Placement Report

by Yke Alysa Wijnker

First university
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Second university
Uniwersytet Jagielloński

Placement institution
Scouting Nederland
Larikslaan 5
3833 AM Leusden
+31 (0)33 496 09 11

Supervisor at first university
Marloes van der Weij

Supervisor at placement
Johannes De Boer

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Introduction

For five months I have worked full-time as an intern for Scouting Nederland. In this report I explain my reasons for joining the youth organisation temporarily at the headquarters rather than staying a volunteer, and whether my expectations have been met in relation to the educational goals of the placement. In order to understand what I have been doing at the office, it is necessary to explain what Roverway 2018 is about, but also how Scouting Nederland works. Knowing the structure of Scouting Nederland and the team behind Roverway 2018, it becomes clear there is a lot more to scouting than meets the eye, something I already knew before, but which is not so obvious to people who have never been involved with the movement. It is hoped that with Roverway 2018 the popularity of the Roverscout programme and its final component called Partenza will increase. To see whether it is even possible to introduce these as they are presented in guidebooks, I looked at the practices in Italy and related these to Dutch scouting activities. The solutions sounds less difficult than expected, but only the future can tell us how this will work out.

At the end of the report a passage is dedicated to what the placement has led me to.

Why Roverway 2018?

I have been a scout since I was 8 years old, from the age of 16 I was first a leader for the beavers, later for the cubs, and when I started studying I joined different committees and was a board member for the student scouting group of Groningen. I have been to two World Scout Jamborees where I saw how young people from over 150 countries can safely enjoy activities together. My scouting resume goes further than that, but it’s safe to say, I have always been an active scout, at local, national and international level, at some point I even considered doing an internship doing at one of the international offices, however, there was no vacancy. But while I was still looking for a placement during the third semester I came across the vacancy for the Steering Committee of Roverway 2018. They were looking for twelve volunteers up to 30 years old to lead the different teams, such as information management, programme, HR, finance, and logistics. I knew immediately it was something I wanted to be part of, however, as I needed a full-time position as an intern I sent an e-mail with the question whether I could do something like that, but full-time for five months. What appealed to me about Roverway 2018 was that it is not just a fun camp for young scouts from all over Europe, there is the aim to leave the participants with a sense of community and responsibility, to turn them into active European citizens. Almost from the beginning of the
project I would be present as an intern which would allow me to see how the project and the team would evolve in the progress of preparing the event. Despite the widespread, often negative, prejudices about scouting, I believe it is movement with great influence all over the world, and knowing Scouting Nederland is the biggest youth organisation in the Netherlands, I was sure my internship would be of value to the European community of all those involved in scouting.

**Preparation**

The people of Roverway 2018 were happy to have me, but as they hadn't prepared to have an intern, expectations from both sides had to be exchanged by e-mail, and I had Skype sessions with project director of Roverway 2018 Eelco Last and HR coordinator for volunteers of Scouting Nederland. In July Eelco and I met in Groningen and continued to give the placement more substance. Based on this the placement plan was written, and formalities were handled by the University of Groningen, Jagiellonian University, and Scouting Nederland. As stated in the internship policy of Scouting Nederland, I was to be paid €150 monthly based on 36 hours a week. I would also have to apply for a VOG (Verklaring omtrent Gedrag = certificate of conduct by which the Dutch State Secretary for Security and Justice declares that the applicant did not commit any criminal offences that are relevant to the performance of his or her duties). The idea was that I would work fulltime for Roverway 2018 at the headquarters of Scouting Nederland in Leusden. At Scouting Nederland they’ve had interns before, but never specifically for one event. For this reason I had several supervisors, two of whom didn’t work at the office. There was Johannes de Boer, active scout in the Twente region and PhD candidate at Saxion University of Applied Sciences, who would help me to reach my educational goals during the placement. At Leusden, Kitty van der Kluit was there to help me to get started and to support me at the workplace, she is coordinator of the project bureau providing support for all the national scouting events. Normally she would do some of my tasks concerning support from the national service center to the project team of Roverway 2018. Eelco continued to be my supervisor in terms of workload.

