

Promoting Diversity Policies in Higher Education: Aims of Inclusive Education Programs in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Like other Western European countries, the Netherlands is experiencing notable demographic changes. The native population is not growing, and to sustain economic growth and current welfare levels, the country relies on new immigrants each year. In the 1970s and 1980s, immigrant workers were called ‘guest workers,’ but today their fourth-generation descendants make up a significant part of society. This creates both challenges and opportunities. Educational institutions must find ways to handle linguistic diversity. Monolingual approaches to education and training often do not produce satisfactory results for multilingual student populations. Most students from immigrant backgrounds are typically placed into lower educational tracks, such as vocational programs. Additionally, school dropout rates among students from immigrant backgrounds are higher than those of native Dutch students. As a result, unemployment among immigrants tends to be higher, and the country cannot fully benefit from the diverse talents they offer. This paper discusses these important societal issues in depth.

Introduction

This article is based on a discussion at the conference organized by the Open University of Japan on December 4, 2024. The conference’s theme was “Open Higher Education beyond Borders and Identities.” I focused on education beyond identities in my discussion. By examining the diversity and inclusion practices of Dutch educational institutions, I compared and contrasted policies at two different levels of schooling. While policies and practices at the primary school level reflect a monolingual mindset, Dutch universities follow diversity policies that promote inclusion and integration. To examine the implications of education beyond identities, presenting a discussion on divergent policies within the same national context may contribute to critical discussions and awareness raising among Japanese policymakers as well. Considering the declining population structure both in the Netherlands and Japan, maintaining a healthy workforce and welfare requires utilizing societal resources, including a meritocratic education system for all.

Following the same structure as my oral discussion, this paper highlights the importance of inclusive education within the Dutch educational system and explores the challenges to its implementation. It thoroughly examines

policies and practices in elementary and secondary schools, providing a detailed comparison of two perspectives on linguistic diversity and inclusion. Essentially, other languages and cultures are seen as obstacles to the successful sociocultural integration of immigrant students into the Dutch education system. In contrast, higher education institutions view cultural diversity as an asset for empowering Dutch society and its institutions. Within the same national context, there are fundamentally different approaches to multilingualism and cultural diversity. A comprehensive discussion of these differences can offer a deeper understanding of the complex factors that lead to two distinct sets of policies in Dutch educational institutions, affecting both the theory and practice of policymaking.

As shown in the discussion below, policymakers and educational specialists at primary and secondary school levels support monolingual ideologies, believing that other languages hinder the learning of the national language. In this regard, other languages are seen as factors that contribute to lower academic achievement among ‘immigrant’ heritage students, leading to stigmatization and linguistic discrimination based on ethnicity and background. Interestingly, the ideological stance at higher education institutions is fundamentally different from the “deficit perspective” of elementary and secondary schooling. Higher

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education institutions view other languages and cultures as valuable resources.

It is important to note that population growth in the Netherlands is negative. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2025), since 2000, the birth rate has declined while mortality has continued to increase due to the aging population. Primarily since 2022, the death rate has surpassed the birth rate. Currently, population growth is driven solely by migration: more people are moving to the Netherlands than leaving. Net migration has increased sharply since 2014. This trend aligns with demographic developments in other Western European countries. In recent years, European nations have experienced fluctuating waves of asylum seekers, with applications rising by 20% in 2022 and 2023. The Netherlands, already known for its diverse population, continues to face the challenge of integrating these newcomers. As of 2023, the Dutch population is approximately 17.81 million, consisting of individuals from diverse ethnic and migration backgrounds. As shown in Table 1, the largest immigrant groups include individuals of Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese descent, whose presence in the Netherlands dates to earlier migration waves in the 1960s and 70s.

Table 1. Heritage distribution of the Dutch population in 2022.

