



TT-PLUS PROJECT
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First country report
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1 Context of Dutch case studies in the TT-plus project

1.1 Characteristics of occupational system

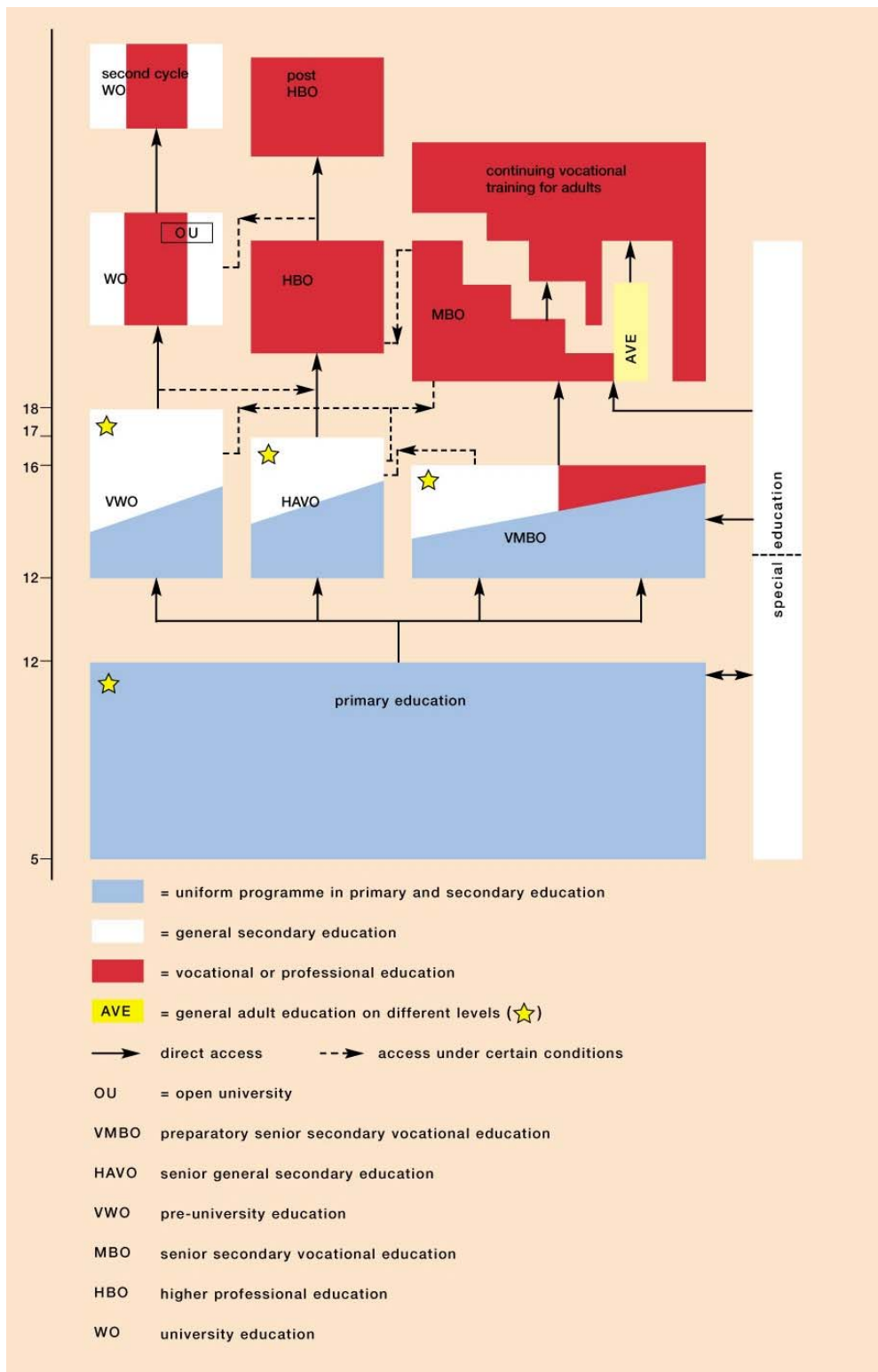
Alongside with industrialization in the nineteenth century, the need for up-to-date training grew in the Netherlands similarly as in other European countries. Previous apprenticeship models of training at the workplace, which date back to the Middle Age, were found to be insufficient to meet the training needs of rapidly growing body of workers. Schooling of workers prevailed over training at the workplace. In the 20th century school learning was the standard of training offered by vocational schools as well as company training schools. The nature of training at these schools was to a large degree theoretical, graduates did not have enough practical skills to be able to perform adequately in the work situation. From 1980 onwards there has been increasing attention to learning at the workplace in both education and labor organizations. In a way it shows a shift back to the old apprenticeship models of training. On-the-job learning has been considered as one of the most important solutions to the lack of connection between education and labor market (Poortman, 2007).

