



# LITERACY IN THE NETHERLANDS

COUNTRY REPORT  
ADULTS

March 2016

This report document reflects the point of view of literacy professionals assembled in this network. It is still a work in progress since we continue to gather and update information on literacy in Romania up to the year 2015. The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part, except for commercial purposes, provided the extract is preceded by a reference to "ELINET", followed by the date of publication of the document.

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# **A PERFORMANCE IN LITERACY**

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This section of the report draws on data from PIAAC the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills, to describe the reading performance of adults in the Netherlands. Our focus is on low achievers, those who scored on the lower levels of the survey: Level 1 (scores from 176 points to less than 226 points) and below Level 1 (scores below 176 points).

**At Level 1**, adults can read relatively short digital or print continuous, non-continuous, or mixed texts to locate a single piece of information, which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. These texts contain little competing information. Adults performing at this level can complete simple forms, understand basic vocabulary, determine the meaning of sentences, and read continuous texts with a degree of fluency.

**Below Level 1**, individuals can read brief texts on familiar topics and locate a single piece of specific information identical in form to information in the question or directive. They are not required to understand the structure of sentences or paragraphs and only basic vocabulary knowledge is required.

The results are compared to the average of the 17 EU countries which took part in PIAAC.

## 1 Average Performance in Literacy

The Netherlands performs significantly better than the EU-17 average of 271 scoring an average of 284. This is a high overall literacy average.

Table 1.1 Average Literacy Performance

	Average	Standard Error
Netherlands	<b>284</b>	0,7
EU-17	271	-

The lowest 10% of Dutch participants perform significantly better than the lowest 10% of the EU-17 average. On the other hand, the best 10% of Dutch participants also perform significantly better than the best of the EU-17 average. Accordingly the gap between top and bottom performers is 122 points in the Netherlands, wider than the EU-17 average of 117.

Table 1.2 presents the spread of literacy achievement of adults in Netherlands and EU-17 countries.

Table 1.2 Spread of Literacy Achievement

	10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Standard Error	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Standard Error	<b>Gap 10<sup>th</sup>-90<sup>th</sup></b>
Netherlands	<b>219</b>	1,99	<b>341</b>	1,41	<b>122</b>
EU-17	210	0,49	327	0,33	<b>117</b>

## 2 Gaps - Low Literate Population

In the Netherlands 16% of unemployed participants perform at or below Level 1. The proportion of adults performing at Level 1 or below is bigger among women than among men. The proportion is bigger among those who live with a spouse or partner than among those living alone. More non-native speakers perform at or below Level 1 than in the other EU-17 countries. Age seems to matter more than on average in the other EU-17 countries.

### 2.1 Language

Migration has no causal relation with literacy. What is significant however is the oral language competence of the migrant. As part of the survey participants were asked if their native language is the same as the test language. 38% of those with a different native language scored at or below Level 1 compared to only 9% whose native language was the same as the test language. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are 34% and 14%.

Table 2.1 Test language and Native Language at Level 1 or below

	Test language <b>not same</b> as native language	Std. Error	Test language <b>same</b> as native language	Std. Error
Netherlands	<b>38 %</b>	2,78	<b>9 %</b>	0,51
EU-17	34 %	0,79	14 %	0,17

### 2.2 Age

The percentage of Dutch participants scoring at or below Level 1 increases with age: from 5% among the age group 24 and below to 22% among those aged 55 plus. This suggests that in the Netherlands age matters more than in other countries. In the age group of young adults (16-24) the share of Level 1 or below performers (5%) is the lowest among the EU-17.

Table 2.2 Age at Level 1 or below

Age	Netherlands	Std. Error	EU-17	Std. Error
24 or less	<b>5 %</b>	0,94	12 %	0,33
25-34	<b>8 %</b>	1,24	12 %	0,32
35-44	<b>9 %</b>	1,07	14 %	0,32
45-54	<b>14 %</b>	1,10	18 %	0,36
55 plus	<b>22 %</b>	1,42	25 %	0,41

## 2.3 Gender

In the EU-17 average the sexes show no significant difference, but in the Netherlands they do. 11% of men and 13% of women scored at or below Level 1. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are nearly 17% of men and 16% of women.

Table 2.3 Gender at Level 1 or below

	<b>Male</b>	Std. Error	<b>Female</b>	Std. Error
Netherlands	<b>11 %</b>	0,74	<b>13 %</b>	0,70
EU-17	17 %	0,23	16 %	0,22

## 2.4 Family

In the Netherlands 12% of those living with a spouse or partner scored at or below Level 1 compared to only 9% of those living alone. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are 16% and 15%.

Table 2.4 Living with spouse or partner among those who scored at Level 1 or below

	<b>Living with spouse or partner</b>	<b>Percent</b>	Std. Error
Netherlands	Yes	<b>12 %</b>	0,72
	No	<b>9 %</b>	1,02
EU-17	Yes	16 %	0,21
	No	15 %	0,31

## 2.5 Employment

9% of the employed in the Netherlands perform at or below Level 1, as do 16% of the unemployed, and 22% who are out of the labour force. International comparison reveal that in the Netherlands the unemployed participants and those out of the labour force are more literate than their counterparts in the EU-17 (16% vs. 22%; 22% vs. 24%).

Table 2.5 Employment at Level 1 or below

	<b>Employed</b>	Std. Error	<b>Unemployed</b>	Std. Error	<b>Out of the labor force</b>	Std. Error
Netherlands	<b>9 %</b>	0,57	<b>16 %</b>	3,95	22 %	1,58
EU-17	13 %	0,19	22 %	0,80	24 %	0,36

### 3 Skills Use

Participants in the Survey of Adult Skills were asked about their writing and reading at home, and at work, if employed. In the table below a higher score shows more frequent use.

Table 3 Literacy Skills Used At Home and At Work

	Writing Skills				Reading Skills			
	at Home		at Work		at Home		at Work	
	Index of Use	Std. Error	Index of Use	Std. Error	Index of Use	Std. Error	Index of Use	Std. Error
Netherlands	<b>2,23</b>	0,01	<b>2,06</b>	0,02	<b>2,22</b>	0,01	<b>2,04</b>	0,01
EU-17	1,99	0,00	1,95	0,00	2,02	0,00	1,97	0,00

Adults in the Netherlands perform significantly better in their use of *reading skills at home* than the EU-17 average. They also differ significantly and positively from the EU-17 average *index of use of reading skills at work* as do their use of *writing skills at home* and *at work*. These indexes reveal that adults in the Netherlands use their literacy skills more often than on average across EU-17 countries, especially their *writing* and *reading skills at home*.



## 4 Literacy Gaps

### 4.1 Parental Education

Table 4.1 presents the spread of literacy achievement by adults reporting their parents' highest education level. Parental level of education is a significant factor in the Netherlands as in the rest of the EU-17 countries.

In the Netherlands there is a significant difference of 23 points between those reporting that neither parent attained upper secondary and those reporting that at least one parent attained secondary (270 vs. 293). Furthermore, those reporting that at least one parent completed tertiary level education perform significantly better than those whose parents attained only secondary (307 vs. 293). The gap between those reporting lower parental education and those reporting higher parental education (37) is smaller than the EU-17 gap (41). The overall impression given by these data is that the higher the parental level of education the better the literacy performance.

