

NAP 2003 Development, objectives and contents

*An evaluation of the National Action Plan the Netherlands
for the prevention of poverty and social exclusion*

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The European Commission has commissioned the Verwey-Jonker Institute to evaluate the development and implementation of the NAP/inclusion, in order to examine whether the main objective of the NAP – encouraging social cohesion and employment – is realised in the Netherlands. The present publication of the Verwey-Jonker Institute reports on the development of the NAP 2003 and gives a reaction on the contents of the NAP 2003. Furthermore, it reflects on the problem definition of poverty and social exclusion, related to the objectives and policy measures mentioned in the NAP 2003.

The present study is the third report in the process of evaluation executed by the Verwey-Jonker Institute. The first report evaluated the progress and implementation of the NAP 2001. The second report summarised the factors for success and failure of the implementation of the NAP 2001, and deal with the question to what extent these factors have been taken into consideration whilst developing the NAP 2003.

1.2 Research questions

The objective of this third report is to give a founded reaction to the contents and objectives of the NAP 2003. The central question of the report is formulated as follows. *How is the problem definition of poverty and social exclusion related to the objectives and the policy measures mentioned in the NAP 2003?*

This central question will be elaborated out by means of the following five research questions:

1. How has the NAP 2003 been established and what problem definition of poverty and social exclusion has been used in the NAP 2003?
2. How is the policy area of gender issues integrated in the NAP 2003?
3. How is the policy area of cultural diversity integrated in the NAP 2003?
4. How is the policy area of accessibility of services integrated in the NAP 2003?
5. Does the NAP 2003 display an integral policy concerning poverty and social exclusion?

1.3 Justification and research methods

In order to analyse the contents of the Dutch NAP 2003, several steps of research are taken. Firstly, we analyse the problem definition of poverty and social

exclusion used in the NAP 2003 based on the SCP model of poverty risks. Secondly, we look at the way this problem definition is linked to the objectives and the several policy measures. We concentrate on three policy areas: gender issues, cultural diversity, and accessibility of services.

The problem of integral policy will be discussed because the model of poverty risks means that people most at risk to remain poor or socially excluded are those confronted with an accumulation of poverty risks. For example, people confronted with a combination of low income, poor health and a low level of education run severe risk. As a result of this accumulation of risks, problem solving should start with an integral approach and a decompartmentalisation of policy areas.

The NAP 2003 states that: "An accumulation of poverty risks occurs more often among women than men. Groups in need of extra attention are, for example, single and older women from ethnic minorities". Also the European Commission emphasised the importance of gender issues and cultural diversity. Therefore, these policy areas are included in our analysis. The accessibility of services is a third policy area emphasised by the European Commission in its reaction to the Dutch NAP. Therefore, the policy area is taken into consideration as well.

In the first report of the Verwey-Jonker Institute on the NAP 2001 we also discussed the problem of local social policy and the decentralisation issue, because in the implementation of poverty prevention and social exclusion, the Dutch government co-operates with municipalities, provinces, social partners and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this report we leave this issue out, because this time we are concerned with the contents of the NAP and not with its implementation. In a next report on the implementation of the NAP 2003 we will take up this issue again.

For our analysis, we used several data. To begin with, we consulted both the NAP 2003 itself and the SCP risk model. Furthermore, the written response of the Alliance of Social Justice, relevant parliament writings, literature concerning the use of indicators, literature concerning the specific policy areas, and annual reports on poverty and social exclusion were consulted. The bibliography gives an overview of the literature and writings that were used. In addition to these data, some of the actors involved in the establishment NAP in 2003 were interviewed. A list of the interviewed persons and the organisations they represent can be found in appendix 1.

1.4 Set-up of the report

The set-up of this report is as follows. Chapter 2 deals with the question of the way in which the NAP 2003 was developed and the problem definition of poverty and social exclusion that was used in the NAP 2003. Factors will be addressed such as the procedure, the scope for support of the various actors, the risk model and the choice of the problem definition. Chapter 3 addresses the question of how this problem definition is related to the objectives and the policy measures mentioned in the NAP 2003. The policy areas under discussion are integral policy, gender issues, cultural diversity and accessibility of services. Chapter 4 gives a short summary and some concluding remarks.

2 Procedure and problem definition

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the first question asked in this report:

- How has the NAP 2003 been established and what problem definition of poverty and social exclusion has been used in the NAP 2003?

First we will focus on how the NAP 2003 was established. This will be done by addressing the following subjects: the procedure development of NAP 2003 and the kind of support and involvement from NGOs.

The second main theme in this chapter is an analysis of the problem definition of the Dutch policy combating poverty and social exclusion. This problem definition is based on the SCP model of poverty risks. We use the method of policy theory for analysis in which the importance of values and standards in policy research is recognised.¹ This method analysis contains a number of steps: problem definition, objectives, and the execution of policy in policy instruments or measures. It means we will be *reading along* with the text of the NAP 2003 in this chapter. In the next chapter this previous analysis is followed by a form of *counter reading* of the way this problem definition is linked to the targets and measures of gender issues, cultural diversity and accessibility of services.

