

Managing Diversity



National Review The Netherlands

WP3: National Review

In front of you lies the 1st draft of the National Review from the Netherlands. The structure of the framework will start with a general picture of learning and VPL system(s) on a national level followed by more specific data about VPL towards the three sectors, namely: healthcare (non-profit), voluntary sector and metal (profit). Purpose of the national review is to see in which bigger national framework VPL is operating in each country and eventually to track differences and similarities between countries.

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1 The Netherlands, an introduction

The Netherlands have more than 16 million inhabitants, with an average population density of 479 persons per km². Approximately 8 million people were employed in different kind of sectors in 2004. The Netherlands have a relatively low unemployment rate of 6,5 % in 2004 (CBS, see appendix A. Factsheet of the Netherlands). In economical difficult times it is often the lower educated people and the university qualified people who get unemployed. People who got vocational or higher vocational education have a lower unemployment rate. Retail and professional services cover together the biggest part of the Dutch employment (See figure 1.1).

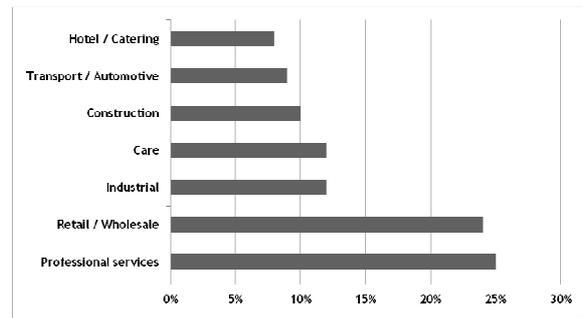


Figure 1.1 the employment for the main sectors

Source: Heijerman, Kenniscentrum EVC (2005)

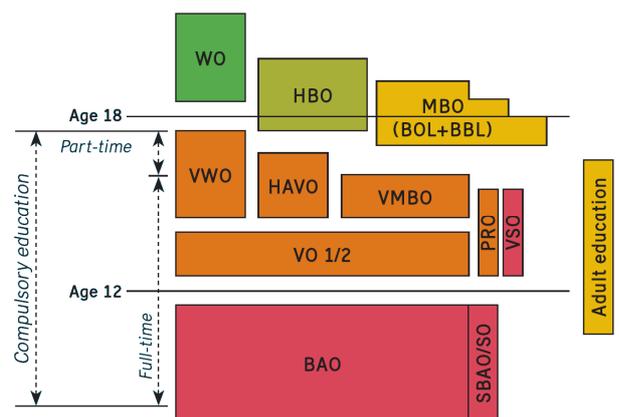
Human resource status

The Netherlands face numerous challenges in the transition from the industrial economy to the knowledge society. The main challenges are:

1. Ageing of the workforce. Within five to ten years traditional recruitment won't be able to fill in the gap of the pensioned people. This has big consequences involving organisations and the costs of, for example, pensions, health care and care for the elderly.
2. The number of unskilled people is rising. It is now almost 20 % out of +/- 8 million workers.
3. The need for upskilling the workforce. The shortage (qualitatively) of higher (vocational) educated people is rising rapidly. An example is in metal sector, where the percentage of higher vocational educated workers is 25 %. In 2010 this percentage should be 40 %.

Formal education

People in the Netherlands have compulsory education from five years till they are at least sixteen years old. Most of the children start the nursery school when they are four years old. Approximately 3,5 million pupils, students and adults are following formal education on different kind of levels. The diagram shows the simplistic structure of formal education (Figure 1.2).



BAO	Mainstream primary education
BBL	Block or day release in vocational education
BOL	Full-time vocational training
HAVO	General secondary education
HBO	Higher professional education
MBO	Vocational education
PRO	Practical training
SBAO/SO	Special primary education
SO	Special education
VMBO	Pre-vocational secondary education
VO	Secondary education
VSO	Secondary special education
VWO	Pre-university education
WO	University education

Figure 1.2 The Dutch educational system

Source: Dutch Ministry of Education (2006)

Vocational education consists of the job-accompanying learning path (BBL) and the job education learning path (BOL). Within the BBL practical work is most important (minimal 60% of the time) and within the BOL this is between 20 and 60%. BOL can be done fulltime (VT) or part-time (DT) – less than 850 hours educational programme - be done. In the year 2003/2004, a total of

278,780 persons followed senior secondary vocational education, of which 161,810 BBL and 316,970 BOL. The absolute number of participants following adult education was 162,480. More pupils follow Preparatory Vocational Education (60 %) than General Secondary Education (40%).

