



National Report: the Netherlands

Wave 1

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GLOSSARY

Except where otherwise stated, the definitions included here are derived from the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Glossary: <http://www.elgpn.eu/glossary>.

Terms in English

Adult basic skills

Definition

Basic skills may include competences in literacy (reading and writing), numeracy/everyday mathematics, Digital competence/ICT skills, and oral communication. Adult basic skills courses/programmes are literacy and numeracy education for adults who for some reason did not acquire these skills or a level sufficient for everyday adult life when they were at school.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

Basic skills assessment

An assessment tool that measures skills in reading and/or writing and/or Maths and/or digital skills.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

Career

The interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education.

Career guidance

A range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences and interests; to make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions; and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

Counselling

The interaction between a professional and an individual helping them to resolve a specific problem or issue.

Early school leaver

See **Early leaver from education and training**.

Early leaver from education and training

A person aged 18 to 24 who has completed at most lower secondary education and is not involved in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Category:Glossary>

Educational counselling/guidance	Helping an individual to reflect on personal educational issues and experiences and to make appropriate educational choices.
Employment counselling/guidance	Counselling or guidance that addresses one or more of the following domains: career/ occupational decision-making, skill enhancement, job search and employment maintenance. Activities include assessment, development and implementation of an action plan, follow-up and evaluation.
Guidance	Help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment.
Guidance counsellor	A trained individual delivering guidance as defined above. Guidance counsellors assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.
Guidance services	The range of services offered by a particular guidance provider. These might be services designed for different client groups or the different ways that guidance might be delivered (e.g. face-to-face, online, telephone, etc.).
Interest inventory	An interest inventory is a career guidance tool that assesses an individual's interests in order to identify the employment or educational opportunities that are most appropriate for those interests. Source: GOAL Project Definition
Lifelong guidance	A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.
Lifelong learning	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
Low-educated adult	An adult without upper secondary education
One step up	A priority of the 2007 Action Plan on Adult Learning is to "Increase the possibilities for adults to go one step up and achieve at least one level higher qualification".

Source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0558>

Outcome (quality)

Positive or negative longer-term socio-economic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output

Self-knowledge

Knowledge that an individual has about him/herself. Developing self-knowledge/awareness is considered an important activity in career counselling: many career interventions are designed to increase self-knowledge.

**Stichting Lezen en Schrijven
(Reading and Writing Foundation)**

The Reading & Writing Foundation brings literacy problems to the attention of both the general public and politicians, as well as offering nationwide support to municipalities, institutions, companies, teachers and volunteers in the education sector. In the GOAL project the Reading & Writing Foundation is responsible for recruiting and selecting partner organisations and for keeping these organisations informed with regard to project design and implementation.

Taalmeter

The Taalmeter, or basic skills quick scan, is the core instrument of the Dutch GOAL project. The basic skills quick scan is an online tool which can quickly and easily identify people who possibly have low literacy or low basic skills.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning/ validation of prior learning (VPL)

A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard. It consists of four distinct phases: (1) identification – through dialogue – of particular experiences made by an individual; (2) documentation – to make visible the individual experiences; (3) a formal assessment of these experiences; and (4) recognition leading to a certification, e.g. a partial or full qualification.

Vocational rehabilitation

A process which enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment or other useful occupation.

Source: <http://www.vra-uk.org/>

Executive Summary

This report presents the Dutch findings from Wave 1 of the evaluation of the “Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners” (GOAL) project. These are **interim findings** based on the early stages of the GOAL project. A final evaluation report will be produced in January 2018.

Project GOAL aims to develop or expand guidance and orientation interventions for low-educated adults in six countries: Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and Slovenia. Running from February 2015 to January 2018, GOAL is coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. The evaluation is being carried out by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London, working with local evaluation teams in each country.

GOAL Activities

The hypothesis underpinning GOAL is that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre may help to increase the participation of this target group in education and training. Each of the six partner countries is piloting new guidance models to specific target groups within the low-educated adult population. Five intervention strategies are being implemented:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations are being established or improved.
2. **High-quality tools** are being developed which will facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults are being defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population are being developed.
5. **High-quality guidance services** are being provided with the aim of optimising individuals’ learning and/or employment outcomes.

Research questions

Four research questions underpin the evaluation:

1. How do existing conditions/resources in the pre-programme environments moderate the relationships among programme operations and outcomes?
2. What programme processes are developed across the various intervention sites and how do these differ? Why do they differ?
3. What service user outcomes are achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?

4. What programme and policy characteristics appear to be associated with improvements in service-user outcomes?

Evaluation data

During Wave 1 of the evaluation, data were gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors.

Dataset

The Wave 1 dataset for the Netherlands was collected from fieldwork undertaken between January 26 and May 18.

The quantitative dataset is comprised of:

- **Monitoring data for eight clients.**
- **Seven client satisfaction surveys.**

The qualitative data set is comprised of interview data from **four programme staff; three programme partners; four policymakers** and **five policy actors**.

There are no programme staff surveys and no client interview data in the Dutch Wave 1 dataset.

Challenges

Four organisations participated in Wave 1 of the GOAL project in the Netherlands, fewer than originally anticipated. The Reading and Writing Foundation, in spite of considerable efforts, found it very difficult to persuade organisations to participate. The main reasons for reluctance from possible partner organisations were:

- the anticipated **additional staff effort**,
- the **costs** associated with project implementation,
- the **administrative requirements** of the evaluation, and especially of collecting monitoring data, and
- the (perceived) **lack of direct added value** for the organisation itself.

This Wave One report is based on data from three pilot organisations only, as the fourth joined the project too late to be included in Wave 1 data collection. An additional bottleneck was that the GOAL project also **started very slowly** within two of the other three participating pilot organisations. As a result, quantitative data were collected at only one pilot organisation.

This slow start also presented several challenges to the qualitative data collection: local evaluators in the Netherlands were unable to interview clients (**none of the clients in the sample were willing to participate in follow-up interviews**) and the number of interviews with staff members and programme partners were fewer than anticipated at some project sites.

Findings

Programme participants and stakeholders

The GOAL intervention in the Netherlands consists of **screening** the clients of various service providers (such as municipal employment offices, reintegration services, penitentiary institutes) for **low literacy** by means of a validated basic skills quick scan (*Taalmeter*). In one guidance session the results of the quick scan are discussed with clients and potentially low literate clients are informed about local training opportunities and are referred to language training points or educational institutions. Counsellors can make use of the so-called '**Road Map**' (which was also developed by the Reading and Writing Foundation) to refer clients to suitable training or education.

Four organisations have participated in the GOAL-project so far: two penitentiary institutions, one municipality and one organisation offering re-integration services. The clients of these organisations vary in age, background and level of knowledge. Monitoring data was collected at one pilot organisation only, **a male-only prison**.

GOAL Guidance service

In the Dutch pilot, there is just one type of contact: the face-to-face interview where the basic skills quick scan is administered and its results discussed. Guidance sessions can therefore be characterised as very short relative to those in the other partner countries, and more limited in terms of possible outcomes, as the intervention is specifically designed to result in **the referral of clients onto education opportunities**.

The use of prisons as intervention sites is of particular interest: their closed nature and the fact that they work in a compulsory context demands a customised approach. For example, not only do screening and guidance take place within the same organisation, it is also possible for GOAL service users to take literacy courses within the prison, depending on the length of their sentence and the detainees' daily programme. As a result, the process in prisons is more closely integrated than it is outside prisons, where movement is **across services and organisations**, rather than **across services within an organisation**. This may have implications (both positive and negative) for service delivery and/or quality.

Partnerships and Networks

An important focal point in addressing low basic skill levels at the policy level in the Netherlands is the establishment and strengthening of regional networks. A condition for addressing low basic skills is ensuring that the offer of local literacy training meets the needs of potential participants. In order to ensure better cooperation between the organisations in which service users with low literacy are identified and the organisations in which literacy lessons are offered, the Dutch national strategy for tackling low basic skills is deploying **regional 'literacy teams'**. Other parties, such as employers and care organisations are also involved by the literacy teams. Participating pilot partners in GOAL can make use of these networks, but networks are not yet established in all regions.

Whereas in other partner countries GOAL is a discrete service that works with partners, in the Netherlands, GOAL is more of **a process, distributed across a network of organisations**. This has clear implications for programme development: partners must be convinced of the benefits of contributing to GOAL, despite the administrative and other burdens this creates. By encouraging and supporting GOAL activities across a range of partners, policy may help GOAL to better establish itself, and thus to contribute to broader policy objectives.

Counsellor competences

Nearly all adult guidance practitioners in the Netherlands have experience in education and/or reintegration practices. However, there are no formal criteria for guidance practitioners and thus a great divergence in quality between various service points. These differences are evident in the Dutch GOAL pilot organisations, which deploy people in a variety of job roles to conduct the basic skills quick scans.

According to qualitative interviews, no extra training (in a technical sense) is required for those conducting the basic skills quick scan. However, staff administering the test do need **good social skills**, because those with low basic skills are often **ashamed** of this. An implication for programme development is that steps should be taken to ensure that staff members are empathetic and have good interview skills in order to deal with the issue of shame.

Unfortunately, because of the extremely small client sample, no findings can be drawn from the client satisfaction survey on counsellor competences at this stage.

Guidance tools

A guidance tool – the basic skills quick scan – plays a central role in the Dutch GOAL project. The basic skills quick scan was developed outside the GOAL programme and has been used 30,000 times in the Netherlands over the past three years.

Although experiences with the instrument are limited within the GOAL pilot itself, the initial feedback is mainly positive. The basic skills quick scan can be taken quickly and easily and offers a structural method for screening and addressing low basic skills. At the current stage of the research, we do not yet have a good picture of the impact of using the basic skills quick scan. In Wave 2 of the evaluation, it will be

interesting to gain insights into how the use of the basic skills quick scan relates to referrals and into participation in basic skills training/education offered in the different regions.

Outreach

Reaching out of adults with low literacy is at the core of the Dutch GOAL intervention and represents an area in which gains can be made. The outreach strategy **involves expanding the numbers of identification sites** and being able to screen people who potentially have low basic skills in a setting that is **accessible** to them. Prisons are a relatively new type of identification site, and two are participating in the pilot.

Organisations need to feel the urgency and see the importance of addressing low basic skills. Networks can help with this type of awareness raising. An important barrier, however, is the **effort, time and financial resources** that are needed for the screening and follow-up process.

Service outcomes

By using the basic skills quick scan, pilot organisations hope to reach and offer guidance to more people. The programme staff members hope the GOAL project will lead to more insights into low literacy and more awareness of the problem low literacy forms for certain clients. Furthermore they point out that it is important to identify low literacy at an early stage. They expect the basic skills quick scan will contribute to this. In the long-term, client perspectives on the basic skills quick scan and its impact on them will become clear.

The focus of GOAL in the Netherlands is principally on the screening and not on any subsequent support/education. No conclusions can be drawn as yet regarding the outcomes of using the basic skills quick scan and any advice and referrals that result from this.

Service quality

One of the five intervention strategies piloted in GOAL is the implementation of high-quality guidance services. At this stage, little information is available on service user perceptions of the service. From the interviews with the pilot organisations it does appear that **clients' initial reactions to the basic skills quick scan are linked to their background characteristics**. In prison, clients are sometimes resistant, and Dutch-speaking clients in particular can feel insulted that they have been asked to take the test.

