

# Language for Life in the Netherlands

step by step  
creating together  
an effective approach

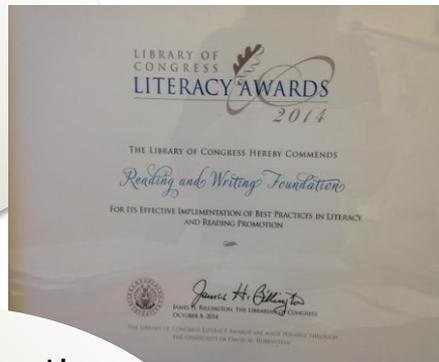


Arjan Beune | program manager  
24th November 2014



# Reading & Writing Foundation internationally

Library of Congress Literacy Award 2014, best practice on recommendation of former EU-commissioner Vassiliou



Teamleader Awareness Raising in Elinet, with partners like NRDC from UK

Princess Laurentien (founder RWF) is UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development and chair of th former EU high level group of experts on Literacy

Mr Schulz visited as chairman of the European Parliament the Library of Cologne, organised by Brussels team of RWF

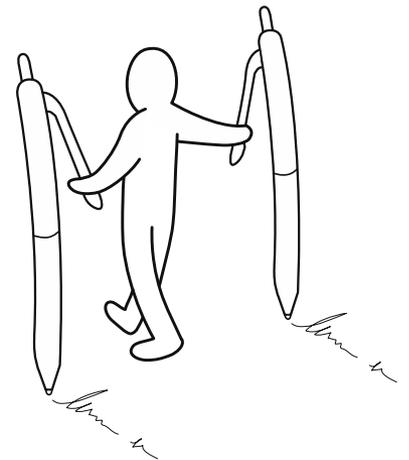


# Why start a new program on literacy?

- Increasing number of low literates (*PIAAC: 10% (1994) to 11.9% (2012)*)
  - Budget does not grow accordingly (*approx. 50 million euros a year*)
  - Decentralisation results in shifting roles (*bigger role for municipalities*)
- 
- New approach is necessary.
  - Department of Education asked RWF to find out a more effective method (*budget 5 million Euros a year*)

# 'Language for Life' approach (1)

1. Bottom up: creating a local more effective infrastructure
2. Combination top down and bottom up:
  - development of new tools
  - Knowledge exchange
3. Top down: Monitoring results and feed back loop

