

Partner Countries – Desk Research Exercise (VINFL)

***please note, the aim of this template is to collate information on VINFL in national and prison contexts from **already completed research**, such as policy and academic papers. The purpose of this form is not to collect original research – the teacher survey will begin this process.*

Partner Country:	The Netherlands
Organisation:	Changes&Chances
Representative:	Erica Kubic and Ed Santman

Provide an outline of the **prison system** in your country (maximum 500 words)

- You should include information such as: global prisoner numbers, estates, and trends.

The Dutch Custodial Service DJI, Dienst Justitiele Inrichtingen has 59 locations in the Netherlands. DJI is an agency of the Dutch Ministry of Justice
In the recent years the number of prison cells has been reduced from 17.700 cells in 2010 to 13.800 in 2014. The average time spend in prison has also reduced from 112 to 93 days. Every year about 45.000 people spend some time in custody.
About 62 persons are imprisoned per 100,000 inhabitants, this is one the lowest rates in Europe. The reoffending rate in the first two years after prison release is 47,3%.

In four prisons there are special sections for inmates with mental issues the so called Penitenciaire Psychiatrische Centra (PPC)

DJI also responsible for juvenile institutions, forensic psychiatric clinics and centres for asylum-seekers in the country. With over 17.000 employees it is one of the biggest organisations in the country

Outline arrangements for **prison education** in your country (maximum 500 words)

- You should include some information regarding the accessibility of education, opportunities, class sizes, resources, challenges.

Education in Dutch prisons consists mainly of basic skills training. In The Netherlands the basic skills are literacy, oral language, numeracy and digital skills. The basic skills level can be compared to the level at the end of primary education on or below level 1. In recent years, there have been large budgets cuts. There are no more art classes in prisons and there are plans to close down the prison libraries.

Literacy (often combined with oral language) is trained by professionals as well as non-professionals, mainly leading to informal certification.

Large differences between the provision of basic skills in Dutch prisons are possible. Some prisons have their own teachers, some cooperate with a formal education schools (especially for VET training) and some work with trained non-professionals. To my knowledge professional and non-professional prison teachers work with 'normal', but adjusted, programs for basic skills, not specifically developed for education in prisons.

Of course, we are talking about a population with specific challenges. It has been estimated that about 80-90% of the inmates in Dutch prisons have psychological/psychiatric difficulties, addictions or are intellectually disabled. An another issue: motivation seems a very important factor in order to be able to start a successful basic skills training.

Currently policymakers are researching the possibilities of the use of tablets in prison, meant for getting access to digital information like newspapers, books, but also for education.

Recent study and policy recommendations in your country (maximum 1500 words)

Is there a national strategy for the validation of informal learning (VINFL)? If so, how well developed is this?

Has there been any pre-existing research carried out on the value of informal learning in education?

Does VINFL form part of training for teachers?

In the Netherlands the system for validating non- and informal learning is well-developed.

Two, government-commissioned institutions give guidelines, watch the quality of learning programmes and certificates and work in close dialogue with the different sectors and branches, such as the metal and cleaning branches and the healthcare sector. These are the sectors where former prisoners most often find work.

However, VINFL is not yet part of the usual training for teachers. In the last years some schools for Vocational Training send their teachers to special VINL courses delivered, for example, Edexcel/Pearson. This way they want to ensure that the teacher can have a more complete overview of all of their pupils' skills and knowledge.

Below some excerpts from the two institutions' websites.

Dutch Qualification Framework (NLQF)

Whether you are:

- an individual who wishes to follow an education or training programme
- an employer who wishes to recruit people or
- a provider who offers education or training programmes

This website will make it easier for you to understand the NLQF and its added value for you.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands commissioned the development of the Dutch Qualifications Framework (NLQF) which was constructed in close cooperation with experts and stakeholders in the field of education and training. The National Coordination Point NLQF (NCP) is an independent body which is responsible for the development and implementation of the NLQF.

The Dutch Qualifications Framework (NLQF) is a new way of describing Dutch qualification levels. It is a systematic organisation of all existing qualification levels in The Netherlands, from Level 1 basic education to the Master's degree at level 7 and a Doctorate's degree at level 8. Qualifications are classified in NLQF levels and are given a level indication. The framework consists of an Entry Level followed by 8 levels, Level 1 being the least complex and Level 8 the most complex.

