

Although this project is reaching an end, it represents a starting point. In order to build on progress much work is needed. What is required differs between Member States. It is clear that the opportunity to have skills recognised needs to be available to all, regardless of their status or ethnicity. Employability is more than skills; it is about knowing how to use those skills in the local labour market, packaging those skills to make migrants as attractive as possible to employers, and working with individuals to ensure they can engage with the labour market. Such provision requires resources and commitment at a governmental level. The work undertaken within this working group can help to shape national programmes. It has demonstrated what can be achieved. The utilisation of migrants' skills may be complex and costly in the short-term but in the longer term it pays dividends from social inclusion, social cohesion, social support and competitiveness perspectives.

TK was born and raised in Eritrea and has been living for the last couple of years in Germany as a refugee.

Back home, he was a political analyst. Through his contact with the MigraNet project in Germany he managed to learn the language and started to network. He studied to become an "intercultural advisor". He has been working at Tür an Tür Integration Centre as an administration employee. His dream is to work to contribute to the wellbeing of refugees or migrants.

H is aged 53 and is a painter and decorator from Zimbabwe

H attended the Progress GB Coventry Skilled Refugees into Construction course one day per week for 14 weeks, where he had his skills assessed and accredited through practical work and some focused training. He was taught the language and knowledge he needed to pass the mandatory Health and Safety qualification. Once he had passed, H undertook some work experience painting a community centre before being offered a full-time job as a painter and decorator. Throughout the course, the Refugee Construction Co-ordinator supported H and his cohort of 12 students.

Recommendations

European level

Skills recognition plays a key role in the employability of migrants and therefore in their integration. To achieve the recognition of skills, experience and qualifications we recommend that:

- Europass and the European Qualifications Framework are extended to third country nationals to help improve employability via skills recognition. A web-based package of products could be commissioned to achieve this
- EU labour market and skills recognition information is made available to economic migrants before they leave their country of origin
- Guidelines for skills recognition for third country nationals are developed to make systems between EU countries more consistent

National and regional levels

Skills recognition takes a different form in each member state. To achieve greater transparency, transferability and sustainability we recommend that:

- Skills recognition needs to be linked to vocational and cultural orientation, together with language, and labour market guidance so that migrants can be prepared for work
- Skills audits or assessments are offered to new arrivals at an early stage
- Certificates are provided to accredit skills or knowledge and help build migrants' confidence whilst demonstrating evidence of ability to employers
- Greater recognition is given to education and training received in developing countries
- Employability and recognition systems are embedded in national programmes to support the integration of third country nationals

Partnership approaches

Skills recognition is undertaken by a range of organisations. We recommend that partnerships of key stakeholders, for example, learning and advice providers, employers, labour organisations, are developed, resourced, and that:

- Information, advice and guidance are provided in an integrated manner as a holistic approach is required to address migrants' employability alongside their other needs
- NGOs play a key role in supporting migrants and may need help with finance and capacity building
- Advisors working with migrants require professional development to help them understand migrants' needs and issues
- Stakeholders all contribute to the development of recognition and employability programmes to ensure that all needs are met
- Employers are offered incentives, for example, through taxation, grants or training systems, to encourage them to offer migrants work experience, skills assessment, training and references

A full report is available from www.niace.org.uk/ProgressGB/Recognition.

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Recognising migrants' skills and qualifications: A transnational perspective



In recent times the EU has experienced unprecedented levels of migration. Many migrants arrive desperate to put their skills into use but find themselves either unemployed or in low skilled work.

Whilst the EU has well documented skills gaps in high skilled, seasonal and low skilled positions, unemployment levels across Europe are twice as high for migrants than the host population¹. It was with the challenge of linking migrants to skills gaps that the partners in the MEET 'recognising skills and qualifications' working group set about their task. The overall aim of the group was to develop approaches to recognising the worth of migrants by creating systems to recognise their skills and qualifications. Each of the participating partners, Progress GB (UK), MigraNet (Germany), Laat Zien Wat Je Kunt (Netherlands) and Visibilinvisibili (Italy) operate within different policy environments. The group agreed that the best way forward was to model their different approaches to recognising migrants' skills and then explore what might be learned at national and European levels. This leaflet sets out the models, the way in which they operate, and the overall learning and recommendations about skills recognition and utilisation.

