

Minding the Gaps

An inquiry of *humanitarian innovations* within the Netherlands



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MINDING THE GAPS: AN INQUIRY OF HUMANITARIAN INNOVATIONS WITHIN THE NETHERLANDS

Abstract

Within the realm of refugee studies, it is observed that there is a thriving body of research. Understandably so, the focus of these studies has always been on refugees themselves. There have been a multitude of studies that showcase how integration is of dire importance and that, it is crucial for refugees to successfully integrate within the context of a host society. Yet, a sizable barrier to integration is the discrimination that refugees, are observed to be, subjected to, especially so in the job market. Further, as the world becomes increasingly reliant on digital technologies, there is an overall sharp increment in the number of studies related to the use of Internet applications by asylum seekers, refugees and newcomers. This has been especially observed in the studies that have been conducted post-2015 refugee crisis.

Capitalizing on these distortions that plague the current system, there has since been a proliferation of efforts by non-governmental state actors aimed at bridging the gaps of the distortions. While we know much about the spectrum of issues that plague the current state of the refugee situation, it has been observed that we know little of the other actors in the field who too, are stakeholders in the migration issue. In order to tackle the aforementioned issues, it is crucial to understand the stances of these actors, as well as, the context of the host society.

Accordingly, this paper draws upon the results of ten qualitative expert interviews conducted with humanitarian innovation actors and policy advisors in the Netherlands. Considering that the Netherlands deals with refugees and newcomers on a local level, the decision was made to set the groundwork of this research in the Randstad area of the Netherlands.

Reporting on the perspectives of these stakeholders, this research attempts to illustrate how such humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute to refugees' access to education and employment. It also studies how digital media is used in this process of fostering integration. In this way, it seeks to provide new angles to for the conceptualizing of refugee economies within the Netherlands. Further, it takes on the lens of a multi-actor perspective in the discussion of technology and refugees.

The findings show that humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute to refugees' access to employment and education in five overarching ways. These have been identified and labeled as: Conceptualizing and perceiving distortions, capitalizing on distortions, collaborating, customizing programs, as well as, changing the narrative.

With the exception of two initiatives that engaged with the use of digital technologies quite heavily, it was observed that, majority of the initiatives combined physical efforts with the use of online activities, to foster the integration of refugees. Still, it was observed that there is an undeniable presence of digital technologies in that the various initiatives presence. Digital media is thus observed as a means to engage participants – newcomers and businesses alike – to partake in their programs offered. It was also seen in the way that initiatives collaborated digitally with each other for their initiatives to thrive and to further proliferate.

KEYWORDS: refugee economies, humanitarian innovation, integration, newcomers, Netherlands

Preface

I moved to the Netherlands after the summer of the *so-called* 2015 refugee crisis during which, for the first time, I was introduced to the realities that asylum seekers and newcomers face in the context of the host society. During rounds of visitations to the refugee centers, it was particularly interesting, to me, to hear first-hand their lived experiences of what they had undergone. Fast forward two years later, on the first day on my *corporate social responsibility* class, at the Erasmus University, Dr. Vidhi Chaudhri posed a question to the class. She asked us to ponder upon what aspect of corporate social responsibility we were interested about. I quickly raised my hand and stated, “I wonder what companies are doing regarding marginalized populations within the Netherlands?” She looked at me, smiled and said, “There you have it, that’s a topic for a potential thesis”.

Reflecting upon my thesis, as a whole, I believe that Wamariya’s (2018) words, in *The Girl Who Smiled Beads: A Story of War and What Comes After*, accurately reflects the ideals explored during the process of this research.

*WE NEED TO SEE BEYOND THE PROJECTIONS WE CAST ONTO EACH OTHER. EACH OF US IS SO MUCH
GRANDER, MORE NUANCED AND MORE EXTRAORDINARY THAN ANYBODY THINKS, INCLUDING
OURSELVES.*

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Last, but certainly not least, I am indebted to each and every one of my participants. Thank you for engaging in my research. Without you, there would have been no thesis and no story to tell.

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1 Introduction

“You put together two things that have not been put together before. And the world is changed. People may not notice at that time, but that doesn't matter. The world has been changed nonetheless” (Barnes, 2013, p3).

In recent times, there has been a burgeoning increase in the number of humanitarian innovation (Sandvik, 2017) efforts for the integration of refugees. It should be noted however that, asylum seeking practices are not a 21st century phenomenon. Rather, across the globe, these practices can be observed all throughout history (Douglas, 2015; McKirdy, 2016; Wasserstein, 2011). Nonetheless, what makes today's practice of migration disparate than that of previous generations is that, it is marked by digitalization (Alencar, 2017; Alam & Imran, 2015; Burns, 2014; Harney, 2013; Leurs & Smets, 2018; Oiarzabal & Reips, 2011; UNHCR, 2016; Watson, Nagel, & Bilginsoy, 2015; Wilding, 2008). Accordingly, the aforesaid quote by Barnes (2013) speaks to the way in which refugee integration and digital technologies, in particular, have been intertwined and continue to do so at an unprecedented rate. It also highlights the coming together of diverse groups of people, as well as, the rise of divergent efforts to tackle refugee integration in today's day and age (Sandvik, 2017; UNHCR, 2016). The coalescence of the aforementioned aspects forms the basis for this research- where, humanitarianism efforts meets digitalization. And together, they outline the revolutionary efforts that disrupt¹ traditional modes and means of the manners of refugee integration (Betts et al., 2014; Betts, Omata, & Bloom, 2017; Sandvik, 2017).

In the past three years, as a result of the *so-called* 2015 refugee crisis that Europe was faced with, the term 'refugee' has received a tremendous amount of interest within scholarly work. The topics of monetary costs incurred by the host countries, foreseeable sociocultural barriers and, mental health issues due to the ramifications of war - are some such topics that arise in the discussion of refugees (Garrett, 2006; Penner, 2012; Wessels, 2014). Still, following Blommaert's (2015) and Mason, Schwedersky, and Alfawakheeris' (2017) arguments, the term *so-called* is loosely used here as I call to question- exactly, whose crisis, is it? Blommaert (2015) claimed that this situation was portrayed as troubling as, this was the juncture when Europe appeared to be incapable of retaining supremacy on its reputation, as a continent.

¹ This point will be further elaborated on in the later sections of this research.

For the purposes of this research, attention will be placed on the contextual aspects of refugee integration. In this way, this research seeks to explore the intersections, the discrepancies and the gaps that humanitarian innovation initiatives attempt to face in the face of refugee economies (Betts et al., 2014; Betts et al., 2017) for the integration of refugees. These points will be further explained and developed in the later chapters of this research.

1.1 Viewpoint of this research

This research draws upon the defining characteristics of 'integration' as provided by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (as cited in Strang & Ager, 2010). In such terms, integration is considered to be a double-edged process that is inclusive of a variety of environmental and individual factors (Strang & Ager, 2010).

This research posits itself in seeking to comprehend the contextual² aspects of integration- particularly, on the various opportunities that can arise as a result of the presence of refugees within the host society. Accordingly, in the following chapters of this thesis, the facets in relation to the context will be unearthed and investigated. First, the notion of 'refugee economies' will be critically assessed and contextualized. Secondly, through the exploration of 'humanitarian innovations', I will explore the role that such initiatives play in the context of refugee integration within the Netherlands. This research will also examine the function of digital media in such innovations to foster the integration of refugees. The purpose of this research is not to cast judgment on the effectiveness of such humanitarian innovations but rather, it seeks to comprehend what stakeholders are presently doing, as well as, to understand the motivations for coming up with such programs. It also brings to attention what humanitarian innovators consider to be their measure of success within the frame of their initiatives.

Additionally, in order to attain a more comprehensive understanding on a local and national level, attention has been placed on policies. In their research, Esses, Hamilton, and Gaucher (2017) have previously illustrated the value of delving into policies that surround refugees. Taken together, policies, in general, can potentially affect the diverse aspects of labor market policies, as well as of governmental policies to promote refugee integration within the education, labor and housing markets. These aspects can collectively affect the course of practice whereby a refugee comes to settle and be recognized in the context of the host country (Penninx, 2003). Accordingly, taking into consideration that policies are gatekeepers in the overall scheme of refugee integration, it is crucial to consider the policies that govern

² This point will be further elaborated on in the later sections of this research.

refugees from differing points of view. In terms of this research, policies in association to the labor market and education.

1.2 Conceptualizing the term *refugee*

The term ‘refugee’ often comes with negative connotations as refugees are recurrently seen as individuals who *take* from the host community rather than, a grouping of people who have the ability, like all other citizens within a country, to *give* (P. Mbikayi, personal communication, April 18, 2018). Consequently, due to the existence of *a single story* (Adiche, 2009) that shrouds the commonplace societal understanding or rather, the lack of understanding of refugees (Betts et al., 2014; Esses et al., 2017; Hinrichs & Juzwiak, 2017; Malischewski, 2013), matters concerning refugees, especially in relation to a host country’s economy, are often subjected to a two-fold discrimination. Put forward by Adiche (2009), *a single story* is a concept that was used to comment upon the perils of viewing peoples within a single lens. This concept has been employed to showcase the existence of the aforementioned prejudice that envelopes the common impressions of refugees. This is particularly observed in the fictitious story that refugees, as a grouping are, detached from the wider society (Betts et al., 2014). This owes to the idea that, often, when an individual identifies with being a refugee, there is a sort of subsequent fixation on this particular identity aspect of the individual. A repercussion of ‘a single story’ is observed in the way, for instance, that the focus of refugee studies is often on the economic strains that the refugee group, as a whole, imposes on a host society (Betts et al., 2014). This ultimately leads to the limited, and arguably prejudiced, studies on refugees (Betts et al., 2014).

Already, as observed, the term ‘refugee’ is met with a vast number of interpretations on what it entails. Correspondingly, I contend that despite its global popularity, it is a highly contested term worldwide. In light of this, it is of importance to refer to the original definition of *refugee* which was contrived as a result of the 1951 refugee convention. This piece of legislation consists of the most extensive set of rules and regulations regarding refugees (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189). In it, it is articulated that a refugee is an individual who has been placed in a position whereby he or she has had to desert his or her home country due to the contingency of “being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, member of a particular social group, or political opinion” (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p.3).

Comprehending this definition is crucial as it takes into consideration the varied nuances of refugees, what being a refugee entails, as well as, the statutes that protect refugees, on a global level.

By doing so, it sets the groundwork for the understanding of the political, economic and sociocultural situations - the context of this research.

1.3 An introduction to refugee economies

Having based their research in Uganda, Betts et al.'s (2014) report on 'refugee economies' focuses on businesses that refugees start themselves in the context of the host society. In their findings, they revealed that refugees, as a grouping, are involved in a labyrinth of connections within, as well as, outside of the nation (Betts et al., 2014). They further reported that, there exists a multitude of distinctions within the refugee grouping, in terms of financial matters and technological use (Betts et al., 2014). Another interesting feature noted, through this research, was that, the use of the Internet by refugees was more significant than that of the other members of society (Betts et al., 2014).

In these terms, it is adamant to place attention to the notion of refugee economies which is defined as, "... resource allocation systems" that pay close attention to the economic practices of refugees within the wider system (Betts et al., 2014, p.6). This is inclusive of pecuniary operations that are related to "... consumption, production, exchange and finance" (Betts et al., 2014, p.6). Betts et al. (2017) noted that, it is of importance to comprehend this aspect as, grasping the concept of refugee economies would aid in the proliferation of efforts to encourage, enable and ensure that refugees flourish within the context of a given society.

With a focus on employment and education, the decision was made to explore the notion of refugee economies within the context of the Netherlands. In the next chapters to follow, the rationale for doing so will be emphasized.

1.4 Dutch Integration Model

The Netherlands was chosen as the country to research upon precisely because of its unique stance on immigration. Despite the fact the nation is not new to the practices and effects of migration and, there has since been measures put in place for the amalgamation of peoples (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS], 2016), numerous reports have pointed out that these efforts are still inadequate (Papademetriou & Benton, 2016; Scholten, 2011). Integration, as a topic, within the Netherlands has been confounded with a lack of explicit transparent clarity (Scholten, 2011). As showcased in the data by CBS (2018) and the Ministry of Security and Justice (2018), while there are a multitude of statistical evidence on the number of asylum applicants that the Netherlands receives on a yearly basis, the figures

regarding the number of asylum applicants that have been successfully granted are rather vague. I say this because; despite showcasing the number of successful applicants, it is not stated out of what number this is derived from (CBS, 2018). Thus, showcasing that, there is inadequacy in terms of detailing the percentage of applicants that receive a refugee status in the Netherlands. It is, however, observed that within the grouping of refugees, individuals who have Syrian and Eritrean roots chronicle the highest number of asylum applications (Ministry of Security and Justice, 2018).

In such terms, the Netherlands has been, and continues to be, portrayed as the poster child of a nation that has sidelined cultural diversity in order to administer the integration of peoples (Human Rights Watch, 2008; Uitermark, 2010). The very shifting of policies throughout the decades clearly highlights the arguably indeterminate stance that the Netherlands has towards non-Dutch populations in the nation (Bruquetas Callejo et al., 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2008; Scholten, 2011; Vasta, 2007). Vasta (2007) further noted that the constant remodeling of policies borderline what can perhaps be deemed as peremptory means. Furthermore, there have been and, continue to be, ongoing debates and controversies as to how lawmakers have designated the duty of coming up with specific policies to researchers (Scholten, 2011). By doing so, it has been claimed that policy makers have attempted to remove the political character of integration and in this way, divert politics away from such a delicate topic (Scholten, 2011). This point is particularly interesting considering that, developments in the immigration and integration policies have implications on the wider society – including, the political, economic and sociocultural realms.