In 1996 the Act on Vocational and Adult Education (*Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs*) came into force. This was the first act to bring together all types of secondary vocational education and adult education (overview of Dutch educational system shown in Figure 1). The act aimed to strengthen and further integrate the system of initial and post-initial vocational education and training, and set it apart from general education (Maes, 2004). "The act broadened vocational education and training to include a system of company traineeships (which also have a school-based element), and stipulated that school-based provision must include a substantial practical element (Heidemann et al, 2000 cited in Brockmann, n.d.). The 1996 Act was significant also because it marked the shift towards a modularised, outcomes-based qualifications system, which was strongly demand-led (Westerhuis, 2006 cited in Brockmann, n.d.)", (Brockmann, n.d., p. 8). The framework resulted in detailed qualifications, drawn up by the social partners in different economic sectors. The narrow qualifications approach was revised since it did not suit with the general framework of knowledge economy. "The new qualifications structure, which is currently being introduced, is once again built upon a broad conception of qualification, which ostensibly focuses on the lifelong career perspective of students rather than on short-term needs of the economy", Brockmann, n.d., p. 8. The new framework introduces competence-based qualifications which aim to improve the transparency and flexibility of qualifications, and enabling the quick adaptation of qualifications to changes in the labor market.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social affairs started a project called "Life long learning" (*Leven lang leren*) as a need to increase the knowledge society and economy of the Netherlands. Outcome of this ambitious project, which will run till 2011 is to realize:

1. Simulating more cooperation and participation (learning and working trajectories, increasing competences, and dual work/study)
2. Flexible and efficient education
3. Reaching more people and employers
4. Concept development of life long learning (Ministry of Education, 2007)

Figure 1. Structure of the education and training system in the Netherlands



Source: CINOP, 2004 found in Maes, 2004

1.1.1 Vocational education and training

Westerhuis, (2007) points out that in general there are four types of competences addressed in Dutch vocational education and training: 1. vocational / occupational; 2. career; 3. civic; and 4. learning competences. In addition, from 2008 two additional groups of competences are included: modern languages and mathematics. Five types of training are distinguished in vocational training in the Netherlands, linking up with four levels of qualification (ILO, n.d.).

Table 1

Five types of training in vocational training in the Netherlands (source: ILO, n.d)

Level	Training	Duration
1. simple executive work	assistant training	0.5 - 1 year
2. executive work	basic vocational training	2 - 3 years
3. complete independent execution of work	vocational training	2 - 4 years
4. complete independent execution of work with broad usability or specialisation	middle-management training specialist training	3 - 4 years 1 - 2 years

Two learning paths are distinguished for training courses at these levels:

- Off-the-job learning path (comparable with the old apprenticeship system)
- Vocational-training learning path (comparable with the old senior secondary vocational education).

1.1.2 Continuing vocational education

For those people who leave their initial education or training and are not compelled to go to an educational establishment anymore, but do wish to better their position in the labor market qualify themselves for continuing vocational education (full-time and part-time). These people can follow a broad range of training courses (approximately 500) which is not accommodated in a coherent system. These full and part time courses are offered within senior secondary vocational education (MBO). The part time variant is not the same as the off-the-job learning path (the apprenticeship system). The intention of this system is that education is provided outside regular school hours (evenings, or weekends). It is therefore a continuing form of vocational training, although it trains for qualifications which were developed for initial vocational education (ILO, n.d.).

1.1.3 Training of employees

Training for employees falls under the responsibility of the social partners. Investment in human capital is thought to be essential to the maintenance and improvements of economic competitiveness. This development has greatly increased the interest in education and training within labor organizations (Van Wieringen & Atwell, 1999). Moreover, continuously changing work requires continuously learning employees, which indicates that work organizations are expected to transform into 'learning organizations' (Van Woerkom, 2003). According to the Beloningsindex (an initiative of the Dutch Institute of Reward Statistics) (2007) the investment of educational budget has grown from 3.3 % in 2006 to 4.7% in 2007. The education of employees has become an important matter within organizations not only to attract employees but also to keep them. Human Resource Development (HRD) in labor organizations addresses employees beyond the group of new staff members (Poortman, 2007). HRD is aimed at releasing the human potential in individuals, groups and organizations, through learning experiences that result from organized training, education and development activities (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986, p. 4). Besides the organized training activities, more attention is needed to place on informal nature of learning at the workplace (Poortman, 2007). Moreover, regulations on training and skills are by 2006 included in all collective agreements. In the context of individual training rights, by 2006 half of the concluded collective agreements include the possibility of a personal training plan (Grünell, 2007). These personal training plans are important as they offer individual right to education and employability.

In addition, Leisnik & Greenwood, (2007) conclude that the reduction of hierarchical layers in management in commercial organizations has directed the decision-making authority to lower levels and introduced self-managing teams with authority over production, quality and personnel issues. The introduction of teamwork has gone along with a tendency towards multi-tasking, higher skills levels and other competences such as social and communicational skills.

1.2 Trainers in the partners' context

The training of teaching staff and the shortage of teachers is currently one of a main policy priority in the Netherlands. Besides a large shortage of teachers in primary and secondary education, to a lesser extent the problem also exists in secondary vocational education and in adult education. Yearly, approximately 2500 – 3500 additional teachers are needed in this sector (Maes, 2004). The additional teachers should be recruited from the regular teacher training programs and also outside the educational domain. The latter is already a common practice in adult education and vocational training. The Ministry of Education has created an 'Act on stimulation of recruitment of teaching staff outside the teaching branch'. Clear capability requirements are formulated. It is possible to attain the necessary requirements via accreditation of prior learning and work experiences as well as through the regular teacher training courses. Unlike secondary schools, regional training centers (ROC) have a large degree of freedom in appointing their personnel. Teachers and trainers can be appointed based on their abilities and competences rather than based on the diplomas and certifications (Maes, 2004).

Trainers in the workplace setting are usually required to have a level of pedagogical and communicational skills, and knowledge and experiences related to the subject matter.

1.3 Trainers' training, qualifications and qualification requirements

1.3.1 Teachers/trainers in educational establishments

Teacher training is part of higher education and regulated through the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act. Educational programs are offered in bachelor/master system. Courses in these educational programs are accredited by the Netherlands Accreditation Organization (Maes, 2004). Teachers for the general subjects of vocational education such as language or social studies are trained in the same way as teachers for general education. Vocationally-oriented subjects are usually taught by teachers who have followed specialized training (Maes, 2004).

