

## **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CAN HELP THE WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY BY INCREASING IMMIGRANTS' STANDARD OF LIVING THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION ABOUT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS\***

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### **Abstract**

Social enterprises can play an important role in increasing the quality of life and well-being of the environment and the country's development. This essay examines in what ways the Netherlands can help immigrants to adapt to the new society, what steps to take, and what type of agencies and help to look for. This essay will discuss how immigrants who come to the Netherlands can seek help in order to adapt to a new environment, what kind of help is potentially offered to them, and how they can get that help. Namely, the essay will also cover topics such as defining social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and the contribution of social enterprises to improving the development of the country and the economy. In the essay, it will be possible to see quantitative data on the frequency of migration in the world, the inequality in challenges between migrants who come from the countries of the European Union and those who do not come from the European Union. The essay will provide the benefits and disadvantages of migration, the most common reasons for migration, the challenges migrants face, and the Netherlands and in general. The essay will also show what are the advantages and disadvantages of migrating to the Netherlands, and where most people immigrate to the Netherlands from. In the end four different examples of social enterprises in the Netherlands that help immigrants in different ways will be presented.

**Keywords:** *Social enterprises, migrants, The Netherlands*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

Social enterprises are business entities whose primary purpose is to help the environment and the well-being of society. Social enterprises tend to solve social problems as well as, to make equal all sensitive groups and provide them with a chance to be included in contributions to society. The main goal of social enterprises is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for owners or shareholders (Denny & Sheldon, 2013). Social enterprises are business entities that help socially sensitive and marginalized groups, one of them being migrants. Migration is a habitual, common phenomenon in today's world. The following essay will evaluate the reasons why people may choose to immigrate to the Netherlands, identify possible limitations and discuss how social enterprises can help the well-being of society on a global scale by aiding immigrants in job finding, consulting

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services and education about local and global markets. Initiatives taken by social enterprises ultimately motivate the workforce to more effectively contribute to society, and inadvertently raise global living standards. The trend of rapid globalization is one of the primary drivers and enablers of migration. Globalization makes it easier for people to connect and thus provides the opportunity for people to move to foreign environments. Today, the politics of the countries of the world are mostly outward-oriented and open to foreigners, which additionally eases migration in comparison to the middle of the last century.

## **2. MIGRATIONS**

According to the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), “an immigrant is a person living in a country other than that of his or her birth” (Bolter, 2019). The MPI indicates that there are 258 million migrants in the world right now, which is 3.4% of the global population (Bolter, 2019; UN, n.d.). Female migrants constituted 48% of international migrants; there were an estimated 38 million migrant children; and three out of four international migrants were of working age, meaning between 20 and 64 years old (Global Migration Data Portal, n.d.; UN, n.d.). A high percentage of immigrants are from least-developed countries that are deemed highly disadvantaged in their development process for structural, historical and geographical reasons, which additionally increases their proneness to migration (UNCTAD, n.d.).

However, local underdevelopment is not the only driver of migration. People are emigrating for different reasons which are primarily dependent on an individual’s country of origin. There is a possibility that people are immigrating to escape conflict zones (e.g., escaping war or financial crises of the state), to escape poverty, to gain better education, to find a job, to get better healthcare or for political reasons such as voting rights. An individual must not exclusively be considered relatively disadvantaged to global standards (e.g., as is the case with LDCs) to choose to immigrate; some immigrants make this choice out of personal preferences, or due to higher living standards in relation to their local communities. Human migrations have been present throughout human history since any ecological, demographic, cultural, religious, socio-political or economic problem arose, as people were forced to move from one place to another (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Despite different reasons for emigrating, they all have the same goal: to raise their living standards.

### **2.1. Migrants’ position in the Netherlands**

The Netherlands remains a frequent country of choice for raising living standards due to its strong economy, freedom of speech, great work-life balance, tolerance for differences, geographic positioning and language characteristics. This is supported by the fact that in 2021, 252,528 persons immigrated to the Netherlands, which was 31,675 more than the figure for 2020. Net migration amounted to 107,198 persons; therefore, in 2021, more people migrated to the Netherlands than emigrated (Netherlands, 2022). According to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the economy of the Netherlands was the 17th largest in the world in 2021 in terms of GDP. Stability, low unemployment and low inflation are advantageous for persons guided by career-related motives. The proximity of other developed countries such as Germany and Belgium also make the Netherlands attractive to migrants, and approximately 91% of Dutch people speak English.