Vocational education has four sectors (economy, technical, service & health and agricultural sector) and four qualification levels: assistant in training (level 1), basis-vocational education (level 2), professional education (level 3) and middle management / specialists (level 4). Higher Vocational Education is level 5. In the upcoming years the government wants to stimulate people to get into higher education (HBO or WO). More than 50 % should follow higher education in 5 till 10 years.

Short history of VPL in the Netherlands¹

During the early 1990s, the Dutch government felt that regular education should be made more accessible for adults. This led to the establishment of the Commission on the 'Recognition of Informally Acquired Skills' (EVK) in 1993. The Commission published its report 'Recognizing Informal Skills' in March 1994. This marked the launch of EVK: the recognition of informally acquired skills, and emphasized the need to increase accessibility to education traditionally based on formal qualifications or the award of certificates.

The Cabinet responded positively to the report. It accepted that EVK could make a useful contribution to the functioning of the labour and training markets, especially for individuals. The implementation of the scheme had to tie in with existing structures and the stakeholders had to pay the costs of implementing. The Cabinet agreed to provide a set of instruments to assist EVK, including the necessary development funding. The various stakeholders now actively got down to work. Schools, national professional education institutions, employment agencies, educational advisory bureaus, companies and other players began to work on the elaboration of EVK, either alone or in partnership. This work was resumed following the unveiling of the national action programme of the first liberal socialist coalition government in 1998. The programme states, among other things, that: "More should be done to ensure that the workplace is used as a centre of learning. The experience gained should be made visible as informally acquired skills and qualifications. The Cabinet wants to assist this by setting up a system in which informally acquired knowledge and experience, that is, knowledge and experience gained outside the formal education system, can be tested and recognised."

Finally, the STAR (committee of social partners) recommendations "Lifelong learning at work" (June 1998) made an important contribution to the further elaboration of the concept of lifelong learning (The glass is half full! 2001).

VPL definitions used in the Netherlands

The Dutch term for recognition of non-formal and informal learning is EVC, Erkenning Verworven Competenties; literally translated this means accreditation of acquired competences. The Dutch term EVC can best be compared with the term APL, Validation of Prior Learning. These competences include both outcomes from informal as well as more formal learning processes. It includes a commitment to formal recognition of outcomes using the national qualification standard. VPL is empowering the individual as well as

¹ Duvekot, R., Schuur, K. and Paulusse, J. *The unfinished story of VPL*. Valuation & Validation of Prior Learning in Europe's learning cultures. Foundation EC-VPL & Kenniscentrum EVC: Utrecht.

organizations, for instance by linking individual ambitions with organisational targets. Formal learning is learning through national accredited schools and regular education. Non formal learning is learning through company courses and other non regular education. Informal learning is learning through activities that are not designed to be a learning environment such as the workplace, at home and through social work (Duvekot et.al. 2003 and Klarus 1998).

The vision on VPL is threefold:

1. The recognition of competences
2. The validation of competences
3. The development of competences

We call recognition and validation only a small vision and a reactive approach on VPL. A broader, desirable and proactive approach combines recognition and validation with the development of competences. The broader approach on VPL includes stimulating learning and knowledge development (Duvekot et.al. 2003). Therefore VPL is more used as Valuation of Prior Learning. VPL bridges formal, non-formal and informal learning. It values the competences acquired irrespectively the learning path that has been followed. VPL also bridges the gap between learning environments such as school, work, voluntary work and private life and assumes that in each environment learning is done and competences are built.

Involved parties

The government and social partners play a steering role for VPL on national level ('poldermodel' or consensus-model). The government has not a strict legislation about VPL, but tries to create conditions to stimulate the use of VPL. The social partners are responsible for VPL on sectoral level. Together they coordinate actions for the national employability-agenda. The government has set up a Project Unit Learning & Working, whose role is to strengthen the integration of learning and working.

All parties have their own responsibilities in initiating and implementing VPL-policy in their own discipline. The responsibility of the formal accreditation is by the Minister of Education delegated to the educational institutes. But also the branch organisations have their own accreditation systems per branch, of which some of them are well recognised by the sector because of their practical impact. But each organisation / individual can issue a certificate according to their own standards. Many volunteer organisations, for example, have their own certificate / ward system, not connected to the formal accreditation system.

