

Improving Access to the Dutch Labour Market for Syrian Refugees.



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Department: Labour Law and Social Policy

School: Tilburg Law School

University: Tilburg University

Student Name: N.G.C. van Wijk, Nienke

SNR: 1267213

ANR: 257194

Supervisor Tilburg University: dr. H. Oosterom-Staples

Co-reader Tilburg University: dr. S. Bekker

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Executive summary

Since the arrival of the Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, in 2015, the integration of this group is an important social issue. One of the aspects that fosters the integration of refugees into their host-society is their participation on the labour market. This participation is influenced by several aspects, one of the aspects that fosters the participation on the labour market is the credential recognition procedure of a country.

Credential recognition is the recognition of outlandish certificates in the new home country. Based on Directive 2005/36/EC and 'The convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region', all EU Member State must provide refugees a possibility to let their professional certificate or past education be recognised. The Dutch authority that is responsible for this recognition is the IDW. Not much research is done into the experience of the stakeholders with this procedure for credential recognition provided by the IDW. This research collected their views, and provides a recommendation based on the procedures of other EU Member States to improve the Dutch procedure.

After collecting the stakeholders' views it became clear that nothing was wrong with the procedure for credential recognition itself, it provides a comparison of the outlandish certificate with the Dutch Education system that determines the advice of the Dutch authorities of the equivalent Dutch certificated. However, the stakeholders did have some complaints about the current procedure, three main views can forward. First of all, there is much unknown about the details of the procedure. Lack of knowledge explains why refugees experience the procedure as unclear and complex. Furthermore, another adjustment can be to provide more information about the recognized certificate of the refugee. As entrepreneurs miss important information about the competencies of a refugee. Finally, this is not really an adjustment on the procedure, but a contribution towards the current arguments of entrepreneurs to reject a refugee in the application procedure: refugee's lack of country-specific human capital was stated as being more important than the certificates that have been obtained. The barriers linked to missing human capital should be reduced, to put more focus on the obtained certificates in the application procedure.

Based on these conclusions the credential recognition procedures of Denmark and Sweden provided the inspiration for recommendations to improve the Dutch procedure. First of all, credential recognition should be supplemented by a background paper, including information about the competencies of a refugee. This will provide entrepreneurs with more details about the qualifications of a refugee.

Furthermore, the Dutch government should integrate introduction guides in the integration introduction package. These guides can provide strong coordination in the procedure of credential recognition. Additionally, organisation should introduce culture mediators, to reduce the impact of country-specific human capital in the job application procedure. By implementing these recommendations, the participation of refugees on the Dutch labour market will be fostered.

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1. Introduction

'Having a job gives life a meaning.'

(Morse and Weiss (1995))

This quote has been shared and cited by a lot of researchers over the past 24 years. For example, by Christensen (2017) who wrote a book entitled: 'How will you measure your life?' According to his research, work gives a person a clear purpose in life that is essential for happiness. 'Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland', a refugee aid organization that represents the interests of refugees in the Netherlands, shares this thought. When an individual has a job, the individual is able to provide his own existence and contribute to society. Based on this fact, Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland assumes that it is good for refugees to have a job. But for refugees, in particular, there are more benefits of having a job; it contributes towards a faster integration into their new home country as it helps refugees to learn the language and build a network.¹

Nowadays, the largest group of refugees in the Netherlands are the Syrians.² From 2011 on, millions of citizens from this country fled, due to the civil war between the current regime of the Alawieten and various Sunnatic-Islamic combat groups, including the most known the 'Islamic State' (ISIS). Most of the Syrian refugees fled to adjacent Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. But Syrian refugees also moved to Europe (Heck & Leijendekker, 2015). In 2015, the Netherlands experienced, due to the Syrians, the largest migrant flow since the Second World War, with a total of 20,623 refugees. Nowadays, a total 70.000 original Syrian refugees are staying in the Netherlands (2019).³ Of those refugees, 73 percent would like to stay in the Netherlands forever, and also expect a good future here, with a nice job and where they can enjoy the freedom of a life without fear. As previously stated, Syrian refugees who have a job consider themselves more a 'real' Dutch citizen than refugees without a job (Van Vliet, 2019). To make a long story short; a job has various positive effects for refugees, but the reality is that labour participation of this group is low (Odé & Dagevos, 2017).

1.1 Labour participation of refugees

As said, for successful integration of refugees in their new home country it is helpful to have a job. Most of the refugees also want to work (Vissers, 2018). But the unemployment of Dutch residents who entered the country through asylum is high (Odé & Dagevos, 2017). Besides that, refugees who are employed have

¹ Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. *Standpunt: arbeidsparticipatie*. retrieved on 10 March 2019, from: <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/wat-wij-doen/standpunten/standpunt-arbeidsparticipatie>.

² Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek. *Asielverzoeken en nareizigers; nationaliteit, geslacht en leeftijd*. 21 May 2019 retrieved from: <https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/83102NED/table?ts=1561211656472>.

³ Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek. *Asielverzoeken en nareizigers; nationaliteit, geslacht en leeftijd*. 21 May 2019.

uncertain, badly paid jobs in the lowest segments of the labour market (Engbersen, et al., 2015). The CBS (Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek, *Dutch research Bureau of Statistics*) published a research about the labour participation of asylum seekers in the Netherlands in 2017. Out of the group of Syrian refugees, who received a residence permit in 2014, only four percent had a paid job in 2018.⁴ It has to be taken into account that the participants in this survey had only been in the Netherlands for a limited time period, so these refugees had just started their integration in the Netherlands (Dagevos, Huijnk, Maliepaard & Miltenberg, 2018).

However, research into labour participation of refugees who entered the Netherlands between 1995 and 1999, does not paint a better picture, it reveals that labour participation is especially sorely low in the initial period of their residence in the Netherlands. Labour participation increases as the period during which a refugee has lived in the Netherlands is longer, but after a residence of fifteen years the labour market participation is still lower compared with labour migrants or family formation migrants (Bakker & Dagevos 2017).

The search for a (good) job is, according to the refugees with a protection status, the biggest problem in regard of their integration in the Netherlands (Engbersen, Dagevos, et al., 2015). Evidence is the fact that 24 % of the Syrian refugees worries a lot and 22% worries quite a lot about finding a job in the Netherlands (Van Vliet, 2019).

1.2 Highly educated refugees

Especially for refugees with a higher education level, the search for a job that matches their abilities based on their education level, as attested by their certificates issued by education institutions in their home country, is difficult. Refugees always experience a 'migrant penalty', the penalty refugees have just because they are part of a migrant group. But this penalty actually increases as the education level increases, because it is harder for higher educated refugees to find a job that corresponds with their education level as attested by their diplomas obtained in their home country than lower educated refugees (Huddleston, Niessen & Tjaden, 2013).

In the case of the higher educated Syrians, only 39 percent have a job that matches their abilities (Dagevos et al. 2011). This not only affects the integration of these refugees but also has repercussions

⁴ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. *11 procent van statushouders heeft werk*. 17 April 2018 retrieved from: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2018/16/11-procent-van-statushouders-heeft-werk>.

for the labour market as such. When highly educated refugees are forced to take lower educated jobs, the effect is a repression on the labour market of lower educated jobs.⁵

One of the reasons why highly skilled migrants work in a lower position than would be expected considering their level of education, is that entrepreneurs not always dare to take the risk to hire a highly educated refugee. Employers are unfamiliar with the education system of the former country of a refugee which is mostly different from the one they are familiar with, i.e. that of their home country. Therefore, it is hard for entrepreneurs to assess what kind of skills and competencies a refugee has.⁶ To overcome this problem, the Netherlands Ministry for Education has adopted a policy that tries to improve the understanding of foreign certificates by employers and education institutions, called the; ‘de Internationale Diplomawaardering’, (*the International Credential Recognition*) (further: ‘IDW’).⁷ In this study credential recognition by the IDW is used to refer to the procedure in which foreign education diplomas and certificates are assessed and valued in terms of their equivalence in the Netherlands. Credential recognition decreases the barriers towards future education or employment prospects and also boosts the self-esteem and motivation of refugees, by giving them a perspective. (Von Oven and Roos, 2016).

A good working system of credential recognition can be seen as one of the mechanisms that can boost the participation of refugees on the labour market. It gives the refugee and the employer a clear vision about the capabilities of the refugee. With this vision, it is easier to understand what competencies are missing, and which education might be needed to improve the chances of labour market participation.⁸ As stated by Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland: ‘participation on the labour market is one of the aspects that encourages the integration of refugees into their host-society.’⁹ A conceptual model of this process is shown in figure 1.

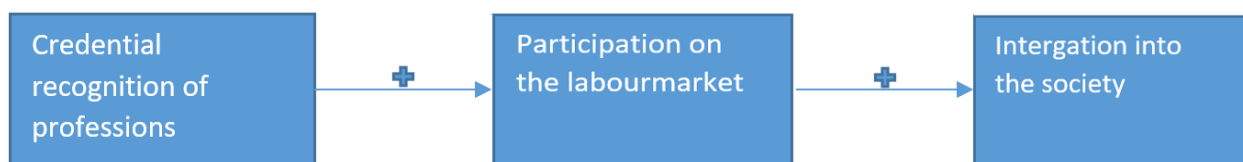


Figure 1: *Conceptual model*

⁵ UAF. *Daarom het UAF*. Retrieved on 20 March 2019 from: <https://www.uaf.nl/wat-we-doen/>.

⁶ Monitor discriminatiezaken 2017. *Oordelen van het college*. 1 April 2017 retrieved from: <https://handicap.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Discriminatiemonitor-2017.pdf>.

⁷ International credential evaluation. *Overall information*. N.D. retrieved on 15 May from: <https://www.idw.nl/en/inburgering-23.html>.

⁸ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. REU_1 (appendix 10, page 104)

⁹ Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. *Standpunt: arbeidsparticipatie*. retrieved on 10 March 2019, from: <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/wat-wij-doen/standpunten/standpunt-arbeidsparticipatie>.

Not only does it foster labour market participation, credential recognition can also take away the negative feeling that some Dutch natives have about Syrian refugees; the idea that the refugees will take their jobs (Bakker, 2017).

All in all, credential recognition is an interesting mechanism for the integration in and acceptance of refugees by their host-society. Not much research has been done into the effectiveness of the credential recognition procedure (De Lange, Besselen, Rhouti & Rijken, 2017). This research will bring together the views of the stakeholders about credential recognition, to identify their feelings towards the procedure for credential recognition in the Netherlands, in particular, which difficulties they experience when using the current procedure. These views will be used to establish the difficulties and formulate a recommendation how to overcome these difficulties. For this purpose, the credential recognition procedure in other EU Member States will be considered, to see whether the experiences of two other Member States can provide a solution for the difficulties experienced by the stakeholders in the Netherlands. The research question is:

What lessons can be learnt from stakeholders and other EU Member States to improve the Dutch policy for credential recognition in order to diminish the mismatch between the professional qualifications of highly educated Syrian refugees and the professional qualifications required by the Dutch authorities to take up employment on the Dutch labour market?

To answer this research question, the question is divided into three sub-questions.

- *Sub-question 1: What is the procedure for credential recognition of certificates from outside the European Union in the Netherlands?*
- *Sub-question 2: What are the stakeholder's experiences with credential recognition in the Netherlands?*
- *Sub-question 3: What is the procedure for credential recognition in Denmark & Sweden and what is there to learn from those countries?*

1.3 Practical and scientific relevance

This research has a societal relevance because the integration of refugees is an important social matter.¹⁰ It can contribute towards the social discussion on refugees. On the one hand, people care about the situation of refugees. On the other, there is a large group of native Dutch people who fear that refugees will take the jobs of the native Dutch population (Mulder, 2017). This research aims at contributing towards an understanding that if refugees have to work at a lower education level there will be repercussions on the labour market (Bakker, 2016).

A different societal relevance is that a more efficient participation of refugees on the labour market is interesting considering the current and expected labour market shortages in the Netherlands (Benton, et al. 2014).

This research also has scientific relevance. Earlier research was mostly about the overall barriers and motives to employ a refugee experienced by entrepreneurs, not much has been published on the topic of credential recognition (Mulder, 2017; De Lange, et al., 2017). This research will mainly focus on the credential recognition of certificates obtained in a refugee's former home country as a means to improve the labour market participation in the Netherlands and, in its slipstream, a refugee's integration in his new home country.

2. Methodology

2.1 Structure of the thesis

The next coming chapters will all answer one sub-question, based on these answers chapter 6 will answer the research question. Supplemented with theoretical contributions and suggestions for further research.

Accordingly, the first sub-question is answered in chapter 3 that discusses the procedure for credential recognition. It provides an insight in the legislation behind the recognition of certificates, the implementation of this legislation in the Netherlands and overall information on the integration policy in the Netherlands.

Chapter 4 will answer the second question. To answer this sub-question this chapter will provide information on two aspects:

¹⁰ European Commission. *Integratie van vluchtelingen: Commissie bundelt krachten met de sociale en economische partners*. 20 December 2017 retrieved from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5352_nl.htm.

- The profile of the stakeholders (the Syrian refugees, entrepreneurs on the Dutch labour market and the aid organisation, IDW/Nuffic is also a stakeholder, but as this stakeholder is already explained in chapter 3, so this chapter does not provide a profile of this stakeholder)).
- The views of the four stakeholders on the credential recognition procedure.

The fifth chapter will use chapter 4's conclusion, to draw up recommendations based on the credential recognition procedure in Denmark and Sweden.

2.2 Data collection

The information provided in the introduction (Chapter 1) is based on the available literature. The statistics about refugees were taken from research conducted by the CBS. To answer the research question, sub-questions have been formulated. Every sub-question will be answered in a different chapter, every chapter also has different ways of data collection. Below it will be revealed 'how' and 'why' data is collected in the way it has been collected, chapter by chapter. A short overview of the data collection is also added as appendix 7.

2.2.1 Data collection chapter three - Dutch credential recognition policy

The third chapter discusses the credential recognition policy in the Netherlands. This is done by using the EU and Dutch legislation on which the system for credential recognition is based. The specifics and details about the overall integration procedure, in particular, the credential recognition procedure, are taken from the available information on the website of the IDW/Nuffic, supplemented with information generated from previous research and information obtained from an interview with a policy officer of the Nuffic.

2.2.2 Data collection chapter four - Stakeholders views on credential recognition.

As has been mentioned in chapter 2.1, this chapter consists of the profiles and views of the stakeholders. The way of collecting data is different for every stakeholder. Subchapter 2.2.2.1 explains how the profile of the stakeholders has been sketched. Then subchapters 2.2.2.2 to 2.2.2.5 explain how the views of the different stakeholders have been collected.

2.2.2.1 Profile of the stakeholder

The profiles of the stakeholders have been written following thorough literature research. The profile of higher educated Syrian refugee has been written, using information from the website of the CBS and SCP (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *Netherlands Institute for Social Research*).

The profiles of the entrepreneurs on the Dutch labour market and the Aid organisations have also been written following a thorough literature review and information on the websites of those organisations. The last stakeholder is the IDW/Nuffic, this stakeholder is discussed in detail in chapter 3. Therefore, as said, chapter 4 does not provide a profile of the IDW/Nuffic.

After providing profiles for all stakeholders, their views, including those of the IDW/Nuffic, on credential recognition are presented. The information has been collected in different ways, as presented below.

2.2.2.3 Views of the refugees

The views of the refugees have been collected through a literature study. Data is taken from two previous, interesting field researches on the views of the refugees. The first interesting field research is the research of '1Vandaag' that provides insight into the integration of Syrians in the Netherlands. This research consisted of a survey under Syrian refugees about their new life in the Netherlands and their ideas about returning to Syrian or not in the future. The research team, more specifically the researcher 'Liset van Vliet' shared the information of her research. The survey includes 848 Syrians who fled to the Netherlands in 2018. The biggest group of respondents were men between 18 and 40 year (1Vandaag, 2019). One part of the 1Vandaag research, in particular, is very interesting for this research, namely the part about the struggle that Syrians experience to find a place on the Dutch labour market that matches their qualifications

The second interesting field research from the University of Amsterdam and the Gak that was conducted by Rijken et al. (2017) and is entitled: 'Van AZC naar een baan' ('From *Asylum Seekers Centre to a job*'). This research focuses on the process of the economic integration of refugees, by mapping the experiences of refugees in all stadia of integration including all the difficulties experienced in those stadia. This research is based on earlier research on the legal framework of labour participation, and interviews with 40 people who share the same integration-experiences and have ideas for solutions to overcome the difficulties that they have encountered. The interviewees had responded to a Facebook request to participate in this research project. These two articles are used as a starting point). A snowball study has

added further, interesting studies and literature to create a clear picture of the views of the Syrian refugee population regarding their road to labour market participation in the Netherlands.

2.2.2.4 Views of the entrepreneurs on the Dutch labour market.

The original idea was to collect the views of the entrepreneurs on the Dutch labour market, who are recruiting refugees, through interviews, i.e. field research. Organisations were selected based on the fact that they posted initiatives on the websites of 'Refugee Talent Hub' and/or 'Vluchtelingenwerk' to hire refugees. Those organisations were contacted, requesting an interview with one of their staff members, by email or phone, stating that the purpose of the interview was to obtain information on the integration of Syrian refugees employed by them and their knowledge of credential recognition. The responses of the organisations were not as hoped.

Some organisations answered that they did not have any experience with the credential recognition of the IDW, as they do not check the certificates and diplomas of their employees. The explanations for this answer were that other external organisations take care of this, i.e. the UAF (*Studie en werk voor hoogopgeleide vluchtelingen, Study and work for higher educated refugees*), NUFFIC and SSB (*Beroepsonderwijs & Bedrijfsleven, Vocational education & Labour market*). Other organisations just answered that they just do not check certificates as the focus of their recruitment procedure is to find out the skills and knowledge of refugees. In the end, the initial field research concluded that organisations do not use the credential recognition for foreign professional certificates. This conclusion will be discussed along with the views of an expert of an aid organisation in chapter 4.3.3.

There a further literature study on the views of the entrepreneurs was added to make the picture of the view of the entrepreneurs clearer. This literature study is also based on a snowball study that started with two interesting field researches, one by Mulder (2017) and one by Markusse (2017), which both give insight into the motives of companies to hire a refugee or not. This quantitative research focusses on Dutch ICT organisations that shared the barriers experienced and motives to hire refugees. Based on the references in those articles further literature study has been conducted.

2.2.2.5 Views of the aid organizations and the IDW

It was impossible to use existing literature to collect the views of the aid organisations about the credential recognition procedure and the integration of Syrian refugees on the Dutch labour market. The reason for this is that there is no literature about this topic. Therefore, the views of the aid organisations and the

IDW/Nuffic have been collected by primary data collection, through interviews. Interviewees were chosen based on their ability to provide information that is needed to conduct this research. This non-probability method of sampling is called the purposive sampling method (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The collection of the information was done through semi-structured interviews. There were two main reasons to conduct interviews in a semi-structured way. Firstly, semi-structured interviews ensured that not only the set of questions, which was set based on a literature study, could be used in various orders, but the interviewee also had the could talk freely. Secondly, some questions were bundled in such a way that the question would not sound repetitive and intervention was possible when a respondent started answering a question. Even though the set of questions was predetermined, depending on the answers of the respondent deviant questions could be asked. This method is suitable to gain a deeper understanding of specific topics, but still provides freedom to interact with and question the respondent based on the answers given. Thirdly, omitting questions can fit the research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). This possibility allows for extra flexibility when respondents lack experience or knowledge to answer certain questions. The interviews, protocols and extra information can be found in Appendix 8.

2.2.3 Data collection chapter five - EU Member States

The legislation and integration procedures of the EU Member States have been found by consulting reports presented by the European Commission, entitled 'Labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees.' Which have been written for every EU Member State and include information about the credential recognition procedure. The paper of Martin et al. 2016, entitled 'Mapping Labour-Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in EU Member States', has been used for extra information, where needed.

2.3 Reliability & Validity

Certain measures needed to be taken to reach a satisfactory degree of reliability and validity for this research. Reliability ensures stability and consistency and refers to the robustness of findings (Suanders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Validity ensures that the used instrument or data collection method indeed measures the intended concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

2.3.1 Reliability

As far as the interviews are concerned, various measures have been put in place to avoid threats to the reliability of this data collection method. With the permission of the respondents, all interviews were

tape-recorded. The summarized interviews were shared with the interviewee to generate feedback and approval of the information in the summaries. Thus, any potential anxiety that the respondent could have towards harming himself or the firm with the responses given was reduced. Sharing the summaries also assured that misinterpretation of answers could be averted. Further steps to ensure the highest possible degree of reliability was reached by ensuring transparency throughout the research process and by describing and justifying the steps taken.

As far as the literature study is concerned, reliability is provided through the use of scientific literature that is objective and verifiable. Non-scientific sources are only used for specific organisation related information, like, for example, the information about the IDW. Here the site of the IDW was used, but only after an extra objectification and verification check. For all the other sources used, the database of ScienceDirect, ArticleFirst, Worldcat.org and PsycINFO were used to find them. Certain criteria were used to select the articles used. First of all, the article needed to be quoted in other articles as proof of the quality of the article. Furthermore, 2012 is set as final year edition, to indicate the current situation. However, using the snowball technique means that older relevant articles can come through.

2.3.2 Validity

In the case of the interviews, internal validity was ensured by verifying the answers of the respondents through re-questioning and summarizing the given answers throughout the interview. After all the relevant topics from the interview protocol were discussed, the respondent was given the opportunity to ask questions or add anything else deemed relevant by the respondent for the topic.

The external validity also had to be considered, meaning that the conclusions should be transferable to another context (Saunders et al, 2009). Therefore, triangulation was applied. This research used multiple data sources: papers, interviews, and legal sources, indicating data triangulation. In chapter 3 a broad variety of literature is reviewed, which entails various researchers studying the same phenomenon leading to researcher triangulation.

3. Dutch credential recognition policy

3.1 Introduction

In the introduction (Chapter 1) the problem of labour participation of higher educated refugees was introduced. As stated earlier, the problem of the participation of the refugees on the labour market is a problem with many segments. The problem that was identified for further consideration in this study is credential recognition. With that in mind, the first sub-question, which will be answered in this chapter, is: *'What is the procedure for credential recognition of certificates from outside the EU in the Netherlands?'*

To answer this question this chapter is divided into different subchapters. The first sub-section discusses the legislation on credential recognition in the Netherlands, which is based on EU directives (3.2). Then the implementation of this EU legislation into a Dutch legal tool is explained (3.3), followed by the criteria used for credential recognition, in sub-section 3.4. Sub-section 3.5 discusses how refugees obtain access to the credential recognition procedure. Sub-question 3.6, finally, gives a summary of this chapter and provides an answer to the first sub-question.

3.2 Legislation behind credential recognition of Refugees in the European Union and the Netherlands

The legislation behind credential recognition in the Netherlands are EU directives and a UNESCO convention.

Professional recognition can be divided into two sub-types. Both sub-types face difficulties. The first is the professional exercising non-regulated professions. A non-regulated profession is A profession that is not acknowledged worldwide, requirements for employment can vary a lot per country, or some professions are unknown in some countries They face the difficulty that the new home country is unfamiliar with their foreign qualifications. For these professions an overall recognition procedure is not possible, the recognition of their qualifications depends on the assessment of their qualifications by the future employer. Most employers, however, lack knowledge what the education and training for a certain non-regulated profession consist of when it has been obtained in another country (Teerling, 2018). For this group of professions, is it hard to enter the labour market, with their certificate. Examples of non-regulated professions in the Netherlands are teacher, archivist and guest parent.

