INGAME

Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation

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INGAME – Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation – A holistic approach for

a cultural shift in education and policy

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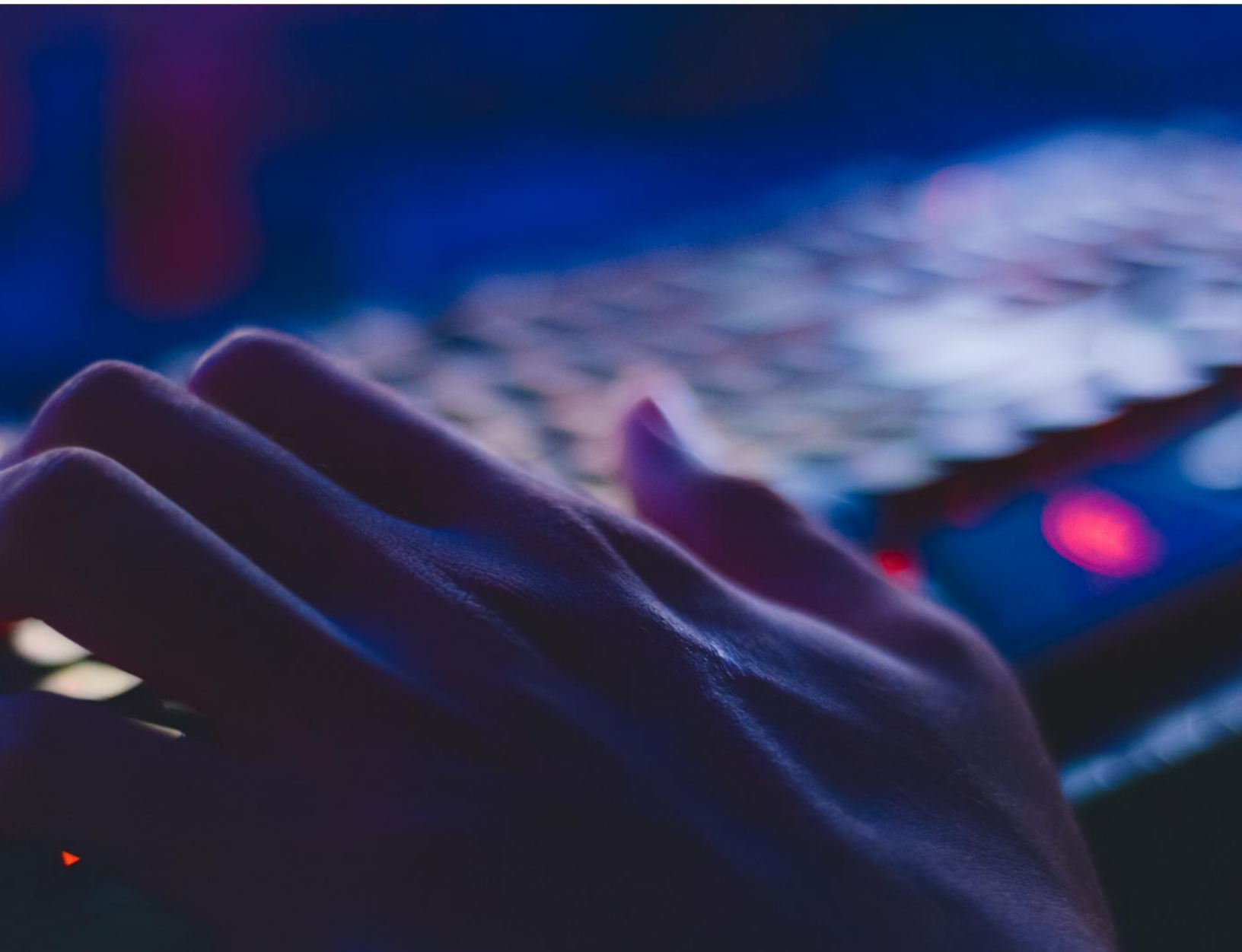
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1. Introduction

1.1. Aims/objectives of this report

"A long time ago, before Corona…" A crisis like the current pandemic was predicted by some[1], but clearly not anticipated by political decision-makers, as the current global chaos shows. How this will develop is still unclear, all the more so because right now national interests and policies seem to prevail. It is fascinating and at the same time somewhat unreal to work in a European project in this context. There is no 'happily ever after Corona' yet.

However, we believe in a transnational (European) future and cooperation, which is why we will, against the tide, continue with enthusiasm on the road we have taken together.

The purpose of the INGAME project provides the framework for this report. The project's core motivation is that current game research has acknowledged that *serious gaming*- games to promote learning and change behavior- has the potential of realizing educational and learning benefits, and for this project in the context of European civic engagement.

The project context

European civic competences involve active participation, equality, equity, social justice, and active interest in democratic institutions. However, various international reports indicated that there are declining levels of civic engagement among EU citizens, linked to limited accessibility to civic education and lack of knowledge of the EU civic environment. Despite the internet, its online information and communication sources, this knowledge is apparently not actively sought after, and thus not appreciated. Youth are frantic users of the digital universe in general (many of them passionate game players) but at the same time they are – in terms of active citizenship- seen as the most disengaged group of citizens. Yet, there is hope that with the proper inspiration and motivation towards civic engagement these young adults could become the role models and potential educators of an even younger generation.

Until not so long ago, gaming seemed dominated by gender and race stereotyping. However, game developers started to become aware about these dominant (normative) discourses (e.g. populism,

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[1] Bill Gates: https://youtu.be/6Af6b_wyiwI

migration, social inclusion), and some of them started to design games with more nuanced contents (Neys J. & Jans J., 2010).

In terms of civic education, the successful engagement of gamers in virtual environments, a game's setting (or 'world') and protagonists, its clear and achievable goals, the variety of resources on offer, increasing skills, competences, understanding and possible rewards would make learning more attractive than printed text. It becomes even more valuable when the game's content addresses and fuels the individual's value system.[2]

The interactive (and collaborative) character of a game and the opportunities to share and discuss insights with co-players and others in the social environment, can provide added value (Neys, Jansz, 2010/2014). *Serious gaming* can provide the opportunity to take a closer look at civic qualities and competencies and make them (again) attractive and valuable to the younger generation in Europe (and beyond).

This report

The current pandemic has shuffled the cards differently than expected. The future is uncertain, so in this report we can only focus on the knowledge before this crisis. Our three research topics will also be affected, but the current lockdowns might be playing into the hands of the development of online education.

This report aims to give a realistic overview of the current (pre-Corona) context (state of the art) from the Dutch perspective. We have examined legislation and active government efforts and, where appropriate, initiatives relating to the above mentioned topics. The spearheads have been the fields of social inclusion, civic participation and gender equality.

Maybe a little outside the research question, we have also looked into the current history of Dutch government's *(civic) education* policy and future plans, as a new education bill has been forwarded to the Parliament, and has yet to be approved and implemented. It is our firm opinion that good education is at the basis of understanding information and thus contexts (social, political, cultural), and certainly when it comes to democratic values and actions. When we look at the Dutch target group in

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[2] From the project application: INGAME-Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation

the INGAME project in terms of civic education and the Dutch education policy during the last decade, education policy (if viewed critically) has somewhat disadvantaged citizenship education.

Serious gaming

In addition, we have explored recent Dutch research and activities on *serious gaming* in (civic) education, social inclusion and gender equality, both academically and from government and government-affiliated research institutes and independent game developers.
We will present (applied) initiatives and *best practices* from (political) educational institutions, NGOs and (independent) developers, and possible results or conclusions.

This, and surveys among different target audiences (young adults, stakeholders, game developers/associate partners) on their knowledge, experiences attitudes and needs concerning the fields of interest and serious gaming in education, will give us insight and the opportunity to design an innovative online *serious gaming* adventure that in the future will engage and inspire young adults, let them (interactively) learn about (and reflect on) social and political realities and enhance their civic engagement. Hopefully, it will elicit inspiring conversations with peers and Europe-wide collective and collaborative action.

2. Key findings from the Desk Research

2.1 Government Policies and Initiatives

Currently, civic participation is promoted by public authorities, not only as an end in itself, but also as a means of contributing to other policy areas, such as health (sport) and social cohesion and participation in society (i.e. sport and culture) (Wennekers et al., 2019).

In the following we will have a look at the official vision of the current cabinet (Rutte III) on education (citizenship, gender equality and social inclusion) and civic engagement initiatives (*civic participation*) by the government, in part reacting to *active citizenship* (citizens' initiatives).

We have also investigated the government's efforts with regard to online education and participation, whether or not through serious games, which will be elaborated further on.

2.1.1. Civic engagement initiatives

Social involvement (civic engagement) is broader than civic- or citizens' initiatives.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (Salverda et al., 2014), for example, distinguishes the following forms:

- Public participation in government plans, implementation programmes and projects;
- Social initiatives with government involvement if necessary;
- Cooperation between social initiators, parties from society and government;
- Social initiatives in response to government policy and plans.

A study of the ways in which government authorities promote social engagement in support of public objectives focused on how policy instruments promote social engagement in support of public objectives (Gerritsen et al., 2018. University of Wageningen in cooperation with Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment).

An observation at the start of the study was that there is no evidence (yet) to suggest that there is a coherent policy theory crystallised for how the national government (the current Cabinet) sees social involvement and a wide range of approaches and practices. According to Gerritsen et al. (2018), social/civic involvement is a phenomenon that follows from how it is seen in the (policy) 'instruments' to be selected.

A list of potential instruments was drawn up and four case studies on the use of such instruments were

carried out and analysed. The instruments (in this case environment oriented) were *Green Deals*, the Dutch National Fund for Green Investments (*Groenfonds*), the 'Acceleration Agenda for the Do-Democracy' (*Versnellingsagenda Doe-democratie*) and the 'Social Participation Code' (*Code Maatschappelijke Participatie*). Each of these could be seen as a different 'flavour' of the promotion of social engagement and of practices. What the instruments had in common is that they provide an interface between the central government and society, so that the government can respond better to social involvement and vice versa.