It is important that programme staff who are involved in administering the basic skills quick scan are aware of the possible sensitivity of clients to this type of instrument. It is important to 'sell' the tool in a positive way: that it is useful in identifying obstacles for meeting clients' goals and showing that education solutions are available to tackle the problem.

1 Introduction

The ‘Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners’ Project (GOAL) is a collaboration between six partner countries: Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia¹. Project GOAL aims to develop existing models of guidance and orientation for adults in the six countries in order that these services specifically reach low-educated adults and address their needs. GOAL is a three year project, running from February 2015 to January 2018, and is coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. Project GOAL is being evaluated by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London.

This report presents national findings for the Netherlands from Wave 1 of the GOAL evaluation. This Wave 1 evaluation dataset consists of quantitative data on GOAL service users collected between the launch of the programme in February 2015 and May 2016; qualitative data collected from programme stakeholders in April and May 2016, and contextual data gathered during a local needs and strengths analysis.

1.1 The GOAL project

Funded under ERASMUS+, Project GOAL addresses the European Commission’s priority theme of reducing the number of low-educated adults through increasing participation rates in adult education. As well as contributing to the European Agenda for Lifelong Learning (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en.htm), GOAL will contribute to three priority areas of the 2008 ‘Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies’ (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf), that is, to facilitate access by all citizens to guidance services, to develop the quality assurance or guidance processes, and to encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders.

Project GOAL is targeted at low-educated adults, that is, at adults without upper secondary education (ISCED level 3²). The context for GOAL is that adult education provision in the six countries is fragmented and there is currently a lack of coordination between the different providers and stakeholders that are involved with low-educated adults. Moreover, although the partner countries have some forms of guidance for adult learners, or have specific policy strategies that focus on educational guidance and orientation, the existing services, or the structures on which these services rely, do not reach the adults most in need of education as well as they could or in sufficient numbers.

¹ Two members of the Turkish Directorate of Lifelong Learning are participating in GOAL as observers, with the aim of learning from the project and identifying opportunities to promote lessons in Turkish guidance policies.

² For more on UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

The hypothesis underpinning GOAL is that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre may help to increase the participation of this target group in adult education. To this end, each of the six countries is piloting new guidance models, in two locations, to specific target groups within the low educated adult population (see 1.3 below for more details on the Dutch target groups). Five intervention strategies are being implemented by the GOAL partners, although not all strategies will be implemented in all countries:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations are being established or improved.
2. **High-quality tools** are being developed which will facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults are being defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population are being developed.
5. **High-quality guidance services** are being provided with the aim of optimising individuals' learning and/or employment outcomes.

The aim of the GOAL project is that, through developing, piloting and evaluating these interventions:

1. The processes to implement effective guidance services and supporting networks that improve service user outcomes will be mapped.
2. The criteria, success factors and conditions on implementation (processes) that contribute to outcomes of guidance users will be identified
3. Potential generalisable case studies will be made available to be analysed by policymakers to understand and analyse challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.
4. The policy processes that play a role in influencing programmes success will be identified and described.

1.2 The GOAL evaluation

The GOAL evaluation being carried out by IOE has two aims. Its primary aim is to understand, assess and improve GOAL across the six participating countries. The evaluation also aims to provide country-specific case studies that can be analysed by policymakers seeking to understand challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.

The evaluation focuses on processes and outcomes, thereby enabling the identification of success factors across different programme contexts. This evidence can potentially be used to develop a

structural support basis amongst decision makers and relevant stakeholders for scaling up the pilot learning guidance and orientation models in partner or other countries.

Four research questions underpin the evaluation:

1. How do existing conditions/resources in the pre-programme environments moderate the relationships among programme operations and outcomes?
2. What programme processes are developed across the various intervention sites and how do these differ? Why?
3. What service user outcomes are achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?
4. What programme and policy characteristics appear to be associated with improvements in service-user outcomes?

The evaluation is taking place in a series of stages:

1. **Pre-implementation stage** (February 2015 - October 2015): activities centred on needs and strengths analyses in each of the six countries; on reporting the results of these analyses, and generating data collection tools.
2. **Ongoing (cross-wave) data collection** (November 2015 - Spring 2017)
 - a. Client satisfaction survey
 - b. Monitoring data
 - c. Longitudinal follow-up with 30 clients per country
3. **Wave 1 data collection** (with national reporting in June 2016)
4. **Wave 2 data collection** (with national reporting in May 2017)
5. **Data analysis and final reporting** (with final report due November 2017)

Section 2.2 of this report outlines the evaluation methodology in greater details

In the Netherlands, the local evaluation is being carried out by two organisations: the Reading and Writing Foundation and Regioplan Policy Research. The Reading and Writing Foundation (<http://www.readingandwriting.eu/>) is responsible for recruiting and selecting partner organisations and for keeping these organisations informed regarding project design and implementation. Regioplan (<http://www.regioplan.nl/>) is responsible for quantitative and qualitative data collection and the processing, analysis and reporting of collected data.

1.3 Project GOAL in the Netherlands

Context

The main providers of education and career guidance in the Netherlands are **Education and Career Guidance Centres/Contact Points**. These serve to ‘provide independent advice about educational opportunities and labour market opportunities for everyone: unemployed, employed, pupils, students and employers’. There is however no official definition of either lifelong guidance or adult guidance provided by government or law in the Netherlands.

There are two other forms of education/career guidance available in the Netherlands. **Regional vocational education centres** are legally obliged to provide career orientation and guidance for their students, including adults who are following lower and upper secondary education. Both lower and upper secondary education are provided by regional vocation education centres. The Inspectorate for Education, which monitors the quality of the career orientation and guidance, defines the guidance as ‘focused on following the developments in the studies of students and support of making choices during and after the studies’. The guidance is therefore very much focused on career guidance during and directly after finishing study, and less on guidance before studies.

Secondly, the **National Public Employment Service** provides career guidance in various forms. This guidance however is highly focused on getting a job rather than personal development and therefore limited educational guidance is provided, although this is sometimes combined. The same type of guidance is provided by local social services to the unemployed. There is no common definition or description of what this career guidance or orientation should look like. It is mostly tailor-made in such a way that it enhances the chances of the unemployed person getting a job as quickly as possible.

There is no guidance in the Netherlands specifically for adults with low basic skills. Although the guidance services described above might be offered to those with low basic skills, this cohort is not their focus.

Given the current guidance context in the Netherlands, specific challenges have been identified regarding providing guidance services for adults with low basic skills. The GOAL project seeks to address the following challenges:

1. **Increasing the number of people that are reached.** This requires shifting the logic of existing guidance interventions from a demand-driven logic to a needs-based one. Demand for (voluntary) guidance is relatively low among low educated adults because this group frequently fails to recognise that their low basic skill levels can limit their professional lives. Demand for guidance services can only be boosted in the long-term if more people recognise their own personal interest in this. In other words, they need to become increasingly sensitive to their own needs.
2. **Improving the impact and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services.** Having assessed that a client has low basic skill levels and after having completed the guidance intervention, it is

important that clients find their way to the most appropriate education (or career service) provider. The impact of guidance on clients' personal and professional lives and the effect of the interventions depend on the degree to which clients translate the advice they receive into action. A prime objective of our intervention is **to improve the advice-to-action-to-impact** ratio.

3. ***Increasing the number of organisations that deliver guidance services.*** Guidance service centres reach a limited group of people because demand is low. We need to multiply the number of locations in which adults with low basic skill levels are identified and subsequently receive appropriate guidance services. We aim to increase the number of organisations that identify and support the target group by providing these organisations with appropriate tools and methods to provide effective guidance (if required, 'in disguise'). Organisations that could identify the target group and subsequently provide guidance services are municipality social security agencies, community centres, libraries, temporary employment agencies and employers.

GOAL programme

Aims

At the heart of the GOAL project in the Netherlands is a basic skills quick scan, the *Taalmeter*. This instrument was developed by CINOP for *Stichting Lezen en Schrijven* (the Reading and Writing Foundation). This validated quick scan is an online tool that gives a sound indication of participants' actual reading, writing and numeracy skills levels. Clients complete the test within **12 to 15 minutes** under the supervision of a trained counsellor. The use of the quick scan is free of charge.

The underlying rationale for using the quick scan is that **effective orientation and guidance services require a sound assessment of clients' qualities, capacities and ambitions**. The levels a client has obtained in formal education are not always a reliable indicator when assessing clients' chances on the labour market as clients may have improved their (basic) skill levels, or their (basic) skill levels may have deteriorated, since leaving school. Rather than looking at obtained formal education levels, experience in the Netherlands strongly suggests that actual basic skill levels are a more important indicator in predicting clients' success in an increasingly demanding and competitive labour market. Effective orientation and guidance services therefore require an up-to-date assessment of the effective, applicable levels of basic skills. **Low levels of basic skills inhibit effective guidance and counselling and reduce clients' prospects of staying active on the labour market**. It is therefore anticipated that more effective, tailored guidance and counselling services can be provided once clients' actual basic skill levels have been assessed.

In the original project plan, the following goals were set by the Dutch GOAL team:

- **Increasing the number of organisations that use the basic skills quick scan** as an integrated part of their working procedures. Recruiting at least eight new organisations, divided equally over two regions.
- **Integrating basic guidance services into the working procedures of organisations** that use the basic skills quick scan.
- **Training staff** of organisations that use the basic skills quick scan to provide basic guidance services.
- **Developing a regional road map to education and career-service providers** to facilitate follow-up after guidance services have taken place and to improve the quality of the match between client needs and service provision.
- **Developing a monitoring system to measure improvements** in the advice-to-action-to-impact ratio of guidance services.

The data collected regarding numbers (basic quick scans taken, numbers of clients with low basic skill levels and referrals) and backgrounds should also give the organisations concerned insight into the following levels:

- Percentage of adults identified as having low basic skill levels who subsequently enrol in an education or career-service programme.

- Percentage of adults identified as having low basic skill levels who complete an education or career-service programme within six months.
- Perception of social inclusion of participants.

Activities

The GOAL intervention in the Netherlands consists of screening the clients of various service providers (such as municipal employment offices, reintegration services, penitentiary institutes) for **low literacy** by means of a validated basic skills quick scan. In one session the results of the quick scan are discussed with clients and potentially low literate clients are **informed about local training possibilities and are referred to language training points or educational institutions**. The word ‘potentially’ is used here as the screening with the *Taalmeter* indicates whether low literacy *might* be a problem and further testing is often needed to establish the exact level of basic skills a client possesses³. Counsellors can make use of the so-called ‘Road Map’ (which was also developed by the Reading and Writing Foundation) to refer clients to suitable training or education.

The experimentation in the Netherlands is thus quite **different** from the GOAL programmes in the other five countries where more elaborated guidance programmes are being set up, often involving multiple coaching sessions. The pilot in the Netherlands can be characterised as **a quick screening for low literary and referral to appropriate training facilities where the actual education and coaching takes place**.