Table 4.1 Literacy Proficiency by Parents' Education

	<b>Lower Secondary or Below</b>	Std. Error	<b>At least one parent secondary/ post- secondary</b>	Std. Error	<b>At least one parent Tertiary</b>	Std. Error	<b>Gap</b>
Netherlands	<b>270</b>	1,05	<b>293</b>	1,46	<b>307</b>	1,45	<b>37</b>
EU-17	253	0,38	277	0,32	294	0,44	<b>41</b>

### 4.2 Books at Home

Table 4.2 shows the spread of achievement of adults by reported number of books at home. This is a common measure of cultural capital. In Netherlands, 59% of adults report having less than 100 books at home. On average these achieve 271 points in PIAAC, 32 points worse than the average of Dutch adults reporting that they have more than 100 books at home (271 vs. 303). This gap is similar to the categories in EU-17 average (31).

Table 4.2 Books at Home

	Average score of those with <b>less than 100 books</b>	Percent of Population	Std. Error	Average score of those with <b>more than 100 books</b>	Percent of Population	Std. Error	<b>Gap</b>
Netherlands	<b>271</b>	59	0,96	<b>303</b>	41	1,00	<b>32</b>
EU-17	259	60	0,25	290	40	0,28	<b>31</b>

### 4.3 Language

In the Netherlands, there are 2% fewer adults reporting that the test language is *not* their native language than on average across EU-17 countries. These Dutch adults, who do not speak Dutch as native language, achieve significantly fewer points in PIAAC than those who report that their native language is the same as the test language (242 vs. 289).

Table 4.3 shows the spread of literacy achievement according to the test language and adults' native language.

Table 4.3 Native Language

	Language of the Test and Native Language						Gap
	Same			Not Same			
	Mean	Std. Error	%	Mean	Std. Error	%	
Netherlands	<b>289</b>	0,72	89	<b>242</b>	3,47	11	<b>47</b>
EU-17	274	0,19	91	246	0,91	9	<b>28</b>

The distribution of native-speaking and non-native-speaking participants in the Netherlands is similar to the EU-17 average. Those Dutch participants whose native language is the *same* as the test language perform significantly better than the EU-17 average (289 vs. 274). Those whose native language is *not the same* scored significantly worse than the average across EU-17 countries (242 vs. 246). Accordingly, the Dutch gap between native and non-native speakers is 47 points, much larger than comparable EU-17 average (28 points).

## 5 Participation in Adult Education - Low Literate Population

In the Netherlands the rate of participation in formal or non-formal adult education by adults on Level 1 or below is significantly better than on average across the OECD-Countries (42%).

Table 5.1 Participation Rates in Formal and Non-Formal Adult Education on Level 1 or below

	Participation Rate	Standard Error
Netherlands	<b>42 %</b>	3,0
OECD-Average*	31 %	0,5

\*For technical reasons we report the OECD average here.

The non-formal education index incorporates participation in seminars and workshops, private lessons and open or e-learning formats. Table 5.2 shows the percentage of low literate and high literate adults participating in all four types of non-formal education.

Table 5.2 Percentages of Low and High Literate Adults Participating in Non-Formal Education and Training

	Open or distance education		Seminars or workshops		Private lessons		On the job training	
	Level 1 or Below	Level 4/5	Level 1 or Below	Level 4/5	Level 1 or Below	Level 4/5	Level 1 Or Below	Level 4/5
Netherlands	10 %	15 %	8 %	43 %	8 %	16 %	22 %	51 %
OECD-Average*	6 %	16 %	9 %	37 %	8 %	17 %	17 %	42 %

\*see above

Dutch adults are most likely to participate in on the job training (organized by supervisors or similar facilitators) reaching 22% of those at or below Level 1 (compared to 17% for the whole sample) and 51% of Level 4/5 performers (compared to 42% for the whole sample).

## **B LITERACY POLICY**

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# 1 Provision

## 1.1 What types of adult literacy provision are there? What do you consider to be adult literacy provision in your country?

Adult literacy provision in the Netherlands is aimed at different target groups: second language speakers, lower educated mother tongue speakers, illiterate adults, (mostly) lower educated employees. Only in adult general secondary education (VAVO)<sup>1</sup> it's also possible for young people (16-17 years old) to participate, in other groups 18 years is the minimum age.

Looking at levels of proficiency adult literacy provision goes to level B1/2F (2F is the Dutch standard for native speakers, comparable with level B1 from the Common European Framework).

In the daily practice of the field of adult education and basic skills training, in the Netherlands, the terms literacy and language are not clearly distinguished. In general we speak of people with low levels of language proficiency from illiterate up to the levels B1/2F. The term used for literacy is alphabetisation. Adults are considered to be fully alphabetised at level A1/Instroom. A framework for alphabetisation of second language learners describes three stages of literacy, looking at letter, word and sentence- level and fluency and automatising of reading and writing.<sup>2</sup>

Since 2003, there was an active policy on fighting illiteracy, resulting in several action plans: Action Plan Literacy for native Dutch mother tongue 2003-2006; Action Plan low Literacy 2006-2011 and the recent Action Plan Literacy 2012-2015. With the introduction of the last Action Plan on Literacy in 2012 the formal definition of literacy is: language- and numeracy skills provision and digital skills as far as digital skills are necessary for language and numeracy learning.

### Literacy provision and immigration policy

Since the introduction of special immigration policy for new immigrants, we distinguish between second language learners who have an obligation to pass the civic integration exam, and second language learners who just want to improve their language skills.

The policy for adult immigrants is enshrined in the WI (Wet Inburgering, law on integration)<sup>3</sup> and falls under the Ministry of Social Affairs (SZW) . Adult immigrants have an obligation to pass the civic integration exam<sup>4</sup> at level A2, combined with an exam about their knowledge of Dutch society. The policy on the rest of adult education falls under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW<sup>5</sup>). The immigrants with an obligation to pass the exam have to pay for language courses themselves, since the government has a general policy of a participation society in which citizens are more self-responsible. According to this vision, the immigrant is mainly responsible himself for integration into Dutch society. They are excluded from the second language courses organised by municipalities funded by the Ministry of OCW.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/volwassenenonderwijs/voortgezet-algemeen-onderwijs-voor-volwassenen-vavo>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cito.nl/onderwijs/volwassen%20educatie/alfabetisering/raamwerk\\_alfabetisering](http://www.cito.nl/onderwijs/volwassen%20educatie/alfabetisering/raamwerk_alfabetisering). "Raamwerk alfabetisering NT2". CITO, Arnhem, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> [http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0020611/geldigheidsdatum\\_16-10-2014](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0020611/geldigheidsdatum_16-10-2014).

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.inburgeren.nl/inburgeraar/Nieuwsberichten\\_homepage/wet\\_inburgering\\_verandert.asp](http://www.inburgeren.nl/inburgeraar/Nieuwsberichten_homepage/wet_inburgering_verandert.asp).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.minocw.nl>.

