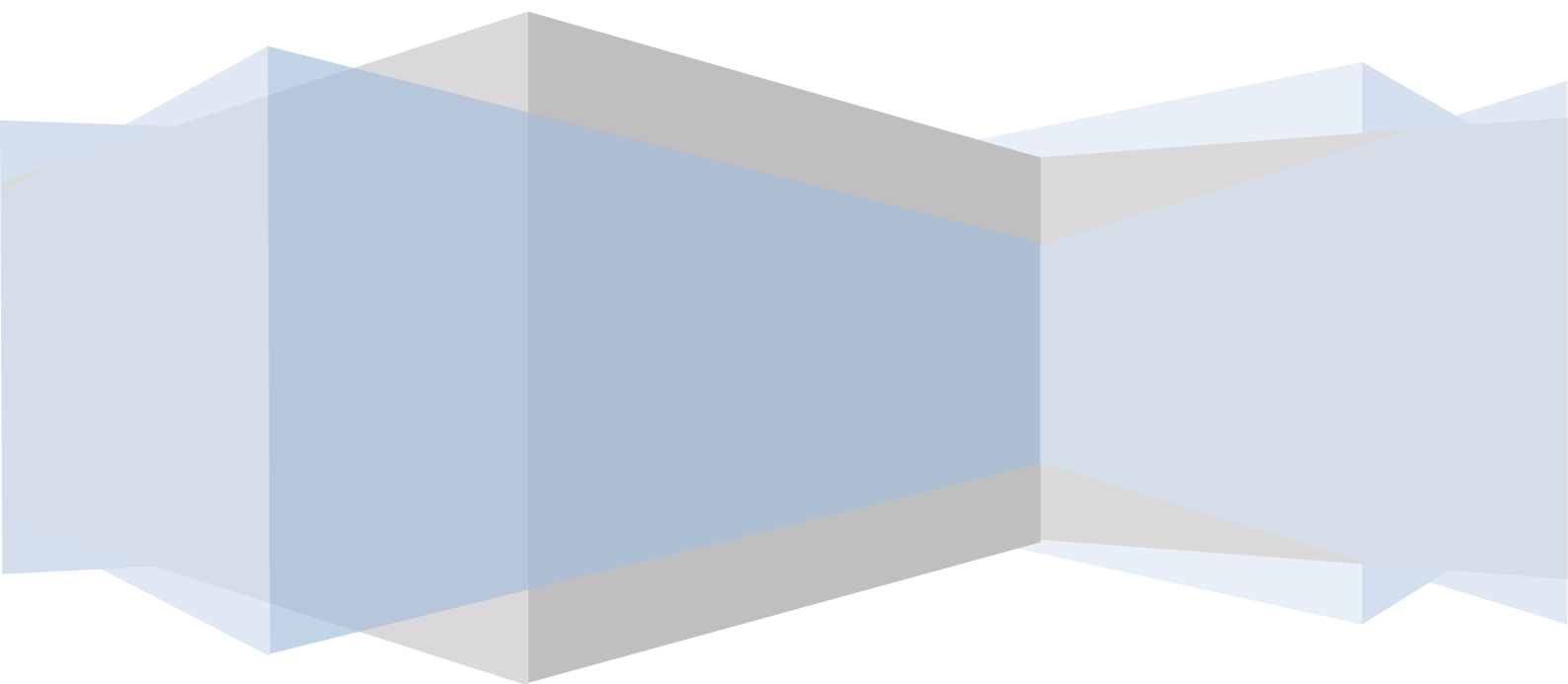


Aeres University of Applied Sciences

Possibilities for Dutch local foundations to receive funding from the European Social Fund

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Aeres University of Applied Sciences

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A research to European subsidies in Almere (Flevoland), the Netherlands

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Preface

“Possibilities for Dutch local foundations to receive funding from the European Social Funds” is a thesis written to examine the possibilities within municipality Almere (province Flevoland, The Netherlands). This thesis is written as a final result of the study European Funds Management at the Aeres University of Applied science.

Together with my teacher dr. K. Schipper I have worked to realise this thesis and I would like to thank him for answering every question and all the useful feedback. Simultaneously, I would like to thank Els van Boxel, Natascha Coppens-Vasconcellos and Bart Zuman for their cooperation. Due to the fact that this thesis is written for two Dutch initiators and the target group is Dutch as well, the summary is translated into Dutch.

In case of any questions or feedback, feel free to contact me at s.oudevoshaar@hotmail.com

Suzanne Oude Voshaar, Dronten (the Netherlands)

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Glossary

EU	European Union
EEC	European Economic Community
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
ESIF	European Structural Investment Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Fund
JMR	Job market Regions

Summary - English

Poverty in the Netherlands seems to be a tackled problem, thanks to the social support-system called “bijstand”. However, the amount of people in risk of living in poverty according to the European Union is alarming, with 2,7 million people. And poverty does not seem to be a problem of being poor, but a problem of not keeping up in the society. Not being able to receive help from the government, this group leans on local foundations and initiatives. With a higher demand than the available supply these local initiatives need to search for new ways of supporting their target group. Therefore, this report is written to research the possibilities for local initiators to receive funding from the European Social Fund. To find out how, it is important to know more about how the European Social Fund’s objectives, the practical side is reviewed and researched which actions local initiatives could take.

The main research question for this report is: ***How can the target group, local initiatives like foundation Wensjes and FARE in Flevoland (the Netherlands), receive funding from the European Social Funds?***. To answer this main research question four sub questions were formulated, namely; 1. *What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?* 2. *How does European Funding get from Brussels into smaller regions?* 3. *How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?* 4. *Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?*. The research’s methodology was based on qualitative research, mainly in the form of external desk research and interviews.

The European Social Fund aims to support European citizens in the subjects of education, employment, social inclusion and helps member states to improve their public services. Each member state list priorities to which the funding is used. Priorities for the Netherlands are active inclusion (social inclusion and reducing poverty and discrimination), active aging and increase access to the labour market. The European Social Fund works with decentralization, in practise, this means that the funding is implemented as local as possible. In the Netherlands 35 job-market regions implement the European Social Fund, which are monitored by the ministry of Social affairs and Employment. The job-market regions can apply for funding at the portal of the ministry. Local initiatives supporting people in poverty have a strong overlap with the objectives of the European Social Fund and Netherlands. Initiators can contact the municipality or job-market region for information about budget, planning and organisation, and create a project plan.

In conclusion, the main research question can be answered as; Local initiatives in Flevoland can receive funding by applying at the job-market region with a plan in which the feasibility, expected results and the financial impact is presented. However, the amount of adjustment within the target group in administration and organisation is demanding. Therefore the realistic outcome of the main research question is that the target group cannot receive funding from the European Social Fund.

Samenvatting – Nederlands

Van armoede lijkt in Nederland geen sprake, desondanks zijn er volgens de Europese Unie 2,7 miljoen mensen in mogelijke armoede. Onderzoek toont daarnaast aan dat armoede meer een perceptie is, het niet mee kunnen komen met de rest van de maatschappij. Lokale initiatieven ondersteunen de groep mensen die tussen wal en schip vallen, maar met een grotere aanvragen dan capaciteit moeten deze initiatieven opzoek naar nieuwe manieren om hun doelgroep te ondersteunen. Dit verslag is opgezet om te onderzoeken in hoeverre lokale initiatieven subsidiering zouden kunnen ontvangen uit het Europees Sociaal Fonds. Om deze vraagstelling te kunnen beantwoorden, wordt er gekeken naar de doelstelling van het Europees Sociaal Fonds, de praktische zaken onderzocht en gekeken naar welke acties lokale initiatieven kunnen ondernemen om hun kansen op subsidiering te verhogen.

De hoofdvraag van het onderzoek luidt: ***Hoe kan de doelgroep, lokale initiatieven zoals stichting Wensjes en FARE in Flevoland (Nederland), subsidie uit het Europees Sociaal Fonds ontvangen?***. Om deze hoofdvraag te beantwoorden, zijn vier deelvragen opgesteld, namelijk; 1. *Wat zijn de doelstellingen van het Europees Sociaal Fonds en op welke manier overlappen deze met de doelstellingen van de doelgroep?* 2. *Hoe komt de Europese Subsiëring van Brussel naar de regio's?* 3. *Hoe beslist de provincie Flevoland hoe de subsidiëring verdeeld wordt over de verschillende gemeentes of aanvragers?* 4. *Welke acties moeten lokale initiatieven ondernemen om subsidiëring te ontvangen?*. The methodologie van het onderzoek is gebaseerd op kwalitatief onderzoek en werd vooral gedaan door desk research en interviews.

Het Europees Sociaal Fonds is opgezet om Europese inwoners te ondersteunen in onderwijs, arbeid, maatschappelijke betrokkenheid en de publieke service van lidstaten. Binnen de kaders van deze onderwerpen, kiezen lidstaten hun eigen prioriteiten gebaseerd op de nationale ontwikkelingen. Voor Nederland zijn dit actieve inclusie (verhogen van de maatschappelijke betrokkenheid, verminderen van armoede en discriminatie), actief ouder worden en het verbeteren toegang tot de arbeidsmarkt. De Europese Unie werkt in decentralisatie, in de praktijk betekend dit dat Nederland is opgedeeld in 35 arbeidsmarktregio's en elke regio verantwoordelijk is voor de realisatie van de fondsen. Het ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid houdt toezicht op de arbeidsmarktregio's, die bij het ministerie subsidie aanvragen middels het webportaal. De doelstellingen van lokale initiatieven hebben een sterke overeenkomst met de Europese en Nederlandse doelstellingen. Om subsidie te kunnen ontvangen, is het belangrijk voor lokale initiatieven om in contact te komen met de gemeente en eventueel de arbeidsmarktregio. Deze kunnen de doelgroep weer in contact brengen met mogelijke partners, waardoor een project een grotere kans tot slagen heeft. Met behulp van een plan kan er dan een aanvraag gedaan worden voor Europese subsidiering.

De hoofdvraag kan beantwoord worden als; lokale initiatieven in Flevoland kunnen subsidiëring ontvangen wanneer ze bij het arbeidsmarktregio een aanvraag doen waarin een plan gepresenteerd word gebaseerd op haalbaarheid, verwachte resultaten en financieel impact. Hiervoor moet de doelgroep echter veel aanpassingen doen op het gebied van administratie en organisatie. Daarom is het realistische antwoord om de hoofdvraag te beantwoorden met dat de doelgroep geen goede kans heeft op subsidiëring uit het Europees Sociaal Fonds.

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1. Introduction

The introduction gives clarification about the research topic and how it was found. The main research question and sub questions are introduced and the problem description, demarcation, hypothesis and justification are specified. Furthermore, the research objectives, a short description of the methodology and thesis structure is given.

1.1 Justification

In a city of over 200.000 inhabitants, poverty has an agenda in Almere. Nationally there is a growing rate of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion since 2008 (Centraal Bureau der Statistiek, 2015). Shame is an important pillar in poverty and financial problems. It stops people from talking about their problems and can eventually lead to more and destructive situations. Most of the foundations providing help for people in financial distress, are more business-like and do not have an approachable atmosphere. This is one of the main pillars for two foundation called foundation “Wensjes” and foundation “FARE”. These foundations, both located in Almere, aims to help people in financial problems but tries to keep an approachable nature. Both of the foundations are operating in the gap of national or provincial social-help-programs, and aims to lower the shame of poverty and bringing their target group back in society. Foundation Wensjes has several day-time activities and gives support through food-packages, while foundation FARE supports people with food and household goods.

