



Conference report

European Conference on Integration and Migration

'The Somali community in focus'

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Preface

Bringing people together is the key to improve the integration and that is what happened on 1 October 2004 in Rotterdam. English and Dutch Government institutions, social organisations, self organisations and researchers came together at Engels Conference Centre to talk about the integration policies in general and the position of the Somali community in particular. This international conference was focused on the United Kingdom and the Netherlands because of the massive migration of Dutch Somalis to the United Kingdom that has taken place. The question is of course why so many Somalis moved and are still moving to the United Kingdom. The Somalis themselves name several reasons and these reasons were discussed during the conference. The reasons are quite diverse, from a negative attitude towards the Islam to less regulation in the United Kingdom. They all have one thing in common and that is that they are very hot issues at the moment in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands and perhaps also in many other European countries.

According to the Dutch Somalis in the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom is a better place to live than the Netherlands, but is this really the case? Different experts and concerned parties addressed this assumption and debated on issues like education, work, entrepreneurship and politics.

This conference is the first in a series of European conferences concerning integration and minorities. These conferences are one of the few places where all parties concerned with integration are present. By discussing several issues and formulating recommendations, the conferences should stimulate the integration of minorities. It is our hope that we will be able to announce some concrete results at the next conference in the United Kingdom later this year.

If you have any comments on the report or would like to make further suggestions, please send these to Momatrade Consultancy.

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2 Reception of the British delegation by alderman L. Geluk of Rotterdam

On 1 October 2004 the Conference Integration and Migration took place at Engels Conference Centre in Rotterdam.

Prior to this day, a number of prominent British guests and Dutch representatives of social organisations, self organisations and the government were welcomed at the city hall of Rotterdam by alderman Geluk. During this reception Mr. Geluk explained the integration policy of the City of Rotterdam and listened to the experiences of the Dutch and British guests.



Next the delegation visited Bureau Medelanders, a private company that commits itself to improve the participation of minorities in society. The delegation was informed about several projects, for example a project concerning Somali women in Amersfoort.

The British guests were very surprised about the fact that a private company has found a market in the participation of minorities. This is something that they do not have in the United Kingdom.

After Bureau Medelanders the delegation went to the Rijnmond foundation of self organisations. A foundation of self organisations in Rotterdam and surrounding areas. Numerous self organisations are connected to this foundation. They were showed an educational centre and were informed about how language lessons are given. Furthermore different self organisations were visited. The British delegates noticed that the organisations had a lot of facilities to their disposal. But the organisations explained that they are not sure if there will be enough money available to keep these facilities in the future.

The next stop of the day was at the Somali Cultural Centre Dar Al-Hijra in South-Rotterdam. At this centre there is also a mosque and this is where the delegation talked to the imam of

the mosque, Ali Nasr and Ahmed Kayhre, connected to the cultural centre. They explained the delegation how they have realised the centre, what was needed for the realisation, how they work and what they do. In addition they informed the delegation about the current political climate and how they experience this. Their objective is to bring Muslim and non-Muslims together and to create more understanding between both groups. One of their methods is to do the Friday prayer in the mosque in Dutch.

At the beginning of the evening the delegation went to the City of Tilburg. First they visited a Somali phone house, the only one in Tilburg. The English guests could not believe this, because the Somali community in Tilburg is relatively large. In Leicester, for example there are numerous Somali phone houses. This probably shows how easy it is to start such a business in the United Kingdom, one of the British guests said.

Around eight o'clock the delegation was welcomed in community centre 'De Ypelaer'. There they enjoyed a Somali meal and talked with several Somalis from Tilburg about their experiences in the Netherlands.

During this day the British guests were able to get to know several aspects of the Dutch society, furthermore they had the time to talk with the parties involved.

Overall this day appeared to be an ideal run up for the British delegation to the conference in Rotterdam, one day later.

3.2 Plenary sessions

3.2.1 Migration of Dutch Somalis to the UK

Adan Igeh Hussein

Introduction

Europe is on the move, however the most recent and remarkable development in Europe is perhaps the large migration of Somalis from Western Europe and Scandinavia to the United Kingdom. Since 1998 approximately 18.000 to 22.000 of Somalis, of which the majority are Dutch Somalis, moved to the United Kingdom. And a significant number of those still living in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, also have the intention to move to the United Kingdom.

Since the end of the 1980s, many Somalis have moved to the western European countries. The group exists mainly of young people, fled from the civil war in their homeland. In 2001 more than 28.000 Somalis were living in the Netherlands. Following signals from various sources about actual and intended relocation to the United Kingdom of a considerable group of Dutch Somalis between the period February 2003 and August 2003, an independent research has been carried out (committed by the Ministry of Justice).

The University of Tilburg (Dr. van den Reek) in cooperation with the Somali European Forum (Adan Igeh Hussein) conducted this research. The primary objective was to chart behaviour, motivation and attitude towards relocation and the migration of this group to the United Kingdom.

The research was carried out in the United Kingdom, more specifically in Birmingham and Leicester and in various parts of the Netherlands. The questions were asked to Somalis with a Dutch passport that had moved to the United Kingdom. The combination of a Dutch researcher of a university and a Dutch interviewer of Somali origin yielded much trust among the target group and a high response rate. 200 questionnaires (including interviews) in both Dutch and Somali have been administered.

Results and analyses

According to the results and analyses of the research, reasons for leaving the Netherlands globally point in two directions:

- economical-social participation
- cultural-religious opportunities

On both dimensions, a considerable part of the Dutch Somali community experiences such high levels of coercion, limitation and deprivation of liberty, that they decided to migrate to the United Kingdom.

The problems and difficulties facing the Dutch Somali are not only related to their cultural baggage, history as a refugee, traumatic war experiences and their coping processes, but the social, economical and cultural changes in the new society (the social context) also affect the condition of Somalis in the Netherlands.

Adults hardly have plans for remigration to the Netherlands. However, almost without exception, children and youngsters who do not feel at home in the Islamic oriented British district where the family has settled, want to go back to the Netherlands, which they see as their native country.

As appears from the results of the survey, there are three major reasons (push-factors) for leaving the Netherlands:

1. Dutch integration policy

In the eyes of the participants, the Netherlands is a country which values tolerance in theory and is in a way progressive, but this is not the case when it comes to migrants.

According to many of the respondents, the Dutch migration policy is so patronizing that migrants are not stimulated to develop themselves or to show any initiative with regard to education or labour participation. The target group experiences an imposed migrant policy.