VPL-procedures are more often embedded into Collective Labour Agreements (CAO) in different kinds of sectors. These are set up by the social partners. The goal is to have employees work on employability, so their position becomes stronger on the labour market. Further on employer organisations are in favour for VPL. Certification leads to an indication and better understanding of the qualifications of employees. The agreements about VPL are often financed by Training Funds (O&O fondsen) Both employees and employers pay a small amount of their incomes to these sector funds, which have originally been set up to support educational initiatives for employees²

² Hövels, B. and Romijn, C., Implementatie van EVC: Rendement, toegankelijkheid en knelpunten, deelrapportage bij de EVC monitor 2001-2002. Kenniscentrum EVC

Kenniscentrum EVC (Dutch Knowledge Centre VPL)

The knowledge centre VPL (Kenniscentrum EVC) has developed a quality code, where the Common European Principles have been used as an entry point (See appendix B. Quality code for VPL). This is done together with KCE (Quality Centre for Examination) and NVAO (Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organisation), who are responsible for the quality control for examination of the secondary and higher secondary vocational education. The quality code should make clear whether and how VPL contributes to career development. The individual plays a central role in the code. The code should test whether individuals have had sufficient aid in a VPL-procedure and whether there has been a good procedure and which instruments have been used. Further on the code should promote exchange of procedures. This code could be seen as a guideline for organisations that offer VPL-procedures.

In November 2006 a covenant was signed by various parties who are involved in developing and executing VPL-procedures. These national actors, among with VPL providers, employers and accreditation bodies, have joined hands to develop a quality code for VPL. The covenant is a contributing factor to three objectives linked to the introduction of VPL:

- 1. Increasing the accessibility of VPL. Clarifying what VPL is and how VPL must be offered.*
- 2. Providing transparency. Allowing better comparison of different VPL procedures.*
- 3. Guaranteeing civil effect.*

The covenant resulted from a broad consultation process among all stakeholders, concedes five main arrangements that the parties agreed upon:

1. The use of the code is voluntary, but the signing parties are dedicating themselves to promote the use of the Quality code for VPL. Making its use mandatory would detract from the motivation to work with the VPL-code.
2. Everyone who starts with an VPL-procedure agreed on the reasons for doing so. VPL is not a standard process but an individualized series of arrangements customized on the goal and use of VPL. Custom work is the standard.
3. Every VPL-procedure ends with a VPL-report. This report states that the individual had documentation of the competencies he possesses. This makes VPL something independent of the educational provider.
4. Accredited VPL providers are listed in a VPL database. This database contains information about all the VPL-procedures that are useful for potential VPL candidates.
5. The competencies of the people supervising these procedures and performing the assessment are documented. Only professionals can be supervisors and assessors.

The Knowledge Centre VPL is also involved in many international activities. By collaborating and exchanging knowledge it strengthens the learning process in the Netherlands about recognition and deployment of competencies.

Financing VPL

VPL is financed in different ways by different stakeholders. The Dutch social partners see the benefits of VPL. They requested the development of the Quality code for VPL. From 1 January 2007, the Dutch

government extended a tax facility to VPL purchasers. In order to qualify for this tax scheme, the VPL purchaser must be able to submit an invoice from an accredited VPL procedure. The employer or employee receives €300 back on tax. A lot of VPL providers became interested in becoming accredited by the Quality code, because of the tax facility. Since the introduction of the Quality code for VPL, 2000 procedures asked for a accreditation of their VPL procedures. The expectations are that this number will reach 6000 at the end of 2007. At the moment there is no clear overview of the costs for a VPL-procedures. Estimated is that a VPL procedure for level 3 and 4 (Vocational education) costs between €800 and €1300. For higher vocational education this is between €1000 and €1500.

The interdepartmental project unit for Learning & Working

The interdepartmental project unit for Learning & Working is a joint project of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment with the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration and the Ministry of Finance. The task of the interdepartmental project unit is to take concrete steps forward in lifelong learning. The Project Unit Learning & Working will not carry out the project itself, but stimulate and facilitate employers, employees, citizens, trade and industry, education providers, local governments and regions to realize these steps in practice. They want to make a start on this with all the parties involved, but at the end of the day, it is up to the relevant parties to implement the project.

The interdepartmental project unit for Learning & Working was set up with the following objectives:

- The creation of a regional infrastructure for career counselling and career management and the associated testing of all competencies acquired (VPL procedures) plus educational advice tailored to the test results. An easily accessible and independent desk will direct the participants to the local infrastructure for training and education in the region.
- One objective included in the Action Plan for Lifelong Learning is for the government to ensure that a total of 50,000 such VPL procedures have been carried out by 2010. The interdepartmental project unit for Learning & Working has resolved to realize 7,500 of these procedures in 2005 and some 12,500 in 2006.

In order to build an infrastructure for VPL procedures, the interdepartmental project unit launched the following actions:

- Establishing contacts with regional partners (trade and industry, Regional Training Centres, Agricultural Training Centres, Centres for Work and Income, higher vocational education institutions, universities) in four regions with regard to setting up an infrastructure for VPL, including career counselling and services on educational opportunities. Based on the experiences gained in these four regions, similar initiatives will be launched in other regions;
- Providing a start-up subsidy to these four pilot projects based on a joint business plan for the parties in the region.

