



NATIONAL ROUND TABLE 4: CONSOLIDATE

Reporting Form

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Basic information about NRT

Country	The Netherlands
Date of the NRT	21 December 2021
Format of the NRT (online/face-to-face/hybrid)	Online (Zoom meeting)
Number of attendees	21
Summary of main findings (3-5 bullet points)	<p>Review and summarise the main findings, whether the change effort has met the original objectives. Identify any lesson learnt for future SIRIUS work and/or policy adaptations that may be necessary.</p> <p>(Details can be found on the Guideline)</p> <p>Impact of the three NRTs:</p> <p>Since 2018, the theme of Multilingualism in Education was chosen for the SIRIUS NRTs in the Netherlands. The reason is that Dutch schools are characterized by a high linguistic diversity (in some areas, more than 50% of students speak an additional language besides Dutch). However, there is a huge lack of awareness among educators and policy makers about the benefits of using this linguistic diversity as a resource for the emotional well-being of students and to improve learning outcomes. Instead, multilingualism is viewed with suspicion, as a problem or as a hurdle that needs to be overcome. Children with a migrant or minority background speaking minoritized languages are routinely discouraged, sometimes even punished for using their home languages at school.</p> <p>In an effort to turn this around, parents, teachers, researchers and policy makers have gathered for live and online roundtable meetings.</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>During the last NRT (held in December 2021), participants confirmed that the topic of multilingualism in education has significantly increased in visibility and awareness over the past three years in the Netherlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are now more professional development courses offered for teachers both in-service and at teacher education colleges;



- there are currently 15 **Language Friendly Schools** in the Netherlands (including schools focused exclusively on newcomers) where all languages are welcomed and valued;
- at least **one municipality adopted a formal policy** to encourage multilingualism among migrant families and
- recently a formal proposal was submitted to the city council of Amsterdam to embrace multilingualism in education using the example of the Language Friendly School.

Fundamental Challenges:

Despite the achievements (which are of course not all attributed to the NRTs but part of a broader movement in the Netherlands), much remains to be done.

- The most important is the **mindset**: multilingualism continues to be widely viewed as something negative – among policy makers, teachers but also among migrant parents themselves. This is the case when it concerns low status-languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Polish, which are languages spoken by migrant workers and refugees. This in sharp contrast to languages such as English and French which are taught in schools and where we see an increase in bilingual programmes offering instruction in Dutch and English.
- The continuing **lack of knowledge** about the way multilingualism operates in education is another important hurdle. Full immersion in Dutch is still considered the best way to teach non-Dutch speakers the Dutch language despite decades of research showing the opposite (that children learn better when they can use the knowledge they have gathered in their home language).
- But even when presented with the evidence base, some politicians still choose to insist on a monolingual education policy because it appeals to **nationalistic, xenophobic and racist sentiments** among their base. This may explain why an increasing number of teachers and school directors express interest in the Language Friendly School-concept (they realize the potential and observe the advantages directly), but there remains a lot of resistance at the policy level (e.g. city councils who are responsible for public education).



Current Opportunities:

- In August 2021, **the UN Committee against Racial Discrimination** issued its conclusions on the Dutch report and recommended that the Netherlands **take measures to ensure that children with a migrant background are not punished or restricted to use their mother tongue at school** and to encourage teacher training in multilingual education.
- The new **Erasmus+ programme** which started in 2021, includes multilingualism as one of its priorities and offers funding opportunities for schools as well as partnerships between schools, research institutes and municipalities.

Recommendations:

The participants reiterated the conclusions from NRT 2020 that:

- To **overcome the lack of awareness** about (1) why multilingualism should be encouraged rather than eradicated in education and (2) how this can be achieved, it is important to organize more meetings such as the NRT. Bringing together different stakeholders (teachers, teacher trainers, policy makers, researchers and parent representatives) is viewed as an effective way to for exchanging views and learning about good practices in education from teachers themselves;
- the **teacher training colleges** should make multilingualism/language friendly teaching a required part of the curriculum and not just offer these as an elective.
- The example of the **Language Friendly School** should be supported and encouraged – as proposed in the Amsterdam city council proposal - as a good practice for creating linguistically inclusive schools.

