



Social exclusion of young homeless people: The State of Affairs in the Netherlands

A preliminary study for the European research
project '*Combating Youth Homelessness*'

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Objective 1

To describe the national contexts in terms of homeless populations: including ethnic, gender, non-national groups and those with different parental statuses

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Introduction

This is the report on the situation in the Netherlands in the field of youth, young homeless people and unaccompanied minor aliens. The report describes risk factors for children and young people in relation to social exclusion and homelessness. This report forms the first part of the international comparative study 'CSEYHP'. MOVISIE carries out this three-year study by order of the European Union. The cooperative partners are three universities in: England, the Czech Republic and Portugal. The objectives of 'Combating Youth Homelessness' are as follows:

1. *to understand the life trajectories of different homeless youth populations in different national contexts;*
2. *to develop the concepts of risk and social exclusion in relation to the experience of young homeless people and to the reinsertion process;*
3. *to test how different methods of working contribute to the reinsertion process for young people;*
4. *to investigate the roles of and relationships between the young person, trusted adults, lead professionals, peer mentors and family members in the delivery of these programmes across all four countries.*

When preparing the national reports, the three partner countries the Czech Republic, England and Portugal use the same format as used in the Dutch report. Based on the four national reports, England will prepare a comparative report, in which the four national situations will be compared.

'Combating Youth Homelessness' focuses on three groups of youth populations: young Dutch people, young immigrants of Dutch nationality and immigrants of nationalities other than Dutch. Consequently, this report emphatically discusses the ethnic background of young people in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, the policy area with regard to young homeless people is separate from the policy area on unaccompanied minor aliens (AMVs). However, practice shows that care providers in the young homeless people chain (co-operation between youth care institutions) do in fact deal with this group of minor aliens. This report interlinks these policy domains by including unaccompanied minor aliens in this study. The objective of this report is to provide information and an insight into high-risk situations for young (homeless) people and unaccompanied minor aliens (AMV) in the Netherlands, at both national and international level. To this end, MOVISIE has carried out a nationwide literature study, aimed at the wide spectrum of youth in the Netherlands and geared towards (preventing) homelessness among young people. In preparation of the report, MOVISIE conducted twelve interviews with professionals and managers who work with young (homeless) people. Various paragraphs detail quotations from the interviews in which these professionals and managers air their opinions on national policy decisions, high-risk situations for young people, social exclusion, the profile of young homeless people, the transition from under to over 18, the value of social support, prevention and their method of working with young people. In addition, case studies have been submitted to seven professionals. The responses to these case studies show the options available to professionals to tackle these problems. They are listed in appendix 1.



Reader's guide

Chapter 1 discusses the composition of the Dutch population, laws and obligations and the national policy in the field of youth. Chapter 2 explains the three concepts of risk, vulnerability and social exclusion within the Dutch context. Chapter 2 further contains a description of high-risk situations for children and young people in relation to social exclusion and the role of youth and young homeless people in public opinion. Chapter 3 details the definition of young homeless people, profiles and subgroups. The range of assistance options to young homeless people, applied methods and interventions are discussed in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 is about the Netherlands in relation to the European social policy.

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For further information visit www.movisie.nl or go to www.movisie.nl/homelessyouth for 'Combating Youth Homelessness'.

1 Relevant national context

1a) Demographic characteristics of the population

The Netherlands are a relatively small country with a surface area of 395.6/km². This country is also one of the most densely populated countries in the world. In 2009, according to Statistics Netherlands (CBS), the number of inhabitants is 16,491,000. CBS is a national agency that collates current statistical information on demographic data of the Dutch population¹ and the composition thereof, such as gender, age, origin and civil state. In 2009, the average age of the Dutch population is 39.9 years. Of more than 16 million inhabitants, 13 million are native Dutch people and around 3 million inhabitants are of foreign origin. This concerns first and second generation² immigrants in the Netherlands. According to the national guideline, a person is deemed to be of foreign origin if at least one parent was born outside the Netherlands.

The National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection (RIVM) is a Dutch research agency that provides information, monitors and scientific substantiation of the public health policy. The RIVM prepares estimates of the composition of the Dutch population and origin, among other things. On 1 January 2007, the RIVM estimated that 19% of the total population in the Netherlands was of foreign origin. A total of 45% of that percentage are non-western immigrants and 55% have western backgrounds. The largest group of non-western immigrants come from Turkey, Surinam and Morocco. The groups of western immigrants mainly come from Germany and Indonesia (a former Dutch colony) (RIVM, 2007). Most immigrants come from Poland, Turkey and China. Since Poland acceded to the European Union, the number of Polish immigrants has risen sharply. Antilleans and Arubans account for the largest share in emigration, followed by Turks and Surinamese. It is expected that the percentage of non-western immigrants in particular will increase in the future, with the anticipated side effect that it will slow down the process of an ageing population in the Netherlands.

In addition to the current economic reasons for immigration by western foreigners and asylum applications, three main reasons can be identified that explain the scope of the groups of western and non-western immigrants and their origins:

1. Former colonies

Around the 17th century, the Netherlands gained a lot of international power through trade. On the basis of this trade influence, the Netherlands dominated a number of regions and set up colonies. They include Indonesia (independent shortly after the Second World War), Surinam (independent since 1975) and the Netherlands Antilles (they form part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, but enjoy a high level of independence). Many people from the colonial occupied areas settled in the Netherlands.

2. Migration for work reasons

In the sixties, there was a large deficit of workers in the Netherlands. In addition, not enough Dutch native people were found to be prepared to do the simple, hard and unskilled work. Dutch companies and the government mainly invited migrant workers (guest employees in the Netherlands) from Turkey and Morocco to come and work in the Netherlands. During that time, many Spaniards and Italians too came to the Netherlands for work.

3. Family reunification

In principle, it was the intention of the government that these immigrant workers would return to their native countries, but that did not happen as expected. The implementation of the Family Reunification Act (1974) ensured that these men no longer needed to live away from their families.

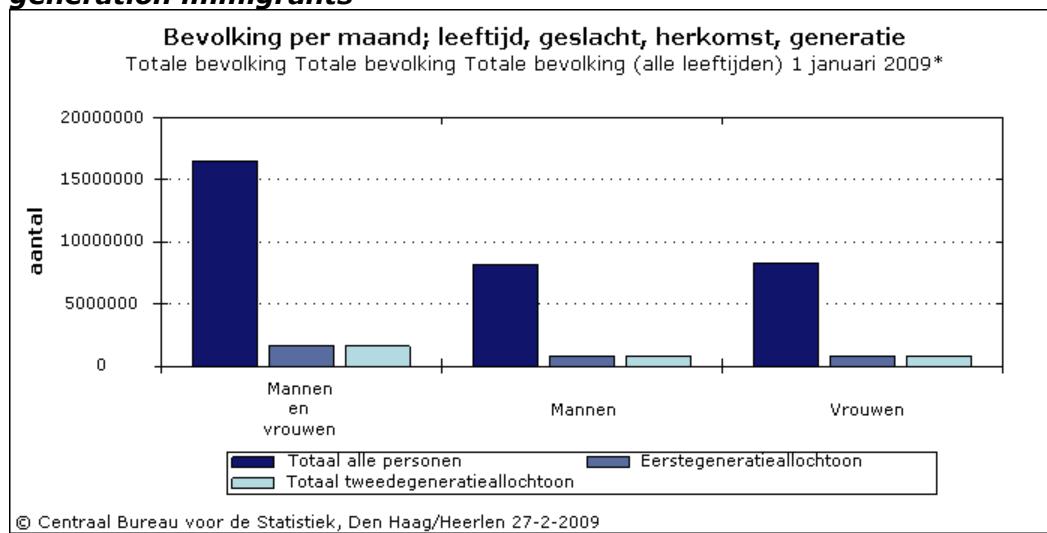
Consequently, many women and children from Turkey and Morocco came to settle in the Netherlands (University College London 2004). However, a high percentage of Spaniards and Italians did decide to return.

In the Netherlands, the number of people who are a member of a religious community is falling. In 2004, 42% of the Dutch population deemed itself non-religious. The remainder can be classified as Roman Catholic (30%), Protestant (14%), 11% of which are Dutch Reformed, Orthodox Reformed (6%), Islamic (5.8%), Hindu (0.6%) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2004).

Youth in the Netherlands

In 2008, the number of young people in the Netherlands under 25 was estimated to be 4.9 million. In this age bracket, the number of boys is slightly overrepresented: there are around 1,000 more boys than girls. Of the total number of young people in the Netherlands below 25, 23% is of foreign origin. Three-quarters of this 23% (around 1 million) was born in the Netherlands and as such falls within the category of the second-generation immigrants (Statistics Netherlands 2008).

The total Dutch population, subdivided according to gender and first/ second generation immigrants



Population per month; age, gender, origin, generation
Total population Total population Total population (all ages) 1 January 2009*

Number	Men and Women	Men	Women
Men and Women	Total for all persons	First generation immigrants	
	Total for second generation immigrants		

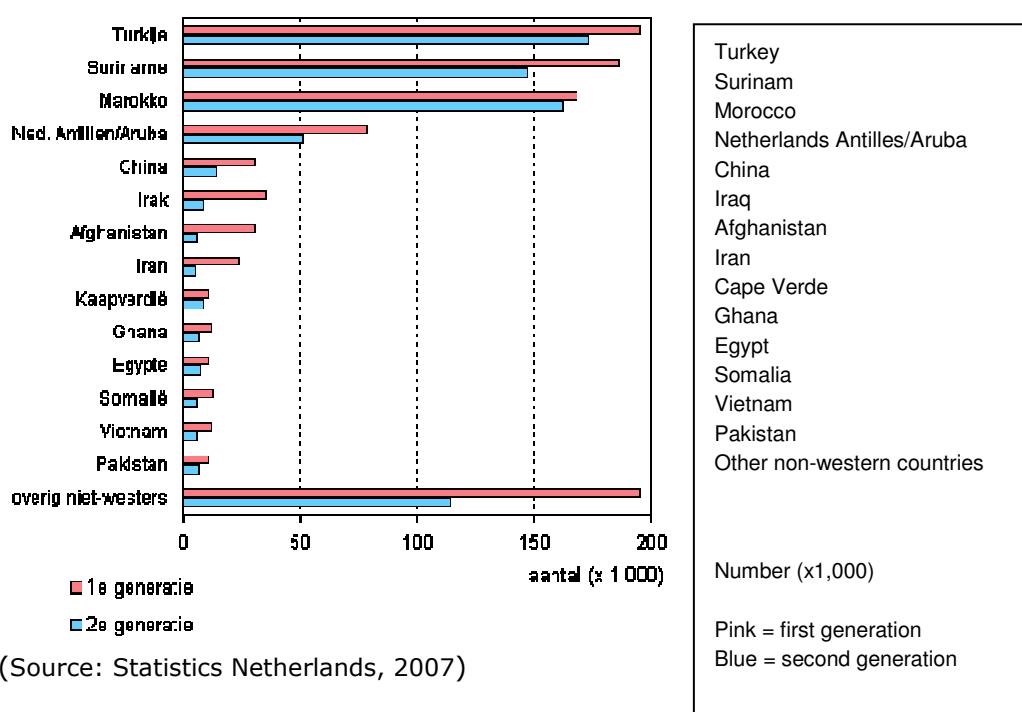
Statistics Netherlands, The Hague/Heerlen 27/02/2009

The total number of children of foreign origin in 2008

	Total of all ages	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20
Total population	16,405,399	945,727	1,011,145	978,852	1,004,726
Foreign	3,122,717	233,805	219,002	220,924	220,199
Dutch native	13,182,809	776 821	768 914	789 108	759 184
Morocco	315 821	39 489	32 772	31 399	29 444
Antilles	130 538	11 335	11 592	12 273	12 238
Surinam	329 430	23 075	24 517	26 870	29 628
Turkey	358 846	33 539	35 770	36 225	31 687

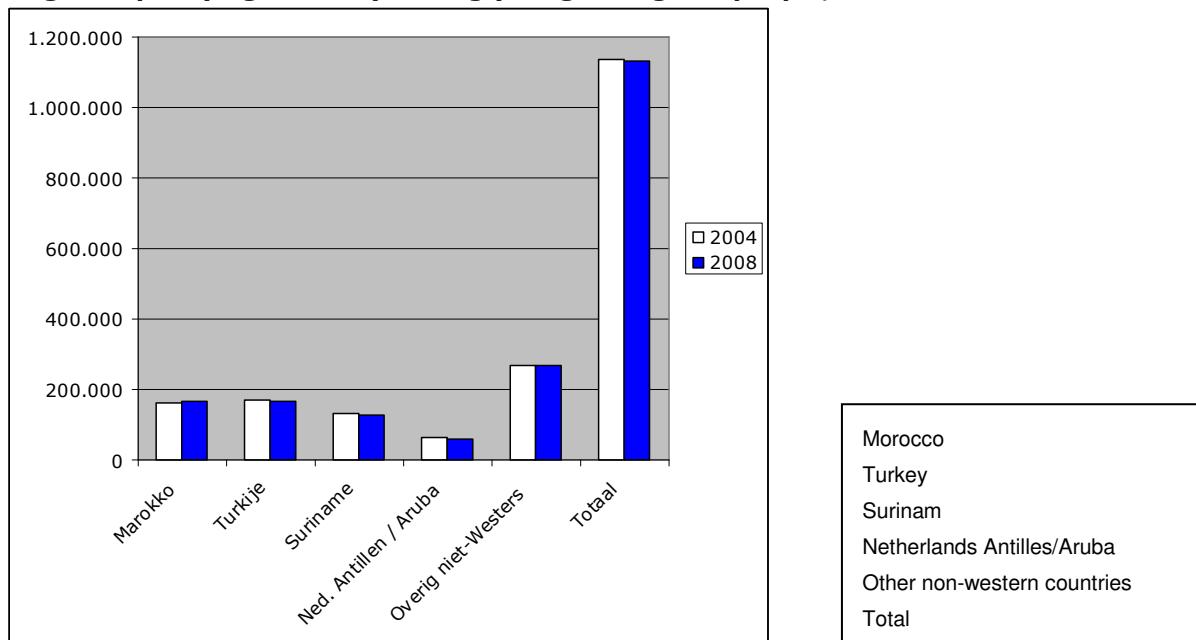
(Source: Statistics Netherlands, StatLine)

Overview of the most common non-western immigrants in the Netherlands in 2007



(Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2007)

Diagram specifying ethnicity among young immigrant people, measured in 2004 and 2008



1b) Legal definition of youth and welfare and criminal justice systems for youth

Of age

The Netherlands Civil Code³ states that a person becomes of age when reaching the age of 18 (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2008a). According to general provisions of the Civil Code, article 233, minority is understood to be the situation where a person has not yet reached the age of 18 and is not married or registered (or was so in the past). The situation of minority requires a form of authority: this can be parental responsibility (parents together or a single parent) or guardianship. Guardianship is provided by a person other than the parent ((Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2008b), article 245, Book 1). However, there is an exception to the rule in the event of minority and maternity. A female minor, once having reached the age of sixteen, who wishes to provide for and bring up her child, can request the juvenile court to have her declared of age ((Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2008c), article 253ha).

Legislation and criminal law for young people

The Netherlands have a number of important (criminal) legislations to secure the upbringing and growing up of young people. Various institutions and organisations are responsible for the enforcement and implementation of these laws. An overview of the most relevant laws and corresponding organisations in relation to Combating Youth Homelessness is set out below.

Compulsory Education Act

First of all, there is the Compulsory Education Act of 1901. The Compulsory Education Act stipulates that anyone in the Netherlands from the age of five to eighteen must attend school. The underlying thought is that young people need professional training and a qualification in order to survive in society. During this period, the parents (or a guardian) are responsible to ensure that the child does indeed attend school. In principle, compulsory education period ends when the young person turns eighteen. However, if the young person is in his final school year or drops out, the basic qualification requirement kicks in. The basic qualification requirement forms an important part of the Compulsory Education Act, as it extends the compulsory education period until the young person has obtained a qualification at MBO 2, 3 or 4, HAVO or VWO⁴ level. Compliance monitoring with regard to compulsory education is carried out by school attendance officers. A school is obliged to report to school attendance officers when children play truant. If the school attendance officer discovers that parents do not register their child in a school, he will report to the Child Care and Protection Board (Regional Notification and Coordination Centre (RMC Westelijk Weidegebied Utrecht).

Regional Reporting and Coordination Function early school leavers (RMC)

Young people who leave the training institute without a diploma, without a basic qualification, are deemed early school leavers. Each young person leaving education prematurely must be reported to a Regional Reporting and Coordination Centre (RMC) for early school leavers. The RMC offers programme-based guidance and, in conjunction with other organisations, endeavours to ensure that the young person obtains a basic qualification after all.