1.3.2 Training of trainers in vocational establishments. Dual learning environments.

ROCs – senior secondary vocational schools wanted the teacher training institutes to take into account the function differentiation in the teaching profession. Subsequently, the dual training projects were initiated. These run based on cooperation between vocational education and training institutes and teacher training institutes (Maes, 2004). "The aim of the dual approach is to develop a new, demand-based training and teaching system, with the design of a four year route that takes account of (sub)competences corresponding with the job profiles of the different functions in the ROCs (educational assistants, trainers, coaches and teachers). This provision is competence-based, instead of curriculum oriented, with a central role for learning at the workplace", Maes, 2004, p. 44. Both the ROCs and teacher training institutes are responsible for the quality and organization of education in a dual system.

1.3.3 Trainers in the workplace

The criteria for accrediting companies that provide practical training are formulated by the expertise centers for vocational education, training and the labor market. "One of these criteria is that the trainers, who are responsible for guiding and training students in the company, should have didactical skills and know how to instruct, guide, motivate and assess the students", Maes, 2004, p. 45. Most of the expertise centers for vocational education, training and the labor market provide commercial courses for training trainers in the various branches. In some sectors (e.g. security) more detailed criteria related to skills and qualifications of the trainers are formulated, such as a minimum level of certified training (Maes, 2004).

In addition, commercial training institutes are accredited and monitored by Cedeo. Cedeo is an organization initiated by HRD managers of large companies and institutes and supported by the Ministry of Economics. The tasks of Cedeo are:

1. Carrying out custom satisfaction research among clients of training and other HRD services of commercial, governmental and non-profitable organizations.
2. Providing certifications based on results.
3. Manages the register of HRD service providers with new or renewed Cedeo-certifications.
4. Provides information about and promotion of the Cedeo-certification and its value for certified companies (Cedeo, n.d).

1.4 Policies of trainers' qualifications and professional development

As indicated before The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs have started a Life Long Learning project, this mainly to: Increase training course participation and increase higher educated professionals (*Lissabondoelstellingen*) (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2007).

As policy they have introduced the EVC (Recognition of acquired competences) for professionals, and Dual trajectories, mainly for MBO schooled people to obtain HBO degree level, by working and studying at the same time. This is realized by:

1. Setting up and initiating more cooperation is to be realized between the Centre for work and income, government, educational establishments, companies and employees. These lead to knowledge centers in different regions in the Netherlands.
2. Creating more flexibility and efficiency in the educational sector, for example through, example schools, the development of Ad (Associate degrees) and stimulation of effective projects.
3. Targeting and reaching the public with more and better public campaigns, an integrated website learning and working for better information management, a telephone helpdesk, and learning and working offices for face to face contact.
4. More concept development, the creation of a think tank and congress on life long learning (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2007).

In 2006 the organization of educational employers and employees have formulated an agenda with eight main points:

1. Focus on the professionalism of trainers and teachers
2. The entrepreneurial school
3. Professional management
4. Strengthening the human resources management policy
5. Training of teachers and other personnel in education
6. Competitive conditions of employment
7. Attractive working environment
8. Developing links with other sectors to attract teachers

A national reference point has been opened for those interested in working in senior vocational education and training in the Netherlands and other European countries. The aim of this organization is to improve the transparency of national qualifications (Colo, n.d.). In addition, a website (<http://www.leraar.nl>) is available which provides a variety of information to practicing and prospective professionals in educational settings. In line with the decentralization of responsibilities to educational institutes, the regional training centers and educational institutes are currently required to manage the professionalization of the trainers and teachers. Various private training providers offer a large number of in-service short-term courses for professional development of trainers and teachers. These courses are paid for from the lump-sum budgets of the educational institutions (Maes, 2004).

1.5 Rational for the selection of cases

As we have described in the previous sections a lot of attention is currently paid on education and training of prospective and practising professionals in the Netherlands. We were interested to find out how training practices are organized outside the formal education institutes. In order to understand how the trends of training reported in policy documents and other regulative acts can be best realized in companies we decided to study companies which are innovative in terms of their training practice. In order to find evidence for a variety of cases we decided to select a governmental institute, a large commercial company and a small commercial company. After consultation with an expert of workplace learning, we selected three companies which are known for their innovative training practices. This resulted in a sample of three cases: a large governmental organisation, a leading large-scale training company, and a small educational training company.

2 Case descriptions

2.1 Case Governmental Organisation

1. Introduction

The growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning places an increasing focus on the importance of training. The development and recognition of work based learning and e-learning offers new opportunities for the training of trainers.

Within the European TTPlus project the issues involved in the training and professionalisation of trainers in the European Member States will be examined. One of the key actions of the project is to examine the contexts in which training takes place in enterprises and who has responsibility for the training function.

The examination will take place in six European countries: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK. Each partner provides case studies of three companies in which training takes place. Out of the different case studies one report will be extracted.

The Governmental Organisation is one of the case studies in the examination. For this case three interviews are held: an interview with a teammanager, an educational expert/trainer and with the coordinator of trainings on one of the main topic within the organisation.

In this case description the following topics are described: a profile of the company (history, structure, location, number of employees), the competences of a trainer including the selection process of new trainers, the professional development of trainers (expectations, support provided /facilitated by the company, informal learning, relevant learning experiences according to the trainers and the ideal situation regarding professional development), training practices (contexts, problems and innovations), policy regarding diversity and trends the interviewees see.

2. Company profile¹

History of development of the company

The more than 30,000 staff members of Governmental Organisation are responsible for a wide range of activities. They are responsible for developing and carrying out governmental policy. Other important work processes include control and detection and the supervision of the policy.

