



Enabling the Flourishing and  
Evolution of Social Entrepreneurship  
for Innovative and Inclusive Societies



# **Social Enterprise, Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in The Netherlands: A National Report**

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## 1. Introduction

Social Enterprise is a quite new type of business sector in The Netherlands compared to other countries like the UK and the US. Therefore we have to start describing this phenomenon from a broad perspective of societal changes and not so much from the perspective of changes and developments within the sector of social enterprises.

Some societal evolutions are stimulating for the rise of this sector like f.e. the economic crisis, the decentralisation of the government, and the privatisation of welfare. At the same time there is a substantially growing number of entrepreneurs, young starters or elderly and experienced ones that decide to commit themselves to entrepreneurial activities based on social impact.

This report is aiming at trying to understand the background and context for the start of this sector and to mark the evolutionary changes and impact towards society, institutions and the way we perceive changes in entrepreneurial concepts.

## 2. Current situation

Social enterprising and social innovation initially were embedded in economic discourses (see *chapter 3.2*), which could be simplified as the wish to adjust culture to the laws of economy. Afterwards, in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the focus has been put on citizens' participation.<sup>1</sup> One could see this as the emancipation of the citizen in a society too complex to manage by politicians. This complexity is being caused by

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<sup>1</sup> Tonkens 2006; Verhoeven 2009; Arend and Behagel 2011;

multiculturalism, globalism and contemporary tribalism<sup>2</sup>. This resulted in many governmental and semi-governmental reports about the issue of mutual trust in the civil society.<sup>3</sup>

TV programmes aiming at poverty and social injustice underwent a subtle change: the challenge was no longer helping people but empowering people to help themselves. This also holds for philanthropy. For example this can be observed in the changes in development projects by OxfamNovib. They frame themselves as the ambassadors of do-it-yourself culture.

The Dutch royal family plays a significant role in stimulating voluntary activities in order to connect people to societal challenges, by initiating projects for the analphabetic and by installing a huge fund for social projects, the Oranjefonds. This fund sponsors “NL-doet” (NL acts), a two days programme for voluntary projects: in 2014 more than 300.000 volunteers were working on some 8400 projects. In the Netherlands the discourse on active citizenship and social enterprising is partly embedded and incinerated by a myriad of philanthropy funds (approximately 20.000), with their social practices.<sup>4</sup>

Recently, in the last decade of the 21st century and invoked by crisis, the context of social innovation and social enterprising changed rapidly. This process is quite complex and the issues at stake are:

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<sup>2</sup> Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010;

<sup>3</sup> Interior and Kingdom Relations 2008; Verhoeven 2009; Engbers, Hovius and Gooskens 2011; Interior and Kingdom Relations, Infrastructure and Economic Affairs 2011; Lans 2011; ROB 2012; WRR 2012b; RMO 2013; Dam, Salverda and During (forthcoming);

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4324/Nieuws/article/detail/1113280/2010/05/26/Onderzoek-hoeveel-goede-doelen-er-werkelijk-zijn.dhtml>;

- The need for the so called “participation society”
- Decentralisation of political power and privatisation of welfare tasks
- Multicultural society and assimilation politics
- Nationalism in response to European Pact for Stability and Growth with its disciplinary budgetary rules
- Aging of the Dutch population and its consequences for pensions and for health care
- The need for systemic change in education, health, poverty, food quality issues and sustainable food production

These issues were always there, but recently, due to governmental budget cuts, they became far more important. Social enterprising received a big boost because of the economic crisis. The government increasingly became aware that the welfare society became too expensive. The strategic council of high officers in the public administration stated that society needed a paradigm shift: civilians should not see themselves any more as anonymous consumers of the welfare state but as responsible do-it-yourself persons<sup>5</sup>. Many appeals were sent out for the so called Do-Democracy<sup>6</sup>. As a result one can observe a fast growth of social enterprises. According to Social Enterprise NL, between four and five thousand enterprises have been established<sup>7</sup>.

Citizens today seems to be quite eager to take an active part in the so-called participation

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<sup>5</sup> Rouw and Steur 2011;

<sup>6</sup> Tonkens and Duyvendak 2006; Twist, Steen and Karré 2009; Tonkens and Verhoeven 2010; Wijdeven and Hendriks 2010; Hajer 2011; Heijden, et al. 2011; Ministerie van BZK, Ministerie van I&M and Ministerie van EZ 2011; Ministerie van BZK 2013; Steen, Bruijn and Schillemans 2013;

<sup>7</sup> Verloop, et al. 2011;

society, but without a priori adopting the aims and problem definitions of politicians<sup>8</sup>. The discussion on governmental budget cuts is present during the last three decennia, and the logical answer seemed to be an increase in efficiency. It gave rise to the ambition of the New Public Management, based on the notion that companies normally achieve a much higher level of efficiency than governmental institutes. This new public management unfortunately did not work out as was expected. To the contrary, the management and measurement of efficiency became more important than the work itself. In many sectors, such as nursery work or police work among others, the relation between the primary work and the administrative work to account for it became out of balance. The discourse on efficiency is still very strong. The question is how social enterprises perform in terms of efficiency compared to regular enterprises which in turn are being perceived more efficient than governmental institutes.

The privatised organisations doing the social work start responding now by experimenting with self-managing teams, by cutting away most of the management levels and decreasing the administrative work load. They are inspired by many examples of private initiatives/social enterprises experimenting with hardly any hierarchy, no bureaucracy, which gives space to put the customers wishes in the centre instead of spending time on monitoring and administration. As an example the Thomas houses can be mentioned here, started by Hans van Putten, who in vain sought for a good home during daytime for his mentally handicapped son, Thomas. He just found houses where more time was spend on coordination and administration than on the care for the pupils. He started his own house, based on the principles mentioned above and it was a huge success. There are well over 100 houses now, and the number is growing.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Dam, Salverda and During 2010; Duineveld, et al. 2010; Xanten, et al. 2011; Groot, et al. 2012; Ellenbroek 2013; Salverda, et al. 2013; Dam, Salverda and During in press;

<sup>9</sup> [www.thomashuizen.nl](http://www.thomashuizen.nl)

In response to these kind of initiatives, organisations such as “Buurtzorg” (Neighbourhood Care), changed their way of working drastically by cutting away the management layers in their organisation. The organisation now consists of self-governing teams in which the personnel decides by themselves how to divide the work, with a minimum of procedures. This institutional change is also being qualified as a social innovation. This is an example of co-evolution, to be discussed later.

A big issue is the question if social enterprises should be awarded for their social outputs. This would imply that social enterprises should receive a specific legal status. This raises big discussions of putting aside other enterprises or privileging them with false reasons. Some say that every enterprise is fulfilling the needs of society and otherwise it rapidly would go bankrupt. Awarding the social outcomes and supporting social enterprises would imply to designate them as a specific category of enterprises, and this is advocated by many spokespeople such as Willemijn Verloop<sup>10</sup>.

Social enterprise is, in my opinion, when the entrepreneur makes enough money to pay for his mortgage, his subsistence, to go on holidays and build some savings, and not to be rich enough to live on own investments. But the greatest point of distinguishing between a traditional enterprise and a social one is the social challenge they aim to battle. A social entrepreneur wants to leave the World a bit better then how he has found it.

*Rense Bos, societal processes facilitator at Publieke Vernellers,  
Interviewed in 2014*

The Dutch focus on economy and efficiency caused a bias in responding to the European discourse on social innovation and social enterprising<sup>11</sup>. Social innovation was understood

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<sup>10</sup> Verloop 2012;

<sup>11</sup> AWT 2014;

first of all only as workplace innovation<sup>12</sup>. It was supposed that workplace innovation could lead to more efficiency, more innovation and a higher performance of the organisation<sup>13</sup>. Recently the focus is broadened to include social enterprising<sup>14</sup>. The actual discussion is about providing support and making social enterprises thus stronger without affecting the level playing field. “Let’s not create some sort of reserve for the social entrepreneur” some policy officers say. Here we see a dilemma if one would like to support this sector you have to define the basic question to what extent a social enterprise differs from a regular enterprise. But this implies the problem of creating a distinctive status and unfair play within the economic arena. This can rise quite difficult dilemmas in public policy making.

Social enterprising is an enrichment of the market and the economy. It will be difficult to make a distinction between traditional and social enterprises, in order to subsidize or reward social impact. Such a distinction would encourage a great number of tax advisors to advise enterprises in the intermediate zone to incorporate the social identity and take a profit from it. I hope that social enterprises will mature at their own strength. Only in case of an evident gap in the public service it makes sense to invite private enterprises and pay them for their services.

*Alexander Rinnooy Kan, University of Amsterdam, Interviewed in 2014*

Willemijn Verloop (who shortly after started the initiative Social Enterprise NL) in partnership with McKinsey, managed to organize the most actual picture on the situation of Social Enterprises in The Netherlands. The majority of the social enterprises work in six sectors: Cleantech, Biosystems, Economic Development, Civic Engagement, Health

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<sup>12</sup>Volberda, et al. 2011.