The four instruments studied were not exclusively intended to achieve a *specific* government objective. Social involvement is (also) a goal in itself, with the instruments showing that in practice there is a great deal of activity involved in bringing parties together and giving them a joint direction so that this can lead to concrete results. To this end, social innovations such as earning models, contract forms, etc. are explored and developed. This also has a strong knowledge and learning component.

Interaction

Possible forms of interaction between government and civic actors had been mentioned earlier (Salverda et al., 2014)[3]. Although they focused mainly on civic participation, they themselves indicated that this framework of thinking could also be applied to entrepreneurial initiatives. Table 5 indicates which form of social involvement the instruments are aimed at:
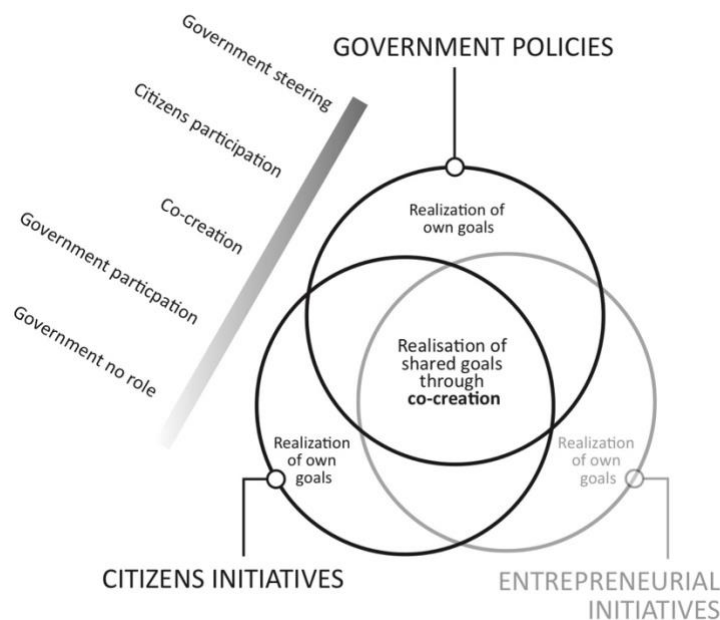

Table 1: 5 possible roles of government in achieving objectives through social initiative (after Salverda, 2014, p.25)

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[3] Also mentioned in Gerritsen et al. (2018)

civic or entrepreneurial participation (social actors participate with government in participation processes or interactive policy), co-creation (government and social actors work together) and government participation (i.e. government gives room for or participates with social actors); or classic government control (social involvement has the form of participation) and government has *no role* (social initiative without government involvement).

The consideration of instruments cannot be separated from this interplay between government and society.

> **'Serious game' for empowerment – an example of a co-creation tryout** (a telephone interview with Greenwish)
> GreenWish and DuurzaamDoor – two bridge-builders between citizens and government – apply 'serious games'. They had learned that initiative takers often (unintentionally) take the underdog position. However, Dutch law regulates an *equal* position of all stakeholders. You not only are offered that position, but you certainly have to take it! This was translated into a serious game: **not an online game** but a **card game** that could be played 'live', in this case initiative takers, municipality and the Water Board to tackle a water supply problem in the region. Thus, the game tackled a real problem, with an assihgnment to the initiative takers to play the roles of the other parties. It led to insights and learning results. Both, initiative takers and governments, learned quickly.

Acceleration Agenda Do-Democracy

The *Acceleration Agenda Do-Democracy* is a programme of the Ministry of the Interior.

The background here is that the Ministry of the Interior observes that citizens and social entrepreneurs themselves are increasingly active in the public domain, for example in the roles of co-administrator and co-producer of public value. They consider this to be a positive development and want to increase the connecting capacity of governments by giving initiators more space. Examples of activities are (extra) attention to citizenship and social entrepreneurship in education (Gerritsen et al., 2019, p.29).

> **Democratic Challenge** – (mentioned in Gerritsen et al., 2019 - we investigated the website)
> The website **www.democraticchallenge.nl** is a combined initiative of the Ministry of the Interior and the Association of Dutch Municipalities and gives an overview of the experiments. What does it yield? The *Acceleration Agenda Do-Democracy* offers a lot of room for experimentation, for example to municipalities and social initiatives by citizens, and a large number of networking and learning opportunities around them (e.g. offering them a **digital working agenda**). This builds up essential social capital with which results can be achieved at a later stage. From a transition perspective, the Acceleration Agenda is valuable in the broad dissemination of ideas and experiences with Do-Democracy. For the Acceleration Agenda as a whole, however, it is yet scarcely possible to determine how much social involvement it has generated.
> *(for more, see chapter Serious Gaming)*

Effects of the policy instruments on social engagement

The investigated instruments aim to develop the capacity to work together. Neither government nor (Dutch) society have yet fully embraced social engagement as a means of working towards achieving public objectives and so it has been necessary to develop these instruments to make this possible. The instruments used *intend* to build up social capital that can be used (now and later) to achieve results in the field of the desired public values. In that sense the instruments lead to social engagement in creating public value. They could be characterised as a form of **multiple democracy** (the instruments are geared primarily to government participation), as a transition process (social engagement is becoming institutionalised via these instruments, but is still in a niche phase) and as a form of government steering (particularly by a networking and responsive government, but other forms of government steering are also important when using the instruments). A promising 'work in progress'.

In short

With regard to the objectives of the Dutch government (*multiple democracy*) and the objectives of this report, one can cautiously conclude that with a more systematic and learning-centred approach, tools for civic engagement can deliver more. It is proving complex to apply instruments for social engagement because coordination is required inside and outside the government and in practice one is learning what there is to do. Partly because of this, the potential of these instruments seems to increase once one is more adept at it. Learning about the instruments is therefore very important. If, moreover, a systematic approach is adopted in the application of the instruments, this learning can also help countries to apply them in practice. In this way, the lessons learned can be made concrete (Gerritsen et al., 2018, p.58).

This suggests that learning about instruments and applying them can pave a road to considering 'serious gaming' related to civic engagement as a learning tool for citizens *and* government as well as a democratic problem solving tool for the social partners. If applied, it will have to be tested to obtain feedback to adjust and refine.

2.1.2. Social inclusion

To get an impression of the developments regarding social inclusion in the Netherlands, briefly the following.

In the years preceding the current Cabinet[4], the Netherlands had a relatively strong position on social inclusion. Employment was high, and the unemployment rate and the risk of poverty were relatively low. The Dutch active inclusion strategy covered a broad area. Participation in the labour market was seen as the key to preventing poverty and social exclusion. Therefore, the Dutch strategies focused on increasing employment and employability. The new or extended active inclusion strategies (introduced after the 2008 EU Recommendation) aimed to increase labour market participation of women, (partially) disabled people and the long-term unemployed and to encourage them to work longer. Also, there was increased attention towards care for the elderly (social isolation), housing for refugees (and future integration).

However, reforms and substantial cuts in social security and welfare during the preceding Cabinet period[5] were seen as potential risk factors or weaknesses in the implementation of the policy. Voices had been raised to the effect that Dutch politics has less eye for social involvement (Schuyt, 2016). For example, the introduction of the Social Support Act (WMO) and the Participation Act in January 2015 introduced the **participatory society**, with an emphasis on social care: *decentralisation* was crucial in this respect, by delegating powers and finances of the state to municipalities, and promoting strongly the involvement of the family and informal network of people in need of care. It gave people in need (and their immediate environment) the feeling of "figure it out yourself", the government is taking a step backwards and "cares less"; it called for more self-reliance on the part of the citizen.

The *current* stance and official policy of the current Dutch Cabinet towards inclusion issues is in short as follows (Van Sasse van Ysselt et al., December 2019)[6]. We would like to stress that these are presented as 'plans', and in some cases as 'work in progress'.
Within the framework of decentralisation, the Cabinet states that complexity of the system of government facilities should never be the reason that people get stuck. One of the Cabinet's *objectives* is to let the authorities concerned cooperate more intensively in order to break through compartmentalisation. Decentralisation of facilities offers opportunities for customisation.

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[4] Cabinet Rutte III, 2017-
[5] Cabinet Rutte II, 2015-2017
[6] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

In addition, the Cabinet is *focusing on the citizen perspective*, rather than systemic thinking, as the starting point for new and existing policy. The Cabinet endorses the importance of taking a citizens' perspective rather than a systemic approach in the formulation and implementation of policy and legislation, which also means clear (and therefore not bureaucratic) language. This will help to make facilities more accessible to the end users (an online tool – 'Steffie' – is an example of facilitation, as we will present in the 'Serious Gaming' chapter).

In the case of people with disabilities, the most important spearhead is that every child should be able to develop as optimally as possible, even if extra support is needed. The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten) has the ambition that in 2021 75% of the municipalities will have a local inclusion agenda or be "working on its development".
The government is also taking various actions to combat discrimination in the housing market.
It will therefore present a plan to substantially reduce the number of homeless people in the coming years. For example, extra places to live will have to be provided together with counselling, so that people stay in shelters for a shorter period of time.

And finally, digital inclusion. In a rapidly digitising society, extra attention needs to be paid to that. More and more (government and municipal) facilities are getting a digital counter. Yet they must also remain easily accessible to people who are less digitally literate, such as people who have difficulty reading and writing. In order to gain access to facilities, it is sometimes necessary for people to be represented by someone else. The Cabinet therefore wants people to be able to obtain digital authorisation.

2.1.3. Gender equality

Equal treatment

Society should aim for equal treatment for every human being. The current initiative bill for the 'Prohibition of trans- and intersex discrimination', supported by most parties.
The current cabinet (Rutte III) on gender equality and the influence of i.e. the media by word of the Dutch minister of Education:

> "The cabinet strives to ensure that all people are free to shape their identity and talent. Choices made by girls, boys, men and women are still too often determined by external influences. There is too little diversity in the media. Media often still contribute to stereotypical images: 88% of the experts in the news are men and only 19.5% who are portrayed in news media are women.

