



YEAR report 2024



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Introduction

We are leaving a year that has brought an accumulation of changes, opportunities and challenges. Of course, the fact that we receive support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for the Action Learning Project KEUS (Knowing, Experiencing, Trying, Starting) is great. From now on we are able to make a difference for the benefit of the weakest in our society and to participate in the change process that must result in a better Participation Act. A huge task for which a lot of work will have to be done in the coming years.

Our European activities will continue as usual. The EU will elect a new Parliament in 2024 and a new Commission will be formed. Starting point to look ahead and work on much more of the same? EAPN, together with the ATD4World Movement, among others, is doing a lot of work to be able to form an Intergroup on Poverty and Social Exclusion within the new European Parliament. The old Commission had already announced it. The newly appointed European Commission asks EAPN to help develop an EU poverty strategy.

Working internationally offers opportunities for further development. We are participating in an Erasmus Plus learning week in southern Germany with the theme "Climate & Classism", a challenge that we are happy to take on. Also with the new class division that the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) has put together in mind.

A frequently recurring question is how municipalities can enter into discussions with experts by experience. In collaboration with the municipalities of Zwijndrecht and Hof van Twente, we are organizing workshops in which experts by experience of the Participation Act participate.

In order to give experts by experience and others more insight into the world of experiential knowledge or expertise, we are compiling a brochure and developing a knowledge fan, which will be offered to all participants within the Action Learning Project KEUS. Our chair can present the first copy to State Secretary Nobel during a VNG (Association of Municipalities) meeting.

Our efforts to have young people participate in the European Youth Event are yielding more and more results. Not only will a delegation consisting exclusively of young people attend the annual EAPN Poverty Summit in Brussels, one of them will act as coordinator of Pep (People Experiencing Poverty) for the first time this year.



The political world will change very quickly in 2024. After months of discussions, a government will finally be formed in which, in addition to the VVD and Nieuw Sociaal Contract, the PVV and BB will also participate. The European elections will be won by democratic parties, while in the United States the MAGA Movement will win the elections.

The terrible war in Ukraine will continue and a war will break out between Israel and the Palestinians. One of the consequences of this, as German research shows, is that young people are afraid for their future.

2024 will thus be a strange year, in which joy will alternate with sadness. It will ultimately be a year in which we will see political landslides, which will certainly not be in favor of the poor and low incomes, even though there has been a lot of talk about security of existence. And a year in which we see how a clear plan is created to tackle the Participation Act and generally speaking to work from distrust to trust. We owe that to the Minister for Poverty Policy Carola Sc Houten and her officials, who pave the way for this and promote cooperation.




Subsistence security

The election theme in 2023, about which almost every participating party or person had something to say. How sad it is then to be confronted with a new government that has not included this subject in its coalition paper. Where an ever-increasing group is yearning for a little more financial air, it becomes a gasp for air for them.

Choices that are made do not match the words and promises during the campaigns. The rich Netherlands rubs its fingers in glee, while the poor continue to struggle. Subsistence security is no longer an issue, even if it pops up every now and then. Rents continue to rise and people are starting to prepare for the further dismantling of the social security system.

The WIA (disability benefit) can be lower, disabled people can work part-time, social assistance does not increase with inflation, let alone wage increases. This also applies to the AOW (Old People’s Act). The Social and Cultural Planning Office has already shown what this means with its class division. The Netherlands is sliding towards a kind of caste system, in which the lowest and low (middle) incomes are condemned to survive and the richest can continue to fill their swimming pools with money. EAPN NL, together with Sterk uit Armoede, the Katrol foundation and Stichting Onze DROOM, sent a letter about Existential Security to the informant, at the time Prof. Dr. K. Putters, and we will continue to draw attention to this piece. Perhaps in vain, but we will continue to fight for improvement.

