

MAKE IT

Make it in the Netherlands!

IN THE

Programme 2013-2016

NETHER

LANDS!



Foto: Ham DeBaker

The purpose of this action plan

1

To make sure that all international students feel welcome in the Netherlands, and know that they can start their career here.

2

To have as many international students as possible decide to work in the Netherlands after they graduate, especially in the top sectors and sectors with good labour-market prospects. To this end, we will begin strategic recruitment and work to boost retention before, during and after students' studies.

3

To ensure that all international students maintain a bond with the Netherlands after they have completed their studies, even if they return abroad.

STEPS

TO BE

TAKEN

Steps to be taken

To achieve these goals we intend to work on retention before, during and after students' degree programmes. To this end, we have set up five lines of action:

- 1. It all starts with language** We plan to make it easier and more attractive for international students to learn the Dutch language, both online and in a classroom environment. We will also be helping our lecturers to improve their English.
- 2. From studying to a career** We will take a more strategic approach to recruitment based on labour-market prospects (top sectors, science and technology), strengthen the connection between education and the labour market, expressly promote study and career as a single entity, offer more work placements and bring together all information on working in the Netherlands in a single portal. We will also provide a smoother transition to the Dutch labour market by organising career events and corporate information days.
- 3. Breaking the bubble** International students find it difficult to connect with Dutch students and to put down roots in Dutch society. We plan to change this situation with extra buddies, an annual cultural connection award, through internationalisation of participation bodies and student associations, and through an active alumni policy.
- 4. From red tape to the red carpet** The practical matters that students need to organise will be simplified. Administrative obstacles to studying, workplacements, side jobs and entering the workforce will be removed, and procedures will be coordinated more effectively. Information on the various situations faced by international students will also be made available in English.
- 5. Regional results** Each region is different, requiring a tailored approach. We will therefore develop and test a specific regional approach in at least three pilot regions. As part of these regional project plans, the regional actors (higher-education institutions, businesses, government authorities, etc.) will decide what is required to attract and retain international talent for the regional labour market. Support will be provided by the national action plan, including a start-up grant to assist in setting up the initial project plan. Incorporation with the national action plan will serve to prevent fragmentation, to scale up regional initiatives and to make results available nationwide.

Who is doing what?

Activity	Lead organisation	Parties involved
▶ Line of action 1: It all starts with language		
Develop online Dutch language course (MOOC)	Nuffic	Dutch Language Union (Taalunie), higher-education institutions, the Ministry of OCW, the Dutch Association of University Language Centres (NUT)
Bring Dutch language lessons together in a single portal	Nuffic	Higher education institutions
Improve lecturers' English language skills	One educational institution	Higher education institutions, lecturers, NUT
▶ Line of action 2: From studying to a career		
Generic promotion of higher education in the Netherlands both for study and career, and strategic recruitment based on institutions' own promotional activities	Nuffic	Nuffic NESOs, DHENIM, VNO-NCW, the National Science & Technology Platform, Ministry of BZ, Ministry of EZ, SER, higher education institutions
Bring information about career prospects in the Netherlands together at www.careerinholland.nl	Nuffic	Temp organisations and agencies, VNO-NCW, MKB-Nederland, the business community
Draw attention to career opportunities in the top sectors and in the regions as part of promoting study and careers	Nuffic	Nuffic NESOs, DHENIM, VNO-NCW, the National Science & Technology Platform, Ministry of BZ, Ministry of EZ, regional bodies
Create an information package for embassies, consulates and NBSOs	Nuffic	VSNU, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, Ministry of BZ, Ministry of EZ, VNO-NCW, the business community, NL Agency, higher education institutions
Intensify organisation of international internships via a regional approach	Educational institutions in the region	Higher education institutions, VSNU, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, the business community, NL Agency
List businesses on www.grantfinder.nl	Nuffic	VNO-NCW, higher education institutions, the business community
Improve the information given to students and alumni on the opportunities for starting a business	Ministerie EZ	Ministry of EZ, Nuffic, start-up hubs in Dutch higher education institutions, ISO

Activity	Lead organisation	Parties involved
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► Line of action 3: Breaking the bubble

Joint effort to recruit more buddies and organise an annual buddy-day, and also promote the importance of buddy programmes among Dutch students.	One educational institution/ ESN & LSVb	Buddy expert group, higher education institutions, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, VSNU, international offices, national and international student associations
Making use of LINE/international classroom	Nuffic	Higher education institutions
Cultural connection award	One educational institution	Higher education institutions, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, VSNU, student associations
Expand Holland alumni network activities in order to foster long-term connections with the Netherlands	Nuffic	Nuffic NESOs, embassies, consulates, NBSOs, Ministry of BZ, NL Agency, higher education institutions
Ensure that Dutch students associations cater for international students	ISO & LSVb	Student associations, programme-based associations, sports associations, participation bodies and interest organisations
Ensure student services are equipped to cater for international students	ISO, LSVb and the youth division of the Dutch Trade Union Confederation (FNV Jong).	