Background	Total number	With a migration background	1st generation migration background	2nd generation migration background
Total Population	17,590,672	4,438,900	2,412,344	2,026,556
Dutch background	13,151,772			
With a migration background	4,438,900	4,438,900	2,412,344	2,026,556
Africa	749,780	749,780	372,120	377,660
America	751,689	751,689	403,127	348,562
Asia	1,023,304	1,023,304	573,733	449,571
Europe (excluding Dutch background)	1,889,704	1,889,704	1,054,016	835,688
Oceania	24,423	24,423	9,348	15,075
European Union (excl. Dutch background)	1,164,767	1,164,767	663,761	501,006
Caribbean Netherlands	6,216	6,216	3,431	2,785
Indonesia	349,301	349,301	91,556	257,745
Morocco	419,272	419,272	173,279	245,993
Suriname	359,814	359,814	176,127	183,687
Turkey	429,978	429,978	204,249	225,729

The Dutch economy thrived in the 1960s and 1970s, attracting guest workers who later settled in the country permanently. As migration increased, government policies shifted from initially supporting inclusion to implementing tighter measures on language and cultural integration. Initially, Dutch policymakers believed that guest workers would stay temporarily, but over time, it became clear

they needed more migrants to sustain economic growth and prosperity. With rapid demographic changes, the local population felt threatened, leading to the enactment of more restrictive policies aimed at facilitating the assimilation of newcomers and maintaining social cohesion and cultural unity.

As discussed thoroughly by Yagmur (2019), linguistic diversity has not always been appreciated in some European countries. European discourse on linguistic minorities reflects the creation of inter-ethnic boundaries between national groups (such as Dutch or French), indigenous minorities (like Basque, Catalan, or Frisian), and immigrant minorities (Arabic, Berber, or Turkish). In European public discourse about immigrant minority groups, two main features stand out: these groups are often called foreigners (*étrangers*, *Ausländer*) and are viewed as needing integration. It is common to describe immigrant minority groups as non-nationals, with their languages labeled as non-territorial, non-regional, non-indigenous, or non-European. This exclusion, rather than inclusion, in European public discourse stems from a narrow view of citizenship and nationality. The words and phrases used to identify immigrant minority groups, along with the semantic load of those terms, reveal the prevailing mainstream attitude toward minority groups in the European context. Most terms used in public and official discourse regarding ethnic minorities indicate a social hierarchy of groups and their languages. After sixty years of migration history, many migrant groups refer to themselves as diaspora communities, implying permanence in the host countries; however, most immigrant-receiving societies do not share this view. The terms used to refer to people with an immigration background demonstrate the level of social exclusion faced by some immigrant groups. Analyzing some of these terms shows that firm social and psychological boundaries exist between the ‘mainstream’ groups and those with an immigration background (Yagmur, 2019).

Yagmur (2019) discussed the connection between public discourse on immigration and the resulting integration patterns. As suggested by Schrover and Schinkel (2013), the situational, institutional, and social contexts shape and affect discourses, and discourses influence social and political reality. The language of inclusion and exclusion is produced collectively in the Netherlands. Despite restrictions on access to citizenship as well as social exclusion, most migrant groups have stronger socio-cultural bonds with the host language and culture than what is imagined by policymakers. Many migrants were born in the host countries, and they belong to the third or fourth generation. The longer the descendants of migrants are identified as ‘the other’, the harder it is for the integration of these younger generations. Naming practices reflect deeply embedded notions of inclusion and exclusion. Who belongs and who

does not is a complex matter that needs to be discussed concerning citizenship, social-boundary construction, language, and identity. In this respect, referring to third and fourth generation persons, who were born in the country of migration, as ‘immigrant’ is an intriguing form of social exclusion.

Factors contributing to the otherization of students from an immigration heritage

During the 1980s and 1990s, when discussions about diversity and inclusion were uncommon in the European Union, Dutch policymakers focused on linguistic pluralism and supported programs to preserve the native languages of students from immigrant communities. Sweden and the Netherlands served as model countries promoting linguistic diversity and offering mother tongue classes for immigrant populations. Over time, due to demographic and political changes in the Netherlands, a strong ideology of monolingualism began to dominate Dutch policies. However, despite its commitment to equality and inclusion, the Dutch education system faced disparities in the academic achievement of students with immigrant backgrounds. Instead of addressing the underlying causes of lower academic performance among immigrant children, educators and policymakers often rely on deficit theories, believing that immigrant students underperform because of deficiencies in their linguistic, cultural, or socio-economic backgrounds. Some even argue that they have lower cognitive skills.

