

National Youth Monitor

Summary of the Annual Report 2008

04 05 06
07 08
09
10 11



Explanation of symbols

.	= data not available
*	= provisional figure
x	= publication prohibited (confidential figure)
–	= nil or less than half of unit concerned
–	= (between two figures) inclusive
0 (0,0)	= less than half of unit concerned
blank	= not applicable
2007–2008	= 2007 to 2008 inclusive
2007/2008	= average of 2007 up to and including 2008
2007/'08	= crop year, financial year, school year etc. beginning in 2007 and ending in 2008
2005/'06–2007/'08	= crop year, financial year, etc. 2005/'06 to 2007/'08 inclusive

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

The National Youth Monitor is compiled at the request of the Ministry for Youth and Families. Statistics Netherlands is responsible for carrying out the project.

Publisher
Statistics Netherlands
Henri Faasdreef 312
2492 JP The Hague

Prepress
Statistics Netherlands - Grafimedia

Cover
TelDesign, Rotterdam

Information
Telephone +31 88 570 75 75
Monday–Friday, 9.00–17.00 hrs
Via contact form: www.landelijkejeugdmonitor.nl/information

© Statistics Netherlands, The Hague/Heerlen, 2009.
Reproduction is permitted. 'Statistics Netherlands' must be quoted as source.

Summary of the Annual Report 2008

Introduction

How are young people in the Netherlands doing? This is an important question for policy-makers as today's youth holds our future in its hands. The Dutch Ministry for Youth and Families greatly values the family in its policies, and wants youngsters to grow up in a healthy and safe environment. The ministry also wants young people to contribute to society, and develop their talents, to have fun and to be well-prepared for the future. To determine how young people are doing on these aspects, the National Youth Monitor was developed. This website has been online since October 2007 providing figures on the situation of young people in the Netherlands aged 0–24 years in terms of population, health, education, and justice. This summary outlines the key results of the annual report, based on figures from the website.

The population covered by the National Youth Monitor and by this publication includes all people in the Netherlands under 25 years of age. This does not mean that all data in the youth monitor are available for this complete age group. The texts specify the age category to which the results refer.

Young people and their families

Almost one third of the Dutch population consists of people younger than 25 years: 4.9 million young people, slightly more boys and men than girls and women. According to Statistics Netherlands' population forecast, this number will decrease: in 2020 there will be 125 thousand fewer under-25s than in 2000. At the start of 2008, some 23 percent of young people had a migrant background. This share is expected to increase slightly in the next few years, to almost a quarter, with Moroccan youngsters then being the largest group with a non-western background.

Most young people are raised in a traditional family with two parents. The number of youngsters under 25 living in single parent families increased from 12 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2007. An increasing number of children live with one parent following a divorce or the death of a parent. Six times as many children of divorced parents live with their mothers than with their fathers. The number of teenage mothers has dropped significantly since 2001, mainly as a result of fewer pregnancies among girls with a non-western background.

Young people and their upbringing: growing up in a healthy and safe environment

A survey conducted in 2007 shows that most parents with children living at home are satisfied about how they bring up their children. Parents who bring up their children with their partner are more satisfied in this respect than parents who raise their children on their own, as single parents are more likely to feel they cannot cope with raising their children; they find parenting more difficult than they expected. Although parents with a non-western background are also more likely to find parenting more difficult than native Dutch parents, they are just as satisfied about how they raise their children as native Dutch parents.

Bringing up children is not always easy and a matter of course. Over one third of parents with children living at home worry from time to time. Most parents who are concerned about the upbringing of their children and who seek help or advice consult first-line professionals such as their GP, the child's teacher or carer, and the child health centre. They also seek advice from second-line professionals, mainly medical specialists, (independent) psychologists and child behaviour specialists, and youth welfare services.

Single parents are more likely to worry about how their children are growing up than parents in a couple. They also make more use of the youth welfare services. Youth welfare services have been facing increasing demand in recent years, and requests for help are expected to increase further in the next few years as the number of single parent families grows, along with the problems they face.

Young people and their health – growing up in a healthy and safe environment

Most children in the Netherlands grow up in good health. 95 percent of infants are vaccinated against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and poliomyelitis (DKTP), exceeding the 90 percent target set in the Netherlands. Also, most young people are positive about their own health. However, in the period 2005–2007 one in seven young people were overweight; these people are less positive about their own health than those who are not overweight. Not all young people have a healthy lifestyle either. Many teenagers have drunk alcohol, smoked cigarettes or used cannabis at some time. What is positive is that alcohol use among the youngest drinkers was reduced drastically between 2003 and 2007, and that the number of young people who have never smoked increased between 1998 and 2008. Unfortunately some young people are raised in a less safe environment, as is reflected in the number of children who are abused. The number of children about whom child abuse was reported increased in the period 2002–2007. This does not necessarily mean that more children are being abused; the recent focus on child abuse may prompt people to contact the Child Abuse Reporting Agency (AMK) sooner or more often to report suspected child abuse.