Considering that this research is focused on post *so-called* 2015 refugee crisis, the present rules, regulations and realities of refugees within the Netherlands should be taken into consideration. As of 2013, it has been established by the Dutch government that it is the responsibility of refugees to engage with the processes of integration (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, 2017a; VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, 2017b). Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen (n.d.a) noted that, the integration examination is comprised of a variety of components including, written, oral and aural tests, among others. On top of these, it is also required of refugees to demonstrate familiarity with Dutch societal conventions, as well as, show that he or she knows how to find employment (Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen, n.d.b). Albeit discounted, it is also established that there are monetary costs involved in the process of refugee integration (Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.a). Together, these constitute the measurement of, if and, whether an individual has successfully integrated in the Dutch society.

At present, the Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers [COA] (n.d.a) is the largest body that takes care of matters of relation to refugees within the Netherlands. It provides an oversight over the

management of asylum seekers and refugees and, is part of the body of the Ministry of Justice and Security in the Netherlands (COA, n.d.a). Owing to its presence when dealing with refugee circumstances, it is important to give prominence to understanding the beliefs and values of COA. These, together with what COA does within the nation, are telling of the stance of the Netherlands when it comes to the reception and future developments of refugee situations. This is particularly interesting within the Netherlands as, there are vast differences between national and the local policies (Van Der Leun, 2006). For the purpose of this research, attention has been placed on national and local policies³, as well as, the role of humanitarian innovations, in relation to refugees and asylum seekers. And, to better situate this research, the decision was made to focus on choosing humanitarian innovations located within the Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague metropolitan areas. Known as The Randstad, this region was specifically selected as they are four of the biggest cities in the Netherlands are known for their international climates (see Juzwiak, McGregor, & Siegel, 2014).

In a report by The Human Rights Watch (2008), it was stated that there has been an inadequacy of enough pretext in to explicitly claim that there has been prejudiced and biased practices found within the policies and laws enforced on immigration policies in the Netherlands. However, paying close attention to the nuances of language and the terminologies used in the policies, it is noted that these policies put in place are directed to specific groups within the Netherlands. Consequently, within the political spectrum, the notions of "... cultural belonging and cultural difference" are topics that are frequently and continuously discussed in the Dutch scene (Hamburg Institute of International Economics [HWWI], 2007, para 3). Thus, it is of importance to note the patterns amongst these policies as, the ebb and flow of the various policies throughout the years point to trends and predilection on what is seen to relatively important at a specific period in the Netherlands (Scholten, 2011). This has an impact on how integration is conjectured and gestated, as well as, how non-Dutch citizens, and consequently, refugees, are officially classified (Scholten, 2011). Together, these features ultimately have implications on the general sentiment within the nation and, the modus operandi of integration policies (Scholten, 2011).

³ For a summary of the key policies surrounding immigration and integration within the Netherlands, please refer to *Section 7.1 Appendix A*.

1.5 Research Questions

The present research is particularly focused on the contextual aspects of refugee integration. In particular, this project aims to address the following research questions:

Research question #1: How do *humanitarian innovation* initiatives contribute to refugees' access to education and employment in the Netherlands?

Research question #2: To what extent, and how, do humanitarian innovations make use of digital media to foster refugee integration through education and employment?

Through these questions, I seek to explore the ways in which humanitarian innovators view their roles in the refugee integration in the Netherlands. I want to comprehend how they perceive the gaps in the system and to comprehend and, further understand the challenges that such humanitarian innovators face when coming up with solutions in the promotion of education and employment for refugees. Correspondingly, I aim to further comprehend if, whether and what are the kinds of support that such initiatives receive from the Dutch government. Further, I seek to investigate if and/or how the policies put in place matches the realities that humanitarian innovators face within the Dutch sociocultural reality. Also, despite not specifically focusing solely on the aspect of digitization, this research too takes into account the present realities of how digitization is very much so intertwined within our lives today. Thus, this would be explored in the ways in which digital media is used to cultivate refugee integration.

1.6 Societal relevance

Although there are a multitude of studies done on refugee integration, there has yet to be an up-to-date study that focuses on specifically on refugee economies within the Netherlands. As noted in Section 1.3 Refugee economies, scholars, like Betts et al. (2014) and Betts et al. (2017), have used case studies from Uganda to address the very concept of refugee economies. Considering its definitions, in addition to catering it to the context of the Netherlands, in this way, this thesis taps upon ideals that have not yet been researched on.

As previously mentioned, integration is a double-edged process. For such reasons, research on the better comprehension of the varied aspects related to the contextual factors of integration is adamant. In the 2011 Census, it was highlighted that the Netherlands is increasingly in a state of

globalization and will continue to be in as such (CBS, 2011). Accordingly, it is important to place a focus on understanding the role that refugees play in the Netherlands, and on a global scale, considering that refugees have been, are and continue to be a part of our everyday lives. In conjunction with attempting to further the notions of refugee economies, this research focuses on the present disruptors aimed at two structural areas of integration – employment and education. As subject matters, such manifestations of initiatives and entrepreneurs are particularly interesting precisely because, they have been created to address the aforementioned existing pitfalls within the current system (Betts et al., 2014). It is of importance to canvass the driving forces, within host countries, behind refugee integration as, this enables the understanding of the various reasons and motivations that push agents and institutions alike, to engage with humanitarian innovations for host societies. In this way, this research enables academia to keep up with the current realities of the real world. The data gathered through this research would thus be relevant for the sustainability of such initiatives aimed at refugee integration that have been created in within the Netherlands.

It is of importance to conduct a qualitative research in order to speak directly to the actors in the field – the innovators and the recipients⁴ of such humanitarian innovation efforts. By engaging with actors of humanitarian innovations, the emphasis of this section of research is on the assessing the accessibility, as well as, the contributions of these projects, from the perspectives of the actors themselves. This research seeks to fill the gap in literature by aggrandizing the current spectrum of studies relating to the topics of humanitarianism innovations and refugee economies.

This research too serves as a starting point to comprehend the policies in relation to practice that are presently occurring in the Netherlands by engaging with the policy advisors. In this way, it focuses on what governments are doing and also, on what they are not doing, to stimulate innovation in these priority areas of refugee integration. These features are of importance as they play a role in the sociopolitical context of the host community. Understanding these reasons that push institutions to expand their forces is thus necessary. Ultimately, this research aims to provide host countries with a better understanding of the infrastructures for refugee integration, especially so, in this digitized world.

⁴ The term ‘recipient’ is used here as this can refer to both the refugees, as well as, other parties involved. Taking into consideration that the goal is for refugees to integrate, the successful integration of refugees, in accordance to the means and markers of integration (as proposed by Ager and Strang, 2008), is thus deemed as beneficial for the host community alike.

2 Theory and previous research

In this chapter, the existing theories and previous researchers within the topics of humanitarian innovations, integration and refugee economies will be introduced. It is noted that, at present, there is yet to be a research within academia that deals with drawing the aspects of humanitarian innovations in the context of refugee economies together. Contemporary communication technologies reshape every part of life ranging from shopping to education and therefore, it is necessary to look at digital solutions when researching refugee economies. Accordingly, this research examines and determines related literature of which, the most pertinent ideals will be discussed in the following subsections. In order for the provision of deeper insights in the study of humanitarian innovations for employment and education, key concepts and ideas will be explained and, definitions will be established.

In **Section 2.1 Theorizing refugee integration**, the concept of integration will be put in the spotlight and, the nuances of integration will be emphasized. This subsection sets the groundwork to understand where emphasis is being placed in the current realities of refugee integration within the Netherlands. On these grounds, references to Ager and Strang's (2008) means and markers of integration will be further used to adduce my arguments. **Section 2.2 'Enough' to Integrate** is a follow-up of the previous section to situate the notion of integration within the context of the Netherlands. Following this, taking into consideration that refugee economies reside in its individual "... institutional space" (Betts et al., 2017, p.716), **Section 2.3 Considering 'refugee economies' embracively** looks into the concept of refugee economies in greater detail. After which, using the arguments as stipulated by researches done by Betts et al. (2014) and, Betts et al. (2017), the term humanitarian innovation will be introduced and analyzed in great detail in **Section 2.4 Follow the 'humanitarian innovation' Integration Road**. In this section, a discussion on the aspects of integration that this research focuses on- education and employment, will further ensue. Further, it aims to showcase where humanitarian innovations stand within this process of refugee integration, as well as, within the economy. Finally, **Section 2.5 It's a digital world, after all** brings to light the notions intertwining digital technologies and, humanitarian innovations.

2.1 Theorizing refugee integration

Previous researches, by Bhugra and Jones (2001) and Wessels (2014), have identified that, the refugee experience is marked by three stages. This is inclusive of pre-departure, during transit and the final stage of migration where the individuals apply for asylum in the host country. In light of the fact that this research is focused specifically on the varied nuances of refugee integration, this research thus situates itself on past the final stage of migration, in that, the recipients of interest have already received the official documentations required for he or she to reside in the host country.

In terms of the discussion of refugees within the context of a host society, Malischewski (2013) highlighted that, the term integration is considered to be a favorable juncture between the other notions of "... assimilation and multiculturalism" (p.4). Still, it is noted that integration is a contested term with different and conflicting meanings for different actors involved. This is highlighted by Strang and Ager (2010), where they stated that there exists some sort of inevitability of the notion of integration of being identical or arguably, interchangeable, with the notion of assimilation. For such reasons, the topic of integration is constantly examined, reviewed and debated (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bakker, Cheung, & Phillimore, 2016; Betts et al., 2014; HWII, 2005; Penninx, 2004; Strang & Ager, 2010). For the purposes of this research, it should be noted that this research draws upon the defining characteristics of integration as provided by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (as cited in Strang & Ager, 2010). In such terms, integration is considered to be a double-edged process that is inclusive of a variety of environmental and individual factors (Alencar, 2017; Malischewski, 2013; Strang & Ager, 2010). The two-way process together plays part in ensuring that refugees are able to acquire the varied markers and means of employment and education, which will be further expounded on by the end of this subsection.

A common frame that is used in the discourse of refugee integration is the model offered by Ager and Strang (2008). Based on research on refugees in the United Kingdom, the authors (Ager & Strang, 2008) explained that the frame that they provided serves as a standardizing means for the comprehension of integration for different stakeholders (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1
A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration

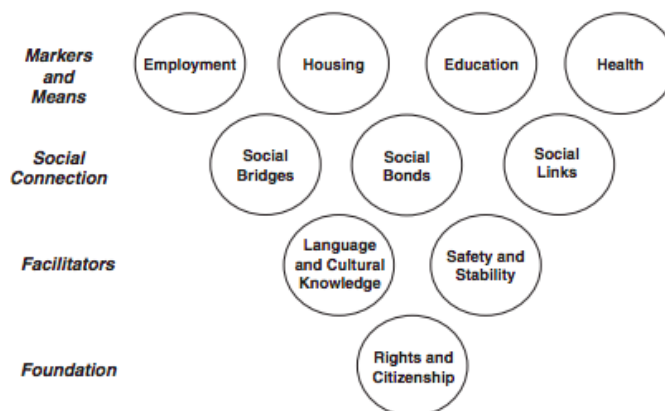


Figure 1: Characterizing the key elements of Integration. Retrieved from Ager and Strang (2008)

This model, as observed in Figure 1, was chosen specifically due to several factors. Firstly, for its popularity in the discussion of refugee integration. Secondly, that it was inspired by the ideals discussed in the 1951 refugee convention which takes into consideration the various particularizations of refugee's rights (Ager & Strang, 2008). Finally, and most importantly, that it takes into account disparate stakeholders from an arguably comprehensive spectrum- this inclusive of refugees and other stakeholders from the political and academic realms. In these terms, integration is considered as a goal and, the markers and means identified, in the model, are not merely indicators of integration but rather, they are too, channels of accomplishing integration (Ager & Strang, 2008).

To better concentrate the locus of this research, the decision was made to focus on two channels of integration, as noted in Figure 1- employment and education. These will be further discussed in the following subsections Section 2.1.1 Employment and, Section 2.1.2 Education.

2.1.1 Employment

According to theories from Maslow (1943), the ability for an individual to work is motivated by deep-rooted psychological implications. He argued then that, it is a humanistic necessity for an individual to have, and to work towards, a sense of security and assurance (Maslow, 1943). Accordingly, to be able to work is for an individual to be an active member of society. In this way, he or she engages with the wider community, contribute to the nation's economy and, arguably, be in control of his or her own life. Thus, catering to what Maslow (1943) had championed, the yearning and acquiring of "safety" (p.376) and, "esteem needs" (p.381) of human nature.

In line with this, Ager and Strang (2008) noted that employment is determined as a component of integration as it enables an individual to earn money and thrive in society. In this way, the individual is able to participate, interact with other individuals of the host community, as well as, plan for subsequent events in his or her life. These are of importance as they strengthen self-determination and self-sufficiency and correspondingly, reestablishes and revives an individual's morale (Ager & Strang, 2008; Craig, 2015).

