



The Netherlands: Country of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Factsheet, March 2010

Societal Innovation Agenda for Education

E ZOEKWOORD VERANDEREN

Resultaten 1-10 van 28 voor idee

groningen

1. Ik heb een idee! (Nederlands) **** (Details)

Een site met plannen tegen zinloos geweld. Deze plannen kunnen ook worden uitgevoerd.
<http://www.ikhebeenidee.nl>

profielwerk

profielwerk

2. Onderwijs maak je samen (Nederlands) **** (Details)

Een website waarop lesmateriaal, columns, artikelen en meer te vinden is. Docenten en studenten kunnen door middel van deze site nieuwe ideeën bedenken en deze met elkaar uitwisselen. Een praktische manier om te werken in het onderwijs.

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The Netherlands: country of entrepreneurship and innovation

The Societal Innovation Agenda for Education is part of the government project called “The Netherlands: country of entrepreneurship and innovation” (*Nederland Ondernemend Innovatieland*), the project links solving societal issues with enhancing the country’s competitive strength. It invests in programmes that foster knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship and works toward solving a number of problem areas which restrict or otherwise hinder innovation. A joint approach is necessary. Therefore, societal innovation agenda’s are developed for different subjects such as water, security, health, mobility, and education.

The Societal Innovation Agenda for Education

The Societal Innovation Agenda for Education is an integral view of the Dutch government on innovation in education. The main objective is to strengthen the innovative power of the educational field to deal with future challenges as yet unimaginable.

Trends and developments

In years to come, there will be several trends and developments which will have their influence on educational practice. Firstly, there will be *demographic changes*: in the size of age groups (i.e. there will be more people retiring) and in ethnic diversity. The consequences will be a decrease in teachers and a challenge for those teachers who are left to deal with more diversity in their classrooms. Secondly, there will be more *international competition* in the globalizing world, therefore the future workers must be able to do their jobs with high productivity. *International cooperation* will also be more common. Dutch students will need specific skills to act competently in international environments. Thirdly, there is a shift going on in types of work, from manual labour to provision of services in a *knowledge economy*. Therefore, there will be a need for more highly educated people, and those people will need to have certain skills and characteristics, such as flexibility, creativity and knowledge of how they learn and can keep themselves up to date. And fourthly, the *social function of schools* will expand. In order to prevent school dropout, to help students in making up arrears (especially in language skills), to deal with more diversity in classrooms (not only in ethnicity, but also in disabilities like ADHD), teachers have to be more than just top-down lecturers.

These four trends provide challenges for the educational field itself, but it also shows a meta-challenge, namely to strengthen the educational field in coping with challenges. The field will need to be resilient, responsive, and adaptive, so in the future they are able to deal with challenges as yet unimaginable, without extra governmental policies.

Innovation in Education

Innovation is not a goal in itself. It is not something added to a normal workload. And it does not always have to be something to do with ICT. Innovation in education is nothing more than just organising the way schools work with the objective that quality and efficiency will be optimised. At an innovative school, teachers and school leaders are critical and have an open view of their own organisation and the way they work and teach. Consequently, they can adapt to challenges they meet.

Innovation in education can be done at three different levels: the executive level (in the classroom), the organisational level (the school) and the institutional level (the system). Innovation imposed by the authorities will not be imbedded in schools, so therefore the government at the institutional level should not develop the innovation, but just give the other two levels incentives and space (financial and legal) to innovate.

Six obstacles for innovation

Of course, the wheels have already been set in motion, but there are still many unutilised opportunities and possibilities for optimising processes in schools. The Societal Innovation Agenda for Education points out six reasons as a result of which schools are not as innovative as they could be:

1. Aversion and resistance to 'something new';
2. Quite a heavy workload and a shortage of time to think about how to optimize processes in the school;
3. No feeling of urgency and necessity to innovate;
4. The reluctance of professional (school) leadership;
5. Educational and financial risks that can come with innovation;
6. A lack of knowledge about what works and what does not work (evidence base).

Maybe not all of these impediments to innovation in education are real, but they are experienced as such by the educational field. Therefore, innovation policies should be aimed both at strengthening the innovation abilities of the educational field and reducing the impact of the above mentioned six obstacles for innovation.

Innovation policy

The Dutch Ministry of Education has a twofold innovation policy. There is policy for specific problems and challenges (such as arrears in language skills and a shortage of teachers). In this type of policy the ministry removes some of the impediments, by putting the challenge on the agenda, giving financial help through grants, giving room in regulation for innovation/experiments, and providing schools with information about what worked (or did not work) at other schools.