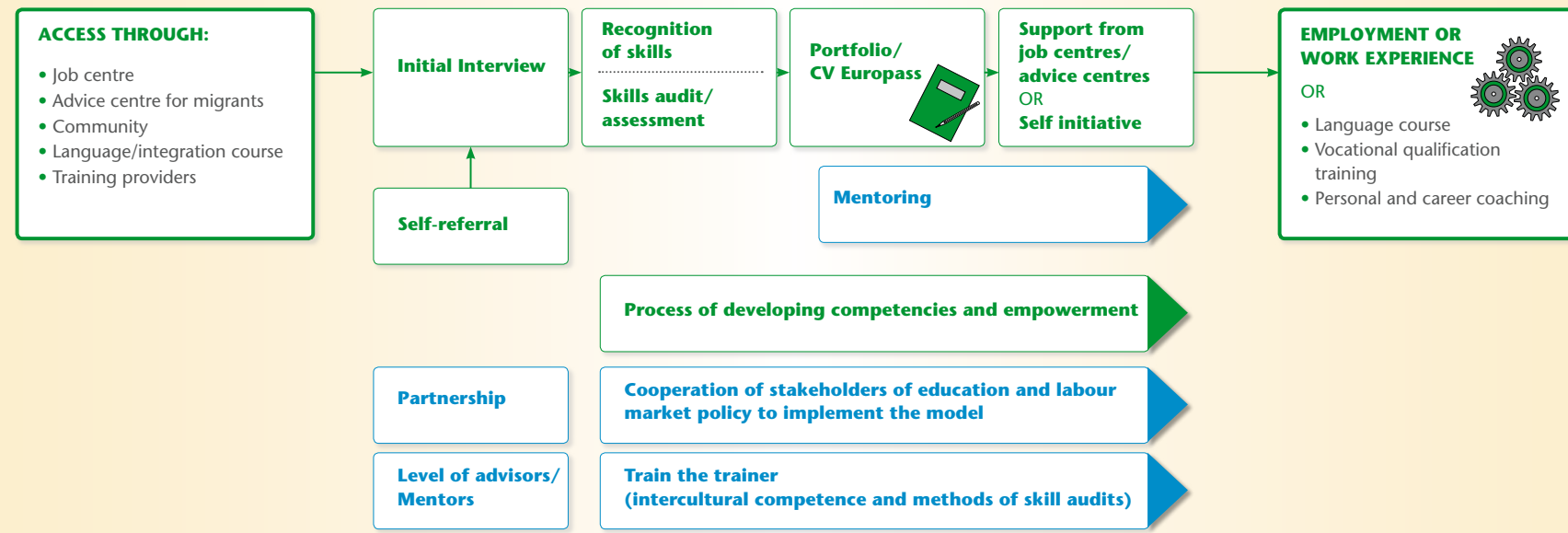
All the models have been developed in an attempt to address at local level a gap in national policy: the absence of an accessible, formalised, skills recognition system. There are distinct differences between the models but the similarities are striking. The models demonstrate the importance of dealing with each migrant as an individual, and catering for their needs in a flexible manner. They include the key elements of lifelong learning, emancipation and self-confidence, and indicate the resources required. All seek to provide a programme that is holistic, dealing with the need to familiarise migrants with the labour market, recognise their skills and build relationships with employers. All attempt formal recognition of skills either through a portfolio process or accreditation, and support of the individual through the building of confidence in skills and abilities, and help to explore how competencies relate to the labour market.

Each model demonstrates the wide range of issues that needs to be considered in order to recognise, and enable employers to make use of, the skills of migrants. Enhancing migrants' employability requires the ability to recognise the complex nature of the challenge, and pull together different services. The models use a partnership approach to deliver outcomes of enhanced employability, engagement in training and eventually employment. Ultimately these models are about developing and marketing migrants for employers. Shaping migrants for the labour market means working on their language and their understanding of employment culture, as well as evidencing their skills, and their ability to utilise those skills in the country that is now their home. The involvement of employers was central to the development of the programmes because they need to result in individuals whose skills and abilities are moulded to employers' needs.



