

## Competence management and HRD in sport organizations

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### Aim

The paper aims at describing competence management as a recent innovation in HRD for sport organizations. In the light of the traditional HRD policy of sport organizations and developments of the sports sector this innovation seems to be promising.

### Context: dynamism of the sport labour market

The actual situation in the sports sector is characterized by dynamism, increasing global and local competition, growing complexity and demands for efficiency and accountability. In this context sport organizations are urged to modernize and improve themselves (Houlihan and Green, 2009). Again and again they are asked to reformulate their core business and core competences (Palahad & Hamel, 1990). As a result of this a need for continuous development of organizations can be perceived, not only on a strategic level, but equally with respect to their human capital.

Parallel to this from an individual perspective labour in sports and more general in society is rapidly changing. A lifelong career in one kind of job is becoming an exception, investing in career development is a necessity, and lifelong learning has become a widely accepted way to deal with this. Workers in the sports sector are conscious of the changing context and will not commit themselves exclusively to a job or an organization.

On the other hand it's clear that the quality of employees is crucial for organizational success. The rapidly changing conditions on the sports labour market ask for a reform of the way in which human capital is treated by organizations. Organization strategy and individual ambitions are less easily aligned than before. Management of competences can be a means to overcome the possible tensions between them.

### Competence management

Core competences of organizations are held to be crucial for the competitive advantage of organizations. Therefore the ability of organizations to identify, manage and improve their core qualities is important and is connected to their learning ability. Management of competences creates a fundamental link between the development of human

competences and those of the organization and mediates personal and organizational learning. Management of competences comprises all activities that bring the qualities of employees in line with the actual and future tasks of the organization (recruitment, placement, education, career advice). In this paper we will clarify two ways of competence management: a traditional cognitivist approach will be contrasted with a new social-constructivist approach (Beirendonck, 2010).

### Practices of hrm in sport organizations in the Netherlands

Based on surveys into the operations of several sport organizations a picture is presented of the actual HRD activities of voluntary sports clubs, fitness centers and national governing bodies in the Netherlands. These practices are evaluated from the viewpoint of the applied approach of competence management. A need for improved competence management will become clear as a conclusion from this analysis.

### Development of adequate tools for hrd

The final part of the paper will present some recent innovations that provide opportunities to reform HRD in sports:

- Assessments as a bridging medium between individual and organization development (Lucassen & van Kalmthout 2010);
- Competence based (vocational) education and training – implementation of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in the sports sector;
- Tools for labour providers in sport.

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