



# Knowledge Dossier

## residence permit holders in The Hague

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29 June, 2018

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## Introduction

To effectively manage the influx and future of newcomers, The Hague Municipality stimulates the setting up of projects that contribute to this goal. Among others there are the programs 'Samen Haags' (targeting all immigrants) and 'Samen verder Den Haag'. Both projects concentrate on the promotion of integration of newcomers. To this end, the programs particularly call upon Hague organisations. 'Samen Haags', for instance, makes use of social internship to acquaint newcomers with Dutch customs and workplace situations. 'Samen verder Den Haag' supports organisations in welcoming newcomers as volunteers. This way it promotes and facilitates (labour) participation. Both programs focus on both the learning and adaptive abilities of the newcomers and on those of the organisations and their staff. What can organisations do to stimulate the integration of newcomers? This knowledge dossier offers tools to answer this question.

In this report the term newcomer will be replaced by the term residence permit holder. We will provide a definition of the term permit holder, discuss the situation of permit holders in The Netherlands in general and in The Hague Municipality with regard to labour participation specifically. This document serves as a source of information for organisations who would like to work with permit holders. It contains specific information on chances and challenges that organisations may encounter when working with permit holders. The figures on labour participation of permit holders and population growth in appendix 1 prove that there is a definite need for this. Organisations that respond to a future divers society show great forward-thinking. The figures in appendix 1 and the information in this document will elaborate on this.

The document begins with some statistics regarding refugees in Europe and The Netherlands, followed by information on the term residence permit holder. Next up will be an overview of the situation of permit holders and the working methods of The Hague Municipality. It will be followed by a segment on the role of private citizens and organisations with regard to the integration process. This will also include remarks on the challenges permit holders may encounter on the labour market. Organisations will then find an overview of the chances and challenges that present themselves when working with permit holders. The document concludes with some specific tips on how to achieve a smooth cooperation between employers and permit holders and a summary of possible resources to help with this process.

## 1. Refugees in Europe

The last five years the number of refugees worldwide has increased significantly. At the close of 2016 a total of 65,5 million people is on the run, fleeing their homes. This is a record number and it means that 1 in every 113 people worldwide is (currently) displaced (UNHCR, 2018). In 2015 the number of requests for asylum in Europe peaked. An escalation of the number of conflicts, like those in Syria, was the main reason for this spike. Today the number of refugees entering Europe has decreased. In 2015 1,25 million people applied for asylum in Europe, in 2016 1,2 million people and in 2017 0,5 million (less than half the number of 2015) (VluchtelingenWerk, 2017).

### From refugee to holder of a residence permit

In 2017 31.327 people applied for asylum in The Netherlands, while in 2015 it had been approximately twice that number (IND, 2018). 1,6 % of the total number of requests for asylum in the EU was done in The Netherlands.

At the close of 2016 a total of 101.744 people, requesting asylum, obtained a residence permit for The Netherlands. If and when a refugee receives a residence permit for a certain period of time he/she is called a 'permit holder'. It means that the asylum seeker is officially recognised as a refugee and has obtained a (temporary) residence permit. The number includes any persons reunited with a family member who is a permit holder and resides in The Netherlands within three month after entry of the refugee (VluchtelingenWerk, 2017).

*A residence permit holder is a refugee who has obtained a temporary residence permit on the basis of a request for asylum. He/she has the right to live in The Netherlands for the next five years and to leave the asylum seekers' centre as quickly as possible to start building a life.*

The 'Vreemdelingenwet 2000' (Vw2000) (Aliens Act) mentions two grounds for protection:

Ground a: refugee status. A person has a well-founded fear of persecution in his/her country of origin. Reasons for persecution can be: race, religion, nationality, political conviction or sexual orientation. The refugee can not rely on protection from persecution in his/her country of origin.

Ground b: subsidiary protection. A person is in danger of being tortured, suffering inhuman and/or demeaning treatment or punishment when being evicted.

## 2. The Hague municipal policy with regard to residence permit holders

### Residence permit holders in The Hague

Receiving permit holders is a municipal task. This is done according to an allocation key. If, at a certain point, it is decided that the situation in the country of origin has improved, the residence permit may be revoked. When after five years it is decided that return to the country of origin is out of the question, a permit for an indefinite period is issued, provided someone does not have a criminal record and is integrated sufficiently (The Hague Municipality, 2018). The Hague Municipality addresses the goal of social embedding in its new approach to integration. This means that the newcomer 'owns' his/her place of residence and feels involved. Having a network in the city, knowledge of local amenities, knowledge of Hague norms and values, the possibility of participation and a feeling of inner-city safety are all, according to the Hague approach, conducive to social embedding.

