

## **ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people**

**Country: Netherlands**

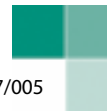
**Author(s): José Smits**

The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.



## Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

A trait of the Dutch Educational system is the constitutional freedom of education. It is the freedom to found schools, to receive funding equal to publicly-run schools, and the freedom to determine what is taught, how teaching is organised and what ideology will be followed. Promoting inclusion is seen as contradictory to this freedom. Government will ensure the freedom to choose for inclusion as well as for separate education.

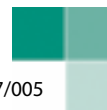
The Dutch governments recognises the wish of a minority of parents and schools to include pupils and students with disabilities and tried to accommodate this wish with new legislation in 2003. A student-bound budget was one of the main instruments. Since this new legislation came into force, the number of students receiving special education increased rapidly. The number of students with special educational needs, included in mainstream settings, did decrease somewhat.

The major economic planning bureau CPB and the National Audit Chamber ARK regards the costs of extra educational support for children with disabilities as very high and recommended to set up an evaluation system to establish effectiveness of educational policies for students with special needs.

Government aims to reduce the growth of costs of special education. Not only does the cost of special education worry government but also the rapid growth of disability benefits to young people. A correlation has been established between the growth of special education and that of disability benefits. Still, inclusion of students with special educational needs is not a goal in itself in new proposals. New proposals for legislation have the title "Appropriate Education". Appropriate can mean both mainstream and special school. The choice between the two is discretionary for each school board.

Vocational education has been made more accessible with the Equal Treatment Act for persons with a disability or chronic illness covering employment and vocational education which also came into force in 2003. Lower levels of vocational education now comprise 2% of students with disabilities. Higher vocational education (universities) have a large percentage of students who say they have a disability or chronic illness (over 7 %).

The Dutch Government signed the UN convention for the rights of people with disabilities but has not yet ratified. The ministry of welfare and health is making an inventory of national laws that might be effected by the UN Convention before a proposal for ratification is send to parliament. Dutch policy to endorse "appropriate" education in stead of inclusion may be contradictory to the UN convention. Ratification is due in 2011.



## Section 2: Legal and policy context

The Netherlands traditionally have a wide array of special schools in primary and secondary education. In legislation and financial support two main groups are identified: those with lesser learning difficulties and behavioural disorders and those with more severe disabilities and or learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs has rapidly increased in recent years and the vast majority receives education in separate schools or separate locations (more detailed evidence and statistics are presented in Section 3 of this report). A group of 1,900 pupils are, at the age of four, exempt from education as they are considered not able to profit from education. This group receives day care<sup>1</sup>.

The Government in the Netherlands aims to reduce the growing number of pupils being referred to special schools in the Netherlands. Government is worried by the rapid growth of students with special educational needs and the established connection with the rapid growth of young people receiving disability allowance straight after leaving special school<sup>2</sup>. Still, Government does not gear towards imposing more inclusion. In several letters to Parliament, the latest sent in 2010<sup>3</sup>, Government states that special schools will always be needed, that the quality of special schools should be improved and that every school and every parent has the right to choose the educational system they prefer.

Promoting inclusion is seen by Government, schools and parental organizations as contradictory with the typical trait of the Dutch educational system: the constitutional freedom of education<sup>4</sup>. It is the freedom to found schools, to receive equal funding as publicly-run schools, and the freedom to determine what is taught, how teaching is organised and what ideology will be followed. Government lists inclusion in education in the same category as religion or other specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori or Dalton method, for which parents and schools choose of their own free will. As a result, privately-run schools comprise a large number of pupils, in primary education up to two thirds of all pupils (privately-run schools are included in CBS/Ministry of Education statistics). These schools, which include Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and schools, based on specific educational ideas, such as Montessori, can refuse admittance of pupils whose parents do not subscribe to the belief or ideology on which the school's teaching is based. In the wide array of publicly and privately-run schools there are also many types of special schools in the Netherlands. The majority of them also privately run.<sup>5</sup> Special and mainstream schools used, until 2003, to have their own criteria for admitting pupils and students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

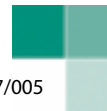
<sup>1</sup> Estimation by Minne B. et al, CPB (Central Planning Bureau) document 192: Zorg om Zorgleerlingen, nov 2009

<sup>2</sup> Sociaal Economische Raad (Socio Economic Council) Meedoen zonder beperkingen, (Participation with Limitations) SER 2007/06 <http://www.ser.nl/>

<sup>3</sup> Kamerstuk (Parliament) 13497, nr 17, page 5

<sup>4</sup> Art 23 Grondwet (Dutch Convention)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/>



Before 2003 there was no formal additional funding available for mainstream schools who chose to include children with disabilities or severe learning difficulties.