At the moment a total of 34 regional initiatives are carried out to stimulate VPL. The goal of the Project Unit Learning & Working is to realize a functioning learning-working desk that provides employed persons and jobseekers with low-threshold access to advice on careers, competencies and training opportunities. The

term learning-working desk refers to an accessible point of contact where all citizens can obtain information, an overview and tailor-made advice on training, career counselling and assistance. If such a desk functions well, it supports people in undertaking activities when they start learning again. The following two projects have been initiated in collaboration with the educational institutions:

1. VPL, portfolio and career counselling. The Quality code for VPL plays an important role in these projects.
2. Online marketplace which makes visible where you can find VPL providers, educational institutes and job applications within a specific sector.

VPL for Vocational education

- Something about the learning-working desks >> most of the time on this level?
- Some statistics about sectors and VPL procedures

VPL for higher professional education

End of July 2006 the subsidy for VPL for higher professional education started. The Project Unit Learning & Working started this subsidy to stimulate projects for VPL in higher professional education. The subsidy had three main goals:

1. Enlarging the demand of VPL for employers, employees and jobseekers.
2. Stimulating the fit between supply and demand for VPL procedures in higher professional education
3. To embed the VPL procedures in the educational infrastructure

A number of 13 institutes for higher education made a project plan and received subsidy for the implementation. The institutes together agreed on a total of nearly eight thousand VPL procedures to be developed for people skilled at higher professional level.

VPL on academic level

The Dutch Open University supplies distance education on academic level for adults. The Open University has the ambition to realise VPL procedures for their bachelor and master "Active learning". To develop a good VPL procedure on academic level, the Open University starts with pilots. For these pilots candidates who signed in for a bachelor ICT, Management or Cultural Sciences are examined on their prior learning.

VPL statistics

Most of the VPL procedures in the Netherlands are on Vocational educational level (level 3 and 4). They represent 72% of all available VPL procedures. For Higher education this is 9%, but expected is a growth on this level because the government stimulates institutes for higher education to develop more procedures. VPL can be supplied by different types of organisations:

- Agricultural Vocational Education
- Examination bodies
- Institutes for Higher Vocational Education
- Knowledgecentres
- Commercial VPL suppliers
- Institutes for Vocational Education

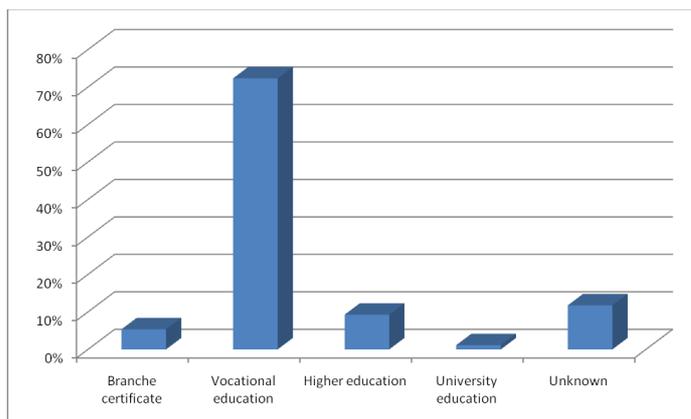


Figure 1.3: Percentage of VPL procedures per level

Most VPL procedures are delivered by institutes for vocational education. They often work together with Knowledge centres. These knowledge centres are responsible for setting up the competence based qualification profiles for the levels 1 to 4.

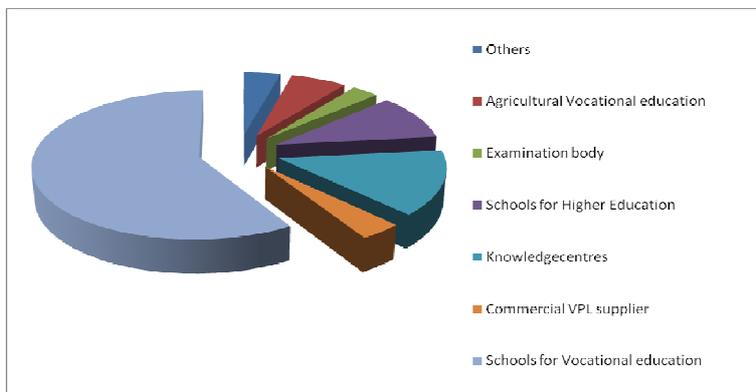


Figure 1.4: Different types of VPL providers

2 Sector Reviews

2.1 Health and social care³

Introduction - overview of the sector

In the health and social care sector, vocational skills are acquired in tertiary education and in informal and non-formal learning. The larger part is learned in tertiary education, depending on the educational level. In lower levels people learn more in practice. Informal and non-formal learning is very important in finding and binding personnel. The informal experiences in social and health care are one of the reasons individuals choose for a job and training in this sector. Officially the Ministry of Education grants formal qualifications, mostly after study and exams. This is done by Regional Training Centres and Schools for Higher Professional Education. Also VPL plays a substantial role.

