



Gemeente
Amsterdam



The Amsterdam Approach to Asylum Status Holders
A fast track to work, education or participation



Asylum status holders are refugees who have been granted asylum status. The City of Amsterdam aims to provide these asylum status holders with a place in the city as soon as possible. We are doing this by helping to fast-track them towards work, education or setting up a business. If this is not (yet) possible, then we help them first towards care providers or participation in society. To this end we have developed a new approach.

Support and guidance as soon as possible

In The Netherlands, everyone that receives social benefits under the Law on Participation is required to take part in activities aimed at (re-)entering the labour market in order to be self-sufficient. All asylum status holders receive benefits under this law when they first obtain their status.

The emphasis is on providing support for quickly getting clients a job or an education, together with citizenship education. We aim to get this process underway while asylum status holders are still living in the asylum seekers' centre in Amsterdam. Customized support is the key factor here. The city authorities apply an intensive, personal, sustainable and integrated approach for these new Amsterdam citizens. The approach comprises support for, among other things:

- work
- education
- entrepreneurship
- participation
- citizenship education
- language skills

To this end the City of Amsterdam deploys casemanagers from the Entry Team (Team Entree), the Activation Team (Team Activering) or the Young People's Support Points (Jongerenpunten), in each case assisted by job hunters. These are specially trained to support and guide asylum status holders.

Team Entree Casemanager

The Team Entree casemanagers provide support in the first six months of the process for all new asylum status holders in Amsterdam aged eighteen and above. Each casemanager has around fifty asylum status holders in their caseload and they offer customized support for their clients. This intensive support takes place both within the boundaries of the municipality and further afield.

The first contact with the casemanager involves a short introductory interview. During this interview the

casemanager determines whether the asylum status holder should undergo an assessment or whether an intake interview is sufficient. The casemanager does everything possible to get the most complete picture of the asylum status holder. On the basis of the results of the assessment or the intake interview the casemanager then draws up a Plan of Action together with the asylum status holder, containing short-term and long-term goals. The City of Amsterdam provides casemanagers with a number of instruments designed especially for asylum status holders.

After a maximum of six months the asylum status holder is transferred to a Young People's Support Point (up to the age of 27) or to the Activation Team (27 years and older).

Team Activering casemanagers

If the asylum status holder is aged 27 or older and does not move on to work or education during the Entry Team support period, then the Team Activering takes over the support process. These specialist casemanagers work with a neighbourhood focus, where possible operating from community centres. They too each have around fifty asylum statusholders in their caseload. They work to promote active participation, preferably and where possible in the asylum statusholder's own surroundings, and here too with the goal of helping the client to obtain work and/or education. Here the casemanagers also make use of existing low-threshold facilities in the local city district.

If care also needs to be provided, the casemanager cooperates with the care network in the neighbourhood. This can involve bodies such as Samen DOEN, neighbourhood care or the social services. The Team Activering manager usually provides support for the asylum status holder for a maximum of three years.

Assessment

We have developed an assessment process specifically geared to asylum status holders. This makes us better

able to identify the talents and qualities of refugees coming to Amsterdam. The assessment supplies information on:

- motivation
- language skills
- work experience
- education
- mental and physical state

The assessment tool is available in Dutch, English, Arabic, Tigrinya and Farsi.

The casemanager discusses the results of the assessment with the asylum status holder. Together they draw up a Plan of Action with short-term and long-term goals, which is then followed by the support process towards work or education.

Intensive Language Course

We offer a short, intensive language boost to enable statusholders to start a job or education faster and more easily. This comprises 128 hours of teaching over a period of four weeks. Here the participant learns:

- how language is used in the workplace;
- how to present oneself more effectively to potential employers;
- how to better participate in training or education.

The training courses are customized and the asylum status holders attend them individually or in small groups of no more than four persons. The language boost takes the current level of language skills into account and focuses on the labour market or education sector that the asylum status holder is aiming for.

Language and Orientation Programme for Refugees

To support the process of citizen education we provide a Language and Orientation programme (TOV) for refugees. The TOV carries out Emplacement Projects. The programme offers status holders a quick and good start for:

- work
- education
- citizenship education
- getting to know the city

The programme has both compulsory and non-compulsory sections. Each asylum status holder attends the compulsory sections related to the 'declaration of participation' and the module about the health system and personal hygiene. In addition

there are two non-compulsory modules:

1. the Language and Learning Capacity Test, which provides information about the language skills of the asylum status holder
2. the module 'Orientation in the City'

Education

We guide and support asylum status holders towards suitable education programmes at senior secondary vocational education and training (MBO), higher professional education (HBO) and academic higher education (WO) levels. Here we work together with regional training centres (ROCs), academic universities and universities of applied sciences. By means of a collaboration agreement the University Asylum Fund (UAF) also provides support and guidance for asylum status holders at HBO and university level.

