



This project was funded by the European  
Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values  
Programme (CERV)



# Citizen Z

*Strengthening the participation of young citizens  
in democratic and civic life*

## **D8.2 Event Report and Final Recommendations from the Second Round of Deliberations in the Netherlands**

June 2024



20-06-2024

## Disclaimer

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## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
<b>Participant:</b>	4 – Stichting Platform INS (Platform INS)
<b>PIC number:</b>	902316020
<b>Project name and acronym:</b>	Citizen Z: Strengthening the participation of young citizens in democratic and civic life – Citizen Z

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
<b>Event number:</b>	8
<b>Event name:</b>	Second round of deliberations in the Netherlands: Deliberative Polling: <i>A house is not a luxury, but a right</i>
<b>Type:</b>	Pre-consultations, Deliberative Polling, Panels, Workshops, Roundtables.
<b>In situ/online:</b>	Offline
<b>Location:</b>	Amsterdam, Netherlands
<b>Date(s):</b>	Pre-consultations: April 24, May 2 and May 16 Deliberative Polling: May 27 - May 29 Discussion of the results: May 31, June 3 and 4
<b>Website(s) (if any):</b>	<a href="http://www.platformmins.nl">www.platformmins.nl</a> , <a href="http://www.citizenz.eu">www.citizenz.eu</a>
Participants	
Female:	60
Male:	73
Non-binary:	1
From country 1 Netherlands:	134
Total number of participants:	134
	From total number of countries:
	1

## Description

*Provide a short description of the event and its activities.*

### **I. Short Description**

As part of WP8, leveraging insights from the first round of deliberations in the Netherlands, on April 24, May 2, and May 16, 2024, Platform INS organized a series of pre-consultations with youth to plan preparations for the second round of deliberations. The aim was to further discuss the critical issues previously identified as affecting young people, such as climate, mental health, and the housing crisis. Following these pre-consultation meetings with youth and professionals, it was decided to conduct a deliberative polling focusing on the housing crisis. With the widespread endorsement of the Affordable Rent Act, addressing this crisis became a priority for Dutch youth.

Between May 27 and May 29, 2024, a deliberative polling exercise was organized at the Community Centre Stichting Burgerhart Amsterdam. This event involved young people, field experts, policymakers, and facilitators aiming to explore the challenges and opportunities young people encounter in the housing market, evaluate how their opinions on the matter change after being exposed to information from various experts, and ultimately gather their recommendations for addressing the housing crisis.

Following the deliberations, several meetings took place on May 31, June 3, and June 4, 2024 to discuss the results of the deliberations and to further communicate to stakeholders and policymakers the recommendations put forward by young people.

### **II. Deliberating on the Housing Crisis in the Netherlands**

The Dutch housing crisis is acute, with the government planning to build 900,000 homes by 2030 to address shortages. This crisis particularly impacts young people, who are struggling to find affordable and suitable housing. Although housing is a fundamental right, it is not directly enforceable through the judicial system in the Netherlands, leaving individuals reliant on government policies to ensure adequate housing. In 2021, the European Parliament expressed concern about the housing crisis affecting young people and called for action to improve access to affordable housing, including building more affordable homes, providing financial support, and combating discrimination in the housing market.

The deliberations in May 2024 united young people, professionals, policymakers, and dedicated citizens to address this pressing housing crisis.

The event aimed to foster discussions, glean insights, and develop innovative solutions from the perspectives of youth participants and other stakeholders.

During the event, panel discussions with experts offered insights into the housing market, followed by Q&A sessions and small group discussions. Facilitators guided participants and provided informational materials, enabling robust exchanges on the urgency of government intervention and innovative policies to address the housing shortage. Discussions covered both immediate relief measures and sustainable solutions, such as incentivizing developers to build affordable housing and implementing rent control measures.

Opinions were gathered through the Deliberative Polling method, capturing viewpoints both before and after deliberations. This approach highlighted crucial issues and fostered the creation of innovative and practical solutions to address the housing crisis.

For further insights into this Deliberative Polling Exercise, please visit the following link: (<https://www.citizenz.eu/publications-and-reports-1>).

