Dutch decentralized approach in favour of diversity in schools

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Primary education (age 4-12)
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.
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.

**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.”
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.
The Dutch policy in favour of diversity in schools

- 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).
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 ("friendship schools")

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

Pilot study to stimulate mixed schools
I. Controlled choice

*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 with 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.
Experiences:
• Mainly highly educated parents attended these tours.
• Participation 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.

Information provision to parents by:
• flyers/ internet
• “schooltours” for parents in mixed neighborhoods to visit different schools
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.
Experiences:
• Schools need 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 were satisfied about the results and there are still friendshipschools.
• The options and willingness of municipalities to actively tackle segregation are limited.
• The effectiveness 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.
**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

- 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

Above-average mathematics performance
Below-average equity in education opportunities

Above-average equity in education opportunities

Below-average mathematics performance
Below-average equity in education opportunities

Mean mathematics score

650
600
550
500
450
400
350
300

0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

OECD average