In the original proposal, it was planned to recruit four organisations to implement the basic skills quick scan in their working procedures in each of the two selected pilot regions (Drenthe and Twente). In each organisation, it was projected that the skills quick scan would be completed by at least 100 people. They would receive guidance services, either by the organisation offering the quick scan or by one of the existing Service Points for Career Orientation and Guidance.

The methodology being used involves the regional project manager of the Reading and Writing Foundation contacting potential participating organisations and providing them with information on the GOAL project (by e-mail and face-to-face contact). If they are willing to participate, the **regional project manager** supports them with information, and training is given to their staff on low literacy and the use of the instruments (basic skills quick scan and roadmap). They also receive information on low literacy and learn about the causes and consequences. A **language ambassador** (former low literate) talks about his/her experiences. Practical instructions are given about recognising low literates (signals) and how to use the instruments (quick scan and Road Map). Staff are also provided with instructions on how to talk about literacy problems with clients, for example to reduce stigma by saying that many people face literacy problems. They are finally taught how to guide people to courses.

³ The basic skills quick scan was developed outside the GOAL programme and has been used 30,000 times in the Netherlands over the past three years. On average, approximately 35% of the 30,000 people who have taken the quick scan have scored at or below level A2 for reading, writing and/or maths. These participants are identified as people with ‘low basic skill levels’.

Sites

In order to recruit sites to the study, the Reading and Writing Foundation reaches out to organisations in their network or to new organisations in the chosen regions. Due to the lack of organisations willing to participate in the original two regions, the **scope of the study was extended to Friesland, Flevoland and Gelderland**. For discussion on this, see Section 2.5 below.

Four organisations have participated in the GOAL project in the Netherlands to date: this Wave One report is based on data from three organisations only, as the fourth, PI Achterhoek, joined the project too late (20 April 2016) to be included in Wave 1 data collection.

The four organisations in the pilot are the following:

- **Aksept** (located at the municipality of Hengelo, in the Twente region), an organisation specialising in services relating to labour market participation and health care. Its services include: reintegration services, job coaching and career counselling. In addition, Aksept provides day care activities to people with a large distance from the labour market (in terms of competences and skills). Within the framework of the GOAL pilot, all new clients of Aksept will be screened for low literacy using the *Taalmeter*.
- The **Municipality of Emmen** (located in the Province of Drenthe). All new clients who apply for social benefits at the municipality of Emmen are screened for low literacy by the training and diagnostic centre. The training and diagnostic centre is part of the EMCO-group which provides services for the municipalities of Emmen, Coevorden and Odoorn. The centre uses the *Taalmeter* for the screening.
- **Penitentiary Institution (PI) Lelystad** (located in the Province of Flevoland). All new inmates are invited to participate in the screening for low literacy. Participation is voluntary. Those clients who are screened as potentially low literate are referred to the internal education department. The *Taalmeter* has been introduced as part of the standard toolkit for all penitentiary institutes. Prior to participating in GOAL, PI Lelystad was already using the *Taalmeter*.
- **Penitentiary Institution (PI) Achterhoek** (located in the Province of Gelderland). The same working method as in PI Lelystad applies here.

Target group

A priority of the adult education policy is to improve basic skills of those groups who are not easy to reach, in particular **native Dutch speakers with low literacy and numeracy skills**. Screening for low literacy at various service providers as is the case in GOAL project is likely to contribute to a better outreach among these groups.

1.4 About this report

This national report serves as an interim evaluation report for the Netherlands. A final evaluation report will be produced in 2017. In addition to national reports, the GOAL evaluation is also producing cross-country reports, which synthesise data and findings from all six participating countries. The first cross-country report has been produced concurrently with the first wave of national reports, and can be found

(along with all national reports) on the project website: <http://www.projectgoal.eu/>. Key aims of the cross-country report are to enable participating countries to learn from one another's programme development experiences, and to draw lessons that can support national-level programme improvement.

The following report is comprised of 11 chapters including this introduction. This report is structured as follows.

- Chapter 2 describes the methodological design of the evaluation.
- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in the Netherlands.

Chapters 4-10 report on Wave 1 findings, covering the following topics.

- Chapter 4 describes the GOAL service in the Netherlands.
- Chapter 5 discusses GOAL partnerships and networks.
- Chapter 6 discusses GOAL counsellor competences.
- Chapter 7 focuses on guidance tools used in the provision of GOAL services.
- Chapter 8 looks at GOAL outreach strategies.
- Chapter 9 provides an overview of programme outcomes to this point.
- Chapter 10 discusses the quality of the GOAL programme.
- Chapter 11 provides a brief summary of the key findings in this report, highlighting the potential implications of these findings for the GOAL service, GOAL partnerships and networks, and policy.

The reporting template on which this national report is based was designed by IOE to be used across all six countries. IOE also contributed generic text to the six national reports, including the material on the GOAL project background and the evaluation methodology. All reporting on national and site level findings is authored by the local evaluation team, with editorial input from IOE.

2 Methodology

This chapter summarises the evaluation methodology and how the evaluation requirements are being implemented in the Netherlands.

2.1 Evaluation design and methods

Evaluation design

The methodology for the IOE evaluation is shaped by the complexities of the project design, namely the facts that:

- GOAL is multi-site (12 'sites' or locations, that is, two in each of six countries) and multi-organisational.
- GOAL has multiple objectives.
- GOAL is predicated on cross-organisational collaboration.
- Each partner country has its own unique context and target groups (and target numbers to achieve).
- Programme resources are finite, and should be primarily focused on the interventions rather than the evaluation.

For these reasons it was neither feasible nor advisable to conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation involving comparison groups. Instead the evaluation draws on two theoretical frameworks: the **'Theory of Change'**⁴ and **Realist Evaluation**⁵ approaches. Theory of Change approach specifies what programme implementers believe will happen as a result of the intervention, and what processes are required⁶. The articulation of the underlying programme theory serves as the foundation for the initiative's operation as well as its evaluation⁷. Realist evaluation approaches emphasise the central importance of **programme contexts and programme mechanisms**, and focuses on the interplay between these two factors, and their combined impact on outcomes.

The evaluation is **integrated within the project throughout its lifespan**, not only at programme level, but also at policy level: an important element of the evaluation's **multilevel approach** is the description and assessment of the policy processes that play a role in influencing programme success. It is hoped

⁴ Weitzman, B. C., Silver, D., & Dillman, K. N. (2002). Integrating a comparison group design into a theory of change evaluation: The case of the Urban Health Initiative. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 23(4), 371-385.

⁵ Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. SAGE.

⁶ Weiss, C. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21, 501-524.

⁷ Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Sage Publications.

that this dual focus on **programme-level and policy-level processes**, and their interaction, will provide useful evidence for a range of policymakers working in complex fields.

Evaluation data are being gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors.

The evaluation includes: a) ongoing data collection (throughout the life of the project) and b) wave-specific data collection.

Ongoing data collection

Quantitative client data are being collected throughout the life of the programme via client surveys and monitoring data. In addition to these two modes of data collection, there will be a third quantitative mode: a **follow-up survey** administered to a planned minimum of 30 clients in each country.

The **data monitoring instrument** gathers detailed information about the clients on the GOAL programmes, thus enabling evaluators to measure target numbers and track a range of programme processes and service user outcomes. This instrument includes a question asking clients if they can be contacted later as part of the evaluation study. Measuring service user numbers allows us to evaluate the fourth intervention strategy: bringing guidance to specific target groups. Measuring client outcomes is part of the evaluation of the fifth intervention strategy – the quality of guidance services: service user outcomes.

The data monitoring instrument is used **each time** a client has a guidance session, although not all fields are completed at every session, with some fields relevant to first sessions only (entrance data) and others designed to collect exit data. Each client is assigned a unique identifier by the counsellor, allowing evaluators to link data for clients who participate in multiple sessions.

The **Client Satisfaction Survey** was designed to gather data from service users about their experiences of counselling services. The instrument is a short, two-page, self-completion survey offered in either paper or online formats. It contains eight questions: two gather demographic information on the client (age, gender); five focus on the counselling session, and the final question asks clients to record if they

received assistance in completing the survey⁸. There are small differences between the surveys offered in the six countries, reflecting the different contexts in which the guidance is offered, and the different objectives of various programmes. Measuring client satisfaction is part of the evaluation of the fifth intervention strategy: the quality of guidance services: service user outcomes.

Both instruments were developed by IOE in close collaboration with the country partners in order that the instruments were sufficiently sensitive to the target groups involved and to national data protection regulations and concerns. The tools were finalised in autumn 2015.

Wave-specific data collection

Programme and policy data are being collected and analysed in two waves, with the findings of **Wave 1** analysed and disseminated amongst programme partners – via this national report and a cross-country report – in order to facilitate service adaptation and improvement. **Wave 2** data collection will repeat the same data collection processes, but with an emphasis on the degree to which expectations have been met, what has been learned and how programmes have evolved. Reporting of Waves 1 and 2 will include analysis of quantitative data collected as part of (a) ongoing data collection.

During each data collection wave, case studies of the GOAL interventions at each location are being collated from document analysis and **semi-structured qualitative interviews** with a range of GOAL stakeholders. In the GOAL Wave 1 data collection, these stakeholder views were captured through either one-to-one interviews (face-to-face and, in the case of some service-users, by telephone) or focus groups. Four topic guides were developed by IOE to assist local evaluators in Wave 1 data gathering and ensure consistency across the programme locations: **1) Programme Staff; 2) Programme Partners; 3) Policy Actors; and 4) Service Users**. A fifth Topic Guide, used in Iceland only, combined questions for Programme Partners and Policy Actors.

In Wave 1, a short quantitative survey was administered to all **GOAL programme staff members** (not only those participating in qualitative interviews and focus groups) to gather some basic data on their educational background, their current employment, and their professional development and training.

2.2 Sample

In Wave 1 of the GOAL evaluation, monitoring data were collected for **eight GOAL service users** in the Netherlands. Seven of these eight service users filled in a client satisfaction survey. All eight service users came from **one pilot organisation**: PI Lelystad.

For the qualitative strand of the research, interviews were conducted at three of the four pilot organisations: PI Lelystad, the Municipality of Emmen, and Aksept. The fourth pilot organisation started

⁸ It was anticipated that low literacy levels, or migrants' low skills in the national language, might prevent some clients from completing the survey without assistance.

participating in the GOAL pilot after the data collection cut-off date for Wave 1. Data from this site will be collected for Wave 2.

Interviews were also conducted with policy actors from various organisations and backgrounds involved in policy and projects regarding adults with low basic skill levels. This included civil servants, advisers and project coordinators from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), the Reading and Writing Foundation, and the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV).

Table 2.1. *Data Collection, the Netherlands*

Method	Participants	Number of interviews
Questionnaire monitoring data*	8	-
Questionnaire client satisfaction survey*	7	-
Interview policy actors	5	4
Interview policymakers	4	3
Interview programme staff	4	4
Interview programme partners	3	1
Total	31	12

Table 2.2. *Data Collection per pilot organisation, the Netherlands*

Pilot organisation	Policymakers	Programme staff	Programme partners
PI Lelystad	2	2	3
Aksept	1	1	0
The Municipality of Emmen	1	1	0
Total	4	4	3

At PI Lelystad, seven people were consulted in four interviews: a double interview with policymakers (the head of the internal education department and the coordinator of the reintegration centre), two interviews with programme staff members and a triple interview with employees from the PI's education department. The education department provides language guidance services and can be seen as an internal programme partner.

