



# REPOSITIONING OR SHIFTING PARADIGMS?

An international review on Dutch positive youth policies



## Report of the international review committee

Dr. Filip Coussée (Belgium),  
Prof. Dr. Howard Williamson (Wales, UK),  
Dr. Lasse Siurala (Finland),  
and Loes van der Meijs (Netherlands).

Organized by the  
Netherlands Youth Institute (Nji) and  
Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG),  
network Child Friendly Cities

To be presented at the  
National Conference on Positive Youth Policies

10. October 2011,  
Burgers Zoo, Arnhem

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## Colofon

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In close cooperation with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the network Child Friendly Cities.

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### Many thanks

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A big word of thank you to all the professionals, volunteers and young people that were able and willing to receive us and to provide the review team an insight in the important work that they do to make the lives of children, young people and families and the living conditions in these two municipalities worth living in.

*Many thanks* for the dedicated cooperation of *Filip Coussée, Howard Williamson, Lasse Siurala* and VNG Committee member *Ms. Loes van der Meijs*, alderman Youth and Education of the city of Doetinchem. It have been very intensive days with lots of debates, discussions and cycling in the Dutch rain.. We would also like to thank the members for their profound report delivered in such short notice. Special thanks to *Filip Cousse* for his inspiring input during the National Conference on Positive Youth Policies the 10th of October, 2011 in Arnhem, the Netherlands. We also would like *Filip Cousse* for his input during an internal seminar for the professionals working within the Netherlands Youth Institute a day after.

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## **Preface**

These pages contain the findings of the international review committee, that paid a lightning visit to the municipalities of Gouda and Oss in September 2011. From an international perspective, the review committee looked at the opportunities and dilemmas in the Netherlands, with regard to the advance of positive youth policies. They had an overview of the policy decisions and initiatives in this area in these municipalities. In a short span of time the review committee did a great job. Of course, the report generates discussion and that's how it should be. International exchange of knowledge provides opportunities for reflection and new perspectives. Positive youth policies is in its infancy in the Netherlands, and the review will hopefully contribute in a modest way to its coming of age.

### *Focus of the review*

The Netherlands Youth Institute extended an invitation to the review team, in consultation with the VNG / Association of Dutch Municipalities. Their task was to provide inspiration from an international perspective regarding the way in which positive youth policies can be developed further in the Netherlands. It is hoped that their findings based on an international perspective will contribute to the debate on positive youth policies in the Netherlands during the National Conference on Positive Youth Policies in Arnhem, 10 October 2011, and afterwards. Prior to this, choices were made regarding the focus of the visits. In the two day programmes –within the context of positive youth policies- it was decided with the municipalities to opt for the themes development of talents and youth participation, cooperation between professionals and sectors, the Centre for Youth and Families and its role as focal point in prevention, parenting support and care and the implementation of the Social Support Act. In view of the review committee's expertise the emphasis was on youth policies for the 12+ age group.

### *Poverty policy and youth with problems?*

The committee provides an exploratory view from abroad. A snapshot, in fact, because investigating a municipality in two days time is virtually impossible. We are aware that there may be a risk that we did not do justice to the full extent of the youth and education policies of these municipalities. Certain aspects may be neglected, although attention is being paid to them at the municipal level. In Gouda for example, integrated poverty policy is a spearhead that was only discussed in part. The main objective is 'preventing as much as possible the handing down of poverty, through education, and the stimulation of emancipation and participation'. In addition, the committee states that poverty –and drug abuse as well- must not be omitted from positive youth policies. Attention for young people with problems may be particularly important in positive youth policies. It should depart from young people's strength without ignoring the problems. What matters is, how to approach the young people; they themselves are responsible, remain in their own environment and are given assistance in tackling jobs or training, elaborating on strengths and talents of young people and supervisors that are qualified, competent but above all, really committed. The JAZ young people of the Hoenderloo group in Oss were a good example of this.

### *Youth welfare policy?*

Youth workers in Oss and Gouda are actively involved in reaching the 'group at the margins' in particular. In addition there are several playgroups, there is goal-oriented school social work and there are social workers

for children and teenagers. However, since the focus was on the age group 12+ this was only marginally discussed during the visit. Thus youth welfare work seems absent, but, as the review committee itself states: ‘one day is too short to see and discuss everything’. Furthermore, in the European and the Dutch context there are several forms of youth work (see also the recently published book “The value of youth welfare work “ by the NJi) and for this expertise alone an entire review could be organised. The committee’s main concern is attention for non-formal learning in leisure time in general. The committee wishes to emphasise that this expertise can play an important –connecting- role in positive youth policies, also regarding embedment in the Social Support Act – and in the The New Welfare debate.

It has been made quite clear to the committee members that municipalities make great efforts to achieve positive youth policies. They –and we- were much impressed with this. In the words of Filip Coussée (Belgium), Howard Williamson (Wales, UK), Lasse Siurala (Finland) and Loes van der Meijs (alderman in Doetinchem):

*“We were impressed by the enthusiastic welcome we received. Policymakers and practitioners displayed a strong commitment to building a consistent and coherent youth policies in their municipality.”*

On behalf of the review committee members and others involved in the preparation process,  
We wish you pleasant reading and interesting debates,

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## 1. Introduction

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Youth policy in the Netherlands is undergoing major changes in pedagogical focus, structure, funding mechanisms and the role of local municipalities and provincial or central governments. Several key players feel that a shift from a mainly risk-oriented, agency driven policy towards a more demand-led policy, flexible and open to all, has the potential to realise a youth field that is more efficient and effective than a youth field that takes a fire-fighting position or a youth field focused on control and prevention and therefore not able to get engaged with the people that need it the most. The consciousness is (re)gaining ground that the upbringing of children is a shared responsibility and a society should invest in accessible, basic social pedagogical infrastructure supporting people in their daily lives (Perquin, 1965).

This shift is promoted under the flag of **positive youth policy**. Two adherents of this positive mind shift are the Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (Netherlands Youth Institute, NJi) and the Vereniging van Nederlandse gemeenten (Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)). These partners agreed on the organisation of a national conference, following the visit of an international review team and its subsequent report. The review team visited Gouda and Oss, two medium-sized cities seeking to transform a risk-oriented youth policy to a policy focused on positive youth development.. The review team consisted of four experts: Howard Williamson (UK), Lasse Siurala (Finland), Filip Coussée (Belgium) and Loes van der Meijs (Netherlands). The team reflects a mix of research, policy and practice perspectives. The international experts are acquainted with the national youth policy review procedures of the Council of Europe (CoE). The CoE's youth policy guiding principles are very much in line with the proposed shift from problem oriented youth policy to a resource driven or opportunity focused youth policy. This positive approach is also visible on EU level. In the new strategy in the field of youth there is an increasing focus on positive principles as active citizenship, social inclusion and participation.