Comparing the rates of native to non-native migrants who are employed, in the context of Europe, Dancygier, and Laitin (2014) draw to attention that there are work-place prejudices that non-native migrants are subjected to. This is of importance to pay attention to as, refugees fall under as a subset of this category. Accordingly, in another research conducted by Jamil et al. (2012), the researchers compared accessibility to employment of refugees to other groupings of immigrants in the USA, and reported that refugees were significantly less inclined to gain employment. Seeing that employment is considered to be a marker in process of integration, it should be noted here that refugees' gainful employment remains to be one of the main challenges for refugees within the context of a host society. There are still disparities within the intended requirements of refugees and, the present realities of employment for refugees. Accordingly, this research aims to comprehend the role of humanitarian innovation initiatives that attempt aid with this problem. This will be further illustrated in the following chapters to come.

2.1.2 Education

When finding themselves in the context of the host society, however, many refugees are faced with the realization that their previous academic qualifications are often disregarded (Ager & Strang, 2008; Le Blond, 2016). Consequently, this poses as a sizable hurdle for employability, thus affecting this aspect of refugee integration (Ager & Strang, 2008; Sandvik, 2017). This, as showcased in Ager and Strang's (2010) model of integration (as observed in Figure 1), is problematic precisely because, integration through the host country's labor market, is an expected feature of refugees. This line of thought is further emphasized by Konle-Seidl and Bolits (2016) who highlighted that for an individual to accelerate his or her process of integrating within the host country, it is imperative for him or her to acquire a job.

In order to be employed, an individual is expected to be equipped with the necessary to be proficient in a particular job (Ager & Strang, 2008). In these terms, education enables an individual to actualize this. It is noted that systems of education play a crucial role in the establishment of other social

aspects such as community building (Ager & Strang, 2008; Betts et al., 2017). In a similar school of thought, Betts et al. (2017) stated specifically “[e]ducation shapes economic outcomes for refugees” (p.724).

Complementary to this argument, in another research, Craig (2015) argued that education, is a key stepping stone that is unquestionably linked to the other constituents of integration. He commented that two aspects that constitute education are an individual’s level of formal education, as well as, an individual’s skill level of the host country’s language (Craig, 2015). It is crucial to pay attention on these two aspects as, as Craig (2015) noted, common issue that shrouds refugees, especially so in relation to employability is, the lack of a cultural knowhow and, command of the host country’s language.

2.2 Enough to Integrate

Following the previous chapter, as noted, integration has been, and continues to be a marker that showcases the successful practice of refugee settlement within the host country. Following this thought, scholars have noted that much of the attempts of integrating refugees has been rooted in measurements based on matters such as, employability, language and community- engagement (Ager & Strang, 2008; Craig, 2015; Pierre, Martinovic, & De Vroome, 2015; Strang & Ager, 2010; Verwey-Jonker & Brackel, 1957). Craig (2015) identified the other constituent of education as, “a [locally recognized] qualification” (p.29). Taken together, these aspects foster the concept of enoughness (Blommaert & Varis, 2015). Albeit having been introduced to describe identity and consumption practices, I contend that the arguments raised can be extended to the ideals of integration (Blommaert & Varis, 2015). This will be elucidated at the end of this section.

Within the Netherlands, it is demanded of refugees to be able to play an active role in the Dutch society as the government considers the very act of integration a necessity (Alencar, 2017; Colucci et al., 2017; Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.b; “Integration of newcomers”, n.d.). Part of this process includes being proficient in the Dutch language and having a deep understanding of Dutch values and traditions (Alencar, 2017; Craig, 2015; Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.b; Ministry of General Affairs, n.d.; Juzwiak et al., 2014). Regardless of one’s income, measures are put in place for individuals to acquire subsidy for the aforementioned requirement (Alencar, 2017; Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.b.; Ministry of General Affairs, n.d.). The Dutch governmental website stipulates explicitly various ways in which an individual can learn the Dutch language (Rijksoverheid, n.d.a). Furthermore, a catalogue of institutes, approved by the Dutch government, can be found on various websites that aid migrants in the diverse processes of integration (Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.b; Ministry of General Affairs, n.d.). To

showcase that an individual has integrated successfully, he or she is required to sit for an *inburgerenexamen* [examination for civic integration] (Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.c). It is noted that individuals are required to have at least obtained an A2 level of Dutch language (Dients Uitvoering Onderwijs, n.d.c). This entails that language is widely accepted as a marker of culture (Nicholas, 2011). Accordingly, should an individual claim a belonging to the Dutch society, there exists an expectation for him or her to be able attain a certain proficiency regarding the Dutch language.

This aspect showcases explicitly the integration model highlighted a research conducted by Pierre et al. (2015). Through their research paradigm proposed, Pierre et al. (2015) reaffirms the model of the means and measures of integration as championed by Ager and Strang (2008). Based on refugees in the Netherlands, Pierre et al. (2015) proposed three different means of integration including “structural”, “cultural” and “social” (p.1843). Under “[s]tructural integration” were the points of employment and “education level” (Pierre et al., 2015, p.1843). The authors had considered language competence as a measure of “cultural integration” and, “[c]ontact with Dutch natives” as a means of “[s]ocial integration” (Pierre et al., 2015, p.1843). For such reasons, it has been observed that there are countless efforts put in place for refugees to learn the various languages of the host country that they find themselves in (Colucci et al., 2017; Jones, 2016; Lehmann, 2015; Obordo, 2015; YALLA Foundation, 2016). These efforts include more traditional means of physically attending to classes to learn a particular language and also, electronic efforts by way of mobile applications other forms of courses that can be found on the internet (Jones, 2016; Lehmann, 2015; Obordo, 2015; YALLA Foundation, 2016).

While the aforementioned paragraph states the stipulations listed by a nation’s government, in a report by Ager and Strang (2004), it is noted that this very qualification is too understood on the part of the refugees. Through the interviews amassed that were conducted with refugees, Ager and Strang (2004) noted that the lack of competence of a language is considered, by refugees, to be a hindrance in the admittance to various markers of integration within nation. In this sense, the mastery of a language is perceived to be an indication of an effort by the refugee to better understand the host country’s culture (Colucci et al., 2017; Jones, 2016; Lehmann, 2015; Obordo, 2015). Further, these expected qualifications from the Dutch government and, the recognition of these very qualifications on the part of the refugees, are in line with the notions that integration is a two-way process.

It is thus duly noted, from the previous paragraphs, that successful refugee integration in the Netherlands is marked by refugees’ command of the Dutch language, as well as, comprehending the values that the Netherlands stand for. These, as highlighted, cater to the cultural elements of integration which have an impact on the structural aspects of integration (Pierre et al., 2015). And together, they

highlight the concept of enoughness (Blommaert & Varis, 2015) in that, to claim a membership to a certain community- the Dutch community- refugees are expected to work towards having enough features to claim his or her membership.

2.3 Considering refugee economies embracively

Scholars have noted that within the host countries, there are observed shortcomings in the comprehension of features that directly impact the economic integration of refugees (Betts et al., 2014; Betts et al., 2017; Craig, 2015). On this note, the term distortions, is employed by Betts et al. (2017) to describe the hindrances and obstacles that refugees encounter in this regard.

Contingent upon this actuality, Betts et al. (2014) further commented that, for businesses within the host communities, there is a lack of guidance for companies and corporations to understand the legal situations of refugees. Coupled with this aforementioned plight, the lack of governmental incentives to accelerate refugee inclusion in the host society's economy has consequently led to the manifestation of discriminatory practices within labor markets (Betts et al., 2014). In this context, Adiche's (2009) a single story is observed as a screen over the current situation of refugees- notably, this line of thought is problematic as it overlooks the fact that these individuals are more than just refugees. This point is being brought up here to draw attention to the plight that refugees are, arguably, subjected to. In other words, the two-fold discrimination that refugees face.

Following the line of argumentation presented by Wimmer (2009), Betts et al.'s (2014) research is revealing of the fact that there is more to the single story (Adiche, 2009) of refugees- in that, there exists a diverse profile of refugees. There are vast differences within the grouping itself and, it is of importance to consider these distinctions which take place in the form of the use of technological devices, levels of education, as well as, language proficiency, amongst others. Furthermore, in a different research conducted by Meda (2016), it is noted that, albeit belonging to the same grouping, the actual lived experience of refugees may be vastly different from each other. Hence, further showcasing that the single story viewpoint that often clouds the refugee grouping should be debunked.

Referring back to their definition of refugee economies, Betts et al. (2014) specified that, the concept of refugee economies is a comprehensive study of all matters in relation to monetary activities of refugees on a local and on an international level. In their report, it was showcased that the authors had considered businesses that were started by refugees in the context of their host society to be as such (Betts et al., 2014). In other words, business efforts by refugees for other refugees. The authors further argued that the focus of refugee economies is on "... bottom- up" approaches of refugee

economic integration (Betts et al., 2014, p.6). Considering the description of refugee economies as defined by Betts et al. (2014), I contend that businesses started by the non-state actors in society, aimed at targeting the various challenges of refugee integration can also be regarded as bottom-up approaches for refugee economic integration. Taking into account the characteristics refugee economies, I argue that not including such initiatives, by non-governmental organizations, startups aimed at the integration of refugees, to name a few, would, in fact, be another means of separating refugees from the rest of society. As Betts et al. (2017) noted, refugee economies is rooted in the very rethinking, reworking and examining the grouping of refugees as a whole. Accordingly, by way of intermeshing the various groups that focus on the function of businesses in molding opportunities for refugees within host societies, such initiatives are undoubtedly a pursuit of filling in the gaps where governmental agencies have yet to tap on.

Although the lived experiences of refugees may lead them to require additional systems of support, especially in their initial stages of living in the Netherlands, following the ideals that Betts et al. (2014) present, there is a need to shine the light away from the notions that refugees are submissive and weak. Rather, the authors argue that by placing attention on the ideals that refugees too are active members of society, this would enhance favorable circumstances for refugees within the labor market. Subsequently, interventions aimed at aiding the disruptions in the current systems should work towards bettering the prevailing systems- on an economic and sociocultural level- to enable refugees to interact more productively with what is presently available (Betts et al, 2014). Accordingly, considering that technological gadgets are crucial to refugees (see researches by Alencar, 2017; Alam & Iran, 2015; Betts et al., 2017; Harney, 2013; Wilding, 2008 for some such examples), focus should also be placed on understanding the services that they offer within the context of refugee economies⁵.

2.4 Follow the humanitarian innovation integration road

Following the subject matter, the notion of humanitarian innovation, was brought up during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 (Sandvik, 2017). Since then, the United Nations has put forward a statement that there needs to be an endeavor towards designing resourceful and innovative programs for beneficent matters (Sandvik, 2017).

In general, when talking about humanitarian innovations, we are talking about refugees (Betts & Bloom, 2014). Accordingly, the term innovation refers to two aspects- firstly, that, the intent of the

⁵ These will be further examined in Section 2.5 It's a digital world, afterall.

programs developed for humanitarian innovation are associated to monetary affairs regarding refugees (Sandvik, 2017). And secondly, that innovation is regarding the use of technological tools by divergent groups in order to cultivate potential solutions to aid in the identified gaps, in the system, pertaining to refugees (Betts & Bloom, 2014). One such gap is, for instance, on a global scale, majority of the mechanisms invented for humanitarian aid were created for "... rural camp settings and short time frames" when on the contrary, a greater number of refugees reside in more citified regions (Betts & Bloom, 2014, p.6). In other words, the infrastructure prepared for the purposes of humanitarian aid is distinctly inconsistent from what is actually required of peoples (Betts & Bloom, 2014; Leurs & Smets, 2018).

In line with the discussion of 'who's crisis is the 2015 refugee crisis', the notion of humanitarian innovations is particularly thought-provoking in terms of, comprehending who the recipients of such innovations are. Through her arguments, Sandvik (2017) puts into perspective that the recipients of the projects developed for the purposes of humanitarian innovation are multifold. The recipients, as well as, the host society that requires the refugees to integrate are both considered to be direct recipients of the initiatives of humanitarian innovation (Sandvik, 2017).

Appropriately, in a similar line of thought, Hinrichs and Juzwiak (2017) state specifically how it is crucial for stakeholders within the community to be involved in terms of coming up with distinctive programs which are appropriate for the climate of each city. In this way, the participation of different groups, as well as, the elements involved, would play a more lucrative role in propelling humanitarian innovations (Betts & Bloom, 2014). As these initiatives were designed for the purposes of overcoming the distortions, it is thus apparent that humanitarian innovations were designed to mitigate the inconsistencies in the system. And together, these showcase that humanitarian innovation is directly linked to the economic lives of refugees.

Accordingly, humanitarian innovation initiatives for the purposes of education and employment are thus given attention for this project. Humanitarian innovation initiatives of education and employment have been framed as a means of solution that aims to fulfill the areas that governmental efforts have yet to be able to reach (Benton & Glennie, 2016). The proliferation of these forms of initiatives and entrepreneurship were established in an attempt to minimize the inadequacies of the current systems and as such, means of overcoming these distortions (Betts et al., 2017). Strictly speaking, the materialization of such forms of entrepreneurships have capitalized on the present market imperfections related to refugee integration (Betts et al., 2014).

In these terms, it is crucial to draw to attention that, the emergence of humanitarian innovations has been met with both, a considerable amount of enthusiasm and criticism. Sandvik (2017), for instance, addresses both sides of this issue. The rhetoric surrounding humanitarian innovations, she claims, is revealing of the transformations that have occurred regarding "... power, resource distribution, and humanitarian governance" (Sandvik, 2017, p.1). In other words, the pertinence of humanitarian innovations offers us an opportunity to rethink notions of control in the discussion of refugee migration. And in accordance to this, it is of relevance to consider recognizing its place in the different areas of the issues of migration. On the flip side, it is noted that Sandvik (2017) also takes the notion of humanitarian innovation with a pinch of salt. Sandvik (2017) implies that due to its popularity at its current moment in time, humanitarian innovation entails speculation with no expectation for prolonged efforts. Further, she goes on to state that there is a need to ground such innovations so that the term would be regarded as more than just a catchphrase of what is in trend for the current moment in time (Sandvik, 2017). I contend that her arguments are revealing of two aspects- of the fleeting nature of a large number of efforts targeted for refugee integration⁶ and, the constantly changing viewpoints towards refugee integration⁷.