For foundation Wensjes a very important way of communicating with volunteers is social-media (facebook). Foundation Wensjes places a message, asking for food, furniture or help in some way (like tutor lessons for kids who drop-out from school). The foundation is very transparent, keeping their members up to date about costs and their own financial problems as well. Due to the stop of subsidies in 2018, a gap of €8.000 arises. In a foundation with only volunteers and no financial-flows (help is almost always non-financial), this could be the end of foundation Wensjes. Foundation FARE operates on volunteers and donations completely. These donation are food and household goods, and in some occasions furniture. There is no financial support from governmental bodies, like subsidies, although foundation FARE did try to apply for subsidies. Due to the limited financial recourses, the amount of people foundation FARE can support is limited as well. The financial problems and limitations for foundations Wensjes and FARE created a research question. After an in-depth interview with Els van Bortel (founder of Wensjes) and Natascha Coppens-Vasconcellos (founder of foundation FARE), this research question is worked out into this research plan.

1.2 Problem description and demarcation

Research from the European databank Eurostat (2016) shows that 2,7 million people in the Netherlands are at risk of poverty. One gets categorised in this area if they cannot afford 4 out of 9 listed items, as shown in table 1. The Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics concludes that every citizen in the Netherlands has a house, food to eat, clothing and access to health care and education. They

therefore do not speak about poverty, but low-income (Laag en langdurig laag inkomen, 2017). And state that there are only 1,7 million people with a low-income (105% of the social minimum of less).

However, perspective is an important factor in measuring poverty. A study from *Bourguignon* (2006) shows that in countries with a good social care system (like the Netherlands) some individuals still categorises themselves as poor. And on the side a study from *Ayllón & Fusco* (2016) shows that not every individual that has a low income is facing financial difficulties, and that there is a group that is facing financial difficulties but does not have a low income. The latter is explained as scarcity and can be described as having less than what you feel you need. Recent studies (*Duflo* (2006), *Mullainathan & Shafir* (2013), *Haushofer & Fehr* (2014), *de Neve & et al* (2013), *de Neve & Oswald* (2012)) show that individuals living in poverty or scarcity have a lot of effect on the behaviour, decision-making process and options an individual has. Adding these two factors with studies about errors in estimating the income for poverty lines (*Nicoletti*, 2010), the traditional way of helping households in poverty should be re-examined (*Ayllón & Fusco*, 2016).

Table 1 In risk of poverty, according to the European Union. (Eurostat.eu)

9 items for not living in poverty	
1. Keep home adequately warm	6. To pay rent or utility bills
2. A car	7. A week holiday away from home
3. A washing machine	8. Face unexpected expenses
4. A colour TV	9. A telephone
5. Eat meat, fish or an equivalent every second day	

To demarcate this research will focus on applying for funding in the municipality of Almere, and only the European Social funding. Other funds (like national or other European funding) will not be included due to that the main topic of these funds are not in line with the subject of this research. The government of Almere has told foundations Wensjes and FARE that to receive subsidies the organisations need to transform and implement a revenue model. In practise, this means that the foundations need to ask money for their services, weighing the amount of payment a client can spend. This ensures an income for the foundations, which then will be financed with subsidies until break-even point. Both foundation Wensjes and Foundation FARE conclude that the group they are trying to help, has no financial possibilities and cannot pay for recourses. Besides this, the foundations fear they lose their feeling of unselfishness and approachable nature. Due to this problem, the question arises whether the European Union could be of help for these two foundations. This research will mainly focus on the situation within Almere, due to the fact that the initiators are operating in Almere. However, foundations and initiatives throughout the Netherlands can use this research to analyse their own organisations and apply advises.

1.3 Target group

This research has a target group of local initiatives or foundations operating in the province of Flevoland, the Netherlands, with an aim of helping people in situations of poverty and prevent such situations with a multidisciplinary approach. Local initiatives usually find their birth in civilians who see a problem and gather people to solve this. And due to this they tend to have a large (social) network. They have a clear mission, are highly demarcated and focus on the “human”-aspect¹. Besides this, the foundation of these initiatives is completely unselfish. This gives them an advantage against larger social help-organisations. The approachable effect is a key-factor for local initiatives. Due to the low professionalization there is not much time and knowledge of the political agenda. Contact with the municipality can be unsatisfactory and can lead to none or less contact with the municipality, leading to none or less subsidy.

To gain a better insight of the target group, the 7-s model of McKinsey is used, as presented in figure 1. This model, based on the principle that an organisation has a shared value, zooms in on seven subjects within an organisation: system, strategy, structure, skills, staff and style.

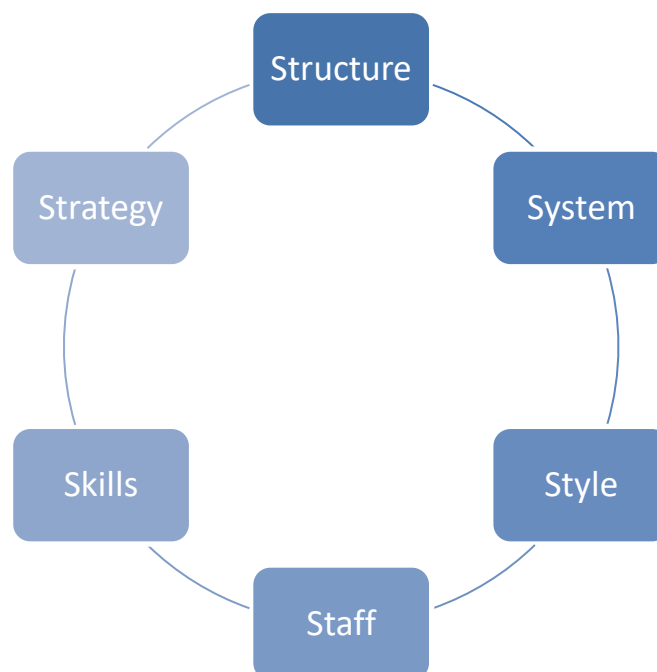


Figure 1 7-s model of McKinsey (based on: <http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net>)

The structure of an organisations shows how the people within the organisation are connected and communicate with each other. Within the target group, there are one or two initiators who work with a various number of volunteers (5 up to 50). The structure can be described as centred around the initiator, but often the structure is not written down. Therefore it is difficult to find the division of tasks, responsibilities, coordination or other structures.

The strategy gives insight to the goals of the organisation and what they are trying to achieve. For the target group, the strategy is to support people in (risk) of poverty. This is done with material support

¹ The “Human”-aspect: to have great notice on the feelings and emotional state instead of a materialistic view

and helping people to raise their social inclusion. Within the organisation there is not much long term strategy for the organisation itself. The focus lies on supporting the clients and helping them. Due to the absence of a clear strategy, it is harder for the target group to place themselves in the society.

The system of the organisations is not clarified for people outside of the organisation. The procedures with clients are not always the same, due to the individual framework, and other organisational systems are not charted either. There is a lot of contact with other organisations, like the municipality, but this is mainly used to find new clients and not as a long term partnership.

The style says something about the atmosphere in the organisation and how this is carried out. Within the target group the style is very informal, one of the key-factors of these organisation is their approachable nature. There is a high feeling of solidarity, both from the volunteers, clients and initiators within the organisation.

As mentioned before, there is few to little staff within the target groups organisation. Mostly it consist of the initiator and a group of permanent volunteers. Sometimes volunteers are given a compensation for the work they do within the organisation, but often both the initiators as the volunteers work on a voluntary basis without any financial compensation. Volunteers are often available for a limited amount of time, but tend to be loyal to the organisation. More than once, the volunteers used to be clients.

The skills of an organisation are otherwise known as the Unique Selling Point (UPS), and describe how the organisation creates distinction between other organisations. The target group's UPS is the philanthropy of the organisation and the approachable nature for clients. Comparing with other organisations providing support for people in poverty, the target group aims for a long-term solution and lies the focus on multiple areas, such as social inclusion.

All the items above combined give a shared value for the organisation. In the case of the target group, the shared value can best be described as what the organisation stands for and its beliefs. For the target group, the shared value is the concept of helping others without wanting something in return, the awareness that poverty can happen to anyone, to help others in need by giving away household goods or food and to help clients without financial support.

1.4 Research objectives

The aim of this research is to find out if the foundations can be supported by the European Union. All the objectives are time-framed within the research.

1. To find out if the initiators and target group are eligible for the European Social funding-program
2. To research eventual adaption the initiators and target group should implement in order to be eligible for European funding
3. To research the requirements for European funding and translate that into an advise

4. To create a clear view of the steps needed to be taken in order to apply for funding

1.5 Relevance of the research

Despite the development of a country, poverty can still be an issue amongst inhabitants. The amount of income does not qualify as a prevention for poverty, but the ability to participate in the society and the absence of financial scarcity are more pressing factors for one's perception of living in poverty. However, most of the governmental aid programs focus on improving the financial situation for people in financial problems, while the problem is not merely money.

The target group, aiming to improve the life of people with financial problems, try to support people by offering a multidisciplinary trajectory. Not only finding a job that fits, or solve unnecessary expenses, but to improve coping and recognising cognitive behavioural patterns.

The relevance of this research comes from the tension field of the target group operating in the same field as larger professional foundations but do not find the same recognition and facilities as them.

1.6 Main research questions and sub questions

How can the target group, local initiatives like foundation Wensjes and FARE in Flevoland (the Netherlands), receive funding from the European Social Funds?

This main question is separated into 4 sub questions

Sub questions

1. What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?
2. How does European Funding get from Brussels into smaller regions?
3. How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?
4. Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?

1.7 Hypothesis

In general, there are four possible outcomes for this research, which are presented in table 2. Funding could be received through the municipality, on the level of regions (province of Flevoland), directly from the European Union or the target group has no realistic chance for applying for funding.

Table 2 Possible outcomes and applicability

Outcome A	Outcome B	Outcome C	Outcome D
There is European funding available through the municipality	There is European funding available through the province or nationally	There is European funding available “directly” from the European Union (side-programs)	The possibilities of funding (whether this is on municipality, provincial or national level) are not realistic for the target group
Applicability	Applicability	Applicability	Applicability
Appliance for funding at the municipality	Appliance for funding at the province	Appliance for funding at the European Union program	Search for alternative solutions of funding

1.8 Methodology

The report will be a qualitative research with a main character of desk research. In general, the sub-questions will answer the main research question.

