

Quality in childcare in times of budget cuts

Challenges in the Netherlands

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Contents

- Dutch system of ECEC;
- The financing of ECEC (and alterations between 2006-2013);
- Effects of budget cuts on ECEC;
- Challenges for sustainability.

The Dutch system of ECEC

- 0-4 years (90% children attend school from 4);
- 2 ½ childcare, elective for parents, in daycare centers and child minders;
- 2 ½ - 4 preschool, partly elective parents mostly in daycare;
- Hybrid system of private held companies en public foundations (3200, holding 13.000 locations);
- Government regulations on quality (both pedagogy and qualifications of staff) , safety and accessibility;
- Regulations as a heavy burden on organization (overreaction?).

ECEC: Accessibility

- Childcare up to 2,5 years: mainly instrument of employment. Access only for parents who are employed;
- Childcare from 2,5 to 4 years: preparation for school (social abilities and language). Both for working and non working parents and especially for children from lower social background or ethnic minorities;
- Child minding: rural areas, parents on night shift (problem: grand parents).

ECEC: Finance

Complex system of finance

- Working parents: tax benefits (depending on family income, and number of children);
- Non working parents: depends on local government policy;
- ‘Target Children’(social background; ethnic minorities), free of charge in the 37 largest towns.

The financing of the system and alterations between 2006 and 2013

Decline and fall of going Dutch?

- 2006: new laws on ECEC and Childcare;
- 2008: economy at its best; ECEC and Childcare too
- 2012: first budget cuts: immediate response from parents
- 2013: Government in need of €; second budget cuts:
 - 30%
- 2014: a point of return?

Effect of investment and budget cuts on ECEC in NL

	2006	2008	2010	2013
Budget (in mln €)	667	2,825	3,313	2,358
Children 0- 4 (x1000)	219	316	381	300
Barcelona Obj.	34%	46%	52%	48% (!)
Maximum price/h	€ 5,68	€ 6,10	€ 6,25	€ 6,70
Employment rate w.	53%	59%	60%	61%
Barcelona Obj	60%	70%	72%	71% (!)
(women with children)				

Results of budget cuts in NL; situation mid 2013

- Budget cuts on ECEC influence on accessibility and participation of women;
- Budgets cuts effect on quality of ECEC;
- Pricing influences on accessibility
- NL position in Barcelona Objectives deteriorates;
- Increasing difference in accessibility town – rural parts;
- Increasing unpopularity professional education;
- Decrease of organizations and locations;
- No relation between labor participation (men & women) and ECEC (informal circuit? Quality?).
- Short term effect vs. long term effects on children

The challenges

- Where are the children?;
- Will parents come back in the coming 4 years?
- ECEC remains employment instrument (low economy, parallel budget reductions inflict on family income);
- A new sustainable and SMART definition on quality (the BIG five);
- Local initiatives vs. national policy
- An attractive perspective to primary education?
- The image of ECEC and its professionals.

Thank you