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European Disability Expertise (EDE) provides independent scientific support to the Commission's policy Unit responsible for disability issues. It aims to mainstream disability equality in EU policy processes, including implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This country report has been prepared as input for the European Semester in 2022.¹

¹ For an introduction to the Semester process, see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/how-european-semester-works/>.

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Table of contents

1	Executive summary and recommendations	4
1.1	Key points and main challenges for Netherlands in 2022.....	4
1.2	Recommendations for Netherlands.....	5
2	Mainstreaming disability equality in the Semester documents.....	6
2.1	Recovery and Resilience Plan for Netherlands (RRP)	6
2.2	Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans.....	6
3	Disability and the labour market - analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies.....	7
3.1	Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities	7
3.2	Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester	10
4	Disability, social policies and healthcare – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies.....	14
4.1	Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities	15
4.2	Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester	17
5	Disability, education and skills – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies.....	19
5.1	Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities	19
5.2	Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester.....	21
6	Investment priorities in relation to disability.....	22
6.1	Updates on use of existing EU funds (up to 2021)	22
6.2	Priorities for future investment (after 2021)	22
7	Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester	24
7.1	Data relevant to disability and the labour market.....	25
7.1.1	Unemployment.....	26
7.1.2	Economic activity	27
7.1.3	Alternative sources of labour market data in Netherlands	28
7.2	EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2019)	28
7.2.1	Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Netherlands	29
7.3	EU data relevant to disability and education.....	30
7.3.1	Alternative sources of education data in Netherlands.....	30

1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for Netherlands in 2022

Disability and the labour market

A comprehensive policy program, introduced in 2015, to increase labour participation and to reduce benefit dependency for people with disabilities, is showing success for to the minority who are offered newly created jobs based on a national agreement. Chances to find paid work have diminished for all other groups of people with disabilities. Those that do find paid work, are often on temporary part-time contacts. There is a shift from sheltered employment to day care centres.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

Poverty increased in the Netherlands among people with a disability, whether they have paid work or not. The main policy to reduce poverty and social exclusion by enhancing employment fails people with a disability, as a significant proportion do not succeed in finding paid jobs. Those that do are often precariously employed. There is no adequate statistical monitoring of poverty and social exclusion and its causes among households with a member with a disability. Government denies that poverty increased among households with a member with a disability.

People with disabilities are confronted with complicated procedures for accessing social support and health care and are not all compensated with the existing tax credit system for high costs. Accessing healthcare and social support is supposed to be facilitated by independent client support workers, but the majority of people with disabilities are not aware they can apply for this support.

Disability, education and skills

People with disabilities who succeed in entering vocational education are adequately supported in their transition to the labour market. Early school leaving is low but increased. Policy efforts to reduce segregated special education and to reduce the number of children with disabilities being exempted from the educational system shows negative results.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

There are no co-ordinated national investment plans for inclusion and accessibility. The CRPD implementation plan aims at voluntary action plans to be made by municipalities, employer organisations, trade unions and an alliance of organisations of persons with disabilities. No quantifiable targets or statistical monitoring are included.

1.2 Recommendations for Netherlands

These recommendations are based on the evidence and analysis presented in the following chapters of our report.

- **Recommendation:** Continue efforts to reserve jobs for people with a disability via the scheme of the national agreement but make these jobs more available to all groups of people with a disability.
Rationale: Efforts so far to enhance job opportunities show positive results for only one specific group of people with disabilities. The broader population of workers with a disability do not see their chances of finding paid jobs increase.
- **Recommendation:** Adjust the national agreement to reserve jobs such that jobs are more secure and profitable for workers.
Rationale: Offered jobs are in majority short term and on temporary basis and they provide no adequate income security to workers. If contracts are on long term and if employers are required to pay full wages, there would be an incentive to adapt jobs to the needs of job seekers and provide more skill training in order to make the jobs productive enough for employers.
- **Recommendation:** Analyse why the Dutch Labour market does not seem able to become more inclusive and adapt itself to the growing number of people who, because of a disability, do not seem to fit productivity demands of employers. Investigate how the labour market could be restructured along the social model such that it becomes more generally accessible for people with a disability.
Rationale: Current strategies aim at providing extensive reintegration support, such as wage subsidies to compensate for the perceived lack of productivity of many individual workers. This strategy is based on a medical model in which individual workers need to be 'improved' or compensated to fit in.
- **Recommendation:** Monitor poverty using definitions from Eurostat and analyse causes of poverty among households with a member with a disability.
Rationale: Poverty increases among people with a disability. There is no adequate policy formulated to address this problem because Government ignores existing data on poverty.
- **Recommendation:** Address segregation within the educational system.
Rationale: Segregation in education reinforces segregation on the labour market and social exclusion. Segregation along the lines of migrant status, socioeconomic status and disability are interconnected. Efforts to diminish influx in special education failed so far.

2 Mainstreaming disability equality in the Semester documents

Country Reports and Country Specific Recommendation of direct relevance to disability policy were not published in this exceptional policy cycle. For a commentary on the last published documents please see our country fiche for the previous Semester 2020-21.

2.1 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Netherlands (RRP)

Due to the resignation of the current Government in January 2021, the March 2021 elections and the so far unsuccessful attempts at forming a new government, the Netherlands has not submitted a plan for use of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) nor an update of the NRP. This means there have been no RRF expenditures in the Netherlands. It is practice in Dutch democracy when a Government has resigned, not to decide on policy matters that require political consideration, such as decisions on new policies and new major expenses. The only references to disability in the Stability Programme are aggregated within total pension expenditure.

2.2 Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

Relevant issues to participation in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are highlighted in each chapter. However, the initial review and examination of implementation in the Netherlands has not yet taken place so there are no formal conclusions and recommendations available in 2021.

It is also important that Semester plans align with national disability strategy. In the Netherlands, this refers initially to the document *UN-convention Unlimited participation! Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2018-2021) and annexed to the initial state party report.

3 Disability and the labour market - analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

The UN CRPD Committee did not yet schedule an initial review of implementation in the Netherlands so there are currently no recommendations. The first state party report was submitted in 2019, as well as independent reports from the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

[Article 27 UN CRPD](#) addresses Work and Employment.

The Implementation Plan² for the CRPD together with the Decree on Accessibility³ and the revised implementation plan *Onbeperkt Meedoen*,⁴ serves as a national disability strategy. The implementation plan and decree aim towards agreeing on voluntary action plans to be made by municipalities, employer organisations, trade unions and an alliance of organisations of persons with disabilities. No quantifiable achievement targets are included in the plan. Concerning employment, no objective is mentioned but a description is given of existing policies such as reintegration opportunities provided via the Participation Act and the effort to provide 125,000 new jobs for persons with disabilities in the open labour market by 2026.

The alternative report on implementation of the CRPD by NGOs notes that poverty and unemployment among people with a disability increased between 2009 and 2016.⁵ The alternative report criticizes the implementation plan for its lack of quantifiable targets and its lack of adequate statistical monitoring.

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Netherlands of 56.3 % in 2019, compared to 83.1 % for other persons against a national employment target of 80 % and approximately 5.0 points above the EU27 average. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 27 percentage points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.7. The gap is quite wide across all adult groups, including for younger age groups.

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 7.2 % and 2.6 %, respectively in 2019 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in

² *Implementatieplan VN Verdrag inzake personen met een handicap* (implementation plan CRPD), 13 March 2017, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2017/03/13/implementatieplan-vn-verdrag-inzake-de-rechten-van-personen-met-een-handicap>.

³ *Besluit algemene toegankelijkheid voor personen met een handicap of chronische ziekte* (Decree on Accessibility), 21 June 2017 <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0039653/2017-06-21>.

⁴ *Onbeperkt Meedoen*. (Unlimited Participation), report on implementation CRPD, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/rechten-van-mensen-met-een-handicap/documenten/rapporten/2018/06/01/programma-vn-verdrag-onbeperkt-meedoen>.

⁵ *Schaduwrapportage Verdrag inzake de rechten van personen met een handicap in Nederland 3* December 2019. *Alliantie VN-Verdrag Handicap*. (Alternative report Netherlands on implementation of the CRPD), https://iederin.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Schaduwrapport-VN-verdrag-Handicap.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0K76ogu6_UWWSSuhGR7A5Bja0345uqhxwvUH1MGfc6V-p-HLuF8Yr_fg.

Netherlands was 60.6 %, compared to 85.3 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

Economic participation is persistently low among specific categories of people with disabilities. According to the participation monitor of the administrative authority UWV, concerning persons receiving disability benefits, the participation rate decreased in 2020 for the general population but more so for people with disabilities. The general participation rate in the Netherlands was 77.3 % in 2020 - a decrease of - 0.9 % compared to 2019. The decrease in participation rate in 2020 for specific groups of people with disabilities varied between 1.2 % and 2.3 %.⁶

The proportion of people with employee related part benefits (and who acquired disability during their working phase of life) having paid work was 46 % in 2020 (compared to 47.2 % in 2019 and 42.5 % in 2014).⁷ The proportion of people with employee related full benefit benefits and working in paid jobs was 7.8 % in 2020 (9 % in 2018 and 8.4 % in 2014). The participation rate of people who became disabled before their 18th birthday and who are considered able to work (at least partly) was 49.1 % in 2020 compared to 50.4 % in 2019 (for those receiving a specific disability benefit called Wajong) and 44.1 % in 2020 compared to 46.4 % in 2019 for those receiving an unemployment benefit. The number of people receiving a disability benefit increased to 808 200 in 2019 (compared to 801 100 in 2019).⁸

In 2015 a national agreement was made to create 125 000 extra jobs by 2025 for people who became disabled before their 18th birthday, and to create 30 000 sheltered workplaces (before 2025) within companies to compensate for the closing down of all inflow in sheltered workshops. The jobs are outside sheltered workshops, in regular companies, but they are considered as sheltered jobs as they are differently financed, and only people who are found eligible for sheltered employment may work there. The total number of people working either on a job created within the agreement scheme or in sheltered workplaces was 167 000 in 2019 (an increase of 5000 compared to 2018).⁹ Government noted a decrease in 2020 and stated that more efforts should be made to reach the target of 125 000 jobs in 2025.¹⁰

The organisation of sheltered employment organizations Cedris analysed more recent data from both the agreement to create jobs for people with a disability and the sheltered work scheme. The analysis shows that the net result of both schemes taken together show a negative trend in 2020 and 2021. The increase in the number of persons working in these schemes was 1 755 in 2016, 9 166 in 2017, 10 941 in 2018

⁶ Administrative authority UWV. Monitor Arbeidsparticipatie 2020; <https://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv-monitor-arbeidsparticipatie-arbeidsbeperkten-2020.pdf>.

