

Evaluatie Logeerregeling COA

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Summary

In this study, we examined the possible added value and results of the COA arrangement that enables so called 'status holders' (refugees with a residence permit) to temporarily stay with their family, friends or a host family. The COA arrangement is aimed at bettering the participation of refugees. We researched the arrangement as facilitated by Takecarebnb (TCBnB), a voluntary initiative that matches refugees and host families. We compared status holders who stayed with a TCBnB host family with status holders that stayed with friends or family (without the interference of an intermediary organisation) and status holders who did not make use of the arrangement but, instead, remained in an Asylum Seeker' Centre until they were given permanent accommodations. In addition, we researched the conditions under which the added value of the arrangement could be ensured. The results of this study provide the COA with substantiation on whether or not to continue this pilot. We conducted a literature study and interviewed all involved parties such as status holders who did (and did not) make use of the arrangement, host families, people living near host families and professionals and volunteers of the involved organisations.

We conclude that the arrangement, in which status holders temporarily stay with family, friends or host families, contributes to a more rapid start in building a new life in the Netherlands. The arrangement enables status holders to move sooner to a context in which the conditions for participation are present: control of their own time/ daily activities, (inner) peace, an environment that offers facilities relevant for integration and participation, and a supportive, domestic environment in which they feel at home. Status holders who make use of the arrangement benefit vastly from the (practical) support they receive in getting acquainted with the Dutch context. Status holders who stay with their friends or families, in addition, benefit from the experience and knowledge of these individuals as they have often only recently established in the Netherlands themselves. Previous research on the position of refugees who arrived in the Netherlands longer ago showed that a long period of inactivity or the lack of possibilities to

work on their own prospects in the receiving country may lead to poor outcomes of participation and integration. The added value of the arrangement, thus, mainly lies in the fact that status holders who make use of the arrangement are able to start building their lives in the Netherlands sooner, thereby, losing less valuable time. Furthermore, the added value of the arrangement lies in facilitating both societal initiatives, such as TCBnB, and unorganised temporary stays with friends and family. This forms an important addition to the professional and voluntary support that status holders receive in their first stages in the Netherlands.

We compared status holders who made use of the matching arrangement via TCBnB to status holders who, without the interference of an intermediary organisation, stayed with friends or family and to status holders who remained in an Asylum Seeker' Centre until they were given a permanent accommodation. Status holders who made use of the TCBnB arrangement are the most advanced in terms of several forms of participation. They receive education the most and a few have paid jobs. Moreover, this group has the most contact with native Dutch. The high(er) level of participation of this group can be partially attributed to the group's specific characteristics. The group contains mostly young, highly educated, English speaking status holders who have a clear idea about how they want to build a life in the Netherlands – often through education – and who and what they need to achieve this. Hence, they are highly motivated and skilled to make a new start. This group makes use of the arrangement in order to be able to leave the ASC sooner and start working on their personal goals. Involved stakeholders qualify this group as the 'people who will make it anyways'. Status holders who temporarily stayed with family or friends also wish to leave the ASC, but have a less clear vision for their future. These people need more support in order to find their way in the Netherlands. This support is currently insufficiently available. There is still an administrative relationship between the COA and status holders when they use the arrangement as there is a weekly reporting obligation where status holders can ask questions during office

hours. However, in practice, this support is not sufficient to help status holders start with activities aimed at participation. We found a few more issues that need to be resolved. The knowledge about the existence of the COA arrangement - among both employees of asylum seeker centres and refugees - can be enhanced, so that more status holders can make use of the arrangement. Furthermore, our study shows that the co-resident rule (that determines that when people share a house with more adult co-residents, the amount of welfare benefits they receive is adjusted accordingly), withholds families from registering as a host family. Moreover, there is more profit to be gained from the arrangement by introducing a more flexible form of reporting obligation of the COA so that it does not interfere with the activities of status holders that are focused on participation.

Colofon

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De COA logeeregeling maakt het mogelijk dat statushouders die nog in een AZC verblijven tijdelijk gaan logeren bij familie of vrienden, of bij een gastgezin, totdat een woning in de toegewezen gemeente beschikbaar is. Het Verwey-Jonker Instituut deed kwalitatief onderzoek naar de opbrengsten van deze regeling voor participatie en integratie. We onderzochten het logeren via TakeCareBnB. Dit is een vrijwilligersinitiatief, dat matches maakt tussen statushouders die willen logeren en gastgezinnen. We vergeleken statushouders die logeerden, statushouders die bij familie en vrienden logeerden en statushouders die níet logeerden.

We concluderen dat de logeeregeling bijdraagt aan een snellere start voor statushouders met het opbouwen van een nieuw leven in Nederland. Hierdoor gaat minder kostbare tijd verloren. Logeren kan een belangrijke aanvulling zijn op de professionele en vrijwillige ondersteuning van statushouders in hun eerste periode in Nederland. Wel zijn er een aantal verbeterpunten. In het rapport bespreken we richtingen waarin de logeeregeling verder kan worden uitgewerkt en geïmplementeerd.