Structure

The Governmental Organisation is part of a Ministry. The organisation structure consists of:

- the Directorate-General;
- 12 policy teams;
- Operational services, and
- Facility services

The interviewees in the case study came from one of the facility services: a *centre for communication and professional development*: This centre supports and advises in three areas:

1. *communication*; An important task is to ensure proper communication with the customers.
2. *teaching and informing*; They organize a large number of internal study and training courses. These courses range from fiscal studies to training courses in the

area of verbal and written communication. To an increasing extent, staff members can decide themselves where and when they study and which modules of a course are most interesting for them. In addition, they provide a number of internal media, in which staff members of the organisation are kept informed on both fiscal and organisational subjects.

3. *personnel and organisational development*. They play an important part in the area of personnel and organisational development. For instance, they advise the management and project groups and assists other staff members in their career development.

Location (factors)

There are more than 260 buildings. The central office is located in Utrecht.

Number of employees

The organisation has more than 30,000 staff members.

3. Competences of a trainer

The trainers are:

- educational experts/trainers: they are responsible for didactical trainings, for developing educational concepts, implementing new training methods etcetera;
- parttime trainers: professional experts who give training one day a week.

According to the interviewees, a trainer should have the following competences:

<i>Didactical competences</i>	Be able to use of different didactical methods, structuring a course, motivating students.
<i>Knowlegde of the subject</i>	A good knowlegde of the training subject is necessary.
<i>Being enthusiastic about sharing information</i>	Trainers hase to be enthusiastic about teaching and sharing knowlegde to motivate students. Although, being too enthusiastic about the subject can have a reversed effect.
<i>Be able to use own experiences as examples</i>	A good trainer can use his/hers own experiences as examples in training.

Selection procedure for trainers

The centre for communication and professional development is responsible for the internal training of employees. The important subjects are divided into 10-15 topics. Each topic has a coordinator who is responsible for the content of training on the topic. The coordinator is also responsible for selecting new developers and trainers on the topic. Most of the time, a coordinator asks someone from his/hers own internal network if he/she is interested to become a developer or trainer. Employees who are interested in the development of materials or in training can also announce themselves to a coordinator. New trainers have to participate in an internal didactical training. If they succeed in this, they can start with giving training. The coordinator supports new trainers and monitors if they meet the requirements. Recent policy is focused on outsourcing as much training as possible.

4. Professional development of trainers

Expectations

Most of the parttime trainers are very motivated and enthusiastic about being a trainer. Because of timepressure on departments, not everyone gets permission to become a trainer. A training day of

6 hours is equal to a working day of 8 hours. Preparation for the training has to be done in their own time. Trainers get a financial compensation for this, in which the preparation time is equal to the training time.

Support provided/facilitated by the company

- Every employee is responsible for his/hers own professional development and gets time for this. The amount of time is depended of the function.
- New trainers have to participate in a didactical course.
- Each year, one day for parttime trainers is organised with workshops on different topics, such as 'blended learning', 'competence based learning'. Trainers can meet other trainers and share experiences.
- At the start of the development of new material/a new training, a meeting is organised with all the involved persons.
- Each team has a budget for professionalisation. The team members have to agree on the way the budget is used.

Informal learning

- Trainers are coached by the coordinator of the training of their topic.
- All trainers work in a team and give feedback to each others

Relevant learning experiences according to the trainers

The educational expert mentioned in the interview she learns most from working in project with colleagues with different expertise. She also mentioned that she organised a lot of training with colleagues and she learned much from the way they teach. She developed her own trainingstyle by watching colleagues with very different styles and adopting all the things which are appropriate for her.

5. Training practices

Contexts

The organisation offers a lot of internal training for their employees. The training on specific subjects are given by parttime trainers who work mainly as professional experts. Didactical trainings are given by the educational experts of the Centre of professional development and communication. They also organise training in a worldwide or European context, which are mostly combinations of trainings on relevant subjects and didactical skills.

There are about 10-15 topics within the organisation. On one of the topics, there are about 40 different trainingmodules each year. In total there are about 60-80 trainings on this topic on different intellectual levels. The coordinator is responsible for the content of the training and for the training materials. The coordinator is also responsible for the selection and coaching of the parttime trainers.

The organisation developed a template for training called B-learning (Blended Learning). Each training use different methods such as e-learning, a syllabus and meetings. A training is divided into learning objects. At the end of a learning object the trainees have to apply the learning content in a real situation. In each training, the trainees also have to work on a case-study.

Problems

Related to the company

In worldwide context:

- sometimes wrong people are sent in such as managers instead of people who has to teach employees in their own organisations

- different expectations: they expect training on a subject and not also on didactical skills

Within own organisations:

- sometimes the attitudes of trainees: they prefer a short training with not too much practice because they can go home early
- Some trainers and developers have difficulties with using the template of a Blended Learning-course (see Innovations). They think it is too restrictive.
- It is difficult to find trainers on high level courses because the trainees are well trained and demanding and the trainer has to be a real expert. Sometimes retired employees are asked for these training tasks.

Related to the trainer

- Difference in age between trainers and trainees. Trainers are much older and they sometimes have difficulties to connect to experiences of young people.
- Difference in experience with ICT and ICT in education between trainers and trainees

Innovations

A learning concept called B-learning (or Blended Learning) is introduced. This means using a combination of educational methods, including e-learning. B-learning courses are developed by a template. A training is divided into different learning objects (chapters) In the template regulations have been taken such as:

- learning goals are described in the introduction of the training
- a learning object concludes with application questions
- a learning task (combination of learning objects) concludes with a case-study, in which the different aspects of the learning objects are combined.

