



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap



Adult Learning in the Netherlands

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LOKET

BRANCHEVERENIGINGEN

FAMILIE

YAKBONDEN

ONDERWIJNSTELLINGEN

JBO

DINERIES

Start

UNIEK

Ik durf steeds meer mens te zijn

heel nu gaat er iets bijzonders gebeuren.





Contents

- 1. Adult Learning in The Netherlands: Facts, Figures & Principles**
- 2. Adult Learning in The Netherlands: Developments**
- 3. Looking Ahead: Lessons Learned & Challenges**
- 4. Questions & Answers**



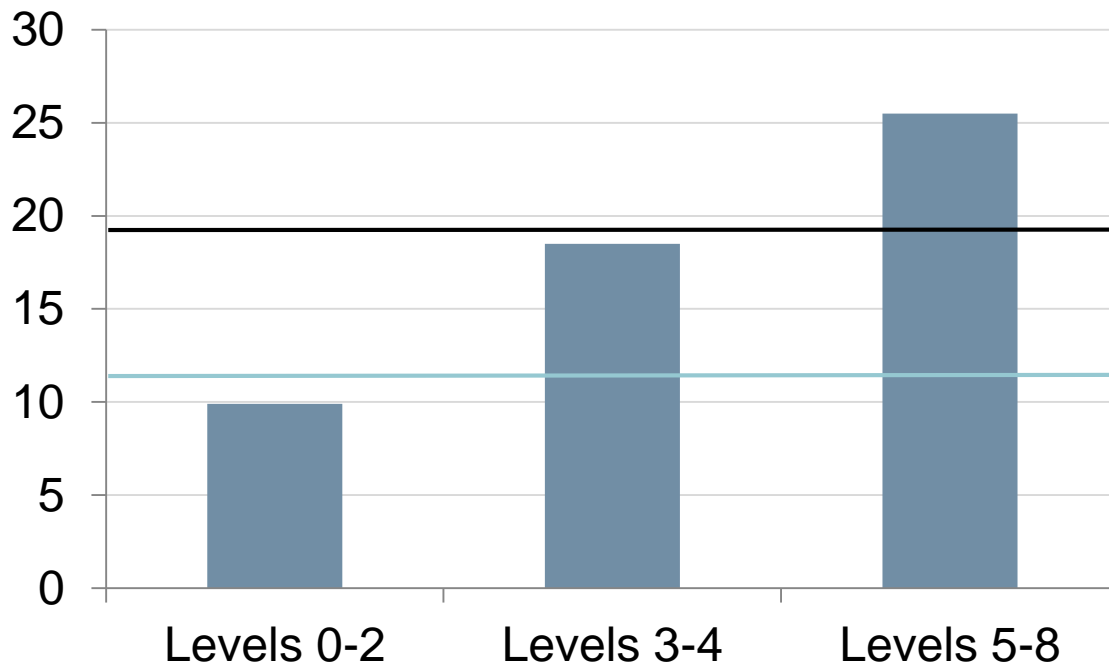
Adult Learning in The Netherlands: Facts, Figures & Principles (1/3)

- Adult learning: all education and training followed by adults of 25 years old and over.
- Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB, 1996).
 - Educational institutions are free under the terms of the Act to devise tailored learning pathways.
 - No age limit exists concerning public funding for diploma-oriented trajectories.
- Action programme Count on Skills focuses on both the prevention of low literacy and the promotion of basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills).



Adult Learning in The Netherlands: Facts, Figures & Principles (2/3)

Participation rate of adults in learning (25-65 y/o, 2018; Eurostat):



NL: 19.1%
EU-average: 11.1%



Adult Learning in the Netherlands: Developments



>2005

**Limited
action**

Individuals,
employers

Limited

Limited



2005-2010

**Push
forward**

Individuals,
employers,
government

Structural

Foundational



2011-2017

**Loss of
momentum**

Individuals,
employers

Moderate

Limited



2017-now

**Break-
through**

Individuals,
employers,
government

Intensive

Comprehensive

**View on
Responsibility**

Cooperation

Actions



>2005: Limited Action

(Responsibility)

Adult learning is primarily the responsibility of employers and adults.

(Cooperation)

Limited cooperation.

(Actions)

Increasing awareness, attention and ambition, but limited action.

- ET2010: EU target - 12.5%; national target NL - 20%.



2005-2010: Push Forward

(Responsibility)

The government is responsible for a basic infrastructure and for providing an impulse to adult learning.

(Cooperation)

Structural cooperation: the joint project department Learning and Working is being established.

(Actions)

Two action plans (2005-2007 and 2008-2010) with significant, but relatively small-scale results.



2011-September 2017: Loss of Momentum

(Responsibility)

Project department Learning and Working abolished.

Impulse by government expected to be followed up by employers and adults.

In the new coalition agreement (September 2010) limited attention to adult learning.

(Cooperation)

A return to inter-ministerial and departmental cooperation.

(Actions)

No wide-scale set of actions.

Expected take-off adult learning does not materialize. With regard to basic skills in specific, progress is being made in the form of a national action programme (2016-2019).



2011-September 2017: Loss of Momentum

Awareness caused by:

- **Increasing urgency**, due to trends such as digitalization, automation and internationalisation.
- **A growing gap in participation rates** between lower (9.5%) and higher (26.2%) educated adults (Eurostat, 2017).
- **Various (inter-)national recommendations**, including:
 - *Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016)*
 - *Doorleren werkt: Samen investeren in nieuwe zekerheid (2017)* – Report on financing adult learning by an independent committee, commissioned by the Dutch government.
 - *OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report Netherlands (2017)*



"A breakthrough in adult learning is required."

Government Agreement, October 2017



October 2017-Present: Aspired Breakthrough (1/2)

(Responsibility)

In order to ensure that *all* adults are able to participate in learning, the government has a role in providing the necessary preconditions.

(Cooperation)

Intensive inter-ministerial cooperation, as well as strong cooperation with external stakeholders.

(Actions)

larger *and* more comprehensive set of actions, whereby the learner is put at the centre.

- Acknowledgement that:
 - Especially low-educated and low-skilled adults experience various barriers to learning, that need to be addressed simultaneously.
 - Levels of basic skills have strong interlinkages with amongst others health and poverty.



October 2017-Present: Aspired Breakthrough (2/2)

National policy measures

- **Current measures**

- Action programme on basic skills (2016-2019)
- A pilot project with the Service Centres for Education and Work
- Initiatives concerning the flexibilization of the learning offer:
 - Action programme for VET institutions (project Upskilling Pathways)
 - Pilots with certificates for modules in VET

- **Measures in development**

- New action programme on basic skills (2020-2024)
- Personal learning budgets
- Digital overview with learning opportunities



Looking Ahead: Lessons Learned & Challenges

Lessons Learned

- There is an important role for the **government** in ensuring the accessibility of adult learning.
- Approaching adult learning from the perspective of the (potential) **learner** is crucial and fosters **cooperation** and **coordination**.
- Benefitting from **other (European) countries' experiences**, including with regard to basic skills and personal learning budgets, increases effectiveness and efficiency.

Challenges

- Ensuring a **strong regional infrastructure** where supply meets demand.
- Stimulating adult learning in a public education system that has traditionally been designed for, and focused on, young students.
- **Outreach** to, and **mobilization** of specific target groups, including low-skilled and low-educated adults.



Questions?