In the next chapter, the pertinence of technological tools with regards to such humanitarian innovations will be addressed.

2.5 It's a digital world, after all

The Internet has presented itself as means that enables changes within society, at an unprecedented rate (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). Considering that digital technologies is an omnipresent aspect of today's society, technological tools with regards to such humanitarian innovations will be discussed in this section of the thesis.

For matters of relation to refugees, in recent years, there has been a thriving body of research concerned with digitalization and refugees, in particular, on the topic of how digital technologies have been regarded as a means of support for asylum seekers and refugees alike (Alencar, 2017; Colucci et al., 2017; Gillespie et al., 2016; Leurs & Smets, 2018; Mason, Schwedersky, & Alfawakheeri, 2017; Mattoo et al., 2015; Papademetriou & Benton, 2016; Sandvik, 2017). This is particularly observed in the rise of the number of mobile applications created specifically for asylum seekers and refugees alike.

⁶ These will be further examined in Section 2.5 It's a digital world, after all.

⁷ See Section 1.4 Dutch Integration Model for further explanation.

This, is in line with the notions that digital connectivity is an easy solution to the problem of refugee integration. This trend is also observed in academia as, there has been a rise in the number of studies (as revealed in researches by Alencar, 2017; Gillespie et al., 2016; Leurs, 2017; Mattoo et al., 2015; UNHCR, 2016, among others) that cater to the functions these mobile applications offer for refugee use. The underlying theme of these studies is that, considering the vast number of refugees who now have connections to acquiring the services that new media provides, digital technologies should be a means that is considered in the comprehension of refugee integration. Technological tools have, and continue to, drastically alter the means of relief that humanitarian initiatives engage with (Sandvik, 2017; UNHCR, 2016). These add to the perspective that new media and digital technologies are realities of today's understanding of migration.

On this note however, it is important to point out that there are gaps within academia regarding refugee studies and the use of digital technologies. On this topic, attention has been placed largely on the high numbers of refugees being connected to the Internet (Maitland & Xu, 2015; Xu, Maitland & Tomaszewski, 2015; UNHCR, 2016), as well as, what refugees do with these technological gadgets (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014; Smets, 2017; UNHCR, 2016). Other studies are focused on the notions of the digital gap (Blank & Residorf, 2012; UNHCR, 2016). The work done by Blank and Residorf (2012) is one such example that illustrates that, there are groups of refugees that get left out as the number of Internet applications aimed at fostering refugee integration continue to proliferate. In this light, there is a need to ascertain a much better understanding of technologies enable new forms of management, control, facilitation and control of the processes of refugee integration (Sandvik, 2017).

Taking on a "...multi-actor perspective" (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2015, p.18), it is thus apparent that there is a gap in the results of the literature examined on the topic of refugees and the Internet. In other words, taking on a bird's eye view on the studies of relation to refugees and their use of the Internet, it is observed that the studies seem to forget that there are other actors in the field, other than refugees themselves (Gillespie et al., 2018). These actors, as previously noted, are humanitarian innovators who, are also involved in the varied areas of the migration issue. It is noted that these actors in the field are not yet thoroughly discussed in the realm of work done on refugees and technology. Accordingly, this research posits itself in attempting to understand the viewpoints of the other actors, in particular, on how humanitarian innovations make use of digital media to foster the integration of refugees.

3 Research Design and rationale

3.1 Research Methodology

The formulation of the theoretical framework employed in this study was based on existing literature. Through this, it was observed that within the study of refugee economies, there is yet to be a study that includes actors of humanitarian innovations within the category. It also showcased that considering the novelty of humanitarian innovations for refugees as an initiative thus far, there has yet to be a comprehensive study done on this topic that addresses and critically compares the various measures to the socio-cultural realities within the Netherlands. For such reasons, it was deemed appropriate to employ qualitative methods of research as, they are inductively- based. This signifies that the theories derived from research would be rooted directly in the very data itself (Babbie, 2017; Gibbs, 2007).

Accordingly, due to the nature of the main research questions of this study, the decision was made to hold expert qualitative semi-structured interviews with actors in the field of the migration issue. I contend that by doing so, I would be able to better attain a more holistic view of the innovation initiatives and, the contextual aspects of refugee integration that these are marked by.

The goals of this research were multifold. Firstly, it aimed to uncover the ways and means that humanitarian innovation initiatives strengthened and advanced refugees' accessibility to structures of integration within the Netherlands. Secondly, it sought to unearth to what degree such initiatives employ digital technologies to do so. To understand these aspects, personal views regarding the distortions in the system, perceptions regarding the current state of refugee integration, as well as, measure of success, are some such features that can only be answered by way of interviews. These are noted to be subjective features and accordingly, a qualitative method of research was deemed appropriate for this study.

Using an interview guide enables the researcher to have the ability to be adaptive to the conditions of the interviews whilst still remaining true to the goals of the research (Gill et al., 2008). By branching out into different fields, it tolerates deviations which may lead to uncovered notions that arise during the course of the interviews (Gill et al., 2008). This is because; it allows for the uncovering of themes and topics rooted from the words of the participants themselves (Neuman & Robson, 2012). As such, the method of in-depth semi-structured interviews was deemed to be the most appropriate for this study.

3.2 Sampling Design

The results of this study were based on a total of ten expert interviews with policy advisors, humanitarian developers, as well as, representatives of humanitarian innovation initiatives (For more details, see Section 3.4 Participants). Using a selection criteria, as observed in Section 3.3 Qualifications, the participants (as showcased in Section 3.4 Participants) of this research were selected.

3.3 Qualifications

The criterion used for this study were as follows:

- Representatives had to be involved in one of the two structural areas of integration- education and/or employment
- They had to be comfortable communicating in English
- Organizations or initiatives had to be located in the Randstad⁸
- At the time of the interview, organizations or initiatives have to have already existed for a minimum of six months

3.4 Participants

Things to note:

- Regarding **2** and **3**: Despite being from the same organization, Newbees, Brad's and Christian's interviews have been considered as two separate interviews as, the interviews held with the participants were conducted on two separate occasions.
- Regarding **8**: Despite being from different organizations, the interview with Kyra and Lilian were held at the same place and at the same time. Furthermore, the interview was with regards to the program that both organizations were part of.

⁸ As previously stipulated in *Section 1.4 Dutch Integration Model*

	Participant	Organization	City affiliation	Platform/ Initiative	Occupation	Area of Integration
1	Alicia	Unity in Diversity	Den Haag	My University Cares Too (MUCT)	Founder	Education
2	Brad	Newbees	Amersfoort, Amsterdam	Newbees	Coordinator	Employment
3	Christian	Newbees	Amersfoort, Amsterdam	Newbees	Technical Developer	Employment
4	Gina	Refugees Forward	Amsterdam	Refugees Forward	Business Developer and, Relationship Manager	Employment
5	Holly	Refugee Talent Hub	Amsterdam	Refugee Talent Hub	Office Manager	Employment
6	Isabella	Bibliotheek Westland	Westland	Taalhuis	Project coordinator	Education (language)
				Digisterk		Digital mediums required for living day-to-day in the Netherlands
				Voorleis visitie		Education (language)
7	Jillian	Universiteit van Amsterdam	Amsterdam	Relink Program	Immigration Advisor	Employment
8	Kyra	COA	Den Haag	VOORwerk	Policy advisor of COA, Project manager of Voorwerk	Employment
	Lilian	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Den Haag		Project assistant	
9	Mia	Gementee of Amsterdam	Amsterdam		Policy advisor	
10	Nate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Den Haag		Senior advisor	

Table 1: Participants of this project whose interviews were used in the analysis

Things to note:

- Regarding Participants **11 and 12**: The participants have been deliberately placed in a separate table (See Table 2 below) as the interviews that were held, were left out of the analysis of this project.
- Regarding **11**: This research started with the idea to study the three structural areas of integration being housing, education and employment. The interview with Pete was the first one interview that I had conducted. However, during the process of research, it was soon observed that there were no other initiatives that were focused on the housing area of integration of refugees. As a consequence, the decision was thus made to leave this interview out of the dataset as, it was decided that no conclusive statements can be made from one interview alone.
- Regarding **12**: At the time of the interview, the participants shared that the Codam school was still in its early stages of development and would only start to receive students in September 2018. For such reasons, due to the criteria that this research had, the decision was made to leave this interview out of the dataset.

	Participant	Organization	City affiliation	Platform/ Initiative	Occupation	Area of Integration
11	Pete	TakeCareBNB	Amsterdam	TakeCareBNB	Founder	Housing
12	Raphael	CODAM	Amsterdam	Codam	Director	Education
	Sophia				Head of Administration	
	Tyler				Student Acquisition Assistant	

Table 2: Participants of this project whose interviews were left out of analysis

3.5 Procedure

As previously stipulated, the participants were all regarded as experts in the field of migration of which, the varied roles of policy advisors, humanitarian developers, as well as, representatives of humanitarian innovation initiatives were consulted. It was important, to me, to get the different perspectives of the experts in order to ascertain a more comprehensive understanding situation at hand. Accordingly, the three groupings of experts were reached out to.

In an attempt to reach out to humanitarian innovation developers, a list of organizations that fell under my definition of humanitarian innovations, was made and from there, the participants were contacted via email and Facebook. In this process, a number of 20 organizations from around the Randstad was contacted. I found that this process was slightly slow and as such, in an attempt to garner more research participants, I attended the launch of Unity in Diversity's "My University Cares Too"⁹ platform that was held at the Erasmus University Rotterdam on April 18th, 2018. Attending this event proved to be a boon to my research as, I then met representatives from Refugee Talent Hub and, Unity in Diversity. These organizations then aided me in reaching out more initiatives that are presently doing their part in contributing to refugees' access to education and employment, around the Netherlands.

With regards to reaching out to policy advisors, emails were sent out to a total number of 15 individuals. Through personal networks, the individuals were contacted and accordingly, interviews were scheduled and conducted. I contend that policy makers and/or advisors too, fall under this list of expert interviews as, they enable for the better comprehension of the context. By ascertaining what aspects of refugee integration policy makers and/or advisors deem to be the important and therefore, give priority to, it would be then possible to note the trends that they foresee in the next couple of years both on a local and a global scale. Further, Craig (2015) highlighted that policies are part of the legal framework that leads to the construction of the general public's viewpoints. Hence, it was deemed relevant to interview policy makers and/or advisors in order to further comprehend the complexities of the context.

In his article, Mikecz (2012) noted that one of the challenges of arranging of expert interviews is largely attributed to their demanding agendas. This was a feature that I had personally met with and for this reason, the interview with Nate was conducted by another researcher. However, my interview guide was shared with her, and the questions were asked accordingly. Furthermore, the interview was

⁹ Hereon referred to as MUCT.

recorded. The transcription and analysis was conducted by me personally. For such reasons, due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, I foresee no possible complications in having engaged with this. Prior to each interview, the participants were asked for their informed consent to use the information gathered through the interview for research purposes. The basic aims of the research were communicated to the interviewees. To minimize any potential unforeseen risks, a verbal agreement between both participant and researcher was regarded as consent by the participant. Each of the interviews was carried out face-to-face and recorded via two recording devices. One with the iPhone Dictaphone and the other, with a digital voice recorder. On top of this, I took notes during the course of interviews. The interviews were largely held in a somewhat formal tone. This was, however, reliant on the course of the interviews themselves. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 57 minutes and 30 seconds in length and, were conducted between April 23 and June 13, 2018. The location of the interviews was chosen by the participants. Some of these interviews were held in their offices while others were held in a more neutral setting of a café of the participants' choosing. Gill et al. (2008) advised that it was of importance for a researcher to cater the interview location according to the participant. They noted that such allows for the provision of calamity for the participant which would ultimately facilitate in the successful execution of an interview (Gill et al., 2008).

For each of the interviews, the participants were first asked about their roles in each of the organizations and/or initiatives. They were also asked about which aspect of integration they saw their organization and/or initiative was concerned with. Prior to having conducted these interviews, as a researcher, I had in mind, the answer to this question. However, it was of importance, to me, to ensure that my thought was in line with how the participants saw their organizations and/or initiatives. Further, the intention was to alleviate any form of confusion later on in the interview. Particularly for the expert interviews held with humanitarian innovation developers, a question regarding which stage of migration the initiative was concerned with was asked directly to the participants. By doing so, it was clearly established that all the initiatives in question were with regards to the final stage of migration where, refugees have since received the legal right to live in the Netherlands. Further, questions regarding the use of digital technologies were also presented to the participants. Through these, the participants were asked on their opinions on how they would evaluate the current systems put in place for such humanitarian innovations to flourish.

During the process of interviews, it was then when the participants revealed their affiliations and belonging to other groups, to me. For instance, Christian revealed that on top of being a technical developer at Newbees, he is also a refugee who had undergone the coding training provided by

HackYourFuture. He was not the only participant with different group belongings as Mia, Brad and Holly too, brought to attention their other affiliations, as well. These, will be further tapped upon and analyzed in Section 4.5 Capitalizing on the multiplicity of belonging.

