

Best Practice



**International
Knowledge Platform**
*Sharing know-how
on asylum*



Pilot 'Guidance to work'

Netherlands

Over a period of one year, COA, together with partners Randstad and the municipality of Almere, experimented with an approach in which a Randstad employee was present at the asylum center to actively mediate residents into paid work.

Summary

Country: Netherlands

Contactperson: Sarah Pennington de Jongh, COA, sarahpenningtondejongh@coa.nl, 0031611734760

Description of best practice:

Give a brief explanation of the best practice. What did you want to achieve? What did the best practice contain? How were the results?

Targetgroup:

All residents who are legally allowed to work: both asylum seekers and permit holders.

Why is this in your view a best practice that others should follow?

If someone is present at the reception center to mediate residents into paid work, the barrier to work is lowered. It makes it easier for asylum seekers' center residents to discuss work, ambition and the associated regulation.

Methods & results

Targetgroup:

All residents of Almere reception center center who are legally allowed to work: both asylum seekers whose applications are still under consideration, and applicants whose applications have been approved.

Aim/issue:

The aim of this pilot was to: A. successfully mediate 50 residents into paid work over a period of one year and B. learn lessons from this approach. A research agency has produced an evaluation report on how this approach could work at another asylum seekers' center.

Parties involved:

During this pilot we work together with Randstad (an employment agency) and the municipality of Almere. The pilot was evaluated by research organization OpemEmbassy.

Context:

This pilot took place at the Almere reception center, where more than 1,200 residents live and more than 800 of them are allowed to work. Many participation activities were already possible from the 'Meedoen-balie' (Participation Desk), this is the central place at the asylum center where all activities related to language lessons, hobbies, sports and volunteer work come together.

Elaborate description of implementation of practice:

During a period of one year, an employee of Randstad (employment agency) was present at the Almere reception center. It was one of the first pilot where COA has worked intensive with an employment agency at the reception center and also where residents are actively guided to work. During individual meetings with reception center residents work experience, ambition and potential vacancies were discussed. A job coach was provided by the municipality of Almere who provided additional guidance in the workplace. This personal approach was very important, as it was very important for residents to have a permanent point of contact to whom they could go with their questions and concerns.

Challenges, risks:

- The combination between working and living in an reception center is not easy. The combination between work and the start of an integration program from the municipality is also sometimes difficult to maintain. It is therefore very important that there is individual guidance for the asylum seeker or status holders, both in the asylum center and in the workplace.
- The administrative processes regarding paid work in the Netherlands. Residents need to apply for a work permit, obtain a BSN number and pay part of the salary to the COA for accommodation. These administrative actions are difficult to understand and can take several weeks or even months. It is very important that residents are well informed about this, so that they know why they cannot start work immediately.

Results:

Over a period of one year, more than 170 people have had an intake by Randstad, of whom 60 were positively matched to an employer. The aim was to match at least 50 people to an employer, what has been achieved. The jobs were in different sectors, for example in hotels, IT or logistics. OpenEmbassy has made an evaluation report and a guide on how to set up a similar approach at and other reception centers. The final version of these documents are expected in May 2024. The lessons learned have been incorporated into the COA labor participation policy frameworks.

Preconditions

Location:

it is helpful if there is already a good network at the location focused on participation. If someone is not yet ready to work, they can easily be referred to volunteer work, for example.

Means:

mainly manpower. A Randstad employee was available full-time and several employees from COA were released for a number of days per work to provide support. They provided asylum seekers and status holders with group information sessions about work and helped with administration.

Who works on the project:

The pilot was carried out at COA reception center Almere. There was close cooperation with the location employees, including with the social workers (casemanagers) who provide individual guidance to status holders and with the coordinators who are involved in participation activities.

Costs:

The pilot was financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Costs were included for the Randstad employee, an amount per successful match for Randstad and hours for the COA for a project leader and secretary, a policy officer and an employee at the asylum seekers' center.