

The Netherlands

Barbara Krantz

Certified Music Therapist, BA
Trainee International Master
of Arts Therapies

Lecturer HAN University
Nijmegen, Department of
Creative Arts Therapies



“The power of music is that it goes directly into our world of feelings without the need of an intermediary process of remembering, thinking, associating, and imagining.”

~Henk Smeijsters

Snapshot

Area

The Netherlands is a small country (404.3 square kilometers) with three additional Islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Population

16,782,300 (February, 2013)

Official Language

Dutch

Ethnic Groups

Dutch 79.1%, other Western 9.3% (including Indonesia and Japan), Turkish 2.4%, Moroccan 2.2% Moroccan, Surinamese 2.1%, Antillean and Aruban 0.9%, other non-Western 4.0% (2012)

Median Age

40.8 (April 2013)

Children under 5

912,000 (2013)

Sources

CBS Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2013), www.cbs.nl
Wereld Informatie (2013), <http://www.wereldinformatie.nl>
Wikipedia (2013), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Netherlands

Demographics

Five universities in the Netherlands offer a bachelors program in music therapy; one offers a masters program as well. There are more than 500 music therapists in the Netherlands. Music therapy is not a regulated profession and there is no obliged registration for working as a music therapist yet. The largest professional association, the Dutch Association of Music Therapy (NVvMT, Nederlandse Vereniging voor Muziektherapie), has 400 members. A recent survey indicated that about 27% of all music therapists who work in institutions and 74% of all music therapists who work in private practice offer music therapy for children from 0-12 years. The major populations served are children with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder, mental and physical disabilities, developmental disorders, and behavioral disorders.

Background Information

In The Netherlands, there is a growing interest in developmental support and healthcare for young children. New centers for “child and family” have been established in every town to monitor and support the development of young children and their families. Preventive and treatment programs are offered by different institutions, covering a broad spectrum of interventions to support families with young children.

Music therapy fits very well into the range of parent-child focused interventions, yet it is rarely seen in programs for families with young children. Different music therapy protocols have been developed but are not yet implemented as standard treatment. Music therapists in the Netherlands explicitly promote music therapy as a strong and valuable tool for children with physical, mental and behavioral

issues, yet there is still a great need for development, implementation and research of consensus-based and evidence-based music therapy protocols.

Common Approaches

Historically, music therapy in the Netherlands is closely related to other creative arts therapies: dance and movement therapy, drama therapy and art therapy. All forms of creative arts therapies have common roots in a Dutch theory of the creative process (Wils, 1973). Smeijsters (2008) developed a theory on analogy, which covers all forms of creative arts therapies. Music therapists who work with children refer to different psychological theories dependent on the setting. Many music therapists use a cognitive behavioral approach, others apply mentalization based treatment or a developmental approach. A recent survey indicates that there is a great variance of theoretical underpinnings within the profession.

Music therapists who work with children make use of improvisational play, songs and movement. Sometimes music lessons are offered as a therapeutic activity, and in some cases older children produce their own CDs. Many professionals have an eclectic way of working, making use of different music therapy approaches like those of Nordoff-Robbins, Orff, Schumacher, Hegi, and Priestley. A group of Dutch music therapists has recently been trained in Neurological Music Therapy, which offers new ways of working with children with physical disabilities.

Only 22% of music therapists who work with children also work with parents, and about 28% work with families. There is no information about the way in which parents and families are involved.

Music therapists are employed by institutes for children with disabilities, child psychiatry, youth care, as well as in educational settings. A growing number of music therapists work in private practice. Within institutions, treatment costs for music therapy are covered by health insurance companies or other healthcare or welfare bodies. Clients who get treatment via private practice sometimes receive partial compensation by their insurance company. Due to current rising national healthcare costs, all kinds of treatments are experiencing drastic cuts.

Prominent Literature

- Maas, D., Buster, M. (2012) *Het product de MuLo methode. Een combinatiebehandeling van muziektherapie en logopedie*. Unpublished theses, HAN University Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Retrieved from <http://www.surfsharekit.nl:8080/get/smpid:13600/DS1>.
- Poisman, K. (in press) *Geteilte Zeit – Gemeinsame Zeit. Entwicklung eines Messinstruments zum Timing in der Musiktherapie mit autistischen Kindern*. Münster, Germany.
- Smeijsters, H. (2008) *Handboek Creatieve Therapie*. Third Edition. Bussum, The Netherlands: Coutinho.
- Smeijsters, H. (Ed.) (2006) *Handboek muziektherapie*.

Houten, The Netherlands: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum.

Smeijsters, H. (2005) *Sounding the self: Analogy in improvisational music therapy*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.

Snijders, M. (2012) *Samen spel. Ontwikkelingsonderzoek naar een muziektherapeutische methode voor opvoeder en kind ter bevordering van de interactie*. Unpublished theses, HAN University Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Wils, L. (Ed.) (1973). *Bij wijze van spelen: Creatieve processen bij vorming en hulpverlening*. Alphen aan de Rijn, The Netherlands: Samsom.

About the Author



Barbara Krantz, BA is music therapist and lecturer at HAN University. She works with children, adults and older adults with mental

health disorders. In her current masters research, she focuses on parent-infant music therapy.

Contact: Barbara.Krantz@han.nl

Note

The author wants to thank the Dutch Association of Music Therapy and the Dutch Federation of Creative Arts Therapies for providing her with the preliminary results of two recent surveys among music therapists and creative arts therapists which have not yet been published.