It was my plan to find a place to live in Amersfoort in order to be close to the office, unfortunately this had proven to be almost impossible within the price range I was able to pay. The monthly compensation was not enough to cover for the accommodation that was available for a higher price than, most student houses wanted someone for a longer period than five months, only left were the dodgy house owners with a spare room who would not allow me to register. I ended up moving back to Groningen and therefore travelling by public
transport every day which was tiring, but I was also allowed to work from home at some days and fortunately I can still travel for free. Being allowed to work from home and taking days off after preparation weekends of the planning team was agreed on beforehand. The travelling took quite a toll on me, more than I expected, so I would recommend anyone to live as near to the location of their placement as possible. At first I didn’t notice how it drained me as the only thing you do while on the train is sitting still. But I found that working on the thesis portfolio in my free time, maintaining my responsibilities at my own scouting group, doing sports, and having a bit of a social life, all at the same time, was nearly impossible. Having said that, I do not regret living a bit further away as Groningen feels like my home now, and I was able to test my own self-discipline and planning abilities in the process.

Goals of the placement

The placement was the perfect opportunity to improve certain skills at a professional level. Of course I had learned much already as a volunteer in scouting, but this had been at a smaller scale than what was expected of me for the placement. Together with Johannes I listed the skills and competences which could be improved through the placement as is expected in Euroculture guidelines for a placement. All of these fitted with the tasks that Eelco and I planned for me to do, which were mentioned in my placement plan. Some tasks not only helped me to develop myself as a professional, but also in terms of my own civic engagement, therefore there is some overlap in the tables below. Johannes and I tried to meet every other week through Skype to talk through the goals and whether the tasks I was doing helped me in reaching them or whether I had to change something about the way I was working.

In terms of personal development I mainly wanted to increase my flexibility and getting better at working in a team of people with different professional and academic backgrounds as I was used to taking my own course or working with like-minded people.

Personal development

| Apply creativity, adapt to new situations and consider issues from multiple viewpoints (also: increase flexibility and improvisation skills) | - Adapting the Partenza-concept into a suitable format for possible application in the Netherlands, taking into consideration Dutch culture |
| - Make practical arrangements for EVS-participants, keeping in mind possible cultural difficulties |
| **Clear communication in transcultural contexts** | - Working together with a team of volunteers while also depending on other organisations, institutions etc.  
- Secretarial support for the Steering Committee  
- Development of a working relationship with southern European countries to develop the Partenza concept  
- Establishing and maintaining contact with stakeholders of Roverway 2018 |
| **Solve field-related problems** | - Find possible sources for funding of otherwise unpayable activities for the programme |
| **Work independently and in team context** | - Working independently during office hours and the ability to decide what’s best for Roverway 2018 without resolving to the judgment of project leaders  
- Participate in meetings and discussions with the Steering Committee  
- Maintaining a good working relationship between Roverway 2018 team and headquarters of Scouting Nederland |

The real aim of an internship is of course to get a taste of professional life before completely finishing the Euroculture programme. I was very curious how Scouting Nederland works, and through the following tasks I was able to experience the professional side of scouting. All these tasks provided me with knowledge and experience for working in any other NGO which focuses on youth and is preparing a big international event.

**Professional development**

| **Put theoretical knowledge into practice** | - Development of a tool for the implementation of the educational objectives in the programme  
- Research of Partenza-concept in southern European countries and development for possible application in the Netherlands  
- Preparing and finalizing the EVS-application  
- Reviewing action plans and policies |
- Operationalizing youth participation within the Roverway 2018 project

Design, manage and execute projects
- Management of long-term planning (100 weeks)
- Planning and arrangement of meetings
- Design plan for approaching student scouting as a source of recruitment for Roverway 2018
- Design a fundraising strategy

Insight in the hierarchical structures of the professional field
- Working at the headquarters of Scouting Nederland
- Getting in contact with WOSM and WAGGGS
- Keeping track of developments within scouting at a national, European, and international level
- Working within the organizational structure of Roverway 2018 (the Head + Supporter system)

Understanding mechanisms and working of a particular professional field
- Working in a non-profit nongovernmental organisation which acts locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Working with a big team of volunteers
- Participating in an international network meeting for fundraising
- Sharing information about the Roverway 2018 project with the right colleagues at the headquarters of Scouting Nederland and vice versa

There was only one thing mentioned below civic development in the placement guidelines, however, I think it is something that encompasses many aspects of working at a NGO. Especially if the NGO shares the same norms and values as oneself.

