



IMPROVING THE COORDINATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND THE LABOUR MARKET THROUGH REGIONAL ALLIANCES

Career guidance in the Service Centres on Education and Work (SCEW)

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THE NETHERLANDS

Service Centres on Education and Work (known in the Netherlands as “Leerwerkloketten”) are regional alliances between schools, institutions for vocational training, business owners and government agencies (municipalities and the PES).

Together, they develop activities, information packs, products and services that improve the coordination between educational/training programmes and the labour market. They also provide independent and free training and career guidance in 35 labour market regions.

Improvement of the recognisability and visibility of the SCEW and their limited staff capacity are the most important concerns. If the SCEW want to extend their services to new target groups, these aspects need attention.

Name of the PES	UWV WERKbedrijf / Leerwerkloketten
Scope of measure	Since 2009, it was additionally financed as a project at UWV, in 2017 it has become a structural service.
When was the practice implemented?	2009-ongoing.
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	To stimulate lifelong learning by providing a more thorough career guidance service to everyone: jobseekers, employees, students and employers. It stimulates on-the-job training and dual education and the recognition of labour market experience by certificates (APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning).
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	The programme started at The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) in 2005. The Ministry started the first Service Centres in the labour market regions in 2006. In 2009, UWV was asked to facilitate the independent Service Centres in the labour market regions.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	Jobseekers, employees, students and employers, with special attention for workers who lack a starting educational level (level 2), or low literates.
What were the practice's main objectives?	To provide user-friendly and independent advice to employers, professionals and individuals (jobseekers, employees and students) in the field of training and employment. They do this by acting as a link in the region between the labour market and education (agency and link function), so the scarce resources available to the partners for the common target groups – employers and individuals – can be used more efficiently and effectively.

What activities were carried out?

The core tasks of the Service Centres on Education and Work include:

- ▶ Providing information and advice on training/education, careers and recognition of prior learning certification services (agency and linking function).
- ▶ Providing expertise, setting up work placements ("financial engineering" in conjunction with the Public Employment Service (PES)).
- ▶ Providing insight into the regional and national training and labour market.
- ▶ Supporting the network functionality between labour market and education.

The career guidance services consist of:

1. Individual support (information and advice) on education, labour market and professions;
2. Group information sessions about labour market opportunities, educational projects (learning on the job);
3. Individual career coaching or guidance (multiple sessions);
4. Organising events for the target group, for example on labour market opportunities;
5. The use of occupational/competence tests;
6. Facilitating the creation of arrangements for learning on the job, together with employers and training institutions;
7. Promoting awareness about the importance of language proficiency at work;
8. Connection and improvement of the cooperation between educational institutions, employers and government agencies.

Depending on the regional demand and context, the extent of these services may vary from one Service Centre to another, partly depending on the available manpower. As a public service, the services are free of charge for the various customer groups, e.g. school leavers, jobseekers, employees and employers.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Per region, a service centre is funded by UWV, regional Vocational Educational Training institutes (VETs) and regional municipalities. These participants make a contribution in terms of human and/or financial resources.

Since the Service Centres on Education and Work are partly funded by the UWV and partly by the regional partners, every region has its own local board, which is composed by representatives from the partners mentioned above and, in some cases, also by additional partners, as for example a delegate from the employers' association.

A specific team from the UWV head office facilitates the work of the regional Service Centres on Education and Work.

What were the source(s) of funding?

Central funding by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), via UWV, and funding at the local level by municipalities and VET-Centres.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

There is no obligation of the Service Centres on Education and Work to monitor activities and other outputs. Because of the regional context and need, objectives and activities are defined at this level, therefore outputs differ per region. However, for specific activities the following results have been measured for 2018:

- ▶ Group information sessions about labour market opportunities, educational projects (learning on the job):
 - ▶ Private persons: 364 meetings, 8,194 visitors;
 - ▶ Employers: 265 meetings, 1,074 visitors;
 - ▶ Stakeholders/partners: 309 meetings, 2,828 visitors.
- ▶ Individual career coaching or guidance (multiple sessions):
 - ▶ Private persons: 19,586;
 - ▶ Employers: 1,078;
 - ▶ Stakeholders/partners: 518.
- ▶ Events for the target group, for example on labour market opportunities:
 - ▶ Private persons: 190 events, 27,233 visitors;
 - ▶ Employers: 33 events, 3,219 visitors;
 - ▶ Stakeholders/partners: 33 events, 32,625 visitors.

What outcomes have been identified?

Against the rather general objective of providing independent information and advice to different target groups, concrete outcomes for jobseekers or school dropouts can refer to integration in a new job or the start of vocational education.

At the regional level, concrete outcome results are defined in annual plans, which take into consideration the respective context and need situation. The local board approves this plan and evaluates if the Service Centre achieves the set goals. Because of their heterogeneous structure and contents, the outcomes defined in these annual plans cannot be aggregated at the national level.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

Key success factors¹ are those which help to prevent dropout from the educational system, to promote the transition from education to employment, from job to job and from unemployment to employment. In this context, the following success factors can be mentioned:

- ▶ The independence of the Service Centre in terms of both the information and advice function and guidance and coaching;
- ▶ Knowledge of the (regional) labour market, available education and training opportunities;
- ▶ The flexible, complementary role of the Service Centres on Education and Work (no competition with existing services or initiatives);
- ▶ Broad expertise and networks, including employers;
- ▶ Focus on strategy, implementation and finance;
- ▶ Because the Service Centres are regionally funded and organised, they are able to respond to regional needs.

Lessons learnt from the past refer to specific areas for improvement which would help to increase success and to use the existing expertise in a broader and more systematic way:

- ▶ Visibility of the support offered by the Service Centres and the benefits of using the services offered could be increased;
- ▶ Commitment of partners to the (local) network agreements could be increased;
- ▶ The scope of the Service Centres is sometimes limited, so that there is potential for broadening of expertise;
- ▶ The relatively limited manpower and resources of the Service Centres on Education and Work (three to five full-time equivalents per Service Centre) could lead to a more systematic service provision and support structures.

¹ https://www.euroguidance.nl/_images/user/Euroguidance_Publicatie_CareerServicesInTheServicecentersOnEducationAnd-Work_210x210mm_December2019_web_def.pdf



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