Existing recognition models

The main actors in the health and social care are employer organisations and trade unions. VPL-procedures enclosed in the collective labour agreement (CAO) of the welfare sector and academic hospitals. Vocational education, intermediaries and businesses work together to set up different kinds of qualification structures, competence profiles and VPL-procedures. Within vocational education, courses can be taken at five different qualification levels: assistant worker (level 1), basic vocational training (level 2), professional training (level 3), middle management or specialist training (level 4) and Higher Professional Education (level 5). An educational route in health and social care is built on different sub qualifications. For each qualification a certificate is available. After passing all exams and skills tests, these different certificates can be converted into a diploma. This recognition model is defined on a national level.

Demand of competences

In 2003, the total number of employees in the Dutch health and social care was 1,079,000. Expected is that this number will grow to 1,614,000 in 2020. This means an increase of approximately 535,000 individuals in this short period, not even including the replacement demand and individuals who stop working because they have reached the retirement age. The total number of Dutch active employees remains limited. In 2003, the Netherlands counted about 8,286,383 active employees which is expected to grow with 66,380 employees to 8,352,763 (CBS, 2003; CPB, 2003). In the future, the availability of qualified employees will be a serious problem⁴. This is caused by an increasing number of people getting in the age group of 65+.

Needs for competences

For all staff within the health and social care, qualifications are necessary. A formal qualification makes a great difference on the labour market. The collective labour agreement is built on formal qualifications. The qualification system is determined by different stakeholders, including the work field, which results in attention for the needs of SMEs and enterprises. The existing certification system is relevant to the needs of employees and individuals returning on the job market. This is because diplomas are obligatory for obtaining and practising a job. Relevant, because applicable. The demand of qualified personnel increases and

³ Beek, van H. and Schuur K. (2005) *WP3 Report Eurovalidation*. EC-VPL: Vught.

⁴ Rekum, C. van (2005). OVDB: Bunnik

meanwhile the number of new employees entering remains constant. For health and social care three groups could contribute to a solution. Firstly, the empowerment of individuals who have worked in the sector in the past. Secondly, the upscaling of working individuals, which creates space for lower qualified persons. And last, the individuals who have experience in health or social care, but no formal education in this area. These three groups could partly form the solution for increasing the availability of qualified employees. They should, however, all be trained before they can be available. Here is a great opportunity for VPL.

Role of VPL in obligatory and optional certification

There have been about 6000 persons within 500 organisations, who went through a VPL procedure until 2002. In the health and social care about 1000 persons⁵ are known to have undergone a VPL-procedure. The estimate for yearly numbers in the health and social care, who have undergone a VPL-procedure, is about 1000 persons and is rising every year.

Different stakeholders use VPL in a formative manner. A distinction is made between objectives for the employee and for the employer⁶. The role VPL plays for the employee is becoming qualified for a future job or for a different position. VPL is used to make education more efficient, because of the ECTS exemptions educational institutes offer. Efficient training is also an objective for the employer, because less time is spent by their personnel in training.

For the employer VPL can be used in three different ways. VPL is used for empowering new employees who have experience and training in the health and social care sector, but who left this sector in the past. These people have a great deal to offer, but often do not have proper qualifications. VPL can be used to stimulate these individuals for a job in the social and health care by making it more accessible. VPL offers possibilities for managing competences and increasing employability, mainly for their working personnel. From the individual's point of view this is career accompaniment. The third way VPL can be used is in the recruitment and selection policy for new employees. Ways an individual could use VPL in optional certification is getting more insight in their value for the company and their career possibilities. The objectives, both for obligatory and optional certification, could be categorized in the two main streams of VPL: VPL within the framework of professional qualification and VPL as a form of competence management.

⁵ www.kenniscentrum.nl

⁶ Sectorfondsen Zorg en Welzijn, 2004

2.2 Voluntary sector⁷

Introduction - overview of the sector

In the Netherlands, four million people do voluntary work for approximately five hours a week. For the last twenty years, the percentage of voluntary workers remained constant, namely about 3,4 million people. Yet there can be seen a decrease in the last few years. Also the attitude is changing. People don't have a steady job in the voluntary sector, but will do voluntary work on a freelance basis. The willingness to do voluntary work is high in the Netherlands (Cahier, 1999). Together with Sweden and Norway, the Netherlands counts the highest percentage of volunteers in Europe. 57,5% of the volunteers is female and 42,5% man.