The second subtype are professionals exercising regulated professions. Those professionals are dependent on the recognition of their qualifications by a competent authority in the new home country, in the Netherlands this authority is the IDW (Kortese, 2018). The EU 'Professional qualification directive', Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2015/55/EU, is the most important legal instrument

applicable to those migrants seeking to work in regulated professions across borders.¹¹ According to this directive, regulated professions are those for which qualification requirements are laid down in legal, regulatory or administrative provisions.¹² 'Qualifications' is defined as diplomas, certificates, attestations of competence and work experience.¹³ The majority of the higher educated professionals exercise a regulated profession and obtain recognition of their qualifications under this directive (Teerling, 2018).

Article 2(2) of Directive 2005/36/EC states that:

'Each Member State may permit Member State nationals in possession of evidence of professional qualifications not obtained in a Member State to pursue a regulated profession within the meaning of Article 3(1)(a) on its territory in accordance with its rules. In the case of professions covered by Title 3(3), this initial recognition shall respect the minimum training conditions laid down in that Chapter.'

Article 3(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC states that this profession also applies to people from outside Europe:

*'Evidence of formal qualifications issued by a third country shall be regarded as evidence of formal qualifications if the holder has three years' professional experience in the profession concerned on the territory of the Member State which recognized that evidence of formal qualifications in accordance with Article 2(2), certified by that Member State.'*¹⁴

As the Netherlands is part of the European Union, it has to adopt rules in its national law implementing Directive No. 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. This was done by adopting the 'Algemene wet erkenning EU-beroepskwalificaties' on 2 December 2015.¹⁵

¹¹ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (further: Professional Qualifications Directive), [2005] OJ L 255/22 as amended by

¹² Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation'), [2013] OJ L 354/132.

¹³ Article 3(1)(b) Professional Qualifications Directive.

¹⁴ Article 3(3) Professional Qualifications Directive.

¹⁵ Wet van 2 december 2015 tot wijziging van onder meer de Algemene wet erkenning EG-beroepskwalificaties in verband met de implementatie van Richtlijn 2013/55/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van de Europese Unie van 20 november 2013 tot wijziging van Richtlijn 2005/36/EG betreffende de erkenning van beroepskwalificaties en Verordening (EU) nr. 1024/2012 betreffende de administratieve samenwerking via het Informatiesysteem interne markt («de IMI-verordening») Staatsblad 2015, 478, gewijzigd, Staatsblad 2016, 2 (verder te noemen: : Algemene wet erkenning EU-beroepskwalificaties)..

Based on Directive No. 2005/36/EC Member States are allowed to determine how they regulate the recognition of professions:

'Member States must designate a competent authority specifically to issue or receive training diplomas and other documents or information and to receive the applications, and take the decisions', referred to Article 3(1)(d) Directive 2005/36/EC.

In the Netherlands this is, since 1999, a centrally organized authority that falls under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment: the IDW, more details about the IDW are presented in chapter 3.3.

Especially for refugees 'The convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region' was adopted. The most important article in this convention is Article 7, which states that:

*'Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.'*¹⁶

As the Netherlands has ratified this convention it is binding and needs to be applied in the Netherlands.¹⁷ That is why the IDW provides credential recognition based on certificates and indications of education level when it is impossible to hand in certificates.¹⁸

¹⁶ Article 7 of the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, adopted in Lisbon on 11 April 1997, retrieved from: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13522&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

¹⁷ Verenigde Naties .*News from the Lisbon Convention Committee*. 11/07/2007 retrieved from: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/News/LRC_news_July2007.asp#TopOfPage.

¹⁸ ¹⁸ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. VCU_3.

3.3 IDW's credential recognition

The department of the IDW that is relevant for this study is the Nuffic that compares foreign certificates at the level of general and higher education with the Dutch school system (Pijpers, et al., 2015). Based on the recognition the IDW/Nuffic provides a non-binding advice on the educational level or the certificate of the refugee.

In 2017 the Nuffic recognised 4700 certificates submitted by Syrian refugees who were integrating in the Netherlands. This was 60% more than in 2016. The criteria used for credential recognition by the IDW/Nuffic are set out in chapter 3.4

The Nuffic also provides online country information, like the country module of Syria and the Netherlands that explains the educational systems, as provided in Appendix 2 and 3. With these modules, organisations can assess a foreign certificate themselves; organisations are not obliged to use the credential recognition procedure. That also explains why organisations and education institutions do not have to comply with the advice of the IDW, they can make decisions based on their own assessment of the qualifications that deviate from the advice.¹⁹ When a refugee disagrees with the IDW advice, the refugee can also decide to lodge a complaint. In this case, there will be a second recognition procedure in which the certificate will be reviewed again.²⁰

3.4 Criteria for credential recognition.

To obtain a credential recognition advice from the IDW the refugee has to submit documents. The documents that are required are:

- The education programme followed,
- The grade list,
- The certificate subscript and
- The certificate supplement.

Directive 2005/36/EC has set some conditions that have to be fulfilled to obtain recognition of the certificate. As the criteria set by the directive are quite vague, the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee has adopted a recommendation on procedures and criteria, based on Directive 2005/36/EC: 'The revised recommendation on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications'. The main criteria in this recommendation, for the overall recognition of certificates, are:

¹⁹ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. VCU_1.

²⁰ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. VCU_3.

'If access to or pursuit of a regulated profession in a host Member State is contingent upon possession of specific qualifications, the competent authority of the Member State shall permit access to and pursuit of that profession, under the same conditions as apply to its nationals, to applicants possessing the attestation of competence or evidence of formal qualifications required by another Member State in order to gain access to and pursue that profession on its territory. Attestations of competence or evidence of formal qualifications shall satisfy the following conditions:

- 'They shall have been issued by a competent authority in a Member State, designated in accordance with the legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions of that Member State;
- 'They shall attest a level of professional qualification at least equivalent to the level
- Immediately prior to that required in the host Member State, as described in Article 1- 'They shall attest that the holder has been prepared for the pursuit of the profession in question.'

Inspired by these criteria, the IDW/Nuffic developed their own criteria, for the overall credential recognition of all the regulated professions, recognition is possible when:

- The education took longer than 1000 hours (one school year)
- The education has to be a regular education programme offered by an institute accredited by the government of the State where the education institute is located.²¹
- The certificate must be authentic.²²

These criteria are also presented in appendix 5, where the criteria set by the IDW are presented, in this document it is also presented which certificates are impossible to recognise. For example:

- Navigator training
- Police, fire and army certificates
- Special Internal Hospital Training

These professions can be seen as nonregulated professions, and cannot be recognised by the IDW/Nuffic as explained in chapter 3.2.

When all the criteria are met, a comparison with the Dutch educational system is made on a system level. The experts of the IDW/Nuffic compare, based on the information provided and their knowledge about the Dutch and, in this case, Syrian education systems, and the certificate with the Dutch standards.²³ The

²¹Coded interviews. IDW/Nuffic. OIC_2.

²²Coded interviews. IDW/Nuffic. OIC_1.

²³ Coded interviews. IDW/Nuffic. OIC_3.

educational systems of Syria and the Netherlands that are used for the comparison can be found in Appendix 2 and 3. Table 1, provides the comparison between the Dutch and Syrian education systems and shows that Syrian certificates can have a different value in the Netherlands. This is based on the fact that the Dutch education system makes more distinctions in education levels compared than the Syrian education system does, like for example in applied science and in university in the Netherlands (which will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.4).²⁴ It does not mean that a refugee cannot work in that job anymore, it just provides the information that it has another value in the Netherlands.

When a refugee cannot hand in the official documents that are required, it is possible to obtain an indication of the education level. In this case, written information from the refugee, about the educational aspects and history, will be used for the comparison. But within an indication of the education level, the advice always includes a note that the Nuffic did not see the real certificate.²⁵

²⁴ Coded interviews. *IDW/Nuffic*. VCL_1.

²⁵ Coded interviews. *IDW/Nuffic*. OII_1.

| Buitenlands diploma | Nederlandse waardering en NLQF-niveau | | EQF-niveau |
|---|---|-----|------------|
| Basic Education Certificate شهادة الدراسة التعلّم الأساسي | ongeveer 2 jaar havo | 2 | 2 |
| Technical/Vocational Secondary Education Certificate الشهادة الثانوية المهنية ... | mbo-diploma (kwalificatieniveau 2 of 3) | 2-3 | 2-3 |
| Technical Diploma Certificate شهادة دبلوم تقني | mbo-diploma (kwalificatieniveau 4) | 4 | 4 |
| Certificate of Associate Degree/ Certificate of Licensed Assistant شهادة مساعد المجاز | mbo-diploma (kwalificatieniveau 4) | 4 | 4 |
| General Secondary Education Certificate الشهادة الثانوية العامة/ شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة | havodiploma | 4 | 4 |
| Bachelor الإجازة (4 jaar) | bachelorgraad in het hbo of 2 jaar wo | 6 | 6 |
| Bachelor الإجازة (5 jaar) in architectuur, engineering, tandheelkunde, farmacie en diergeneeskunde | bachelorgraad in het wo | 6 | 6 |
| Master المجستير | 1-jarige mastergraad in het wo of in het hbo | 7 | 7 |

Table 1: comparison between the Dutch and Syrian education system

3.5 Credential recognition in the integration package

Credential recognition is integrated in the integration package that is offered to migrants in general in the context of their overall integration (*inburgering*) in the Netherlands, because it is proven to enhance the participation of refugees on the labour market (which, in the end, leads to better integration) (Rijken, et al, 2017). For refugees who entered the country after 15 January 2015, when the current introduction package was introduced following an amendment of the rules on integration, credential recognition is free of charge. It is part of the exam: ‘Orientation on the Dutch labour market’, which together with ‘State

exam Nt2 program 1 or 2' and the 'Knowledge of the Dutch society' forms the integration package. A refugee needs to pass the three parts within the integration period of 3 years.²⁶

Credential recognition is also free of charge for refugees who apply for a residence permit for indefinite time or wish to become a Dutch citizen through naturalisation. In the case of naturalization and an application for an indefinite residence permit, DUO (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs) decides if the refugee is entitled to free credential recognition or not. If not, credential recognition costs 148.83 euros per certificate and the procedure is normally 4 weeks, for both the free or paid recognitions. An application for urgent recognition, i.e. within 2 weeks, costs 212.96 euros per diploma.²⁷

3.6 Summary

This chapter answers the first sub-question: '*What is the procedure for credential recognition of certificates from outside the European Union in the Netherlands?*' Summarized, the IDW is responsible for credential recognition in the Netherlands, Nuffic is responsible for the recognition of certificates of higher educated professions. The recognition of the credentials of refugees is based on the 'Professional recognition directive' and 'The convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region.'

The IDW/Nuffic provides a non-binding, advice about the level of the certificate or the education level of the refugee. As the IDW/Nuffic is free to determine the conditions for the credential recognition, it has set some criteria to evaluate certificates. If it is impossible for refugees to hand in a certificate, the IDW/Nuffic can also provide an indication of the education level, through written information.

Credential recognition is integrated in the current civic integration package and is offered free of charge when a refugee applies for the exam 'Orientation on the Dutch labour market'.

²⁶ Dienst uitvoering onderwijs. *Inburgeren*. N.D. retrieved on 12 August 2019 from: <https://www.inburgeren.nl/examen-doen/examen-ona.jsp>

²⁷ International credential evaluation. *Doing exam for orientation on the Dutch labour market*. N.D. retrieved on 15 May from: <https://www.idw.nl/en/inburgering-23.html>.

4 Stakeholders views on credential recognition.

4.1 Introduction

How the procedure of the current credential recognition, as discussed in chapter 3, is received by stakeholders will be discussed in this chapter. The objective of this chapter is to answer sub-question 2: *'How do stakeholders assess credential recognition?'* As stated in the methodology chapter (chapter 2), the first part of the chapter will sketch a profile of the stakeholders; 'the Syrian refugees', 'entrepreneurs' and 'aid organisation'. The purpose of this presentation is to explain who the stakeholders are and to provide insight into the interest of the stakeholders in a good working credential recognition policy (subchapter 4.2). The second part, subchapter 4.3, will discuss the views of all the stakeholders, including the IDW/Nuffic, about the Dutch credential recognition policy, showed figure 2. In the summary of this chapter, the views of all the stakeholders will be merged to provide an answer to the sub-question as set out supra (subchapter 4.4).

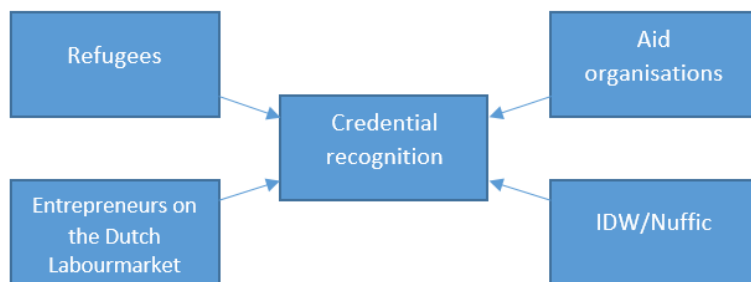


Figure 2: Stakeholders in procedural of credential recognition.

4.2 Profile of the stakeholders

4.2.1 Highly educated Syrian Refugees

To give a profile of the 'higher educated Syrian refugee', it is important to define the two concepts within this profile; namely 'refugee' and 'higher educated'. To define the concept of 'refugee' Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention is used. This provision states that a refugee is a person who:

'Outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group, or political opinion'.²⁸

²⁸ Weis, Paul, and Cambridge University Research Centre for International Law. *The refugee convention, 1951*. Vol. 7. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Focussing on Syrian refugees, the following has to be taken into account. Like in all migrant groups, the group is far from homogeneous. Syrian refugees are war refugees and, as is often seen, the first group of war refugees that leaves the country of origin to seek refuge in Western countries is more frequently higher educated than the groups that come later.²⁹ Those who are higher educated have also, more often, embraced the Christian/western culture, so that integration is easier for them than the more traditional Islamite Syrians who arrived later.³⁰

To define the concept of ‘Highly educated’ the Dutch government stated that:

“A higher educated resident has an applied science degree that includes an associate degree or a university degree including a doctorate degree.”³¹

In 2017, the CBS and the SCP conducted research about the Syrian population in the Netherlands. One aspect of their research is the education level of Syrians in the Netherlands. This research revealed that in total 31 percent of the Syrian refugees has followed higher education, according to the criteria set by the Dutch government (Rijken, et al 2017)

If we take a closer look, there are two significant differences in the, at first sight, homogeneous group of Syrian refugees. The first is a difference between ‘followed an education’ and ‘graduated’ in terms of completing and obtaining a certificate. An overview of this phenomenon is presented in table 2. The percentages of higher educated Syrian refugees, as presented in this chapter, are based on the Dutch definition of higher educated reproduced supra.

| Age group | Followed education | Obtained the certificate |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 15 -24 year | 16% | 3% |
| 25-34 year | 44% | 28% |
| 35 – 44 year | 29% | 25% |
| 45 year and older | 34% | 31% |

²⁹ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VSE_1.(Appendix 10, page 99)

³⁰Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VSE_2.

³¹ Rijksoverheid. *Onderwijs en onderzoek*. N.D. retrieved on 04 May 2019 from: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/regeerakkoord-vertrouwen-in-de-toekomst/1.-investeren-voor-iedereen/1.3-onderwijs-en-onderzoek>.

Table 2: *Overview of Syrian refugees who followed and finished higher education.*³²

The explanation for the lower percentages, of higher educated, in the younger generations (15 – 24 years) can be that they probably had to stop their study, or did not even start a study, due to their age and the fact that their country is one at war, or because they had to leave their country before completing their studies (Dagevos, et al., 2018). For them, the indication of the education level is especially important to receive credits for the years that they followed a study that they were not able to complete and to gain insight in what steps have to be taken to obtain a certificate or which competencies an entrepreneur expects from employees, including a refugee.

Table 2 also reveals that a considerably group of the Syrian refugees has followed or obtained a certificate after attending education at a higher education level, according to the Dutch standards. But, only 39 percent of them has a job that is equivalent to their skills and competencies (Dagevos, et al., 2018). This is the exact reason why this research is so interesting; there are so many refugees who have a higher education, working under their level. Especially in the group of the 25-34 years olds, who have entered the labour market, and probably prefer to stay in the Netherlands (Van Vliet, 109). This is a group that has a whole career path ahead of them. If they can enter the labour market at the education level that corresponds with their abilities, the chances and the possibility for a (good) career in the future will only increase (Pijpers, et al., 2015.).

4.2.2 Organisation on the Dutch Labour Market

To take up employment in the Netherlands, a refugee has to find an organisation that will employ him. Finding a job will help a refugee to integrate into the new society which is beneficial for all parties as integration is a concept that reflects a multidimensional two-way process that starts upon arrival of an individual in the new home country (Phillimore, 2011), and requires the host country's willingness to facilitate integration of a new arrival. Access to jobs and services and acceptance of immigrants in social interaction is an important aspect of integration (Castles et al, 2002). The overall integration of refugees is thus achieved through the labour market which, in term, requires recognition of their education certificates. This explains why credential recognition is part of the Dutch integration package, as set out in Chapter 3.

Some multinationals in the Netherlands, amongst which Shell, ING and Phillips, have made a big commitment to help refugees in and outside the Netherlands to find a job in their new home country. The

³² Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. *Syriërs in Nederland. Juni 2018.*

multinationals are joint in partnership: 'Tent Partnership for Refugees', to increase the participation of refugee on the labour market. As the chairman, Hamdi Ulukaya, stated: 'It is not only good for companies to help refugees it is from a business point of view also wise. A lot of refugees will stay, this gives the organizations the chance to give talented people with a lot of perseverance a place in their company'.³³

From a Dutch labour market perspective, a good working credential recognition system is not only important for its role in the integration of immigrants, but also because it can prevent repression on the labour market, i.e. if higher educated people work in jobs that require a lower level of education there are less opportunities for those who have an education level that corresponds with the job taken by a higher educated person (Mulder, 2017). Besides, a good working system for credential recognition provides organisations seeking employees with a clearer picture of the knowledge and skills of, in this case, a refugee, when they are seeking candidates to fill their vacancies (Van der Welle, 2013).

4.2.3 Aid organisations

Refugee aid organisations are organisations that represent the interests of refugees in the Netherlands.³⁴ Some of those aid organisations are specialised in the integration of the refugees on the Dutch labour market. One of the most known and oldest refugee aid organisations concerning finding work for higher educated refugees in the Netherlands is the 'Stichting voor studie en werk voor hoger opgeleide vluchtelingen' (*Foundation for study and work for higher educated refugees*) better known as the UAF.³⁵ Since 1948 the organisation has supported refugees in their studies and in finding suitable employment. The UAF supports refugees with grants and loans so that they can attend a course of higher education. UAF organizes training courses and network meetings for refugees who are studying and for those who have graduated. This resulted in guidance of 3.847 refugees in 2018 compared to 3.373 in 2017, within different areas as shown in figure 3, this table shows the importance of a good working credential recognition for a refugee, as still almost half of the refugee who the IDW helps, namely 46%, is preparing for a study.³⁶ With a credential recognition it would be easier to determine what level of education a refugee can handle, based on the educational background.

For an aid organisation, a good working credential recognition system is interesting because it makes it clearer for both parties (the refugee and the organisation) what the best options are for a refugee

³³ UNHCR de VN-vluchtelingenorganisatie. *Nederlandse bedrijven gaan zich inzetten voor integratie vluchtelingen*. 9 April 2019 on: <https://www.unhcr.org/nl/2019/04/nederlandse-bedrijven-gaan-zich-inzetten-vluchtelingen/>.

³⁴ Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. *Wat wij doen*. Retrieved on 7 July 2019 from: <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/wat-wij-doen>.

³⁵ UAF. *Over het UAF*. Retrieved on 8 July from: <https://www.uaf.nl/over-het-uaf/>.

³⁶ UAF. *Dit doet het UAF*. Retrieved on 8 July 2019 from: <https://www.uaf.nl/wat-we-doen/>.

considered his level of education. This knowledge helps the aid organisation optimise its advice on suitable employers and jobs for a particular refugee. Ironically, aid organisations exist because of the difficulties experienced by refugees in their overall integration process. This means that, as assisting a refugee to find a place on the labour market is only one aspect of the integration process, a good working system for credential recognition, allows an aid organisation to focus on other difficulties.

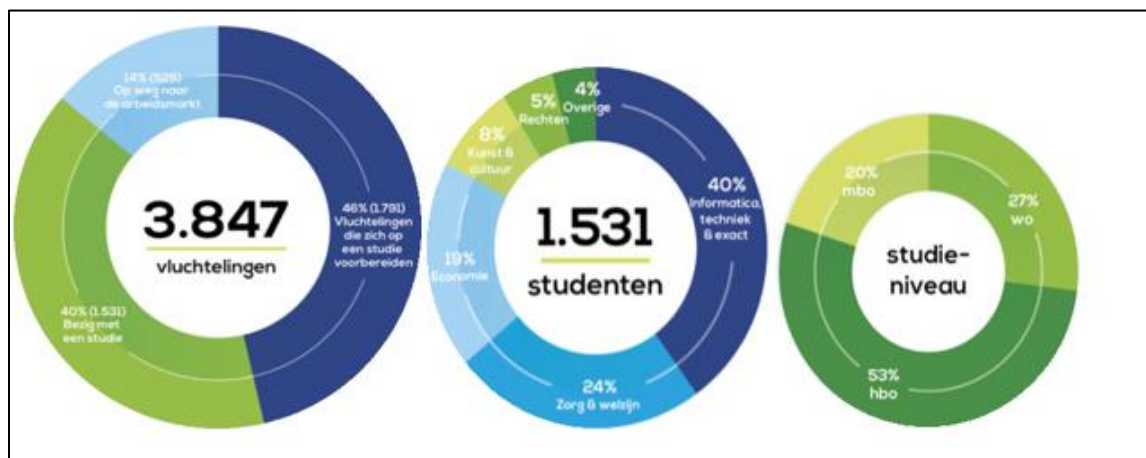


Figure 3: Workfield of the UAF.³⁷

4.3 Data collection about the views of the Stakeholders

4.3.1 Views of the Syrian Refugees

4.3.1.1 Views about the level of recognition

The most stated view of refugees about the credential recognition procedure is the fact that refugees are disappointed with the level that their certificates are accorded after credential recognition. The certificates are recognized at a lower level than expected, which results in disappointment. (Pierik, 2019; Werken zonder grenzen; Van Vliet, 2019 & Reitz, 2017).

The most typical example of this phenomenon is given on the website of 'Werken zonder grenzen' (*Working without boundaries*, an aid organisation for refugees in the Netherlands). This website shares the story of Souhir Ibrahim, where she states that her University Bachelor degree in Economics is assessed in the Netherlands as an 'Applied Science Degree' instead of a 'University bachelor degree' which is what it is in the country where she obtained the degree.³⁸ Foreign certificates do have a different value in the Netherlands (Pierik, 2019). A 'university bachelor or master's degree' in the Netherlands is education on a more theoretical and academic level, preparing students for either a professional or academic career.

³⁷ UAF. *Dit doet het UAF*. Retrieved on 8 July 2019 from: <https://www.uaf.nl/wat-we-doen/>.

