



Refugees and Recognition – progress meeting minutes

30th March (14:00) – 31st March (12:30) 2017

Day 1

Time: 14:00 – 18:00

Location: The New Club, 2 Montpellier Parade, Cheltenham GL50 1UD

Attendees: Stig Arne Skjerven, Marina Malgina, Katrien Bardoel, Vera Lucke, Wafa Triek, Gayane Harutyunyan, Inna Ghabulyan, Lisa Collett, Katherine Latta, Rose Chacko, Adnan Rawwash

- **Updates**

UK: still awaiting government decision on the resettlement of 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, and with that funding to support their integration into the UK employment market or education system as appropriate. UK NARIC was also involved in the Council of Europe pilot project for the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees; 20 refugees received the passport in March.

The Netherlands: Nothing new in 2016, 3,000 refugee assessments were conducted under the framework of the free service. Expect a further 5,000 in 2017 as awareness of the service steadily increases. The EUN service for those without any documentation has received 123 enquiries so far. NVAO have begun asking questions as to how the toolkit can be tailored to VET, NUFFIC are happy to support and facilitate that discussion.

Armenia: Not much change. Refugees are mainly from Syria, and difficulties in finding a job, VET programmes are being developed and provided by government. In 2016 Armenia received 22,000 refugees, but it considers itself a transition country.

France: CIEP have developed a practical guide for recognition of refugees for university and there is now a designated post in the ministry. There is also an initiative linking refugee researchers and doctors to PhD spaces currently 20 people have been identified through this programme and have been awarded a scholarship for 3-4 years.

Italy: Broadly speaking the numbers of refugee applications continue to increase. CIMEA has developed a new website with a refugee section (<http://www.cimea.it/en/services/services-recognition-of-qualifications/recognition-of-qualifications-held-by-refugees.aspx>) and is also participating in the Council of Europe project.

With reference to the Toolkit project, CIMEA has organized a National Coordination for the Evaluation of Refugee Qualifications (CNVQR) with several Italian universities to support the access of refugees to university. CIMEA are testing the qualification passport and interview templates with a two stage process: an initial interview verifying the comparability of the individual refugees' qualifications, and a second interview with professors to establish coverage of the field of study.





Norway: Refugee numbers in Norway continue to rise gradually. It appears that refugees wait 1-3 years before they request recognition. Syria is the number 1 country for applications with Eritrea, Afghanistan and Iraq also very high.

The first Qualifications Passports have been issued as part of a pilot project in Greece funded by Council of Europe and co-ordinated by NOKUT.

There are a number of information sharing initiatives ongoing in Norway to ensure the establishment of complementary bridging courses in particular for teachers, nurses and engineers. These courses are developed specifically for individuals from the Middle Eastern region. These have been developed by Ministerial / inter departmental working groups to support integration of refugees.

UVD and qualification passport referrals are increasing; many apply to the passport route as they do not have the appropriate language or residency.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also provides support to students from countries in conflict to continue their studies in Norway. This process involves a review of their documentation and their language proficiency in Norwegian / Scandinavian language / English.

2 – Project Update

One-year since the project has started. The remaining tasks include:

- Compilation of the toolkit
- Testing of the toolkit
- Development of the e-modules

Currently all partners need to review of the country briefings need to ensure the following:

- Short
- Informative
- Relative
- Standardised / alike
- Take out certificate samples

Consider referring to additional services and links to up to date information on the changes and developments in country. Consider two publications – one for public viewing and a secure publication of sensitive information for ENIC-NARIC Centres.



572356-EPP-1-2016-1-NO-EPPKA3-NARIC - **Refugees and Recognition** – Toolkit for recognition of higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation

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The briefings were tested in the Council of Europe project and were found to be useful and informative. In Afghanistan and Somalia it was noted is very difficult to establish official sources of information on higher education.

Deadline for final amendments on country briefings is the 10th April

Verification requirements vary considerably between each country, particularly without documentation. Identify examples of best practice to include within the toolkit. Toolkit should include the following:

- Country Briefings
- Structured Interviews / Questionnaires
- Qualification Passport Samples
- Background Paper Samples
- Reference to EAR Manual Chapter 12: Refugees
- Map / Flow chart of existing methods

This could be further supported by the inclusion of case studies from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan; providing the sequence of events for documentation. Link to other relevant projects support recognition of refugee qualifications without documentation.