This means that there is more emphasis on a policy aimed at assimilation and less on responsibilities and ideas of the group and more on shortcomings instead of competence and positive values of the target group. In the United Kingdom, adapting to language, culture, rules and values and social intercourses is not, like in the Netherlands, experienced as a prescribed law; the United Kingdom offers the opportunity to live within a district with co-ethnics, with the help and understanding of a large Somali social network.

2. Economic-social participation

The target group faces strong limitations in raising their position on the Dutch socio-economic ladder; as a consequence they experience the restrictions, partly financial, in different areas, both at community and family level. When it comes to possibilities for labour participation and education chances, especially Somali men with a relatively high education in their country are disappointed. As stated above, the Dutch immigration policy is experienced as patronizing.

Migrants are not stimulated to develop themselves or to show any initiative with regard to education or labour participation. Women notice the lack of a large social network; in Somalia, a child is not just raised by its parents but other members of the family also play an important role in this.

The Dutch regularized welfare state seems irreconcilable with the character of the Somalis. In countries like Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, with their more liberal economic systems, the traditionally nomadic participants obviously feel more at home. The Netherlands, with its 'over organised welfare state' does not seem to be a suitable country for all migrants. The high level of unemployment (with its financial consequences) seems to show that the Somalis are more hindered than helped by the Dutch welfare state; this is in contrast with the British situation where economic activity is less constrained by rules and laws, which is more in line with the emphasis on own initiative and cultural maintenance of the Somalis.

3. Decreasing tolerance after '9/11'

Decreasing tolerance of native Dutch towards other cultures and religions, especially after '9/11' is a regularly returning motive for leaving the Netherlands. This limitation of religious freedom, standards and values and transfer of culture are

often mentioned in combination with the experienced limits on the development of the (Muslim) identity and on be themselves in the public domain. According to the respondents, they cannot be Muslim outside the private domain in the Netherlands and they cannot live by traditional Muslim standards and values.

The awareness of the fact that in the United Kingdom the Somali community can live in the traditional way is one of the main reasons for migration.

Conclusion and recommendations

It is very obvious that the number of European Somalis moving from different EU-countries to the United Kingdom (especially to the British Midlands, Birmingham, Leicester, Bristol and London) is increasing significantly. A considerable number of European Somalis who still remain to live in these countries also has the intention to leave. The majority of this group are families particularly women and children.

Finding specialist and appropriate input to highlight and meet the needs and understand the migration backgrounds of those families is not easy. The only way to enable the Somali refugees who are settled in EU-countries to become useful and adequate European citizens is by offering them and their families the opportunity to live normally in the host countries.

This requires providing this new ethnic group with the means to achieve public outcomes within employment, housing, education, healthcare and so on, which are equivalent to those within the general population. Equally Somali refugees should be willing to adapt to the lifestyle and social values of the host societies as well as to the law and the rules and accept the fact that equal rights entails equal obligations.

The engagement and participation of the Somali community in a civil society is very crucial. They have to get a sense and feeling of belonging and being part of a community and society in the host countries. This will contribute to their level of awareness and knowledge concerning fundamental European values, nationhood and citizenship.

Having seen the transmigration movements and integration difficulties inside Somali European communities across Europe, but also the expected influence and consequences of this phenomenon, it is considered, recommended and it seems very necessary to set up and establish a trans-national and multidimensional network of migration and integration monitoring systems, for the following purposes:

- Support and strengthen the cooperation, coordination and partnership between the involved actors to develop an effective and mutual dialogue at strategic and policy level with a future vision.

- Support the development of a trans-national network of information and knowledge exchange between the involved partners. Furthermore make common strategies and policy decisions concerned integration, migration and security issues of the target group.

3.2.2 Why do asylum seekers migrate to the UK?

Prof. Dr. Vaughan Robinson

Commissioned by the UK Home Office a research is conducted to explore why asylum seekers migrate to one destination country rather than another. The United Kingdom was used as a case-study.

In order to make the project feasible, the scope of the research was narrowed down to the population of asylum seekers who had already sought and gained entry to the UK and then to a sample of these. The sample size was restricted to 65 asylum seekers. Although this is a larger sample than has been used in any other comparable study and is also a large sample for qualitative research, it is not possible to assess whether the research respondents are statistically representative of the asylum seeking population of the UK.

Among the respondents there were four main nationalities: Sri Lanka, Romania, Iran and Somalia. Thirty one percent of respondents were female and 69 per cent male. Two-thirds of respondents have been in the United Kingdom for less than five years. Table 1.3 shows that, not unexpectedly, most of the respondents were relatively young when they arrived in the UK, with only 8 per cent aged more than 40 years and three arriving as children.

Table 1.3: Age of respondents on arrival in Britain

	Number	%
0 – 15	3	5
16 – 24	25	38
25 – 39	17	26
40 – 59	1	2
60 +	4	6
Not disclosed ¹	15	23
Total	65	100%

Home Office Research Study No 243

Key findings

The flight

- Most people did not choose to leave their country;
- The aim to reach a place of safety in the world;
- Destination is less important than the escape;
- It is not that they are interested in another country; they just want to save their lives.

The role of agents

- Two-thirds been helped by agents;
- The relationship between agent and client varied.
 - Some agents imposed their will
 - Others negotiated
 - Others supplied services as requested

- Agents channelled migration
 - They denied clients access other countries
 - They offered choice of destinations
 - They offered advice on merits of different destinations

Why did people 'choose' the UK? *For those given a choice, why did they opt for the UK rather than other destinations?*

Safety and democracy

- Freedom of speech and thought;
- Long history of democracy.

Opportunities, especially for children

- Belief that the UK is a modern and affluent country;
- Desire to work;
- Limited knowledge of welfare benefits;
- Quality of the education system.

Family and friends

- Family reunion as an objective as itself;
- Knowing that someone already here offered security and reassurance;
- Family and friends as sources of advice and information.

Language

- Prior knowledge of English because of the historical ties: eases integration;
- English is seen as a global language;
- Acquisition is seen as opening opportunities.

Historical ties

- A former part of the British empire;
- Pre-existing migration-channels.

Prior perceptions and images

- Some of the respondents had images from film or novels, others from prominent people, sports or music

Conclusion

This research looked at those migrating to the UK from outside the European Union. However it is possible that similar factors motivate subsequent migration from one EU country to another. We should not be surprised that Somalis now are migrating to the UK from the Netherlands:

- Nomadic people;
- Most long distance migrants subsequently make short distance moves as they gained extra knowledge of local opportunities;
- Key objective of the European Union is to stimulate migration between labour markets.