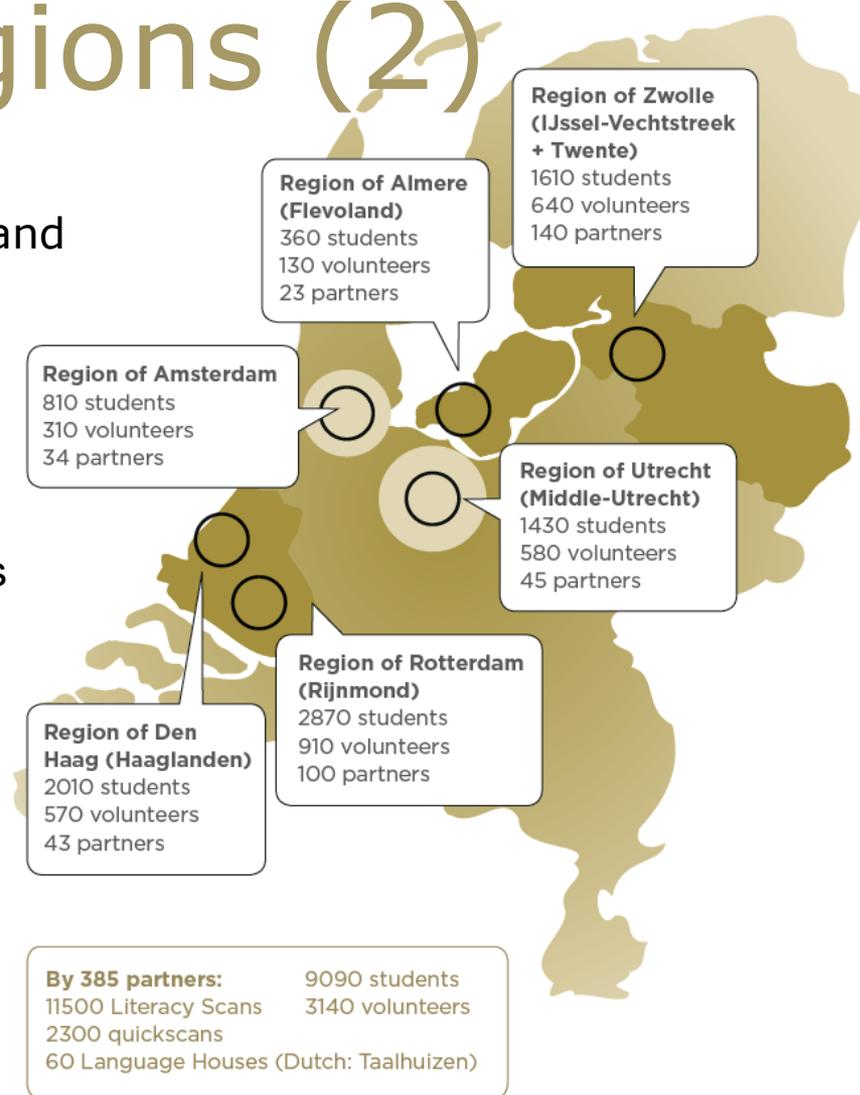


# The start: 6 regions (2)

Outcome national expert meeting (May and June 2012):

1. Use local infrastructure
2. Never forget the importance of teachers
3. Go out and built alliances
4. Create different methods for

Different target groups



# Dilemma's in the beginning (2,3)

1. A focus on big cities, means
  - *More complicated local public management*
  - *More focus on migrants*
2. Focus on re using local infrastructure
  - *Means more time in convincing your relevance*
  - *Does not improve innovation immediately*
3. Relevant pressure groups often wait and see

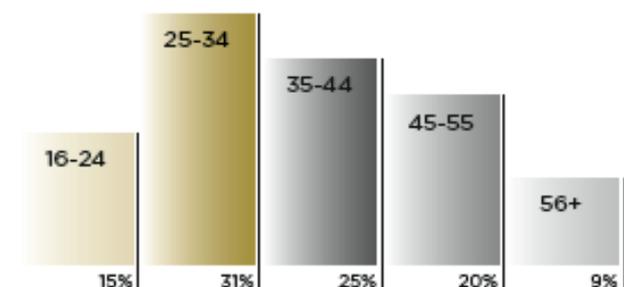


→ Summary: Safe resources (money and people) for this innovation

# Break through: Literacy Scan (3-6) in finding illiterate & other policy areas

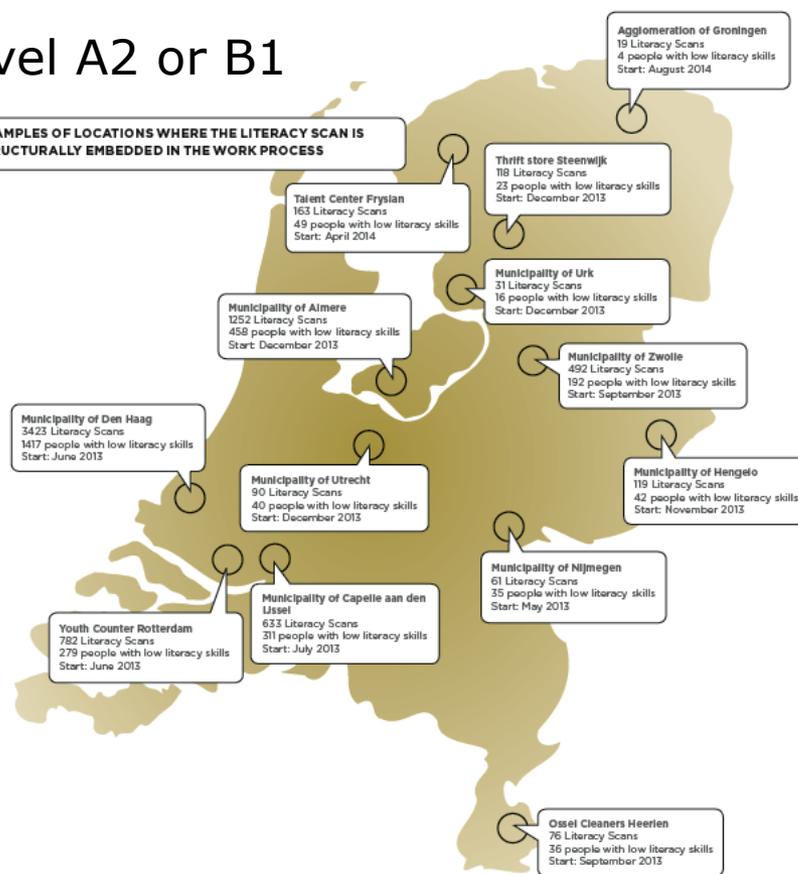
12 min. Reading test online below level A2 or B1  
12.000 test in the first year  
approx. 40% indication illiterate

