. improve the strength of people and aim for an increase in participation;
4. invest more in prevention: youth, culture, accessibility of services;
5. change the structure: generalist frontline in areas, specialist in 2<sup>nd</sup> line. Be present;
6. improvement of roles: the city has to be more specific as to what is expected, organisations have to more self-critical concerning their quality of services;
7. work community-based: build bridges. Coach and buddy programmes, experts by experience;
8. improve debt counselling and measures. Main issue: co-operation and outreaching methodology;
9. poverty ambassador: independent structure that brings organisations together in order to resolve structural counterproductive structures or measures. The ambassador is NOT a

representative or defender of individual problems and complaints.

The Poverty ambassador was recruited and chosen by a group of stakeholders in the city. A special (neutral) association was founded and the ambassador started the 2 years pilot in January 2010.

Based on 5 citizen profiles, representing most poverty situations, a roadmap was introduced:

- Services chain has to be connected:
- Financial measures should be simplified and be seen and granted in the view of the person (and not the system)
- Social inclusion is the objective: operate on the bases of strength (reinforce own power of people), introduce experts by experience

As much as all the stakeholders have wanted this ambassador, already now, after 6 months, it is clear that the reality is sometimes difficult. That was to be expected since so many organisations delivered with all the best intentions their services. A side-effect of the ambassador will therefore desirably be that organisations discuss and work together in a much more open way. The first success had been harvested: partners in debt measures and counselling are now working together in order to ameliorate the coordination of and the content of their services. As much as it may seem an open door, the key success factor here has been to use the client as a central starting point.

However, there is still a lot of work to be done. Therefore, during this European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the first of the two main goals is 'Promoting the cooperation between (primarily local) parties/organisations towards a long term approach to combating poverty and social exclusion of the group of people who have been in the margins for some time'. The 'Stedenestafette' (City Relay Racer) with a participation of 23 cities in The Netherlands, also gives this theme a top priority. Also a subsidy scheme is set up for NGOs and pressure groups, research institutes and consultancy agencies. One of the things subsidiaries have to do is to make a recommendation for local government.

### What kind of activation strategy dominates?

In 2007 the minister for Housing, Communities and Integration selected the most disadvantages areas in The Netherlands. This selection was made on the bases of 18 indicators, which can be categorized in four themes:

- social-economic disadvantages of households
- problems in the living environment as experienced by inhabitants
- low quality housing stock
- physical problems in living environment according to inhabitants

Action plans were then for each disadvantaged neighbourhood to improve the 40 districts on these themes: Housing, Employment, Education, Integration and Security

The neighbourhood approach can be characterized by the following principles:

- It is oriented towards a specific area. Because problems are too complex for just sectoral policy making alone. Local coalitions of the municipality, housing corporations, residents and civil organisations and businesses. Together they set up integral problem analysis, make plans based on this and carry them out. Efforts are combined. With regard to programmes and means priority is given to those areas where problems are most severe.
- Has a standard, monitors the quality and gets concrete results. There are clear agreements about who contributes what and when. This gives certainty and confidence. It is essential to monitor and evaluate on a regular basis. What works, what does not.
- Residents are central. The questions and challenges of residents are central to the approach. Not the purpose or mission of organizations or institutions. Residents participate in policy making. Involvement of residents leads to self-motivation, broad involvement and personal responsibility.
- Corporation between parties. Cooperation between parties is connected to the issues of the neighbourhood and its residents and not to the institutional logic. The neighbourhood plan has broad coalitions, of corporations - people - government - civil society. More and more companies take their social responsibility. This creates opportunities for sustainable and efficient solutions. The quality of these coalitions at district level largely determines the success rate of the neighbourhood plan.
- It is an innovative and learning approach. The collaborative search for solutions is valuable. Continuous investment is needed in the broad transfer of knowledge on effective and efficient solutions. Learning never stops.
- It is a sustainable approach. Persistent problems require sustained attention and commitment. The scope of the neighbourhood plan is therefore 10 years. This provides certainty and confidence for residents and also for the partners. While carrying out neighbourhood plan successful approaches come up. These approaches should be made part of business as usual.

