Innovation in Policy and Practice: Student-engaged and Student-led initiatives to Improve Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in Dutch Higher Education

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Dutch Education System

The Dutch education system

- WO
- HBO
- MBO (BOL+BBL)
- VWO
- HAVO
- VMBO
- LWOO +PRO
- VSO
- VSO
- SBAO/SQ
- BAO
Why: Inequities in graduation rates in HE (2002-2012)
**National Policy Agenda**

Increasing urgency of Inclusion and Equity in (transition to) HE

2. Policy letter on Inclusion and Equity (October 2018)

Focus inclusion and equity on different stages in students study paths:
- Trajectories before entering HE
- Trajectories within HE (Bachelor phase)
- Trajectories toward Master studies

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**Moving toward Individual student success**

Minister Van Engelshoven:

*“Student success should foremost focus on the student: students who enter HE should be enabled to successfully complete their educational program”*

- Breaks with past policy focus on performance output of HEI’s.
- Question is how to capture this in quality assurance with HEI’s as policy partners.
- Trilemma: How to balance: wide accessibility & high quality of education & high completion rates.
Policy & incentives

• Binding study advise (BSA)
  • Minimum ECT’s completion requirement in first year bachelor
  • How to avoid high drop out rate of underprivileged students

• Selection before entering
  > Only part of the programs
  > How to make selection methods lead to more inclusive results

• Social lending system
  • Low socio-economic status receive scholarship as gift
  • All students can lend against low interest rate
  • Concern: lending fear among 1st gen students. Ministry provides information

• Coalition Agreement on improving student well-being
  • Aim: improve over all well being for students.

• Yearly Conference on Inclusive HE
  • Collaboration between ministry, ECHO and HEIs

• Regional collaborations VET & HE
  • VET Institutes and Universities of Applied Sciences collaborate on a regional scale to improve successful transitions for their students.

• Comenius Grants
  • Grants focus on teaching innovation
  • Teaching, Senior & Leadership grants
**Bottum up initiative**

- Staff initiative of Ministry of Education, Culture & Science.
- Programme is supported by the Minister and the Secretary General

**Aim:**
- Practice what we preach: create awareness about the impact of implicit bias in the organization
- Creating awareness on cultural diversity in our organisation
- **Color blind → Color brave**
- Innovate processes concerning recruitment and staff-selection

**Activities**

- Network of Ambassadors within our organisation
- Mentoring programs: staff become mentor of students and (young) professionals with bi-cultural backgrounds
- Focus group research into sense of belonging of diverse groups in the organisation
- Innovate HRM processes on recruitment and staff-selection
- Support (top) management to develop inclusive leadership
Innovations empowering students

**Student Labs**

- The ministry initiated and organized these Student Labs.
- VET & HE Students developed project proposals for improving transition to HE in *Student Labs*.
- HEI’s were eligible for funding to implement these student proposals.

**Students-4-Students**

- Peer role-modeling projects improving transition, retention and inclusion.
- Collaboration of Ministry and ECHO.
- Four year period (2018-2021)
- Students and HEIs can apply
Innovation in policy to enhance equity and inclusion in Dutch Higher Education:

Students-4-Students
How can students play an important role in making HE more accessible and inclusive

Superdiversity in society → Inclusion in HE
Students-4-Students Campagne

- HE institutions
- Role models
- Peer learning
- Projects

Students → Studenten
Digital platform → Digitaal platform
Projects → Projecten
Community → S4S
Instellingen in het Hoger onderwijs → Rolmodellen
Bijeenkomsten
**How?**

- Funding from the Ministry of Education. Students and institutions can apply for funding to improve inequities based on an zero base analysis.
- Proposals from institutions have to be developed in collaboration with students.
- Students play a role in developing content, as volunteer or within the project management. Funding is also meant to pay students.
- Programs of institutions and students have to be: **innovative**, enhancing **inclusion**, closing the **achievement gap**, creating **sense of belonging** and leading to **sustainability**.
- Programs of students have to be embedded in institutions.
- ECHO coordinates peer learning activities for student and institutional program coordinators.
- In total 16 institutional and 11 students projects (4 mln euro in total).
Criteria for funding

• None!

• Invitation to fill in a questionnaire → leads to a baseline analysis

• A proposal that is in fact an answer to the issues raised from the baseline analysis

→ Awarded proposals were selected by an independent committee of experts
ECHO
Center for Diversity Policy

Students & Young professionals

ECHO
www.echo-net.nl

(H)E Institutions
Ministry of Education
Other ministries
Municipalities
Private and Public employers
National, European and Global networks
Innovation in policy to enhance equity and inclusion in Dutch Higher Education: Students-4-Students

How can students play an important role in making HE more accessible and inclusive?

Superdiversity in society → Inclusion in HE

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Social identities & intersectionality

Edwin Hoffman

Person

Ethnic group

Gender

Socio-economic background

Education background

Family

Age

Health condition

Sexual orientation

Religious group
Pathways to success

Programmes

• ECHO Junior Academy
• Erasmus Pre Academic Program
• ECHO Award/ ECHO Foundation
• Masterclass on Inclusive Excellence
• Mentor program for almost graduated students
• Outreach and mentor programs to increase diversity in PhD and academia
• Leadership development through Community Meetups

➤ Target groups

➤ Children in primary school
➤ First year students Erasmus University (1st generation)
➤ Students with a migrant background
➤ Professionals in higher education
➤ Students with a migrant background
➤ MA students, PhD’s, post docs etc.
➤ Students and young professionals
Why: EU funded project IDEAS - Identifying effective approaches to enhancing the social dimension in Higher Education (http://www.equityideas.eu)
Having Needs Addressed
Having Needs Raised
Comprehensive Approach

- Does not take role of pedagogue, but puts marginalized voices central in problems and solutions
- Subjugated knowledge —> Epistemic knowledge
- Creates and fosters leadership qualities and development (and role modeling!)
- Stimulates (HEI) social responsibility and active citizenship
- Uses (human-)capital to create platforms of exposure
- Project managers —> frameworks & guidelines; Participants —> concrete interpretations
- Improved reach and retention of target group through agency
- Addressed both Individuals (←—StudieHub) as well as Institutional (←—Think Impact) needs
- Sustainability
- Pipeline trajectories
- NB: Interesting unintended outcomes!
Contact details

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Thank you!