Visiting two cities in two days was an intensive experience with discussions and dialogue from early morning till late at night. It is remarkable how much can be learned in such a short time, but it must also be acknowledged that this formula has its weaknesses. Inevitably we have missed some things that perhaps we should have seen and sometimes we had only a cursory glance where we should have explored an issue in more depth. Nevertheless, we feel that we absorbed a lot in only two days. The critical debates between the review team and our guests in Gouda and Oss, but also between ourselves as a team, is the basis of this report. Given the inevitable limitations of this review procedure, we ask you to forgive the mistakes, but to consider the issues. A stranger's eye and a 'critical complicity' with youth policy development is the bedrock of the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy, and this reflection on municipal youth policy in the Netherlands is no different. Our views are informed by our wide-ranging experience of youth issues in many countries and these may – or may not – have a resonance for municipal youth policy development here. We hope they do.

## 2. Context

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### *From a passive welfare state to an activating welfare regime*

Over the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all West-European welfare states have undergone a shift towards a so-called active welfare state. The traditional pillars of the welfare state – full employment, stable jobs, the male breadwinner model of the family – have been steadily eroded. This led to a crisis of the Keynesian, ‘passive’ welfare state and an increasingly felt need to redefine the role of the state and governance. After a decade mainly characterised by welfare cuts and increasing social exclusion and poverty, the 1990s saw the birth of the ‘social investment state’: a welfare state that no longer waits to compensate for ‘failure’ and identified ‘need’, but instead seeks to invest in future health, well-being and ‘success’. Social inclusion, in the first place defined by labour market participation, became a central concept.

### *Decentralisation, individualisation and prevention*

Not long over a decade further on, however, governments feel that they have lost grip on the conditions in which social inclusion can be realised through radical ‘top down’ investment in preventative and enabling social programmes. For this and, of course, other reasons, many policy domains and challenges have been decentralised to the local level. In the context of the ‘risk society’, proactive work, early intervention and prevention become extremely important. Contemporary financial restraints and austerity measures resulting from ‘the crisis’ place an even more pressing emphasis on individual responsibility not only to find a place on the labour market, but for leading healthy lifestyles and contributing to community life. Local governments draw back into a preventative role and focus on risk-aversion. Social policies are increasingly transformed. The focus of social policy shifts from redistribution of opportunities and resources to enabling individuals to seize the more restricted opportunities available, and indeed playing a part in their construction. Such a future-oriented reframing of the role of the government and its relation with its citizens has far-reaching implications for the status of young people and for their parents. Parental support and the monitoring of the individual development of children and young people have moved to the centre of youth policy (Featherstone, 2005). Next to this focus on family support, increasingly attention is paid to the bridge between school and labour market, as labour market participation has become a synonym for social inclusion (Lister, 2003).

In the Netherlands local authorities face huge challenges. More and more policy areas and competences are moved to the local level. Important factor is that this decentralisation goes along with **budgetary cuts**. This does not make it easier to make the shift from risk-orientation and risk-management to a more open approach to young people and their contexts and meanings. Quite the contrary.

### *From agency-driven to demand-led?*

In the Netherlands, as in Finland, UK and Flanders, youth care was one of the driving forces behind the development of broader social work. For parental support makes it possible to intervene in families whilst



maintaining the principle of the family as the primary and unique upbringing environment. The child's standard development - the health and developmental possibilities, including the possibility to develop as a good citizen - was constituted as the standard against which the need to intervene was assessed. In such an agency-driven approach parents can take advantage of the support and counselling offered by social work, as long as they recognise themselves in the agency's framework with regard to the upbringing of their children. During the last decades social work increasingly established its own thresholds, standards and approaches to intervention with little reference to personal, family and community (and indeed economic) circumstances. So professional procedures and practice took over from the needs of the clients. The control of social work based on these assumptions led to a technicalisation: the emphasis lies on manageability and its optimization. The aim is to 'empower' individuals so that they can 'handle their own problems'. Social policies make abstraction however of the context in which problems can be dealt with and thus empowerment can be realised. Policy planners think increasingly in terms of standard definitions and packages and subsequently leading parents and families to the standardised and compartmentalised social work offer.

The challenge in current Dutch youth policy is to shift from a risk-oriented approach towards a more positive mission in which the pedagogical role of professionals is to guide children, young people and parents in their opportunities and foster their empowerment. In short, the proclaimed paradigm shift is about starting from the 'own strength' of the family or individual instead of from the 'deviance from the ideal standard development'. Talent development, active citizenship, positive parenting and participation are therefore key areas. NJI and VNG strive to make this positive pedagogical approach to be shared by all stakeholders at the political level, from a policy point of view and by professionals in the field.

### ***A local, but more holistic approach***

Generalist, preventive youth policy is now a local responsibility. The Social Act (WMO – Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) stipulates that a local government has five statutory duties:

- Information and advice
- Signalling problems
- Guidance
- Light pedagogic assistance
- Coordination of care

To perform these duties all local municipalities are obliged to set up at least one Youth and Family Centre within their community boundaries before the end of 2011. It should – at least- act as the front office for children, young people and families within the local settings.

The system of youth 'care'- specialized and targeted services for young people and families experiencing or causing problems – is, at the moment, a provincial responsibility. However, this currently divided financing system and management is now under transition and will *all* eventually fall to local authorities' responsibility. This process is now in train; it will effectively start in 2012 and is expected to be completed in 2016.

The overall aim is to raise the quality of upbringing, to reduce the demand for targeted and specialized care services for those with problems, to create better opportunities for special care within the citizen's own

environments and therefore also to raise its effectiveness and efficiency. It should also create better coherence between preventive youth policy and the specialised care and targeted services.

Local governments feel that it is impossible to control all the conditions that support this approach to personal and social development and integration. Therefore they deliberately seek to enter into contracts, coalitions, partnerships and agreements with schools, private companies and third sector actors. Services are mostly run through NGOs that have contractual agreements with the local municipality for certain programme funding. Other services like education and employment are not part of the local governmental responsibilities. However, also structural changes are foreseen in these domains. There will be 60 regional cooperation structures formed in which the public, general education for all children (primary and secondary education) and the 'specialized' education (inclusion and care for children with special needs in primary and secondary education) should cooperate to foster that children who need special attention and care should be provided an appropriate place. The aim is that parents do not have to find those placements themselves anymore and better arrangements can be made between all partners involved. Also current financial provisions within the school system for extra attention for those children ('rugzakjes') will end and should become the responsibility of local authorities, although the political debate is not finalized on this issue yet. There are also some imminent changes in the unemployment laws coming up within next years in order to create more local power to deal with local unemployment situations..