Social support

The Dutch Council for Refugees is responsible for the social support of status holders. Their task is to make the asylum status holder an independent and informed person in Dutch society, with a focus on Amsterdam. The counsellors of the Dutch Council for Refugees are present at the locations where the casemanagers work, and the social support they provide runs parallel to the support given by the casemanagers, the TOV programme and the citizen education.

Collaborating partners

As municipality we collaborate with many organizations to realize the approach, including:

- the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
- the Municipal Health Service (GGD)
- the Dutch Council for Refugees
- housing corporations
- social work organizations
- employers
- private initiatives

We involve employers in various ways. To give one example, we have drawn up the 'Amsterdam works for everyone' covenant. Employers here undertake to offer job vacancies or internships that are tailored to asylum status holders. We have also made agreements with the providers of citizenship education courses, regarding issues such as a good flow of information between the casemanager and the course teacher.



Khalid and Souliman repair electrical appliances at Repair Café Jordaan



Montasser and Allaa working as a cook at Lebanese restaurant Maz Mez



Maaz begins his assessment



Rami gets an explanation as he makes his assessment



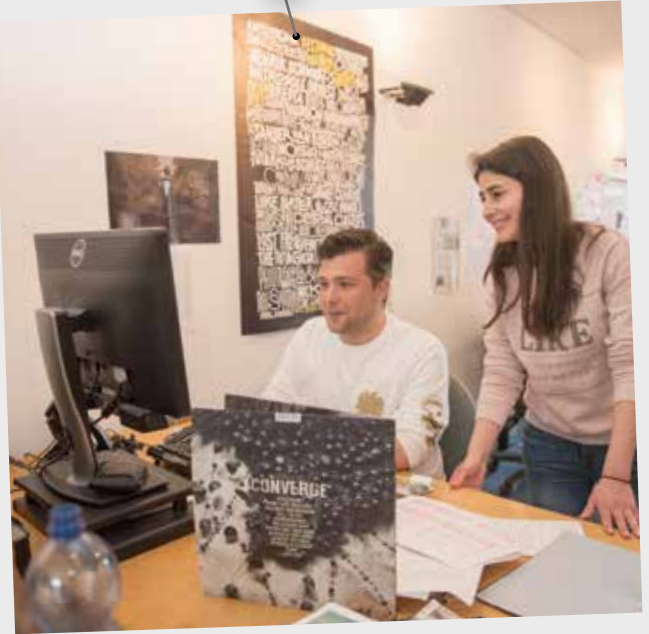
Semere works at Markus BV in a soil remediation project near his home in Startblok Riekerhaven



Mohamed discusses the results of his assessment with his case manager Zohra



At Refugee Company status holders are trained as baristas ↓



Nour works as a marketing assistant at music venue and cultural center De Melkweg



and Mahmoud works here full time in the sewing workshop



Jessica works as a volunteer at GenderTalent and helps other transgender refugees

For more information on the Amsterdam Approach to Asylum Status Holders see:
www.amsterdam.nl/vluchtelingen
see Information for refugee status holders

The Amsterdam Approach to Asylum Statusholders is a partnership between the departments of Work, Participation, Income and Economic Affairs of the City of Amsterdam.

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Success factors

- Dual approach to support and guidance towards work or education, together with citizenship education.
- The approach begins in the asylum seekers' centre, enabling asylum status holders to put their waiting period to good use.
- Time for a focused, specific, customized approach to each asylum status holder, with the talents of the asylum status holder serving as our starting point.
- The casemanagers have specific knowledge about the asylum status holders, speak different languages and have diverse cultural and working backgrounds.
- A regular casemanager provides support for around fifty people.
- Special training courses focus on dealing with this specific group.
- Various specialists are combined within one team: casemanagers, job hunters, coaches and income counsellors.
- The counsellors of the Dutch Council for Refugees are present at the locations where the casemanagers work, thus enabling quick consultation and coordination.
- Focused use of instruments relating to work and language.
- Special instruments also available, such as:
 - job application training courses
 - preparing a CV/résumé
 - 'matching tables' involving vacancies for asylum status holders
 - visits to employer work locations
 - internships
 - trial job placements
- Internal and external partners of the City of Amsterdam provide supplementary support and collaboration.
- Assessment processes specially developed for asylum status holders to provide a good picture of the client.
- A language boost, focused on specialist language or education.
- Help in finding the right citizenship education provider.
- The City of Amsterdam also offers its own on-the-job training programmes.
- Provision of grants for private initiatives for asylum status holders that focus on work, education or participation.
- *Klankbordgroep Vluchtelingen* ('Refugees Sounding Board Group') issues solicited and unsolicited recommendations on policy, implementation and communication.