<sup>13</sup> (Pot 2012)

<sup>14</sup> (AWT 2012; AWT 2014)



and Wellbeing and Education<sup>15</sup>. Almost half of these enterprises does not measure their social impact and half of them did not reach their financial break-even point<sup>16</sup>. The majority of the enterprises in Cleantech and Health and Wellbeing depend on subsidies, respectively 57 and 75 percent of their funding depends on this capital source. This evaluation shows that professionalization is still low. One of the key problems is the lack of adequate business models, limited access to capital, management development issues and legislation issues.

An interesting result in the overview of McKinsey is that the background of an entrepreneur in this sector seems not a leading indicator for success of the company. 'Neither a long work experience nor entrepreneurial experience before starting a social enterprise is a predictive for financial success'. One of the reasons could be that the lack of experience with the development of new business models needs perhaps different entrepreneurial skills or more time to experiment.

Social enterprises in my opinion are a new type of leaders, a group of frontrunners developing innovative business models that create scalable impact on society. Growth of the sector and its societal impact will be created through adaption by f.i. larger corporates of the impact model, which can potentially lead towards systemic change. It is not realistic to expect that the whole economy can become dependent on social enterprises. The lessons from UK are that we should not overpromise within this sector. However we should accelerate the growth and innovations of social entrepreneurs and support the development of this sector.

*Willemijn Verloop, Social Enterprise NL, Interviewed in 2014*

One of the biggest issues of social enterprises is their variety in organisation and output.

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<sup>15</sup> (Verloop, et al. 2011)

<sup>16</sup> (Verloop, et al. 2011)

It will be difficult to make categorisations within this concept. For instance enterprises that employ those with a big distance to the labour market may be called social enterprises, but what if the enterprise is run by themselves without a specific label? This issue of variety and inequality can be problematic for the public administration<sup>17</sup>. Also transparency and quality are big issues of debate, especially when dealing with issues like welfare (for example), that is still to a large extent dominated by formal rules and regulations. The government normally judges quality with diplomas and verifiable standards, whereas the social entrepreneur aims at the quality directly with their clients<sup>18</sup>.

To survive as a company, you have to be profitable. It is a complicated situation for social entrepreneurs. If you are not profitable, and only function through subsidies or volunteer workers, you are not social. You do not contribute to the economy generating income for others and insurance for yourself. This is the main difference between social enterprise and volunteer work – which is huge in the Netherlands.

Many people are searching for a business model which fits their social objective, and that also makes them stand out. There is a market for social entrepreneurship, and in a meta level the entrepreneurs are very organized and form a compact network. In the individual level, they are still dreadfully searching for practical ways of actually building their businesses.

*Rense Bos, societal processes facilitator at Publieke Vernellers, Interviewed in 2014*

## 2.1. Legal framework

Hitherto, no legal provisions have been made in the Netherlands for the support of social enterprises. The EU directives for public procurement allow social arguments to be taken

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<sup>17</sup> (Schulz, et al. 2013)

<sup>18</sup> (Schulz, et al. 2013)

into consideration<sup>19</sup>. Increasingly this is done by governmental actors. The broader picture of social enterprising from the SBI (Social Business Initiative) and social innovation as exchanged within Social Innovation Europe has primarily been appropriated as workplace innovation in the Dutch context.

The Dutch government assigned different Councils to explore issues of social innovation and social enterprising and this is reflected in several advisory reports, such as on Science and Technology<sup>20</sup>, on Citizenship and Governance<sup>21</sup>. Regarding grass roots energy production and social innovation a report was issued by the Environmental Planning Bureau<sup>22</sup>. The Council for Public Administration advised on the decentralisation of the government and if citizens are expected to be reliable partners in building a society with a receding government<sup>23</sup>. These advises are well considered and well informed, and provided the basis for a more inclusive view on social enterprising, with better connections with the broader EU social innovation discussion.

Recently several legal changes are implemented that affect the position of the socially excluded. Access to the social working institutions and social security funds are made less easy, and a new Participation Law has been accepted by the Senate in 2014, with provisions for re-integration towards regular employability. Many nursing houses are closing nowadays, because the rules of acceptance for patients have been changed, impacting even those who are at a very high age and consider their place as final. Another societal change effecting health, and welfare is the already mentioned decentralization of these topics to local municipalities.

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<sup>19</sup> (BZK 2013)

<sup>20</sup> (AWT 2014)

<sup>21</sup> (WRR 2012a)

<sup>22</sup> (Hajer 2011)

<sup>23</sup> (ROB 2012)

This resulted in big uncertainty among the affected to what extend they will feel the differences but also to many institutional changes due to budget cuts. Many health and welfare experts are losing their jobs and are being pushed to work as a micro-enterprise. Also in the educational system the system of rules changes, leading to bigger schools at a greater distance in rural areas. As a whole the changing of rules takes place in every sector of society, calling for more efficiency of institutions and for more self-management among people. Below we will give some examples of how these calls for self-management are being taken up in society and how this in turn affects the efficiency discourse within institutions with a strong movement that cuts out all layers of management and accountancy. The situation regarding social exclusion is complex, because politicians do not believe that citizens can run into severe poverty problems without being accountable for that. The myth of the welfare state pertains in their debate.

Social enterprises exert external effects on society that are outside value systems, influencing prosperity and wellbeing of others in society. Governments should take those effects in consideration to ensure a balanced spread of welfare. In fact there is no real difference with the effects of environmental pollution. But, the public administration should not become a parasite on the activities of civil initiatives and social entrepreneurs. With parasitism I mean a shameless use of social initiatives for work that used to be paid for.

*Roel in 't Veld, former State Secretary<sup>24</sup>, Interviewed in 2014*

The latest development on the Dutch legal framework is a motion submitted on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 by two political parties at the House of Representatives from the Parliament. The motion defends that social enterprises should profit from tax benefits.

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<sup>24</sup> Latest work: *Transgovernance, sustainable development and knowledge democracy (in Dutch)*

The argument of the politicians is that social enterprises deliver a useful contribution to society, regarding the social inclusion of segregated or handicapped working classes. “A financial stimulus to social enterprises could, according to the parliament members, contribute to the further increase of jobs for people with working limitations”<sup>25</sup>. As a consequence of the motion, the government would investigate which are the possibilities for creating financial (regarding taxes) stimulus for social enterprises.

### 3. Early experiences

#### 3.1. Social enterprise and the Dutch culture

According to Kennisland and Social Enterprise NL the social enterprise fits very well in the Dutch culture and tradition<sup>26</sup>. The Dutch economy is grounded in a strong tradition of cooperatives<sup>27</sup>. Even some of the country’s biggest institutions started as a cooperative, such as the RABO bank and the insurance company Achmea<sup>28</sup>. This tradition goes back to the Middle Ages, wherein groups of entrepreneurs established so called guilds, independently from both state and church. Similar structures were established in agrarian communities, such as “markes” and “maalschappen”: cooperative structures that ensured the proper maintenance of arable lands and woodlands.

Moreover, water management was done by cooperative water management boards, that

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<sup>25</sup> <http://social-enterprise.nl/motie-tweede-kamer-voor-fiscale-voordelen-sociale-ondernemingen-aangenomen/>

<sup>26</sup> (Arnoldus, et al. 2013)

<sup>27</sup> (Kievit 2011; Moor 2013)

<sup>28</sup> (Moor 2013)

protected the farmlands against inundations. These cooperative structures are still present in today's social memory of the Dutch society and grounds the mushrooming of civic initiatives and a strong inclination of newly established cooperatives<sup>29</sup>. A significant part of these initiatives can be designated as co-creation between enterprises (such as Attent) and citizens, such as small supermarkets in villages that are sustained by social contracts in which villagers assist in the work and guarantee an agreed turn over<sup>30</sup>.

The Dutch have a long standing tradition of entrepreneurship and volunteer ship. Much more than people realise. Recently a study has been conducted to compare the Dutch enterprise landscape with the ones in England and America. Much to my surprise the Dutch economy appeared to be the most entrepreneur driven. So I think that social enterprising will become a viable element of the Dutch economy in future. Social entrepreneurship enriches and diversifies our economy, by invoking experiments, finding new job opportunities and realising new ideas.

*Alexander Rinnooy Kan, University of Amsterdam, Interviewed in 2014*

A slightly different view on the cultural grounds for social enterprising is being expressed by the Dutch culture as one of merchants and parsons<sup>31</sup>. They see the unification of profit and moral as a key issue that combines the social and the economic and leads to the social entrepreneur. The consequence is ambivalence in the social enterprise: producing social values and still make a living out of it. Schulz et al (2013) highlight the dilemmas of this ambivalence for a public administration, that is used to judge before acting. They advocate postponing of any judgement and delineate the relevance and output in view of the group that is addressed by a social enterprise.

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<sup>29</sup> (Moor 2013)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.sparholding.nl/over-spar/formules/attent>

<sup>31</sup> (Schulz, Steen and Twist 2013)

Hybridity is important enabler for social innovations and for social enterprising: between the egocentric and the altruistic, the market and the administration and between public and private. It is an enabler because of the tensions sprouting from heterogeneity of relationships.

*Roel in 't Veld, former State Secretary, Interviewed in 2014*

Both views differ in their understanding of a social enterprise. The first view highlights the social and addresses exchange of social values on community based reciprocity; the second sees the social enterprise as a specific way of doing business, but in doing this taking the individuality of the entrepreneur as a fact.