3.2.3 A glimpse of the problems facing the Somali communities in the Netherlands and their migration to the United Kingdom.

Shamsa Hassan Said

Background

Somalia is one of the countries which became known as the 'failed states'. Emergency complexes have made its inhabitants a war torn society. A long dictatorial rule has created dissident armed groups who launched an armed struggle in the late seventies and intensified into a full scale civil war in the late eighties and early nineties. Consequently, law and order and government institutions have collapsed. The civil war has also claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and has inflicted catastrophic destruction to both public and private properties. Moreover, it has caused massive famine, huge internal displacement of people and a large influx of refugees who became scattered all over the world. A massive international humanitarian and military intervention in 1992-95 has not succeeded in restoration of peace and tranquillity. Neither did it succeed in the restoration of the Somali State. A breakaway Republic of Somaliland was inaugurated in the north and has enjoyed a relative peace and rehabilitation. In 2004 the last of over fourteen internationally brokered peace conferences was held in Kenya in the hope of rebuilding the Somali State.

Somali arrivals to the Netherlands

The first wave of Somali refugees to The Netherlands has fled from the brutal war between the dissident armed groups in the north of the country and the dictatorial military regime in the late eighties. It was followed by mass arrival of refugees when the civil war spread into the south of the country in the early nineties. However, it is safe to say that the final destination of the majority, if not all of the Somalis was North America and the United Kingdom. This was due to several reasons among which are:

- Somalis considered North America not only as a land of opportunities but also as refugee paradise.
- There is a colonial legacy between Somalia and the United Kingdom, which colonized for nearly a century the northern part of Somalia, which now became the breakaway Republic of Somaliland and for ten years (1941-50) the whole of the country.
- Most of the Somalis did not have previous knowledge and experience of The Netherlands.

Difficulties Somalis encountered in the Netherlands

In addition to the traumatic experiences the Somalis have faced in their home country, which included physical, psychological wounds, loss of loved ones, loss of properties, loss of community and the hardships they have supported during their long and arduous way to The Netherlands, the Somalis also encountered several psychological shortcomings in The Netherlands. Some of these are:

- Cultural shock and language barrier;
- Difficult Asylum procedures;
- Uncertainties in their future.

In contrast to the other migrant people such as the Turks and the Moroccans, which have long established communities in The Netherlands and community centres were their members could meet and could exchange information, ideas and experiences, the Somalis are new arrivals and their newly established community centres are too weak to cope with the demands of their members.

From the Netherlands to the United Kingdom

Waves of Somalis have moved from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom in the past years. Several factors might have contributed to this migration.

First, as mentioned previously, there is a colonial linkage between Somalia and the United Kingdom. Secondly, the English language is an international language, which is seen as having an advantage over the Dutch language. Thirdly, in contrast to the tough business regulations in the Netherlands, Somalis benefit from the lax business regulations in the United Kingdom, which allows them to easily establish small scale businesses. Finally, Somalis feel at home in the United Kingdom since large and well established Somali communities are already thriving in many parts of the country.

However, not all of the Somalis from the Netherlands in the United Kingdom are satisfied with the move. The children are hard hit by the migration to the United Kingdom. This is primarily because they miss their friends and neighbourhoods.

Conclusion and recommendations

As was mentioned before the historical relations between Somalia and the United Kingdom and the existing economic, language and communal factors have all contributed to the migration of quite a number of Somalis from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom. However further research is needed to have a solid knowledge on why Somalis migrate from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom.

Empowering the Somali communities through their community organisations seems one of the existing options that could halt the immigration. This could be carried out by for example funding capacity building programmes for the Somali community organisations in the Netherlands. Assessing the priority needed and helping them cover these needs is however a precondition to any new programme and project.

Integration and the City of Leicester

Dr. Steve White

Leicester has now seen over 50 years of settlement of Black and Asian people from former British colonies, the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and East Africa. Leicester has been attractive to immigrants for a number of reasons: prosperity, diverse industry, accessibility, central location, the availability of cheap houses for purchase and so on. Today, Leicester is one of Europe's most multicultural cities with a well-integrated ethnic minority community comprising over one third of the city's population.

Somalis in Leicester

Since the nineties, increasing numbers of Somalis have begun arriving in Leicester. The existence of several constitutionalised Somali refugee community organisations (RCOs) demonstrates that this community is sizeable and well-organised. Many of these Somalis are refugees and asylum seekers fleeing civil war in the Somali regions, or British Somalis (both former refugees and former labour migrants) migrating from other UK cities.

Refugee organisations providing services in the city estimate that a significant proportion of Leicester's Somali population are EU nationals, who have migrated to Leicester after having received refugee status and citizenship in other EU countries, especially the Netherlands. The Somali community in the Netherlands is apparently quite segregated from mainstream society, and so Leicester's multicultural character and established Somali community is understandably an attraction to those seeking to exercise their rights of movement as EU citizens. According to Paul Winston of Leicester City Council, in May 2001, approximately 20-30 Somali EU nationals were arriving in Leicester per week, although this rate of migration is now thought to have slowed down considerably.

The majority of the Somalis arriving in Leicester have settled in poor quality private sector accommodation in the Highfield and St Matthews areas, with others settling in areas such as Goodwood, Beaumont Leys, Braunstone and Northfield. The Somali community is variously estimated to number between 8,000 and 10,000 people. A good example of the number of Somalis in Leicester are the schools in Highfields, all nine schools in this area are at least one quarter Somali.

Integration

Leicester has welcomed Somalis but it has cost the City Council 3 million pounds extra per year with no help from the Government and no warning from the Dutch Government that they were coming. 3 million pounds in Housing Benefit and Education. Support was received from the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM). A Somali Steering Group has been established to address the needs of the Somali population in Leicester and as a result several projects and achievements can be mentioned.

- First of all there has been a rapid growth in Somali businesses, 36 in two years. The Leicester Asian Business Association (LABA), has helped to establish a Somali business association and adviser. The Leicester African Caribbean Business Association (LACBA) has helped too. Cooperatives may be established in community businesses, woodwork and embroidery.
- An Islamic Bank has been established last October.
- The Director of Social Care and Health has created a Somali Working Party with representatives from all departments. The City Council has held an open day on Somali culture and will soon open another.