## Law on adult education

Formal adult literacy provision is organised by the government in the WEB<sup>6</sup> (Wet Educatie Beroepsonderwijs, the law on adult education and vocational education and training) since 1995.

As a result of the Action plan on Literacy, a new version of the WEB was established in 2013. The following courses in adult education were determined in the WEB:

- 1) Courses in literacy for mother tongue speakers (NT1), including literacy and numeracy. One course at level 1F (to be compared with level A2 of the CEFR) and one course at level 2F (to be compared with level B1 of the CEFR), that is giving entrance to all courses in vocational education and training at level 1 and 2.
- 2) Courses in Dutch as a second language (NT2) ) for adults preparing for the State Exam (level B1/B2 of the CEFR)<sup>7</sup>
- 3) Courses in alphabetisation for second language speakers (NT2) at level A1 of the CEFR and courses in Dutch as a second language at level A2 of the CEFR.
- 4) Adult general secondary education (VAVO). This type of provision is mainly a second chance for young adults to obtain their qualification in secondary education and is therefore not really seen as a part of adult education, especially not since 2013, when the funding for these courses was split from the rest of the budget for adult education and is not given to the municipalities, but directly to the ROC's (regional centres for vocational education and training).

Also as a result of the Action Plan, the government decided to enhance quality in literacy provision and therefore national standards were introduced:

- For the courses for second language learners, the standard became the Framework on Dutch as a second language (Raamwerk Nt2)<sup>8</sup>, that was developed in the beginning of the century and is based on the CEFR.
- For courses in literacy for mother tongue speakers, the national standards in adult education were developed for literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They are based on the Dutch Reference framework for language and numeracy that is the national standard for all types of education: from primary school to secondary school and vocational education and training (Referentiekader taal en rekenen). This reference framework regulates continuous standards for language and numeracy, and defines which level must be achieved by students at the end of every school type. Although not strictly comparable with the CEFR, when it concerns language, 1F=A2, 2F=B1, 3F=B2 and 4F=C1.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0007625/geldigheidsdatum\\_16-10-2014](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0007625/geldigheidsdatum_16-10-2014).

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.hetcvte.nl/item/staatsexamens\\_nederlands\\_als](https://www.hetcvte.nl/item/staatsexamens_nederlands_als).

<sup>8</sup> [www.cito.nl/.../Files/Volwasseneneducatie/cito\\_ve\\_raamwerk\\_nt2.ashx](http://www.cito.nl/.../Files/Volwasseneneducatie/cito_ve_raamwerk_nt2.ashx).

### **In 2015 another important change in the WEB<sup>9</sup> was introduced:**

- Introducing a free market policy for all types of adult literacy provision between 2015 and 2018, in several stages of 25% of the budget every year,, with the rest of the budget reserved for the regional centres for adult education and vocational education and training (the ROC's).
- The budget for adult education courses can also be provided by private training companies, libraries or institutions for social welfare and organisations of volunteers
- introducing the term *formal adult education* for courses leading to official qualifications according to the national standards for adult education.
- introducing the term *non-formal adult education* for literacy provision based on the national standards, but not aiming at a recognised qualification.
- literacy provision/adult education will be part of overall policy on social affairs and social inclusion (together with income-assistance, welfare, reintegration in the labor market for the unemployed), the so called 'social domain'. In 2018 literacy provision and adult education will be defined by the Law on Participation and not by the WEB.
- the budget on literacy provision, already given to the local municipalities, is distributed over 35 labor market regions in which municipalities have to work together to develop policy on literacy provision, divide the budget, define special target groups and organize tenders for which literacy-providers (either public or private) can bid. For every labor market region one municipality is indicated as contact-municipality.

### **2016: Tel mee met Taal (Count on Skills). A new action program for literacy and language**

The current Action Plan on Literacy 2012-2015 ends at the end of 2015. In this period a pilot project was launched, called "Taal voor het leven" (Language for life) for a period of three years in six regions in the Netherlands with a budget of 5 million euros each year. The pilot project is focussing on non-formal education and working with volunteers in order to reach more learners and activate them to follow language courses. Important pillars in the project:

- creating local and regional partnerships for campaigning and literacy policy
- active connection between "sites" of poor literacy (places where low literate people can be found) and provision by a diversity of language providers (formal, non-formal, informal)
- training of volunteers
- development of materials that can be used by trained volunteers
- monitoring and evaluation

The program was evaluated by the University of Maastricht (impact on social inclusion and progress in the development of language skills of the learners) and Bureau Wending (quality of the Language for Life approach for regional cooperation, campaigning and development of instruments and materials)<sup>10</sup>. After 2 years a positive evaluation was published and submitted to parliament.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stb-2014-288.html?zoekcriteria=%3fzkt%3dUitgebreid%26pst%3dStaatsblad%26dpr%3dAnderePeriode%26spd%3d20140708%26epd%3d20140814%26sdt%3dDatumUitgifte%26org%3dMinisterie%2bvan%2bOnderwijs%252c%2bCultuur%2ben%2bWetenschap%2b\(MINOCW\)%26planId%3d%26pnr%3d1%26rpp%3d10&resultIndex=2&sorttype=1&sortorder=4](https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stb-2014-288.html?zoekcriteria=%3fzkt%3dUitgebreid%26pst%3dStaatsblad%26dpr%3dAnderePeriode%26spd%3d20140708%26epd%3d20140814%26sdt%3dDatumUitgifte%26org%3dMinisterie%2bvan%2bOnderwijs%252c%2bCultuur%2ben%2bWetenschap%2b(MINOCW)%26planId%3d%26pnr%3d1%26rpp%3d10&resultIndex=2&sorttype=1&sortorder=4).

<sup>10</sup> In 2015 the Reading and Writing Foundation published "Slim samenwerken loont. Resultaten Taal voor het Leven na twee jaar in de regio. 2013 en 2014".

The Dutch parliament concluded that the approach developed in the program should be the basis of a new action plan, starting in 2016 and ending in 2018: *Tel mee met Taal*.

#### *"Count on Skills" – headlines*

- The development of regional and local partnerships to develop a literacy infrastructure, based on the experiences in the Language for Life pilots.
- Literacy at Work – support programme for employers
- The art of Reading – programme for the promotion of reading.
- Experiments in literacy programs and campaigns for elderly people, unemployed women, family literacy and guidance and orientation in Adult Learning.
- Monitoring, research, knowledge sharing and communication

#### **Other forms of literacy provision**

- courses in Dutch as a second language (NT2) for adults preparing for the civic integration exam (level A2 of the CEFR). Mainly organised by private companies and volunteer organisations. Several providers and volunteer-organisations also offer training in oral skills in addition to the lessons given by professionals.
- vocational education and training level 1 and 2 dual pathway (BBL) for adults, combined with language courses or embedded language training.
- literacy and language courses offered by social enterprises:
- workplace learning/ in-company training of low literate employees

#### **Non formal adult education:**

- at community centres, libraries, primary schools focussing on parents, local organisations
- in projects like 'Language for Life' (Taal voor het Leven)
- formal workplace learning by volunteers

### **1.2 How is adult literacy provision funded?**

The different types of adult education are funded in different ways.