In 2008, each family with children under the age of 18 were entitled to family allowance. In 2009, this will change to so-called supplementary child benefit (as recorded in the new Supplementary Child Benefit Act). This means that each family receives an amount per child (depending on the number of children), subject to the rule 'the lower the income, the higher the allowance'.

Youth Care Act

If parents are experiencing problems bringing up their children or if young persons are having problems growing up, the relevant parents and young persons up to the age of 18 are entitled to youth care. The Youth Care Act stipulates that the Youth Care Agency is the portal to youth welfare services, juvenile mental healthcare, youth protection and juvenile rehabilitation. The financing of youth care runs via the provinces, which receive funds from the central government (the Dutch government). The Netherlands have twelve provinces and each province should have a Youth Care Agency. The new Youth Care Act was implemented in 2005 and since 1 January 2008, the variant 'secure youth care' also forms part of the options. In order to enable secure youth care, the Youth Care Act needed an amendment that clarified the division between Young Offenders Institutions (penal) and secure youth care (care). The current capacity for secure youth care is not yet sufficient. Hence young persons with serious behavioural problems can still be placed in a young offenders institute (Stichting AB 2009).

Youth Care Agency

The Youth Care Agency was formed out of the necessity to create a central portal for the entire range of assistance options in the field of youth care. In the past, too many institutions were engaged in assigning the correct care. The range of options was not clear and caused confusion. The youth care system suffers from a serious shortage in capacity: the waiting lists are long. The government has invested additional funds in youth care in order to reduce the waiting lists. Unfortunately, the waiting list problem has still not been resolved in 2009. During the last years, youth care has seen some sad situations in which children died as a result of child abuse or neglect. These cases were given ample media attention. Subsequently, the youth care system was blamed for this malpractice. Some of the criticism was that professionals had been unable to contact the relevant families or that families were dealing with various professionals at the same time without consulting each other and without coordination. As a result of these situations and the long waiting lists, the Youth Care Agency is suffering from a negative image. The government has taken these situations seriously and endeavours to reform the youth policy, see paragraph 1d (Bureau Jeugdzorg).

Youth protection

When children's rights are violated or when the development of a child is seriously undermined and voluntary youth care is not an option, the court can impose a youth protection order. Once the juvenile court has imposed this order, the Youth Care Agency or a national institution for guardianship or family supervision implements this ruling. There are three types of youth protection orders:

- family supervision order: involving support to the parents to remove the threats that undermine the development of the child. More than half the children who are given a family supervision order (OTS) continue to live at home. An other option is placement in a foster home, residential or day treatment, or placement at a boarding school;
- temporarily relieve parents from parental responsibilities. See placement options above;
- terminate parental responsibility: in this case, the children are placed elsewhere, e.g. in a foster home. In 2006, around 19,000 children were placed in a foster home. The number of children assigned to a foster home tripled in the past decade.

Number of children (0-18 years of age) placed under guardianship or family supervision

	2004	2005	2006
Guardianship and temporarily guardianship (0 to 18 years of age)	5,376	5,177	4,591
Family supervision (0 to 18 years of age)	22,243	23,979	26,379

(Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2008)

Young persons or children under the age of 18 who have come to the Netherlands without adult relations by blood or affinity are referred to as unaccompanied minor aliens (AMV). According to Dutch law, these AMVs must be placed under guardianship. By virtue of the Youth Care Act, the nationally operating Nidos Foundation is responsible for the guardianship of minors for whom an application for a residency permit or asylum has been submitted.

During the asylum procedure, these young people can also qualify for youth care. In addition, asylum seekers and children residing in the Netherlands illegally are subject to the Compulsory Education Act (Nidos).

Guardianship influx and the number of guardianships of AMVs (0-18 years of age)

	2004	2005	2006
AMV guardianships, influx (0 to 18 years of age)	545	412	333
AMV guardianships (0 to 18 years of age)	4,535	3,274	2,477

(Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a)

Child Abuse Counselling and Reporting Centre (AMK)

When neighbours, family or professionals suspect that a child is mentally, physically or sexually abused in the home, they can report this to the Child Abuse Counselling and Reporting Centre (AMK). This reporting centre offers a consultancy meeting or will follow up the report and investigate the family situation. When the Child Abuse Counselling and Reporting Centre confirms the suspicions, they will report it to the police (offences) or to the Child Care and Protection Board (in the event the development of a child is seriously undermined) (Advies & Meldpunt Kindermishandeling Nederland), regardless of the nature of the problem. The number of reports of child abuse in the Netherlands in 2004 was 34,061, in 2005 37,875, in 2006 41,536 and in 2007 49,889 (2007). The number of reports is clearly rising, partly also because the detection of child abuse receives greater attention (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a). Of the 49,889 reports made in 2007, 16,932 cases were investigated. Of these investigated cases, 16.8% involved physical abuse, 16.7% physical neglect, 18.2% physical abuse, 33.7% emotional neglect, 6% sexual abuse and in 33.8% of the cases it involved children who witnessed violence in the family (Anonymous2007).

Child Care and Protection Board

The duty of the Child Care and Protection Board is to defend the children's rights. In the event of a situation that could undermine the welfare of the child, an expert of the Child Care and Protection Board starts an investigation, followed by a report. If the development of the child is seriously undermined, the Child Care and Protection Board is entitled to intervene, see the three child protection orders above. If the investigation of the Board confirms that a child is not exposed to a serious threat, but to some threat, they can decide that the problems need to be tackled with the help of a psychologist or social worker (Raad voor de Kinderbescherming).

Youth justice system

Young people in the age of twelve to eighteen years who have committed a punishable offence are subject to the youth justice system (Wetboek.net). Young person aged 16 and older having committed a serious criminal offence can also be tried according to the justice system for adults (Wet online 2008b). If a young person is 'immature of character', the youth justice system can also apply to 18 to 21-year-olds. In 2006, approximately 3.2% of 12 to 25-year-olds had been in trouble with the police. In 2007, a total of 95,271 cases in the age group of 12 to 24 were tried in a court of law (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a). The Compulsory Identification Act, i.e. the duty to provide proof of identify, applies from the age of fourteen.

Young Offenders Institutions (Framework) Act

Young people who have been sentenced by a juvenile court are sent to a youth custodial institution. Following an evaluation of the Young Offenders Institutions (Framework) Act, a legislative proposal 'compulsory aftercare following juvenile detention or placement in a judicial institution for juvenile offenders (PIJ)' was made. This means that all juveniles who have been sentenced to three months of juvenile detention or more or who have been given a PIJ order are obliged to accept guidance by the juvenile probation service. Part of the group of juveniles who have been given a family supervision order are placed in a

youth custodial institution, in view of their own safety. In 2006, more than one thousand young people were placed in a young offenders institute following civil proceedings. The number of boys and girls were more or less equal. In 2006, a total of 4,587 young people in the age group of 12 to 25 were placed in a youth custodial institution. This number accounted for 3,888 criminal-law and 1,055 civil-law orders (Veiligheid begint bij Voorkomen 2008).

Juvenile probation service

The juvenile probation service counsels children from 12 to 18 who have committed a punishable offence. Juvenile rehabilitation includes the set up of a guidance programme plan. The overall objective is to prevent reoffending. The need among professionals for effective intervention to reduce reoffending among young delinquents arises from the fact that the effectiveness of most common methods is unknown. Two methods are available: an intensive guidance programme for young people who repeatedly show delinquent behaviour (ITB hard core) and the method 'Crime in relation to integration of ethnic minorities' (CRIEM, specially aimed at young immigrants (Blom, Laan 2007) (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum 2008)

The influx of 12 to 25-year-olds in regular youth rehabilitation, ITB crime and ITB hard core

		2004	2005	2006	2007
Regular youth rehabilitation	influx (12 to 25 years of age)	6,456	7,690	9,159	8,641
Regular youth rehabilitation	status (12 to 25 years of age)	6,191	8,568	7,566	9,143
Youth rehabilitation order: ITB crime	influx (12 to 25 years of age)	623	652	821	689
Youth rehabilitation order: ITB crime	status (12 to 25 years of age)	131	59	236	101
Youth rehabilitation order: ITB hard core	influx (12 to 25 years of age)	378	305	303	294
Youth rehabilitation order: ITB hard core	status (12 to 25 years of age)	156	57	168	89

(Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a)

HALT Netherlands

If young people in the age group of 12 to 18 are in trouble with the police for reasons of crime or vandalism, they are given the option to choose between a judicial process or a so-called 'HALT settlement' (out-of-court settlement offered by the Public Prosecution Service to juvenile offenders involving community service or educational tasks) through a HALT agency. The primary task of these agencies is to combat and prevent juvenile crime. By opting for the HALT settlement, the juvenile avoids the judicial road and the punishable offence can be rectified via a community punishment order. The juvenile mostly completes a training or community service order. One of the conditions for this programme is that young people admit to their crime and apologise to the victims. In addition, HALT offers the possibility to parents with a child under 12, who has committed a minor punishable offence, to teach their child what it has done wrong, in conjunction with HALT. Here too an apology forms part of the programme. Each year, more than 22,000 young people are referred to a HALT agency for a HALT settlement or Stop response (Halt Nederland).

Aliens Act 2000

Foreigners who wish to settle in the Netherlands, can apply for a residence permit in two ways: via the asylum procedure (leaving the home country by reason of e.g. war) and via the regular procedure (work, study, family reunification or family formation). The Benefit Entitlement (Residence Status) Act (art. 10 of the Aliens Act 2000) stipulates that an illegal

person cannot claim government provisions, unless it involves: providing necessary medical care, prevention of violations of public health, legal assistance to aliens and education to children up to 18 (Stichting Alleenstaande Minderjarige Asielzoekers Humanitas 2005).

According to SAMAH, there are around 12,000 AMVs and an estimated 16,000 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between the ages of 18 and 21. An unaccompanied minor asylum seeker is also referred to as Ama. In 2001, within the framework of the new Aliens Policy, this abbreviation was changed to AMV: Unaccompanied minor alien (SAMAH, faq, 2009). Current estimates are that a few hundred former asylum seekers under 24 are detained in the Netherlands for the purpose of deportation (Work plan SAMAH, 2004). Based on the records of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), an overview for 2007 is detailed below: In 2007, it involved around 122 unaccompanied minor aliens. A total of 64 thereof left the campus with unknown destination and 58 left small-scale residential units or child residential groups. Unaccompanied minor aliens from India, China and Nigeria run a relatively high risk of disappearing. They are classed under the risk categories.

Of the 64 unaccompanied minor aliens that left the campus, 46 were male and 18 female. Of the male minor aliens, 21 came from India. Of the female unaccompanied minor aliens, 10 came from Nigeria.

Of the 58 unaccompanied minor aliens that left the small-scale residential units or child residential groups with destination unknown, 32 were male and 26 female. Of the male minors from the risk categories, 6 came from India, 4 from China and 4 from Nigeria. One Chinese boy was 13 years old and an Indian boy was 14. Of the female unaccompanied minor asylum seekers who disappeared, two were from China and 13 from Nigeria. One of the disappeared Nigerian girls was 14 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a).

Influx of unaccompanied minor aliens from 2001 to 1 January 2009

2001	3,654
2002	2,361
2003	998
2004	464
2005	424
2006	321
2007	658
2008	739

Representation of nationalities among unaccompanied minor aliens on 1 January 2009

Somalia	181	25%
Iraq	133	18%
Afghanistan	91	13%
Guinea	54	7%
Angola	42	6%
Other	225	31%
Total	726	100%

1c) Main national routes of youth insertion into adult life

The different laws and work methods of organisations continuously use different age limits with regard to young people. A few examples: compulsory education up to 16, HALT (the Halt settlement) is for children from 12 to 18 years age, the youth justice system, juvenile mental healthcare and youth care run up to 18 years of age, the youth healthcare up to 19 years of age, the Regional Notification and Coordination Function early school leavers runs to 23 years of age and the duty to provide proof of identity applies from the age of 14. When at-risk youths reach the age of 18, they are deemed to be of age and as such subject to the legislation and the range of assistance options for adults. In the expert interviews, this was identified as a bottleneck, since at-risk youths are still very much developing at that age, making them vulnerable. The adult support and service provisions often do not contribute to this in a positive sense, as they often do not link up with the specific problems that these young people are contending with.

During the course of time, an increasing number of young people have chosen to study for a longer period. As a result, the average level of education of the Dutch population has risen. In 2004, 29% of the population aged 25 to 64 had received higher education. In general, the level of education among men is higher than among women. With the rise of the average level of education in the Netherlands, the requirements set in the labour market in terms of training and qualifications have also risen.

One could say that value of diplomas has been subject to inflation. According to Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2008), 14.5 percent of young people received a level of education that is inadequate to qualify for the labour market. In 2006/07, more than half (54%) of the 1.4 million 18 to 25-year-olds were still studying. In 2006/2007, more than 30 percent of young people were attending higher education. A significant rise compared to 2000/01, when a mere 26% attended higher education. Among women of 18 to 25 years of age, that rise in attending higher education was higher than among men: in that period, the female attendance percentage rose from 28 to 32 percent. Among non-western immigrant peers, the percentage attending higher education ranges from 15 percent for youngsters of Turkish origin to 27 percent of youngsters from Antillean origin (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2008).

Of the Dutch young people who have reached the age of 25, approximately 25% lives alone. This often is a temporary lifestyle between leaving the parental home and cohabiting with a partner (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). Most young people under the age of 25 still live at home (87%). A small part (6%) of young people under 25 has left the parental home and lives alone. In addition, 4% cohabited with a partner in 2007. Of the 18 to 25-year-olds, 57.4% still live with their parents, 20.6% live alone and 16% cohabit. It is striking that more and more youngsters living at home live in single-parent families. Particularly the age group of young people between 19 and 24 moves regularly, mostly by moving to the city or within it (Steenbekkers, Simon & Vermeij 2008). Non-western immigrant youngsters mainly live in the big cities or surrounding area. In 2006, 16.4% of all young people lived in deprived districts.

Depending on the extent of the income and the rent of the house, Dutch citizens either are or are not entitled to receive assistance from the government in paying the rent: the housing allowance. Depending on the extent of the income, some citizens can also qualify for government aid with regard to health insurance: the care allowance.

Young people (up to 25 years of age) according to household position, 1 January 2007, Statistics Netherlands

	Total	Living at home	Person living on his own	Cohabiting	Single parent	Other member	Residing in institution
	X 1000						
Total	4932.1	4305	287.3	218.6	12.7	77.4	22.1
0-15 years of age	2958.6	2933	0	0	0	19.7	5.9
15-18 years of age	605.8	587.3	7.2	1.6	0.2	4.3	5.2
18-25 years of age	1358.7	784.6	280.1	217.1	12.5	53.5	11
Total	100	87	6	4	0	2	0
0-15 years of age	100	99	0	0	0	1	0
15-18 years of age	100	97	1	0	0	1	1
18-25 years of age	100	58	21	16	1	4	1

In 2008, of the people aged up to 25, a total of 12,041 men and 38,477 women were married. In 2003, the average age of men getting married was 34, whereas the average age of women was 31 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2003).

Since the seventies of the last century, the average age at which people are getting married has risen by approximately 7 years. In the 2006-2050 Household Forecast, Statistics Netherlands do not expect a further rise in the age at which people marry (Duin 2006). Since 2001, partners in the Netherlands have been able to formally register their relationship in three ways: via civil marriage, via the registered partnership or via a cohabitation contract. All these forms of living together are available to couples of equal or different gender. In addition, people have the option to live together without registering this officially. In principle, both parents retain parental responsibility for the children in the event of a divorce. However, both parents or one of the parents can request the court to assign parental responsibility to one of the parents. In 2007, a total of 1,858 of women aged 15-20 (= 0.4 % of the total number of women in this age group) and 16,384 (3.4%) 20 to 25-year-olds have one or more children. Of the women aged 15-25, a total of 18,242 (=1.9% of all women in this age group) has one or more children. In 1990, 29,246 women aged 15-25 had one or more children (= 2.5%) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009b). In 2006, around 1,216 children were adopted, 232 of which from the Netherlands. The number of times that an infant is abandoned is low: less than once a year.

The economic (in)dependence of young people is difficult to define. There are numerous rights and obligations in the Netherlands that young people are subject to or can appeal to within the framework of work and income. A few examples are listed below:

Young people from the age of 18 and youngsters still attending school can apply for study costs allowance: the so-called student finance⁵. In the case of young people under 18, the study costs allowance is paid into the bank account of the parents. The minimum youth wage applies to the ages 15 to 22. The minimum wage is based on age. The wage rises each calendar year. The minimum wage – € 1,356.60 gross per month – applies to young people from the age of 23 (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid 2009). Young people from the age of 18 are entitled to social assistance benefit. The extent of the benefit depends on the household composition.

As from the age of 21, people can apply for a standard social assistance benefit. Young people under the age of 27 who appeal to the Municipality for social assistance benefit are offered a job, education, or a combination of both. If they accept the work, they will receive a salary from the employer (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid 2008).