In all the interviews, the participants were prompted to speak on behalf of the organizations and initiatives that they were representing but were also, encouraged to speak about their personal points of view regarding the various topics discussed. This was, occasionally met with some concern. However, the participants were reassured that they could, at any time, request for the pause of recording of the interview should they feel that it was appropriate to do so. This was done so in the interview with one of the participants and the participant's wish was promptly granted. For me, respecting the wishes of the participant was of utmost importance and, I found that this fostered much rapport and trust between both participant and researcher. I say this because; after having done so, I noticed that the participant proceeded to talk more about the participant's individual feelings that were, in some occasion, not particularly in line with the organization that the participant was representing.

After which, each of the recordings were played once before I proceeded to transcribe the interviews.

3.6 Interview Design

On the topic of interviewing experts in the field, Edwards and Holland (2013) recommend that interviewers should be well-acquainted with matters of relation to the participants. This is inclusive of features such as, having a rough idea of the of the participant's stance towards varied topics and being aware of the of the various initiatives that the participant could be associated with. In line with these recommendations, a preliminary research was done on each participant, and their initiatives, before each interview. For me, the method of semi-structured interviews was particularly comforting and necessary as, the interview guide served as a means for me to posit myself in a position of confidence.

Alshenqeeti (2014) noted that the method of interviewing is an effective means for the inquiring of human experiences. Noting this, it is of equal importance to hear directly from the various groupings the various groupings of humanitarian innovators and, policy makers and/or advisors on the topics of relation to this research. Through the in-depth semi-structured interviews held, I was able to uncover how the individuals saw their role in the current so-called refugee crisis, the motivations for the development of such humanitarian innovations, how the individuals cope with the mechanisms involved with the maintenance of these humanitarian innovations and, research upon the type of support such humanitarian innovators face within the Dutch economy and sociocultural reality.

Accordingly, for this research, two interview guides- one of which, was for experts who fell under the humanitarian innovators¹⁰ grouping and the other, for experts who fell under the grouping of policy makers and/or advisors¹¹ - were prepared. The method of in-depth semi-structured interviews that this research made use of, allowed for the researcher to adhere to a structure of questioning and concurrently, cater to the specificities of the interviewees and the direction of each specific interview (Gill et al., 2008).

The interviews that were prepared for this both groupings consisted of the following divisions. Incipently, the participants were asked to identify themselves- in the case of the humanitarian innovators grouping, their title, their company and/or initiatives represented were identified. And, in the case of the policy makers and/or advisors grouping, the participants' title, organization and the area, city and/or district represented were established.

After which, for humanitarian innovations- general and specific questions regarding the initiative in question, the participant's perceptions of integration, as well as, partnerships and funding of the companies and/or initiatives were asked. For the policy makers and/or advisors grouping- the participant's perceptions of integration and the specificities of policy making or advising were asked. More specific questions regarding the role of technologies in the area of refugee integration were also presented to the participants of this grouping. These questions were particularly aimed at better comprehending the views of the participants on the current realities within the Netherlands, as well as, the observed patterns regarding integration. The final portion of the interviews, for both groupings, included questions about their expert opinions of looking into the future of the issues of migration.

Taken together, I contend that this very method of in-depth semi-structured expert interviews offered opportunities to rethink and to re-conceptualize the noted distortions of the current refugee economies as, it ties together the different aspects of digitization, globalization, integration, humanitarian, as well as, the business sectors associated with them

3.7 Data analysis procedures

The interviews with the ten participants were digitally recorded and transcribed. The names of the interviewees were anonymized. The notes that were taken during the course of the interviews, as

¹⁰ Please refer to Section 7.2 Appendix B

¹¹ Please refer to Section 7.3 Appendix C

well as, the reflections that ensued, were referred to during the course of this procedure. Transcriptions were sent to the participants who had requested for a copy of the transcripts of the interviews.

The grounded theory approach was used for the raw data itself as it enables the researcher to understand and construe the nuances encapsulated within the texts (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Neuman & Robson, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this method is regarded as a primary means of the analysis of qualitative data. This is because, within the realm of qualitative research, this approach is noted to be a compelling means of unearthing the crux of the matters revealed in the interviews with participants (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Mediani, 2017). In this way, the ideas observed were pinpointed and investigated in more detail.

The first two interviews were open-coded and when thematic concerns started to rise, the process of selective coding was practiced. The method of open coding was employed as, it enabled the most salient themes to surface (Neuman & Robson, 2012). This coding procedure enabled for the coupling of ideas and nuances (Saldaña, 2009) to lead to the categories that can be observed in the next chapter of this thesis, Section 4 Results and Analysis. For me, it was particularly important to clasp to the words of the participants themselves as, I wanted the data gathered through this research to remain ardent to the words and meanings conveyed by the participants of this study (Neuman & Robson, 2012). For a further explanation of the code list that was used in the process of analysis, please refer to Section 7.4: Appendix D.

4 Results

Noting the complexities of the notions of refugee economies and humanitarian innovations, this study was approached with a varied number of goals. By focusing on the bridges built to overcome distortions aimed at the structural areas of integration- employment and education, the main intent of this research was to delve into and analyze the role of humanitarian innovations regarding the integration of refugees in the Netherlands. This topic was explored using a method of qualitative grounded theory approach. Accordingly, this section reports upon the findings of this research. A discussion of the results will follow.

This research sought to answer two main questions, and accordingly, the results of this study will be reported and discussed in the following chapters. Despite being concerned about seemingly different aspects of integration, the ideals that surrounded both employment and education, proved themselves to be interlinked. Thus, considering that the aims of this research were multifold, the decision was made to report the findings of this research by thematic concern rather than, by way of classifying them according to the responses posed to the participants. I am convinced that this method of reporting would highlight the key findings of this research in a more appropriate and enlightening manner thus, strengthening my arguments. It may be appropriate, at this point, to highlight that some of the interview segments, within this chapter, may appear to fall under numerous categories. This, I contend, highlights the very perspective that these aspects of integration are entwined with each other.

As anticipated, an array of issues was raised by the participants during the interviews. An observation that was apparent, throughout the interviews was that, the ideals of how each humanitarian innovation initiative perceived the distortions within the system was, directly related to the way that each of them contributed to the access of refugees. This, was in line with the arguments raised by Betts et al. (2017), in the consideration of refugee economies¹².

This chapter has been divided into nine main parts. In the first two sections, Section 4.1 A word on terminology and, Section 4.2 Newcomers are stakeholders too, some overall observations derived from the data have been addressed. These are pertinent as they set the groundwork for the understandings of the other chapters of this results section. From here on, corresponding to the thematic concerns, each section has been further divided into various subthemes of which, segments from the interviews have included, described and analyzed to illustrate the varied notions. Together, they address the means in which humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute to the access of

¹² See Section 2.3 Considering 'refugee economies' embracively for more details

education and employment of refugees in the Netherlands, as well as, observe the ways in which these initiatives use digital media whilst doing so, in order to enhance our understanding of the role of digital media in the process of refugee integration.

4.1 A word on terminology

To start, one of the features that was impressed upon me, during the interviews was that, the term ‘newcomer’ has since replaced the term ‘refugee’. This was raised to me by participants, Christian, Gina, Holly and Mia, whom had constantly referred to this term newcomer when referring to *refugees* throughout the course of their interviews. In her interview, Mia stated the following:

Newcomers became a new term in the forced migration dictionary. It means [...] people who [have been granted] status, [...] have a right to reside and, are new to our society. This is the new term that we are using now- newcomers. (Mia).

In his statement, Christian further explained that considering his refugee background and personal experiences, he was not particularly fond of the term refugee due to its negative connotations. Instead, he considers himself to be “an active refugee”. This was notably interesting to me, to see the, arguably, active rejection of the term refugee.

In another interview, Holly had referred to refugees as ‘talents’, which was an ideal that was in line with the way that the organization that she represented, Refugee Talent Hub, views the individuals. She stated the following:

Actually, we don't like a word *refugees* because *refugees* is just based on people who leave their country to come to [another country]. It just stops with this sentence. But *talent* means, you can give, you can make, you can work. That's what we need. (Holly)

Ruminating upon the above contexts, it is noted that like Christian, Holly dismisses the term refugee due to its unfavorable undertones. On the other hand, the term talent acknowledges an individual's capabilities and suggests that he or she is significant, unique and important in his or her own way (Talent, 2018). In consideration of her multiple roles as an office manager at Refugee Talent Hub and, as a refugee in the Netherlands, her statement, “that is what we need” is a striking choice of words which provides insight on two aspects. The term talent encourages the focus to be on the positive aspects of the refugee. In this way, focusing on the talents of the refugee provides some kind of hope, for the individual himself or herself. Simultaneously, talent from the perspective of humanitarian innovation

initiatives, is revealing of the way that such initiatives see refugees. By viewing refugees as talents, these individuals should thus be given a chance within society to proliferate. In respect of this, from this point forth, with the exception of the term refugee being used in the quotations by the interviewees themselves, I will be referring to this grouping of individuals as newcomers from this point forth.

Secondly, although the interviews were held in English, some Dutch terminologies were used to describe the terms, processes and the names of organizations that were mentioned during the course of the interviews. As this research is based in the Netherlands, it appears to be commonplace for the participants to have done so. A clear explication of this is recognized in the term, *uitkering*. This was a term that was constantly raised by the participants, especially in the discussion of employment. When literally translated from Dutch to English, it means payment. This translation, however, is inaccurate as, in the context of refugees in the Netherlands, *uitkering* is of reference to the monetary aid that the Dutch government provides newcomers with (DisGover B.V., n.d.). It is noted that there are a few types of *uitkering* of which, some of the individuals who are subjected to this are unemployed persons and individuals with disabilities (Beek, 2017; Rijksoverheid, n.d.b; Rijksoverheid, n.d.c). In the context of refugees, *uitkering* functions as a monetary assistance that has been gathered from the social fees that employed persons pay, to help newcomers to aid newcomers in their daily lives in the new environment that they find themselves in (DisGover B.V., n.d.). As observed, the nuances of what the various terms try to encapsulate may sometimes get lost in translation and accordingly, with the exception of some phrases that were observed to need a more in-depth translation, I have attempted to keep the reporting of the interviews, to as close to the data, as possible.

4.2 Newcomers are stakeholders, too

In line with the idea that integration is a two-way process, through the interviews amassed, a notion that stood out was that, newcomers are part of the grouping of stakeholders in ensuring that the initiatives of humanitarian innovators are successful. This idea is straightforward - should a business owner want to continue making profits from a certain product, there is a need for consumers to want to purchase the product offered. Although it appears to be seemingly obvious, this point, in respect of the humanitarian innovation initiatives, is highly pertinent in the chapters to come.

Similarly, considering that newcomers are the direct recipients of the programs offered, it becomes clear that the presence and the support of newcomers are features required for these initiatives to fall into place, as well as, to proliferate. This idea of newcomers are stakeholders too is

observed in the way that newcomers have the ability to gather more participants for these initiatives.

This is illustrated in the excerpts below,

[In terms of attracting more participants,] word of mouth [...] is going really well. (Gina)

People in the Taalhuis [program] come and [they bring along] a neighbor or friend or family [member] who [might] also want to come. So, they come together and [the program] just gets bigger and bigger. (Isabella)

In the above contexts, it is highlighted that newcomers themselves play a large role in the proliferation of such initiatives. This is observed in the way that newcomers recommend the services provided by these initiatives to other newcomers. This is illustrative of Betts et al. (2014) arguments where they stated that was instrumental for initiatives to shine the light on the notions that newcomers are active members within society. Newcomers are not merely quiet receivers of the nuances of integration. Instead, newcomers too have a role in being responsive, interested and welcoming towards such initiatives. Thus, highlighting the point that there is more to a single story (Adiche, 2009) of newcomers.

The idea of newcomers as individuals with vested interests in the humanitarian innovation initiatives is further highlighted by Christian as he stated:

The gaps are being covered by NGOs big time. That is something really, I appreciated this country and that's one of the reasons I'm supporting Newbees all I can. Yeah, they deserve it. (Christian)

During his interview, Christian disclosed that on top of being a Technical Developer at Newbees, he is a newcomer, as well. He stated that he came into contact with Newbees while he was living at the AZC¹³:

[Newbees goes] to the AZC, which are refugee camps in the country, and they meet [newcomers] directly as soon as they come in and, they get their status. This is how the refugees know about Newbees. This program so far has proven to be sufficiently good. This is the way I knew about them too. (Christian)

The above context exhibits a number of features. Firstly, it comments upon the means in which newcomers get to know of Newbees. Secondly, it highlights the notions of identification and individual

¹³ The AZC is short for asielzoekerscentra which is, a reception center for asylum seekers and refugees (COA, n.d.b).

belonging to various groupings¹⁴. Thirdly, on top of the aforementioned arguments that newcomers are not merely submissive recipients, this segment of Christian's interview highlights the extent to which newcomers can provide support for such humanitarian innovation initiatives. And, in the case of Christian, he has started working for this initiative.