#### Area-based reintegration services in the city of Eindhoven

Eindhoven has 3 special disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Krachtwijken). These areas have an accumulation of problems which justifies an intensified programme for these areas. One of the objectives for all 3 areas is to tackle unemployment. An innovative programme has therefore started.

The innovative elements in this approach are:

- it is decentralized, whereas all reintegration services are usually offered on a central city level
- as close to the target groups as possible

- close cooperation between social services department (city) and reintegration coaches (university)
- methodology: all life domains are dealt with: housing, health, work & income, safety.
- 1 client (on unemployment benefits or welfare), 1 coach; together they deal with all the obstacles that need to be tackled



The approach started in November 2008. In the last 1.5 year 360 clients were registered and 282 started the programme. The programme lasts 1.5 year so the results are not known yet. We do know though that time is needed if sustainable reintegration is the objective. Clients are quite easily assisted to step 3 or 4 on the participation-ladder. Economic and social independency (step 6) is something that will take longer. The evaluation will have to give insight in the effectiveness of the approach and the success-costs ratio.

The methodology is very positively rated by the clients. They appreciate the fact that it takes place in their own area as well as the fact that they can relate to only 1 person with whom they can build up a 'relation'.

In the field of social support and welfare 8 beacons are recognised forming a strategy:

1. Demands are hidden behind the question (Gericht op de vraag achter de vraag)
2. Take actions directly (Direct Er op Af)
3. Citizens have the power to solve the problem (Gebaseerd op de eigen kracht van de burger)
4. Optimal ratio of formal and informal care (Formeel en informeel in optimale verhouding)
5. A good balance between collectivity and individuality (Doordachte balans van collectief en individueel)
6. Wholistic approach (Integraal werken)
7. Results are obligatory (Niet vrijblijvend, maar resultaatgericht)
8. If necessary professional care is available (Gebaseerd op ruimte voor de professional)

A successful approach that emerged from the neighbourhood approach, is '1 household, 1 plan'. An approach that is implemented in, among others, Eindhoven (see below).

### 1 household, 1 plan: dealing with multi-problem families in Eindhoven

One of the main problems in our society is that all the help (financial, socially, mentally, physically) is very much specialised and people in difficulty have to relate to an often large amount of professionals. What we ask these vulnerable people is to participate actively and keep the overview, or manage, all these professionals. It is not difficult to imagine that especially where people are already vulnerable and in problems, have huge difficulties in doing so. The effect is twofold: people disconnect from the professionals and the offered help leading to a passive attitude: they undergo the help offered instead of being an active participant. The other effect is that all the help offered is not coordinated and can at the least lead to overlap and in the worst case to contradictory aid. For example: housing is offered if a person had proof of income, but income (welfare benefits) is only granted if that person has an address.

Studies have shown that many households have multiple problems: parents unemployed, bad health situation, kids have school problems, debts etc etc.

The traditional way of helping the people in these households by offering different parallel help, is not effective (enough), definitively not sustainable, and expensive. This given was the starting point of a 2 years experimental new approach.

In the 3 least favourable areas in the city a coordinator was introduced. The role of this person is to bring together the main actors (police, social work, housing corporation, school) in order to detect as early as possible the households at risk. Once these stakeholders have detected a household at risk, a tailored made plan is made. This requires all organisations who deal with this household to cooperate. It is not an exception to have 15 organisations around the table!!

The coordinator, who is not formally mandated, lines up all the offered help and supervises the actual delivery of the help. From a point of view of durability of the effect, the coordinator follows the household even after completion of all the help.



This approach should lead to 3 effects:

1. The people in the household are really helped, and the effect lasts
2. The workers in the field learn how to detect and mostly how to cooperate in the case of

multiproblem households

3. Organisations (management, boards) will always take into account neighbouring services when designing and protocolling their own services.