### **III. Detailed Program**

The deliberations began with participants completing an initial questionnaire. The deliberative polling process officially started with the knowledge injection phase, featuring panel discussions moderated by Shanti Tuinstra. Experts such as Suzanna Lividikou from the Tenant Union, Agnes van Erve and Henk van Veen from Tenant Associations, Teun Otte from the Student Union, and journalist Tayfun Balcik provided a comprehensive overview of the housing policy challenges. These discussions addressed systemic issues, including the transition in social rental properties and prolonged waiting times for housing allocation.

Following the informative panels, attendees engaged directly with the speakers and participated in group sessions led by facilitators. Supported by informative materials, these sessions enabled participants to actively engage in discussions and propose relevant and innovative solutions to the housing crisis. During these deliberations, participants consistently emphasized the necessity of collaborative efforts among government, private sector, and community organizations to ensure equitable access to housing.

On the second day, the focus shifted to summarizing discussion points and insights from the first day to formulating practical and actionable recommendations. Participants engaged in brainstorming sessions facilitated by organizers, fostering thoughtful discussions. The interactive and collaborative nature of these sessions facilitated a productive exchange of ideas and a deeper understanding of the housing crisis and potential

solutions, particularly concerning youth perspectives and affordable housing challenges in the Dutch market.

At the conclusion of the second day, participants drafted and presented a list of recommendations (see section VII: Final Recommendations). They then completed the questionnaire once more, allowing organizers to study the changes in their views after being exposed to information and engaging in extensive deliberations on the issue.

To follow up on the resulting recommendations, the organizers scheduled several meetings to discuss and present the list of recommendations from the young participants to policymakers.

#### **IV. Participants**

The participants in both the pre-consultations and the deliberations hailed from diverse backgrounds, encompassing students, educators, business leaders, journalists, retirees, youth advocates, individuals with firsthand experience in housing issues, and various stakeholders from housing-related foundations and organizations.

The event attracted a total of 134 participants, representing a broad spectrum of gender and age demographics. Among the attendees, 73 identified as male, 60 as female, and 1 as non-binary. Additionally, the age distribution included 43 participants aged between 18 and 26 years, highlighting a strong representation of youth voices in the discussions. This diverse participation ensured a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences were brought to the table, enriching the deliberative process.

#### **V. Participants' feedback**

Participants provided valuable feedback throughout the event, shedding light on the severity of the housing crisis and the urgent need for increased attention. They found the program content enriching and particularly appreciated the interactive sessions despite their intensity. The exchange of personal experiences regarding the search for affordable housing was especially enlightening, underscoring the critical importance of addressing this challenge.

Feedback highlighted significant obstacles faced in navigating the housing market, including a lack of available options and intense competition for affordable housing. Participants, especially young individuals, expressed a strong desire to actively contribute to solving the crisis and urged policymakers to take their voices seriously.

Key insights from the feedback included:

**Urgent Need for Affordable Housing:** Participants repeatedly emphasized the critical necessity for more affordable housing, with a particular focus on the needs of young people.

**Importance of Governmental Intervention:** There was a strong call for government action and innovative policy initiatives to address the housing crisis effectively.

**Personal Impact:** The sessions revealed the profound personal impact the housing crisis has on participants' lives, highlighting the human aspect of this issue.

Overall, the feedback demonstrated a collective eagerness to find solutions and a demand for policymakers to consider the participants' perspectives and experiences in the decision-making processes.

## VI. Findings

Deliberations on the housing crisis revealed several critical insights:

**Frustration Among Young People:** The current housing market is a significant source of frustration, especially for young people. Lower incomes, student loans, and limited savings make it increasingly difficult for them to afford high rents or down payments on homes. The financial strain caused by expensive rents and the scarcity of affordable housing is particularly acute for those trying to purchase their first home.

**Impact on Future Prospects:** The housing crisis profoundly affects the prospects of young individuals. It poses barriers to their academic and professional achievements, impacts their social lives, and influences their overall well-being. Prolonged stays at the parental home due to housing shortages strain familial relationships, hinder independence and contribute to increased stress and interpersonal conflicts.

**Necessity for Collaborative Efforts:** Addressing the housing crisis is crucial for enhancing the well-being and future stability of young individuals. This requires collaborative efforts involving government, policymakers, and stakeholders to create more affordable housing options and support young people on their path to independence.

**Rising Housing Costs:** Increasing rents and purchase prices present substantial challenges, often forcing young people into precarious living situations or financial hardship. The housing shortage exacerbates these difficulties, disproportionately impacting young people and first-time buyers.

