

Development Cooperation in a European context Survey



INTRODUCTION

At the request of NCDO, TNS NIPO conducted a survey on the knowledge and opinion of Dutch citizens about development cooperation by the European Union (EU). A qualitative study was conducted late 2007, followed by a quantitative study in February 2008.

During the qualitative study 33 people participated in four focus groups. This formed the basis for a quantitative part where 1,035 Dutch citizens completed an online questionnaire. The participants constituted a representative sample of the Dutch population aged 18 and above. They were tested on their knowledge of the contribution and areas for attention of the EU in development cooperation. In addition, they answered questions like: What is your opinion about the reach and the efficiency of the EU and other actors in the field of development cooperation? Which countries or continents receive most foreign aid from the EU? What are the motives of the EU to provide this aid? And what are the strengths and weaknesses of the EU in this field? This summary contains the most important results. For more information, please refer to www.ncdo.nl

NCDO stands for National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development.

NCDO involves people in the Netherlands in international cooperation and supports them with information, subsidies and advice. The millennium development goals provide the point of reference for all these activities. In the year 2000, 189 countries agreed on these goals in order to reduce worldwide poverty before 2015.

The knowledgeable of NCDO conducts research on the public opinion of international development amongst Dutch citizens. Most of the issues concern the Dutch development aid. This is a summary of a research on the European development aid. More information can be found on www.ncdo.nl

Focus on independence

When asked what development cooperation should focus on in the future, one quarter of the Dutch citizens indicate independency as primary objective. 24 percent name schooling and education as the most important objective. This is followed by healthcare (16 percent), food supply (14 percent) and finally drinking water supply (12 percent). The results of the following question, in which the respondents could allocate various development tasks to thirteen actors, indicate that the EU should primarily deal with big, abstract issues. These are issues such as: peace and safety, the environment, human rights, good governance and sustainable agriculture. The most common answer to the question why these issues should be appointed to the EU is: because the EU is an organisation with considerable influence. Other motives include solidarity, the availability of resources and the coordinating power of the EU.

Large impact, little efficiency

How much can actors in the development sector achieve? 85 percent of the Dutch citizens believe that the United Nations (UN) can achieve most, followed by international relief organisations (83 percent). The EU takes third place with 73 percent. The Dutch government is listed in ninth place. The ranking of the efficiency of these actors in the development sector is different: International relief organisations are ranked highest (72 percent), followed by the UN (66 percent) and Dutch relief organisations (60

percent). 58 percent of the Dutch citizens believe that schools and churches are efficient. The EU is ranked seventh with 50 percent (see figure 1). A large majority is unable to answer the question of what the strengths and weaknesses of a separate development policy for the EU are. 18 percent mention cooperation and influence as strengths. Complexity and fragmentation are the weaknesses mentioned most.

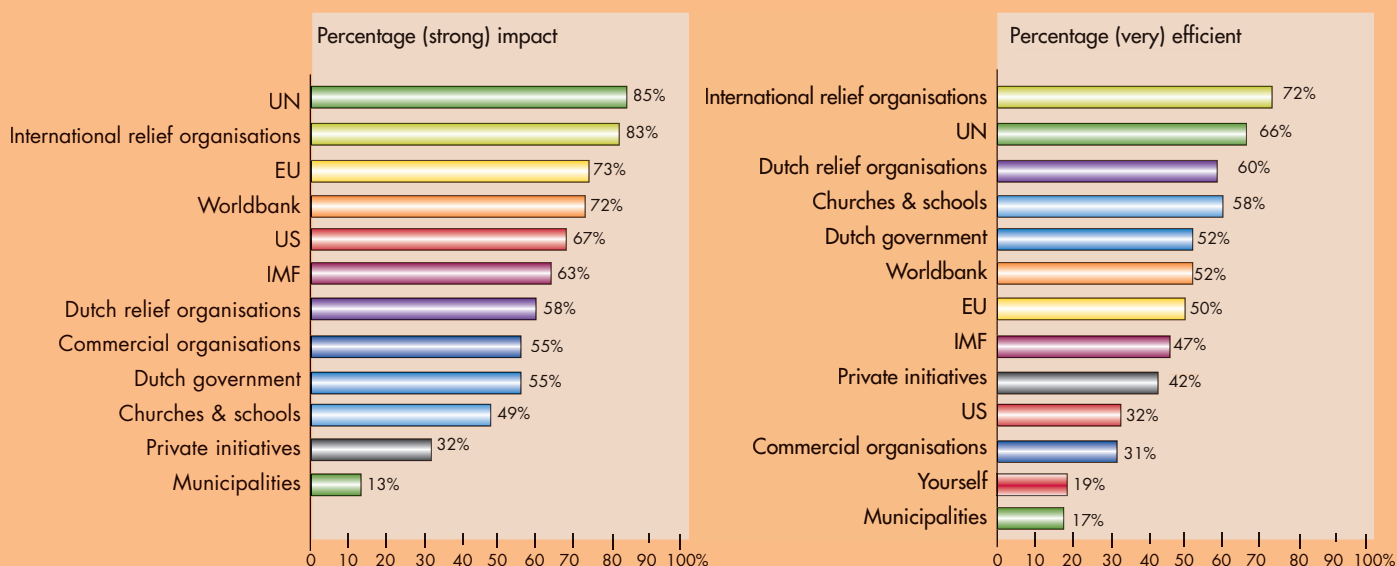
A good thing?