- 1. What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the researched foundations?**
 - Desk research from the European Union’s website (European Commission)
- 2. How does European Funding get from Brussels into smaller regions?**
 - Desk research from the European Union’s website (European Commission) & interview with Alain Hubers
- 3. How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?**
 - Desk research from the European Union’s website (European Commission), Municipality Almere and Province of Flevoland & interview with Alain Hubers
- 4. Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?**
 - Desk research from the European Union’s website (European Commission), Municipality Almere and Province of Flevoland & interview with Alain Hubers and Froukje de Jonge, Desk research scientific literature about poverty

Desk research will mainly focus on information retrieved from websites as written above. Especially the website from the European Union will provide an extended amount of information for the first four sub-questions. Most of the information retrieved from the website will be papers, documents and publications published by the European Commission. Furthermore, books and E-books will be used for desk research. Information from the municipality Almere and Province of Flevoland will be found on-line as well, but for the research mostly official publications will be used. The website <http://www.sciencedirect.com> will provide scientific literature where necessary, for example in answering sub-question four and five.

The interviews will be held with experts or employees of institutions. Their knowledge will be used to extend and confirm the information found during desk research. Below, a list of possible participants is written, together with their professionalism.

- Alain Hubers Flevohuis, Lelystad
- Froukje de Jonge Officiary of the municipality of Almere

1.9 Thesis structure

The introduction of this thesis has as a main objective to introduce the research topic and provide specific information about the justification, demarcation, target group and relevance of the research. Furthermore, the main research question and sub questions are presented, as are the possible outcomes for the research. The methodology and thesis structure are given to provide information about how this thesis is organised.

The literature review describes what is already known about the research topic. This chapter contains information about scientific articles about poverty, more information about the point of view on poverty from the target group and general information about the European Union.

The third chapter, Material and Method, describes the methodology and research design. It arguments the chosen methodology and gives a critical analysis increasing the validity and reliability of the research.

The fourth chapter presents the result from the research which is followed by the discussion of these results in chapter 5 and conclusions and recommendations in chapter 6. The last chapter contains a list of references with all the used literature in this thesis.

2. Literature review

The literature review is a collection of information necessary to know before reading the research. It provides general information about the European Union, the Funding programs of the EU (European Social Funds) and how this is implemented in the Netherlands. General information about poverty and the target group is presented, as is information about poverty in the Netherlands.

2.1 The European Union

The European Union has its roots in the European Coal and Steel Community, founded in 1952 after the second World War. At the time it was an encouragement for cooperation between France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries (Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) and prevention of another war. It developed into the European Economic Community (EEC) (1957-1986) which was better known as the European Community by 1986. The EEC had known a successful period, starting with 6 members in 1957 and 12 members in 1986. In February 1992 the Treaty of the European Union was signed, creating the current organisation around the European Union (page 52 - 63 McCormick, 2011). Between 1995 and 2013, 16 countries entered the European Union, making it a total of 28 member states (European Commission, 2018).

Due to the growth of the European Union over the years, the organisation has become more complex. Nowadays the EU knows 4 main European institutions and some specialised institutions namely the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the European Union. Other European (specialised) institutions are for example the European Central Bank and the Court of Justice of the EU.

The European Council can best be described as the directors of the EU, it determines the goals and discusses international and European issues. The European Council consists of the European Commission President and the head of state or government from the member state (one each) and meets at least 4 time per year.

The European Commission has no direct power, but does have a lot of influence in the EU with their four main activities. The European Commission proposes new law, manages the EU policies and funding, enforces EU law in cooperation with the Court of Justice of the EU and is the representative of the EU for international occasions.

The European Parliament has three main pillars: legislation, supervision and the budget and consist of 751 members (European Parliament, 2018), each member state can send a number of members proportioned by the population (in comparison with other member states.). Members of the European parliament are elected by European citizens. Besides the European Council, there is a Council of the European Union (also known as the Council of Ministers) which adopts and negotiates about EU law and decides about the EU policies.

The Council of the European Union has a rotating presidency of 6 months between member states and consists of the ministers from each member state by one of the ten configurations (subject). For example, during the configuration agriculture and fishery, the ministers of agriculture from each member state attend the meeting (pages 78 - 92, McCormick, 2011)

The European Union operates to achieve peace, a stable economic and welfare throughout the member states and internationally. One of the success factors of the EU is the open market, creating an open, efficient and competitive marketplace. Another is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), improving productivity, assurance of supplies, protection of farmers and a stabilised market (pages 172 - 179, McCormick, 2011). Nowadays the EU operates in the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), containing six types of funding to support member states, organisations, businesses and European citizens, figure 2 shows the ESIF with their main priorities (European Commission, 2015).

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve economic, social and territorial cohesion • Improve infrastructure • Low carbon economy
ESF	European Social Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve social issues • Education • Public services • Unemployment • Social exclusion
CF	Cohesion Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen economic, social and territorial situation
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitiveness of agriculture • Sustainable management • Environmental and animal welfare issues
EMFF	European Maritime and Fishery Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainable and responsible fishery • Implementation of the fishery policy • Sustainable and environmental development
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border cooperation • Transnational cooperation • Interregional cooperation

Figure 2 The European Structural Investment Fund and their priorities (European Commission, 2015)

2.2 The European Social Funds during 2014-2020

The European Social Fund (ESF) is a funding programme, founded in the Treaty of Rome (1957), and is aiming to improve the life of European citizens by strengthening the member state's educational programs, public services and reducing unemployment and social exclusion. The European Commission sets the main priorities for the four subjects and the member states choose their own priorities, specified to tackle national problems (European Commission, 2016).

Table 3 Objectives of the European Social Fund, period 2014-2022 (European Commission, 2016)

Employment	Social inclusion	Education	Public services
Support excluded groups (<i>disabled, long-term unemployed, single-parent families, 55 years and older</i>)	Support marginalised groups (<i>migrants, ethnic minorities, disabled, long term unemployed and long term low income</i>)	Improve educational systems, renewing ICT, update skills off teachers, new strategies for education	Strengthen public services (<i>ICT, skills of employers, more effectively, transparency</i>)
Support equal chances for woman	Support people with addictions	Support early-school leavers	Improve financial status of public services
Help young people finding jobs	Giving counselling, job training, help finding jobs and education	Developing a life-long learning mentality	Involve citizens in decision making
Adapt workplaces (<i>flexible hours, part-time jobs</i>)	Support communities with creating work-learning places	Invest in transferable skills	
Funding for start-up businesses and self-employment	Supporting employee and employer	Bring education closer to labour	

As seen in table 3, the objectives of the European Social Fund have a variation from helping excluded or marginalised groups, up to supporting communities and public services. In general, the four main objectives overlap slightly, which is seen best at social inclusion which overlaps with both employment and education. For employment the ESF aims to support people who easily get excluded, like people with disabilities, helping young people, support equal chances for woman and help long-term unemployed like single-parent families. To higher the chance of employment, the ESF supports projects with training activities to strengthen skills and job counselling. Organisations are supported to create flexible hours, adapted workplaces and part-time jobs. The ESF also supports funding for start-up businesses and self-employment (European Commission, 2016).

Social inclusion has the main priority to include everyone in the society. This overlaps in a way with employment and education. Within the social inclusion objective, the ESF aims to help marginalised group (migrants, ethnic minorities, disabled people and long term low income). But they also help people who face addiction, homelessness and debts. These groups are supported by the ESF in counselling, getting people ready for a job, finding jobs and education. Communities are supported with supervised work-placements and support for employer and employee. Projects that help in the community can receive funding as well, like helping reduce poverty (European Commission, 2016).

Education is not only about educating people, but also about supporting the educational system in a member state. By improving these systems, the amount of early leavers can be reduced, equality for students raised and it can help bring education closer to labour. To improve education, funding can be used to set up training courses for teachers, to create new IT systems, to develop new strategies and

to create a closer link with businesses. The ESF aims to support early school leavers and create second chances, developing a lifelong learning mentality and allowing people to share their skills (European Commission, 2016).

Strengthening public services can be necessary to give support to citizens. With helping public services become more effective, improve finances and involve citizens in the decision making processes, public bodies will be strengthened. With stronger public bodies the effect of European funds can be increased (European Commission, 2016).

2.3 The ESF in the Netherlands during 2014-2020

The Netherlands has three main priorities for the European Social Fund budget during the period of 2014-2020. The first is so called active inclusion, and its objective is to increase social inclusion and reduce poverty and discrimination. The second priority is aging well and advances to create good mobility for elderly on the labour market, the retirement age in the Netherlands lies at 67 in 2021 (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014). The third priority is to increase the access of the labour market for both jobseekers and non-jobseekers. Aiming to reduce the amount of people receiving so called *bijstand*² (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

2.4 NUTS and regions in the Netherlands

NUTS (EN: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) is a French abbreviation and used within the European Funding programs, research within the EU (for example in Eurostat) and as geographical terminology in meetings. NUTS has 3 levels, namely NUTS 1, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 as seen in figure 3 (Eurostat, n.d.).

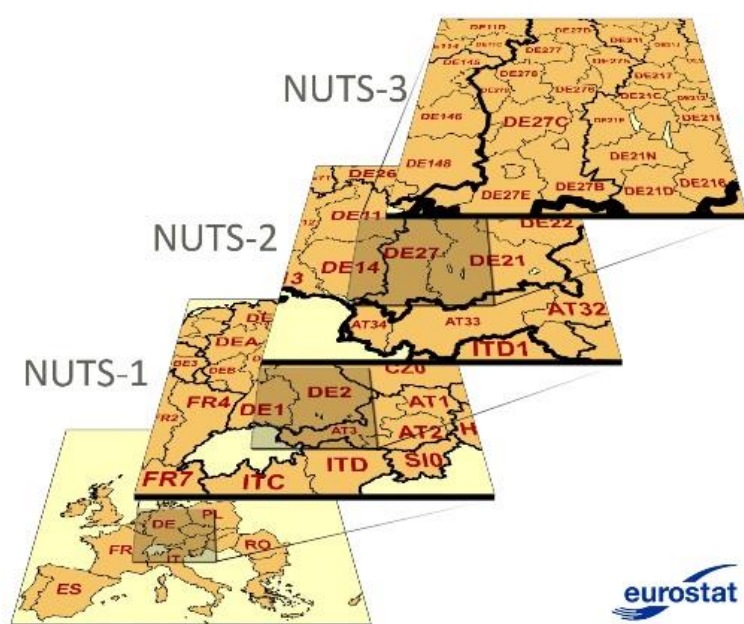


Figure 3 NUTS level explained (source: Eurostat).

² *Bijstand* is a Dutch social security allowance for people who cannot find a job or sustain themselves in another way.

The NUTS is built on 3 principles: population, administrative divisions and regular/extraordinary amendments. With the help of the NUTS, the European Union is organised into population similar areas, so that areas can be compared. Though the NUTS is roughly based on population, the regions can be adjusted due to extraordinary factors.