### ***Positive parenting and young people's involvement***

Parenting questions should become easy to ask without being 'stigmatized' as a parent with severe problems. This requires the development of a positive climate with non-formal and informal pedagogical networks of parents, young people and children. A burning question is how a local authority or professionals working in institutionalised welfare settings should relate to a civil society

At the end of 2011 all Dutch municipalities should have established some form of participation of young people in the coordination and implementation of local youth policy areas. Most of the local authorities have set up local youth councils. Some have been successfully established – like in Oss – while others fail due to lack of continuity, unclear expectations or a breakdown in communication.

### 3. Gouda and Oss

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#### *Some facts and figures*

**Gouda** is a city and municipality in the province of South-Holland in the Netherlands. The city is situated in the urban area of the Western part of the Netherlands; the Randstad. It has 71.296 inhabitants (2011) at 16,92 km<sup>2</sup> (42 inhabitants per ha). It is the 48<sup>th</sup> largest town in the Netherlands and the 12<sup>th</sup> of the province. Gouda has a regional role in the area.

From 2004 to 2008 the number of inhabitants slightly decreased, but has increased somewhat since. The expectation is that it will grow further thanks to some new housing projects until 2020. The expectation is a growth towards 79.578 inhabitants in 2020 and 81.613 in 2025. 25% of the inhabitants are 19 years or younger. 18% is between 19 & 35 years and 22% is between 35 to 49 years (January 2007). People working in the health services is the highest percentage with 24%. In business services (16%), industry (11%) and retail (10%). Unemployment rate in 2007: 8%

22% of the population belongs to an ethnic minority, which is slightly higher in comparison with the Netherlands as a whole (20%). 7% has their background in other western countries, while over 15% come from other backgrounds like Surinam, Indonesia, and Morocco.

The number of ethnic inhabitants is growing while the number of inhabitants from Dutch descent is decreasing. The largest group of non-Dutch inhabitants are Moroccans (9% of the total population). In some neighbourhoods (like Eastern Gouda) there is a relatively high percentage of ethnic inhabitants (52%) or even 71% (Oosterwei) of which Moroccans form 51%.

<b>Gouda Inhabitants per 01.01 2010<sup>1,2</sup></b>	
<b>Ethnic categories</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Dutch origin	55.208
Western origin	5.352
NonWestern origin	10.555
<i>like Moroccans</i>	6.606
<i>like Turkish</i>	431
<b>Total per 01-01-2010</b>	<b>71.115</b>

**Oss** is a city and municipality in the province in the South of the Netherlands, in the Province 'Noord-Brabant' in the Netherlands. The local authorities of the municipality Oss govern 5 small towns and the city of Oss. The area is situated near the city of Eindhoven, has a size 160 km<sup>2</sup> - of which 12% is build with housing, 70% is agriculture and 5% nature. The area of Oss has 84.180 inhabitants (April 2011, CBS) of which 57.970 people live in the city Oss. 50% is female.

Like Gouda, Oss has a regional role as a working, living and shopping area. The number of inhabitants has doubled since 1970 because of the extension of the city area and the incorporation of neighbouring communities (through the regionalization of governance). If this expansion is not taken into account, then a strong decrease in population growth is noticeable.

Overview of inhabitants in age groups (2011, Oss in Cijfers<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> The very small community of Lith became recently part of the municipality of Oss and therefore these figures are not complete. However the percentages remain the same as the numbers very slightly differ.

0 - 14 years:	17,5%	(14.712)
15 – 29 years:	17,3%	(14.532)
30 – 44 years:	20,5%	(17.271)
45 - 59 years:	22, 2%	(18.720)
60 - 74 years:	15,8%	(13.275)
75 – 89 years:	6,4%	(5.362)
Older	0,4%	(333)

In 2007 the average household consisted of 2.48 persons, while in 2010 and 2011 it was stable at 2.45 persons. 27.1% of the population consists of single-person households, 31.7% of two-persons without children. 5.6% are single parents and 31.1% of the population consists of families with children.

<b>Oss Inhabitants per 01.01 2011</b>	
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Dutch origin (83.6%)	70.372
Non-Dutch (16.4%)	13.818
- Western origin (45.6%)	6296
Non-Western origin (54.4%)	7520
<i>like Moroccans (2.6%</i>	<i>358</i>
<i>like Turkish (31.1%)</i>	<i>4296</i>
<b>Total per 01-01-2011</b>	<b>84.180</b>

16.4% of the population is from ethnic origin, which is lower in comparison with the Netherlands as a whole (20%). 45.6% have their background in other westernized countries (and in Indonesia as a former Dutch colony), while 54.4% are from countries such as Turkey Surinam, and Morocco. The number of ethnic inhabitants is slightly decreasing, due to the enlargement of the area in focus. A few small villages that are now within the municipal boundary of Oss have no inhabitants from non-Dutch origins.

The largest group of non-Dutch inhabitants in Oss are Turkish, comprising 31% of the total group from non-Dutch origins.

The unemployment rate slightly increased in 2011 compared to previous years. It is now 7.9%, while in 2009 this was 6.3% and in 2008 5.8%. It is now higher than in the Netherlands as a whole (6.4% or in the province Noord-Brabant (5.8%) Unemployment has risen especially in industry and business services.

### ***The programme***

The review committee visited a broad range of settings and organisations: Centres for Youth and Family (the local front office for all youth and family care in future), an integrated community centre (built by a housing corporation), schools with talent campuses, a youth therapy centre. We were also introduced to public planning and safety policies. The full programme is included in appendix 2.

#### 4. What we liked

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- First of all we were impressed by the enthusiastic welcome we received. Policymakers and practitioners displayed a strong commitment to building a **consistent and coherent youth policy** in their municipality. They were convinced of the need to turn the dominant agency-driven approach into a policy that makes connection to what happens in the real world. They were aware of many still existing problems and challenges, and were very open to constructive, critical feedback.
  
- The **overarching philosophy** was clear: they want to make a turn
  - from a defensive, risk-focused approach to a positive policy aimed at offering opportunities and reinforcing existing strengths.
  - from an agency driven, compartmentalised approach to a user-led strategy in which different agencies find each other around the questions of clients.
  - from hierarchical relationships to an approach driven by dialogue and partnership, between local government and different services, between government and citizens, between politicians and civil servants and, critically, between ‘social’ service professionals’. This is a shift that could be described as a move from ‘divided responsibilities’ to ‘a shared responsibility for the positive development of young people and for the creation of a responsive social educational environment’.
  - from instrumental relationships between social workers and the users of social provision to a relationship based on mutual dialogue, consultation and trust. It is an important principle that social workers should not ‘expropriate’ people from the problems they experience. This makes people feel disempowered, as if the organisation of the circumstances in which they live is taken out of their hands.
  - from ‘social sectorisation’ to a cross-sectoral partnership between social policy, social work, schools and private companies.
  - from targeted services to holistic, non-stigmatising services, if needed specialised services should be available and accessible.
  