#### *WEB and Participation Act<sup>11</sup>*

Since 2009 Dutch municipalities have available one single budget for labour and reintegration policy, social services, civic integration and adult education. This so-called 'Participation Budget' allows them to combine several budgets in an integrated strategy. They can, for example, combine the budget for reintegration and the budget for adult education to guide low skilled adults to jobs in the labor market. Until 2018 the municipalities are bound to rules about which budget to use for which goals. The WEB budget is only to be used for adult education based on the national standards as described above. Municipalities can also use funds from the Participation budget as extra funding for courses for adults.

#### *WI and the courses for immigrants*

The Civic Integration Act (WI) defines the rights and obligations for immigrants. They are obliged to pass the civic integration exam (level A2) or the State Exam level B1 or B2 within a period of three years. If they fail they can lose their right to remain. Since 2013 immigrants have to finance their courses themselves, although it is possible to get a loan under favourable conditions. The government

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<sup>11</sup> [http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0025039/geldigheidsdatum\\_25-09-2014](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0025039/geldigheidsdatum_25-09-2014)



only finances courses for refugees (those granted asylum), (at certified<sup>12</sup> providers) by providing a loan which doesn't need to be returned if the recipient passes the exam.

#### *Funding of literacy provision in the labor market*

In the labour market enterprises and branches of industries finance courses for employees. When they organise courses that are pathways to official qualifications in vocational education and training, for example at level 1 or 2, they can finance the course partly because of the funding for dual pathways (BBL) at the ROC's. Language and numeracy are seen by the Dutch government as important parts of VET. Since 2012, for all initial education, including VET, standards for language and numeracy are described by law. In lower levels of vocational education and training (level 1 and 2) the level to be obtained is 2F (comparable with B1) and on level 2 VET courses this is a condition of gaining the vocational qualification.

For the rest there is a great deal of in-house training of lower-educated employees focussing on literacy and language, often taking an embedded approach. This is funded by the companies themselves. In several cases they can make use of tax reduction regulations and other mechanisms to increase available funding.

### **1.3 Is there a statutory entitlement to literacy provision up to a certain level?**

No, there is no statutory entitlement to literacy provision for adult in the Netherlands.

### **1.4 What is the rate of participation in adult learning, workplace training, liberal adult education?**

Adult literacy provision in the Netherlands is not regularly registered. When we count all forms of adult education, including the number of participants in VAVO and immigration courses we see a decrease from 55.000 to 22.000 a year between 2006 and 2012<sup>13</sup>. This decrease in the numbers of participants reflects a decrease in the available budget, due to cuts and the removal of the budget for immigrant courses, since the responsibility for these course has been taken over by several other ministries.

When we look specifically at participation in courses funded by the WEB-budget without VAVO, monitoring was done during the Action plan from 2006 – 2011. Research<sup>14</sup> in these years provide us with data on the participation rate of adults in literacy courses at local training centres (ROCs), focused on L1 speakers and L2 speakers. Provision consisted of courses in reading, writing and maths. The number of participants increased from approximately 5.000 in 2005 to 12.000 in 2009 and in 2010 there was a small decrease to 10.000. These figures do not include literacy provision in BBL-courses, in-house private training activities within companies or branches of industries and participants in all kind of forms of non-formal adult education.

Compared with the PIAAC number of 1,1 million people with have problems in basic skills this is a very small number. However, in the Netherlands a high proportion of the people identified by PIAAC as low literate are already almost at level 2 and we know that this group are not aware of the fact that they are low literate and do not experience great problems in every day life.

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<sup>12</sup> Certified by the Stichting Blik op Werk.

<sup>13</sup> Educatie op een kruispunt. Ontwikkelingsrichtingen voor volwasseneneducatie. Van Schoonhoven, R. Actis Advies, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Titel: Opbrengsten in beeld. Rapportage Aanvalsplan Laaggeletterdheid 2006-2010: Samenstelling: Paul Steehouder en Marli Tijssen. CINOP: Den Bosch 2011.

### **1.5 Are studies available on factors that inhibit or prevent participation in literacy education and in using literacy outside educational contexts? If yes, what are the factors?**

Yes, in the research report 'Van Scylla tot Charibdis' (Steenessens, K., Vermeire, K. en Vranken, J., 2000) there are four factors mentioned that could inhibit participation in literacy education:

- 1) Situational factors such as a lack of day care provision for children or a lack of transport to educational providers.
- 2) Institutional factors such as the days and times the courses are planned.
- 3) Dispositional factors: individual's attitudes to, and perceptions of, learning and education.
- 4) Informational thresholds exist when persons are not aware of the educational provision.

For L1 speakers the dispositional factors are of great importance. Campaigns trying to reach this target group of low literate L1 speakers often focus on changing the perception of education among low literate adults to encourage them to enrol. .

### **1.6 What progression routes are there from adult basic education courses to VET/HE courses?**

For certain target groups there are progression routes available. When L2 speakers pass the State Exam level B1 they can be admitted to VET programmes; admission to bachelor and master education is possible for those who pass the State Exam level B2. People attending VET level 1 and 2 (BBL) and obtaining a diploma can progress to level 3. Adults attending general secondary education (VAVO) who obtain a diploma can continue their schooling in VET or bachelor and master programs, depending on the qualification level they obtained in VAVO.

### **1.7 Does a right to advice and guidance regarding educational opportunities exist? If yes, who provides this advice?**

In the Netherlands there is no right to advice and guidance concerning educational opportunities. Advice can be provided by the Leerwerkloketten<sup>15</sup> (services for learning and working, regionally organised in the 35 labor market regions, with a focus on low educated adults). These services provide information for individuals and enterprises offering advice about educational possibilities and career orientation. At local training centres (ROCs) career guidance professionals provide students with advice concerning their educational and professional careers. This is common for VET but not for the adult literacy courses at ROCs.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.lerenenwerken.nl/leerwerkloketten>.

## 2 Quality monitoring

### 2.1 Is there an inspection service to monitor the quality of adult literacy providers (including classroom practice)?

All forms of government regulated education fall under the national inspection authority for education, 'de Onderwijsinspectie'.<sup>16</sup> The inspectorate has developed special supervisory frameworks for all different kinds of education (primary education, several forms of secondary education and VET). In the beginning after introduction of the WEB, since adult education is a part of the WEB and is provided by the ROC's, the inspection also monitored the adult education department. Later on, from about 2005 the inspection was concentrated on the VET-colleges. Since VAVO has again come under the control of the ministry, the inspectorate developed a supervisory framework for VAVO.

#### Quality monitoring in formal adult education

With the changes in WEB in 2015 quality monitoring was reintroduced, but only for formal adult-education (formal in the sense that courses lead to a formal qualification/diploma). The supervisory framework for adult education is being developed in cooperation with stakeholders and will be completed in 2015. The framework will be concentrated on the quality of the education and the way monitoring of quality is organised internally in the educational institute.

Regarding to quality of education there are two main topics:

- Program, diagnosis and assessment of learners and didactical approach
- Quality of exams and diploma's and the organisation of the exam-proces.

Providers can submit their courses for recognition and, when accepted, they will be monitored by the inspectorate for the specific courses for which they applied for recognition.