This approach is supported by the main stakeholders. They recently concluded that the latter two effects already happen (after 1 year). The effect on the household is in a sense obvious but needs good monitoring and measuring. This will be improved in the coming six months by performing a social costs and benefits analysis

## Gender approach

The Cabinet supports the social participation of women in vulnerable positions via the Thousand-and-one-Force (Duizend en één Kracht) Programme. The aim is to activate 50,000 women and the approach is currently applied in 25 municipalities.

### 1001 Force: participation of migrant women in Eindhoven

So far not much attention was being paid to women from a migrant background. There were no urgent or too visible problems. Diversity and participation were on a local level themes that were addressed in a low-key way.

When on the national level the programme 1001-forces started, it stimulated the special attention for migrant women. They are considered to be the agents of change within their social circle. A number of projects have been set up. All of them are area-based with a focus on 1 area: de Bennekel, where a relatively high migrant population is found.

The activities are very much based on empowerment and informal social structures (so called self-organisations). For example one of the projects trains women so that they will be able to get in touch and guide other (migrant) women. One of the bigger issues is namely that the women remain rather anonymous which makes it difficult to find them, and develop programmes with/for them.

Another project aims eventually at reintegration but starts with empowerment and language education in an informal but day-to-day relevant way. This approach was so successful that migrant men claimed a similar project specifically for migrant men. Which was granted and developed.



Transfer of these activities to other areas will be considered once the effect of the projects become clear.

## Monitoring, evaluation, knowledge transfer

Part of the neighbourhood approach is the Outcome Monitor developed by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The monitor consists of a set of indicators that makes insightful developments on themes like employment rates, educational level etc. Another important instrument is the 'Leefbaarometer' (quality of living barometer). This gives municipalities and counties online information about the situation of all neighbourhoods. This therefore enables local governments to respond quickly on adverse developments.

## Points of discussion

### Participation

Participation by residents of communities is important. Two things are difficult in making this work. First involving more and more diverse people (not the 'usual suspects'), such as young people and people with different ethnic background. Second to really give residents a say in policy decisionmaking. How to deal with these difficulties might be a subject for discussion during the Peer Review.

### Sectoral versus area perspective in government

A major challenge is to make sectoral organised institutions adopt a more area perspective and to stimulate that residents and there problems determine what actions to take and not the organizational logic. We would like to hear whether other countries recognise this issue and how they deal with this.

### Neighbourhood versus regional level in government

In neighbourhoods problems can be identified. However, solutions are not always found on this level, often a regional perspective must be used to identify solutions (like involving employers). How to organize the co-ordination of these levels working together is something we would like to discuss, for example the relationship between area-and sectoral policies.

### Role of government and civil society

Problems have deepened due to the current economic situation, yet there is also less money available for solutions. Exclusion must increasingly be taken up by the community itself. What competencies are needed to promote self-reliance? What is de role of governments and the civil society in this process?

### Shrinking population in certain areas

The next thirty years, one quarter of the Dutch municipalities will shrinks in number of inhabitants. Sometimes by more than five percent. This can have negative effects on quality of education, housing, health care and so on. Reason for the national and local governments to take action on preventing the negative effects of population decline. Which action is needed and how to make things work will also be an interesting point of discussion.

## Appendix, facts & figures

### The level of social exclusion and poverty in The Netherlands

In December 2009 CBS has published 'Lage inkomens, kans op armoede en uitsluiting' (Low income, risk of poverty and social exclusion) based on 2008 figures.