³⁸ Werken zonder grenzen. *Verhalen*. N.D. retrieved on 22 June 2019 from: <http://werkenzondergrenzen.nl/verhalen/>.

Education is research-oriented and aims at developing critical thinking skills and conducting research. Thus, an in-depth study of study material, using scientific sources is key to a Dutch university education programme. In the Netherlands, an applied science degree is based on a more practice-based education programme which prepares students for specific professions.³⁹

An explanation for this phenomenon is found in the research of Razenberg & Gruijter, 2016. Their focus was labour integration of refugees with a (temporary) residence permit in the Netherlands. This research revealed that based on recognised certificates, only ten percent of the status holders is considered as direct deployable on the labour market according to the entrepreneurs within their regions. For about the other 30 percent of the refugees with a (temporary) residence permit, labour market mediation is not possible at all, because the refugee did not have the right qualifications based on the recognized certificates. The remaining 60 percent needs more education and additional activities to integrate on the labour market (Razenberg & Gruijter, 2016).

4.3.1.2 Views about the legislation behind the credential recognition.

There are some views concerning the legislation behind credential recognition in the Netherlands that reveal that refugees are experiencing some gaps in the legislation. The first view is that initially, refugees do not understand that the IDW/Nuffic only gives an advice about the certificate of the profession. Refugees are disappointed when they found out that entrepreneurs and education institutes can deviate from the advice of the IDW/Nuffic because this is just an advice that is not binding.

The second view that is often heard about the legislation behind the credential recognition is that it is hard to obtain a contra-expertise once the IDW/Nuffic has handed down an advice, even though the stakes are high. There is not much knowledge amongst the refugee population about the parties who can deliver a contra-expertise (Rijken, et al., 2017; Scholten, Ghebread & De Waal, 2019). For example, when a refugee is rejected for a job based on the advice of the IDW/Nuffic, where can he go for a second opinion to ensure that this advice will not be the reason to be turned down in the future?

4.3.1.3 Understanding the Credential recognition procedure in the Netherlands.

As discussed in subchapter 3.5, in the Netherlands credential recognition is integrated in the integration package. A still often heard view from the refugees is that it is hard to understand the procedure to obtain credential recognition in the Netherlands. As shown in chapter 3, the number of

³⁹ Study in Holland. *Differences in requirements*. N.D. retrieved on 22 June 2019 from: <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/education/bachelors-programs/study-choice/dutch-higher-education>.

refugees who had their certificate recognized, in 2019, was 4700.⁴⁰ But still, some complaints are heard about the procedure of the credential recognition.

The most heard view is the fact that the procedure for credential recognition is too complex and hard to understand because everything has to be organized by the refugees themselves. A lot of status holders start the procedure, but stop half-way through, based on the fact that there is a lack of clearance about the procedure (Kortese, 2018). Also 'de Vries' et al. 2018 stated that the recognition procedures are complex and often misunderstood by refugees. Even with extensive knowledge about relevant competent authorities, as the IDW/Nuffic, it is often hard for refugees to collect all the relevant information about the recognition possibilities.

4.3.2 Views of organisations operating on the Dutch labour market

4.3.2.1 Views on credential recognition overall

In the literature about credential recognition in the Netherlands, there are not many views of 'The Dutch labour market' about credential recognition by the IDW/Nuffic. In theory, it looks like employers do not experience many problems with credential recognition (de Vries et al. 2018). But still, some views are found, two views about the level of the recognition are distinguished in the literature:

- Even with a recognition of the IDW/Nuffic it can still be hard to understand the certificates; and
- The recognition of skills and competencies are more important than the recognition of certificates of professions.

The two different views are explained below:

The first view is that entrepreneurs have difficulties in understanding a recognized certificate even with a credential recognition advice. This is discussed in the news broadcast of 'BNR' (Business Nieuws Radio, *Business News Radio*) with experts in the field of credential recognition. These experts stated that some refugees do have a bachelor degree from their former home country. In most cases, this certificate is evaluated as a bachelor-degree in the new home country, but most of the time a comment is added that 'further/additional' education is necessary. In this situation, a lot of employers have trouble to evaluate the certificates. As a result, employers still do not know what to do with those certificates in terms of a person's suitability for a certain job vacancy.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Nuffic. *Jaarverslag 2017*.

⁴¹ BNR radio. *Werkgevers zien weinig in Syrisch diploma*. 31 Mei 2016 retrieved from: <https://www.bnr.nl/nieuws/arbeidsmarkt/10305676/werkgevers-zien-weinig-in-syrisch-diploma>.

This is also revealed in the book of de Vries et al. (2018) where it is stated that organisations have difficulties in understanding a recognized certificate if a comment is added that further education, for example, one more year of applied science, is needed to obtain full recognition.

The second view is that the recognition of skills' and competencies are more important than recognition of certificates of professions'. This is based on the fact that the names of professions can differ per country. Countries set different requirements for professions and different competencies can be identified as important in different countries. That is why researchers have stated that: 'the name of the profession on the certificate can differ per country and that the skills that a profession holds can differ' (Markusse, 2017). For example, in the research of Razenberg & Gruijter (2017), Elianne de Geus acknowledged, based on interviews with organisations in the Netherlands, the difficulties in the recognition of skills and competencies as follows: 'It is, for example, clear that a refugee has been a Pharmacist, but it is not clear what kind of competence and skills a refugee has and how to translate those skills into parameters that can be used for the Dutch labour market.'

For organisations, the recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates and professions. The research of Mulder (2017) concluded that in practice, the importance that organisations attach to certificates is less than the theory in his research suggests. In the case of executive jobs, certificates are considered more important because of the use of machinery and apparatus. Practical knowledge is required, but this information can also be tested by an assessment. For higher educated professions, most of the organisations estimate the skills and knowledge of a refugee in the application procedure. In the field research conducted by Mulder (2017), ASML admitted to translate foreign certificates to Dutch standards; a translation is enough, an advice of the Nuffic is not necessary for them. In the case of work experience, most organisations admitted that they always verify this for every candidate, i.e. both for a Dutch and a foreign candidate if this is possible. Mulder's research revealed that certificates and work experience do not seem to be a barrier to hire a refugee. The problem is having the right qualities (Mulder, 2017). To finish, this is also supported by the research of Mahumed, Alam & Härtel (2014) who stated that it is hard to translate foreign professions into the qualifications required in the host country, in their case Australia, because even within the same professions the qualifications needed to fulfil a profession can differ a lot.

This means that credential recognition of foreign credentials is important, but in real-life organisations are more interested in credentials that are obtained in the new home country. (Chiswick & Miller, 2010). Credentials obtained in the former home country, are unknown to the employer who is not

sure what the credentials are worth and whether they are complete. In contrast, the credentials in the home country, in this case the Netherlands, are comparable for an employer (Markusse, 2017).

4.3.2.2 Influences of new home country competencies

As mentioned above, there is not much known about the views of the entrepreneurs on credential recognition. According to some research, this is because objective qualifications, which are proved by certificates, are not that important for organisations. These researches show that some aspects are more important, and have already an influence in the application phase before a certificate is reviewed; even before the skills and competencies are discussed, subjective qualifications have to be met. Subjective qualifications are productivity, work ethics, and motives (Markusse, 2017). An employer will rather choose a native than a migrant as far as subjective qualifications are concerned. Evidence of this phenomenon is the research of the 'SCP' that reveals that in the case of two applicants, a native and migrant, with exact the same certificate and qualifications organisations acknowledge that newcomers lack new home country subjective competencies, which natives do have who are therefore given preference over a migrant.⁴²

This is confirmed by a research of Friedberg (2000) which revealed the importance of new home country-specific competencies, but mostly the importance of 'social-cultural competencies'. A migrant who invests in human capital can acquire new or additional home country-specific social-cultural capital and competencies. As stated, this will improve the chance to be employed at a level that corresponds with his education.

The most important barrier, in light of social-cultural competencies, is the command of the language of the new home country (Mulder, 2017; Auer, 2017). Markusse's research (2017) corroborates this, as he has established that four out five organisations admitted that command of the language of the new home country was one of the conditions to fulfil the vacancy.

Duvander (2001) also emphasises language fluency as the most crucial home country-specific form of human capital that increases one's chances to even get invited to a job interview. Organisations want employees who can at least speak the language.

⁴² Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. *Op afkomst afgewezen, onderzoek naar discriminatie of de Haagse arbeidsmarkt*. June 2015 retrieved from: https://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2015/Op_afkomst_afgewezen.

As all of the research mentioned the importance of the social-cultural qualifications and the command of that language, this is also included in this research as this is of so much importance for the entrepreneurs, and also influences the value of the certificate which will be discussed in subchapter 4.5.

4.3.3 Views of the aid organisation

4.3.3.1 Overall view on the integration of the Syrian Refugees

The expert of the UAF expressed great concern with the overall system for credential recognition as far as refugees are concerned. Within the overall context of integration, the supervision of the integration progression at an individual level is the key issue that needs to be addressed, according to the UAF expert. This is explained by the fact that according to the current Dutch integration law, refugees are responsible for their own integration.⁴³ Refugees, however, depend on the integration facilities offered by the Dutch government of which there are not enough for refugees to design a good and fitting integration programme for themselves. Instead of managing their own integration progress they need aid organisations to help them.⁴⁴ But the aid organisations cannot help all the refugees, this is why aid organisations still hear that refugees have trouble understanding and obtaining credential recognition.⁴⁵

More specific at the level of credential recognition, there are two major views. These views will be discussed in chapters 4.3.3.2 and 4.3.3.3 below. For now, it suffices to note that, according to the UAF expert, the starting point for access to the labour market is always the command of the language of the host country.⁴⁶ It is important to master the language before applying for a job. Because job application procedures are mostly in Dutch. It is a fact that a lot of refugees do not have sufficient command of the language of their host country in this phase.⁴⁷

4.3.3.2 Views on level of recognition

What the UAF experience is that entrepreneurs find it difficult, to translate a foreign certificate into Dutch education standards. There is no difference whether this certificate is only translated into Dutch or if it has been subject of credential recognition. This is explained by the fact that employers prefer certificates that they recognize. When the IDW advice following credential recognition includes a note

⁴³ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A. VOC_1* (Appendix xx, page xx).

⁴⁴ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A. VOC_2*.

⁴⁵ ⁴⁵Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. *Standpunt: arbeidsparticipatie*. retrieved on 10 March 2019, from: <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/wat-wij-doen/standpunten/standpunt-arbeidsparticipatie>.

⁴⁶ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A. VOL_1*.

⁴⁷ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A. VOL_2*.

that some further education is required, to be equal to the Dutch equivalent this leads to uncertainty by employers what the level of knowledge is. Due to this uncertainty, employers often choose not to hire a refugee, than to take the risk and have to provide further education⁴⁸.

What the UAF experience regarding the level of at which a certificate is recognized, is that the recognition is mostly lower than in their former country of residence for refugee. This can be explained by the differences between the educational system in the former country of residence of the refugee and the host country⁴⁹. Almost all refugees have to deal with a demotion when they want to work in their new home country. An example for this phenomena is when a refugee who has obtained a ‘university Bachelor’ in Syria and applies for recognition of his certificate in the Netherlands, the advice is often that it is equal to a Dutch ‘applied science’ bachelor, but only until the third year. This means that as a Dutch applied science bachelor is a four year programme, refugees actually have to follow a year more extra education to obtain the same level as their foreign ‘applied science’ bachelor to ensure that they can work at the same level as they would be able to work if they had stayed in Syria.⁵⁰

What makes it more disappointing for refugees is that a lot of refugees do not understand the procedure for credential recognition and that refugees have high expectations of realising their dreams, i.e. continuing their career where it stopped when they left their former home country when they finally arrive in their host country.⁵¹

4.3.3.3 Views on the importance of soft skills

The UAF expert stated that even though it is hard for employers to understand foreign certificates, they actually do use them as proof that a refugee has reached a certain level of education.⁵² He also stated that there is not so much wrong with the recognition procedure for certificates used by the IDW, because it is just a comparison of the foreign certificate with the Dutch education level. The mismatch is explained by the fact that the Netherlands has higher standards for certificates obtained in the Netherlands than in the countries where refugees come from. This is why a year of more education is often necessary. This is also the experience of entrepreneurs. So the lower education level does not relate to anything that is ‘wrong’ with the credential recognition procedure but is based on an existing difference in education systems and what is required to obtain a certificate in different countries.⁵³

⁴⁸ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VCL_1.

⁴⁹ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VCL_4.

⁵⁰ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VCL_4.

⁵¹ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VSX_1.

⁵² Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VCU_1.

⁵³ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. REC_1

However, it must be admitted that the UAF experiences that even in cases that a refugee, who has exactly the same recognized certificate without any note, applies for the same position as a native Dutch applicant, entrepreneurs will, more often than not, hire the native Dutch applicant rather than the refugee.⁵⁴

This can be explained by important differences in the ‘social-cultural’ skills that are important in the job application phase.⁵⁵ For example, in a lot of refugee cultures ‘assertivity’ is seen as brutal or disrespectful, whilst in the Netherlands assertivity is an important skill. The same goes for reflection. Lacking these social skills has a major influence on the decision to hire a person or not, based on these competencies a conclusion to employ a refugee is mostly already made, even without seeing the certificates.⁵⁶

4.3.4 Views of the IDW/Nuffic as a stakeholder in the procedure.

4.3.4.1 Overall view on the integration of the Syrian refugees

As the organisation that is responsible for the recognition of foreign certificates, the IDW/Nuffic, is just occupied with providing recognition and does not really have a view about the procedure. In the procedure of the credential recognition, they see themselves as a starting point, which provides an advice. As said in chapter 3, the IDW/Nuffic also admits that this is the only thing they do, what the organisations and educational institutions do with the advice is up to them.⁵⁷

Having said this, some views did come forward during the interview.

4.3.4.2 Views on level of recognition

In the view of the IDW/Nuffic, there is nothing wrong with the level of the advice that the IDW/Nuffic gives. The expert underpins this with two arguments. First of all, the main difficulty in understanding this comparison is, according to the IDW/Nuffic, the difference in educational systems. Differences in systems can lead to a different level to a profession. But refugees can still do the work that they studied for. Secondly, in cases where the advice is that additional education is necessary to complement the knowledge, the Nuffic argues that the Netherlands sets higher standards than the former country of residence. In the view of the IDW/Nuffic, there is a gap between the competencies refugees

⁵⁴ Coded interviews. *Aid organisation A*. VCS_1

⁵⁵ Coded interviews. *Aid organization A*. VCS_2.

⁵⁶ Coded interviews. *Aid organization A*. VCS_3.

⁵⁷ Coded interviews. *Aid organization A*. VCU_3

bring with them and what the Dutch labour market requires from their employees. The recognition procedure reveals a difference in the value of the certificate. This does not mean that there is something wrong with the procedure of credential recognition used by the IDW/Nuffic.⁵⁸

Furthermore, the IDW/Nuffic mentioned the importance of ‘speaking the language’ of the new home country.⁵⁹ As ‘speaking the language’ is not taken into account in the procedure for credential recognition, it has no influence on their advice that is the outcome of credential recognition. The IDW expert did recognise that command of the new home country’s language strongly influences the admissibility to higher education institutions and the success rate of even be invited for a job interview. Thus, when a refugee does not speak the language, credential recognition is worth nothing, as the refugee will not get very far in the procedure without speaking the language.⁶⁰

4.4 Analysis of the collected views.

The data presented above does not pretend to give a complete image about the views of all stakeholders about credential recognition of professions but reflects the most important and most stated views expressed by the stakeholders who were interviewed. In this subchapter, these views will be summarized and analysed. Below a summary of the main views of the above discussed stakeholders is given in table 3.

| The stakeholders | Views of the stakeholders | Views numbered |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Refugees in the Netherlands | Disappointed on the level of the recognition. | 1 |
| | There is no official remedy against the advice of the IDW. | 2 |
| | It is disappointing that the IDW only gives an advice. | 3 |
| | Lack of clearance about the recognition of qualifications and the regulated professions. | 4 |
| Employers on the Dutch labour market | Even with the recognition of the IDW, employers still have trouble with understanding certificates. | 5 |

⁵⁸ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. VCL_1.

⁵⁹ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. VOL_1.

⁶⁰ Coded interviews. *Nuffic*. OIL_1.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|
| | Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates of professions. | 6 |
| | Newcomers lack specific new home subjective qualifications. | 7 |
| | Speaking the natives language is the most important human capital that a refugee needs to obtain. | 8 |
| Aid organisation | Refugees are responsible for their own integration, with too few tools. | 9 |
| | The most important competence of a refugee is language knowledge. | 10 |
| | It is hard for employers to understand the outlandish certificates even when they are evaluated. | 11 |
| | Refugees are disappointed in the advice of the IDW. | 12 |
| | Social-cultural skills are as important as credential recognition. | 13 |
| The IDW/Nuffic | Speaking the language is important. | 14 |
| | There is a gap between the competencies a refugee has and the competencies the Dutch labour market requests. | 15 |
| | Level of recognition is not per se lower but different because of different education systems. | 16 |
| | Credential recognition must be used as a starting point, but organisations and education institutions are the ones who decide in the end. | 17 |

Table 3: *Views of stakeholders*

Amongst the views of the stakeholders some similarities and contradictions are found. The views can be merged into 7 conclusions. This analysis is made and then presented in table 4 below.

Conclusion 1

First of all, view 1 of the stakeholders, ‘the disappointment on the level of the recognition’ can be combined with view 12 of the aid organisation that mentions: ‘refugees are disappointed in the advice of the IDW’, because both stakeholders state that refugees are disappointed by the fact that certificates were recognized at a lower level than was expected, albeit for various reasons.

In regard of those views, view 15 and 16 of the IDW/Nuffic and the explanation of the procedure of the IDW/Nuffic are interesting (chapter 3.3) because it declares that the certificates are not rated lower, but get a different value due to different education systems. Refugees can still do the same work as they did in the former country of residence. When additional education is needed this is based on the fact that the Dutch labour market sets higher standards than the former country of residence.

This does not mean that refugees are not disappointed by the result of the recognition by IDW/Nuffic. This is mostly based on the fact that the refugees are unfamiliar with the procedure, why the level is lower than expected, and the fact that refugees have too high expectations about their career opportunities in the new home country (chapter 4.3.3.2)

In conclusion, these 3 views can be combined into one conclusion: *‘due to differences in the educational systems the recognition of the certificates can be different than expected, which is disappointing for refugees’.*

Conclusion 2

View 4 of the stakeholders: ‘lack of clarity about the recognition of qualifications and the regulated professions’ can be combined with view 9 of the aid organisations that ‘refugees are responsible for their own integration, but have too few tools to create an effective integration procedure by themselves.’ The latter is actually an explanation why refugees lack clarity regarding credential recognition: *‘due to the fact that refugees are responsible for their own integration no information is provided on the credential recognition procedure by the Dutch authorities, as a refugee is expected to find this out for himself, which causes a lack in clearance.’*

Conclusion 3

View 5 of the entrepreneurs: ‘employers have trouble with understanding the certificates even with recognition of the IDW’ is actually the same as view 11 of the aid organisation, the overall conclusion is: *‘It is hard for employers to understand the outlandish certificates even when they are evaluated’.*

Conclusion 4

View 7 of the employers that ‘newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital’ can be combined with view 13 of the aid organisations. Both justify the conclusion that ‘social-cultural skills are just as important as recognized certificates.’ So these views can be combined into one new conclusion ‘*Newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital which are as important as recognized certificates.*’

Conclusion 5

View 9 of the employers can be combined with view 11 of the aid organisations and view 14 of the IDW/Nuffic. All express the view that ‘*Speaking the native language is the most important competence in the job application phase.*’

Conclusion 6

View 6 of the employers that ‘*Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates*’ is an often stated view by employers, but not necessarily by other stakeholders, so this view will be a conclusion on its own. Conclusion 6 is: ‘*Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates*’.

Conclusion 7

To finish, view 16 of the Nuffic contradicts views 2 and 3 of the refugees. Views 2 and 3 are that ‘there is no official remedy against the IDW/Nuffic advice’ (view 2) and it is ‘disappointing that the IDW/Nuffic only gives an advice’ (view 3). However, there is actually a remedy available if a refugee does not agree with the IDW/Nuffic’s assessment; the complaint procedure (as revealed in chapter 3.3). The purpose of the complaint procedure is to review a certificate recognition. The question is whether, in practice, the availability of a review mechanism is really important because it are the organisations and educational institutions that ultimately decide to hire or to enrol a refugee. It is not even necessary to have a certificate recognized by the IDW/Nuffic to be employed or to enrol for an education programme. This is precisely the reason why it is almost impossible to give this advice legal value, with an accompanying official remedy. Therefore views 2 and 3 can be merged with view 16 of the IDW/Nuffic, leading to the conclusion that ‘*Credential recognition must be used as a starting point, but organisations and education institutions are the ones who decide in the end, it is just a help tool.*’

| The stakeholders | The view of the stakeholders | Views numbered |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Refugees, aid organisation & Nuffic | Due to different educational systems, the recognition of the certificates can be different from expected, which is disappointing for refugees. | 1 |
| Refugees & aid organisation | Due to the fact that refugees are responsible for their own integration, no information is provided on the credential recognition procedure by the Dutch authorities as a refugee is expected to find this out for himself, which causes a lack in clearance.' | 2 |
| Employers & aid organisation | It is hard for employers to understand the outlandish certificates even when they are evaluated | 3 |
| Employers & aid organisation & Nuffic | Newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital which are as important as recognized certificates. | 4 |
| Employers, aid organisation & Nuffic | Speaking the native language is the most important competence in the job application phase. | 5 |
| Employers | Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates. | 6 |
| Refugees & Nuffic | Credential recognition must be used as a starting point, but the organisation and education institution are the ones who decide in the end, it is just a help tool. | 7 |

Table 4: Combined views of stakeholders

The table shows that in the end two kinds of conclusions can be drawn;

Firstly, conclusions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 are about the credential recognition. Considering the conclusions about the credential recognition, it is found that with the credential recognition procedure itself, and with the legislation behind this credential recognition, there is nothing wrong. The conclusions prove that some adjustment can be made in the form of extra support or supplementing elements; to provide more information about the procedure of credential recognition, and provide more context about the certificate.

Furthermore, conclusions 4 and 5 are factors that are mentioned so often as an important factor in the job application phase for refugees. Together with the credential recognition, they form a big factor of influence on the participation of a refugee on the labour market, but the effective use of credential recognition also depends on these factors. For example, when a refugee is not even invited to a job application, because of a lack in the command of the language, a credential recognition is not even important. Or, when a refugee shows behaviour during the job interview that is perceived as inappropriate by the entrepreneur, a credential recognition does not have any value; a decision is already made based on the first impression. That is why these two, subjective competencies (as discussed in chapter 4.3.2.2) are taken into account in this research; by reducing these barriers the influence of credential recognition will be higher (Rohlof, 2017).