Young people and education – developing talents and preparing for the future

Most young people spend much of the day in school. Over 95 percent of 4–17 year olds participated in education in 2006/07. This is to be expected given children are required by law to attend some form of education up to and including the school year in which they turn 16. Moreover since September 2007, they are required to have a basic labour market qualification when they leave school. Over half of young people over 18 were still in education. Female students tend to obtain slightly higher qualifications than male students. More girls than boys leave secondary education with a qualification at pre-university (*vwo*) or senior secondary general (*havo*) level, and girls are not only more likely to complete higher education, but also to do so more quickly than their male peers. Native Dutch students graduated not only in greater numbers than students with a non-western migrant background, they also graduated from higher education levels.

Although most young people complete their education without too many problems, and leave with a diploma, this is not the case for everyone. Over 50 thousand pupils (4 percent) dropped out of education, and thus left school without a basic qualification (at least *havo*, *vwo* or *mbo*-level 2 diploma) in 2005/06. On the positive side: the drop-out rates were lower than the year before. The drop-out rate is highest in senior secondary vocational training (*mbo*). Boys are more likely to leave education prematurely than girls, and students with a non-western migrant background are more likely to drop out than native Dutch students. Furthermore, children in urban areas, single parent families and low-income households have a higher drop-out risk.

Young people active in society – doing their bit and having fun

In addition to the time they spend in school, young people have spare time which they can use for sports, playing outside, or being active in society in some way. In 2007, three quarters of 6–17 year-olds were members of some sort of club. Sports clubs were the most popular. Many children also play outside, in the streets, in playgrounds, on football fields and basketball courts etc. Teenagers in higher levels of secondary education are more likely to join a club, whereas teenagers in lower levels of tend to meet more on street corners, playing fields or in youth centres. Boys meet each other more often on a weekly basis in public places than girls, especially boys with a non-western migrant background. Three-quarters of boys with a non-western migrant background meet each other in one of these places at least once a week, compared with just over half of girls with a non-western migrant background. These girls are also less likely to belong to a club.

Young people can contribute to society by doing a practical placement organised by their school, or by doing volunteer work. Although the practical placement scheme is not yet compulsory in the school curriculum, in 2007 12 percent of 12–15 year olds had completed such a placement or done other volunteer work as part of their school work. Most of these were students in the higher classes in of pre-vocational secondary education (*vmbo*). Outside school, young people can also volunteer or provide informal help; 57 percent of 18–24 year olds did so in 2007.

Social involvement among young people is also reflected in participation in demonstrations. In 2007, 15 percent of 12–15 year-olds reported they had participated in a demonstration at some time. These were mainly children in pre-university education (*vwo*).

Young people and the labour market – developing talents and preparing for the future

For many young people their first acquaintance with the labour market is through a part-time job while they are still at school. As soon they leave school, they are expected to find a permanent place in the labour market. Young people who leave education without a basic qualification have less chance on the labour market, as such a qualification is essential for success. People aged 15–22 years without a basic qualification were twice as often unemployed in 2007 than their peers with a basic qualification. Young women, in particular, without a basic qualification are relatively often unemployed. Young people without a basic qualification are also considerably less likely to be active on the labour market, relatively often because of disablement. Youngsters with a basic qualification are relatively often not active because they are in some form of further education. As a result of the economic recovery unemployment among 15–22 year-olds has decreased in recent years, especially among men with a basic qualification.

In 2005, 19 thousand youngsters aged under 23 claimed income support benefit: mainly young women and youngsters with a migrant background. The number of young people on income support has decreased: in 2005 it was 2 thousand lower than in 2003.

Some young people increase their skills while at work. Almost 8 percent of working youngsters took courses or received some form of company training in 2006. This percentage is slightly higher than in 2004.

Young people and safety – growing up safely

Young people aged 15–24 years are relatively often victims of some sort of crime, but they also often commit offences. The percentage of suspects among 12–24 year olds is almost twice as high as the percentage among the population as a whole. People aged 18–22 years with a parent who had been suspected of committing an offence when the children were young are more likely to be suspected of committing an offence themselves than people whose parents had never been suspected. School drop-outs are also more likely to be questioned by the police than their school-going peers, or children with a basic qualification.

The police themselves settle some of punishable offences committed by youngsters. These children often receive a punishment under the Halt crime prevention scheme. More serious offences are referred to the Public Prosecutor's office. The number of cases involving 12–24 year-olds referred to the Public Prosecutor's office was almost a quarter higher in 2007 than in 1995. Two-thirds of the incoming cases are dealt with by the Public Prosecutor's office itself; these mainly involve larceny and vandalism offences. The remainder of the cases are heard by a judge. Judges impose a community service sentence for over half of these underage offenders (12–17 years) and a custodial sentence for just under a quarter. The number of 12–24 year-olds in custodial youth institutions fell between 2005 and 2006. The number of new youth probation cases seemed to stabilise in 2007 after a relatively strong increase in the previous four years.

When parents fail to take their responsibility, judges may impose measures to protect the child(ren). The most common measure is a supervision order. The number of young people aged under 25 years placed under supervision increased from almost 20.5 thousand in 2002 to over 26 thousand in 2006. Over half of them continue to live at home, while a guardian keeps an eye on the family. Just over one thousand young people placed under supervision orders live in a custodial youth institution for their own safety, without being convicted of any offence (on civil grounds). Parents may also have their parental authority removed. The number of children placed under guardianship for this reason has been stable around 5 thousand for a number of years now.