Furthermore:

- There should be more **opinion articles** published in newspapers and there should generally be more exposure in the (mass) media about the benefits of a language friendly education.
- Teacher trainers with expertise in multilingualism should reach out to school principals and colleagues.



OUTCOMES OF NRT

TYPE OF OUTCOME	
<p>Consolidation workshop outcomes</p>	<p>Tom Tudjman (Risbo/SIRIUS) started out with an overview of the past three NRTs:</p> <p>NRT 2018: the Value of Multilingualism. Here it was concluded that there should be a series of meetings with three goals: (1) to put more pressure on the policy level regarding multilingual education; (2) to create a network of professionals and parents to collaborate on multilingual educational issues, and (3) to help schools adopt a more language friendly school approach.</p> <p>NRT 2019: The Art of Multilingual Teaching. The aim of the NRT was to provide participants with deeper insight into the skills, knowledge and strategies that teachers need to have to support the multilingual talents of their pupils.</p> <p>NRT 2020: Language Friendly Education Policy. During this NRT, participants discussed inclusive education policies at three levels: micro (classroom), meso (the school) and macro (local/regional governance). A range of recommendations were directed at teachers and teacher trainers and different sets of policy makers (e.g. school boards, municipalities and the education inspectorate).</p> <p>The topic for NRT 2021 was Education inequality and multilingualism: what role for policy makers?</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council member Simion Blom (Green Left party) of the Amsterdam city council presented his recent proposal to the city council of Amsterdam to support multilingualism in schools among others by following the example of the Language Friendly School – a label and global network that was initiated in 2019 by the Rutu Foundation. • Ellen-Rose Kambel, director of the Rutu Foundation, discussed the recent views and recommendations published by the UN Committee against Racial Discrimination on the report of the Netherlands. The Committee expressed its concern about discrimination targeting children with a migrant background and recommended among others that the Netherlands take



	<p>measures to ensure that children with a migrant background are not punished or restricted to use their mother tongue at school and to encourage teacher training in multilingual education. This is a clear message to the Dutch government that adopting a multilingual inclusive education policy is not just good policy but also a children’s right.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Svetlana van Schilfgaarde (Nuffic/Erasmus+ National Agency) explained that the new Erasmus+ Programme (which started in 2021) includes multilingual education as one of its priorities for funding, offering municipalities, school boards, schools and other institutions ways to fund new initiatives around linguistic diversity and increasing equal opportunities in education.
<p>Name any collaborative tasks taken on by NRT or its sub-groups so far</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rutu Foundation and Risbo are currently working together along with several Language Friendly Schools in the Erasmus+ project ALCOR which focuses on teacher training in multilingualism and parental participation. The project will run from 2021-2023 and produce among other a MOOC aimed at teachers throughout Europe.
<p>Policy outcomes:</p> <p>Policy recommendations (new policies or adaptations of current policies) that have been developed during the NRT</p>	<p>Recommendations formulated for policy makers at NRT 2020 which were reiterated at NRT 2021</p> <p>Embrace multilingual diversity in education: it is not a problem to overcome, but a resource to utilize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social safety of a child is a priority, this includes the (appreciation for) the language of a child. • Exclusion based on language is a violation of human rights => confirmed by the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination in August 2021 • Do not discount children on 'language disadvantage' but use home languages in education to meet the (legal) standard. <p>Increase and disseminate knowledge about multilingualism (and inclusion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have research done on approaches that have positive results => included in Amsterdam city council proposal (November 2021)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize more meetings on this theme.• Ensure teachers have more knowledge about multilingualism so it doesn't have to be imposed from above.• Not only share or use knowledge from linguistics but especially educational (didactic) knowledge.• Sensitize teachers about the benefits for the child and for the teacher. What does it do to social safety?• Provide clarity on the freedom of schools to use home languages.• Stress that language friendliness is not an additional burden and does not overload the curriculum.
	Include multilingualism as a mandatory part of the teacher training curriculum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are the teachers of the future. Make sure (novice and experienced) teachers have sufficient knowledge about multilingualism.• Make knowledge and awareness about multilingualism a mandatory part of teacher training. Multilingualism is now only offered as an elective course.• Increase attention to (linguistic) diversity within the teacher teams.
	Enable the final exam of primary school in multiple languages
	Make use of the knowledge that is available at language (weekend) schools and promote contacts between regular and language (weekend) schools
School boards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract more teachers from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds.• Profile yourself as a Language Friendly School.• Hire teachers from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds.• Promote cooperation around multilingualism within school boards.	
Inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check what a school does for multilingual students and include it in the inspection report.	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make language friendliness an indicator of schools. <hr/> <p>Municipalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the example of the municipality of Zaanstad where multilingualism is positively highlighted. • Base your policy on scientific knowledge. Not on underbelly or popular ideas that aren't necessarily correct. • Share scientific knowledge in organizations and among professionals, to ensure a bottom-up effect. • Involve all parties related to children and young people (including school boards, public health service, library, childcare and playgroups) • Develop a common multilingualism policy. • Let all parties (including the municipality) create their own implementation plan and take responsibility for their own piece. • Allow multilingual parents to speak out.
<p>Other outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two political parties (Green Left and Labour Party) in Amsterdam, the largest and most multilingual and culturally diverse city of the Netherlands, who currently form the city council, have embraced multilingualism in education, calling for more research in their programme. This came after party representatives attended previous NRTs. • One of the council members of a different city council (Zwolle) who was present at the NRT said that she had already taken up this issue with the council alderman on education and will continue talks to have a more positive view of multilingualism. • The Language Friendly School was created in January 2019 and started out with a pilot of two schools in Amsterdam. Teachers and principals of Language Friendly Schools (currently 15 schools throughout the Netherlands and 20 schools in 5 countries in total) have been present and shared their insights at all three NRTs.