- We saw several examples in which this overarching philosophy is taking shape:
  - The extended (broad) schools and talent campuses in both cities try deliberately to make the shift from an outcome driven learning process that is imposed on pupils, to an approach in which students are challenged to explore their own capacities and to take their learning process in their own hands, guided by supportive teachers, acting as learning facilitators.
    - The talent campus in Oss for instance, in order to achieve its vision of establishing a ‘learning boulevard’, has made agreements with a real estate company, a football club and many other organisations to create room for experience, experiment, expression, exploration, exercise and enterprise for their students and in the same time create an added value for their partners (in bridging the gap between school and labour market or facilitating the connection between students and social provisions).

- The 'broad schools' in Gouda have made agreements with hobby clubs, sport associations, music and art schools, ... to organise an after school programme for all children in Gouda's primary and secondary education. More than half of the children participate in this after school provision.
- The Nelson Mandela Centre in Gouda combined housing, child care, primary education, a youth and family centre, and outdoor playground, a weekend school (reminding the traditional Sunday schools), an association for people with disabilities, a home care organisation and a community centre. This approach creates a win-win situation as it increases the quality of neighbourhood life, and promotes opportunities for development while the building itself retains its value and recovers its costs through rental to the range of user groups.
- The other Youth and Family Centres we visited made similar efforts to be easily accessible and to have a low threshold for participation, advice and consultation. Ordinary questions and day-to-day needs concerning child care and upbringing are just as welcome as questions demanding a more intensive intervention.
- The community school 'De Meteor' in Oss brought two schools together in one building, a public school and an Islamic school. The concept of the 'Peaceful school' is built on mutual understanding, respecting diversity while building a strong community.
- The JAZ-project ("Jij aan Zet") from the Hoenderloo Groep in Oss makes sure that young people who go through a difficult period can access tailor-made support in which self-confidence, social networks and access to the labour-market are central elements. It is important that *young people have the right to fail - and the obligation to learn from their failures.*

## 5. Questions and concerns

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### ***The seeming inevitability of problem-oriented and outcome-focused thinking***

At one moment, during a broad discussion on positive youth policy in a Youth and Family Centre the review team observed that the term positive had only been mentioned three times, while the word ‘problems’ has been uttered many more times. This illustrates the seeming reflex or ‘default’ position to start a policy approach at the point where one wants to end (and certainly does not, philosophically, want to start). What the review team got to see was a well-thought out deployment of a strategy aiming at the installation of a network of provisions where no one could slip through (a so-called seamless service or provision). This positive turn often seemed to struggle to make a move even further on down the line towards even earlier detection and earlier intervention. The review team deliberated that therefore the practice, as described, was rather less of a paradigm shift, and more a repositioning of youth and social policy. Problem prevention seems to remain the guiding principle in the thinking about the upbringing of children and young people. The outcomes may have been translated in more positive terms, the strategies remain outcome-focused, trying to design, to plan and to monitor the ideal and desired development of individual young people. This relates to what the German social pedagogue Hermann Giesecke (1963) named ‘*die Misere der geplante Jugendlichkeit*’. Even if we start from positive outcomes, we tend to focus at those young people that seem at risk of not getting there and we design interventions to get them back on ‘the right track’. If these interventions are not grounded in the lived reality of young people at the margins of ‘average’ development, we risk marginalising and excluding these groups even further. They are re-labelled as the hard-to-reach, while in fact it is probably rather the social provision that is hard-to-reach for them (or the standardised ideas of harmonious development that underpin these services), through being perceived as alienating or threatening, meaningless or irrelevant to their lives.

### ***Youth exists, also outside of schools and programmes***

Young people do not start from some mythical zero-point without family, culture, class or religious stance. Social and pedagogical practices intervene in settings that possess their own history. The field of positive youth policy, certainly as expressed in the Netherlands, seems to be dominated by views from developmental psychology. There is nothing inherently wrong with that, especially not now that the focus on risk aversion is slowly making way for a broader approach focusing on assets instead of problems. Emotional health and well-being, empowerment and exploration have replaced risk aversion and prevention as guiding concepts. Still, as far as the review team could observe, this paradigm is limited in two ways (see also Ginwright and Camarota, 2002):

- It is indeed positive to take the assets of young people as starting point. But this does not set aside the social, economical and political influences in young people’s lives. The risk is that policy is informed by a romanticised picture of a strong and willing youth, taking their lives in their own hands through a more robust sense of personal agency, acquiring social and cultural capital and even changing their communities if there seems to be the need to do so. This picture neglects acknowledgement of the necessity for some young people to survive in difficult, sometimes oppressive conditions.

- Another bias in European youth policies is often the externally defined image of an ‘average childhood’ made up of the average life of white, middle-class young people. Other young people are then seen as deviant and in need of support in order to ‘normalise’ them (although we used a variety of more positive and purposeful words, such as inclusion, empowerment, or emancipation). It could well be that leading such a more ‘normal life’ would make those young people happier than they are now, but their aspirations in that direction cannot be considered in isolation from the countervailing influences and pressures of racism, sexism and poverty (for a similar argument from a very different context, see Swartz 2009). With no humane means can we disconnect youth from their environment that shapes their lives and their identity. If we are to connect to those young people’s lives we need take into account the existing coping mechanisms and survival strategies that they invoke, in order to support agency within the parameters of the powerful structural constraints that will continue to affect their lives.

It was argued long ago that a variety of alternative (youth) cultures emerged from differential structures of opportunity (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). For those without the means to achieve dominant, desirable societal goals with legitimate means, there were criminal responses to achieving them by illegitimate means, retreatist responses (giving up), and political responses seeking to alter the distribution of resources. Using this platform of argument, we have a notion of ‘entitlement’ for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – a package of opportunities and experiences that anchor young people in a positive pathway towards adulthood and personal, social and economic futures. This package is routinely provided to many young people through broad schooling and family support; it does not exist very much for more disadvantaged young people, and public policy needs to consider how to extend such an offer to them. The package includes various forms of education (learning), information, advice, group experiences, exchanges and participation.

### ***Youth work, a missing link?***

It is indeed difficult to engage with groups-at-the-margins as a worker in an outcome-led service. Both the youth care and the educational system are formal institutions and do not have the possibilities to completely shift to a lifeworld oriented approach reaching out to marginalised groups. Therefore youth work is an important player in the social and educational field.

With youth work we certainly refer to the broad social pedagogical concept of youth work going beyond the often problem-focused professionalised and out-come driven practices that became dominant at the end of the 1990s. Youth work refers to informal education, working with groups of young people in their leisure time, building bridges to the other domains of their lives. It was the impression that youth work in the Netherlands is understood as a work with individual young people and not with groups or communities. The profile of the youth workers then is rather a ‘coach’ and a ‘counsellor’ than a ‘facilitator’ or an ‘enabler’. In general the review team did not get a clear view on Dutch youth work. Youth workers seem to operate in the margins. Youth work was only mentioned twice in an explicit way. One of the young adults at the Hoenderloo centre told us that he finally got there thanks to the intervention of a youth worker. And the president and vice-president of the Oss youth council indicated that they needed the youth workers to connect to young people for whom the council itself has little appeal, because they don’t feel that traditional structures of participation and decision-making are in their interest.