Unfortunately, migration also constitutes a large number of adaptation issues. The most prominent challenges faced by migrants include language barriers, a lack of employment opportunities, discrimination, racism, marginalization, cultural differences, prejudices and finding affordable housing. Understanding the role and relationship between increasing

cultural diversity and historically restrictive immigration laws is crucial for identifying possible obstacles and the importance of social enterprises in alleviating these inequalities. It is easy to conclude that people who move from one place to another inevitably face situations very different from those they are used to in their country of origin. Sometimes they have to speak a different language, adapt to different cultural identity and a number of different customs and traditions. These factors characterize migration as a risk with potentially difficult and complex processes. Unfortunately, some nationalities are more restricted by law than others, especially regarding employment; this further highlights the importance of social enterprises in easing immigration processes. Namely, according to the Central Bureau voor de Statistiek in 2020, labor was the most common motive for 35.040 immigrants from within the EU/EFTA. Immigrants from within the EU/EFTA had more benefits compared to non-EU citizens because, under EU legalization, all EU/EFTA citizens can start working in any other EU country without a work permit. Contrastingly, people who are not from the EU face a plethora of administrative issues to be able to start working. In addition to work permits, obtaining residence is difficult as it is first mandatory to obtain a temporary residence permit and live in the Netherlands for five years, after which there is a possibility to ask for permanent residency (Government of Netherlands, n.d.). Despite their origin and nationality immigrants face numerous problems in terms of administration, health insurance, housing, education and utilities. Due to the existence of language and cultural barriers, they are often unable to overcome problems on their own. In that case, they turn to agencies in charge of assistance. In the Netherlands, there are a large number of social companies, agencies and foundations that support migrants in their relocation. Those organizations can be profitable or non-profitable, but they all have the same goal, which is to solve social problems, increase social cohesion and create social value.

There are different types of help that an immigrant can get from social enterprises in the Netherlands. Primarily, the immigrant can contact a company that helps when going through the complicated administrative adjustment process, and there are other ways of help such as a direct job offer from certain social enterprises or help with understanding the legal framework and restrictions when doing business or setting up a company in the Netherlands in order to . encouragement of entrepreneurship.

### **3. EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE NETHERLANDS**

The following section will analyze the role of two specific social enterprises that aid migrants in this process: I am expat and Expat Center Rotterdam. These companies specialize in providing information to immigrants regarding administrative and formal matters, housing, work, health insurance, education, careers, transportation and social life.

Rotterdam Expat Centre is a specialized, non-profit organization for international businesses and expats who are looking for services and information about working and living in Rotterdam. They are familiar with all requirements and procedures that come with wanting to settle in Rotterdam. They ease immigrants' arrival to Rotterdam by advising them on legal aspects such as taxes, opening a bank account, and other diverse aspects such as housing, healthcare, education and careers. Additionally, all services of Rotterdam Expat Centre are free (Rotterdam Expat Centre, n.d.).

IamExpatriMedia is the leading English-language media platform for internationals in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. It provides information, news, job listings, housing services, events and lifestyle advice. Addressing the needs and improving the lives of modern expats is their mission. The company is funded through its partners and also offers advertising for other companies on its platform. IamExpatri has helped hundreds of companies from various industries to raise awareness and target potential customers for

their products and services. Companies can advertise directly to their target group through advertisements for apartments, jobs, festivals and fairs, advertisements and banners or email marketing, all through the IamExpat platform (IamExpat, n.d.).

These companies help their clients with administration and required documents. Knowledge about what questions immigrants may have and what challenges they may face has enabled them to keep their clients informed and make the application process for any type of permit or registration much easier. The services they provide save time for clients and allow them to avoid exhausting formal procedures. Due to the lack of knowledge of foreign legal regulations, such services are important for immigrants in the process of moving and adaptation.

As mentioned above, there are also different types of services that individuals might search for. There are also possibilities to get job offer from social enterprise or get help for legal framework. Some of the most common problems that person can face in the Netherlands are finding a job and housing, which is where the role and aid of social enterprises come into place. Namely, immigrants may struggle with discrimination and it is not easy for them to find a job; social enterprises combine economic and social value creation to impact immigrants' employment status, and thus increase public value and help in resolving this issue (Karré, 2018). Social enterprises are businesses with special social objectives that serve their primary purpose, and one of their main objectives is to increase social cohesion. Increased social cohesion is enabled through the investment of social enterprises' profits into socially sensitive groups (Thompson & Scott, 2013). Besides helping immigrants, they aid marginalized groups with employment to further enhance cohesion. Marginalized groups include, but are not limited to: persons with disabilities, young people, women, the elderly, uneducated persons, refugees and the population living in rural areas.

Social enterprises tend to help socially sensitive groups in diverse ways. Two ways in which social enterprises can help immigrants are by listing a job offer or providing consulting services related to market adaptation upon starting a business. The following section will discuss two examples of social enterprises and projects helping immigrants and their adaptation to new environments. By helping immigrants, they increase the overall good for the entire community and strengthen their country's economy by creating new jobs.