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FORWARD PLANNING

National Plan and action to sustain or share the success of the NRT	There is no National Action Plan formulated as such. However, the results and recommendations of the NRTs will be shared with the new government that was installed in January 2022, in particular the Minister of Education. Also, the expertise centers on equal opportunities ('kansengelijkheid') which have been created in municipalities throughout the Netherlands will be approached for funding and to seek collaboration in the organization of meeting as recommended by the NRT.
Interim actions to be taken by the NRT or working groups during the year	Depending on available funding, Rutu Foundation and Risbo intend to organize follow-up meetings in 2022 to bring together the teacher training colleges and in-service trainers.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

- Please ask attendees to sign digitally or in person to confirm their attendance

Name	Organisation/ institution	Position in organisation/ institution	Signature confirming attendance
POLICY MAKERS			
1. Simion Blom	City Council Amsterdam	Council Member Green Left party	
2. Willem Kuijpers	ASKO School Board	Director	
3. Margriet Leest	City Council Zwolle	Council Member Green Left party	
4. Tanja Jadnanansing	City Council Amsterdam South East	Chair	
MIGRANT-LED ORGANISATIONS			
TEACHERS, TEACHER-TRAINERS, SCHOOL-LEADERS OR OTHER SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES			
5. Margit Tera	Optimist International School	Teacher	
6. Ellen Scheermeijer	Huibersschool	Principal	
7. Jeanette Sibma	Krachtig Meertalig Leren	Teacher trainer	
8. Dieneke Blikslager	St. Janschool	Teacher/vice principal	
9. Amy Klipp	Hogeschool Leiden	Teacher trainer	
10. Fadie Hanna	Hogeschool Amsterdam	Teacher trainer/researcher diversity and inclusion	
PARENTS REPRESENTATIVES			
11. Bozena Kopczynska	Polish Center for Education and Culture Lokomotywa/Multilingual Parents Amsterdam	Director	
12. Ute Limacher-Riebold	Ute's International lounge	Independent language consultant for multilingual families	
OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS			
13. Boudien Bakker	LOWAN	Manager	
14. Janneke Oussoren	ABC onderwijsadviseurs (teacher training bureau)	manager	
15. Inge Jansen	SLO	Curriculum developer Dutch language	
16. Maaïke Verrips	Drongo talentfestival	director	
17. Svetlana van Schilfgarde	Erasmus+ National Agency/Nuffic	Programme advisor primary and secondary education	
EU PLATFORM NATIONAL MEMBERS			
ORGANIZATION NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE			
18. Afke Weltevrede	Risbo	Researcher (moderator)	
19. Ellen-Rose Kambel	Rutu Foundation	Director (moderator, report)	
20. Hilda Heyde	Rutu Foundation	Programme officer	
21. Tom Tadjman	Risbo	Researcher	