The other type of innovation policy from the ministry covers the other three impediments: reducing aversion and resistance by showing positive examples, helping school leaders to professionalise, and by showing that innovations can save time (instead of cost time) and can make processes go more easily.

Of course there are huge differences between various parts of the educational field: a primary school faces different challenges than a school for vocational education and training. But for the whole educational field, both types of policies from the ministry have three basic assumptions.

First, there is the autonomy of the school. The government is responsible for defining what should be taught, but the schools are responsible for how they do this. Consequently, the ministry will never dictate any innovation. This is called the basic strategy.

Second, there is the so-called depth strategy: schools will be given the option of exploring on a small scale whether something works for them or not. The vanguard is already making use of this strategy.

And third, there is the so-called dissemination strategy: if something works on a small scale, other schools can adopt it. This strategy is about distributing knowledge and views taken from experiences. These strategies can be seen as complementary to each other. A challenge will be put on the agenda by the provision of subsidies for small scale investigation. Then, when we know what works, this information will be disseminated to other schools. In the end, schools can deal with (somewhat similar) challenges with their own autonomy.

Taking responsibility: the roles of the different actors

By strengthening the innovation capabilities of the educational field, schools will be more and more able to deal with the challenges they meet in an innovative way. By frequent peer reviews teachers can learn from each other and inspire each other to work 'smarter' and more efficiently. In this way, schools decide for themselves what works for them, but they are not left out on a limb: there is a supporting education structure to help them. This structure consists of both school leader and teacher unions at sector level, sector organisations, and organisations with specific knowledge i.e. about educational ICT (e.g. Kennisnet) or beta education (e.g. Platform Beta Techniek).

Schools can become more innovative by themselves, with help and support from the supporting education structure, or with boosts from other schools, in or outside their own sector or from businesses. Finally, there is of course also support and encouragement from the Ministry of Education and other (local) governmental policy makers. The role of the ministry is to guarantee the quality of the educational system and to strengthen the actors in the educational field in order to reach the highest quality of the system, so every child can get the best out of him or herself. But not only the development of all the talents of every child is a core objective for the ministry, but just as important is the use of all the talents of professionals working in the educational field, especially the talents and everyday knowledge of teachers.

Education for Innovation

The concept of 'educational innovation' is mostly talked about as 'innovation in educational processes', but it can be also seen as 'education for innovation in other sectors. Which type of employees will be needed in the future? Which competencies, skills and knowledge must be taught at school if we consider what a future society will ask of our labour force? Is our present educational system compatible with our expectations?

For answering these kinds of questions the business sector, educational sector and several ministries will need to cooperate, in order to make the educational system more adaptable to the wishes and needs from other sectors.

Additional policy strands

The educational field is already actively regarding innovation and innovative ways of organising their work. There is also existing policy concerning innovation from the ministry, but this is not enough. To further strengthen the innovative capabilities of the educational sector the Dutch Ministry of Education has drafted additional policy plans. Such as:

- Innovation Impulse: A subsidy programme to enhance the quantity and quality of teachers by organising the work in another, more effective way, without an increase in workload or a decline of school quality.
- Network Innovation for Education: At request of the members of government for education the independent Network Innovation for Education was established. The Network consists of highly skilled individuals with important positions in Dutch society. The Network focuses on the teacher shortage and an analysis of the Dutch education system as a whole.

In order to overcome the teacher shortage the Network concentrates on increasing the sense of urgency for this challenge in the educational field and pointing out how innovation could contribute to solving this problem. On a more general level the network will advise the Ministry of Education on what kind of impediments for innovation there are at system level and how to overcome these obstacles. Is the system organised in such a way that it indeed encourages the innovative power of the educational field? If not, what should be changed? It is the government's responsibility to create an environment/framework in which schools, school leaders and teachers can innovate.

- Network School: A programme that focuses on the teacher shortage and school drop outs in vocational education.
- Wikiwise: An open, internet-based platform for educational resources by and for teachers. Teachers can find, adjust and upload educational materials on this website and use the material for their classes. It tries to encourage the use and development of digital educational resources by teachers.



The Netherlands: Country of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The Netherlands: Country of Entrepreneurship and Innovation combines solving societal issues with strengthening economic competitiveness by encouraging innovation. The Netherlands: Country of Entrepreneurship and Innovation does so by investing in projects that promote education, research and enterprise. This is something that has to be tackled across the whole spectrum of government. That is why the Knowledge and Innovation programme directorate has been set up, in which representatives from various government ministries work together. At present, the following ministries are involved: the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, and the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management.

Further information

Further information on the NOI project can be found at www.nederlandondernemendinnovatieland.nl or by calling +31 (0) 70 379 7443.