There is limited research on teachers’ beliefs and opinions about linguistic diversity in Dutch schools; however, existing studies (Driessen, 2001; Van den Bergh et al., 2010) treat immigrant students’ home languages as barriers to academic success and social integration. Immigrant multilingualism is rarely seen as a resource (Yagmur, 2017). On the contrary, students from immigrant backgrounds are viewed as lacking the cognitive and communicative skills necessary for learning (Akoglu & Yagmur, 2016; Spotti & Kroon, 2009). However, multilingualism in prestigious languages, such as English plus Dutch or Spanish plus Dutch, is highly valued. Deficit views of bilingualism apply only to bilingualism involving immigrant languages. The perception that immigrant languages hinder effective Dutch learning is rooted in an implicit monolingualism ideology prevalent in society. Conversely, research has consistently shown that metalinguistic awareness among bilingual children is much higher compared to monolingual children (Bialystok, 2005). Nevertheless, elementary and secondary school teachers hold onto deficit views (Spotti & Kroon, 2009; Jaspers, 2015). These deficit views are shaped by broader societal discourses on integration, nationalism, and language,

and do not occur in isolation. In the Netherlands, public and political discourse often links language proficiency, especially Dutch proficiency, to civic participation, social cohesion, and national identity (Extra & Yagmur, 2012). Consequently, linguistic diversity is framed as a problem to fix rather than a resource to leverage (Yagmur & Extra, 2011). Students from immigrant backgrounds who speak other languages are frequently portrayed as linguistically deficient and culturally deviant, reinforcing stereotypes of non-belonging.

These beliefs and opinions are embedded in education policies that favor Dutch-only instruction and devalue multilingual education. Research by Driessen, van der Slik, and de Bot (2002) shows how such policies, along with public narratives about integration and assimilation, shape teachers’ beliefs and expectations. Teachers internalize the message that students must first improve their Dutch to succeed academically, which reinforces a deficit-oriented view of linguistic diversity (Van den Bergh et al., 2010). As a result, non-Dutch heritage is linked to school achievement and Dutch language issues. Students from immigrant backgrounds are expected to learn Dutch in a second language environment without specific bilingual support systems. The dominant instructional approach in the Netherlands for immigrant students has long been submersion education, where children are expected to learn and perform entirely in Dutch, with little to no institutional support for their home languages since 2004. This model assumes that immersion in the majority language will speed up language learning and academic integration. However, research shows that submersion methods often hinder bilingual development instead of supporting it. Without support for their first language (L1), immigrant students are more likely to experience subtractive bilingualism, decreased academic engagement, and lower performance in content areas. The achievement gap between native Dutch students and those from immigrant backgrounds—mainly Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese students—can partly be traced to this lack of bilingual support. To gain a deeper understanding of the differences between lower and higher education institutions’ approaches to linguistic diversity, information on the transition from primary to secondary schools will be helpful.

Dutch School System

Providing a brief overview of the Dutch schooling system (pre-primary, primary, and secondary) helps readers understand the issues and challenges faced by both policymakers and student populations. There are notable performance differences in PISA reading and mathematics results between mainstream and immigrant students, as reported by OECD (2012). However, many

immigrant children attend schools in disadvantaged inner-city neighborhoods. Achievement levels in schools in these impoverished areas are often relatively low compared to those in middle-class suburbs. The OECD (2012) report showed that a significant source of performance gaps between mainstream and immigrant students in PISA may be related to socioeconomic status, which tends to be low in these areas; yet, even after adjusting for socioeconomic background, a considerable achievement gap remains between immigrant and non-immigrant students across PISA countries. As discussed by Arikan et al. (2017), performance differences between immigrant students and mainstream students are also linked to early school tracking practices in Austria, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. In this regard, gaining insight into the school system in the Netherlands will help foster a better understanding of diversity and inclusion issues in Dutch schools.

In the Netherlands, full-time education is compulsory for all children from the age of five until the age of sixteen. Early differentiation, a rigid curriculum structure, and a high degree of stratification characterize the Dutch education system. Primary education is standardized for all pupils and spans eight years. Pupils typically enter primary school at the age of four or five and complete this phase around the age of twelve with a placement test. After primary education, students transition to secondary education. Placement into different educational tracks is determined by a combination of the class teacher's recommendation and the results of a standardized national assessment (the Cito test). This transition is considered a pivotal moment in a student's educational trajectory. Secondary education in the Netherlands is divided into three main tracks:

- VMBO schools (pre-vocational or junior general secondary education): Usually lasts four years and prepares students for vocational training.
- HAVO schools (senior general secondary education): Lasts five years and leads to higher general education.
- VWO (or gymnasium) schools (pre-university education): usually last six years and prepare students for university studies.