The second pilot organisation where interviews were conducted is Aksept. At Aksept, local evaluators spoke to a policymaker (i.e. head/coordinator) and a programme staff member. Finally, two interviews were conducted at the Municipality of Emmen: one with a policymaker and one with a programme staff member.

2.3 Data collection methods

To ensure the collection of robust data and the consistency of instrument administration across the six countries, IOE created an **evaluation manual** containing guidelines for the use of the data collection tools. Version 1 of the manual (November 2015) included protocols for two quantitative instruments used in ongoing data collection. Version 2 (March 2016) added guidelines for the administration of the

Wave 1 Topic Guides and other instruments, as well as guidance for completing the national reports. Future iterations of the manual will include protocols for administering Wave 2 instruments and writing the final national report.

In the Netherlands, **each pilot organisation has a contact person who functions as a permanent contact point for the GOAL programme**. These contacts all received an e-mail with information about the evaluation as well as links to the online instruments for data monitoring and the client satisfaction survey. The contact person forwarded this e-mail to all client managers in their organisations, with the request that the monitoring survey be conducted during an intake session among all clients who have low basic skill levels according to the basic skills quick scan. The client managers were also asked to have clients with low basic skills complete the client satisfaction survey at the end of the intake session (if necessary with the client manager's support). In the Netherlands the decision was made to use an **online version** of the client survey so that the data would be more easily and securely available to researchers.

Appointments were made for qualitative interviews via the pilot organisations' contacts. For two pilot organisations, face-to-face interviews were conducted; in the third pilot organisation, the interviews were conducted by telephone. All interviews were conducted using a voice recorder. The interviews were transcribed using the interviewer's notes. If the notes provided insufficient clarity, parts of the interviews were listened to again. The interviews with policy actors were transcribed using the recordings.

In the Netherlands, one-to-one **interviews were selected instead of focus groups** for the qualitative data gathering because of the limited group size, to limit participant time investment (no journey time to a central location) and to enable the possibility of responding flexibly to the relevant participant's agenda. A flexible and individual approach was required as the participating parties had only recently decided to participate. The willingness to participate in the interviews was high and, as far as we could see, this was not considered to be a great burden.

2.4 Data analysis

In this **mixed methods evaluation**, a number of analytical approaches were used. Quantitative data were analysed using mainly **descriptive statistics**, e.g. frequencies, averages, group comparisons and cross-tabulations. For this Wave 1 report, most of the investigation relies on descriptive statistics, as **GOAL programme participant numbers are as yet too small** for any in-depth inferential statistical analysis.

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were analysed using mainly thematic analysis around the topic guides that were explicitly linked to the main aims and objectives of the project. In addition some typology analysis and group comparison analysis were also used.

2.5 Methodological challenges

Programme set-up challenges and their impact on the evaluation

Stichting Lezen en Schrijven (the Reading and Writing Foundation), in spite of all efforts, found it very difficult to get organisations to participate in the GOAL project. This was mainly to do with the anticipated additional staff effort, the costs associated with this and the lack of direct added value for the organisation itself. For many of the organisations, sessions with clients are carried out with a completely different main objective and any screening for low basic skills is carried out as an extra. For many of the organisations that are interesting for this research, the emphasis lies on working efficiently, partly because of past cost-cutting, and intake and other interviews are conducted according to **strict procedures and strict time limits**. Many organisations considered the effort that is necessary for conducting the basic skills quick scan and the additional monitoring surveys to be too high. **Although the effort for the monitoring and client survey seems limited from our perspective, for the organisations, it appeared to be an insurmountable objection.** Many organisations fear ‘administrative hassle’, as one potential participant put it.

Due to this difficulty in recruiting organisations fewer pilot organisations participated than was projected.⁹ In January/February 2016, only one organisation participated (Askept). PI Lelystad and the Municipality of Emmen and PI Achterhoek started participating later (March/April 2016, see also Table 2.3. for starting dates of each GOAL pilot). An additional bottleneck was that the GOAL project also started very slowly within two of the participating pilot organisations. Once the municipality of Emmen and PI Achterhoek had agreed to participate, it took a few months to get the project started. This had an impact on the (monitoring) data that could be collected.

At Askept no surveys (i.e. monitoring data and client surveys) were completed because – contrary to prior expectations – there had been almost no new client intake since January 2016. The municipality had hardly referred any new clients to Aksept. According to the policymaker interviewed at Aksept this was due to internal problems at the municipality. Among the limited client intake there were no clients with low basic skill levels.

The Municipality of Emmen started using the basic skills quick scan in the Training and Diagnostic Centre on 18 April 2016. The interview regarding the outcome of the basic skills quick scan however is conducted by a different department, namely the client managers. Due to a technical obstacle it has not yet been possible to send the results of the basic skills quick scan to client managers digitally. The interviews about the outcome could therefore not take place. This also had implications for the data collection, as clients managers have to provide the monitoring data and ensure the administration of the client survey.

⁹ As a positive spin off of the efforts of the Reading and Writing Foundation to recruit organisations to participate in GOAL, an organisation which did not originally wish to participate in GOAL is currently considering using the basic skills quick scan and the organisation of language lessons on the work floor.

PI Lelystad is the only organisation that completed the surveys (data monitoring and client satisfaction). In the data monitoring survey, clients can indicate whether they wish to participate in a follow up telephone interview. **All eight clients indicated that they did not wish to participate in any follow-up interviews.**

Table 2.3. provides an overview of filled out basic skills quick scans (1 January to 9 May 2016), the number of indications of low literacy, and the starting dates for participating in GOAL. As the table shows there is a discrepancy between the number of indications of low literacy and the number of clients for whom we have monitoring data (i.e. only from 8 clients from PI Lelystad). This mainly due to the fact that organisations – as discussed above – already implemented the basic skills quick scan before they decided/were asked to participate in GOAL. In the case of PI Lelystad, 15 of the 23 clients identified as potentially having low literacy were scanned either before participation was agreed, or in the 10 day set-up period that followed the agreement.

Table 2.3. *The Use of the Basic Skills Quick Scan (Taalmeter) 1 January – 9 May 2016, the Netherlands*

Pilot organisation	Start participation in GOAL	Number of completed basic skills quick scans (Taalimeters)	Number of indications of low literacy
PI Lelystad	21 March 2016	128	23
Aksept	26 January 2016	9	2
The Municipality of Emmen	18 April 2016	42	21
PI Achterhoek	20 April 2016	87	13
Total		266	59

There were also a number of challenges to the qualitative data collection. As mentioned above, local evaluators were not able to interview clients as the limited number of participants (N=8) all indicated that they were not willing to participate in follow-up interviews.

Also the number of interviews with staff members and programme partners were fewer than anticipated at some project sites. For example, at Aksept it was not possible to conduct an interview with a second programme staff member. Due to a very low intake of new clients, there were as yet few staff members involved in the project. This low intake of clients is also the reason why we have not conducted an interview with a programme partner, i.e. the municipality of Hengelo. Aksept expects to receive more clients from the municipality in the future. We will include the Municipality of Hengelo in the Wave 2 data collection as a programme partner. At the project site at the Municipality of Emmen it also was not possible to conduct an interview with a second programme staff member. The reason for this is the municipality's very recent participation in the GOAL pilot. Due to the planning of Wave 1, it also was not possible to conduct an interview with a programme partner.

A particular challenge is associated with tracing results of the participants at the penitentiary institutes. It has already proven difficult to organise follow-up interviews. This will make it difficult to map any (longer term) results of the screening and referral.

Data analysis challenges

The limited participation of organisations and the late start of one organisation mean that little data is available for Wave 1. As the sample is very small (data monitoring N=8; client satisfaction survey N=7), it was not possible for local evaluators to conduct statistical analyses for the Netherlands, and **this country report contains descriptive statistics only.**

The key methodological issue is currently the limited number of participants and the limited availability of quantitative data. No reliable analyses can be made using the current numbers.

2.6 Key methodological findings

An important lesson to be learned from the Wave 1 experiences of the GOAL project in the Netherlands is that **the benefit for organisations in participating in the pilot should outweigh the administrative 'burden' associated with the accompanying research.** Especially in the Netherlands where the intervention is relatively 'light', the data collection (data monitoring, client surveys, interviews etc.) can pose a significant strain on already tight work processes. This fear for administrative burden has been a reason for several organisations to forgo participation in GOAL. **While organisations do see the benefit of using the basic skills quick scan, they do not always see the benefit of participating in the research.** In fact they can also implement the *Taalmeter*, without participating in GOAL. This situation has made it difficult for the programme coordinator to fully implement the GOAL project as originally anticipated.

2.7 Methodological implications

Implications for programme development

The GOAL programme in the Netherlands has encountered a number of problems in recruiting organisations: reflection is needed in future programme development on the amount of resources that need to be devoted to securing participation and on how recruitment strategies and tactics might be improved. Particular attention should be paid to understanding and offsetting the administrative burden on potential partners.

Implications for policy

At this stage of the project, limited data means that it is not yet feasible to highlight potential policy implications, with regard to evaluation methodology.

Implications for evaluation

In the Netherlands two of the four current pilot organisations are penitentiary institutes. An important consideration for the evaluation process, is the difficulty of getting access to participants in prisons for follow-up qualitative interviews. It is unlikely that evaluators will be able to collect in-depth data on detainees' experiences and perceptions of GOAL.

3 Programme Participants and Stakeholders

This chapter provides descriptive data on the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in the Netherlands. These data are drawn from quantitative and qualitative data gathered during Wave 1. The intention in this chapter is to develop a picture of: a) the target client group in the Netherlands, and b) GOAL staff. In doing so, we seek to provide context for the programme’s objectives, successes and challenges. Programme partners are discussed in Chapter 5.

The GOAL intervention in the Netherlands is targeted at screening clients of various service providers for **low literacy**, such as municipal employment offices, reintegration services, penitentiary institutes. GOAL will also search for ways to include difficult-to-access target groups, such as **employed people and native Dutch speakers**.

3.1 Service users

Socio-demographic characteristics

Target group

The target group so far consists of **detainees**. One participant was classified as migrant/refugee/asylum seeker (Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. *Target Group, the Netherlands*

	N	%
Job-seeker/unemployed	0	0
Early School Leaver	0	0
Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker	1	13
Detainee	7	88
Over-50	0	0
Total	8	100

All three of the interviewed pilot organisations state that the target group they deal with is very diverse. Clients enter the organisations with a specific purpose, but their age, background and level of knowledge vary. Aksept provides two kind of services: reintegration services and day care for adults who are at a large distance (in terms of competences and skills etc.) from the labour market. In addition, they also offer guidance to youngsters from the training college who are looking for an internship to learn employee skills. The target group of the Municipality of Emmen consists of people who apply for social security. At PI Lelystad the target group consists of male detainees. According to the interviewed programme staff members of the PI, the background characteristics and issues also vary widely within this target group. Yet a few common features can be identified:

‘Mainly boys who have got less of a social network outside the prison, who have to rely on themselves, who have a lower IQ level and/or a background on addiction’.

