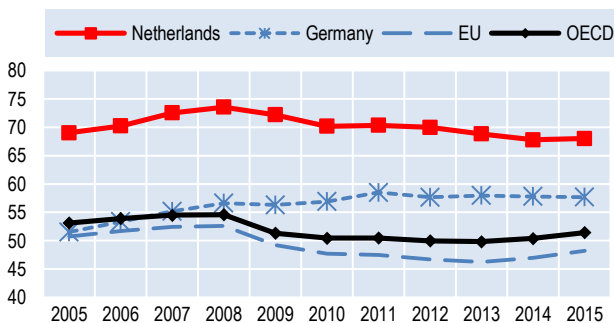




The 2016 edition of *Society at a Glance* examines social well-being and its trends across the OECD. The number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) remains elevated in many countries since the crisis; the report therefore focusses on this group of young people examining the characteristics of those at risk of being NEET along with policies to help meet the challenge. This edition also includes many new youth-specific indicators on family formation, self-sufficiency, income and poverty, health and social cohesion.

The labour market situation of young people in the Netherlands remains favourable

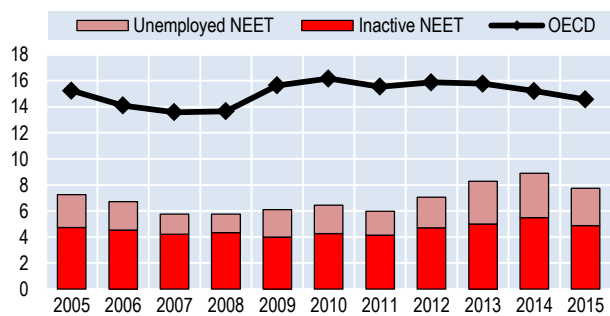
Youth employment rates by country, 2005-2015



[Figure 1.2]

NEET rates by activity status, Netherlands and OECD, 2005-2015

Percentage of 15-29 who not in employment, education or training



[Figure 1.5]

THE NEET SITUATION

The labour market situation of young people in the Netherlands has deteriorated since the start of the Great Recession but remains favourable overall. Among 15-29-year-olds, 68% were working in 2015 – the third-highest rate across OECD countries – but 5.5 percentage points less than at the start of the Great Recession in 2008 (see Figure above, left panel). More than half of all employed young people work part-time, typically combining studies and work.

Only few young people are out of education and work. The NEET rate – the share of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training – attained 7.8% in 2015, the second-lowest value across the OECD (behind Iceland). In total, 240 000 15-29-year-olds were NEET in 2015, 70 000 more than in 2007, causing an estimated earnings loss of 0.4% of Dutch GDP.

The majority of NEETs in the Netherlands are, however, not looking for work: *unemployed* young people only accounted for about one-third of all NEETs in 2015 – the remaining two-thirds were *inactive* (Figure above, right panel), indicating that young people out of education or work appear to often face additional barriers.

Low educational attainment is the principal risk factor for being NEET. Of the 25-29-year-olds with at-most lower-secondary education 34% are NEET, five times

more than the NEET rate of university graduates of the same age [Figure 1.9]. And 40% of all NEETs in the Netherlands have not attained an upper-secondary qualification. In 2014, **14% of young people in the Netherlands left school without an upper-secondary qualification.** This is only slightly less than the OECD average of 16% and considerably more than the 8 to 9% observed in Finland, Switzerland or Austria [Figure 1.26].

Health problems are an obstacle to school attendance or employment for many NEETs. The share of young people in the Netherlands who report suffering from poor health is 16 times higher among NEETs than among non-NEET youth – the greatest gap observed across all OECD countries [Figure 1.15]. Half of all Dutch NEETs report that ill health limits them in their daily lives, suggesting that the Netherlands can do more to support the school-to-work transition of young people with mental or physical health problems.

Young people born abroad are 2.5 times more likely to be NEET than native-borns [Figure 1.16]; 20% of all NEETs in the Netherlands were born abroad. The gap in employment rates between natives and migrants is larger in the Netherlands than in any other OECD country, both for young people and the working-age population [Figure 4.3]. This underlines the importance of programmes to support young migrants – both those struggling in school as well as those out of work.

OVERVIEW OF OTHER SOCIAL INDICATORS

Difficult labour market entries

Finding a stable job after leaving school or university can be a lengthy process involving bumps and false starts. **While the overall youth unemployment rate is low in the Netherlands** – 9% of all active young people in 2014 – it was 50% higher for the cohort who left education in 2014, at 13% [Figure 4.13].

Young people who completed school during the Great Recession had a particularly hard time finding employment. In the Netherlands, the employment rate in the year of labour market entry was over 15 percentage points lower for the cohort who entered the labour market at the height of the crisis in 2009 than for a comparable cohort that left school in 2004. **The impact of the Great Recession on employment chances was initially much larger for young men, but has proven more persistent for young women** [Figure 4.15]. Having left school during the Great Recession also had a lasting effect on young people's earnings. [Figure 4.15].

Low poverty but greater risks for youth

Comparatively few people in the Netherlands live in poverty – 8.4% versus 11.4% in the OECD on average [Figure 5.4]. Young people, however, face a much greater risk: among 15-24-year-olds, 22.8% lived in households with incomes below the poverty line, the second-highest value across all OECD countries [Figure 5.6]. **The poverty risk for young people in the Netherlands is double that of children under 18 and more than 10 times as high as for seniors aged 65 and over.** One reason is that young Dutch tend to leave the parental home at a young age, often before having a regular income. This is similar to the situation in Canada and the Nordic countries. [Figure 3.10].

High life satisfaction

The Dutch are generally happy with their lives: on a scale from 0 to 10, the Netherlands record an average life satisfaction of 7.3, well above the OECD average of 6.6 [Figure 7.1]. **Teenagers are particularly satisfied with their lives: 90% report being satisfied, the highest share across the OECD.** Boys in the Netherlands tend to report substantially higher levels of life satisfaction than girls – a pattern observed also in other countries [Figure 7.2].

Declining smoking and drinking

Tobacco and alcohol are major risk factors for at least two leading causes of premature mortality: cardiovascular diseases and cancer. **Smoking rates have declined in nearly all OECD countries, and the drop has been particularly pronounced in the Netherlands.** Around 19% of adults in the Netherlands reported daily smoking in 2014, just below the OECD average, compared to nearly a third of Dutch adults in 2000 [Figure 6.11]. **Most countries, including the Netherlands, have also seen a gradual reduction in alcohol consumption.** Adults in the Netherlands consumed on average 8.4 litres of alcohol in 2014, slightly less than in the OECD on average – and 1.7 litres less than in 2000 [Figure 6.12].

Reduced confidence in government

Trust in public institutions is essential for public support of and compliance with government policies and regulations. **Confidence in the national government is widespread in the Netherlands, it has, however, declined since the start of Great Recession:** 56% of the population reported having confidence in the national government in 2014/15 - 9 percentage points less than in 2007/8. This is still much higher than the OECD average (42%), but significantly lower than in Switzerland (77%), Luxembourg (68%) or Norway (65%) [Figure 7.5]. **The Netherlands is, however, among the countries with the greatest share of people reporting trusting in their fellow citizens:** 67% feel that, generally, most people can be trusted – a value surpassed only in Denmark and Norway. The OECD average lies at only 36% [Figure 7.4].

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