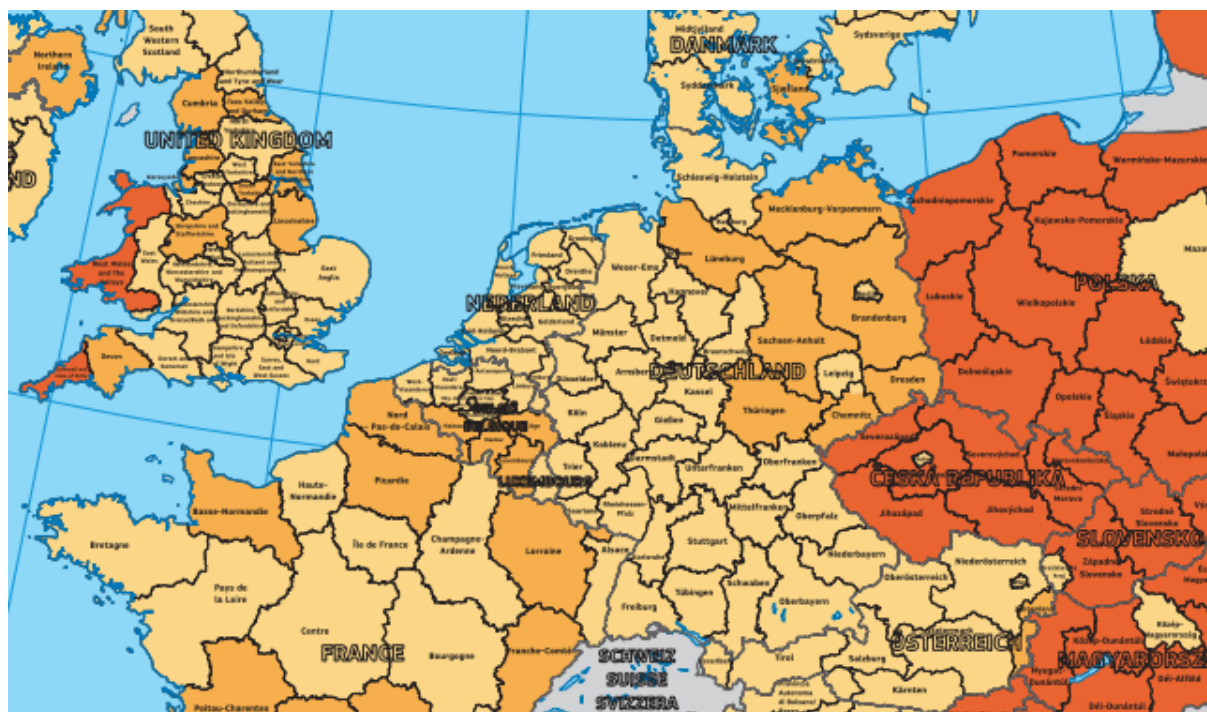


Figure 4 NUTS regions in and around the Netherlands (source: European Commission, 2013)

With the help of the NUTS the European regions can be compared and categorised at development. Figure 4 shows a part of the map for European regions. The classification of development is an important factor for awarding funding and the amount of funding (European Commission, 2018).

2.5 Poverty

Poverty can best be described as a scarcity of money, money can be spent only once and in the case of poverty there is not much space which can eventually lead to debts or other financial difficulties (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013). In policies and statistics poverty is often explained in income or expenditure, also known as the poverty paradigm. In this paradigm, a level (or line) is set at an income limit, everyone below the line lives in poverty and everyone above the line does not, according to the poverty paradigm. Research from Bourguignon (2003) showed that even though in many countries the poverty has been excluded successfully, the feeling of social exclusion and poverty are still present. Later research from Rojas (2008) confirms Bourguignons research, though income poverty might be absent from the community, experienced poverty can still be a significant problem.

3. Material and Method

The chapter Material and Method explains the steps that have been taken to gain information and research methods. At first, a methodology background is given, with extended information divided in the sub questions. In the method, the steps taken to conduct the research is presented. The sub paragraphs 3.3 interviews, 3.4 official documents and scientific articles and 3.5 keywords give information about how these sources were found and used. This chapter closes with a critical analysis on the material and methods.

3.1 Methodology background

In the methodology background the research method is explained and reasoned. The type and form of research are described. Furthermore, all the information necessary for the research is presented and argued upon.

3.1.1 What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group

This sub question was answered with the help of qualitative research, in the form of external desk research and individual interviews. External desk research is information found outside the organisation, found in online resources, government published data and scientific research. With individual interviews a broader view of the sub question has been acquired. The interviews main objectives was to understand underlying motivations, opinions, experiences and reasons. Qualitative research fits this sub question best due to the amount of information found in official publications and a specific detailed analysis of this information.

3.1.2 How does European Funding gets from Brussels into smaller regions

This sub question was answered with the help of qualitative research, in the form of external desk research and individual interviews. External desk research is information found outside the organisation, found in online recourses, government published data and scientific research. With individual interviews a broader view of the sub question and to understand underlying motivations, opinions, experiences and reasons. Qualitative research fits this sub question best due to the amount of information found in official publications and a specific detailed analysis of this information.

3.1.3 How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?

This sub question was answered with the help of qualitative research, in the form of an external desk research and individual interviews. External desk research is information found outside the organisation, found in online recourses, government published data and scientific research. With individual interviews a broader view of the sub question and to understand underlying motivations, opinions, experiences and reasons. Qualitative research fits this sub question best due to the amount of information found in official publications and a specific detailed analysis of this information.

3.1.4 Which actions do local initiatives need to take in order to receive subsidies?

This sub question was answered with the help of qualitative research, in the form of an external desk research and individual interviews. External desk research is information found outside the organisation, found in online recourses, government published data and scientific research. With individual interviews a broader view of the sub question and to understand underlying motivations,

opinions, experiences and reasons. Qualitative research fits this sub question best due to the amount of information found in official publications and a specific detailed analysis of this information.

3.2 Method

The method shows which steps are taken to conduct this research.

Step 1

Collecting information through interviews with the initiators to create a valid main research question.

Step 2

Desk research for scientific articles and official documents

Step 3

Interview with the job-market region to collect specific information about the situation within the area.

Step 4

Further desk research for scientific articles and official documents

Step 5

Analysis about the information found in the research

3.3 Interviews

Information about this subject was found by interviews with the target group and the job-market region of Flevoland. For the target group two initiators were interviewed, Els van Bortel (face to face) and Natascha Coppens-Vasconcellos (via phone), both founder of a foundation. The interview with the target group contained the following questions:

1. How could you describe the activities of the foundation?
2. What is the most important factor within the foundation? Why does it work?
3. What is the target group for the foundation?
4. At this moment, what seems to be the biggest problem the foundation faces?
5. What is most difficult about the process of receiving/applying for funding?
6. Why does the foundation not receive funding (anymore)?
7. How much do you know about the European Union and the possibilities for the foundation?

These questions were drawn-up on forehand to gain necessary information for the research. The first three questions focus on information about the organisation itself, while the fourth question is aimed to gain more information about the main problem. Questions five, six and seven focus on gaining information about the knowledge of the interviewee about funding. The questions were used to organise a semi-structured interview. With the questions as a guideline, the interview was held as an informal conversation, while steering the conversation among these questions.

The interview with the job-market region was held with mr. Zuman. The interview was held in Dutch and can be found in Annex I. The following questions were asked:

1. How does the European Social Fund work?
2. How does the funding from the ESF get split into the region of Flevoland?
3. What advice could you give to local initiatives concerning funding from the ESF?

The interview held with mr. Zuman was organised in a semi-structural way. The first question was used to start the conversation, questions two and three were used to guide the conversation if necessary.

3.4 Official Documents and scientific articles

After these interviews, official publication of the European Union, the Dutch government and the job-market regions was collected from the official websites of those organisations. Some of this information belonged in the literature review, other parts of the information were used as analysis in this sub question. To find useful sources, within these website the following keywords were used:

1. Guideline European Social Fund
2. European Social Fund 2014-2020
3. Objective ESF 2014-2020

3.5 Keywords

For each sub question the keywords used to find information within official documents and scientific articles are mentioned. To analyse the information found above, scientific research was used to explain, compare and present the information found. Criteria for these researches were that they were not older than 10 years, useful for the research and had an added value to answer the sub question. The articles were found at www.sciencedirect.com.

3.5.1 What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives target group?

For the first sub question the following keywords were used:

1. Preventing poverty
2. Reducing poverty
3. Financial problems
4. Social inclusion and poverty
5. Financial scarcity

3.5.2 How does European Funding get from Brussels into smaller regions

For the second sub question the following keywords were used:

1. Decentralisation
2. Effect of decentralization
3. Decentralisation in the European Union

3.5.3 How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?

For the third sub question the following keywords were used:

1. ESF in Flevoland
2. ESF regions Netherlands
3. Decentralisation Netherlands
4. Decentralisation ESF
5. Decentralisation EU

3.5.4 Which actions do local initiatives need to take in order to receive subsidies?

For the fourth sub question the following keywords were used:

1. Effect of networking

2. Why networking
3. Effect of planning
4. Effect of business plan
5. Business plan social organisations

Furthermore, a study book is used to formulate a format for the business plan. This book was used in official education courses for Business students and is written by de Boer, P., Brouwers, M.P. and Koetzier, W..

3.6 Critical Analysis

When looking critically at the methodology, a few limitations were seen. Looking at the validity and reliability of the methodology, it is seen that the research is valid for a very limited time-frame. Both the European Social Fund and the national objectives vary in periods. The European Union uses time-frames of seven year, making this research only valuable for the current time-frame. Furthermore, more information about the target group is necessary to give a valuable advice. The philanthropy of the target group is often unknown and since the target group does not operate with high finances, it seems the target group is unrepresented in research. Another difficulty in the methodology is the amount of information about poverty and social inclusion. The keywords used to find scientific research were too broad and therefore the right research was difficult to find. More and specific keywords could prevent this.

4. Research results

Chapter 4 presents the results from the research as described in chapter 3 with the aim to answer the sub questions and meet the research objectives. The chapter uses the sub questions as a guideline through the chapter, answering one sub question before answering another.

4.1 What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?

The sub question *What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?*, can be split into two questions and an analyse of their comparison, namely: *What are the objectives of the European Social Fund* and *What are the objectives of the target group*. These two questions are answered in the paragraphs below, and later analysed.

As written in the Literature review, the objectives of the European Social Fund (ESF) are built on four main pillars, namely employment, social inclusion, education and public services. The objectives within these four pillars are broad and wide, the European Union itself does not decide the targets, but the member states themselves set objectives more specifically for their national problems. In the following diagrams (figure 5, 6, 7 and 8) the ESF objectives are given per main subject and the specific target or objectives set by the Netherlands are presented below.