Activity	Lead organisation	Parties involved
▶ Line of action 4: From red tape to the red carpet		
Mobstacles information line	Nuffic / Mobstacles	Ministries of OCW, V&J, SZW and EZ, implementing bodies
Improve administrative procedures	Nuffic / Mobstacles	Red Carpet steering committee (Nuffic, Ministry of OCW, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), VSNU, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, Kences, Studielink, SK123 and the Education Executive Agency (DUO)), the Ministries of V&J, SZW, EZ, BZ and VWS, the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and the Netherlands Tax and Customs Administration (Belastingdienst)
Streamline enrolment procedures	Studielink	The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND)
Improve information on study finance, residence permits and other administrative procedures	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)	Nuffic (RLB), Ministries of SZW and V&J, ex-pat centres, SK123
Make information and administrative procedures available in two languages	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)	Higher-education institutions, Ministries of EZ,V&J, SZW and VWS, the Red Carpet steering committee, NL Agency, and the Tax and Customs Authority
Explore mixed housing options	Kences	VSNU, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, LSVb, ISO, the Dutch Network of Knowledge Cities (Netwerk Kennissteden NL), possibly local parties

Activity	Lead organisation	Parties involved
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► Line of action 5: Regional results

Quick-scan and implement project plans in 3 regions	NL Agency	Ministries of OCW and EZ, Nuffic, Brainport Development, VNO-NCW, higher education institutions
Pilot aimed at attracting 100 additional science/technology students to Eindhoven University of Technology and Fontys University of Applied Sciences.	Brainport Development & Eindhoven University of Technology	Nuffic, Ministry of OCW, NL Agency

► Miscellaneous

Data collection and tracer studies	Nuffic	Ministry of OCW
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Foto: Ham DeBler

Line of action:

It all starts with Language

Analysis

The large number of study programmes offered in English is a unique selling point of the Dutch higher education system. Nearly half of all Master's programmes are currently offered in English, and there is an English-language variant available of many Bachelor's programmes. International students cite this fact as one of the key reasons for studying in the Netherlands. An additional benefit is the fact that international students can also get by perfectly with English outside the lecture hall: from grocery shopping to asking for directions, the Dutch switch relatively easily to English.

However, this upside also has a downside. It has been shown that speaking Dutch is necessary to achieve genuine social integration. And speaking English is often not enough to find a job in the Netherlands, especially among SMEs. English therefore turns from a blessing into a curse once students stop studying. International students often bemoan the fact that they really would have liked to learn Dutch, but that it just never happened. The logical conclusion is that it is worthwhile learning Dutch at an early stage. For this reason, we intend to make learning Dutch easier, both online and in a classroom environment. This initial step will assist in the other lines of action, because after all: it all starts with language. International students will be offered a free introductory Dutch course, enabling them to prepare for their stay in the Netherlands, or to learn about Dutch at the start of their study programme.

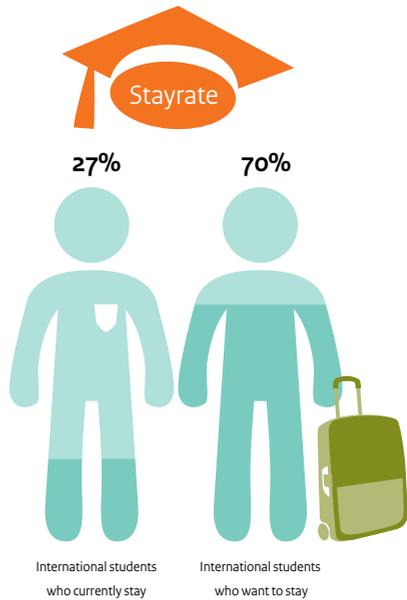
Language also works both ways. Good English skills are required in order to improve teaching quality and to improve lecturers' ability to communicate with their international students. Improving our lecturers' English language skills will help our education system to make the leap from 'good' to 'excellent'.