When accepting the study offer, young people are given an income that is equal to the social assistance benefit, where necessary; young people aged 21 or 22 receive a lower benefit, derived from the statutory minimum youth wage that applies to this group. Young people under sixteen are subject to the Working Hours Act with regard to minors. As from the age of 16, a person can enter into an employment contract with an employer (Wet online 2008a). The national principle is that young people from the age of 16 are allowed to work, provided the work is not harmful to their health. Young persons under the age of 16 are generally deemed to be studying. Hence various restrictions apply to employment contracts for youngsters under the age of 16. Most young people have a job on the side during their secondary school years. That means they work after school hours or during the weekend for some extra cash.

Minor asylum seekers are allowed to work from the age of 16 (a maximum of 12 weeks per year), provided their asylum application procedure has started. The Centre for Work and Income (see page 20) must provide the employer with a work permit. The same applies to voluntary work. Minor asylum seekers can also follow regular school and university.

Listed below are the experiences of professionals and managers in practice with regard to young people under and over the age of 18.

Box 1: Interviewees on the 18- / 18 + transition and independence

Project coordinator of Kamers met Kansen The Hague: 'The transition from youth care to adult care is enormous. When you turn 18, your responsibilities shoot up as a young person, expectations are high.'

Project leader Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'When youngsters turn 18, there's in fact nothing for them. After their 18th birthday they don't qualify for anything, whereas there's a mountain of development tasks. The young person becomes of age and needs help to become independent. So after youth care, there's a gap. Another regular feature is that young people 'drop out' after an intake with other organisations. The problem is that youngsters are unable to formulate a request for help, whereas they're expected to do just that. They are faced by an enormous task on 'how to get through the bureaucracy of the Netherlands...''

Guardian region Arnhem of Nidos Foundation: 'We guide minor asylum seekers until they reach the age of 18, separate from the asylum procedure. Should the young people need guidance after their 18th birthday, we engage the Dutch Refugee Council or the regular welfare services. Minor asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeals are allowed to stay in the Netherlands until they are 18.'

Assistant at the information centre for pregnant girls and young mothers: 'These days you're given a work placement allowance when you are under 27 years of age, but you must sign up to a programme straight away as you're obliged to find work or study. It's not clear yet whether your benefit will be cut; we're still investigating this as the arrangement is very new. These girls are often not stable enough as yet and there's a shortage in child care facilities. So that generates the necessary problems. Through Steady, we try and do something about this by flagging the problem. If their benefits are cut, it means that they fall below the social assistance level. We are currently gathering data/facts from practice to verify whether this is indeed the case. Only then can we take the necessary steps to confront the relevant organisations/politics.'

'Access to work is difficult, as you need child care for that and there are waiting lists. School is often also difficult, as schools are generally not very flexible and don't take this group into account. On the other hand, these girls often don't know what they're entitled to, as they don't have the (right) information.'

1d) Government youth policies

The trend in the Netherlands is that the national government increasingly withdraws and hands over more and more tasks and powers to local authorities. This is a process of decentralisation. As a result, municipalities now have more discretionary power in many different fields. However, decentralisation of the policy does not always go hand in hand with proportional funding for the local authorities. The national policy is implemented by 13 ministries in different policy fields. A major national problem (which also affects regional/local levels) is that the Netherlands suffers from 'fragmentation'. This means that different authorities deal with a certain policy field without working together. As a result, cooperation is ineffective and a lot of time is lost through coordination meetings. In order to avoid this fragmentation in this case, ministries take initiatives for interdepartmental projects. The cooperation between the different fragments of the ministries improves with regard to cross-ministry policy domains (such as the Youth or homelessness policy domain). Please find below an overview of the most significant ministries and their policy plans which relate to different habitats of young people.

Ministry for Youth and Families and the Youth and Family Centre (CJG)

The Ministry for Youth and Families, which is a fairly new concept in the Netherlands, is a programme ministry that falls under the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS). The Ministry for Youth and Families is involved in three aspects of the national youth policy:

1. The family takes up a central position in society;
2. Prevention - problems must be identified earlier;
3. A non-obligatory approach, i.e. everyone will have to accept his or her responsibilities.

One of the tasks of the ministry is to promote the formation of Youth and Family Centres in larger towns and cities. The Youth and Family Centres can be guided from the first line, but the ministry also has the objective to encourage municipalities to set up local Care and Advice Teams. In these multidisciplinary teams, professionals from the fields of education, police, compulsory education, youth care and social work, work closely together (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin 2007a). The ministry also strives to finalise the needs assessment⁶ of young people reported at the youth and family centres within nine weeks. In the case of at-risk youths, the ministry wants to take a tough stance in order to fight nuisance and to guide 'young people on the verge of going off the rails' to education and a job. The aim is to have Family and Youth Centres throughout the country by 2011 and to make sure that the money flows are contained (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin 2007a).

The Youth and Family Centres (CJG) that are currently being set up must serve as low-threshold access for children and parents; preferably in a central location, close to other facilities. The central approach in these centres is: one family, one approach. This principle is also based on the bottlenecks described earlier, and as a result of the dramatic fatal incidents that have occurred in youth care. The centre must anticipate signals during the growing up and childraising processes, and provides parents with information and advice. So as to be able to tackle problems beforehand, the CJG plays a role in the case of debt problems, parenting issues, divorces/single-parent families and a family's network in the neighbourhood. The professionals of the CJG are also responsible for making proper referrals when issues are identified, and the CJG - as a gateway - has a transparent relationship with the Youth Care Agency.

With a view to the bottlenecks in youth care described earlier, professionals of the CJG use an electronic children's dossier and the reference index. These two systems must ensure that professionals can exchange information on a child, and that professionals share risk reports, both in and outside a municipality.

Operation Young (Dossier Jeugdzorg) forms the basis for Youth and Families. This is an interdepartmental collaboration between the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

The goal of Operation Young was to improve coherence in the youth policy and the chain (ended on 1 January 2007). The concrete goals were:

1. Reducing youth unemployment, so that in relative terms it is no higher than twice the total level of unemployment;
2. To reduce the number of early school leavers by half in 2010 and by 30% in 2006;
3. To reduce educational disadvantages among 2 to 6-year-olds by providing language programmes (early childhood education) for half of these children. To reduce language disadvantages among disadvantaged pupils (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin 2008).

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport focuses on the health and welfare of citizens in the Netherlands. The ministry is responsible for an important (decentralisation) act: the Social Support Act (Wmo). Municipalities receive funding from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport for this. Within the framework of youth in the Social Support Act, the task of the municipality is to regulate youth health care and preventive parenting support. The way in which the Social Support Act is applied differs per local and regional situation and depends on the local care structures. Young homeless people also fall under this act, among others.

What is the Social Support Act (Wmo)?

This act means that each citizen must be able to participate in society. Towns and cities are responsible for the implementation of the act. The Social Support Act stipulates that citizens look after their own health and welfare first. If they require support, they must first look for it in their own family or network. If that proves insufficient, citizens can turn to volunteers or professionals. The underlying goal is to encourage self-sufficiency and participation, and to give citizens more control over their own lives. In order to be able to realise this, the social network and neighbourhood (with facilities) is an important factor.

In 2005, a conference took place at which the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the administrators of the four big cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) decided to improve shelter for the homeless. This led to the launch of the Plan of Action in 2006. The objective of this plan was two-tiered: to improve the situation of the homeless who languish and degenerate and to reduce the nuisance caused by this group at the same time. The ambitions of the Plan of Action were high. The (quantifiable) objectives were that a reintegration plan for all 10,000 homeless people in the four big cities had to be prepared by 2010, and that these homeless people, insofar as possible, should receive an income, suitable housing, effective support and care and useful daytime activities and/or work.

Also, the fight against homelessness became more personal and reintegration-oriented, as well as less noncommittal. In order to realise these ambitions, no statutory amendments were deemed necessary. What was required was good cooperation between various chain partners, and extra funding was made available in order to realise the plans. The Plan of Action does draw heavily from '2002 target' in Great Britain.

The Plan of Action was also adopted in other towns and cities. Under the name Urban Compass, the Plan was rolled out in 39 other municipalities that are responsible for the homelessness policy in their region.

The Plan of Action and the Urban Compass appear to give the cooperation between municipalities, care administration offices, organisations for the homeless and clients (Goede et al. 2009) a healthy boost.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has explicitly asked municipalities to also include young homeless people in the Urban Compass. There are about twelve municipalities that actually invest in monitoring, chain control and process support or intend to do so. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport based itself on used a report by the Court of Audit⁷ about the state of affairs regarding assistance for young homeless people in 2007. One of the recommendations in the report was to include young homeless people in the Urban Compass. The report highlighted the fact that in 2007, there was no specific body that dealt with the provision of information for young homeless people. Illegal young people fall outside the framework of the Urban Compass; the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice do not cooperate in that respect. Box 2 on page 22 explains what professionals come across in practice in terms of illegal young people and young people in asylum procedures, and the amount and type of support that is provided. In order to make the Urban Compass possible, funding is required for the fight against homelessness. One third will have to be funded by virtue of the Social Support Act (the municipalities themselves) and the rest by virtue of the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act⁸. Central government is cutting down on the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act. As a result, all types of funding are moved from the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act to the Social Support Act, making it the responsibility of municipalities. The most recent one has been supportive counselling⁹. This has all sorts of consequences for young homeless people (see box 2; interviews with experts).

One example of a programme by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is 'Immigrants take part through sport', in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Districts and Integrations (WWI) (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport 2008). Through this programme, the ministries wish to encourage integration by means of sport. On the one hand it makes it possible to encourage citizenship and on the other it makes it possible to tackle problem behaviour. In addition, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has set up a campaign that aims to reduce the consumption of alcohol among young people (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport 2009).

Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice covers, among other things, the policy areas of immigration, migration, youth protection and youth crime. One of the objectives of this ministry is that the Child Care and Protection Board and the Youth Care Agency improve their collaboration in order to be able to offer children who find themselves in unsafe situations a safe circumstance as soon as possible. To that end, the 'Better Protected' plan (Ministerie van Justitie) has been developed.

In order to reduce youth crime, the ministry has stipulated a number of actions: early intervention, a personal approach, fast and effective enforcement of sentences and suitable aftercare. This ministry is also responsible for adoption. The Ministry of Justice is increasing safety in the Netherlands, by reducing crime and nuisance. Together with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations it has set up the 'Safety starts with Prevention' project. The result is that so-called safety houses are set up in various regions, where the Public Prosecutor, police, the Dutch Probation Service, the Youth Care Agency and the school attendance officer work together for the benefit of perpetrators and victims. Each region has different partners; the Domestic Violence Report Line could also form part of a safety house.

Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND)

The Immigration and Naturalisation Service is responsible for the implementation of the aliens policy in the Netherlands. This national organisation assesses applications from aliens who wish to stay in the Netherlands or who wish to gain Dutch citizenship. Since the implementation of the Aliens Act 2000, 90 to 95% of minor asylum seekers learn that they cannot stay in the Netherlands (Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers) (Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst).

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW)

There is currently a legislative proposal that should ensure that young people up to the age of 27 who apply for benefits from the municipality are offered a job, education or both. The basic principle is to have as many young people as possible in employment or education. There is a suspicion that the participation of young people in the labour market will be postponed as a result of the global economic recession, or 'credit crunch'. The young people's network of the Dutch trade union FNV (FNV Jong) predicts that 200,000 young people may lose their jobs as a result of the crisis. Trade union FNV Jong therefore wants the Minister for Youth and Families to intervene by investing in the position of young people in the labour market during these difficult times (Beem 2009). As for the improvement of emancipation of certain groups of young people in the Netherlands, we have only been able to find information on immigrant girls and women. Girls and women from ethnic minorities are in many ways disadvantaged compared to native Dutch women. Encouraging emancipation and integration of women requires extra attention, also because they are relatively more likely to be confronted with issues such as domestic violence, traditional role patterns and restricted freedom. The government therefore wants to aim at assisting these girls and women in finding voluntary work and paid employment (MOVISIE).

Centre for Work and Income (CWI) and Employee Insurance Agency (UWV)

Those looking for work can search vacancies and obtain assistance from a consultant for work at the CWI. In addition, the CWI is also a platform for jobseekers and employers to seek employment and suitable employees respectively. The UWV is responsible for reintegration and temporary income for those who have been fired, are ill for prolonged periods of time, have a handicap or who are being assisted in their quest for a new employer.

At the end of 2008, the CWI and the UWV merged into the 'UWV Work Experience Company'. The main reason for the merger given by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment is that it will improve the integration of the services provided by both organisations. It would also improve the collaboration with the municipal Social Services department and employment (UWV).

Social security

When people wish to apply for social assistance benefits, they can turn to their municipality or the UWV Work Experience Company. Homeless people must go to the municipality for benefits. The extent of the benefits for the homeless is in principle the same as others, except in the case of low or no housing costs or high costs for night shelter. Having an address is a condition in order to be able to receive benefits. This is a problem for young people who are indeed homeless and still wish to qualify for benefits. Various municipalities have come up with a solution in the form of a correspondence or postal address. Young homeless people without a home and address can obtain one from a body or organisation - often the municipal social services - thus solving the problem. In order to obtain a postal or correspondence address, a young homeless person must be able to 'prove' that he or she has no home or address.

Before young people are given a postal address, some municipalities, including Amsterdam, require them to use the shelter for the homeless for a short period of time. The homeless are subject to conditions for actual benefits in the case of addiction (participate in a medical programme), debts (debt support), irresponsible spending or a life of drifting. In the last two situations, the municipality may choose not to pay out money, but to offer goods or a place to sleep instead. Changed home situations, such as moving from one town or city to another, admission or obtaining an address affect the benefits (Schulinck 2009).

All municipalities can apply the Work and Social Assistance Act (Wwb) for recovery activities for young homeless people, but also for prevention in the case of at-risk youths. The objective of the Work and Social Assistance Act is to provide support for employment and granting social assistance benefits. The benefits under the Invalidity Insurance (Young Disabled Persons) Act (Wajong) are benefits for young disabled persons on minimum level. Central government wishes to encourage the highest possible degree of moving on to a regular job. That also applies to young people. Some of the young people who receive their income by virtue of the Wajong scheme work in protected 'sheltered workshops' that fall under the Sheltered Employment Act. A recent government scheme wants young people to move from the Sheltered Employment Act to regular jobs. Organisations that often work with Wajong youngsters wonder whether these young people are not out of place in regular employment.

Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment is, among other things, responsible for the policies for housing and integration. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment deals with the housing policy, housing market and living quality in the Netherlands. Groups that require attention under the housing policy are single people, senior citizens and immigrants. The ministry wants more control for residents and it wants to encourage housing associations to invest in social housing. There must also be a better balance in the percentage rented/owner-occupied houses. Within the framework of integration, the ministry stimulates all sorts of (local) programmes in order to increase solidarity among citizens. One of the pillars is that non-Dutch citizens learn the Dutch language (Ministerie van Wonen, Wijken en Integratie).

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)

Out of the 1.5 million children who are in primary education in the Netherlands, about 350,000 are confronted with a social-economic disadvantage. Schools, municipalities and local partners are in principle responsible for reducing disadvantages by means of, for instance, early childhood education (educational language programmes). Another option is the preparatory year: this bridging period gives children a year to catch up. Immigrant children are at a relatively large risk of falling behind (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap 2008). Half of the primary schools in the four big cities (Utrecht, Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam) have more than 50% non-western immigrant pupils. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the 'Fighting school drop-out rates' plan. This plan focuses on making education more attractive, on involving care in education, on facilitating the transition from secondary education to higher education, and on paying more attention to the practical qualities of a young person. In 2009, the ministry decided to abolish tuition fees and the school provides school books free of charge. The plan 'Back to school together' relates to vulnerable children who are enabled to follow regular education by providing them with extra care. They no longer have to follow special education. The ministry will provide the money for the extra care for these children.

The following four categories of pupils are involved:

1. pupils who suffer from a disorder that falls in the autism spectrum
2. pupils suffering from ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
3. dyslexic pupils
4. highly gifted pupils.

Regional Training Centre (ROC)

The Regional Training Centre provides the central access to education in the Netherlands. The centre offers secondary vocational education programmes. The possibilities differ per Regional Training Centre, but they could involve senior secondary vocational education, higher senior vocational education, university education, adult education, Dutch as a second language courses for non-natives, the combination of work placement/education and working/learning in a variety of sectors (Stichting ROC.nl 2009).

Financing

A major bottleneck in the young homeless people chain is the fact that there is no specific financing for aid for young homeless people. There are four important financing schemes available in the chain, all implemented by different parties (Heineke, 2007):

1. Social Support Act¹⁰: all municipalities are responsible for a preventive youth policy (the prevention, identification and tackling of educational and development issues)
2. Social Support Act: provision of emergency accommodation special-purpose grant, only paid to centre municipalities that are responsible for the range of facilities available.
3. Exceptional Medical Expenses Act: implemented by the care administration office responsible for the indication of young people with a handicap
4. Youth Care Act: the youth care policy is implemented by every province.