All students follow a core curriculum during the first three years of secondary education. In subsequent years, instruction becomes more specialized to prepare for final examinations. The length of this specialization phase varies by track: one year for VMBO, two years for HAVO, and three years for VWO. Although the system is highly stratified, limited upward mobility between tracks is possible. For example, students who complete the VMBO program may advance to HAVO by completing an additional two years of study and passing the HAVO exam. Similarly, HAVO graduates may pursue two years of VWO-level education to earn a VWO diploma. Tracking or stratification occurs not only through the track system but also within

tracks, based on curriculum difficulty levels, ranging from Level 1 to Level 4. These levels directly affect students' eligibility for further vocational or higher education. A key policy goal within the Dutch educational system is achieving the minimum qualification called the *startkwalificatie*, which is defined as a diploma at the VMBO Level 2, HAVO, or VWO level. Students who do not reach this benchmark are officially labeled as early school leavers, a status linked to fewer opportunities for long-term skilled employment. In summary, the Dutch educational system is known for its early selection, structured pathways, and limited flexibility once students are placed into a track. Compared to systems like those in Scandinavian countries, the Dutch model is more stratified and prescriptive, with the transition from primary to secondary education serving as a key moment in a student's academic and professional growth.

Inclusive Education and the Dutch Educational System

The terminology used to describe different population groups reflects societal attitudes toward immigration. Terms such as allochthonous versus autochthonous, or Western versus non-Western immigrants, show how students from specific backgrounds are viewed, even in the third and fourth generations. These labels influence larger issues of belonging and inclusion. As mentioned above, after completing elementary school, students take a standardized final exam called the Cito test. The results, along with teacher recommendations, determine the educational path students will follow: VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education, divided into low and high levels), HAVO (senior general secondary education), or VWO (pre-university education). Due to Dutch learning difficulties, a lack of effective teaching methods, and immersion education, the academic performance of immigrant students is negatively impacted. Early school tracking, which assigns students to different educational levels at a young age, is common in several European countries. In the Netherlands, this happens at ages 11-12, while in Germany and Austria, it occurs even earlier, at age 10. Conversely, France and Scandinavian countries delay tracking until age 16. Early tracking greatly affects immigrant students, as their placement is often based on standardized test scores instead of a full evaluation of their potential.

A persistent issue in Dutch education is that school achievement among immigrant children is often recorded based on ethnicity rather than socioeconomic background. If factors like family income and socio-cultural capital were considered, the differences within immigrant groups would become clearer. Over time, the percentage of immigrant students in higher academic tracks (HAVO/VWO) has increased, but challenges still exist. Immigrant students

tend to focus on specific fields in higher education. For example, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese males often pursue economics and law, while females generally choose economics, law, health, and wellness. These trends reflect socio-cultural influences where certain careers are viewed as more prestigious.

The question of why lower academic achievement among immigrant students receives significant attention warrants further discussion. Deficit viewpoints dominate the conversation about immigrant languages. High-status languages (English, French, German) are often seen as cognitive advantages, while immigrant languages are viewed as obstacles. This mindset has resulted in restrictive educational policies that harm multilingual students. Many teachers believe that being bilingual interferes with learning the dominant language, reinforcing a deficit perspective. Consequently, immigrant parents are often advised not to speak their heritage language with their children, despite research showing the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism. Such negative attitudes toward immigrant languages and cultures contribute to the marginalization of immigrant students and impede their linguistic and educational growth.

State institutions and the media often compare immigrant students to their native peers, reinforcing the idea that heritage languages lead to academic failure. Instead of examining the structural barriers within the education system, blame is placed on students' home language environments. Some teachers hold strong opinions about immigrant children's educational struggles, failing to recognize the limitations caused by monolingual teaching methods.

Cito, the national testing and evaluation institution, administers the end-of-primary-school exams. Based on the results, students are directed to various types of schools, such as vocational or higher secondary schools. Scores for students can range from as low as 500 to as high as 550. Each year, Cito scores for different immigrant groups are published alongside scores for native Dutch students. As shown in Table 2, the Cito test scores for Turkish and Moroccan students are lower compared to those of native Dutch students.