Aim

To improve international students' Dutch skills, giving them better access to Dutch society and the labour market, and to improve lecturers' English skills to boost the quality of the international classroom.

Steps

- ▶ We will develop a national online course (MOOC) with an introduction to the Dutch Language. This course will offer international students an initial look at the Dutch language, and they will be able to start the course before they come to the Netherlands. The language course will be made available at www.studyinholland.nl and be promoted by Nuffic and the various educational institutions. The first module will be launched in the spring of 2014, and expanded in stages after that.
- ▶ Many educational institutions already offer Dutch language lessons. To help make these courses more accessible, all information on language courses will be brought together in a single portal. Completing the online language course will also make it easier for students to continue on with a classroom-based course.
- ▶ Improving lecturers' English skills will help to remove language barriers and to boost the quality of English-language education in the Netherlands, benefiting education in general and the effect of the international classroom. Professional development agreements between lecturers and educational institutions is one way to achieve this.



Line of action 2:

From studying to a career

Analysis

The single most important factor when deciding to start a career in the Netherlands is being able to find a job or launch a business. International students say that it is difficult to find a job. This can have many possible causes, such as the language barrier, legislation, unfamiliarity with the labour market or simply completing a study programme for which there is no demand in the Dutch labour market.

The SER has determined that students' study choices could be better, given the demand in the labour market – only 7% choose courses in science and technology, for example, while the prospects in this area in the Netherlands are especially good. This point is also expressly made in the Technology Covenant that was signed this year. The SER recommends putting a greater focus on science and technology during the recruitment stage.

It has also been shown that international students are mostly concerned with their studies, and not thinking about their subsequent careers. Study programmes in the Netherlands are also often promoted independently of the career that follows. A more strategic approach to recruitment is to promote study programmes and careers together, devoting specific attention to those specialisations offering good career prospects. These activities, focusing on proper fine-tuning with the labour market, must also benefit Dutch students. Prior research has shown that students who complete work experience during their studies are more likely to keep working in the Netherlands. Getting to know Dutch



businesses while studying makes for a smoother transition after graduation. In addition to work placements, this can also be achieved through side jobs or ‘shadow’ days. It is important to improve communication between education and the labour market before, during and after the study programme. This will benefit the education of both international and Dutch students.

International students are also eligible for the 1,000 Top Grants (Topbeurzen) outlined in the Technology Covenant. In conjunction with businesses that issue international student grants, possibilities can be explored such as work placements, shadow days or thesis research.

Aim

To promote and facilitate the transition from study to work for international students, especially in the science and technology sector and the top sectors.

Steps

- ▶ We will start promoting study programmes and careers at the same time via www.studyinholland.nl and via the career portal www.careerinholland.nl, with a special focus on science and technology. The same approach will be taken by higher-education institutions, who will undertake strategic recruitment using their own educational profile as a basis. Nuffic will structure the generic promotion of Dutch higher education accordingly, via the activities of the Netherlands Education Support Offices (NESOs) and promotional channels including www.careerinholland.nl and www.studyinholland.nl, among other activities. DHENIM, the network of international marketeers in higher education, and the WASA network of career officers will also incorporate this focus into their activities.
- ▶ All key information on starting a career in the Netherlands will be brought together on the www.careerinholland.nl website. This website will be actively promoted by educational institutions, as well as expanded to include training courses, links to

vacancies, information on the job market, etc..

- ▶ Study and career recruitment will also focus on the top sectors, putting excellent internationally-oriented students in touch with top-quality Dutch knowledge institutes and companies with international activities. By including a reference to Global Challenges, Dutch Solutions international talent in the Netherlands will be encouraged to set their minds to solving global social issues. A large amount of the existing web-content developed for Holland Branding can be used for this purpose. This material will be made accessible to international students via the website www.careerinholland.nl.
- ▶ An information package will be put together specifically for embassies, consulates and NBSOs on studying and working in the Netherlands, enhancing their role in the strategic recruitment and retention of international talent. This information package will contain the latest information on career prospects, combined with study programmes available in the Netherlands. The opportunities for promoting study and work in the Netherlands will also be brought up during the planning stage of future trade missions.
- ▶ We will introduce more internships as a means of strengthening the connection between education and industry. Through a regional approach, higher-education institutions and employers will intensify their activities regarding the organisation of international work placements and career services, seeking alignment with the local labour market and employment agencies in doing so.
- ▶ The business community will be given a more prominent position in information issued on study programmes in the Netherlands, as well as ways of financing a degree in Holland. To this end, companies will be explicitly mentioned on the www.grantfinder.nl website (as well as professional fields and institutions), where all study grants sponsored by businesses will be brought together in one place.
- ▶ Entrepreneurial students may find it attractive to start a business in the Netherlands after finishing their degree. The Centres of Entrepreneurship and the ‘incubators’ affiliated with higher-education institutions already aim to support international talent in launching their business. To boost the appeal of Dutch higher education among this target group, www.studyinholland.nl and www.careerinholland.nl will include promotional information on these facilities. These websites will also provide information on the various start-up procedures in English.