This led to growing dissatisfaction amongst parents and schools who were trying to include children with disability/learning difficulties because it was difficult to finance extra assistance and expertise. A growing number of individual students and parents came into conflict when they were denied access to mainstream schools<sup>6</sup>. Conflicts around admittance and referral of pupils with disabilities could not be settled easily as there was no Equal Treatment Act nor any central referral criteria for students with special educational needs, and no legal right to receive extra care, assistance or special material in mainstream school.

In 2003 two Acts came into force with potential effects on inclusion in education. The first is the Equal Treatment Act for persons with disabilities and chronic illness<sup>7</sup> (WGBH-CZ) which covered employment and vocational education and training (during or prior to employment, Article 4). Since 2009 the coverage of this Act has been extended to primary and secondary education. On the basis of this Equal Treatment Act all schools are required to admit students with disabilities if the student can meet the academic requirements and if the necessary adaptations are within reason and the means of the school. Under Article 3 the prohibition of discrimination does not apply where it can be justified on grounds of 'health and safety', where the object of the service is to provide for disabled persons, or where the measure seeks to provide a positive advantage for disabled persons (within reason). The Act does not apply to indirect discrimination where there is a necessary and legitimate purpose.

Also in 2003 the Act on Expertise Centres<sup>8</sup> (WEC) came into force. It introduced eligibility criteria for special education and forced the wide array of special schools to specialise in four types (or 'Clusters') of disabilities/disorders: (1) for blind and partially sighted pupils; (2) for pupils who are deaf, hearing impaired or have severe speech-language problems; (3) for pupils with severe physical and/or learning disabilities; (4) for pupils with behavioural disorders. Pupils with autism can be found in all clusters (more details about the numbers of pupils in each Cluster are provided in Section 3 of this report).

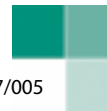
In 2003 a fixed pupil-bound budget was introduced for students who were eligible for special education and chose to stay in, or go to, a mainstream school in primary or secondary education. In 2006 the pupil-bound budget was also introduced in vocational education (MBO). There is no student-bound budget possible in higher education for students with disabilities.

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<sup>6</sup> Rights of people with Intellectual disabilities, Access to education and Employment, 2005 [www.eumap.org](http://www.eumap.org) and [www.hetkanveelbeter.nl/downloads/id\\_nederlands.pdf](http://www.hetkanveelbeter.nl/downloads/id_nederlands.pdf); ; Yearly reports of ACTB which gives overview of mediation and advices by the temporary General Committee on Access and Support in Education, between 2004 and 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Wet gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap of chronische ziekte*  
<http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0014915>

<sup>8</sup> <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0003549>



Inclusion of pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties in secondary education is hindered by the streaming of all pupils in pre-university education (*vwo*), general secondary education (*havo*), pre-vocational secondary education (*vmbo*) and practical training (*pro*). Education Inspectorate and Ministry of Education consider only *vmbo* and *pro* schools as open for students with cognitive disabilities. Schools for higher secondary education are not allowed to admit students with cognitive disabilities.<sup>9</sup>

*Vmbo* students with minor learning difficulties can receive additional support through learning support programmes (*lwoo*) and/or through student-bound budgets. This group comprises 125,000 students where the same group in primary education is only 44,000.

Those who receive *lwoo* support are usually grouped separately.

Most students with more severe physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties are referred to special secondary schools (31,000). These schools are open to pupils up to the age of 20. Students with severe learning difficulties or behavioural disorders can opt for *vmbo* and *pro* and receive an additional pupil- and student-bound budget (17,000 did).

Vocational education and training<sup>10</sup> has been effectively opened up for adults with disabilities. This happened three years after the Equal Treatment Act for persons with disabilities and Chronic Illness (WGBH-CZ) came into force for vocational education. The main instrument is a student-bound budget for students with disabilities in vocational training for a maximum period of 7 years.

Special schools for students with more severe disabilities had, until 2009, no legal obligation nor funding to prepare their students for the labour market. The majority of these students leave school without any qualification for employment and they receive a disability benefit after leaving school. This benefit may be combined with working in sheltered employment or in day care centres.