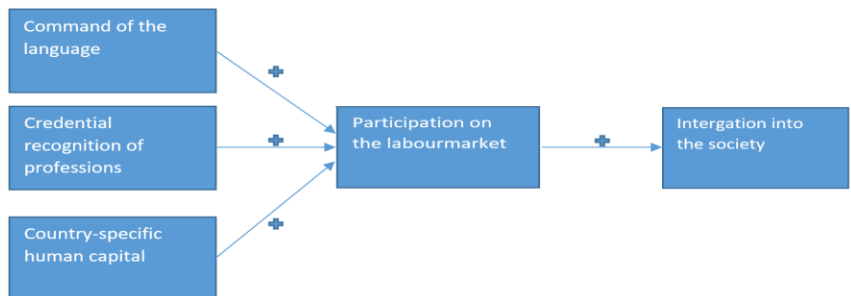


Figure 4: Conceptual model 2

4.5 Summary

The conclusions that have been drawn by merging views are found in table 4 above. These conclusions are the answer to sub-question two: *What are the stakeholder’s experiences with credential recognition in the Netherlands?* It can be concluded that with the credential recognition itself, and the legislation behind this procedure, there is nothing wrong. It can be improved by making adjustments in the form of extra supporting mechanisms and supplementing elements. The command of the language of the new

home country and the country-specific human capital have proven to be so important to access the labour market at the level of a refugee's education that these factors will be included in the search for recommendations in chapter 5.

5. Credential recognition in other Member States.

5.1 Introduction

The starting point for this chapter are the conclusions which were drawn based on the field research that was discussed and analysed in chapter 4. This chapter will reflect on these conclusions by considering how other Member States are dealing with the credential recognition procedure, in particular, those issues that prove to be an obstacle for refugees seeking access to the labour market in the Netherlands. By reflecting on how two other Member States have addressed these problems sub-question 3 can be answered; *What is the procedure for credential recognition in Denmark & Sweden and what is there to learn from those countries?*

As discussed in chapter 3.2, Member States are legally allowed to determine how they regulate the credential recognition of professions in their own country as long as they observe the rules in the Professional Qualification Directive.⁶¹ Member States must designate an authority competent to assess a credential recognition.⁶² In this chapter parts of the implementations from other Member States which are interesting for the Netherlands, limited to those issues that are interesting, will be discussed. The two reference countries, Denmark and Sweden, have been chosen because, just like the Netherlands, these countries have experienced a large flow of Syrians from 2015 on.⁶³ Denmark and Sweden are known, just like the Netherlands, as traditionally strong welfare states, with benefits and services to guarantee means for living for those who are unable to provide for themselves.⁶⁴

The next chapters will explain the credential recognition procedure in Denmark (chapter 5.2) and Sweden (chapter 5.3). Chapter 5.4 will give recommendations to address the concerns expressed in the conclusions drawn in chapter 4.4 based on the discussed features in chapter 5.2 and 5.3. Thus an answer to the third research question can be given in the summary (chapter 5.5)

5.2 Introduction Denmark

As in the Netherlands, Syrian asylum seekers currently make up the largest share of refugees in Denmark.⁶⁵ According to 'Professional Qualification Directive, Article 3(3)', it is possible for refugees to have their certificate or education level recognized in Denmark. The Danish government stated, that the

⁶¹ Factsheets on the European Union. *Migration an Asylum: a challenge for Europe* PP 600.414.

⁶² Article 3(1)(d) Professional Qualifications Directive.

⁶³ Asylum Map. First time asylum applications of Syrians by country of Asylum. N.D. retrieved on 17 July 2019 from: <http://syrianrefugees.eu/asylum/>.

⁶⁴ Growing inequalities' impacts. Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden: the four Nordic countries? 5 June 2013 retrieved from: http://gini-research.org/system/uploads/480/original/8_-_Blomgren.pdf?1372263555.

⁶⁵ Enic-Naric. *Denmark*. Retrieved on 6 June 2019 from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/denmark.aspx>.

earlier certificates could be recognized, the more effective the participation of refugees on the labour market. That is why, in Denmark, credential recognition is integrated in the integration packages for refugees. In light of obtaining credential recognition as fast as possible, the government has spread awareness about the potentials for having a migrant's certificates recognized in the Danish context, amongst municipalities and other actors, i.e. job centres and language schools.⁶⁶

The Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education is the competent authority to assess foreign qualifications. The credential recognition of professions in Denmark is governed by various legal rules. The most important is the 'Assessment of Foreign Qualification Act' consolidated Act No. 579 of 2 June 2014'.⁶⁷ The assessment of foreign qualifications is done by comparing the learning outcomes evidence of the foreign qualification with the Danish qualification or study period.⁶⁸

The criteria for evaluation are laid down in: 'The revised recommendation on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications (adopted by the Lisbon recognition convention committee at its fifth meeting, Sévres)', which also applies in the Netherlands (which can be found in appendix 4). The Danish Ministry created, based on this recommendation, its own criteria. These are attached in appendix 6.

The Danish procedure of credential recognition includes some features that can be interesting to imply in the Netherlands (which will be discussed below):

- The Background Paper and
- A strong coordination of the procedure.

5.2.1 The Background Paper.

According to the Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region, Article 7, parties have to establish an indication of the educational level even when a refugee cannot provide documentary evidence⁶⁹.

In Denmark, this article is applied in the form of a 'background paper' which is nearly the same as the Dutch indication of education level, as discussed in chapter 3 in the sense that the refugee must have

⁶⁶ ENIC-NARIC.net. *Recognised qualification held by refugees – guide for credential evaluations*. Retrieved on 25 May 2019, from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>.

⁶⁷ Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (Consolidation) Act The following is a consolidation of the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications Act, cf. Consolidation Act No. 371 of 13 April 2007, with the amendments following from Act No. 561 of 6 June 2007, section 5.

⁶⁸ Article 3(1) Assessment of Foreign Qualification Act.

⁶⁹ Article 7 of the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, adopted in Lisbon on 11 April 1997, retrieved from: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13522&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

completed all or parts of an educational programme in a country other than the new home country. An education programme can be, e.g. upper secondary school, vocational training or a university programme. Further, an application for a background report is only possible if a refugee is unable to get hold of the documentation required to have an assessment made according to the normal procedure. There must be good reasons why sufficient documentation cannot be provided. When a background application is made, a refugee is expected to describe the education that he has completed, including the subjects which he has followed and any internships which he has completed.⁷⁰ Based on this written information an indication of the education level achieved is made.

However, the Danish government has designed additional steps that can be taken to create a clear picture of the skills and competencies the refugee holds. Those additional steps can be: to organize an examination/test to allow the refugee to demonstrate acquired knowledge, competencies and skills; to perform an interview with a committee of experts who can ask the applicant specific questions. Both options allow the authorities to gather additional contextual information and to create an official document, provided by a legal authority that a refugee can use when applying for the job. This document contains the information which was provided by the refugee himself, and the results of the test/interview; i.e. skills, competencies or knowledge that are found during the additional steps.⁷¹

5.2.2 Strong coordination mechanism

The Danish government's concern is the fast integration of refugees, by participation on the labour market. One of the aspects that foster participation, as explained in chapter 1, is credential recognition. In Denmark, there is strong coordination in the procedure of credential recognition. The government wants a refugee to obtain credential recognition as fast as possible. With strong coordination, continuity and guidance this can be ensured.

This is done by publishing information on the recognition procedure and policies for refugees, with or without certificates, on various important websites for refugee. As said in chapter 5.2, by increasing awareness of credential recognition amongst municipalities and other actors who help refugees contributes towards their overall integration. Thus the credential recognition procedure is an

⁷⁰ Ministry of higher education and Science of Denmark, *Can I get a background report??* Retrieved on 6 June 2019 from: <https://ufm.dk/en/education/recognition-and-transparency/get-assessment/background-report>.

⁷¹ ENIC-NARIC.net. *Recognised qualification held by refugees – guide for credential evaluations*. Retrieved on 25 May 2019, from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>.

important integration tool. Therefore the more refugees are aware of the possibilities and the procedure the better this is for society as a whole.⁷²

Information about recognition practices and access to higher education is crucial for a refugee who wishes to continue the educational path to improve his chances on the labour market. Relevant and transparent information should be provided at an early stage to eliminate the gap between previous and continued education.⁷³

5.3 Introduction Sweden

Like in most of the European Union Member States, the biggest group of refugees in Sweden are, since 2015, the Syrians. The Swedish policies for migrant newcomers are celebrated for being comprehensive, ambitious and for providing few obstacles for labour-market mobility. The new 2010 integration programme has come with increased funding and economic incentives for participating in employment programmes and access to labour market services (Martin et al. 2016). The goal of the Swedish integration policies is to aim at ensuring equal rights and impose obligations and opportunities on all newcomers regardless of their ethnic and cultural background. In Sweden, there are no formal distinctions between refugees and those who enjoy subsidiary protection. Both groups are given permanent residence permits from day one and have the same rights to general welfare services and integration measures as native Swedish people (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014).

Since 2013, the Council for Higher Education has been responsible for assessing all kinds of foreign credentials: secondary diplomas, post-secondary vocational education, and academic degrees. This credential recognition is based on Directive 2005/36/EC⁷⁴, which means that the criteria of recognition are based on: ‘The revised recommendation on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications (adopted by the Lisbon recognition convention committee at its fifth meeting, Sévres)’, which can be found in appendix 4.

Besides the credential recognition, migrants have to apply for permission to practice a profession in Sweden from the agency responsible for a specific profession. For instance, the Board of Health and Welfare for nurses and the Electrical Safety Board for electricians. A study by the Agency for Higher

⁷² ENIC-NARIC.net. *Recognised qualification held by refugees – guide for credential evaluations*. Retrieved on 25 May 2019, from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>.

⁷³ ENIC-NARIC.net. *Recognised qualification held by refugees – guide for credential evaluations*. Retrieved on 25 May 2019, from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>.

⁷⁴ Swedish council for higher education. *Work in Sweden or another EU/EEA country. N.D. retrieved on 30 July 2019 from: <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/international-opportunities/EC-directive-on-the-recognition-of-professional-qualifications/>.*

Education found that a majority of those who had had their foreign credentials validated felt that validation had helped their future careers, as this had provided them a good starting point to plan their future career in Sweden. It had also boosted their self-esteem (Martin et al. 2016).

The Swedish process of credential recognition and participation on the labour market includes some features that can be interesting to implement in the Netherlands, based on the conclusions that were drawn in chapter 4. Further to the two interesting features that are discussed, in chapters 5.3.1 and 5.3.2. The two features that will be discussed are:

- Introduction Guides
- Subsidized employment*

*Subsidizes employment is not a feature that is based on a credential recognition procedure, but as it has some contribution to the other important aspects of integration (conclusions 4, 5) this feature is also taken into account in this chapter.

5.3.1 Introduction Guides

Based on the Swedish law: 'Establishment Measures for Newly Arrived Migrants' an individualized and tailor-made introduction plan is ensured for every newly arrived migrant or refugee. The municipality where the newly arrived migrant lives, is responsible for the implementation of this 'Introduction plan' that is part of the introduction programme.⁷⁵ This introduction plan is drawn up by the refugee and an introduction guide, who is chosen by the refugee himself.

Guides are independent actors whose task it is to help new arrivals find a job that matches the qualifications and skills identified through the history and interests of the refugees, through for example credential recognition. The newcomers could choose their own guide from a selection of private and non-profit organizations. The compensation paid to the guides for their efforts is partly based on their success (Martin et al. 2016). The use of introduction guides started in 2012, from when on 5 million SEK a year has been allocated to guiding/mentoring schemes by the Swedish government⁷⁶.

There is evidence that guide programmes have a positive impact on a refugee's possibility of establishing a career (Månsson & Delander, 2017). Regarding credential recognition, guides offer a

⁷⁵ European Commission. *Labour market integration of Asylum seekers and refugees, Sweden*. April 2016.

⁷⁶ Government offices of Sweden. *Swedish integration policy*. December 2009.

refugee all the information necessary to obtain credential recognition in Sweden, as soon as possible, so that the recognition can be incorporated into the introduction plan (Fratzke, 2017).

5.3.2 Subsidized employment

Employment subsidies are the second tool to speed up the labour market participation of newcomers. Employment subsidies are part of Sweden's ALMP (Active Labour Market Policies). Refugees and other third-country migrants who have been granted a residence permit have access to all ALMP. When hiring newly arrived migrants, who have a residence permit that is no older than 36 months, there are two kinds of hiring subsidies, 'New Starts Jobs' and the 'Step-in jobs'.

'New Start jobs' subsidies are available to anyone who has been out of work for a long time as well as for humanitarian or family migrants, who have been in Sweden for less than three years. Depending on the age of the worker, the employer receives a normal employer's fee: (31.42 per cent) for those who are 20-25 years old, a fee which represents 31 per cent of the gross salary; or a double employer's fee for those who are 26 years or older, which represents 63 per cent of gross salary. Subsidies are available during a period that is not longer than twelve months. An employer must offer the employee at least 15 % supervision and training and must be able to offer the jobseeker at least 15 % supervision and training.

'Step-in Jobs' subsidies are offered to humanitarian and family migrants during their first three years after admission. A subsidy of 80 per cent of employer wage costs is paid to the employer for a maximum of two years. Wages are to be paid in accordance with the current collective agreement for the industry or an equivalent for employers lacking a collective agreement (Martin et al. 2016).

Employment subsidies come with obligations for the employers. One of the support mechanisms that need to be provided during the time an organization receives hiring subsidies are 'Labour Market Training' programmes. Labour market training programmes are meant to make the migrant familiar with the requirements needed for labour market participation, like language, cultural and profession-specific competencies. These programmes are based on 'Vocational Introduction Employment' programmes (Martin et al. 2016).

Subsidized employment is introduced to give refugees a chance on the labour market, by reducing factors that are a reason why employers decide to refuse a refugee. This participation policy is based on evidence that the faster refugees become part of the labour market, the faster they integrate into the Swedish society. Employment, according to the Swedish integration vision, is more important than education. For instance, Lemaître (2007) states that a working refugee is learning the language faster by

practice. Working with colleagues also provides a network which contributes towards integration in the host society.

5.4 Recommendations on the conclusions drawn in chapter 4

This chapter will discuss how the features that were discussed above (chapter 5.2 and 5.3) address the concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding the Dutch procedure of credential recognition, as presented in chapter 4. The influence of each of the features on the conclusions are reviewed in separate chapters, all the chapters will finish with an overall recommendation for implementing a specific feature in the Swedish or Danish procedure into the Dutch procedure;

- Chapter 5.4.1 discusses the Background paper.
- Chapter 5.4.2 discusses the Introduction guides (including strong coordination mechanism)
- Chapter 5.4.3 discusses subsidized employment.

5.4.1 Influence and recommendation based on the background paper

5.4.1.1 Conclusion 3: It is hard for employers to understand the outlandish certificates even when they are evaluated.

As presented in chapter 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.3.1; organizations still have trouble with understanding the certificates when they have been evaluated, especially when a note is added that additional education is needed. As the IDW/Nuffic admitted that sometimes extra education is needed when the Dutch labour market set higher standards than the former home country. This confuses the employers. In this case, it is hard for them to understand which competencies, skills and/or knowledge a refugee has, and which are missing.

In this situation, a background paper can provide more clarity for the entrepreneur. The background paper will present what kind of competencies/skills/knowledge the refugee actually has, which are assessed by using additional tests or interviews. With this information, it is easier for entrepreneurs to decide, based on these competencies/skills/knowledge, to hire a refugee, to reject a refugee, or to offer the refugee the exact education that is needed to obtain the necessary competencies/skills/knowledge. A report with more information about a certificate, from a legal authority, will take away any confusion that an employer has and gives the indication of education level

and the credential recognition an added value. (Because it is recommended to also use the background paper at the credential recognition, this will be discussed in chapter 5.4.1.1.4) This all contributes towards faster participation on the labour market and thus a speedier integration of refugees.

5.4.1.2 Conclusion 6: Recognition of skills and competencies are more important than the recognition of certificates.

As said in chapter 4.3.2.1, it can differ per country what competencies/skills/knowledge are required to fulfil a job. With this in mind and the responses of the employers that they do not use the credential recognition (chapter 2.2.2.4), a background paper can be an adjustment that can be made that will improve the Dutch credential recognition system and make it more interesting for employers to make use of the credential recognition as the background paper provides the information that entrepreneurs miss in the official recognition: i.e. the skills and competencies of a refugee (4.3.2.1). Providing this information contributes to the participation of refugees on the labour market in such a way that the chances of getting hired are bigger for refugees as the entrepreneurs understand the certificate of refugee (Hawthorne, 2016). The understanding of the certificate is improved by adding extra context, through the use of tests/interviews to reveal competencies, skill and/or knowledge that remain hidden in the current procedure.

5.4.2.3 Conclusion 8: Credential recognition must be used as a starting point, but organizations and education institutions are the ones who decide in the end, it is just a help tool.

That the IDW/Nuffic is only a help tool for organizations and education institutes is presented in chapter 3.3. That entrepreneurs not always make use of this help tool is explained in chapters 2.2.2.3 and 4.3.2.1. For the employers competencies are the most important, due the lack of recognition of competencies, entrepreneurs are not using the credential recognition nowadays, they are now looking for the competencies by themselves in the application phase (chapter 4.3.2.1). Entrepreneurs do not have to do that anymore when a background paper can present the competencies/skills/knowledge of the refugee.

This can foster the participation of refugees in such a way, that it can take away doubts entrepreneurs have when considering whether to employ them. When entrepreneurs and education institutes can rely on the advice the IDW/Nuffic gives, they do not have to do their own research anymore to establish the abilities of a refugee. This, subsequently, accelerates the application phase, so that a refugee can start a new job earlier.

5.4.2.4 Overall recommendation background paper

In Denmark, the background paper is only used in cases when a refugee cannot hand in a documentary about the obtained certificates. But a background paper is not only useful in cases where there is only an indication of an education level. As established in chapters 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2, even in cases in which a refugee can provide a certificate, entrepreneurs still miss information about the competencies of a refugee. A background paper can provide this extra information. That is why it is recommended to create the possibility to incorporate the additional steps presented in the background paper to the Dutch system for credential recognition; i.e. a competency test and interviews with experts. Background papers should be made possible, both in cases of an education level indication and in cases of 'normal' credential recognition.

It requires more work from the IDW/Nuffic to provide background papers for all credential recognitions and to find the field experts to conduct interviews or assess fitting tests. But, in the end, the advice with a background paper will give organisations and education institutions more information, which improves the influence and the productivity of credential recognition advices. The employers stated in chapter 4.3.2 that a credential recognition is not important, recognition of skills and competencies is more important. These employers will probably not use the credential recognition procedure at the moment. But, with the additional information about the competencies and skill, an advice from the IDW/Nuffic can be interesting for them. By providing a background paper, entrepreneurs do not have to organise tests themselves which speeds up their participation on the labour market.

5.4.2 Influence and recommendation based on the introduction guides.

The strong coordination mechanism of Denmark can be seen as guidance for refugees in the procedure of credential recognition, this mechanism can be merged with the work of the introduction guides of Sweden, these introduction guides guide the refugees in this procedure. The introduction guides can be the strong coordination mechanism that is why the strong coordination mechanism feature will not be discussed alone but is included in the recommendation of the introduction guide.

5.4.2.1 Conclusion 1: Due to different educational systems the recognition of the certificates can be different as expected, which is disappointing for refugees

As set out in chapters 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.3.2, refugees are often disappointed by the advice of the IDW/Nuffic. The UAF explained that this is because refugees are unfamiliar with the procedure of the IDW/Nuffic, the differences in education systems, and that refugees often have too high expectations.

Introduction guides can have an added value as they can reduce the chance that a refugee is disappointed with the advice as they simply explain the procedure of the credential recognition, in detail, to the refugees. By being honest about the big chance that more education is necessary to reach the Dutch standards, and explanations about the different school systems, the disappointment currently experienced by refugees can get reduced. Introduction guides do not directly improve the participation of refugees on the labour market, but they contribute towards the acceptance of the refugee that further education is needed, which can encourage the latter to start with this education.

5.4.2.2. Conclusion 2: Due to the fact that refugees are responsible for their own integration no information is provided on the credential recognition process by the Dutch authorities as a refugee is expected to find this out for himself, which causes a lack in clearance.'

In the Netherlands, a refugee is responsible for his own integration, but there are too few mechanisms and not enough information to inform refugees about the integration requirements which, in turn, is an obstacle to good integration. Lack of knowledge is one reason why it is hard for refugees to understand credential recognition (chapter 4.3.4.1). It can be concluded that a mechanism is missing that provides all the necessary information to the refugees to obtain a credential recognition (as fast as possible).

The introduction guides can be used as a coordination mechanism, which provides refugees with all the information they need to obtain a credential recognition. Introduction guides can also provide information about the procedure for credential recognition; i.e. which institutions are important, what kind of documentary does the refugee have to hand in etc.

Used in this way, an introduction guide has a positive influence on the participation of refugees on the labour market as there is evidence that; the sooner a refugee has his credentials recognized, the sooner the advice can be used as a starting point to plan the future career, and thus find a job that corresponds with the certificate of the refugee (Månsson & Delander, 2017). It is proven fact that a personal approach in terms of guidance contributes positively towards the participation on the labour market, as refugees are better motivated this way (Lidén, Nyhlén & Nyhlén, 2019).

5.4.2.3 Overall recommendation about the introduction guides and what has to be changed in the Netherlands

In Sweden, the Introduction guides are used when the refugee or migrant lives in a municipality and the introduction plan is made.⁷⁷ In the Netherlands, it would be the most effective to introduce the Introduction guides when a refugee starts with the integration programme because part of the integration programme is the orientation on the labour market.

In light of this recommendation, it should be mentioned that Minister Koolmees of Social Affairs and Employment is working on a new integration policy. This policy includes a PIP (Plan Inburgering en Participatie, *Plan Integration and Participation*). A PIP is a plan that creates an individual route for refugees to fast-track their participation in Dutch society through integration. Integration programmes are customized for all the newcomers: a personal programme to learn the language in combination with paid work, as a volunteer, study or stage. This agreement specifies the conditions and duration of the integration programme as well as 'how' the various skills are to be mastered. The Dutch municipalities will play an important role in managing the integration process, by supervising the process and evaluate it with the refugee. The whole point of the 'PIP' is that it is not permissive, not for the newcomer nor for the Municipality. Both parties need to commit themselves towards completion of the 'PIP', with the Municipalities supervising the process and evaluation the progress.⁷⁸

Inspired by the Swedish introduction guides, if introduced in the Netherlands it would be is the most effective when, during the PIP, a refugee is assigned to an employee of the municipality as his/her own guide. At this stage, it is clear for the refugee where to obtain all the information about his integration, including information about labour market participation and credential recognition (including the difference in education system and the standards on the Dutch labour market).

In June 2019 minister Koolmees presented his renewed integration act for consultation, called: 'Wet Inburgering 20...'. In this act, article 15.1 stated that based on an intake a personal education route for each refugee is conducted (1a) and get for this route the needed support and guidance (1b). Who is responsible for the guidance, presented in article 15.a, is based on the geographical area: the municipalities where the refugee is integrating (article 18.2). In this context, it must be required for

⁷⁷ ENIC-NARIC.net. *Recognised qualification held by refugees – guide for credential evaluations*. Retrieved on 25 May 2019, from: <https://www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>.

⁷⁸ Veranderopgave Inburgering. *Persoonlijk plan inburgering en participatie, resultaatsverplichting en handhaving*. 07February 2018. p. 6.

municipalities to provide personal guides for the refugees. In this light some more context should be added to the now presented article 15.1b, the adjustment is presented below in '*Italic*', first in Dutch, afterwards in English:

Art 15.1b: de daarvoor nodige ondersteuning en begeleiding *door een persoonlijke coach*

Art 15.1b: the support and guidance required for this *through a personal guide*

The municipalities have the responsibility to provide this support and guidance (through a personal coach), the new integration act also includes an allowance towards the municipalities to reimburse the cost which come with the intake and the personal learning route (41.1) this allowance comes with accountability for the municipalities, article 42. If it appears that the allowance, which municipalities receive for the participation of refugee, is used incompletely or are spent unduly. Is this allowance, at the level of the illegally spent part, reclaimed by the Minister.⁷⁹

5.4.3 Subsidized employment

5.4.3.1 Conclusion 4: Newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital which are as important as recognized certificates.