Table 2. End of Primary Test Results across ethnic groups from 1994 to 2005.

Years	Turkish	Moroccan	Surinamese	Native-Low SES	Native-High SES
1994/95	524.1	525.1	527.1	531.9	538
1996/97	525.2	526.4	527.4	531.2	537.4
1998/99	526.9	526.9	529.2	530.6	536.9
2000/1	527.3	527.4	529.8	530.5	537.3
2002/3	527.3	528.3	528.3	530.6	537.3
2004/5	527	527.7	527.9	528.9	536.2

Derived from Akoglu & Yagmur (2016)

Based on the results presented in Table 2, immigrant groups perform significantly worse than native Dutch students in primary schools. Such group-based comparisons are commonly used in public and scientific publications. These comparisons rely solely on ethnicity as a criterion. Since ethnic groups are not homogeneous entities, it is crucial to control for socioeconomic status, parental background, and the educational level of the parents. When the results are adjusted for factors such as family income, the differences become more meaningful. Using data from the official interactive website of the Dutch Central Statistics Agency, we were able to request data on Cito test results categorized by parents' income levels. As shown in Table 3, once the socio-economic status of the parents is controlled for, the differences between native Dutch and immigrant groups in Cito test scores are no longer statistically significant. Immigrant students from high-income families achieve scores comparable to those of native Dutch children from high SES families. The gap between low-SES and high-SES immigrant children is as wide as the gap between low-SES native Dutch children and high-SES native Dutch children.

Table 3. Distribution of Cito scores by immigrant and native groups according to income levels

Family income level	Origin	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Lowest income level 1st 20%	ND	533	533	533	533	533	533
	N-WI	528	528	529	529	529	530
Second income level 2nd 20%	ND	534	534	534	534	534	534
	N-WI	529	529	530	530	530	531
Average income level 3rd 20%	ND	535	535	535	535	536	536
	N-WI	531	531	531	532	531	532
Above average income level 4th 20%	ND	537	537	537	537	537	537
	N-WI	533	533	533	534	534	535
Highest income level 5th 20%	ND	539	539	539	539	540	539
	N-WI	537	538	538	538	538	538

ND means Native Dutch; N-WI means Non-Western immigrant.

When considering social and economic factors along with differences, 'ethnicity' becomes much less meaningful. All ethnic groups are diverse, with significant social, economic, and linguistic variation within each immigrant community. Grouping everyone together and showing results based on group statistics masks the real reasons behind achievement issues. As a result, educational experts, policymakers, and teachers often make wrong judgments based on flawed assessments. They tend to see 'ethnicity' as a main reason for school failure. Since many academic reports and scientific papers use similar methods focused on ethnic comparisons, the true differences between native-born and foreign-born groups are hidden. The stereotype of the 'low-achieving immigrant minority' becomes deeply rooted in mainstream society's perceptions, which can turn into a long-lasting social stigma. Comparisons based on carefully selected, relevant factors could give better insights

for schools and the public.

Submersion education, where immigrant children are expected to learn exclusively in the national language without support in their native language, presents significant challenges. Most immigrant children begin school with limited proficiency in Dutch, which affects their academic performance. Research shows that strong first-language skills transfer positively to second-language learning, yet educational policies rarely consider this. Overcoming barriers to effective teaching and learning should be a top priority. Instead of grouping students by ethnicity or religious background, schools should focus on language skills and socioeconomic status. The goal should be to break down mental barriers between groups rather than reinforce them.

As discussed so far, educational specialists, policymakers, and teachers at primary and secondary schools view immigrant languages as problems to be addressed. Because they adopt a deficit perspective, they overlook the inherent value of heritage languages for students' emotional and cognitive development. This monolingual mindset dismisses the values and skills linked to the home languages of immigrant students. As a result, multilingualism and linguistic diversity become obstacles for schools to manage. Deficit views on immigrant languages continue to influence the educational experiences of immigrant students in the Netherlands, shaped by teacher perceptions, policy practices, and societal ideologies. These deficit perspectives not only portray linguistic and cultural diversity as issues but also hinder inclusive practices in primary and secondary education.