Please find below an overview of the experiences of professionals and managers with regard to the policy for youth and young people.

Box 2: Interviewees on region and policy in relation to young homeless people

Project leader Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'Young people do not always suffer from psychiatric or addiction problems. That means it's difficult to get young people an AWBZ place. The result is that a number of groups miss out, including young people with a criminal past.'

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief for young people Salvation Army (Utrecht) 'More transparency in financial terms would be appreciated. Young people are exposed to a host of regulations. How do we explain the different surcharges and why this person is entitled to an amount of money and someone else to a different amount? It's extremely obscure and too fragmented. I'd rather see things integrated, institution-tied instead of socially tied.'

Policy assistant municipality of Rotterdam Social Affairs and Employment: 'The existing accommodation for young people is largely paid for by municipal funds. As many youngsters staying there suffer from severe problems (psychiatric problems among others), we need more guidance. Through additional entitlements to the AWBZ, the municipality can focus on young people with (often less severe) psychosocial problems. It is about a proper distribution of the financial responsibilities between the municipality and AWBZ. Counselling and structured accommodation just have to be paid for from the AWBZ, that's also a condition for the expansion of 175 places that we, the municipality of Rotterdam, strive for. We can only expand with the current budgets if we get more out of the AWBZ. If we can't, those additional places will never materialise and we won't have a tight network. That's the result. Everyone, on a national and municipal level, says that young people are a primary concern, so it would be a shame if things go wrong. This additional entitlement to the AWBZ seems to go against the trend. However, this is about an extremely vulnerable group, with an unfavourable prognosis.'

Box 2: Interviewees on region and policy in relation to young homeless people

'Institutions too need to look further for their financing than just the municipality, they should also explicitly turn to the AWBZ. That's quite a change for them. A tricky bottleneck in that respect is the fact that we ask institutions to help the most difficult groups, while their financing is not secured.' 'The changes to the AWBZ have made the needs assessment of young people much more difficult. It's desirable to develop a standard assessment protocol for young people who are given social relief. You can make volume arrangements with each municipality, limiting the costs. Such a solution would help keep young people on board. On the other hand, something has to be done about guidance and diagnosis. We need to agree that an assessment is indeed ready after six months. Then, each youngster, financed by the AWBZ, should be given shelter without an assessment. A lot of them are misdiagnosed: young people come from unstable family situations, they've seen a lot during their lives. Diagnoses such as PTSS (Posttraumatic Stress Syndrome), weed addiction or difficulties to fit in are often completely missed or not made at all. At the CIZ (Central Needs Assessment Care) they say that, based on the information they have been given, the children do not suffer from psychiatric problems, when in fact they do. There's a grey area between shelter and treatment, and young people in that grey area do not receive sufficient and effective help. Fragmented assistance and legislation in the field of financing and needs assessment mean that the most vulnerable youngsters miss out. Really, the conclusion you can draw is that young people are exposed to all sorts of risk as a result of the fragmentation of collective facilities.'

Departmental coordinator crisis relief for young people Zandbergen (Utrecht): 'I would like to see more coordination with the chain partners, but that's the responsibility of the municipality. Right now, there's room for improvement when it comes to communication between the chain partners. A major improvement is the new chain, registration and information system (KRIS), which will kick off this year for this target group. It enables you to see what and where the client is.'

2. Youth at risk of social exclusion and homelessness

In this chapter, we deal with the following themes. Paragraph 2.A defines three concepts - risk, vulnerability and social exclusion. Paragraph 2.B outlines the vulnerable and high-risk situations for children and young people. Paragraph 2.C describes which groups run a risk of social exclusion and homelessness. Finally, paragraph 2.D gives a picture of the public opinion and of the role of the youth in the national media.

2a) Three concepts of risk, vulnerability and social exclusion

The three concepts of risk, vulnerability and social exclusion are key elements in the 'Combating Youth Homelessness' study. The research partners in the Czech Republic, England, Portugal and the Netherlands apply different interpretations of these concepts on different levels. The interviews with professionals have demonstrated that these three terms are also used differently in the field. Because, when is a person actually vulnerable, when does that person run a risk of social exclusion, and what does 'a high-risk situation' mean? Which factors increase the likelihood that young people become homeless? In order to determine - in a comparative report - how the four countries apply these concepts and which meaning can be derived from them, it is necessary to first define them on the basis of the situation in the Netherlands.

Risk

In the political and social debate in the Netherlands, the terms risk and 'at-risk youths' are often associated with safety. In this context, risk mainly relates to young people sounding out and pushing back frontiers, experimenting with high-risk behaviour and 'loitering' in the streets as a leisure pursuit.

In that sense, risk relates to slipping into youth crime, which should be prevented at an earlier stage. The main focus is on Moroccan, Surinam and Antillean youngsters and unacceptable and deviant behaviour (Spectrum Gelderland 2008).

Where the accent in terms of intervention should lie varies from 're-education', learning norms and values to a 'tough approach' and intervention. The police, teachers, parents and neighbours (within the context of nuisance) are dealing with this issue. In youth care, at-risk youths are referred to as young people whose development is under threat, a situation in which social workers must work together well in order to avoid worse. It is vital for them to be able to give 'risk signals' beyond the municipal borders, in order to be able to coordinate assistance (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin 2007b). The way in which a professional defines 'risk' depends on the professional judgement of the professional. There is no manual.

A person is in a 'high-risk situation' when there are problems in multiple habitats at the same time, as a result of which this person is at risk of ending up on the fringes of society (Heineke, Ploegmakers 2007).

Vulnerability

Within the framework of the Social Support Act, people are regarded as vulnerable citizens when they are less self-sufficient or when they are limited in their participation in society. A person is vulnerable when he or she is not able to live like everyone else due to a limitation. The extent to which a person is self-sufficient and can participate in society is usually measured by whether a person:

- can run his own household,
- can move around in and around the home,
- can get about locally using transport,
- can meet other people and as such maintain his social contacts.

In this context, vulnerability mainly concerns people with a limitation (physical, psychological or mental) and informal carers and volunteers who need support in order to be able to do their jobs.

In relation to young people, vulnerability may mean that the young person does not trust adults, has negative childhood experiences, has no stable home situation and is therefore unable to develop well socially (Heineke, Ploegmakers 2007). The relation between being vulnerable and being at risk is often like the 'chicken-and-egg' story: 'A person is vulnerable and therefore runs a risk of dropping out of school for instance; a person drops out of school, which makes him or her vulnerable.'

Social exclusion¹¹

There have been various studies into social exclusion in the Netherlands. The four most relevant studies will be discussed below.

Based on the scientific literature on social exclusion, the '*Social Exclusion in the Netherlands' study of 2004*' (Jehoel-Gijsbers 2004) distinguishes between aspects of social exclusion and risk factors that encourage social exclusion. The authors interpret social exclusion as a multidimensional concept, and they stress that risk factors may influence social exclusion, but that this does not define the concept of social exclusion. They distinguish the following four dimensions of social exclusion:

1. material deprivation; not so much low income as concrete material problems (such as debts);
2. insufficient access to social rights in the fields of education, housing, health care and safety;
3. insufficient social participation, lack of social support;
4. insufficient normative integration: insufficient observance of central norms and values (such as work ethic), violating statutory regulations (such as the abuse of social security) (Jehoel-Gijsbers 2004).

In the SCP study, health and having a job or benefits emerged as the main determinant factors of social exclusion. The Poverty Monitor 2007 (Vrooman et al. 2007) shows that in 2005, 1.4 million people (8.9% of the population) on low incomes lived below the income limit¹². People most affected by poverty are single-parent families, people with a non-western background and those on benefits (not a pension). The amount that an average household spends on a child would be 390 Euros per month in 2004. As such, the higher the income, the higher the expenditure.

About 185,000 children under the age of 18 (5.4% of the population) are from families whose income is below the incomelimit. Sometimes they will not have a hot meal, money for new clothes is not always available, no Internet and no social participation (Vrooman et al. 2007). The authors argue that there are hardly any studies into social exclusion and children, and that little reliable information is available on that subject. One of the few conclusions we can draw on the basis of the SCP report about social exclusion is that growing up in a dimension 1 household (material deprivation) may affect children. Another conclusion is that single-parent families and families with children under the age of 18 suffering from poor health and on low incomes score high not only on aspects of social exclusion on the entire household, but also on aspects that affect the children, as described above (Vrooman et al. 2007). It is therefore necessary to find out more about the long-term effects of growing up in a family struck by poverty.

In 2006, a study into social exclusion was conducted among Salvation Army clients (Voorham 2006). In this study, actual social exclusion is seen as a combination of social poverty (social integration in society), material poverty (the general prevailing spending pattern in society) and living conditions (apart from having a roof over your head, it also includes finding and keeping a place to live). The main findings of the study are:

1. The influence of childhood experiences and experiences with unacceptable and deviant behaviour influence the health experienced (psychological and physical health and addiction) and do not really influence actual social exclusion;
2. Health experienced seems to be an important signal of social exclusion (in accordance with the hypothesis);
3. The individual experience of life is determined both by actual social exclusion and by health experienced (Voorham 2006).

The publication "Social division and social cohesion" of 1999 studies the social inequality among young people. The report argues that social networks of young immigrants could be dysfunctional for social integration in Dutch society and that young immigrants mainly identify themselves with their own ethnic group (Veenman 1999). The reason for this is the one-sided ethnic composition of the networks and the lack of information on Dutch society. One of the findings was that the social-economic disadvantage of young immigrants can be seen primarily in 'high-concentration districts'; districts with more than 50% of immigrants in the big cities (Veenman 1999).

2b) Risk factors for youth

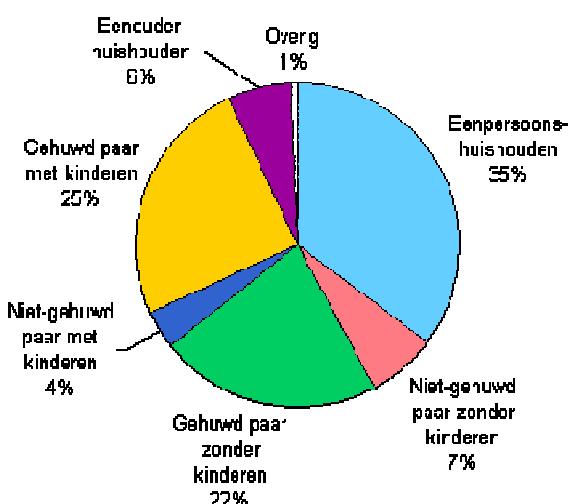
Risk hallmarks for social exclusion as listed in the SCP report 'Social exclusion' are: age, composition of the household, health, unemployment and income. Ethnicity may also be a hallmark.

Single-parent families

In 2007, the Netherlands had around 444,000 single-parent families. In five out of six cases, it concerns a single mother and in the other cases it concerns a single father. In 13% of the cases of single mothers, they are native Dutch mothers and in 30% of the cases they are mothers with a non-western background. Of the single mothers with a non-western background, 57% originate from Surinam, 47% from the Netherlands Antilles and 17% from Turkey and Morocco (Merens, Hermans 2009).

The number of divorces is likely to increase in the future, and with that the number of children growing up in single-parent families. Children from single-parent families seem to be twice as likely to drop out of school prematurely (Statistics Netherlands, 2001). Children growing up in a single-parent family are on average more likely to be socially excluded than children who grow up in a two-parent family situation. The table below expresses the composition of the household for 2007 in percentages.

Figure Household Classification the Netherlands, 1 January 2007



Eenouderhuishouden = Single-parent household

Overig = Other

Eenpersoonshuishouden = Single person household

Niet-gehuwd paar zonder kinderen = Couple, not married, no children

Gehuwd paar zonder kinderen = Couple, married, no children

Niet-gehuwd paar met kinderen = Couple, not married, with children

Gehuwd paar met kinderen = Couple, married, with children

(Source: (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009b)).

Access to the labour market

In 2006, 46,950 of 15 to 23-year-olds (3%) were unemployed jobseekers, 28,750 (2.4%) of whom were native Dutch people and 17,310 (4.7%) immigrants. In 2000, those figures were 64,890 (4.3%) for the total number of young people, 39,630 (3.4%) for native Dutch people and 25,260 (7.9%) for immigrants respectively. Not all unemployed young people were on benefits. In 2005, this figure was only 1.5% (while 3.8% were unemployed). For indigenous people those figures are 1.0 and 3.1, and for immigrants 2.9 and 6.2. The 2006 figures are not available (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a).

Education / basic qualifications

In 2007, 85% of young people (15 to 23-year-olds) with a basic qualification who no longer attended school were in paid employment for twelve hours per week or more. Out of those without basic qualifications, a much smaller percentage was in paid employment, i.e. 68%. In total, more than 50 thousand young people left school prematurely, i.e. without basic qualifications, in 2005/2006. This is 4% of the total of nearly 1.3 million young people in secondary education or senior secondary vocational education. Boys dropped out slightly more often than girls (5% and 3% respectively).

With almost 7 percent, the percentage of early school leavers among non-western immigrants was higher than among native Dutch people (3%) in 2005/2006. When looking at country of origin (Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba), the differences in school drop-out rates among non-western immigrants are small.

In general, the drop-out percentage in urban areas is higher than in rural areas (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap 2008). In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 6% of pupils dropped out in 2005/2006. The number of early school leavers has fallen: in the 2005/2006 academic year, the number of pupils that left school without basic qualifications was 2,800 lower than in 2004/2005. That is a drop of 0.5% (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2008).

Illiteracy

According to the International Adult Literacy Survey, about 250,000 Dutch people (1.6%) are completely illiterate and more than a million Dutch people (6.3%) are to some extent 'functionally illiterate' (Noë, Aukema).

Abuse / violence

A survey among professionals, conducted by the University of Leiden, demonstrates that in 2005, 107,200 children between the ages of 0 and 17 were victims of child abuse (physical, mental or sexual violence) (IJzerdoorn 2007). A survey held by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam among pupils between the ages of 12 and 16 leads to an estimate of 160,700 children who are or have been victims (Lamers-Winkelmann 2007). Each year, an estimated 40 to 80 children die as a result of child abuse. Out of all teenagers between the ages of 10 and 20, 8% were the victim of sexual violence. The studies did not differentiate according to ethnicity.

In 2006, during the third national measurement of domestic violence (Ferwerda 2006), a police figure-based in-depth study was carried out on a random test of 1,000 incidents during which children witnessed violence. This shows that in 57.8% of the domestic violence cases, it concerns a family situation with children up to 18 years old. These are mainly young children. In more than a quarter of the incidents investigated, children actually witnessed the violence. Again, the study did not differentiate according to ethnicity. As for violence against asylum seekers and refugees, it has emerged that minor female asylum seekers in particular are vulnerable to sexual violence.

In the box below, the professionals and managers who were interviewed list the risk factors for young homeless people.

Box 3: Interviewees on risk factors

Crisis coordinator and social worker at Kwadrant-Emaus: 'The young people we see have an underdeveloped skill set, which makes it hard for them to maintain a positive network for longer periods of time. Also, they often come from broken homes. There isn't enough help for these young people, there are waiting lists, they get stigmatised and can't find their way. In order to survive they sometimes use violence, also because they meet the wrong sort of people.'

'If their residence permit is not in order, it destroys them. Support equals trust and you can't build it up like that, because the stories they tell you can be used against them. There's hardly anything you can do about it.'

Project coordinator Kamers met Kansen The Hague: 'Here, 80% come from broken homes. These young people were never given a good basis or were set an example. Out on the streets they meet peers who are in the same situation. They often find it difficult to handle money, they have many debts. That's an easy thing to happen in this society. Some of the fines they were given have gone through the roof and it's impossible to make arrangements for that. They can't go to school either; it's difficult to find accommodation and they are behind with their health insurance premium payments.'

Box 3: Interviewees on risk factors

Group educator at youth custodial institution: 'The boys that come there often have a history with support and social workers. This place is their last chance and this placement is needed, because there's a risk you lose contact with this type of boys. Their history shows that the welfare services are no longer able to keep these boys in check. For years on end, they created their own laws and rules. In the past, they had to choose for themselves too often and had to take on responsibilities when they were very young. The boys should have been dealt with tougher at an early stage in order to prevent worse. The welfare services apparently were unable to take measures, even though they often had dozens of social workers around them: the young people just sailed right through it.'

'Young immigrants often have no father figure. They're raised by single mums, who often have little money. They're expected to take on the role of father at an extremely young age, as a result of which it is difficult for their mothers to control them. Consequently, they have to act like adults at a very young age. Relations in those families are often disturbed.'