Participation	Act	in		Balance
<p>At the beginning of the year we recruiting municipalities that participate in the Action Learning in which the use of experiential and experiential experts within implementation of the Participation Act will take shape. The project is a first step that must support the municipalities in shaping the Participation Act in Balance process and developing models on how this very important step can be shaped. It appears not to be so easy to convince municipalities that participation is -also- to their advantage. Not that they don't believe it, but more because it turns out that they simply don't have the manpower to fill in the extra hours that this process requires. As a result, our planning gets quite out of hand and we not only start later, but the preparations are much more complicated than expected. Despite this setback, we start in the second half of the year with the first two groups and at the end of the year with group three. We are still in talks with interested municipalities for group four.</p>				



During a workshop that we fill in at a Movisie conference on experiential expertise, it turns out that participating municipalities are not familiar with the two different visions, namely the Recovery Vision and the Inclusion Vision, which is the one we use. Both are very valuable, but come from a different approach and require different steps. Because this knowledge is also not present in the municipalities that participate in our project, we address this during the introductory meeting with which the Action Learning process starts. Furthermore, we decide to create a handy information brochure and information fan, which helps participants to use the information at any time. These two products, entitled "We Are Together in Change", are very well received. During an introductory meeting of the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) with State Secretary Nobel of Social Affairs and Employment, our chair can present both products to the State Secretary. Both products are intended to better address the question of what is needed to be able to look at an expert by experience in the right place, for the right conditions, support and for the right reward within the action learning process.

What also appears to help is the workshop we conducted with experts by experience, together with the municipality. It provides many valuable insights into what is going on, why people do not use schemes and what could possibly be adjusted or changed.

In the second half of 2024, the website will be renewed, so that we can better promote the new products, make them more accessible and easier to handle. As additional support for the KEUS project, we are making a podcast, in which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment also participates and with which we create extra PR for this wonderful project.



In terms of content, we are taking considerable steps together through this learning process. The process objectives are:

1. Discovering Together - Mapping out what is already happening in the practice of the municipality involved with the use of experiential knowledge, for

which 'goals' experiential knowledge is used and what its effect is.

2. Improving Together - Gaining an image of what works, what does not and what will have to be adjusted. Also considering the



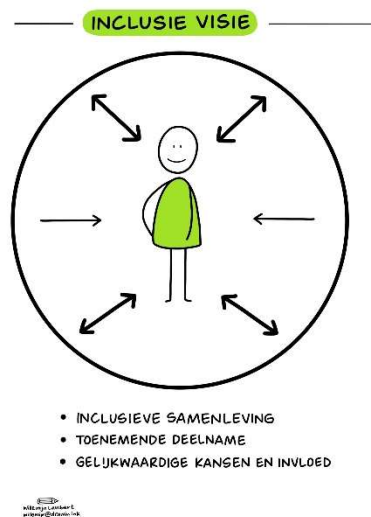
'reasons' why something does or does not work, illuminated from the various sources of knowledge.

3. Developing Together - Developing one or more working methods for municipalities to arrive at an appropriate use of experiential knowledge by experts and the appropriate moments/opportunities for this.

4. Changing Together - Working with selected working methods and models in our own municipalities to arrive at an appropriate use of experiential knowledge in practice.

The process results can be described as follows.

To achieve a cultural shift, change must occur at multiple layers, multiple levels and multiple aspects in the municipality. Culture manifests itself in



Shared products (e.g. policy notes, work process descriptions, meeting rooms),

Shared language use (e.g. success stories about collaboration with experts by experience, shared terminology)

Shared practices (e.g. how do we shape collaboration and involvement, what steps do we take, how do we safeguard this in actions and daily practice)

- INCREMENTAL SOCIETY
- INCREASING PARTICIPATION
- EQUALITY OPPORTUNITIES AND INFLUENCE

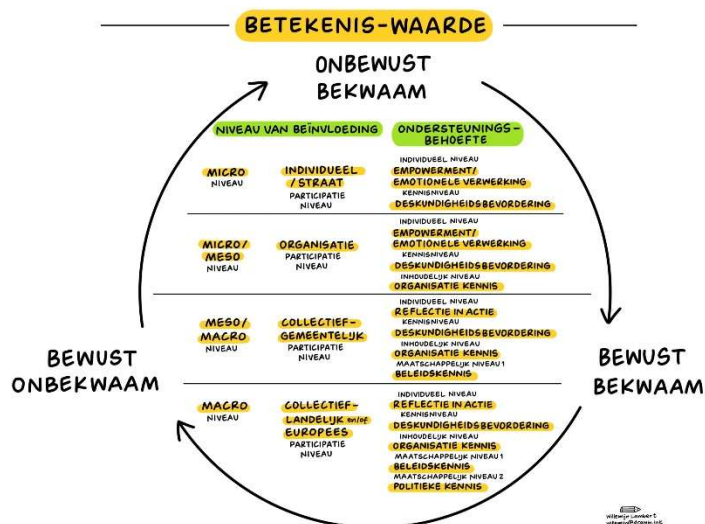
Shared values and feelings (e.g. beliefs, shared vision, values and ethics)