- A 50.000 pounds Somali Community Chest has been established under the Community Cohesion Fund with 6 Somali project applicants. This will be topped up with ERDF, European Regional Development Fund, money.
- A newspaper 'Somali voice' has been created with the local newspaper the Leicester Mercury as a free sheet.
- A women's centre, the Nim'ah Centre has been founded for Somali women and a number of mosques have been established.

These are some successful examples. But the community is fragmented and needs to work more closely together. Many problems remain for the community that speaks Kiswahili, Somali, Dutch and English. These include overcrowding, poor health, unemployment, racial discrimination, crime amongst young people and lack of adequate meeting places.

However, as Leicester appears to have a good track record in addressing the issues confronting asylum seekers and refugees and promoting racial equality and celebrating cultural diversity, it is probable that the resettlement and integration of new groups will be relatively successful in Leicester.

Indeed, the multicultural nature of the city may mean that the secondary migration of those that have been dispersed to Leicester does not occur at the rate experienced by other cities.

The Refugee Resettlement Project run by the city council aims to develop a long-term integration strategy for refugees in partnership with local residents, agencies, and other stakeholders. The council's hosting scheme that places those who have just received status with local families for a short period also shows a commitment to promoting integration as a two-way process.

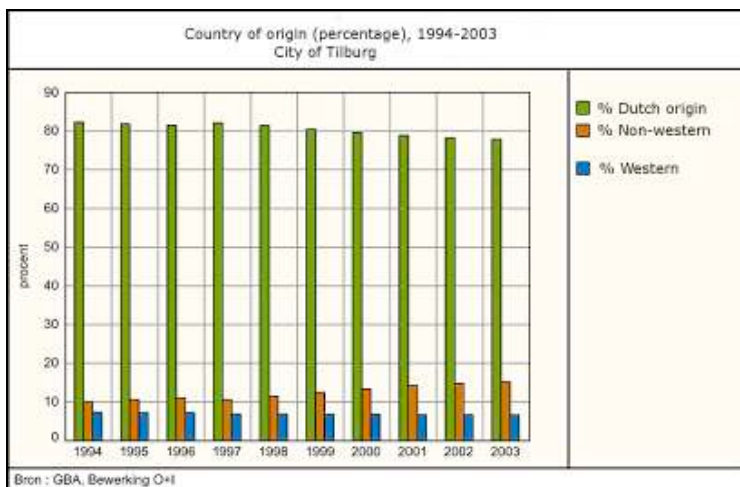
The Somali community as well as putting some drain on resources in Leicester, overall they are seen as an asset, adding value and ultimately prosperity to the city. The positive approach of Leicester, looking to people's assets instead of their shortcomings and promoting integration as a two-way process are all aspects that will contribute to achieve positive results.

3.2.5 Integration and the City of Tilburg

Drs. Gon Mevis

Tilburg is a city of nearly 200.000 inhabitants. Significant for Tilburg is that it consists of a large variety of neighbourhoods that are grown to each other. The diversity of the population is like other cities. And by the presence of a university and many education institutions, there are for instance approximately 20.000 students in the city.

In Tilburg people are used to the image of a multi-ethnic population. The alien population has increased from 10 to 15 percent in nine years.



Like many other cities Tilburg has also multi-cultural policies. In 2001 these policies were written down in the policy document 'Kleurrijk Tilburg' which means colourful Tilburg. The primary objective of this policy was at the time: integration, meaning that all citizens of Tilburg should have literally and figuratively a good understanding with each other and all citizens should participate equally in the Tilburg society. Everybody should get the opportunity to develop and express themselves. Achieving this objective is a shared responsibility of all institutions en citizens of the city.

The premises and starting points of living together in a multi-cultural environment are:

- People should be able to look after themselves;
- Creating prior conditions in order to participate in society;
- Respecting other cultures;
- Minimum of rules and values for everybody.

The framework of the Tilburg multi-cultural policy is that the city wants to create an environment in which all citizens can live together properly and can make optimal use of all the provisions in the city. Where certain groups face difficulties in trying to participate in society, a lot of work is needed to make them more independent. On the other hand, access to public provisions should be easy.

For people of foreign origin who have lived here both for a long and a short time, language and work are the basic conditions to participate in society.

What do these nice words and starting points mean in practice? What has been done in the past years in Tilburg? And what will be done in the future?

Citizenship

The City of Tilburg has the opinion that people, who come from foreign countries and want to live in Tilburg, should learn the language and should learn how the Dutch society works. In the Netherlands this is called 'Inburgering'. For this reason the city has established an office Inburgering. Every newcomer has a consultation at this office. He or she will get a casemanager and this casemanager will check what the newcomer needs with regard to language and social orientation.

Dependent of the level of the newcomer and his or her ambitions, appointments will be made for education and language courses. This means that suitable courses will be offered. The casemanager will keep contact with the newcomer and his or her development will be tracked. If people dropout this will be addressed. So it will not end with one single intake consultation.

This method of working has been developed in the past years in Tilburg and is now an example for many cities in the Netherlands.

In September 2004 for example 127 people were rewarded with a diploma because they attended practical education in the field of language and society. At the beginning of 2004 there were 145 participants and the dropout level was very low. This low dropout level is primarily the result of the support that was organised at schools and neighbourhoods.

Living in Tilburg

The new citizens do not end up in every neighbourhood in Tilburg, but largely in the so called vulnerable neighbourhoods. In these neighbourhoods often live people with a weak social-economic position. Among some of the original citizens, who are confronted with these changes, this leads to resistance. They do not feel at home anymore in their own neighbourhood. This problem becomes bigger and stronger if people are also confronted with annoyance that results from differences in living standards and conflicting lifestyles. Furthermore many citizens experience language problems, when addressing their neighbours about this annoyance and they cannot understand or answer them. A large diversity of cultures and lifestyles can make it more difficult for local residents to identify themselves with their

fellow residents and sometimes creates tensions and confrontations.

In the past years the City of Tilburg has, together with housing associations, welfare institutions and the police, invested in projects and activities in order to improve the coexistence of different ethnic groups. Examples are:

- Neighbourhood mediation, volunteers of the neighbourhood mediate in conflicts between local residents and newcomers.
- Restructuring of old neighbourhoods: new houses, multifunctional accommodation for schools and community centres.
- Improving the security, sometimes by placing street lights and in other cases by intensive patrol of the police.