6. Diversity

The organisation has policy on equal opportunities. Every new employee gets a training on this subject. Equal opportunities is one of the five core topics and is especially applied at the personnel sector. Besides the fact that diversity is a core topic in the company, there is not much attention for diversity in relation to the trainers

7. Trends

Shared (mentioned by more than one person)

- Blended Learning: a mix of different learning methods (including e-learning)
- Outsourcing training to companies and to universities for professional education. They have to focus on their main tasks. A connected development is buying educational material from other companies/schools (instead of developing own materials).

Mentioned by only one interviewee

- Informal learning such as training on the job
- Focus on short trainings with specific objectives.

2.2 Case Training and Consulting Firm

1. Introduction

The growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning places an increasing focus on the importance of training. The development and recognition of work based learning and e-learning offers new opportunities for the training of trainers.

Within the European TTPlus project the issues involved in the training and professionalisation of trainers in the European Member States will be examined. One of the key actions of the project is to examine the contexts in which training takes place in enterprises and who has responsibility for the training function.

The examination will take place in six European countries: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK. Each partner provides case studies of three companies in which training takes place. Out of the different case studies one report will be extracted.

One of the case studies in the examination is a large Training and Consulting firm. For this case four interviews are held: two interviews with trainers and two with stakeholders (managers).

In this case description the following topics are described: a profile of the company (history, structure, location, number of employees), the competences of a trainer including the selection process of new trainers, the professional development of trainers (expectations, support provided /facilitated by the company, informal learning, relevant learning experiences according to the trainers and the ideal situation regarding professional development), training practices (contexts, problems and innovations), policy regarding diversity and trends the interviewees see.

2. Company profile

History of development of the company

Nowadays, this company is a leading training and consulting firm in personal and organisational development. It began in 1979 and the first projects were an organisational-development project and a stress-workshop. In this year also the first assertiveness training was developed. The services they offer right now consist of various behaviour and skills trainings, and organisational consultancy projects.

The goal of this organisation is, like any other organisation, achieving results.

For more than twenty-five years, they have achieved remarkable results together with their clients. This accomplishment is based on their vision that their clients succeed when their employees succeed.

Structure

This companies aim is to contribute in the form of training courses, education and consultancy. They interpret 'Results with people' as meaning: the improved functioning of managers, supervisory staff and employees in profit and non-profit organisations, related to increased effectiveness and efficiency.

The firm has two training divisions that are full-service providers of courses for job content in a wide variety of business areas. Several of their courses have been accredited for bachelor and master degrees, others have accreditations by respected international organisations.

In support of their training services, they have developed an online Personal Development & Learning Platform, to facilitate 'learning on the job' in every organisation.

Some of their core fields of expertise:

- Human resources and management development;
- Management and stress prevention in organisations;
- Personal effectiveness training;

- Team building and team work improvement;
- interface management among organisation levels;
- Corporate path finding: strategic problem finding and goal-seeking for management;
- Contract management;
- Leadership, management and 'on-the-job' coaching;
- Implementation management.

Location (factors)

The company is located in the centre of the Netherlands.

Number of employees

The firm is part of a bigger group, which employs more than 600 people including trainers, consultants, psychologists and other experts. Together they partner to achieve the clients' objectives. In addition, they work with an extensive network of freelance professionals.

3. Competences of a trainer

According to the interviewees, a trainer should have the following competences:

<i>Knowledge of the subject (know-how)</i>	Knowledge of theories and concepts. Two interviewees (a trainer and a manager) express the importance of scientific or academic knowledge. It is not necessary to express these during training but it is important to draw on these sources.
<i>The ability to deal with group dynamics and phases of a group.</i>	He/she must be able to place interventions for instance when the group process doesn't match with the learning process.
<i>Goal oriented</i>	The trainer must always keep in mind the goal of the trainee.
<i>Communicative</i>	To be communicative is a basic skill of a trainer
<i>The ability to deal with resistance.</i>	The trainer must know how the instruments he/she can handle when dealing with resistance at the individual as well as the group level.
<i>The ability and nerve to hold back his/her reaction</i>	Because a trainer is in a frontrunners position it is a danger that the trainees are focussed on the trainer while it is important that interaction in the group will develop (dynamic communication pattern), independent from the trainer.
<i>Leadership qualities</i>	Leadership qualities without getting authoritarian. And to be able to 'follow' without getting too obedient. A trainer needs to find a balance between these two qualities.
<i>The ability make a personal connection with a group</i>	The ability to get in contact with the trainees and the skills to reformulate the questions of the trainees into training materials (cases). Goal is that not only the individual that asked the question learns from it but the groups as a whole.
<i>The ability to make a connection with him/herself</i>	A trainer must know him/herself well to be able to feel free with a group.

<i>Personal effective</i>	A key value is the 'personal effective employee'. He/she is expected to take initiative, shows responsibility and solves problems by him/herself.
To be able to <i>collaborate</i>	Trainers must collaborate in a team.
<i>Precise</i>	Precision is important since a trainer need to give feedback and has to evaluate the courses, which is a precise task.

Selection procedure for trainers

A selection procedure starts with the description of the vacancy. They think of the requested competences and experience. Important selection criteria are: experiences, the connection someone can make with him/herself and with the subject, his/her effectiveness (e.g. are the training goals reached), their communication skills and the 'fun' they have in their work. The most important characteristics of an trainers profile are: result-oriented and "hard with a heart". Trainers must be able to confront participants in such a way that they will come into action. The selection procedure contains always more than one interview with the same person. Sometimes a proof training takes place, or an assessment or a candidate joins the trainers a few times during training sessions.