**DIVISION AGE COHORT**  
of people with low literacy skills indicated by the  
Literacy Scan  
June 2013 - October 2014



91% are educated to some degree  
20% primary school

**EXAMPLES OF LOCATIONS WHERE THE LITERACY SCAN IS  
STRUCTURALLY EMBEDDED IN THE WORK PROCESS**





# Practical example (3-6)

Literacy Scan

National Welfare Agency in The Hague

& small municipality of Midden-Delfland



# 1. Creating demand



- Random selection of 271 people with vocational education as the highest level of education
- 167 people showed up for an indicative 12-minute screening at level B1
- 28 of these did not start the screening due to a lack of oral Dutch language skills
- 85 people scored the screening below level B1
- 113 people with insufficient language skills (68%)



## 2. Creating demand



- Municipality of Midden-Delfland (18.225 inhabitants)
- Screening at the department of Social Affairs
- All the people with Dutch primary school background and vocational education as the highest level of education
- 23 people obliged to do an indicative 12-minute screening at level B1
- 17 people with scores below level B1 (74%).



# 3. Follow-up: next steps

1. Structural use of screening tool at UWV and Midden-Delfland
2. Matching supply by using professionals and trained volunteers
3. Monitoring the learners' progress on language skills and social inclusion
4. Inspiring both other local departments and national policymakers with local cases.

→ Summary: literacy scan is

- An effective way to find (native speaking) illiterate
- And expands budget for basic skills (e.g. Unemployment budgets)