D

MigraNet: A network of projects for skills recognition of migrants



The model produced by the MigraNet DP shows an 'ideal' process of vocational integration. The model shows the full range of information, advice and guidance activities.

Migrants can access the process via several routes. The model describes the process on three levels:

At the level of the client, the process is marked by developing, broadening, recognising and assessing previously acquired skills and qualifications. The clients' empowerment and activation of resources is important. The social and vocational integration of

the client is supported. Our aim is to direct the clients towards employment that fits their qualifications, or to tailored vocational and/or language qualification programmes.

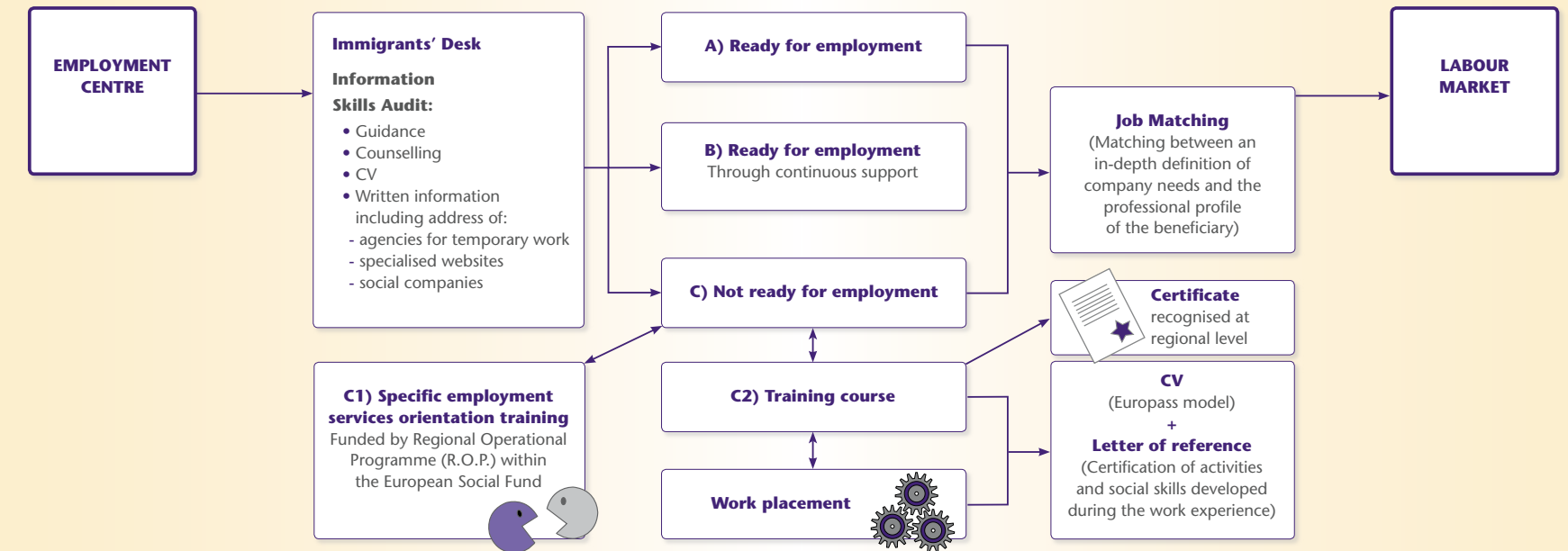
At the level of the adviser and the mentor, the migrant is guided by an adviser; if necessary a mentor is consulted. On both levels an ongoing development of skills at a vocational and intercultural level should ideally take place. This includes further training in the latest methods of assessing skills, intercultural skills, and analyses of the job market.

As there is no uniform, standard system for the recognition and validation of skills, the different organisations that deal with employment and education policy need to be brought together in the partnership process.

I

Sustainable process for integration and employment

visibilinvisibili



At the employment centres (Centri per l'Impiego - CPI), all service users from outside the EU are directed to the "immigrants' desk", where they are given support to find a job.

Through a structured interview, they receive help to become more aware of their own skills and capabilities, which can be matched to the type of job vacancies offered in the local area. Useful information about labour market requirements is also provided. Once immigrants are able to cope with basic, and sometimes

complicated, statutory procedures, they can better access all the community services they need.