The Dutch voluntary sector is sizeable, with health care, education and social care as biggest sub sectors. On three levels, local, regional and national, different local authorities, supporting organisations and volunteer organisations play a role in the infrastructure. New volunteers have different motives for entering voluntary work, mostly a unique combination of motives:

Idealism: commitment with fellow man (40%), social motives (11%)

Practical: hobby (19%), keeping busy (17%), need for companionship (17%), Career (1,1%)

Existing recognition models

For voluntary work, NIZW and CIVIQ developed a competence catalogue. This catalogue describes general functions within voluntary work. On the basis of fifteen different types of volunteer organisations, IVIO researched common marks and general competences that are used by voluntary workers. This recognition model is defined at national level. For example, Scouting Gelderland has developed competence profiles for leaders and group leaders in collaboration with CITO (Institute for test development) and knowledge centre VPL. The problem with these recognition models is the quality control. At the moment it is possible to print your own certificate when downloaded from the internet. Future employers want to be assured the what the certificate says is true. This aspect needs some kind of quality control. Since the Quality code for VPL, developed by the Knowledgecentre VPL (Kenniscentrum EVC, see chapter 1), it is possible to assure a certain quality. The possibilities that the Quality code for VPL bring are examined by the Voluntary sector.

Demand for competences

No official qualifications exist for voluntary work. In interviews with both NIZW (sectoral research institute, incl. work on general competence profiles) and Scouting Gelderland (organisation specific competence profiles) the emphasis was on using the recognition model without obligations. The demand of competences and quality control of volunteers is one of the reasons to start using competence profiles within the volunteer organisations (van Houten, 2005). There has been carried out research about the wish of volunteers in getting their prior learning recognised. Between 10 and 20 percent of the volunteers want their competences to be recognised.

⁷ Beek, van H. and Schuur, K. (2005) *WP3 Report Eurovalidation*. EC-VPL

Role of VPL in obligatory and optional certification

There are approximately between the five and fifteen procedures in the voluntary sector. In each procedure 10-50 persons undergo a VPL-procedure a year.

The figure below shows which role VPL plays within voluntary work.

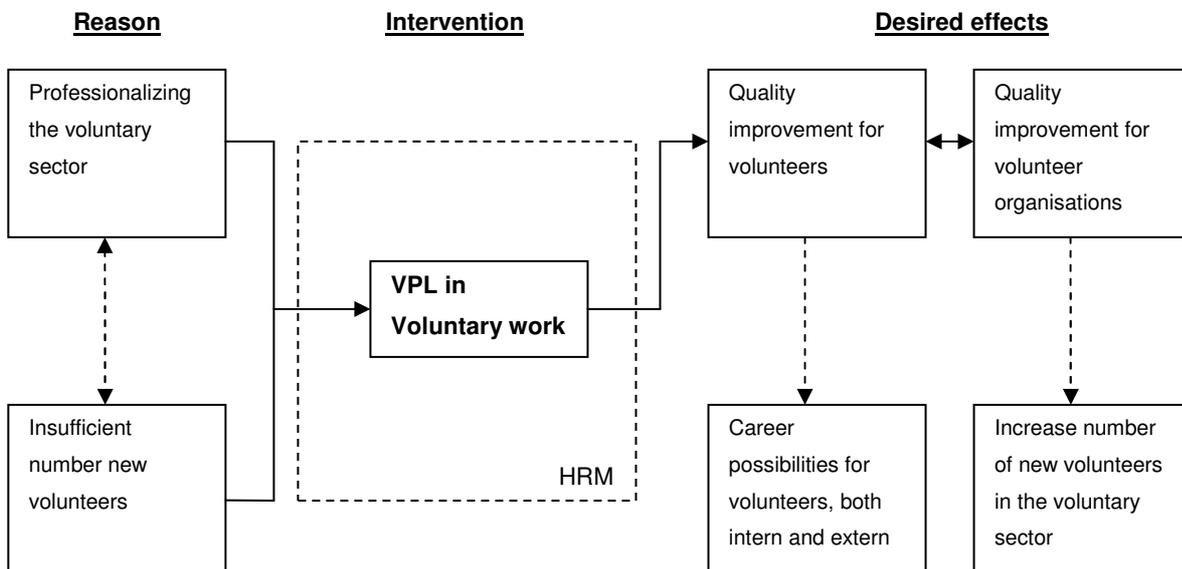


Figure 2.1 VPL in Voluntary Work (Van Dam & Frietman, 2003)

The above example gives insight in the twofold way VPL works in the volunteer organisation. Because of the recognition, voluntary work is used and valued within formal education. In this way voluntary work plays a role in obligatory certification. On the other side, groups that want to be recognised by the OVDB are more aware of their internal policy in coaching and guiding volunteers.

