



Year report 2016



Photo front:

State Secretary Ms Klijnsma and members of the pupils council of Elementary school Mikado at the EAPN NL conference on the 18th of November in The Hague

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Year report 2016

2016, the year of the experience expert

The deployment of experts in the area of poverty and exclusion took in 2016 a serious step forward. The GGZe¹ organises in Venlo the 1st Experience Experts Day, EAPN NL works on the project "The deployment on experts within the local social domain" and in various cities start training courses for experts. Something similar took place many years in the mental health care, as we learn from the Nederlandse Herstel Groep². An interesting development, where we want to note how unfortunate it is that the National Cadre Training Foundation (LKU³) is no longer active, as they, from 1990 to 2006, every year brought forward dozens of trained experts for local self-help organizations and local client councils.

As every year since 2001, we brought together a delegation of experts together to participate in the "European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty" held in Brussels in November. Next to that we organize a conference on the use of experience experts in The Hague on 18 November.

2016 also offers some local workshops, in which many people, who live on a benefit and are experience of poverty, participate. And is there a co-lecture at the Hague conference of the European Social Network (ESN) on the problem of debts from the president of EAPN NL.

One of the absolute highlights of this year is the meeting between State Secretary Mrs. Klijnsma and the Mikado primary school pupils council from Blerick (Venlo) on poverty, we organize at the start of the conference on the 18th of November as the photo on the front page shows..

Workshops

In cooperation with the Regional Client Participation Council eastern Achterhoek we organize well-attended workshops in Winterswijk, Neede and Lichtenvoorde, where we give the floor to the people themselves. In all workshops the relevant aldermen are present and clearly indicate to welcome this initiative. With the results of workshops the Regional Client Participation Council eastern Achterhoek will seek the dialogue with the regional Social Service Department and will bring proposals on the table.

Later in the year we organize in cooperation with the Citizen Council Boxmeer a workshop, that gets a follow-up meeting at the end of the year. For both meetings the accommodation shows to be too small. That great is the turnout. It becomes very clear how much need there is for poor people to discuss their situation and develop ideas and proposals to improve their situation.

Also in Ommen, in cooperation with the foundation Ommen Samen Sterk and the municipality Ommen, a workshop takes place. Again, the meeting provides a lot of positive energy. For the participants, for the foundation and for the alderman who is very satisfied with what has been brought forward. He promises to speak about the ideas and proposals with Ommen Samen Sterk and others to seek for what is possible.

¹ GGZe is a self help organization of people with a mental health care problem.

² National organization that trains and guides experience experts within the mental care world.

³ The LKU was a self organization in which three of the founding members of EAPN NL worked together.

Within the frameworks of the project "The deployment on experts within the local social domain" we organize, also with Ommen Samen Sterk as partner a working group on the local poverty policy, during which we examine the existing policy, develop new ideas and contribute to a Poster, compiled by EAPN NL and Ommen Samen Sterk, which is suspended at many locations. The starting point is that the information is better understood if we use the personal situation. This creates special tables for the single person, the single parent, the family, the elderly and the working poor. Also several Evenings for free Ingress are used to provide information, to talk about the possibilities offered of the municipality Ommen and to develop new ideas. This leads to a letter to the city council, which contains two proposals for increasing the minimum income policy. During its first discussion the council reveals that there is a real chance the proposals will be adopted. During the 2nd council meeting, the councilors and members of the College of B & W –mayor and aldermen, were offered an owl, to wish them wisdom. This action shows to be highly appreciated.

In Deventer we organize, also within the framework of the project, in cooperation with the communal Budget Advisory Office Deventer, a workshop for the volunteers who act as a buddy for those in debts. To see what they are doing, what they need and how support could possibly be improved. There are two other sessions, one with the former clients and one with clients that are in the last part of the official 3 year to end debts track. One of the goals is to gain insight into the problems experienced by clients.

Participation

NRP

EAPN NL is invited, as stakeholder, to react to the concept of the National Reform Programme (NRP). This year we send out, under a strict embargo, the concept to the grassroots organizations that operate on a national level and to national organizations we cooperate with, asking if they want to use this opportunity to respond. EAPN NL will add any comments to her own reaction, without changing anything. Four organizations use the opportunity by coming up with its own response. As agreed, we send these along with our own response.

The problem with the NRP is and remains that the government only responds to the country specific recommendations from the European Commission and recover what has already happened. So not really what they intend to do or change. While our opinions correspond to the existing policies and look for a change. In our review we ask explicitly to take more account of people with low incomes as it regards the huge rent increases. We reject the Commission's assertion that the rents in our country would be too low strongly.