Case

The University of Groningen has a Placement Office for Arts students that provides information on work placement options, helps to find actual placements and takes care of all official organisational aspects. The Talent & Career Center is there to help international graduates by offering career advice, English-language workshops on applying for jobs, and advice concerning study grants, visas and insurance.

Case

On Monday 16 September, Minister Bussemaker issued 42 top-sector Chemistry Grants to talented chemistry students. These promising students (15 from research universities and 27 from universities of applied sciences) will each receive a monthly sum from chemical companies, who will also provide them with practical experience. There were 11 international students among the selected group.

Line of action 3:

Breaking the bubble

Analysis

International students who come to the Netherlands often find it hard to get close to the Dutch. The Dutch are friendly people, but they live very much to themselves. The language barrier is one of the causes, however, it is true that many organisations and activities do not cater towards international students. Building up a long-term relationship with the Netherlands means breaking the international student ‘bubble’, requiring a more international outlook from the Dutch.

There are many successful examples of buddy programmes that help foster integration. As part of these programmes, international students are paired with Dutch students, or with international students who are already very familiar with the Netherlands. These ‘buddies’ can make a large contribution to social integration within Dutch student life and the university community. They can also help international students to practise their Dutch. One activity that focuses on this aspect is Language Tandem, run by Radboud University Nijmegen. Twice a month, students come together to practise a particular language. An Italian student, for example, can practise speaking Dutch with a Dutch student, who wants to improve his Italian.

Aim

To promote the integration of international students into Dutch society.

Steps

- ▶ There are already several successful buddy programmes in operation, however, their capacity remains limited by the number of available buddies. We plan to scale-up these programmes through a joint effort to recruit additional buddies, including both Dutch and international students. We also plan to organise annual buddy days for both international and Dutch students. Best practices will be exchanged through an expert group, with language being one of the focus areas. To help enrich the buddy programmes, their importance will be promoted among Dutch students.
- ▶ We intend to boost the quality of the international classroom by means of a tailored online course facilitating the exchange of best practices: an introduction and training course for lecturers in higher education. For this purpose, an 'International Classroom' module will be developed for the online teaching environment in the LINE-project (Leeromgeving Internationalisering Nuffic en Europees Platform) run by Nuffic and the European Platform, in conjunction with topics such as 'intercultural competencies', 'integration of international students' and 'internationalisation of the curriculum'.
- ▶ The best ideas for increasing retention in the Netherlands come from the students and lecturers themselves. These ideas will be put in the spotlight, as part of a competition run at institutional level. The best idea will receive a financial contribution towards its implementation. The local winners will also compete for the grand prize at national level.
- ▶ We plan to expand and activate the Holland Alumni Network, in order to build up long-term relationships with our international students. Educational institutions will take a more active approach to recruiting international students for their own alumni network, and combine these networks with the Holland Alumni Network. From these networks, study in Holland ambassadors will be selected and deployed for various activities.
- ▶ Dutch organisations, such as study-programme and student associations, participation bodies, sports associations and interest groups, will also start explicitly targeting international students. Student associations, for example, will be encouraged to organise more activities in English, and participation bodies will be trained on how to better represent the interests of international students.
- ▶ Student services will be better equipped to deal with international students. Among other improvements, this will include the (legal) services provided by the Dutch National Students Association (ISO) and the Dutch National Students' Union (LSVb), as well as recommendations on terms and conditions of employment (the youth division of the Dutch Trade Union Confederation, FNV Jong).