Civic development

Acquisition of knowledge, skills and values that stimulate active and responsible participation in civil society
- Application for EVS-funding, preparation of arrangements for volunteers
- Research of Partenza-concept in southern European countries and development for possible application in the Netherlands
In order to accomplish all of the above, I didn’t start my placement blindly so to say as I had skills and experiences to offer to the team and to Scouting Nederland:

- Linguistic skills both oral and in writing for formal and informal communication
- Planning skills in relation to the management of volunteers and organisation of events
- Participation in multiple national and international scouting events
- Residence in three other European countries and dealing with cultural differences, England, Spain, and Poland
- Establishment of stronger collaboration between different student scouting groups in the Netherlands
- Research skills e.g. quickly collecting relevant information, fast reading skills, summarizing information for practical use
- Academic knowledge about active citizenship and youth participation
- Basic knowledge about the workings of the EU

All of this certainly helped in contributing to the project and maintaining the European dimension of not only the event, but in the long-term process leading up to it.

**Scouting Nederland and Roverway 2018**

Since the founding of scouting in 1907 in England it has been providing non-formal education to young people in skills and competences which arguably could not be taught to the same extent at school or in other clubs. Soon the movement expanded to other countries and in 1911 the first scouting groups were founded in the Netherlands. Since then the scout movement has grown to more than 100.000 members in the Netherlands, and 40 million worldwide.

Scouting in the Netherlands as an organisation is led by volunteers in the national council which consists of the national board and representatives of each region. The national board has ten members and is led by Jaap Boot, the president of scouting in the Netherlands. The main focus of the council is to design and implement policies which enable scouting to reach its full potential in the Netherlands. They are supported by the 45 people who work at the headquarters of Scouting Nederland in Leusden, also called the national service centre, with Fedde Boersma as the director in charge. They provide financial and judicial support for all 1000 local scouting groups, the scout regions, event planning teams, individual members, and the Scoutshop, but also give support in the areas of IT, HR, and planning. The work
environment at the service centre can be called quite informal which helps with being approachable for all the volunteers in scouting.

Scouting Nederland is a member organisation of both the World Organisation of Scout Movement (WOSM) and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). Unknown to many, WOSM and WAGGGS both have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and this is only one example of how scouting cooperates with other organisations on an international level. Scouting Nederland works together with several organisations in the country, for example the Nationale Jeugdraad (National Youth Council), which aims at increasing youth participation and improving youth policy in the Netherlands, but also WaterSpaarders of the Missing Chapter Foundation which provides children with the support and material to help them encourage their families to waste less water. Scouting Nederland has also carefully voiced their opinion on the refugee crisis and is part of the Stay Human initiative which tries to keep the debate about refugees civilized as we’re talking about people, not objects.

Roverway 2018 is one of the projects supported by Scouting Nederland, but it is commissioned by WAGGGS and WOSM. Therefore the team of Roverway has to work closely together with all of them in order to fit the plans within the policies of all three organisations. The Roverway team consists only of volunteers who do their tasks in their free time, myself being the exception during the internship as I had a desk at the service centre and my name on the door. The Roverway team is called the Planning Team with three people as project leaders, Eelco Last being the project director, who I talked to regularly. The Planning Team is coordinated by the Steering Committee, twelve young people who are guided by twelve supporters who have more experience in the field. As more positions have to be fulfilled as the project progresses the team will only grow bigger, the Planning Team started off quite small (less than 40 people) when I started my internship, but by the end the number of volunteers had doubled.

**Partenza in the Netherlands**

One of the goals of the Roverway 2018 project, except from organising a successful event for young Europeans, is to increase the interest in the Roverscout programme in the Netherlands by local scouting groups, and in particular to Partenza. The Roverscout programme is designed for scout members between 18 and 21 years old, an age group which often doesn’t have its own section in local groups as members who become 18 years old generally just become part of the bigger “adult” section of their group called the “stam” (In English that
would be “tribe”). This sudden transition from participating young member to an adult without the use of a programme specifically designed for the needs of people around twenty years old, can negatively impact the development of the person as there is often a gap between him/her and the older members of the tribe. Furthermore, there is no moment for reflection upon the experience that has been gained as an active member, no time to consciously look back at all that has been done and to decide what to do next. In other words, more can be done in the Netherlands to guide the development of young adults as volunteers in scouting (and outside of scouting).