In all these matters in the neighbourhoods, there will be tried to get the local residents involved as much as possible.

Cooperation with schools and health care institutions

Except living, there are some other essential matters that a city should take care off. This is not a job done alone.

Fortunately the city government has a very good cooperative relationship with for example the schools and the health care institutions.

Together with the schools the city takes care off a number of additional provisions, as a result foreign children are very good taken care of. Children, who come from another country, first receive one year of a lot of Dutch lessons in a separate class on an ordinary school. Subsequently they will go to a regular class but, if necessary, they keep receiving extra support.

Moreover in Tilburg are some intermediaries active. These are usually women of a certain ethnic group, who are for example employed at consultancy agencies for women and children. They give, if necessary, information in their own language, but more importantly they create more understanding on all sides.

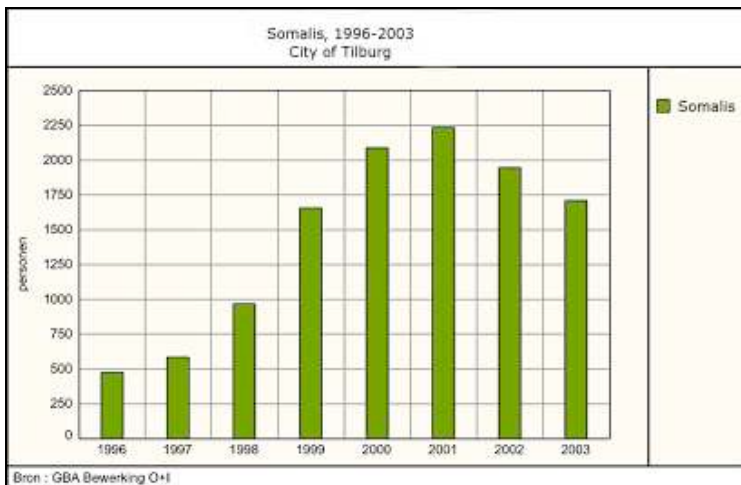
These are some examples from practice over the past years. Policy documents keep up to date for approximately four years. Therefore it is important to regularly check if other problems did arise and how these problems can be solved best.

The City of Tilburg wants to make new guidelines for policies with regard to newcomers. Together with the citizens and organisations in the city, Tilburg will examine what is going on, what problems need to be solved and who is best at solving the particular problems. This debate will be held in the coming months.

Tilburg Somalis

Up to now, we talked about the integration policy in general and that is in principle also the starting point of the city. We want that the integration policy benefits all citizens of Tilburg. This does not mean that the City of Tilburg never conducts policies or measures for one specific group.

Because of the civil war in Somalia many people fled the country. Most Somalis who fled to the Netherlands ended up living in Rotterdam en Tilburg.



The Somali community in Tilburg has, more than other ethnic groups, clear and complex socio-economic problems.

These problems consist of unemployment, debts, language problems, lack of education and criminality. This has several reasons. A number of studies have been conducted to get an indication of the problems and causes.

The past years several projects have been carried out and a lot is learned from these projects. As a result of these experiences the city of Tilburg started for example the project STAP. This is a project to stimulate and activate the Tilburg Somalis. Somalis in Tilburg have the highest percentage with regard to income support of all ethnic groups in Tilburg. Of all Somalis who are 18 years of age or older in October 2003, 38 percent has income support, in other words 308 of 811 Somalis. *(For comparison: of all Antilleans/Arubans who are 18 years of age or older 15,7 percent has income support, among Moroccans and Surinamese this is 10 percent and among Turks 7,8 percent.)*

The objective is to decrease this percentage. Therefore the city of Tilburg employed two Somali advisers at the Social Affairs department of the city. They will advise and support the casemanagers of Somali clients. STAP has been drawn up in good consultation with people of the Somali community.

Another good example is the use of qat. In a living environment that is vulnerable and has social problems, we see people showing deviant behaviour and this strengthens

the feeling of insecurity and causes annoyance among the other citizens. How do you get people to a point that you have control with regard to the security and at the same time the people have faith in the government of the city? This almost asks for a sort of risk-communication or crisis-communication.

Many Somali men use qat. They cause annoyance to the neighbours on places where the qat is used and sold. Qat is not listed on the so called opium list and therefore it is not recognised as being a drug. The city of Tilburg is, together with the Somali community, looking for a solution. Some regulations have been added to the city's license system, in order to limit the annoyance but simultaneously give an entrepreneur the ability to start a business.

The last example is an information-video concerning law and regulations. For instance, we have noticed that for many people it is unclear what the procedure is if you get income support. Through a film with a Somali voice-over people get informed about rights and duties.

2.3 Workshops

2.3.1 Facts and Fiction

Do scientific studies on minorities correspond with reality? Is this reality not manipulated? In practice it appears to be very difficult to conduct a representative study among minorities. The question is also, how do politicians deal with the results of these kind of studies. Do they use or misuse it for their own benefit? And do they also give publicity to results that are not that positive for them? Or do these results end up in a large desk drawer? All these questions were discussed during the workshop 'Facts and Fiction'.

Workshop leaders Anna Maria Carbonaro (Bureau Medelanders) and Tim van der Avoird (Tilburg University) made an inventory among the attendants which topics they would like to discuss during this workshop. The following topics were chosen:

- What are the real reasons for migration (facts);
- In what way do research results influence politics?
For research reflects also a certain reality;
- What kind of studies on migration are conducted in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom?
- Are Somalis happier in the United Kingdom than in the Netherlands?

- What is the role of the media?
- What do studies say about the Dutch society?
- How are the facts interpreted

Next the group is split in three: Somalis, scientists and politicians/media. However everyone has to choose another group than his or her present profession, study or ethnic background. In other words: Somalis play the part of scientists, who become politicians and the politicians have to identify themselves with the Somali community in the Netherlands.

The central question for the Somalis is: "Why do more and more Dutch Somalis migrate to the United Kingdom? Is this because they are happier there than in the Netherlands. And what does this tell about the Dutch society and politics?"

The scientists are engaged in the following questions: "Why do they study the migration of Somalis from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom? Does this migration creates a problem and if so, why? What is the part of fiction in science and how does this influence politics?"

Finally the politicians/media. They will look at the questions: "Have Dutch politicians attention for the situation of the Somalis in the Netherlands? Do they have an opinion about it,

are they interested in this matter or not? And do politicians use or misuse research results for their own benefit?”.