#### Quality monitoring in non-formal adult education

Knowing that the formal education is, in all probability, only a small part of the adult education courses that are offered, the municipalities will have the responsibility for monitoring the quality of non-formal adult education. Due to negative experiences with courses for immigrants, and the way that quality standards were implemented following the introduction of the free market policy, this is a big concern. Municipalities are not experts in education and therefore in general not always qualified to monitor for quality.

#### Quality monitoring in immigration courses

There is an organization, Blik op Werk<sup>17</sup> (Vision on Work) that is (among others) concerned with the quality of providers of adult literacy education preparing for the civic integration exam and State exam level B1 and B2. Providers that meet the requirements of Blik op Werk are certified and that offers advantages to students following their courses. These students are able to get a loan from the governmental executive education organization (DUO) to finance their courses and exams.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/onderwerpen/Toezicht/Algemeen>.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.blikopwerk.nl/inburgeren/een-keurmerk-wat-is-dat>.

Unfortunately, the Blik op Werk requirements do not primarily focus on the quality of the teachers and provision. For example only a small proportion of the teachers must be qualified in order to obtain the certification. Instead they focus on more organizational aspects, such as waiting time between intake and start of the course, transparency, the percentage of students passing their exams and the level of student satisfaction with the content of the provision.

In conclusion, we can say that there is no effective and sustainable system of quality monitoring for adult literacy education.

### **Quality monitoring in combined VET and literacy provision for low educated adults**

Regional training centres (ROCs) with dual pathway training (BBL) for adults and adult literacy courses fall under the national inspection authority, the Onderwijsinspectie. The aim of the Onderwijsinspectie is to evaluate the quality of education to make sure students can develop and learn optimally during their educational pathway. Because of the great influence of teachers on the learning outcomes of students, the Onderwijsinspectie pays special attention to the quality of teachers and evaluates if they are qualified and competent. Other than that, the Onderwijsinspectie regularly publishes national reports on thematic issues in education, such as languages and math, the way complaints are processed, or time spent at school by students.

#### **2.2 Are there national quality standards for the quality of adult literacy providers?**

The Onderwijsinspectie and Blik op Werk make use of requirements that are published on their websites. See above for further information.

For municipalities interested in having a more detailed report on the quality of providers of adult education, the 'Kwaliteitsgroep Inburgeren', a consortium of universities, can be hired to perform audits of providers of L2 education. This organisation visits courses and reports, among other things, on the quality of teachers and educational methods and helps providers to establish their own process of quality monitoring

#### **2.3 Are there national benchmarks / standards for adult literacy performance? How are adults' progress in reading and writing assessed / monitored?**

The national standards for (adult) literacy performance that are established in law are:

- the Raamwerk NT2 (Framework Dutch as a second language) is the national standard for courses for T2 learners in courses financed by the Ministry of OCW. This framework was introduced in 2002 and became for T2 courses the national standard in 2013. Also the civic integration exam (level A2) and State Exams level B1/B2 are based on the standards described in this framework.
- The Standaarden en Eindtermen VE (standards and final attainment levels for adult education). These standards are introduced in 2012 and concern language, maths and digital competences. These standards apply to education and examination of adults in literacy courses at ROCs and other providers, but not to adults for whom the civic integration exam or State Exam is required.
- The Referentiekader Nederlandse Taal en Rekenen (framework Dutch language and maths) is applied to initial education and examination in the Dutch educational system from primary education, secondary education and VET. This framework is therefore also the standard for adults in the dual pathway training in VET.

An overview of the different frameworks and the levels, compared with the levels of NLQF/EQF:

Framework	Levels					
Raamwerk NT2	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
Standaarden en Eindtermen VE	<b>Instroom</b>	<b>1F</b>	<b>2F</b>	No elaboration at this level	No elaboration at this level	No elaboration at this level
Referentiekader Nederlandse Taal en Rekenen	No elaboration at this level	<b>1F</b>	<b>2F</b>	<b>3F</b>	<b>4F</b>	No elaboration at this level
NLQF	<b>Instroom</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			
EQF	-	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			

Progress in reading and writing of adults is monitored or assessed by different methods, chosen by the providers and teachers. Examples are assessments with real-life tasks, tests, portfolios to demonstrate competences, etc. Providers have the possibility to choose which method for monitoring progress fits their needs, or the municipality defines which (type of) instrument they have to use. For the examination of students to test if the final required level is reached, nationally developed tests are available for L2 learners.

# 3 Literacy Curricula / Reading Instructions

## 3.1 Is there a national literacy curriculum for adults? How is this linked to school curricula?

In the Netherlands no national literacy curriculum is available. Providers and teachers create their own curricula based on the standards that are applied to their target groups. Since 2013 however the national standards define what tasks in language and numeracy should be learned and taught and at which levels. They form the basis for every curriculum.

## 3.2 What is the accepted methodology for the teaching of literacy to adults?

Individual teachers, curriculum managers and professionals within providers are free to use whatever methods and materials they think work best for individual learners or learner cohorts. The national standards however, are based on a functional approach to learning: what do adults need to function in their daily lives and in the labour market. Research on success factors in immigration courses<sup>18</sup> and research on success factors in adult education in general<sup>19</sup> define the following didactic principles that are generally accepted in adult education:

- for adult learners, education is not a goal in itself but always serves the goal of being able to function better in society and in the working context.
- adult learners acquire better skills in language and numeracy when they learn in their own practical context. Therefore the curriculum must provide the possibility to use skills in practical situations, so that there are opportunities to transfer what is learned into real life.
- good literacy provision is based on individual needs and learning goals of participants.
- the curriculum must create possibilities for independent learning in the educational process.
- the curriculum must be tailor made for the individual and must take into account the ability to learn, the preferable way of learning and the degree of independent learning the individual is capable of.

## 3.3 How do curricula and learning materials cater for diversity of learner groups and learning needs?

As there is no national curriculum and used methods differ among providers and teachers, it is not possible to illustrate how curricula and learning materials cater for diversity.

## 3.4 Is there a specific focus on literacy in VET provision for adults?

In VET provision for adults the The Referentiekader Nederlandse Taal en Rekenen (framework Dutch language and maths) is used. In levels 2, 3 and 4 of VET, national exams are used to test the competence level of students in Dutch language and maths. VET providers choose in which way they prepare their students for this examination and work on increasing the level of Dutch and maths along the educational pathway of their students. One could speak of a specific focus on literacy, although adults following a dual pathway training in VET do not have a lot of teaching time for literacy / Dutch language.

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<sup>18</sup> Cito (2008). Succesfactoren NT2-onderwijs uit 'Op zoek naar het succes van inburgering'. Arnhem: Cito.

<sup>19</sup> Greef, de, M. et al. (2009). Leren voor Leven een eigen plek in het dagelijks leven. Velp: Spectrum CMO Gelderland.

## 4 Screenings / Assessments / support

### 4.1 How are adults with literacy needs identified?

Adults with literacy skills are identified in different places:

- in the municipality, where L2 speakers / migrants are administrated
- at social services centres, by their agent
- at work, by their employers, HRM of colleagues
- in the primary school of their children
- at community centres and welfare
- at centres where adults with debts receive assistance
- at food banks
- and other places where lower educated adults are encountered.