2.2 The procedure development of NAP 2003

The development of the NAP 2003 consisted of the following four phases:

1. Preparation.
2. Writing a concept text.
3. Incorporating input of NGOs.
4. Rounding off and publishing the NAP 2003.

During the preparation phase, the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment activated the interdepartmental commission NAP 2003, with regard to its constitution largely a continuation of the interdepartmental commission NAP 2001. The co-ordination of the NAP 2003 was once again in the hands of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment. On 3 October 2002, the ministry organised the first meeting of the preparatory phase. Present were the members of the interdepartmental work group NAP 2003, representatives of the European Commission, and representatives of a large number of NGOs. Over fifty NGOs provided input for the new plan by offering a manifest against poverty and social exclusion, entitled

¹ See for example the theme issue 'Onderzoek naar beleidstheorieën' of *Beleid en Maatschappij* (XV, 1988-1), edited by F.L. Leeuw and H. van de Graaf.

High Time for Social Justice, in which the NGOs formulate the four main points of an ideal poverty policy (full citizenship, employment, income, facilities).

As another part of the preparation of the contents of the plan, the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) was commissioned to research the risk factors related to social exclusion.

The second phase consisted of the writing of a concept text. This was carried out by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment, being the co-ordinating ministry.

In the spring of 2003, there was a lot of bilateral deliberation with the members of the interdepartmental commission by e-mail and telephone. Furthermore, a meeting was held with the director-generals (DGs) of various ministries in order to incorporate their input and to augment support the basis within the ministries.

The third phase started at the beginning of May 2003. The various NGOs were offered a concept report with the request of responding before 15 May.

The fourth phase consisted of incorporating the comments of these organisations and rounding off the internal procedures. This took place from the second half of May through June 2003. The process led to the final version of the NAP 2003. After the political decision-making by the government the NAP 2003 was ready at the beginning of July 2003, and was offered simultaneously to the European Commission and the Dutch Lower Chamber on 3 July 2003.

2.3 Support from actors and NGOs

According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, the NAP 2003 is once again primarily the work of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment. The other ministries played a minor role. The representative of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, for instance, did not participate in the interdepartmental commission after the beginning of February.

The representative of the VNG (the Association of Dutch Municipalities) once again had a seat in the interdepartmental commission, but was not involved in the evaluation of the NAP 2001. He claims that the procedure was similar to the procedure surrounding the development of the NAP 2001.

Representatives of these NGOs experienced the first meeting in October as a form of exchanging information about the procedure and a starting point for interactive co-operation. They are very disappointed about the procedure that followed this first meeting, because they did not hear again from the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment until they received the concept report at the beginning of May. Furthermore, the representatives of the Alliance for Social Justice expected the procedure surrounding the NAP 2003 to have improved, taking into account the more elaborate time schedule. In retrospect, the representatives responded to the procedure negative, because the Alliance was offered no more than two weeks to respond to the concept text. They feel the procedure is a repetition of the one regarding the NAP 2001, when time to react to the concept was also lacking. Several interviewees indicate that this time made it either barely possible or wholly impossible to involve their supporters in responding to the concept. The professionals themselves, too, hardly had enough time to write a good comment. The Alliance organised preparatory NAP 2003 meetings with their supporters in February 2003. A lot of people visited these meetings, but the initiative came to a dead end:

“The changing of governments has led to a deadlock on the side of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment. As a result, the preparation brought small results.”

According to the Alliance, the short term for responding to the concept text is at odds with one of the key objectives of the NAP, that is stimulating an active input

from and close collaboration between all actors involved on the topic of prevention of poverty and social exclusion.

Even though the Alliance understands that the formulation of the NAP asks a lot of the ministries involved, the representatives are of the opinion that the departments should take interaction with the field more seriously. Furthermore, the Alliance is not satisfied with the way in which the action items and terms of reference from the manifest *High Time for Social Justice* have been incorporated in the NAP 2003. The senior advisor for international politics of the NIZW also speaks of a repetition of the procedure of the NAP 2001. She is of the opinion that welfare organisations were insufficiently involved in the planning process of the NAP 2003.

2.4 The SCP model for poverty risks

To start our analysis of the policy theory of the NAP 2003 we have to look at the conceptual model developed by the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP), on which the problem definition of risk groups of the NAP is based.² The SCP carried out a scientific study to chart the risks of poverty and social exclusion. The result was a model that can be very useful to design policy to combat poverty and social exclusion. The model distinguishes four characteristics of social exclusion: insufficient social participation, insufficient normative integration, material deprivation and insufficient access to social rights.

The next step was to find the risk factors on poverty and social exclusion with the help of a secondary analysis. These risk factors are mostly connected with the social position of people: disadvantages in the areas of *labour market status* (long-term unemployment), *income* (long-term reliance on the social minimum, problematic debts), *education* (low education), and *physical and social environment* (living in a poor neighbourhood). Two other risk factors are more connected with the personal situation: *health* (poor health conditions, chronic illness) and *the ability to cope* (social competence). Moreover, the so-called 'background' characteristics like gender, ethnicity, age and family composition, are also important in connection to risk factors. The NAP states that the effect of these background characteristics will be partially reflected via other characteristics.