Out of the group discussions several results came forward. After every presentation the real scientists, politicians/media and Somalis responded to it.

First the ‘scientists’. Science is not always free to choose her own object of study. Often she gets the request of politicians who give the scientists time-limitations. Furthermore in these cases the scientist is not the owner of the results but the principal (read government) is and therefore the principal can do what ever he wants with the results. A number of examples are mentioned in which research results can be ‘misused’ by politicians. For instance, a study showed that 40 percent of the Somalis in the Netherlands did not succeed in learning the Dutch language. Instead of underlining that 60 percent was successful, the first result (40 percent) was highlighted. So in this case the research results were used very specifically. Another thing that is important is the method that the researcher is using. Think about the selected formulation of the question. This, among others, determines the outcome of the study.

Additionally the ‘scientists’ wonder to what extend a research group can be called representative. Studies among the Somali ethnic group are not very simple to analyse because of the

cultural differences. Somalis are very sceptical towards studies and researches.

Taken in account the political situation in their homeland during their departure, working for the government is not always explained as being a positive thing. And it is not clear what will happen with the research results. That is why Den Haag has chosen to visit every respondent at home and to inform him or her about the study and what will be done with the results. Therefore the scientists plea for a 'bottom up' approach. Let respondents participate, that will make the study more reliable.

The real scientists responded that you cannot do anything about misuse of the results. And a bottom up approach is always better but in that case the question has to come from the Somali community and that is almost never the case because they do not have an organisation to initiate studies and researches. Fortunately there are Somali individuals, like Adan Igeh Hussein (Somali European Forum), who do initiate studies.

The 'politicians/media' emphasise that they are very positive with regard to migration. They see migration as a chance for people to achieve their goals. Hence the Dutch politicians do not reject the migration of Somalis to the United Kingdom. This migration is not a point for discussion for Dutch politicians.

The real politicians respond that the only objective could be the fact that the most active Somalis choose to move to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands is left with the most vulnerable groups. This means that the Netherlands will lose a lot of quality and skills. Noteworthy is the fact that it does not matter if the city government is left-wing or right-wing orientated. In Rotterdam where at the moment a right-wing government is in place less Somalis are leaving than from Tilburg, where a left-wing government is in place. If people will leave or not also depends on their so called 'social capital': people who have a lot of family and other networks in the United Kingdom will choose sooner to leave the Netherlands. In addition the Netherlands are not a multicultural country, while the United Kingdom is experienced as such by migrants. However the latter is well overestimated: for there is no welcome committee standing ready for the Somalis and the unemployment among migrants is high in the United Kingdom.

The 'Somalis' have several reasons to leave the Netherlands: the historical ties between Somalia and the United Kingdom (colony), the Dutch political climate has become more negative towards migrants, the Dutch language is internationally not very useful, family ties are more important than the country and the Somali community in the United Kingdom is a 'safe haven'. Apart from that, with a Dutch passport you are free to settle yourself in another EU-country. The naturalisation has stimulated the migration.

But for children, especially those in puberty, it is not easy to find their way in the United Kingdom. How many children return to the Netherlands is not clear, there are only rumours about this.

The real Somalis notice that who ever had the choice to choose a migration country always would have chosen the United Kingdom instead of the Netherlands. And people who have family in the United Kingdom always hear that the living and labour situation is better in the United Kingdom than in the Netherlands. For example it is much easier to start a business. Some UK-migrants have bought a house in their home country from their earned money. Furthermore if you do not choose to go to the United Kingdom, you will not have all this and the community will think you are 'weak'. A Somali adds: "Somalis always leave instead of solving a conflict. If someone has problems with his work or his family, he just leaves." The Dutch society is too much focused on the individual, while in the United Kingdom everybody is free to live together in a large Somali community. This fact is connected to their own culture.

Another Somali from the United Kingdom points out that: "the Somali community in the United Kingdom is not directly confronted with racism, because they do not depend on the English with regard to work and social network." In the

Netherlands the chance to be discriminated is bigger because you are forced to act in the Dutch society.

If the Netherlands want to prevent that Somalis are migrating, they have to change to housing-policy. And instead of spreading ethnic groups, the government should choose for, for example, a concentration of Somalis in a particular neighbourhood. Like in the United Kingdom, 'cities in cities' will arise. This neighbourhood will become self-sufficient"

Conclusion:

- The migration of Somalis from the Netherlands is a negative development.
- Politicians and the media give the discussion her own swing. Sometimes positive and sometimes negative.
- The government thinks that it can guide the migration but this is not the case. People choose to migrate, the government cannot stop this.
- Cities should, with each other, find a solution for the children who have returned to the Netherlands, these children often end up on the streets. But it is not clear how many children it concerns.
- Politics must only be based on facts not fiction.

At the decision making level, but also in scientific research all actors should be involved. At the moment politics is very much based on 'feelings' instead of research or studies.

2.3.2 Education, Work and Entrepreneurship

“Get rid of formal structures”

Under the chairmanship of Ronald Lucardie (co-worker of Cordaid, an international development organisation based in the Netherlands and adviser of SMS-vluchtelingen) the participants discussed ways to clear away obstacles, which hinder Somalis in finding work and a good education.

The story of the Somali psychiatrist Drs. Suaad Abdulrehman, who is daily confronted with victims of the rules of an institutionalised Western society, provided a guideline for the discussion.

Miss Abdulrehman explains that, in the beginning, it was a very big surprise for her that higher educated men and women were sitting at home, doing nothing. It seemed impossible to her that such a thing occurred in one of the most developed countries in Europe. From her point of view it is very logical that people are first of all looking for a safe place in the world. Through her contacts in the Somali community, she also knows that most Somalis start to look for a job or to attend education. But at the end when they did not succeed, people choose the easy way and began sitting at home, where they chew qat, talk about non-useful ethnic problems and advice

Somalis who just arrived in the Netherlands not to do too much effort because it is a waste of time.

Abdulrehman noticed that on the one hand people thought this life was quite easy and comfortable but on the other hand a lot of Somalis had the opinion that they really did their best, but no one listens to them. And this is how they lost faith in society. The Somalis are very disappointed about the fact that their expertise and knowledge did not get any recognition. And at the end they get very frustrated.

Fortunately there are also people who did not give up and went on learning the language in order to take away the barrier between themselves and society. This group became more flexible and tried to follow a different approach. Namely discussing the problems with the government and asking the government what exactly is expected of them.