Before the French revolution charity almost exclusively was done by the church<sup>32</sup>. In 1800 the first Poverty Law was installed, regulating poverty taxing and a public body to employ or feed the poor in society. This was done contraire to severe criticism how poverty programmes invoked laziness among the poor. There were also complaints about the costs that were needed to fight poverty in the country as a whole. In favour of it was the idea of a clear divide of the role of the state and church in society. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the central government tried to increase its influence, but the church did not act cooperatively.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Foundation for Common Welfare (Maatschappij tot Nut van het Algemeen) did an inventory showing the enormous chaos in church lead charity and pleaded for a sound system of welfare<sup>33</sup>. There was a great need for state inspections in this field. In that phase the Salvation Army was established as a Christian organisation that however was independent of the church. In the Netherlands this Salvation Army immediately achieved much credits because of the severe winter in 1890 in which people

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<sup>32</sup> (Leeuwen 1998)

<sup>33</sup> (Leeuwen 1998)

were in need or were starving.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century charity was more or less reformed to state welfare programmes (the welfare state)<sup>34</sup>. Recently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century one can observe welfare programmes such as the food bank organised by big enterprises, such as supermarkets, banks and food producers.

Social life in the Netherlands traditionally has been very well organised, especially in the agrarian community. The rules of social behaviour although different for each region or municipality (gemeente) have rarely been documented in legal documents. The set of rules in the eastern part of the Netherlands was called “Noaberschap”, and it prescribed appropriate behaviour of neighbours (and their neighbours and all other community members) in case of birth, death, illness, marriage, harvesting etcetera<sup>35</sup>. Today the reminiscence to this high level of social reciprocity is still present in society<sup>36</sup>.

The rules of social life changed rapidly after WW2. There was a strong belief in a prosperous future and people were supposed to take care of their own affairs. Christian democratic and socialist governmental policies were focusing on the family household as a self-organising unit. If a households was confronted with misfortune such as unemployment or invalidity the rapidly emerging welfare state provided the necessary provisions to stay alive and ascertain for instance a prosperous future for the children with subsidies. Here is where the politics of individuality comes in, affecting the citizenship discourse<sup>37</sup>. The politics of individualism puts the interests of an individual above those of

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<sup>34</sup> (De Jong, 2014)

<sup>35</sup> (Heuvel 1909)

<sup>36</sup> (Salverda, et al. 2009; Salverda, Jagt and During 2012)

<sup>37</sup> (Heijden, et al. 2011; Lans 2011; ROB 2012)



the collective and it focuses on maintaining personal independency<sup>38</sup>. It is obvious that nowadays the flip side of this individuality is at stake: the ability for self-supportiveness at local or community level, at a scale much greater than a household.

### 3.2. The definition of 'social enterprise' : a media overview

*An inventory of issues have been made by means of a media and literature survey on social innovation and on social enterprising. This has been used to find the elements of discourse that coproduce the concepts of social innovation and social enterprising and the issues that promote or inhibit this process.*

#### 1990s

The expression "Social innovation" appeared in the Dutch newspapers for the first time in 1992<sup>39</sup> (in Dutch ' sociale innovatie' ). The trigger for the first media discussions about social innovation was a report from the 'Central Planning Bureau' called ' Scanning the Future: a long term scenario study of the World Economy 1990-2015'<sup>40</sup>. In this report, the CPB developed a theoretical model, which consisted of a 'welfare circle'. In the middle of the circle, they placed the expression ' social innovation', as a representation of a new attitude from government, private sector and citizens towards a new economic develop-

<sup>38</sup> (Verhofstadt 2004)

<sup>39</sup> "Planbureau brengt toekomstvisie van formaat." Algemeen Dagblad. (May 16, 1992 ): 722 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>40</sup> Central Planning Bureau (1992). "Scanning the Future: a long term scenario study of the World economy 1990-2015". Sdu Publishers, Den Haag. <http://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCgQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cpb.nl%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpublicaties%2Fdownload%2Fscanning-future-contents-summary-introduction.pdf&ei=G84dU8zcOMjNygPkz4KIBA&usg=AFQjCNEVFxrVn7fbeAIFGS-OEQt07IE2QA>

ment<sup>41</sup>. Social innovation was used in this situation as a representation of an open mindset for a new (economic) vision.

The report received critics, which can be considered a natural effect of a document that proposes a vision about the future. Critics pointed that the report forecasted the future in a too long term, that the study was not scientifically well founded and did not have a clear methodology<sup>42</sup>. Apart from the discussion about the economic view, it can be perceived here that the first use of the term 'social innovation' was fully connected to the economic field.

"Social innovation" appeared again only in 1994, and once more related to a political discussion in economy newspapers. This time, the centre of the debate was the concept of the '24 hours economy'<sup>43</sup>. 'Social innovation' was mentioned during a political debate as a definition of flexible economy, with lighter rules for opening times and labour rights. Advocates of the '24 hours economy' believed that freedom for definition opening times would create constant economic activity and therefore boost the economy<sup>44</sup>. According to Heertje (1994)<sup>45</sup>, the '24 hours economy' could mean a huge stimulus for the World economy, and 'social innovation' is absolutely necessary for a time where the paradoxical combination between a prosper economy and extensive unemployment<sup>46</sup>. He defends that freedom for definition of opening times would shape the market according to the consumer flows, reducing unnecessary costs for opening shops when no one is actually shopping, and opening in more often weekends. Social innovation was seen, in this case,

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<sup>41</sup> Idem 1

<sup>42</sup> "Maakbare wereld." NRC Handelsblad. (May 26, 1992 ): 989 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25

<sup>43</sup> "ECONOMIEDEBAT; Politiek en ondernemers steken hand in eigen boezem." Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau ANP. (March 24, 1994 ): 866 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>44</sup> "Politieke discussie moet gaan over de samenleving van de toekomst." NRC Handelsblad. (April 19, 1994 ): 1267 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>45</sup> Heertje, Arnold (1994). 'Koersen op kwaliteit; perspectief voor de sociaal-democratie' ISBN: 90 5356 1145.

<sup>46</sup> "Heertje: 24-uurseconomie levert banen op." NRC Handelsblad. (June 4, 1994 ): 1398 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

as an adaptation to the traditional market to the timeframe of the consumer. As a result of the discussion in 1994, the shops in the Netherlands received permission to open on Sundays (under restrictions). Heertje defended once more that this did not mean full freedom for the shop owners and was not an example of 'social innovation' <sup>47</sup>.

In 1996, the 'social innovation' term was still appearing in discussions within economy newspapers. Nevertheless, during that year the focus was broader than the financial problematic, and a social perspective was connected to 'social innovation' for the first time. Social innovation was connected to an emerging concept, the 'Corporate Social Responsibility'. The pioneering commercial institution 'The Good Company' was on the newspaper in 1996, presenting their innovative way of advising large companies in the field of 'Corporate social responsibility' <sup>48</sup>. The owners of the company declared that: *"In contrast with the 1960s, when the word 'commercial' was considered dirty, the Good Company is a company with a clear 1990s mentality and see no conflict in the combination between 'good will' and 'commercial objectives'"* <sup>49</sup>.

Furthermore, the owners of the company called for attention to *"the way your business influences the society, either positively and negatively. (...) The art lies on relating social engagement to your business in a suitable way"*. <sup>50</sup> In the same year, a Dutch insurance company started giving prizes for companies that incentivized social entrepreneurship and innovation <sup>51</sup>.

The next year (1997) brought 'social innovation' back to the financial and economic discussion. In 1997, a European Conference called "Social Policy And Economic Perfor-

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<sup>47</sup> "'Laat koopgedrag openingstijden van winkels bepalen'." NRC Handelsblad. (October 7, 1994 ): 822 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>48</sup> "'EEN ONDERNEMING IS GEEN EILAND'." Het Financieele Dagblad. 1622 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>49</sup> Idem

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem

<sup>51</sup> Klaverblad prijs (check klaverblad.nl)

mance' took place in Amsterdam. During this conference, the Dutch Minister of Social Affairs Ad Melkert declared that '*social policy and financial strength are complementary*'<sup>52</sup> and essential to help Europe recover from the economic crisis. The strength of social innovation was seen as a positive future development that would overtake the dated system. At the time, it was declared that Europe needed to switch from the old form of labour relations to an institutionalized form of social partnerships full of man's entrepreneurship and talent<sup>53</sup>.

In the same year, the Dutch 'Central Planning Bureau' published a report<sup>54</sup> that strengthens the concept of 'social innovation'. The report declares that financial policy were becoming less relevant instruments, and that macro-policy was giving place to the '*modern micro-economy*'<sup>55</sup>, where economy and society can adapt to new conditions.