# Literacy points: a local hub (4,5,6)

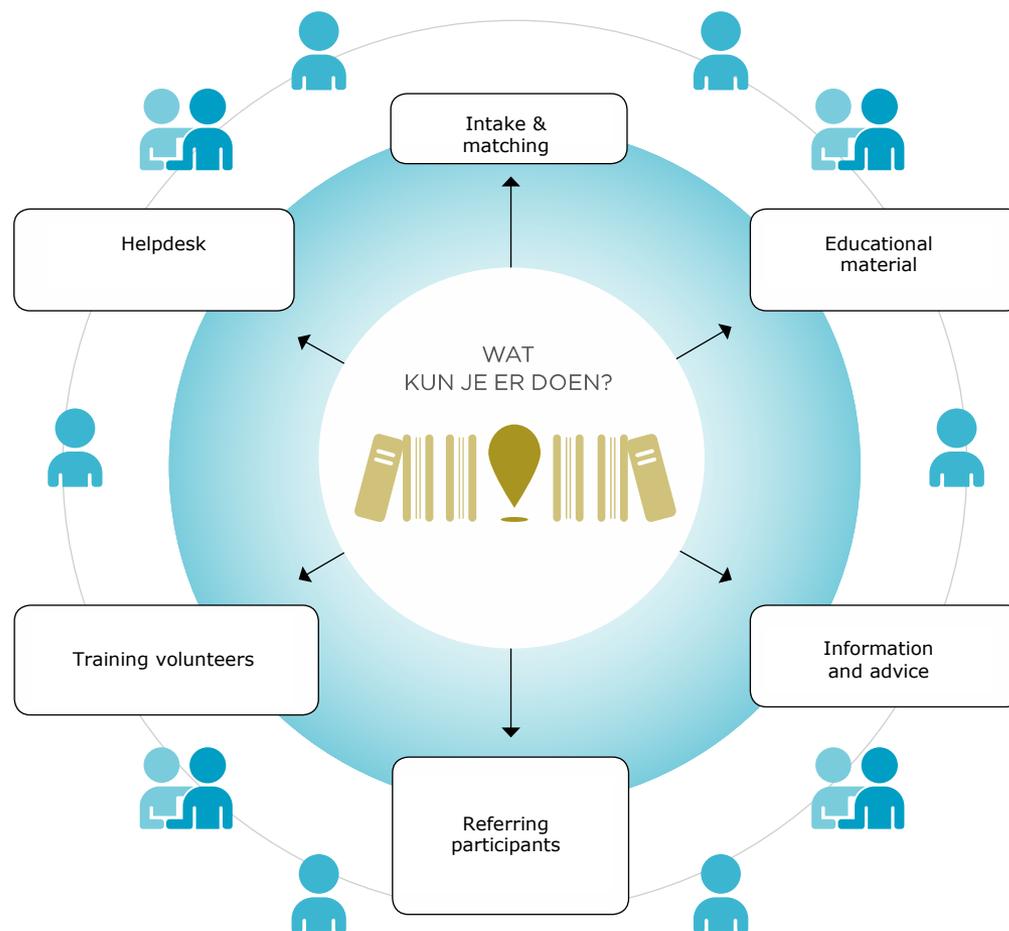


# Local hub for literacy (4,5,6)

in:

- Libraries
- Hospitals
- Local counters

→ Re use of local  
budget and  
infrastructure



# Constant monitoring and feed back (7,8)

By - Maastricht University  
 - some public administration researcher

## PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS REGARDING INCREASE IN SOCIAL INCLUSION

Learning context	Courses Language for Life 2014	National Survey 2012
National language skills	71	58
Digital skills	66	51
Assertiveness	66	54
Work and parenting skills	48	42
Meeting & undertaking	58	49
Nature and sports activities	57	49
Decrease in social isolation	51	45

Note: 'national language skills' stand for applied linguistic skills

## 4 vital conditions:

1. High quality teaching materials
2. A teacher nearby
3. good trained volunteer
4. Vast time for transfer possibilities

Source:  
 Maastricht University

### PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS REGARDING INCREASE IN HEALTH CARE

Learning context	Courses Language for Life 2014	National Survey 2012
Physical health	39	-
Mental health	53	-

Source:  
Maastricht University

### 4 vital conditions:

1. High quality materials
2. A teacher nearby
3. good trained volunteer
4. Time for transfer possibilities

### PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS REGARDING INCREASE IN THE LABOR MARKET

Learning context	Courses Language for Life 2014	National Survey 2012
Paid job	21	20
Volunteering	28	21
Internship	26	7
Job seekers	36	20
Paid job with supervision	28	14



# Research Public administration: from best practices, to best principles (7,8)

1. The bigger the local network makes a better combination of demand and supply
  2. Always include local municipality, public and private school, libraries and volunteer organisations in your network.
  3. If they don't want to commit to specific results, stop investing
  4. Create new instruments in cooperation with local organisations
  5. Always monitor the results and discuss it with them
- Its not about language, but about ability to.... *be a better (grand)mom or (grand)dad, neighbour, worker, volunteer, voter etc.*



Thank you so far!

New reserach will come in beginning of 2015  
Any Questions?

*You can always email, call, skype etc*

Arjan Beune

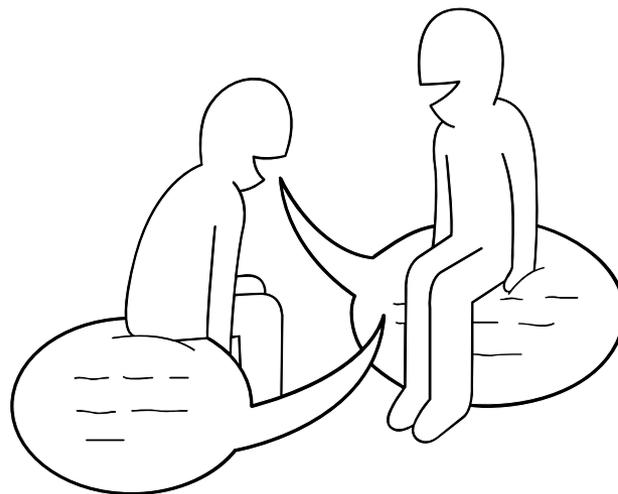
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