### The Hague municipality's policy regarding residence permit holders

The Hague Municipality's website outlines the individual coaching process for permit holders. The central government and the COA (Central Body for Asylum Seekers) allocate the number of permit holders per municipality. The Hague has accommodated some 1.000 permit holders in the year 2017. To assure adequate social embedding the municipality offers individual coaching. This coaching starts the moment a lease is signed. The permit holder is required to leave the AZC (asylum seekers' centre) within two weeks and to occupy his/her new home forthwith.

The first three months permit holders are being coached intensively by volunteers from VluchtelingenWerk. They receive help with practical matters such as applying for a health insurance, finding a school for their children and family unification. Besides, courses are offered on how to handle money responsibly, health and integration. The integration requirement includes a state exam (level NT2) or an integration exam. After having obtained their permit, residence permit holders are given three years to accomplish the integration exam (Dienst uitvoering onderwijs, 2018). The government's position is that permit holders themselves are responsible for this, which is laid out in coalition agreement 'Vertrouwen in de toekomst' ('Faith in the future') drawn up by the Rutte III cabinet: 'We offer opportunities that people themselves must seize'.

The integration exam consists of 6 parts: written skills, oral skills, listening skills, reading skills, Dutch society and orientation on the Dutch labour market. Since July 1st, 2017 signing a participation agreement is also part of the integration process. It details the rights, obligations and values of Dutch society. The integration process needs to be completed within three years. The responsibility rests with the (adult) newcomer him-/herself (Kabinet Rutte III, 2017).

However, statistics from the Court of Auditors show that this position leads to disappointing results, since not all people are capable of recognizing these opportunities (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2017). This motivated Hague's alderman Rabin Baldewsingh to start his own integration program in the Schilderswijk district. The program started on January 1st, 2018 and will have a two-year run. It is complementary to the government's obligatory integration efforts and starts when, after a period of two-third of a year, an individual is not yet sufficiently integrated in society. More information on the subject can be found on [www.samenhaags.nl](http://www.samenhaags.nl).

After the first three months of intensive coaching by VluchtelingenWerk, permit holders may turn to VluchtelingenWerk with any questions they may have for an additional 6 to 9 months. To help permit holders with learning the language, buddies will be used to practise Dutch language skills with. These buddies are provided by Taal aan Zee Foundation. Under the slogan 'Taal is de sleutel tot participatie' ('Language is the key to participation'), more than 300 volunteers are committed to helping people learn the Dutch language. The organisation works in partnership with VluchtelingenWerk, general practitioners, maternity consultation clinics and others that come into contact with the target group. This way a referral is easy. More information on the subject can be found on the website [www.taalaanzee.nl](http://www.taalaanzee.nl).

Two weeks after having moved into their new home, an employee of the Hague municipality makes an appointment with the new tenants. The aim of the interview is to find out in what way they can participate in Hague society. The Hague municipality works with five guiding principles:

#### 1. The basics, quickly and successfully

The basics include matters like municipal registration, finding a General Practitioner (GP), a school for the children, social benefits, healthcare insurance and things like electricity and the internet. Support is provided by VluchtelingenWerk Nederland.

## 2. Action with regard to work, language, integration and participation (program from The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour)

The municipality has a program in place for every permit holder that includes the following components:

- Introduction to Dutch norms and values
- Starting compulsory integration and learning the language
- Entering the labour market, courses and other types of useful daytime activities like volunteering
- Mapping the current financial status and financial budget management.

The aim is to establish the amount of support needed in terms of health - and/or psycho-social care. More specific information on this program can be found in the document 'Haagse aanpak, Statushouders sociaal Domein' (Hague approach Permit Holders Social Domain), drawn up by the Hague municipality.

## 3. A language buddy for everyone

Volunteers are available to practise the Dutch language with and to help build a network in school or at the workplace.

## 4. Social management in group housing, cooperating with the neighbourhood

Especially in the case of group housing, supervision in the form of a concierge is desirable. There is also assistance in place to help neighbours and other parties directly involved, with a smooth transition.