4. Professional development of trainers

Expectations

Trainers are expected to take care and responsibility for their own learning process. E.g. read relevant magazines and books, and seize the opportunities for learning. The company facilitates the professional development but the trainer should take the initiative. 30%-35% of the available time of trainers is mentioned for meetings and professional development. Each trainer is supposed to draw up a year plan that contains agreements concerning his/her professional development. The trainer is more or less free regarding his/her professional development but he/she needs to previously inform his/her manager. On the one hand, the manager has a duty to facilitate the trainers. On the other hand he/she needs to be result-oriented. Thus, it might be possible that a manager talks to an employee who doesn't stick to the appointments made in his/her year plan.

Support provided/facilitated by the company

The company offers and facilitates various ways for the professional development of their staff:

- Internal business school. All trainers, permanent staff as well as freelancers, can take part in own courses for free. These courses are organised every three weeks.
- Team meetings. One day in every month the team meets to discuss: logistics, professional development with respect to current topics. One department starts these meetings with a so-called 'flag-parade'. Each team member expresses with a flag (red, orange or green) how he/she is doing. If someone shows a red flag, the team will collaboratively search for solutions. The idea behind this is that a safe environment is a precondition for good development.
- Professional development days. Twice every year all trainers that run the same training meet and exchange. They discuss bottlenecks and improvements will be made.
- Connection days. All trainers meet during two-days to exchange and share. The trainers are responsible for the programme. They have the opportunity to follow training from their colleagues or external trainers.
- Summer school of 5-days.
- Courses and training. In addition to the possibilities the internal business school offers, trainers can attend external training.

- Talks with the trainings manager of their team. They discuss the content of the trainings
- Talks with their team manager about their personal
- Books for free. The company has an internal publisher. Each trainer can get a certain amount of the books they publish for free.
- Scientist café. Soon they will start with a scientist café. Each month a scientist will be invited to give a presentation.
- Podium. A new initiative to offer a platform where trainers can display their expertise to their colleagues.
- Internet site and 'newsflash'. Important internal articles are published at a website. In addition, a newsflash exists with information about the organisation.
- Internal quality assurance. All trainers write trainings report after each training and mention what can be improved.

Informal learning

- The company deliberately organised facilities that promote informal learning. E.g. there is a grand café where people can work, meet and lunch in the location. Especially in the beginning this worked well. The company still puts effort in a culture of meeting, exchanging and sharing.
- Trainers organise interpersonal consultation meetings for trainers, within the company as well as with trainers outside the company.
- Trainers that organise a community of practice (COP).
- Professional development through practicing (give trainings) and reflecting.
- Attending conferences and give a presentation makes that one gains more in-depth knowledge.
- Reading relevant literature and keep up with professional journals. This is being highly stimulated by the company.
- The company finds it important that trainers learn from participants as well. When a trainer does too much or gets too high evaluations, the management will talk with him/her.

Relevant learning experiences according to the trainers

- Coaching of study groups and giving lectures. By repetition a trainer gets a lot experience.
- It is important that a trainer can explain things clear and simple but in such a way that it generates questions by the participants in the training. At a certain moment the trainer doesn't need to worry more about the content of training. Central becomes the interaction with and between the participants. You learn this by giving the same training over and over again.
- Participants in training learn the most by actively working with the content: learning by doing.
- Training is one of the best mirrors. Everything you encounter and experience as difficult says a lot about yourself. For example, about the way you react, you dislike and the interventions you do. This has to do with your own values, standards and demands. If you know better how you self are as a person than you can better deal with it. You learn a lot about the behaviour of people, how they react and you can react faster.

Ideal situation regarding professional development

Two stakeholders reflect on the ideal situation, According to one, the company should theoretically be a learning community that consists of small, independent teams that function as centres of expertise. These teams should publish books as well. Non-team members can join when they are intrinsically motivated and challenged by a certain knowledge area or expertise.

For the other stakeholder an open learning space is important for the professional development of the trainers. In this open space all actors should be brought together: trainers, trainees, de client and the workplace. Often, trainers have their own domain but they can learn for other trainers and from trainees. The trainers drive for professional development should be in fact the success rate of the professional development of the trainees. The company is working on such an open space but the problem is getting all the actors together at the same time.

6. Training practices

Contexts

The company offers:

- Incompany trainings and trainings with open enrolments (40% permanent staff and 60% freelancers)
- Trainings with a fixed format
- Tailor-made consultancy, like consultancy to organisations
- Coaching of individuals
- Trainings that deal with different aspects: (1) behaviour, like assertiveness training and communication trainings and (2) content, like methodical design and basic skills for trainers
- Several courses have been accredited for bachelor and master degrees, others have accreditations by respected international organisations.

There is an intake interview with every participant of training with open enrolments. They also try to have an intake with the trainees at the incompany projects.

Every course has a "comeback day" in which the transfer of the training in practice is an important subject

Problems

Related to the company

- The company is dynamic and powerful. They offer a broad range of trainings. There sometimes is a tension between being profitable and creating enough spaces for new initiatives.
- Sometimes things happens 'ad hoc'. For example: a text for the programme has to be written before the development of a course. It is better to think about what you really want first.
- The training time for all courses is shortening for the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which may not be suitable for all courses.

Related to the trainer

- Trainers put the energy in new trainings e.g. with ICT, while the exiting trainings lag behind. These should be renewed too.
- As an experienced trainer it is not always easy to stay motivated. This can partly be solved by performing different trainings.
- Trainers deal with participants and sometimes it is problematic that they are too quiet during training or have psychical problems.
- There is a difference in the way trainers make use of the VLE; not all trainers use it as it is supposed to be used.