At PI Lelystad it was particularly mentioned that low literacy is accompanied with feelings of shame and avoidant behavior:

‘Often they are super intelligent in hiding their low literacy, in order of which they’ve developed all sorts of mechanisms’.

Gender

As all available data on service users comes from PI Lelystad, a male-only prison, all the Wave 1 clients from the Netherlands are **male** (Table 3.2.).

Table 3.2. *Gender of Clients, the Netherlands*

	N	%
Female	0	0
Male	8	100
Total	8	100

Age

Table 3.3. gives the age distribution of participants. The **age of participants is very varied.**

Table 3.3. *Age of Clients, the Netherlands*

	N	%
18 and under	0	0
19-25	1	13
26-35	2	25
36-55	2	25
56-65	3	38
66 and older	0	0
Total	8	100

Residence

Most participants hold **Dutch citizenship** (Table 3.4.).

Table 3.4. *Residence Status of Clients, the Netherlands*

	N	%
National/citizen	5	63
EU national	2	25
Non-EU national with residence permit	0	0
Asylum seeker	1	13
Refugee	0	0
Other (Please specify)	0	0
Total	8	100

Home language

Participants speak a variety of languages. Only three of the eight clients have Dutch as the language most commonly spoken at home (Table 3.5.). For home language, we have concealed the specific languages in order to avoid clients being recognised, as they are all from one organisation.

Table 3.5. ‘Which language(s) do you most commonly speak at home?’, the Netherlands

	N	%
Dutch	3	38
xxx	1	13
xxx	1	13
xxx	1	13
xxx	1	13
xxx	1	13
Total	8	100

Education and employment characteristics

Highest educational level

Most participants have **lower levels of education** (primary education, lower secondary education) (see Table 3.6.).

Table 3.6. ‘What is your highest level of education?’, the Netherlands

	N	%
Not completed primary education	2	25
Primary education	3	38
Lower secondary education	2	25
General upper secondary education (gymnasium)	0	0
Vocational education (upper secondary level)	0	0
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	0	0
Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)	1	13
Total	8	100

Current education and learning

As Table 3.7. shows, **most participants are involved in a form of training.** This is provided by the educational department within the PI Lelystad.

Table 3.7. ‘Are you currently engaged in any kind of education or learning?’, the Netherlands

	N	%
No	2	25
Yes	6	75
Total	8	100

Half of those who are participating in training are **working towards a qualification** (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8. 'Are you working towards a qualification?', the Netherlands

		N	%	Valid %
Valid	No	3	38	50
	Yes	3	38	50
	Total	6	75	100
Missing	Not applicable	2	25	
	Total	2	25	
Total		8	100	

Employment status

Unsurprisingly, as the dataset comprises entirely of detainees, **participants are labelled as inactive** (see Table 3.9.).

Table 3.9. 'What is your current employment status?', the Netherlands

	N	%
Employed full-time	0	0
Employed part-time	0	0
Self-employed	0	0
Unemployed	0	0
Retired	0	0
Inactive (not retired and not actively looking for a job. E.g. full time student, stay at home parent)	8	100
Other (please write)	0	0
Total	8	100

Previous guidance

As Table 3.10. shows, most GOAL participants in the Netherlands have **no prior experience with career or educational guidance** during adulthood.

Table 3.10. 'Have you previously received any career/educational guidance during adulthood (but not as part of Higher Education)?', the Netherlands

	N	%
No	6	75
Yes	2	25
Total	8	100

Self-efficacy

In the initial guidance session clients were asked to answer three questions concerning their own judgment about their self-efficacy, i.e. their self-perceived ability to achieve desired outcomes in life. Each question was made up of two statements, one presenting a more positive view and the other a more negative view. The positive statement gave the client a score of 1 point for that question and the

negative one gave them a score of 0 points; thus the scores for the whole scale could range from 0-3 points, with 3 representing a client who chose the positive statement for all three questions and who thus had the highest possible score on the self-efficacy scale. The lowest possible score was 0.

The calculated self-efficacy scores (Table 3.11.) indicate that **most participants feel more or less in control of their lives.**

Table 3.11. *Self-efficacy score (at the entry point), the Netherlands*

	N	%
1	0	0
2	2	25
3	6	75
Total	8	100

Attitudes to learning

As Table 3.12. shows, all participants indicate that they like to learn new things.

Table 3.12. *'Do you like learning new things?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
No, not really	0	0
Yes, a bit	3	38
Yes, a lot	5	63
Total	8	100

Learning goals

The most commonly mentioned learning goals are achieving a (specific) qualification or improvement of skills (see Table 3.13.).

Table 3.13. *'Do you have specific learning goals? (multiple answers possible)', the Netherlands*

	N	% of responses	% of cases
Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort	3	20	38
Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification	3	20	38
Yes, I want to improve my skills in general	4	27	50
Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific area	2	13	25
Yes, I need this learning to find a job	2	13	25
Not applicable; the client does not have education related guidance	1	7	13
Total	15	100	188

Career goals

As Table 3.14. shows, five out of eight clients know in what industry or sector they would like to work.

Table 3.14. ‘Does your client have clear career goals?’, the Netherlands

	N	%
No, the client does not have any specific job or career area in mind	3	38
Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	5	63
Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	0	0
Total	8	100

3.2 Programme staff

In Wave One there were four participating organisations spread across multiple sites. In the Netherlands, **no quantitative information was collected on programme staff**. It was chosen not to burden participating organisations further, because the situation is complex (for example, in the case of the two participating prisons) and because **background information on staff is less relevant** than in the other participating countries because of the unique nature of the Dutch intervention. This mainly concerns using the basic skills quick scan including an interview on the outcome and any referral, but not about guidance in the wider sense of the word. Those administering the basic skills quick scan (professionals and in the case of the PI trainees) have received instruction from the Reading and Writing Foundation on how to recognise low literacy, how to discuss this issue with clients and how to use the *Taalmeter*. As the *Taalmeter* itself is very straightforward this does not require any further training of staff.

3.3 Key findings

It is not yet possible at this stage to use quantitative data to make pronouncements about participation, implementation and outcomes of using the basic skills quick scan. The interviews have given us an initial impression of the current situation and the first steps among the participating organisations.

The pilot organisations provide different types of services: from reintegration and day care for adults who are at a large distance from the labour market, to detention. The clients who make use of these services vary in age, background and level of knowledge.

3.4 Implications

Implications for programme development

An important challenge, which is pointed out by PI Lelystad in particular, is how to dispel the feelings of shame which accompany low literacy. Clients often try to hide their low literacy. Hopefully the use of the basic skills quick scan (*Taalmeter*) can contribute to an improved screening and open up the conversation about low literacy. This issue is further discussed in Sections 6.4 and 7.4 of this report.

At present there are no other implications either for policy or for the evaluation.

4 The GOAL guidance service

This chapter provides an overview of descriptive information on the GOAL guidance service in the Netherlands, in order to develop our understanding of how the service has been used in the initial stages and why. By analysing quantitative and qualitative data on the GOAL activities and processes to date, the chapter offers preliminary insights into what appears to be working well and less well in the guidance service.

Looking across Europe as a whole, the culture of **adult guidance is underdeveloped**, especially among adults who are traditionally less likely to engage in work-related and other forms of learning, such as those with low literacy and numeracy skills. There is a perception – which to some extent is still borne out by practice – that guidance is almost exclusively a careers-focused service offered in schools at or near the point where students are completing their compulsory education.

According to the ELGPN¹⁰, **guidance within adult education typically takes three forms:**

- *Pre-entry guidance* which supports adults to consider whether to participate in adult learning and what programmes might be right for them.
- *Guidance as an integral part of adult education programmes.* Some adult education programmes are strongly focused on career planning or on the development of employability and career management skills: in these cases lifelong guidance is often built into the core of the programme.
- *Exit guidance* which supports graduates of adult education programmes to consider how they can use what they have learned to support their progress in further learning and work.

4.1 Guidance activities and processes

Quantitative findings

Reasons for seeking guidance

Reasons for seeking guidance are diverse. The most common reasons registered are: to explore educational opportunities, to get assistance with learning strategies and to get assistance with job seeking.

Table 4.1. *Reasons for Seeking Guidance (multiple answers possible), the Netherlands*

	N	% of responses	% of cases
To explore educational opportunities	2	18	25
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	2	18	25
To get assistance with job seeking	2	18	25

¹⁰ Hooley, T. (2014) The evidence base on lifelong guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

To get information about different institutions and their roles	1	9	13
Other (please specify)	4	36	50
Total	11	100	138

Contact type

In the Dutch pilot, there is just one type of contact and that is the **face-to-face** use of the basic skills quick scan and discussion about it.

Length of session

As Table 4.2. shows sessions are **relatively short** in the Netherlands. The majority are conducted in 10-15 minutes.

Table 4.2. *Length of Session, the Netherlands*

Minutes	N	%
10	2	25
15	3	38
20	1	13
5	1	13
8	1	13
Total	8	100

Focus of session

The focus of the sessions is diverse, as Table 4.3. shows. Due to limited numbers it is not possible to draw any further conclusions.

Table 4.3. *Focus of Session, the Netherlands*

		N	%	Valid %
Valid	Helping the client to get a clear view of his wishes for the future	1	13	17
	Reasons why the client wants to learn Dutch	2	25	33
	Finding an appropriate educational programme	1	13	17
	Educational opportunities and barriers	2	25	33
	Total	6	75	100
Missing	Answer not provided	1	13	
	Not applicable	1	13	
	Total	2	25	
Total		8	100	100

4.2 Key findings

The GOAL intervention in the Netherlands is unique: guidance sessions can be characterised as very short relative to those in the other participating countries.

The use of prisons as intervention sites is of particular interest: their closed nature and the fact that they work in a compulsory context demands a customised approach. For example, not only do screening and guidance take place within the same organisation, it is also possible for GOAL service users to take literacy courses within the prison, depending on the length of their sentence and the detainees' daily programme.

4.3 Implications

Due to the very early stage of the implementation process of GOAL at the project sites, it is too premature to discuss implications for policy or practice. However, it is notable that prisons have certain features which may impact, either positively or negatively, on GOAL. For example, because screening and guidance take place within the same organisation (in contrast to the non-prison GOAL model), the process in prisons is more closely integrated than it is outside prisons, where movement is across services *and* organisations, rather than across services *within* an organisation. This may have implications for service delivery and/or quality.

5 Partnerships and Networks

This chapter provides in-depth background information of the partnerships and networks that have been developed to support the work of the GOAL programmes. It also provides a preliminary assessment of the quality and value of these partnerships and networks.