Through action learning, all four of these components of cultural change are addressed and we actively work on them. This produces the following process results:

- Common language and shared success stories are created
- Shared products are created that can be used
- Shared practices are created, agreement on how we work
- A shared vision is created at multiple levels and with multiple stakeholders.

All important steps to make the use of experts by experience a success and something lasting, whereby all parties realize that this takes time if we want to secure it. The Action Learning Project KEUS will continue in 2025.





Preparations for EYE 2025

Towards the end of the year, our young people propose to send a delegation to the European Youth Event again in 2025. We will make an application with a budget for this. An application for a subsidy will be sent at the beginning of 2025.

The European Youth Event, in which we were able to participate in 2021, has provided us with a number of new volunteers, one of whom has now become our coordinator for the People Experiencing Poverty conference and the EAPN Peoples Summit. Another is about to join the EAPN EU Inclusion Strategies Group policy group. Others are working on the application for EYE 25 and are prepared to play a role in the implementation. In addition, this largest youth gathering must also include a place for young people who grow up in poverty and/or social exclusion.

Conferences, workshops, seminars

During the year, we participate in various meetings, both at home and abroad. In addition to the meetings on the Participation Act change process, one of our people is participating in a VNG congress, where she is on a panel and can report on the KEUS Action Learning Project. Afterwards, she makes various contacts, some of which result in participation in the project.

In the second half of the year, one of us is participating in the conference "Social Work as a Political Actor in the Context of Poverty: Potential, Tension Fields, Challenges" at the University of Bochum Essen. What role do organizations that fight poverty play in the social and political field?

Erasmus+

In November, four people, including three young people, are participating in the Erasmus+ Seminar "Climate & Classism", which is taking place in Coburg (D). In addition to EAPN NL, EAPN Latvia and Armutskonferenz Austria are also participating. There are also participants from Germany, Spain and Greece. Working on change processes is never simple and every new approach, tactic or strategy is welcome, especially when we learn and try them out in an international group consisting of activists and change-minded people. The subject naturally plays a major role in this day and age. Not only do people in poverty have little or no chance of playing an active role in reducing their energy needs, apart from not heating anymore, the SCP report has also shown us that the Netherlands has increasingly changed into a class society, where the lowest classes just barely survive. This applies not only to people who are dependent on benefits or a state pension, with possibly a small pension in addition, but also to the large group of working poor. These are the people who often live in poorly insulated homes and who do not have the means to insulate and/or purchase solar panels themselves.

EAPN-Adecco workshop

In December, EAPN Europe, in collaboration with the employment agency Adecco France, is organising a workshop on working poor and work and poverty. The starting panel includes our coordinator Pep and the coordinator EAPN NL. The latter also provides an introduction to the Horizon project "Working Yet Poor", in which EAPN NL participated, and to work intensity. Our input is appreciated. Participation in this workshop, which we consider important, also because of the participation of one of the most important employers in France and Europe, also leads to the participant from the European Commission showing interest in our Action Learning project KEUS. Immediately after the workshop, we will send information about this project to the Commission in Brussels. Talking about dissemination of our projects.

People's Summit

In March 2023, the Ministry of Social Affairs in Portugal organize the first Peoples Summit together with EAPN Portugal, to which EAPN will be invited. EAPN NL will also participate in this important new conference where the experts by experience will have their say. In 2024, EAPN organizes the second Summit in Brussels and we will also participate there. This is also the start of the Peoples Summit, which has become a collaboration between EAPN Portugal, the Portuguese Ministry of Social Affairs and EAPN Europe and will take place in Porto in March 2025.