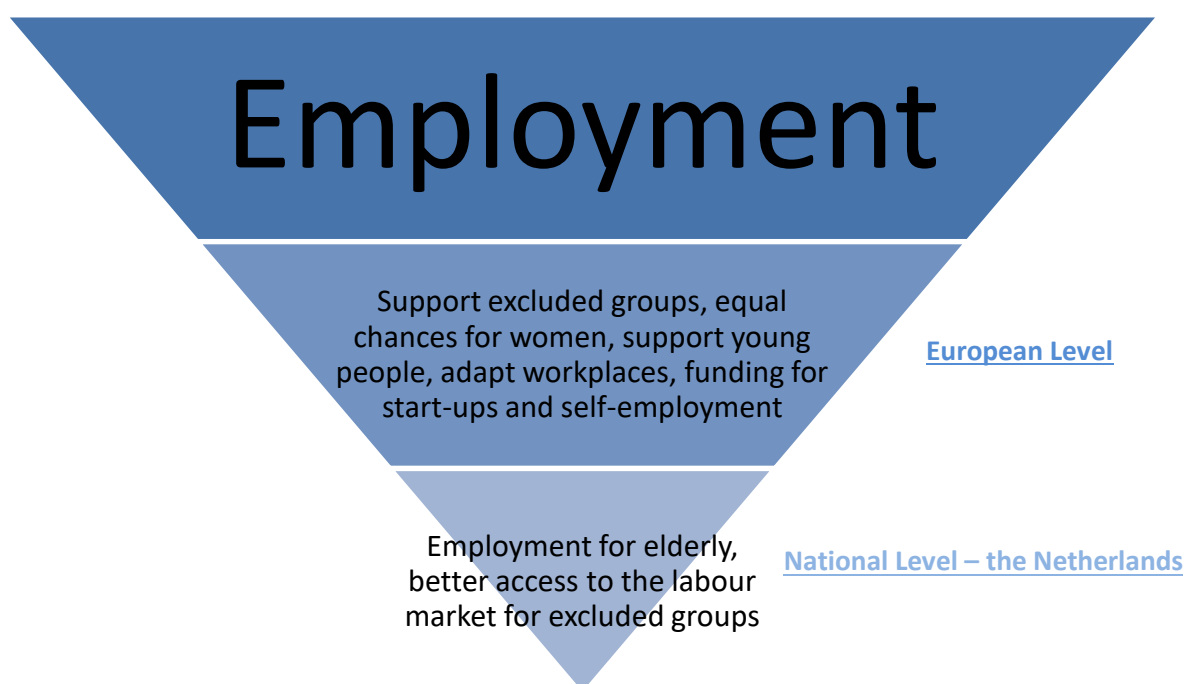


Figure 5 Objectives for the European Social Fund, Pillar Employment

As seen in figure 5, the objectives for the ESF on European level have a wide perspective. At national level, there are two objectives specified on employment, firstly: *Improving the sustainable and qualitative working possibilities and support for labour mobility; getting old while remaining active and healthy*. And secondly: *Improving the sustainable and qualitative working possibilities and support for*

labour mobility; Access to the job-market for active and non-active job seekers. These excluded groups contain a similar group which is mentioned in the European objectives. Though the European objectives for the ESF focus on equal chances for woman and supporting young people, the Netherlands chose to focus on elderly people and support for this group to keep them working. Due to this focus on elderly people at national level, most of the objectives on European level had no place in the ESF objectives of the Netherlands (European Commission, 2016) (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).



Figure 6 Objectives for the European Social Fund, Pillar Social Inclusion

The pillar Social inclusion has a broad perspective and can be used for various objectives, as presented in figure 6. Within the objectives on European level, the aim is to support marginalised groups, people with addictions and support employment. The Netherlands used the term “Active inclusion” to increase issues as mentioned above and broadens it with issues as poverty and discrimination. The official objective is: *Improving the social inclusion and fight poverty and discrimination; active inclusion*. Within the objective of active inclusion, the Netherlands specified objectives to support people in various areas, like education, employment and health (European Commission, 2016) (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

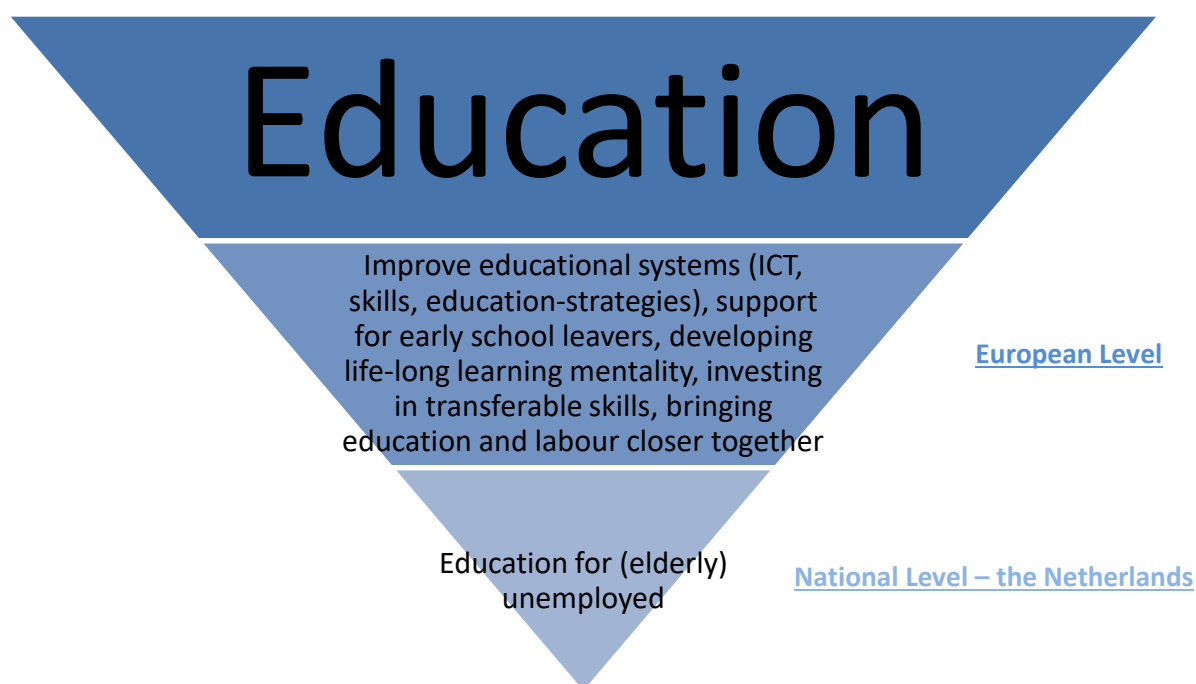


Figure 7 Objectives for the European Social Fund, Pillar Education

Figure 7 presents the objectives of Education at European and National level. In this figure, the scope of the Netherlands is very clear. Though the European level gives more than enough space for objectives, the Netherlands only chose one, combining it with their objective to support elderly on the labour market by subsidising education for unemployed, as well for elderly unemployed (European Commission, 2016) (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

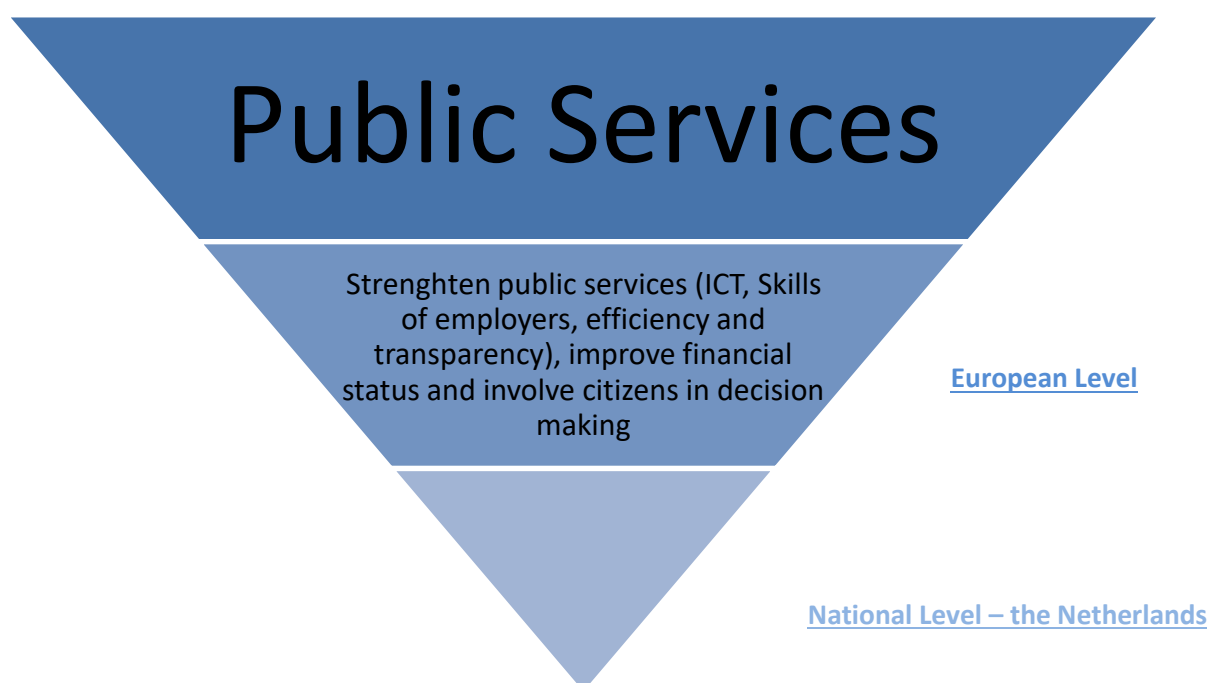


Figure 8 Objectives for the European Social Fund, Pillar

Figure 8 presents the objectives for the public services, for which the Netherlands has no objectives. (European Commission, 2016) (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

Overall, figures 5 to 8 show that the Netherlands have made the decision to narrow the ESF objectives to fewer objectives and to use the ESF for issues that are currently up to date in the Netherlands or global trends.

The target group's main objective is to reduce poverty and support those facing financial problems like for example debts, long-term unemployment and long-term low income. However, to support their clients the target group mainly operates to increase the social inclusion of clients. Studies of (Duflo (2006), Mullainathan & Shafir (2013), Haushofer & Fehr (2014), De Neve & Oswald (2012)) show that living in poverty, of having the perspective of living in poverty changes a lot in the behaviour and decision-making process. Due to this, the target group tries to support their clients by introspection, increasing self-esteem and developing new skills. In general, the target group does not support financially (interview initiators, 2017). Table 4 shows the target groups objectives set in the four main pillars of the European Social Fund.

Table 4 Objectives of the target group

Employment	Social inclusion	Education	Public services
Find a (volunteering) job	Learning to find a place in the society	Insight in behavioural patterns / introspection	Better contact with public services (whom do they need for what)
Support for start-ups	Reduce debt, financial and other problems	Support for an education program	Mediator and a hatch between clients and public services

As seen in table 4, the target group operates in a wide spectrum and can be mentioned as strengthening the social inclusion. Other objectives are seen as a bonus, but the belief is that by strengthening the position in the society, other aspects will grow as well.

Overall, the objectives of the European Social Fund and the target group seem very alike, but looking at the point of perspective there is a difference. The target group has their objectives set by experience and priority, their scope are their clients and their road to success. For the ESF, the scope is more aimed at the European problems and trends. Looking further at National level, it is seen that the objectives are based on national trends or national problems. This means that at National level, the target group's objective is not high enough on the priority-list to overlap.