Innovations

- Introduction of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE can be used as a steppingstone for various innovations, like the use of an electronic portfolio and 360 degree feedback. Now the trainers are in the first phase: make use of the VLE and follow the learning process. The next phase is to make more in-depth use of it.
- Make more use of tests and assessments, for instance to let participants of a training determine their own starting situation. This is important since training should fit on the learning questions.
- Effect scan (questionnaire that measures the competences of the participants) that is linked to the VLE. The idea of the effect scan is good but they have to work on the details further.

8. Diversity

Interesting is that the interviewees give a different answer to the question on diversity. Two say that the company has a policy regarding diversity, according to another one it doesn't. The two stakeholders agree that they look good at the composition of the team. Relevant aspects are: male-female, age, (educational) background, style, or characteristics. In fact the teams within the company are virtual since the pool of trainers consists of those with a permanent job and a lot of

freelancers. In addition, trainers perform training for more than one team. There exist also a policy regarding minorities but this is hardly an issue in practice. The pool of trainers is quite 'white' and the participants are 'white' too in general.

One of the two trainers informs us that one person in the company has diversity in her portfolio. She organised a meeting on policy regarding diversity.

9. Trends

Some trends that are mentioned are shared by more than one person. Other trends are mentioned by individuals.

Shared (mentioned by more than one person)

- *Shorter and faster.* The duration of training may not be too long. Preferable workshops in the evening because employees need to be profitable. Furthermore, people read less nowadays. They have less 'theoretical luggage'. Therefore, trainers need to speak quickly the language of the participants. They also need to come to the essence and they must be able to explain things in a simple way. In addition, more and more participants are getting self-centred. They are impatient, want to receive a lot of feedback and they want to produce results fast (me, myself and I).
- *More focus on transfer:* on the level of the individual (what does this mean for me in practice) as well as the organization (what does this training mean for the organization). Trainers are trying to relate the context and workplace of the trainees in the training. Thus, more tuning to the question of the organization and the individual.
- Participants want to receive a *certificate*. Due to internationalization: participate in Europe. Quality and control are getting more important.
- *Distance learning.* Because it is a selling point. But also because of the environment and the traffic jams: development of 'environment neutral courses': parts of course will be offered on-line through a VLE. Coaching through the internet.

Mentioned by only one interviewee

- More attention to the traditional profession as a trainer. A trainer can be a change agent for organizations, a coach or a teacher but the most important is that he/she is a good facilitator of learning processes. This is getting more separate from the content. Participants can find the content themselves, for instance on the internet.
- Shift in focus of the company: more on the individual employees while in the past they were more focused on organisations and companies. Individual employees are getting more responsibility, for instance they have their own learning budgets and the company is anticipating on this.
- Training is not always the solution. We have to think of broader learning paths in which trainers are also facilitators and guides of learning processes. To what extent is a trainer a type almost vanished? A trainer needs to be versatile.
- More companies are interested in training their own people didactical and information skill.

2.3 Case Educational Training Company

1. Introduction

The growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning places an increasing focus on the importance of training. The development and recognition of work based learning and e-learning offers new opportunities for the training of trainers. At the same time the adoption of the European Qualification Framework offers opportunities for the development and implementation of a common European trans-cultural Framework for Continuing Professional Development for trainers and those with responsibility for training as part of their job.

Within the European TTPlus project the issues involved in the training and professionalisation of trainers in the European Member States will be examined. One of the key actions of the project is to examine the contexts in which training takes place in enterprises and who has responsibility for the training function.

The examination will take place in six European countries: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK. Each partner provides case studies of three companies in which training takes place. Out of the different case studies One report will be extracted.

For the case of the Educational Training Company four interviews are held: three interviews with trainers and one with stakeholders (managers).

In this case description the following topics are described: a profile of the company (history, structure, location, number of employees), the competences of a trainer including the selection process of new trainers, the professional development of trainers (expectations, support provided /facilitated by the company, informal learning, relevant learning experiences according to the trainers and the ideal situation regarding professional development), training practices (contexts, problems and innovations), policy regarding diversity and trends the interviewees see.

2. Company profile

History of development of the company

Since 1998 the company supports educational institutes and in-company training bureaus with the innovation of their curriculum, organisation and knowledge management with the use of new media. The main objective is letting teachers work with more fun.

Structure

The company is a network organisation in which not much hierarchy exists. It offers the following services:

- training: of teachers, trainers and managers
- consultancy, e.g on educational and organisational innovations
- design, e.g of new concepts for (virtual) knowledge centres or curricula
- research: practice based research
- support, e.g. arrange knowledge and assessment centres, formulate strategic policy.

The company also developed an E-learning website, where the latest news can be found, articles, events, trends and research. One can also make a contribution to the website.

70% of the work of the company consists of training, mainly teachers and trainers, and some guidance and support during design processes. The remaining 30% is consultancy (including software).

A lot of universities and universities for professional education are clients. More and more the business sector finds its way to the company. Probably because the usual courses of training institutes do not fit anymore the needs of companies. Nowadays there is a need for virtual and

short courses in which the high educated participants can bring in more of their intelligence. The company assists these training institutes with the use of different methodologies and trains the teachers and trainers.

Location (factors)

The company is located in the south of the Netherlands.

Number of employees

Seven persons are employed and nine freelancers work for the company.

3. Competences of a trainer

According to the interviewees, a trainer should have the following competences:

Knowledge of the subject	
Personal characteristics/skills	-Your personality is important. You have to know yourself very well to be able to estimate what people think of you. -Inspiration -Enthusiasm -Flexible
Social competences -Social intelligence -Social and communicative skills -To be able to listen -To be able to active working -To be able to deal with a group -To be able to improvise	-Someone needs to judge 1) the effect s/he has on others 2) how others perceive him and adjust his/her behaviour on this -To be able to deal with difficult matters and resistance -Power to be empathically -Knowledge of the target group
To have a critical attitude towards oneself	Critical regarding your own work
To have a professional attitude	-Prepare yourself thoroughly -Be sure that the training materials are tip-top

Selection procedure for trainers

Next to the most important competences, such as social intelligence, it is important that employees are reliable. This is also an important criterion for selection.