5.1 Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

An important focal point in addressing low basic skill levels in the Netherlands is **the establishment and strengthening of regional networks**. There has been a focus on regional collaboration for some time. The preconditions for addressing low basic skill levels were mapped out in a number of regions in the Literacy for Life pilot programme (2012 and 2015). It is important that the regional literacy training services on offer meet the needs of potential students. To this end, regional ‘literacy teams’ have been established, which work with regional parties to make existing literacy services more effective. They do this by ensuring that organisations which identify service users with low literacy such as the UWV (Employee Insurance Agency), the Public Employment Services, Service Points for Career Orientation & Guidance, and social district teams, cooperate more effectively with organisations offering literacy courses, including ROCs (Regional Education Centres), libraries and community centres. This creates a regional ‘literacy network’, enabling municipalities to develop a more effective approach to addressing low basic skills. It also clarifies the role and responsibility of other parties, including employers and care organisations. More low literacy service users were trained in the Literacy for Life pilot regions and it also appeared that they made advancements regarding literacy proficiency and participation in society. Partly because of the outcomes of the previous pilot programme, **strengthening networks is now incorporated as one of the five action lines in the national *Count on Skills* programme** and the aim is to establish active networks in all 35 employment regions in the Netherlands. The goal of the action line during the action programme (2016-2018) is to ensure that at least 45,000 participants start literacy training, in which materials and volunteers from the programme will be used. The intended results of the action line ‘local network approach’ are described as follows:

‘1a. In all employment market regions, a sustainable infrastructure has been created in which municipalities, together with local and regional partners, take the lead in better identifying and addressing low basic skills.

1b. New literacy volunteers will be trained in each region for deployment as a literacy buddy, literacy coach or guide for semi-literate service users. At least 3,000 volunteers will be trained throughout the Netherlands in 2018.

1c. In each region, at least one recognisable permanent meeting point will be designed for students, volunteers, teachers and other network partners (Literacy Point)’.

The above-mentioned literacy teams will be deployed in order to stimulate cooperation. The literacy teams (established by *Stichting Lezen en Schrijven*, the Reading and Writing Foundation) will ensure that the municipalities and other involved parties in a region build a sustainable regional infrastructure in order to identify service users with low literacy and guide them to literacy or other training. This basic infrastructure, as described in the *Count on Skills* action programme, comprises amongst others:

- **A Literacy Point**, which acts as local or regional contact point for the literacy network. All regional information about literacy training will be collated here, the target group will be able to contact the point with any questions, and courses and events can be organised.
- The **basic skills quick scan** will be used by organisations such as temporary employment agencies, the UWV (Employee Insurance Agency), Service Points for Career Orientation and Guidance and care providers to identify services users with low literacy more quickly and to refer them to an appropriate literacy training.
- **A range of training for literacy volunteers**, the development of training and testing materials.

With regards to GOAL, organisations make use of these networks from the *Count on Skills* programme if they are already in place, but also need to identify which organisations are relevant within those networks. These **partners can provide clients** (e.g. a municipality refers clients to the reintegration company) **and also act as partners where they can refer their clients to** (e.g. libraries, or education centres). The Reading and Writing Foundation provides support to identify and reach out to network partners.

The interviews with national stakeholders demonstrated that in locating, referring and supporting clients with low basic skill levels, **a network in which the different parties can contact each other and cooperate easily is of great importance**. Various interviewees referred to the situation in the Province of Friesland, which is seen as good practice in the area of networking. In this province a broad alliance was set up to tackle the problem of low literacy, including amongst others employers and educational institutions. A regional assessment was made of the number of low literate adults in the region. Also all partners identified what they could do to contribute to tackling the problem of low literacy. At the regional level an inventory was made of the quantity and quality of educational services for low literate adults, as a basis for further developing the regional infrastructure. An important result of the activities in Friesland is that the problem of low literacy is on the agenda at various organisations and an infrastructure has evolved to refer clients to education. In the Netherlands, the new nationwide action plan to combat low literacy, '*Count on Skills*', provides new opportunities for partnership building, especially because of the new involvement of the ministries of Health and Social Affairs in low literacy action plans. The participating organisations in our sample originate from different regions, which is why we cannot create a cohesive analysis of the regional networks here. As many of the pilots started far into the data collection period, we have not been able to collect much data from (and about) partners to make any sound statements on the development of local networks at the pilot locations and the actual collaboration between partners. We hope to include more information on this in Wave 2.

Aksept operates in a region where there is already an established network. Aksept attends information meetings about low literacy, together with several regional parties. The Reading and Writing Foundation organises these meetings for health care institutions, social work facilities, the municipality, organisations who offer reintegration services (like Aksept) and volunteers. The key purpose of these meetings is sharing knowledge, not collaboration. Aksept attends these meetings in order to be better prepared to address low literacy in their coaching. The Municipality of Emmen has set up an infrastructure as mentioned above in the section on the *Count on Skills* programme. In January 2016, they established a local network in Emmen with the library, social work and the regional community

college. The partners have opened two Literacy Points and collaborate to get more adults with low literacy into coaching or reintegration trajectories. The municipality subsidises the network and has an advisory role.

At PI Lelystad the situation is different. Because of its closed nature, **the prison is not part of a local or regional network**. They do have an internal network: the literacy lessons are offered by the education department.

5.2 Perceived quality of collaboration within networks

From the perspective of GOAL

Regional cooperation is vital in both identifying and supporting service users with low literacy. Parties need to be prepared to act as identification sites, and there must also be a clear range of training and guidance on offer. The proposed regional approach focuses on the identification sites, screening, training offered and professionalism. The focus on this indicates that improvement is possible on these points, which was also clear from the interviews. **In the more successful networks there is an influential and enthusiastic driving-force, the urgency of the problem is recognised, clear agreements are made and, according to one interviewee, there is commitment at strategic, tactical and operational levels.** The Dutch GOAL intervention, with the use of the basic skills quick scan as the core element, forms part of this approach. The formation of networks is vital here because of an expansion in the number of identification sites for service users with low literacy and the improvement of the follow-up programmes after screening.

Due to the relatively late start of the GOAL project at the project sites, it is not possible at the time of writing this report to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing partnerships. This analysis will be carried out in Wave 2.

Partner and policy perspectives

The policy perspective and how this has already been implemented in some of the regions is described in Section 5.1 above.

5.3 Potential sustainability of collaborative networks

The sustainability of collaborative networks has been incorporated into the national plan, *Count on Skills*, with the aim of ensuring that, following temporary support from a literacy team, municipalities and other regional parties will continue the regional literacy network themselves. Regional literacy agreements will be signed in order to stimulate this embedding of the programme. Municipalities, libraries, employers, literacy trainers, care institutes and other involved parties will make a commitment in such regional literacy agreements to contribute towards preventing low literacy and to address low basic skills. Within the current GOAL pilot regions, this cooperation is still being developed and it is too early to draw conclusions about embedding the programme in the long-term.

5.4 Key findings

An important focal point in addressing low basic skill levels in the Netherlands is the establishment and strengthening of regional networks. A condition for addressing low basic skills is ensuring that the offer of local literacy training meets the needs of potential participants. In order to ensure better cooperation between the organisations in which service users with low literacy are identified and the organisations in which literacy lessons are offered, regional 'literacy teams' will be deployed. Other parties, such as employers and care organisations will also be involved by the literacy teams. Participating pilot partners in GOAL can make use of these networks, but networks are not yet established in all regions.

The basic infrastructure of the intended network is threefold: a **Literacy Point**, which acts as local or regional contact point for the literacy network, use of the **basic skills quick scan** to ensure that service users with low literacy are recognised and referred to an appropriate training provider, and a **range of training** to increase the skills of literacy volunteers. These are factors that have proven to be successful in other regions, but it is too early to establish whether this is also the case at the GOAL project sites.

Pilot partners can draw on existing partners, but also need to look at their own specific network partners. Due to the late start of the project at pilot locations, we cannot draw any conclusions yet on how this is working in practice. The infrastructure is still being developed in the regions and organisations participating in the research.

At a more general level, a number of success factors are clear from the networks that already exist: the network has an enthusiastic, influential driving-force, there is recognition of the urgency of the problem of low basic skills, there are clear agreements, and there is commitment from all involved levels: strategic, tactical and operational. Once the regional networks have been established, a second and important challenge follows: embedding. A main target has been incorporated in the *Count on Skills* programme with the aim of ensuring that, following temporary support from a literacy team, municipalities and other regional parties continue the regional literacy network themselves. In order to ensure that this is embedded, **regional literacy agreements will be signed**, in which all network parties will make a commitment to contribute towards preventing low literacy and to address low basic skills.

5.5 Implications

Implications for programme development

The Netherlands' approach to GOAL differs radically from the approaches of the other partner countries. The diffused nature of GOAL in the Netherlands means that the programme is particularly dependent on the establishment of strong partnerships, with partners themselves administering the skills scans and then referring potential clients on to another organisation. Whereas in other countries GOAL is a discrete service that works with partners, in the Netherlands GOAL is more of a process distributed across a network of organisations. This has clear implications for programme development: **partners must be convinced of the benefits of contributing to GOAL, despite the administrative and other burdens this creates for themselves.**

Implications for policy

Because of the diffused nature of GOAL in the Netherlands, policy support may be particularly important. By encouraging and supporting GOAL activities across a range of partners, policy may help GOAL to better establish itself, and thus to contribute to broader policy objectives. It is notable that, in general, **the Netherlands has a strong policy focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills**, and GOAL is seen as contributing to this policy.

Implications for evaluation

For the data collection for Wave 2 we need to collect more data on the functioning of these networks in practice in the selected pilot regions, as these networks form a cornerstone of the Dutch approach.

6 Counsellor competences

This chapter focuses on guidance counsellors: on their job roles and the competences that are required to do that job effectively.

6.1 The job of the counsellor

Nearly all adult guidance practitioners in the Netherlands have experience in education and/or reintegration practices. However, there are **no formal criteria for guidance practitioners** and thus a **great divergence in quality** between various service points. No research is available from the Netherlands on the effectiveness of guidance practitioners. One reason for this is that effectiveness is strongly dependent on the quality of the individual practitioner, but there is currently no policy focus on the quality of the practitioners.

Turning specifically to the basic skills scan being used in the Dutch GOAL project, these scans are conducted by a range of different people. This could include professionals, but also interns and/or volunteers. As conducting the scan is technically relatively simple, no extensive training is needed in order to use it. The person conducting the tests, and discussing the results with clients, does however need to have **good social skills**. One interviewed staff member remarked:

'If [the clients] sit behind the computer and can't read a word, then that is a painful moment'.

Handling the client's embarrassment and discussing the follow-up possibilities requires **tact** from the person conducting the test. Or, as another interviewee stated:

'the client manager must be empathetic, must have good interview skills and it helps if the client manager and the client know each other a little'.

Another interviewee indicated that the client managers conducting the basic skills quick scan at that organisation are all degree-educated and that their competencies are, therefore, more than sufficient. The general impression at the participating organisations is that employees are sufficiently competent for this task and that **no additional training is needed** for this.

6.2 Degree to which counsellors achieve competence standards

Service user perceptions

The client satisfaction survey asked service users about several aspects of their counsellor's competences, for example, "Did the counsellor explain things clearly?" For each question, service users could tick a box indicating an answer of 'yes', 'no' or 'somewhat'. The evaluation team opted for this simple three-point scale (as opposed to a more detailed five-point scale) as one of a number of steps aimed at making the client satisfaction survey as user-friendly and non-demanding as possible – steps that were felt to be essential given the limited reading skills of many programme participants. The number of questions service users faced, and the wording of the questions varied slightly between the

participating countries because of programme differences, although four questions featured in all six user surveys.

In the Netherlands, the client satisfaction survey was completed by seven people. This therefore does not provide a reliable and representative picture of the experiences of using the basic skills quick scan, the follow-up interview and the skills of the person conducting this interview. This said, there have been **no negative assessments to date**. It should also be noted here that most clients received assistance in completing the client satisfaction surveys (5 of the 7) and this could have resulted in social pressure, which may have influenced the answers.