Unbalanced representation and stereotyped images perpetuate specific ideas about gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity. They influence our behaviour and opportunities in society.
In education, it is clear that girls and boys make choices based on stereotypes. As a result, they lose the chance to choose a study or profession that suits their talents." (Voortgangsrapportage Emancipatie, 2019, minister Van Engelshoven)[7]

The current cabinet devoted a great deal of attention to LGBTI emancipation in the coalition agreement (Rutte iii Cabinet 2017). In addition to a number of concrete measures (such as supplementing the General Equal Treatment Act, reducing unnecessary gender registration and the possible extension of Article 1 of the Constitution to include 'sexual orientation'), the coalition agreement states that emancipation requires constant attention and that the promotion of emancipation is important. The latest Emancipation Memorandum builds on this and gives topics such as safety, social acceptance, gender diversity, labour and health a place in the LGBTI emancipation policy. (Van Beusekom, Kuyper, 2018, p.10).

In addition to a focus on physical victimisation, policy in recent years has also focused a great deal of attention on cyber-crime, cyber-bullying and victimisation, in general and specifically for LGBTI persons (Van Beusekom, Kuyper, 2018, p.35).
As for the experience of safety and security of all citizens (gender, ethnic, etc.), the judgement of the citizens of the functioning of the police and municipality are seen as important determinants. Therefore, government policy pays attention to how the police deal with diversity.

2.1.4. Civic education policies

With regard to the provision of informal educational resources (i.e. serious gaming), we must also take into account the national quality of education and the extent to which (future) citizens are prepared (and want to) absorb information/knowledge. It starts in primary and secondary education. Regarding the current state of education and out project's target group/generation it may seem that the Dutch government has a somewhat faltering education policy.

This is the most recent official statement of the Dutch government about citizenship education (2019):

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[7] Voortgangsrapportage Emancipatie, maart 2019 (pdf). Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. Van Engelshoven is Minister of Education, Culture and Science. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ministerie-van-onderwijs-cultuur-en-wetenschap/documenten/rapporten/2019/03/14/voortgangsrapportage-emancipatie

"Citizenship education *will be* strengthened. In this way, pupils learn about the rules of society, their own rights and the rights of others. In order to promote the participation of young people in political decision-making, a youth parliament will be created *in 2020*. Finally, a start has been made with an annual democracy festival. People will be able to talk about social issues in an informal setting."

Social and civic education are important aspects of citizenship, including the transfer of values, the promotion of autonomy and independence. In this way, young people are optimally equipped for a successful life. Living together with others is an important part of this. Little is known about the benefits of education in terms of social and societal competences. At the system level, the insight into the outcomes is at most fragmented and at school level, there is usually little or no insight into the social outcomes. The actual situation has not yet reached this objective, as a report by Vogelzang et al. concludes (2020, Inspectorate of Education).

Transfer of citizenship

This task is also referred to as the *citizenship mission* of the school. The Inspectorate of Education has been pointing out for some time that this task requires more attention from schools.

Since 2006, primary and secondary education have been legally obliged to "contribute" to the "promotion of active citizenship and social inclusion". Due to the lack of specific wording, schools already had met their obligations when they taught citizenship classes **once!** (Remie, Rusman 2019/2). Therefore, the new bill tries to be more specific. Schools must now promote "active citizenship and social cohesion", "in a targeted and coherent way". They must publish the objectives in their school plan. In their citizenship education, schools must teach pupils both knowledge and skills.

The proposed bill 'Clarification of the citizenship assignment in basic education', promoted by minister Arie Slob[8] in combination with the process of curriculum renewal in basic education, underlines this assignment and wants to give teachers and school leaders clarity about the interpretation of the citizenship assignment.

The bill was sent to the Lower House in December 2019. It states that citizenship education should help to find *answers to the new problems of society*, e.g. Islamic schools that teach that boys and girls are not allowed to get along freely during puberty, students who believe in conspiracy theories, or students who film their 'left-wing' teachers.

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[8] Arie Slob is Minister of Primary- and secondary Education and Media

Slob's new law wants to solve these problems. Firstly, schools must promote 'active citizenship and social cohesion' by teaching pupils 'the basic values of the democratic rule of law', as well as the 'social and civic competences' to participate in society. Secondly, 'school culture' should be in line with basic values. These include equality, freedom of expression, solidarity and human dignity. The bill focuses on the rule of law; schools are not obliged to promote Dutch culture (Remie, Rusman, 2019/2).

Effective citizenship education

A safe and open school climate and room for discussion in the classroom should have a positive influence on pupils' social and societal competences. Also, a vision on citizenship education *developed by the school*, having specific learning objectives for citizenship and frequent attention to citizenship themes should benefit pupils' social and societal competences.

> "Citizenship education can therefore have a compensating effect for young people who are less fortunate. The mapping of pupils' civic competences is well possible. Yet we see that few schools do this. As a result, it is often unclear to both the school and the environment what pupils have learned and whether this meets expectations." (Vogelenzang, 2020).

In other words, the responsibility still lies within the institutions themselves, which again poses a risk that civic education is put back on square one.

2.2. Public Opinion

We investigated opinions, needs and desires of citizens (> 18) up to the beginning of 2020. Among other studies, the extensive annual report (November 2019) of the Dutch Bureau for Social Policy Analysis (SCP- Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau)[9] was very helpful; it identifies worries, desires, anxieties and expectations of Dutch citizens. We have complemented these findings with other sources and studies. We think the collected literature will balance the (qualitative) answers of the participants of the focus groups.

The focus of the SCP annual report – '*The Social State of the Netherlands*'[10]- is on the actual 'state' of the experienced quality of life, compared to the last ten years. On the basis of key figures the objective living situation is described in different domains: education, paid and unpaid work, income and social security, health and care, leisure, social and political participation and involvement, social security and living.

2.2.1. Citizenship and civic engagement

As much as the following may look like a recommendation, it reflects a way of thinking that can help to look at citizenship in a different, nuanced way. In her PhD thesis 'Citizens against policy. An Analysis of Dynamics in Political Engagement'[11] Verhoeven (2009) challenges the use of the term 'citizenship', because it contains the connotation of the *morally* desirable; it morally implies a contribution to the public cause. However, that might not cover all forms of political involvement: citizens can also be politically active to pursue their own *self-interest*.

That is why Verhoeven proposes to talk about 'styles of political engagement' instead of political citizenship styles. She introduces four styles: active, wait-and-see, dependent, and detached. In the context of the INGAME project's objectives (and serious play) this could be an interesting stance.

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[9] The SCP is an interdepartmental, scientific institute that conducts - both solicited and *un*solicited - social scientific research. It reports to the government, the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, the ministries and social and government organizations. The SCP is formally the responsibility of the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport.
[10] Wennekers A., Boelhouwer J., van Campen C., Kullberg J. (Eds.) (2019). De Sociale Staat van Nederland. SCP
[11] Translation of the Dutch title

	+ Political participation -	
+ Directions for participation in politics -	Active	Dependent
	Wait-and-see	Detached

Table 2: 4 styles of political involvement (after Verhoeven, see WRR 2002: 107-108, Verhoeven 2004)

The monitorial citizen

Verhoeven introduces us to the 'monitorial citizen', a term coined by Michael Schudson (1998)[12]. He states that in daily life citizens cannot satisfy high ideals of 'the good citizen' who proactively and frequently participates in political life; citizens are not proactive, but *reactive*. Schudson expresses this in this allegoric quote:

> "Picture parents watching small children at the community pool. They are not gathering information; they are keeping an eye on the scene. They look inactive, but they are poised for action if action is required. The monitorial citizen is not an absentee citizen but watchful, even while he or she is doing something else. Citizenship during a particular political season may be for many people much less intense than in the era of parties, but citizenship now is a year-round and day-long activity, as it was only rarely in the past" (Schudson 1998: 311).

Citizens thus act as a kind of supervisors of political decision-making that keep an eye on things, in most cases not interfering in government and politics, but *intervening* as soon as they receive signals in one way or another; or intervene themselves if they develop the idea that there is a problem that they have to do something about. Schudson's view may be a little too optimistic about the extent to which citizens follow politics that way (Verhoeven, 2009).

Media malaise

There can be considerable differences between the four styles of political involvement. Approximately a quarter of the population seems to be the politically hard to follow, they're 'offline' (*detached*), which may have its origin in online infotainment and *politainment*. This development may undermine serious information – the rational debate and well-considered opinions (and structure) that citizens need to form a clear picture of politics. It can result in poorly informed citizens who are subtly misled and manipulated. Entertainment-oriented television this is seen as anti-civic, paralyzing social and political

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[12] Mentioned in Verhoeven (2009, p. 62)

involvement (Putnam, 1996).[13] A 'drama democracy', creating social discontent and distrust of politics (Elchardus, 2002)[14]. This media malaise theory paints a very gloomy picture, that might be softened by the view of the monitorial citizens – when they react, they *act*.

Civic participation or active citizenship?

In addition to the forms of civic participation initiated by the government, there are numerous activities in which citizens take initiative unsolicited. Developments indicated that the Dutch feel that individualism had gone too far. It manifested itself in the growing social involvement of young people: they are more often donors, do more voluntary work and are more often politically active (Halman, Sieben, 2011).

When the initiative comes from the citizen instead of the government, Van der Steen et al. (2013) do not speak of civic participation, but of *active citizenship*. In this respect, citizens sometimes get involved because they feel that the government has failed to carry out certain tasks (such as the climate targets); sometimes this involvement goes against the government's own wishes (e.g. in providing assistance to migrants who have exhausted all legal remedies). This corresponds partly with Salverda's model and Schudson's perspective.

In addition, the electoral and non-electoral political participation has been put firmly back on the map in recent years. National consultative referendums have been held; teachers, farmers, workers and students have come to The Hague to make their voices heard on wages, pensions and climate plans. Protests have a common denominator – change or reform of one's *own* democracy. People are no longer satisfied with a 'flawed' democracy, or with a government that does not take its citizens seriously, says historian Gert Jan Geling in a recent article (2019).
It is only recently that public concern about the climate, the quality of life and policy in this area has grown (Dekker and Den Ridder, 2019)[15]. One form of collective private participation in this field is participation in energy cooperatives.