WGS

The Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment asks Consultancy Bureau Berenschot to organize two meetings to discuss the implementation issues of the Municipal Debt Act. We attend both meetings.

Given the fact that, in the framework of the project "The deployment on experts within the local social domain", we cooperate in Deventer with the communal Budget Advisory Office (BAD), we can report two important issues in a letter to the ministry.

1. With regard to the proposed moratorium, we propose to start this at the moment the request for help is adopted, and the communal bureau can start the process. From that point on it still takes some time before the route can start

actually. At that time, creditors will still reap their rewards quickly, making that debt and the pressure continues to increase.

2. volunteers are popping up everywhere. That's because different organizations want to help, with the best intentions, people dealing with debts. Fact is that there is no clarity about who does what, plus that difference arises in quality. This can and must be better coordinated, because that way it will be more effective.

Eindhoven

This year also the foundation Together for Women's Health from Eindhoven organizes three thematic conferences, for which they invite EAPN NL to be partner and ask for a contribution. On behalf of EAPN NL two ladies speak on two of the conferences. Their contributions prove to be a hit. Also because they are based on daily life, put the real issues on the table and clearly show what poverty does with people, and their children. We would, of course, not be EAPN NL, if we do not come up with positive solutions.

FEAD

At the request of our European network, EAPN NL organizes a discussion meeting on the Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived (FEAD), also known as the European Fund for the most needy (efmb).

The purpose is to look to the future opportunities this new fund may offer to organizations that work in favour of and with those (most) deprived..

We also want to reflect on the space offered by the fund, because in addition to direct financial support such as food and clothing, it might used to reduce social exclusion. We also want to look forward and discuss how the new European Platform FEAD should develop. The outcomes of the meeting will be provided to the European Commission via the consultancy Ecorys, together with the reports of several other EU countries, where a similar meeting will be organized. The Commission is interested in new ideas and would like to further expand the role of the European FEAD platform.

Beforehand of the meeting we contact the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Association of Food Banks and the single project in our country supported through the FEAD program.

Several representatives of the organizations participating in this meeting, as EAPN NL does, also participate in the founding conference of FEAD, which takes place in Brussels. As at network meetings organized by FEAD. There even start some talks about cooperation, both at national and international level between organizations. The future will show whether this is realistic.

PEP meetings

In 2016, as usual, two meetings were held with representatives of local and regional organizations that participate in our network. We discuss not only the work of EAPN NL, but especially what is happening at local level, how the mood is and what is happening. This provides insight into what concerns the position of the poor and excluded and how communities respond.

Conference November 18

The second meeting is held within the framework of the experience expertise project. On the 18th of November we organize a conference in The Hague for our Hinterland, colleagues and the municipalities that participated in the project. We invite State Secretary Mrs. Klijnsma and her staff and hand out to the two reports as outcome of the research. Knowing that Mrs. Klijnsma will be present, we organize, obviously in consultation with all stakeholders, a conversation between the State Secretary and the pupils council of primary school Mikado from Blerick (Venlo). The aim is to talk about poverty. On Mikado you find 28 different nationalities, something experienced in more and more schools. Nothing serious if there are sufficient resources to learn the Dutch language. However, this is not our reality, so all children are put at a very young age, despite all the efforts of schools, at a disadvantage. The kids not only surprise the State Secretary, but also the audience, and delight us with their questions and comments. A very special event, for which we want to thank all the participants warmly.

PEP conference

This year the "European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty" is –again– one of the highlights of our work. For the 15th time organized by the European Anti Poverty Network, together with the European Commission (DG V), this unique event take place. Delegations of poor and excluded from 28 countries come to Brussels. People who know what survival means, day in, day out, for themselves, their families and their children. And how to try the give life some form.



During the conference they will discuss with their peers, with the coordinators and colleagues who are able to speak a 2nd language to act as interpreters. This year's central theme is "Empowerment through Participation". The outcomes of the discussions and the preparatory work in their own country, will be included in the compilation of the White Paper on Social Inclusion which the European Commission is working on and that will be presented in 2017.

Enough reasons to make it, as usual, a quality meeting, during which we certainly will not forget that the participants may also enjoy. A good hotel, good food, laughing together and help and support each other, contribute to this. During the conference, the Dutch delegation offers all delegations, representatives of the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament, the State Secretary for Social Affairs of Slovakia, Mr. Ondrus, and to European Commissioner Mrs. Thyssen, a little owl. In the second text cadre you can read what is the goal of this action and what we want to emphasize.



This PEP conference is closed by a collective action, that also can be called remarkable.