Table 6.1. shows that clients felt that the counsellor explained things clearly.

Table 6.1. *'Did the counsellor explain things clearly?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	5	71
No	0	0
Somewhat	2	29
Total	7	100

Clients also felt that the counsellor was encouraging (Table 6.2.).

Table 6.2. *'Was the counsellor encouraging?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	6	86
No	0	0
Somewhat	1	14
Total	7	100

All clients felt that the counsellor understood their needs (Table 6.3.).

Table 6.3. *'Did the counsellor seem to understand your needs?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	7	100
No	0	0
Somewhat	0	0
Total	7	100

Clients assessed that the information they were given was useful (Table 6.4.).

Table 6.4. *'Did the counsellor give you helpful information?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	5	71
No	0	0

Somewhat	2	29
Total	7	100

Table 6.5. shows an overall satisfaction with the counselling session.

Table 6.5. 'Overall, were you satisfied with the counselling session?', the Netherlands

	N	%
Yes	5	71
No	0	0
Somewhat	2	29
Total	7	100

Staff and other stakeholders' perspectives

Current participants see no need for additional training, apart from the training they receive from the Reading and Writing Foundation on the causes, consequences and extent of low literacy, conducting the basic skills quick scan, feeding back the results and referral to training institutes.

6.3 Key findings

Nearly all adult guidance practitioners in the Netherlands have experience in education and/or reintegration practices. However, there are no formal criteria for guidance practitioners and thus a great divergence in quality between various service points. These differences are evident in the Dutch GOAL pilot organisations, which deploy people in a variety of job roles to conduct the basic skills quick scans. Unfortunately, because of the extremely small sample, no further conclusions can be drawn about client satisfaction at this stage.

6.4 Key Implications

Implications for programme development

According to respondents, no extra training (in a technical sense) is required for conducting the basic skills quick scan. However, the person conducting the test does need social skills, because low basic skills are often accompanied by feelings of shame. An implication for programme development is that **steps should be taken to ensure that staff members are empathetic and have good interview skills** in order to deal with the issue of shame.

Implications for policy

The structure of GOAL in the Netherlands may have implications for policy more broadly. If policymakers can foster an environment in which more organisations see it as **their responsibility to contribute to literacy and numeracy gains**, this may in turn encourage organisations to make time for skills scans, and to support the development of scan administrators' competencies in this area.

Implications for evaluation

It may be interesting to ascertain in Wave 2 whether the job role of the staff member conducting the basic skills scan impacts in any way on the value clients ascribe to the intervention, and their satisfaction with the process.

7 Guidance tools for low educated adults

This chapter provides descriptive information on the tools which the GOAL counsellors the Netherlands use to support and enhance their GOAL guidance programmes and offers some preliminary analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these tools in terms of impact and quality. In the Wave 1 evaluation, no quantitative data on tools were collected from clients or from counsellors; the findings presented here are based on national reporting of qualitative interview data only.

The range of tools that support staff and clients in adult guidance is broad and can include:

- Traditional, paper-based resources and newer online and digital tools.
- Tools to diagnose and assess levels of skills, including basic skills.
- Tools to support the validation of prior learning (VPL) processes.
- Tools for evaluation and self-evaluation (such as interest inventories, tools for making action plans, goal-setting pro forma).
- Tools that help counsellors to reflect; professional development tools for counsellors.
- Information tools (internal and external sources), including both those which inform the counsellor and those which can be used to disseminate information to clients (such as job-search tools, college websites).
- Data monitoring tools and registrations systems, where analysis of the variables can be used to develop the programme and track outcomes.
- Tools that help to structure the guidance session such as scripts for interview. Data monitoring templates can also support this aspect of the counselling.
- Tools that help clients with job-search, such as tools to assist with CV writing.

From this range, a number of the GOAL partners are seeking to develop a toolbox of resources that can support guidance services for low-educated adults.

7.1 Guidance tools for low educated adults

As discussed in previous chapters, the basic skills quick scan (*Taalmeter*) is the core instrument of the GOAL pilot in the Netherlands. The basic skills quick scan is an online tool with which organisations can identify quickly and easily those people who may have difficulty reading. The basic skills quick scan can test the literacy level but does not determine the precise level of basic skills. The basic skills quick scan does, however, give a good indication of whether someone may have low literacy or low basic skills. The basic skills quick scan is comprised of five reading assignments with a total of 24 different questions. Each reading assignment has 19 different versions. Participants have up to 12 minutes to answer the questions. Once the time has elapsed, the basic skills quick scan stops automatically.”¹¹

¹¹ See www.lezenenschrijven.nl/hulp-bij-scholing/Taalmeter

In two of the pilot organisations, the basic skills quick scan is used as standard when clients enter. In the prisons, the scan takes place on a voluntary basis. Experience shows that most detainees agree to take the scan. The advantage of using the basic skills quick scan instrument is that this is clear and does not need much instruction. Prior to initial use, instruction is given by the Stichting Lezen en Schrijven (the Reading and Writing Foundation) contact person.

Additionally, the **road map tool** can be used. The road map is an overview of all basic skills courses (both formal and non-formal) that are available in a given region. The overview is publicly available on a website (Google Maps embedded feature, www.taalzoeker.nl). The road map is updated for the GOAL regions. The regional project coordinator has contacted the relevant libraries and 'language points' and asked them to update the roadmap. In the interviews, however, no mention was made of the actual use of the road map by the pilot organisations.

7.2 Impact of guidance tools

The advantage of the basic skills quick scan is that the test provides an **objectively determined result**. This result makes the subject of low basic skills concrete and easier to discuss. At the current stage of the research, we do not yet have a good picture of the impact of using the basic skills quick scan. It is, however, clear that this topic is one that is surrounded by stigma and that the discussion following the result can be difficult. For the next measurement, it will be interesting to gain insight into the referrals and the link to what is offered in the different regions. Screening is after all only useful when good follow-up can be offered. The client, who had after all not asked to take this test, plays an important role in this, but the follow-up discussion and the available training and guidance are also important.

7.3 Quality of guidance tools

The basic skills quick scan has been developed by the Reading and Writing foundation in collaboration with CINOP. The basic skills quick scan is already well-used outside the GOAL pilots and has been used over 30,000 times in the past three years¹².

Within the GOAL pilot, experiences with the instrument are limited, because it has only been used to a limited extent. In the few discussions about the experiences with the instrument, it was confirmed that the test is quick and simple to conduct. One interviewed respondent answered as follows:

'The strength of the basic skills quick scan is that you obtain general insight into a participant's literacy level in an entirely objective and rather quick way'.

In the interviews with policymakers from the pilot organisations, it was also repeatedly stated that they consider **the systematic approach to be an added value of the basic skills quick scan**.

¹² See also: http://www.arteduc.nl/PDF/Eindrapportage_Ontwikkeling_Taalmeter_Arteduc_08-10-12.pdf and www.literacyscreener.eu

At the level of implementation, experiences with the basic skills quick scan are generally positive, but several respondents mentioned the **time limit as being a bottleneck**. The time pressure could have negative impact on the client. A second point that could contribute to a negative result is the digital nature of the test. Some clients have difficulty using a computer.

7.4 Key findings

A guidance tool – the basic skills quick scan – plays a central role in the Dutch GOAL project. This is an online instrument with which people who possibly have low literacy or low basic skills can be identified quickly and easily. The basic skills quick scan has already been developed outside the GOAL programme and has been used 30,000 times in the Netherlands over the past three years. Although the experiences with the instrument are limited within the GOAL pilot itself, the initial feedback is mainly positive. The basic skills quick scan can be taken quickly and easily and offers a structural method for screening and addressing low basic skills.

At the current stage of the research, we do not yet have a good picture of the impact of using the basic skills quick scan. The advantage of the basic skills quick scan is that the objective result makes the subject of low basic skills concrete and offers starting points for discussing this. This does not alter the fact that having low basic skills is a sensitive subject that is accompanied by a sense of shame. For the next measurement, it will be interesting to gain insight into how the use of the basic skills quick scan relates to referrals and the participation in basic skills training/education offered in the different regions.

7.5 Implications

At present there are no clear messages concerning implications for programme development, the evaluation, or for policy. However, with regard to the next stage of the evaluation, there may be future implications related to issues such as referrals and next steps for clients.

8 Outreach

This chapter provides analysis of the outreach strategies adopted by the GOAL programme in the the Netherlands including a description of the challenges involved and preliminary analysis of the strategy's successes.

By 'outreach' the GOAL project refers to strategies for bringing the guidance programmes to the target group, for example, by setting up drop-in services in locations that are easier for marginalised clients to access, and strategies for bringing the target group to the guidance programmes, such as establishing referral structures, or awareness-raising measures. Outreach may occur through '**reaching out**' to the **target group** directly, but it also will occur through '**reaching into**' **organisations** that serve the target group. At its core, outreach in GOAL aims to identify and attract those adults who would not normally engage with either counselling services or further education and training.

8.1 Outreach challenges

In the Netherlands, it is difficult to speak of outreach activities in the literal sense. **The pilot organisations are outreach organisations in themselves**, that is, clients come for different purposes to the organisations (e.g. to get assistance with finding a job) and are asked to take the basic skills quick scan.

During interviews with policy actors, it was emphasised that with this approach gains can be made in the Netherlands regarding reach. **Reaching the target group of service users with low literacy therefore forms the core of the Dutch GOAL intervention.** This involves expanding identification sites and screening of people who potentially have low basic skills in an accessible setting. By doing so, GOAL will also search for ways to include difficult-to-access target groups, such as native Dutch speakers.

For the theme 'reach', in the Netherlands, there is no voluntary registration; the use of the basic skills quick scan mainly forms part of a broader intake interview regarding issues such as finding employment, applying for benefits or preparing for reintegration. Reach in this context is then also determined by the participating organisations and the extent to which the basic skills quick scans are used. Although many guidance services are available for unemployed people in the Netherlands, **those in employment are poorly reached.** This lack of opportunity is compounded by the fact that seeking guidance is still considered taboo, especially among native Dutch speakers. That is why, **with the development and expansion of the networks, new ways for identifying these difficult-to-access groups are sought.**

8.2 Outreach strategies

Strategies

In establishing regional networks, involvement will be sought from as many organisations as possible in which service users with low literacy can be found. The current GOAL pilot participants are organisations in which intake and referral interviews are conducted in the context of working towards employment

and/or benefits (Aksept and Municipality of Emmen). The two prisons form a relatively new identification site within this pilot. Strengthening the literacy skills of detainees may help in their successful reintegration into society. The closed nature of prisons and the fact that they work in a compulsory context, however, means that they deviate from the usual network partners. At the prisons, for example, screening as well as guidance takes place within the same organisation and much more control is possible. Practical restrictions such as travelling time do not play a role; issues such as transfer or release for concluding the process do play a role. Continuity of literacy lessons also forms a challenge, because the lessons need to be integrated into a detainee's daily programme.