Many immigrants and refugees feel that they have to show the native Dutch people that they are also 'good' people. In spite of the effort and commitment they want to show to the native Dutch people, it remains very difficult. If one wants to start a business, he or she faces a lot of problems, regardless of the fact that the entrepreneur has everything well arranged. The native Dutch society keeps having problems in accepting immigrants, despite his or her qualities, as said by Miss Abdulrehman.

According to Drs. Abdulrehman, interculturalisation is the most important concept: interaction and communication between different groups in society. If people start to develop themselves with this interculturalisation-thought in their mind, it will speed up the integration and the integration will be more effective. We are still in the initial phase of this process and therefore it will take a lot of time, but as we all know, integration depends on both parties in the society. "I am also still developing myself", Drs. Abdulrehman told the participants.

With reference to the examples put forward by Miss Abdulrehman and the experiences of the workshop participants, different obstacles that hinder Somalis were discussed. Especially language, pre-education, qualifications and licenses throw up barriers. Many of these barriers originate from the attitude of Dutch policymakers to blame problems on the victims themselves. With regard to this attitude, the Netherlands should take the United Kingdom as an example, where policymakers take responsibility and remove the barriers themselves. British policymakers take the individual wishes and needs of the newcomers as starting point and have legal options at their disposal to adapt the rules to a particular situation. Starting your own business in the United Kingdom is much easier than in the Netherlands.

The United Kingdom is among Somalis a popular immigration country, because newcomers get support if they have a good plan and they get stimulated with special programmes and facilities. In the Netherlands on the other hand, if someone wants to start a business he or she has to know the language, show sufficient education, comply with several license demands, draw up a business plan by him or herself and show this to the Chamber of Commerce. In the United Kingdom the language requirements are less rigid and foreign candidate entrepreneurs get, if necessary, support at drawing a business plan. Credit facilities are easier to set up than in the Netherlands.

Without patronizing them, the British institutions and government bodies take in account the cultural differences of newcomers and therefore the newcomers can easier realise their plans. This working method is appealing to the Somalis, because they are not used to institutionalised systems. They usually operate in informal circuits, which are often considered corrupt by outsiders. British policymakers are less narrow-minded when it comes to these informal circuits. And this more differentiated approach appears to have a positive effect, the number of Somali businesses in the United Kingdom increased drastically. Therefore it deserves recommendation

to support initiatives of Somalis in the Netherlands by the government.

Somali self organisations in the big cities often start promising businesses, but they often have to end it prematurely.

What's more, the policymakers have to get rid of the outdated idea that most newcomers are low-educated. This certainly does not apply for Somalis. Many Somalis are hindered in their possibilities, because they are offered jobs that they are overqualified for. Since obtained qualifications in Somalia are not recognised in the Netherlands, it happens that university graduates have to be satisfied with cleaning jobs. And if they want something else, they have to attend the Dutch education system from scratch. That it is disastrous for people to have a job for a long time that is below their level or to be send back to the school benches, while they were for example teachers themselves, appears from the large number of Somalis that is depressed and sitting at home.

A lot of workshop participants have experienced this themselves: "I graduated in business management but this specialisation is not known by the employment office, so I was listed under agriculture" and a biochemist student: "I am the only one who cannot continue my study, my fellow students who have fled to the United Kingdom do not have these problems."

Suaad Abdulrehman agrees on this and together with the workshop participants she recommends Dutch policymakers to take in account the education level of the Somalis and to recognise in Somali obtained qualifications and diplomas.

Conclusion

- Somalis can succeed in the Netherlands but Dutch policymakers have to be open to the abilities and needs of this ethnic group.
- This requires a flexible attitude with regard to work and education. Somalis have their own style, which differences from the formalised structures of the Western society.
- Although different problems occur, the Somalis should not give up and they should become active members of society in order to be able to address their problems.

The Dutch government, politicians and policymakers and involved (self)-organisations should take this to heart in order to improve the position of Somalis in the Netherlands.

2.3.3 Integration and Politics

Under supervision of Fatma Ali of Stichting Palet (a foundation that supports multicultural development), Drs. Stef Blok, Dutch MP and chairman of the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on Integration Policy, started the workshop with a presentation about the findings of his committee.

He points out that the general conclusion of the 'Blok Committee', that the integration in the Netherlands for the most part progressed very well, was received with scornful laughter, but that by now all political parties value the factual research results at its true worth. The Blok Committee focused exclusively on the entire picture and deliberately did not divide it into different smaller groups of 'newcomers' among the 1.6 million not-Western immigrants in the Netherlands.

Several facts and figures are known concerning Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans. But until now facts about specific groups such as Somalis have not been studied. However by now, some organisations and private companies have carried out a few studies on specific groups of newcomers. Nevertheless Blok has the belief that general findings are very useful for all groups of newcomers.

First Blok states that the Netherlands is a terrible country for newcomers and not because of the mentality but because of the language and culture.

Dutch is one of the most difficult languages to learn in the world and the Dutch economy is very focused on services, where language and education are vital for those who want to succeed.

The government particularly falls short in the assistance of newcomers in these areas.

The citizenship courses for example, how they are set up at the moment, are not a success. Only 15 percent makes 'level 3', the level on which the language and culture knowledge can be considered sufficient enough to attend education and to get a job. By more intensive guidance and a better course set up, the percentage could be increased to 40 percent, but according to Blok a higher percentage is not achievable.

Shamsa Hassan Said states that it is not very useful to give citizenship courses if you cannot get a job afterwards. There has to be more self-responsibility in the integration policy, because at the moment self-initiatives are too much hindered. Easing restrictions on independent entrepreneurs, who want to start a business of their own, could stimulate self-initiatives, but Blok acknowledges that it will be very difficult to realise that. Blok mentions Paris as an example, where on Sunday and after closing time of the regular shops, in the 'black' and

Arabic neighbourhoods the shops open. During those opening hours they are able to generate enough income.

The most 'shocking' conclusion of the committee is that the migrant organisations do not have an effect on the degree of integration. Therefore subsidies are no longer obvious for these organisations. According to Drs. Blok also marriage migration is a problem, because the children grow up in a family where they do not speak any Dutch.