The first social enterprise that helps immigrants which will be discussed is sMaak catering service. sMaak is a student-led social enterprise that exists to serve its primary purpose, to help immigrants integrate into Dutch society. According to their website, sMaak started spontaneously at a primary school in Schiedam, where mothers who migrated from the Middle East to the Netherlands in the hope of achieving a better life, cooked together for different school events (sMaak, 2022). The idea to help migrants coming to the Netherlands in this social enterprise is based on applications from immigrants who want to cook for certain events and thus join the social enterprise. Their main goal is to help immigrants to adapt to the way of doing business here, to help them get a job by employing them and thus enable them to adapt to life in the Netherlands more easily.

The Rotterdam Business Case also provides help to immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs who are struggling due to a lack of knowledge of the market. Their main goal is different from the previous example because their focus is primarily on helping immigrants who want to start their businesses in the Netherlands and who are struggling because of differences between markets. The Rotterdam Business Case provides help in adapting to doing business here with the idea that retired entrepreneurs who know a certain market, as well as young students of applied sciences will be coaches and advisors to migrant entrepreneurs in helping them to do business or to start a business. One of the main goals is to better understand the market and introduce migrants to their market for the purpose of creating a stable economy. This project deems that the contribution to the

stability of the economy is equally distributed to immigrants and domestic citizens. By assigning mentors who are already familiar with the market, immigrant entrepreneurs will more often venture into the risks of starting their own business and will get to know the advantages and disadvantages of the Dutch market more quickly, which will help them overcome challenges and differences at least at the business level.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, several benefits and drawbacks of migration to the Netherlands may be emphasized. The Netherlands belongs to one of the most culturally diverse, richest countries in the world, where success can be achieved with a good knowledge of the English language, which is spoken by 90% of the population. However, limitations such as difficult conditions for obtaining papers, complicated and stressful administration and the oversaturated real estate market that makes it difficult to find housing must not be neglected. Despite differences in reasons for migration, all migrants share the common goal of increasing their living standards; this process is undoubtedly aided by social enterprises such as sMaak or The Rotterdam Business Case. Social enterprises are empathetic to the difficult circumstances and obstacles that migrants might face, and their ability to ease the process of employment and create opportunities upon arrival in the Netherlands is a noble characteristic. The complexity of the labor market and the housing market can also be combated with the assistance of social enterprises. Partnerships between social companies and employers or landlords benefit all three parties: the company, partners and clients. Therefore, supply and demand meet directly, and communication is effectively facilitated due to the mediating role of social enterprises. Helping migrants is thus extremely important to achieve harmony in society and increase the overall well-being of society, especially considering the constant rise in globalization and increased frequency of international exchanges. By helping migrants, countries are also able to learn about diverse cultures and create environments in which cultural diversity is more effectively welcomed.

## **SOCIJALNA PREDUZEĆA MOGU POMOĆI BLAGOSTANJU DRUŠTVA POVEĆANJEM ŽIVOTNOG STANDARDA IMIGRANTIMA ZAPOŠLJAVANJEM I OBRAZOVANJEM O NACIONALNOM I MEĐUNARODNOM TRŽIŠTU**

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### **Izvod**

Socijalna preduzeća mogu igrati važnu ulogu u povećanju kvaliteta života i blagostanja životne sredine i razvoja zemlje. Ovaj rad ispituje na koje načine Holandija može pomoći imigrantima da se prilagode novom društvu, koje korake da preduzmu i koje vrste agencija i pomoći da traže. Ovaj rad govori o tome kako imigranti koji dolaze u Holandiju mogu da potraže pomoć kako bi se prilagodili novoj sredini, kakva im se pomoć potencijalno nudi i kako tu pomoć mogu dobiti. Naime, rad će obuhvatiti i teme kao što su definisanje socijalnog preduzetništva, socijalnih preduzeća, doprinos socijalnih preduzeća unapređenju razvoja zemlje i privrede. U radu moguće je videti kvantitativne podatke o učestalosti migracija u svetu, nejednakosti u izazovima između migranata koji dolaze iz zemalja Evropske unije i onih koji ne dolaze iz Evropske unije. Ovaj rad će dati uvid u prednosti i nedostatke migracije, najčešće razloge za migraciju, izazove sa kojima se migranti suočavaju, Holandija i uopšte izazovi. Rad će takođe pokazati koje su prednosti i mane migracije u Holandiju i odakle se većina ljudi useljava u Holandiju. Na kraju će biti predstavljena četiri različita primera društvenih preduzeća u Holandiji koja pomažu imigrantima na različite načine.

***Ključne reči:*** *socijalna preduzeća, migranti, Holandija*

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