## 5. Monitoring effectiveness and return of efforts

Top priority of the Hague approach is an active participation of permit holders in Hague society. To see whether or not the efforts are successful, the municipality monitors the effectiveness of the approach and in that way is able to decide if any additional efforts are necessary.

## Methods to stimulate job market participation The Hague Municipality

A pilot project is currently underway in The Hague to map the competencies and labour potential of permit holders so as to make an optimal match between employers and permit holders. Expectations are, based on national figures, that:

- 10 % is able to start work immediately (only a limited use of facilities is required)
- 30 % is able to start work with the help of the Werkgeversservicepunt (Employer Service Point)
- 60 % is (currently) unemployable

The Hague Municipality considers it her obligation to help permit holders find a paid job as quickly as possible. To this end she cooperates with Employer Services, Vluchtelingenwerk, social institutions and employers on developing specific initiatives for refugees. Permit holders in the age bracket 18-27 are expected to require additional help with language skills and access to the labour market. More information on the subject can be found in the document '[Haagse aanpak, Statushouders sociaal Domein](#)' (Hague approach Permit Holders Social Domain).

Employing a permit holder demands a commitment from both parties involved so as to achieve a successful match. Employers are obliged to pay an employed person the legally required minimum wage. The government has a number of financial compensations in place that bridge the gap between investment and yield. There is, for instance, a new fiscal advantage to be had when employing people that will earn between 100-125% of the legal minimum wage. It is called the *low income advantage* (LIV); at the close of each year the organisation receives this allowance automatically from the tax authorities. There is also the so-called *mobility bonus* that entitles an employer, when hiring a permit holder of over 56 or with a labour disability, to a premium discount on various employee insurances. Furthermore, there are financial compensations for training & coaching programs designed to make better use of the permit holder's abilities as part of an organisation. It includes the possibility of offering a permit holder a traineeship for one year whereby he/she retains his/her welfare benefits. It could be a successful way of training someone and have this individual discover his/her talents (VluchtelingenWerk, 2017).

All those entitled to welfare benefits are legally required to give something back to society. This also applies therefore to permit holders. Volunteering can be an alternative in this respect; it may serve as a first step to a paid job and learning the language.

If and when an organisation chooses to work with volunteers, it is important to have a clear vision of their role in the organisation. Volunteers are not merely free labour, they also require supervision and investment.

### 3. Obstacles for permit holders when entering the job market

The municipalities' mission regarding housing for permit holders has only a limited focus on labour market integration and employment (KIS, 2017). As mentioned earlier, many permit holders encounter major obstacles in finding a job. As a result many remain dependant on social welfare. Relatively speaking, refugees have more difficulties finding a job that best suits their respective educational levels. Also: more refugees work part-time, have temporary contracts and wind up in lower-level vocational education.

CBS figures show that in March 2017 a total of 474.000 welfare claimants have a non-Western background. In one year this number increased with 19.000 people. The number of people on social welfare with a Dutch or Western background decreased (compared with the year 2016) with 4.000 (CBS,2017). This can be explained by the influx of refugees between 2014 and 2016. From the group of Eritreans and Syrians that received a permit in 2014 5% had a paid job by 2017.

A study by WRR (2015) mentions a number of contributing factors. Individual challenges encountered by permit holders include, among others, insufficient knowledge of the Dutch language, a relatively high age when entering the labour market and lack of relevant experience. More general challenges include possible trauma(s) and, as a result, long career breaks. Highly motivated people are often found to accept low-level jobs that they then find hard to escape from. They are also quite often insecure about their performance, partly as a result of psychological problems. People who enjoyed good education and a good job in their country of origin often find that their expectations do not live up to the opportunities they are offered in the Dutch labour market.

Mrs. Van der Linden from 'Participatie Delft' remarks that the newcomers she is helping, have only limited access to Dutch speaking people. The language lessons the government provides (four half-days a week), she thinks, offer insufficient possibilities to learn the language well. The result being that it is difficult for newcomers to interact with the Dutch population. Because of this they tend to seek more people that speak their own language and in so doing of course stop learning Dutch altogether. A vicious circle is formed. It also means that norms and values are likely to be recognized less, which, for instance, has a negative influence on job interviews. All this contributes to the fact that newcomers and the general populace cross paths only occasionally. And here too, as the saying goes, unknown makes unloved.

