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Minutes: training-seminar for HEIs in The Hague

Time: Monday, 26.11.2018 (09:00 – 16:00)

Place: NUFFIC, Kortenaerkade 11, 2518AX The Hague

Participants: see list at the end of the document.

1) Current status for the project and looking towards 2019

- Toolkit-project completed; result - toolkit, two procedures.
- REACT: involve HEIs and see how Toolkit can be implemented/adjusted
- Goal: five different approaches, from five HEIs.
- Last months: developed five refugee country briefings (Iran, Somalia, DRC, Ethiopia, Venezuela).
- Plan is to have webinars (e-learning modules) prepared by March.
- 2019: testing of the toolkit at HEIs – January ← → June.
- 2020: final dissemination seminar - involve all relevant stakeholders.

2) Presentation of the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications

- First-aid kit for institutions, when met with inadequately documented qualifications.
- How the toolkit is implemented is up to the institutions, based on the needs they have and their institutional mandate.
- Eight principles and ten tools
- Experience: many universities do not receive inadequately documented applications because information given on website of institution is that documentation requirements are essential.
- Think both efficiency and quality in the recognition process.
- How can the final document be relevant and made use of by applicant.
- Important to cross-check several sources of information.
- Experience in several countries: challenge with level placement - technical qualifications which are at post-secondary level, but presented as higher education.
- Questionnaire - translated into six languages.





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- Question: the questionnaire asks for the completed nominal length of qualification, but several applicants have incomplete degrees. Will be looked into adapting this.
- Two approaches within the toolkit: Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Background Report.

3) Presentation of current practices and priorities at HEIs

- **University of Limerick:**
 - Several potential entry routes – dependent on documentation and status of applicant.
 - Not clear overview of number of students with refugee background.
 - University of sanctuary: removing obstacles, awareness raising, providing access to education. 24 students this year. Two programmes available for the students.
 - Would like to extend the programmes students can attend.
 - More and more students would like to join master programmes, because have one or two years completed.
 - Informed about the work of the toolkit to other universities in Ireland.
 - Dialogue with several institutions about the work on applicants not meeting the requirements.
 - Potential students for testing: re-start degree programmes, & master and PhD.
 - Multiple admission offices at the university – will be a challenge.
- **University of Bremen:**
 - HERE: joint unit of all five universities in Bremen.
 - Without recognition of high school diploma: preparatory year with examinations.
 - Did not expect the small number of students with inadequately documented qualifications.
 - Inadequately documented qualification: missing documentation necessary for admission.
 - Several entry routes for admission.
 - Registration process through HERE studies programme: demand of passed TestAS
 - If a person comes from outside of the registration process: no demand of TestAS





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- Several procedures for testing the academic biography – meeting with candidate, language requirement, formal evaluation by ZAB, interview by board of experts
- Successful testing: learn about quality standard of interviews.

- **OsloMet:**
- No specific procedures in place for admission of refugees
- Have complementary educational programs (teacher, nursing, engineers), where refugees are given priority.
- For inadequately documented applications: the outcome depends on what is missing, what program the applicant has applied for, and how competitive admission is.
- Category of applicants for testing: look more attentively among all applicants – especially from countries where there are many refugees coming from.
- Aim with testing: admission.
- Open to implement new procedures, if the methodology tested is useful.
- EQPR: accepted one person with EQPR as a student – passport proven helpful because it lists the qualification achieved, and the caseworker can then focus on other parts of the application.

- **LUISS:**
- Progetto Mediterraneo (2017) - scholarship programme.
- Possibility to attend bachelor and master courses in English.
- University of Petra and University of Malta: partners.
- Selection of students: academic results, social and economic disadvantage status.
- 7 refugees part of the project. LUISS sends academic staff to Jordan for lectures.
- Department of Economics and Finance - four different bachelor programmes.
- Will now work on intake for master degrees; interested in enriching number of students attending.
- Students completing: will receive degree from University of Petra and LUISS.
- Requirements for student: ID document, present updated version of transcript.
- For future admission (especially master programmes), will meet challenges with the requirement of updated transcript.





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- Potential candidates for testing: would like to enrich amount of students taking part in the project, especially for master degree courses.
- Thoughts on testing period: develop in partnership with institutions from home-countries of applicants; student office, progetto mediterraneo project team, and international office involved from LUISS.
- **University of Utrecht:**
 - Do not see many applicants without documentation. Unsure why this is the case.
 - If so, they are often in the process of having an entrance exam.
 - Most normal: documentation, but not at necessary level for admission.
 - If insufficient documentation → Colloquium doctum procedure applies: applicant must pass a fixed set of entrance exams.
 - Entrance examinations: to make sure students are well prepared to successfully complete the degree started. Entrance examinations are not tailored for refugees.
 - No specific admission procedures for refugees.
 - Master programmes: no specific admissions procedure for refugees. With partial documentation/no documentation, assessed by case-by-case basis. If possible, forwarded to selections committee.
 - Inclusion: bottom-up approach – humanitarian project. Open for refugees and asylum seekers. Attend single courses for free, but cannot obtain a degree.
 - Idea: make good use of the waiting time.
 - No admission procedure; conversation with applicant (level of english, academic background).
 - Toolkit will be useful for professionalising the procedures.
 - When students pass exam - receive certificate of participation.