Some adults with literacy needs self-identify and contact a local provider of adult literacy education. When not they do not self-identify, adults with literacy needs are sometimes hard to recognize. People are very capable of preventing their lack of literacy skills being recognized. The national Stichting Lezen & Schrijven (Association for Reading and Writing) trains professionals and volunteers all over the country to be able to identify low literate adults and encourage them to start literacy courses. For L1 speakers the threshold to start literacy courses is a lot higher than for L2 speakers. The main focus of the Stichting Lezen & Schrijven is therefore identifying low literate L1 speakers.

### 4.2 How are adults' prior literacy knowledge and skills recognized and validated?

Prior literacy knowledge is recognized and validated through diagnostic assessments and interviews when enrolling for a course. Providers have different viewpoints on using tests within the enrolment procedure. For L2 speakers it is more common to test them when enrolling for a course, L1 speakers, especially those with a very basic literacy level, are not always tested before the start of a course. During a so-called prolonged intake-period the teacher identifies the level of proficiency and needs of the student. For a complete overview of often used learning materials and tests see research carried out in 2012<sup>20</sup>; in 2015 this research was updated<sup>21</sup>.

### 4.3 Are there any standard tests to assess literacy needs or learning progress in literacy programmes?

There are no prescribed tests to assess literacy knowledge and skills or learning progress in literacy programmes, providers have the freedom to design their own testing procedures. For L2 speakers there are several tests that provide information on the levels of students in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The Toets Basisvaardigheden (Basic Skills test), as well as screening and final assessments at all levels and skills described in the national standards for Dutch language, have been developed for L1 speakers. Both developed by CINOP, the assessments commissioned by Stichting

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<sup>20</sup> Bohnenn, E. en M. de Greef (2012). Aan de slag met leer- en toetsmateriaal voor volwassenen. Analyse leer- en toetsmaterialen Taal, Rekenen en Digitale Vaardigheden voor volwassenen. Ede Steunpunt VE.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.steunpuntve.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Rapport-mei-2015-Aan-de-slag-met-leer-en-beoordelingsmateriaal-voor-volwassenen.pdf>.

Bohenn, E en Thijssen, R.(2015). AAN DE SLAG MET LEER- EN BEOORDELINGSMATERIAALVOOR VOLWASSENEN. Update van het overzicht Aan de slag met leer- en toetsmateriaal voor volwassenen december 2012

Lezen & Schrijven. In the future, a test for unemployed low literate adults will be developed, to be used by social service centres to establish which clients should be obliged to take literacy courses.

#### **4.4 How are adults with dyslexia identified and supported?**

To identify and help adults with dyslexia, a guide has been developed by the Kenniskring NT1 (knowledge network literacy for L1 speakers). This guide - 'Dyslexia in Adult Education' - has no formal status, but can be of help for teachers and providers who identify students with dyslexia.



# 5 Special support for second-language learners / migrants

## 5.1 Is there provision for adult migrants whose home language is not the official language of the host country?

Provision for adults who do not have Dutch as a first language is termed NT2 in the Netherlands. Within NT2 one can distinguish between immigrants who are obliged to take the civic integration programme and L2-learners that are not obliged to pass the exam, but want to improve their skills.

For immigrants who have to pass the civic integration exam there are two possibilities:

- courses in Dutch as a second language (NT2) for adults preparing for the civic integration exam (level A2 of the CEFR)
- courses in Dutch as a second language (NT2) for adults preparing for the State Exam (level B1/B2 of the CEFR)

For immigrants who have no obligation to pass the civic integration exam can follow courses funded by municipalities on the WEB-budget.

- courses in literacy for second language speakers at level A1/full alphabetisation
- courses in Dutch for second language speaker at level A2
- courses in Dutch as a second language (NT2) for adults preparing for the State Exam (level B1/B2 of the CEFR)

The Civic Integration Act defines who is obliged to take the civic integration exam or State Exam. These people follow courses to reach the level of proficiency that is needed to pass the civic integration exam or State Exam, or study at home or work. Providers of these NT2 courses can be local training centres (ROCs), commercial providers and individual teachers. Online language learning is becoming more common in the Netherlands, perhaps because the government does not pay for the courses anymore and most adult migrants need to finance their education and exams themselves.

## 5.2 Who pays for this provision?

Adults for whom the Civic Integration Act applies are obliged to pass the civic integration exam or the State Exam at level B1/B2. The government finances courses (at certified<sup>22</sup> providers) and exams only for refugees (those who granted for asylum) by providing a loan which doesn't need to be repaid when passing the exam. Other migrants (not refugees) need to finance their preparation for the exam themselves. When they take courses at certified providers, a loan is possible. Municipalities can pay for courses for L2-learners with no obligation to pass the civic integration exam.

## 5.3 Does this provision employ specialist teachers?

There are special training programmes (post HE and post academic) for NT2 teachers, at several HE institutes (universities of applied sciences) and Universities in the Netherlands. A professional association for NT2 teachers (the BVNT2) was founded in 2003 and has developed a competence profile for NT2 teachers. All of the training programmes for NT2 teachers are largely based on the

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<sup>22</sup> Certified by the Stichting Blik op Werk.

acquaintance of competences from this profile. Still, there is no requirement for providers to hire NT2 certified teachers. Some providers do find this certificate important. The majority of NT2 teachers working in the Netherlands did not follow one of the training programmes for NT2 teachers, neither do they have a teaching qualification, but they have specialized in working with L2 speakers during their working life.

The BVNT2 also offers short courses, workshops and conferences for NT2 teachers, in order to professionalize this group of teachers.

#### **5.4 Is there specialist provision for those who have poor literacy skills in their L1?**

Yes, in the Netherlands the regional training centres (ROCs) offer special provision for adults with low literacy skills in their L1. There are courses for adults who are illiterate, and for adults who want to increase their skills in reading and writing until level 2F. These courses aim at reaching a higher level of independence in everyday life, at work and when following a training programme. Since 2015 other providers than the ROCs can offer adult literacy courses for L1 speakers as well (see also section 1).

#### **5.5 Is there a separate curriculum for this type of provision?**

In the Netherlands no separate literacy curriculum is available for L1 speakers. Providers and teachers create their own curricula, based on the Standaarden en Eindtermen VE (standards and final attainment levels for adult education). Curricula need to be based on these standards in order to be funded.

# 6 Reading environments to stimulate reading motivation

## 6.1 Are there schemes to promote reading for pleasure among adults?

There are no formal government programmes to incentivise and support reading for pleasure. However, there are organisations that promote reading for pleasure, such as the Stichting CPNB (association for collective propaganda of books) and Stichting Lezen (Association for Reading). CPNB focuses on a broad target group, from children to adults and offers many different campaigns promoting reading, together with libraries. Stichting Lezen focuses on reading pleasure and culture for children from 0 – 18 years. There is no organisation specifically focussing on reading for pleasure among adults.

## 6.2 Is there systematic cooperation with civil society – e.g. libraries, bookstores, literature institutions, theatres, media, newspapers, publishers etc. in reading promotion for adults?