Dutch organisations too often underestimate know-how, diplomas and relevant work experience when dealing with permit holders. Permit holders also often lack a social network that could help with finding a job. Insufficient knowledge about the labour market makes it difficult to present oneself adequately. Employers often get cold feet when it comes to giving permit holders the benefit of the doubt. Discrimination is a factor too (VluchtelingenWerk, 2016).

For instance, people with an Arabian last name are less likely to succeed in the job market (Blommeart, 2015).

Moreover, mediation in finding employment usually starts relatively late in the integration process. Valuable time is lost and distance to the labour market increases. A link to demand for labour is also lacking frequently. New insights however have prompted some municipalities to make some changes in all this and mediation in finding employment is addressed much earlier in the reintegration process. A case in point is the Hague approach.

## 4. The role of citizens & organisations in social integration of permit holders in The Hague

“Dutch citizenship is something to be proud of and which has to be earned”, according to the coalition agreement of Rutte III. What is it that defines ‘the’ Dutch citizen and how can newcomers ‘earn’ Dutch citizenship?

A multicultural society not only requires a new perspective from organisations but also from the individuals that make up society: its citizens. It is important for an organisation to establish a clear vision on citizenship first, so as to be able to make a success of one’s diversity policy. The Hague municipality considers the integration of permit holders as a joined responsibility of all Hague citizens.

*Citizenship* is defined as the way in which people participate in society; it is often connected with having a shared identity. The arrival of large numbers of people with different nationalities may be felt as a threat to one’s own national identity. This makes it important to reflect on the nature of citizenship.

Newcomers have to meet a number of requirements in order to become eligible for Dutch citizenship. Dutch citizenship, for instance, is viewed as something that must be ‘earned’. People that are born in Holland have an unconditional right to citizenship while newcomers are constantly required to pass tests and exams in order to acquire that same citizenship. Integration policies -with the aim of creating positive citizenship and solidarity in society- are always subject to a variety of political and social, time-specific, perceptions. At the moment, integration seems targeted specifically to distancing oneself from one’s cultural heritage and adopting Dutch rights and obligations as well as acquainting oneself with the Dutch values of freedom, equality, tolerance and solidarity. These values seem somewhat paradoxical when required strong adjustments from the newcomers.

To actually shape and maintain this free, equal, tolerant, inclusive, Dutch society, maybe it is time for a fresh perspective on citizenship. *World citizenship* would perhaps be a more fitting starting point for a thriving and diverse society. A *world citizen* is someone who realizes that everything he/she does affects the rest of the world and as a result starts to reflect on his/her choices more. This will not so much emphasise a national - or regional identity but rather bring about a stronger sense of connectedness with humanity in general.

## 5. Residence permit holders as part of an organisation

Organisations that allow employees to be proud of their cultural background give them a sense of acceptance and appreciation (van Dijk, 2013). In so doing, an organisation reflects that different cultures do not have to exclude but can even complement one another. It gives employees a chance to stand out and excel, which will contribute in a positive sense to overall productivity. A win-win situation. Research by Manpower shows that both immigrants and natives regard cultural diversity in the workplace an added value. If an organisation opts for a policy that offers room for permit holders, it is important to know what opportunities and challenges such a policy entails. Some basic understanding of the current situation on the labour market is also required. More on the subject can be found in Appendix 2.

The labour market is becoming more and more diverse. Migration is expected to be the main contributor of future population growth. Some 22,6% of the people living in Holland are migrants. CBS considers someone a 'migrant' when at least one (grand)parent was born in another country. This means that more than 1/5 of the Dutch population was raised in or with multiple cultures. This percentage will continue to rise in the future and it is predicted that in 2060 1/3 of all Dutch citizens will have foreign roots (CBS, 2017). If society as a whole changes, sales markets and customer base also change. If an organisation invests in people from various backgrounds, the organisation automatically extends its number of connections with foreign markets.

### Opportunities

Permit holders bring with them expertise, skills and qualifications that could contribute to Dutch society. They are often highly motivated to start working and actively make use of their acquired skills or diplomas. By employing permit holders, an organisation can make a positive contribution to society and at the same time make a huge difference in the life of a permit holder. Furthermore, someone with a different cultural background may provide fresh perspectives.

A diverse workforce may better equip an organisation in responding effectively to their clients' changing wishes and needs. On the one hand, their employees will develop more empathy by coming into contact with differing views, on the other hand clients will be more apt to identify themselves with such an organisation. The diversity in staff in turn will provide a variety of points of view that may increase an organisation's problem-solving ability.