Organisations need to feel the urgency and see the importance of addressing low basic skills. Networks can help in this. An important barrier, however, is the effort and time and the accompanying lack of financial resources that are needed for any screening and follow-up process. For instance, one of the participating organisations stated that **there were limited resources available for education** and that they preferred people to **actively register** for this themselves (and thus be motivated) instead of **diluting the available resources** across people identified via screening. In the wider context, reference was also made to a lack of resources as a limiting factor in increasing the reach. In the Netherlands, many volunteers are used to support service users with low literacy.

8.3 Key findings

In the area of reach of service users with low literacy, gains can be made in the Netherlands. That is why this aspect forms the core of the Dutch GOAL intervention. This involves expanding identification sites and screening of people who potentially have low basic skills in an accessible setting. Relatively new identification sites are, for example, prisons, with two participating in the pilot.

As regards the outreach to native Dutch speakers, little can be said as yet due to very limited data on participants in the pilot project sites.

8.4 Implications

Due to the very early stage of the implementation process of GOAL at the project sites, it would be premature to discuss implications for policy or practice. However, one potential policy issue to consider later in the project is that of the recommendations made by the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy¹³. This Group, chaired by Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, called on Member States and the EU more broadly **to support the development of policy environments in which individuals and organisations were more aware of low literacy as an issue for all of society to address.**

¹³ EU-HLG (EU High Level Group of Experts On Literacy) (2012) *Act now! Final report: EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf

9 Service outcomes

This chapter looks more closely at outcomes for service users. By service outcomes, this report refers both to **hard outcomes**, that is, measurable outcomes such as progression to employment or education, and **soft outcomes**, which may be harder to quantify, such as improved confidence or changes to attitudes.

9.1 Outcomes of guidance

Quantitative findings

No conclusions can be drawn as yet regarding the outcomes of using the basic skills quick scan and any advice and referrals that could result from this. The questions being considered by the other participating countries in this part of the Wave 1 evaluation report do not apply to the programme implementation plan in the Netherlands because of the nature of the intervention being used. In contrast to other five countries, the focus of GOAL in the Netherlands is principally on the screening and not on any subsequent support/education.

Results of the session

Table 9.1. provides an overview of the results of the sessions as recorded in the data monitoring: the most common results are **an interest inventory** and **referral** to other specialists.

Table 9.1. *Results of the Session (multiple answers possible), the Netherlands*

	N	% of responses	% of cases
Being informed about what can study and where	1	9	13
Development of a personal action plan	1	9	13
Interest inventory	3	27	38
Given information on how to overcome barriers	1	9	13
Referral to other professionals/specialists	2	18	25
Other (please specify)	3	27	38
Total	11	100	138

Service user perceptions

Turning to data from the client satisfaction survey, as Table 9.2. shows, for the majority of participants **the basic skills test was helpful** to them in identifying training needs.

Table 9.2. *'Did the basic skills test helped you to identify your training needs?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	4	57
No	2	29
Somewhat	1	14

Total	7	100
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Participants now know which organisation can help them with their training needs (in this case the internal education department of the PI Lelystad) (Table 9.3.).

Table 9.3. *'Do you now know which local organisations can help you with your training needs?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	7	100
No	0	0
Somewhat	0	0
Total	7	100

Participants felt that the steps to be taken after the counselling session have become clearer (see Table 9.4.).

Table 9.4. *'Are the next steps clearer after the counselling session?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	5	71
No	0	0
Somewhat	2	29
Total	7	100

Participants gave mixed answers as to whether they would follow up upon the advice given by the counsellor (Table 9.5.).

Table 9.5. *'Do you think you will follow up on the advice given by the counsellor?', the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	3	43
No	1	14
Maybe	3	43
Total	7	100

The small sample size means that no further interrogation of these data with respect to client background characteristics is possible at this stage.

Stakeholder perspectives

Local evaluators in the Netherlands spoke to three pilot organisations about their participation in GOAL and the outcomes they desired for clients. By participating in GOAL, the pilot organisations hope to get **tools for improvement of their low literacy guidance services**. One of the interviewed policymakers illustrates this as follows:

'We noticed that we had a lot of low literate clients and we wanted to improve our service to them. We participate in the GOAL project because it provides us with a proven method and structural approach'.

The main goal of the guidance at PI Lelystad provides is **to prevent recidivism**. Low literacy hampers a positive, successful return into society. The interviewed policymakers hope that the use of the basic skills quick scan will enable them **to distinguish incapable clients from unwilling clients**:

'There are a lot of people who frequently get in trouble because of their low literacy. It would be a great thing if we are able to offer this group guidance and support in Dutch language, which will give them more opportunities and prevent them from returning to prison'.

In conclusion, the pilot organisations think the basic skills quick scan is a good screening instrument. By using this specific instrument, they hope to reach and offer guidance to more people.

Benefits of guidance

From the interviews, we can only derive some indications about programme staff expectations. Nothing can be stated as yet based on the actual results of the pilot in the framework of GOAL. The programme staff members hope the GOAL project will lead to more insights into low literacy and more awareness of the problem low literacy forms for certain clients. Furthermore they point out that it is important to identify low literacy in an early stage. They expect the basic skills quick scan will contribute to this. Previously, low literacy of clients was sometimes discovered in a late(r) stage which negatively impacted on the effectiveness of coaching or reintegration trajectories. **By early screening for low literacy, service providers expect to be able improve their services to clients.**

9.2 Meeting expectations

In the long-term, client opinions of the basic skills quick scan and its consequences for them will become clear. Also, clients will have had few expectations in advance regarding the basic skills quick scan, as this is conducted during a session with an entirely different objective (for example a discussion about activities for finding a job, requesting benefits etc.).

Quantitative findings

No quantitative data on this are available from the Netherlands.

Meeting expectations

These questions apply to the detail of support following any necessary screening and therefore do not apply to the Dutch situation.

9.3 Key findings

We can be brief regarding the outcome in this phase: this is not yet measurable because relatively few data are available. GOAL in the Netherlands is more limited in terms of the possible results, as the intervention is specifically designed to refer clients onto education opportunities. In Wave 2, Dutch evaluators will monitor the number of participants starting and finishing educational activities after referral on the basis of the basic skill quick scan.

9.4 Implications

Implications for evaluation

A relevant outcome indicator is the impact of the screening and referral on more effective service provision (e.g. the prevention of recidivism, successful reintegration into the labour market etc.). It is important for organisations to experience added benefit of using the quick scan for their regular working processes for successful implementation. These effects often occur in the long or medium term and might be difficult to measure within the scope of this research. It would nevertheless be interesting to include this topic (even only in a qualitative way) in the data collection for Wave 2.

10 Service quality

One of the five intervention strategies piloted in GOAL is the implementation of high-quality guidance services. This chapter provides some preliminary findings on the quality of the guidance service provided by GOAL in the Netherlands. It draws on quantitative data from the client satisfaction survey as well as qualitative data gathered from the range of GOAL stakeholders in interviews and in focus groups.

10.1 Service user perspectives on guidance quality

As Table 10.1. shows, participants were generally satisfied with the counselling session.

Table 10.1. *‘Overall, Were You Satisfied with the Counselling Session?’ the Netherlands*

	N	%
Yes	5	71
No	0	0
Somewhat	2	29
Total	7	100

As explained earlier in this report, it was not possible to conduct client interviews in the Netherlands during Wave 1 and thus no further information is available on service user perceptions of the service. Information on client experiences will be presented in Wave 2 reporting.

10.2 Programme staff perspectives on guidance quality

Programme staff’s perspectives and insights

At Aksept and the Municipality of Emmen all new clients have to take the basic skills quick scan. At PI Lelystad this is on a voluntary basis.

From the interviews with the pilot organisations it does appear that **clients’ initial reaction to the basic skills quick scan (Taalometer) is linked to their background characteristics.** In prison, clients sometimes are more resistant. Dutch speaking clients in particular can take it as an insult that they have to take a test. At the Municipality of Emmen, the first reactions were very positive in general. The interviewed programme staff member points out that the way in which you introduce the basic skills quick scan influences the clients’ reactions. The staff members at the municipality emphasise in the interview with the clients that it is important to address low literacy and that there are opportunities to help the clients if it turns out that low literacy is an issue.

10.3 Partner and policy stakeholder perspectives on guidance quality

The interviews with policy actors briefly considered the quality of the support. In the Netherlands, many different parties are involved in many different forms of support and education in the area of low basic skill levels. Both professionals and volunteers are involved, depending on the organisation. Regarding

service quality at the GOAL pilot organisations, the interviewed national policy stakeholders made no pronouncements, as they have an insufficient overview of this.

10.4 Key findings

It is important that programme staff who are involved in administering the basic skills quick scan are aware of the sensitivity of (some) clients to this type of instrument. **It is important to 'sell' the tool in a positive way: that it is useful in identifying obstacles for meeting clients' goals and showing that education solutions are available to tackle the problem.** At a national level, the programme '*Count on Skills*' also aims to break the taboos concerning low literacy by putting the issue on the national agenda.

10.5 Implications

At present there are no implications for policy or practice regarding service quality. A potential implication for the next steps of the evaluation relates to the provision of GOAL in prison settings. It may be difficult for evaluators to achieve sufficient access to relevant settings and/or clients, thus limiting the ability of evaluators to make credible claims regarding programme quality.

11 Conclusions

11.1 Summary of key findings

The most important finding in this first measurement is that the GOAL programme has made but a limited start in the pilot regions, meaning that there is little scope to draw reliable conclusions about the various research themes. This applies to both quantitative data as well as qualitative data. The organisations that participated have only recently joined the pilot and/or have only recently started using the basic skills quick scan (*Taalmeter*). Completed data from the data monitoring (N=8) and client survey (N=7) was available from only one organisation. From the interviews with policy actors, we were able to form a good impression of the background, approach and intended results. This is an approach with which positive experiences have already been reported in regions other than the GOAL regions.

11.2 Implications for the GOAL service

It is still too early to talk about the implications of the researched intervention; for this, the intervention will first need to take further shape in the pilot organisations and regions. However, the difficulties establishing GOAL across the proposed partner organisations do have potential implications regarding resource investment (e.g. recruiting partners) and service users reached.

11.3 Implications for partnerships and networks

With an increase in the number of basic skills quick scans, increasing numbers of service users with low literacy will be identified. Only when there are substantial numbers will it become clear what this means for referrals and the consequences this will have for the infrastructure and cooperation in the area of support and training. There are potential implications regarding target groups reached, as these may be determined less by basic skills needs than by the client range of organisations who are willing to participate (e.g. prisons).

11.4 Implications for policy

In terms of its objectives and focus, GOAL fits well with broader basic skills policies in the Netherlands. This suggests that policymakers should be willing to support GOAL in its challenging efforts to more successfully embed the quick scan process in a range of organisations. However, the mechanisms for this support may not be clear.

11.5 Implications for data collection and programme evaluation

As discussed in Chapter 2, fear of ‘administrative burden’ was an important reason for organisations to forgo participation in the GOAL project. This is why fewer organisations have participated in the project as originally intended. In order to reduce administrative hassle, compact online surveys were developed. It should become clear in the coming months how the figures will develop at the participating

organisations. The availability of sufficient measurement data is of great importance for the relevance of the next measurement. However, as experience in the first few months of the GOAL-project in the Netherlands have shown, it is important to strike a balance between the time involved in carrying out the primary tasks of the project and the information requirements for the research.