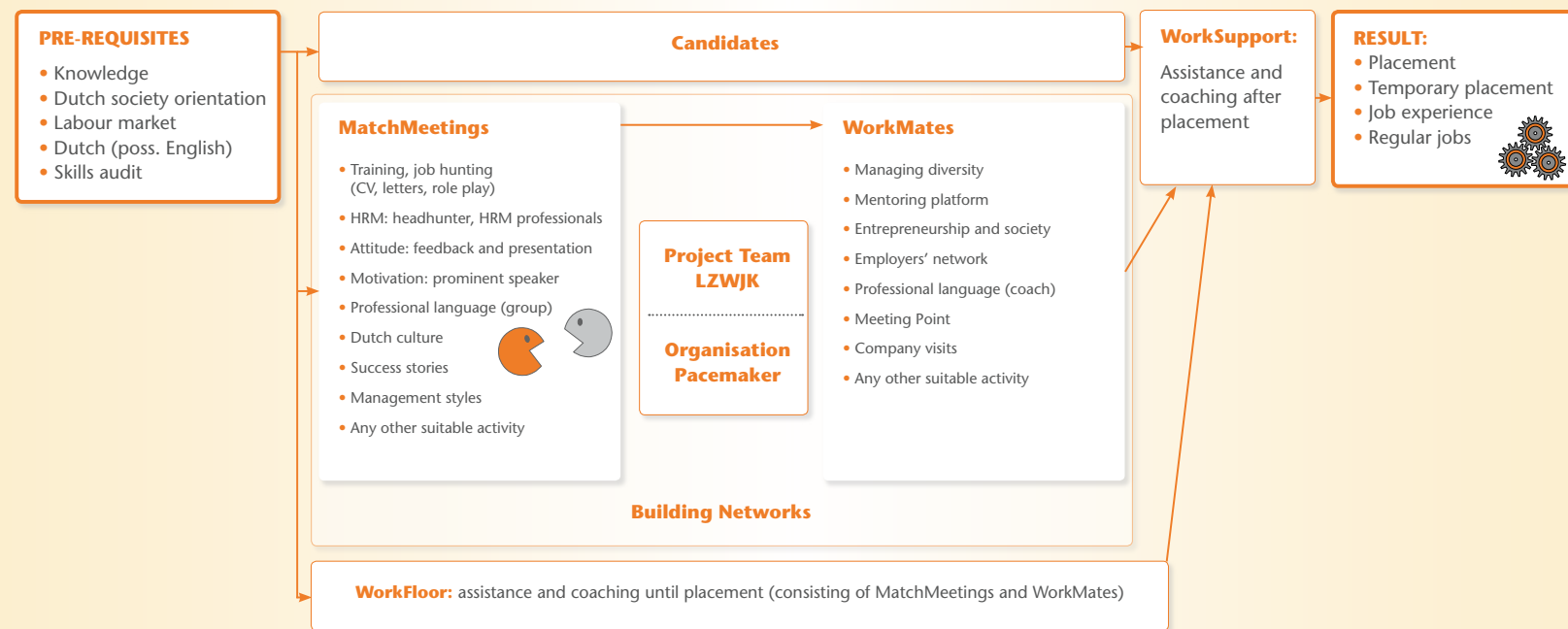
Those individuals who have difficulties finding a job are encouraged to join a training programme that will develop their knowledge of the Italian language and help them find suitable employment. They can then submit applications to an economic sector chosen on the basis of a further guidance and self-development module. Work experience in the same sector will

complete the training. Subsequently, a reference letter from the host company will be issued for use in future job applications and interviews.

Project beneficiaries can access a dedicated Matching Service, which is based on individuals' professional profiles and the requirements expressed by the employers involved in the project.