Government seeks to improve the situation for both groups of students by working toward better cooperation between employers, special schools, mainstream vocational education centres and UWV<sup>11</sup>, the main provider of disability benefits. The benefit Wajong for young people with disabilities has been restricted as of 2010. Instead of receiving a benefit, young people with a disability who are considered able to do some work (60% is the estimation) are offered a job, an internship or prolonged education until the age of 27.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Questions in Parliament by Eysink and Smits 4 2040513260 (d.d. 20 april 2005) and questions in Parliament by Aasted-Madsen – Van Stiphout 2040513120 (d.d. 15 april 2005)

<sup>10</sup> *mba*-level

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.uwv.nl>

<sup>12</sup> Based on the new Act WIJ, which is an acronym for Act on Investments in Youth (see also ANED country reports on employment and on social protection and social inclusion).

Students with disabilities have difficulty in financing transport and assistance during periods of internships. Municipalities are responsible for transport to schools and for leisure activities. UWV is responsible for special transport and job coaching in work. However, neither can be held responsible for arrangements during internships as these do not take place at school, are not considered leisure activity nor formal work. Interns usually get their expenses paid by Dutch employers whereas students with disabilities are sometimes requested by employers to pay for the privilege of doing an internship.<sup>13</sup>

Government announced new legislation with the title Passend Onderwijs<sup>14</sup> (Appropriate Education, based on the concept of a 'tailor-made' education for each child). The aim is to reduce the costs of special education and to improve the quality of education for pupils with disabilities. Both in special schools and in inclusive settings quality of education is now assessed insufficient (words used are "weak to very weak") in a third of the cases by the Education Inspectorate. A few years before quality of education in special schools was assessed as insufficient in half of the cases.<sup>15</sup> The two main elements in this proposal is the abolition of student bound budgets in favour of extra lump sum to schools and the obligation for cooperating schools within each region to seek an appropriate place for every student with a disability or a behavioural disorder. 'Appropriate' can mean either mainstream or special school. The choice between the two is discretionary for the school board.

The view of Government, that inclusion in education is not to be promoted and that free choice should be available to parents and schools for both inclusion and separate special education, is challenged by some small pressure groups in the Netherlands. The Coalition for Inclusion<sup>16</sup> is the main lobbying group for inclusion, consisting of several private foundations, some large care providers, and a number of individual activists. The general advocacy organisations of people with disabilities (or parents of children with disabilities)<sup>17</sup> support government's vision that every parent and student should be able to make free choice between inclusion in mainstream education or separate facilities in special schools.

The Equal Treatment Act for persons with disabilities and chronic illness (WGBH-CZ) will not yet be expanded to the delivery of goods and services or public buildings. This expansion would clarify whether all privately-run vocational training and all buildings should also be made accessible for students with disabilities.

<sup>13</sup> Botsboek by Cross Over: [http://www.kenniscentrumcrossover.nl/projecten/botsboek/de\\_botsen](http://www.kenniscentrumcrossover.nl/projecten/botsboek/de_botsen)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.passendonderwijs.nl/>

<sup>15</sup> Pages 89-90, Chapter 4 on quality of education in Onderwijsverslag: Speciaal Onderwijs en Expertisecentra (special education and regional centres of expertise) <http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Onderwijsverslagen/2010/Hoofdstuk+4+-+printversie.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [www.coalitievoorinclusie.nl](http://www.coalitievoorinclusie.nl)

<sup>17</sup> The two main platforms of general organizations of people with disabilities are CG-Raad [www.cg-raad.nl](http://www.cg-raad.nl) and Platform VG [www.platformvg.nl](http://www.platformvg.nl)



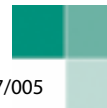
The Government signed the UN Convention for the rights of people with disabilities in 2011. The ministry of welfare and health is making an inventory of national laws that might be effected by the UN Convention before a proposal for ratification is send to parliament. Dutch policy to endorse "appropriate" education instead of inclusion may be contradictory to the UN Convention and Art.3 of the Equal treatment Act would be sufficient to argue that special schools should be kept in place, because parents might chose them as "the measure that seeks to provide a positive advantage for disabled persons (within reason)". Ratification is due in 2011. The Government commissioned the Coalition for Inclusion and the general advocacy organization CG-Raad to organise a conference and booklet on ratification of the UN treaty.<sup>18</sup>

An impact assessment was made in the Netherlands on The European Commission Proposal for an Equal Treatment Directive. According to this assessment<sup>19</sup> full equal treatment in education would cost in a minimum option of €600 million and a maximum option €6.7 billion. This is conceived as high cost, which government is not readily willing to take up (particularly in the current economic crisis).