Stichting CPNB cooperates with libraries, bookstores, publishers and many others for their campaigns to promote reading.

## 6.3 Are there family literacy programmes with a focus on supporting adult literacy?

Several incentives for family literacy programmes are known in the Netherlands. Many primary school offer more or less formal adult literacy courses for L2 speakers (and occasionally L1 speakers) who are parents of their pupils. The national association Stichting Lezen & Schrijven developed a special programme for L1 and L2 speakers with school children, called Taal voor Thuis (Language at Home).

# 7 Digital environments / use of technology in education

## 7.1 Is there a digital gap? How are adults supported in acquiring digital skills / digital literacy?

The so-called digital gap has evolved from a dichotomous concept of digital exclusion to a multidimensional and very complex phenomenon in which digital skills and variation in the use of media have become more and more important.<sup>23</sup> Regarding access to computers and the internet: in 2011, 94% of the households in the Netherlands had a computer or laptop. The same percentage had a connection to the internet. Elderly and lower educated people have less access to computers and the internet.

The CPB (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis) investigated the digital skills of Dutch citizens with computers.<sup>24</sup> From this group, 9% of computer users have no digital skills whatsoever, and 18% have poor digital skills. More than one fourth of computer users are not capable of actually using the computer. When focusing on internet skills, the CBS states that 46% of internet users have poor internet skills. Research suggests that women are less skilled in using the internet than men. Elderly people are less skilled than younger people in using the internet. And the lower the level of education, the lower the level of internet skills.

If the above means that there is a digital gap in the Netherlands, the conclusion could be that certain groups are indeed considered to have more problems than others regarding access to computers and internet, and are less skilled in the use of computers and the internet. These conclusions are especially relevant considering the policy of the Dutch government: the ambition is that in 2017, all citizens and entrepreneurs dealing with the government will do so in a digital way, for example when applying for permits. Digital services will become the standard, according to the coalition agreement of the cabinet Rutte II.<sup>25</sup>

### Digital skills and digital literacy

Several organisations in the Netherlands are aiming at developing the digital skills and digital literacy of adults. In the past, ROC's (regional training centres) offered courses in basic digital skills. As described in chapter 1, the budget provided by the WEB (law on adult education and vocational education and training) is only to be used for adult education based on the national standards for literacy and numeracy.<sup>26</sup> Digital skills can be included in this provision, but only to support the learning of reading, writing and numeracy. Courses in digital skills can no longer be offered as a specific training programme, at least not funded by the WEB budget.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://emsoc.be/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Marien\\_Van\\_Audenhove\\_-\\_mediageletterdheid\\_en\\_digitale\\_vaardigheden.pdf](http://emsoc.be/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Marien_Van_Audenhove_-_mediageletterdheid_en_digitale_vaardigheden.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> ICT, kennis en economie 2012. CBS 2012.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/05/23/visiebrief-digitale-overheid-2017.html>.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.steunpuntve.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Service-document-wet-en-regelgeving-2014-def.pdf>.

Other organisation offering courses in digital literacy are:

- Libraries: the policy of Dutch libraries includes reaching low literate people and those lacking digital skills and offering short courses to those target groups. Although there are differences in the provision of the different libraries across the Netherlands, an example of provision aiming at improving digital skills is the 'Klik & Tik' course (about the basic use of computers and the internet) of ETV.nl<sup>27</sup>. A report from SIOB (Netherlands Institute for Public Libraries) presents the results of these courses and is available on their website.<sup>28</sup>
- other non-formal providers of courses for adults, such as community centres
- online courses in digital skills, for example the Internet Bootcamp<sup>29</sup>) a course developed within the programme 'Digivaardig & Digiveilig' (a platform for the information community). See 7.3 for more details on these courses.

## **7.2 Which population groups are excluded from access to ICTs?**

Population groups that appear to have less access to ICTs are elderly people, lower educated people and probably also lower income groups, as noted in 7.1. It is important to note that in the Netherlands a very high percentage of the population does have access to ICTs, but this does not mean that people are skilled enough to use them.

## **7.3 Are there any web-based programmes for adults to improve their literacy & numeracy skills?**

The Foundation ETV.nl is the largest provider of non-formal training material aimed at low literate adults. On their portal 'Oefenen.nl' they offer programmes focusing on reading and writing, programs for Dutch as a second language, numeracy, digital skills and health skills development,

All materials on the portal "Oefenen.nl" is free for individual citizens wanting to improve their skills in literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Organisations offering courses in which they integrate the online programs of Oefenen.nl and want to monitor the progress of their students, need to purchase a licence in order to be able to offer the programme to target groups. By having a licence, they can not only monitor results, but also develop tailor-made learning pathways

Together with CINOP Consultancy the program 'NLvaardig' was developed. This combines Skype-lessons by professional teachers with individual practise with the help of non-professional volunteers.

## **7.4 What classroom resources (E-books, notebooks, internet, mobile phones...) are used to support the development of adults' literacy?**

There is no centralised approach to the use of learning technologies in the delivery of adult literacy provision. The implementation of these resources will take place in the individual classroom or at institutional level. Most adult literacy providers work with computers or laptops, as a part of their educational programmes, sometimes in open learning centers, where learners can work individually, sometimes with help of a classroom-assistant. Online (and offline) courses on the computer are for example used to support individual learners in their development and to enable differentiation in level and learner profiles.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.etv.nl/index.cfm?act=algemeen.tekst&tid=3>.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.siob.nl/media/documents/Klik-Tik-monitor-2013-2014\\_def.pdf](http://www.siob.nl/media/documents/Klik-Tik-monitor-2013-2014_def.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> (<http://www.internetbootcamp.nl/>).

# 8 Teachers

## 8.1 What are the professional roles within adult education?

The most important professional role in adult education is the role of teacher. Most often there are specialist teachers for L1 and L2 speakers. Furthermore there are professionals responsible for the intake procedure, professionals who are responsible for attracting new students, professionals who are responsible for testing and assessment. Some providers also hire assistants who support the teacher and help individual students; other providers have volunteers supporting teachers and individual students.

## 8.2 What is the status / reputation of teachers and other professionals who work in adult education?

In general, teaching in adult education is considered to be of lower status than teaching in VET or HE. Teachers in adult education are generally women aged 55+ who work part time and are very concerned with their target groups. The fact that teaching in adult education requires no special education, at least not officially, underlines this low status.

## 8.3 What are their working conditions?

In general, teachers working in adult education provided by the ROCs work under the same labour laws, regulations and conditions as their ROC colleagues in VET courses. Since an open market was introduced for immigration courses and after several budget cuts, a lot of adult education departments of ROCs changed working conditions by changing the ratio between actual working hours in the classroom and hours for preparing courses and other tasks. Where it was 52/48 % now often the ratio is around 70/30 %.

For teachers in private companies, for example in immigration courses and literacy provision in companies and branches, the situation is completely different. They aren't protected by the same CAO (central labor agreement, in this case for the educational sector) and often work on temporary labour contracts for lower salaries. Also a lot of them work as freelancers and that means that they do not have social security provision for illness or pension or periods of joblessness.