At this point, we make two short comments on the way the NAP uses this model. Firstly, the NAP does not question effectively these background characteristics. Three of the four characteristics mentioned, gender, ethnicity and age, 'works' in the areas mentioned above. They produce a hierarchic situation of inequality, which influences the risks of poverty and social exclusion. The field of women's studies has extensively discussed how the inequality of social positions between men and women are linked to traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity. The same analysis can be used to show how concepts of age (young and old) and ethnicity (migrants and native Dutch people) 'work'. In this respect, these characteristics are key elements of the risk factors involved in poverty and social exclusion and must be explicitly taken into account.

The second comment is about the way the risk groups mentioned in the NAP are distinguished. The NAP only mentions this has been done by paying attention to the effects of risk factors and to the connection between different accumulations of risks. However, it fails to specify how these factors generate the specific risk groups mentioned in the NAP. We will further explore the way risk groups are distinguished by means of an analysis of the problem definition.

² For this see the NAP 2003, note 8. It wasn't possible to study the working document from the SCP, because it wasn't published yet.

2.5 Problem definition

In NAP 2003 the problem definition of poverty and social exclusion is the same as in the NAP 2001. We can recognise elements of the model of the SCP: "Poverty is a complex phenomenon which commonly has interlinked dimensions (income, social participation, educational level, health, ability to cope, home and living environment), in which the future perspective is an important distinguishing characteristic, particularly in situations where there is little or no prospect of work or a change in living conditions. In this broad view poverty is similar to social exclusion."

The central elements in this definition are the complexity of poverty and dead-end situation. The NAP 2003 is aimed at specific risk groups. The document mentions a lot of groups who are faced with this situation of interlinked risks on poverty and a futureless perspective. But how are these groups distinguished? It is unclear on what criteria their classification is based, making these groups elusive. Which group has to deal with what kind of risks?

The groups who face an accumulation of poverty are:

1. Ethnic minorities;
2. Older people (55-plus);
3. One-parent families;
4. Single households;
5. Women (more than men);
6. Single and older women from ethnic minorities.

It is not clear what kind of accumulation these groups have to face. Also the members of these groups overlap.

The following risk groups are mentioned in the same paragraph:

7. People at a great distance from the labour market;
8. People at risk from financial poverty;
9. Vulnerable groups running the risk of poverty through exclusion or a lack of basis provisions;
10. The most vulnerable who find themselves coping with an accumulation of poverty risks through a multiplicity of problems.

In this description, it is clearer what the problems for these groups are, but unclear is how these groups are composed.

In another paragraph there are the following groups with multiple problems:

11. People with psycho-social problems;
12. The young (learning disadvantages, premature school leaving, youth unemployment and the affordability of education);
13. Chronically ill people and the disabled (care for the disabled, long-term unemployment, occupational disability and health differences);
14. Ethnic minorities (integration in Dutch society, leaving school prematurely, occupational disability, degree of participation, long-term minimum income).

Risk groups for poverty, because of a lack of timely availability of provisions (for example a short supply of courses, or long waiting lists) are:

15. The illiterate;
16. Clients of the mental health care sector;
17. Addicts;
18. Ethnic minorities (newcomers and the longer-established);
19. The homeless;
20. Women needing shelter.

This overview leads to the following question: how effective is this classification in risk groups? The old method of distinguishing target groups was not effective either, because the causes of poverty were mostly linked to personal characteristics, such as working experience and lack of education. This classification puts the

blame for the situation of poverty and social exclusion on people themselves. Moreover, there was also the problem of stereotyping the people as members of a marginalised group. From this perspective, the use of risk factors connected to the social position of people with futureless perspective is more useful to start the process of policy making. However, it must be done more consequentially. Let us now turn to the way the NAP translates attention for the risk groups in objectives and measures.

Contents NAP 2003

In this chapter, the contents of the NAP 2003 will be analysed. We will address the following policy areas: gender issues, cultural diversity, and accessibility of services. We will answer the question how for these policy areas the problem definition used in the NAP 2003 is attuned to the indicators, targets and policy measures. Thereafter the issue of integral policy will be discussed. The analysis will be done by means of the following research questions:

- How is the policy area of gender issues integrated in the NAP 2003?
- How is the policy area of cultural diversity integrated in the NAP 2003?
- How is the policy area of accessibility of services integrated in the NAP 2003?
- Does the NAP 2003 display an integral policy concerning poverty and social exclusion?

3.1 Gender Issues

One of the recommendations of the European Council's joint report for the Dutch NAP 2001 was to give more attention to the gender aspects of poverty and social exclusion, for instance on the following topics of social integration policy: education, health care, and housing.