Head of welfare services boarding house Maaszicht: 'Virtually all youngsters in Maaszicht face multiple problems. The basis they have been given from home is not very stable, they have trouble defending themselves, their educational records are poor, so they have little chance of finding a job, they're on low incomes, as a result of which there are certain things they can't take part in. Also, they often can't deal with money, they're addicted, use soft drugs, so they know many other drug users.'

Policy assistant municipality of Rotterdam Social Affairs and Employment: 'It appears to be more profitable for youngsters (18+) to live on benefits than go to school. If you go to school, you have to pay tuition fees and books, and often they have debts right from the start. So it's hard for them to make that choice, and I'm talking about young people that are more or less 'smart'.'

Ambulatory assistant T-Team Twente: 'There are so many factors that cause young people to run into trouble: debts because of the health insurance, mobile phone contracts and they buy things even though they don't have a job. Our youngsters don't get any stability at home, no security; they've been to welfare services before in their youth, lived in communes. Bureaucracy works against you; you have to fill in forms for everything, but they're already facing so many problems. Immigrants are confronted with cultural differences or experiences in their country of origin (war). Those without a proper network are at an increased risk. Most young people don't know what to do with their problems. So they start doing stupid things: drugs, wrong friends, buying things without having the money for it. They often continue until they hit rock bottom, and it starts to accumulate: homeless, debts, no stable network, nothing to do during the day, no job or education.'

Guardian region Arnhem of Nidos Foundation: 'Most AMAs (unaccompanied minor asylum seekers) are normal when it comes to skills and talent. We guide 'healthy young people'. I must add that these are children who've seen a lot in their lives, poverty or violence. It strikes me that they're extremely flexible and resilient. The throughput in care is often smooth for example. Sure, there are waiting lists, it's something we're also confronted with. But the youngsters themselves are sympathetic.'

'Culture adds something specific. If you've been in this profession for a while, you develop an insight into aspects of different backgrounds. We've noticed that young people from a violent culture, Arabic youngsters for instance, view violence differently. They're violent youngsters (often boys). Asian youngsters often don't say much. They're extremely sympathetic and kind, but it's difficult to gauge them. Susceptibility to drink and drugs abuse is also very different among cultures. Their faith, religion, is a highly determinant factor.'

'The differences between boys and girls among AMAs are bigger than between Dutch boys and girls. Reasons are traditional role patterns and religion, these are factors that enhance the differences. Our target group is not so much involved in criminal activities. Most AMAs don't drink, don't do dope and don't smoke. Of course, we don't see everything, but that's just a minority.'

'The life a child led in his or her country of origin does in fact to a high extent determine how well they will integrate in Dutch society. If it used to drift for large parts of its life, a child will find it harder to create a stable situation here.'

Box 3: Interviewees on risk factors

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief Salvation Army (Utrecht): 'One of the high-risk groups is immigrant youngsters who have traditional parents and who clash with a modern western outlook on life via their education. They sometimes argue with their families about pregnancy or sexuality and are subsequently disowned by the family. They often stay lonely and don't understand why their parents disowned them. In such cases they come from further afield, our crisis relief centre has a national role in that case. Young people with a Moroccan, Turkish, Iraqi or Iranian background are high-risk groups, as they were often confronted with violence and aggression from an early age.'

Housing coordinator at-risk youths, special youth housing (Rotterdam): 'We assume that the youngsters have a good chance of succeeding. For the youngster himself, success depends on whether there is a place, whether he has accommodation and what type of support he needs. We talk with the youngsters about what suits them best.'

Departmental coordinator crisis relief for young people Zandbergen (Utrecht): 'More than 80% has debts (varying from a hundred to tens of thousands of Euros). Not being able to handle money is one of the problems, they're focused on the immediate satisfaction of their needs and find it difficult to relate to society. One special group here is that of adopted children who encounter problems in puberty, which is often related to a bonding problem. Some of the youngsters we look after have been going to welfare services or care institutions from a very young age.'

Team leader Streetcornerwork Amsterdam: 'Although it's not scientifically substantiated, I've noticed that in the case of attachment problems, the development of their conscience can be low. Also, in practice we can see that Turkish and Moroccan girls live with their parents, but sometimes lead a completely different life outside the home, going to exciting parties dressed in sexy clothes, and changing back into their normal clothes outside the home, so that their parents won't find out. They're 'stuck between two cultures'. Many girls on the other hand are the victim of sexual violence or pestering behaviour by men within the family system.'

'We experience the consequences of waiting lists. Due to the long waiting times, we lose track of some young people. However, with the arrival of the field table for the youth (multidisciplinary casuistry meeting in Amsterdam) we hope to reduce waiting lists, as the lines between the organisations will be shorter. We won't know the exact effects until the near future.'

Project leader Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'A project at the JIT may fail when bureaucracy causes something to take too long. Some of the youngsters may drop out.'

2c) Who are socially excluded?

Please find below an overview of young people who, for different reasons, are (being) restricted in functioning independently and taking part in society.

Early school leavers

Drop-outs (priority early school leavers) not only lack a basic qualification, they also do not hold any diploma and are therefore the most vulnerable and problematic group of school leavers. During the past few years, about a quarter of newly reported early school leavers were drop-outs (Herweijer 2008). '*The lack of a basic qualification leads to a weak position in the labour market, which in its turn leads to a heightened risk of unemployment, crime and social exclusion*' (In 't Veld et al., 2006:5, quoted in the SCP report). The group of 38,000 long-term unemployed young people and the 124,000 at-risk youths plus the 60,000 new early school leavers each year, therefore form a high-risk group. The number of young people with debts rises. About 1 in 3 young people still living at home have an average debt of 750 Euros or are in the red (Vereniging van Openbare Bibliotheek). From the age of 18, young people are responsible for their own debts. The interviews with experts have demonstrated that most young people have debts relating to mobile phone contracts, health insurance and Internet credit schemes.

Another typical aspect for the group of young homeless people is the high debts; 35,000 Euros on average, but 100,000 Euros is not uncommon either (Budde, Vos 2008).

Young people who frequently consume alcohol

In the Netherlands, the alcohol and drugs problem among young people is an important issue.

Young people start drinking at a young age (from the age of 14) and when they drink, they drink too much. In 2007, 48% of 12-year-old girls consumed alcohol and 63% of 12-year-old boys. At age 15, 68% of boys consume alcohol. Many of those who drink on a regular basis, binge-drink; in a group, they drink 5 or more glasses of alcohol. In 2007, the number of heavy binge-drinkers was 35.6% (39.6% in 2003). For 12-year-olds, that was 8.4% in 2007, rising to 48.7% for 15-year-olds and 71.1% for 17 to 19-year-olds. In 2007, about 7,600 addicted youngsters under the age of 25 registered at an addiction clinic. Of the 12 to 19-year-olds, 8.1% actively used cannabis in 2007. For 12-year-olds, that was 0.6%, 11.6% for 15-year-olds and 20.7% for 17 to 19-year-olds. Of the 12 to 19-year-olds, 16.7% occasionally used cannabis in 2007.

Of the 12 to 19-year-olds, 3.8% used hard drugs in 2007, for 12-year-olds this figure is 1.9%, for 15-year-olds 4.9%, and for 17 to 19-year-olds 8.6% (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2009a).

Young people who are limited in their daily functioning

Out of the children and young people aged between 4 and 24, almost 2.5% are moderately or seriously physically impaired in their daily functioning. This concerns a total of about 90,000 persons: children and young people in individual households. Residents in institutions are not taken into account. About 1% of children and young people are mentally impaired. In the age group of 0 to 19-year-olds, it concerns 40,000 persons. Physical and mental impairments occur far less often than other impairments that children and young people suffer from, such as dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and psychosocial problems (Ie and Saaier, 2005). The publication 'Youths with impairments' shows 'that the total number of young people that are hindered in finding a job due to a long-term disorder and/or impairment, the so-called occupationally disabled youngsters, is much higher than the estimate based on just physical or mental impairments' (Kooiker 2006).

Young people who are confronted with honour-related violence

The number of girls under the age of 25 or the percentage of women who are or were confronted with honour-related violence is hard to trace. Exact figures about young victims are not available, as not every incident is reported to the police or welfare services. As a result, many cases never come to light. In the case of serious threats and violence, boys and girls sometimes seek refuge in (special) shelters. Only some of them report the incident. Part of this group is fleeing a forced marriage. We can only speculate on the backgrounds of these girls; most of them come from Turkey, Morocco, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan (Brouns et al. 2003). In 2005, the Advisory Committee on Aliens Affairs issued a publication on forced marriages (AVCZ 2005). The committee concludes that no quantitative data is available on forced marriages. The report does argue that the Advisory Committee on Aliens Affairs deems it necessary to develop an integral policy for prevention and assistance with a view to the gravity of this phenomenon.

Having exhausted all legal means also forms a great risk for social exclusion when the youngster decides to stay in the Netherlands without reason. None of the support agencies can officially do something for someone who has no proof of ID.

Often there are networks in the Netherlands of people from the same country of origin, which young people can join, which means they are suddenly no longer socially excluded as they are accepted by their own people. Certain forms of assistance and support are unofficially tolerated, and there are illegal forms of assistance and support.

Teenage mothers

At the start of 2008, there were 3,200 teenage mothers in the Netherlands. These are girls who become a mother under the age of 20. In the Netherlands, this number is falling. In 2007, 2,300 teenage girls gave birth to their first child. About half of them are 19 when they have their first child. Since 2001, the number of teenage girls that have their first baby has been falling by more than a quarter. The drop in the number of teenage mothers after 2001 applies to all ages. The majority of the drop since 2001 however occurs among non-western immigrant girls. The number of non-western immigrant teenage mothers has fallen sharply between 2001 and 2007, despite the steady increase in the number of non-western girls aged 15 to 20 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2008).

Please find below an overview of the comments from professionals and managers interviewed on the chances of social exclusion for the target group they work with.

Box 4: Interviewees on social exclusion

Head of welfare services Boarding house Maaszicht: 'There are different reasons for these young people to go off the rails: motivation, disappointments, addiction, temptation, short-term gains in their minds. It affects various domains: they are tempted into crime when they can't find a job because they don't have the right qualifications (vicious circle) or they smoke dope to eliminate their disappointments, as a result of which the day and night rhythm is disturbed. This can then lead to social exclusion: not being able to find or keep a job leads to a smaller social network and fewer financial resources to do things.'

Project coordinator of Kamers met Kansen, The Hague: 'In my opinion, various sections of the population run a risk of being socially excluded:

- Moroccan youngsters are often kicked out of the house by their father, who is a major influence. They've been arguing about loitering in the street, strict house rules. The youngster wants more freedom, but doesn't get it.
- Antilleans are sent to the Netherlands at the age of 17 or 18 in order to lead a better life, but there's no support for them here. The mother has returned to the Antilles or the youngster has been imprisoned because of drugs and has now been released.
- Former AMAs via COA or NIDOS turn 18, but are not yet ready to live on their own. That can be tricky now and then, because they don't speak the language.'

Project leader Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'Part of the cause lies with the social climate. It would be nice for the climate to be somewhat milder for people with a non-western background. At the JIT we notice that it influences the way in which youngsters perceive their treatment. Just take Mr Wilders (Dutch right-wing politician); thanks to him, youngsters feel they're being pointed at, that they're not welcome. It's very directive and doesn't exactly make them feel valued. The youngsters are being labelled and that's a disadvantage. People have to become conscious about the fact that someone is good at something, instead of focusing on the downsides. We need to realise that we need those youngsters badly.'

'Young people without a residence permit come to the JIT, but we are unable and not allowed to do anything for them. We report them to the Dutch Refugee Council. AMAs certainly also visit the JIT.'

Group educator at youth custodial institution: 'The IQ of young people ranges from 60 to 85. That means that they have limited cognitive skills, also characterised by low deliberative powers. About 80% come from broken homes. It's obvious that the youngsters are hampered by their own limitations, they're getting nowhere at school, they have no diplomas, are often on benefits or have debts.'

Box 4: Interviewees on social exclusion

'They're not set the right example, and you're almost 'weird' if you don't engage in making loads of money through drugs dealing or doing a heist. Young people with cognitive limitations look each other up, after all, they connect best with each other, and that doesn't always have a positive effect. Their parents aren't proud of their children's behaviour of course, but there's often no impetus.'

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief Salvation Army (Utrecht): *'What these young people all have in common is that the situation at home is not perfect. There's no stability in their own families. Stronger still, sometimes, in my opinion, the parents are worse than the youngsters. When I meet the parents, that's often when the penny drops; that's when I start understanding the youngster's behaviour better. Because it appears to be extremely difficult to teach them standards and values. These young people have been through a lot and were never set the right examples when they grew up. We are in actual fact doing the job their parents should have been doing.'*

Housing coordinator at-risk youths, Special youth housing: *'It's hard to say in what way social factors influence social exclusion. The group's too large. We assume risk factors such as not getting basic qualifications, alcohol and drugs abuse, psychiatric problems, young mothers and lover boys.'*

Assistant and coordinator of the information centre for pregnant girls and young mothers: *'In general, there aren't enough supervised housing projects for young mentally handicapped mothers. They miss out on both fronts. When they're pregnant, they don't qualify for many things. Society has hardened lately and so has the target group. They don't know how to adjust, but they do have to survive. They now dare speak up for themselves, but it's more like a survival strategy. Things weren't as tough in the old days. It was easy to arrange things with organisations, to request housing for a young mother on the basis of urgency. That's no longer possible, as a result of which they end up on the streets, they start drifting or end up in shelters. Sometimes they don't qualify for shelter, because it's only the housing that causes problems and the rest is working fine. Waiting times for a house are 6 to 7 years. Try and do that as an 18 or 19-year-old. They have to rely on the private housing market, where houses are expensive and poorly maintained. Also, society judges these young people as unwilling or street girls, as a result of which they develop a mentality, a survival strategy that works against them. We're creating our own young homeless people.'*

Team leader Streetcornerwork Amsterdam: *'We often meet youngsters who don't have any proof of ID. In that case, we pay it for them and we'll get the money back once they receive an income. If youngsters are unable to apply for an ID card, you've got a problem. We're also confronted with that and we often mediate for these young people, but it's not always successful. We have to be able to say 'no' and be quite strict. Illegal youngsters can come here for warmth, and to fulfil basic needs such as washing and eating. Ultimately, there's nothing we can do for them.'*

'Streetcornerwork wants to put youngsters with serious problems into care as soon as possible, in institutions that can cater for that need. It's not always successful and easy, also because a minority of youngsters are difficult to get into care and/or avoid care but are troubled. This concerns for instance young people with a minor mental impairment or a combination with psychiatric problems, or just psychiatric problems, and youngsters with personality disorders. These problems are worrying, because they're not always recognised straight away. With the arrival of the field table I really hope that these youngsters are given a path they can follow, because the institutions required for this cooperate with each other.'

2d) Public opinion and national media towards youth

Both the media and welfare services hardly ever focus on young homeless people. News articles on young homeless people in the national media often report on cuts in the AWBZ and abolishing benefits and housing benefits for young people under the age of 27. The purport in most news articles is the same, i.e. the fear that the number of shelters will fall as a result of cuts. And there are so few places already (Budde, Vos 2008). The youth in the Netherlands is often in the news in relation to alcohol and drugs abuse, safety in the street/crime, sexualisation and work.

3 Youth homelessness

This chapter discusses the topics outlined below. Paragraph 3a describes the various aspects of the definition of young homeless people in the Netherlands. Subsequently, paragraph 3b outlines the subgroups and profiles of young homeless people.

3a) Dutch definition of young homeless

Halfway through the eighties, it becomes apparent that the Netherlands are faced with a growing group of young homeless people (Susteren 1993). In the nineties, it is found that the majority of young homeless people are from lower social economic classes and that they are dealing with a multitude of problems in multiple aspects of life at the same time (Bijvoets 2006) (Heineke, Ploegmakers 2007). These often involve a combination of the following:

- Psychological: psychosocial, psychiatric or adjustment problems
- Income: debts, irresponsible spending pattern
- Alcohol/drugs: (excessive) drug abuse
- Society: in contact with the justice system due to criminal behaviour
- School: no basic qualification
- Work: unable to find work, living on benefits or no commitment to work (job hopping)
- Network: disturbed family relations and having the 'wrong friends'

The backgrounds in relation to the problems of young homeless people are discussed in greater detail in the next paragraph (3b).

The estimated number of young homeless people in the Netherlands is 6,000. This equals 0.12% of the total number of young people up to 25 years of age. In 2004, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport formulated the following government definition:

'Young homeless people are young people up to 25 years of age with multiple problems, without fixed abode or who reside in shelter accommodation.'

This is a generalised definition which allows for ample differences in interpretation. The consequences are multiple. Practice shows that centre municipalities apply different age limits in studies into young homeless people in their municipality. As a result, there is no uniform national overview of the scope of the young homeless population. Furthermore, the age limit of up to 25 does not correspond to the different age limits that are used in the legal frameworks young people are subject to (see paragraph 1c).

