Dutch decentralized approach in favour of diversity in schools

Manon Persoon

Policy officer Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
Primary education (age 4-12)

4 & 5 juin 2015

1. Motives for diversity in schools
2. Facts and figures
3. Dutch policy in favour of diversity in schools
4. Pilot study to stimulate mixed schools
5. Focus on educational disadvantages

The main objectives are:

1. To enhance pupils' knowledge and skills.

2. To teach pupils to be members of society.

But there is no scientific and political consensus about these goals.

➢ The policy for mixed schools is highly influenced by the prevailing political stance.
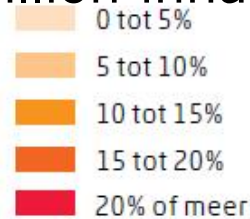
Freedom of education: *"the right for parents to have their children educated in accordance with their religious and other views, allowing groups to be able to educate children without being impeded by the Nation State."*

➢ Therefore, anyone is allowed to start a publicly founded school, for instance: Catholic, Jewish and Islamitic, Steiner and Montessori schools.

➢ Parents have the freedom to choose a school that suits their beliefs.

➢ However the quality standards for all schools are the same and all schools are under the jurisdiction of the educational inspectorate.

Fact and figures of the Dutch situation

- 3.5 million immigrants (17 million inhabitants):
  - 20% of the population
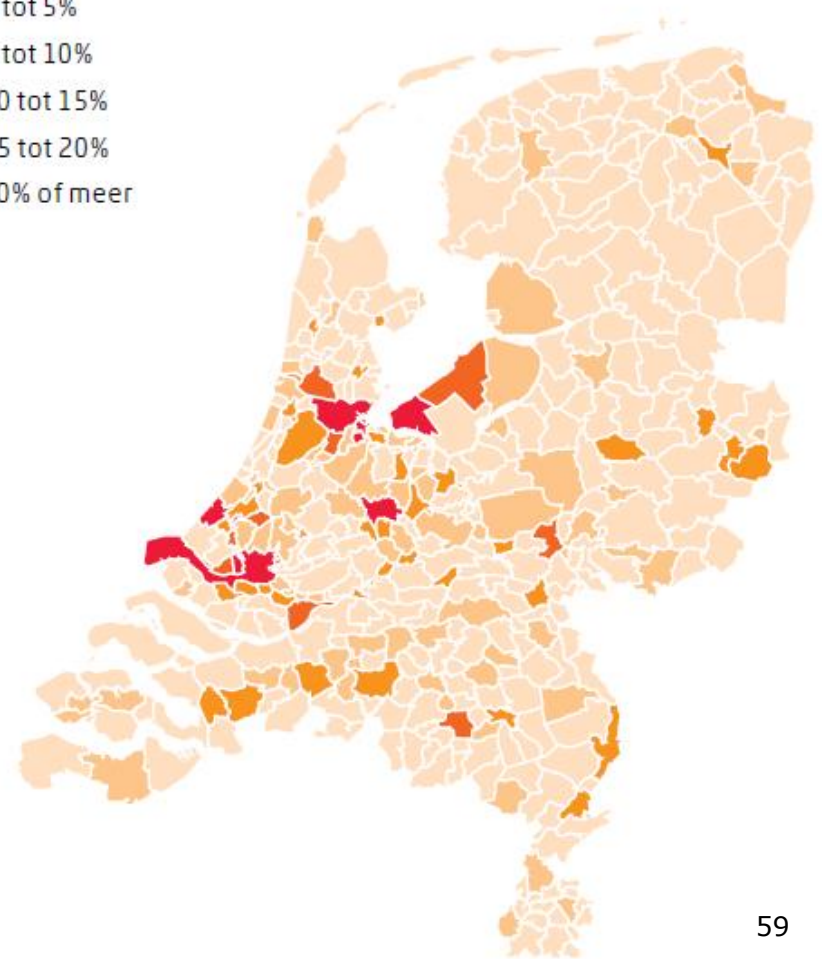 - 12% is non-Western
- Non-Western persons with a migrant background mainly live in and around:
  - Rotterdam (37%),
  - Amsterdam (35%),
  - The Hague (35%).
- Countries of birth: Morocco, Dutch Antilles, Suriname, Turkey.

Legend:
- 0 tot 5%
- 5 tot 10%
- 10 tot 15%
- 15 tot 20%
- 20% of meer

59

- No, active central policy with regard to diversity in schools.
- With the exception of a pilot study to stimulate mixed schools in 2008-2011.
- Municipalities and school boards have to discuss integration and segregation within the (legal) framework of the local educational agenda.

➢ **However,** national focus on addressing educational disadvantages.
➢ Enhancing the educational performance of pupils not by focussing on migrant background, but by focussing on Socioeconomic status (SES).

The causes of segregated schools:
I.   Different ethnic groups live segregated;
II.   Parental school choices ("white flight")
III. School admission policies

• Which (policy)instruments can be used to address these issues?

I.   Controlled choice

II.   Information provision to parents

III. Parental initiatives

IV.   Interaction between pupils from schools of different mixture ("friendshipschools")

Schools cooperate in the allocation of pupils by regulation of the application procedures. Priority rules will be used in the allocation of children to their school of preference.

Experiences:

- Two-thirds of the pilot cities could not establish an agreement whit their schools about controlled choice.
- Just one pilot used background or SES as criteria.

Results:

➢ Transparency and equal chances for parents.

➢ More children go to school in their own neighborhood.

➢ However, no prove that a central registration system enhances integration. Parents with different background have different preferences.

Information provision to parents by:
- *flyers/ internet*
- *"schooltours" for parents in mixed neighborhoods to visit different schools*

Experiences:

- Mainly highly educated parents attended these tours.

- Partipation is in some neighborhoods an issue.

Results:

➢ Limited effect on integration, however:

➢ Schooltours are an opportunity for schools to promote themselves.

➢ Schooltours bring parents together.

Groups of parents decide together to sign up their children for a school in the neighborhood, with a different background.

Experiences:

- Success depends on: the enthusiasm of the parents, the involvement of the school, the quality of the school, the support of the local government and the mixed background of the parents of the neighborhood.

Results:

- ➢ Parental involvement helps to enhance mixed schools on a small scale.

Pupils in segregated neighborhoods with different backgrounds are brought together.

Experiences:

- Schools needs to be equally involved and committed in order to make it work.
- The activities must be focused on interaction and not on cultural backgrounds.

Results:

- *During the pilot the municipalities and schools did not succeed to find measurable outcomes. In The Hague they where statisfied about the results and there are still friendshipschools.*

- The options and willingness of municipalities to actively tackle segregation are limited.
- The effectiviness of the instruments depends on the local situation.
  - Neighborhood population,
  - The neighborhood.
- Based on the results some municipalities continued the pilots on a small scale.
- The main focus of the policy

of the Dutch (local) government is

addressing educational disadvantages.

66

Adressing educational disadvantages

> *Every school regardless the background of the pupils must provide the best possible quality.*

By:
    I.   A system of additional financial support
    II.   Early Childhood Education and Care (age 2,5-4)

- Every school with pupils with educational disadvantages receives extra resources, based on SES.
- The result can be that a school with almost a total of 100% pupils with educational disadvantages receives double amount of funding.

- Early childhood education contributes to reducing the (language) disadvantage of pupils at a young age.

Performance and equity

PISA, 2012

◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is above the OECD average
◇ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is not statistically significantly different from the OECD average
◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is below the OECD average

68