



IOI Best Practice Paper Outreach

AORC-IOI Webinar: Enhancing citizen engagement: Encouraging greater utilization of Ombudsman services by citizens

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National ombudsman of the Netherlands

3 June 2025



IOI Best Practice Paper – a work of many

Why a best practice paper on outreach?

IOI-community: Challenges in our work require to exchange ideas and experiences and learn from each other



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12 - 17 May 2024



Why not ONE best practice for outreach?

Important to exchange ideas and experiences on outreach to become more aware of:

What we mean by outreach >> because there is not a single definition

Where our journeys cross >> because we can learn from similarities in shaping outreach

Where our paths separate >> because of differences that matter in shaping outreach



A joint journey



- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Online regional meetings | Autumn 2023 |
| • First consultation round (3x questions) | January 2024 |
| • In-depth online interviews | February and March 2024 |
| • First analysis | March and April 2024 |
| • IOI Conference and presentation of initial findings paper | May 2024 |
| • Second consultation round with new participants (3x questions) | Summer 2024 |
| • Second analysis | Autumn 2024 |
| • Concept paper sent to all participants for feedback | End of autumn 2024 |
| • Concept paper submitted to the IOI board of directors for approval | Mid February 2025 |
| • Concept approved and paper published on IOI website | April 2025 |
| • Publication in format of the National ombudsman of the Netherlands | May 2025 |

Participants

Federal Ombudsman of Belgium	Northern-Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Flemish Ombuds Service of Belgium	Taxpayers' Ombudsperson Ottawa, Canada
Ombudsperson British Columbia, Canada	Provincial Ombudsman Sindh, Pakistan
Ombudsman of Israel	People's Advocate of Romania
Ombudsman of Kenya	Ombudsman Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Netherlands
Parliamentary Ombudsman Malta	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Mexico City Human Rights Commission	Public Protector South-Africa
Ombudsman of Namibia	The Control Yuan of Taiwan
National Ombudsman of the Netherlands	

First thoughts on “outreach”?

Describe outreach in one or two words!



Focus of the best practice paper

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Why | Different goals of outreach |
| 2) How | Outreach practices |
| 3) Who | Targeted audience |

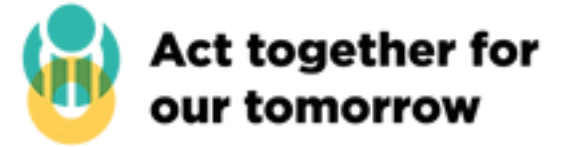
Why >> Different goals of outreach

Raising awareness and empowering the public

Gaining a deeper understanding of societal issues

Improving government functioning

Why >> Different goals of outreach



Mobile cinema to promote human rights activities among girls, boys and adolescents in schools and other spaces.

The Ombudsman of Namibia met with the indigenous community in the Kunene region who lodged a complaint regarding the mineral extracting activities (mining) in their area.



On November 2, 2023, the Committee on Social Welfare and Environment Hygiene Affairs and the Committee on Judicial and Prison Administration Affairs of the Control Yuan conducted a joint supervision at Yuli Hospital of the Ministry of Health and Welfare in Hualien County, Taiwan, focusing on the health conditions of political victims.

How >> Outreach practices

By being outside the premises

being close & directly in contact

From inside the premises

making services more visible & accessible

By using media

traditional media & digital tools

How >> Outreach practices



Complaints drop boxes stationed in various strategic service points in state entities in South Africa.

In this episode of OmbudsTalk, (children's) Ombudsman of Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Marianne van den Anker and Stans Goudsmit, speak with city council members from Rotterdam and Krimpen aan den IJssel about the so-called "bureaucratic jungle". ORR criticizes the maze of rules and service desks that often leave citizens lost within their municipality. The episode explores this issue from various perspectives.



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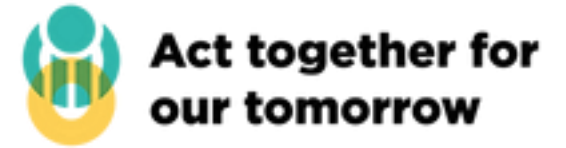
Sembrando Derechos para Cosechar Paz



Presentation of The Virtual Tree House, a digital space with resources such as video library, playroom, library and others for girls, boys and adolescents.