⁷ Administrative authority UWV. Monitor Arbeidsparticipatie 2020; <https://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv-monitor-arbeidsparticipatie-arbeidsbeperkten-2020.pdf>.

⁸ Administrative authority UWV. Monitor Arbeidsparticipatie 2020; <https://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv-monitor-arbeidsparticipatie-arbeidsbeperkten-2020.pdf>.

⁹ Letter to Parliament. Voortgangsrapportage onbeperkt meedoen nov 2020; https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2021Z15333&did=2021D32855.

¹⁰ Letter to parliament on the effects of the job agreement and sheltered workplaces. December 2020; <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/18/resultaten-onderzoeken-banenaafspraak-en-cijfers-beschut-werk>.

and 3 418 in 2019. A decrease in total number on the scheme of 5 254 occurred in 2020 and a further decrease of 1,300 in the first three months of 2021.¹¹ The decrease in the number of persons working within these schemes is attributed to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy.¹²

The jobs offered within the national agreement and sheltered jobs are for a large and increasing part (48 %) on a temporary contract.¹³ The majority of jobs within these schemes offer a net disposable income at or below disability benefit level.¹⁴

Research by the independent research agency Nivel shows that people with physical disabilities have a labour participation rate of 31 %, people with mental health problems 15 % and people with a minor to moderate intellectual disability 35 % all compared to a general labour participation rate of 76 % in the general population.¹⁵

Another research report by Nivel, states that people with disabilities who have paid work, are more likely to be offered temporary contracts and less working hours per contract than they prefer. They state they have less chance of being offered promotion and opportunities for self-improvement.¹⁶

A proportion of 36 % of all workers in the Dutch labour market work on temporary contracts, on call contracts or on contracts as self-employed workers. The proportion of temporary, on call contracts and self-employed is almost 50 % higher among people with lower educational level.¹⁷ People with disabilities report an even higher proportion of such flexible temporary contracts. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research SCP reports that people with such contracts, including people with disabilities and paid work, are among the first to lose their work and income security as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸

¹¹ Feitelijke analyse ontwikkeling van de inclusieve arbeidsmarkt. Reort by Cedris, September 2021 <https://cedris.nl/app/uploads/Cedris-Feitelijke-analyse-ontwikkeling-van-de-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-digitoegankelijk.pdf>.

¹² Letter to parliament on the effects of the job agreement and sheltered workplaces. December 2020. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/18/resultaten-onderzoeken-banenafpraak-en-cijfers-beschut-werk>.

¹³ Parliament, December 2020. Resultaten onderzoeken banenafpraak en cijfers beschut werk, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/18/resultaten-onderzoeken-banenafpraak-en-cijfers-beschut-werk>.

¹⁴ *Eindevaluatie Participatiewet*. SCP. scp-publicatie 2019-17 (End report evaluation Participation Act) <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2019/11/19/eindevaluatie-van-de-participatiewet>

¹⁵ Report on indicators for the CRPD. Overkoepelende indicatoren programma Onbeperkt meedoen 2016-2019! Nivel 2020 <https://www.nivel.nl/nl/publicatie/monitoring-onbeperkt-meedoen-tweede-meting-overkoepelende-indicatoren-2016-2019>.

¹⁶ *Verdiepingsstudie Participatiemonitor. Werken met een beperking. Arbeidsomstandigheden van mensen met een lichamelijke beperking* (In Depth study Participation Monitor) and Nivel *kerncijfers participatie* (Core data participation) Knapen, Haarmann, Grosscurt & Boeije, 2020. <https://nivel.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/1003802.pdf> and <https://www.nivel.nl/nl/publicatie/meedoen-de-samenleving-2008-2018-update-kerncijfers-participatiemonitor>.

¹⁷ *Flex barometer*, by CBS, TNO, ABU and FNV (a combination of Netherlands Statistic CBS, Trade Unions Federation, Union of temporary agencies, and research agency TNO, <http://www.flexbarometer.nl/verhouding-vast-flex-zelfstandig>.

¹⁸ *Welbevinden ten tijde van corona. Eerste bevindingen op basis van een bevolkingsenquête uit juli 2020* SCP, September 2020. (Wellbeing in times of corona. First data based on interviews in

People who are self-employed and have low income (15 % of all households with a minimum wage level income are self-employed) and a majority have no insurance when they become ill or disabled¹⁹ or funds to invest in personal education or training.

Employers show no significant increase or decrease since 2015 in their willingness to hire people with disabilities. Of all employers, 61 % state they are willing to hire someone with a disability but only 19 % make concrete plans to do so. Less than a quarter of this 19 % willing employers succeeds in hiring an employee with a disability.²⁰ The administrative authority UWV provides slightly different data on employers who are hiring persons with a disability. In 2019 12.7 % of employers hired a person with a disability(benefit) compared to 11.9 % in 2018.²¹

One third of people with disabilities experience discrimination and unequal treatment by employers or work colleagues) compared to 25 % among people without disabilities. One in eight job seekers with a disability stopped their attempts in finding paid work due to experienced discrimination.²²

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

In 2015 a comprehensive policy program and legislation was introduced to increase labour participation and reduce benefit dependency of people with disabilities, in particular of people who acquired disability at a young age before 18th birthday. Only those who were assessed as having full incapacity to work are entitled to a disability benefit. All others are to be given an unemployment benefit (based on the Participation Act and to be offered a broad range of reintegration support (including job coaching and wage subsidies). The national agreement with employers' organisations was made to create 125 000 extra jobs and 30 000 extra sheltered workplaces by the year 2025 (while closing down all influx in sheltered workshops). Part of the deal was also to involve municipalities to provide benefits and reintegration support, both to be paid out of a total budget for benefits and reintegration support.

As a result of this major policy program, the chances to find work have improved for the specific group of young persons who are considered able to work partially. Before 2015 the chance to find paid work for this group was 29 % compared to 38 % in 2019.²³ However the scheme does not aim at the broader and larger groups of people with disabilities out of paid work and national statistics show no improvement in employment chances. Overall, nor in dependency on benefits (either from administrative authority UWV or municipalities based on Participation Act).

general population) <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2020/09/10/welbevinden-ten-tijde-van-corona.-eerste-bevindingen-op-basis-van-een-bevolkingsenquête-uit-juli-2020>.

¹⁹ Stimulanz May 2010. *Bestrijding van Armoede onder zelfstandigen*. (Fighting poverty among self-employed).

²⁰ *Eindevaluatie Participatiewet*. (End report evaluation Participation Act) SCP. SCP publication 2019-17.

²¹ Monitor Arbeidsparticipatie 2020. Administrative authority UWV, <https://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv-monitor-arbeidsparticipatie-arbeidsbeperkten-2020.pdf>.

²² *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland II* SCP April 2020 (Experienced discrimination in Netherlands), <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2020/04/02/ervaren-discriminatie-in-nederland-ii>.

²³ Evaluation Participation Act. Echtelt, P. van, K. Sadiraj, S. Hoff, S. Muns, K. Karpinska, D. Das, M. Versantvoort, m.m.v. L. Putman, 2019, *Eindevaluatie van de Participatiewet*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

Moreover, the chance to being offered a sheltered jobs (in a regular company) decreased from 55 % in 2013 to 39 % in 2019, a decrease of 16 percentage points. Sheltered employment jobs are in majority (52 %) temporary jobs and the average wage for sheltered employment has decreased since 2015.²⁴ Sheltered workshops ceased new job applications since 2015. There is a tendency to offer sheltered employment more to people with less severe disabilities and to refer people with more severe disabilities to projects in which people with disabilities are offered a contract to work without pay as a day-care activity.²⁵

Tighter eligibility criteria for disability benefits reduced the number of beneficiaries but enlarged the group of people receiving unemployment benefits by municipalities (based on the Participation Act). Around 60 % of people receiving such benefit describe themselves as unable to seek work due to a disability or chronic illness. Although municipalities have means to offer wage subsidies and other reintegration support, the chances of finding and keeping paid work did not increase for this group, according to the evaluation report by SCP.²⁶

An evaluation report by the Netherlands Institute for social research SCP, sums up the shortcomings of the policy since 2015:

- Wage subsidies are a very effective measure to place people with disabilities in employment (55 % more chance of a job), but municipalities offer these subsidies sparsely due to lack of budget.
- Municipalities offer less or no reintegration support to persons with a disability if they are not entitled to an individual benefit.
- Municipalities offer less support in finding work to people with more severe disabilities, as their reintegration support is deemed more expensive.
- Municipalities acknowledge that a majority of long-term unemployed experience a range of health problems and that they can be considered having disabilities. Coexisting problems such as having large debts prevent these unemployed with health problems to accept work.
- Employers are in majority unaware of the range of reintegration support and wage subsidies that are available and if they are aware, they find them so complicated and such a burden on productivity of their employees without a disability, that they refrain from using them. Employers want municipalities to arrange necessary financial and other support effortlessly.
- Employers offer existing job vacancies to people with disabilities and do not want to deploy adaptation instruments for specific jobs. Furthermore, employers are

²⁴ Evaluation Participation Act. Echtelt, P. van, K. Sadiraj, S. Hoff, S. Muns, K. Karpinska, D. Das, M. Versantvoort, m.m.v. L. Putman, 2019, Eindevaluatie van de Participatiewet, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2019/11/19/eindevaluatie-van-de-participatiewet>.

²⁵ Projects might be restaurants like Brownies and Downies in which people with intellectual disabilities work as waiter or kitchen aid or shops who sell handmade projects, <https://www.browniesanddownies.nl> and <https://www.ipsedebruggen.nl/over-ons/winkels-horeca>.