**Psychological Impact:** The psychological impact of the housing shortage is profound, contributing to increased stress and frustration among young

people. Normalizing longer stays at the parental home and reducing the stigma associated with housing challenges are essential steps toward fostering greater societal understanding and support.

**Lack of Awareness on Housing Rights:** There is a significant lack of awareness among many young individuals regarding their housing rights. This highlights the necessity for improved education and awareness campaigns concerning housing-related issues.

These findings underscore the urgent need for effective solutions to the housing crisis, emphasizing the importance of governmental intervention, innovative policies, and comprehensive support systems to alleviate the challenges faced by young people.

## **VII. Final Recommendations**

To address the housing crisis in the Netherlands comprehensively, the following recommendations were put forward and provide a strategic roadmap. Each recommendation is crucial for creating a more equitable and accessible housing market:

### **Increased Investments in Social Housing:**

- Boost investments in social housing to expand the supply of affordable homes and lower rental prices, alleviating strain on the housing market.

### **Tighter Regulations for Equitable Renting:**

- Introduce stricter regulations to address disparities in renting.
- Prioritize social housing allocation for those in greatest need to ensure fairness and accessibility.

### **Support Programs for Youth:**

- Implement initiatives such as starter loans or incentives for constructing student accommodations.
- Provide tailored financial support to help young people access the housing market.

### **Enhanced Collaboration:**

- Foster closer cooperation among governmental bodies, housing associations, and stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions to the housing crisis.

### **Awareness and Education:**

- Raise awareness and provide education on housing rights to empower tenants.
- Equip individuals to assert their housing rights effectively.

**Addressing Structural Issues:**

- Tackle systemic challenges like speculation and income inequality to establish a stable and equitable housing market.
- Implement structural reforms for enduring change.

**Revitalizing Shrinking Regions:**

- Focus on revitalizing shrinking regions through construction efforts.
- Mitigate housing shortages and promote regional development.

**Efficient Use of Existing Housing Stock:**

- Encourage communal living arrangements and repurpose vacant buildings into affordable housing units.
- Explore adaptable housing concepts to maximize the use of existing housing stock.

**Supplementary Actions:**

- Accelerate the construction of affordable rental homes to meet increasing demand.
- Promote the renovation and repurposing of vacant properties.
- Explore innovative housing solutions such as tiny houses.
- Adjust regulations to facilitate converting long-vacant properties into studios for young people.
- Encourage programs enabling young individuals to work for housing or actively contribute to society.

**Youth Participation and Advocacy:**

- Ensure active involvement of young people in housing-related policymaking by establishing forums or advisory groups.
- Listen to their needs and involve them in decision-making processes related to housing policy.

**Storytelling:**

- Use storytelling to convey the realities of the housing crisis and foster empathy among policymakers and the public.
- Share personal experiences to illustrate the impact of housing challenges, enhancing advocacy efforts.

Implementing these recommendations is essential for establishing a fair and inclusive housing market that enhances the prospects of young people. Effective collaboration among government, policymakers, and stakeholders is crucial to swiftly enact these measures. Prioritizing investments in social housing, enforcing regulations, supporting youth programs, and fostering collaboration will comprehensively address the housing crisis and ensure a sustainable future for all.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

In the Netherlands, the housing crisis remains a significant issue despite widespread acknowledgement from politicians. This crisis disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, particularly young people and low-income households, who face prolonged waits for social housing and endure substandard living conditions, exacerbating social inequalities. Proposed solutions, such as accelerating home construction and providing financial assistance, have been slow to materialize, failing to meet the urgent needs exacerbated by market speculation and income disparities.

To effectively address these systemic challenges, policymakers must move beyond rhetoric and implement substantive reforms through collaborative efforts involving the government, housing organizations, and stakeholders. This approach is crucial for devising sustainable solutions and establishing a fair housing market.

Young people are actively advocating for specific measures to tackle the housing crisis. These include increasing the stock of affordable housing, providing financial aid, and combating housing market discrimination. Effective government intervention and policy measures, such as investing in social housing and promoting innovative housing solutions, are essential to alleviate the housing shortage and improve affordability for this demographic.

Mere acknowledgement of the crisis is inadequate; decisive action is imperative. Urgent structural reforms are necessary to ensure equitable access to affordable housing for all. It is vital to unite in confronting housing insecurity and strive towards a future where every individual and family in the Netherlands can enjoy a fulfilling life in stable, affordable housing.