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.coalitievoorinclusie.nl/speerpunten-VNverdrag.html> en [www.cg-raad.nl](http://www.cg-raad.nl)

<sup>19</sup> Impact Assessment Richtlijn Gelijke behandeling Buiten de Arbeid, Ape B&A, 2009. [www.bagroep.nl](http://www.bagroep.nl)



### Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs remained stable at around 5% but, since 2003, there has been a rapid growth of 25% in the number of pupils with identified special needs<sup>20</sup>. Of these pupils and students, the vast majority receive education in separate schools or locations. Of all pupils with severe learning disabilities only 20% are included in mainstream settings and this percentage is declining. Of all pupils with severe behavioural disorders a third are included (two years previously it was 46%)<sup>21</sup>. Some mainstream schools never admit pupils with an intellectual disability or behavioural disorder. Of those that do, the percentage is not higher than 1.5% in primary education and or 0.6 % in secondary education<sup>22</sup>.

The European Agency's Netherlands country profile<sup>23</sup> is based on Ministry of Education data from the academic year 2006/07, which suggests that there were 88,295 pupils of compulsory school age (aged 5-18) with special educational needs (in all settings, mainstream and special), out of a total population of 2,403,113 (or 3.67%). Of these, 59,176 (67%) were placed in segregated special schools. The report also refers to 1,367 pupils aged 19 or over in full-time education.

A range of Education statistics are also published annually by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS)<sup>24</sup>, including an Education Yearbook<sup>25</sup>, and statistics can be reported by age, gender and ethnicity (cultural minority).

Education statistics from the [2009](#) Yearbook indicated that in 2007/08 the number of children in primary school in the Netherlands was 1,553,000 and in secondary school 941,000. These figures reflect a 5% growth as compared with the school year 1995/96. The number of children in schools for special education was 65,000, a growth of 84% as compared with 1995/96 (CBS, Statistics Netherlands<sup>26</sup>). The increase is especially prominent at the high school level. 25 out of every 1,000 students attended a school for special education in 2007/08 as opposed to 14 in 1,000 in 1995/96, despite government policy measures to increase mainstreaming, including via student-specific financing. Special schools for children with behavioural difficulties (Cluster 4) have experienced the most growth. At the same time the number of children with special financing to provide support for education in regular schools (so-called 'Backpack' financing) was 25,000 in 2007/08.

<sup>20</sup> Depending on the exact definition the growth is estimated around 25 % by the Algemene Rekenkamer (National Audit Chamber) Zorgleerlingen in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs, Kamerstuk (Parliament) 32338, nr 2 and the Ministry of Education, in a report : Kerncijfers (keyfigures) 2004-2008, kamerstuk 31924 VIII, nr 5.

<sup>21</sup> Onderwijsinspectie (Education Inspectorate, Staat van het onderwijs 2010).

<sup>22</sup> See note 2.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/netherlands/dutch-files/NETHERLANDS-SNE.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/onderwijs/nieuws/default.htm>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/onderwijs/publicaties/publicaties/archief/2009/2009-f162-pub.htm>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/onderwijs/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2008/2008-2499-wm.htm>



Detailed numbers of pupils in special schools are also available by region (North, East, West, South), category of special provision and by gender<sup>27</sup>. Statistics on including children with disabilities differ per region. The cause is not exactly known. Outside larger cities and densely populated areas including children with disabilities is more common. The Education Inspectorate attributes this to two factors. One is that distances to special schools can be so far that school and parents hesitate to take this option. The other explanation is that very small schools, in threat of losing funding when their pupil population go below a minimum level, include children with disabilities in order to keep enough pupils listed to continue existence<sup>28</sup>. In vocational education three out of 12 provinces, Noord Brabant, Overijssel and Gelderland, score considerably better. The cause is not known.

For the year 2009/10, the total number of pupils reported in special schools was 67,653 (including 16,043 aged 16 or over; 4,875 aged 18 or over)<sup>29</sup>.