The entrepreneurs on the Dutch labour market stated, see chapter 4.3.2.2, that the influence of country-specific competencies are as important as credential recognition. Not having these competencies is a reason to reject a refugee's job application, even before looking at the certificate. Differences in country-specific human capital are very logical as every culture has his own habits (Hendricks & Schoellman, 2017). But, the influence of these differences can be reduced through the use of subsidized employment, in two ways.

First of all, by obliging employers to provide, 'Labour Market Training' to refugees, refugees can acquire country-specific competencies, like being assertive in the Netherlands, during work time. As a refugee is in employment, he will acquire these competencies through his contact with the employer and colleagues. The possibility to master these competencies will take away the barrier to the labour market.

⁷⁹ Wet Inburgering 20.. de consultatieversie. 25 June 2019, retrieved from: https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/veranderopgave_inburgering

Furthermore, as subsidized employment, of course, comes with a subsidy to employ refugees, it will increase the willingness of employers to hire a refugee (Joyce, 2019). Both foster participation of refugees on the labour market.

5.4.3.2 Conclusion 5: Speaking the native language is the most important competence in the job application phase

The most stated competence required to participate on the Dutch labour market is speaking the Dutch language (chapter 4.3.2.3, 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.4.1). Not speaking the language means that refugees are often not even invited for job interviews. Subsidized employment can take away this barrier, by requiring vocational training provided by the employer in exchange for a subsidy. It is proven that the most productive way of learning the language, is learning through doing instead of learning in a classroom (Lemaître, 2007).

Taking away the barrier of speaking the language will accelerate the participation of refugees on the labour market. This is based on the fact that entrepreneurs have stated that this is the most important criteria to hire or reject a refugee (Mulder, 2017).

5.4.3.3 Overall recommendation about subsidized employment and what has to be changed in the Netherlands.

The implementation of subsidized employment is a feature that will come with a price for the Dutch Government. In Sweden, the subsidized employment programmes have proven to raise refugee employment levels, but as an expensive participation tool, it does not give that much in return (Farrell et al., 2011). In light of the expensiveness, a cheaper recommendation can be made.

The recommendation is inspired by the subsidized employment programmes and reflects the principle that missing human capital should not be a reason not to employ a refugee. As said, the most effective way of learning is by practice (Lemaître, 2007). Unlike the subsidized employment programmes, this recommendation to motivate entrepreneurs is not based on subsidies, but rather the investment in qualified employees.

The labour participation of refugees increases when employers invest in cultural mediators. These mediators can be present in the organisation as employees, who are committed to promoting cultural diversity in the broadest sense of the term, as an additional task. When the mediator talks the same language as the newly hired refugee, the mediator can first of all help the refugee with all the questions and can teach him the language right away; which takes away the justification to reject a

refugee because he does not speak the language. Instead of learning the language in a labour market training (like in the Swedish example), the mediator can teach it. Furthermore, the mediator can also teach the new refugee what behaviour is expected from an employee. Cultural mediators with an immigrant background can be the role models for others. They can be responsible for identifying intercultural issues or problems and put them on the table; which takes away the barrier of missing the country-specific human capital (Robinson-Pant, Magyar, 2018). Both foster the participation of refugees on the labour market, as discussed in chapters 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2

Where possible, the mediators may suggest holistic or non-western ways of looking at the behaviour of and disorders caused by refugees. Through the mediators' activities, intercultural awareness can spread across the organisation in an organic, bottom-up way.

Entrepreneurs should see it as an investment in good and qualified employees. It, of course, will cost the entrepreneurs more money, especially in the beginning; the cultural mediator is less productive in the original job and the refugee has to learn a lot before being productive. But, as discussed in chapter 4.2.2, integration of refugees is a multi-dimensional two-way process, where organisations also have to take responsibilities. Considering this, employers should see the cultural mediators as a contribution to this social matter in a way that it can turn out to be effective and productive for themselves in the long term, as the net result is qualified employees.

5.5 Summary

This chapter provided insight into the credential recognition and labour market participation policies of Denmark and Sweden. Based on the interesting features founded in these EU Member States' policies recommendations were drawn for the implementation of those features in the Netherlands, in chapter 5.4. The influence of these features on the conclusions is shown in table 5. With these features an answer is given on the third sub-question 3: *'What is the procedure for credential recognition in Denmark & Sweden and what is there to learn from those countries?'*

In sum, three recommendations can be made. First, the IDW/Nuffic should, as a supplement to the current credential recognition, have the possibility to provide a background paper, to create more information about the refugees' skills and competencies. Secondly, the Dutch ministry should implement the proposed PIPs, in the renewed integration act, in such a way that a refugee has a personal guide during the whole integration period, who provides him overall guidance, and information

about the credential recognition procedure. This can provide clarity about the procedure and reduce disappointment by the refugees. Finally, organisations should introduce cultural mediators to take away barriers that in the past have resulted in the rejection of refugees in the job application period. This recommendation is inspired by the subsidized employment programmes in Sweden but is a less expensive option for the Dutch government.

| The Stakeholders | View of the stakeholders | Interesting features of the EU Member States | Views numbered |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Refugees, aid organisation & Nuffic | Due to different educational systems, the recognition of the certificates can be different as expected, which is disappointing for refugees. | Swedish Introduction Guides | 1 |
| Refugees & aid organisation | Due to the fact that refugees are responsible for their own integration, there is a lack in the clearance about the credential recognition. | Swedish introduction guides | 2 |
| Employers & aid organisation | It is hard for employers to understand the outlandish certificates even when they are recognised. | Denmark's background paper | 3 |
| Employers & aid organisation & Nuffic | Newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital which are as important as recognized certificates. | Swedish subsidized employment/ Cultural mediators | 4 |
| Employers, aid organisation & Nuffic | It all starts with language, it is the most important part of the integration, more important as credential recognition. | Swedish subsidized employment/ Cultural mediators | 5 |
| Organisations | Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates. | Denmark's background paper | 6 |
| Refugees & Nuffic | Credential recognition must be used as a starting point, but organisation and | Swedish introduction guides | 7 |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | education institution are the ones who decide in the end, it is just a help tool. | | |
|--|---|--|--|

Table 5: Stakeholder's views combined with features of other EU Member States

6. Discussion and conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to answer the research question stated in chapter 1: *What lessons can be learnt from stakeholders and other EU Member States to improve the Dutch policy for credential recognition in order to diminish the mismatch between the professional qualifications of highly educated Syrian refugees and the professional qualifications required by the Dutch authorities to take up employment on the Dutch labour market?* To answer this research question, three sub-questions were formulated.

In chapter 3, sub-question 1 was answered: *What is the procedure for credential recognition of certificates from outside the European Union in the Netherlands?* In the Netherlands, the credential recognition for higher educated refugees is done by the IDW/Nuffic. Credential recognition is done based on Directive 2005/36/EC and 'The convention on the recognition of qualification concerning higher education in the European Union.' The IDW/Nuffic is the organisation who provide the credential recognition in the Netherlands. Based on a comparison between the Dutch educational system, a binary system, and the foreign educational system a credential recognition is made, this is a non-binding advice.

As credential recognition can foster the participation on the labour market which, in turn, fosters the refugee's integration in the Netherlands, credential recognition was integrated in the integration policy in the Netherlands. Since, 2015, refugees can, within the integration, apply for a credential recognition for free.

The views of the stakeholders about credential recognition as discussed in chapter 3, are analysed in chapter 4 resulting in an answer to the sub-question 2: *What are the stakeholder's experiences with credential recognition in the Netherlands?* In chapter 4 the views of the stakeholders (the refugees, entrepreneurs, aid organisations and the IDW/Nuffic) are discussed and merged into seven conclusions revealing how credential recognition works or does not work, in practice:

- Due to different educational systems in the former and new home country, the recognition of the certificates can be different from expected, which is disappointing for refugees.
- Due to the fact that refugees are responsible for their own integration, there is a lack in the clearance about the credential recognition.
- It is hard for employers to understand outlandish certificates, even if they have been recognised by the IDW/Nuffic.
- Newcomers lack specific knowledge and other types of country-specific human capital which are as important as recognized certificates.

- It all starts with knowledge of the language of the new home country, it is the most important part of the immigrant's integration, more important than credential recognition.
- Recognition of skills and competencies is more important than the recognition of certificates
- Credential recognition must be used as a starting point; organisations and education institutions are the ones who decide in the end to employ/enrol; credential recognition is just a help tool.

It can be concluded from these conclusions that nothing is wrong with the credential recognition tool itself, and also not with the legislation behind it. However, this does not mean that with a few adjustments, the procedure for credential recognition cannot be improved which, in turn, will improve the integration of refugees by removing obstacles to access the labour market of their new home country.

The seven conclusions drafted in chapter 4 are used in chapter 5 to answer sub-question 3: *What is the procedure for credential recognition in Denmark & Sweden and what is there to learn from those countries?* The recommendations that are given based on the analysis of the credential recognition procedures in Denmark and Sweden are:

- Add Background papers to the credential recognition.
- Introduction guides should be provided for every refugee, within the integration act.
- Organisations should introduce cultural mediators.

As said, there is evidence that the procedure of credential recognition does work in the Netherlands. The recommendations in this context focus on the introduction of supporting and supplementing tools to improve this procedure. By answering sub-question 3, the research question of this thesis is also answered, the participation of higher educated Syrian refugees on the labour market can be increased by:

- Introducing background papers in the credential recognition procedure, to provide more information about the competencies of the refugee. It makes it easier for employers to understand the credential recognition.
- The introduce of PIPs, with the personal guides, in the integration act can create clarity about the credential recognition procedure which can foster the speed of the credential recognition, and so the speed of the participation on the labour market
- The use of cultural mediators by organisations can reduce the influence of language barriers and the lack of country-specific human capital in finding a place on the labour market. If these measures are put in place the focus can shift to the obtained credentials of a refugee.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

This thesis focusses on the labour market participation of Syrian refugees. However, the results, although they are descriptive for Syrian refugees in the Netherlands can be generalized in the sense that they can also be used to improve the position of other refugees on the labour market. Like Syrian refugees, 'other' refugees who entered the country after 2015 experience the same problems when trying to access the labour market which are also related to civic integration issues.

This study advanced knowledge about the views of the stakeholders regards the credential recognition policy in the Netherlands. By shedding new light on the views experienced by stakeholders new features could be suggested that will ultimately contribute to an increased labour market participation of refugees in the Netherlands.

This study's recommendations are designed to improve the credential recognition tool, but as the data collection has revealed, what is most important, support for refugees to help them understand and access the credential recognition procedure. The data that has been collected justifies the conclusion that the credential recognition procedure itself is not wrong even though refugees do experience the procedure as 'flawed'. By introducing the support mechanisms given in the recommendation, the labour market participation of refugees can be improved. These proposed support mechanisms will also contribute to reduce the fear that refugees will take the jobs present amongst the native Dutch people. The recommendation, if endorsed, will mean that refugees can work on a level that fits their education. This can reduce the repression on the labour market and, at the same time improves the integration of refugees into Dutch society as they can learn the language and culture on the work floor.

And finally, this research can be used as a support of the plans of Minister Koolmees for a new civic integration policy. The views expressed by stakeholders participating in this research show that there is indeed a need for personal integration plans, as proposed by Minister Koolmees.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study faces several limitations. The first two limitations can be found in the sample. The first limitation is that the views of the refugees and employers are collected through secondary data, which was mostly taken from interviews with Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, but not all of it. Even though this research is based on the views of Syrian refugees, it can be considered to reflect the views of refugees in general, because as stated in chapter 4.2.1 are, as in every refugee group, many difference between the Syrians The recommendation is, in part, based on the post- 2015 civic integration

programme which is the integration programme mostly used by Syrian refugees. But does not provide a particular recommendation for the Syrians Refugees

The second limitation concerns the interview sampling. The concerns of the experts are based on the views of one expert in the aid organisation field and one expert in the policy field. This reflects the reality that there are not many experts in the field of credential recognition and that it is hard to contact them because there is a lot of hostile interest in the situation of refugees and the aid organisation does not have time to help all the students or interested researchers. The knowledge of the interviewed experts of the subject was very high value and provided interesting points for this research that could not be found in the literature. However, the fact that there were only two interviewees reduces the reliability of the findings.

The last limitation is the time-space. Time constraints meant that a cross-sectional design was chosen, which means that data was collected at one point in time. However, to measure the impact of the recommendation a longitudinal design would have been better as this allows researchers to follow the impact of the recommendations. It also increases the ability to better capture changes and assess how those changes affect the effective integration of refugees in terms of their educational level.

Future research should focus on the impact the recommendation has on the integration of Syrian refugees on the Dutch labour market. Another interesting idea for future research is to approach the stakeholders interviewed for this research after the implementation of the amendments to the civic integration programme, which have been proposed by Minister Koolmees, to see if their views and concerns have been addressed or whether the amendments give rise to new concerns regarding labour market participation of refugees.

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8. Appendixes

8.1 Appendix 1 Acronyms

ALMP = *Active Labour Market Policies*

AZC = Asielzoekerscentrum

Asylum Seekers Centre

BNR = Business Nieuws Radio

Business News Radio

CBS = Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek

Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics

DUO = Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs

Education Service Execution

IDW = Internationale diplomawaardering

International certificate recognition

PIP = Plan inburgering en Participatie

Plan integration and participation

SBB = Beroepsonderwijs & Bedrijfsleven

Vocational education & Labour market

SCP = Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau

The Netherlands Institute for Social Research

UAF = Studie en werk voor hoogopgeleide vluchtelingen

Study and work for highly skilled refugees

8.2 Appendix 2: Overview Syrian education system

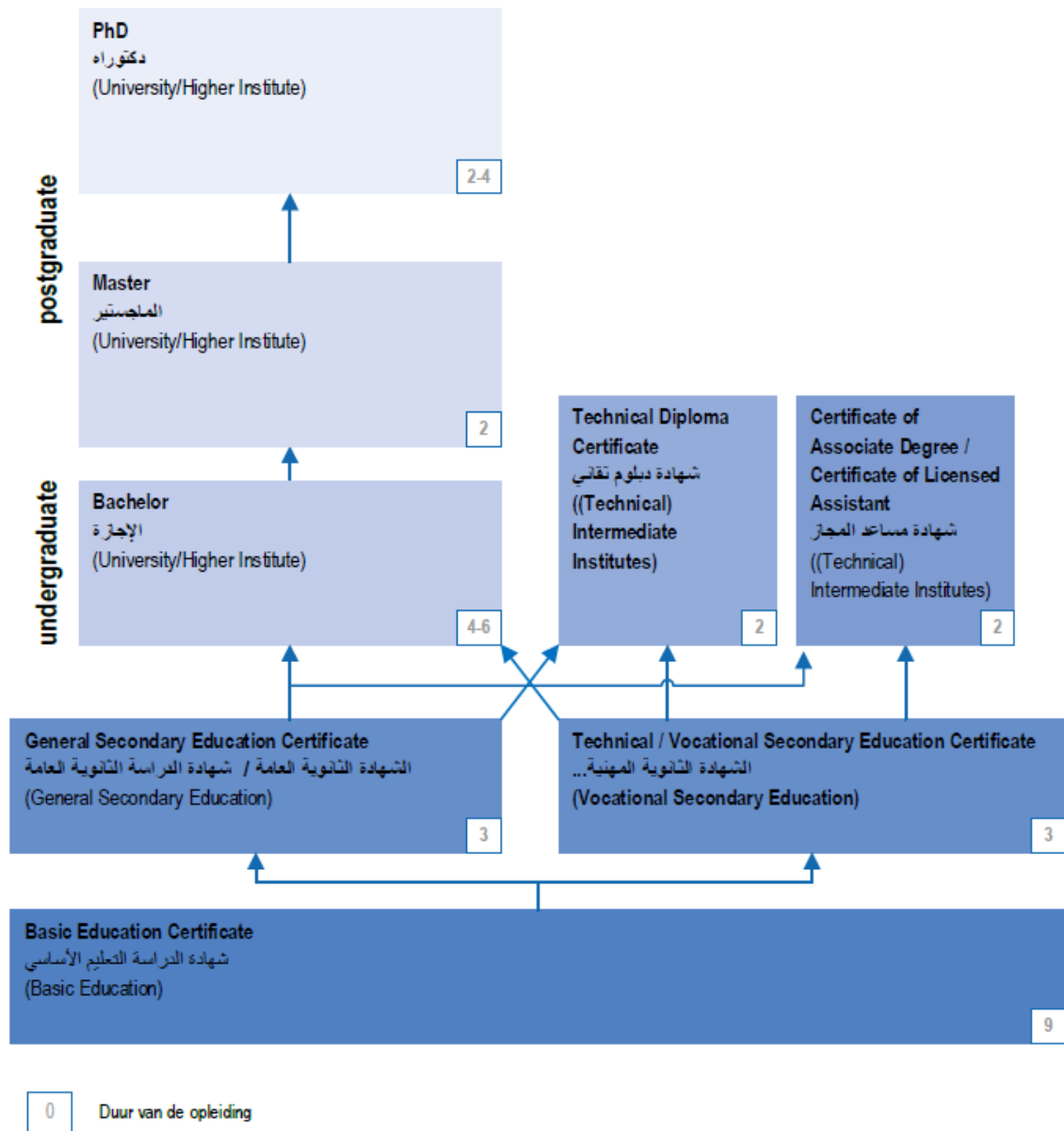


Figure 5: overview Syrian education system⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Nuffic. *Onderwijssysteem Syrië beschreven en vergeleken met het Nederlandse systeem*. 1 December 2015

8.3 Appendix 3: Overview Dutch educational system

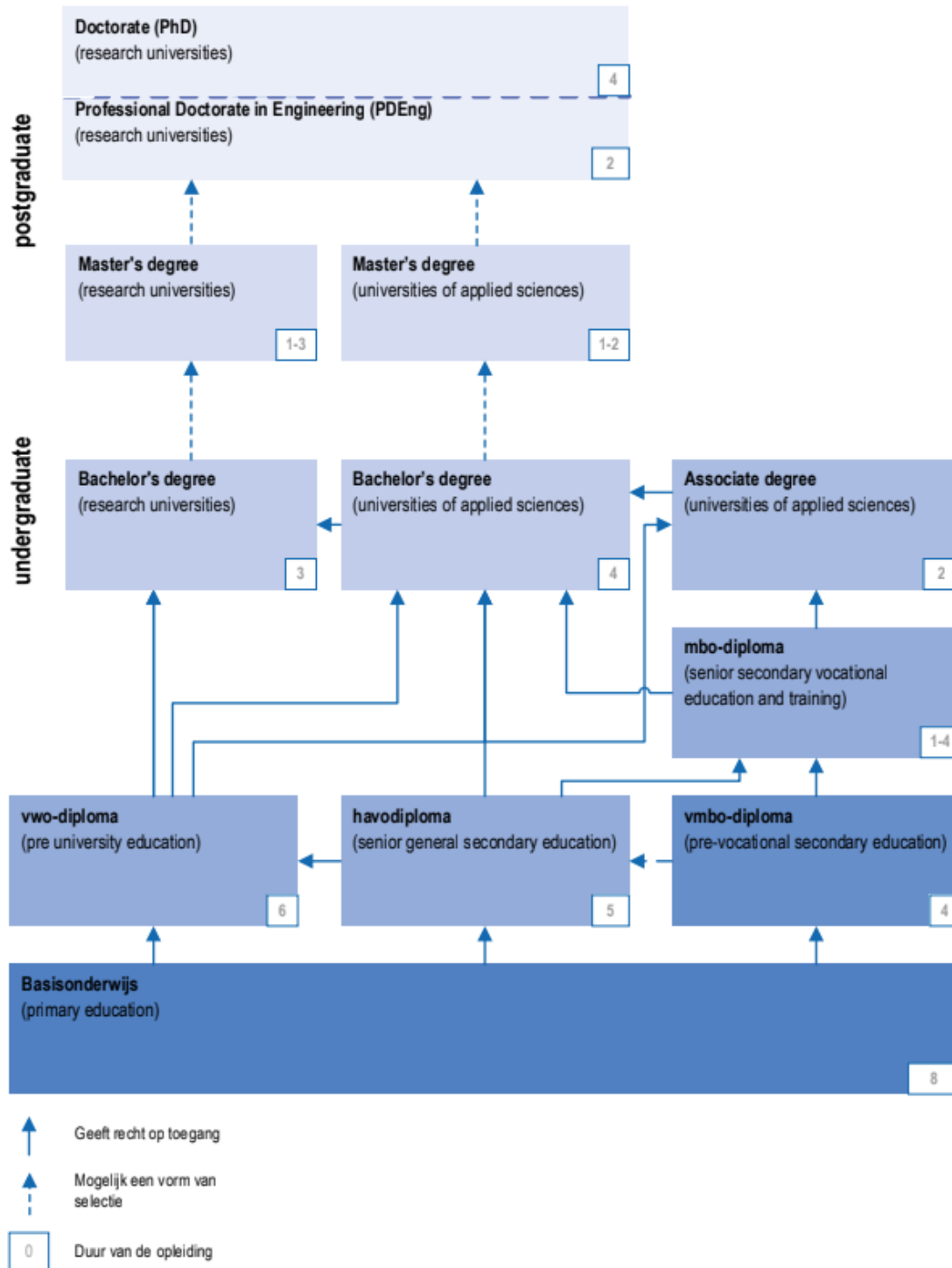


Figure 6: overview Syrian education system⁸¹

⁸¹ Nuffic. *Onderwijssysteem Nederlands*. 5 July 2018

8.4 Appendix 4: Chapter 5 Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee at its fifth meeting, Sèvres) Assessment criteria.

V. Assessment criteria

Status of the institution

29. In view of the wide diversity of higher education institutions and of the developments in transnational education, the status of a qualification cannot be established without taking into account the status of the institution and/or programme through which the qualification was awarded.

30. The competent recognition authorities should seek to establish whether the higher education institution belongs to the higher education system of a State party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and/or belonging to the European Region. In the case of qualifications awarded by higher education institutions established through transnational arrangements, the competent recognition authorities should analyze these arrangements on the basis of the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education and in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees.

31. Where countries have established a quality assurance system including a system of formal assessment of their higher education institutions and programmes, the competent recognition authorities should take due account of the results of the process when evaluating qualifications from such systems.

Assessment of individual qualifications

32. Recognition of foreign qualifications may be sought for a variety of purposes. The assessment should take due account of the purpose(s) for which recognition is sought, and the recognition statement should make clear the purpose(s) for which the statement is valid.

33. Before undertaking the assessment, the competent recognition authorities should establish which national and international legal texts are relevant to the case, and whether these require any specific decision to be reached or procedure to be followed.

34. The assessment should also take into account past practice in similar recognition cases, in order to ensure consistency in recognition practice. Past practice should be a guide, and any substantial change of practice should be justified.

35. The assessment of a foreign qualification should identify the qualification in the system of the country in which recognition is sought which is most comparable to the

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foreign qualification, taking into account the purpose for which recognition is sought. In the case of a qualification belonging to a foreign system of education, the assessment should take into account its relative position and function compared to other qualifications in the same system. Where available, the competent recognition authorities should also refer to the National Qualifications Framework, European Qualifications Frameworks and other similar Qualification Frameworks as part of the assessment process.