Inclusive Practices in Higher Education: Diversity as a Strategic Asset

While primary and secondary education in the Netherlands still face inclusion challenges, higher education has taken a more active approach. Recognizing the systemic underrepresentation of ethnic minorities, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) initiated the Mosaic Program (2004–2012), which was revived as Mosaic 2.0 in 2020. This program funds PhD positions for candidates from migration backgrounds, aiming to foster a more inclusive academic environment. Beyond increasing representation, it also seeks to develop future role models and academic leaders from diverse backgrounds.

Importantly, the Mosaic initiative sees diversity not only as a matter of equity but also as a strategic asset for the country's future. In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, harnessing diverse cultural experiences and perspectives can significantly enhance the quality and relevance of academic research. Mosaic supports this by fostering innovative, interdisciplinary thinking and enabling

the Dutch academic community to tap into a broader pool of talent, ideas, and innovation potential.

Between 2004 and 2012, the original Mosaic Program supported 192 PhD candidates out of 1,294 applicants—a competitive 15% selection rate. Of those awarded funding, 79% successfully completed their PhDs, and nearly half (49%) continued in academia. These outcomes not only represent individual successes but also demonstrate the program's effectiveness in promoting academic diversity and laying a foundation for sustainable scientific progress. By providing access to academic careers, Mosaic has helped integrate underrepresented talent into key research areas, thereby boosting knowledge production and fostering intellectual innovation.

Beyond academia, the program has had a wider social influence. It has challenged deep-rooted institutional biases, promoted inclusive policy-making at universities, and established clear paths for marginalized communities. It also fosters a cultural shift—one that sees diversity as vital to a resilient, future-focused society.

However, the program has faced several challenges. Limited funding, intense competition, and underdeveloped support structures—such as inadequate supervision or experiences of bias—continue to impede some PhD candidates' progress. Additionally, advancing beyond the doctoral level remains difficult, with relatively few Mosaic alumni moving into senior academic roles. These obstacles highlight the need for more structural reform and ongoing investment in inclusive academic career pathways.

To address these ongoing issues, Mosaic 2.0 was launched in 2020 with a renewed focus. While its predecessor laid important groundwork, researchers from migration backgrounds still remain significantly underrepresented in faculty and leadership roles. Mosaic 2.0 aims to change this by not only increasing access but also supporting career advancement—thus allowing diverse scholars to contribute more fully to the academic and scientific community of the Netherlands.

The program emphasizes that inclusive education improves intercultural skills, encourages critical thinking, and drives the innovation ecosystem. Having diverse academic backgrounds stimulates new questions, creative approaches, and wider application of research outcomes—essential for technological advancements, social progress, and economic growth. As the Netherlands strives to become a leading knowledge economy, investing in diversity is both an ethical duty and a strategic move.

The program also addresses broader structural inequalities that persist in education and society. These systemic disparities—rooted in institutional norms, policies, and historical biases—continue to disproportionately affect individuals based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, socioeconomic background, and migration history. While

Mosaic creates crucial opportunities, its very existence also highlights the ongoing need for comprehensive, long-term reforms that address these inequalities across all levels of society.

Conclusion

Diversity and inclusion are handled differently at various educational levels in the Netherlands. In primary and secondary schools, systemic issues like early tracking, monolingual policies, and the undervaluing of bilingualism still limit opportunities for students from immigrant backgrounds. These obstacles prevent many young people from reaching their full academic potential.

Higher education institutions are increasingly acknowledging that diversity extends beyond mere representation and serves as a vital driver of societal resilience. Initiatives such as Mosaic show how focused support for underrepresented students can boost academic participation, foster innovation, and strengthen university institutions. Incorporating a wider array of cultural viewpoints into research and education enables universities to more effectively address the complex issues of the 21st century.

With an aging native population and increasing dependence on immigration to support the labor force, Dutch policymakers and scientists are increasingly aware that utilizing the talents of all citizens is essential. Embracing diversity in education is crucial for sustaining economic growth, maintaining scientific competitiveness, and strengthening social cohesion. However, for this vision to be fully achieved, the Netherlands must tackle inequality starting from the earliest stages of education and commit to inclusive policies across all sectors.

To stay competitive in a rapidly changing world, the Netherlands must see diversity as a key strength—an important source of expertise, creativity, and collective growth. Inclusive education is not just an ideal; it is essential for national progress.

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