It is not easy to make a difference between at-risk youths and young homeless people, as the definition lacks the necessary specification. From a policy point of view, centre municipalities aim at different (sub)groups: some municipalities, for instance, count at-risk youths as young homeless people, whereas other municipalities do not. In addition, there are differences in interpretation in terms of the duration of homelessness. Some centre municipalities, for instance, only register young people as young homeless if they have been homeless for at least 3 months and/or when they have been residing in shelter accommodation for that period. Other municipalities do not apply this term of three months. These differences in interpretation of the definition do of course also have consequences for establishing the need for provisions and the range of assistance options open to young homeless people.

For homeless adults is a distinction made between imminent homelessness, actual homelessness (literally on the street, sleeping in porches, small tents in the woods etc.) and residential homelessness (24-hour facilities). This distinction does not work for young homeless people.

Actual homelessness as in out on the street hardly exists, as young homeless people mostly reside with friends/family, squat etc., or stay in night and residential shelters. Hence the term 'young homeless people'; they often go from one home to the other, wherever they can find a bed. There often is a home address, but due to personal circumstances young people opt not to reside there (Spectrum Gelderland 2008).

The definition does not contain a lower age limit, which is a positive thing, as there are signals that the average age of young homeless people is falling (Court of Audit 2008). Yet in their Urban Compass, some centre municipalities limit themselves to young homeless people of 18 and up.

In 2009, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport instructed a research agency to formulate a uniform definition that is supported by the different parties in the field. The objective of this definition is that all important parties commit to the same definition, so that everyone bears and must accept their responsibility in the chain of young homeless people. The new definition must also pay attention to prevention, circumstances and care of young people that run the risk of becoming homeless. Unfortunately, at the time this report is published the proposal of the research agency is not yet complete.

The report 'Shelter for Young Homeless People 2008' of the Court of Audit (Anonymous2008) lists an overview of the current state of affairs in the Netherlands with regard to policy, registration and assistance to young homeless people. The report is accompanied by a response from the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport and the Minister for Youth and Families to the recommendations of the Court of Audit. The most relevant conclusions are outlined below:

- The Court of Audit has assessed the Urban Compasses of centre municipalities in terms of effectiveness on tackling the problem of young homeless people. They find that centre municipalities still talk too much in terms of intentions without making enough concrete proposals;
- Centre municipalities do not sufficiently include young homeless people under the age of 18 in their problem analysis. On the recommendation of the Court of Audit, the State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport will urge centre municipalities to do just that;
- Centre municipalities apply the definition of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport differently, thus impeding proper registration. It is also difficult to make statements on the level of quality and range of assistance options available to young homeless people in a region;
- A coherent approach is lacking due to the transition to adulthood around the age of eighteen. The responsibility of youth care (province) transfers to youth healthcare and the Social Support Act (municipality). The State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport will urge municipal and provincial authorities to enter into sound arrangements with each other;
- Creating provisions alone is not enough: investments in the broad chain of prevention, monitoring, shelter, guidance and aftercare are needed;
- Municipal and provincial authorities must hold the institutions financed by them responsible for providing accurate registration records (Anonymous2008).

3b) Amount, numbers and profile

It is not possible to produce a uniform profile of young homeless people, as research uses various criteria in order to come to profiles. This paragraph discusses the main *regional* and *national* studies in which subgroups and profiles have been prepared.

Findings from regional studies

In (regional) studies, young people are often categorised according to the nature and severity of the problems and the fact the problems often manifest themselves in combinations. Examples include: the municipality of Rotterdam, where Maaskant published 'Bandits, runaways, dissidents and outcast' (Maaskant 2005) and the municipality of The Hague, where in 2006 Bijvoets examined to what extent the profiles of Rotterdam apply to The Hague (Bijvoets 2006). The study by Bijvoets showed that only the profile of young criminals (bandits) from the study by Maaskant in The Hague was reproduced.

Groen and Van der Veer (Hekelaar 2008) distinguish three categories of young homeless people: young mentally impaired people (young LVG people), young people with a psychiatric syndrome (young GGZ people) and the group of pregnant girls and teenage mums. These groups fall under young people who are 'difficult to place and guide' (see Korf, 2004).

In the study by Ploegmakers, young people are classified according to phases of homelessness, such as at-risk youths, new young homeless people, young homeless people in the care system and young people in the recovery phase (Heineke, Ploegmakers 2007).

On the basis of a literature study, Snoek *et al* (2008) concluded that both research and policy focus on the care issues of clients, rather than their problems and need for support. In 2006, in the municipality of Amsterdam, a study¹³ was conducted among young homeless immigrants (Muskens 2006). This study will be discussed in more detail, in view of the findings with regard to (illegal) young immigrants. This study distinguishes two categories:

1. Young legal immigrants: children of homeless immigrants, victims of sexual exploitations and violence, teenage mums, pregnant girls and babies, children that run away from home, 18+ youngsters that need to leave the home as the benefits of other household members are compromised, young people loitering in the streets, slightly mentally impaired youngsters and young Antillean newcomers.
2. Young illegal immigrants: children of asylum seekers who exhausted their appeals, AMVs, children of illegal family reunification, children of less than five years' marriage (risk of loss of status), young people for whom no asylum procedure has been applied for, children/young people that have been recruited for 'work', e.g. in prostitution.

According to the study by Muskens, RISBO research agency has studied the nature and scope of illegal migrants in Amsterdam and counted 11,349 persons in the period 1997 – 2003, on the basis of police records. Of these people, more than 80% is male and more than 50% is younger than 30. Most illegal migrants come from North Africa (20%), other regions in Africa (15%) and Eastern Europe (25%) (Muskens, 2006:17). The study discusses the chain of young homeless people in Amsterdam in more detail as well as the structure according to population in shelter organisations and support agencies. When shelter organisations are dealing with homeless illegal immigrants, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), NIDOS, Dutch Refugee Council, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), detention of aliens and the national interest group for asylum seekers (SAMAH) become involved. The Don Bosco House in Amsterdam offers both shelter and guidance for African economic refugees, among others. The study by Muskens distinguishes between young legal homeless people (who qualify for care) and young illegal homeless people (who are excluded from care): '*Illegal residents are not helped officially in the Netherlands and in its cities such as Amsterdam, however many there are, however great their misery might be and however obviously the illegal residence was created by Dutch legislation, policy and practice*' (Muskens 2006). The Amsterdam chain does not work for young illegal immigrants. The author even concludes that assistance to AMVs can only mean something if there is a prospect of obtaining legal papers.

According to the author, young homeless people without multiple problems fall outside the chain, as the situation is not serious enough in terms of evidence and therefore provisions and guidance are lacking (Muskens 2006).

Findings from national studies

Some national studies provide further insight into the general features of the target group of young homeless people. In 2003, the Trimbos Institute published 'Assistance to Young homeless people' (Planije, Land & Wolf 2003). The following can be concluded from the report:

- two-thirds of the population of young homeless people in the Netherlands are male;
- a quarter is slightly mentally impaired;
- a little less than half is of foreign origin.

The largest group of young homeless people concerns the group of 16 to 20-year-olds.

Based on a study by Planije, the document 'Young homeless people, Policy and Practice' states that alcohol and drug abuse plays a role among many young people, that a third is suffering from psychological problems, many young people received care in the past, few young people have completed their education and that 40% is frequently in trouble with the police and the judicial system (Spectrum Gelderland 2008).

Another study by Korf in 2004 shows that groups that are hardly reached are young homeless people suffering from psychological problems and drugs problems, young people that hang around in Amsterdam all day and sleep in Almere, do not make a nuisance of themselves, girls in prostitution and young homeless adults, as they no longer appeal to the Youth Care Agency (in practice, since they turned 17) (Korf, Ginkel & Wouters 2004). The percentage of young homeless people of foreign origin differs per study; ranging from 35% (Planije, Land & Wolf 2003), 45% (Jansen, Mensink & Wolf 2007) to 53% (Maaskant 2005). In 2007, Heineke concludes that ethnicity is a feature that is difficult to define and measure.

The number of pregnant girls is unknown. It is known that it often involves girls of low IQ, with little or 'incorrect' knowledge of contraceptives and sexuality, insufficient support from family or friends during the pregnancy, with an unclear residency status and a non-western background (Brussaard 2006). These same features apply to young homeless mothers. In their case, the relation with the biological father is often instable.

The group that requires specific attention first involves young people who are slightly mentally impaired (an IQ ranging from 50 to 84). This impairment is often difficult to recognise as a result of which these young people are quickly overwhelmed. Furthermore, these young people often have little grasp of reality and thus can easily get into trouble. As stated before, teenage mothers are also a group that requires attention, particularly when the health situation is compromised due to the homeless situation mother and child are in.

A third group that requires attention are young people that are in danger of ending up in criminal circles or who have spent some time in a youth custodial institute and who have been released. The means and self-confidence of these young people are often fragile, making it difficult to survive outside the walls of the clinic. The danger of ending up in the 'wrong' network of old remains.

Although unaccompanied minor aliens (AMVs) who have exhausted their appeals do not fall within the scope of the definition for young homeless people, within the framework of the study 'Combating Youth Homelessness' it is an important group to mention here. The Ministry of Justice has instructed a literature study to be conducted into illegality in the Netherlands.

AMVs are only mentioned in relation to exploitation (illegal adoptions) and education. This will be followed up by a field study into the living status of illegal, former AMVs. This group

of youngsters no longer receives living allowance, which constitutes an additional risk. It is expected that the results of this study are certainly relevant to 'Combating Youth Homelessness'.

A study conducted in 1998 into the nature and scope of prostitution among underage girls shows that the number of 'missing' AMVs ending up in prostitution is unknown. There are a number of cases known of girls with AMV status who are of a Nigerian or Liberian background. Of the 315 underage prostitutes who had been contacted, 63% ended up in the asylum procedure as an AMV, either before or after having worked in prostitution. Research shows that the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) does not always deem victimisation of human trafficking reason to stay in the Netherlands, if assistance is available in the country of origin (Venicz, Vanwesenbeeck 1998).

During interviews, we asked professionals and managers (who have been working with young people for a number of years) whether they believe that the profile of young homeless people has changed. The box below details their experiences in practice.

Box 5: Interviewees about the profile of young homeless people through the years

Departmental coordinator crisis relief for young people Zandbergen (Utrecht): 'I can see a change compared to 5-10 years ago in our crisis shelter. The group has become younger, there're fewer refugees. The use of alcohol used to be proportionally higher, but now the problems mainly involve the use of cannabis or the problems that stem from that.'

Housing coordinator at-risk youths, Special Accommodation for Young People (Rotterdam): 'I can see an increase in the number of young people with a mental disability, particularly the group with a psychological impairment, young psychosocially traumatised or psychiatrically impaired young people. This group is large, but it remains to be seen whether this group is really growing. It could also be the case that we now focus on them more or that we can find them sooner thanks to improved cooperation. Another cause could be that the closure of a number of mental health care institutes leads to an increase from this group. Another factor can be immigration from a country where their conditions were poor and they have developed traumas due to war or violence.'

Crisis coordinator and social worker at Kwadrant-Emaus: 'Around 50% with us is foreign; nothing much has changed in that respect. Most young foreign people are of Surinamese, Antillean or Moroccan origin. Their problems are similar to those of the young Dutch native people, but you need to take into account cultural differences when providing support. There used to be more problems with drugs, aggression and oppositional, obstinate behavioural disturbances, whereas now psychiatric problems, playing truant, sexually inappropriate behaviour and lover boy type of problems are more dominant. We used to deal with tough youngsters more, now they are the weaker types, of lower intellect. Young people come from secured institutions, they were in trouble with the judicial system at an early age.'

Guardian region Arnhem of Nidos Foundation: 'Children are registered here from a variety of backgrounds: Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (AMAs), children from Eastern Europe who would like to earn something here, drug mule children, 'child families' (brothers and sisters together), teenage mums, children who have been given a family supervision order (OTS) and children who have been detained for the purpose of deportation. A highly diverse group.'

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief for young people Salvation Army (Utrecht): 'Our team finds that the severity of the problems has increased. We do believe that the profile changes, but the reason is unclear. We regularly see young boys (16) and also more girls, nearly 40% now. 'Immigrant problems' are abundant, among Iranian and Iraqi youngsters or Indian and Surinam youth, for example. We used to see fewer young Indian people in particular.'

Box 5: Interviewees about the profile of young homeless people through the years

Team leader Streetcornerwork Amsterdam: 'It seems as if young people have become harder and more desperate, there's a change there I believe. Yet on the other hand, society has changed also.'

4 Services for the young homeless in relation to needs and service methodologies

During the interviews with professionals and managers, we asked about their method of working with young people and what they believe is important. An overview of their experiences is listed below.

Box 6: Interviewees about the work methods and approach of professionals

Project leader Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'Services or other institutions are often still too normative in their approach. As a result, you lose this target group. The YIT approach, on the other hand, is not normative; hence we are a vital link in the chain. The youth care threshold is often too high and associated with the Child Care and Protection Board. As if youth care is something contagious, as a result of which it has a less favourable image among this target group.'

Departmental coordinator crisis relief for young people Zandbergen (Utrecht): 'Our basic principles must be as follows:

- People are allowed to relapse. It's part of making progress, they can be who they are;
- As a professional, don't allow yourself to be frustrated when things don't work out with the young person the way you want it. It's often 3 steps forward and 2 steps back;
- Young people experiencing homeliness (sharing meals, routine and structure).

The team is diverse in set-up with various backgrounds, many of whom foreign, with first-hand experience of their own, so that youngsters can see live examples.'

Head of welfare services boarding house Maaszicht: 'Factors of success in guidance within Maastricht are safety, warmth, feeling at home, low threshold and trust. For example, an informal weekly drinks gathering for the young people is held under the supervision of a group leader. Furthermore, the no-nonsense approach works, directive, confronting, getting to the bottom of it. The lower the risk factor, the better it works. Young people are also rewarded, not financially, but in the form of appreciation, crisps and lemonade. Sanctions must always be supported by reasons.'

Housing coordinator at-risk youths, Special Accommodation for Young People (Rotterdam): 'Our motto is: do it all or don't do it at all. You need to do something in all parts of life. If you don't do that, you get a waterbed effect. If you concentrate on a single habitat, the problem is shifted to another.'

Guardian region Arnhem of Nidos Foundation: 'We work on the basis of the story of the child or young person themselves. However, if I'm under the impression that someone is older than he or she claims to be, I show that I believe him or her, but do address this person as an adult. Our approach is that we ask children open questions, really invite them to open up. If organisations are not geared properly to our target audience (which happens frequently) you, as a guardian, are frequently engaged in providing explanations and uniting two different worlds. As such, you are fulfilling an intermediary role. I think we must take young people a bit more seriously and work on the basis of the information a person provides.'

Box 6: Interviewees about the work methods and approach of professionals

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief for young people Salvation Army (Utrecht): 'The first thing I work on with a new young person is building up a bond of trust, also from the perspective of my own personal safety. Building up trust is the first and foremost factor of success. Once you have won that trust, the rest follows automatically. But you don't always get the time to do that. You act as a surrogate parent. Sometimes you succeed in having the group say what you want to hear. If it is the group that says the right words, the effect is stronger.'

Team leader Streetcornerwork Amsterdam: 'I believe that, through the years, we ourselves have become too much of care providers, whereas 'simply being there' (presentation approach) has become second. Our key principle is that through your presence on the street, you contact your target group and refer them. As a professional, you need to be present and entirely free of prejudices. I also believe that we need to remain vigilant not to become 'enforcers' in the street.'

Assistant at the information centre for pregnant girls and young mothers: 'Often care providers change things as a result of which the girls need to tell their story all over again. Consequently, they drop out. If, for instance, they are placed in a guided accommodation project, I give them a call to see how they are and hear that the support does not materialise, that things aren't arranged. That's very frustrating.'

A frequently heard complaint in the Netherlands is that assistance and professional services are not properly geared and structured to help young (homeless) people. There are too many people behind the desk and the range of assistance options available does not link up with the needs of young people (Winter, Noom 2001). In the article 'Someone that simply treats you as a human being....' the authors quoted above conclude that stimulating independence and personal responsibility are the main objectives of care assistance, but that the opinions of young persons themselves hardly form a part. On the one hand, young people want more personal space, no patronising and, on the other, they need more support with that personal responsibility, want to receive better guidance. Another conclusion is that the relation between care provider and young person must be dialogue-directed (Winter, Noom 2001).

In 2004, the Shelter Federation concluded that the capacity problem, among other things, is acute. It is important that the municipalities understand the nature and scope of the problems in order to come to differentiated offer of provisions and to draw from the right financing sources. The possibilities to move into independent living form a bottleneck for young people, as indeed for homeless adults. The *Chain cooperation guide* (2005) states a proposal for a chain approach.