Intermezzo: Brabant Talents - Good Practice

Brabant Talents is a programme that, through a range of concrete activities and by setting up a long-term knowledge network, aims to retain both national and international students for the Brabant labour market. The programme was set up and implemented by the Province of North Brabant, the 'B5' municipalities (Eindhoven, Helmond, 's Hertogenbosch, Tilburg and Breda), the Brabant Chamber of Commerce and Brainport Development, in conjunction with students, knowledge and educational institutions, companies and other stakeholder organisations.

In 2013/2014, Brabant Talents will focus on students at higher-education institutions in the following three fields: Engineering, ICT and Financials & Economics.

To promote contact and relationship-building between students and employers in North Brabant, the following activities will be carried out in 2013/2014:

- Meetings between students and employers will be organised for each of the three fields cited above, in the form of guest lectures and company visits;
- A major event organised in the spring of 2014, with a wrap-up of the initial period and matchmaking between students and employers; and
- Drawing up of a central communication plan, as well as the launch of an ongoing online and social media campaign for all relevant parties.





Line of action 4:

From red tape to the red carpet

Analysis

Practical matters and administrative procedures still often form a hurdle for international students. The red carpet is rolled out for them, both for study programmes and careers. And although we do want to make learning Dutch a more attractive option, there are many practical matters that need to be taken care of right at the start of their study programme. It is therefore important to offer administrative procedures and information in two languages, where necessary. We also plan to take a close look at legislation to determine how it can be improved, in combination with a joint effort to coordinate steps in the enrolment process accordingly.

Aim

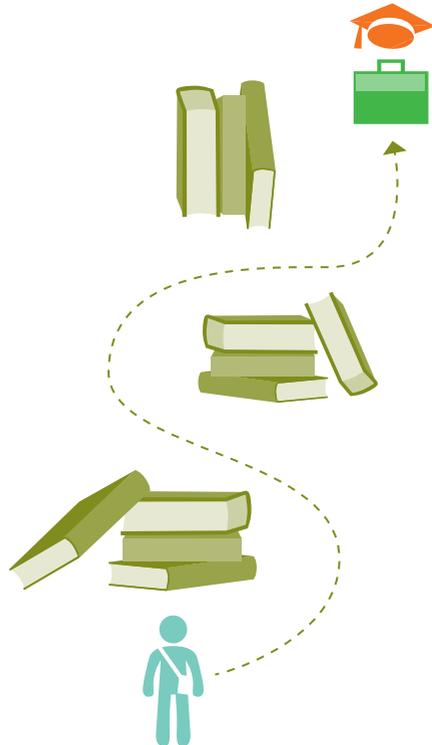
To improve and streamline administrative procedures and information.