In this paragraph we will analyse how the NAP 2003 deals with this recommendation. Can one really speak of gender mainstreaming in both targets and measures? Gender mainstreaming means a consequent awareness of the inequality between men and women in all parts of the policy document. The first question regarding this awareness is: At what points does the NAP 2003 pay explicit attention to gender differences and what arguments are put forward for doing so?

However, it is also possible that the NAP still neglects gender as a risk factor. The first indication for this is that the overrepresentation of women living with financial poverty remains unmentioned, although these figures are directly at hand. The Emancipatiemonitor 2002 (SCP, 2002), which examines the progress of the emancipation process in the Netherlands, shows that in the year 2000 nearly 4% of the population formed part of a household that had to get by on a low income for four years or more. Of these people, 62% were women. This is due in particular to the unfavourable income situation of many older women on a small pension. Moreover, poverty is undergoing a 'feminisation'. Among all households on a low income the proportion of households with a woman as the main or sole earner is growing: in 1999 53% of all households on a low income. Single-householder non-western immigrant mothers are worst off. Of this group nearly 58% are on a low income; 48% of this low-income subgroup have already been in that position for at least four years.

A second question regarding NAP's awareness of gender inequality is whether it neglects the gender issue. This question does not concern explicit attention paid to

women in the document text, but the amount of attention paid to gender differences through concrete measures within the various policy fields.

Targets and measures

In the targets and measures, scarce attention is paid to women: at one point only. This is part of table 2.8: Expansion of capacity and suitability of provisions for women's relief. This one and only subject explicitly concerning a group of women have been translated into the following measure: 6 million Euro has been added to the budget of 2002.

The argument for this specific measure are that although relief during crisis situations prevents longer-term marginalisation for women needing shelter, there is a structural lack of capacity within women's shelter services. Around 45% of the registered applications of women seeking shelter were not followed by an intake, and another 60% of the intakes were not followed by an actual admission, although according to the NAP these figures seem to include a lot of double counting. It is curious this is the only subject concerning women within the targets and measures, since a lot more women groups are distinguished among the risks groups, for instance single parents. However, in a special paragraph called gender mainstreaming the NAP mentions three policy fields in which gender is explicitly recognised as a determinant of (the risk of) poverty. Here the group of single parents are mentioned twice: the calculation of benefits for single parents, and the reintegration of single parents within the assistance system. The third field, already mentioned, concerns the separate provisions for the relief of women within the entire social relief system. Although here the NAP sums up two clear topics concerning the position of single parents, these do not return in the targets and measures. Let us now look in more detail at the position of single parents, and the connection of this position to policy combating poverty and social exclusion.

Gender mainstreaming

The integration of single mothers on the labour market has more than one specific gender aspect. Only 38% of single mothers are economically independent (SCP, 2002). Single mothers have to combine full-time paid and unpaid labour if they do not want to stay part of a risk group on financial poverty. So the first issue within the scope of poverty prevention is taking care of *facilities for the combination of employment and care*.

The subject of child-care is crucial for single parents. Yet because this subject is part of the National Action Plan for Employment 2002, the NAP does not mention child-care facilities, let alone closely related subjects like opening hours of public facilities and school schedules. The field of child-care battles with a lack of facilities. In the year 1999 17,4% of children aged 0-3 made use of child-care; of the 4-12 year-olds 2,9% made use of out-of-school care (SCP, 2003). The opening hours of public facilities coincide with office hours. For working single mothers, therefore, access to these child-care facilities is difficult. Medical or dental care is virtually unavailable in non-urgent cases outside office hours. The NAP Objective 3: Promoting the accessibility of provisions in the fields of housing, education, care, legal assistance, integration programmes and social relief, pays no attention to such facilities. Moreover, with the exception of social relief, none of the targets in this objective differentiate between the position of men and women, let alone that they differentiate between the diverse needs of different groups of women. Another omission in the NAP is that no attention has been paid to relevant provisions on the labour market, for instance the opportunity to take time off if a child falls ill for women with children aged under 12; or the opportunity to adapt working hours.

Moreover, the moment a single parent enters the labour market she has to cope with a lot of aspects concerning gender differences like, for instance, segregation and income differences. The NAP 2003 does not mention any such aspects.

3.2 Cultural diversity

The NAP 2001 was criticised for the fact that the aspect of cultural diversity was underexposed. In this paragraph, we will discuss how cultural diversity was dealt with in the NAP 2003. The NAP 2003 starts with a chapter on Trends and challenges. In this chapter the aspect of cultural diversity is put forward as follows: *"The population makeup has changed radically over the past thirty years because of immigration. This process of change is not yet complete"* (NAP 2003, English edition, p. 5). Table 1.1 in the NAP 2003 shows that in 1995 in the Netherlands 7.3% of the population had a non-western ethnic background. In 2005 this percentage will be 10.6.