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[13] Mentioned in Verhoeven (2009, p.59)
[14] Mentioned in Verhoeven (2009)
[15] In Wennekers, Boelhouwer (2019, p. 235)

Volunteer work goes hand in hand with more confidence in fellow men and politics, and with greater satisfaction with society *and* the functioning of democracy. Dutch people who take part in collective actions also have more confidence in fellow men but are less satisfied with the *functioning of democracy*. The two forms of participation therefore differ in their possible consequences. *Voluntary* action shows positive effects across the board; *campaigning* merely presents positive effects for the vision of fellow citizens, as shown in table 3.

	has social confidence (in general 'trusting most people')	is satisfied with the Dutch community (indicates a 7 (out of 10) or more)	has trust in politics (has (very) much trust in government)	is quite or very satisfied with the the functioning of democracy in The Netherlands
Works as a volunteer (or interested in)	1,23*	1,26*	1,55***	1,45***
Has participated in collective action (or is interested in)	1,23*	0,96	0,83	0,71**

Table 3: **Volunteers more positive about society and politics, activists not**
The relationship between two forms of participation and attitudes towards society and politics, individuals aged 18 and over, 2017/'18 (in odds ratios)[a]
a Mentioned are relative probability ratios corrected for effects of gender, age,level of education, paid work, church attendance and satisfaction with one's own life. As a number exceeds 1, participation has a stronger positive effect; as a number is smaller than 1, participation has a stronger negative effect. Significance of effect: * < 0.05 , ** < 0.01 and *** < 0.001 (two-sided).
Source: SCP/CBS (CV'17/'18)

On the functioning of democracy, *activists* are even more negative. This may be due to the negative experiences as activists, but it is also possible that people became active due to an experienced deficiency of democracy and did not think differently about it afterwards.
There is also concern about reduced political participation by some groups: citizens for whom democracy works less well, i.e.. those who feel unrepresented, quit (Wennekers, Boelhouwer, 2019, p.225), i.e. naturalised (im)migrants, LGBTI, or disabled people.

2.2.2. Social inclusion and Integration
The SCP annual report states that in 2018 the mood in the Netherlands was relatively positive compared to ten years before. Economic satisfaction was high, as was confidence in democracy and institutional confidence. More people felt that the Netherlands was heading in the right direction.

The Dutch are more likely to see conflicts between *groups*: at the beginning of 2019, 43% on average saw a major conflict between population groups[16], compared to 32% in 2012.

In 2018, the way of living together and immigration/integration are the most frequently mentioned social problems that people spontaneously mention when asked for important points of attention. Since 2014, economic issues are considered less important than during the financial and economic crisis. Views on immigration and the multicultural society are not more negative in 2018 than before the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Support for the EU in 2018 is higher than in the period 2012-2016. (Wennekers A. et al., 2019, p.54).

Yet, many Dutch people are worried about the way we treat each other, about anti-social behaviour and growing intolerance. In the area of immigration, it is felt that too many refugees come to the Netherlands, that the reception of refugees is at the expense of others and that newcomers do not adapt sufficiently. (Wennekers A. et al., 2019, p.61). When asked: *'What do you think are the biggest problems in our country right now? What are you very negative about or angry about or what are you ashamed of when it comes to Dutch society'?* the six most frequently mentioned social problems came up (see table 4).
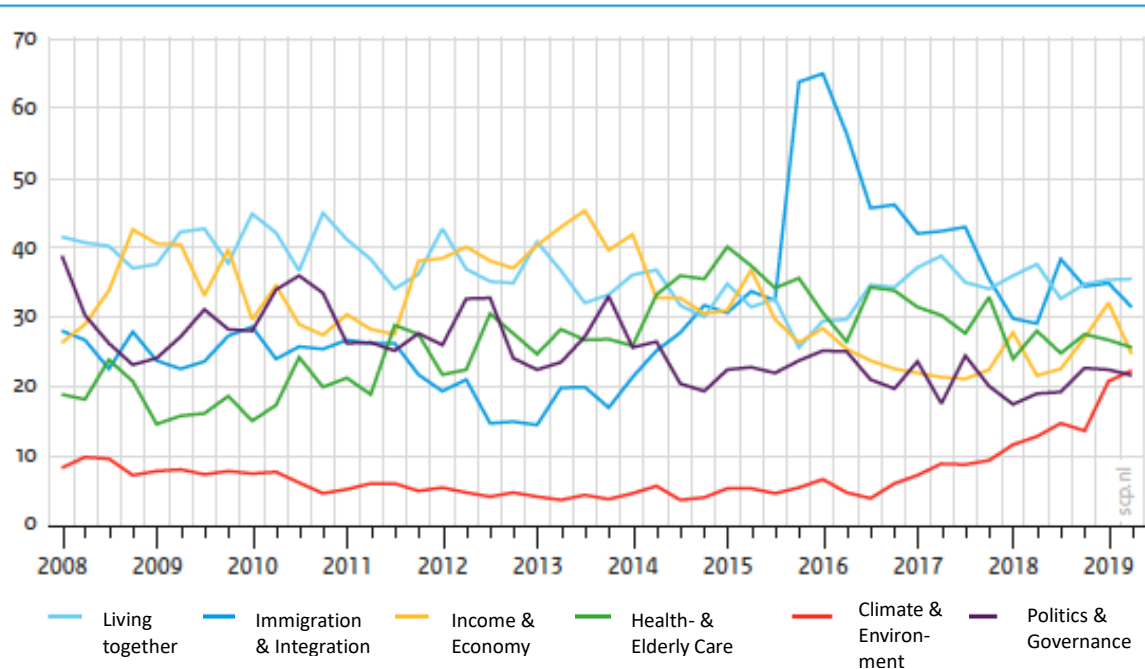
Table 4: The six most frequently mentioned social problems, persons of 18 years and older, 2008-2019 (in percentages that mention a problem spontaneously). Source: SCP (COB'08/1-'19/2)

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[16] Questioning oppositions and conflicts between 'rich and poor', 'lower educated and higher educated', 'immigrants and natives', 'unemployed and employed', 'young and old', 'employers and employees', 'the working and middle classes' and 'women and men'.

There are concerns about living together, about immigration and integration, about the cost of healthcare and about the quality of care for the elderly, and increasingly also about climate and the environment. 2019 shows an increase in conflict thinking compared to 2012.

Discrimination

As a feeling of being excluded is closely related to feeling discriminated or stigmatised, we continue with discrimination. To start, one has to be aware that there is a distinction to be made between *perceived* discrimination and *actual* discrimination, they need not always correspond. However, findings in the most recent Dutch report on perceived discrimination (Andriessen I. et al., 2020) make clear that the *perception* of discrimination is in itself sufficient to have an impact on people's behaviour and emotions. Shifts in perceived discrimination provide an insight into societal changes: where people think their position in society is more – or less – unfair.

The report by Andriessen et al. (2020) reveals that in the Netherlands *perceived* discrimination increased among women, but fell (slightly) among people with a migration background, especially Dutch Turks and Moroccans. People with a disability experienced more discrimination in education and when looking for work than in 2013. It is plausible that societal developments played a role in these shifts.

In the case of women, the *#metoo* movement probably increased the discussion about which behaviour was and was *not* considered acceptable. The increase in perceived gender-based discrimination may be linked to these developments.

For the disabled, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into effect in the Netherlands in 2016, with the aim of ensuring that people with a disability are able to play a full part in society, and on an equal footing with other citizens. This may have led people with a disability to be more inclined to link unequal treatment to their disability or chronic illness.

Anti-abortion movements do appear to be manifesting themselves more emphatically and claim that they are receiving more support and donations. A recent study of attitudes to abortion[17] showed that, on average, younger generations now hold more conservative views than preceding generations.

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[17] Mentioned in Andriessen (2020)

There seems to be less discrimination with regard to age (45+) and migration background. The observation that more people with the same background find work may increase the sense of inclusion and mean that incidents are less often linked to discrimination in other areas, too. The decline in *perceived* discrimination extends to other areas, particularly among Dutch citizens with a Moroccan background.

The labour market is often seen as a key area in fostering the integration of groups in society, partly because it gives people the opportunity to increase their resources (income, knowledge, skills, network, etc.), opening up society to them in the process. Participation in the labour market also appears to play a role in the more general perception of inclusion in society. The central role played by the labour market makes it all the more painful that *people with a disability* find it hard to obtain work. Discrimination is (still) not equally distributed, which is shown in the 'Stigmatisation Ladder'.
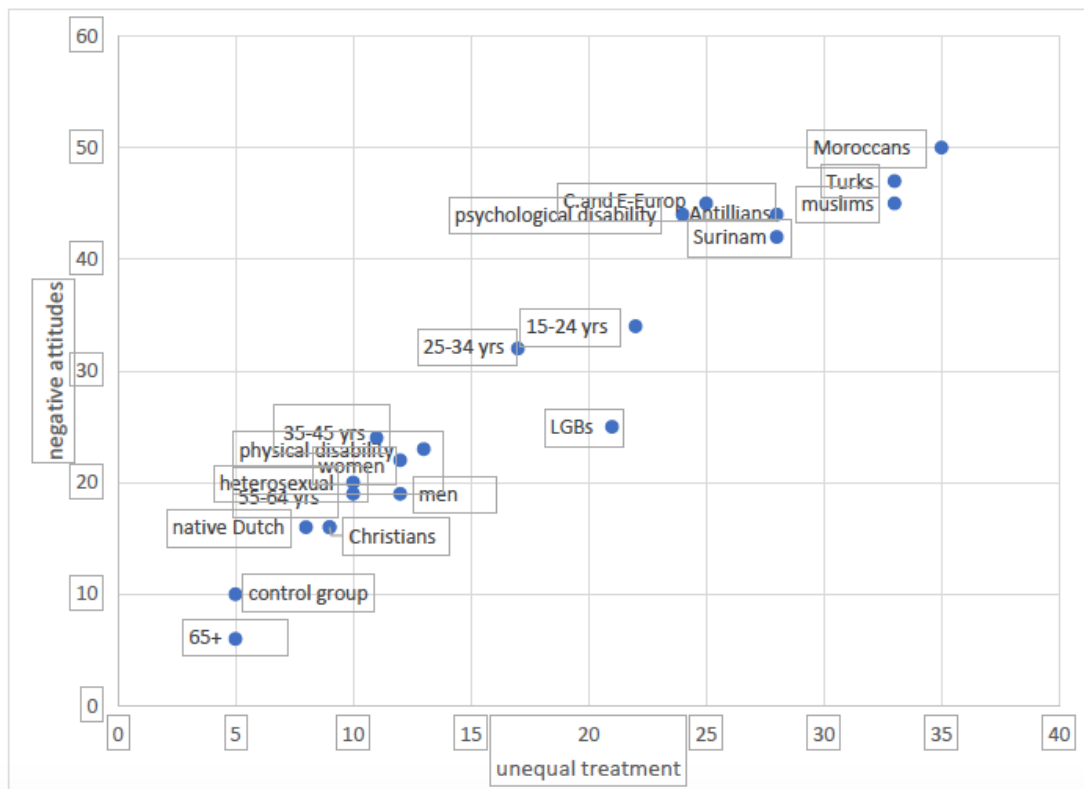
Table 5: 'The Stigmatisation Ladder'- Degree of perceived negative attitudes and unequal treatment, by group, total Dutch population aged 15 years and older, 2018 (in percentages). Source SCP/CBS (2018)