NL

Laat Zien Wat Je Kunt: "Show what you can do"



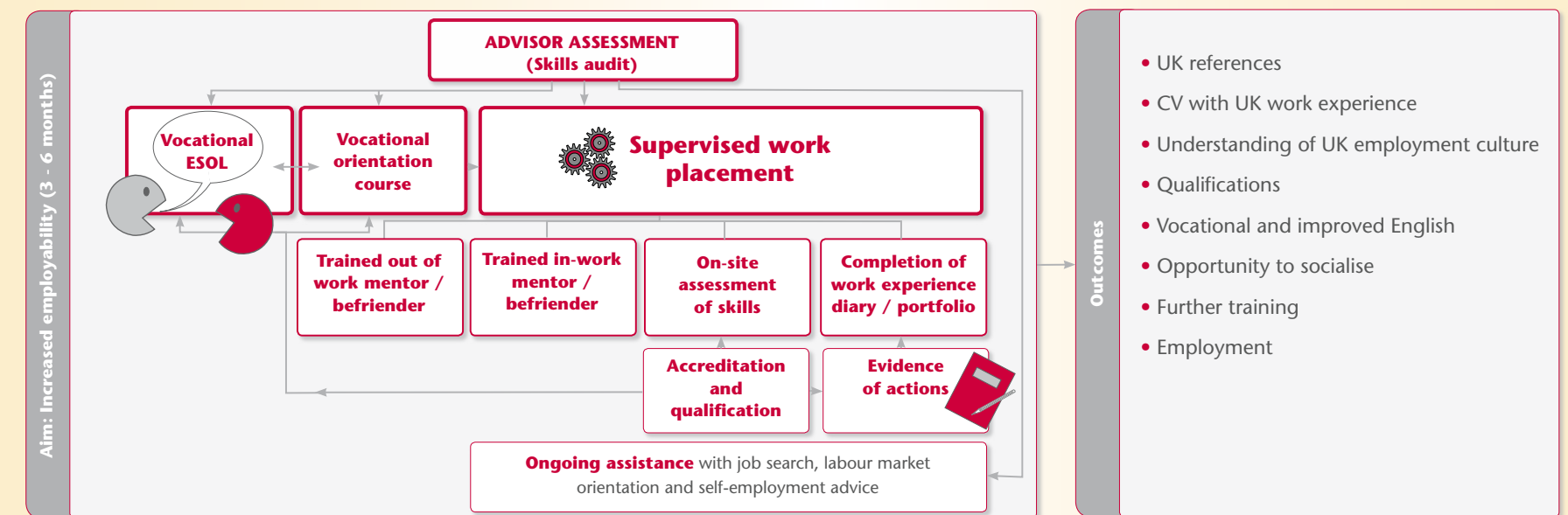
The model of Laat Zien Wat Je Kunt is one that allows participants to choose activities that will help them to find a job in the Netherlands as quickly as possible. Once a candidate enters the project with a basic knowledge of the Dutch language and culture, it relies on network-building among participants and potential employers. Moreover, other interested parties, such as government organisations, educational institutions and reintegration companies, can also benefit from this network.

The two main pillars of the project are the MatchMeetings and WorkMates. The MatchMeetings are for acquiring knowledge on specific subjects such as vocational Dutch, cultural differences and job hunting. The WorkMates are mentors who have been recruited from industry to advise on a wide range of topics. The activities increase factual knowledge and instil more confidence among the candidates.

Throughout the process, candidates are helped and coached where necessary. This may include sign-posting to specialist organisations for problems the candidate might encounter, such as debt, the validation of diplomas, or top-up courses.

UK

PATHWAY TO ENHANCED EMPLOYABILITY FOR SKILLED REFUGEES: Recognition of prior and experiential learning



The model pictured here is a general version of several vocational models, all aimed at refugees. The refugee is assessed by an advisor who discusses the programme and explores the candidate's language and skills levels. The refugee is then sent to either a vocational orientation programme to help them decide how their skills can be used in the UK, or to a vocational language

programme. The orientation programme identifies gaps in ability and signposts to further appropriate training. In some vocational areas skills may be accredited whilst on the orientation programme. Once they are work-ready refugees are offered a supervised work experience place. On-site they are matched with a befriender or mentor to help them integrate into the workplace,

they have the option to complete a work experience diary and are observed by their supervisor who will at a later stage provide them with a reference. Throughout the process the refugee is offered ongoing assistance with job search and self employment advice, and may leave the programme at any time to take up paid employment.