The issue of cultural diversity returns in the next chapter, which deals with the main objectives of the NAP 2003, where it is raised as a central issue in the paragraph concerned with the first main objective of the NAP: "Increasing social participation in the form of paid work or where (re-)employment is not possible, through carrying out socially meaningful unpaid activities". The formulation concerning the issue of cultural diversity is as follows:

"The level of participation among ethnic minorities is lower than average. In 2000 the employment rate of men among minorities was 60 per cent, and among women 36 per cent. Research (...) has shown that high poverty risks and an accumulation of risk factors occur significantly more often among ethnic minorities. The increase in labour participation among this group opens the perspective to reduce these poverty risks" (NAP 2003, English edition, p. 11).

That the labour participation of ethnic minorities lags behind becomes clear, when we compare the percentages with the average Dutch labour participation of men and women. In 2002 these percentages were as follows: of men between 15 and 65 years old the nett labour participation was 78%, while the labour participation of women was 54% (CBS/statline).

On the basis of the figures presented in the NAP, and by the CBS too, we can conclude that the labour participation of ethnic minorities lags behind. However, we also have to take into consideration the cultural diversity between cultural groups. Already in 2001, the SCP *Rapportage Minderheden* concluded that the position of people from Surinam on the labour market is on the same level as that of native Dutch people, while for people with a Moroccan or Turkish background these figures are lower (SCP 2001a, p. 12-13). Lowest are the labour participation figures of Moroccan and Turkish women (17 and 22 % in 2000 respectively). Surinam women, on the other hand, have a higher labour participation rate than native Dutch women (58%).

Targets

Considering the fact that cultural diversity is a central issue in the poverty debate in general and in the NAP in particular, we will next discuss how cultural diversity returns in the NAP targets and indicators. Table 2.1 of the NAP 2003 shows the targets and indicators concerning "Increasing social participation". One of the indicators mentioned in table 2.1 is an increase in nett labour participation among ethnic minorities. The target connected to this indicator is a labour participation growth of ethnic minorities to 54% in 2005. This means an annual increase of 0.75 percentage point from 2002.

Although the target is clear in itself, less clear is on which this increase of 0.75 percentage point is based. If this is the increase in labour participation of ethnic minorities over the last few years, we can ask the question whether the Dutch government takes the issue of participation of ethnic minorities seriously enough. We can also ask whether the NAP should not be a little bit more ambitious. The average nett labour participation of men and women in general was 66% in 2002 and the target for women alone for 2010 is 65%. With a target of 54% ethnic minorities in 2005, these groups trail behind, also in the long run. The obvious conclusion is that the poverty risks of large groups of people from ethnic minorities will remain high as well.

Furthermore, It would have been better if at least the target concerning the nett labour participation of ethnic minorities had made a distinction between men and women. The figures above show that both in general and for ethnic groups in particular the nett labour participation of women lags behind that of men. To use an average percentage of 54 as a target here, conceals these differences. The fact that the emancipation and integration of women of ethnic minorities will benefit from extra or specific government measures is thus overlooked. In addition, it would be better to distinguish according to cultural diversity, also keeping in mind the differences between ethnic groups.

Another point is that six of the 25 targets formulated in the NAP 2003, including the one on labour participation, deal explicitly with the issue of cultural diversity. Although the issue of cultural diversity seems to be a central issue in the NAP, this can not be concluded from the way most of the targets are formulated. In chapter 2 it was mentioned that in the NAP a risk model has been introduced, consisting of variable risk factors. The most vulnerable groups – the groups to which most risk factors apply – are likely to end up in a situation of poverty. People from ethnic minorities are among those groups, but ethnic minorities are not often mentioned explicitly (with the exception of target number 4 on labour participation, the two targets on integration programmes, and the two targets on dropping out of services).

This can best be explained by an example. Table 2.1 on “Increasing social participation” mentions as subject or target group “Long-term unemployed (those drawing unemployment or disablement benefits)”. Ethnic minorities are not mentioned explicitly, but research has shown that migrants, particularly those with a Turkish or Moroccan background, receive benefits from the Disability Benefits Act (WAO) relatively more often than native Dutch people. People with a Turkish background benefit from disablement insurance benefits twice as much as native Dutch people, and people with a Moroccan background 1.5 as much (Snel, Stavenuiter and Duyvendak, *In de Fuik*, 2002). Of course, all various ethnicities, including the white one, should be offered a programme towards reintegration where applicable, but some groups do need more specific policy measures on top of this. In certain areas specific measures are indeed taken, but the question is whether that becomes sufficiently clear when the targets are formulated in general terms. We come back to this question in the next paragraph.

Policy measures

The policy measures connected to the target group “Long-term unemployed (those drawing unemployment or disablement benefits)” are mentioned in the third chapter of the NAP. Policy measures concerning people who benefit from the Disability Benefits Act are described as follows:

“The UWV has launched various pilot projects to gain an insight into the most suitable way of activating those within the existing ranks of disability benefit schemes (and eventually to lead

them into employment). To this end, in principle everyone who applies for a reintegration programme is referred on."