4 years or younger	1,274
5 years	2,268
6 years	2,916
7 years	3,515
8 years	4,152
9 years	4,708
10 years	5,085
11 years	5,273
12 years	5,301
13 years	5,212
14 years	5,670
15 years	6,236
16 years	6,025
17 years	5,143
18 years or older	4,875
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,653</b>

There is a considerable gender difference, with 48,319 male and 19,334 female pupils. The total proportion of 'cultural minority' (CuMi) pupils in special schools is around 17% but this varies greatly according to the category of provision, as the following table shows:

<b>Pupils in special schools (2009/10)</b>				
<b>Education groups/clusters</b>		<b>Pupils (N)</b>	<b>CuMi (N)</b>	<b>CuMi (%)</b>
Total special schools	Total	67653	11558	17
	Male	48319	8049	17

<sup>27</sup> <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=71478ned&LA=NL>

<sup>28</sup> Onderwijsinspectie (Education Inspectorate, Staat van het onderwijs 2010).

<sup>29</sup> <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/default.aspx?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=37746sol&LA=NL>

	Female	19334	3509	18
Total special schools - primary	Total	34244	6040	18
	Male	24767	4249	17
	Female	9477	1791	19
Total long-term sick - primary	Total	6658	582	9
	Male	5283	424	8
	Female	1375	158	11
Total multiple disability - primary	Total	4637	821	18
	Male	2825	505	18
	Female	1812	316	17
Total cluster 1 - primary	Total	513	85	17
	Male	305	49	16
	Female	208	36	17
Total cluster 2 - primary	Total	6880	1804	26
	Male	4807	1248	26
	Female	2073	556	27
Total cluster 3 - primary	Total	14220	2894	20
	Male	9079	1865	21
	Female	5141	1029	20
Total cluster 4 - primary	Total	12631	1257	10
	Male	10576	1087	10
	Female	2055	170	8
Pedo logic institutes - primary	Total	1894	369	19
	Male	1582	322	20
	Female	312	47	15
Total special school - secondary	Total	33409	5518	17
	Male	23552	3800	16
	Female	9857	1718	17
Total long-term sick - secondary	Total	4153	214	5
	Male	3085	145	5
	Female	1068	69	6
Total multiple disability - secondary	Total	1774	308	17
	Male	1131	186	16
	Female	643	122	19
Total cluster 1 - secondary	Total	256	63	25
	Male	139	42	30
	Female	117	21	18
Total cluster 2 - secondary	Total	2185	620	28
	Male	1512	435	29
	Female	673	185	27
Total cluster 3 - secondary	Total	12788	2469	19
	Male	7694	1433	19
	Female	5094	1036	20
Total cluster 4 - secondary	Total	18180	2366	13
	Male	14207	1890	13

	Female	3973	476	12
Pedologic institutes - secondary	Total	179	17	9
	Male	120	10	8
	Female	59	7	12

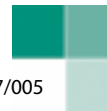
The following table (from CBS data) shows the updated comparison between numbers of pupils in special schools in 2003/04 and 2009/10, broken down by gender and category of provision of special education need<sup>30</sup>.

<b>Pupils in special schools 2003/4 and 2009/10 (by gender and known category of need)</b>						
	Total		Male		Female	
	2003/04	2009/10	2003/04	2009/10	2003/04	2009/10
Total Cluster 1 - primary	497	513	285	305	212	208
Visually impaired - primary	497	274	285	168	212	106
Deaf - primary	397	432	202	227	195	205
Hearing impaired - primary	1187	540	759	321	428	219
Total Multiple disabilities cluster 2 - primary	1013	304	674	189	339	115
Multiple disability deaf and visually - primary	33	24	14	16	19	8
Multiple disabilities: deaf and severe learning difficulties - primary	382	220	239	130	143	90
Multiple disabilities: hearing impaired and severe learning difficulties - primary	598	60	421	43	177	17
Severe speech difficulties - primary	4367	5604	3211	4070	1156	1534
Disabled - primary	1242	1440	779	957	463	483
3 multiple disabilities -	3450	4094	2136	2499	1314	1595

<sup>30</sup> <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=37746SOL&D1=0&D2=4-5,8-14,18-27,31,34-40,44-52&D3=a&D4=12,I&HD=080616-1318&HDR=T,G2,G3&STB=G1>

primary						
Total cluster 4 - primary	9946	12631	8209	10576	1737	2055
Severely maladjusted children primary	4010	5278	3427	4464	583	814
Pedo Logic institutions - primary	1718	1894	1415	1582	303	312
Psychically prolonged sick - primary	4218	5459	3367	4530	851	929
Total special schools - secondary	20486	33409	14094	23552	6392	9857
Total long-term sick - secondary	1426	4153	1018	3085	408	1068
Total plural. disability - secondary	531	1774	310	1131	221	643
Total Cluster 1 - secondary	197	256	105	139	92	117
Deaf children - secondary	203	216	116	112	87	104
Multiple disabilities: deaf and visually - secondary	33	27	18	14	15	13
Multiple disabilities: G deaf and severe learning difficulties - secondary	86	88	51	54	35	34

