



Netherlands

The Dutch Government has committed itself to the implementation of Sustainable Development (SD) in the country. In line with the goals of the UNECE strategy and the DESD, the national programme, **Learning for Sustainable Development (LfSD)** 2004- 2007, creates effective learning processes in order to enable judgements and choices in favour of SD. LfSD has an intergovernmental Steering Committee that makes the decisions. Learners from all levels are encouraged to use systematic, critical and creative thinking and reflection in both local and global contexts. The learning targets also include awareness, knowledge, skills, understanding attitude and values of SD. The learning process in this programme is based on three levels: the learning individual (focus on formal education), the learning organization (focus on governments and policy making) and the learning society (focus on complex decision-making processes in society).

The Netherlands differs from the other countries in that it does not have a 'national curriculum' in place. Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution guarantees Freedom of Education – people in the Netherlands therefore have the right to found schools on the basis of their own religious, ideological or educational beliefs, and to have them funded by the government. However, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science does have the authority to set out the minimum requirements that a school must meet in order to receive government funding. This includes attainment targets that indicate the minimum that a school must teach in each subject of the curriculum, and the content of national exams. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science is charged with the inspection of education in Dutch schools. This role of ensuring compliance with statutory regulations is carried out under the Minister's authority by the Education Inspectorate.

Projects/Initiatives

In 2006, an idea originated at the Ministry of housing, spatial planning, and environment in close cooperation with the Dutch Intergovernmental programme of LfSD. It was to design a tool - a 'game' that helps with making sustainable decisions in policymaking. The tool was named as PPP tool and is based on the NSDO-matrix (National Strategy for Sustainable Development). A guide for trainers and a 'train the trainer' course are available. The tool is used in group meetings to initiate discussions on making sustainable decisions in policy making. The tool helps to reflect on the non-sustainable habits and ways of thinking.