The NLQF aims to facilitate students and labour market mobility by providing an insight into the levels of qualifications recorded by the National Coordination Point NLQF in the NCP register. The NLQF provides transparency in that it facilitates a comparison of qualification levels nationally and internationally, thus, labour market mobility.

The NCP records Government-regulated qualifications (The qualifications of the Ministries of Education Culture and Sciences; and Economic Affairs; Food and Natural and Living Environment) in the National Coordination Point (NCP) Register of qualifications. All other qualifications are first assessed and level-determined by the NCP and then recorded in the Register.

The Dutch Qualifications Framework offers providers of qualifications which are not regulated by the Government the possibility of having such training programmes and qualifications classified at a level of the NLQF. Procedures and criteria for this process are in place.

The NLQF is referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). EQF aims to enable qualifications

from different countries within Europe to be compared by means of a single reference framework to which they are all referenced. Thus, EQF will contribute to greater transparency in the education systems of EU countries, thereby increasing the international mobility of individuals. Currently 36 European countries are



contributing to the implementation of the EQF by linking their own national qualifications frameworks to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

However, there are many things the NLQF does NOT do. NLQF is not a revision of the Dutch education system. An NLQF level indicator does not give an entitlement to a title or a degree. The right to enter and transfer to education sectors is not regulated by NLQF.

National Expertise Centre EVC

is the Centre for validating 'hands-on' expertise (www.kenniscentrumevc.nl) EVC Centrum Nederland. EVC stands for Erkennen Verworven Competencies (Certifying Acquired Competences)

In the Netherlands the employers and employee organizations give great importance to a sound and guaranteed experience certification procedure and to experience certificates that reflect the further developed qualities of employees. They have asked the Stichting Examenkamer (Exam Room Foundation) to set up the National Expertise Centre EVC. Their mission is to guarantee the quality and reliability of the EVC procedure and certificate. The Ministry of Education stimulates the thorough, clear and precise description of learning outcomes for each job and each level of a job.

The Experience Certificate

A passport to appropriate work

The Experience Certificate enhances the position in the labour market. Through a procedure for the certification of your Acquired Competences (EVC) your specific skills and knowledge are mapped out according to a certified standard. There will be looked at what you have learned in practice and this will be recorded in an elaborate, personal experience certificate. An experience certificate is a proof of someone's personal qualities, developed during a formal learning process in school and further developed by a non-formal learning process through courses and informal learning on the job and elsewhere.

Advantages of a experience certificate:

- Employees have a stronger position in the labour market
- Helpful in application procedures for a new position
- Adds to durable employability
- Employers can see the qualities of employees
- Growth is shown according to branch-certified standards

Registration of Experience Certificates

The Experience Certificate is a valuable document. This register has been developed in order to guarantee the authenticity of the certificate and to enhance its effect. It has been formulated by the Nationaal Kenniscentrum EVC in dialogue with the

Employers' Organizations. Only certificates that have been drafted and issued by certified EVC providers can be included in the register.

Advantages of registration:

- It guarantees the exactness of a personal experience certificate
- Enhances it's effectiveness
- Prevents abuse
- Can be consulted by employers and examiners
- Can show one's qualities in a clear and transparent manner

An example of how a validation form looks for the educational level of a large number of prisoners, the people we work with.

Context-	A recognizable living and working environment
Knowledge-	Has basic knowledge of elementary facts and ideas related to a profession and knowledge domain. Reproduces knowledge and applies it
Skills-	Application of knowledge. Performs elementary (professional) tasks, based on automatisms
Problem solving	
Skills-	Recognizes elementary problems in the professional and knowledge domains and solves these
Learning and Development	
Skills-	Develops himself under supervision
Information	
Skills-	Obtains and processes basic information concerning elementary facts and ideas related to a profession and knowledge domain
Communication	
Skills-	Communicates, on the basis of, in the context and professional practice applicable conventions with peers, supervisors and clients. Cooperates with peers, supervisors and clients
Responsibility and Independence-	
	Carries, under supervision, the responsibility for the results of elementary tasks and study

The descriptor elements together determine the level of the qualification. In order to scale a qualification in the NLQF the principle of 'best fit' is being used. This means that a qualification does not have to satisfy all the descriptions of a level, but that it is positioned there where it fits best.