It can be doubted whether people with a Turkish or Moroccan background, who receive benefits from the Disability Benefits Act, will apply to these programmes. The question is to what extent specific schemes or means of communication should be used to reach them. The UWV is aware of this problem and is working on it. That the specific measures or actions concerning the reintegration problems of people with a Turkish or Moroccan background are not mentioned in the NAP, can only be the result of the way the targets are formulated. In this respect, it is remarkable that, on the other hand, in the overview of measures linked to the target of labour participation of ethnic groups such measures *are* mentioned. The measure is formulated thus: "Agreements have been made with UWV to prevent the influx of an unnecessarily large numbers of ethnic minorities into the WAO system." It can only be concluded that when the target is more narrowly defined, the measures connected to it are explicitly mentioning ethnic minorities as well. It was shown that the labour participation of women from ethnic minorities is only 36%. Although there are differences between various ethnicities, this still means that large groups of immigrant women are excluded from the labour market. The Dutch government is very much concerned with the integration and emancipation of women from ethnic minorities. This can be concluded from the fact that the Directory of Emancipation (DCE) of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is developing a Policy Plan (Plan van Aanpak) concerning the integration and emancipation of women from ethnic minorities. This Policy Plan will be published in December 2004. It will be interesting to compare the measures of this Policy Plan to the policy measures in the NAP/inclusion, and to see whether both measures are attuned to each other.

Promoting the labour participation of ethnic minorities is also part of the National Action Plan for Employment 2002. As a result, the measures to enhance the labour participation of - among others - ethnic minorities are to be found in the NAP/Employment as well. The NAP/inclusion only concentrated on groups confronted with long-term unemployment. Given the target on the labour participation of ethnic minorities mentioned above, it is at least awkward that the policy measures and instruments concerning child care, social activation and reintegration are not to be found in the NAP/inclusion. This brings us to the broader question how the targets and measures of both the NAP on inclusion and the NAP on Employment are attuned to each other.

3.3 Accessibility of services

In the Netherlands, the issue of waiting lists in the public health sector has been much debated for many years. The issue in all its complexity far exceeds the theme of the NAP/inclusion, but is connected to it in as far as inaccessibility of services enhances the risks of poverty and social exclusion. The link between waiting lists and social exclusion can be made more explicit by bringing in another much debated issue in the Netherlands, namely the issue of the large proportion of people drawing benefits from the Disablement Benefits Act (the WAO). The link is explained in the NAP in footnote 23 of the English version: "(...) non-timely assistance for a serious mental disorder may quite possibly have a direct negative effect on someone's health and ability to cope, which in turn can lead to a low income (for example through becoming disabled for employment, or unemployed)".

For many years the influx in the Disablement Benefits Act in the Netherlands was very high. Of all people who benefited from the Disablement Benefits Act, one third received a benefit because of a mental disorder. This one third has remained constant during the 1990s (Hertogh, 2001). In the Dutch system, during the first year of illness the employer is responsible for the activation process of his or her employee. During the first year of illness, the benefit for the employee is also paid for by the employer. In the second year of illness, the government takes over. For the employee, who as a result of a mental disorder is unable to work in the short run, it might be necessary to get referred to a psychologist or psychiatrist in the public health sector. However, when waiting lists are high and the employee has to wait many months before getting treatment, it might happen that the employee becomes dependent on the disablement benefit before getting better. Afterwards, it is much more difficult to keep in touch with his or her employer and to get reinstated into working life again. The waiting lists form only one aspect of the influx of people with a mental disorder into the Disablement Benefits Act, but since it is a crucial one we will now look at the way the NAP deals with the issue in its targets and target groups.

Targets

Table 2.5 of the NAP 2003 shows the availability of care provisions. One of the target groups in the table is mental health care (GGZ). The targets are to reduce mental health care waiting lists by:

- Better insights into waiting lists
- Halving the numbers waiting in 2007 compared to 2003

The footnote to the table shows that currently 75,100 people are on the waiting list for mental health care. This means that when numbers have been halved in 2007, 37.550 people will be on the waiting lists. Because this is still a large number, it will indeed be crucial to have more insight into the waiting lists and to know how long the waiting lists are, what kind of people are on the waiting list, whether there are any other options open to them, and whether there are people on more than one waiting list. Better insight into waiting lists is in this respect no empty shell. How this target will be reached depends, of course, on the set policy measures.

Measures

When we look at the measures concerning health care in the NAP, it is concluded that in 2007 people will be helped within certain norms, based on what is medically and socially acceptable. In the NAP it remains unclear whether these norms keep people with a mental disorder out of the social benefits and, in the longer run, out of poverty and social exclusion. In order to fight poverty and social exclusion more interchange between the medical sector and the system of social security is therefore necessary. This brings us to the question of integral policy, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Insight into waiting lists will be obtained by setting up a benchmark by which mental health organisations can compare their performance. In the NAP it is stated that for this a start has been made in 2003. It remains unclear, however, how the benchmark helps to reduce the waiting list.

3.4 Integral policy

In our first report on the development and implementation of the NAP 2001 we asked whether the plan had an integral policy in the area of poverty and social exclusion. Our research showed that within the procedure there was insufficient space to attune the policy contents for subjects that went beyond the boundaries of the working fields of the ministries. In this report on the contents of the NAP 2003, we further elaborate on this question. Has there been an improvement, and can one speak of the NAP as a good example of integral policy?