4.2 How gets European Funding from Brussels into smaller regions?

Within the European Union, the European Commission is responsible for both the strategy of the European Social Fund as for the budget. The national budget for the European Social Fund depends on the development of the area, as a higher developed area need to bring a higher percentage of self-investment (European Commission, 2016). Research from Sujarwoto (2017) shows that decentralization increases the effect of public services. Therefore the European Union has chosen to decentralize the funding into regions within the member states. The Netherlands is split into 35 areas, so called arbeidsmarktregio's (job-market regions), which are all categorised as high developed. Even though the job-market regions implement the European Social Fund, the ministry is responsible for good usage of funding (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

The European Funding goes from the European Union to the Dutch Ministry of Social affairs and Employment. Here, a time frame is created to lower the financial risks of failed projects. For the period of 2014-2020 there are four periods, firstly three periods of two years and an one year period at the end. The agency divides the funding over the job-market regions, trying to spread the funding equally over the amount of inhabitants. Cities or areas with a higher problematic situation can achieve a higher amount of funding per inhabitant. The job-market regions then search for possible projects within their area, and contact the municipalities. The job-market regions then apply for funding at the portal from the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Projects can be spread out over the entire area, or just within the municipality. The job-market region keeps track of the used funding for each municipality, so that each municipality has an equal amount of funding according to their inhabitants. Figure 9 shows the hierarchy of the European Social Fund (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

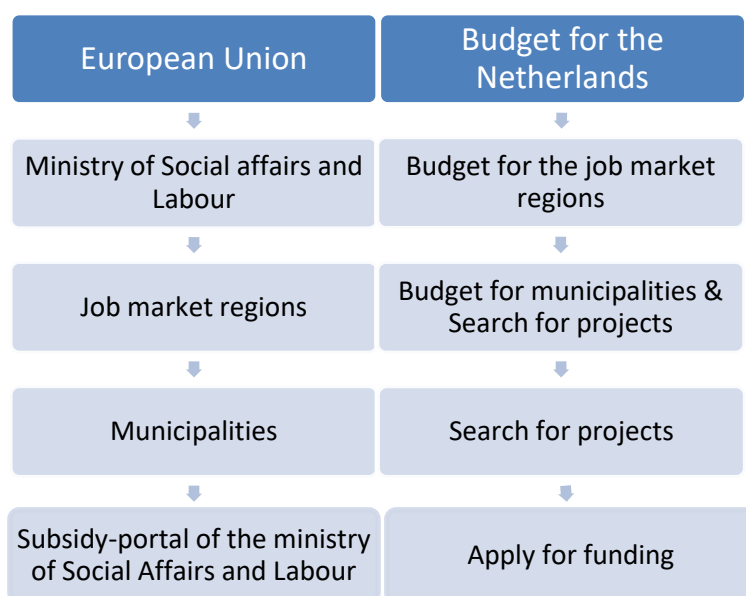


Figure 9 Decentralisation of the European Funds

4.3 How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?

The subsidy for the province of Flevoland is not divided and handed over to the municipalities. The job-market regions search for possible projects that fit in the national policy and the region. This is done in cooperation with the municipalities, but can also be spread out over more than one municipality. In order to ensure that each municipality receives an equal amount of subsidy, the job-market regions makes a division of the available subsidy amongst the amount of inhabitants for each municipality .

The projects set out for the European Social Fund need to be in line with the policy of the European Union and the National policy set up by the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The job-market regions research these policies and regional problems, and tries to find possible projects and initiators within this frame work together with the municipalities. These initiators are organisations that support the projects objectives. Both the municipality and the job-market regions support projects with setting up a concrete plan. This plan is presented to the agency of the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, who assess the plan. If the project-plan is accepted, the funding is acknowledged and granted, the project can start and collect results. Afterwards the results are reported and the agency controls if the funding was used according to the regulations (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014).

Usually, the funding for the European Social Fund is used to tackle large problems. The annual report from findings of the European Social Fund from 2014-2015 show that the Netherlands chose to make use of larger projects due to the decrease of budget. The funding is not specifically used to support foundations that operate within the objectives of the European Social Fund, but searches to find ways of solving priorities (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014). An example of this is Job-wise (Baanwijs), an initiative to help young people with a disadvantage on the labour market to find a job (Agency of Social Affairs and Employment, 2016).

4.4 Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?

Looking at the organisational structure of the target group, as presented in the introduction and summarised in table 5, the target group has a clear style and strategy but almost nothing is described or recorded. The absence of documentation and administration make it difficult to analyse the organisation for people outside the organisation.

Table 5 7S-model of the target group, summarised

Structure	Centred around initiator, but structure is not described
Strategy	Supporting people in (risk of) poverty and/or social inclusion, but strategy is not described
System	Unknown system, individual framework
Style	Informal, high solidarity and approachable nature for clients
Staff	One initiator / director of foundation, group of permanent volunteers
Skills	Philanthropy of the organisation, approachable nature for clients
Shared Value	concept of helping others without wanting something in return, the awareness that poverty can happen to anyone, to help others in need by giving away household goods or food and to help clients without financial support

The ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (2014) state that *“the application need to fulfil certain criteria such as: feasibility, quality of implementation and administration, acceptable relation between costs and benefits, financing and controllability. These requirements are captured in the national regulations for subsidy-applications”*. The national regulations (Staatscourant, 2014) state that the application need to have a project-description, budget, financing-plan, description of the activities, scope, objectives, results, products, implementation, responsibilities, administration, duration of the project and operational and financial capacity.

Looking at the requirements set by national regulations and the guideline from the ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, a project application need to have the following items:

1. Project description
 - a. Duration of the project
 - b. Objectives
 - c. Expected results
 - d. Scope
 - e. Feasibility
2. Budget and financing plan
3. Activities
 - a. Operational capacity
 - b. Financial capacity
4. Implementation
5. Responsibilities
6. Administration

Furthermore, the project needs to have an acceptable balance between the costs and benefits. Looking at literature from Lin, Tan, Zhou and Karim (2015) show that networking can increase the success of a project.

When comparing the organisation of the target group with the requirements of the ESF and national regulations, the main difference is the administration. In order to fulfil the requirements, the target group has to take the following actions:

1. Establish documentation for the foundations

Due to the amount of administration required for the ESF, the organisation of the target group needs to be prepared for this. The documentation of the foundation need to be established. Looking at table 5, this means that the following subjects need to be described: the structure of the foundation, the systems used within the foundations, the strategy of the foundation. Besides this the style, staff and skills can be described, but this has less priority. Besides this, the target group need to make a setup for the project of the ESF.

2. Create capacity to implement the project

In order to implement an ESF project successfully, the target group has to create capacity to implement the project. Therefor volunteers may need different directions and time for administration needs to be calculated into agendas.

3. Create a project plan to fulfil the requirements

The requirements of the ESF and the national regulations give a setup for a project plan. Annex I contains a project plan based on the ESF requirements and national regulations, supported with information from Grit (2008) and de Boer, Brouwers and Koetzier (2008). The format can be used for the target group to make a project plan, therefore it is written in Dutch.

4. Find out which job-market region operates within the area

Contact with the municipality, job-market regions and other organisations can create opportunities for the target group to participate in projects or to find support for target groups project.

5. Discussion of results

The aim of this research was to find out if the target group could apply for funding from the European Social Fund, and how to apply for funding if possible. This chapter analyses the process of collecting results and discusses limitations and unexpected results. The main character of the chapter is to view the differences between the results (the research) and the literature review, to highlight new insights, or are the results similar to the information given in the literature review?

5.1 What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?

The objectives of the European Social Fund are to support European inhabitants with employment and education, increase their social inclusion, and strengthen the public services. The objectives of the Netherlands are to increase social inclusion, reduce poverty and discrimination and increase access to the labour market. The target group's objective is to support people in poverty and financial problems, by improving their social inclusion.

On paper the target group finds itself precisely in the objectives of both the European Social Fund and the Netherlands. However, as written in the literature review, both the ESF and the national objectives of the Netherlands are written on current problems or trends and is the funding result-driven. Since the target group operates with few financial recourses and has low administration it is difficult to see and predict results. Looking at the literature review, the results give a similar answer to the hypothesis, although the influence of the national objectives is underestimated in the literature review and hypothesis of the research.

The process of answering the first sub-question went well, due to the fact that information was easily accessed. In some cases it was difficult to find literature that supported the objectives, like at the case of employment it is assumed that employment has a positive effect on poverty, but research is not often used to back this up in official government or European publications. The influence of the Dutch government to add priorities was underestimated in the hypothesis of this research, what can be seen throughout the report, starting in the literature review. Research to objectives of local initiative operating to reduce poverty could give a clearer sight of how they overlap with objectives of the European Union and Dutch government.

5.2 How does European Funding get from Brussels into smaller regions?

As written in the literature review, the European Union works with decentralisation. The budget for the Netherlands is in control of the ministry of Social affairs and Employment, and the operator is the agency of the ministry. The implementation of the European Social Fund is realised by the 35 job-market regions, who search for projects together with the municipality and initiators.

When the target group wants to apply for funding, it is important to have knowledge of the process and knowing the requirements. For the target group, not only the municipality but also the job-market region has an important influence on the approval of funding. In the literature review the regions within the Netherlands were considered, but their influence on the ESF did not come forward within the Literature review. It anticipated on the province to divide the funding, instead of the job-market region.

The amount of information about this sub-question was less than anticipated in advance. It would have been nice to find information about how funding used to be transferred in comparison to how it is arranged now. Unfortunately there is little information or research about this. The amount of data collected is sufficient, but in order to create a more practical view on the European Social Fund research about previous projects and their success factors could be interesting.

5.3 How does the province of Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?

Although suggested in the literature review, the province of Flevoland does not have any say in the European Social Funds, since the job-market regions implement the European Social Fund. The job-market regions search for projects together with the municipality and overviews that each municipality receives an equal amount of funding according to the amount of inhabitants, with the exception of cities or areas with problematic situations.

Both in the hypothesis and the literature review the province was considered to divide the funding over the municipalities. For the target group, the job-market region gives another entry of funding, when the municipality does not have place for the initiative. But, it also complicates the process, because more people are involved in decisions and approval. In the Literature review, the job-market regions are not considered, due to the fact that the NUTS regions in the Netherlands are equal to the provinces. However, certain areas (mainly cities) are considered as regions of their own.

The expected answer of this sub-question was wrong, since the province is not involved in the European Social Fund. Finding concrete information about this sub-question was difficult as well. The job-market region of Flevoland uses the same property as the municipality of Almere. And the employers of the job-market region have close contact with employers of the municipality of Almere. It is unknown if other municipalities in the job-market region have lesser influence on European Social Funding due to the fact that they are not present in the same office. The website of the agency of Social affairs and Employment gives direction towards the municipality and has a portal where one can apply for funding. This seems to arise the idea that apply for funding can be done without contacting the job-market regions or municipality. More information and transparency about the practical use of the European Social Fund would take away this knowledge gap.

5.4 Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?

Firstly, the target group needs to create more documentation about the current activities, systems and strategy of the foundation or initiative. And the first ideas for the project need to be setup. Secondly, the capacity for the project needs to be determined and analysed whether it is possible to implement

it. To apply for subsidy, a project plan need to be written and handed over to the job-market regions. And find contact with both the municipality and the job-market regions.

For the target group this means that there is a higher need for improving administration and organisational structure within the foundations or initiatives. A focus on results is not necessary, but awareness of results is. Networking is another keyword for the target group, but a difficult and time-demanding job. Finding partnerships with other organisations could be an option for the target group to initiate in the funding and helping their clients. The impact of networking has not been taking in this research enough, as seen in its absence in the Literature review and hypothesis.