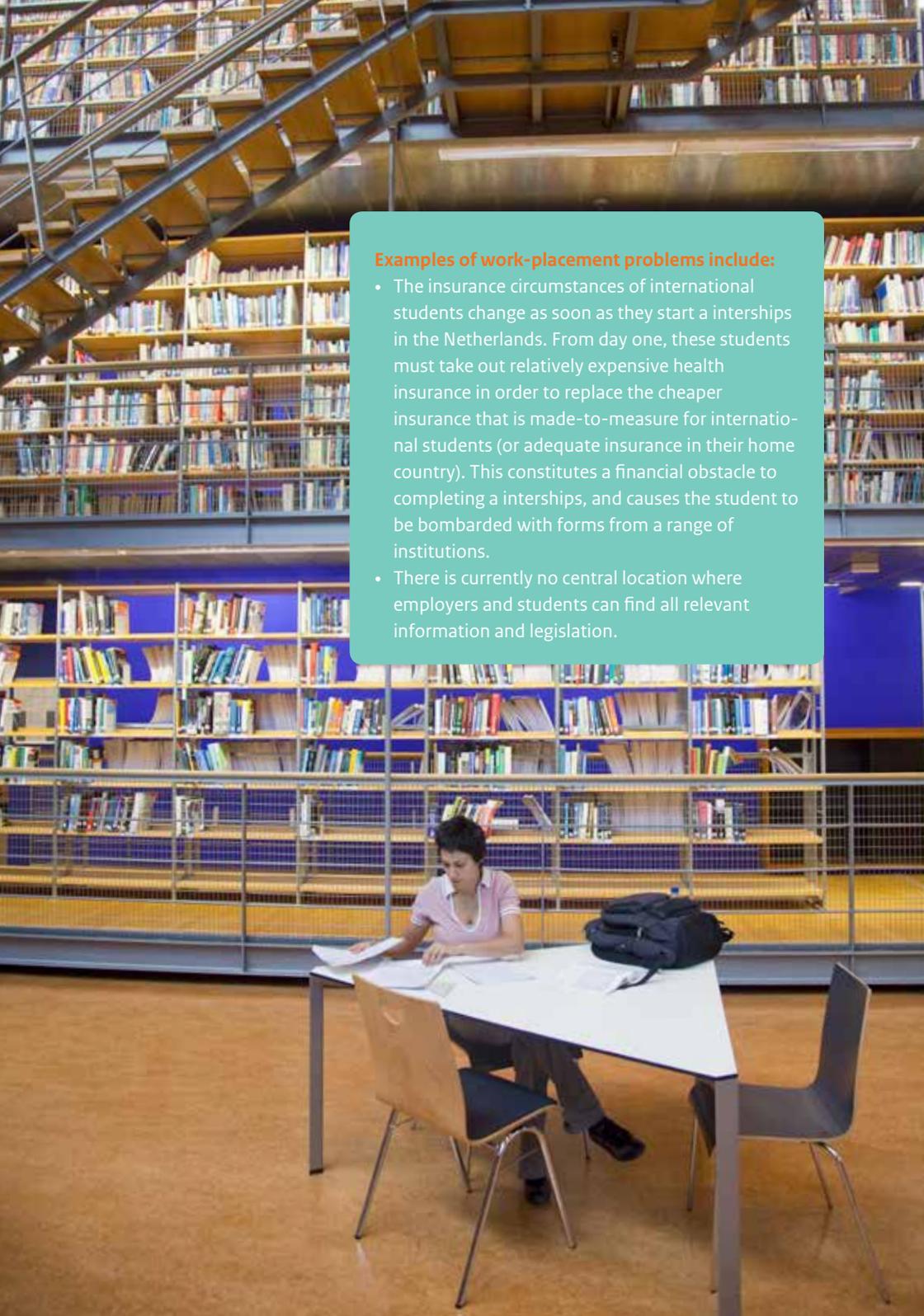
Steps

- ▶ An information line will be set up for students and educational institutions with administrative problems. The 'Mobstacles' hotline will identify problems, investigate possible solutions, and go in search of them in conjunction with the relevant ministries and implementing bodies
- ▶ We will make improvements to the administrative procedures that international students are confronted with, by evaluating and more actively promoting the Graduates' Job-Seeking Year Scheme (Regeling Zoekjaar Afgestudeerden), the

Scheme for the Highly Educated (Regeling Hoogopgeleiden), the procedures governing start-ups and the enrolment procedures at higher-education institutions.

- ▶ Information issued on study financing, residence permits and other administrative procedures will be improved and brought actively to people's attention via www.careerinholland.nl. Direct links to this information will also be placed on the educational institutions' websites (Red Carpet B).
- ▶ Where necessary, the administrative procedures and information for international students will also be made available in English.
- ▶ The problems with administrative procedures surrounding internships will be addressed. A stakeholders' network will also be created to take responsibility in order to eliminate the practical and administrative obstacles in the way of internships. This group will provide information on internships and professionalise the information via fact-sheets distributed by both educational institutions and internships agencies.
- ▶ The possibilities for mixing international student housing in with Dutch student housing will be investigated in 2014. Various forms of mixed housing will be explored (e.g. per complex, per storey or per home). This exploration will include a look at how interaction between Dutch and international students can be improved via accommodation. The opportunities and possible obstacles will be examined.





Examples of work-placement problems include:

- The insurance circumstances of international students change as soon as they start an internship in the Netherlands. From day one, these students must take out relatively expensive health insurance in order to replace the cheaper insurance that is made-to-measure for international students (or adequate insurance in their home country). This constitutes a financial obstacle to completing an internship, and causes the student to be bombarded with forms from a range of institutions.
- There is currently no central location where employers and students can find all relevant information and legislation.