It was my goal to find out how a ceremony for Roverscouts such as the Partenza would be useful for incentivizing youth participation among scouts. But it was hard to find an actual answer to this as most information on the Partenza is in languages I cannot read. However, I did collect all relevant information about it in Dutch and English guidebooks and was even able to talk to Nicolò Marchesini, the international commissioner of the Corpo Nazionale Giovani Esploratori ed Esploratrici Italiani, one of the two Italian Scouting and Guiding associations. Nicolò was able to provide me with a lot of information the practical implementation of Partenza which helped me to imagine how it can be done by Dutch scouts. The latter is of course very interesting for the planning team of Roverway 2018, but also for the activity team of Scouting Nederland who design and promote the programmes of the different age sections.

During the placement I learned a lot about the Roverscout programme. Roverscouts and their specific role in scouting were already mentioned by Lord Robert Baden-Powell in 1918, but somehow the programme never really caught on in all the countries were the movement is active. I myself have never been a Roverscout or participated in Partenza, so research about both had to be done in order to understand the programme and its purpose. It was also part of the training for all volunteers in the Roverway 2018 project to learn about the programme in order to be able to fit the event with the needs and expectations of the participants.

The Roverscout programme is more popular in southern Europe than in northern Europe. Through contact with volunteers during my placement who have worked with southern Europeans at international scouting events, it became clear to me that the self-reflective aspect of the programme and Partenza is what partly explains the difference in popularity. In the southern European countries scouts are more used to reflecting upon their own development and everything they have learned as a youth member, while in the northern European countries reflection mainly takes place in the shape of evaluation of the practical side of events, not of the self. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, due to a shortage of volunteers, it is
normal someone aged 16 already becomes a leader of the younger age sections, therefore becoming an adult volunteer happens before reaching full adulthood. In some other scouting organisations this is not even allowed.

As mentioned before I talked with Nicolò about Partenza in Italy. First I asked him how the ceremony is done and whether it is the same for all the groups or not. He told me every local group organizes Partenza slightly differently, but it comes down to the same principle. Partenza is done at the end of the educational path of a youth member, this would be from the age of 8 until 19 for CNGEI members, but 8 to 21 for the members of the other scouting association of Italy, Associazione Guide e Scouts Cattolici Italiani (AGSCI). A member looks back at his or her own path and reflects upon the skills and competences that have been acquired. The scout also gets to decide what role suits him best in the future of his life and in scouting. It is a moment to consciously think about who and what you want to become, but also to say goodbye to your old group of peers. Partenza is organized as an individual track with a spiritual path to follow, this is even more present in the Catholic association than in CNGEI. There the decision is not only made whether the person will follow the values of scouting in the future, but also whether he will follow the values of the Catholic church. If the answer is no to either one of these questions or even both, it is expected you leave the scouting group.

Part of the process leading up to Partenza in the Netherlands according to the guidebook is to fulfill three personal challenges, this is not the case for members of CNGEI. Each youth member personalizes the Rover path by creating the so-called Mirror and the Rover Charter, and this is repeated every year. The Mirror is a representation of the scout in the shape of a statue and shows his own positive and negative characteristics. Together with the leader the path is designed to overcome the limits of the negative aspects. The Rover Charter is created by the whole age section. Together they rewrite the scout law and promise in their own words in their preferred format, e.g. a tale, a poem etc. All the peers have to commit to this charter in their daily lives. In the summer, or at the beginning of the new school year, those who are old enough participate in Partenza, which can take a day, or a weekend. The ceremony is co-constructed by the participants and their leaders, the rest of the peers design some of the activities.

The above sounds all very well-constructed and it is a shame that not so much attention is given to the self-development of scouts of the same age in the Netherlands, but it has to be said it has been noticed by the national association that the Partenza ceremony tends to be more of a leaving party for the scouts and lacks the educational dimension. Nicolò stated a
national Rover team is now in place to improve the programme and to support the leaders to organize a good substantive Partenza.

I asked how Partenza would work for groups which consist only of members older than 18 as these exist in the Netherlands. Generally those are groups which pursue a certain interest such as first aid, bush craft and survival, there’s even a tribe for people owning Land Rover jeeps who help out at events. I found out these kind of groups do not exist in Italy, so this has no implications for Partenza either.

