

Netherlands – EC-VPL and IVC den Helder

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| Institution | EC-VPL and IVC den Helder |
| Interviewed Person | Jifa (35), from Sri Lanka |

I – Preparation

Jifa (35) is from Sri Lanka. She was nine years old when she came to the Netherlands. She studied financial administration and she has worked for several years as assistant-accountant. When she married and got children she has quit her job for a few years. Now her children are old enough to go to school she wants to start working again. However, during the years she was taking care of her children she realized she did not like her work field.

II – Awareness

Although Jifa lived most part of her life in the Netherlands she is not common with this Dutch way of thinking.

“I live in the Netherlands for a really long time, but just now I am becoming aware of what I really want in my life. Although I am living physically here for most of my life, I am used to live in a totally different culture where earning money is more important than doing something you like”.

Jifa studied financial administration because that was what her family expected her to do. The assurance of finding a job and earning money were the main goals. But when she decided to go back to work again and realized she wanted to do something totally different she reached first to the IVC for help. The IVC was always an important part of her life. Here she learned about VPL and competences.

“I know the IVC since my childhood. When we arrived in the Netherlands my parents always went here to participate in the activities”.

III – Starting up

As stated above Jifa worked as an assistant-accountant for quite some time. Although she was really good at her job she decided not to return there after her work-break.

“My bosses were very satisfied with me. They already offered me a contract after a few weeks of working for them. I was always taught you have to be good for people, so I was staying late to finish all the work. But in the end, it made me realize I was good for others but not for myself. I was unhappy in this function”.

For the first time in her life she realized accountancy did not make her happy, it was not her passion. She saw an advertisement of the IVC and decided to go there. Here she signed up for both VPL trainings.

“The competence training connected perfectly with the questions I was asking myself”.

For her the biggest outcome of the training was the possibility to learn what she actually likes to do for a living. She learned how to look further than economic prosperity.

IV – Documentation and support

Jifa first focussed more on documentation out of formal learning experiences such as education and work. She contacted her former employers to write about her competences. To collect these documents of proof was easy for her, to find proof for her goals was hard.

“To find proof for what I was trying to get out of these trainings was hard. I had no proof because I did not yet know where I was going”.

The trainer noticed Jifa had a hard time finding evidence for her informal and non-formal learning and helped her to broaden her way of looking at this. He told her to think about her youth, what did she liked then? And what did she learned during the time she stayed home taking care of her children?

“For example: during my secondary school, they examined you in writing. Writing did not suit me and I came up with the idea of doing my exams oral. I really had to work for it but in the end, they accepted it. The trainer made me realize I am capable of making changes”.

Her portfolio was a mix of all kind of proof. Jifa is creative and she uses this competence to make the best out of life with the small amount of money she can spend. For example, she baked a princess birthday cake for her daughter. A photo of the cake was proof for her portfolio.

V – Assessment

The assessment was focusing on the future. During the training, she was still looking for answers and the assessment was more a mix of questions that were keeping her busy than giving answers. She presented her strong points and why she was good at these competences.

“For me the most important thing I learned during the assessment was not the outcome. For the first time, I was looking at my own future by focussing on what I wanted and not what others wanted for me”.

VI – Impact

During the training Jifa learned she wanted to work more in the social field.

“All my life I had worked with numbers but I realized I missed the social part. At the IVC I was given the opportunity to work there as treasurer. They knew about my wish to add more social values to my job so they offered me the function of trainer as well. This is perfect for me, I will always work with numbers because this is what I am really good at but now I can expand and combine my knowledge to the social field as well. As a trainer, I want to teach to newcomers that they need to look at what they want to reach in life. I know from experience that this way of thinking does not come naturally, but it is so important!”