There are a lot of factors that will determine the approval of a project and funding, and though a plan would help it is not a definite way of receiving funding. On this topic more information about creating goodwill, the importance of a financial plan and investors are less captioned in answering this sub-question. It would be interesting to research how previous European Social Fund projects received their funding and create a stronger base for new projects, but even then there will never be a guarantee of receiving funding.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this thesis was to research the possibilities for local Dutch foundations to receive funding from the European Social Fund. To demarcate this research, the main question and four sub questions were created, as stated below;

How can the target group, local initiatives like foundation Wensjes and FARE in Flevoland (the Netherlands), receive funding from the European Social Funds?

Sub questions

1. What are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?
2. How gets European Funding from Brussels into smaller regions?
3. How does the province Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?
4. Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?

The first sub question is *what are the objectives of the European Social Fund and how do they overlap with the objectives of the target group?*. The European Social Fund has four general objectives and each member state formulates own priorities. The four subjects are employment, education, social inclusion and public services. For the Netherlands the priorities are active inclusion (increase social inclusion, reduce poverty and discrimination) and increase access to the labour market. The target's group objective is to support people in poverty and financial problems (like long-term low income, debts and unemployment), by getting them into the society. Looking at the target groups objectives and the European Social Fund objectives, there is a strong accordance between them. Within the objectives of the Netherlands the target group has a strong resemblance with the priority of active inclusion.

The second sub question is *How gets European Funding from Brussels into smaller regions*. The European Union decentralized the European Social Fund into regions, creating 35 regions in the Netherlands. The European Social Fund first goes to the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, where the funding gets split into time frames and where regions can apply for funding. Each region has an office, so called job-market regions, who together with the municipalities search for projects within the objectives of the national priorities. The regions apply at the subsidy-portal from the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

The third sub question, *How does the province Flevoland divide the subsidies on to the different municipalities or foundations?*, was adapted during the research, since the province does not implement the European Social Fund. Instead of the province, the job-market region is the instrument between the municipality and the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In general, the funding is divided equally towards regions in a percentage of the inhabitants. The ministry of Social Affairs and Employment assures that each region has a fair amount off funding and the job-market regions are responsible for dividing the funding equally over the municipalities.

The fourth sub question is *Which actions do local initiatives have to take in order to receive subsidies?* and consist of four main action steps for initiators. Firstly, the target group needs to create more documentation about the current activities, systems and strategy of the foundation or initiative. And the first ideas for the project need to be setup. Secondly, the capacity for the project needs to be determined and analysed whether it is possible to implement it. To apply for subsidy, a project plan need to be written and handed over to the job-market regions. And find contact with both the municipality and the job-market regions.

How can local foundations in Almere (the Netherlands), like foundations Wensjes and FARE, receive funding from the European Social Funds?

Before answering the main research question, the hypothesis is looked at once more. In table 6 it is seen that there were four possible outcomes for the main research question. Outcome A, B and C imply that funding is possible, through the municipality, province or nationally or through the European Union directly. Outcome D implies that applying for funding is not realistic for the target group and alternatives solutions for funding or finance should be examined.

Table 6 Possible outcomes and applicability

Outcome A	Outcome B	Outcome C	Outcome D
There is European funding available through the municipality	There is European funding available through the province or nationally	There is European funding available “directly” from the European Union (side-programs)	The possibilities of funding (whether this is on municipality, provincial or national level) are not realistic for the target group
Applicability	Applicability	Applicability	Applicability
Appliance for funding at the municipality	Appliance for funding at the province	Appliance for funding at the European Union program	Search for alternative solutions of funding

Looking at the conclusion of the sub questions, the target group could apply for funding within the European Social Fund. However, the question arises whether this is realistic. In order to have a sufficient chance of receiving funding, the initiators need to adjust their current way of working and develop a more business driving atmosphere. Funding means more administration and registration of results. Both the target group and initiators do not always have the time and means to fulfil these requirements. It can be concluded that hypothesis D is so far the answer for the main research question.

Recommendations

The recommendations are split in two scenario's, one for short-term projects (implementation within six months) and one for long-term projects (implementation within a year or longer).

For short-term projects the first advisable step is to contact the municipality and job-market region. Gaining more information about the availability for funding is necessary to assess whether the project can receive any funding at all. If the project can apply for funding, several administrative proceedings will start. When not present already, a financial plan is of most importance, since the European Social Fund does not provide 100% finance for a project. Most of the projects within the target group are small and local initiatives, finding collaboration with other parties or host network-meetings to find investors to find finances. Depending on the size of the budget it is advisable to seek contact with businesses in the area of the initiative and if possible with a shared target group. Asking for donations in exchange for mentioning the business can provide finances for a small budget. Larger budgets (over 50.000€) need more investors or the support from one larger investor, national or international companies can be approached. Success factors in this recommendation are to spend time in creating a good project plan and establishing documentation about the current organisation.

On a longer term, it is recommended to increase knowledge about the European Social Fund and the member state's objectives. For the European Social Funds information is available on the website from the European Union and easily searched from web search-engines. Information about the national objectives and priorities can be found on the website from the agency of Social Affairs and Labour. It is recommended to contact the job-market regions for more information about the European Social Fund in the Netherlands. Especially information like time-frames, specific objectives/priorities, available budget, scope of the projects and projects with a similar goal.

Secondly, it is recommended to invest in a project plan and therefore research possible outcomes and feasibility. This does not have to be a highly professional document, but it is important to answer the following questions: Why is the project needed? For whom is the project intended? Who is going to implement the project? How is the project going to be implemented? What is the goal of the project? How is the project financed? Find information about project management and writing a project plan to increase the quality of the plan. The strength of this project plan is a success factor, the more (detailed) information given in this project plan, the better it can be assessed.

The last step is to seek contact with the municipality and job-market regions as described in the short-term recommendation. The project plan can be adapted during the process and the municipality can assist in networking and collaboration between projects.

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Annex I

Projectplan

Hoofdstuk 1 Project omschrijving

Waar gaat het project over, waarom dit project, wie worden er geholpen? (Introductie)

Hoelang duurt het project?

Wat zijn de doelen van het project?

Welke resultaten worden aan het eind van het project gehaald?

Is het project haalbaar?

Hoofdstuk 2 Financiering

Hoeveel geld is er nodig om het project te kunnen starten?

Waar komt het geld vandaan?

Hoofdstuk 3 Activiteiten

Wat gebeurt er in het project? Welke activiteiten vinden plaats?

Hoeveel mensen zijn er nodig om dit uit te kunnen voeren?

Wat betekent dit voor het budget?

Hoofdstuk 4 Uitvoering van het project

Hoe worden de activiteiten uitgevoerd? Door wie en wanneer?

Hoe wordt er voor gezorgd dat de kwaliteit goed is?

Hoe wordt er binnen het project gecommuniceerd?

Welke deadlines zijn er?

Hoofdstuk 5 Verantwoordelijkheden

Wie is waarvoor verantwoordelijk?

Wat gebeurt er met klachten/problemen?

Hoofdstuk 6 Administratie

Welke zaken moeten bijgehouden worden?

Wie houdt dit bij en wanneer gebeurt dat?

Hoe worden de resultaten bijgehouden?

Op welke manier worden resultaten/administratie gecommuniceerd?

Annex II

Interviews

Arbeidsmarktregio Flevoland

Bart Zuman - Regionaal coordinator Europees Sociaal Fonds – March 2018

Hoe werkt de ESF in de praktijk?

Het ESF wordt uitgevoerd door de gemeenten, omdat het ESF zo lokaal mogelijk werkt. Het geld van Europa komt bij het ministerie van Sociale zaken en Werkgelegenheid binnen. Hun agentschap gaat hier dan verder mee aan de slag. De periode wordt in vier tijdvakken verdeeld, zodat er minder financieel risico is voor de projecten en gemeentes. We zitten nu in het op-een-na laatste tijdvak, (2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2020). Over het algemeen is het zo dat de subsidie over drie tijdvakken van 2 jaar wordt verdeeld en alles wat binnen die twee jaar overblijft naar het resterende tijdvak gaat. Nu is er zo goed gebruik gemaakt van het ESF, dat voor 2020 niet veel budget meer is.

Naast de tijdvakken zorgt het ministerie ook voor de prioriteiten voor het gebruik van de ESF. De projecten moeten dan daarbinnen passen. Wij, de regiokantoren, gaan dan samen met de gemeenten opzoek naar projecten die daar binnen passen. We helpen de gemeenten en projecten en doen dan de uiteindelijke aanvraag bij het ministerie. Na afloop van het project wordt het gecontroleerd door het agentschap SZW. Als de subsidie dan niet goed gebruikt is, moet het worden terugbetaald.

Hoe wordt het ESF verdeeld over de regio Flevoland?

Vanuit het AMR kunnen wij subsidie aanvragen bij het ministerie. Wij zorgen ervoor dat voor elke gemeente een gelijkwaardig bedrag beschikbaar is. Daarbij kijken we naar de inwoners van elke gemeenten. In sommige gevallen kan een gemeente meer krijgen, maar dan moeten er wel specifiek aangetoonde problemen zijn.

Welk advies kunt u kleine/lokale initiatieven geven met betrekking tot subsidie uit het ESF?

Kleine projecten zijn er bijna niet in het ESF, meestal zijn het grote projecten die passen bij de prioriteiten van het ministerie. Goed inlezen in die prioriteiten is van belang, weten waar in geïnvesteerd moet worden dus. En zoek naar samenwerkingsverbanden. Ook het hebben van een goed plan in belangrijk, vooral de financiële kant. Het ESF financiert maar een deel, dus het moet vooraf al duidelijk zijn waar de rest van wordt betaald. Verder, kom vooral met ideeën naar de gemeente of het arbeidsmarktregiokantoor.

Stichting WENSJES

Els van Boxtel – Oprichter stichting Wensjes – March 2017

Hoe zou u uw stichting haar werk beschrijven? Wat zijn de grootste activiteiten?

Signalering. Er komen dagelijks tussen de 30 a 40 personen binnen, sommige daarvan komen via het wijkteam wegens problemen, andere zijn zelfstandig met een hulpvraag naar Wensjes gekomen en een groep mensen die bereid is om te helpen of een donatie komt brengen. Met iedereen praten we en vooral word er veel geluisterd. Ik bied hulp aan, maar mensen accepteren pas hulp als ze er klaar voor zijn. Schaamte is een groot probleem bij de doelgroep en dat heeft tijd nodig. We verlenen noodhulp aan de mensen die tussen wal en schip vallen, in het weekend en geen geld voor eten, ineens je huis uitgezet worden (op vrijdag natuurlijk). Allerlei zaken waarbij de normale hulpverlening afwezig is (niet geopend in het weekend) en waar wij helpen. Daarnaast is er een langdurige vorm van hulpverlening, waarbij we mensen weer terug in de maatschappij proberen te krijgen. Minder

eenzaam worden, weer een beetje zelfvertrouwen krijgen en waar mogelijk weer een baantje/opleiding te zoeken. Ik probeer altijd ervoor te zorgen dat het uit de mensen zelf komt, ik vertel ze niet wat of hoe ze het moeten doen, maar ik luister en bied eventueel opties aan.