Multiple disabilities: hearing impaired and severe learning difficulties- secondary	92	160	64	103	28	57
Total Cluster 3 - secondary	8443	12788	5018	7694	3425	5094
severe learning difficulties - secondary	6228	9395	3678	5601	2550	3794
Somatic long-term sick - secondary	344	663	185	356	159	307
Disabled - secondary	1551	1300	978	811	573	489
Pedo Logic institutions - secondary	119	179	101	120	18	59
Psychically prolonged sick - secondary	1082	3490	833	2729	249	761



The Act on Expertise Centres and introducing student bound budgets did not lead to a decreasing numbers of students in separate special education. On the contrary: there was a rapid growth of pupils in special education of 25%<sup>31</sup>. A number of reports<sup>32</sup> ruled out the possibility that disabilities or disorders are more manifest among Dutch youngsters. The open end financing system for educational support for students with special needs combined with easy access to student bound budget and personal care budget<sup>33</sup> are seen as the main cause for the rapid growth. The other cause is the common view among teachers that they do not have to take up the challenge of educating a child with learning difficulties or behavioural disorders as there are special schools to do that job. Analysis<sup>34</sup> furthermore shows that transition from primary to secondary education leads to more referrals to special education.

The increase in the number of pupils in special education is attributed to the effects of the funding system. Mainstream and special schools gain financially by identifying pupils with learning difficulties and behavioural disorders. Not only do their school budgets will grow but there is also more opportunity for schools and parents to apply for student-bound budgets and personal care budgets.

Introducing the pupil-bound budget has, theoretically, increased the options for students with disabilities to choose a more inclusive setting. Statistics show however that the student-bound budgets were used, primarily, to give extra assistance to students already in mainstream schools<sup>35</sup>.

At *mbo*-level the proportion of students with disabilities and student bound budgets was 2% in 2008.

It is not made clear if this suggests an increase or decrease in actual numbers as, before the introduction of the student-bound budget, there were no statistics available on students with disabilities in vocational training.

The transition between secondary special education, vocational training and employment was troublesome in the Netherlands. The prospects for students with minor learning difficulties or behavioural disorders to be admitted to vocational training have improved considerably.

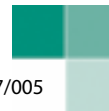
<sup>31</sup> Algemene Rekenkamer (National Audit Chamber) Zorgleerlingen in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs, Kamerstuk (Parliament) 32338, nr 2; Report of the Ministry of Education : Kerncijfers (keyfigures) 2004-2008, kamerstuk 31924 VIII, nr 5; Onderwijsinspectie (Education Inspectorate, Staat van het onderwijs 2010).

<sup>32</sup> See Minne B. et al, CPB (Central Planning Bureau) document 192: Zorg om Zorgleerlingen, nov 2009); Algemene Rekenkamer (National Audit Chamber) Zorgleerlingen in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs, Kamerstuk (Parliament) 32338; Besseling J. et al. Toename Gebruik Ondersteuning voor jongeren met een gezondheidsbeperking, TNO nr 385.

<sup>33</sup> These personal care budget are given for personal care and support in daily life, be it in school or at home, based on compulsory care insurance AWBZ.

<sup>34</sup> See note 1 and 10

<sup>35</sup> Inspectie onderwijs Staat van het Onderwijs 2008/2009. Minne et al, CPB (Central Planning Bureau) document 192: Zorg om Zorgleerlingen, 2009.



In 2007, 77% of students with minor disabilities (with *lwoo* support) entered vocational training where in 2003 only 36% percent went through. After vocational training half of them find work, in the majority of cases on a temporary basis<sup>36</sup>.

The number of students with disabilities in higher education is estimated at around 7.5%<sup>37</sup> These students in higher education are, by definition, all included as there is no separate special higher education.