One of the major points of criticism regarding the NAP 2001 was related to the fact that the plan was primarily a summary of existing policy measures in the area of poverty and social exclusion. During the development of the NAP 2003, more emphasis was placed on the integration of policy contents. This has led to a much more fixed choice for certain policy areas. The Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment expects that the groups where poverty risks tend to accumulate are some of the most vulnerable, and these groups are likely to end up in poverty. According to the representatives of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment, it is obvious that, considering this culmination of risks, an integral approach should be adopted and an integrated offer of welfare facilities should be made available. After all, the purpose of this would be to reduce the number of risks. With this, the ministry expects to offer a helping hand to the municipalities. In this paragraph we will look at two ways in which an integral policy can be established: an integrative steering model, combined with interactive policymaking.

An integrative steering model

In the Netherlands one can expect that the policy of decentralisation has had a lot of consequences for the system of steering. It is no longer possible to design policy within the closed environment of a compartmentalised department (Hufen & Ringeling, 1990). Instead, there must be a new form of active policy making. This means that the traditional top down type of governing (government) has to be replaced with a communicative, interactive bottom-up system (governance), whereby steering and decision-making are considered as a common project and process between citizens and the government (Dierckx, 2003). The notion of co-operation is central to the concept of governance. In the NAP we distinguish between three types of co-operation: horizontal, vertical co-operation, and co-operation between public and private actors.

The multidimensional background of poverty necessitates an extensive horizontal collaboration within the government. As we have already mentioned, an interdepartmental commission was established in order to facilitate deliberation and tuning. Although one can speak of more focus of the plan because there seems to be consensus on a fixed choice for certain policy areas, the question is whether the implementation of the plan will also be the effect of horizontal co-operation. The causes of poverty and social exclusion are of a complex and interwoven nature. This still clashes with the old government's habit of pursuing a policy from a single perspective.

In the field of poverty and social exclusion, vertical co-operation between levels of government has mostly to do with the relation between the national and the local government, as a result of the policy of decentralisation. In recent years the local authorities were encouraged with financial incentives to implement measures aimed at combating poverty. The process of decentralisation will not only continue

in the years to come, but will also be reinforced by the new Employment and Social Security Act.

The NAP 2003 speaks of stimulating an integrated local approach to poverty and social exclusion, in the form of a linked approach: "The (policy) efforts of multiple actors are necessary due to the many aspects of poverty and social exclusion. To this end emphasis must be laid on a linked approach with regard to risk groups with multiple problems." On this point, also a target and a measure have been formulated. The target in table 2.9 is: "Offering municipalities assistance from 2005 in formulating an integrated local approach to poverty and social exclusion." This assistance (knowledge of complex reintegration programmes) must be realised in 2005. However, the representative of Divosa emphasises that on the subject of the local system of debt assistance a financial regulation is also needed.

In the evaluation of the NAP 2001, several actors (the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and NGOs) already determined the necessity of more reflection on a decentralised approach. Several parties have suggested the development of regional or local action plans, to facilitate the direct approach of citizens and to make it possible to create more scope for support on a local level. However, with regard to the NAP we conclude that the plan for working with a linked approach can only be efficacious if there is enough fine-tuning, co-ordination and feedback between the national and the local level.

Interactive policy making

The Dutch government seems to move in the direction of interactive policy making. It delegates societal responsibilities and no longer functions exclusively as a central problem-solver. In the NAP one can read this intention in objective 5: "Encouraging active input by and close co-operation between all stakeholders in combating poverty and social exclusion." This objective has no target and no measure, which is an omission. In this paragraph, all the actors are mentioned who are in any way involved in the plan. The relation with the non-governmental organisations is also mentioned: "Many non-governmental organisations provide input into the approach to poverty and social exclusion and stimulate the social debate on parts of this policy".

On this point we have a question about the involvement of the non-governmental organisations. An important characteristic of interactive policy making is the involvement of various actors, from a very early stage of policy making on. On a surface view, this seems to be the case. From the start, the non-governmental organisations were invited to participate. Yet, what did this interaction with the government consist of, and what was its quality?

A second characteristic is an active involvement as partners in the governing of society. The representatives of the NGOs, with exception of Divosa, make it very clear this is not the case. They are formally recognised as organisations of the poor, and individual policymakers may be prepared to listen to them, but an adequate way of interactive policymaking has still not been found.

Conclusions

The NAP based its problem definition of risk groups on a conceptual model developed by the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP). The SCP model was discussed in the chapter 2. We have concluded that the characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity and age are key elements of the risk factors involved in poverty and social exclusion and therefore should be explicitly taken into account. Also in chapter two we have explored the way risk groups are distinguished and concluded that the use of risk factors connected to the social position of people with a futureless perspective is more useful than the old method of distinguishing target groups to start the process of policy making. However, this could be done more consequently, because now in the NAP it is unclear on what criteria the classification of risk groups is based. In order to look into the risk groups in more detail we have analysed the issues of gender, cultural diversity and waiting lists.