²⁶ *Eindevaluatie Participatiewet*. SCP. (End report evaluation Participation Act) SCP publication 2019-17.

not in the habit of using instruments such as job carving to create new jobs that might be suitable for people with severe disabilities.²⁷

- People with physical disabilities are not offered enough opportunities to work on their employability by learning or studying.²⁸
- People with a disability benefit who are considered to be able to do some form of paid work, are not entitled to a guaranteed disability benefit. The majority of this group does not succeed in finding paid work and runs a high risk of missing out on an adequate minimum income level.

In a response to this evaluation, Government offered in 2020 several measures and extra budget to address these shortcomings. The aim is to simplify reintegration support measures for employers, provide a larger budget (EUR 53 million) for wage subsidies, job coaching and other personal support instruments. Wage subsidies for people with disabilities that until 2020 were given for a maximum of three years will, as of 2024, be granted permanently to stimulate employers to change temporary job contracts into permanent contracts.²⁹ This measure does not address the fact that municipalities prefer not to pay wage subsidies, as they are perceived as too costly. Furthermore, municipalities face budget deficits due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Government made an additional budget of EUR 300 million in 2021 available for municipalities to provide additional support to young people who have large debts and who are unemployed and extra budget for people who are unemployed in general (EUR 40 million in 2020 and EUR 90 million in 2021). This increase in budgets is a response to a 20 % increase of requests for unemployment benefits in 2020 since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A large part of unemployed who are entitled to support by municipalities have a disability.³⁰

The new budget for 2022, published 22 September 2021, adds no additional measures, due to the resignation of the Government. For the same reason Government does not address the need to restructure labour market such that the

²⁷ Research cited in Evaluatie Participatiewet SCP: De Beer et al., 2019; Ieder(in), 2019, Fermin, de Looze en Hazelzet, 2019. *Eindevaluatie Participatiewet*. (End report evaluation Participation Act) SCP. SCP publication 2019-17.

²⁸ *Verdiepingsstudie Participatiemonitor. Werken met een beperking. Arbeidsomstandigheden van mensen met een lichamelijke beperking* (In Depth study Participation Monitor. Working with a disability. Work environment for people with a physical disability) and Nivel kerncijfers participatie (Core data participation), Knapen, Haarmann, Grosscort & Boeije, 2020, <https://nivel.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/1003802.pdf> and <https://www.nivel.nl/nl/publicatie/meedoen-de-samenleving-2008-2018-update-kerncijfers-participatiemonitor>.

²⁹ *Programma Breed offensief* (Programme Broad charge) Budget plan 2021 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/begrotingen/2020/09/15/xv-sociale-zaken-en-werkgelegenheid-rijksbegroting-2021>.

³⁰ *Programma Breed offensief* (Programme Broad charge) Budget plan 2021 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

proportion of self-employed and temporary contracts decrease, as was advised by a temporary advisory commission³¹ and by the national Socio Economic Council.³²

To reduce the number of people working in self-employed contracts, the government will further reduce tax credit for the self-employed. This measure, in itself, does not address the financial incentive employers have to contract self-employed workers for whom they have no obligations to provide and pay social security. Reducing tax credits for self-employed does on the other hand diminish the means for self-employed to pay for their own social insurance.

Additional budget (EUR 40 million) was made available in 2021 to make work pay more for people with a disability benefit. Of every extra earned euro, a beneficiary of disability benefit is allowed to keep at least 30 cents. Municipalities and the administrative authority UWV (who both support different groups of job seekers with a disability) are stimulated to work more intensively together in regional reintegration programmes and are supposed to lessen bureaucratic rules for granting wage subsidies to employers.

Government has not as yet designed national strategies or organised research to make more fundamental changes in the vocational education of low skilled adult workers. There is not yet a strategy to reduce the large number of temporary contracts for workers with a disability. Workers with a temporary contract are less well positioned to profit from programmes for developing their skills at the workplace. There is no specific strategy to enhance skills of adult workers with a disability and no policy to reduce perceived disability discrimination based in the labour market.

A national strategy could help to make employers more aware of creative solutions for opening up employment for people with disabilities such as creating opportunities for job carving or enhancing employability of potential employees by providing skills training opportunities or enhancing literacy. It is left up to the creativeness and willingness of regional organisations of employers and municipalities to try to define new strategies.

³¹ In wat voor land willen wij werken?. Report by the advisory commission Borstlap, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2020/01/23/rapport-in-wat-voor-land-willen-wij-werken>.

³² Sociaal-economisch beleid 2021-2025. Zekerheid voor mensen, een wendbare economie en herstel van de samenleving. Sociaal Economische Raad, June 2021; <https://www.ser.nl/-/media/ser/downloads/adviezen/2021/sociaal-economisch-beleid-2021-2025.pdf>.

4 Disability, social policies and healthcare – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

The UN CRPD Committee did not yet schedule an initial review of the implementation in the Netherlands so there are currently no recommendations. The first state party report was submitted in 2019, as well as independent reports from the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

[Article 28 UN CRPD](#) addresses Adequate standard of living and social protection.

[Article 19 UN CRPD](#) addresses Living independently in the community.

[Article 25 UN CRPD](#) addresses health care.

The Implementation Plan³³ for the CRPD together with the Decree on Accessibility³⁴ and the revised implementation plan *Onbeperkt Meedoen* (translates as Unlimited Participation),³⁵ serves as a national disability strategy. Both plan and decree aim towards agreeing on voluntary action plans to be made by municipalities, employer organisations, trade unions, organisations of persons with disabilities.

Poverty is not mentioned in the Implementation plan. The unspecified targets that are mentioned are to enhance participation of people with disabilities in social life, recreation, sports, culture and political participation. The alternative report on implementation of the CRPD by NGOs notes that the situation of people with a disability in the Netherlands deteriorated since signing of the Convention. Poverty among people with a disability increased between 2009 and 2016. No significant increase in participation has been achieved.³⁶

The right to be able to live independently is not specifically addressed in the Implementation plan. The unspecified targets that are mentioned are to enhance participation of people with disabilities in social life, recreation, sports, culture and political participation. The alternative report notes that municipalities (who are since 2015) responsible for providing support for independent living, did not have adequate budget to provide all requests for adequate support, and do not succeed in providing enough affordable adaptive houses for people with disabilities. Municipalities have cut down the number of direct payments for personal support for people with disabilities.

³³ *Implementatieplan VN Verdrag inzake personen met een handicap* (implementation plan CRPD), 13 March 2017; <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2017/03/13/implementatieplan-vn-verdrag-inzake-de-rechten-van-personen-met-een-handicap>.

³⁴ *Besluit algemene toegankelijkheid voor personen met een handicap of chronische ziekte* (Decree on Accessibility), 21 June 2017; <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0039653/2017-06-21>.

³⁵ *Onbeperkt Meedoen*. (Unlimited Participation), report on implementation CRPD, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/rechten-van-mensen-met-een-handicap/documenten/rapporten/2018/06/01/programma-vn-verdrag-onbeperkt-meedoen>.

³⁶ *Schaduwrapportage Verdrag inzake de rechten van personen met een handicap in Nederland 3* December 2019. Alliantie VN-Verdrag Handicap, https://iederin.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Schaduwrapport-VN-verdrag-Handicap.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0K76ogu6_UWWSSuhGR7A5Bja0345uqhxwevUH1MGfc6V-p-HLuF8Yr_fg.

The number of people with disabilities below 65 years of age living in residential institutions has increased since 2015 (to an estimated number of 141 000 people).³⁷

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC 2019 indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Netherlands was 20.6 % in 2019, compared to 11.1 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 10 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was -0.1 points (11.3 % for older persons with disabilities and 11.4 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion and break these down by gender as well age.

For persons with disabilities of working age in Netherlands (age 16-64) the risk of poverty before social transfers was 42.1 % and 20.6 % after transfers. The in-work poverty rate for persons with disabilities aged under 60 was 6.1 %.

Of interest to health policy are the data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list). Disability equality gaps are evident here too and, on this basis, the rate for persons with disabilities in the Netherlands was 0.4 %, compared to 0.1 % for other persons, which is below the EU27 average of 1.7 %.

In 2020 and 2021 net disposable income increased more for households with paid work (2.2 % compared to 1.2 %) than for households with a member with an unemployment or disability benefit (increase in 2020 1.3 % and 2021 0.3 %). For 2022 the prediction is that household income for working people will see a zero increase while net income for people on benefit will decrease by 0.2 %.³⁸

In a reaction to the claim in the alternative report on implementation of the CRPD that poverty increased for people with a disability between 2006 and 2016, government denied that households with a member with a disability are worse off than households without. According to government, households with a member with a physical disability in fact had a slight higher average net income level, then households without a member with a disability. This slightly higher net income is attributed to the fact that the average age of households with a member with a disability is higher and the higher the age the higher the average income tends to be. The overall conclusion was that poverty did not increase for people with a disability. The research that backs this Government claim used an unusually broad definition of disability such that of all 5.6 million households below 65 years, a majority of 68 % was considered to have a

³⁷ Alternative report. Schaduwrapportage Verdrag inzake de rechten van persnen met een handicap. Alliantie VN verdrag, December 2019, <https://iederin.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Schaduwrapport-VN-verdrag-Handicap.pdf>.

³⁸ Macro Economische Verkenning. Centraal Planbureau September 2021, <https://www.cpb.nl/sites/default/files/omnidownload/CPB-Raming-Macro-Economische-Verkenning-MEV-2022.pdf>.

member with a disability.³⁹ EU-SILC data gives a much lower proportion of 26.1 % of disability prevalence for households below 65 years of age in the Netherlands.⁴⁰

The Netherlands Institute for social research SCP states that people with a disability have suffered austerity measures affecting their ability to access support and care.⁴¹ Additional research by this Institute shows that people who have temporary contracts or low age level, lack educational opportunities and have lesser opportunities to buy their own home and start a family.

The national agreement to provide jobs for people with disabilities who are assessed as to have capacity to work (partially) have improved their chance to find paid work but at the price of worsening their income security because the majority needs additional benefits.⁴² Additional research shows that 61% of people with disabilities who have paid work and who need additional benefits, experience a decrease in net disposable income as additional benefits do not add up to the net disposable income when they only have a benefit.⁴³

Social inclusion of people with physical and intellectual disabilities has not changed significantly in the period 2008-2018 according to the general participation monitor by research agency Nivel. According to this monitor (based on interviews of a panel of people with disabilities) participation in recreation activities, living in the community using public transport, doing paid or voluntary work and contributing to clubs and associations, hardly changed.⁴⁴

Access to health care and social support, affordable housing and forming families is hindered by obligatory contributions for care, inadequate support in navigating complicated eligibility procedures, and competence fights between different acting agencies in financing and providing long term care.⁴⁵ The National Ombudsman

³⁹ Letter to parliament on disability policy. 24 170, nr 244. April 2021.