The differences between the scout movements in each country are what makes it hard to apply the same Roverscout programme of southern European countries as it is in the north. But I could see the possible way to do it though. Firstly, there is already a ceremony in the Netherlands which is done by most groups when a member moves from one age section to the next, this is called “flying over” (a literal translation of the Dutch word “overvliegen”). Generally this is just a fun day during which peers and leaders organize activities which have to be succeeded by those flying over. For the younger sections, parents are often present to behold the transition of their children to a section with more challenges. The scouting groups which have a Rover section could use this moment for Partenza without diverting too much from their normal planning. An activity can be added in the beginning which is aimed at looking back at their time with their peers and all that they have learned as a youth member in their scouting group. And when the day comes to an end, all those who fly over to the tribe can announce what they plan to do in scouting and why they choose this part. Scouting groups which do not have a Rover section, but plan to have it in the future, can start implementing the programme in steps. First, the age section has to be separated from the tribe. Secondly, the leaders can look at the particular needs of their members. Rewriting the scout promise and law as is done in Italy is a good way to establish how the members view scouting and its impact on their lives. Each year an activity can be dedicated to reflect upon their own Rover Charter and the Roverscouts can come up with ideas on how to make the Charter work for them in the activities they organize and in their daily lives. As self-reflection is not a common practice in the Netherlands, a toolkit can be designed for leaders which makes the process a lot more tangible. As the aim is often to learn by doing, the toolkit should preferably contain ideas, tips, games and activities in which self-reflection is apparent, but it is possible to do it without it being the main element of the activity. This is because the interest of the age section lies in organising fun activities for themselves rather than in sitting down and writing down their accomplishments in scouting. Thirdly the three personal challenges of the Roverscout programme in the Netherlands can be left out in the first years of the existence of
the age section, but they can be introduced when a structure has developed in the activity planning of the scouts. Instead of introducing the challenges as something new, the leaders can relate the challenges to activities which are already being organised by the Roverscouts. For example, they might organise their own summercamp for the first time in a foreign country, or they volunteer at an event, or some of them are taking part in training to become scout leaders. By consciously viewing these activities as personal challenges and reflecting upon their value, it becomes more obvious how scouting is part of their personal development and how all this experience can be used in society.

At first, it appeared to me that introducing Partenza in the Netherlands would be quite difficult as the way scouting is done seems so established, but when thinking about it, it is possible to match the different elements of Partenza and the Roverscout programme to existing activities of local scouting groups. The best way to increase the interest of leaders into the programme and the ceremony would be to present them as not something new, but a variation on what is already done. A variation which will help to increase the impact of the young members of scouting upon society as they will be more aware of their own skills and competences.

**After the placement**

The placement officially ended on the 27th of January, but I had a final presentation for the Steering Committee in the weekend of February 5th. Also the deadline of the funding application for European Voluntary Service was on 2 February and not all documents had been sent back to us by the partner organisations before the end of my placement. It wasn’t necessary for me anymore to physically present in Leusden, but it took a week more than estimated to finalize everything. During the presentation at the planning weekend I summarized what I had done during the five months at the national service centre and highlighted my main achievements such as the presentation at the Fundraisers Network Meeting in Paris, the funding applications, and my work on the educational objectives. The presentation was a good way to put an end to everything as I was able to make clear to all the Committee members all the things I would no longer be doing and which were no longer my responsibilities. I also took the opportunity to announce my new role as a volunteer for Roverway 2018 as the EVS coordinator. Beforehand I wasn’t so sure what to expect of the whole European Voluntary Service and its value to Roverway 2018, but I found out it was something that was not only very challenging (in a good way), but I could also really apply
my knowledge and creativity to it. As the EVS coordinator it will be my job to write the future application for Large Scale EVS, and to handle the project of the earlier funding application in case it would be approved. That does not only mean a lot of paperwork, but also recruitment of volunteers, managing my own team, secure housing for the volunteers, maintaining contact with the international partners, etc.

Furthermore, I hope to apply the gained experience to my future career even though I do not know where life after Euroculture will take me. But first I will certainly will be able to use my newly acquired knowledge about EU funding to the Eurocompetence course in the fourth semester.