We can conclude that the attention of the NAP 2003 for gender aspects is still very limited. Only one risk group, women who need a relief system, is explicitly mentioned in the targets and measures. All the other targets and measures are formulated in neutral terms. In our example of the position of single parents, we saw there is a strong reason to pay explicit attention to the position of single parents in relation to specific gender aspects. In order to prevent poverty and social exclusion for different groups of women who are in a situation with a lot of risk factors we need to have more clues about the diversity of the position and the needs of these groups to alter their futureless situation. The NAP has to be more explicit on the subject of gender aspects in every policy field. Now there is only a vague intention: "Where relevant discussions will be held with the departments involved during the ongoing NAP process, to determine how to take account of the male-female differences in implementing targets and policy measures." The question is if this intention leads to an effective form of gender mainstreaming in the phase of implementation or that the outcome will be a sketchy plan.

Next we have analysed how the aspect of cultural diversity was dealt with in the NAP. We have seen that ethnic minorities are considered a risk group for poverty and social exclusion. The way ethnic minorities and cultural diversity are dealt with in the NAP is, however, somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, ethnic minorities are mentioned specifically in some of the targets and the measures deduced from them. On the other hand ethnic minorities are not considered as a specific group at all, although it is acknowledged in the NAP that "the level of participation among ethnic groups is lower than average". The way ethnic minorities are dealt with in the NAP leads to two problems. Firstly, it is unclear who precisely are meant by ethnic minorities. There are big differences in for example labour market participation between people with a Surinam background or people with a Turkish or Moroccan background and between the men and women from the different groups. Therefore, it would have been better to bring in the aspect of cultural diversity and consider the differences between the ethnicities,

including the white one. Secondly, for certain so-called risk groups within the ethnic minorities it might be necessary to take specific measures. Women with a Turkish or Moroccan background for example will never reach the target of labour participation of 65% in 2010 when all measures for all groups of women are the same. They will stay behind in both the short run and the long run if nothing specifically is done for them. This problem is overlooked as long as the targets are formulated in so-called neutral terms. When the targets formulated are explicitly about ethnic minorities, the measures deduced from them are also explicitly dealing with ethnic groups.

In chapter 3 the problem of waiting lists connected to the issue of poverty and social exclusion was discussed. The NAP 2003 considered the problem of accessibility of services at length and as an example we took a closer look at the waiting lists for people with a mental disorder. The waiting lists in the public health sector are connected to the policy area of social security in so far as long waiting lists can make people dependent on disablement benefits, one of the main political issues in the Netherlands. It was concluded that, although it is useful to reduce the waiting lists for people with a mental disorder in the next few years, the problem could only be solved successfully by an integral approach. In such an approach both aspects, the architecture of the social security system and the organisation of the public health care, are taken into account.

The Dutch government seems to move in the direction of interactive policymaking. It delegates societal responsibilities and no longer functions exclusively as a central problem-solver. This was formulated in the NAP in the fifth objective. An important characteristic of interactive policymaking is the involvement of various actors from a very early stage of policy-making. We have seen that in the Netherlands the non-governmental organisations were invited from the start to participate in the development of the NAP, but on the interaction with the government some of the NGOs still have questions. Another characteristic of interactive policymaking is an active involvement as partners in the governing of society. The representatives of the NGOs, with exception of Divosa, have made clear this is not the case. They are formally recognised as organisations of the poor, and individual policymakers may be prepared to listen to them, but an adequate way of interactive policymaking still has to be developed.

The NAP 2003 gives an overview of many measures in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. In this respect the NAP 2003 is a useful and practical instrument for the next few years. Whether the implementation of the NAP will be successful depends on both internal and external factors. Three of those we will mention in particular. Firstly, we have discussed that working with risk factors and risk groups is valuable, but that in practice it can be confusing what or who is meant by them. Especially the aspects of gender and cultural diversity need clarification. It will be recommended to discuss this issue with the SCP and all actors involved. Secondly, many of the policy measures concerning poverty and social exclusion will have to be dealt with by the local authorities and not by the central government. The next few years it will become clear if the local authorities are sufficiently equipped for this. In this respect the new law concerning work and social security (Wet werk & bijstand or WWB) will be a test case. Thirdly, the Dutch government has decided on a course of economy measures for the next four years. How these measures will effect the level of participation remains to be seen.

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Appendix **List of interviewed persons**

Name	Organization
Mr G.L.M. van Rienen	Management Social Policy, Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports
Mr G. Koster	VNG (Association of Dutch Municipalities)
Mr T. Thissen	Divosa
Mr R. Janssen	Sociale Alliantie
Ms M. Bulk	FNV
Ms J. Udo	CNV
Mr M. Kerkhof	Humanitas
Ms Th. Meinema	International Centre, NIZW

Colophon

commissioner	European Commission
financier	European Commission
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