In 2008 the Equal Treatment Act for persons with disabilities and chronic illness (WGBH-CZ) was evaluated when the scope of coverage was still limited to employment and vocational training. Since coming into force each year around 30 cases were brought forward of which 6 concerned equal treatment in vocational education. Based on these cases, and on an extra evaluation of accessibility in vocational education<sup>38</sup>, the Committee concluded that few students have knowledge of their rights to equal treatment, and that there is not enough done in educational institutions to accommodate students with disabilities. The evaluation showed that a major obstacle for including students with disabilities is the commonly used teaching method "competentiegericht leren" (learning competences) in vocational education. This method requires from students an ability to evaluate their own progress and to set their own learning goals<sup>39</sup>.

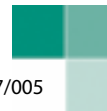
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<sup>36</sup> SER: (Socio Economic Council) Het Veld van Voorzieningen, 2009

<sup>37</sup> Onderwijsinspectie (Education Inspectorate): Onbelemmerd Studeren (study without hindrances) in which 15 % of students say they are disabled or chronically ill and of which half of them say they are hindered by their disability or illness.

<sup>38</sup> Onderzoek naar de toegankelijkheid van het Beroepsonderwijs (Evaluation of accessibility of vocational education) , 2008. [http://www.cgb.nl/webfm\\_send/423](http://www.cgb.nl/webfm_send/423)

<sup>39</sup> Kok, J.J.M. (2003) *Talenten transformeren, Over het nieuwe leren en nieuwe leerarrangementen. Oratie Fontys Hogescholen 19 juni 2003*



## Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

### Section 4a: Financial support

A general description of the funding principles for education and special education is included in the European Agency country report<sup>40</sup>.

The current system of funding for special education utilises as its main instrument the 'backpack' principle, 'student-bound budget' or 'pupil funding' (LGF)<sup>41</sup>, where the pupil/student carries the additional funding with them. These budgets can be obtained in primary, secondary and vocational education. These budgets do not apply to disabled students in higher education. The budgets vary according to school types and type of disability from €7,000 in vocational education, to €8,000 in secondary education and €12,000-18,000 in primary education. Half of the budgets are to be spent at expertise centres, staffed by experts from special education schools. The Ministry of Education finances the budgets. A new proposal sets out to abolish the budgets in favour of a lump sum for schools.

The LGF budgets are only for educational purposes (such as additional staff support or learning materials) and are not intended to cover 'care' needs. Decisions on individual funding are made by independent indication committees<sup>42</sup> (CVI), which are part of the regional centres of expertise (REC). They consider evidence from the application and expert reports against the national criteria (which is open to appeal for six weeks). If the budget is awarded then, in theory, it can be used at the parents/students choice of school/provider (e.g. it is up to the parents to approach the school of their choice but the budget is paid directly to the school not to the parents).

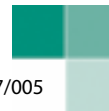
The cost of support for children with disabilities, learning difficulties and behavioural disorders is estimated by the Central Planning Bureau CPB<sup>43</sup>. The education of a child without any disability, or special support based on language deficiencies, in primary education is estimated at €4,000 per year. A child with a minor disability or learning difficulty is estimated at €9000. A child with more severe disabilities and eligible for student-bound budget, or special schools for this group of children, is estimated at €18,400 per year. Transport to special schools costs around €2,000 per student per year. The average expense on personal equipment is estimated at just below €1,000 per year. An average personal care budget for children under 12 is estimated at €15,000 per year. Special additional care and support for families and children with psychiatric and emotional disorders or disordered families costs on average €8,500 per child per year.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/netherlands/national-overview/financing>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/passend-onderwijs/leerlinggebonden-financiering-lgf-of-rugzak>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.wec-raad.nl/index.php?pid=322>

<sup>43</sup> Minne B. et al, CPB (Central Planning Bureau) document 192: Zorg om Zorgleerlingen, nov 2009



The researchers note that there is no evaluation of the effectiveness of support for students with disabilities in terms of better chances for participation for the students or profits for society. The researchers recommended the establishment of a system to evaluate outcome results per student with disability.

The National Audit Chamber ARK recommended in 2009, in its report on rapid growth of costs for special education in the Netherlands<sup>44</sup>, to strengthen evaluation systems for schools, and policies for students with special needs, as too little information on the effectiveness of policies is available.

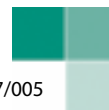
Support for disabled students in higher education is organised and provided by the University institution, and the financial regulations also vary accordingly. There are no direct payments to disabled students in higher education.

Students with a disability can receive specific personal benefits based on WIA such as special equipment or compensation for the costs of special transport. Students who are eligible for the Wajong benefit (a monthly cash benefit for people who have a disability before their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday) can receive this benefit alongside the regular financial support for all students. Students with a disability below 23 years of age are eligible for rent benefit if the cost of an adapted house is too high for their income.