⁴⁰ Master tables concerning EU 2020: year 2018 Prepared for the European Disability Expertise (EDE) By Stefanos Grammenos (in collaboration with Mark Priestley) Statistics on Persons with Disabilities (2018) Employment, unemployment, activity, education (Early school leavers & Tertiary education) Source of data: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 Prevalence, Low work intensity, Risk of poverty (financial poverty), Material deprivation, At risk of poverty or social exclusion & Health Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Extracted on 13-07-2020, <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/1046-edo-task-2-1-statistical-indicators-tables-eu-silc-2018>.

⁴¹ *De Sociale Staat van Nederland*, (Social state of affairs Netherlands) SCP September 2020, <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2020/09/10/kwaliteit-van-leven-in-onzekere-tijden.-de-sociale-staat-van-nederland-op-hoofdlijnen>.

⁴² Evaluation Participation act. Echtelt, P. van, K. Sadiraj, S. Hoff, S. Muns, K. Karpinska, D. Das, M. Versantvoort, m.m.v. L. Putman, 2019, Eindevaluatie van de Participatiewet, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2019/11/19/eindevaluatie-van-de-participatiewet>.

⁴³ Als verrekenen een beperking is. Report by Stimulansz, Optimalistic and Muzus. February 2021, <https://www.stimulansz.nl/als-verrekenen-een-beperking-is/>.

⁴⁴ *Update Kerncijfers Participatie monitor 2008-2018*. Nivel, July 2020.

<https://nivel.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/1003827.pdf> and <https://www.nivel.nl/nl/publicatie/meedoen-de-samenleving-2008-2018-update-kerncijfers-participatiemonitor>.

⁴⁵ CPB discussion paper 363 Co-payments in long term home care: do they affect the use of care: <https://www.cpb.nl/sites/default/files/omnidownload/CPB-Discussion-Paper-363-Co-payments-in-long-term-home-care.pdf>.

warned in 2018 and 2020 that people with more severe disabilities and families with young children with disabilities are severely affected by the lack of access to long-term care.⁴⁶

The alternative CRPD report made use of interviews in which young people with a disability, who state they cannot access affordable adapted rental houses. They also stated that obligatory contributions for social care and support - which are means tested within households - prevents them from initiating marriage or starting long lasting relationships with partners with a paid job. Forming a household which a partner with a paid job would result in higher obligatory contributions for care of hundreds of euros per month.⁴⁷

Government investigated these complaints, confirmed that marrying or living together lead to higher contribution for long term care (up to EUR 800 per month) but declined to change legislation as the costs of long-term care requires high contributions and means testing within households.⁴⁸

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

The national policies to reduce poverty consists of two main measures:

- The first is that net minimum level of benefits is linked to the level of net minimum wage. If minimum wage is increased, net benefit level will automatically increase. This helps maintain a minimum income for all households.
- The second policy measure is to stimulate all people dependent on benefits to accept paid work by increasing (via fiscal measures) the net disposable income level of all people with paid work. The result is a widening gap in net income increase between people with and without work over the years. This widening gap leads to an increased poverty level of all those who are dependent on benefits and is particularly significant due to the disability employment gap.

Although the chances of getting paid work have increased for people who acquired a disability before 18th birthday, many people with disabilities with a benefit do not succeed in acquiring a paid job. Many of those that do, find that their net disposable income stays at net minimum level.⁴⁹ Thus the policy to reduce poverty by enhancing employment of people with disabilities shows inadequate results.

⁴⁶ *Rapport Zorgen voor burgers.* (Report worries on care for civilians) Mei 2018: <https://www.nationaleombudsman.nl/nieuws/onderzoeken/2018030-zorgen-voor-burgers-onderzoek-naar-knelpunten-bij-de-toegang-tot-zorg> and press release September 2020: <https://www.nationaleombudsman.nl/nieuws/2020/nationale-ombudsman-geen-woorden-maar-daden-nodig-bij-toegang-tot-zorg>.

⁴⁷ *Schaduwrapportage Verdrag inzake de rechten van personen met een handicap in Nederland* (Alternative report on implementing the CRPD Netherlands) 3 December 2019. *Alliantie VN-Verdrag Handicap*, https://iederin.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Schaduwrapport-VN-verdrag-Handicap.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0K76ogu6_UWWSSuhGR7A5Bja0345uqhxwvUH1MGfc6V-p-HLuF8Yr_fg.

⁴⁸ Answers to written questions on 'stacking health care costs by members of parliament Van der Staaij and Ploumen. December 2020, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/28/beantwoording-motie-van-der-staij-en-ploumen-over-in-kaart-brengen-verdere-beperking-stapelning-van-zorgkosten>.

⁴⁹ *Kansrijk armoedebeleid* (Successful poverty policy), SCP June 2020.

Because there is no specific monitoring of the net income position among households with a member with a disability and Government recently denied⁵⁰ the deteriorating poverty among such households, the need for additional measures is not addressed. Poverty diminishes opportunities for people with a disability to participate in training and education. Municipalities tend to offer reintegration support only to those that have an individual unemployment benefit. People with a disability are being made financially dependent on household members with a paid job and cannot acquire reintegration support.

The national Umbrella organizations of DPOs, IederIn, criticises Government for ignoring increasing poverty and social inclusion and the lack of specific measures in the new Budget plan for 2022.⁵¹ The Netherlands Court of Audit also criticised the government for not investigating the efficiency of the tax credit system for people who pay high health costs. The Court of Audit did a survey of their own of the tax credit system and found that people with a middle income and costs of more than EUR 500 on health costs profit the most from the tax credits. People with low income do not profit from the tax credit system because they do not pay enough tax to be able to deduct the health costs from their taxes.⁵²

There is a need to address the growing inequality among low skilled workers, not only in terms of net disposable income, but also in terms of having job security and access to social insurance. People with a disability are overrepresented among groups with lower education, lower skills and insecure job contracts and access to employee related disability benefits.

National Government initiated several projects and pilots to enhance access to long term care and social support as a reaction to the critique by the National ombudsman. The aim is to provide everyone in need of social support or long-term care with an independent client support worker who will help navigate care bureaucracy and complicated eligibility procedures. An evaluation report of the implementation plan CRPD shows that in 2019 33 % of people (27 % in 2016) were aware that they can get help by an independent support worker.⁵³ Apart from the fact that the majority is not aware of the availability of support workers, the system does not address adequately the competing financial interests and competences of financiers of social support and care according to the National Ombudsman. People with disabilities may still face the consequences and not be provided with adequate support.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Letter to parliament. April 2021. 24170, nr 244 Gehandicaptenbeleid.

⁵¹ Letter by IederIn to Government on Budget 2022, September 2021, <https://iederin.nl/herstel-de-bestaanszekerheid-voor-mensen-met-een-beperking/>.

⁵² Verantwoordingsonderzoek. Ministry of Health, welfare and sports. Yearly report 2020. May 2021, <https://www.rekenkamer.nl/publicaties/rapporten/2021/05/19/resultaten-verantwoordingsonderzoek-2020-ministerie-van-volksgezondheid-welzijn-en-sport>.

⁵³ Voortgangsrapportage Onbeperkt Meedoen 2020. Ministry of Health Welfare and Sports, November 2020, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2020/11/20/voortgangsrapportage-2020-onbeperkt-meedoen>.

⁵⁴ Press release September 2020: <https://www.nationaleombudsman.nl/nieuws/2020/nationale-ombudsman-geen-woorden-maar-daden-nodig-bij-toegang-tot-zorg>.

5 Disability, education and skills – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

The UN CRPD Committee did not yet schedule an initial review of implementation of the CRPD in the Netherlands so there are currently no recommendations. The first state party report was submitted in 2019, as well as independent reports from the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

The Implementation Plan⁵⁵ for the CRPD together with the Decree on Accessibility⁵⁶ and the revised implementation plan *Onbeperkt Meedoen* (translates as Unlimited Participation),⁵⁷ serves as a national disability strategy. The implementation plan has the general goal of ensuring that all children have access to education and will be offered education that fits their needs.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2019 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with additional caution due to relatively wide confidence intervals, but they consistently indicate disability equality gaps (an average of 2-3 years provides a more stable indication). Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status in Netherlands. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than peers of the same age groups without disabilities (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

The number of early school leavers increased in 2017 and 2018 to a level of nearly 27,000 pupils. National Government set the aim to reduce the number of early school leavers to 20,000 in 2021.⁵⁸ The dropout rate in (general) secondary education is 0.5 % and rose from 4.7 % to 5.1 % in vocational education and training (VET).

According to the OECD, vocational upper secondary education (MBO colleges) is of good quality with strong links to the labour market. School-to-work transition is also smoother in the Netherlands than in most other countries. After this transition phase, it seems there are lesser opportunities to develop workers skills tough. The OECD notes that the workplace provides a potentially strong learning environment because it offers real on-the-job experience that makes it easier to acquire job-specific skills, as well as other important skills, such as problem solving, conflict management and

⁵⁵ *Implementatieplan VN Verdrag inzake personen met een handicap* (implementation plan CRPD), 13 March 2017, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2017/03/13/implementatieplan-vn-verdrag-inzake-de-rechten-van-personen-met-een-handicap>.

⁵⁶ *Besluit algemene toegankelijkheid voor personen met een handicap of chronische ziekte* (Decree on Accessibility), 21 June 2017; <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0039653/2017-06-21>.

⁵⁷ *Onbeperkt Meedoen*. (Unlimited Participation), report on implementation CRPD, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/rechten-van-mensen-met-een-handicap/documenten/rapporten/2018/06/01/programma-vn-verdrag-onbeperkt-meedoen>.