By the end of the decade, 'social innovation' was once more related to Corporate Social Responsibility, as this concept was becoming more embedded. In 1999, several Dutch companies were developing pioneering projects in the field of social responsibility<sup>56</sup>. The first successful experiences of large companies (like Ahold, Ambev, Mc Donalds, etc) brought enthusiasm to other companies to try the same concept. Initiatives of 'social innovation' were spreading in the country, like 'Business in the Community' and 'Overlegplatform Stedelijke Vernieuwing'<sup>57</sup>. More companies were specializing themselves in advice for another businesses interested in social responsibility initiatives, that according to them would create win-win situations for companies, government and society, with the

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<sup>52</sup> "Sociaal beleid is stimulans voor de economische groei in Europa." NRC Handelsblad. (January 24, 1997 ): 1300 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>53</sup> Idem

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.cpb.nl/publicatie/challenging-neighbours-heroverweging-van-duitse-en-nederlandse-economische-instellingen>

<sup>55</sup> "Vergelijkend warenonderzoek: McKinsey en het Planbureau." de Volkskrant. (September 13, 1997 ): 962 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>56</sup> "CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP: BEDRIJVEN PAKKEN GETTOVORMING AAN." Fem de Week. (June 12, 1999 ): 2813 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/04/25.

<sup>57</sup> Idem 18

added value of a long term profit (declared by Henk Kinds, owner of a consultancy agency for social innovation)<sup>58</sup>.

## 2000s

### ***Social Enterprise x Social Innovation***

In line with the evolution of the term 'social innovation' , the term 'social enterprise' (in Dutch 'sociaal ondernemen') appeared in the media around 1997, and already presented as a trend<sup>59</sup> for large companies. It still concerned the same topics covered by the term 'social innovation' , and both terms were merged into a similar meaning. The trend was increasing as a result of the growing reputation of companies with a famous CSR policy. Large financial organizations and banks started to incentivize the adoption of a CSR policy, and to pay attention to their production chain and to invest in cultural and social projects.

By 1999, management Schools were including the topic in their programs. Prof. P. Veilinga declared<sup>60</sup> during a conference at the 'Rotterdam School of Management' that *'investment analysts would start, in the coming 5 years, considering the environmental and social policies of companies in the stock market'*, in the 'Triple Bottom Investment' (financial, social and environmental criteria). The Dow Jones company in the United States had released a 'Sustainability group index' in the same year<sup>61</sup>, influencing the importance of CSR in the World.

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<sup>58</sup> Henk Kinds: consultancy in social innovation.  
<http://www.communitypartnership.nl/Default.aspx?alias=www.community-partnership.nl/nl>

<sup>59</sup> "Sociaal ondernemen is in de mode." de Volkskrant. (April 26, 1997 ): 273 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/05/27.

<sup>60</sup> "SOCIAAL BELEGGEN WORDT TREND VAN DE TOEKOMST." De Telegraaf. (October 9, 1999 ): 366 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>61</sup> Idem

In 2000, the CSR was connected to the personal level of the employee. It was seen as a way of providing to employees an extra meaning for their careers, by offering a social or environmental impact as a consequence of the employer's CSR policy. The group of ambitious professionals who searched for more than financial outcome and personal development in their careers was growing, according to employment agencies<sup>62</sup>. The advice for these professionals was to find an employer whose CSR mission would fit his personal objectives of social contribution. The meaning of social enterprise went beyond the pure CSR definition and reached the personal level of a potential social entrepreneur.

The most discussed CSR policy outcome, seen as socially meaningful, concerned social inclusion of social groups such as socially excluded foreigners and handicapped. Municipal organizations were facilitating the connection between companies and community. The Municipality of Groningen created a project called 'Heal the Neighbourhood', facilitating the dialogue between companies and the local people and incentivizing volunteer work during working hours as a CSR investment<sup>63</sup>. Another example comes from the Municipality of Amsterdam, who started an employment agency for unemployed youth. They connected the excluded youth to more than 1.000 employers open to give them a work opportunity<sup>64</sup>.

A new debate took place in 2005, when the scale of the CSR downsized to small and middle-sized companies<sup>65</sup>. The Dutch Employers association for small and middle-sized

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<sup>62</sup> "WERK MET ZIN." Next. (April 26, 2000 ): 2293 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>63</sup> "Oldambt proeftuin lokaal sociaal beleid plattelandsgebieden; 'Wederzijdse communicatie tussen burgers, gemeenten en professionele organisaties moet verbeteren'.." DAGBLAD VAN HET NOORDEN. (December 30, 2000 Saturday ): 358 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>64</sup> "Alle jeugd aan de bak." NRC Handelsblad. (December 6, 2003 ): 1560 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>65</sup> "Actieplan voor nieuwe aanpak 'sociaal ondernemen'." Rotterdams Dagblad. (March 21, 2005 ): 134 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

entrepreneurs (MKB-Nederland) developed an action plan<sup>66</sup> connecting the companies with local and regional parties, focusing on employment opportunities for the foreign and low educated youth. The action plan was released in an event with the presence of the premier Balkenende and other political influential parties. The plan brought up the discussion for a needed *'new social and economic fundamentals for the society'*<sup>67</sup>. The concept of social enterprise was not yet settled in the discussion, but it was finding its way in the debates. This moment created an important discussion about small entrepreneurs and their social impact.

## The shift

The definition of social enterprise, as currently understood, appeared for the first time in the Dutch media in 2006<sup>68</sup>. The definition was clearly presented: *'social enterprise: entrepreneurs in a company whose profit gets invested on a social objective for an added value'*<sup>69</sup>. Social enterprise was considered the *'growing diamond'* of the local economy. The Municipality of Amsterdam was a facilitator for the discussion, organizing a large international symposium around the topic. The project leader at the time Roel Piera declared that Amsterdam had around 100 people working as social entrepreneurs in 2006. He predicted a large growing opportunity for the economic development of the city: "Social enterprise gives chances to people that would maybe not have it in the traditional market, and without subsidies. It brings more entrepreneurship, and this is what we want"<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.ser.nl/nl/publicaties/overzicht%20ser%20bulletin/2005/mei%202005/02.aspx>

<sup>67</sup> Idem 27

<sup>68</sup> "Sociaal ondernemer is snelle groeier in economie hoofdstad." De Telegraaf. (June 27, 2006 ): 401 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>69</sup> Idem 30

<sup>70</sup> Idem 30

The meaning of social enterprise stayed unstable in the media, shifting from CSR to the new concept. In 2007, Aukje Smit, a researcher from the Dutch institute TNO, declared on an interview that *'social enterprise has nothing to do with corporate social responsibility'*<sup>71</sup>. She clarified the discussion saying that for CSR, the social policy is a small part of the company policy, while for a social entrepreneur the social impact is the main objective. The focus of the discussion at the time was the employability of the long term unemployed and handicapped. For a social entrepreneur, the hired employees must work as another employee, and this makes the differentiation between social working spots defined by the public policies, where the employee would commonly have lower working quality standards.

In the following years, social enterprise in the Netherlands was target of comparison with the situation in other countries. It has been stated by Maartje Wierenga, manager of the former Dutch Foundation of Social Entrepreneurship (Stichting Sociaal Ondernemerschap - SSO), that the main character of social enterprise – full social commitment and reinvestment of profit – does not fit into the Dutch companies profile. *'The Dutch companies culture is not so focused on philanthropy, like in the United States, so example'*<sup>72</sup>. The Dutch Association of Social Entrepreneurship closed its doors some years later, as a result of *'lack of money and a lack of interest'*, according to Petra Kroon, social entrepreneur active in the market<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> "Handicap? Kom erbij; Maar ook in een sociaal bedrijf moet je gewoon werken." NRC.NEXT. (10 January 2007 Wednesday ): 498 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

<sup>72</sup> "Winst is niet hun doel, maar een middel." Het Financieele Dagblad. (11 July 2007 Wednesday ): 1555 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/social-enterprise-network/2012/aug/17/international-best-bits>



## The comparisons

After the term of social enterprise was somehow settled, the discussion moved to a comparison with the reality of other countries which were more developed in the topic. A research from the Dutch institute TNO<sup>74</sup> about employment for handicapped people made a comparison between the Dutch reality and the German, British, Italian, Swedish and Belgium situations. Aukje Smit, responsible for the research, declared in 2008<sup>75</sup> that the Netherlands have a great need for social enterprises, who would offer more employment possibilities for the vulnerable social classes. It was stated that the social entrepreneurs received less support and subsidies when compared to the sheltered workshops (*SW-bedrijven*). According to Smit, social enterprises should have similar facilitating conditions as the sheltered workshops, and they would be able to offer work to a large number of people. The discussion in the papers stated that the Dutch Government should stimulate social enterprise like it happened in another countries<sup>76</sup>.

The discussion reached the Government. Parties like the CDA (Christian Party) supported the addition of social enterprises to the budget for Social Affairs in 2010. Mirijam Sterk, from the CDA, declared in 2012 that one of the key problems that made social enterprise in the Netherlands stay behind other countries (like in the UK) is the difficulties to get credit in banks, even with a good business plan in hands<sup>77</sup>. The comparisons happen on the news, in most cases, with the policy in the United Kingdom. The 'Big Society' project

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<sup>74</sup> [https://www.tno.nl/downloads/europese\\_ervaringen\\_sociale\\_economie.pdf](https://www.tno.nl/downloads/europese_ervaringen_sociale_economie.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> "Nederland heeft behoefte aan sociale ondernemers." De Stentor/Zutphens Dagblad. (April 15, 2008 ): 345 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

<sup>76</sup> "Werk voor kwetsbare werknemer; In het buitenland meer steun voor sociale ondernemingen." Trouw. (April 21, 2008 ): 636 woorden. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

<sup>77</sup> "CDA: Stimuleer sociaal ondernemen." Trouw. (8 december 2010 woensdag ): 216 woorden. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

from Cameron was mentioned<sup>78</sup> several times as an example that could be followed by the Dutch authorities in order to incentivize social enterprise initiatives.