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<sup>44</sup> Algemene Rekenkamer (National Audit Chamber) Zorgleerlingen in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs, Kamerstuk (Parliament) 32338, nr 2.





## Section 4b: Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

Support available for students and teachers in inclusive settings are a mixed responsibility for the ministry of education, ministry of social affairs and employment, ministry of welfare and health, municipal councils, private health insurance companies and several providers of benefits.

Personal equipment for specific students are provided by the UWV, based on WIA, an act that grants benefits and equipments for students and employees with a disability. Around 60,000 pupils with disabilities (both in mainstream and special schools) are provided with specific equipments or special transport by UWV.

Adaptations in school buildings are to be provided by municipalities as they are responsible to provide accommodation for all schools. Municipalities may choose their own eligibility criteria for such adaptations. Municipalities may, for instance, refer the child to a special school where the building is already adapted. There is no obligation to make all schools accessible. Only new build schools exceeding a ground floor of more then 400 square meters are to be build accessible.

Special transport to primary and secondary education is a responsibility for municipalities. Councils may decide how to organise transport and what fees they may ask from parents. It is accepted by all municipalities to pay for transport costs even when children go to remote special schools (including those outside the municipality).

Municipalities are also responsible for special transport for leisure activities and transport for activities to enable general participation in society. However, special transport to higher education is the responsibility of UWV (under responsibility of Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) Responsibility for transport during internships can be troublesome as responsibility is between municipalities and UWV.

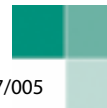
Children with disabilities who require personal care, beyond what is usual for children their age, can receive care based upon a compulsory care insurance based on the Act AWBZ on Exceptional Medical Expenses<sup>45</sup>. This care is either provided by a special school or in the form of a personal care budget. This personal care budget can exceed the student-bound budget with tens of thousands Euro and is widely used to facilitate inclusion of children and students with SEN in mainstream schools.

Handicap en Studie<sup>46</sup> is an expertise centre, funded by the Ministry of Education, which will assist students and universities with information on accommodations, rights, support systems and best practices for students with disabilities.

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<sup>45</sup> <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002614>

<sup>46</sup> [www.handicap-studie.nl](http://www.handicap-studie.nl)



## Section 5: Evidence of good practice

Good examples of primary schools who include children with severe and multiple disabilities with care budgets are de @rchipel in Almere<sup>47</sup> and de Cypressenhof in Middelburg<sup>48</sup>. Both schools admit pupils who are exempted from education and have been referred to day care centres.

The use of AWBZ care budgets is not always accepted though. There have been incidents in which care budget was refused because parents could opt for a special school where care would be provided out of school budget<sup>49</sup>. De Cypressenhof is under investigation by The Education Inspectorate because they use care budgets on a large scale.

There are more examples of individual schools that include all children regardless type or severity of disabilities. There is not, as yet, an evaluation. The non-profit foundation Perspectief<sup>50</sup> starts, in 2010, an overall evaluation of good practices in ten elected primary and secondary schools. This evaluation project is financed by the Ministry of Welfare and Health.

There are some successful pilots where special schools work toward improving employment qualifications.

An example is the School for special secondary education VSO De Hoge Brug in Rotterdam<sup>51</sup>, which cooperates with two major employers and a care provider in providing practical training (both in and out the school) and internships for students with more severe disabilities. During internships and practical training outside school in companies, the coaching of students is done by their own teachers from school.

The higher education school Fontys Hogeschool<sup>52</sup> has started an extra training on inclusive education as part of the curriculum for new teachers.

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<sup>47</sup> Evaluation of an experiment at public school @rchipel:

<http://www.inclusiefonderwijs.nl/documenten/samenvatting.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.coalitievoorinclusie.nl/werkconferentie/Uitwerking-Werksessie-Inclusief-onderwijs.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> [www.ciz.nl](http://www.ciz.nl)

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.perspectief.org/evaluaties/dekernvan-leesverder.php> ;

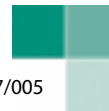
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<http://www.perspectief.org/tienjaar/EindverslagCongres.php>

<sup>51</sup> [www.vsodehogebrug.nl](http://www.vsodehogebrug.nl) and [www.werknemerinopleiding.nl](http://www.werknemerinopleiding.nl)

<sup>52</sup> [www.fontys.nl](http://www.fontys.nl)



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