⁵⁸ Briefing website: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/vsv/maximaal-20.000-voortijdig-schoolverlaters-in-2021>.

entrepreneurship. According to the OECD this informal learning is an underutilised resource in the Netherlands.⁵⁹ The large proportion of temporary contracts, on call contracts and self-employed workers among people with a disability contributes to this lack of on the job learning opportunities.

Segregation of pupils with disabilities has increased. The influx of children with disabilities in schools for special education increased since 2015 while the age of leaving special education has been lowered from 20 to 18 years of age.^{60 61} The number of children with disabilities and complex support needs that are not accepted in any school but are being referred to day care centres increased from 4 444 children in 2015 to 6361 pupils in 2019/2020.⁶² On top of that number around 4 000 children with special educational support needs are registered pupils in schools but effectively dropped out of school.⁶³

The Netherlands Institute for social research (SCP) states in a report that half of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities need extra support in education, including vocational education. After leaving schools at least 40 to 55 % in this group needs support on employment.⁶⁴

The Dutch educational system is becoming more segregated not only by disability, but also by migrant status, gender and parents' educational attainment. Migrant children, especially boys, are overrepresented in special schools. Differences between schools have the largest impact on pupils' performance of all OECD countries and are closely linked to the different tracks offered. The gap between the average performance of pupils at schools with a low versus high concentration of pupils with a migrant background is the second largest in the EU. This implies that the achievement of individual pupils is closely linked to their school choice. The parental choice system contributes to creating more segregated schools and strengthens the effects of residential separation.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report Netherlands 2017, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264287655-en.pdf?expires=1600931571&id=id&accn_ame=guest&checksum=DB4602BABF58E551C3C8FEE4D228ABC 8.

⁶⁰ *Trends in passend onderwijs 2011- 2019 DUO Informatieproducten* (Trends in education for pupils with disabilities), dr Susan Borggreve, dr Bo de Lange 24 August 2020; <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/passend-onderwijs/documenten/rapporten/2020/09/10/duo-ip-trends-in-passend-onderwijs-2011-2019>.

⁶¹ ARK Mey 2017. *Rapport Resultaten verantwoordingsonderzoek 2016 bij het Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*. Report accountability budget Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), <https://www.rekenkamer.nl/onderwerpen/passend-onderwijs/documenten/rapporten/2017/05/17/resultaten-verantwoordingsonderzoek-2016-bij-het-ministerie-van-onderwijs-cultuur-en-wetenschap>.

⁶² Letter to Parliament. Verzuimcijfers schooljaar 2019-2020. February 2021, https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2021Z03683&did=2021D08156.

⁶³ Letter to Parliament. Verzuimcijfers schooljaar 2019-2020. February 2021, https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2021Z03683&did=2021D08156.

⁶⁴ *Meedoen gaat niet vanzelf* (Participation does not occur on its own) SCP, September 2020; <https://www.scp.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/09/01/meer-meedoen>.

⁶⁵ OECD Education at a glance 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>.

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

The policies to reduce early school leaving consist of agreements between national Government, municipalities and secondary and vocational schools to cooperate on a regional basis. Schools and municipalities are required to make regional plans to finance and offer coaching for potential early school leavers, to set up special classes, provide mentoring, reduce sickness among pupils, provide on the job learning opportunities and to provide support to families of pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school. These policies aim at reducing drop out numbers and help enter young pupils with a disability to enter vocational education and a transition to the labour market. The success in this field has already been good. According to OECD, vocational upper secondary education (MBO colleges) is of good quality with strong links to the labour market.⁶⁶ Pupils with disabilities in special schools are supported and succeed in entering basic vocational education. Vocational colleges cooperate with special schools and provide their courses within these special schools. Projects to provide more coaching while doing internships for pupils with disabilities are funded with ESF funds.

Special schools, vocational colleges and municipalities do not succeed in offering these opportunities to all pupils with a disability but select entry on the basis of severity of disability and support needs. Vocational colleges select pupils on literacy and math's skills for most courses above entry level and exclude those that do not meet their requirement. DPO's of parents of children with disabilities complained that their children drop out or are refused entry because they cannot get adequate individual support in vocational colleges.⁶⁷

The increasing influx of children with disabilities in primary and secondary special schools is addressed by extending opportunities for special and mainstream schools to cooperate together and to find ways of providing more opportunity to provide (medical) care and support within schools so children with support needs do not have to be referred to day care centres.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report Netherlands, 2017 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264287655-en.pdf?expires=1600931571&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=DB4602BABF58E551C3C8FEE4D228ABC> 8.

⁶⁷ Report by DPO's Balans en Nederlandse vereniging voor Autisme, September 2018. *Studeren op het mbo met een beperking. Zorgelijke ervaringen uit de praktijk* (Studying at vocational colleges, worrisome experiences), https://autisme.nl/media/296484/dossier_mbo_2018.pdf.

⁶⁸ Letter to parliament. Verbeteraanpak passend onderwijs en route naar inclusiever onderwijs. (Route to more inclusive education). November 2020, https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2020Z20529&did=2020D44085.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

6.1 Updates on use of existing EU funds (up to 2021)

Of the total ESIF budgets for the Netherlands for the period 2014-2020, EUR 510 million comes out of the European Social Fund (ESF). Of this ESF budget 71 % is spend on active inclusion,⁶⁹ to enhance labour participation for groups who have a low participation rate, including people with disabilities. Of the participants in ESF project, nearly 70 % were people applying for assistance in seeking work by municipalities. Around 32 % of this group were young people with disabilities graduating from special schools and special vocational schools. Of the young people participating in ESF-projects after leaving special schools, 27 % found paid work immediately afterwards. Most projects provide internships and additional support such as job coaching, training for specific jobs and help with applying for jobs.⁷⁰

The funding based on the ESF programme was depleted in 2018.

6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2021)

The focus of projects financed with ESF funds has been almost exclusively on helping young people with disabilities leaving special schools and vocational colleges to enter labour market. A future priority could be to enhance employability for people with disabilities after entering the labour market by providing more structural opportunities to develop their skills, improve literacy and to create opportunities to seek qualifications for jobs in upcoming sectors of the economy such as investments on the green and digital transition.

Another priority could be to explore innovative ways to create jobs that are more 'carved up' to suit the specific capabilities of people with disabilities. Employers who are willing to hire employees with a disability tend to offer jobs that are suited for the average worker. Carving up jobs does not mean that jobs are necessarily made simpler or require less skills; carving up could also mean creating different work circumstances that suit both specific individual needs and are at the same time productive enough for the employer to pay full wage.

An example of such a strategy introduced by the newly formed initiative called the Coalition for Technology and Inclusion. This coalition formed by representatives of employer organizations, the administrative authority UWV, the ministry of social affairs, some universities and a national council of receivers of unemployment and disability benefits, aims to improve reintegration in the labour market by using digitalisation for people with disabilities.⁷¹ The coalition describes seven pilot projects.⁷² Examples are development of a communication app for non-verbal workers; testing an eyeglass with a camera and the ability to read and speak digital

⁶⁹ Voortgangsbrief ESF 2017. 29 January 2018, Letter to Parliament on progress ESF by the minister of Social Affairs and Employment, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2018/01/29/voortgangsbrief-europees-sociaal-fonds-esf-2017>.

⁷⁰ Factsheet ESF projects, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2016/24/factsheet-esf-in-nederland>.

⁷¹ Coalitie voor technologie en Inclusie, <https://www.technologievoorinclusie.nl/overcti/>.

⁷² <https://www.technologievoorinclusie.nl/challenge/>.

texts for workers who cannot see or who cannot read; a project to monitor (with smart watches and checklists) energy levels of workers who run the risk of being overloaded in their work; development of an exoskeleton for workers in physically hard working conditions; development of a system of 9 linked microphones and an app which converts speech to text in order to enable deaf workers to 'listen' (via speech-to-text software) and respond on group conversations of colleagues; development of an augmented reality glass to facilitate a worker through complicated work processes within a warehouse; development of an app combined with a specific working tool (hedge cutter) to provide feedback to workers with limited strength and concentration ability. Some of the initiatives aim at people with intellectual disabilities who are more and more pushed out of labour market as working environments are more and more technologically advanced and digitalised. Digitalisation usually means a push out of people with intellectual disabilities and low reading skills. In this case digital innovation is used to re-enable people with disabilities to be productive and be included in modern working environments.

Addressing the segregation in the Dutch labour force could also be a future priority. Dutch workers tend to be highly educated and skilled, yet 1.7 million workers are low skilled among which are many with cognitive disabilities. A priority could be to improve literacy skills by investing in quality of basic education to people with disabilities.

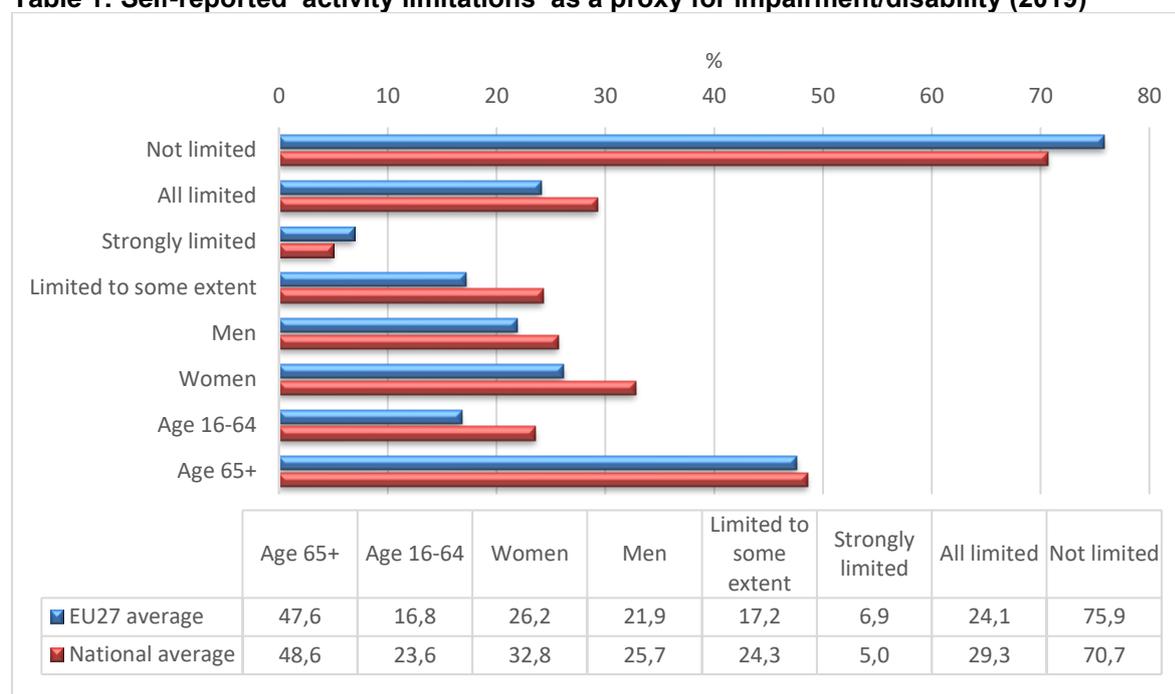
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database⁷³ and statistical reports.⁷⁴

Unless specified, the summary statistics are drawn from the most recent EU-SILC data available to researchers from Eurostat. The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions (congregative households). The sampling methods vary somewhat in each country.