VPL plays a role in internal competence management, quality improvement and as a tool for volunteers to express their competences. In voluntary work, learning experiences often remain implicit in that HRM instruments are seldomly used. Using VPL can change that. Within voluntary work, VPL is a bottom-up approach in which volunteers express the need for feedback on their work and want to work more effectively and efficiently. This benefits the organisation. Various good practices describe that by more awareness of competences within the organisation, volunteers can be brought better into action. 75% of the volunteer organisations want to keep the expertise on a high level. They offer training, group and individual coaching and organise thematical meetings. About two thirds of the volunteers participate in educational activities of their volunteer organisation. From the other third, however, a quarter is interested in taking training. Particularly in voluntary work in social care volunteers use their prior learning to find paid work.

2.3 The metal sector

Introduction - overview of the sector

The metal sector exists of two main groups which each have their own collective labour agreements: Metalektro (mostly big companies) and Metal and Technical Organisations (mostly SMEs in metal processing). The collective labour agreements are one of the biggest in the Netherlands. It is a diverse sector from basic industry till complex endproducts in which ten of thousands business operate with about half a million of employees, which is about 40% of the entire industry. In the last couple of years there has been a regression on both volume of the market as well as systematic decrease in employment. In the upcoming years organisations in this sector have to cope with a lot of international concurrence on the labour market. Organisations have to characterize by delivering high quality against low prices to hold the head above the water. Ageing is also a big issue for this sector; the outflow is bigger than the intake. In the next couple of years a lot of people will make use of an early pension arrangement. This is not stimulated by the government.

Existing recognition models

Vocational profiles have been set up by the social partners. These are taken as entry points in different educational institutes to formulate qualification structures, but are also used to draw competence profiles for VPL-procedures. In certain branches of the sector, competence profiles have already been drawn.

Demand for competences

Organisations in the metal sector were asked what the most important competences were⁹ in this sector. Professional skills were still named as most important, followed by problem-solving capacity and leadership. Yet there can be seen a movement towards other skills like attitude on the working place, dealing with other cultures and increasing mobility to be available for more functions in the metal sector. Employees are mostly enrolled in courses on the technical aspects, safety issues, IT skills and communication skills.

Even in economical difficult times, it is hard to find employees for specific functions. The main arguments are: a) not enough applicants that have sufficient or the desired competences; b) not enough applicants that have sufficient work experience; and c) too little availability of secondary and vocational educated individuals.

Need for competences

The metalektro group sees that the role of an employee is changing and understands the necessity of VPL. An employee has to become a multi-skilled worker. Most of the upskilling still happens outside formal education, because formal education is not fully equipped to give response on the demand of businesses in this sector. But developments in more made-to-measure education are taking place.

⁹ http://www2.caometalektro.nl/data/3_ARBEIDSMARKT/downloads/055349%20AMM.PDF

In the last years a lot of organisations innovate on the process instead on the product¹⁰. Organisations expect to work with other techniques in the upcoming five years. Organisations also invest more in their HRM-policy. More often organisations use career development –or career planning (23%) or function circulation (48%) to optimal utilize the knowledge of the staff and to stimulate competence development. The investments in development of competences will not only be through formal courses and practices but also through informal learning: 'learning-by-doing' or 'coaching' play an important role to obtain the right competences.

There are a lot of developments to strengthen the qualification structures and competence profiles going on. Secondary Vocational Education (ROC's) and Higher Vocational Education are involved in different VPL-procedures, just as educational funds, knowledge centres on employment en developments in the sector and consultancy agencies. Different coöperation structures are formed with the different procedures.

Role of VPL in obligatory and optional certification

10% of Organisations in the metalektro branch already works with VPL. 25 % of the organisations in this branch believe that VPL will become a spearhead in the future HRM-policy. In the metal sector VPL-procedures are mostly used for upskilling staff. VPL is enclosed in the collective labour agreements (CAO) in this sector. VPL-procedures are also used to employ people and eventually to be a part of the HRM-policy for the development of sitting employees.

More often organisations try to get a good view of which competences they have in their organisation. To stimulate development and use of competences a quarter of the metalektro sector makes use of a form of competence-based management. Besides this the recognition of competences becomes more important. Most of the organisations see VPL as a spearhead for future HRM-policy.

VPL procedures are mostly focussed on low-skilled, on different functions from fitters to engineers. New VPL-procedures are also being developed, e.g. a VPL-procedure is being developed for the mechatronica sector. At most big companies VPL has become a structural HRM policy to up skill their staff, like Philips, Corus and DAF. SMEs are less occupied with HRM and therefore less interested in VPL even though they need it the most. The educational sector therefore has to provide more demand steered education to reach these companies. The Quality code for VPL tries to accomplish that by making the VPL supply more visible and accessible for SMEs.