The chain is built up of identification/prevention, circumstances, care and aftercare linked to examples of applied methods and interventions (Heineke, Veen & Kornalijnslijper 2005). As stated previously in this report, the four large municipalities work in accordance with the Plan of Action for the Provision of Emergency Accommodation, while the centre municipalities have set up an Urban Compass. The priority in this approach is embedded in stimulating the influx and efflux of homeless adults in the provision of emergency accommodation. Lessons can be drawn from the experiences in the approach towards homeless adults in order to improve the chain infrastructure for young homeless people.

The box below outlines a practical example of the municipality of Rotterdam which is already working according to the adult example.

Example of the municipality of Rotterdam

Central Reception of Young People (COJ) is a joint venture between the welfare services and the municipality. Since all participating institutions work closely together, they prevent that young people miss out altogether. In brief, the work method of COJ, which is located in Jongerenloket, is as follows:

- young people from the target group can register or be registered here
- registration is followed by both the intake and the first screening
- this process discusses all habitats (so not accommodation alone)
- after that, there are two options:
 - the young person is homeless -> to be placed in curative programme immediately (care and sheltered housing supervision)
 - the young person is at risk of becoming homeless -> to be placed in preventive programme immediately (daytime expenditure and debt reconciliation aid)

The objective of both programmes: independence and self-reliance.

The Programme Assignment Commission Young People (TTJC) discusses the programme plan (maximum of 2 A4 sheets) and grants authorisation if found to be in order. If a young person from the target group reports to one of the participating institutions of COJ, he/she is immediately registered in the central registration and coordination system for young homeless people, a web-based computer system developed especially for COJ. Through this computer system, all participating institutions can instantly see:

- Whether a young person is known
- Which institution guides him/her
- Who his/her contact person is there
- Whether shelter for that young person with his/her problems is available

And if so, where and under which conditions (contra-indications).

From: interview with the coordinator of Jongerenloket in Rotterdam

Monitoring and prevention

The prevention of homelessness among young people has received a lot of attention during the past few years by, for instance, the prevention of dropping out of school, debts and house evictions. The organisation of prevention primarily benefits from strong control and binding agreements, aimed at for instance low-threshold support and agreements between the municipality and housing associations in the event of rent arrears. However, monitoring and prevention goes beyond professionals and the municipality. Family, friends and neighbours also play a major role in this. If people are worried, they can contact various information lines (Regional Reporting and Coordination function early school leavers, domestic violence, multi-problem families, dirty households) and local neighbourhood and monitoring networks where social workers, the police and schools work together in the neighbourhood. In the case of at-risk children and youngsters, it is important for professionals from different sectors to be able to monitor and report facts (in ICT systems or to information lines).

Methods and interventions

Below are two examples of popular methods and interventions for the prevention of homelessness among young people.

A first example is the reference index At-risk Youths (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin 2007b). This is a national electronic monitoring system that assembles risk reports from social workers, both within the municipalities and across the municipal borders. Social workers can also use it to obtain information on colleagues involved with the youngsters. A second example is the Risk Monitor tool (Schelling et al.). This has been developed to prevent young people turning into young homeless people. The Youth Care Agency applies this monitor tool among youngsters aged 17, and again when they reach the age of 18. The monitor was set up by JSO in collaboration with the Haaglanden Youth Care Agency.

Box 7: Interviewees on preventing homelessness among young people

Sheltered housing supervisor crisis relief for young people (Utrecht): 'The Salvation Army has made arrangements with the housing association, as a result of which homes are available to young people on a regular basis. During the first year, the house will be in the name of the Salvation Army, and in the second year it will be in the name of the youngster. The support is finalised during the third year. This promotes the throughput of assistance and youngsters are able to retain their social networks.'

Team leader Streetcornerwork Amsterdam: 'I think there should be something for Moroccan youngsters and Antillean boys, as they don't fit in the Dutch social services system. They've got conflicts at home, they don't want to stand out, but they do want to be independent. Some of them sleep in cars or with friends, but if there was something developed particularly for them, we can make sure nothing happens to them.'

Project leader of Youth Intervention Team The Hague: 'Classes in schools should be smaller, making it possible to give a pupil more personal attention. It's important to pay more attention to what young people are interested in, in terms of work for instance. Often they select a job for practical reasons, not because it takes their interest. School drop-out rates could be reduced if young people are supported in practical matters such as student finance.'

Coordinator of the information centre for pregnant girls and young mothers: 'You have to prevent them from drifting by giving them something suitable, the 'reversible house': a house with one year of support. If all goes well, it is reversed into your name. That's one of the things that can prevent them from drifting. There's a lot to be gained from prevention. We've got to prevent them from going into care, because then they will be part of a group process, where a lot of things are done for you, and it's full of girls with all sorts of problems. It's not easy. It's better to let girls who are able to do so, try for themselves, first with intensive but later with less intensive ambulatory assistance. Giving all young mothers a house on the basis of urgency doesn't work, but as things stand right now, there aren't many options.'

Guardian region Arnhem of Nidos Foundation: 'At the Nidos we notice that unaccompanied minor aliens from a Dutch foster family find it easier to move on to higher vocational education. But how things work out for young people still depends on the basic qualification. There is illiteracy, so in that case it's difficult to move on to an education or job. The youngsters receive language tuition and often focus on a vocational education, provided their future perspective is to 'stay here'. If not, we concentrate on the best way of returning to the country of origin.'

Guidance

Guidance includes the proactive approaching ou to hard-to-reach groups and helping people find the right type of support. Guidance covers the entire spectrum from providing information and advice to accompanying young people to the social services, crisis relief or talks at home. Orientation on the social network of young people (analysing and finding important contact persons) is vital in that respect. Examples include street corner work, outreach professionals, Care and Advice Teams (ZATs), Jongerenloket and guidance from youth teams.

During the past years, we have seen a development in Internet assistance. Chatting with a social worker is low-threshold and young people tend to find it easier to discuss their problems. In addition, there are many Internet forums where young people can talk to each other or share experiences. Multi-problem situations among young people require a strong network of professionals, aimed at 'involvement', such as Youth Safety Net (OGGZ), or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) for serious psychiatric and/or addiction issues, aimed at guidance and treatment.

Methods and interventions

Below are two examples of popular methods and interventions in the field of guiding young homeless people to assistance and services.

A first example is the Care and Advice Teams (ZATs). These are professionals who, in cooperation with schools, support children and young people and their parents (social services, youth healthcare or youth care, the school attendance officer and the police) in trying to solve the problems of these children and young people. Care and Advice Teams react to signals and arrange the right type of assistance when a teacher is unable to do so. The case history of the child or youngster is discussed in the Care and Advice Teams.

A second example is the Homeless' teams (T teams). In the early nineties, these teams were set up in a large number of cities to make it possible for young homeless people to find a place in society through short-term, but extremely intensive, ambulatory assistance. Social workers work with the youngsters during an intensive process of about ten weeks. Every youngster will be assigned one social worker. The wishes of the youngsters are in principle guiding, but they are put into a realistic perspective. All teams have received intensive training on how to apply the so-called Induction Method. Following a two-year period, this method is implemented as regular service. The teams focus on young homeless people aged up to 25 now (Gijtenbeek 1996).

Homeless Services

In Homeless Services, a distinction is made between facilities for people who are actually homeless (walk-in, day and night shelters, crisis centres) and the residential homeless (women's shelter, 24-hour provisions, social guest houses). There are also these types of facilities for young homeless people, although not always available in all central municipalities. Good trajectory-based guidance during shelter (by professionals working in shelters or by T-teams and youth intervention teams) is essential to help people move on and move out. A stock-taking of assistance provided to young homeless people in 2003 showed 67 facilities with a combined total of 787 beds. Most of these facilities concern residential shelter (Planije, Land & Wolf 2003).

Unfortunately, not all shelters keep records of young homeless people, homeless and women's shelters. The data that do exist are not always reliable. Because of the various differences in measuring techniques, it is not always possible to compare the data.

Nevertheless, the 2006 records of homeless and women's shelters show the following: An estimated total of some 67,500 clients use this type of shelter. Homeless shelters have substantially more clients, around five times as many as women's shelters. Among clients in women's shelters, 36 percent are children (between the ages of 0 and 16); among homeless shelter clients 6 percent are children. This concerns approximately 4,500 children in women's shelters and approximately 3,200 children in homeless shelters. Almost all children are accompanied in the shelters by one or two parents. In women's shelters, 4 percent of children show up on their own; in homeless shelters, the figure is 18 percent. (Ministry Health, Welfare and Sport, 2008: 16-18). Some children were admitted to the crisis centres of homeless shelters. At present, Radboud University Nijmegen is researching the situation of children in shelters.

For the time being, with regard to existing data about youth in shelters, we will have to use older data.

In this regard, for homeless shelter, we can only use records from the Salvation Army. There is a rule of thumb in social shelters that the Salvation Army provides approximately half of all shelter facilities. Some 4,500 clients visit day shelters, of whom 9 percent are between the ages of 16 and 23 years. Around 3,300 clients visit night shelters, of whom 10 percent are between the ages of 16 and 23 (Planije, Wolf 2004). For the entire homeless shelter, this would represent close to 1,500 young people between the ages of 16 and 23. There is an urgent need for up-to-date, reliable registration figures. The Trimbos Institute will wind up its 2009 social shelter monitor in the near future.

Shelter for unaccompanied minor aliens (AMVs) consists of the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) (children groups, small housing units, campus and protected shelter to reduce the risk of disappearance) and shelter by the NIDOS (minor asylum seekers - shelter and living in host families). Of course, there are also AMVs who drift about (called 'Zamas' – homeless, unaccompanied minor asylum seekers). SAMAH (Unaccompanied Minor Asylum Seekers, Humanitas Foundation) focuses attention on this group: 'Zamas have to drift about in a society with which they are not familiar. They are therefore not in a position to find the channels that offer assistance. For many, the lack of adequate crisis centres is a major problem in the field'.

Methods and interventions

Below is a discussion of two methods that are often employed in shelters for young homeless people.

In the first instance, the eight-phase model. This is a frequently used method for working systematically in social shelters. The method describes the eight different phases in the social assistance process – from reporting in to moving out. It helps social workers to elaborate eight practical areas systematically with clients. These practical areas are housing, finances, social and psychological functioning, purpose, physical and practical functioning and daily activities. The NIZW (Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare -now MOVISIE) introduced the method in 2004. In 2002 and 2003, prior to the introduction, an extensive practical survey was undertaken at six social shelter organisations. Today, the eight-phase model is the most widely used method in social shelter, according to a survey ('What Works'?¹⁴) among shelter organisations carried out by MOVISIE.

The hold-on intervention method (Altena, Brilleslijper-Kater & Luijtelaar 2009) was developed by UMC St. Radboud in cooperation with several facilities for young homeless people.

The aim of the hold-on method is to increase the self-reliance, independence and quality of life of young homeless people. Various activities were introduced in the development of the intervention, including group interviews with young people, interviews with workers, an international literature study into interventions that had proved effective with young homeless people and working groups with young people and workers to discover the active ingredients in methodic treatment, along with the organisational conditions necessary (Academic Workplace, Shelter & Public Mental Health Care (OGGZ) Nijmegen).

Aftercare

Aftercare and recovery include assisted housing projects, ambulatory housing counselling, best-mate projects and projects geared towards activation, participation and re-integration. Aftercare contributes to good cooperation between professionals and young people with the transition to independent housing situations. In an effort to measure objectively the extent to which recovery is reached, the four largest Dutch cities and central municipalities adopted the 'stable mix' criterion. This refers to 'the number of homeless people at the end of a trajectory who, wherever possible, are provided with stable housing, regular incomes, care, daily activities or work'.

This stable mix criterion was originally developed for adult homeless people in the framework of the Social Shelter Action Plan, but is sometimes also applied to young homeless people (Heineke, Bosker & Van Deth 2007).

Methods and interventions

The projects below focus on recovery after a period of homelessness, to foster self-reliance and participation in society through school or work.

Take Off – small-scale housing facilities for young people (Anonymous). The Take Off project is part of the 'Give Shelter a Chance' project (a joint activity of the Shelter Federation and the Aedes housing associations). 'Give Shelter a Chance' (Federatie Opvang, Aedes 2009) endeavours to prevent evictions, offering a new future, besides housing, of learning, working and societal participation. Take Off is an initiative of Aedes, in cooperation with the Netherlands Foundation for Young Homeless People (SZN) and the Federation Shelter. The aim is that housing associations should not only provide suitable housing but also workexperience jobs in their own organisations or with business relations, possibly combined with a schooling trajectory. Take Off has been implemented at ten locations.

Kamers met Kansen projects (Kamers met kansen 2009) aim to help young people become self-reliant within eighteen months, with educational qualifications or a job. The pillars of Rooms with Opportunities are:

1. Housing: young people with different backgrounds live with their peers, making joint use of the facilities offered. Safety and affordability are essential;
2. Learning: Rooms with Opportunities stimulates young people to engage in the most suitable study programme;
3. Working: many residents have part-time jobs, apprenticeships or do volunteer work. Rooms with Opportunities helps young people to get in contact with various employers and jobs. The coach can also advise employers about the best applicants;
4. Coaching: learning to cook for your housemates, doing the shopping, making allowances for others, establishing a good daily routine. The young people learn the most basic elements of daily life by living with others under the same roof.

In 2005, the Volksbond set up the 'For and By' project to develop daily routines. It started with youth consultations. Young people interviewed young homeless people to discover their need for useful daily routines (peer to peer). The project is based on the so-called participation audit, whereby young people 'test' what is being offered to arrive at a work-learning trajectory set up for and by young homeless people.

The number of best-mate projects, related to buddy projects, (Leads on Demand) is increasing in the Netherlands. For various groups, there are initiatives that couple volunteers with young people with disabilities, young homeless people, unaccompanied minor aliens (AMVs) or teenage mothers. For AMVs, there is a best-mate project, 'A Mate for You', which stems from social work in Nijmegen and SAMAH, which is geared towards mediation between volunteers and AMVs by means of host parent and best-mate projects. This entails assisting with doing the shopping, acting as a host family, playing sports with AMVs, providing furniture or attending parents' evenings (SAMAH Working Plan, 2004). The 'Think Peer!' project of the national pressure group for asylum seekers (SAMAH) is a joint activity with the National Youth Council and the educational organisation Echo. The project provides a mentor team at SAMAH. The aim is to link 100 AMVs to 100 mentors.

Departure training (Spanjaard 2005, Spanjaard, Bijl & Veldt 2000) is a method developed by the former NIZW in cooperation with the Paedologic Institute. The method has been practised since 1994. It is based on the competence model, teaching theory and the social networking approach.

Departure training consists of intensive individual training for ten weeks, intended for young people 15 years of age or older. The emphasis is on increasing young people's skills and on building a support network.

To offer proper councils to unaccompanied minor aliens (AMVs) who are being repatriated to their countries of origin, a special methodology was developed for educating these young people. The AMVs go through a customised counselling trajectory with various practical instruments. The purpose of this methodology is to offer better prospects on repatriation. The education is geared towards starting small businesses in their own countries and, in this way, building a future.

During interviews with professionals and managers, we inquired into the effect of social support during the counselling and shelter of young people. Below is an overview of the views expressed.

Box 8: Interviewees about social support

Guardian, Arnhem region, the Nidos Foundation: 'The family is often a huge source of support for the child. As guardians, we also appreciate this. It ensures that the child stays in touch with its own culture. Compatriots are also very important. Theirs is a small world. Most people know each other. There is a network in the Netherlands of every culture. They always know how to find theirs. On the one hand, that is good; on the other, it could also push them in the wrong direction. When young people are drawn totally into their own networks, as an outsider or counsellor it is difficult to know what is going on – if they are involved in criminal activities, for example. Because their network provides such solid support, if they are in the country illegally, they mostly do not have their own place to stay. The stay with family or friends and many work illegally.'

You notice that teen-age mothers are more apt to hang on to a certain network because they seek contact with other young mothers.'

Group Educator, Youth Custodial Institution: 'Although the young people have weekly contact with their parents, I think there is still too little parental contact. Parents can provide support during compulsory admission, but the distance between young people and their parents is often too great. That makes their role less relevant for the success or failure of the trajectory. As group educator, I have little control over the parents. Some young people have no or very bad home situations. That means, when they go on leave, they cannot go home, although they have earned the right to do so. Ideally, we should use host parenting so that the young people would end up in a stable family situation. But there are hardly any host families. One wonders if more will ever become available. You would like to see these kinds of young people spending their leaves with families that would benefit their treatment. The gap between home and what you are trying to do here with young people is too large. Because what the young people learn while they're here is vulnerable, more home control is needed to make the transition from behind these walls to society easier. For these young boys, it is difficult to withstand the temptation of their old (criminal) contacts.'