Andriessen et al.(2020) investigated not only the *extent* of discrimination but also at the *nature* of it. There were differences and similarities between groups, and the authors describe a *pattern* of perceived discrimination. Groups are placed on the two largest dimensions of perceived discrimination according to:

1. the extent to which a group feels it is subject to negative attitudes and

2. the extent to which a group feels it is subject to unequal treatment.

The control group experiences little discrimination, either in the form of unequal treatment or negative attitudes. People aged 65+ are situated close to the control group; they experience even less unequal treatment (due to that most of 65+ no longer participate in education or the labour market).

Dutch citizens with a Moroccan and Turkish background, and Muslims heavily overlap each other to some degree, and encounter a great deal of both negative attitudes and unequal treatment. They are stigmatised in Dutch society and are perceived as threatening by a proportion of the majority group. This *perceived* threat is based mainly on a cultural interpretation (value conflicts, losing cultural identity. They occupy a low position in the ethnic hierarchy, a ranking of ethnic groups in a society. The lower a group's position in the hierarchy, the more they are stereotyped as socially and culturally 'other'. People with a Surinamese or Antillean background and people from Central and Eastern Europe experience slightly less discrimination.

There is a striking difference between people with psychological and physical disabilities. This can be explained by the degree to which groups are perceived as threatening (Fiske et al. 2002). People with a physical disability tend to evoke feelings of empathy and sympathy, whereas people with a mental health disorder are viewed more negatively and sometimes elicit fear (Andriessen et al, 2020, p. 194).

Lesbian, gay and bisexual persons occupy an intermediate position, a situation they share with young people aged 15-24 years.

Although people with a migration background experience less discrimination than five years ago, a great deal still needs to be done in order to achieve the inclusive society that is the government's goal. The 'stigmatization ladder' shows that discrimination is (still) strongly associated with ethnic discrimination. It may be an indication that discrimination on other grounds is less readily recognised. If so, it may be underestimated (Andriessen et al., 2020).

The wide differences in the extent to which groups feel included or excluded show that an inclusive (Dutch) society is still a long way off. The small shifts in the last five years suggest that movement is possible under the influence of societal developments (Andriessen et al., 2020).

Given the current economic and social landslides due to the pandemic we have to take this prognosis with a grain of salt.

2.2.3. Gender equality

When we zoom in on genders, and specifically on men and women in general, the differences are (still) large. On average, men spend about 33 hours a week on paid work, women about 21 hours.

There have been some smaller shifts between *obligatory activities*: since 2006, women have on average spent about 2 hours a week more on *paid work*, and about 3.5 hours a week less on caring for the household and others. However, in the total time spent on compulsory activities, has been no substantial change over the past ten years.

While men with children spend more time on *paid work* than single men, the reverse is true for women: women with children spend less time on this per week.

The time spent on training- end education activities by people aged 20-65 years per week is generally low, i.e. a maximum of 2 hours per week, and men and women hardly differ at all (Wennekers et al., 2019).

LGBTIQA+

The terms and abbreviations used are subject to considerable change. While words such as 'gay' and 'transsexual' used to be the order of the day, nowadays people often talk about LGBTI's or *sexual and gender minorities*. The social debate in the Netherlands also includes other groups, such as people who describe themselves as 'queer', 'gender-fluid', 'questioning' and, moreover, the A of asexual is added to the discussion. (Van Beusekom, Kuyper, 2018, p.13)

LGBT and heterosexual persons do not differ in the extent to which they possess psychological resources such as experiencing control over one's own life, self-esteem or resilience. There are also few differences in the objective living situation index (a measure the SCP uses to summarise the position of groups in different areas of the living situation, such as cultural participation, holiday behaviour, housing and mobility).

Despite higher scores on some aspects of the objective and subjective living situation, LGBT-persons are slightly less happy than heterosexual persons. They experience less social cohesion in the neighbourhood, they feel unsafe in general and in specific locations (such as on the street or in the centre) and they are more likely to experience disrespectful behaviour (e.g. from acquaintances or company staff) and various forms of cyberbullying than heterosexual persons. LGB-employees have a less good position at work (Van Beusekom, Kuyper, 2018, p.13). For example, they experience more undesirable behaviour and conflicts. LGB's also report more burn-out complaints and are less satisfied with their work than heterosexual persons.

Transgender people have a poor position in the Netherlands. They have a significantly worse socio-economic position than the general population. For example, they are more likely to fall into the low income category, have less assets and more debts, and much less likely to own a house. Their labour market position is also less favourable; they are less likely to be employed and are more likely to receive social assistance benefits (Van Beusekom, Kuyper, 2018, p.13).

2.2.4. Civic education – a view from the outside

The *reality question* with civic education in the Netherlands, as already mentioned in the government policies, is: are young adults do (not all) seem properly prepared to be competent citizens?
The *freedom of education*, as enshrined in article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, offers schools the space to give shape to education *on the basis of their own philosophical foundations*. This may be the weak spot.
This 'freedom' fits in with an open society characterised by diversity, but it is not without borders. These are determined by legislation and regulations, such as core objectives and the statutory citizenship mandate, in which the basic values of a democratic state play a central role, i.e. equality and the rejection of discrimination,.

More clarity about the content of the citizenship curriculum can help to achieve sharper educational goals. Reference levels for citizenship could contribute to clarity about the expected level of civic competences (Vogelenzang, 2020).

However, clarity is not yet there, as the latest citizenship education statement (and bill) shows. It is an 'action plan' for 2020 and further, without defined concrete actions.

The government's hesitant course of action is also addressed in a recent SGI[18] report that gives Dutch cabinet's education policy a poor grade (Hoppe, Krouwel, 2019):

> "Growing segregation across levels and types of schools needs to be addressed. The relevance of existing educational qualifications in a rapidly changing labor market is increasingly questionable, and education at all levels is inadequately financed and staffed… An estimated 138,000 young people are not in education or employment. A large proportion of those young people lack a basic level of literacy, computer literacy or technical craft skills. Better educational and school-to-work transitional
> arrangements are crucial."

Also, according to an SGI report (2018)[19], equitable access to education for minority ethnic groups has not been achieved and is worsening at the university level. In higher professional training and university education, inadequate government funding exacerbates existing challenges resulting from increasing student numbers (particularly international students), work pressure and quality issues.[20]

Other observations are that there is no minimum requirement for students' knowledge and skills. And both the content and the development of citizenship education is (still) left too much to schools themselves. This means that large differences remain between schools, and these lead to unequal opportunities (Remie, Rusman, 2019/2).

What is "really worrisome" is that government experts already had concluded in 2010 that the Dutch live in a 'diploma democracy'[21]: highly educated people are better educated and represented in democracy than the less educated. Recent research proves that these differences in educational level (still) already exist at the start of secondary school. The fact that these differences are already present will probably have consequences for later political participation, unless the school can compensate for them (Remie, Rusman, 2019/1).

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[18] Sustainable Governance Indicators
[19] https://www.sgi-network.org/2018/The_Netherlands/Social_Policies
[20] According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with a score of 485 points, Dutch pupils rank 26th on the OECD rankings in 2018. This is eleven places lower than in 2015. The average score in 2018 shows a significant decrease compared to 2015.
[21] Remie, Rusman (2019/1)

If one does not want only highly educated people to vote in the future, one also needs to teach citizenship seriously in vocational education, thinks Joris Kurk[22] (2019). Unfortunately, right now more than 25 percent of civic education classes – especially in preparatory secondary vocational education- are not taught by a qualified teacher. So maybe students may have a teacher from another subject in front of the class who anxiously clings to a workbook because he finds it difficult to manage the conversation on complex social and political issues.

Fortunately, there is a recent new opportunity at secondary vocational education: the offer of a 'citizenship course'. Some *secondary vocational education* curricula have enthusiastic teachers who do their utmost to give students the political self-confidence with which they can move forward in their adult lives. Yet, with bad luck the school (policy) can consider attendance at a project *week* of citizenship a sufficient effort, which – again – would place it back to square one.

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[22] Kurk is a political scientist and civics teacher

2.3. Usability of (online) serious games in formal and informal educational environments

Online political games are a particular form of the serious game genre, and their engaging properties are summarized by Frasca (2006)[23] where he says that 'games and simulations can also make us think about what is going on in this world'.
The games' technology enables the developers to visualize the complexities in a much more sophisticated way than in a two-minute sound-bite on television. Games allow the player to be in someone else's shoes and view the world from their perspective.

