



Scouting Gelderland as a learning organisation

Many Scouting Volunteers experience difficulties in achieving acknowledgement for the experience they acquire during their volunteer work. Scouting Gelderland therefore wanted to recognise competences acquired by their volunteers in order to acknowledge their efforts.

There was a desire within the organisation to properly establish and document the skills expected from group leaders, taking into account the needs of their team members. This documentation can be used to make clear what an individual volunteer has learnt to educational institutes and future employers.

Steunpunt Scouting Gelderland is one of the regional offices for the support of Scouting and Guiding in the Netherlands, based in the province of Gelderland. They support scouting groups by offering information, training and tools which they can use to ease and better their practice. Overall, 30 000 volunteers work for the Scouting in the Netherlands.

Scouting Gelderland started with the development of a VPL (Valuation of Prior Learning) procedure as an answer to the need to get volunteers experienced in how to write their competences down in their curriculum vitae. The scouting jargon complicates communication with future employers and educational institutes. The support centre for Scouting Gelderland does not offer certificates or diplomas, but tools which support the volunteers to express their scouting experience in more general terms. In this way, non formal and informal learning counts in the application procedure and at school. This is a benefit for the employer, the volunteer and the educational institute. Besides that, the recognition of Scouting groups as learning firms has made them a part of formal education. In this sense part of the diploma is based on scouting experience.

Regional Training Institutes recognise scouting groups in Gelderland as official learning organisations. The developed competence profiles make clear what competences are learned within the organisation. Every scouting group that wants to offer recognised trainee posts has to be recognised by the OVDB (Knowledge centre for learning in practice). They have to prove that the organisation is capable to coach their trainees.

Volunteers are not always aware of the extent of their skills and knowledge when building their profiles. Scouting Gelderland therefore uses training to raise awareness of these competencies. A Swiss model 'the CH-Q (<http://www.ch-q.ch>)' has been used to develop this training. Scouting Gelderland found about this model through the Knowledge-centre, and adapted it to the Dutch context. The training consists of three steps:

- what am I good in?
- how should I formulate my expertise?
- Where can I actually use it?

Beside CH-Q training, group leaders can observe the leaders, give feedback, write a recommendation letter for (team) leaders and practise job interviews with the STAR methodology. .

Tools that Scouting Gelderland developed are:

Competence game, work-shops, CD-rom with documentation for leaders, team leaders and group leaders, Guide for a STAR-conversation, Competence Profiles.