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.⁷⁵

Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability (2019)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1.

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do not report ‘activity limitations’.⁷⁶ National estimates for Netherlands are compared with

⁷³ Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁷⁴ Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

⁷⁵ The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

⁷⁶ This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.⁷⁷ More working age adults report limitations in the Netherlands than the EU average.

7.1 Data relevant to disability and the labour market

Table 2: EU and Netherlands employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

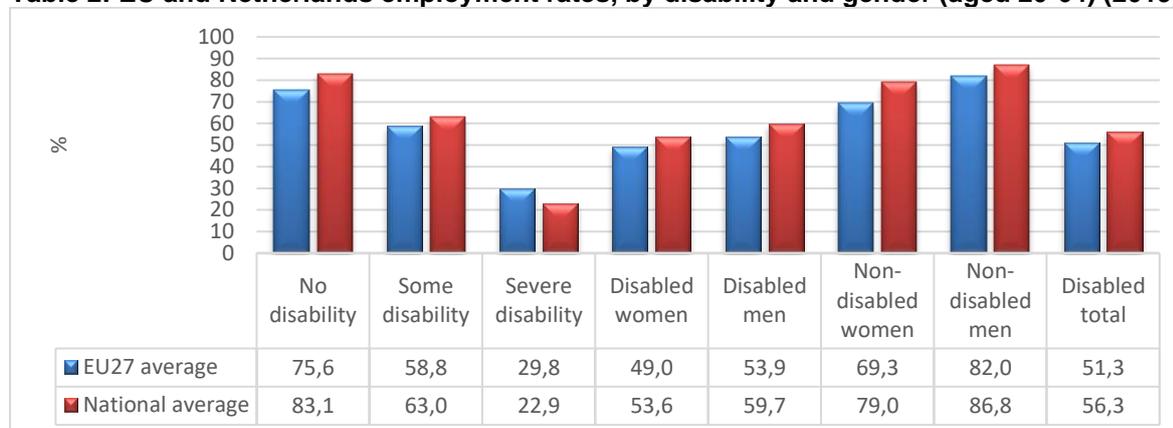


Table 3: Employment rates in Netherlands, by disability and age group (2019)

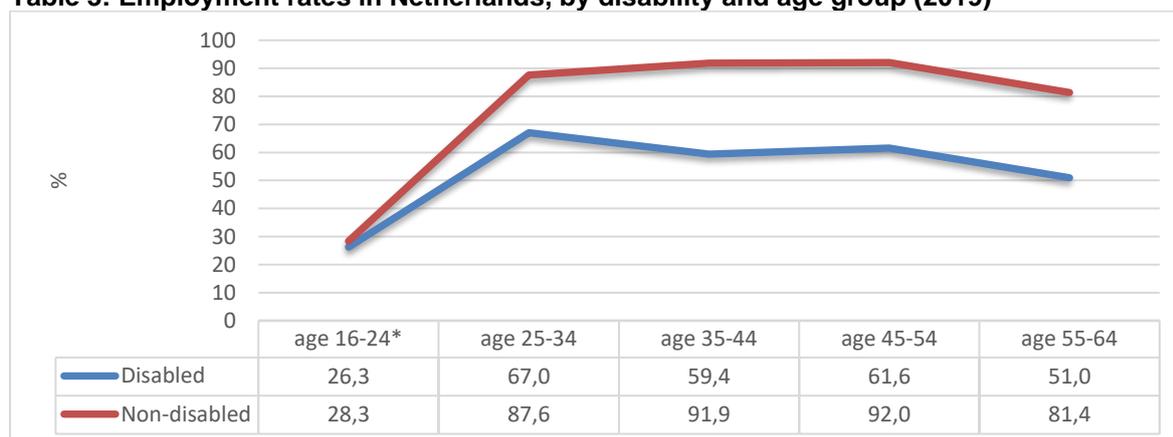
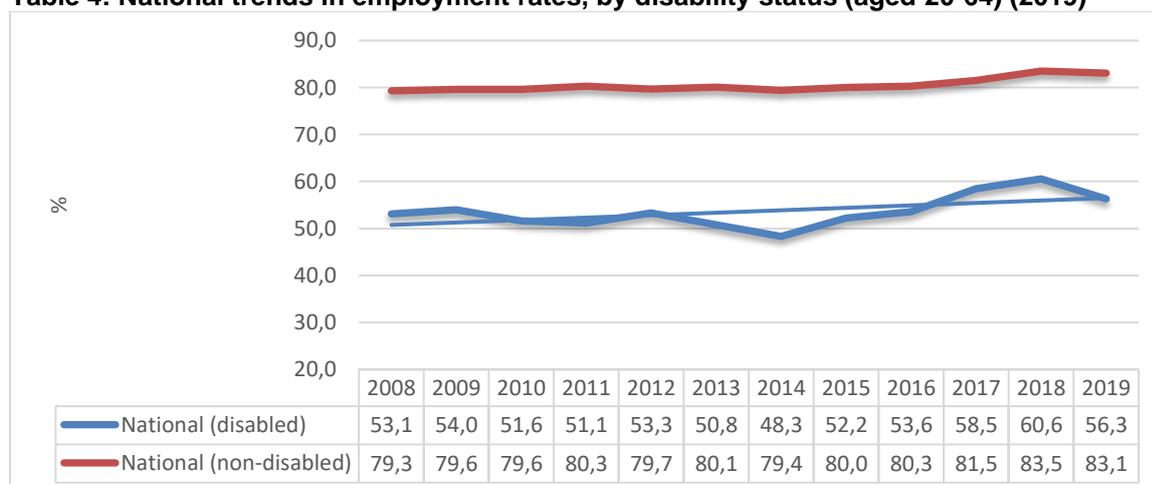


Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

⁷⁷ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changes the EU average. Averages were also affected in 2015 by a discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change.

7.1.1 Unemployment

Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

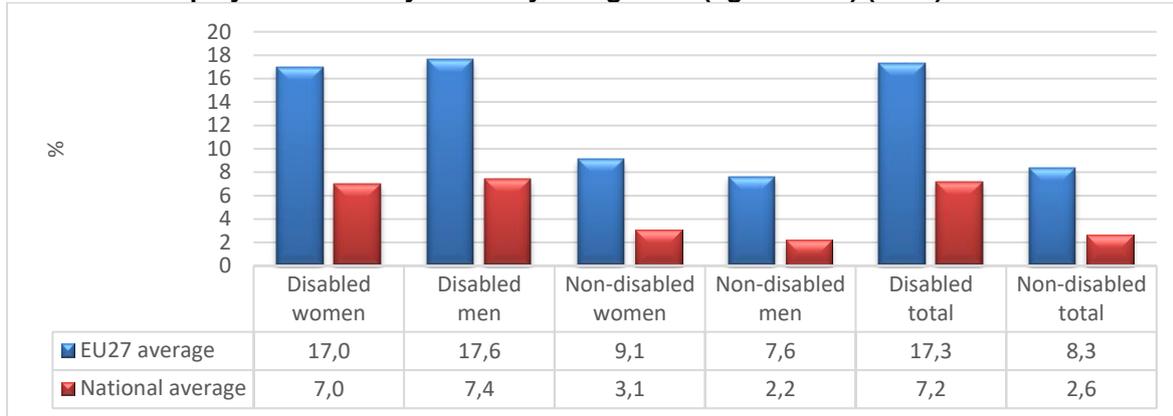


Table 6: Unemployment rates in Netherlands, by disability and age group (2019)