4.3 Customizing programs for newcomers

This chapter is a continuation of the school of thought from the previous section that, newcomers' opinions on the offered programs were crucial to provide support for the various efforts suited of integration. Accordingly, another theme that manifested itself was in the way that humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute to newcomers' access to education and employment by customizing their programs to suit the needs of newcomers. This was observed by way of taking into account the lived experiences, of which some are traumatic, that come newcomers have often faced. This point is clearly illustrated in the interview segments by Mia, Christian and Jillian below:

Maybe something you need to know, people in [the] AZC are very, very disoriented. [...] Unexpectedly leaving your home, being in a society of which, you did not expect [...] of which, you don't understand [the] language [and the] system. Your expectations are not even real or existent. You become passive negative waiting for what is to happen. That is why when you ask people, why don't you do this or that, the answer is, 'we don't know'. There is none. It's like there is a certain level way beyond the normal expectation of people who live. (Christian)

As quoted above, Christian talks about the notion of uncertainty, of not knowing what is to come despite the fact that legally, the newcomers in question have already received their legal documentation and statuses to reside in the Netherlands. Jillian too raises this point, about emotional trauma and emotional scarring, as she states:

Some are harmed, emotionally harmed or they have [gone through] a very difficult time. [This] makes it more difficult sometimes for people to get jobs because [...] they're just not in their best shape. (Jillian)

As highlighted above, Jillian comments upon the fact that the lived experience of newcomers is an issue to be aware of when initiatives work with newcomers. Following this, she highlights in the following text

¹⁴ See Sections 4.4 Changing the Narrative and 4.5 Capitalizing on the multiplicity of belonging for further explanations

below, how emotional support, as well as, the understanding from other staff members within the work environment is needed in the consideration of these programs. She continues to state:

There are cultural differences [...] people are sometimes traumatized. They [...] really need a lot of help within a workplace, [...] people need a lot of [...] support, they need a lot of attention. So that's a challenge to make sure that there's a good match and that, the people from the departments are willing to give that support. So, it's a two-way thing. (Jillian)

This point is also illustrated in Mia's interview segment as she stated:

Newcomers when they come into a new city, they don't know what to do, where to go, where to start. [They do not] come here completely new. They [...] also come with their life experience, with their own knowledge and their own expectations and their trauma. So, this is the thing, I feel like, instead of [taking] them as a product- this is a newcomer, we need to take him or her – [...] rather, we should listen to him or her. (Mia)

Mia raises the points about uncertainty, being at a loss and not knowing. Further, she goes on to talk about the emotional baggage, "their own knowledge and their own expectations and their trauma". Accordingly, she points out that it is crucial to "listen to him or her" thus revealing the notions of two-way integration. She reveals that there is a need to understand newcomers' positions and sympathize for their traumatic experiences.

Further, in his interview, Nate gave his opinion, as a senior advisor, on how, especially for newcomers, it is of importance to give attention to customized programs as he states,

For refugees, it can be very helpful to have tailor-made solutions and information on how to cope with society. (Nate)

In this way, humanitarian innovation initiatives can customize their programs to suit the needs of newcomers.

4.3.1 Customization of program structure

Here, customization is manifested in the ways and means of coming up with programs, and paying attention to how they are structured, to cater to the needs of newcomers. This is illustrated in Gina's description:

In Westland, refugees start with vluchtelingenwerk and, they get help with their house, [the making of] DigiD and [...] other stuff too. Yeah, [...] help [is offered for] the basic things you need [have] to live in Westland. [...] At first [help was offered for] just 9 months. [We spoke] about it and [decided that it was necessary] to [make] it more per person. So now, we have 3 [trajectories]. [...] For the people who are young and educated, they are faster in [the program of] 9 months. [...] There are other is other [trajectories] for 15 months or 21 months. [...] I think it's better because not everyone is the same [...] some take longer than others, some [are] just quicker. (Isabella)

Here, Isabella illustrated how the Bibliotheek Westland caters to the different groupings of newcomers by catering their programs to the differing length of time in which newcomers need to complete a certain program.

4.3.2 Individual customization

On the note of structuring their programs, during the interviews, a striking feature that was observed was that all the humanitarian innovation initiatives engaged in individual customization. In this, each individual's goals and dreams are discussed in order for both initiative and newcomer to better understand each other and, to come to a consensus on how they can effectively work together. This again, highlights how initiatives contribute to newcomers' access by way of customizing their programs to suit the individual needs of newcomers. These are clearly observed in the interview segments below:

[For our] 'meet and greet' events [at Refugee Talent Hub], we need about 10 or 11 talents to be invited. [...] The employers who [initiate] the event [...] sit with our talents - person per person and, they get to know each other and to talk about their work and how they found their job. Everyone will have a chance to speak to [representatives] from the [potential employers of the various companies]. (Holly)

[For our voorleis visitie program], I go [personally] to the family [...] because I make the matches. So, I want to know [details such as] how the children are, how the family is, how the parents are - Can they speak Dutch very well, or not? [...] I want to know before I match the volunteers to a family because, some volunteers are better in contact with the parents, others are better in just reading. So, we want to make a good match. (Isabella)

[Regarding the Relink program] their individual path is discussed [...] and they get [...] advice from a career coach. And that could be, maybe you need a bit more education, but a lot of these people are already highly educated. So, in practice, for most of them, it turns out that it might not be [needed for them] to do another Master's [program] because that's not where that efficiency is. Yeah so, quite often the perspective of the participants [changes] through the work program. They start with the idea that they're going to do another Master's and in the end [for] half of them, it's not needed. (Jillian)

In the three excerpts above, the notion of customization is observed in the ways in which the humanitarian innovation initiatives ensure that each newcomers' goals are well-suited to the services that the initiatives offer. In taking the time to cater to, and to get to know, each individual, this changes the perspective that newcomers are often faced with. One of the problems, as mentioned in the earlier chapters of this thesis is that, often, the general public is unaware of the fact that there are varied differences within the very grouping of newcomers. This will be further explored in the next chapter, Section 4.4. Changing the Narrative.

4.4 Changing the Narrative

I was attending a conference in Amsterdam [where there was a lady who was presenting]. She was my ideal feminist and, she was talking about vulnerability and image of refugees. [After the conference, I went up to her and we had a discussion] about refugees and, she looked at me and said - 'You do not look like a refugee!' I was shocked [to hear her] saying that. [Here,] she was talking about images and narratives and, she was saying that! Oh my god! See, this is the magic of media. They don't allow us to think beyond the images that they are portraying. (Mia)

Previously, in Section 1.2 Conceptualizing the term 'refugee', I have described that, one of the shortfalls in matters surrounding newcomers is that, newcomers are often faced with a two-fold discrimination due to a lack of understanding. This very notion is highlighted in the above stated context where Mia related her experience as a policy maker with a newcomer background. As observed, through Mia's experience, this is revealing of the narrative that shrouds newcomers.

Consequently, coupled with the negative narrative that already shrouds newcomers, when talking about employment, one of the problems that newcomers face is unfairness within the labor market. In the case that the goal is to gain employment, Dancygier and Latin (2014) noted that this unfairness within the labor market that newcomers face is, an obstruction to the goal. Accordingly, one

of the observed means in which humanitarian initiatives contribute to newcomers' access to employment is by altering the perspective that is generally perceived of newcomers. In the context below, Holly illustrates the process on how Refugee Talent Hub steps in to attempt to change the narrative. She states:

Many [...] see refugees as people who [do not have the same level of] certification [as others]. For them, it is [just] not the same thing. They think- Maybe I give [the newcomer] the job, [and he or she] cannot continue or [is unable to do] a perfect job. Our job [here at Refugees Talent Hub] is to say to the partners or companies- 'No, [give them a chance to prove themselves,] you can try [giving] them a short time to work and you can see how they work. We cannot say that all the refugees don't do that. Maybe a part of them. But not all. (Holly)

The context above is revealing of three aspects. Firstly, that newcomers are generally not given a chance in the labor market. Secondly, of how such initiatives, like Refugee Talent Hub, step in, on behalf of the newcomers to ask companies for a chance to allow newcomers to prove themselves in the labor market. Lastly, it can be observed that initiatives are attempting to change the narrative about newcomers. This is seen, in the above context, where Holly states, "We cannot say that all refugees [...] do that". By claiming that newcomers are not all the same and that there are, indeed, different groupings of newcomers, this is revealing of one of the means in which humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute – by trying to change the single story (Adiche, 2009) that clouds newcomers in the Dutch labor market. By placing importance on newcomers and their specific needs, through these, it can be noted that initiatives contribute, in a broader sense, by changing the narrative that plagues newcomers within the larger society.

4.5 Capitalizing on the multiplicity of belonging

Among the participants, there was a recurrent theme of 'capitalizing' on the notions that individuals are not bound to one identification alone. Accordingly, it is observed that initiatives contribute by capitalizing on individual strengths and group belonging. The multiplicity of belonging allows for the creation of opportunities.

Social constructivist approaches and the corresponding theories of identification and belonging (see researches by Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Hogg et al., 2004; Thoits & Virshup, 1997 for some such examples) have long established that humans can identify with, and belong to,

several groups at a time. Following this school of thought, during the course of the interviews, the capitalizing of the multiplicity of belonging was observed.

Brad stated the following:

Newbees [...] is my first paid job. But in 2015, together with four friends, we started our organization in Amsterdam called Syrian volunteers in Netherlands, SYVNL. I work there as well as a project manager and co-founder. So now, I work with [both] Newbees and our organization.

(Brad)

In Table 1, it has been noted that Brad is a coordinator at Newbees. During the course of the interviews, he revealed that he also happens to be a newcomer that has been employed by this humanitarian innovation initiative. He also shared that he is a founding member of an international organization, Network for Refugee Voices [NRV], as well as, a team member of Syrian Volunteers Netherlands [SYVNL]. These organizations are concerned with integration on an international scale and, the sociocultural aspects of integration, respectively. In the above context, in talking about the different organizations that he is affiliated to, Brad's statements are revealing of the notions of multiple group belongings and identification. He further commented:

A lot of organizations that are working try to figure how [newcomers can] find jobs. [As a Syrian newcomer myself,] I know how Syrian people think. We can [...] make it easier [to connect and to understand the needs of the newcomers] (Brad)

Sharing his personal reflections, Brad provided an example of this:

I remember [an incident] last year, at the job, when I started in Newbees. As a Muslim, we do Ramadan. It's the month where we fast. When some of my colleagues called some people to ask them to do vrijwilligerswerk [unpaid voluntary work]. They say, 'Ah! I'm so sorry! It's Ramandan. When I was in Syria, I did not do anything during Ramadan'. But this is not true [in fact, during] Ramadan, we work more because we need more money for the feest [celebrations] after Ramadan. [...] When I took the call, at first, I started in English with the people [and when] they told me, 'I'm so sorry but in Syria, we did not do anything during Ramadan', I [started] speaking in Arabic with them and I [said], 'But it is not nice. [This is not accurate]. I am Syrian also, okay?' Then, they [said,] 'Oh I'm so sorry, I thought you were Dutch'. (Brad)

In the above stated context, Brad highlights how he capitalizes on his background to engage with other newcomers who are part of the Newbees program. Drawing to attention his statement in the first

excerpt, “I know how Syrian people think”, this is revealing of how humanitarian innovation initiatives have to take into consideration factors such as the culture of newcomers in their efforts of coming up with programs to suit newcomers’ access to employment opportunities. These are revealing of the aspect of the multiplicity of belonging.

In another interview, Gina had given an explication of a project that Refugees Forward was presently training a newcomer for.

By being in touch with highly-educated refugees, you can meet [newcomers]. We have 2 ideas which is, to be in touch with low-skilled workers and educate them and train them and integrate them into the Dutch workforce and another one is [...] to employ Syrian craftsmen to do craftsmen work in Dutch houses. That of course, is a means to reach other levels of the Syrian or any other refugee [level] in society. (Gina)

In her statement, Gina had described one of the projects that was in process. Being a newcomer that belonged to the higher educated cohort, the newcomer had come forward with the idea to create employment opportunities for other newcomers. This is revealing of capitalizing on the resources of newcomers’ themselves to create employment opportunities for other newcomers. Referring back to the nuances of refugee economies¹⁵, this very initiative, that the participant of Refugees Forward is spearheading, appears to fall under the very definition of this term.

The notion of refugee economies is also noticed in the following excerpt:

[The individual] wasn't an official translator, but [was] someone who can also speak Dutch [on] a specific level in Dutch, according to the [levels] that we use. So, he can translate it for me [when communicating in class. (Isabella)]

Commenting on the Digisterker initiative that Bibliotheek Westland offers, it is observed that the initiative capitalizes on the strengths of newcomers based on their knowledge and/or command of languages. In the above quoted case, Isabella noted that there are translators who aid in helping to run the program, in either Arabic or Tigrinya, to cater to the large numbers of Syrian and Eritrean newcomers located in Westland. As observed, this is another means of creating opportunity for newcomers, as translators.

¹⁵ See Sections 1.3 An introduction to ‘refugee economies’ and 2.3 Considering ‘refugee economies’ embracively

In the same line of thought, the *multiplicity of belonging* was illustrated in Mia's interview: [As] I work with the [municipality, they occasionally] ask me to give advice or suggestions on [things like the] communications publication [..] They ask me [...] to give some feedback because, I was a newcomer myself. So, I see things from a newcomer's lens. I [consider] things like- Is it easy to understand? [In this way,] I give them the perspective of a newcomer. They trust my judgments on this. I should point out here that the [municipality] did not hire me as a newcomer but, as a policy advisor. I am [presently] working with education experience. (Mia).