Are you aware of pre-existing research that has been carried out into **the need for and potential benefits of VINFL, particularly in prisons?** (maximum 1000 words)

In a number of European projects Ed and Erica (then not yet C&C) have participated in, both the need for and potential benefits of VINL have been researched.

In the EQUAL project (ESF-Equal 'Art Work(s) in the Tertiary sector' 2004 – 2008') artistic workshops (theatre, music, dance, musical theatre) were delivered in prisons and other disadvantaged groups, such as drug addicts in rehab, in the UK, Italy, Hungary and the Netherlands. The workshops stretched over 10 weeks and worked towards a final presentation.

The participants were beforehand told that they were also learning employability skills. They were observed by researchers from Research Institutes/Universities, filled out questionnaires and had group talks about their progress.

The vast majority of the results was very positive and the bulk of the participants were stimulated by knowing they were learning useful skills while having fun doing artistic work.

They reported increased self-esteem, motivation, communication skills, collaboration skills, self-direction, critical thinking and a broader horizon.

The final report of the research, formulated by the University of Exeter is available [Research Effectiveness of Art Education](#)

The European (Grundtvig) project PEETA (Personal Effectiveness and Employability Through the Arts) 2010-2012, worked along the same lines as the EQUAL project. In this case the partners were in the UK, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Turkey. The University of Exeter partner wanted to research the potential of developing an award or certificate for the learned employability skills during the artistic workshops and spent considerable time in each country observing and talking with the participating prisoners, giving feed-back on their progress and assembling portfolio's of evidence.

Based on the EQUAL experience Exeter had selected the following competences to be measured during group projects:

GOOD COMMUNICATION; listening to others, appropriate communication with others

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION; contributing ideas and suggestions, being reliable, collaborative team working skills

DELIVERING SET TASKS; demonstrating task management skills, flexibility, problem solving skills, time management

REFLECTIVE LEARNING; describing own personal effectiveness in group, identifying personal effectiveness skills and qualities to be developed for employability, planning ways to develop personal effectiveness skills and qualities for employability



These pilots in the 6 countries showed again how motivating it was for the prisoners to know that they would be learning skills while doing creative work. Most had not been very successful in a formal learning setting before.

Together with Edexcel/Pearson, the University of Exeter developed out of these research results a BTEC (level 1 and 2) unit and SEPE award. (Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness) [Final SEPE internal evaluation](#)

Furthermore there are research reports on the effects of the arts on non-formal learning such as: (control+click links)

[Unlocking Value](#)

[talent4 evaluation report](#)

[sport science and art in the prevention of criminal behaviour](#)

[Rose, Melissa – A New Leaf – The Benefits of Arts Education in Prisons – Faculty Michael Rushton](#)

[McNeill-et-al.-2011-Inspiring-Desistance](#)

[Lloyds value for money report](#)

[GHillman Trend Paper eval-effectiveness-employability-arts](#)

[Doing the Arts Justice 0](#)

[ArtinPrisons Djurichkovic](#)

[ArtinPrisons Australia](#)

[Art Programs in Prison Final Version](#)

[4-research a. brewster](#)

[Arts-At-Risk-Youth](#)

[The-Arts-of-Desistance-2014-11-03](#)

[ENTRADO Natalia Azevedo Alterado](#)

[Cultural Activities 2015-v2](#)

[Apresentação Holanda](#)





Give examples of **good practice in informal learning activities/projects in prisons and community justice settings** (maximum 1000 words)

As described above, the pilots in the EQUAL and PEETA projects were all formulated to allow non-formal learning. In all participating countries most all were successful and showed good to excellent results with the prisoners/participants. The pilots are shortly described in the Final reports.

Extensive descriptions of workshops that lead to informal or non-formal learning can be found on the website www.picp-project.eu of another European funded project, the Grundtvig Learning Partnership PICP (Partners in Crime Prevention). Partners, all involved in arts activities in prisons, from the UK, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Greece and the Netherlands (C&C) exchanged methodologies and best practice examples. They were brought together on the Turning Points section of the website.

<http://picp-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Turning-points.pdf>

Of each project is described how it was set up, which different perspectives it gives on art and education in prison, tips for improvement and continuity and feedback from teachers, prison staff, prisoners and family.

Especially collaborative group projects prove to be successful for non-formal learning of social and employability skills. Although in only a few this learning was validated (Micky B, for instance, with an Active Citizen Award). One can read in the quotes of prisoners, staff and public that big steps were made.