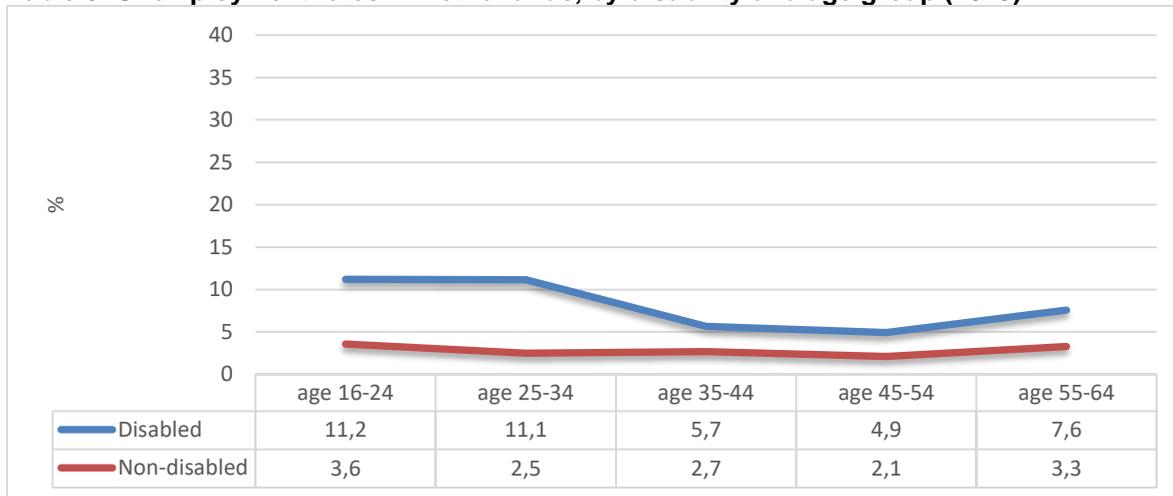
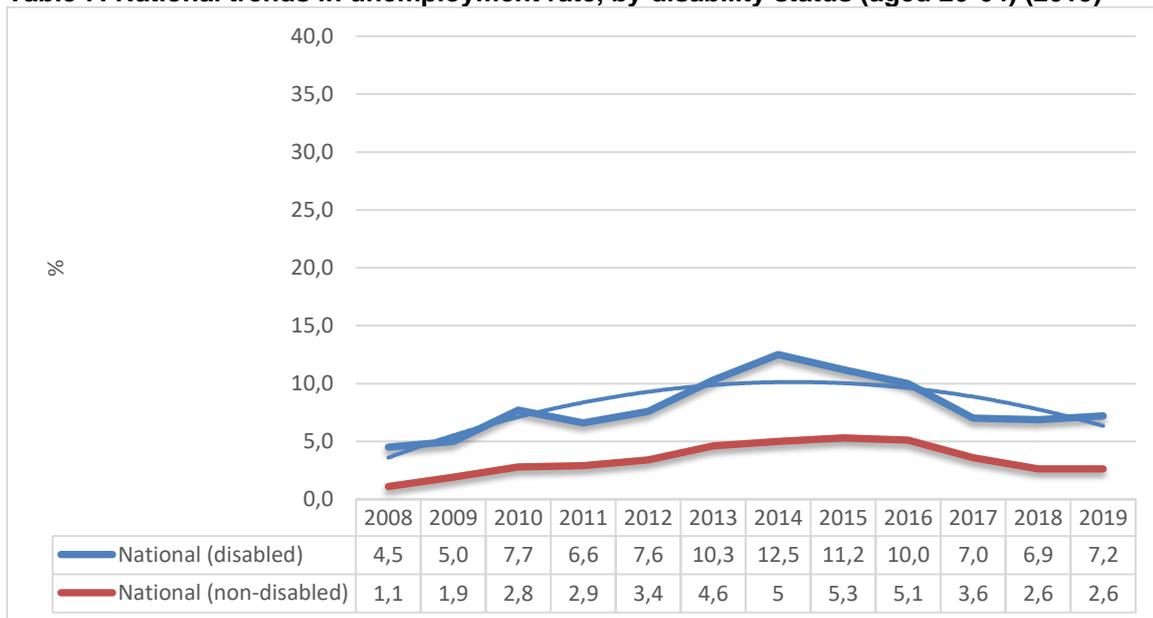


Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

7.1.2 Economic activity

Table 8: Activity rates in Netherlands, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

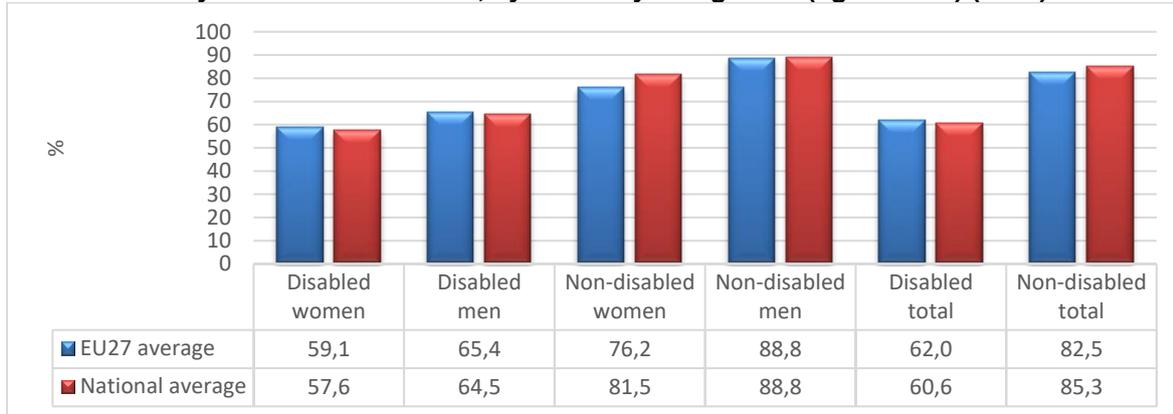


Table 9: Activity rates in Netherlands, by age group (2019)

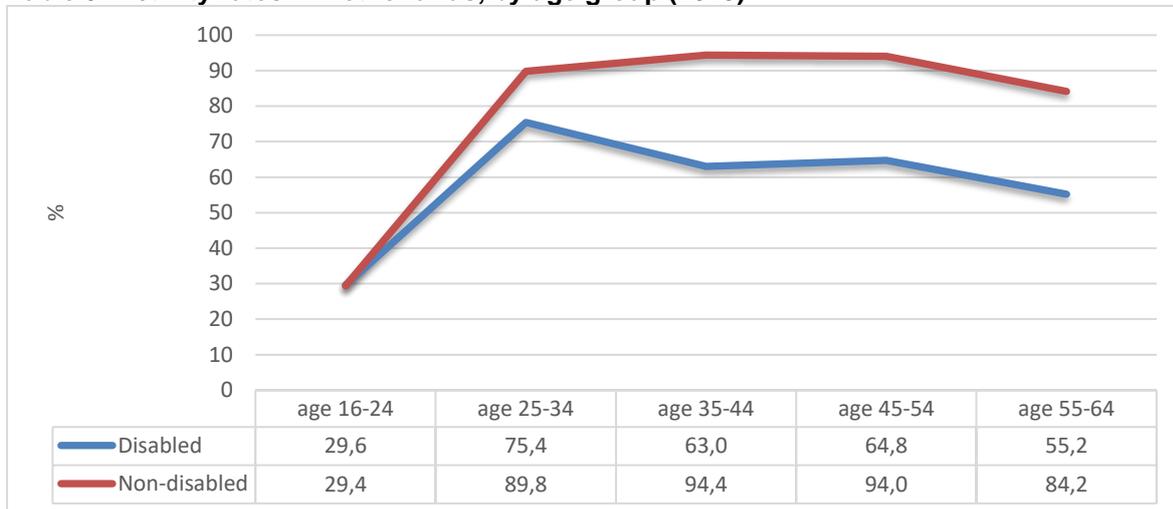
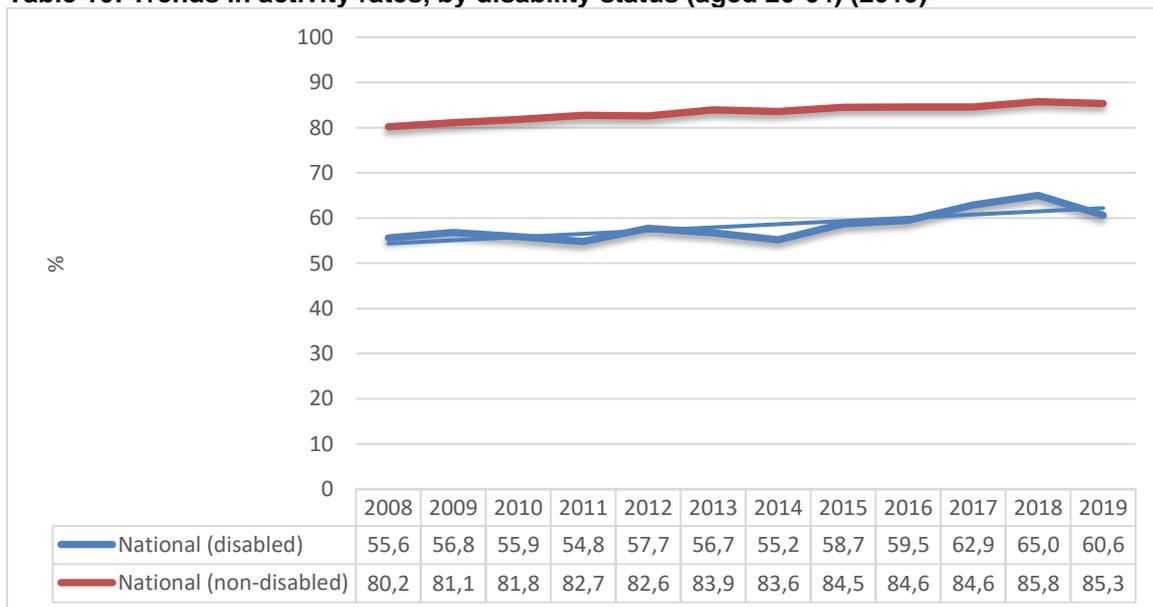


Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Netherlands

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Netherlands were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁷⁸

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2019)

Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-59)