The majority of the Dutch population (81 percent) believes it is a (very) good thing that Brussels takes an active role in development cooperation. Less than one tenth (7 percent) believe this to be a (very) bad thing. More than a quarter of the proponents are unable to indicate why they believe aid from Brussels is a good thing (27 percent). Those who are able to give a reason most commonly state that the EU is an authoritative organisation (26 percent). Dutch citizens that are negative about Brussels as a provider of relief give the argument that it is redundant (31 percent) and too bureaucratic (25 percent).

Motives for development aid

More than half of the Dutch citizens (53 percent) indicate global stability and equality as motives for the EU to provide development aid. Almost one third of the respondents (30 percent) mention democracy and good governance, followed by the helping of people in need (29 percent). These motives are altruistic. Motives for development

Figure 1: Impact & efficiency of actors in the development sector



aid that are based on self-interest are not given that often. 22 percent indicate the creation of a market as a reason. Less frequent reasons include the prevention of immigration (18 percent) and terrorism (9 percent).

Joint decisions are important

Support for the EU development policy is largest for the statement 'The EU has to ensure that memberstates jointly decide where development aid will be provided'. More than three quarters (80 percent) agree (or agree very much) with this statement. More than two third of the Dutch citizens (68 percent) feel that the EU should have a Minister of Foreign Affairs. One half believe that responsibilities should be divided, with one EU state leading the activities in each developing country. 30 percent is in favour of a preferred treatment of former colonies when dealing with access to the European market.

What does the Netherlands spend?

More than one third of the Dutch citizens know which administration spends most per citizen on development cooperation: the EU. Almost half of the respondents

are unable to answer the question. 7 percent think that the correct answer is the US, which is a similar score to Canada. 4 percent answer Japan or Australia. One in ten citizens give the correct answer to the question of how many percent of its development budget the Dutch government puts at the disposal of the EU, being 10 percent. 37 percent do not know the answer. When the participants were told that the Netherlands puts 10 percent of its developing cooperation budget at the disposal of the EU, more than one third (35 percent) state that they believe this to be rather high. Almost half (41 percent) is neutral and almost two tenth (17 percent) believe this to be a rather low percentage.

Relief intended for the very poorest

Almost two third of the Dutch citizens (65 percent) indicate that the EU should spend its budget for development cooperation to the very poorest countries of the world. The disadvantaged regions within Europe take second place; 43 percent of the Dutch citizens feel that EU aid should go there. A quarter (25 percent) of the citizens is in favour of

providing relief to African regions south of the Sahara desert. The scores for other regions are negligible. Dutch citizens believe that most relief funds are spent on stimulating the economy by means of agriculture, fishing, industry, mining, trade and tourism (31 percent). 31 percent also mention emergency relief and reconstruction after large-scale disasters and civil war. Third place is taken by the provision of social needs such as education, health and water. The EU actually spends 41 percent of its budget on these latter social sectors. The first two sectors mentioned take up 6 and 14 percent of the EU budget respectively.



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