The 'European chorus of the poor' is established and performs, especially for European Commissioner Mrs. Thyssen, in front of the Berlaymont building, "Blowing in the Wind" by Bob Dylan. Not an easy task, since 80% of the attendees do not speak or read English. But during the rehearsals, everyone is very enthusiastic, and the moment of execution, with lots of humming singers seems to have been pretty impressive.

Our definition of Participation is

To have the right to decide whether you want to participate or not
 To have the right to decide how you want to participate
 To know that you have the right to participate
 To have the right to decide what you will do with the new information
 Freedom of decision
 I determine HOW I will participate. So, my talent is decisive, not what others want!

How can participation be developed?

- How can we achieve a meeting with civil servants?
- How can we make them clear why what we are doing is important?
- How can we create a dialogue between groups?
- How can we learn "our group" that they are unjust to themselves?
- How can we create respect for each other?

Which conditions are required for participation?

- The freedom to be allowed to can -NOT have to- to participate -> create chances
- The financial position to be able to participate -> budget
- Agreement on what you hope to achieve within the next year -> open, realistic, challenging but never compulsory
- To have your own "spot" where you can work with your group
- Open doors! -> to be allowed to enter as well to invite -> acceptance.

The Participation Ladder (Dr. Leny Jansen)

- Access to information
- Getting involved in the dialogue
- Bringing forward our own ideas and proposals
- Have a say in the decision process.

Delegation of EAPN Netherlands to the 15th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, Brussels 15th and 16th of November 2016

Erik Slagter Ommen Samen Sterk
 Nicolette Faddel Samenwonen Samenleven Amsterdam
 Hajar El Karkachi U 2B Heard Utrecht
 Ellen Walhout Ommen Samen Sterk
 Jo Bothmer EAPN Netherlands

The delegation of the Netherlands felt that we should give each delegation and our guests an owl. Why?

Because an owl stands for

- wisdom** and we have to be smart if we want them to listen to us. The owl is the advisor of the Gods.
- being **alert**. We have to be on our watch to provide that we are not late to address or miss an opportunity to lay down our ideas, our comments, our proposals.

And

- he stands for **change**. And that is what we need in the fight against poverty and exclusion. The change for the better: no more poverty, no more exclusion, no more bullying.

As a Dutch philosopher once said:

Use your disadvantage to create an advantage
(Johan Cruyff)

We hope this small token of friendship will help, guide and strengthen you in **our common fight for a more social and just Europe.**

The Dutch delegation consists of delegates from

Samenwonen Samenleven	Amsterdam
Ommen Samen Sterk	Ommen
Ommen Samen Sterk	(co-coördinator)
U-2B Heard	Utrecht.

At the European Conference on Social Enterprise, which takes place in late November in Bratislava, Slovakia, within the framework of the Slovak Presidency of the EU, the coordinator of the Dutch PEP speaks to European Commissioner Mrs Thyssen about the translation problems and calls for support to solve it. The Commissioner tells him to seriously look at it.

During the same conference, the representative of EAPN NL and his Lovak colleague have the opportunity to talk with the Slovakian State Secretary for Social Affairs about the Dutch local anti-poverty policy program. Unique because this local poverty-approach policy was created and maintained out of the cooperation between self-organizations of the experience experts and municipalities.

European PEP coordinators

The annual preparation meeting for the national PEP coordinators is in the Netherlands this year and co-organized by EAPN NL. The foreign colleagues not only have the opportunity to be for a short stay in the Netherlands and to enter into dialogue with each other, but they are also introduced to three projects. The meeting takes place at project Samenwonen Samenleven in Amsterdam. On the first day we eat together at one of the Resto van Harte restaurants and at the end of the meeting we organize an Amsterdam Underground Experience. Two groups, led by two former homeless ex-junkies, discover in the old part of Amsterdam the places where homeless and drug addicts try to survive. Where they may be able to find a place to sleep and where they occur more frequently at night to protect against the cold and rain. An experience which gave us a glimpse into the lives of those for which we work. Our colleagues appreciate it very much.

ESN / CEIF / ACIG

ACIG

At the beginning of spring, the European Commission is organizing its annual Annual Convention Inclusive Growth, the ACIG. EAPN NL is invited by the Ministry of Social Affairs to take part. One of the two delegates is a young woman with a disability, which is active at the local level and was member of the PEP conference delegation 2015. During the ACIG Secretary Mrs. Klijnsma speaks on behalf of the Dutch government as EU President, about the social policy that they, together with the European partners, want to perform. It becomes clear that everyone present in our society, is invited to participate. Everyone is welcome and the government holds open the door. In this case, participation is not only accepting paid work, but literally to participate in society. Commissioner Thyssen announces that the Commission launched a process aimed at the creation of a White Paper on Social Policy. She calls on everyone to contribute actively to this.