*Table 1: Numbers of Social enterprises in Amsterdam (mentioned in the media)*

Amsterdam: number of Social Enterprises	
<b>2006</b>	100
<b>2007</b>	100
<b>2008</b>	150
<b>2010</b>	270

#### Sources

2006- "Sociaal ondernemer is snelle groeier in economie hoofdstad." *De Telegraaf*. (June 27, 2006 ): 401 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/06/25.

2007 - "Winst is niet hun doel, maar een middel." *Het Financieel Dagblad*. (11 July 2007 Wednesday ): 1555 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

2008 - "Nederland heeft behoefte aan sociale ondernemers." *De Stentor/Zutphens Dagblad*. (April 15, 2008 ): 345 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

2010 - "CDA: Stimuleer sociaal ondernemen." *Trouw*. (8 december 2010 woensdag ): 216 woorden. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

Until now there is no formally accepted common definition of social enterprises in the Netherlands. In our interviews we found out that there is much diversity in the opinion if we need a common definition or not. Social Enterprise NL did a survey among their network of 220 businesses and one of the results was that 52 % of their network is in need of recognition of this sector as being different from regular businesses. The aim of a

<sup>78</sup> "De burger is aan zet; Het nieuwe kabinet De Big Society: tijd voor een nieuw politiek verhaal." *De Groene Amsterdammer*. (October 31, 2012 ): 5225 words. Nexis. Web. Date Accessed: 2014/07/03.

distinctive and recognizable identity is not only necessary for the general position of these entrepreneurs but is a requisite for clients of social enterprises.<sup>79</sup> However other parties doubt the effectiveness of a common definition because of the risk of exclusion or others don't see a fundamental difference between business as usual or social enterprises (Ministry of Economic affairs). They see that the motivation of Social entrepreneurs differ a lot from other enterprises but are scary to define stimulating measures for sectors because of the disturbance in the economic markets.

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**Definition of social Enterprise as being used by Social Enterprise NL (largely based on the definition of the European union)**

**A social enterprise:**

- *Primarily has a social mission: impact first*
- *Realizes that mission as an independent enterprise that provides a service or product*
- *Is financially self-sustaining, based on trade or other forms of value exchange, and therefore barely, if at all dependent on donations or subsidies*
- *Is social in the way it is governed:*
  - *Transparent*
  - *Profits are allowed, but financial targets are subordinate to the mission, shareholders get a reasonable slice of profits*
  - *All stakeholders have a balanced say in strategy and management*
  - *A social enterprise is fair to everyone*
  - *A social enterprise is aware of its ecological footprint*

**From: Social Enterprise Unravelled, best practices from the Netherlands, 2014**

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<sup>79</sup> De social Enterprise monitor 2014

The number of social enterprises in the Netherlands depends a lot on what you count as social enterprise and the degree of independency from subsidies. In the category enterprises less than 30 % based on subsidies I count not more than 2000 businesses, while there are I think up to 10.000 businesses that are up to 50 % dependent on subsidies”

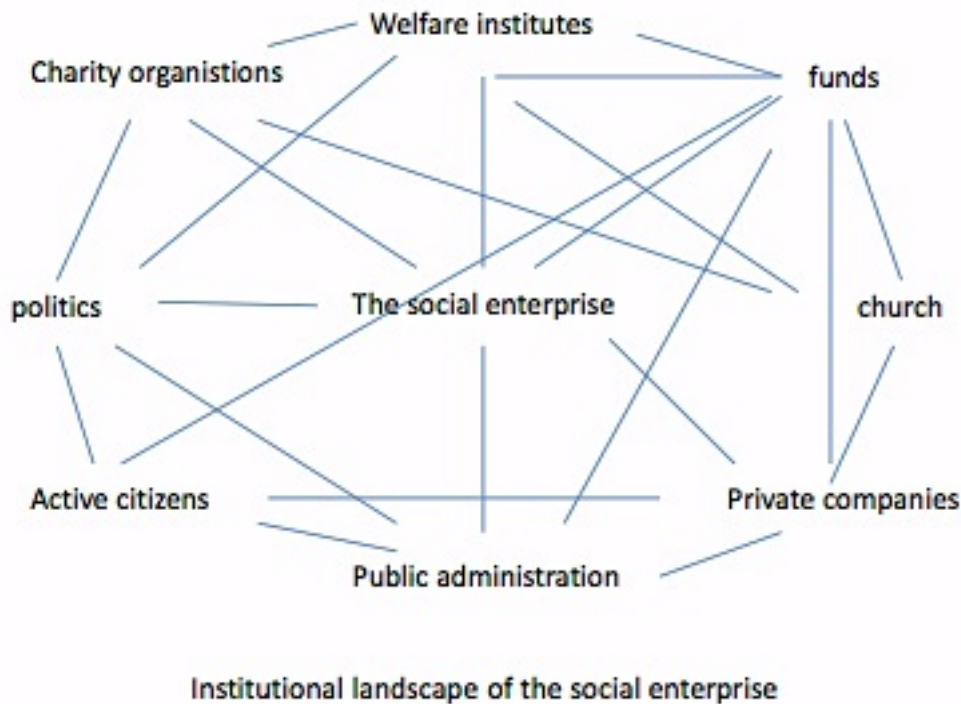
*Henk Kinds, Community Partnership Consultant, Interviewed in 2014*

#### **4. Main steps, changes and evolution**

Because of the high level of social employment facilities in the Netherlands there was not much need for social firms. Comparative research shows that in countries with a low level of social employment facilities the number of social firms and enterprises is high.

*Aukje Smit, Consultant and Researcher for Inclusive Work, innovatiefinwerk.nl, Interviewed in 2014*

The climate of subsidies has interfered highly with the number of social enterprises in the Netherlands. Around 2000 a lot of subsidized jobs were created by the government. The effect was a grow of social firms/ social enterprises. After the government stopped the subsidies the enterprises disappeared as well. On a higher level of observation one can see how difficult it is to establish a new brand of enterprises in the institutional landscape, see the illustration below.



If we look at this web of relations, we can see many examples of competition, suppression, replacement and co-adaptation. In national politics a strong discourse emerged recently about unemployed who should become active in society. There has been a proposal to make a voluntary work obligatory by law, but this failed and municipalities are to decide on this themselves.

The decline of the welfare state will lead to differences between cities in the level of care, facilities etc. This will put an enormous pressure on local politicians, that have to explain why one city away the rights of citizens deviate. To make this work one needs political distance. This distance is lacking in local politics.

Roel in 't Veld, former State Secretary, Interviewed in 2014

For example in Rotterdam the unemployed are told to do something social in return of their unemployment money. Here the city administration is very enthusiastic about its spin

offs for both the volunteers as the targeted people in social need. They focus for instance on matching voluntary work for those who have no social relationships<sup>80</sup>. In other cities, if the unemployed decide to do voluntary work, they run into problems with the institute that provides the social security allowance, the UWV. The argument here is that they push away the social entrepreneurs and the employees in nursery houses who try to make a living in the same field of work. In fact the UWV institute subsidises many unemployed in what is called a “trajectory from work to work”, in which people who lost their job receive instructions and an educational programme to start a firm without personnel and the UWV is against any competition by volunteers. This would negatively affect their success parameters. Two very famous tv personalities did a show on loneliness of the old people in nursery houses. As a result an increase of 2000 voluntary people was achieved in two weeks after the TV show in 2013. Most of them unemployed. This number has grown to 8000 now. Currently those of them who receive an unemployment beneficiary are forbidden to do this voluntary work by the UWV<sup>81</sup>.

The role of the church is important but not so visible in the social innovation movement itself. They merely see the harsh policies of the government as a good opportunity to expose the Christian moral and not only oppose the policies in the media, but also offer the church as a refuge for the adolescent asylum seekers that wait for repatriation. The church gains a lot of sympathy from mayors and the wider public, and hope in this way to stop the process of secularisation. In their view charity however should always be an act of Christianity and not a commercial activity. There is a possibility that they consider the actual trend towards social enterprising as a loss of control with regards to the government, but this needs to be confirmed.

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<sup>80</sup> See NRC Weekend, Saturday 10 May and Sunday 11 May, page 18-19. fArticle by Sheila Kamerman. Als je een ander helpt, dan help je uiteindelijk ook jezelf.

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.nu jij.nl/economie/039-uwv-dwarsboomt-vrijwilligerswerk-039.27310799.lynkx>

Many of the social entrepreneurs try to cooperate with the bigger welfare institutes and charity organisations, and end up with empty hands while their ideas have been copied. The bigger private companies see the social entrepreneur as competitive in addressing funds. They have long lasting cooperative relationships with funds. For most of the funds this is a basis of trust, and it leads to bigger contracts and less administration compared to dealing with social entrepreneurs as micro-enterprises. Politicians also tend to engage with the bigger organisations in order to benefit from the established reputation. Charity has thus become a big industry and charity funds are active in buying shares etc.<sup>82</sup> Here we see how the bigger charity funds act like multinationals and banks. They are not waiting for the social entrepreneur to come around.