Youth workers have demonstrated skills to negotiate with young people and empower them Youth workers are there to connect to young people in their lifeworld, to enter into an unconditional and open relationship, and to use the group as a means of empowerment, self-understanding and participation. These things are more difficult in the more formal parts of the social and educational field.

Informal conversations have informed us that youth workers are active in both Gouda and Oss. Therefore the review team surmises that youth work may be an invisible link, rather than a missing link. And often youth workers are literally an invisible link, guiding young people without dictating their direction. It is not clear however in how far the educational and social mission of youth work is recaptured, after the rather harsh budget cuts of the 1990s in this field, and in how far youth workers are included today in the broader social and educational policies (and under which conditions). The remark in the NJI fiche on 'Youth work' (jeugdwerkzwaaiwerk) that youth work has no effective methodology leads the review team to suspect that youth work is not seen as an autonomous profession. Perhaps policymakers and social workers would wish youth work to function as a gate to youth care or even as 'waste manager' (keeping socially and economically redundant young people out of the streets)? This would be a restriction of the potential of youth work to connect to and engage with youth at the margins. The strength of youth work lies in its ability to create free spaces for young people characterised by safety, a sense of belonging, the art of conversation, challenge, friendship and convivial relationships; spaces different from schools as they are founded upon voluntary affiliation and free dialogue. Within such settings and relationships the focus is not upon the certification of measurable skills, but life skills - biographical, institutional and political competencies. The focus in youth work is on competencies that are useful for young people given the life they lead and the aspirations they have or may acquire. The review team sometimes had the impression that this focus on informal learning has been introduced in the formal learning systems<sup>2</sup>, but would this make youth work practice redundant<sup>3</sup>? The emphasis on talent development and choices in schools was impressive, but still the activities are marked and accredited, and, if not passed, then the year has to be repeated. This is more formal education, than non-formal. That is legitimate, but it shows the gap that is created by ignoring informal educational practices.

### ***The disconnect between abstract desire and real delivery***

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<sup>2</sup> We found it quite impressive to see how formal institutions embraced principles of informal learning. It is not clear for us if this situation is representative for the Netherlands. Perhaps one of the reasons is that both Oss and Gouda have one and the same 'wethouder' for youth and educational policies?

<sup>3</sup> The importance of youth work is emphasized in recommendations and policy texts of the Council of Europe and the EU. Some countries have included these into their national legislation, clearly establishing the role, the tasks and the profession of youth work within the national, regional and local youth policies (see for example Finnish Youth Act ([www.minedu.fi](http://www.minedu.fi))). Another possibility would be to amend the Social Support Act. The Dutch Social Support Act (2006) and the corresponding Finnish Child Care Act (2008) both stipulate that the municipalities "shall" prepare and adopt a municipal plan "to outline the social support policy" (the Netherlands) or "organize and develop child care" (Finland). The Dutch Act focuses on organizing child care, while the Finnish legislation seems to have a broader approach. Finnish Child Care Act emphasizes (12§) the importance of a broad study on the "living conditions and welfare of children and young people" which shall be followed by a plan of "services and activities which promote the welfare of children and young people". The Child Care Act is a very influential law and has led to (1) the recognition of the importance of general welfare service for all as the base of child care and (2) the fact that the youth sector has become a key partner in preparing and implementing the municipal plans, often called "Children and youth welfare plans" (see for example [www.wellsinki.fi](http://www.wellsinki.fi)). The emphasis of the Child Care Act on welfare and interprofessional collaboration has led to markedly increased recognition of youth work within the municipal services for children and young people.

*“Creating a safe environment will lead to concerned, independent and social citizens”*. This is one of the basic assumptions of Gouda’s youth policy. It shows how youth policy, perhaps unavoidably, takes indeed a positive, but rather abstract starting point. What are the characteristics of a safe environment? Are these the same for all young people? Is this attainable for all young people? If social workers intervene in the environment of children, does this make the environment more safe? And is a safe environment enough in itself to create independent and social citizens?

There is also a point about delivery. The figures are well-known and heavily used in all kinds of policy plans and declarations during the last two or three decades: 85% of young people are doing good, 15% are in need of help from which 5% have severe problems. It is not quite clear where this evidence came and still comes from, nor is it clear why these figures remain the same for so many years, despite all changes and paradigm shifts that we have witnessed?

We did not hear much about the concrete nature of problems. What are these severe problems? What distinguishes severe problems from moderate problems? The glimpses that we had suggested that things are ‘not so bad’: the gift of a bicycle resolves a mother’s challenge of getting her kids to school; violence is more youth nuisance than the use of knives or guns, and even protracted youth nuisance and ‘violence’ is not embedded in gang culture; the atmosphere in, and the fabric of schools, appeared to be pretty good; even the troublesome youth we met were rather charming and agreeable (though they may have been chosen, in part, for that!).

## 6. What we did not see or hear

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It is clear that a one day visit is not enough to cover the whole field of youth, educational and social policy. Yet even with an apparently comprehensive programme of visits and discussion, we were left rather surprised that we did not get information on:

- **substance misuse:** this seems to be a serious and even growing problem in many European countries, with an ever decreasing starting age of drinking alcohol and risky experimentation with new and emerging drugs (NEDS – popularly referred to as ‘legal highs’]. Perhaps this indicates the repositioning of social and educational work, focusing at resilience, prevention and learning to say ‘no’. One of the young men we spoke to at the Hoenderloo Centre was adamant that, while he had caused trouble and broken the law, he had never taken drugs.
- **Youth space:** young people need space to explore and experiment. We saw lots of places designed for children, but these are places where they are first of all the subject of monitoring and control. We did not hear about free space. We did hear something on JOP’s (Jongeren Ontmoetings Plaatsen, Youth Meeting Places), but even these were prestructured. Young people and public space was only mentioned in terms of the development of a safety policy. And this included regulating young people within the framework of wider community provision in order to engender ‘proper’ attitudes and values.
- **poverty/social inequality:** one of the most influential conditions affecting how people cope with daily problems in their life is poverty. We did not hear the word once. Fortunately, neither did we hear rhetoric assertions concerning a so-called underclass either<sup>4</sup>.
- **‘youth cultures’, ‘peer cultures’, ‘social media’, ‘internet communities’, ‘youth work and the internet’:** These are – together with the also underexposed contexts of young people’s own spaces and youth organisations – the most popular contexts of development for today’s children and youth. The review team raised the question whether the strong focus on families has led Dutch youth policies to undermine important learning contexts and arenas of growing up – and consequently lack important means and methods to influence youth issues and problems.