36. Qualifications of approximately equal level may show differences in terms of content, profile, workload, quality and learning outcomes. In the assessment of foreign qualifications, these differences should be considered in a flexible way, and only substantial differences in view of the purpose for which recognition is sought (e.g academic or de facto professional recognition) should lead to partial recognition or nonrecognition of the foreign qualifications.

37. Recognition of foreign qualifications should be granted unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the qualification for which recognition is requested and the relevant qualification of the State in which recognition is sought. In applying this principle, the assessment should seek to establish whether:

(a) the differences in learning outcomes between the foreign qualification and the relevant qualification of the country in which recognition is sought are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted;

(b) the differences in access to further activities (such as further study, research activities, and the exercise of gainful employment) between the foreign qualification and the relevant qualification of the country in which recognition is sought are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted;

(c) the differences in key elements of the programme(s) leading to the qualification in comparison to the programme(s) leading to the relevant qualification of the country in which recognition is sought are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted. The comparability of programme elements should, however, be analysed only with a view to the comparability of outcomes and access to further activities, and not as a necessary condition for recognition in their own right;

(d) competent recognition authorities can document that the differences in the quality of the programme and/or institution at which the qualification was awarded in relation to the quality of the programmes and/or institutions granting the similar qualification in terms of which

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recognition is sought are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted.

38. Where formal rights attach to a certain foreign qualification in the home country, the qualification should be evaluated with a view to giving the holder comparable formal rights in the host country, in so far as these exist and they arise from the learning outcomes certified by the qualification.

39. The recognition of qualifications issued several years ago and/or under previous higher education structures may present different challenges to the recognition of more recent qualifications. The following should be considered:

(a) To what extent a qualification is outdated will depend on the field concerned as well as the activities undertaken by the applicant since the qualification was issued;

(b) Where qualifications were issued under previous structures, the competent recognition authorities should refer to the status of the qualification in the issuing country. If a national qualifications framework exists in the issuing country, it should be established whether previous qualifications are included in it;

(c) In general, older qualifications should be recognised along the same lines as similar qualifications issued in the country in which recognition is sought, and taking into account the purpose for which recognition is sought. It may be considered whether relevant work experience may compensate for dated qualifications.

40. Competent recognition authorities should be encouraged to focus on the learning outcomes, as well as the quality of the programme and to consider its duration as merely one indication of the level of achievement reached at the end of the programme. The assessment process should acknowledge that recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, different forms of access to higher education, joint degrees and life-long learning will all shorten the duration of some academic qualifications without diminishing the learning outcomes and a decision not to grant recognition should not be motivated by duration alone.

41. The assessment of a foreign qualification should focus on the qualification for which recognition is sought. Previous levels of education should be considered only where these levels have a serious bearing on the outcome of the assessment and should, as far as possible, be limited to qualifications of a level immediately preceding the qualification for which recognition is sought.

42. In undertaking the assessment, the competent recognition authorities should apply their know-how and best professional skills and take note of all relevant published information. Where adequate information on the learning outcomes is available, this should take precedence in the assessment over consideration of the education programme which has led to the qualification⁸²

⁸² Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee at its fifth meeting, Sèvres). Strasbourg/Paris, 23rd June 2010. Chapter 5

Welke diploma's kunnen niet gewaardeerd worden?

Algemeen:

- Cursussen of opleidingen die korter dan 1000 uur (een schooljaar) geduurd hebben.
- Diploma's die buiten het reguliere onderwijs behaald zijn, bijvoorbeeld bij een particulier instituut.
- Nederlandse diploma's en / of certificaten.

Specifiek:

- Rijbewijzen, zwemdiploma's, werkgeversverklaringen, verklaringen waaruit blijkt dat u een beroep mag uitoefenen.
- Certificaat heftruckchauffeur
- ICT-cursussen, zoals cursussen Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint) of een typediploma
- EHBO-diploma
- Certificaat van korte beveiligingscursussen (korter dan 1000 uur)
- Ondernemersdiploma's, Certificaten of Getuigschriften van Bedrijfsbeheer
- Opleidingen voor politie, brandweer of opleidingen in het leger
- Zeevaartopleidingen (korter dan 1000 uur en / of gevolgd buiten het reguliere onderwijs)
- Branche-diploma's (korter dan 1000 uur en / of gevolgd buiten het reguliere onderwijs)
- Specialistische interne ziekenhuisopleidingen, zoals OK-assistent en Anesthesie (zie College Zorg Opleidingen via www.czo.nl)

LET OP: Het kan voorkomen dat we geen uitspraak kunnen doen over het diploma. In dat geval ontvangt u een *Bericht geen Waardering*. De desbetreffende landenexpert stelt een *Bericht geen Waardering* op na inhoudelijke beoordeling van de aanvraag.

Als wij een *Bericht geen Waardering* afgeven, ontvangt u het bedrag dat u aan ons heeft overgemaakt niet terug.

Wanneer kunt u beter direct met een andere organisatie contact opnemen?

- **Als u met een buitenlands diploma een reguliere opleiding wilt volgen in Nederland**
Neemt u dan contact op met de school, hogeschool of universiteit waar u de opleiding wilt volgen. De onderwijsinstelling beslist of zij u toelaat en of u vrijstelling kunt krijgen voor bepaalde studieonderdelen. De onderwijsinstelling kan bij SBB of Nuffic een diplomawaardering aanvragen.

Deze regeling geldt niet voor particuliere onderwijsinstellingen. U moet dan zelf een diplomawaardering aanvragen.

- **Als u een onderwijsbevoegdheid of een academische titel wilt aanvragen**
Neemt u dan contact op met de Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO),
Afdeling Diploma-erkenning en Legalisatie
Telefoonnummer: 050 599 80 36
E-mail: ks.dw@duo.nl
Website www.duo.nl

Gereguleerde (bij wet beschermde) beroepen

Sommige beroepen zijn gereguleerd (bij wet beschermd) in Nederland. Voorbeelden zijn arts, leraar verpleegkundige en apothekersassistent. Dit betekent dat iemand alleen in dit beroep mag werken na toestemming door de bevoegde autoriteit (de organisatie die beslist over de toegang tot het beroep). Deze kijkt onder andere of iemand voldoet aan de juiste opleidingseisen.

Wilt u werken in een gereguleerd beroep in de gezondheidszorg, zoals verpleegkundige, fysiotherapeut of Verzorgende IG? Dan moet u een aanvraag indienen bij het Centraal Informatiepunt Beroepen Gezondheidszorg (CIBG) van het Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport

BIG - informatielijn: 0900 - 8998225
Telefoonnummer vanuit het buitenland: + 31 70 340 6600
E-mail info@bigregister.nl;
website www.bigregister.nl

8.6 Appendix 6: Criteria set by the Ministry of High Education and Science of Denmark

Assessment criteria

The assessment normally includes the following criteria:

1. Whether the educational programme or the study periods have been recognised in the home country.
2. When the educational programme or the study periods were completed.
3. The admission requirements of the educational programme or the study periods, more specifically whether the admission requirements for the foreign educational programme correspond to the admission requirements that apply to a corresponding Danish educational programme and whether the entry qualification is comparable in terms of length and level.
4. The length of the educational programme or the study periods, more specifically whether the duration of the educational programme is comparable to the duration of a corresponding Danish educational programme.
5. The purposes of the educational programme or the study periods.
6. The structure and academic content of the educational programme or the study periods, including: What is the academic content seen in relation to a corresponding Danish educational programme? Does it include subjects that are not academically relevant? Does it include an independent project or dissertation? What is the extent of this and how much time has been allocated for this part of the educational programme? Is the educational programme research based or not?
7. The relationship between theory and practice in the educational programme or the study periods.
8. Previous assessments made by the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education (previously Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, Danish Agency for International Education/CIRIUS or CVUU) or others.

Substantial differences

If substantial differences are ascertained between the foreign qualification and a comparable Danish qualification, this will be included in the assessment of the foreign qualification. This applies in, for example, the following cases:

- If the previous education (the admission basis) is shorter or is assessed as being at a lower level than the level required for admission to a corresponding educational programme in Denmark, the first year(s) of the subsequent study programme of higher education will normally be assessed as being on a level with a Danish entry qualification.
- If the foreign educational programme has not been research based, it will normally not be compared with a Danish university degree, but with an intermediate study programme of higher education, also where the foreign qualification is a foreign bachelor degree that has been acquired at a university.⁸³

⁸³ Ministry of Higher education and Science. *Assessment methods and criteria*. N.D. retrieved on 31 July from: <https://ufm.dk/en/education/recognition-and-transparency/more-about-recognition/assessment-methods-and-criteria>

8.7 Appendix 7: Data overview

| Collection method | Type of Data | Method | Sampling strategy | Purpose |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Interviews | Specific target experts in the field of credential recognition in the Netherlands | Semi-structured interviews | Purposive sampling | Gain in-depth views of the experts about the credential recognition in the Netherlands, and over the overall integration of Syrian refugees |
| Literature | Field researches, Research papers | Content analysis | Snowball sampling | Collect the views of stakeholders about the credential recognitions in the Netherlands, sketch a profile of the stakeholder and the situation in the Netherlands |
| Jurisprudential | EU directives, Case law, Dutch law | Content analysis | Convenience sampling | Get a clear understanding of the legislation behind the credential recognition policy in the Netherlands, and find interesting features in other EU Member states |

Table 6: *Data overview*

8.8 Appendix 8: Interview protocol

The interview protocol will be formulated in English and translated into Dutch since the experts who are interviewed are Dutch (mother language) speaking.

Some questions are meant to provide consistency throughout the entire interview and are therefore asked in each interview. Other questions will provide a topic list from which several relevant questions will be chosen. Some questions will be bundled, in such a way that sub-questions can be asked when a respondent answers on the first question.

The interview protocols can be found on the following page.

The interviews were conducted between the 17th of June and the 27th of June 2019. Interviews were held in Dutch as this is the native language of the interviewees. Interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes. The interviews were recorded and can be found in appendix 9, the coded are attached in appendix 10. In order to maintain the accuracy of the data, the transcribing of the interviews took place within 24 hours after the interview.

8.8.1 Aid organisation (English)

For my master 'Labour Law and Employment Relations', I am writing my thesis about the integration of Syrian refugees on the Dutch labour market. Research reveals that the integration of refugees is still rough. One of the policies that has influence on the integration of the refugees is the credential recognition of professions of refugees, which is, based on the Lisbon treaty, mandatory for EU Member States

For my research, I want to research what the view is of the stakeholders in the credential recognition policy in the Netherlands about this policy. And what there is to learn from other EU Member States, because Member States are free to set up that policy.

I also see the UAF as a stakeholder in this policy because they represent the interest of the refugees and giving them chances on the labour market. But the UAF is also an important stakeholder because it is an organisation who sees both sides of the experiences of the refugees and organisation from both sides and acknowledge the objections and difficulties.

To start off I would like to thank you for your time. Before we start the interview I would like to settle on a few things. The interview consists of multiple open questions. I am going to talk to you for about an hour. Do you mind if I record the interview?

Overall question about the integration of Syrian refugees on the labour market?

- Overall, what do you think about the integration from the Syrian refugees on the labour market?
- Are there some characteristic that distinguishes Syrian refugees from other refugees?
- What are the most important points where a refugee is selected on in the selection procedure?
- To what extent are obtained certificates and work experiences important in the selection procedural?

The use and results of credential recognition

- To what extent do you know that organisations use credential recognition?
- What are the experiences with the advice of the IDW about the recognition of the certificates of the refugees?

- A lower/same/higher recognition?
- What is the reason for this do you think?
- Are employers always accept the advice or are they also doing research by themselves?
- Do you know of a it happens that a refugee is not hired though the advices from the IDW?

Experiences of refugees and organisation

- Do you think that all refugees and organizations are familiar with the credential recognition of the IDW?
- Based on the experiences of the refugees, they indicate that the diplomas are often recognized lower than expected
- Do you also see it like that, and are refugees prepared for the fact that the advice may be lower?
- Companies indicate that they do not consider the credential recognition as important but are more interested in the knowledge and skills of refugees, and do you also experience that?
- How many influences has the command of the language on job prospects on the labour market?

Increasing labour market opportunities for refugees in general

- In what way could the credential recognition policy offer better integration of refugees into the labour market

8.8.2 Aid organisation (Dutch)

Voor mijn master 'Labour Law and Employment Relations' schrijf ik mijn thesis over de integratie van Syrische vluchtelingen op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt. Uit de cijfers blijkt dat de integratie van de vluchtelingen ondanks vele initiatieven stroef verloopt. Een van de factoren die invloed heeft op de integratie is de diplomawaardering van buitenlandse diploma's, die op basis van de Lisbon Treaty verplicht is gesteld voor EU Member States.

Ik wil in mijn onderzoek uitzoeken hoe de stakeholders het Nederlandse diploma waarderingstraject van het IDW ervaren en wat er te leren valt van andere EU Member States, omdat de Member States vrij zijn om dit traject naar eigen keus in te vullen.

Het UAF zie ik ook als een stakeholder in het traject omdat het de belangen van de vluchtelingen behartigt en ze een kans op de arbeidsmarkt geeft. Maar het UAF is ook zeker een belangrijke stakeholder omdat het tussen de vluchtelingen en de organisaties staat en van beide kanten de bezwaren en moeilijkheden ervaart.

Ik wil u als eerste natuurlijk bedanken voor u tijd. Voordat we starten wil ik nog een paar dingen met u bespreken. Het interview zou bestaan uit verschillende open vragen, en zou ongeveer een half uur tot 45 minuten duren. Vindt u het erg als ik het interview opneem?

Algemene vragen de integratie van Syrische vluchtelingen op de arbeidsmarkt

- Wat vindt u over het algemeen over de integratie van Syrische vluchtelingen op de arbeidsmarkt?
- Zijn er bepaalde karaktereigenschappen die Syriërs onderscheiden van andere vluchtelingen?
- Wat zijn de belangrijkste punten waarop vluchtelingen worden beoordeeld in de sollicitatieprocedure?
- In hoeverre zijn behaalde diploma's en werkervaring belangrijk?

Het gebruik en resultaat van gewaardeerde diploma's

- In hoeverre weet u dat bedrijven gebruik maken van gewaardeerde diploma's?
- Wat zijn de ervaring met het advies van de IDW over het diploma van een vluchteling?
- Een lagere/dezelfde/hogere waardering?
- Waar ligt dit aan denkt u

- Nemen organisaties het advies altijd aan of doen organisaties daarna nog onderzoek zelf omdat het maar een advies is?
- Heeft u weleens ervaren dat een kandidaat niet is aangenomen door een advies van de IDW?

Ervaringen van vluchtelingen en organisaties

- Denkt u dat alle vluchtelingen en organisaties bekend zijn met de diplomawaardering van de IDW?
- Vanuit de ervaringen van de vluchtelingen geven zij aan dat de diploma's vaak lager worden gewaardeerd dan zij hadden verwacht?
- Ervaart u dat ook zo, en worden vluchtelingen daarin begeleid dat het advies lager kan uitvallen?
- Bedrijven geven aan dat ze de diplomawaardering niet zo belangrijk vinden maar meer geïnteresseerd zijn in de kennis en ervaringen en vluchtelingen ervaart u dat ook zo?
- Hoeveel invloed hebben Nederlands verworven competenties op de kansen op een baan op de arbeidsmarkt?

Vergroten van arbeidsmarktkansen van vluchtelingen in het algemeen

- Op welke manier zou het diplomawaarderings procedure een beter integratie kunnen bieden van vluchtelingen op de arbeidsmarkt
- Wat kan er gedaan worden om de teleurstelling van vluchtelingen worden tegen gegaan?

8.8.3 The IDW/Nuffic (English)

For my master 'Labour Law and Employment Relations', I am writing a thesis about the participation of Syrian refugees on the Dutch labour market. Research reveals that the participation of refugees is still rough. One of the policies that has influence on the integration of the refugees is the credential recognition of profession, which is, based on the Lisbon treaty, mandatory for EU Member States

For my research, I want to research what the view is of the stakeholders in the credential recognition policy in the Netherlands about this policy. And what there is to learn from other EU Member States, because Member States are free to set up that policy. One of the most important stakeholders are, of course, the Nuffic and IDW because these organisations are the ones who provide the credential recognition.

To start off I would like to thank you for your time. Before we start the interview I would like to settle on a few things. The interview consists of multiple open questions. I am going to talk to you for about an hour. Do you mind if I record the interview?

Overall question about certificate recognition

- On what basis are the certificate recognized?
- Are there legal procedures related to the recognition of certificates?
- Is this a general procedure or does it differ per profession/target group?
- What are the most important points on which the IDW decides that a university foreign diploma is rated lower / equally high / higher than a Dutch university diploma?
- What is the influence of speaking the Dutch language or a good command of English on the advice you give organization?
- Is there a possibility to request a second recognition? If so, is another procedure used?

Syrian refugees

- What can be done in advance to remedy the lack of professional qualifications?
- What are your experiences with the Syrian population, are they highly educated?
- To what extent does the IDW experience that Syria's diplomas have a lower value than those in the Netherlands?

Receipt of advice through organization/refugees

- Do you think that all refugees and employers know that they can have their certificate recognized in the Netherlands?
- Do you know what companies do with the advice, is this taken over or is something else sometimes chosen despite the advice?
- Are you familiar with the reasons why organizations do or do not adopt the advice?

Increasing labour market opportunities for refugees in general

- In what way could the credential recognition procedure offer better participation of refugees into the labour market
- Are there initiatives regarding the disappointment of migrants that could reduce the disappointment in the level of the recognition?

8.8.4 The IDW/Nuffic (Dutch)

Voor mijn master Labour Law and Employment Relations schrijf ik mijn thesis over de integratie van Syrische vluchtelingen op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt. Uit de cijfers blijkt dat de integratie van de vluchtelingen ondanks vele initiatieven stroef verloopt. Een van de factoren die invloed heeft op de integratie is de diplomawaardering, die op basis van de Lisbon Treaty verplicht is gesteld voor EU Member States.

Ik wil in mijn onderzoek uitzoeken hoe de stakeholders het Nederlandse diploma waardering policy van het IDW ervaren en wat er te leren valt van andere EU Member States, omdat de Member States vrij zijn om dit traject naar eigen keus in te vullen. Een van de belangrijkste stakeholder in het proces is natuurlijk de Nuffic en IDW, omdat deze organisaties gaan over de diploma waardering.

Ik wil u als eerste natuurlijk bedankten voor u tijd. Voordat we starten wil ik nog een paar dingen met u bespreken. Het interview zou bestaan uit verschillende open vragen, en zou ongeveer een half uur tot 45 minuten duren. Vind u het erg als ik het interview opneem?

Algemene vragen over diploma erkenning

- Op basis waarvan worden de diploma's van migranten gewaardeerd?
- Zijn er juridische procedures verbonden aan de waardering van de diploma's?
- Is dit een algemeen traject of verschilt dit per beroep/doelgroep?
- Wat zijn de belangrijkste punten waarop de IDW beslist dat een universitair buitenlands diploma lager/even hoog/hoger gewaardeerd worden dan een Nederlands universitair diploma?
- Wat is de invloed van het spreken van de Nederlandse taal of een goede beheersing van het Engels op het advies dat u organisatie geeft?
- Is er een mogelijkheid om een herwaardering aan te vragen? Zo ja wordt er dan een andere procedure aangehouden?
- Waarom is het advies van de IDW eigenlijk alleen een advies? Zou het niet beter zijn om het bindend te maken?
- Wat kan een migrant doen als hij/zij het niet eens is met het advies?
→ second opinie, juridische stappen?

Syrische vluchtelingen

- Wat kan op voorhand worden gedaan om het gebrek aan beroepskwalificaties te verhelpen?
- Is dit gegroeid door de komst van de Syrische migranten flow in 2015?
- Wat zijn uw ervaringen met de Syrische populatie, zijn deze hoog opgeleid?
- Worden deze diploma's over het algemeen hoog gewaardeerd, of merkt u een groot verschil in de onderwijssystemen van Nederland en Syrië?
- In hoeverre ervaart de IDW dat de diploma's van Syriërs een lagere waarde hebben dan die in Nederland?
- Bij welke doelgroepen of beroepen wordt er over het algemeen een lager advies gegeven, en wat is hier de reden voor?

Ontvangst van het advies bij organisatie/vluchtelingen

- Denkt u dat alle vluchtelingen en werkgevers weet dat hij/zij hun diploma kunnen laten waarderen in Nederland?
- Wat merken jullie dat bedrijven met het advies doen, wordt dit overgenomen of wordt er toch ondanks het advies soms iets anders gekozen?
- Bent u bekend met de redenen waarom organisaties wel of niet het advies overnemen?

Tot slot

- Zijn er componenten van de diploma erkenning waarvan u persoonlijk denkt dat deze verbeterd kunnen worden om zo de diploma erkenning te verbeteren?
- Of zijn andere initiatieven wat betreft de teleurstelling van migranten die de pijn zou kunnen verlagen?

8.9 Appendix 9: Summaries of interviews

8.6.1 Summary aid organisation A

Respondent: employee UAF

Date: 19 June 2019

Wat vindt uw organisatie van de integratie van Syrische vluchtelingen hoe dat op dit moment gaat?

Dit is een heel algemene open vraag. Kijk ik denk dat er op dit moment te weinig regie wordt gevoerd op die integratie, dat is natuurlijk ook de kern van de huidige inburgeringswet. Dat wordt gezegd: 'het is de eigen verantwoordelijkheid van de vluchteling om de inburgering in te vullen, en daar zelf ook cursussen voor in te kopen'. Dat betekent ook dat vluchteling die nog nauwelijks iets van de Nederlandse samenleving weten en van het Nederlandse onderwijsveld en de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt, dat traject moeten gaan vormgeven, dat is natuurlijk erg lastig. Dus dat is het gebrek aan regie, daarin komt wel verandering in, als het goed is in een nieuwe inburgeringswet die in 2021 zal ingaan. Want dan wordt die regiefunctie meer bij de gemeente gelegd.

Maar wat ook speelt, is dat er te weinig faciliteiten zijn voor vluchtelingen om echt een goed inburgeringstraject neer te zetten. Er zijn natuurlijk wel allemaal taalaanbieders, maar die richten zich voornamelijk op taal en taal is natuurlijk niet het enige wat nodig is om goed in te burgeren en de arbeidsmarkt te betreden. Dus je hebt daarnaast ook particuliere stichtingen nodig zoals het 'belangenbehartigingsorganisatie A' die vluchtelingen begeleiding bij het vormgeven van het traject. Het feit dat zulke private stichtingen nodig zijn, zegt al dat de integratie vanuit de overheid nog niet verloopt zoals het zou moeten.