4. Professional development of trainers

Expectations

Since the company works a lot with ICT it is necessary that employees know how to deal with it.

Support provided/facilitated by the company

- It is not encouraged to follow a training outside the own company. It is desirable that employees follow a training within the company since the company offers a lot a trainings itself and for financial reasons.
- Every trainer that starts to work is expected to follow at least the basic pedagogy course.
- Every second year he/she is allowed to attend a conference in the USA.
- Working with freelance trainers is not only interesting from an economical point of view (to deal with fluctuations in the economy) but they bring in new ideas too.

- A training is always evaluated internally with colleagues. This supports the professional development of employees. They evaluate the materials (did it fit, was it good), the response of the participants and the trainers own wishes regarding his/her professional development.
- Every employee tries to work at least one day per week at the office in order to exchange and develop knowledge collaboratively.
- Now and then a study day is organised.
- To develop the website about e-learning. This caused a boost for the professional development of one of the employees. She wrote news items and made summaries of important and relevant articles on her area of expertise.

Informal learning

The culture of the company is focussed on informal learning. Within the company there is room for the professional development of trainers. Learning is mainly informal. E.g. coaching by senior trainers, joining trainings of colleagues (not as a participant but as a prospective trainer) and providing and receiving feedback.

Ideal situation regarding professional development

According to the manager, the ideal situation is one of equal responsibility. Thus, a situation in which nobody is employed but everyone is entrepreneur. In addition, it would be ideal to spend one day per week together on knowledge exchange and development: train each other, invite speakers, discuss articles, work with other partners.

Relevant learning experiences according to the trainers

- Coaching by experienced trainers in practice. These senior trainers help you to develop yourself as a trainer by using their feedback and to evaluate often. Learning in this way is interwoven with working.
- Brainstorm sessions to develop new trainings and to try out new ideas.
- To give feedback to and receive feedback from colleagues, peers as well as more senior colleagues, in an informal way (added value: quality assurance) .
- Reflection in training and education.
- Through the educational concept, you work on specific competences.
- To receive feedback from participants in a training.
- To gain experience by giving a lot of trainings to different target groups.

How do trainers work on their own professional development?

- Stay up-to-date with the professional literature on one's own subject or domain (educational-concept, VLE, ICT and Education).
- (Personal) Reflection.
- Through the educational -canon you are able to participate in trainings and to receive a certificate.
- Participate in congresses: exchange and discuss.
- Participate in trainings of colleagues to learn from each other.

5. Training practices

Contexts

The company works with an educational concept of virtual action learning. With the accompanying Virtual Learning Environment: Virtual Community. The concept is not used in all trainings. They also offer trainings on: employability, professional development, how to become an assessor, pedagogical skills etc. Twenty projects are running at the moment the interviews take place.

Problems

- Tension can occur when the expectations the participants have regarding the training do not match with what they agreed upon with the company. Although this is an internal company problem, a trainer has to deal with it. Thus a problem of tuning.
- Aversion towards the new methods and innovations.
- Knowledge. When participants put forward a subject where a trainer is not familiar with (yet).
- Friction with an internal training institute or department when they, as an external organisation with better facilities –lunches, rooms etc-, are invited to train the employees.
- Practical problems:
 - o The ICT (multimedia, facilities, security settings, availability) needs to be previously checked and tested always at the location where the training takes place.
 - o The starting time may cause problems (traffic jams). They try to take this into account in the planning of a training.
- Participants who complain that they have not time enough for the training

Innovations

- The educational concept is innovative by itself. It is important is that a trainer is inventive in such a way that the participants are actively working with the material.
- Since one year, the company anticipates the tension related to the manager of a company (the customer) who initiated a training and the participants. They introduced a so-called talent orientation as an intake. After some tests and a talk they look at the potential of the participant, his/her motivation and if he/she is aware what it is all about. After this orientation the participant and the company decide together to start with the training.
- The company works with a question-based concept. During the talent orientation (intake) participants can put their topics of interest forward. Based on these topics, the programme of the training will be compiled.
- New concepts of training, e.g. a combination of virtual learning and f-2-f learning. For example picture learning. Participants learn from pictures that are put online by translating this to f-2-f actions. This can reduce the amount of training days while the same learning effect is reached.

Success

- A training is a success when the participants are satisfied not only immediately after a training but also after the whole training programme and when the participants are able to apply in practice what they have learnt during the training.
- When you yourself are satisfied about the training. Evaluations are an important tool in this.
- When the client is satisfied.
- When the participants can deal with the content of the training. When they gained enough 'luggage'.

6. Diversity

- Usually the group he trains is homogenous; diversity is not an issue. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account the different levels of education in a group (different approach).
- Diversity is an issue: different cultures.
- According to the manager, he doesn't take diversity into account. In the selection process it is all about the best candidate. Coincidentally, a lot of women work at the company.

7. Trends

- Trainings are more and more linked to knowledge management of organisations
- E-Learning. People can professionalise in a different way.
- Transfer: what people have learned in a training or a course must be applicable in practice.

- Product-oriented. In a training/course participants need to work towards a concrete product.
- Due to the workload of people: training need to get shorter and more intensive.
- More virtual trainings. And more virtual support during f-2-f trainings.
- More tailor-made trainings. Companies want to pay for this.
- Integration of ICT in courses.
- More long lasting and flexible training courses. Therefore, the function of a trainer is changing more to a guide and coach.

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