Can games with a political-social content motivate young people to participate and get involved?
To start with: little scientific research has been done on the possibilities of using games *in relation to citizenship and social involvement* as research tells us (Neys, Jansz, 2014). Nevertheless an investigative small-scale qualitative study in 2010 (Neys, Jansz)[24] showed that gaming has a positive effect on the knowledge of the players and that they are wanted to delve further into the subject. It also turned out that players with friends and family members wanted to talk about it.
The analysis of the data gathered by means of an online survey revealed that more than half of the respondents were female (n = 43; 54 percent). The average age was 27 and a majority (87.5 percent) was educated to university level or higher. Most of the respondents had a (part-time) job (83.8 percent) and 15 percent indicated that they were students. Dutch respondents were well represented, making up 87.5 percent of the sample. The other nationalities represented were all western.

Effect
After playing the game, the respondents were asked if, and if so, to what extent, their knowledge and opinions about the issue dealt with had changed. About three-quarters said that they had become more knowledgeable. When asked to quantify this, participants indicated that on average they had gained about 30 percent more knowledge of the issue than before playing the game. Opinions about the issue had also changed for about 25 percent of respondents, whereas a further quarter indicated

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[23] Mentioned in Neys & Jansz (2010, p. 229)
[24] Based on U.S. designed short games (independent developers with a political/social context: Airport Security, Darfur is Dying, McDonalds Game and September the 12th.

that they had not learnt anything (23.8 percent) and almost a third had not changed their opinion (30.0 percent).

More effects

Another research (2012)[25] by the same authors on the effects of the game Poverty Is Not a Game (PING, for secondary school students) confirmed the conclusions of the earlier project, and revealed that the knowledge about the subject increases after the game. The students were also fine to indicate their involvement in the game, some even wanted to join action groups (in the end they didn't). There was also social facilitation: students said they would like to talk with others about the subject. It showed that it does not necessarily mean a lack of political commitment. After all, players continued to have intensive conversations and discussions with friends and relatives, also in the long term. Being active on a subject increases one's social involvement.

In short, from their own (and based on other research) Neys & Jansz (2014) conclude:

- Education in citizenship can benefit from the use of serious games.
- Recent scientific research shows that games can contribute to deepening insight into the subject covered by the game.
- Games can contribute to positive involvement with the subject (including behaviour).
- The clearest but modest effects are social in nature: after playing a serious game, the player is more inclined to talk about the subject with others.
- These discussions are of great importance in achieving longer-term effects.

2.3.1. Serious games in the Netherlands

We've had some interesting phone conversations with some of the leading serious game developers[26]. Some of them are eager to be 'critical friends' and 'associates' we can turn to in the course of the development of our game.

The Netherlands is not big in entertainment gaming, but big in serious gaming. This is in line with the service industry in the Netherlands, which is large. A number of the larger development studios have

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[25] Mentioned in Neys, Jansz (2014)
[26] IJsfontein (https://www.ijsfontein.nl), Frisse Blikken (https://frisseblikken.com/nl/), NDB Biblion (https://www.nbdbiblion.nl), Covince (https://covince.com)

grown from e-learning. Lots of single-person and small businesses are widely distributed in the Netherlands. Creators quickly become entrepreneurs.

There is a lot of diversity in what they can handle and thus diversity in quality.

What started with service organisations, is now more and more operational in the private and public sector. The main points of attention in game development are

1. Awareness-raising

2. Information transfer

3. Change of behaviour

4. Development of skills

What they consider as important is working from *design thinking* perspective, thus: analysis of target groups and issues are important, e.g. what does the target group know and how do they think. They also consider it important to build in good reflection steps. Debriefing and translating back to the real world is important.

Some developers spend a relatively large amount of time on design, others use flat simulation, concentrating on only on one of the two will make it difficult to get people involved. Fresh eyes are needed in between. "Make a real game, with a good story, but also keep in mind the dynamics of the issue".

In an interview with NDB Biblion[27] we learned that libraries have started with experimenting with escape rooms and break-in boxes (= the opposite of an escape room). These 'serious games are still offline, but online games will be added in the future. There is certainly a belief that this can turn out to be a strong combination. Planned development initiatives and challenges are:

- Developing a game for integration in conversation with group of libraries
- Talking to language schools. In the participative society municipalities now are responsible for civic integration, so there is more demand from the municipality from libraries. A 'Language house' is the physical version, later a game and a digital version (online).
- Reading programmes for children learn to read, something interactive in addition to the physical programme. Physical is a starting point to bring it to the target group.

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[27] NBD Biblion, formerly known as the Dutch Library Service is a service organisation for libraries. https://www.nbdbiblion.nl

- A group of VMBO[28] students will develop their own game for a reading program, and also to become acquainted with libraries.
- Those who work at the libraries will also need to understand and know it in order to be able to support users. Building a learning community to share experiences with each other.
- The challenge for libraries: what do people who have to integrate need?

Developer Covince[29] has universities as users. Covince is a platform where everyone can develop their own game, similar to services of Wordpress. One can leave their concept on the platform and then others can use it- if that topic is relevant to them as well- or others can build on it. It resembles the idea of an 'open source'.
Similar services are offered by developer Athand[30]: they are specialised in developing 'knowledge battles' (and thus favour team- or network games) for in-company training purposes. They also 'build' their (serious) games on a basic platform.

Still, to some the name 'serious game' is not very clear. As we have presented and will present in our overview further on, there are many types of (serious) games, from board and card games (our best practice example is a board game) to simulations and dramatized games, such as role-playing games. From face-to-face games, in which players see each other, to online games, in which players take on a role in a virtual reality (Van Haaster, 2015, p.14).

Yet, in general, 'gamification' gets a lot of positive reactions. It is therefore not only the entertainment that is valued, but also the value of learning in a *playful* way.
Serious gaming is perceived as a perfect development tool to bring people close to their own role and value within complex themes as those we address in the INGAME project.
It has become interesting to let people play along in scenarios that invite participation: it leads to what is called "participatory value evaluation", because games are generating involvement, as research already has shown.

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[28] VMBO – secondary vocational education
[29] https://covince.com
[30] https://www.athand.nl

In our opinion, the most convincing argument for a serious game (especially with sensitive issues as social inclusion, citizenship or gender equality, is given by developer Lisa Hu[31]: "In a game, all players are *equal*. You don't need prior knowledge, so anyone can join."

The European context

What was thought (by the developers) to be considered: too often beautiful and potentially effective (project) outputs are developed that end up in a drawer, or are only used for a very short time. Marketing is very important. Who is the sender, how is it distributed, and to whom? An example given: a game about immigrants presented by a progressive broadcaster is mainly played by a left-wing, progressive audience. Whereas one would want to appeal to a more conservative, right-wing audience with such a subject. That will also be a challenge for INGAME, putting it on the market for a wide audience.

Thus, developing a game that is suitable in different countries is possible but very difficult. The danger with developing something for a very broad (and *politically and culturally diverse*) target group is that it becomes so generic that it runs the risk of not appealing to anyone.

2.3.2. Serious gaming as a government policy in civic education

We have mentioned two 'serious game' related activities earlier (Greenwish, Democratic Challenge), and it is clear that it is not within the Dutch Cabinet's policy to employ (online) serious gaming to involve young citizens in civic issues in formal (let alone informal) education. It does not seem a role governing Cabinets assign to themselves, probably due to the relative short term assembly (4 years) in differently 'coloured' coalitions and their political agendas. However, it showed that (in the long term) governmental institutions - ministries (in cooperation with universities and/or private developers) and municipalities try out initiatives (the participatory 'instruments' we mentioned earlier). Also, as we will show, private developers also cooperate with National Television's (NTR) educational programmes and with schools, or develop serious games and offer them to educational institutions, municipalities or regional governmental bodies. As it turns out, there is a diverse range of 'serious games' (in civic

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[31] TEDtalk Lisa Hu: https://youtu.be/n9lAyxRmoWI

education or close to that) on offer, not all of them specifically online. In the following we present an number of 'serious game' initiatives in the fields we want to cover in the INGAME project.

2.3.3. (Online) Serious Gaming for civic participation (education) in the Netherlands

Democratic Challenge

We have already mentioned this initiative of the Ministry of the Interior and the Association of Dutch Municipalities[32]. It is **not so much a 'serious game'** but an invitation to initiatives by citizens to strengthen local democracy in their municipality. It directs participants/initiative takers to the Digital Working Agenda[33] and a download page (Google docs) where they can download a collection of democratic tools such as practical examples, handouts, studies, essays and checklists[34]. The latter contains a mountain of information over forms of democracy, how to influence as a (local) citizen (set up initiatives, participation instruments), roles and cadres within the municipality, and a 'training' toolkit (e.g. balloting, inclusive district economy) including 'masterclasses (balloting, local democracy, digital democracy, etc.). Unfortunately these are all pdfs, and thus require a lot of reading and organising. As mentioned earlier, this may be the reason that it is difficult to determine how much civic engagement it has generated. It contains little information of successful cases.
However, in the course of this project some of the information) may be interesting when developing the project's 'serious game' (story).

Serious game- An escape room connects residents to municipal democracy

A game designed by a young consultant of Twijnstra Gudde (a consultancy and in-company training organization). In the municipality of Amersfoort, the game was tested in the form of a pilot on 20 March 2018, the day before the municipal elections. Young people were locked up in the council chamber. They were able to escape by carrying out tasks that are also faced by the municipal council.
The concept was taken to the province of Overijssel wanted to involve residents in democracy and history in a new way. TwynstraGudde had tailor made the Old Statesroom at the city hall into an escape

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[32] http://democraticchallenge.nl
[33] https://democratischzakboekje.nl, website still under construction
[34] https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VZLm4NuMHADNDfr7_pyy5sk5flHDxWug

room for this purpose. With this, the province had an innovative instrument at its disposal to involve residents in democracy and history in an accessible and new way.

https://www.twynstragudde.nl/cases/escape-room-verbindt-inwoners-aan-de-democratie

Serious game City Councils (D66) – started in 2017 – not online

The serious game Gemeenteraadsels (*Municipality Riddles*) has been played throughout the country for some time. In neighbourhoods where the turnout for elections is low, many do not know how local politics actually works. To do something about this, the Mr Hans Van Mierlostichting (Van Mierlo Foundation[35]) had developed this serious game together with D66 The Hague.