4) Workpackage on e-learning modules

- Jessica Stannard (NUFFIC) presents the draft schedule for the webinars (refugee country briefings).
- 31. January, 10.30-11.30 – Iran
- 7. February, 10.30-11.30 – Ethiopia
- 28. February, 10.30-11.30 – Somalia
- 7. March, 10.30-11.30 - Venezuela
- 26. March, 13.00-14.00 - DRC





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- Time: 60 minutes. 45 minutes presentation and 15 minutes for discussion.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation based on the refugee country briefing.
- NUFFIC will share their presentation, as they are the first one holding the webinar.
- Practical for assessment of documents from these countries.
- Main target group is HEIs from NARIC countries.
- Webinars will be recorded, and stored, for open access.
- Jessica will send out schedule for dress rehearsal.
- All necessary information will be distributed to project participants in advance.

5) Testing of the toolkit – planning ahead (group work)

- Participants are handed a template to practice for the testing period, focusing on how the different principles and tools can be implemented at their institution.

6) Presentation of group work - planning of testing period

- **Italy:**
- Target population: academic staff in charge of recognition, inadequately documented applications, enlargement of progetto mediterraneo.
- Purpose of assessment: enrollment of students.
- Status of the final document: background report, because of regulations. Could be used by universities in their assessment for enrollment.
- End-users: applicants and student office.
- Principles: relevance – final document could also be used in labour market. Equal treatment – importance of Lisbon Recognition Convention, overcome inequalities. Competent treatment – ensure similar treatment of all applicants. Organise training of staff, in cooperation with CIMEA. Accessibility – first step of an inclusive process. Adapt to language of refugee, in beginning of process. Document must be understood by the applicant.
- Six steps: acceptance of request – verification of documents. Exam – tool number one – four. Meeting with applicant and submission of questionnaire – tool five. Organisation of preparatory meeting – tool six and seven. Interview and follow up – tool eight and nine. Publication of background report – tool ten.





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- Marina Malgina mentions that at least 40 people in Italy have received the EQPR, and it would be interesting to gain knowledge of how HEIs in Italy assess these documents when they receive them.
- **Germany:**
 - Target group: students from University of Bremen and neighbouring cities.
 - Purpose of assessment: admission.
 - End-users: applicants and admission officers.
 - Four steps: questionnaire, confirmation of step one by credential evaluator - use level placement template, interview with expert board, end document – qualifications passport.
 - Have identified four candidates: first talks will be next week.
- **Ireland**
 - Target population: admission to post-graduate programmes. Students who do not have relevant work experience. Persons who normally would be rejected at the international office, because of lack of documentation/documentation cannot be verified.
 - Status of final document: produce a document to be recognised by cooperating institutions.
 - Would need input from international office, on what tools could be needed.
 - Principles: transparency is important – clear communication with applicants on managing expectations. Some programmes have fee waivers already, but would need to have this in place for more programmes.
 - Will meet with colleagues at international office and at faculties.
- **The Netherlands**
 - Target population: asylum seekers and refugees.
 - Purpose of assessment: admission to bachelor programmes
 - Status of the final document: background report
 - End-users: admission office
 - Don't expect to change too much at once, but adapt to current procedures.
 - Things need to be changed in the regulations – will take that up with institution.
 - Steps: preliminary mapping – questionnaire and ask person to apply for NUFFICs ION. Person apply regularly - Identify these students. Credential evaluator phase –





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identify missing documentation, arrange interview (who would be suitable to attend). Admission – issue final statement.

7) Practical matters and conclusion of the meeting

- Template to be answered by participants – deadline of answers: within 21.12.2018.
- Receipts to be kept for at least five years.
- Dissemination template to be filled in within 15.01.2019.
- NOKUT will send email with information on deadlines about reporting to participants (financial and dissemination) within this week or early next week.





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Participants

	Institution	First name	Last name	Country
1	CIMEA	Letizia	Pisoni	Italy
2	KMK	Theresia	Strümpfel	Germany
3	NOKUT	Marina	Malgina	Norway
4	NOKUT	Erlend Bern	Aaser	Norway
5	NUFFIC	Katrien	Bardoel	Netherlands
6	LUISS	Michele	Gradoli	Italy
7	University of Bremen	Mirja	Uschkureit	Germany
8	University of Limerick	Rhona	McCormack	Ireland
9	University of Limerick	John	Lannon	Ireland
10	University of Utrecht	Elena	Valbusa	Netherlands
11	University of Utrecht	Wendy	Holwerda	Netherlands
12	EUA	Henriette	Stoeber	Belgium
13	NUFFIC	Samer	Alzaidy	Netherlands





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