- The central message of this publication is: in 2008 a small rise can be seen compared to 2007 concerning the portion households with an income under the 'lage-inkomensgrens' (low income threshold)<sup>1</sup>. Of the 6.9 million households 545.000 lived under the low income threshold (8%). In 2007 this was 7.6%.
- An increase was noted in households which main source of income is work (10.000 households extra) or pensions (11.000 households extra). All other groups showed a small decrease or the same level as in 2007.
- From a long term perspective poverty has decreased: in the beginning of the nineties the the portion low income households was about 15%.
- The portion households which at least four years in a row lived beneath the low income threshold was in 2008 2.8%, equal to 2007.
- One-parent households with only children under 18 did have the largest risk at poverty in 2008. 70.000 (29%) of them lived under the low income threshold. They also were most prolonged depended upon this low income: 19.000 (10%). Due to an increase of the labourparticipation the incomeposition and the purchasing power of one-parent families that are dependent on benefits have improved since 2000.
- 257.000 (18%) of the singles younger than 65 years lived under the low income threshold.
- A strong decrease of the percentage of single 65-years-and-older that have to live persistently of a low income: from almost 14% in 2000 to about 1.5% in 2008. Mostly this is due to an increase in the purchasing power for singles with just a state pension.

**Tabel 7.1 Most important groups with a risk for social exclusion; average score on index and percentage with an index >1 (= with social exclusion).**

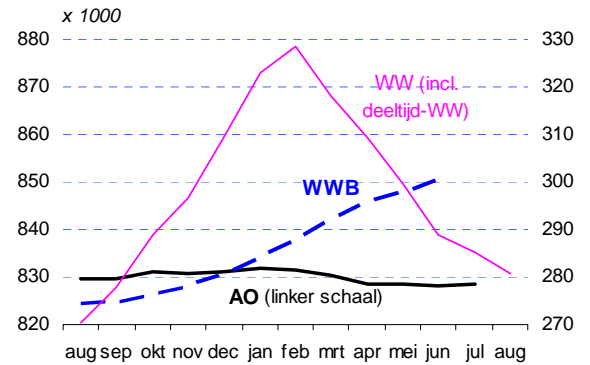
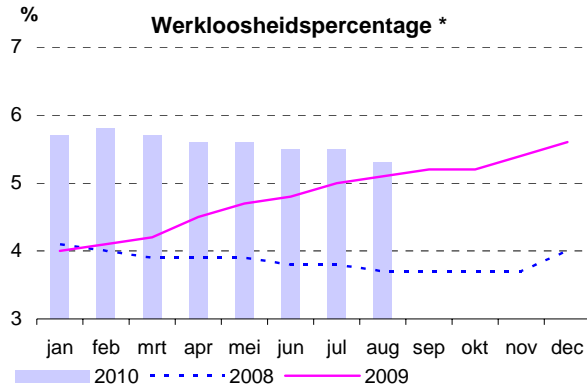
		Average score on index	% with index >1
1	people with a (severe) bad health	1.26	45
2	people with a low degree of psychosocial wellbeing	1.17	42
3	households with an income under 105% of the social minimum	1.07	39
4	one-parent families	0.97	41
5	households with at least 2 periods of unemployment in the last year (only households <65 year)	0.90	30
6	households with specific benefits (only households < 65 year)	0.75	28
7	households with an income in the lowest income quintile	0.70	30
8	non-western immigrants	0.62	27
9	people who speak Dutch poorly	0.59	21
10	jobless households (only households < 65 year)	0.55	24

Source: SCP (SU'03)

<sup>1</sup> Low income threshold, a threshold based on the income provisions in 1979 (when benefits were at a high level).

## Unemployment rate

Between February 2010 and August 2010 the unemployment rate has decreased from 5.8 to 5.3%. In comparison with August 2009 the unemployment rate now is plus 0.2%.



\* Voor seizoen gecorrigeerd. Bron: CBS Statline

## Loneliness

Related to poverty loneliness is an important issue in society. Circa 10 % of the population is suffering from loneliness, distributed evenly over the generations. Persons over 70 years of age are slightly more like to be lonely. Loneliness has several basic characteristics as a feeling of a person:

1. a person lives in small social network (including living in a new city)
2. a person is not able to make social contacts (motor disabilities, autism, intellectual disorder)
3. the social network does not fit the expectancies of the person (younger looking for a partner, widowed persons)
4. social pressure to participate in social society.