Municipal councils allow participants to become acquainted with local politics in a fun and accessible way. The game has 5 different game scenarios, suitable for both large and small municipalities. In the game each player is assigned a role, with his or her own goal. For example, the alderman wants to spend as little money as possible in the game, while a councilor thinks it is important that as many inhabitants as possible are satisfied. Together the players solve problems: will there be green spaces or parking spaces in the street? Where will refugees be accommodated? And what happens to 'the empty building'?

The game is suitable to play in various places such as community centres, schools or football canteens! Take a look at the successful test session we had in a community centre in the Rivierenbuurt in The Hague. A compilation of one meeting can be found here: https://youtu.be/foDB7DUKBbI

13 in the War

Developer *IJsfontein*[36] made the serious game *13 in the War* in cooperation with the NTR[37]. The 13-part NTR history series 13 in the War explains the Second World War through stories of teenagers. This serious game connects to a TV series, but can also be played separately. The game makes war concrete and shows the choices and dilemmas.

https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/serious-game-13-in-de-oorlog

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[35] Hans van Mierlo was the founder of the Dutch social-liberal party D66
[36] www.ijsfontein.nl
[37] The NTR is a public broadcaster with statutory tasks. These tasks are in the field of information, education, culture, youth and diversity.

During our search we also came across a Dutch research publication about gaming and gamification in penal institutions. There the authors (Te Velde, Steur, Vankan, 2015) presented some (adult) games of which two drew our attention. One (Vigilance) has not been developed in the Netherlands, but both were interesting in terms of theme, scenario and 'staging':

Vigilance 1.0- Protect a city from immorality while trying to maximize your score

In Vigilance- a serious game cum artwork- the player sees a wall with images of security cameras in front of him or her. The rules of the game are extremely simple: he has to click on all offences he sees. In other words, he has to censor the citizens in the city. The more violations he reports, the more points he collects. The number of points depends on the seriousness of the offence. Illegal dumping = +1, public drunkenness +2, prostitution +5 and so on. However, every time he falsely clicks on a citizen he will sue him for 'defamation' and the score goes down. The game gives the player the opportunity to experiment with 'procedural justice'. For example, he can choose to focus on the most serious offenses (which earn the most points). In that case, however, the number of less serious offences will increase, disrupting the city as a whole (rubbish accumulates, drunks roam the city, etc.). Already after a few minutes of play- and after the necessary false reports- the question arises whether the unlimited (and shameless) monitoring of citizens outweighs 'fighting immorality'- who is he to judge his fellow citizens?... (Te Velde, Steur, Vankan, 2015, p. 25)

The other game was

The Compliance Experience- Integrity training and assessment

The Compliance Experience is a serious game concept for the training and assessment of compliance and integrity developed by *&Ranj* in collaboration with the HR consultancy GITP and Utrecht University. Compliance is "the tendency of the individual to go along with proposals, questions or instructions in order to gain a certain advantage".

On the one hand it is about complying with rules, laws and standards of behaviour of the organisation to evade punishment. On the other hand, it beats to respond to requests from others to avoid confrontation. Therefore, the main focus of compliance is on dealing with- and exerting- social pressure. The game creates recognisable situations in which everyday dilemmas can be played. The Compliance Experience is a so called *narrative serious game*: the (rich) storyline of the game is central. It may be static (it's a tree diagram), but it's small decisions that are being made at the start (such as committing innocent offences) can lead to major negative consequences in the long term. Because the

player is sucked into the game (immersed), the 'normative inflation' is creeping in. Unlike in traditional role-plays, students are not only faced with the short-term effects of their choices, but also feel how those can trigger longer-term decisions (Te Velde, Steur, Vankan, 2015, p. 75).

These set-ups (themes) are interesting in both ways: one is that they tackle individual competencies as well as civic competencies.

When it comes to detainees, it is more about (future) social inclusion when the behavioural intervention is completed and the end of the sentence is in sight, the detainee works according to his detention & reintegration plan towards self-reliance with the aim of successful reintegration. Through the application of differentiated (gaming) programmes it is possible to create (new) incentives for inmates. These incentives are used to stimulate good behaviour, to promote reintegration, and ultimately to reduce recidivism. The knife cuts both ways: on the one hand, the system can help maintain order (internal) and recidivism reduction (external).

2.3.4. (Online) Serious Gaming for social inclusion in the Netherlands

Restart

Restart is an educational program of the Dutch Open Air Museum in Arnhem. This programme aims to raise awareness among schoolchildren about the theme of migration. In a fun and interactive way, students experience what it is like to be a migrant.

Upon entry, a museum employee checks the (home-made) passports of the students. They have just become 'citizens on trial' from the fictitious 'Anderland' (*Otherland*). Pupils are included in the story from the very first moment. After a short explanation, 'families' of 3 or 4 pupils are formed and they go on their own for more than 2 hours through the park with an iPad as a guide. Once on the way, the pupils look for work, make new friends, learn how to ride a bicycle (on strange bicycles) and learn how to cook strange food. Throughout the park there are fixed assignments and optional assignments. For all assignments the pupils contact the park, the staff or the visitors. To feel happy, for example, pupils have to make friends with 'normal' visitors who were born in another country. They have to be photographed together as evidence. https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/restart

Hero game

Go fight harassment and bullying. But how? By getting to know each other better and in a different way. For the EO program[38] 'Anti Bullying Club' IJsfontein developed the Hero Game. A digi-board game for group 5 to 8 of primary school. The game was launched during the *Anti-Bullying Week.* In the Hero Game children get to know each other in the classroom in a whole new way. The pupils answer questions and propositions by physically standing in a certain place in the classroom. The questions are about everything: Do you speak a language other than Dutch at home or what kind of house do you live in? In this way, children explore themselves and other children differently than in the everyday situation and discover that they have more in common than they thought.

https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/zapp-heldengame

Steffi – online tool for low literates

Steffie explains difficult things in an easy way to low literate citizens by making use of a talking virtual assistant/coach (*Steffie*). It contains information about various topics like dating, DigiD, the OV-chipcard, health and health insurance, taxes, (new) laws, banking and finance, a visit to the doctor and more. It is not a game, but offering a normally excluded group (or a group perceiving exclusion) palpable and clear information is a sympathetic initiative[39]. https://www.steffie.nl

Social Shuffle

Research by scientists at Radboud University shows that changing the classroom layout can improve student relationships. With this simple and valuable insight, Creative Agency Dawn came up with a classroom tool commissioned by insurance company *Zorg en Zekerheid*. Developer *IJsfontein* contributed to the concept of the tool, designed the interface and developed the tool.
The Social Shuffle is a free and very accessible online tool, which scrambles the classroom setup based on a calculation. In total, four times a year, everyone gets a different place, and the tool ensures that children are close to as many different classmates as possible. In this way the whole class gets to know each other better. https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/social-shuffle

Subcutaneously- online

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[38] EO is a Christian-oriented broadcaster
[39] Steffie is an initiative by Leer Zelf Online, originally set up by Netrex Internet Solutions in 2016.

Prejudices and ideas about 'the other', almost everyone has them. Sometimes they are visible and sometimes below the surface. Ideas that we are sometimes frightened of to discover are there, because they do not match our self-image. The platform was set up in the wake of documentary filmer Sunny Bergman's new documentary about *unconscious* racism *'Black as soot'.* 'Subcutaneously 'challenges us to focus on ourselves and society. IJsfontein developed the platform. The basis of the platform is the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT was originally developed at the Harvard University and is now adapted to the Dutch context. The test shows whether you have an unconscious preference for light or dark skin. Many people were (and are) shocked by the outcome. 'Yes, but' and 'and now' are frequently heard reactions. These counter-arguments are mentioned and discussed on the website. The goal is to *make people aware o*f their preferences and not to tell them how to do something.

https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/website-onderhuids

Shadow game (multimedia, including game)

Shadow Game is a 'coming of age' story, an adventure film through Europe with (migrant) adolescents as guides. For most children, life is a game. But not every game is without risk. Crossing the borders in Europe, *'The Game'*, as *child migrants* call it, is life-threatening. In search of a better life, these children are often on the road for years. Meanwhile, they grow up and develop their identity. Shadow Game tells their story in a long documentary, webdoc series, **game** and photo project. Not everything has been developed yet.

https://www.prospektor.nl/shadow-game-nl

Into D'Mentia- offline

This 'serious game' is not developed for online use, but it is an example of thinking how to stage a specific theme.

Into D'Mentia helps to understand people who suffer dementia, and as such fits in social inclusion. The experience is built in a *travelling container*. Audiovisual tools, an interactive story and a smart design give caretakers and family members a clear picture of patients' experiences.

In a cozy kitchen, users are immersed in the world of someone with dementia. Invisible techniques in *Into D'Mentia* provide a lifelike experience. A simple example of this is changing the buttons on a radio. The user experiences that things don't work the way they are used to and gets confused. The story is

based on interviews with caregivers and people with dementia and was further developed with the help of scientists and research in this field.

https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/into-dmentia

(the following game seems outside the 'social inclusion' we address in the project, but it again shows how to stage an attitude change)

Delirium Experience (health care)- online

The Delirium Experience is an online interactive video experience. In the game, care providers learn how to recognize and treat a delirious patient. Patients often encounter powerlessness or even incomprehension among care staff and family members. The *Delirium Experience* wants to contribute in a positive way to a change in attitude, so that doctors and nurses can take even better care of this category of patients that is often experienced as 'difficult'.

The delirium experience is an online interactive video experience. In the game, care providers learn how to recognize and treat a delirious patient. Patients often encounter powerlessness or even incomprehension among care staff and family members. The game allows doctors and nurses to take even better care of this category of patients, which is often experienced as 'difficult'. The player can experience a delirium from different perspectives. One is free to experiment with different kinds of treatments. So one can also try what happens if one makes mistakes. The stories on which the scenario of the Delirium experience is based are real and are played by experienced actors.

https://www.ijsfontein.nl/projecten/delirium-experience-4

2.3.5. (Online) Serious Gaming for gender equality in the Netherlands

As far as we have explored, there are no serious (educational) games that cover gender equality 'on the market'.

