

# Dutch youth found to have little knowledge about democracy

November 29 2023

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**What democratic value does each app feature reflect?**

Drag and drop each app feature onto its matching democratic value.

There will be one democratic value without a matching app feature.

### App Features

The app does not display the names of voters.

The app locks out members after they have voted.

The app supports the use of text to speech readers.

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### Democratic Values

Voting must be accessible to all members.

Each member may only vote once.

The votes of members must be kept secure.

Members should be able to vote without pressure from others.

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Sample item 11 (Voting App module item 2). Credit: *Education for Citizenship in Times of Global Change - ICCS 2022 International Report*

Dutch youth are less informed about democracy than peers in similar

countries. This is evident from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), an international survey conducted in 24 countries on citizenship among second-year high school students. The Dutch part of the study was conducted by the University of Amsterdam, the Kohnstamm Institute, and GION Education/Research at the University of Groningen and commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science.

In summary, the conclusions are:

## **Knowledge lower than in other countries and significant differences between students and schools**

Dutch [high school students](#) know just as much about [citizenship](#) and democratic principles as the international average but significantly less than students in areas similar to the Netherlands, such as the Scandinavian countries or the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. As in many other countries, the knowledge of students in the Netherlands is lower than six years ago when this study was last conducted.

Compared to other countries, the group with the lowest scores in the Netherlands is relatively large: one in seven young people. Furthermore, the differences between schools are considerably larger than in other countries. In addition, significant disparities exist in the Netherlands among young people with parents with different educational backgrounds and between young people with or without a migration background.

The views of Dutch students on citizenship and [democratic values](#) have not changed much in recent years. Remarkably, young people in the Netherlands have less confidence in their own citizenship skills than

peers in comparable countries.

Many young people in the Netherlands support democracy. Nearly four out of five consider democracy the best way to govern the country, believe that the political system works well, and express confidence in the government.

However, Dutch students have less confidence in the government than peers in comparable countries and less frequently expect to engage in political activities later in life. Although almost three-quarters of young people say they will vote when they turn eighteen, this number is lower than in countries similar to the Netherlands. Additionally, young people in the Netherlands express less support for gender equality and equal rights for ethnic groups.

## **Schools do little to provide citizenship education**

Teachers devote relatively little attention to various perspectives on political and social issues or to diversity and inclusion. Compared to their peers elsewhere, Dutch students state that they have learned less about citizenship at [school](#).

Significant differences in citizenship competencies exist among [young people](#) with parents having different educational backgrounds. These differences not only pertain to knowledge but also extend to support for gender equality and equal rights for various ethnic groups. Youth with parents having a higher professional or academic education possess more knowledge and express greater support for equal rights.

Young people with a migration background have a more positive attitude towards immigrants than their peers but less confidence in the institutions of democracy. Young people without a migration background are more likely to plan to vote when they turn eighteen

compared to students with a migration background.

## About the study

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2022) was conducted in 24 countries. In the Netherlands, over 2,600 students from second-year classes in more than 120 schools for pre-vocational education (vmbo), senior general secondary education (havo), and pre-university [education](#) (vwo) participated. The research in the Netherlands was carried out by the University of Amsterdam, the Kohnstamm Institute, and the GION Education/Research of the University of Groningen.

**More information:** Report: [www.iea.nl/studies/iea/iccs/2022](http://www.iea.nl/studies/iea/iccs/2022)

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