Testing of the toolkit

- CIMEA are testing the qualification passport process with several universities this spring – conducting a two stage interview process, using the qualification passport interview templates.
- CIEP will undertake a similar exercise in France
- UK NARIC will explore how to gather feedback within the UK on these processes
- ArmENIC are unclear as to how they can test the documentation

The Qualification passport has now been issued in Greece and Rose Chacko and Marina Malgina provided a report on the process that leads to the issuance of the passport:

- Applicant fills in a questionnaire regarding their educational background
- Credential evaluator reviews the application forms and checks and verifies the information
- Credential evaluators then conduct an interview with the individual cross-checking the information included within the application form.

Rose mentioned that it does help to have a subject specific expert, or someone who is familiar with that field of study within the interview.

The Qualification Passport has three parts:

1. Explanatory part



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2. Evaluation part
3. Information part

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How the qualification passport is to be used is at the discretion of each national authority, and how the qualification passport can be verified.

Katrien Bardoel provided information on the Dutch process which includes a questionnaire that is completed by applicants and then the credential evaluator conducts a rudimentary cross-check issuing the individual a background paper.

Day 2

Time: 9:30 – 18:00

Location: UK NARIC, Suffolk House, 68-70 Suffolk Road, Cheltenham GL50 2ED

Attendees: Stig Arne Skjerven, Marina Malgina, Katrien Bardoel, Vera Lucke, Wafa Triek, Gayane Harutyunyan, Inna Ghabulyan, Lisa Collett, Katherine Latta, Rose Chacko, Adnan Rawwash

1. E-Learning Modules

Discussion of the technicalities and content, the recommendation is for the following:

- A series of three webinars
- Including guest speakers active in the recognition of qualifications of refugees without documentation
- Identify key topics
- Compile and e-module

There was a discussion of the development of an online training session to include in the On-Req credential evaluation course. The concern is that this is not visible enough, and it has a different audience.

Webinars to be interactive, and to develop an online e-module to compile the following information:

- The tools available
- How to use the toolkit
- Case studies / demonstration on how those tools are used
- Flow chart to demonstrate the sequence of events

To develop the webinars and e-module the testing needs to be completed and the results of that need to be reported; the tools and the toolkit needs to be complete and ready for use.

On that basis the timeframe is as follows:



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September:

- Results of the testing
- Content of the tool kit

- All documentation ready (interview templates / Background Paper / Qualification Passport / Country Briefings)
- Skype meeting at the end of September UK NARIC / NUFFIC / NOKUT

December:

- Content of the e-learning module by mid-December
- Content, structure and speakers for the webinar series agreed
- Marketing and promotion of the webinar series

January:

- 3 x webinars: one a week from the third week in January 2018

UK NARIC to co-ordinate the webinars and with the support of NUFFIC and NOKUT engage the guest speakers consider UNHCR / Refugees / Universities / Council of Europe / European Commission.

Next Meeting: CIEP, Paris, 2nd and 3rd November 2017





Appendix:

Agenda for 30th and 31st March 2017

Start	End	Activity	Presenter
14:00	14:15	Welcome, practical information and presentation of the programme for the meeting	UK NARIC NOKUT
14:15	14:45	Information from the offices	Participant offices
14:45	15:30	Follow ups and activities after the 2nd meeting	NOKUT
15:30	16:00	Coffee break	
16:00	16:45	Tools and toolkits: recap after the 2nd meeting	NOKUT
16:45	17:45	Testing of the methodology and tools	CIMEA CIEP ArmENIC UK NARIC
17:45	18:00	Summary and conclusion of the day	NOKUT UK NARIC

Agenda

Start	End	Activity	Presenter
09:30	09:45	Introduction and practical information	UK NARIC NOKUT
09:45	10:45	E-Learning modules – form and contents	UK NARIC NUFFIC NOKUT
10:45	11:00	Coffee break	
11:00	11:45	Timeline and planning of the rest of activities in the project	NOKUT
11:45	12:00	AOB	All participants
12:00	12:30	Conclusion of the meeting	NOKUT UK NARIC