In the above context, Mia raises an interesting point regarding capitalizing on her belonging to the two groupings of policy advisor and newcomer. She shares how her colleagues at the municipality of Amsterdam capitalize on her wealth of knowledge from a newcomers' perspective. She proceeded to state,

I was invited in the European regional committee in Brussels [to speak]. It was a huge European parliament [and] I talked [...] as a newcomer. I did not speak as a policy advisor because, I believe [that I can give so many] more insights. [There, there] are [already] so many people who [make] policies [and can therefore, speak from that perspective]. (Mia)

In this second excerpt, Mia brought to attention that she spoke from the perspective of a newcomer in front of the EU parliament. This is revealing of the notion that Mia has capitalized on her position as a policy advisor and used that to channel her voice as a newcomer. In this regard, Mia is noted to have seized the opportunity to capitalize on this moment. Having gone through the system of asylum herself, she has the ability to speak on a personal level as she further states:

I believe I am fresh. My experience is totally fresh so [...] I believe it could help. (Mia)

4.6 Market-directed approach towards perceived distortions

A common theme that emerged from the interviews was in the ways in which humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute is directly related to the manners in which these initiatives perceive the varied distortions within the system. In this sense, it can be argued that these initiatives embarked on a market-directed approach to mind the gaps. In the four examples below, this point will be elucidated.

For the establishment of the MUCT platform, Alicia noted:

MUCT is really focused on looking at people who are [interested] at higher education [...] Refugees ages can really vary [...] mainly because, many of them have already gone through schools before they even left their country but because their Bachelor's or [other certifications] was not being recognized here, they have to start afresh again [...] sometimes, in the middle somewhere. [...] So really, the age range is quite wide, if you ask me mainly because, they have finished back at home. Oh, but even if they have not finished... they spent years running or trying to get into the system. and before they are ready, time has already gone for them. (Alicia)

It becomes clear that the creation of MUCT is based on how Unity in Diversity, and its affiliated partners, viewed the distortions within the education system for newcomers. Thus, showcasing how Unity in Diversity, as an initiative, contributes to newcomers' access to education in the Netherlands.

In another interview, Isabella highlights how Bibliotheek Westland perceives the distortion of literacy and command of language and in this way, they cater to this distortion by offering their service of the voorleis visitie program. This is observed in the quote below,

[For the voorleis visitie] program, sometimes [you have parents that] don't speak Dutch very well. [This program was established] to prevent [...] low literacy. So, a volunteer, goes to the families at their homes and they [...] read for children [...] once a week, like an hour for 20 weeks. (Isabella)

In the above stated context, the Bibliotheek Westland is observed to have capitalized on the need for better Dutch language skills and, in this way, directly approach this perceived distortion by way of the voorleis visitie program.

Another observed means of distortion and capitalizing on the perceived distortion is illustrated below,

[Newbees] help people sharpen their skills through networking, like, you know, expanding their network to learn more and to practice their skills [...] refugees found them very helpful for network. [When newcomers join the] workshops, [they go] to places where they can learn from, [...] sharpen their skills and adapt to the market. Refugees need such a model of NGOs and this is where they come in. (Christian)

As observed, using the example of Newbees, Christian illustrated how Newbees contribute to refugees' access of employment by firstly, identifying the distortions within the system and secondly, coming up

with solutions for the recognized problems. It is thus clear that with the services offered, this is the means in which Newbees cater to the perceived distortions.

Finally, in the fourth example, Holly too raises this point as she stated,
 For me, [from the perspective of a newcomer], the Netherlands has helped me with continuing my study. They do a great job but, [regarding work], I think it is still difficult. [It is demanded of refugees] to have more qualifications to have to have a job. [...] Most refugees can speak English and some Dutch, but not enough. [Furthermore,] the certifications or the diplomas from our land [...] not always [seen as the same]. This is where Refugee Talent Hub comes in, it] tries to [level] the sides for [both] the refugees and [...] the Netherlands. (Holly)

Here, Holly's comments are revealing of a few aspects. Firstly, of the multiplicity of her group belonging – as an office manager and as a newcomer. Accordingly, she provides insights from both roles. Further, she comments on the distortions, as perceived by Refugee Talent Hub, which are language barriers and newcomers' certifications are always being recognized in the present labor market. Lastly, she illustrates how Refugee Talent Hub capitalizes on this gap with their program and in this way, provides a bridge for these identified distortions.

Contrary to point raised by Betts et al. (2014) regarding the lack of guidance for corporations to understand the legal situations of refugees, during her interview, Mia raised an intriguing point which provokes the rethinking of, if and whether, there is truly an inadequacy, in this regard. She stated the following:

[Sometimes, the municipalities try] to accommodate. [There is a] strong will to help [newcomers] but sometimes, [we are faced with] too much structure so [the municipalities] can't do more. They are trying and sometimes there is [a problem of] a lack of funding. Before 2012, it was the municipality's responsibility to give language courses to newcomers, to migrants... But after 2013, the law was changed and, it became [the] individual's responsibility [...] Being a newcomer, [myself], I feel, it is not good. Now, we have so many schools. There is a big market and there is a big competition. It is not competition of the quality of language but [rather,] a competition of how many students [can each school] have. [Language schools] are offering laptops, iPads, phones... [even programs like] Dutch language in Arabic, can you imagine? [The system] is open and so, [schools] are given €10,000 per person. This money does not [go] to the newcomer's pocket. [Instead,] schools can claim- this student is coming to my school and so, they can take the money directly from the government. This is why the market is very high. (Mia)

In the above quoted case, Mia raises her opinions on the consequences of the governmental push towards learning the Dutch language, it is noted that in the Dutch context, the mastery of the Dutch language is a means that is required of all Dutch citizens, and newcomers, to integrate successfully¹⁶.

This is a point revealed in Isabella's interview as she stated,

I think it's very important to learn the Dutch language because [...] you need for everything - you need it for your social contacts. You needed for your work [...] but also to understand the digital forms for your health [...] you need it for everything. And then, I think you can integrate in the Dutch society (Isabella)

It is clear that the propagation of language schools is illustrative of a market-directed approach towards the distortions. However, it is observed, in the exemplification above that, in an attempt to counter for the inability of the municipality to cater to this aspect, the unquestioning support of the government for the proliferation of such efforts aimed at working on the language capabilities of newcomers appears to have cause an arguably *so-called* corrupt system. Thus, showcasing how language schools can capitalize on the governmental needs of requiring newcomers to learn the Dutch language.

4.7 Localization

Within the Netherlands, matters regarding newcomers are dealt with on a local level and accordingly, it was noted that different cities had differing ways as to how initiatives can proliferate. This notion was very much in line with the arguments made by Hinrichs and Juzwiak (2017), in that, it was of importance for initiatives to design programs that cater to the climate of the city's needs.

This was exemplified in Isabella's statement:

For Digitsterk, I did it myself. It's part of a national program from Sitching Digisterken but I adjusted it for Westland [...] every [municipality] has their own ways to make an appointment or [other things such as] bijstand or uitkering. We have special forms and we had to adjust the course to the forms so that everyone can know about how it works [...] in other [municipalities], it's different. (Isabella)

Here, Isabella notes of the differences that Westland has and accordingly, the program of Digisterken that Bibliotheek Westland offers, is observed to cater to these differences, in aiding newcomers. And as

¹⁶ See Section 2.2 Enough to Integrate

exemplified, the notion of customization based on location was observed in the efforts of Bibliotheek Westland in their programs offered.

Aside from explicitly designing programs to suit the specific nature of each city, through the interviews amassed, it was revealed that there are differences between the support system given to each city in which, two approaches of integration have been identified. Nate states the following:

There are real differences for example, between the Rotterdam approach and the Amsterdam approach. But it's, it's rather difficult to establish what the differences are specifically. For Rotterdam and Amsterdam, we know that there are differences. For example, in Amsterdam, you have one civil servant dedicated for [each] asylum seeker and the asylum seekers do have [their processes of] intake rather early after getting [...] their status. [Whereas in] the Rotterdam approach, it's [a] more [...] generic approach. So, people have to search for work themselves for certain periods [and] when they don't have it, they get assistance. (Nate)

Nate speaks of the different approaches that newcomers are provided with for the purposes of integration. This is also observed in the quoted text below:

I think history, location and funding matters. Amsterdam is a huge metropolitan city. There are so many migrants, expats and international companies. [...] Utrecht is a big province so [integration programs] are only happening in the cities, [less] in the villages. [Some cities] do not have a good history, especially with migrants, [and this poses as a problem in terms of support for such initiatives]. (Mia)

In both Nate's and Mia's responses, it is observed that the context in which newcomers find themselves in is highly relevant. Accordingly, this sets the ground work for two factors – firstly, as to how initiatives can step in to aid in the process of integration. And secondly, it sets a framework for initiatives to be aware of the kinds of support system that can receive regarding their initiatives at hand.

Perhaps the most interesting finding regarding the way in which initiatives can contribute by customizing their programs to suit the specificities of each city was raised by Mia in her discussion in privacy laws that surround the municipality of Amsterdam:

In Amsterdam, [digital media] have their own privacy laws [the municipality is] not allowed to openly announce what they are doing because [of] privacy laws. [There is no] Facebook page. They are still doing a lot like, they have some kind of websites but websites have very restricted communication [...] but, it could be my personal perception. (Mia)

In the above context, Mia relays the privacy laws that the municipality of Amsterdam was subjected to. Considering these perceived limitations that the municipality of Amsterdam is subjected to, it is thus observed that the municipality provides much support for humanitarian innovation initiatives. This provision of support is indicative of the way in which the municipality taps into the areas that they are unable to do so themselves.

In light of this, Amsterdam has since earned its reputation as a city and as a municipality that provides considerable support for such humanitarian innovation initiatives, so much so that, the participants raised that Amsterdam provides one of the most support for their various represented initiatives. This is observed in the following excerpts:

So far, what I have seen, heard and observed is that, [Amsterdam] really wants [newcomers] to get out of the social assistance as soon as possible. It is called uitkering¹⁷. [The municipality of Amsterdam] wants [refugees] to start their own work as soon as possible. (Mia)

Amsterdam is really trying to get people out of social support and to get them to work. They have entrepreneurship programs and they are quite eager to support programs like [ours] but you need to work very closely with them together, and that, of course, takes time. (Gina)

I'm very positive about the [municipality of] Amsterdam and about their position because, they are very aware that the group of people I work with are higher educated refugees. In the end will be most happy or most valuable for society if they also have jobs on the level that they can work with. (Jillian)

The excerpts above regarding Amsterdam and Westland are particularly interesting as they were indicative of two notions. Firstly, regarding the aforementioned customization of programs based on location – The infrastructure is dependent on the local situation of what each city demands. And secondly, of how local governments are giving support to initiatives in the areas that they have yet to, or unable to, tap on. Further, these are revealing of support systems put in place for the initiatives to thrive. These will be further elucidated in the next chapter, Section 4.8 Samenwerken.

¹⁷ See Section 4.1 A word on terminology for explanation

4.8 Samenwerken

The term, 'samenwerken', when translated to English means to collaborate. This term was taken directly from an interview with Kyra and Lilian, who had described their experience, in relation to the project VOORwerk. This project is concerned with developing newcomers' soft skills and ultimately, to connect them to potential voluntary jobs or work placements. There, the participants had described that VOORwerk was a collaboration of three organizations, namely, the IOM¹⁸, the COA¹⁹ and, the UAF²⁰. As observed, the establishment of VOORwerk is an explicit example that showcases the very coming together of stakeholders to bring forward an initiative that is concerned with the employment aspect of newcomers in the Netherlands.

In the following chapters, the notion of stakeholders will be discussed and, their efforts of samenwerken will be illustrated. It is important to mention that, all of the interviewed participants stated that each initiative and/or organization that they represented was a collaboration of different individuals and organizations. This collaboration was noticed in the means of goal setting, funding and expansion of initial project, among others.

4.8.1 Collaborating and capitalizing

In the earlier chapters of this thesis, I have illustrated that, in the discussion of newcomers within the Netherlands, integration is considered to be a goal and, as a marker of success²¹. In these terms, it is noted that integration is not one a one-man job. There are various stakeholders regarding this topic. In all ten of the interviews, the notion of teamwork was an ideal that was raised. In terms of humanitarian innovation initiatives that are targeted on the employment aspect, this is clearly illustrated by Gina as she stated:

¹⁸ The IOM is an international body that handles migration, as well as, the features that come along with it (International Organization of Migration [IOM], 2018).

¹⁹ As explained in Section 1.4 Dutch Integration Model

²⁰ The UAF is an organization that is concerned with the tertiary levels education of refugee students in the Netherlands and provides support to these individuals by way of financial means (Stichting voor Vluchteling Studenten [UAF], n.d.).

²¹ See Sections 1.4 Dutch Integration Model and 2.2 Enough to Integrate

To get the names of good entrepreneurs, [for Refugees Forward], we need to find the right people. So, [our founder spends] a lot of time with relationship building with policy makers [...] we are in close contact with all the municipalities and they know about our program [here at Refugees Forward]. We tell them- 'Hey, if you have clients, whereby the refugees are the clients of the municipalities, and they want to open [a business], send them to us'. (Gina)

Gina talks about the cooperation of a number of parties. Firstly, of the efforts of the founder of Refugees Forward to connect with municipalities located in Amsterdam. Secondly, of the cooperation of the municipalities for the program to assist in gathering participants. Lastly, newcomers are observed stakeholders²², as well. She further states,

So, where we are here [this office], it is Team Academy. It is an undergraduate in entrepreneurship. It is a University and they are our main partner. Then, the Amsterdam center for entrepreneurship, it is also our partner. Of course, also Google, Uber and [...] DLA Piper. (Gina)

Gina further lists the other stakeholders that play a role in the development of the Refugees Forward program. As observed, in both excerpts, these are some of the organizations and institutions that play a role in the program that Refugees Forward offers.