## Challenges

A substantial degree of diversity in various fields will undoubtedly challenge some people's sense of security and might even be seen as a threat. Having to work together with people from different backgrounds and cultures, with different ideas, can initially make for an uneasy feeling; it will require a willingness to acquaint oneself with other people's way of thinking and communicating (ISW, 2015). Psychologically, it can even make for heightened stress levels in the body. Homogeneous groups usually find cooperation easy, which is commonly felt to be the result of their successful collaboration. However, this is not always a legitimate assumption. Heterogeneous groups tend to invite people to talk more in order to reach a consensus, which stimulates staff to engage more. Generally speaking, 'strangers' force people to rethink their common beliefs. Moreover, differences in background, perspectives, way of thinking and various types of knowledge make for an innovative work environment (Sommers, 2011).

If an organisation does not adequately monitor the influence diversity has on its business operations, this could lead to discontent among employees. If minorities in such an organisation are insufficiently acknowledged, chances are they will conform to the majority of the group or leave the organisation altogether. As a result, diversity and its benefits will be on the decline (Dohmen, 2017).

For an organisation to have a successful diversity policy, it is important that she communicates a clear ideology on maintaining space for diversity. If and when employees know why their organisation considers diversity to have an added value to the operation, they will perform better (Dohmen, 2017).

An inadequately managed, diversified work force can lead to 'us vs. them'-conflicts and a lower job satisfaction with all consequences thereof. It is important to pay special attention to your employees' sense of feeling 'at home'. If people experience a sense of 'not fitting in' they start to feel threatened and will have a tendency to go on the defensive. It is important therefore that organisations are aware of the psychological processes inherent to diversity.

## 6. 14 Tips and insights for a smooth collaboration between employers and permit holders

Research from 'Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving' shows that the support for permit holders on the labour market is focussed primarily on the permit holders themselves and only minimally on the employers (KIS,2017). This is often considered to be an obstacle. Here are some focal points for organisations when working on a smooth collaboration:

### 1. Expectation management

As mentioned in Appendix 2, permit holders not only have to deal with major issues from their past but also with a variety of integration requirements. Volunteering may speed up the integration process and act as a solid foundation for building a social network. In the beginning, however, this too will require a lot of effort from the permit holder. It is important for organisations to acknowledge this and adjust their expectations accordingly. It is better to view someone who is relatively new to a society as a welcome addition to the workforce than as someone who, from the get-go, can be considered as a full-fledged employee.

### 2. Start with a diversity policy

A high degree of diversity can create uncertainties. It can be considered as threatening (ISW, 2011). The cooperation between people with different ideas, cultures, views, beliefs, interests or backgrounds can be an awkward one. Indeed, it asks for a certain amount of empathy to understand one another. If you wish your organisation to be a diverse one, this policy must be widely supported within the organisation. Management may well decide on and put down in writing such a policy, but it has to be implemented as well and resources will have to be made available for it to work. It is important that everyone in the organisation is on board with this. If management does not strongly back the initiative, you cannot expect others to do so. Drawing up a diversity policy is only the beginning; next concrete actions and objectives are required.

### 3. Act out diversity policy bottom-up

For an organisation to have a successful diversity policy in place, it is of paramount importance that she promotes a clear ideology (Ellemers, 2017). Only when everyone in an organisation is aware of the importance of diversity can you expect people to act accordingly. So do not make diversity a top-down novelty.

When volunteers and employees are familiar with the reasons *why* you believe diversity to have an added value, it could influence their behaviour in that area in a positive way. So: Why is diversity important? How are we going to put forward the idea and how are we going to put it into practice? Which steps do we have to take to accomplish this?

#### 4. Maintain and acknowledge differences

Diversity is more than just having a more diverse pool of volunteers. It has to contribute to the organisation as a whole as well as to her social position and her employees' well-being (TNO. 2004). To eliminate uncertainties, it is necessary to acknowledge a prevailing culture as well as the fears that come with a change of that culture. Appreciation for diversity does not happen overnight. If these concerns are not sufficiently addressed, chances are that people will form groups and start to regard the matter as a mere managerial concept that will eventually drown the values they hold dear. So make sure there is room for dissenting opinions and deal with them in a constructive way.