Het traject dat in 2021 in gaat, dat veel meer gaat bieden omdat gemeente dan dat soort trajecten vormgeven en inkopen. Op dit moment is dat dus niet zo, dus je ziet ook dat veel particuliere partijen die betrokken zijn bij de voorbereiding op de nieuwe inburgering ook zeggen: 'we hebben behoeften aan gecombineerde leerwerktrajecten. We hebben behoeften aan trajecten waarin de taal leren niet alleen in een taalklasje gebeurt en ook maar drie dagdelen in de week, maar trajecten die voltijd zijn. Waarin naast taal ook aandacht wordt besteed aan allerlei andere zaken die ook nog belangrijk zijn voor de inburgering.' En ja die andere zaken hebben ook heel erg te maken met de arbeidsmarktparticipatie, zoals Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt leren, wat jouw competenties zijn in relatie tot beroepen die je wilt uitvoeren. En dan ook uitzoeken wat je kan doen om eventuele competenties die je nog niet hebt te verwerven. Dus op dit moment schiet het flink te kort. En nou ja dat weerspiegeld zich dan ook wel in vrij lage percentages wat betreft arbeidsparticipaties die gemeten worden. Kijk wat er vaak in die onderzoeken niet goed wordt weergegeven is dat er wordt gezegd van: 'nou ja na 2 jaar is nog maar 12 procent van de statushouders aan het werk'. Ja dat is op zichzelf vrij logisch omdat als je de taal nog niet goed spreekt het bijna onmogelijk is om aan het werk te zijn. En vaak moeten mensen vaak ook nog andere vaardigheden ontwikkelen. Maar als je kijkt na tien jaar dan zijn de statushouders, of ex statushouders, want dan zijn ze meestal al generationaliseerd, dat ze nog steeds minder aan het werk zijn dan de autochtonen bevolking dus daar zit wel echt een verschil en heeft ook alles te maken met

belemmeringen die er zijn en waar ik dus ook een hoofdstuk over geschreven heb in het boek. En het boek gaat sowieso in andere hoofdstukken nog in op andere aspecten die van invloed zijn.

En als je dan kijkt naar Syriërs in het algemeen, zijn er nog bepaalde karaktereigenschappen die het voor Syriërs lastig maken om te integreren of ziet u daar niet heel veel verschil in?

Nou ja Syriërs, je ziet altijd wel op basis van nationaliteit dat er verschillen zijn in groepen. Zo doen Ethiopiërs en Somaliërs het gemiddeld niet zo goed. Wat je ook wel kunt verklaren als je kijkt naar het onderwijsstelsel in die landen. Iraniërs en tegenwoordig ook Afghanen doen het juist wel heel goed. Het heeft voor een deel te maken met een bepaald type vluchtelingen, Iraniërs zijn over het algemeen vooral politieke vluchtelingen en geen oorlogsvluchtelingen en dat betekent ook vaak dat ze uit een bepaalde laag van de samenleving komen en dan kunnen ze over het algemeen wat makkelijker integreren omdat ze over het algemeen goed opgeleid zijn en misschien als politiek vluchteling ook wel redelijk voorbereid zijn op het idee dat ze zouden gaan vluchten al nagedacht hebben waar ze naartoe willen en al connecties hebben in dat land waar ze terecht komen en beschikken ze soms over middelen om dingen tot stand te brengen. Dus daar zie je wel verschillen in, bij Syriërs heb je te maken met oorlogsvluchtelingen en zie je vaak dat de eerste groep die komt wat hoger opgeleid is en de groep die later komt wat lager opgeleid is omdat die wat minder mogelijkheden ook om te vluchten. Maar veel Syrische vluchtelingen blijven nu hangen ook in de opvangkampen in de regio, dus die groep die echt heel laag opgeleid is blijft ook wat meer achter bij groepen in het verleden, uit bijvoorbeeld Irak of Afghanistan. Je kunt je ook de vraag stellen als je toch zo binnen die nationaliteiten zo veel verschillende groepen ziet, kun je die groep Syriërs wel als een groep zien. Want je hebt natuurlijk hoogopgeleide Syrische vluchtelingen uit een christelijke meer westerse cultuur, die zich wat makkelijker kunnen integreren dan Syriërs die een hele traditionele islamitische cultuur meebrengen, en die heb je ook dus er zijn grote verschillen tussen de Syriërs die naar Nederland komen. Er is ook een onderzoek gepubliceerd vrij recent waarin Syriërs met een meer christelijke achtergrond, vinden dat ze in Nederland meer op hun plek zijn en die willen ook liever blijven dan Syriërs die een meer traditionele Islamitische achtergrond hebben.

Als je kijkt naar het sollicitatieproces, wat zijn de belangrijkste punten waar vluchtelingen op worden beoordeeld. Zijn dan behaalde diploma's en werkervaring echt belangrijk of gaat het dan meer over andere aspecten, voor hoogopgeleide vluchtelingen?

Die dingen die je noemt zijn natuurlijk altijd belangrijk maar je moet je voorstellen dat het toch altijd wel begint met taal. Hoewel er best vaak wordt gezegd dat je tegenwoordig ook je met een Engelstalige vaardigheid een baan kan vinden, worden de meeste sollicitatiegesprekken toch in het Nederlands gevoerd en wordt er verwacht dat je je sollicitatiebrief in het Nederlands schrijft. Dus je moet die taal al in de sollicitatiefase goed beheersen om door de selectie heen te komen. Je ziet ook vaak dat werkgevers ook mensen aannemen met diploma's die ze herkennen. En of dat nou een diploma is wat is

vertaald of waar een diplomawaardering voor gegeven is maar met een soort opmerking erbij dat het niet volledige gelijkwaardig is gaan werkgevers toch vaak twijfelen.

Dus als het een gewaardeerd diploma is, waar een aantekening bijstaat dat ze toch niet helemaal zeker zijn?

Ja dan zie je toch dat het Nederlands diploma meerwaarde heeft. Dat is ook een van de redenen dat wij als 'belangenbehartigingsorganisatie 1', zeg maar zinvol werk kunnen doen. Want we kunnen mensen die al een bachelorsdiploma hebben in staat stellen om in Nederland bijvoorbeeld opnieuw een bachelorsdiploma te halen of een master. Een master is vaak nog een iets kortere route. Wat je ziet als probleem bij de diplomawaardering; als je een universitaire bachelor in Syrië hebt behaald en je laat je diploma hier in Nederland waarderen dan wordt gezegd: 'het is gelijkwaardig aan een bachelor hbo maar eigenlijk tot en met het 3e jaar'. Dus zouden ze eigenlijk een jaar extra onderwijs moeten volgen. Maar om dat te kunnen doen moet je vaak de opleiding helemaal opnieuw volgen. Omdat er geen maatwerkprogramma's meer worden aangeboden. Dat betekent dat je beter kan proberen om een masteropleidingen te doen. Want toelaten op een master met zo een diplomawaardering dat lukt dan vaak nog wel. Zeker als je dan bijvoorbeeld nog een premaster of iets dergelijks kan doen. Dan heb je dus na een jaar studeren een Nederlandse Master op zak. En met zo'n Nederlandse Master word je op de arbeidsmarkt dan wel weer erkend door werkgevers.

In hoeverre weet u dat bedrijven echt veel gebruik maken van de gewaardeerde diploma's?

Ja tuurlijk de bedrijven kijken ook van wat heeft iemand gedaan. En daar willen ze bewijzen van zien, en een diploma is een bewijs voor wat iemand gedaan heeft. En je moet je ook voorstellen dat dit voor buitenlandse diploma's voor werkgevers lastiger is. Daar lopen we ook tegenaan bij het waarderen van competenties, dat is natuurlijk op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt een nieuw instrument, dat je je competenties kunt laten waarderen. Maar heel veel van die competentiewaarderingscentra zeggen dan ook: 'van mensen die in het buitenland die competenties hebben verworven kunnen we de beoordeling niet goed doen omdat we geen referentiekader hebben en omdat we geen dingen kunnen controleren'. En ja dat betekent dus ook dat dat voor werkgevers ook zo is. Als een Syriër op zijn cv heeft staan dat hij 10 jaar bij een bedrijf heeft gewerkt, wat de werkgever niet kent en dat bedrijf is niet meer te bereiken via de email of telefoon. Dan is dat in feite iets wat op je cv staat maar niet meer zo veel voorstelt.

Het IDW in dit geval, geeft een advies voor organisaties bijvoorbeeld merkt u dat organisaties dat altijd aannemen of dat de ze zelf ook nog wel onderzoek doen verder doe? Omdat het natuurlijk alleen een advies is wat een organisatie geeft.

Bedoel je dan het advies van de diplomawaardering of bedoel je voor mensen die geen diploma hebben meegenomen en dan een advies van de IDW krijgen, want dat doen ze ook?

Allebei

Ik ga ervan uit, maar heb geen harde cijfers, maar ga ervan uit dat alle werkgevers ook nog eigen onderzoek doen. En kijk als je het werkveld een beetje opdeelt. Heb je tegenwoordig veel beroepen waar je een beroepsdiploma voor nodig hebt, zoals in de zorg maar ook in steeds meer andere sectoren zoals in het onderwijs kun je zonder bepaalde diploma's en bevoegdheden je überhaupt niet werken. Je moet gewoon als beroepsbeoefenaar gekwalificeerd zijn. Dus die werkgevers willen sowieso een diploma zien, en willen checken of je op andere punten voldoende vaardigheden hebt. En in de techniek heb je veel meer de situatie dat werkgevers zelf willen onderzoek hoeveel ervaring en hoe vaardig jij bent. En in de techniek kan dit makkelijker, want je kan natuurlijk vragen: 'beschrijf eens wat je gaat doen als een bepaalde storing optreedt' of 'beschrijf hoe je het onderhoud van dat apparaat of die machine doet.'

Dus dan gaat het echt om de vaardigheden die iemand moet beheersen?

Ja en dat kan je dan vrij makkelijk in een interview wel uitzoeken hoe dat zit.

Dus eigenlijk is voor bepaalde beroepen de waardering belangrijk dan voor andere, bijvoorbeeld technische beroepen?

Ja in de zorg en onderwijs is het sowieso heel belangrijk. In de zorg moet iemand gewoon gekwalificeerd zijn en meestal ook in een BIG-register of ander beroepsregister zijn geregistreerd en daarnaast heb je de nascholingen en andere verplichtingen om gekwalificeerd en geregistreerd te blijven.

Denkt u dat alle vluchtelingen en Nederlandse werkgevers bekend zijn met het diplomawaardering systeem?

Dat weet ik niet, maar wat je wel hebt is dat het sinds de gewijzigde inburgeringswet van 2015, januari 2015, is gewijzigd. Alle statushouders hebben nu recht op een gratis diplomawaardering, dus ik ga ervan uit dat de meeste statushouders het ook wel laten doen. En wat je bij werkgevers ziet is dat ze sowieso wel vragen om een vertaling en daarmee dus indirect om een diploma waardering.

Vluchtelingen zijn vaak teleurgesteld dat hun diploma lager is gewaardeerd. Ervaart u dat ook zo? Of denkt u dat dat wel meevalt?

Nee dat zien wij ook zo. Alle vluchtelingen, of bijna alle vluchtelingen hebben te maken met een demotie als ze in het land van ontvangst weer aan de slag willen. En bijna nooit kunnen ze op hetzelfde niveau weer door. Dit heeft te maken met een lagere diplomawaardering. Maar het is sowieso in de internationale literatuur bekend dat migranten over het algemeen op een minder hoog niveau in hun nieuwe land aan het werk komen. Dus het zal ook iets te maken hebben met taalachterstanden, cultuurverschillen, discriminatie. Daar heeft volgens mij, ik dacht het sociaal planbureau was, een paar jaar geleden een onderzoek naar gedaan en daarin kwam naar voren dat als je migranten en

autochtonen bevolking helemaal gelijkstelt aan elkaar, qua opleiding en werkervaring er dan toch een verschil is. En daarvan zegt dus ook het planbureau, wat volgens mij het onderzoek heeft gedaan, het kan ook een andere club zijn geweest, maar die zeggen ook de enige verklaring die je daarvoor kan bedenken is een verschil in zachte vaardigheden. Dus verschil in bepaalde vooral sociaal-communicatieve vaardigheden of er is sprake van discriminatie, allebei kan maar dat zijn dus verschillende dingen die altijd wel een rol blijven spelen. Dus vluchtelingen hebben over het algemeen maar te accepteren dat ze op een lager niveau aan de slag moeten, terwijl ze in ambitie vaak wat hoger insteken. Ze hebben vaak het idee van we zijn nu in het land waar we van gedroomd hebben. Met onbegrensde mogelijkheden en nu willen we onze droom ook realiseren. Dat valt natuurlijk extra tegen als je op een lager niveau aan de slag moet dan dat je in het land van herkomst deed.

Worden vluchtelingen voorbereid op het feit dat de waardering lager uit kan vallen, door bijvoorbeeld de 'belangenbehartigingsorganisatie A' of andere organisaties?

Ja kijk wat heet voorbereid. Als je met mensen praat die vluchtelingen begeleiden in het traject wat moet leiden naar werk. Dan hoor je vaak de verhalen over hoe moeilijk het is om die hoge ambities te temperen. Met die mensen hebben wij ook te maken, die zeggen dat ze arts willen worden of advocaat of nou ja noem nog eens een beroep dat hoog aanzien heeft. Maar allemaal beroepen waar je niet zo heel makkelijk in terecht kunt, waar een heel zware opleiding of selectie aan vooraf gaat. En dan heb je wel veel het gesprek van; 'we weten niet of dat realistisch is, probeer ook alternatieven te bedenken voor het geval dat niet lukt'. In onze doelgroep horen we echt heel vaak dat mensen vaak arts willen worden of tandarts, ja dat zijn natuurlijk allemaal beroepen waar je niet zomaar in terecht komt ook als je dat heel graag wilt.

We hadden het al even over het verschil tussen Nederlandse en migrant, u heeft begeleid natuurlijk vluchtelingen die een opleiding doen. Zoals een masterprogramma, hoeveel verschil ziet u in competenties die zijn verworven in Nederland en Syrië? Als in masterdiploma's en dat soort dingen?

Ik snap je vraag niet helemaal goed, bedoel je competenties in de zin van ook competenties die niet met een diploma zijn gewaardeerd. Er zijn wel belangrijke verschillen in competenties, we hadden het al even over de zachte vaardigheden de sociaal culturele vaardigheden, dat is wel een groot verschil. Daar hangt ook van alles mee samen. Er wordt ook vaak genoemd een verschil in assertiviteit, wij zijn natuurlijk heel erg gewend zeker in de Nederlandse samenleving maar ook in de hele westerse samenleving, dat je assertief moet zijn om je doelen te bereiken. En assertief zijn wordt over het algemeen niet gezien als brutaal of respectloos. Maar vanuit culturen waar vluchtelingen vandaan komen wordt dit vaak wel zo ervaren en vinden zij het vaak lastig om kritische vragen te stellen omdat ze dan bang zijn dat het wordt gezien als teken van kritiek hebben of eigenlijk de boodschap afgeven 'ik vind jou dom'. En dat is moeilijk om overheen te komen, hetzelfde geldt voor reflecteren. Veel vluchtelingen vinden dit ook wel moeilijker dan mensen die hier zijn opgegroeid en dit kan ook zeker

voor beroepen waarin sociale vaardigheden belangrijk zijn best wel een belemmering zijn. Want op het moment dat je door middel van reflectie of dus eigenlijk het gebrek aan reflectie niet laat zien dat je in staat bent om te leren van dingen die zich hebben voorgedaan zullen collega's of werkgevers daar ook wel negatief over oordelen. En dat gaat dan vooral om het punt van als zich dingen hebben voorgedaan wat heb je daarvan of daarmee geleerd, of jouw rol en je gedrag daarin en hoe zou je dit volgende keer beter kunnen doen. Veel vluchtelingen hebben toch de neiging om dingen buiten zichzelf te leggen en het verloop van gebeurtenissen ook te zien als iets wat tot stand is gekomen door gebeurtenissen die buiten zichzelf liggen. En zo wordt er in Nederland in ieder geval vaak niet over gesproken er wordt eerder gekeken naar wat kan je zelf volgende keer anders doen om een beter resultaat te bereiken.

U als expert in dit vakgebied, op welke manier zouden de kansen op de arbeidsmarkt vergroot kunnen worden voor vluchtelingen? Door misschien aanpassing in het diploma waarderingssysteem of vanuit organisaties?

Nou het aanpassen van het diploma waarderingssysteem heeft niet zo veel zin. Want de verschillen die bij de diplomawaardering worden geconstateerd die zijn er meestal ook echt wel. Dus op het moment dat je dat anders gaat waarderen, ja dan ga je eigenlijk iets verbloemen. En dat zullen werkgevers dan ook direct gaan corrigeren. Ja door er dan nog een eigen oordeel over te vellen. Dat heeft niet zo veel zin. Wat je over het algemeen ziet is dat het toch best wel een kloof is wat een vluchteling of statushouder meebrengt aan opleiding en ervaring en wat van een medewerker in Nederland wordt verwacht, en het dichten van die kloof vraagt dus gewoon heel veel training en opleiding maar ook ervaring opdoen bij werkgevers die er niet zo een probleem van maken dat ze een medewerkers hebben die andere competenties heeft en nieuwe moet leren. En die bereid zijn om dat ook te ondervangen en daar ook weer adequate op te reageren en daarvoor training aan te bieden. Waardoor mensen ook langzaam toegroeien naar een situatie waarin ze niet meer zoveel verschillen met de gemiddelde werknemer. En wat je daar ook voor nodig hebt zijn collega's op de werkvloer die daarin ondersteunen want een CEO of manager kan wel roepen we willen vluchtelingen aannemen. Maar je moet natuurlijk op de werkvloer van je collega's natuurlijk dingen oppakken en leren, dus wat heel belangrijk is is dat er naast formele opleiding en training waar in die nieuwe inburgeringswet ook meer aandacht voor komt ook wordt gezocht en gekeken naar werkgevers en bedrijven waar werknemers werken die bereid zijn om statushouders en nieuwkomers te ondersteunen en begeleiden waardoor er ook zeg maar tussen collega's relaties ontstaan waar heel veel van geleerd kan worden. Waardoor die, noem het maar gewoon aanpassing, de bekende discussie over integratie of assimilatie. Kijk ik wil niet zeggen dat je volledig moet assimileren om succesvol te zijn, maar je zult toch op een heleboel punten moeten aanpassen om in de Nederlandse werkcultuur niet meer als een buitenstaander te worden gezien. Nog een kleine nuance daarbij aan te brengen;

Ik denk dat het voor werkgevers ook een ingewikkeld proces is, een cultuur moeten creëren waarin diversiteit meer wordt gewaardeerd. Zoals ik het nu beschrijf lijkt het heel erg alsof ik zeg; 'nieuwkomers moet zich volledig aanpassen wat in de Nederlandse werkcultuur gebruikelijk is'. Maar wat je eigenlijk

ook wil is dat er in die werkcultuur ook meer ruimte en aandacht is voor geluiden vanuit een andere achtergrond. En als dat meer wordt gewaardeerd dat je dan ook zo in een organisatie op een meer, bredere manier eigenlijk, naar dingen kunt kijken wat voor organisaties ook een verrijking kan zijn. Het moet natuurlijk niet zo zijn dat mensen het idee hebben van ik moet me helemaal Hollands gedragen om hier geaccepteerd te worden, je moet natuurlijk ook je eigenlijk dingen kunnen inbrengen en daar moet ook waardering voor zijn. De basis ligt denk ik toch in het je eigen maken van de Nederlandse werkcultuur en vanuit daaruit kun je dan volgende stappen zetten.

8.9.2 Summary IDW/Nuffic

Respondent: employee Nuffic

Date: 27 June 2019

Wat is u functie binnen de Nuffic

Ik ben beleidsmedewerker bij team onderwijsvergelijking, dat is een afdeling met zo'n dertig medewerkers waarvan de meeste mensen, zo'n twintig man onderwijs vergelijkers zijn en zij waarderen diploma's. Verdeeld naar regionale expertise en taalkennis, een aantal China loge een aantal arabisten, mensen met kennis van de Slavische regio. Die lezen ook de verschillende alfabetten, om het zo maar te zeggen. Die brengen dagelijks advies uit en dat doen ze aan hoger onderwijsinstellingen, werkgevers en ook individuen. Wij doen het ook in het kader van de inburgering, vanaf 2015 kan iedereen die inburgering plichtig is gratis een diplomawaardering aanvragen. Wij geven het advies af voor het hoger onderwijs en het algemene voorbereid onderwijs dus middelbare school. Alle adviezen op het niveau van mbo gaan naar het SBB. We werken wel samen er is een portaal waar alle aanvragen binnen komen. Die kijken dan wat waar terug hoort en wordt intern doorgevoerd.

Oke want dat is via de IDW als ik het goed heb toch?

Ja.

Als je kijkt naar de diploma's op basis waarvan worden die gewaardeerd, is dat een vergelijking die wordt gemaakt?

Die ziet er als volgt uit, we kijken altijd naar authenticiteit, is het een echt diploma. En vervolgens wordt gekeken door de landdeskundige van door wie is het diploma afgegeven. Het is altijd belangrijk dat dat een erkende onderwijsinstelling is, die binnen de nationale kwaliteitszorg kaders valt. Als het daarbuiten valt dan is het voor ons lastig om een advies af te geven omdat het dan lastig is omdat we dan niet weten of de kwaliteit in orde is. Dat is altijd belangrijk. En vervolgens wordt altijd gekeken naar het onderwijsprogramma, dus cijferlijsten, het diploma subscript en het diplomasupplement als dat er is. Dan wordt op basis daarvan inderdaad een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse niveau. Dat doen wij op systeemniveau, heet dat, waarin wordt gekeken of het vergelijkbaar is met een Nederlands hbo-bachelor of is het vergelijkbaar met een Nederlandse universitaire bachelor.

Is dat een algemeen traject of is verschild dit per doelgroep of verschillende beroepen?

Nee, dit is voor iedereen hetzelfde. We kijken niet naar doelgroep en we kijk niet naar afkomst. We kijken naar diploma, diplomawaardering.

Wat zijn punten waardoor ervoor wordt gekozen dat een diploma bijvoorbeeld een lagere waarde heeft dan het Nederlandse systeem?

Ik kan je niet zeggen dat ze een lagere waarden hebben, wat vaak wel lastig is is dat we hebben een binair onderwijssysteem dus er wordt al heel vroeg onderscheid gemaakt in Nederland voor leerlingen welk niveau zij hebben, is het een mavo, havo of vwo-kind?

Heel veel systemen kennen dit onderwijs niet, waardoor er veel minder onderscheid is. Daarnaast heb je ook verschil tussen hbo en universiteit. In het engels heet dit 'University of applied science' en Research University in Nederland wordt dit onderscheid gemaakt maar in heel veel landen niet. Dus als je verpleegkunde studeert in Syrië dan ga je naar de universiteit en journalistiek studeert ook, maar die worden wel gewaardeerd op een hbo-niveau hier. Want dat is in Nederland wel een hbo-diploma.

Er wordt een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse opleidingssysteem, dus daar zit een vertaalslag op.

Stel vluchteling zijn het niet eens met de waardering, zijn er procedures waarop ze terug kunnen vallen? Of kunnen ze een tweede aanvraag doen?

Ja ze kunnen een klacht indienen dan wordt het nog een keer bekeken.

Heeft de beheersing van de Nederlandse taal bij vluchtelingen invloed op de waardering van het diploma?

Nee, daar kijken wij helemaal niet naar. Het heeft wel invloed op de toelaatbaarheid op de instellingen want die kijken daar wel naar. Maar bij onze adviezen, wordt daar niet gekeken naar taalkennis.

In hoeverre bent u ervan op de hoogte dat organisaties en onderwijsinstellingen echt gebruik maken van deze waardering?