Evolution of the social enterprise can be seen as a discursive process in which its concepts migrate and are appropriated in the discourses on sustainable development, Corporate Social Responsibility, Fair Trade, micro financing and others. It can be observed that governing ones reputation has become a key issue in the welfare economy and charity industry, because of social media effects. The evolution of social enterprising and social media are heavily intertwined<sup>83</sup>. Being a social enterprise provides tremendous reputational benefits. This can be illustrated with the afore-mentioned Food Bank. The idea of a Food Bank came over from the US and was introduced in France in 1986. In 2002 the first Dutch Food Bank was opened. Supermarkets are keen to participate, because the food they are supposed to destroy can be distributed among the poor. This saves money and increases their reputation. The Food Banks are organised on a European level and the Commission has opened an food aid programme PEAD. The

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<sup>82</sup> The salvation army mentioned earlier has 110 million Euro's liquid funds, according to their annual report 2012. No information on their fortune can be found there

<sup>83</sup> (Salverda, et al. 2013)

Dutch government is not inclined to apply for this fund, because they see food aid as a national issue. Of course one can sense the animosity about having poor people in such a rich country here. Again the relation between reputation and acceptance of insurmountable social problems in a country is at stake here.

Do we see a food bank as a social enterprise?

*Roel in 't Veld, former State Secretary, Interviewed in 2014*

In 2003 the Ministry of Internal Affairs organised an inspiring meeting called “Borders to Cross” on social innovation and social enterprising, wherein knowledge exchange was organised on a European level<sup>84</sup>. In this meeting 40 inspiring projects from abroad were presented which were discussed by 250 civic society professionals and social innovators. This conference gave a huge impetus to the Dutch discussion on the need for democratic innovation to engage with civic driven change, but during the conference it became apparent that politicians on all levels were absent and still aren’t truly involved. The follow up has been organised as a learning community on LinkedIn. There are still actions running sprouting from this congress, but on the whole it appeared difficult to define a follow up that brings continuity to the subject. This has to do with the problem that no Ministry is willing to take the lead in this transition towards the social economy.

We are positive about new disruptive influences on the economic market. We see a trend in a growing number of young entrepreneurs. There is a growing number of social businesses with innovative business models. We follow these trends to see what kind of businesses evolve and to what extent this will lead to new forms of entrepreneurship. The motivation of these entrepreneurs is explicitly different from the more traditional businesses but we are still hesitant to create stimulating measures for a special category of entrepreneurs because of the disturbing effects in the economy in general. We want to stimulate better entrepreneurship

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<sup>84</sup> <http://borderstocross.com/conference/>



in terms of more transparency in administration for example but our policy is to create generic stimulating policy for all entrepreneurs and not only for specific categories.

*Paul Thewissen, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Interviewed in 2014*

There are two important trends in the development of social enterprises. One is the social organizations developing entrepreneurial skills and ambitions and from the other side commercial business that are developing social ambitions and skills. I work with people from the social fringes of society mostly homeless people. From this perspective I see that within the society and within the formal structures the space for those who do not fit the system is diminishing. A situation of declining tolerance and even less acceptance of diversity.

*Roel Piera, Social entrepreneur at Volksbond Amsterdam, Interviewed in 2014*

#### **4.1. Eluding overregulated policies and a jungle of non-cooperating welfare institutions**

Because of the great outreach of governmental subsidies at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a large inspection apparatus was kept alive. Many people believed that Big Brother was in fact the government itself, controlling every aspect of daily life. In one of the overregulated fields, education, teachers started to elude the control and tried to become independent from subsidies (in which they never fully succeeded) by starting a private school in which children were free to choose their activities. These were called *lederwijs* Schools. The first one was established in 2002, taking the Sudbury Valley School in America as an example. Teachers started it in Schoonhoven and in Apeldoorn (with a school named *Wonderwise*). It received a lot of attention from the mass media and from the Education Inspection. Immediately the school functioned as a refugium for pupils with labels such as autism, ADHD and so forth. The initiators were severely blamed and shamed in the mass media, because the common opinion did not believe in the radical

concept of self-management in education. Quite a number of schools however were established and *Iederwijs* became an influential educational movement during a period of no more than ten years. Recently the experiment stopped because of the exaggeration of critical evaluation reports in the mass media, highlighting the shortcomings, and the teachers went on in a less radical way. Only the *Wonderwise School* is still in function.

Big steps in social innovations were made at the level of city neighbourhoods. A very prestigious programme for forty of the most problematic neighbourhoods has been launched by the Minister of Social Affairs in the *Balkenende IV Kabinet*. These were the localities with the highest levels of criminality, marginalisation, unemployment, addiction and medical problems. This was the right place to find out more why the huge investments in the welfare organisations did not pay off. Initially there was a stigmatising effect of this action, and the neighbourhoods felt marginalised. But as a result of many study and action oriented programmes the institutes learned that increasing the capacity for self-organisation and self-management among the residents is the key to success (see the publications of Platform 31).

Policies should ensure the quality of life and society. I think that policy initiatives should reflect what important stakeholders in society, business, stakeholders, citizens in organizations and even non-organized citizens feel is important to them to a much greater extent than is happening now. People and policy should be totally interconnected.

We moving nearer to this every year, but moving incrementally; we are still a generation away. At the moment the baby boomer generation is a big block that is hindering the evolution towards societal innovation. We need to make them allies and advocates in this process; then we will be half a generation away.

*Hank Kune, Opportunity Enricher at EDUCORE, Interviewed in 2014*

## 4.2. The financial crisis

Another very influential factor is the role of the banks. Young entrepreneurs can hardly become a loan for launching their enterprise. This was countered by crowdfunding. During the last five years many crowdfunding platforms emerged<sup>85</sup>, and a multitude of crowdfunding initiatives. The ABN AMRO bank responds to this development with their own crowdfunding initiative called SEEDS<sup>86</sup> that just started in 2014. The RABO bank provides information on crowdfunding on a special website for starters<sup>87</sup>

Not every citizens initiative is desirable. You need some institutions that take care of the general perspective. Do you want citizens armies or citizens police or do you want this as a function of the government? Do you want citizens to collecting trash in their neighbourhood or is that the responsibility of a larger entity? These are all things that should be worked out in different ways. It shouldn't be realized because there is not enough money left. No, it should be developed in a organic way that anyone benefits of it. You can have a private police force or fire department or private trash collection. But are they a social enterprise? Not necessarily. You have to have ways of defining where the social enterprise comes and where the private enterprise comes. In lots of other countries in different parts of the world you have volunteer fire departments. These are social enterprises. But if you say that Amsterdam should have only volunteer fire departments perhaps you need some boundary conditions. The same for trash collection and security in the neighbourhood. It should be worked out further. *Hank Kune, Opportunity Enricher at EDUCORE, Interviewed in 2014*

We created a centre of social innovation SHFT in Tilburg. SHFT is an open network organisation that focuses on identifying, creating

<sup>85</sup> See <http://www.crowdfunding.nl/links-test/>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.seeds.nl/crowdfunding>

<sup>87</sup> [www.ikgastarten.nl](http://www.ikgastarten.nl)

and strengthening cross-over innovations and preparing them for the market. Based on cross-overs between entrepreneurs, government, civil initiatives and science. Creating an ecosystem of partners and entrepreneurs based on the positive power of the unexpected”

*Bert van Helvoirt, social innovator at SHFT, Interviewed in 2014*

## 5. The role of institutions

### 5.1. Governmental organizations

Social return is growing. In July 2011, the Central government took the decision to oblige social return on investment at public procurements above 250.000 euro's. This means that during the project people will be included with a distance to labour market. The question is to what extend this will reduce the market for social enterprises.

Social Enterprise NL aims at recognition of the social enterprise field by the central government. We need to put in place a more conducive eco-system for social enterprises. We should build an enabling legal and regulatory framework, provide sustainable finance instruments and support access to markets.. The next step would be that the local governments create an agenda to facilitate the development of new initiatives of social enterprises and start building business partnerships with existing social enterprises.”

*Willemijn Verloop, Social Enterprise NL, Interviewed in 2014*

### 5.2. Platform and lobby organizations

Social Enterprise NL is a platform for social enterprises focussing on entrepreneurship and

social impact. They are funded by their members (approx 250 social entrepreneurs in 2014) and by partners such as ABN AMRO, Anton Jurgens Fonds, PWC, stichting Doen). They aim at facilitating both entrepreneurship and social impact of their members and Social enterprise sector. Social Enterprise NL offers direct services (Peer to Peer learning cycles, coaching, Master classes on legal expertise, financial instruments, e.a.) and indirect services in order to create an enabling environment and ecosystem for social enterprises (political lobbying, creating national/ local policy agenda's, etc).

For the masterclasses Social Enterprise NL has created a network of partners within e.g. big accountancy companies, or banks that work pro bono on master classes to stimulate the sector. They worked with long term access to capital tracks, and impact tracks to develop more generic methodology/ instruments for other social enterprises. Another instrument to stay in contact with the needs of SE is a yearly survey on impact, financing structure, indexes and barriers.