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<sup>4</sup> In relation to the English riots, the Justice Secretary of State, referred to a ‘feral underclass cut off from society’ – or, as they are coming to be know, the ‘fucofs’!!!!

## 7. Key issues

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- **Coherence and seamless provision:** a one-stop-shop model as used in the Centre for Youth and Family has clear advantages. The social and educational field is so complex that many people can't see the wood for the trees. The single entrance gate solves this problem. There is also a de-stigmatising effect. On the other hand the 'no-one-slips-through-the-net' philosophy risks keeping some people beyond the radar. No net can exist without meshes or it becomes an oppressive framework, more centred on controlling development, than on supporting growth. The CJGs in the Netherlands have been able to create an interprofessional service in Gouda and Oss. The staff in both centers which the international team visited were experienced professionals well acquainted with the challenges of interprofessional collaboration. It was not clear, however, what would be the image of the CJGs among young people. Perhaps a study on its image among its users and potential users would be helpful. How well are the CJGs known? What do the young people think of them? What do they expect from them? There are also questions concerning the 'well worried'. In this context this refers to the people with moderate concerns who then clog up the system and produce a perception of the Centres as being not for those with really severe challenges in their lives. As a basic infrastructure this general Centre for Youth and Family is a good thing, but we should always be realistic about the fact that the most marginalised people can in many cases still only be reached through **outreach** work.
- **From agency-driven to demand-led:** the ongoing specialisation and technicalisation of social and pedagogical work has led to a differentiated and complex field. People have to figure out how to formulate problems so that they fit in what is on offer. Dutch policymakers and practitioners show the intention to turn this situation around. This is a good thing. The review committee however wishes to emphasise that 'demand-led' may be a term that refers more to an economic reality than to a social or pedagogical reality. Some (or even most?) people would not know what their question might be. Some people might have questions that are so comprehensive that there is not the capacity for the response to meet those comprehensive needs. At that moment people ration their demands in order to get something. Or they don't show up at all, because they feel there is nothing on offer for them. In that case social policy is not any longer a correction mechanism in order to redistribute opportunities, but a mechanism that even reinforces social inequality caused by market mechanisms. **Dialogue-steered** may sound horrible, but it does seem to be a more appropriate concept, than the market language of demand and supply.
- **Participation:** Other formats than the meanwhile classical youth council are in development, but the main question remains the question of how to reach the hard-to-reach (young people and their families!). As in other countries it is clear that youth councils do reach out to young people that are relatively well equipped to participate in democratic processes. The participation of young people in all their diversity is still a huge challenge, despite the fact that the Netherlands were one of the first countries to raise the use of categorical participation, as well as democratic participation (Nissen et al., 1998). This is also the case in Oss, although the local youth council has made serious efforts and therefore received the local youth participation award in 2010. There is an ongoing need for democratic experiments in how to reach out to young people who see no meaningful ways of engaging in the existing participation structures, often

modelled on adult examples of democratic governance. Perhaps the format of such youth participation is too formally and ‘rationalistic’, missing **emotion** and passion. Clearly, local youth participation needs redirection. Or, as Malone and Hartung (2010, p. 36) say it “[we need to] *think of new ways to interact with children outside the predefined ways in predefined structures*”.

- **Evidence based policy and measuring the benefits:** Dutch social and pedagogical policies are balancing a ‘what works’ approach with the need to contextualise problems that young people encounter and produce. For an evidence-based approach does not eliminate the need to carefully assess the specific situations in which troubled young people grow up. The desired outcomes or the undesired deviation from the standard development leading to these outcomes cannot be the one and only criterion for professional interventions.

The review team had questions about:

- *the nature of ‘evidence’:* There was not much attention for youth research during the visit, but the review got the impression that youth policy today is – as it was a century ago – predominantly informed from the discipline of developmental psychology. Evidence from social pedagogy and youth sociology was not often heard<sup>5</sup>.
- *the direction of the evidence:* It was nice to hear how the ‘broad schools’ engage with leisure organisations in the field of sports and culture to provide meaningful leisure time activities. More than half of the young people participate in this after school activities. The review team still wondered if this was an agency-driven or a lifeworld-oriented service. A Finnish study of the after-the-school expectations of 9-12 year old students showed that a majority prioritised other activities than those offered as after-the-school activities. Children were also found to be very quality conscious consumers of leisure activities and they often criticised the educational quality of the after-school activities. The review team did not have access to similar Dutch research. The participation figures only provide evidence on one aspect of after-school time programmes. The risk is clear that after-school time policies would be restricted to increasing participation figures, without take into consideration questions about social and pedagogical meaning from the perspectives of young people themselves. More information is required on both how many do not seize the opportunity to continue their choices in leisure time and, critically, who they are. There are certainly ‘rewards’ (recognition and certification) for taking part: does this have any real currency? If it does, then those who do not take part become further excluded (and this happens under the flag of positive youth policy, which almost directly leads to the conclusion that the exclusion of children must be their own individual failure).

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<sup>5</sup> Different professions have different notions, experiences and understandings of evidence, contextualise them differently and want to apply them differently at different times. Think of the discussion between the surgeon and the speech therapist with regards to the evidence of operating a cleft palate. The earlier, the better for the speech therapist, for an early intervention increases the chance that the child will not have speech defects. The surgical evidence however suggests to delay an operation till the moment the child’s mouth has taken a more definitive shape, which decreases the risk for aesthetical deficiencies. This kind of (a)e(s)th(et)ical dilemmas shows the need to engage with the lives young people and their families lead and the question concerning what interventions can be meaningful given their lived realities.

- *The perspective of the evidence:* What about the perspective of young people, especially those young people that have and/or create problems? The community safety presentation for instance was about residents' sense of (in)security, but there was no comment on young people's sense of (in)justice.

## 8. Conclusions

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A general threat in any policy change is the persistence of both the established ways of thinking and the existing practices. The impression of the review team was that following policy areas needed special attention to overcome “the ghost of the existing approaches”.

### **The key-messages of the review team:**

- ***On a shift of paradigm***

The review team definitely supports the proposed change of direction from risk-aversion to the promotion of opportunities. As everywhere it is not easy to distinguish between rhetoric and reality, but the review team felt a genuine will to engage with the lived reality of young people and their families. There was constant and careful consideration given to balancing the what-works question (‘how to organise things better?’) and the engagement with citizens/clients (‘do we organise the good things?’). At some points it became clear that a proposed paradigm shift easily slips into a repositioning of our ‘social work on offer’. The key issue of children and youth support policy in the Netherlands is: Too many young people are referred to specialized services, while they should have been supported earlier through ‘lighter’ services like the Youth and Family Centers (van Yperen, 2009). The focus therefore in many discussions is on identifying earlier individuals and families at risk and providing them interprofessional assistance. Youth and family policy revolves around early intervention and care: how can we reach risk groups earlier and how can we keep them from falling over to specialized services? This is clearly still about engaging with problems and anticipated ‘deficits’, albeit through greater partnership, participation and recognition of potential strengths even in those with current or prospective deficiencies/problems. This is not shifting the paradigm, but improving the existing **agency- and outcome-driven paradigm** by moving further down the line. A paradigm shift to a **rights-based approach** includes genuine empowerment through choice and opportunity (and access to resources!), whereas the repositioning seems to be about professional framing of ‘what is good for them’ and an expectation that they should take part in making that ‘positive development’ happen.