#### 5. How to deal with change

An inadequately managed, diversified work force of volunteers and employees can lead to 'us vs. them'-conflicts and a lower job satisfaction with all consequences thereof. Everyone should feel at home. If people experience a sense of 'not fitting in' they start to feel threatened and will have a tendency to go on the defensive. It is therefore important that organisations are aware of the psychological processes inherent to diversity (TNO, 2004). For instance, your organisation could offer a course on diversity. Or a workshop that addresses identification and acknowledgement of differences. In short, people can be introduced to diversity and be given tools to address any uncertainties they may have.

#### 6. The 30% rule

People tend to categorise one another on the basis of certain characteristics. For instance on the basis of race, gender or age. If 85% of the employees fall under one category they are regarded as 'the norm', according to the Kanter - (or critical mass) theory.

This means that they represent the dominant norms and values within any given organisation. The remaining 15% are considered to be 'the outsiders'. They are, knowingly or unknowingly, expected to conform to this majority-dominated culture. If and when the minority group gets to about 30%, they will start to feel less compelled to conform to the dominant culture and experience a more pronounced awareness of their own norms and values. And that is exactly what diversity is all about.

### 7. Attention for openness

The formation of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' is something quite natural (Tuckman, 1965). According to social psychology, an 'in-group' is a well-defined group an individual can identify with, providing that individual with his or her sense of social identity. An 'out-group' is exactly the opposite; identification is absent. If an 'in-group' is threatened, it could create resistance. It is important for an organisation to address this process and make everyone co-responsible for success or failure. It is also important to start a dialogue on the organisation's diversity policy. For instance by stressing how it might create new opportunities. Wide enough support can only exist if everyone ascribes to the importance of diversity (TNO, 2004). In cases of apparent discrimination or exclusion, you, as acting director, must intervene. Keeping the debate open and stimulating feedback is no mere luxury. Make sure that people can freely and respectfully voice opportunities as well as threats.

### 8. Awareness about people's preference for 'sameness'

Be aware of the 'Clone'-effect. People often have a preference for others they have strong similarities with (Lievens, 2015). People rarely have conflicts about the fact that they tend to make the same choices again and again or agree with one another all the time. That is why people love to meet others that resemble them. It is important to make people aware of this social mechanism. By expanding your network with people of different beliefs, you avoid tunnel vision.

### 9. Awareness about ascribing positive or negative properties based on certain characteristics

The 'Halo'- and 'Horens'- effect. The 'Halo'-effect is our tendency to automatically ascribe additional positive properties to people who we believe to have one positive characteristic (Lievens, 2015). For instance, people with a neat appearance are usually considered to be more intelligent and more friendly than people who are less groomed. The 'Horens'-effect does the exact opposite. For instance, people who are physically disabled are more likely viewed to possess negative characteristics. It is important that everyone is aware of such mechanisms. Someone who doesn't speak Dutch well isn't stupid, he or she just doesn't speak Dutch well. Maybe this person was a lawyer in his country of origin.

#### 10. Focus on introduction of new volunteers and employees

People's first days with an organisation are very important in the light of their future development within that organisation. The more effortless the transition, the better people's overall functioning and well-being. Often there are a lot of unwritten rules people have to observe, in order to fit in. It is important that new arrivals have the opportunity to ask questions or that a mentor is available for matters like these. There also has to be a certain amount of tolerance regarding people not picking up on (unwritten) rules immediately. By allowing people to ask questions from the very start, an organisation could even profit from an outsider's fresh perspective on things, shedding light on areas of potential improvement.

#### 11. An introduction manual for new (and old?) volunteers

An introduction manual is useful in bringing new employees up to speed about the inner workings of an organisation. It is important that organisations have specific rules about diversity, like codes of conduct, an anti-discrimination policy, complaints procedures and other diversity aspects in decision-making (TNO,2004). Is attention paid to various religious holidays? Or to exams when it comes to young people? In short, the better you inform people about existing rules, regulations and corporate culture but also on any proposed changes in direction, the more likely it becomes they will be implemented successfully.

#### 12. Acknowledgement of people's own frame of reference and the possibility of asking questions

By having people question their own frame of reference, they will tend to be more sensitive to their own norms and values and possible ways of a more ideal way of dealing with one another. It may contribute to a growing awareness of how people's individual behavior influences the world around them. To learn more about other people's beliefs on matters like gender, age or sexual orientation, it is important that everyone should be able to ask questions and that curiosity is okay. In this way, curiosity is rewarded with new knowledge on the culture, habits, ideas and manners of people from different cultures. This, in turn, will improve our relationships with others and increase feelings of collectivity.

