



## Bondgenootschap voor geletterdheid

### Alliance for literacy

#### Fighting low literacy together

Limburg is home to 120,000 low-literacy adults (ages 15-75). Because of their struggles with reading and writing, it is difficult for them to fully participate in society. Learning to read and write is extremely important for individuals themselves, as well as for employers, service providers and the community as a whole. But functional illiteracy cannot be solved by a single person or entity; this requires collaboration. Therefore, in consultation with the national Reading & Writing Foundation (Stichting Lezen & Schrijven), Cubiss has teamed up with Limburg libraries and regional partners in various locations to initiate new alliances.



#### Collaborating parties

Within an alliance, public and private parties work together. These may include municipalities, employment agencies, play groups, community health services, cleaning companies, trade union centres, welfare organisations, child care centres, language education providers, companies offering sheltered employment and of course libraries: all organisations which have a role and interest in identifying low literacy. Within the alliance, the activities of the different partners come together. Examples include 'identification and referral' workshops, master classes, teaching material for volunteers and the exchange of best practices and screening tools.



#### Clear objectives

A collective approach leads to a broader approach to low literate individuals, who can be encouraged from many different angles to enrol in a literacy course. South Limburg has already seen initial results. A total of 35 organisations have joined forces to form the 'Parkstad Alliance for Literacy' (Bondgenootschap Parkstad voor geletterdheid).

SCHUNCK\* Library: 'Participation in the alliance serves a social purpose. Together we contribute to civic engagement among citizens and create suitable opportunities, thereby lowering the threshold for the target group. This leads to more active individuals, higher labour productivity, a lower rate of absenteeism due to illness, and less dependence on social services.' The aims of the Parkstad Alliance for Literacy largely tie in with the Parkstad municipalities' action plan to promote literacy, thus resulting in close cooperation.



## Strengthening basic skills together

Ivette Sprooten, a specialist in low literacy at Cubiss: 'The alliances initiative comes from the Reading & Writing Foundation. Cubiss acts as a bridge builder in setting up these wonderful partnerships in more locations. Together we are fighting low literacy and strengthening basic skills. This is very important in order to engage people in the community.'

Ivette Sprooten (co-initiator of the Parkstad Alliance for Literacy) says that the Alliance has launched various activities such as:

- joint activities during national Literacy Week (Week van de Alfabetisering);
- a workshop on low literacy, attended by management and employees from all alliance members;
- sponsorship for 'Lingo on location' (a word game), provided by the alliance members;
- collaboration between ROC Arcus and the Parkstad libraries to promote reading among low-literates.



If you would like to know more about alliances or other activities related to promoting literacy, please contact Cubiss consultants Ilse Lodewijks ([i.lodewijks@cubiss.nl](mailto:i.lodewijks@cubiss.nl) / 0031 (0)6 20 96 00 51) or Ivette Sprooten ([i.sprooten@cubiss.nl](mailto:i.sprooten@cubiss.nl) / 0031 (0)66 52 67 26 65).

We would be happy to discuss the opportunities with you.

This project was developed by Cubiss in collaboration with the Reading & Writing Foundation and is sponsored in part by financial support from the Province of Limburg.

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