Line of action 5:

Regional results

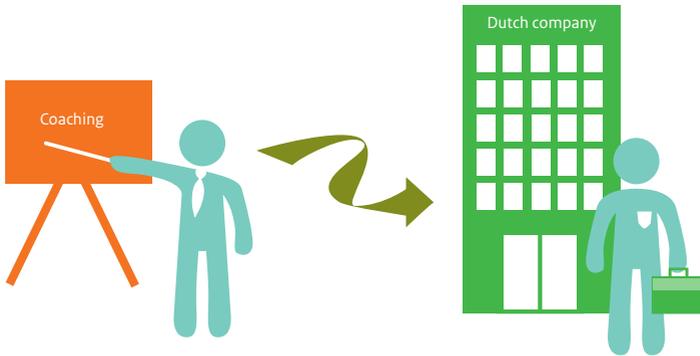
Analysis

Each region is different, requiring a tailored approach. Brainport Development is a good example of such an approach, and taking this as a model, we plan to develop and test a specific regional approach in at least three pilot regions. As part of these regional project plans, the regional actors (higher-education institutions, businesses, government authorities, etc.) will decide what is required to attract and retain international talent for the regional labour market. Existing initiatives will of course be included in the plans. Support will be provided by the national action plan, including a start-up grant to help in setting up the initial project plan.

Regional approaches are currently fragmented, and can be improved by lending them a national character that can be supported by this action plan. To avoid mutual competition among regions, the regional approach will be in line with the over-arching secretariat for student retention. Where possible, collaboration will be sought with the regional network in the Technology Covenant.

Aim

To increase retention at regional level by supporting parties with a specific regional approach.



The Connect programme is a joint pilot by Saxion University of Applied Sciences and the University of Twente. Connect provides unique opportunities to both international graduates and Dutch businesses. The Connect programme matches international graduates with companies in the Netherlands. These ‘high-potential’ graduates are selected by Connect. Participants are offered training and coaching, better preparing them for the workforce in the Netherlands and giving them a kick-start in their career. Employers thus receive easy access to these graduates, and can offer them an initial position under favourable conditions.

Steps

- ▶ A quick-scan will be performed in 10 regions, looking at the demand in the regional labour market, the available international student talent and potential activities for boosting retention. These scans will also furnish a regional network of organisations focusing on student retention.
- ▶ The three regions with the best scan results will receive a start-up grant and professional assistance in setting up a regional project plan. The regional project leaders will closely monitor what happens with the national action plan.
- ▶ In the Eindhoven Brainport Region, a pilot will be launched using scholarships to attract 100 additional science/technology students to Eindhoven University of Technology and Fontys University of Applied Sciences. These students will be monitored during and after their studies and, based on the information obtained, the approach taken to recruitment and retention will be optimised and scaled up. In consultation with Nuffic, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and NL Agency, regional bodies will examine the need for national support in the setup, implementation and monitoring of the pilot.

THE COALI- TION

The Coalition

This is a joint action plan. Research universities, universities of applied sciences, associations, unions, employer umbrella organisations, individual companies, the government, Chambers of Commerce, students and many others must work together to achieve our common goals. The steps in this action plan are the result of a joint effort, and will be implemented in the same fashion. It is for this reason that a clear implementation structure will be set up for the action plan

Data collection and tracer studies will provide valuable information on the effects of this action plan. To facilitate interpretation of the action-plan results, as much existing data as possible will be used, and clear definitions applied.

- To start with, a wide-reaching steering committee has been set up that will help provide direction for the action plan throughout its existence. This committee will be manned by administrative representatives from the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) and Economic Affairs (EZ), the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen), Nuffic, the Dutch National Student Association (ISO), the Dutch National Students' Union (LSVb), the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), the Dutch Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MKB-Nederland) and the Dutch Trade Union Confederation (FNV).
- For each line of action, a working group has been established through which one or more organisations will address the concrete steps. All relevant parties are represented, such as the Education Executive Agency (DUO), DHENIM, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), Studielink, Kences, Brainport Development, NL Agency, etc. This places the responsibility for achieving results directly with the stakeholders themselves.
- The secretariat of the 'Make it in the Netherlands' action plan will be run by Nuffic. Nuffic will report on the progress of each line of action, ensure conformity with the Technology Covenant, organise interaction between national and regional initiatives, support the implementation of the action plan and organise the knowledge-exchange seminars in combination with other stakeholders.
- A feedback group containing a broad range of representatives is indispensable for this action plan. Its members will include: international and Dutch students, international alumni, lecturers (including an international lecturer and a Dutch lecturer with experience in the international classroom), employers, staff from international offices, and lastly staff from career centres and from Alumni & Development offices. The feedback group will meet three times per year, and provide input on concrete measures, identify trends to ensure that the action plan is up-to-date, and provide a vision on how to flesh out the various lines of action.



Interstedelijk
Studenten
Overleg



Government of the Netherlands



VSNU
vereniging van universiteiten
association of universities
THE NETHERLANDS



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK



V N O N C W



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