Housing Counsellor, Youth Crisis Centre, Salvation Army (Utrecht): 'One thing that certainly needs improving is that I wish these young people had a better future. Street policy has resulted in shelter, which is designed to reduce nuisance, but nothing else. The shelter is therefore very meagre. There is hardly ever time or money available to do something with the youth. A great many young people have never visited a museum, walked on a beach or eaten in a restaurant. They never did these things when they lived at home. What our team does do sometimes, in our free time, is undertake various activities with young people.'

Project Leader, Youth Intervention Team, The Hague: 'Social support is very important in the lives of young people. But it is difficult to identify their role models. In its approach, the YIT gives considerable attention to major role models in the lives of young people, the so-called Very Important Persons (VIP's). Sometimes, when I re-read a report, it strikes me that not a single VIP is mentioned. I always ask whether this is really the case. It has considerable effect. The young people at YIT too often lack incentives. As a result, they lack self-confidence.'

Box 8: Interviewees about social support

Staff Member, Information Centre for Pregnant Teenagers and Young Mothers: 'The extent to which people in the immediate surroundings are involved in the trajectory depends on what the young people themselves want. We first try to find out how they feel about their boyfriends, parents, family and neighbours, whether they have anyone or whether their social network is reliable. We first try to understand that. Because they often do not have networks, they are very lonely. But there are others who mention someone, take someone along or someone we see during our home visits. We then get that person involved, but it is not a condition – only if the young person agrees. We work with the best-mate project but that is only possible if the girls are stable. If they go to school or have jobs, they often start building a network.'

Ambulatory Staff Member, T-Team Twente: 'The young people that we see are uncertain and suspicious. That leads to social problems, which they cannot cope with. Some become alienated. We then contact sports clubs so that they can play sports there without having to pay. In this way, you try to build a social network, without which they would probably return to their old ways. We also look at the possibilities within the family. A strong social network is a major success factor. Sometimes a single person is enough as a stable factor. The network is often underestimated. By building a social network together with the young people, he or she will gain more self-confidence and realise what can be accomplished.'

5 Issues for the European social model and values

For the 'Combating Youth Homelessness' project, it is important to determine the relationship between national policy and European policy in the areas of human rights and combating social exclusion. The agreement between Great Britain, the Czech republic, Portugal and the Netherlands specifies that each country include a paragraph in its national report to reflect on this. In the comparative report, there will be further discussion of the effect of European policy in the various countries.

Following the streamlining of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, Member States of the European Union are now charged with translating the common objectives into national plans for each of the three areas of Social Inclusion, Pensions and Health and Long-Term Care. These plans, which cover a period of two years, are submitted to the Commission in the form of a National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion. In the field of social protection and inclusion twelve objectives were formulated by the European Spring Council 2006. These objectives formed a guideline for the first National Strategy Report (NSR), written by the Netherlands in 2006 and the second, written in 2008. The importance of the social dimension of the EU as an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy was confirmed in the Spring Council 2008. This requires further integration of economic, employment and social policy. Considering the cohesion between the various policy areas, the Netherlands National Reform Programme (NRP) progress report and the National Strategy Report (NSR) together give a full picture of progress in the Netherlands. In the country-specific report of the NSR 2006 the Commission expressed positive opinions about the Dutch policy. The Commission sees six challenges for the Netherlands. These are:

- 1) Encouraging active inclusion of groups that are distanced from the labour market, by further promoting labour market integration;
- 2) Further development of a suitable evaluation and monitoring framework with a view to reducing the number of households with minimum incomes;
- 3) Increasing the participation of women and part-time employees in company pension schemes;

- 4) Monitoring the effects that should lead to value and efficiency improvements in healthcare procurement;
- 5) Safeguarding the operation of the healthcare insurance market;
- 6) Monitoring the effects of the costing system of the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act ('AWBZ').

In the period 2006 - 2008 the Dutch government worked - partly on the basis of the National Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Promote Participation (NAP, 2006) - on shaping the European common objectives with regard to combating poverty and social exclusion by ensuring:

- Access for all to the resources, rights and services needed for participation in society, preventing and addressing exclusion and fighting all forms of discrimination leading to exclusion.
- The active social inclusion of all, both by promoting participation in the labour market and by fighting poverty and exclusion.
- That social inclusion policies are well-coordinated and involve all levels of government and relevant actors, including people experiencing poverty, that they are efficient, effective and mainstreamed into all relevant public policies, including economic, budgetary, education and training policies and structural fund (notably ESF) programmes.

In the National Action Plan 2006 the Dutch government again confirmed that work is the best remedy against poverty and that people's opportunities should be taken as a starting point, rather than their impediments. Four priority objectives were chosen based on the accessibility of facilities and participation incentives:

1. Increasing participation through acceptance of work, training and/or socially useful, unpaid activities;
2. Tackling poverty and promoting participation among children and young people;
3. Prevention of the non-use of income support; and
4. Addressing over-indebtedness.

In 2007 the European Commission provided comments and a first review of the NSR 2006 in the country-specific comments of the Joint Report 2007. From this, it emerged that – also thanks to the general economic recovery in the Netherlands that was in line with the general economic recovery of the EU – the general employment rate and unemployment in 2005 showed improvements for various groups such as young and older people, women and ethnic minorities. In 2004, the general poverty risk of 11 percent was one of the lowest in the EU. In 2006 that risk dropped to 10 percent.

- Tackling the homelessness problem

The National Action Plan pays specific attention to the homelessness problem. It states that attending to the homeless is and remains necessary. By an accumulation of problems, the homeless risk severe poverty. They are usually difficult to deploy in the labour market. In recent years, much attention has been paid to improving the preconditions for the municipalities to conduct a cohesive policy for this target group in the area of social support, housing, care, income and daily activities. This increased the municipalities' and institutions' capacity to offer prospects to clients in shelters. In the coming years even more focus will be put on preventing people becoming homeless. The Social Relief Action Plan for the four large cities, which was set up in 2006 and has been in operation since that time, was expanded in 2008 to 39 municipalities that look after social shelters for the homeless as central municipalities (page 19). The target is that all central municipalities should have a Municipal Compass for social shelter at their disposal by 2009.

- Tackling poverty and promoting participation among children and young people

As a basis, the Dutch Cabinet takes five development conditions for children. They apply to every child, regardless of cultural background or physical condition. Children must grow up healthily and safely, participate in society, develop their talents, have fun and be well-prepared for the future. Although parents are primarily responsible for this, attention is also required from the government to influence development conditions favourably and avoid problems. Obviously, this should take place in such a manner that youth policy reaches everyone regardless of cultural background. In addition, it is important that parents have a proper command of the Dutch language so that they can offer their children good opportunities for development, as it appears that migrant children and young people are less easily reached by a development-orientated offer. Unfortunately, too many children are still prevented from growing up healthily and safely and participating in society. One example of a serious obstacle is child abuse. This theme has been included after social organisations expressed the wish during the consultations to include the theme of domestic violence in the National Action Plan 2008 (European Commission 2008).

Annexe 1: Case studies

Eight case studies were presented during the interviews with professionals and managers. In each case, a problem was sketched. Below is a brief overview of the responses of those interviewed.

1. In the case of a 14-year-old boy who regularly played truant from school, living with friends because he couldn't get along at home, the interviewees said that Youth Care is the best authority to offer help. Most emphasised that it concerns a system, family and/or upbringing problem. First, it must be clear what is causing the tension in the family. Reference was made to the possibility of a family coach, home training or an ambulatory intervention team. Additional organisations mentioned were AMK, the children's telephone, YIP, school, the compulsory education officer, the school doctor, 3^e layer, addiction care. It would require someone who has good contacts with the boy, who could be called in (VIP).
2. With a 15-year-old girl who was beaten by her stepfather and wanted to leave home, Youth Care was mentioned by those interviewed; but the girl could also go to AMK, school, the children's or teenagers' telephone. Here, too, some recommended help for the family, but that would primarily depend on what the (in this case justified) runaway girl herself wants. A VIP or host parents could play a role here.
3. A 15-year-old girl who lives with her mother, but because of constant arguments sleeps at her boyfriend's house, could call on Youth Care, also for her mother. With pregnancy, a different type of assistance is necessary (teenage mother projects). Then the Child Care and Protection Board could get involved.
4. In the case of a 15-year-old orphan who plays truant from school and cannot get along with the oldest of his three brothers (who is also his guardian), the interviewees recommended more research into guardianship. Youth Care and Child Protection play roles when guardianship is involved, but various interviewees pointed out that efforts should be made to improve the situation and not remove the boy immediately from the situation. Withdrawal from compulsory education is important. Various authorities then get involved, such as school social welfare, the school inspectorate, counselling trajectories and coaches.
5. A 19-year-old boy who has an unhappy past with Youth Care and who, without qualifications, is referred to as 'an unsuccessful social welfare client'. As a result, he could be placed in adult shelter but that is not seen as desirable. The Youth Counter, Youth Intervention Team, Rooms with Opportunities, MEE, Room Training or another project could help him.
6. An 18-year-old girl with a secondary school diploma, who lives in an assisted housing project, is not seen as problematical. She could receive counselling via YIT, YIP, GSW or in a work-learning trajectory of Werk & Handicap (Work and Disability), via re-integration agencies and the CWI (Employment Exchange).
7. An AMV who, following social shelter, lives in a hostel says that it is very difficult without status. Fellow sufferers could help prevent him from becoming isolated and depressed. With status, he is entitled to all facilities.
8. A 19-year-old who met someone in a social shelter and got pregnant from him should receive help so that she can care for her child, with assistance from a mentor or upbringing support. Anyone in social shelter can often obtain a certificate of urgency for housing. But there are also projects for teenage mothers. According to those interviewed, it is too bad that there are not more of these kinds of facilities.

Annexe 2: List of organisations, expert interviews

Organisation	Age	Gender	Nationality	Position	Urban/regional
Nidos Foundation, Arnhem region Guardianship for minor asylum seekers.	48	Female	Dutch	Guardian	Regional
Kwadrant Foundation. Crisis centre for young homeless people	39	Male	Political refugee from Kurdistan	Crisis Coordinator & Social Worker	National
Youth Intervention Team, The Hague. Trajectory counselling for young homeless people	48	Female	Dutch	Team leader, Youth Intervention Team	Urban
Room with Opportunities The Hague. Self-reliant group housing for young homeless people (room training)	39	Female	Dutch	Coordinator DUWO Foyer	Urban
One Way to Self-reliance (Enkeltje Zelfstandig) Crisis centre, Salvation Army for young homeless people	58	Male	Dutch	Housing Counsellor	National Ratio 80% (Utrecht) 20% (national)
Streetcornerwork Foundation, Amsterdam. Outreaching assistance and walk-in house for young homeless people.	48	Female	Dutch	Coordinator Youth Assistance	Urban
Steady (Arosa), Rotterdam. Teenage mother shelter	30 42	Female Female	Dutch Dutch	Executive Coordinator	Urban
Maaszicht Guest House Social guest house for young homeless people and room training	54	Male	50% Thai, 50% Indo	Head of Assistance	Urban
Department of Social Affairs and Employment, Rotterdam. Chain management and trajectory counselling for young homeless people through the municipality	?	Male	Dutch	Policymaker, Research and Strategy	Urban
Youth Counter, Rotterdam Counter for questions and advice for young people in all aspects of living	43	Male	Dutch	Coordinator Youth Counter	Urban
Ambulatory Youth Assistance, Zandbergen Family and youth assistance	50	Male	Dutch	Departmental Coordinator of the Dijk	Regional
State Penitentiary, Den Engh Custodial Youth Institute for young people	31	Male	Dutch	Group Educator	National
Jarabee Twente People without homes Team, outreach assistance for young people.	24	Female	Dutch	Ambulatory staff member of T-Team	Regional

Annexe 3: The youth health care system and NGO's

Authorities involved in the implementation

- Social Shelter Organisations
- Welfare Organisations (such as welfare work, youth work, social work, Youth Information Point (YIP), Youth Counter, General Social Work (GSW))
- Youth Care Agency (for advice, information, referrals, youth resocialisation etc.)
- Youth Health Care/GGD
- Assistance Organisations and Care Facilities ((youth)GGZ, general practitioners, youth care organisations)
- Housing Associations
- Centre for Youth and Family
- Educational Institutions
- Compulsory Education Office
- Municipal Social Service
- UWV (body implementing employee insurance schemes)
- MEE

National institutions and organisations

- Netherlands Young Homeless People Foundation (SZN) (Stichting Zwerfjongeren Nederland 2009a) is a national idealistic social network organisation that works to provide structural improvement of the situation of young homeless people. The work of SZN is made possible through funds, sponsors and donors.
- Zwerfnet (Stichting Zwerfjongeren Nederland 2009b) is an initiative of the Netherlands Young Homeless People Foundation (SZN). This is a digital platform for and by professionals designed to foster knowledge and experience about young homeless people.
- The Trimbos Institute (Anzion, Wit 2009) is the national knowledge institute for mental health care, addiction and social care. Among others, the Trimbos Institute conducts surveys within social shelter and mental health care and compiles sector reports and monitors about these sectors.
- Shelter Federation (FO)(Federatie Opvang 2009) is the trade association for social and women's shelter. The FO focuses on the interests of member organisations, carries out projects and provides information and advice.
- Public Mental Health Care Shelter (OpvangXOGGZ) (Donders 2008) of the UMC Radboud Foundation comprises the Social Care Research Centre (Onderzoekscentrum Maatschappelijke Zorg (OMZ)) and the academic workplace shelter, XOGGZ. The OMZ is a national institute geared towards selection and exchange of social knowledge about the scope and profile of (groups of) socially vulnerable people, processes of social exclusion, homelessness and domestic violence, along with development and testing of effective, efficient and appropriate interventions. The OMZ participates in the XOGGZ Workplace Shelter (OxO), a structural partnership with shelter organisations. The aim of the workplace is to contribute to the improvement of professionalization and quality assurance of shelter and public mental health care.
- Netherlands Youth Institute (Nederlands Jeugd Instituut) is the national expertise centre for youth and upbringing for professionals, public servants and administrators.

In 2007, the three-year project 'Policy for Young Homeless People Now' ('Tijd voor zwerfjongerenbeleid') started. This is a collaborative effort between the Shelter Federation (principal), SGBO (Consultancy & Research Office), the Netherlands Young Homeless People Foundation) and MOVISIE.



The Shelter Foundation has hired three consultants to advise the four central municipalities of Apeldoorn, Den Bosch, Almere and Dordrecht) in bringing about and implementing policy for young homeless people. For support, the four central municipalities are linked to four other municipalities that are already well advanced in the region and in implementing policy for young homeless people. There are also four good practices described in the area of policy for young homeless people: The Hague, Nijmegen, Zwolle and Rotterdam. The project will be evaluated in May 2009 (SGBO).

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¹ The population estimates of the CBS are made on the basis of the municipal personal records database. Every municipality in the Netherlands records the changes regarding their citizens in this database and passes them on to the CBS.

² The first generation immigrant is a person who was born abroad, with at least one parent who was born abroad, and the second generation immigrant is a person who was born in the Netherlands and has at least one parent who was born abroad.

³ The Netherlands Civil Code describes all rights and guidelines for the citizens of the Netherlands.

⁴ MBO = senior secondary vocational education, HAVO = senior general secondary education and VWO = pre-university education.

⁵ Student finance is the government's contribution in the form of a gift or a loan to fund the study costs and living expenses during the study.

⁶ A needs assessment is required in order to assess the nature and extent of a person's need for care.

⁷ The Court of Audit studies the financial and material management of the ministries. It also checks the government policy.

⁸ The Exceptional Medical Expenses Act includes long-term medical expenses. For instance, lifelong care and nursing in a care home or long-term rehabilitation. Anyone working and living in the Netherlands and insured through their health insurance (within the framework of the Healthcare Insurance Act) is entitled to a refund of these costs. It can be given directly or via a personal budget. People can use the latter to buy their own care.

⁹ Supportive counselling includes among other things, the support for activities at home, or assistance for social activities outside the home.

¹⁰ The Social Support Act differentiates between all municipalities and municipalities with a specific task and, of course, with a different financing method.

¹¹ In the case of social exclusion, a comment must be placed with social exclusion on society level and peer group level. From the interviews with the experts it emerged (and this was acknowledged by the Czech Republic, England and Portugal) that young people often feel they are not accepted by society, but that they did have a place in their own network, in other words, they were actively looking for those circles.

¹² From the 2008 poverty report: in 2006, the low-income limit for a single person was 880 Euros, for a couple without children 1,120 Euros, for a couple with 1 child 1,470 Euros and for a single-parent family with 1 child 1,170 Euros.

¹³ Comparative study project in four cities: Amsterdam, Prague and Madrid, financed by the Daphne Programme of the European Commission. Carried out in Amsterdam by DOCA agencies.

¹⁴ 'Wat werkt?' (What Works?) is a survey into the effectiveness and practical usefulness of methods in women's and social shelter in shelter for young homeless people, which sheds light on 18 frequently-used methods (Rensen, 2008).