Social and Cultural Planning Office

We ask the SCP to participate in the Expert Group that we set up for the KEUS Action Learning Project. In addition to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the VNG, Divosa, SAM (the professional association of client managers), the LCR, Sociaal Werk Nederland, Movisie and the two partners Sterk uit Armoede and the Windesheim Almere University of Applied Sciences, the SCP is a member of this group. We organize the

meetings at the Straatconsulaat in Den Haag, an organization that works with young homeless people and to prevent homelessness.

EAPN NL participates in a number of meetings that the SCP organizes in the context of the "civil society project", a study into the influence of organizations from the people themselves on policy and politics. The results will be published in 2025.

European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, the European Poverty Summit

This will be the first Pep (People experiencing Poverty) conference for our new coordinator. Over the past two years, she has done an 'internship' alongside the coordinator. This year she is responsible during the conference. In 2024, we have an exceptional delegation. Three young people, together with two assistance dogs, form the EAPN NL delegation. One of the delegation members has a history as a homeless person with addiction problems, the other has to deal with psychological problems. They are very active during the conference and have a clear input. The usual gift from our network to the delegations and speakers is also well received. The conference, entitled #PEP2024—Shaping the Future of Social Europe After the EU Elections, focuses on an EU without poverty, without poor people and without working poor people. In addition to strengthening our democracy, participation is logically a topic. The tax on the rich and super-rich is also discussed and not to forget the ongoing attack on Hope. People are losing their Hope for change and for a different future for their children, which is why they are slowly sinking further. The social media that play an important role in this must undergo a positive change. All the outcomes of this important conference of experts by experience will be included in the discussions on an EU poverty strategy.



Poverty strategy European Union

After the elections and the appointment of the new EU Commissioners, DG V invites us to think along in the construction of the poverty strategy that must help the EU to reduce poverty in a targeted manner and, in our opinion, above all prevent it. We will start discussions in the various bodies and groups right away. Everything will come together at the EUISG (European Union Inclusion Strategies Group), our policy makers. In the course of 2025, an EAPN report will be published, in which we will present our ideas and proposals to the Commission.

European elections

This year a new European Parliament will be elected. In the COMM'ON group we are working, together with colleagues from North Macedonia, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and the secretariat in Brussels, on the EAPN election calls and a pamphlet. Through all social media and during meetings we ask the citizens of the EU, in cooperation with the national EAPN networks, to go and vote. A policy document that we are putting together substantiates our demands that poverty and exclusion are tackled and in which we invite the democratic parties in the new parliament to work together to prevent poverty. To achieve this, there are quite a few online meetings prior to the elections, which build on what we discussed during the Face-to-Face meeting in Brussels. Here the first steps are also taken for the construction of a so-called Poverty Intergroup within the new parliament, a group composed by the members that specifically focuses on combating and preventing poverty within the EU. We do this as EAPN together with, among others, the ATD4thWorld Movement. Our lobby is successful, which is why a special Poverty Intergroup is also being set up in this parliament.

Poverty Watch

As we do every year, we are putting together a Poverty Watch, in which we draw attention to Subsistence security, energy inequality, plutonomy, taxes, the Main Lines Agreement and the income position of low incomes. We also point out the four pillars of the VNG.

Here are the four pillars on which the VNG and its members want to build the future.

1. Income security: residents have certainty of sufficient and predictable income to meet their livelihood.
2. Job security: residents have the certainty of being able to participate in society through meaningful work and meaningful daily activities.
3. Human scale: the government approaches citizens from a position of trust and empathy and connects with the situation of residents. In this way, we give residents the certainty that they will be supported by the government when necessary.
4. Energy inequality. Having a place to live and good care are basic certainties for being able to work and live.

The Poverty Watch is also part of the joint Poverty Watch 2024, which EAPN compiles on the basis of national reports. The European Poverty Watch is officially announced in the European Parliament and presented to members of parliament and the European Commission.