We take this invitation on the spot by asking the word and clearly draw more attention to people with disabilities. Also in regards of participation in the labor market.

ESN

Seen the Dutch presidency of the EU this year, the annual conference of the European Social Network (ESN) is held in The Hague . When asked if we could organize a workshop, we have already responded positively in 2015. However, it becomes a co-lecture during a workshop on debts. The President of EAPN NL clearly marks the dividing line between what happens with a client and how an institution responds. She also draws attention to how debts may arise. It is not always a matter of own fault. In particular, the so-called life events play an important role. Think of divorce, unexpected death of partner, unexpected unemployment or disability. Another problem she calls attention for is the improvement of the information.

CEIF

Our Slovak colleagues invite one of us to speak at the Central European Interfaith Forum which takes place in July in Nitra, Slovakia. We have seized this opportunity to recruit for client participation, as we know it in our country. To speak about the situation of the people and their daily struggle to survive. And to draw attention to the work of networks such as EAPN Slovakia and EAPN NL. One of the outcomes was a conversation with European Commissioner Jan Figel. During his stay in Slovakia the representative of EAPN NL also meets one of the advisors of the Prime Minister, to speak about the role of EAPN as such and the importance of the annual European conference PEP. Here the Dutch local minimum income policy is also raised. This conversation is also important since Slovakia takes over the EU presidency in July Netherlands. We use the opportunity to invite State Secretary Ondrus to the PEP conference.

Letter on combi people with disabilities and police officers

EAPN NL send a letter to the ministry of SA&E, in which we propose to create more opportunities for paid work for people with disabilities by combining this issue with the fact that police officers complain that they have to little time to do their actual work by the ever-increasing administration. The ministry sends this letter to other departments with the demand to look at this proposal.

We wonder if this in 2017 can make a positive contribution to address two problems:

1. more opportunities for paid work for people with disabilities
2. more time for police officers to be on the streets.

We believe this is an excellent solution that provides a positive improvement for both groups

Deployment Project Experience Experts at the Local Social Domain

With support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), we can work on the project "The deployment on experts within the local social domain". The municipalities of Venlo, Deventer and Ommen appear willing to participate in experiments, which we thank them for. The findings are contained in a Report and a Guide book which are send to all municipalities, many local organizations and client councils as to all the organizations within our network.

We sincerely hope that this project, in particular the results, will contribute to increase the participation of people who have experience of living in poverty, unemployment, exclusion and hopelessness, at local forms of consultation and they will increasingly be consulted and will be invited to think and are involved in the process to actually realize changes.

There are no models and tools that will provide the perfect solution (the copy / paste principle). Experimenting and the way in which processes take shape will make the difference between a society that excludes or includes (two different sides of the same coin), and a society that connects to each other. The examples in the guidelines are intended to indicate which aspects the creation of value to enrich the (municipal) world may include.

This project shows that there are all kinds of things happening and there is on increasing attention for experience experts.

Dutch EU Presidency

The Dutch Presidency of the European Union, during the first six months of 2016, gets an extra boost because poverty and exclusion are part of the agenda of this Presidency. That's not all. The Ministry of Social Affairs has made arrangements with the two successive presidents, Slovakia and Malta, to also put poverty and exclusion on their agenda.

In her speech during the Annual Conference for Inclusive Growth State Secretary Mrs. Klijnsma takes us on a journey and invites everyone, without exception, to participate in our society. She makes it clear that everyone is welcome to participate and that the Netherlands will endeavor to make that possible. EAPN as well as EAPN NL are both mentioned as an important partner.

Poverty Projects website

In the framework of the EU Presidency the ministry of SA&E opened a special website for good examples of poverty reduction. This website also offers a number of EAPN NL projects. We are quite proud of this.

<http://www.effectiefarmoedebeleid.nl/goede-voorbeelden>.

October 17, World Poverty Day United Nations

Where we last year in Arnhem and Amsterdam got support from local organizations to step over the poverty line, in 2016 we cooperate with the people of Ommen Samen Sterk. This time the youth is also well represented. The weather is great, and it is a very special action.



G32

EAPN NL participates in the Working Group on Poverty and Debt of the G32 (municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants). This working group provides us with lots of information, particularly in debt issues. Municipalities struggle with sharply rising costs for guardianship. This is an attack on the Special Assistance Budget. Of course, we also speak about the 100 million euro, which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment makes each year, starting at the 1st of January 2017, makes available to tackle child poverty. In what way can this extra money be used. Many municipalities already have measures to tackle child poverty in their poverty policy and wrestle with the problem that not everyone who may have a claim uses it. In what way can we improve the use?

