



**Shadow Report**  
on the first two Common Objectives:  
information and participation  
by  
**The Dutch National Youth Council**

# The Implementation Process

## Contact with governments

The Dutch National Youth Council (Dutch NYC) has been involved in the consultation process of the White Paper from the beginning. A working group has been set up for implementation of the consultation consisting of the Ministry for Youth, NIZW-IC (National Youth Agency, also responsible for some work on the international monitoring function in the White Paper) and Dutch NYC. This working group coordinated the consultation on the evaluation of the first two Common Objectives. During the past 6 months, the working group met 3 times. The Dutch NYC was fully involved in this. NIZW-IC implemented the consultation among welfare Institutions involved in youth work/participation/information. The Dutch NYC consulted the youth organisations; sending the questionnaire to all 30 member organisations and all local and regional youth council's active in the country (around the 60 organisations).

NIZW-IC has received approximately 24 completed questionnaires from the respondents. The Dutch NYC received 10 completed questionnaires from the initial youth organisations approached. Various youth organisations participated, like regional youth councils, political youth organisations, etc.

The low turn out was due to the unclear and general formulated questions in the questionnaire. For this reason it was difficult for most youth organisations to comprehend the questionnaire at all. Despite the clear introduction written by Dutch NYC, it was still difficult for most youth organisations to relate to the questions and topics raised. Therefore 2 people of Dutch NYC called all organisations to explain the purpose of the questionnaire, consultation and the White Paper. It is a general problem of consultations around the OMC that you almost need to be an expert to be able to answer the questions. The Dutch NYC tries to make a translation, but this remains fairly difficult. The way the OMC on youth is formulated and dealt with should be closer to the lifeworld of young people.

After all responses were received, a meeting was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December at the Ministry with all stakeholders and organisations that participated in the consultation. In total 20 persons were present at the meeting, which was chaired by the Dutch NYC. The cooperation and contact with the government increased because of the process. But no other issues than the evaluation of the Common Objectives on participation and information were discussed.

# Information

## Understanding of the process

The Dutch NYC's perspective on the topic of Information is that disseminating information should happen on peer level, for and by youth. This is the most effective way in having an impact and best outreach to young people. Besides that, information is a prerequisite for effective participation. The Government does not have a strategy or policy on youth information, before the White Paper nor since the White Paper. A general understanding of the topic of information is lacking by the organisations working in the youth field. While there are many things happening and there many examples of best practices.

## Measuring implementation

The National Government did not develop new tools on youth information or does it have a strategy on national level to ensure that young people get or have information on youth issues. However it supported a central telephone information number (0900-Jeugdraad) developed by the Dutch NYC, where young people can get all kind of information on youth participation. Some local and regional governments have developed youth portals or other tools. But there is no coordination, monitoring or support on youth information on national level. From the Common objectives it was also clearly indicated that this coordinating role is found necessary and at this moment missed. There is no concrete funding for youth information, however many local authorities support Youth Information Points (YIP's) and libraries to develop these central information points for young people. But these support for the YIP's are not a result from the common objectives, but are initiatives that already exist for many years. The White Paper did not prevent budget cuts or a reduction in local youth information initiatives. The government is not collecting data on how many people are attending youth information centres. Nor did they fund/organise infrastructures for coordinating youth information centres.

## Results

Many things have changed over the past 2 years. Some in positive, many in negative sense. And this is not because of the White Paper. Our government has its own line of thinking, which is not a result of the white paper and the common objectives, but still some elements are in line with these common objectives. The most important obstacle for the implementation is that on information there is no coordination on national level. Many governmental organisations and Ministries are involved in youth information, but there is no coordination in this field. This makes youth information fragmented. This obstacle can be overcome by assigning youth information to one single Ministry for the coordination on National Level, and on local level there's coordination and cooperation between the libraries, youth information points(YIP's), municipality, etc .

# Participation

## Understanding of the Process

One of the main obstacles is that the government doesn't have a clear understanding or definition of participation. It doesn't see youth participation as a goal in itself, but only as a means to accomplish other things as active citizenship, employment, etc.

## Tools/measures

Due to a new funding system the support for national youth organisations has been cut for large parts. Youth organisations now mainly get funding for projects, there is almost no funding available anymore for organisational costs. The effectiveness of youth participation projects is the main criteria for the government to continue funding or to cut back funding when on projects of which they do not consider effective. The Dutch NYC does not always agree with this judgement.

A new policy of the Dutch Government is named 'Operation Young'. This is an interdepartmental working group between the different ministries. The working group aims to enhance better communications between the ministries involved in youth policy. Priority within this policy is the development of a preventive approach towards different youth "problems", such as young people dropping out of school, being unemployed, etc. The Dutch NYC considers this an important effort, but it is too one-sided. "Operation Young" only focuses on the negative things that happen to young people and it is not about positive alternatives like youth participation. If you want to prevent young people from being a drop out in society you need a broad scala of things young people can be active in. Youth organisations play an important role in this and they are not included or supported in relation to Operation Young. The view of the government is that they do not have to look at active young people, because they can make it on their own. But if youth organisations are supported less, less young people will be active and will activate less young people. The Dutch NYC likes the interministerial approach of operation young and it is important to keep young people from dropping out, but to accomplish this you need a positive alternative: youth participation.

## Results

One of the main obstacles on the issue of youth participation is that the government considers a local level the best place to foster and stimulate youth participation. Therefore youth participation is mainly a responsibility of local authorities on institutional level. On national level, the government's priority is youth welfare. But there's no coordination to the local communities, so participation is dependent on the willingness of local officials. And there's no monitoring on what local authorities do. The Dutch NYCs experience is that local authorities, if they're involved in youth (participation), its on youth welfare and participation of young people

dropped out from school, employment and not on positive youth participation. These obstacles could be overcome by having a more coordinative role by the national government, and having the rights tools to support local authorities to develop knowledge, actions and strategies on youth participation. And this is quite frustrating for the whole OMC process, because for the process a coordinating national government is necessary, and the Dutch Government is leaving this more to the regional and local authorities. That's why the Dutch NYC doesn't see the added value of its involvement in the consultation process of the White Paper.



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