3. Good Practice

Terra Nova Minimaatschappij (Terra Nova Mini Society)

This is a serious game that has been put forward by different developers we talked to as an innovative and successful game. It has been developed for schools and has been developed with the help of students, teachers and many others. In the meantime, hundreds of children and young people have started talking to each other through Terra Nova. Although it is not an online game, but a board game, it answers to the criteria (involvement, results, effects) put down by researchers[40] and game developers we spoke to.

It is a game and discussion tool to make difficult social issues discussable. Using a storyline on an uninhabited island, players discuss their ideal society. During their adventure, they are challenged by moral dilemmas. They explore what is 'right' for them and what is not and take matters into their own hands to organise something for this. With Terra Nova, students create their own miniature society in teams of five on an uninhabited island. They experience what it means to be part of a society by being allowed to run/govern one themselves. The game also perfectly fits to be played by (young) adults. This is citizenship education beyond knowing the state: it provides a moment and opportunity for children *and* (young) adults to weigh up for themselves what is needed for a well-functioning society (e.g. fairness, equity, inclusion, migration/refugees, cooperation).
After a sold out first edition and extensive further development, the second edition is now available.
The game is offered as *single packs* (5 participants) and *six packs* (30 participants). The developers offer or workshops, lectures and teacher trainings. www.lisahu.nl
See Lisa Hu's[41] TEDtalk here (worth watching): https://youtu.be/n9lAyxRmoWI

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[40] Neys & Jansz (2014)
[41] Lisa Hu is founder and director of the Foundation Terra Nova - Democratic Design. She works as a social designer of products and services with social value as a goal.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Key Results of Desk Research and Surveys

Desk Research

Dutch government policies should be seen as twofold: the policies that the Cabinet propagates, and the policies that ministries and municipalities try to implement and (some) try to innovate. The Cabinet is well aware of its EU policy towards (democratic) citizenship, social inclusion and gender equality. In practice (legislation and implementation), government policy is rather vague about this. The introduction of the 'participatory society' has ensured that many tasks (e.g. integration, social inclusion) and budgets are decentralized and under the responsibility of municipalities. Citizenship education is a stepchild, the responsibility lies with schools and educators, there is (still) no clear (testable) programme, to the regret of the Education Inspectorate. The emphasis on economic progress has therefore had little impact on how citizens interact - there has been little improvement in gender equality and social inclusion, there is still discrimination, and mutual trust does not generally seem to have improved, unless citizens themselves intervene when things really do go wrong (active citizenship, 'monitoring citizens') .

Ministries and other authorities (e.g. municipalities, regional water authorities) are independently experimenting with programmes and 'instruments' to promote the cooperation (participation) with citizens. In that case, it is referred to as 'participatory citizenship', as opposed to 'active citizenship'- activities and initiatives that citizens set up independently of governmental institutions.
'Active citizenship' expresses itself most in *volunteer work* and it is there where we see the most 'satisfied' citizens: working with like-minded people on a goal gives this group confidence in their fellow man and belief in democracy (and at least in social inclusion). This does not seem to work with activists: too often actions fail and trust (in fellow men and democracy) decreases.
We have also indicated that there is still a 'diploma in democracy' in the Netherlands: lower educated people feel at a distance from society and will not experience 'democracy' as such. They are often also the ones who are sensitive to 'we-they' thinking.

Researchers, (experimenting) ministries, advisory bodies (SCP) as well as citizens are concerned about the state of the Netherlands with regard to citizenship, social inclusion and gender equality. There is still much to be gained here.

As far as serious gaming is concerned, we see that the government does not make any mention of it, and certainly not of stimulation and education in relation to the three major themes that INGAME wants to tackle.

However, research is done and Dutch game developers show us that assignments are being given: often limited to informal ('unofficial') education, paying attention to social inclusion and citizenship, but strangely enough not to gender equality. We say 'informal' because none of the games are officially offered by the government. However, the research done shows that when people are kept engaged in a ('political') game and finish it, they will also involve (and talk to) their personal environment about its content and become more active in society.

The surveys

The surveys show that most of our respondents feel involved in society, or at least want to feel involved. Most also want to be *actively* involved (active citizenship, 'monitoring citizen'). As an important note, we would like to add that our target group) consisted of higher educated people (the above mentioned 'diploma democrats').

It was striking that there is hardly any familiarity with (online) serious games related to the topics chosen by INGAME. Most respondents have confidence in technologies and (online) gaming as a knowledge provider, provided that conditions of 'entertainment' (game), challenge and user-friendliness are met. Concerns are expressed when it comes to (personal) finances - e.g. powerful laptops or iPads are not available to everyone.

In addition, some respondents seemed somehow intimidated by the "big questions" asked found it difficult to say anything about the possible role of technology on the basis of these broad concepts.

Game developers (and researchers into gaming) are convinced that *play* is an excellent basis for changing people's behaviour, attitudes and transferring knowledge. After all, we are *homo ludens* ('the playing man')- play is (also and especially) *experiential* learning. Successful behaviour (e.g. anticipation, social skills) is 'rewarded' and strengthened, and you learn from mistakes. The challenge and

opportunity for INGAME is to develop a serious game that captivates people from different (political) cultures equally and not only transfers knowledge but also invites them to actively put it into practice.

4.2. Recommendations for future action

Awareness: the message of an online political game is presented in play. Therefore, the impact that it might have on its audience is not derived solely from its content as such, but is also dependent on the meaning the audience attributes to it while playing. (Neys, Jansz, 2010)

One has to be sure that the stated final learning objectives are achieved within a defined timeframe. Important are the flow of engagement, the way of scoring and feedback, and the possibilities to ensure collaboration for greater self-efficacy (Oprins et al., 2013)

The danger with making something for a very broad target group (politically and culturally) is that it becomes so generic that it does not appeal to anyone. The challenge will be to make the game a 'stayer' and not let it get bogged down.

Autonomy: Deen (2015)[42] argues that autonomy – the feeling that learners have their own input and can make choices independently – is often lacking in educational games. This suggests discreet steering. Deen also talks about *restructuring*: changing a certain situation in order to create a new situation and learn from that *playfully* and intuitively.

But 'authenticity' is not sacred, on the contrary: we are after all the '*zoön politicon*', the social animal. So we have to make use of the opportunities of the game 'world'. Games allow humans to think as a network rather than on their own and let them wander around the digital terrain, interacting with whatever and whomever they encounter. "Human minds are plug-and-play devices; they're not meant to be used alone. They're meant to be used in networks," (Marklin, 2014).

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[42] Mentioned in Conradi (2015)

Learn from social design thinking: the analysis of the target group and issue is important. Research means analysis of the issue and questioning it. Plus: what are the questions of the target group and what do they think?

Social design can facilitate 'reframing': one wants to achieve a change in behaviour or a certain influence on behaviour. It is not only about the (social) problem, it is also about those involved. So the social designer engages all those involved in the (design) process in a far-reaching way (this is what the interviewed developers share strongly).

With a well-designed game alone, we're not there yet. The biggest challenge in 'employing' games in education lies in the context. We should make sure that the conversation about the subject of the game actually takes place *in the social environment of players*, because there are strong indications that the interaction between the experiences the player gains through the game and the discussions he or she then has with classmates, friends and family makes all the difference (Neys, Jansz, 2014).

Developers' aims for creation:

Three functions for 'political games are proposed:

Recording, meaning that the game aims to inform players about a political issue.

Persuasion: the political game aims at awareness and thereby stimulates debate and discussion.

Engagement: aims to incite the players into taking action and becoming *involved* in politics in some way. "If you have something to say about the world, don't wait around for someone to create that thing for you, DO IT YOURSELF." (Neys, Jansz, 2010)

An engaging (maybe even exciting) scenario and the chosen setting and imaging will be paramount to keep the players involved in in the complex (and for some maybe even controversial) issues we want to address.

And finally:

Promoting 'active citizenship' (as in the promising effect of volunteer-thinking) and providing democratic tools (e.g. democratic challenge) for that within a serious game seems to be a direction for INGAME. The games we have presented will hopefully add to the inspiration.

Last, but not least: when we look at it from the Dutch perspective, we have to be aware that there is still a 'diploma democracy': higher educated (young) citizens are represented in democracy than the less educated. The educational background plays an important, maybe even crucial role in becoming interested in democracy and democratic values. It may be of paramount importance that we don't make the threshold too high to get into a serious game. The aspect of 'play', the 'parallel world' in which mistakes are allowed in order to learn, must prevail. What is needed to achieve this parallelism, is that one understands reality and has an idea of how (behavior) change can be achieved. There must be a picture of the critical factors that determine future success (Wenzler I., 2015, p.44)[43]

We'd like to finish with what one of the inspirators of the gaming world, Leonard Huizinga, said about 'play':

> It is a significant function-that is to say, there is some sense to it. In play there is something "at play" which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means *something*. (Huizinga, 1949/1980, p. 1)

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[43] Contributing in Van Haaster (2015)

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6. Annex

Notes from a webinar

DOs and DON'Ts

DO

1. Define: What behaviour? What knowledge (content)?

2. Design: What design (form)? What platform (budget-driven) and how to? What to measure (performance parameters)?

Design has to fit target audience.

If you want to create awareness, challenge. Acquired knowledge enhances enthusiasm, will lead to action (in game and outside game).

If you want to 're-condition' behaviour through knowledge, give rewards (badges) and thus increase 'status'.

The higher common objective

'We Democracy' (others need you) – DO something!

DON'T

Competition, but no 'losers'. Participating is more important than beating someone else.

Possible game form:

'**Knowledge Battle'** (Use Avatars (against other avatars) → it's not you who 'loses', it's the avatar (pity you lost, but (new) life goes on – trial and error). Or work in (avatar) teams, creates connection (e.g. Fourtnight).

Time frame serious game: 10 (to max. 20) minutes a day, length (depending on content): 2-4-6 weeks. Make it episodic. Repetition is important.