### 13. Appoint a diversity officer

You might consider appointing a diversity commission. You would be well advised to staff this commission with people from the same targetgroup you hope to reach with your diversity policy. Appointing a diversity officer to initiate changes and coordinate efforts in the field of diversity, will help to get things going. The officer's job could also include devising inhouse courses in intercultural competencies and monitoring whether or not volunteer- or general policy sufficiently reflects the subject of diversity.

### 14. Keep the discussion open

Cultural changes are not made overnight. It is important to give employees time to adjust to the new diversity policy. Patience is required. It is also important that an organisation has a clear vision on how to attain diversity and keeps the discussion open with volunteers and employees. Diversity in today's society is a reality and it will only increase. Today's diversity policy could be obsolete tomorrow.

## 7. Support and assistance by PEP

To assist organisations with recruitment and appreciation, PEP has devised a number of trainings on, for instance, working with volunteers and cultural diversity.

## 8. Samen verder in Den haag

PEP is also part of the 'Samen Verder in Den Haag'-initiative: a joint venture of VluchtelingenWerk, Taal aan Zee, Den Haag Cares, PEP and Resto van Harte.

'Samen Verder in Den Haag' hopes to lower the threshold for permit holders to start volunteering. The aim is for all stakeholders to benefit from the project: permit holders find their feet in The Hague, Hague residents can be of value in a variety of ways and organisations may benefit from municipal assistance in realizing their social objectives.

The project:

- Has a special volunteer desk for permit holders at VluchtelingenWerk. The intermediaries there are specially trained in matching and mentoring permit holders.
- Organizes low-threshold volunteer opportunities for groups, to help permit holders get acquainted with volunteering and social organisations around the city.
- Trains volunteers to act as 'Volunteer Buddy'. 'Volunteer Buddies' supervise and mentor permit holders who wish to volunteer.
- Hosts inspirational meetings open to organisations, volunteers and permit holders.
- Champions the promotion of a positive message about permit holders as volunteers.

Read more about 'Samen Verder in Den Haag' on [www.samenverderinden Haag.nl](http://www.samenverderinden Haag.nl)

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## Appendix 1: Population growth as a result of migration and labour participation of permit holders

CBS (Statistics Netherlands) expects population growth as a result of migration to increase in the years to come. As a result, the number of people in Dutch society with foreign roots will grow (CBS, 2017). This will have an impact on society as a whole and consequently on the labour market as well. Especially for refugees with a (temporary) residence permit, the road to a paid job proves to be not an easy one. A recent publication from the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR) (Advisory Council on Government Policy) shows that only one in every three permit holders in the 15-64 age bracket has a paid job (WRR, 2015).

## Appendix 2: General characteristics permit holders

### Health

As a result of the traumatic events many permit holders have witnessed, some 13 to 25% of this group of people suffers from a post-traumatic stress disorder or depression. Among the Dutch population this percentage is 2,5 to 6%; significantly less. Other psychological complaints like stress, depression, suicide, insomnia, worrying and loneliness occur often. Also, the lifestyle of permit holders is often an unhealthy one. Many of them smoke, use controlled substances, lack exercise and have an increased risk of diabetes or overweight. This, in turn, can lead to chronic pains. Furthermore, many of them are familiar with infectious diseases like TB, hepatitis B, HIV and they often have dental problems.

### Effects on (labour) participation

The above physical and mental problems as a result of a turbulent past, make for a far from ideal springboard for permit holders. The publication from the WRR, mentioned earlier, reflects, therefore, the problems encountered by this group of people in the labour market. Risk factors include too big a workload as a result of debts incurred, an unfamiliar workplace and the language barrier. Often, when permit holders are offered housing but no paid job is forthcoming, they are forced to take out a loan if they lack the necessary funds. In many instances, the integration examination too requires a loan. All this could mean additional (financial) stress. Stress is also a factor in not speaking the language, getting stuck in Dutch bureaucracy and receiving mail in an unfamiliar language.

It is an established fact that prolonged stress suppresses the functions of the hippocampus, which could lead to: memory problems, depression and anxiety disorders. People who have been forced to leave their homes, lived through a long and arduous voyage, stayed in a variety of locations and have ended up in a completely foreign environment definitely fall under the category of having been exposed to prolonged stress. The new civil society, calling upon people's individual strength to get things done, could add to the stress; thus creating a downward spiral. Anything but fertile ground for building a new existence.