COMM'ON

The European Working Group for Communication and PR meets in its new composition and works on the European elections. In doing so, we consider it important to ask people to vote and to present a clear document on what we believe the new Parliament should be concerned with. Not an easy task, as it soon becomes apparent, because the many facets of poverty are discussed. We have to make choices, also to prevent it from becoming a manifesto. After a fair amount of online discussions, a piece is created that everyone is happy with, that is approved by the EXCO and that we can take to the road. We also make a number of calls for votes that the national networks can use to ask people to go and vote. We work together with many other organisations to reach as many people as possible, via social media, during meetings and otherwise. We call for democratic candidates to be elected and candidates who clearly state that they want to reduce poverty and exclusion. In addition, the first steps are being taken that will lead to a Communication Plan and the launch of a new website in 2025.

EXCO

The war in Ukraine has an impact, especially for the inhabitants of the country itself, but also for other European countries. The agenda of the EXCO meeting of September 2024 includes an exchange about the (financial) consequences of this and the influence of this on the mutual relations between the different countries. EAPN Netherlands decides to organize a discussion evening on the subject in which participants from EAPN Netherlands and Sterk uit Armoede participate. One of the participants brings up that war brings with it a whole new generation of poor people. The outcome is that Ukraine must be supported (financially), but that this should not be at the expense of social security & poverty reduction, but must be financed from other resources. This appears to be a shared position at the next EXCO meeting in Brussels. Maintaining mutual solidarity as EAPN EU and countries that are close to the border with Russia and Ukraine is the outcome of the conversation that does not end here but will certainly be continued next year. It was also discussed that, related to this, the focus of the new Commissioners for the European Commission is often on safety and security and less on themes around social security and inclusion, which requires vigilance from EAPN. The influence that EAPN has on the EU Anti Strategy to which the new Commission has committed itself is encouraging and for which the roadmap, with a lot of attention for input from people living in poverty, is jointly discussed. The Bureau elections that took place in the EXCO meeting in 2024 show enthusiasm from capable candidates who are committed to their mission in the coming period: contributing to a well-functioning EAPN and continuing to put topics around poverty and social exclusion on the agenda. At the EXCO meeting in November recommendations from a study into improving cooperation between the various bodies within EAPN will be presented and the themes will be further explored in working groups. All this to create a future-proof strong network that can continue to exert real influence.

EU ISG

The EU Inclusion Strategies Group can be seen as the policy department of EAPN. This committee works on topics such as the Poverty Watch EU, which is compiled every year from the national reports and is officially presented. In addition, they work on the development of strategies and plans to combat poverty. This is partly done in collaboration with others and with the European Commission (Europe 2020, Social OMC, Employment Strategy, Platform against Poverty, Structural Funds). The EU ISG prepares responses to EU strategies and policies. Three subgroups have been set up for this purpose. Once a year, the group reports to the EAPN Board (EXCO) and discusses any important strategic decisions. The decisions are adopted by the EXCO. 2024 was in the context of the elections, the Europe 2030 agenda, the European Semester, the progress of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), the Poverty Watch and attention is paid to the minimum income. We also look at what poverty and exclusion mean in daily life. A start has been made with the vision and recommendations for the EU strategy against poverty and exclusion.

Social media

Although we are very aware of how much Twitter, now called X, has developed negatively and we have considered whether we want to continue using this medium, the fact is that there is still a lot of good and positive news to be found and that it is still widely used. That is why we have decided to remain active and to send and support positive messages.

In addition to X, we are also active on LinkedIn, where we also use the platforms we set up, on Facebook, although we had to experience how our page was hacked and had to start over and partly on Instagram. A very happy fact is that we were able to launch a new website this year. From now on, the website meets all basic requirements again and can be reached and used by everyone. Well worth a visit www.eapn.nl

Finally

2024 is a special year in which EAPN NL can start a wonderful project to put experiential expertise firmly on the map again. What should certainly be mentioned is the great support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to actually accept experiential knowledge as a third source of knowledge and to use it in both policy and implementation. Not only will this initiate a process of change from distrust to trust, but it will also contribute to the creation of new

jobs for experiential experts in the long term. A wonderful development, and we are proud to be able to contribute to this and, together with our colleagues, make sure that poverty and social exclusions stays part of the political and societal agenda.