## 8.4 How do salaries compare to the national average?

Teachers working at ROCs receive a salary equal to that of other teachers at ROCs. Teachers working at commercial providers mostly receive a lower salary than teachers at ROCs, with great differences between the different providers.

## 8.5 What are the statutory qualification requirements?

Teachers in adult education do not require a specific diploma or at some providers even a teaching qualification, except for teachers teaching on the dual pathway trainings (BBL) at local training centres (ROCs), who need to be qualified and competent.

## 8.6 What are the entry requirements for ITE?

Entry criteria for initial teacher education in the Netherlands is secondary education at the level of HAVO (higher general secondary education) or VWO (general secondary education preparing for

universities). HAVO gives entrance to universities of applied sciences, VWO to universities. There is no initial teacher education for teachers in adult education and basic skills. The official policy of the government is that a teacher in Dutch language is also qualified to teach in literacy and basic skills training.

## 9 Teacher Education

### 9.1 What are the statutory qualification requirements for adult literacy teachers?

There are no official qualifications for adult literacy teachers. Providers of adult literacy courses make different demands on the qualifications and competences of teachers. Some providers ask for a teaching qualification, which does not mean that teachers have special knowledge or experience in adult literacy provision, Others ask for two years or more experience in teaching adults, others demand that when no teaching qualification is held, the teacher should start a training programme to obtain a teaching qualification within two years..

ROCs should only work with teachers who are qualified and competent.<sup>30</sup> In VET and adult education teachers without proper education need to obtain a pedagogical educational certificate. However, the quality and intensity of training programs to obtain such a certificate is very diverse.

### 9.2 Are there specialist qualification routes for adult literacy teachers?

Yes, for teachers of NT2 courses there are several qualification routes. In the Netherlands it is possible to obtain a certificate Qualified NT2 Teacher, at Universities of applied sciences or Universities in Amsterdam, Zwolle, Utrecht, Tilburg and Nijmegen. These training programmes differ in entry requirements, one of the programmes requires a teaching qualification, the other programmes do not. Time spent at the training programmes differ from about 400 hours to more than 800 hours. A traineeship is an obligatory and important part of the training programme. These programmes are followed by NT2 teachers wanting or needing to obtain a qualification in teaching NT2 and by students at wanting to start a career in NT2 teaching.

Special training programmes for teachers of low literate adult L1 speakers do not exist in the Netherlands. There are some incentives and handbooks which offer information on teaching to this target group, but no official training programmes occur. Training programmes for maths teachers within adult education do not occur either, though a specialist training programme for maths teachers in VET is being developed in the Netherlands. For maths teachers in adult education this training programme could also be of interest.

### 9.3 What are the entry requirements for Initial Teacher Education?

The normal requirements for teacher education is a diploma of secondary school at HAVO-level for a bachelor program at a university of applied sciences and WO-level for a bachelor and masterprogram at a university.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/werken-in-het-onderwijs/vraag-en-antwoord/hoe-word-ik-docent-in-het-beroepsonderwijs-en-volwasseneneducatie-bve.html>.

#### **9.4 Who pays for training?**

In some cases the provider pays (partly) for the training, but often the trainee teachers pay for the training. The central government offers bursaries (Lerarenbeurs) to teachers in VET schools, aiming at professionalising and specializing teachers. Those bursaries are directed at teachers in in ROCs. There are no data available about the use of these bursaries for teachers in adult education departments of ROCs specifically.<sup>31</sup>

#### **9.5 Is there a curriculum for initial teacher training?**

There is no national adult initial teacher training curriculum in the Netherlands. Initial teacher training in the Netherlands is based on two important documents, enshrined in the law on education:

- The 'Kennisbases' (bases of knowledge). These bases of knowledge describe what the teacher must know about the subject he is teaching. For example history, chemistry etc.
- A competence profile describing the pedagogical, didactical and general professional competences of teachers in education.

Training programmes for teachers use these 'Knowledge bases' to develop their curricula. A Kennisbasis is not a curriculum but it mentions what should be offered in the teacher training programmes, in order that all qualified teachers master the necessary competences and knowledge. Training institutes have the possibility to offer more in their training programmes than what is described in the Kennisbasis, but cannot offer less.

For training of basic skills teachers the Ministry has not developed an official knowledge base or competence profile. However, there are competence profiles for teachers T1 and T2, developed by stakeholders in the field (also 5.3).

In 2015 the Ministry asked several institutions (CINOP, ITTA and the Freudenthal Institute) to develop a framework for teachers in basic skills education. This framework consists of competence-descriptions as a base for teacher training institutions to develop courses for teachers in basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) for adults. This framework does not have the same status as a knowledge base and training institutions who offer training for teachers in basic skill are not obliged to use the framework. There is also no quality monitoring for training for teachers in basic skills.

#### **9.6 Are there compulsory (or optional) language and literacy modules in all adult education ITE?**

In the Netherlands, one cannot speak of ITE for adult education. There are no compulsory or optional modules for language, literacy, numeracy or digital skills teaching to adults.

Most qualified teachers in adult education have one of the following qualifications:

- training programme to obtain a degree in teaching in primary education
- training programme to obtain a degree in teaching in secondary and vocational (VET) education
- educational minors and masters for students studying at universities, to obtain a degree in teaching in secondary and vocational (VET) education

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/werken-in-het-onderwijs/lerarenbeurs-en-promotiebeurs>.



- additional training programmes for students who recently graduated from Universities, to obtain a degree in teaching in secondary and vocational (VET) education
- additional training programmes for teachers already working as a teacher in VET schools or at providers of adult education

Which percentage of teachers in adult education has which degree is not clear (and not every teacher in adult education has a teaching qualification). An estimation could be that a large part of teachers working in adult education have a degree in teaching in primary education or a degree obtained in an additional training programme.

### **9.7 What is the length of the required training?**

Training programmes to obtain a degree in teaching in primary, secondary and vocational (VET) education normally take four years (fulltime training programme), with possibilities to follow a shorter programme when one has exemptions.

Additional training programmes normally take between six months to a year, depending on the programme, the background of the trainee teacher and possible exemptions.

### **9.8 Is there a curriculum / quality standards?**

There is no national agreed curriculum, since there are different options in training programmes to obtain a teaching qualification.

### **9.9 Is there continuous professional development (in-service training) for teachers which focuses on literacy development?**

For teachers in Dutch as a second Language (NT2) there are possibilities for professional development offered by the BVNT2 (professional association for NT2 teachers) and some other organisations specialised in language teaching and examination. There is no requirement to take such training. Teachers of adult literacy courses to L1 speakers are offered some possibilities for professional development as well (conferences, commercial organisations specialised in adult literacy), but clearly less than teachers of L2 speakers.

### **9.10 What is the take-up among teachers?**

Because of the diversity in professional development training for adult literacy teachers, it is difficult to describe the take-up among teachers.

### **9.11 Who delivers this training?**

See 9.9

### **9.12 How is it quality assured?**

There is no formal quality assurance process for professional development of adult literacy teachers.

# 10 Policy-making

## 10.1 Who is involved in policy-making for adult literacy education?

On the national level: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs. For the new program 'Tel mee met Taal' (Counting on skills) in 2016 the Ministry of Health and Welfare will also participate.