Onderwijsinstellingen kunnen direct bij ons een diplomawaardering aanvragen, wij krijgen afgelopen jaren veel aanvragen ook van Syrische studenten. En als een student zelf al via de inburgering al een aanvraag heeft gedaan, krijgen ze een ander document een INO, dan krijgen wij soms telefoontjes van onderwijsinstellingen van 'we hebben hier een student met een INO hebben jullie die echt afgegeven?' dan willen ze dat checken. We werken ook veel samen met het UAF, is ook een klant van ons en wordt dus ook veel gebruikt van gemaakt.

Nog even goed om te vermelden, we geven diplomawaardering af, dat is dus een advies. En dan is het aan de instellingen om te bepalen of ze iemand toelaten, of aan de werkgever om te bepalen of ze iemand aannemen. Onderwijsinstellingen en werkgevers hebben ook andere manieren, ze hoeven niet per se een advies bij ons in te dienen, ze kunnen ook bijvoorbeeld op basis van allerlei informatiematerialen die online staan, zoals de landen module van Syrië, een keuze maken. Hierin wordt het Syrische onderwijssysteem uitgebreid beschreven, en wordt er ook een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse niveau. Dus wij geven ook instrumenten aan instellingen om dat zelf te kunnen doen en informatie op te zoeken.

Heeft u gemerkt dat het aantal diplomawaardering aanvragen is gegroeid sinds 2015, sinds de Syrische vluchtelingenstroom?

In 2015 was de procedure er nog niet, dus was het 0. In het eerste jaar dat het mogelijk was, was het zo'n 500 aanvragen. Dit zijn wel de ruwe getallen want weet de exacte aantallen niet uit mn hoofd. Maar toen moesten mensen echt nog een beetje de weg vinden naar de procedure, en mensen hebben

natuurlijk ook wat tijd nodig gehad want het is misschien niet het eerste wat je doet je diploma laten waarderen. Dus in het jaar erop hadden we al zo'n 5000 aanvragen, en nu zitten we ook daarop.

Merk je dat niet iedereen zijn diploma laat waarderen ook al zit het in het nieuwe integratieprogramma, weet u waaraan dat kan liggen dat niet iedereen dat doet?

Ik weet niet of niet iedereen dat doet eerlijk gezegd, wij zien natuurlijk alleen maar wat binnenkomt. En ik heb geen absolute aantallen van het aantal mensen dat een diploma heeft gehaald wat in Nederland is, volgens mij is dat ook niet bekend verder. En mensen hebben zo'n 3 jaar de tijd om een advies aan te vragen dus het is niet een op een zo groot is de instroom dus zo groot is het advies aanvraag.

De wetgeving achter het advies is dat gebaseerd op Europese Directive?

Je hebt in Europa een verdrag op het gebied van hoger onderwijs, dat is de 'Lissabon Erkenningconventie'. En daarin hebben alle landen binnen Europese hoger onderwijs ruimte om, waar Syrië overigens buiten valt in principe doen ze niet mee, maar we passen dit ook toe op diploma's uit andere regio's. Maar het is dus eigenlijk niet een verdrag dat over die regio's gaat. Maar het gaat over het Europese hoger onderwijs ruimte, die landen hebben met elkaar afspraken gemaakt dat ze het in de eerste plaats belangrijk vinden dat studenten en werknemers mobiel zijn, dus tussen landen kunnen verplaatsen en daar kunnen werken en studeren. En nou ja die hebben principe afspraken gemaakt van hoe ga je dan te werk, met buitenlandse diploma's. En daar staat inderdaad in artikel 7 in die 'Lissabon erkenningconventie' gaat specifiek over diplomawaardering voor vluchtelingen zonder documenten. Dus dat zijn vluchtelingen die wel onderwijs hebben gevolgd en diploma's hebben behaald maar die die niet meer kunnen laten zien.

Op basis waarvan wordt dan erkenning uitgevoerd als zij geen documenten kunnen laten zien?

We hebben dan de indicatie onderwijsniveau. Dan moeten ze gewoon een vragenlijst invullen dus dat is schriftelijke informatie. Over het gevolgde onderwijs en de werkervaring en op basis daarvan geven wij dan een advies af, maar daar staat wel een disclaimer op dat we de feitelijke diploma's niet hebben gezien. Dit is de indicatie onderwijsniveau.

Daarnaast adviseren we hoge onderwijsinstellingen ook wel over hoe ze de toelatingsprocedure kunnen invullen om die mensen toe te laten.

Dat sluit aan op mijn laatste vraag, wat denk u nou persoonlijk, omdat u in het onderzoeksveld werkt, wat werkgevers en onderwijsinstellingen zouden kunnen doen om de arbeidsintegratie te verbeteren van vluchtelingen op de arbeidsmarkt?

Wat je ziet is dat diplomawaardering maar een klein stukje in het aan het werk gaan in Nederland. Het is een startpunt om eigenlijk te weten voor de vluchteling en de werkgever waar kunnen we je neerzetten of plaatsen. En daarnaast is taal heel belangrijk. Je ziet dat uit allerlei rapporten blijkt dat mensen toch een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt hebben. Waar dat precies aan ligt, of werkgevers onvoldoende

vertrouwen hebben in wat van ver komt: onbekend maakt onbemind. Maar vaak is het toch nog het geval dat er toch echt nog een gat zit tussen wat iemand meebrengt en wat de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt vraagt. Dat is voor mij moeilijk in te schatten. Maar ik denk dat dat vooral het laatste is, en om dat laatste op te vangen moet je werkgevers en onderwijsinstellingen veel beter samen gaan werken om dat gat op te vullen met verkorte leertrajecten. Dat is op dit moment wel heel lastig nog, UAF is daar wel heel druk en goed mee bezig. Koppelen werkgevers en onderwijsinstellingen en studenten aan elkaar. Dat doen ze heel succesvol, maar dat zijn wel vooral kleinschalige projecten. Eigenlijk zouden de onderwijsinstellingen dat makkelijker moeten maken. Wat nu vaak gebeurt is dat dan heeft iemand een half afgerond diploma, dan zegt de instelling 'ja sorry dan moet je toch helemaal opnieuw beginnen bij ons'. Procedures om halverwege in te stromen, of vrijstellingen te krijgen zijn vaak best lastig en ook de instellingen hebben daar ook niet altijd de ruimte voor. Maar dat zou iets zijn dat enorm zou helpen.

8.10 Appendix 10: Coded of interviews

8.7.1 Coded aid organisation

| Category | Acronym | Quote | Translation of Quote |
|--|---------|---|---|
| Views about overall integration | | | |
| Language proficiency | VOL_1 | 'De dingen die je noemt zijn natuurlijk altijd belangrijk maar je moet je voorstellen dat het toch altijd begint met taal' | 'The things you are mentioning are important but it always starts with language.' |
| | VOL_2 | 'Dus je moet die taal in de sollicitatiefase goed beheren om door de selectie heen te komen.' | 'Thus it is important to master the language in the application phase, to come through the selection.' |
| Control on the Integration | VOC_1 | 'Kijk ik denk dat er op dit moment te weinig regie wordt gevoerd op die integratie, dat is natuurlijk ook de kern van de huidige inburgineswe.t' | 'I think that nowadays there is too little direction on the coordination, which is ,of course, the core to the current integration law.' |
| | VOC_2 | 'Maar wat ook speelt, is dat er te weinig faciliteiten zijn voor vluchtelingen om echt een goed inburgeringstraject neer te zetten.' | 'But what also plays, is that there are too less facilities for refugees to create a good integration policy.' |
| Integration of Syrians | | | |
| Education level | VSE_1 | 'Bij Syriërs heb je te maken met oorlogsvluchtelingen en zie je vaak dat de eerste groep die komt wat hoger opgeleid is en de groep die later komt wat lager opgeleid is omdat die wat minder hadden om te vluchten.' | 'In case of the Syrians, you have to deal with war refugees and you often see that the first group that comes up is more educated and the group that comes later is lower educated because they had fewer possibilities to flee.' |
| | VSE_2 | 'Want je hebt natuurlijk hoogopgeleide Syrische vluchtelingen uit een christelijke meer westerse cultuur, die zich wat makkelijker kunnen integreren dan Syriërs die een hele traditionele islamitische cultuur.' | 'You, of course, have higher educated Syrians from a more Christian/western culture, who can integrate more easily than Syrians who originally had a more traditional Islamic culture.' |
| Expectations | | | |

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| | VSX_1 | 'Ze hebben vaak het idee van we zijn nu in het land waar we van gedroomd hebben. Met onbegrensde mogelijkheden en nu willen we onze droom ook realiseren.' | 'They often have the idea that they arrived in the country of their dreams, with limitless possibilities and now we want to realize our dream.' |
| Views about credential recognition | | | |
| Use of recognition | VCU_1 | 'Ja tuurlijk de bedrijven kijken ook van wat heeft iemand gedaan. En daar willen ze bewijzen van zien, en een diploma is een bewijs voor wat iemand gedaan heeft.' | 'Yes, of course, the organization look to what someone did before. And they want to have proof of that, and a certificate is a proof of what someone did.' |
| Level of recognition | VCL_1 | 'Je ziet vaak dat werkgevers ook mensen aannemen met diploma's die ze herkennen. En of dat nou een diploma is wat vertaald is of waar een diplomawaardering over gegeven is maar met een soort opmerking erbij dat het niet volledig gelijkwaardig is gaan werkgevers toch vaak twijfelen.' | 'You often see that employers also hire people with a certificate that they recognize. And whether that is a certificate that has been translated or for which a credential recognized has been given, but with a kind of comment that it is not completely equivalent, employers often start to doubt.' |
| | VCL_2 | 'Ja dan zie je toch dat het Nederlandse diploma meerwaarde heeft.' | 'Yes then you see that a Dutch certificate has an added value.' |
| | VCL_3 | 'Maar veel van die competentiewaardering centra zeggen dan ook: 'Van mensen die in het buitenland die competenties hebben verworven kunnen we de beoordeling niet goed omdat we geen referentiekader hebben en omdat we geen dingen kunnen controleren.' | 'But many of those competency evaluations centre say: 'from people who have acquired competencies abroad, it is hard to make a good assessment because we do not have a frame of reference and because we cannot control things.' |
| | VCL_4 | 'Als je een universitaire bachelor in Syrië hebt behaald en je laat je diploma hier in Nederland waarden dan wordt gezegd: 'het is gelijkwaardig aan een bachelor HBO maar eigenlijk tot en met het 3e jaar.' dus zouden ze eigenlijk een jaar extra onderwijs moeten volgen.' | 'When you have obtained a bachelor in Syria and your let you certificate evaluated in the Netherlands, than it is often said that: Is equal to a bachelor on 'applied science' level but only until the third year. So which means that they should actually follow a year of extra education.' |

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| | VCL_5 | ‘Alle vluchtelingen, of bijna alle vluchtelingen hebben te maken met een demotie als ze in het land van ontvangst weer aan de slag willen. En bijna nooit kunnen ze op hetzelfde niveau weer door. Dit heeft te maken met een lagere diplomawaardering.’ | ‘All the refugees, of almost all the refugees, have to deal with demotion if they want to work in the new host country. And rarely they can work on the same level. Based on a lower credential recognition of the certificates.’ |
| Soft skills | VCS_1 | ‘Daar heeft volgens mij, ik dacht het SCP was, een paar jaar geleden een onderzoek naar gedaan en daarin kwam naar voren dat als je migranten en autochtonen bevolking helemaal gelijkstelt aan elkaar, qua opleiding en werkervaring er dan toch een verschil is. En daarvan zegt dus ook het planbureau wat volgens mij het onderzoek heeft gedaan, het kan ook een andere club zijn geweest, maar die zeggen ook de enige verklaring die je daarvoor kan bedenken is een verschil in zachte vaardigheden.’ | ‘The SCP researched about, a few years ago. In this research came up when migrants and indigenous people totally assimilate to each other, in terms of training and work experience, then there is a difference. Within conclusion that the only explanation of this difference you can think of is a difference in soft skills.’ |
| | VCS_2 | ‘Er zijn wel belangrijke verschillen in competenties, we hadden het al even over de zachte vaardigheden, de sociaal culturele vaardigheden, dat is wel een groot verschil. Daar hangt ook van alles mee samen.’ | ‘There are some important differences in qualifications, we already talked about the soft skills, social-cultural skills, and there is a big difference to find. It all depends on everything.’ |
| | VCS_3 | ‘Er wordt ook vaak genoemd een verschil in assertiviteit, wij zijn natuurlijk heel erg gewend zeker in de Nederlandse samenleving maar ook in de hele westerse samenleving, dat je assertief moet zijn om je doelen te bereiken. En assertief zijn wordt over het algemeen niet gezien als brutaal of respectloos. Maar vanuit culturen waar vluchtelingen vandaan komen wordt dit vaak wel zo ervaren en vinden zij het vaak lastig om vragen te stellen omdat ze dan bang zijn dat het wordt gezien als | ‘It is also often stated that there is a difference in assertiveness, of course, we are very much used to certainly, in Dutch society, but also throughout Western society, that you must be assertive to achieve your goals. And being assertive is generally not seen as brutal or disrespectful. But from cultures where refugees come from, this is often experienced and often difficult to ask questions because they are afraid that it is seen as a sign of criticism or actually giving the message ‘ I |

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| | | teken van kritiek hebben of eigenlijk de boodschap afgeven 'ik vind jou dom'. En dat is moeilijk om overheen te komen, hetzelfde geldt voor reflecteren. Veel vluchtelingen vinden dit ook wel moeilijker dan mensen die hier zijn opgegroeid en dit kan ook zeker voor beroepen waarin sociale vaardigheden belangrijk zijn best wel een belemmering zijn. | think you are stupid '. And that's hard to get over, the same counts for reflecting. Many refugees also find this more difficult than people who grew up here, and this can certainly be a hindrance to occupations where social skills are important.' |
| Recommendations of the experts | | | |
| Customizing the certificate recognition system | REC_1 | 'Nouja het aanpassen van het diploma waarderingssysteem heeft niet zo veel zin. Want de verschillen die bij de diplomawaardering worden geconstateerd die zijn er meestal ook echt wel.' | 'Well adjusting the credential recognition procedure does not have much sense. Because the differences that are observed in the certificates are mostly true.' |
| Intern Guidance | REI_1 | 'Dus wat heel belangrijk is, is dat er naast formele opleiding en training waar in die nieuwe inburgeringswet ook meer aandacht voor komt ook wordt gekeken naar werkgevers en bedrijven waar werknemers werken die bereid zijn om statushouder en nieuwkomers te ondersteunen en begeleiden waardoor er ook zeg maar tussen collega's relaties ontstaan waar veel van geleerd kan worden.' | 'So what is very important is that next to formal education and training, where the new civil integration law puts his focus on, more focus must be on organization where the employers are willing to support and guide newcomers where the relationship between colleagues arise to learn from.' |
| | REI_2 | 'Ik denk dat het voor werkgevers ook een ingewikkeld proces is, maar een cultuur moeten creëren waarin diversiteit meer wordt gewaardeerd.' | 'I think that is for employers a difficult process, but they have to create a culture where diversity is more appreciated.' |
| | REI_3 | 'We hebben behoefte aan gecombineerde leerwerktrajecten. We hebben behoeften aan trajecten waarin de taal leren niet alleen in een taalklasje gebeurt en ook maar die dagdelen in de week, maar trajecten die voltijd zijn.' | 'We need more combined learning procedure. We need procedures were learning of the language is not only in a classroom and only 3 dayparts a week, but full-time procedure.' |

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| Dutch labour market | RED_1 | 'Zoals Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt leren, wat jouw competenties zijn in relatie tot beroepen die je wilt uitvoeren.' | 'Like learning the Dutch labour market, what are your competencies in relation to the job you want to fulfil.' |
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Table 7: *Coded interview UAF*

8.10.2 Coded IDW/ Nuffic

| Category | Acronym | Quote | Translation of Quote |
|---|---------|---|---|
| Views about overall integration | | | |
| Language proficiency | VOL_1 | 'En daarnaast is taal erg belangrijk' | ' And in addition language is very important ' |
| Gap in competencies | VOG_1 | 'Maar vaak is het toch nog het geval dat er toch echt nog een gat zit tussen wat iemand meebrengt en wat de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt vraag.' | 'But often there is still a gap between what someone brings and what the Dutch labour market demands.' |
| Views about credential recognition | | | |
| Level of recognition | VCL_1 | 'Ik kan je niet zeggen dat ze een lagere waarde hebben, wat vaak wel lastig is dat we hebben een binair onderwijssysteem dus er wordt al heel vroeg onderscheid gemaakt in Nederland wat voor leerling welk niveau zij hebben, is het een mavo, havo of vwo-kind? Heel veel onderwijssystemen kennen dit onderwijs niet, waardoor er veel minder onderscheid is.' | 'I cannot tell you that they have a lower value, but often it is difficult because in the Netherlands we have a binary education system so a distinction between levels is made very early. A lot of education systems do not know this kind of education, in those systems there is less distinction.' |
| | VCL_2 | 'Daarnaast heb je ook verschil tussen hbo en universiteit. In het Engels heet dit 'University of applied science' en Research University in Nederland wordt dit onderscheid gemaakt in heel veel landen niet. Dus als je verpleegkunde studeert in Syrië dan ga je naar de universiteit en journalistiek studeert ook, maar die worden wel gewaardeerd op een hbo-niveau hier. Want dat is in Nederland wel een HBO diploma.' | 'Also, you also have the difference between HBO and University. In English, this is called 'University of Applied Science' and 'Research University'. In the Netherlands, there is a distinction between those two but in many countries not. So if you studied to be a Nurse in Syria you go the university and also in case of Journalism, but in the |

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| | | | Netherlands, this is recognized as an HBO level (applied science) Because this is an HBO bachelor in the Netherlands.' |
| | VCL_3 | 'Er wordt een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse opleidingssysteem, dus daar zit een vertaalslag op.' | 'A comparison is made with the Dutch education system, so there is a translation.' |
| Use of credential recognition | VCU_1 | 'Nog even goed om te vermelden, we geven diplomawaardering af, dat is dus een advies. En dan is het aan de instellingen om te bepalen of ze iemand toelaten, of aan de werkgever om te bepalen of ze iemand aannemen.' | 'Also got to mention, we give a certificate recognition which is an advice. It's up to the institution to decide to accept someone, or up to the employer to decide to hire someone.' |
| | VCU_2 | 'Onderwijsinstellingen en werkgevers hebben ook andere manieren, ze hoeven niet per se een advies bij ons in te dienen, ze kunnen ook bijvoorbeeld op basis van allerlei informatie materialen die online staan, zoals de landen module van Syrië. Hierin wordt het Syrische onderwijssysteem uitgebreid beschreven, en wordt er ook een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse niveau. Dus wij geven ook instrumenten aan instellingen om dat zelf te kunnen doen en informatie op te zoeken.' | 'Education institutions and employers have also other ways, they do not have to submit and advice, they can for example also make a decision based on information materials online, like the country module of Syria. Were the education system of Syria is explained and comparisons are made with the Dutch levels. We hand out instrument toward institutions to do research themselves.' |
| | VCU_3 | 'Ja ze kunnen een klacht indienen, dan wordt het nog een keer bekeken' | 'Yes they can file a complaint, then it will be watched again' |
| Recommendations of the experts | | | |

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| Use of credential recognition | REU_1 | ‘Wat je ziet is dat diplomawaardering maar een klein stukje in het aan het werk gaan in Nederland. Het is een startpunt om eigenlijk te weten voor de vluchteling en de werkgever waar kunnen we je neerzetten of plaatsen.’ | ‘What you see is that certificate recognition is only a small part in the process of finding a job in the Netherlands. It is a starting point for a refugee or employer where to place him.’ |
| Intern Guidance | REI_1 | ‘...werkgevers en onderwijsinstellingen veel beter samen gaan werken om dat gat op te vullen met verkorte leertrajecten. Dat is op dit moment wel heel lastig nog, UAF is daar wel heel druk en goed mee bezig. Koppel werkgevers en onderwijsinstellingen en studenten aan elkaar.’ | ‘.. Employers and educational institutions must work much better together to fill the gap with a shortened learning pathway. That is very difficult at the moment, UAF is very busy and well involved. Linking employers and educational institutions and students to each other.’ |
| | REI_2 | ‘Eigenlijk zouden de onderwijsinstellingen dat makkelijker moeten maken. Wat nu vaak gebeurt is dat dan heeft iemand een half afgerond diploma, dan zegt de instelling ‘ja sorry dan moet je toch helemaal opnieuw beginnen bij ons’. Procedures om halverwege in te stromen, of vrijstellingen te krijgen zijn vaak best lastig en ook de instellingen hebben daar ook niet altijd de ruimte voor. Maar dat zou iets zijn dat enorm zou helpen.’ | ‘In fact, the educational institutions should make that easier. What often happens now is that then someone has a half completed diploma, then says the setting ' Yes sorry then you should start all over again with us '. Procedures to move in halfway, or to get exemptions are often quite difficult and the institutions also do not always have the space to do so. But that would be something that would help tremendously.’ |
| Overall information about the credential recognition through the IDW/Nuffic | | | |

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| Certificate recognition | OIC_1 | Die ziet er als volgt uit, we kijken altijd naar authenticiteit, is het een echt diploma. | ‘It looks like this, we always look at authenticity, it is a real certificate.’ |
| | OIC_2 | ‘Het is altijd belangrijk dat dat een erkende onderwijsinstelling is, die binnen de nationale kwaliteitszorg kaders valt.’ | ‘It is always important that it is a recognized educational institution that falls within the national quality assurance framework.’ |
| | OIC_3 | ‘En vervolgens wordt altijd gekeken naar het onderwijsprogramma, dus cijferlijsten, het diploma subscript en het diplomasupplement als dat er is. Dan wordt op basis daarvan inderdaad een vergelijking gemaakt met het Nederlandse niveau. Dat doen wij op systeemniveau, heet dat, waarin wordt gekeken of het vergelijkbaar is met een Nederlands HBO bachelor of is het vergelijkbaar met een Nederlandse universitaire bachelor.’ | ‘And then the education program is always looked at, so grade lists, the diploma subscript and the diploma supplement if there is one. Then a comparison is made with the Dutch level. This is on system level, which means that we look at whether it is comparable to a Dutch hbo-bachelor or that it is comparable to a Dutch university bachelor.’ |
| | OIC_4 | ‘We kijken niet naar doelgroep en we kijk niet naar afkomst. We kijken naar diploma, diplomawaardering.’ | ‘We do not look at target groups and we do not look at the origin. We look at the diploma, credential recognition.’ |
| Indication educationlevel | OII_1 | ‘We hebben dan de indicatie onderwijsniveau. Dan moeten ze gewoon een vragenlijst invullen dus dat is schriftelijke informatie. Over het gevolgde onderwijs en de werkervaring en op basis daarvan geven wij dan een advies af, maar daar staat wel een disclaimer op dat we de feitelijke diploma’s niet hebben gezien. Dit is de indicatie onderwijsniveau.’ | ‘We have an educational level indication. Refugees just have to fill in a questionnaire so it is based on written information. Based on this information we provide advice on the education and work experience followed. But there is a disclaimer included that we have not seen the actual diplomas. This is the educational level indication.’ |

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| Language | OIL_1 | 'Het heeft wel invloed op de toelaatbaarheid op de instellingen want die kijken daar wel naar. Maar bij onze adviezen, wordt daar niet gekeken naar taalkennis.' | 'It does have an impact on the admissibility of the institutions because they take that into account. But our advice does not look at language skills.' |
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Table 8: Coded interview IDW/NUFFIC