Wat is de belangrijkste factor binnen uw stichting? Waarom werkt het?

Een van de belangrijkste succesfactoren van mijn stichting is de laagdrempeligheid. Er hoeven geen ingewikkelde formulieren ingevuld te worden, geen lastige gesprekken en iedereen is welkom. Dit heeft er ook voor gezorgd dat mensen die eerst hulpbehoevend binnen kwamen, nu in de stichting als vrijwilliger andere hulpbehoevende helpen. Hierdoor ontstaat een groot saamhorigheid gevoel en creëer ik een samen staan we sterk mentaliteit.

Welke doelgroep heeft uw stichting?

Iedereen die te maken heeft met eenzaamheid of armoede. Het zijn mensen die in de bijstand zitten, schuldsanering, chronisch zieken, ouderen, alleenstaanden. Armoede kan iedereen overkomen, sommige mensen zitten al maanden zonder inkomen, anderen verliezen hun baan.

Wat is het grootste probleem waar u tegenaan loopt?

Dat de groep die ik probeer te helpen heel groot is. Daardoor heb ik eigenlijk te weinig tijd. Daarnaast ontvangen we geen subsidie meer, waardoor we de huur van het pand zelf moeten gaan betalen (€8000). Er zit in de stichting zelf geen geld, alles is gebouwd op en door vrijwilligers, waardoor we nu moeten gaan vragen om financiële donaties of op andere manieren aan geld te komen. Verder is alles in de stichting gericht op non-financiële hulp, er word vooral geholpen met goederen en een luisterend oor.

Wat is het struikelpunt voor het verkrijgen van subsidie?

Elke 4/5 jaar veranderd er weer heel veel, tegen de tijd dat ik denk te weten hoe alles loopt, veranderd er weer zoveel. Daarnaast kost het best veel tijd om ervoor te zorgen dat je gezien wordt bij de gemeente. Er is een netwerk nodig en iemand die daar handig in is.

Waarom ontvangt u geen subsidie (meer)?

De gemeente vindt dat stichtingen een verdienmodel moeten creëren zodat er ze minder afhankelijk worden van financiële steun. Wat op zich goed is, maar er wel voor zorgt dat wij nu niks krijgen en de stichting misschien niet meer kan voortbestaan. Het is ook cru dat de gemeente wel hulpbehoevende doorstuurt naar ons, maar wij niet om hulp kunnen vragen bij de gemeente.

Hoeveel weet u van de Europese unie en eventuele steun voor uw stichting?

Daar heb ik geen weet van. Volgens mij heb ik ooit iets ingevuld voor het verkrijgen van subsidie, maar ik weet niet meer waar dat vandaan kwam.

Stichting FARE

Natascha Coppens-Vasconcellos - oprichter stichting Wensjes

Hoe zou u uw stichting haar werk beschrijven? Wat zijn de grootste activiteiten?

Wij proberen mensen in armoede te ondersteunen met voedsel(pakketten), huisraad, advies bij financiële problemen en contact met lotgenoten. We organiseren inzamelacties, veilingen en (rommel)markten voor onze doelgroep. Ook de noodhulp is een grote activiteit, we zijn dag en nacht bereikbaar voor mensen die in de problemen zitten.

Wat is de belangrijkste factor binnen uw stichting? Waarom werkt het?

De kleinschalig- en laagdrempeligheid zijn denk ik de succesfactoren van onze stichting. We kunnen een stukje maatwerk leveren aan mensen en zijn geen grote machine waarbij je elke keer een ander gezicht ziet. De mens staat centraal.

Welke doelgroep heeft uw stichting?

Ondersteuning aan mensen in de “nieuwe” armoede en mensen die tussen wal en schip vallen bij andere instanties.

Wat is het grootste probleem waar u tegenaan loopt?

Veel mensen nemen contact met ons op met het idee, een stichting=overheid dus je moet me helpen. We zijn volledig zelfvoorzienend en rekenen dus volledig op vrijwilligers. Ondanks dat we veel willen, kunnen we niet altijd alles en dat is lastig omdat onze doelgroep eigenlijk meer hulp nodig heeft.

Wat is het struikelpunt voor het verkrijgen van subsidie?

Je moet zichtbaar zijn bij de gemeente, maar er is niet altijd tijd en zin om mee te doen aan het “politieke” spelletje. Er verandert elke keer weer veel, je moet weten bij wie je moet zijn en het kost enorm veel tijd en administratie om alles te regelen. Onze secretaris is wel vaak bezig met het zoeken naar fondsen/financiële ondersteuning, maar het is lastig. We hebben wel een AMBI-status.

Waarom ontvangt u geen subsidie (meer)?

Alles gaat naar de bekende groep, we zijn te klein om er echt tussen te komen. Daarnaast steunen we op vrijwilligers, waardoor we zelfvoorzienend zijn.

Hoeveel weet u van de Europese unie en eventuele steun voor uw stichting?

Ik ben niet echt bekend met de EU of fondsen van de EU.

Annex III

Report Writing - checklist

Items marked with an * are the so called killing points. IF there are more than five killing points ticked on the checklist, the report must then be improved on all failed parts and must be handed in again with the old version. N.B: No killing points are allowed in the thesis!

1. Report

- ☐ *Report is properly bound, no staples

2. Cover

- ☐ Attractive layout (photo, illustration)
- ☐ Title of report and author(s) are mentioned (alphabetical order)

3. Title page

- ☐ Title is specific
- ☐ Subtitle is clear
- ☐ Author(s) (alphabetical order)
- ☐ Date and place of publication
- ☐ Company logo if applicable

4. Preface

- ☐ Contains reason for writing
- ☐ Acknowledgement

5. Summary

- ☐ *The summary is a short summary of the entire report without any opinions in it
- ☐ The summary is structured (introduction (see 7), core, conclusion, paragraphing)
- ☐ Summary is written in the passive and is objective.

6. Table of contents

- ☐ *All parts of the report are noted and numbered (6-11, paragraphs, sub paragraphs)
- ☐ *Page numbers are correct
- ☐ Table of contents is clear

7. Introduction

- ☐ *Introduction invites the reader to read (eye catcher) and is 1st chapter
- ☐ *problem demarcation and justification are clear and specific
- ☐ *Aim is clear and specific
- ☐ *method data collection / research methods are described
- ☐ * the construction of the report is indicated (short content per chapter.)
- ☐ * Target Group is indicated

8. Core: Construction of chapters, paragraphs

- ☐ *Chapters, paragraphs and subparagraphs are numbered and clearly structured
- ☐ Chapters and (sub) paragraphs have a fitting title
- ☐ New chapters start on a new page
- ☐ *Chapters are clearly introduced
- ☐ Chapters end with a conclusion referring to the introduction
- ☐ New paragraphs are clearly indicated by a hard return
- ☐ Sentences are continuing (no hard return within paragraph)

- ☐ *Figures and tables are numbered
- ☐ *Figures and tables have fitting title
- ☐ *Figures and table are referred to in the text
- ☐ *Pages are numbered and have attractive lay out
- ☐ *Chapters don't contain plagiarism (See added information)

9. Use of English language

- ☐ * Grammar/spelling according to criteria³
- ☐ Use of appropriate vocabulary (no jargon)
- ☐ Use of punctuation according to standard English rules
- ☐ * Report does not contain colloquialisms, and is written in the passive form.
- ☐ * Chapters contain NO personal pronouns (for example I, we etc.) except for the preface
- ☐ * Sentences are structured according to standard English word order and are not cut off like a telegram.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

- ☐ * Conclusions and recommendations are based on argumentation from the chapters and are 2 separate chapters
- ☐ Brief and to the point
- ☐ Does not contain any new information

11. Literature list

- ☐ * Literature list is drawn up according to official guidelines
- ☐ * Literature list is accurate and complete (all sources are mentioned)

12. Annex

- ☐ * Annexes are numbered
- ☐ * Annexes have appropriate titles
- ☐ * Each annex is specifically referred to in the content
- ☐ Annexes do not contain the writers analyses (own words)

12. Sources

- ☐ *ALL sources in the literature list, will be referred to in the text by notes, quotations and footnotes
- ☐ *Quotations are not longer than 3 lines
- ☐ Sources support arguments and facts (own text)
- ☐ Sources are indicated at the right place in the content

Clarification plagiarism

Sources from books, articles, internet, magazines needs to fulfil to certain requirements. If the requirements are not taken into account, plagiarism is assumed.

³ Randomly chosen pages do not contain more than 3 spelling and grammar mistakes

Annex IV

Checklist assessment thesis

Name student:				
Title of the thesis:				
Criterion	Research activity	Pass or fail	Bonus credits (0, + or ++)	Comment of tutor
1. RPP	The RPP is assessed with 'PASS'. <u><i>Failure to conform to the guidelines stops the assessment and thus leads to automatic fail</i></u>	Yes or No	0	
2. Literature review	The report contains a section discussing current theory (what is already known with regards to the research topic) in which the relevant research is summarised and contains a critical analysis, both supported by sources. A link should be shown between literature review and the rest of the research (methodology). The majority of sources used must be scientific, the sole mentioning of website and/or standard books is insufficient.	Pass or Fail	0 or + or ++	
3. Material and method	The research design and the type of research methodology is described and derived from and linked to the problem description and main +sub research questions. The Methodology is precisely described in such a way the research can be replicated. Contains a critical analysis of the conducted research relating to validity and reliability.	Pass or Fail	0	
4. Results and discussion of results	Results: Data is properly collected, summarized and statistically analysed. Also presented using the most suitable medium.	Pass or Fail	0 or + or	

	<p>Discussion of results: The discussion of results are reviewed in the context of the literature review (what was already known) and the new knowledge generated in this research with regards to the research topic.</p> <p>The data is evaluated and interpreted critically where the alternative solutions, and a discussion of the arguments for the final choice are made.</p> <p>The student also demonstrates the applicability of the research outcomes and their current values.</p>		++	
5. Conclusions, recommendations	<p>The conclusions in the report must be relevant, concrete and justified.</p> <p>The conclusions provide an answer for the main and sub research questions and fulfil the research objectives.</p> <p>The conclusion cannot contain new information which was not presented earlier in the report.</p> <p>Recommendations are formulated in relevant, realistic and concrete terms and should be applicable for target group.</p>	Pass or Fail	0 or + or ++	
6. report format	<u>Failure to conform to the guidelines stops the assessment and thus leads to automatic fail (see Appendix 6 & 7)</u>	Pass or Fail	0	
7. seminar	The final presentation is intended to present the full project to a lay audience and meets the criteria as described in appendix 5.	Pass or Fail	0 or + or ++	Assessed in thesis presentation.
Filled in by: Date: Signature:			Pass/ Fail	<i>(Final grade can only be determined after seminar)</i>

Assessment criteria: all criteria must be a pass.

Grade will be determined by number of bonus credits (number of +):

Number of bonus credits	mark
0-1	6
2-3	7

Possibilities for Dutch local foundations to receive funding from the European Social Fund

4-5	8
6-7	9
8	10