- ***On interprofessional collaboration***

The review team was impressed by the connections that have been made between social work, educational work, youth care, labour market, housing market and local government. This is certainly in the interest of young people, and particularly those young people living at the edge of social exclusion. Still, this kind of provision has difficulties to reach out to young people that live beyond the realm of ‘normal’ aspirations. The institutionalised, formal offer therefore is not always meaningful to them. If a genuine paradigm shift is made from ‘what’s in it for me’ to a shared project engaging with the direct and concrete lives of young people and their environment this approach is certainly promising and goes far beyond the ‘social sectorisation’ prevailing in neighbouring countries.

But beautiful models do not work without people. The social engagement of the workers, the way in which they engage with their clients and with each other is from huge importance. This aspect was often underexposed, although the review team was impressed by the engaged way in which social and educational

workers talked to us about their job and mission. Still there are clear educational, professional and administrative barriers, that hinder a ‘precarious equilibrium’ in inter-agency practice (Williamson and Weatherspoon, 1985). Thresholds of confidentiality were not really discussed, yet information-sharing is both absolutely essential to the expressly desired style of working *and* a central platform of disagreement about exactly how this should be done. Commitment, which we saw in abundance, is fine when it is there and overcomes a lot of things, but what are the protocols when these people move on and new people come into their positions?

▪ ***On a reductionist approach of youth policy and a technical view on the upbringing process***

In this respect it is counterproductive to reduce youth policy to educational and parental support, even if all partners agree to combine their forces. The strong focus on families seems to result in very few methods and activities to work directly with young people<sup>6</sup>. This might be linked to the small number and low recognition of youth workers. Youth policy is definitely broader than schooling and child and youth care. Although sailing under a positive flag, such a reductionist approach to youth policy leaves little place for informal social pedagogical processes with young people in their leisure time. An expanding youth care system seems to have squeezed the existing youth work field in between the fields of school and social work. The above mentioned genuine engagement and the existing social pedagogical infrastructure close to the places where people live (neighbourhood centres) should assure that provisions find their way to citizens and not necessarily the other way round. Still the diversity of situations in which young people live necessitates a social pedagogical provision that leaves space for engaging with young people without the burden of a prefixed set of outcomes. The review team gained little awareness of any existing provision aimed at enabling processes of informal learning. For sure, the positive paradigm shift (or even a better repositioning on a prevention to cure axis) is impressive and is important for the educational and youth care systems, but it still runs the risk that positive policies only reach out to the children and young people who potentially feel at home in the existing systems. What should or can be done with the others? Leave them behind? Hand them over to more repressive youth policies (although it was good to see that principles of positive youth policy take root in youth care institutions)? We heard a lot about spiders in the web, coordinating an all-embracing network of provision and support, but let’s not forget that young people also need a nest. In many cases this is the family, and it could also sometimes be the school, but youth work as well can definitely be a (provisional) nest for many young people – to change the imagery, a haven and a sanctuary before it becomes a springboard or trampoline to wider, further and future engagement and development (Williamson 2011).

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<sup>6</sup> Although it must be clear that the engagement of parents, especially mothers (in relation to families, children and communities) is clearly a massively positive direction. They are the ‘social scaffolding’ of disadvantaged communities, eager for their children to have better futures. In Paris, they have the concept of ‘community mothers’, who reach out to other families having a hard time or wanting to learn more. Bob Holman in the UK pioneered the idea of ‘resourceful friends’ and built the concept of ‘community social work’ where professional workers worked alongside local people. Holman bought a large house on the edge of a newly built municipal housing estate and opened it as the community centre, using local people to run the coffee bar, youth club, toddlers’ group and so on; eventually money was raised to build a proper community centre, and Holman moved on to Glasgow to try again in an even tougher environment. He is now retired – to a one bedroomed apartment. His greatest sadness on retiring was having to leave his books behind, but he told that he could not justify a bigger apartment just for his *books* when neighbouring families did not have enough rooms for their *children*).



The conscious effort to change youth policy emphasis from risk and problem oriented to a positive, demand – led, general youth policy brings Dutch policy closer to that of the Council of Europe, many European countries and the Nordic Countries, in particular. The review team strongly encourages this change and will make some observations and recommendations to further promote it. The review team was also impressed by the Youth and Family Centers (CJG), the efforts to support young people explore their identity and job careers (talent schools), open spirit of searching for new ways of working with children, young people and the families, and the professional competence and dedication of the staff we met. All this provides good conditions for qualitative improvement in services for youth as well becoming an internationally interesting example of a policy change from ‘youth as problem’ to ‘youth as a resource’ approach.

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## Appendix 1: The review committee

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**Filip Coussée** (Dr.) will act as researcher and practitioner. He is researcher in the field of youth in the European and Belgian context. He is also a practitioner in the support for youth work with vulnerable young people in Belgium (Flanders). He has extensive knowledge about (voluntary) youth work in Flanders and in the European context. He will focus on the relationship between volunteers and professionals, working with problematic youth and pedagogical approaches and models from the perspective of youth work.

**Howard Williamson** (Prof. Dr.) will act as researcher, policy advisor and youth worker. Experienced in reviewing youth policies in 20 European countries, researching pedagogical approaches and theories in the international and European context. A background in youth work with problematic young people. Participation of young people is one of his areas of expertise. He will focus on the pedagogical approaches in youth policies and participation of youngsters. As a member of the UK Justice Board he has also extensive experience with issues related to young people at risk and in protective custody.

**Lasse Siurala** (Dr.) will mainly focus on the role of the municipality to steer the youth policy process. He has many years of political experience in steering the youth policy process in the city of Helsinki. The Finnish model of holistic youth policies and approaches in which children and families are at the center are interesting for the Netherlands youth policy approaches. The existence of Family Centres and their distinctive role regarding integrated working with and on behalf of children and families in positive parenting and parent participation is his main angle.

