



KLOKK® Foundation

(Ecclesiastical Child Abuse National Consultation Umbrella Organisation).

Victims for Victims®

Once the scandals of child abuse perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the Netherlands came out into the open, groups of fellow victims started forming around the location or congregation the abuse had taken place in. The many dozens of victims came together in 20 groups for fellow sufferers.

All victims wanted "Recognition, redress and compensation".

The victims also wished for **help and counselling**.

KLOKK is a non-profit foundation, founded on 17 August 2011.

Objective: Obtaining recognition, redress and compensation for all victims of abuse.

Being able to offer assistance and counselling that is qualitatively and quantitatively sound.

Preventing abuse.

The KLOKK Foundation became the formal consultation partner of the committee investigating the nature and scope of the abuse and, later, also of the RCC.

The Foundation has been working to raise awareness of the child abuse problem since 2010. Through working on hundreds of cases, the Foundation has collected a great amount of expert knowledge on what happened, the problems this has caused and how to work towards recovery. This expert knowledge is important for those who suffered abuse as a child some 40 to 50 years ago and now have to deal with the consequences. However it is equally important to estimate what the consequences of more recent abuse are and to consider how to treat them.

The Foundation has been receiving a grant from the Dutch General government through the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport since 2013. This allowed for the professionalisation of the Foundation.

The Foundation maintains contact with organisations for fellow sufferers in a number of countries inside and outside of the EU.

In addition to a director, the Foundation features a front office and a coach providing counselling to victims. The KLOKK Foundation has both a Board of Directors and a Board of Supervisory Directors.

The chair of the Foundation also serves as its press spokesperson.



Facts and numbers:

- 2010 The public became aware of the widespread following publication of a report by investigative journalists Joep Dohmen and Robert Chesall.
- 2011 Deetman committee report. The scope and nature of the abuse were found to be substantial, with well over 700 cases of sexual abuse being reported. It was estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 children had been abused by the clergy.
- 2011 The RCC set up a reporting, complaints handling, compensation and assistance centre. Three thousand victims submitted a report, over two thousand filed a complaint and 1670 of these complaints have been recognised. In two hundred cases, complainant and accused came to a settlement through special mediation. The maximum amount of compensation paid to a victim was EUR 100,000. On average, victims received EUR 30,000.
- 2013-2014 Hundreds of reports of physical and psychological violence/abuse. A settlement was reached with these victims, under which a modest compensation (max. EUR 5,000) was paid out.
- 2013 Start of systematic consultations between Cardinal W. Eijk, the chair of the Bishop's Conference, Friar C. van Dam, the chair of the Conference of Dutch Religious Orders, and G. Klabbers, the chair of the KLOKK Foundation.
- 2015 Conclusion. Two hundred and fifty complaints have been declared to be unfounded since 2011, such in connection with the lack of any supporting evidence. The authenticity of the complaints themselves was not disputed. Some of these victims have as yet received "recognition" and a modest compensation. This process is still ongoing.

From 2010 onwards, over 1,500 victims have contacted the KLOKK Foundation to tell their story, receive aid with the complaints procedure and ask questions on submitting supporting evidence. The sheer number of reports allows us to provide supporting evidence to fellow sufferers. In addition, many have asked for assistance. Organising meetings of fellow sufferers are one way to meet this need. KLOKK provides counselling as well. We also provide assistance to partners. The KLOKK Foundation is there for men, women and transgenders.

Communication

The main way for people to contact the Foundation are by ringing one of its two dedicated telephone numbers. Every caller is put through to a fellow sufferer. Follow-up contact takes place mainly by e-mail. However, given their age, part of the target group does not use e-mail. For these people, all contact is by telephone and/or in person.



A lot of information is available on our website www.klokk.nl:

- Calls to fellow sufferers (partly anonymised) to gather supporting evidence
- News on the file on abuse in the Netherlands and Belgium
- Press news on criminals and victims.
- Views of KLOKK (Blogs).

The website receives many thousands of visitors, including foreign visitors, each month.

How do victims of (church) abuse receive recognition?

In 2010, abuse victims finally dared to come out in force and tell their story. They were encouraged by victims who spoke up in front of a camera, often close to the building the abuse had taken place in.

The victims had not been believed as children, even by their parents. The prevalent culture was one of keeping silent. Perpetrators were hardly ever punished. Many offenders were transferred and simply continued their abuse somewhere else.

This abuse was not simply a collection of single incidents, but was ubiquitous.

The RCC has always looked the other way. Denial was still common in 2010.

This dismissive attitude by the RCC served to fuel the already substantial anger of the victims. It was only upon the publication of the Deetman Report that the investigated facts were recognised. Yet this public recognition did not mean that any redress was offered to the victims.

The RCC, which had at first itself approached the investigator, now set up a reporting centre the victims could register and file a complaint with.

The complaints were to be considered by a Complaints Committee working in accordance with regulations drawn up by the RCC. "Supporting evidence" was to be submitted for a complaint to be considered "founded".

If a complaint was considered to be founded, the Compensation Committee could determine the amount of compensation to be paid out. The RCC also offered assistance through its reporting centre: conversations with a confidential advisor and references to therapists.

Everything was arranged without

involving the victims. While the committee arranging for the provision of assistance did talk to the victims, it did nothing with their statements. As a consequence, there was little trust in the proposed measures.

The position of the victims was extremely weak in 2010.

Three factors played a role in strengthening the position of the victims:



- The investigation committee (chaired by W. Deetman, MSc) consulted with victims and encouraged their coming together in larger groups
- The Dutch press (radio, TV and papers) often and in force covered the abuse cases
- Dutch MPs (especially the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Security and Justice, but also others, of various political parties) have played a decisive role in providing the victims with a voice and a position to stand up to the RCC. Without this support, the victims would not have been heard, or helped, by the RCC. These MPs insisted on an investigation and, later, in 2013, on consultations between the RCC and KLOKK.

What lessons are to be learned?

1. Victims require support from an independent press reminding government and institutions of their responsibilities and exposing misconduct. Victims have no leg to stand on in countries lacking an independent press.
2. Victims and their organisations should themselves be discussion partners of the accused and of institutions playing a part in the recovery process.
3. MPs should stand up for their citizens who have been victimised by the State (e.g. in children's homes) or by the (Catholic) Church.
4. Preventative measures are to be imposed on the international level, as the abuse continues still and networks of paedophiles operate across borders.
5. Appropriate assistance should be available, the victims themselves playing an indispensable part in this context. Providing a telephone helpline is only effective if reporters realise they are talking to a fellow sufferer, able to understand their story.
6. Victims who were abused as a child and only report 40 to 50 later require different counselling and assistance than victims who were abused more recently.
7. A Forum sub-committee should be set up for the specific issue of elderly persons abused by the Church or in State institutions as a child.
8. KLOKK has collected a lot of expertise over the past 5 years.

We are happy to share our expertise with others



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