The day of the experience expert

This year for the 1st time "The Professional Experience Day" is organized. The GGzE group of Venlo organizes this event and has, to their own surprise, to declare a stop of the participation, as more than 500 registrations come in. So it is very clear how much it is needed. EAPN NL participates with two persons in this exciting day. We are a kind of strangers, as the vast majority is primarily concerned with mental health problems. This shows to be a very good initiative that will take place in 2017, very likely in Groningen. We were happy to participate, because this way poverty also gets its own place.

EAPN EU governance

2016 was all about survival, because of the implemented budget cuts. A just decided 'structure' within EAPN thus came to be instantly under pressure. And the solution is sought in decreasing of number of delegates at the General Assembly and by combining meetings. This ad hoc decisions asks a lot of our flexibility. This in combination with the departure of the Director of EAPN Europe. The presence of the Netherlands at the EU council changes for some meetings. This is because of personal circumstances of the permanent representative (Chair of EAPN NL) which made it impossible to be at all meetings. We internally resolve this by ensuring to replace each other. In these turbulent times it appears that the survival of our own network is a hinder to us all, including the staff at the headquarter in Brussels. This causes lots of valuable time and flexibility. All that we would actually want to use to improve our European society, particularly for poor people in these societies. The challenge remains to return time and again, despite this' difficult circumstances', to our own work and intentions.

EAPN NL governance

EAPN NL always looks for new ways to how active people can be supported. Since we do not have an own bureau nor staff, we have established regular Skype meetings to inform each other of what everyone is doing and what is happening locally. Another decision is a duo as delegates for the EUIS Group. This decision has been taken to active new people, to get more diversification of the accumulated knowledge and to be less vulnerable. This form of picking up 'togethers' tasks gives newcomers the change to grow into the work.

EUISG

European Inclusion Strategy Group

EUISG focuses on the 2020 poverty strategy and the associated European Semester.

EU Inclusion Strategies Group provides mutual support for national networks for the development of national strategies and plans to combat poverty and is involved in the EU institutional arrangements and strategies (2020, Social OMC Employment Strategy, Platform against Poverty, Structural Funds) to see how they are used in the implementation of these strategies.

Key priorities for the EU-ISG 2016 are

- 1) Ensure that there is and will be focus on poverty and social exclusion on the agenda of the European Commission, defend the poverty target and create EAPN proposals for the mid-term of 2020 in the Semester, monitoring trends on poverty and other new EU commitments to reduce poverty through an integrated anti-poverty strategy based on an integrated active inclusion and social investment in quality jobs, services and social protection.
- 2) Ensure that the minimum of 20% of the ESF funds is earmarked for anti-poverty intended trimmings and to help ensure that there is greater involvement of NGOs in the monitoring and delivery; input for the revision of the multi annual framework and to provide better budgets for poverty.
- 3) Contributions to proposals for the progress of social standards in the EU, notably through proposals for social protection, adequate minimum income and minimum wages.

A number of products are:

- a scoreboard for the national reform programs to assess the state of poverty, employment and education objectives and participation in the EU Member States.
- Response to mid-term review of the Europe 2020 poverty strategy.
- Inputs for the mid-term review of the Multi annual Financial Framework (MAFF) to increase funding for the fight against poverty.
- Participation in the annual convention by people living in poverty, including participation in workshops / plenary sessions and side events and the development of key messages.
- 1 participation in the Policy Conference
- 2 Task Forces
 - a) poverty and social exclusion as a violation of human rights
 - b) call for a human rights approach to migration, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Active participation in EU-Stakeholder Dialogues - inclusion of Roma, vulnerable consumers (Energy & Poverty).

Networks to strengthen EAPN NL

We speak with various representatives of organizations about the opportunity to join our network. We invite everyone to create that equitable, humane and more equal society we want. We are thereby open to all kinds of cooperation with individuals and organizations to work with this theme. The energy behind it is to create a movement based on compassion and empathy.

And last but not least

2016 was a great year in which a lot has happened and has been done. All of this we cannot do without the help of many people who do this unselfishly. Please accept our sincere thanks. But we also cannot do our work without cooperation with governments and other organizations. Also to them a sincere thank you for their support and cooperation. We want to end with the certainty that the fight against poverty and social exclusion will continue in 2017.

During the CEIF in Nitra (SI.) In July 2016 European Commissioner Jan Figel said

Tolerance is live and let live.

Solidarity is helping each other to live.

EAPN NL wants to stress the solidarity that we need so much in our society.