**Loes van der Meijs** will provide a more detailed insight from the Dutch perspective as an active alderman in the town of Doetinchem (East of the Netherlands) to the other committee members. She advocates shifting Dutch youth policy from the risk-oriented towards the development oriented approach. Ms. Loes van der Meijs is an experienced (second term). She is active member of a national group of alderman advocating positive approaches in youth policy (*Bart's Gang*). She is also a Dutch member of the network Child Friendly Cities and member of the governmental sub committee of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) in the field of specialized care for children and young people. Therefore she has a good overview in local and national development in the youth field. She is also responsible for the European focus within another governmental sub committee of the VNG; Education, Culture and Sports. She will be the chair during the 10<sup>th</sup> of October Conference on Positive Youth Policies.

## Appendix 2: The programme

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**Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2011**

**Visit to the town of Gouda**

During the day we will ride bicycles, so be sure to wear suitable clothing (including raincoats)

08.44 am Leave from Utrecht Central Station

Mr. Lasse Siuarala and Mr. Filip Coussée will travel together.

Ms. Hanna Eigeman will escort them from the hotel to the train station.

Ms. Loes van der Meijs, Alderman for Youth and Education of the City of Doetinchem and member of the Committee will arrive at the Central Station by herself.

9.03 am

Ms. Gerrie Tol from the city of Gouda and Miss Marieke Hebbenaar (Netherlands Association of Local Municipalities) will welcome all at the Gouda train station

Mr. Howard Williamson and Ms. Pink Hilverdink will arrive directly, coming from Schiphol Airport (flight arrives at 08.30 am, so they will hopefully arrive in Gouda at around 10:00AM) .

**09:30AM Arrival at the city hall of Gouda. Introduction about Gouda.**

Input from Ms *Marion Suijker* - Alderman for youth and education of Gouda

**10:00AM ‘Positive’ youth policy: what does it mean for Gouda?**

Input from Ms *Marion Suijker* -Alderman for youth and education of Gouda

**10:30AM The role of community (extended) schools (Brede scholen) in Gouda**

Input from Mr *Hans van Kekem* - Director of the Federation of Community Schools in Gouda

In 2001 the first community school of Gouda was founded. By now, there are five community schools. The *Federation of community schools*, established in 2006, is a demand-driven organisation. The Federation is independent and works on behalf of the five community schools in Gouda. The Federation takes care of the cooperation and coherence in the activities that all community schools offer to children up to twelve years.

11:15AM

Departure to Youth and Family Centre, on bicycles

**11:30AM**

**Arrival at Youth and Family Centre. Presentation and tour.**

Input from Ms *Petra de Jong*, Process manager Youth and Family Centres

The Youth and Family Centre in Gouda is the coordination point and combines various provisions in prevention and specialized care in the field of parenting support and more

**12:45AM**

**Departure to comprehensive school ‘De Goudse Waarden’**

‘De Goudse Waarden’ is a protestant (denominational) , comprehensive, secondary school for youth from 12 to 18 years old. Besides the regular curriculum, the Goudse Waarden offers ‘talent classes’, . In the first year, for 12 year old children, there are four types of classes: Da-Vinci, World, Art & Culture, and Sports. Students are challenged to develop their talent, but also skills in working together and giving presentations.

**13:00PM**

**Lunch at ‘De Goudse Waarden’, department for pre-vocational secondary education.**

Input from Mr *Pieter Dijkshoorn* - chairman of the Executive board of ‘De Goudse Waarden’

- 14:15PM**      **Departure to Nelson Mandela Centre (NMC)**  
NMC is a multifunctional accommodation with several social services, including a housing corporation. It accommodates the extended (community school) the youth and Family Centre, a Community centre. Also other local services and associations rent parts of the complex, like the municipality of Gouda, an association working for people with disabilities, a children physiotherapist and a homecare office.
- 14:30PM      Arrival at Nelson Mandela Centre  
Tour by Mr *René Mascini* - Director of a housing corporation
- 15:15PM**      **Approach of youth at risk**  
Input from Mr *Rik Scheele* - Head of department Safety and Maintenance/ Public Planning of the City of Gouda
- 16:00PM      Departure to the market square by bicycle
- 16:30PM**      **Drinks at the market and a fotoshoot for the national youth magazine “Jeugd en Co”**
- 17:30PM      Diner at restaurant Lavendel in Gouda
- 21:00PM or later:      Leave to Utrecht, by train

**Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of September**

**Visit to the Municipality and City of Oss**

- 08:00AM      Travel by train from Utrecht Central Station  
Pink Hilverdink will accompany you.  
Arrival in Oss at 09.00AM  
A small bus will accompany you for the whole day throughout the area.

- 09:30AM**      **Welcome in the Youth and Family Centre**  
by Miriam Kettani, policy officer of the Municipality of Oss

The Youth and Family Centre is the heart of the youth and family policy and the coordination point for all provisions in the field of welfare and care for children and families. It should foster a continuum of care by all stakeholders involved, from the preventive to the specialized care. The focus is a multidisciplinary cooperation between all partners including the school care and specialized care. For the coming period a new priority is to develop a positive and open environment for families and children to share 'basic, normal and general question in upbringing between themselves.

- 10:00AM**      **Interactive presentation about Positive Youth Policy in Oss**  
by Marcel Verhoef and Miriam Kettani, policy officers Municipality of Oss  
What are the priorities and what is the local authorities' role?  
Including discussion, questions and answers

- 11:30AM      Departure by bus

**12:00AM**      **Community School ‘De Metoor’**

12.00 Welcome and guided tour by Emanuel Huliselan, leading partner De Metoor  
The Community School is an extended school with a networking function within the city of Oss. It cooperated with a variety of provisions and professionals in the youth field.  
The multifunctional building combines a public school and an Islamic school for children between 4 – 12 years. The local school councils have a combined cooperation structure and operate on the basis of the 'Peaceful School model'. This is strongly emphasizing on talent development. The 'Peaceful School is a complete programme for primary education and focusses on development of social competences and democratic citizenship. The classroom and the school are regarded as a living environment (a micro society)

in which children's voices are heard and within which they learn to make decisions, to debate and to deal with conflicts.

**12:30 Lunch**

13:30 Departure by bus

**13:45 PM Visit at the Talent Campus**

Welcome and guided tour by Richard van Ommen, director Hooghuis Lyceum Stadion. The Talent Campus is a combined service from youth work, educational field, the local council and other provisions. It's focus is to create a positive, non-formal learning environment in which young people (in further educational levels) can 'learn by doing and bonding'.

15.15PM Departure by bus

**15:30PM Visit to De Hoenderloo groep**

Presentation Jaz-project of the Hoenderloo Group by Willem Brouwer, Hoenderloo Groep

The Hoenderloo group is a large provision in the field of specialized care for young people. They also have specialized programmes for young people out of work and out of school. The approach to them is to discover what talents they have in order to support them to develop those further.

17:30PM Departure by bus to **restaurant Buitengewoon** for a diner with alderman R. Peters and other participants from the city of Oss.

**21:30PM End of Programme and back to Utrecht by train**