Jan van Esch of ROC Midden-Brabant, a Regional Training Centre for adult education and vocational training at secondary level, thinks that the committee points to much to the responsibility of newcomers for their own integration. He does not see any recommendations to improve the attitude of the Dutch people in the committee report. He explains how he used to learn at school that the Netherlands is a tolerant and hospitable country, where everybody is welcome. Nowadays young children only hear how many problems immigrants cause. Mahamoud Farah agrees. He says the integration has to come from both sides. If you want to make yourself a success, you have to initiate things yourself. Therefore, he states, you cannot compare the Netherlands with the United Kingdom, because the systems are very different from each other. In the United Kingdom you can rely on your clan and that is often necessary, while in the Netherlands you have to do it yourself. Zahra Naleyeh tells how her street in Alphen aan

den Rijn changed into a 'black street', not because more Somalis and other Africans came to live there, but because of the fact Dutch people were moving away.

Like this, a dialogue is impossible, because people do not meet each other on the streets anymore.

Stef Blok is familiar with this problem but thinks that, for example, it is very difficult to deal with segregation in schools. 'Black schools' are bad influence for the language development of children, but you can only stop the increase of 'black schools' by changing the neighbourhoods around these schools. According to David French of the United Kingdom Home Office department, language development is possibly the most important factor with regard to integration. And he points out that this conference has convinced him of the fact that this is indeed the most important factor.

Furthermore French finds it strange that the United Kingdom is being idealised, because he hardly sees any differences between both countries. He even states that in some cases it is better in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom. Mark Darbey of the education department of the city of Manchester confirms this. He mentions that in Manchester 85 percent of the Somali men is unemployed and the Somali women are sitting at home since they cannot afford child day-care. Apparently, starting a business easily is very important among the Somalis, as said by Adrian Randall from the city of

Birmingham. As well as the social contacts and that is exactly what lacks in the Netherlands.

Additionally in the Netherlands the assistance and the newcomer policy is very much aimed at individual support. This applies for example to the regulations with regard to income support or welfare. They are created for individuals and not for the whole group. This welfare state does not correspond with the attitude of the Somalis, they are used to independence and receive support from each other. The situation in the United Kingdom is different. The government hardly offers a social safety net, however at the same time the regulations are much more flexible.

The Dutch government policy is seen by many Somalis as patronizing and aimed at assimilation, instead of integration. At the same time among the young and likely to succeed Somalis, the fear for a worsening political climate in the Netherlands is also a factor with regard to the decision to leave. Perhaps the United Kingdom is as a living country better, but this applies primarily to the parents. For children it is often a nightmare. The parents are more familiar with the British institutions and values, because they know these from their childhood when the colonial past of Somalia and Somaliland was still present and visible. However the children in the United Kingdom are confronted with strong segregated

schools, dreadful social conditions and prospects and they have to miss their Dutch friends.

Conclusion

- The Netherlands is a very bad country for newcomers and not because of the mentality but because of the language and culture. The Dutch economy is very focused on services, where language and education are vital for those who want to succeed.

- Self-initiatives of immigrants are too much hindered. Easing restrictions on independent entrepreneurs, who want to start a business of their own, could stimulate self-initiatives, but this will be difficult to realise.

- It is not very useful to give citizenship courses if you cannot get a job afterwards. Therefore Integration has to come from both sides.

- The United Kingdom Home Office states that there are hardly any differences between both countries. In some cases it is even better in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom.

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- 'The Blok Committee': migrant organisations do not have an effect on the degree of integration.

2.4 Summary of Recommendations

Many issues were raised during the conference, which adopted the following recommendations previously developed by three workshops:

1. Facts NOT Fiction

Politics must only be based on facts not fiction and at the moment politics is very much based on 'feelings' instead of research or studies. Therefore further research is needed to have a solid knowledge on the reasons why Somalis migrate from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom, as this can help solving the problems concerning integration.

2. Efforts from both sides

Provide the Somalis with the means to achieve public outcomes within employment, housing, education, healthcare and so on, which are equivalent to those within the general population. On the other hand Somali refugees should be willing to adapt to the lifestyle and social values of the host societies as well as to the law and the rules and accept the

fact that equal rights entails equal obligations. The engagement and participation of the Somali community in a civil society is very crucial. They have to get a sense and feeling of belonging and being part of a community and society in the host countries.

Although different problems occur, the Somalis should not give up and they should become active members of society in order to be able to address their problems.

There has to be a commitment of all actors to promote integration as a two-way process.

Integration policies

It is not very useful to give citizenship courses if you cannot get a job afterwards. As mentioned above, integration has to come from both sides. Empowering the Somali communities through their community organisations seems one of the existing options that could stimulate the integration. This could be carried out by for example funding capacity building programmes for the Somali community organisations in the Netherlands. Assessing the priority needed and helping them cover these needs is however a precondition to any new programme and project.

Self-initiatives of immigrants are very much hindered. Easing restrictions on independent entrepreneurs, who want to start a

business of their own, could stimulate self-initiatives, but this will be difficult to realise. Looking to people's assets instead of their shortcomings and promoting integration as a two-way process are all aspects that will contribute to achieve positive results.

Somalis can succeed in the Netherlands but Dutch policymakers have to be open to the abilities and needs of this ethnic group. This requires a flexible attitude with regard to work and education. Somalis have their own style, which differs from the formalised structures of the Western society.

Cities should, with each other, find a solution for the children who have returned to the Netherlands, these children often end up on the streets. But it is not clear how many children it concerns.

Action!

The Dutch government, politicians, policymakers and involved (self) organisations should take these recommendations to heart in order to improve the integration in general and the position of Somalis in the Netherlands in particular.

Appendix 1 Organisations

Below you will find a listing of all the organisations that have supported the conference.

Cordaid

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f 070 3136301
e cordaid@cordaid.nl
w www.cordaid.nl

Bureau Medelanders

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e mnoordegraaf@medelanders.nl
w www.medelanders.nl

OntwikkelingsBedrijf Rotterdam

Europoint II, Galvanistraat 15

Postbus 6575

3002 AN ROTTERDAM

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e info@obr.rotterdam.nl

w www.obr.rotterdam.nl

Gemeente Rotterdam

Coolsingel 40

Postbus 70012

3000 KP ROTTERDAM

t 010 – 4179111

e post@stadhuis.rotterdam.nl

w www.rotterdam.nl

Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland

Merelstraat 2 bis

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e info@vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl

w www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl

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Stichting Palet

Willemstraat 59

5611 HC Eindhoven

t 040 2359999

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Momatrade Consultancy vof

Rijnstraat 223-2

1079 HH AMSTERDAM

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