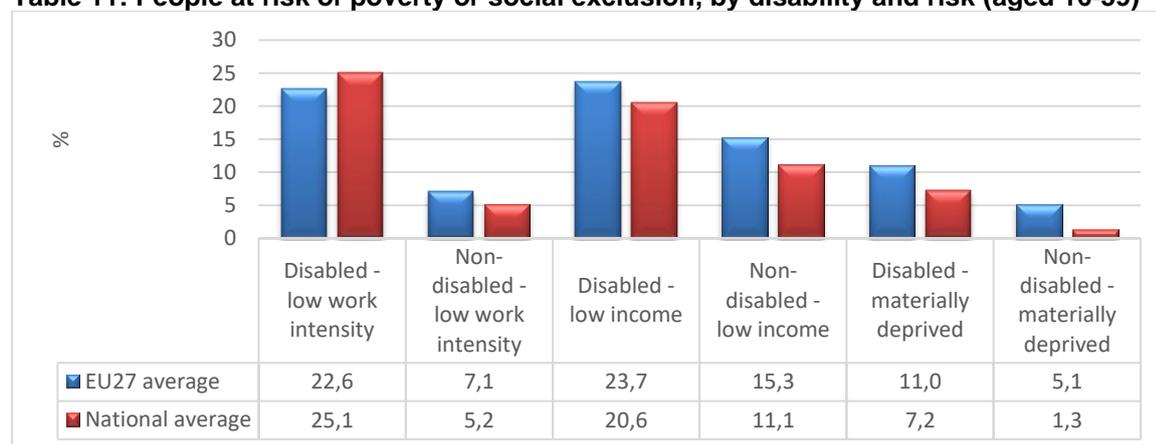


Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

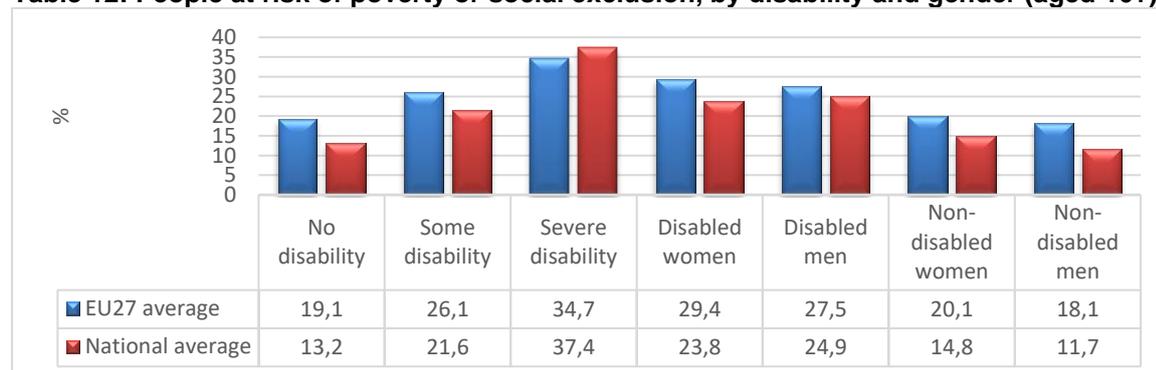
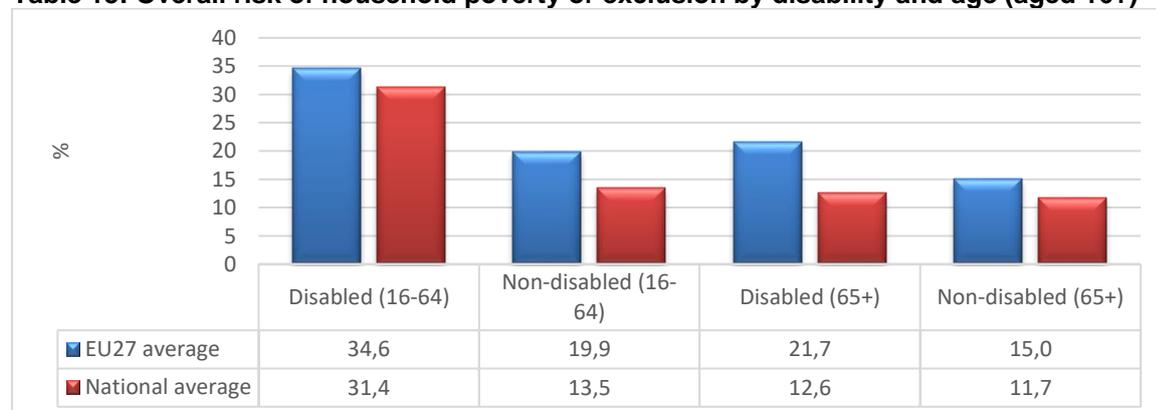
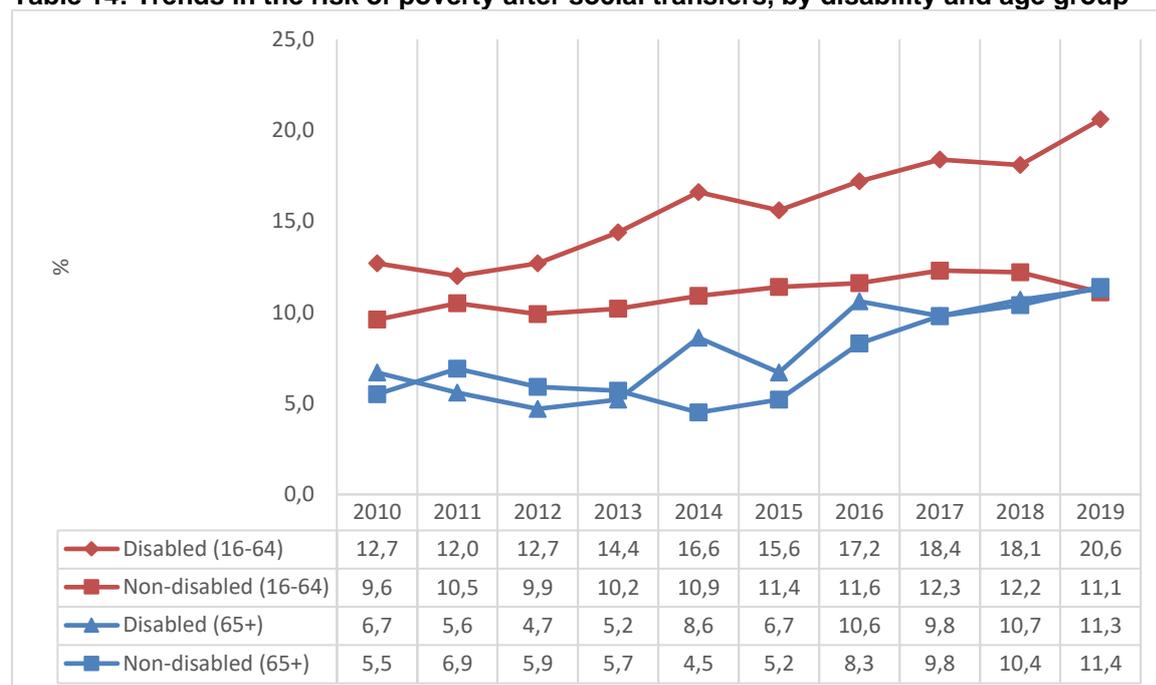


Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)



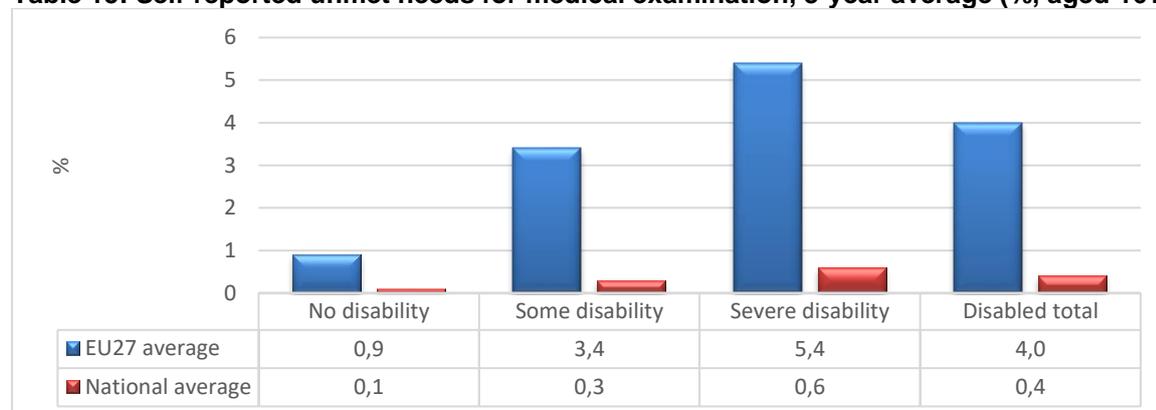
Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and previous UDB).

⁷⁸ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

Table 14: Trends in the risk of poverty after social transfers, by disability and age group

Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth_dpe020](#)] - People at risk of poverty.

Note: this table shows national trends in financial poverty risk, rather than the general AROPE indicator (which is not as comparable between age groups due to the effect of paid employment); the survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under 16.

Table 15: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination, 3-year average (% , aged 16+)

Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth_dh030](#)] – 'Too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list'.

Note: due to large variations an average of three years is indicated. EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2019 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Netherlands

The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)⁸⁰

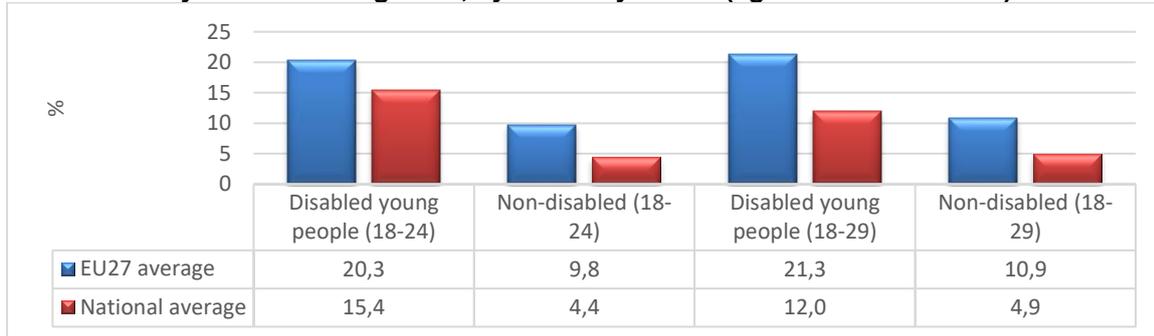
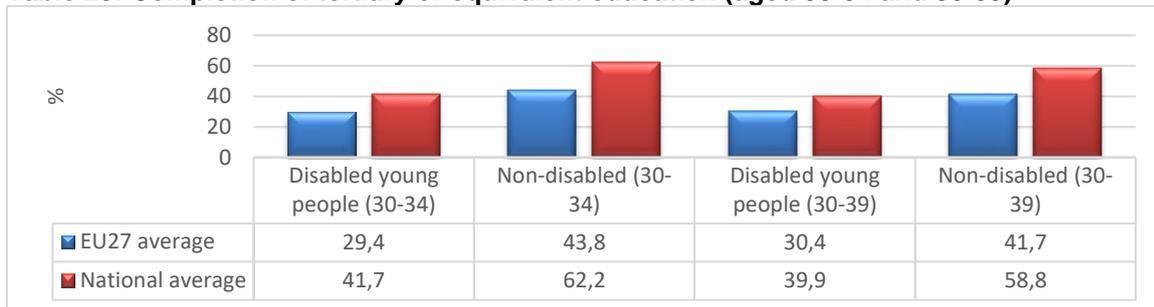


Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low (due to the small sample size in the target age group). An average of several years may be needed to establish trends or to compare breakdowns by gender.

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Netherlands

Not alternative data of relevance to these indicators was identified.

⁸⁰ There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

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