Conclusions

Appendix

A. Factsheet of the Netherlands

Politics

Name of country	Kingdom of the Netherlands
Form of government	Constitutional monarchy
Head of state	Queen Beatrix

Geography

Area	41,092 km ² (0.96 x DK)
Capital	Amsterdam

Population

Population	16.3 million residents (2007)
Population growth	1.02% (2001-2005)
Language	Dutch, Frisian
Religion	42% No religious persuasion 30% Roman Catholic



Economic indicators 2005

GDP	449 billion euro
GDP per capita	EUR 28.000
Actual growth GDP	1,7% in 2004
Consumer price inflation	1.7% in 2005
Currency	Euro

Contribution to GDA 2004

	Contribution to GDA
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fisheries	2%
Industry	13%
Mining	2%
Building/civil engineering	5%
Consumer product repairs, commercial and hotel/catering	13%
Transport, storage and communication	7%
Public utilities	1%
Care/other services	12%
Financial/professional services	24%
Government	11%

Source: CBSnet

B. VPL Quality Code

Code	Details of implementation
<p>1. The goal of APL is to define, evaluate and accredit individual competencies.</p> <p>The accreditation of prior learning has a value in and of itself and contributes to employability. In many cases, APL can be a benefit to further career-related personal development.</p>	<p>1.1 A goal is explicitly linked to the APL procedure.</p>
	<p>1.2 The APL-supplying organization and each individual reach consensus on the use of the results of APL.</p>
<p>2. Individual entitlements: the APL process answers to the need of the individual. Entitlements and arrangements with the APL-offering organizations are clearly defined.</p>	<p>2.1 The accessibility of the APL procedure for participants is documented.</p>
	<p>2.2 Participation in the APL procedure is generally on a voluntary basis.</p>
	<p>2.3 The APL-offering organization and the participants make arrangements on the optimal course of the APL procedure.</p>
	<p>2.4 The participant decides whether he/she will participate in the APL procedure and will receive all relevant information needed to do so.</p>
	<p>2.5 Time frame for the entire procedure is realistic, feasible and known in advance.</p>
	<p>2.7 The privacy of the participant is guaranteed and the results of the APL procedure are the property of the participant unless agreed otherwise in advance.</p>
	<p>2.7 The participant is entitled to appeal, and there is a system in place for this option.</p>
<p>3. Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on solid standards</p> <p>Trust is the key issue. Trust has to do with civil effect, properly defined standards, and clear information on the way in which assessments are conducted and the arguments on the basis of which conclusions are drawn.</p>	<p>3.1 Tasks and capacities of all parties involved in all phases of the procedure are known and are functioning.</p>

Code	Details of implementation
	3.2 A standard coordinated to the relevant working area and which leads to the civil effect is used.
	3.3 The equivalence of the APL procedure with an initial vocational training programme must be demonstrated.
	3.4 The reliability and validity of the assessment instruments and procedures used is guaranteed, even if procured externally.
	3.5 The assessment instruments make use of any available evidence, no matter what the source.
	3.6 The participant is entitled to a concluding meeting to be informed of the result. This result, including the civil value of the result, is set out in an APL report.
<p>4. Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and impartial</p> <p>Independence and impartiality are crucial factors in the evaluation and are rooted in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved in the process. It is of major importance to avoid unnecessary confusion of roles. Impartiality can be reinforced by training and the use of networks.</p>	4.1 The independence of the assessors is guaranteed.
	4.2 The roles of supervisors and assessors are separate.
	4.3 The supervisors have a proven track record of competence. They are able to present procedures and to interview, coach and give feedback to individuals; they are professionals in the fields in which their coaching specializes.
	4.4 The assessors have a proven track record of competence. They are able to interview, give feedback to individuals and evaluate competencies; they are able to communicate assessment results; they are professionals in the fields in which they conduct assessments.
	4.5 Supervisors and assessors keep their professional skills up.
<p>5. The quality of APL procedures is guaranteed and is being improved on an ongoing basis</p> <p>The quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used is guaranteed.</p>	5.1 The APL procedure is open.

Code	Details of implementation
Evaluations are conducted regularly. The results are incorporated into improvement actions.	
	5.2 Targets, procedure, assessment framework, assessment instruments, quality of assessors and supervisors, and APL administration are all evaluated regularly.
	5.3 Evaluation of the participants is a standing component of quality control.
	5.4 The organization lives up to the quality standard of APL.
	5.5 The evaluation and the APL procedure improvement policy that follows from the evaluation is embedded into the organization's existing quality control system.

Source: Kenniscentrum EVC (2006)