Another aim of Social Enterprise NL is to create a better eco system for social enterprises. This means recognition from the government, better access to finance, better access to public markets and a legal form specific for social enterprises like for example the CIC (Community Interest Company) in UK<sup>88</sup>. Or creating a specially adapted form of private limited company (Ltd.) with Public Benefits. Cooperatives are not that common among Social enterprises in the Netherlands. This legal form is sometimes desirable because of a partnership with a municipality. The most commonly used and still growing, legal form of Social enterprises at this moment is the Ltd. Combined with a foundation.

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<sup>88</sup> (A CIC has a social objective that is "regulated", ensuring that the organization cannot deviate from its social mission and that its assets are protected from being sold privately. For more information on CICs, see the CIC regulator - [www.cicregulator.gov.uk](http://www.cicregulator.gov.uk)).

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## Results Social Enterprise monitor 2014 (based on 115 respondents)

- **Employment rate: growth of 12%**
  - **1/3 of the social enterprises attracted external financing**
  - **Impact issues: 21 % growth of employment participation, 19 % on international poverty reduction**
  - **Biggest challenges: attracting seed money, and attracting new customers**
- 

### 5.3. Education

In most countries in Europe – and many countries around the world – if parents ask their children what they want to be, few kids would say a ‘social entrepreneur’. Even if they did, most parents would explain that this is not a profession.. The whole idea of introducing social entrepreneurship and work of this kind as a valid career choice to children at primary and secondary school is one issue to address. A second issue is the skill set and the mentality needed. What type of mentality is important and what type of skills should be developed at primary and secondary school? Answers are emerging through discovery learning. There are already some very interesting international programs that stimulate discovery learning and entrepreneurial learning in secondary and primary schools. These types of programs should be encouraged, supported and funded everywhere. You also have entrepreneurial universities, civic universities, and connected universities, of course. They carry

many different labels, and these – and similar types of institutions throughout the world – and are of great importance. But you can never start too young, and primary level learning is essential.

I think that universities are very important. Not only entrepreneurial and civic universities, you rethinking all universities. For example, many business schools have been working on completely different and often destructive principles. We should look at the movement of so-called civic universities, both in the UK and other countries. Universities that are addressing university responsibility and taking an active role in social responsibility. It's a step beyond 'entrepreneurial' and there should be many more experiments, more prototypes, more examples, and these should be better known.

*Hank Kune, Opportunity Enricher at EDUCORE, Interviewed in 2014*

Examples of Dutch education institutions that already have SE in the curriculum:

- ACE Amsterdam Center of Entrepreneurship;
- Universiteit Utrecht, social entrepreneurship initiative:  
<http://www.uu.nl/faculty/leg/EN/organisation/institutesandcentres/Social%20Entrepreneurship%20Initiative/Pages/default.aspx>
- ENACTUS based on social enterprising, active at different universities;
- Saxion University of applied sciences is transforming all there studies on social affairs into social entrepreneurial studies. Working from a business approach is now the leading motive.
- Erasmus (check rob van tulder)

We started to work with students on the concept of Make your world a better one! To create social impact with students. For these young students it is hard to connect to the grand challenges but it was more energizing to start with your irritations. The approach was to start with things in the city that irritates you and work on a

solution. We are trying to stimulate students to think on their contribution and position towards societal issues. This triggers new concepts of knowledge, research and societal impact ”

*Bert van Helvoirt, social innovator at SHFT, Interviewed in 2014*

#### 5.4. The role of Banks and financial institutions past and present

The financial return of social enterprises normally is more risky compared to regular businesses and the returns are relatively low.<sup>89</sup> This is not only because of the start-up phase but also due to the slow growth rate of social enterprises. The number of investors in social enterprises is low and there is big need in seed money for starters in SE. Over 70 % of the Dutch social entrepreneurs use their own money to start their business.<sup>90</sup> Where does the rest of the investment opportunities come from?

Banks are not so eager at risky investments and unless their policy of impact investing they usually do not provide a lot of opportunities for social enterprises. ABN AMRO started recently a social impact fund <http://www.abnamro.com/en/newsroom/newsarticles/abn-amro-launches-social-impact-fund.html>.

ABN AMRO at this moment is the sole investor but the bank is investigating to open up the fund to other ABN AMRO clients as well. For the coming years a budget of €10 million is available for investments, varying from €250,000 to €1.5 million. Some of the criteria for receiving funding is to have an innovative and scalable business model, measurable social impact and the introduction of something new to the market. Other investors are Green banks like Triodos Bank, Toniic, Dutch Greentech Fund, PYMWYMIc, Social Impact Ventures NL, the Noaber Foundation and several family trusts.

<sup>89</sup> Social Enterprise unraveled, Verloop, W. Hillen, M. 2014

<sup>90</sup> Social Enterprise NL Monitor, 2013



The chief dialogue officer at the ABN-AMRO Bank, Paul Iske, is the creator and founder of the bank's DialogueHouse ([www.dialoguehouse.nl](http://www.dialoguehouse.nl)). Dialogues Houses is a place where people from diverse disciplines meet to work on topics like innovative business, sustainability futures and entrepreneurial activities, putting knowledge management and intellectual capital insights into practice. Through his vision of acting on social responsibility, Dialogues House has created conditions for supporting dozens of startup social enterprises. This way of creating and supporting innovation activities through – and within – the bank makes this a wonderful example of real social innovation in action.

*Hank Kune, Opportunity Enricher at EDUCORE Interviewed in 2014*

The Social Impact Accelerator is a first step in the EIB Group's (European Investment Bank and EIF) strategy to pioneer the impact investing space and respond to the wider EU policy aim of establishing a sustainable funding market for social entrepreneurship in Europe. The Netherlands will probably receive a tranche of this funding.

Efforts are being realized to develop social stock exchange in The Netherlands. Money to start a global stock exchange that will allow investors to trade exclusively in companies with social and environmental goals following the example of The London social stock exchange. In the London example the money is not for start-ups but for mature companies that are in need of money for growth and expansion.

### **5.5. Social Impact Bonds**

The discourse on Social Impact Bonds has migrated from England to the Netherlands. Migration of this discourse has been mediated by multinational finance organisations such

as Ernst and Young, discussing success stories from abroad<sup>91</sup>. Big financial organisations such as banks and charity funds have responded to the social enterprising discourse with Social Impact Bonds<sup>92</sup>. The SIB has been adjusted to health issues by the National Think Tank under the title of Health Impact Bonds<sup>93</sup>. This idea is put into practice by the Platform Society Impact that cooperates with an incubator network of health organisations called VitaValley that claims to work with start-up partners. Here the focus is put on an investing programme that in the end will lead to smaller budget claims and thus to a return on investment. In Rotterdam the first Social Impact Bond has been established<sup>94</sup>, but it is still in an initial phase. In practice it seems as if crowdfunding platforms play a much more significant role than SIBs, but this is mere speculation and needs further confirmation.

From an institutional perspective social enterprising is related to the international CSR discourse that in turn emerged from the sustainability discourse. Here we find institutes that have developed CSR standards and CSR indicators redressing their activities towards social enterprising. One such multinational is DNV GL, operating worldwide in five regions and aiming at “more social enterprising”. Recently they commissioned TNO to develop a social performance ladder to help enterprises to substantiate their social output and performance<sup>95</sup>. Organisations such as the public administration of a municipality can be certified by DNV GL. Here we can find traditional parameters such as the number of employees with problems to find a regular job.

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<sup>91</sup> (Ernst and Young 2013)

<sup>92</sup> <https://insights.abnamro.nl/samenwerking-publieke-sector-2-0/>

<sup>93</sup> [http://www.nationale-denktank.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FAQ\\_Health-impact-bonds.pdf](http://www.nationale-denktank.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FAQ_Health-impact-bonds.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> <http://sibrotterdam.nl/>

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.pso-nederland.nl/>

## 5.6. Political institutions

No political analysis can be found in academic literature on social innovation and social enterprising in the Netherlands. During the period in which the social innovation movement in Europe became important, the political arena was dominated by the Christian Democratic Party: four subsequent governments have been chaired by Jan Peter Balkenende, from this CDA party. The main focus was to achieve economic growth and his cabinets strived for a strong position in the international field of innovation. Despite the fact that innovation became so important, social innovation was almost neglected and very poorly addressed.

Social Innovation was seen as a specific terrain of innovation by the National Innovation Platform that was installed in 2003 by prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende. The platform was chaired by the prime minister himself and aimed at solving the innovation paradox. One of its recommendations was to create a social innovation platform for SMEs. This platform has been installed in 2006 and was called the Dutch Centre for Social Innovation<sup>96</sup>. This centre was run by TNO and focused primarily on workplace innovation<sup>97</sup>. In 2012 this centre stopped because no subsidies were allocated towards their work. The governmental focus shifted to the big industrial players with the so called Top Sector Policies and the issue of social innovation has been taken up in the Human Capital Agenda of this policy<sup>98</sup>. Ambitiously it started with social innovation, but was replaced by the need for skilled personnel and some even say to the shift of educational costs from public to private. The discussion on social innovation paved the path for social enterprising.