It also houses a space for children's participation.

How >> Outreach practices

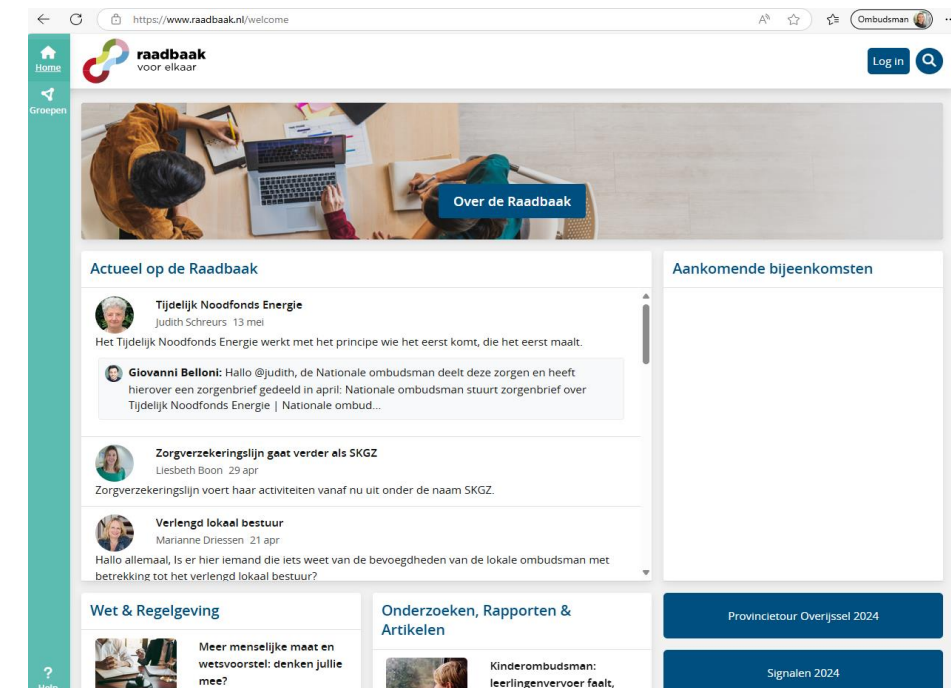


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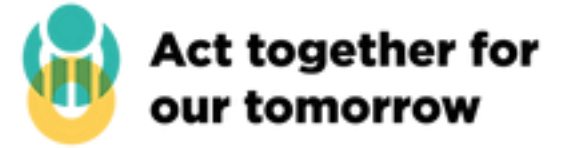
By approaching intermediaries:

NGOs, ambassadors, volunteers, community leaders / key figures,
experts by experience, professionals.

Online community for intermediaries in the
Netherlands: Counselling desk/”Raadbaak”



Who >> Targeted audience



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Target groups

public in general / priority groups

Ongoing process

constantly changing contexts

Barriers to connect

lack of trust, insufficient visibility, other barriers

Using research and data to identify priority groups

internal & external data-analysis

Conclusion

Every ombudsman faces unique challenges

geography and mandate

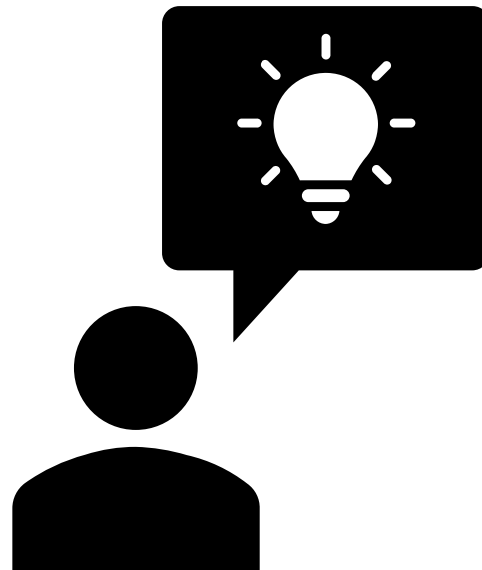
Many members experience challenges with resource shortages

financial and personnel

--> Important to carefully allocate resources, set goals and prioritize activities within its own context

Discussion

- What are your thoughts on the paper and its findings? What stands out to you?
- What are your near-future plans regarding outreach?



Don't hesitate to ask questions



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