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<sup>96</sup> [www.ncsi.nl](http://www.ncsi.nl)

<sup>97</sup> TNO is primarily a technical organisation and due to organisational autopoiesis interpreted the social innovation discourse as call for new techniques of workplace innovation.

<sup>98</sup> <http://topsectoren.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/human-capital>

The Dutch labour party (PvdA) are actually stimulating social entrepreneurship through a national working group in a broad sense. They include in this group social enterprises and CSR issues. The Christian Democrats (CDA) have adopted social enterprises in their political agenda. The liberal party (VVD) is still neutral in this discussion.

## 6. Organizational Models

The majority of social enterprises are micro-enterprises without personnel, called ZZPs. They are very much inclined to share information and help each other<sup>99</sup>. Therefore it is not surprisingly that they readily create networks, or become attached to existing international networks such as Ashoka. The number of networks is growing very rapidly and it is interesting to see how civil society organisations (such as Movision, the Institute for Societal Innovation, Institute for Public Values, Waag Society, Kennisland, Synthens, etc) become attached to individual entrepreneurs. For both civil society institutes and social entrepreneurs this seems a logical thing to do. It is impossible to create a picture of all the networks, because it changes every day. Some can be mentioned here: Sociale Innovatie Network Nederland (SINN), and so forth, like [www.foodlog.nl](http://www.foodlog.nl) and [www.nudge.nl](http://www.nudge.nl), or kick-starts on such websites as [www.doederwataan.nl](http://www.doederwataan.nl), [www.crowdaboutnow.nl](http://www.crowdaboutnow.nl) and [www.betterplace.org/de](http://www.betterplace.org/de) (the Dutch version of which, [www.voorjebuurt.nl](http://www.voorjebuurt.nl) is currently under construction). Another good example is a LinkedIn group and unofficial digital map of vacant project development sites in Amsterdam, which finally prompted the city council to publish the official data and to invite the initiators to give the vacant sites a temporary function<sup>100</sup>. The huge democratizing,

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<sup>99</sup> (Verloop, et al. 2011)

<sup>100</sup> [http://maps.amsterdam.nl/braakliggende\\_terreinen/](http://maps.amsterdam.nl/braakliggende_terreinen/)

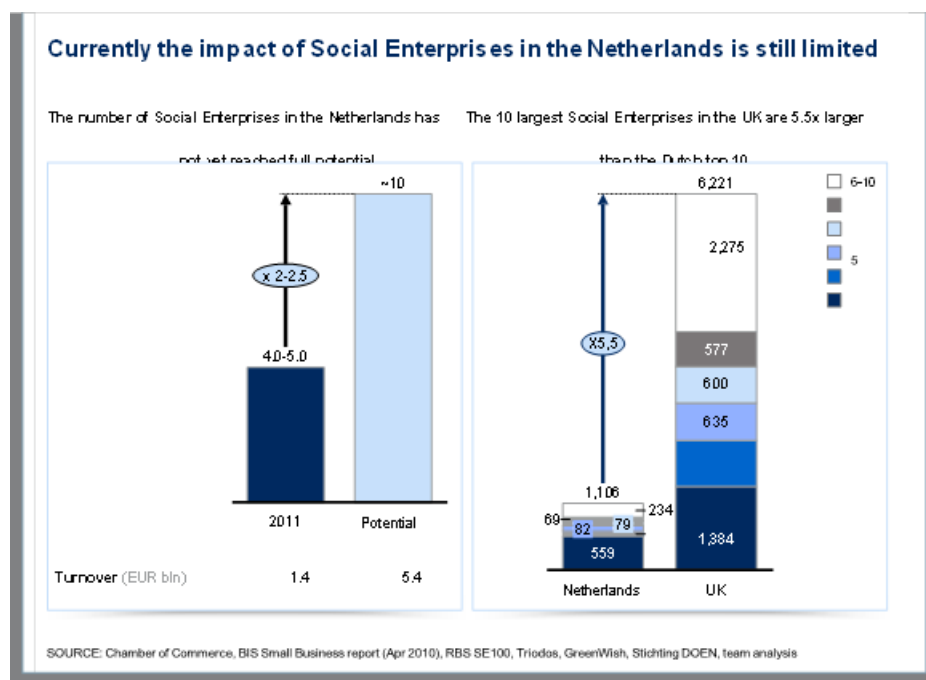
mobilizing and legitimizing effect of social movements on social media produces a springboard and sometimes a lever for new ideas, collaborations and (off-line) projects for the achievement of social goals.

A second social trend is the emergence of foundations, funds and networks that promote and support all manner of organized forms of active citizenship. One thinks, for example, of Stichting Doen, the VSBfonds, Oranjefonds, ikwordmaatje.nl and the Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie, as well as networks like Kracht in NL, Makers en Doeners and Bende Burgers. These funds, foundations and networks channel and kick-start all kinds of active citizenship.

One final fundamental change concerns the waning of public confidence in the structures of the welfare society. This decline is fuelled by debates about cutbacks and about problems on the capital market. Whether it is pensions, aged care, health care, education or nature and the environment, citizens are increasingly questioning exploring their ability to deliver. In so doing they also appear to be responding to the political appeal for active citizenship.

In a 2011 survey report, McKinsey & Company laid out the opportunities this offers for the cultural sector. It is likely that the government, prompted by the aforementioned recommendations and social changes, will adopt a broader approach to the concept of social innovation. Impetus for this has been given in a variety of publications, such as *Experimenteren with Burgerinitiatief* (Experimenting with Citizens Initiative, Heijden et al., n.y.) and *De Energieke Samenleving* report (Hajer, 2011). It was no coincidence that the 2013 *Bestuurskunde Festival* (Public Administration Festival) was devoted to social innovation (*Tijdschrift Bestuurskunde* 2013, no. 1).

Here we can mention the example of the Trimbos Institute, an institute for treatment of addicted people. This institute engaged in an experiment in which homeless people were managing their own reintegration in society<sup>101</sup>. Because of the slow start of social enterprising in the Netherlands compared to the UK or the US, the sector of social enterprises is still in its pioneering phase. An estimation was made by McKinsey & Company<sup>102</sup> within 2011 that the upside potential of social enterprises after overtaking the slow start is a potential number of ca. 10.000 and an increase of jobs from 24.000 to 100.000 within the next ten years.



Source : *Opportunities for the Dutch Social Enterprise Sector*, Mc Kinsey&Company, 2011

The majority of Dutch social Enterprises are active in six broad sectors : Bio systems (mostly organic farmers), Cleantech (new sources of energy), Economic development (among others many fair trade companies), Civic engagement, Health and wellbeing (care farms), and Education.

<sup>101</sup> (Stomp 2008)

<sup>102</sup> *Opportunities for the Dutch Social Enterprise Sector*, Mc Kinsey & company, 2011

In 2011 only half of the respondents of the study of Mc Kinsey was measuring social Impact in one way or the other (counting the number of people supported, number of people employed or amount of Co2 reduction. Only a small number of enterprises by than was using a more advanced method of impact measuring like SROI. Over the last 3 years the social enterprise monitor shows that the number of enterprises measuring their social impact was growing from 50 to 62 %. SROI stays back and seems too time consuming for most of the companies.

Professionalization can also be seen as the exchange of ideas, resources etc within networks, in business ecosystems. One even can speak of a local exchange trading system within networks. One example can be found in the IMPACT-HUB.

## 7. Influence of the EU and other international organisations

In 2007, as part of the ESF agreement 2007-2013 between the Dutch government and the European Commission, a call for social innovation projects has been launched. The evaluation of this action showed that service institutes and industrial enterprises were keen to submit projects that were focused on smart working<sup>103</sup>. Responses came primarily from medium and big organisations. This was caused by a dominant role of subsidy consultancy bureaus<sup>104</sup>. Applicants were reluctant to submit projects without such a consultant because of a rather complex seven steps implementation plan as a compelling element of the application. Small and micro enterprises don't have the funds to involve

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<sup>103</sup> (Bureau Bartels 2011)

<sup>104</sup> (Bureau Bartels 2011)

consultants and this is one of the reasons why a fund for social innovation was out of reach for the social enterprise. Moreover the requested implementation plan for the organisation excluded the individual entrepreneur without employees and an organisational structure.

As a result on this action on provincial social innovation monitoring was done by Universities and consultancy bureaus. In Limburg this was done by the NSI, Network Social Innovation, from the School of Business and Economics of Maastricht University.<sup>105</sup> The Tilburg university has a similar position in the province of Brabant.

The Social Impact Accelerator (SIA) of the European Investment Bank is the first pan-European public-private partnership supporting social enterprises. Launched in May 2013 with the collaboration of private sector investors, SIA is a pilot initiative which aims to address the growing need for availability of equity finance to support social enterprises. This segment of the business world is becoming increasingly instrumental in promoting social inclusion, providing alternative sources of employment for marginalised social groups, and contributing to growth.

SIA is a first step in the EIB Group's (European Investment Bank and EIF) strategy to pioneer the impact investing space and respond to the wider EU policy aim of establishing a sustainable funding market for social entrepreneurship in Europe. The Netherlands will probably receive a tranche of this funding.

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.networksocialinnovation.nl/nsi/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Sociale-Innovatie-Monitor-Limburg-2013-.pdf>



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