Similarly, in another interview with Alicia, she stated the following:

MUCT [platform] partnered with Erasmus University [particularly with the School of Media Communication studies] we were sponsored financially by [...] The Redeemed Christian Church of God BTS, wijdoenmee.nu, which is a small Dutch fund that gives funding for these types of projects so, we have them as our main, financial sponsors. [...] We also had Real X Media [...] and the UAF. The UAF is also our supporter, in the sense that, they connected us to all the universities and the institutions that we had to reach out to. [In] the Netherlands, it's not just universities when it comes to higher education. There are many different levels of high school and, the UAF was instrumental in connecting us with all these people. (Alicia)

Here, Alicia comments upon the MUCT initiative that her organization, Unity in Diversity founded. She noted in her interviews that MUCT is targeted at newcomer students. Thence, catering to the educational aspect of newcomer access. In the above excerpt, she listed the various institutions and companies that were instrumental in the forming of this platform.

²² See Section 4.2.3 Newcomers are stakeholders, too for further discussions.

This is also observed in the follow excerpt,

[At the Bibliotheek Westland], we have a partnership with different partners, especially for refugees. So, we come together and talk about [things like] work, language, learning a language, housing. Different partners like Vluchtelingenwerk and the [municipality of] Westland itself. And, Vitus Welzijn, ... that's another partner. And, it is about volunteers and Patijnenburg. (Isabella)

As observed, in Gina's, Alicia's and Isabella's interview segments, initiatives that they represented are the product of a collaboration of stakeholders. Such are in line with the recommendations that Betts et al. (2014) stipulated. In their research, they stated that initiatives should work together with what is presently available, to expand on the current initiatives, for the benefit of creating opportunities for newcomers.

Another aspect of teamwork was revealed in the merging together of humanitarian innovation initiatives illustrated by Christian:

Now, I don't see many NGOs being formed- who already exists, are already did a great job. And who did not, are actually closing or merging. (Christian)

Almost three years on from the 'so-called 2015 refugee crisis', Christian's comment in the above context, is revealing of his observations regarding the current realities of how initiatives work together to aid newcomers.

In the excerpt below by Lilian, she raised some interesting points, as she stated:

We asked for new funding for [...] part of the training and, we got it. So, we can continue for another two years and, for the part of the coaching [of this program], we are trying to have it integrated in the other programs. [...] We are trying to blend it in with what we already have. [...] This is really politically motivated. (Lilian)

As showcased in the above, Lilian talks about monetary matters regarding continuation of the VOORwerk project. In her statement, she revealed that there are two aspects to this project – firstly, training and secondly, coaching. She raises an intriguing point about how VOORwerk is trying to merge the different aspects of the program together. This is in line with the recommendations by Betts et al. (2014) where they stipulated that there is a need for initiatives to work with what is presently available. She also highlights that the aspect of funding is “politically motivated”.

On the note of funding and monetary matters, Jillian stated the following:

In a more general sense, you always need a little bit of money and people should realize that without money you can't do anything. (Jillian)

Jillian brings to attention that for all the humanitarian innovation initiatives to occur, there is a need to have, at least, “a little bit of money” for the project to materialize. Accordingly, she states here a means of collaboration – the way in which funding took place for each initiative. This was an aspect that was raised in nine out of ten the interviews held with participants.

Through the interviews, the participants had described the means of funding in a few manners. Funding was observed in the way initiatives need funding to get their program started, as well as, to proliferate:

Our business model is, we don't have a business model because, we are completely funded by funds like Oranjefonds [...] but the idea of the business model is that, the municipality pays us per person that participates in the program. Because, in the ideal world, we get everybody out of social welfare so the [municipality] has an incentive for people to participate in the program (Gina)

In her statement above, Gina lists some examples of institutions that support Refugees Forward financially. One of which, she noted, is the municipality which, she stated explicitly, has a vested interest in aiding such programs offered by the initiative to proliferate.

It can be asserted that funding was an interesting factor, in the provision of support. This is because, it was noticed that whilst funding is a means of monetary support for initiatives to thrive, these also came with a set of guiding rules that initiatives were obliged to follow. This was observed directly in the interview regarding the VOORwerk program where Kyra stated explicitly that the program was

[As] this project receives subsidy, [from the EU,] we are not allowed to directly try to connect a person to paid job [...] these are the boundaries of VOORwerk. (Kyra)

In the above context that Kyra mentions, it is revealing of the fact that, while funding manifests itself a means of support, it also serves as a guiding principle to set the limitations of the initiatives.

4.9 Use of digital media

Earlier in this thesis, I have highlighted how technological tools have been described as a means of having the ability to change the ways in which humanitarian innovation initiatives significantly and to influence in the process of refugee integration. While there appears to be high optimism regarding the capacity of technological tools, there are also skeptics regarding the impact of the aforementioned notion. For such reasons, the decision was made to research upon this aspect, as stipulated in Research Question 2.

Through the interviews, it becomes clear that the use of digital technologies is coupled with physical efforts of the humanitarian innovation initiatives. In sharing her opinions regarding the presence of technological tools to foster integration, Jillian puts it succinctly as she states,

An [app] in itself doesn't help. It helps if there's an organization behind it. (Jillian)

Her words are indicative of how it is of importance to ensure that there is enough support for the digital tool, when used.

Still, on the most part, it was observed that humanitarian innovations employ the use of digital media, as tools, to foster the integration of newcomers. These can be observed four aspects - Firstly, in the way that social media, in particular, is used to attract newcomers to the programs offered. Secondly, in the way that social media is used to continue enticing newcomers to their offered programs. Thirdly, digital technologies are observed in the very running of the program. And, lastly, in the collaboration of the varied initiatives offered.

4.9.1 Attracting participants

On the note of attracting participants, it was observed that social media has presented itself as a means in which humanitarian innovation initiatives sought to reach more participants. This was noticed in Holly's and Kyra's interview segments:

We try at every event to a post a story about what we did [during the] event or, photos for other refugees who joined our page. [This is so that newcomers know -] we are working on [...] how to help you. If you have not joined us yet, you can join us this time. You can see what we do. You can see what we offer to you. (Holly)

We also post teasers explaining about the value of soft skills. There needs to be variations on what you post to keep it interesting. (Kyra)

In the quotes above, both Holly and Kyra reveal how the initiatives make use of Facebook, as tools, to attract potential participants.

In the interview segment below, Lilian too, illustrates this:

We have a Facebook page where we put a nice little success story. Sometimes an employer is really involved, sometimes a refugee finds a job... Those are really nice things and you really hope that the VOORwerk training has helped them to get it [...] and hopefully for more employers and refugees as well to take initiative, to take the first step and to see what happens. (Lilian)

Like Holly and Kyra, Lilian too talks about how VOORwerk makes use of Facebook to celebrate the successes that VOORwerk has led, directly or indirectly, to the gainful employment of a newcomer. Furthermore, another aspect that she brings to attention here is that, the attracting of participant is not merely for newcomers alone but also for the attracting of potential companies who might want to collaborate with the program. This is again, illustrative of how humanitarian innovation initiatives are a collaborative effort²³.

It is noted that social media is not the only means in which these initiatives reach more participants. On the contrary, Jillian highlights how the presence of the Relink program on the University of Amsterdam website has led to an increment in the number of potential participants for the initiative. She states:

[You can find out how to participate in this program] through the website. There's a refugee work programs page on the website and both in Dutch and English. Both scholars at risk and Relink are mentioned there. And uh, this is also how most people contact me. (Jillian)

Together, these are revealing of how digital media is used as a means for these initiatives to gain exposure and, to attract participants to the varied programs offered by the initiatives.

4.9.2 Maintaining relations

A way in which digital media has been used is observed in the way that the humanitarian innovations use their data base to maintain relations with their stakeholders. This is observed in the following excerpt:

We work hard to keep in touch with [people who are in] our database. But it's, you know, it's very difficult to keep in touch with hundreds of people. Some [...] people [have jobs], have [...]

²³ As earlier showcased in Section 4.8 Samenwerken

program[s], have [illnesses] and because of that,) they cannot always keep in touch with us. But, [in Refugee Talent Hub,] we try to have new ideas, offer new things to them [in order] to make other opportunities. (Holly)

Here, Holly comments upon the ways in which Refugee Talent Hub engages with digital media to ensure that they are well-connected and continue to maintain relations with their stakeholders. It is insinuated from her above statement that the stakeholders that she is referring to are the newcomers themselves. In this sense, digital technologies are used to store the contact details of newcomers in the Refugee Talent Hub database. Further, in an attempt to entice newcomers to take part in their services offered, they come up with “new ideas [and] offer new things to [newcomers]” thus revealing of how physical efforts from Refugee Talent Hub are coupled with digital technologies to attract participants to their program.

4.9.3 Running of the program

Another observed means of how digital technologies are used is by way of running the very programs offered by the initiatives. The MUCT platform that Unity in Diversity offers, for instance, is one such initiative that relies on digital media to run their program. Still, as previously stipulated in the beginning of this chapter, despite the fact that this initiative is digitally- based, it was observed through the interviews that physical efforts of the staff from Unity in Diversity are needed in order to maintain the website and to gather potential partners.

This is also noted in the program that Refugees Forward offered. Gina stated, in her interview that, technological tools and the internet were used as means to increase the possibilities for newcomers. In their program, digital media was used quite fervently and as such,

For the people who did not have a laptop, we got them one. And, they are expected to work a lot online. We use XXX [platform] as a means of communication, email, Whatsapp etc. so very digital. Of course, also writing the business plan, everything. (Gina)

Still, it was observed that in terms of the very training of the newcomers, these were done in-person. Thus showcasing, once again, the points from the earlier subsections that, digital initiatives are coupled with physical efforts.

4.9.4 Digital collaboration

Previously, in Section 4.8.1 Collaborating and capitalizing, stakeholders are seen to be collaborating with each other for the creation and the maintenance of humanitarian innovation initiatives. Commenting upon the digital platform that Newbees relies on, interestingly, Christian reveals, in his interview, an aspect of digital collaboration regarding this structure of the platform:

The [Newbees] website is actually the backbone now [of TakeCareBNB]. I believe every other NGO would really benefit from the same [...] Newbees is giving them a license to use their own platform on which [TakeCareBNB is] welcome. We are just cloning the platform, adapting it to their use. Yeah so, we have two projects in that now. And, Newbees [does not] mind to share the platform with any other NGO. This [is what] I [mean] by NGOs [are now] relying on each other [and] exchanging values. Some NGOs have a good network but don't have technical platform. Some of them build technical platform but they need the connections. So, they just borrow from each other. (Christian)

IT [...] is all costly. It is not easy to find a good developer who could do [...] a complete application for below €10,000 and, most NGOs always [strive] to save money [...] because of their target. Yeah, so I'm glad to see that they're helping each other in this group [...] I think in the future, [Newbees is] going to be fully automated which is great. This would allow them much more expansion. Although the new refugees [come] from backgrounds with less education, in general [as] compared to Western Europe, but not early without exception, they use electronic devices and they're always on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram [...] I'm expecting all NGOs to start tapping into this technology, which makes me happy as a developer. (Christian)

Through Christian's interview excerpts, it becomes clear that initiatives support each other to ensure that other organizations can benefit from each other's strengths. Despite the fact that, presently, both Newbees and TakeCareBNB are involved with different aspects of integration – in that, Newbees is concerned with employment whereas, TakeCareBNB is concerned with housing, collaboration is viewed in a digital sense to aid in the proliferation of efforts to foster the integration of newcomers. This is revealing of one of the means in which initiatives use digital media. Further, this is revealing of Sandvik's (2017) arguments that technological tools have the ability to immensely revamp the ways in which humanitarian innovation initiatives can offer aid (see Dette, 2016 for some such examples).

Further, this aspect of digital collaboration shows the ways in which humanitarian innovation initiatives use digital media to foster the integration of newcomers. What is observed here is that, these

initiatives collaborate and capitalize on each other's strengths, in this sense, digital capacities, to support encourage and cultivate means of integration.

5 Concluding Remarks

This study was set out to add to the current spectrum of studies on refugee economies and in these terms, understand the role that humanitarian innovation initiatives play in realm of newcomer integration in the context of a host society. Focusing solely on bottom-up approaches that were created by non-governmental actors, it was observed that much can already be said about the ways that humanitarian innovations are presently changing the course of integration. The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were researches conducted by Betts et al. (2017), Ager and Strang (2010) and Sandvik (2017) and together, they aided in the understanding of the effectiveness and the sustainability of these initiatives.

In these terms, this thesis sought out to answer two research questions:

#1: How do 'humanitarian innovation' initiatives contribute to refugees' access to education and employment in the Netherlands?

In this inquiry regarding newcomers' access to education and employment within the Netherlands, in summary, five key aspects as to how humanitarian innovations contribute have been noted. These have been identified as conceptualizing and perceiving distortions, capitalizing on distortions, collaborating, customizing programs, as well as, changing the narrative.

In the discussion of how humanitarian innovation initiatives contribute, perhaps, the most significant finding of this research was that, the way that these initiatives perceive the distortions within the system is directly related to how they come up with solutions to bridge over these distortions. In other words, it is because of these distortions that humanitarian innovation initiatives exist. In this way, in line with the observations of Betts et al. (2014), these initiatives have capitalized on the imperfections of the system and engage in a market-directed approach towards these distortions.

Throughout the course of the interviews, a feature that was highlighted was on the notion of working together. This manifested itself in terms of monetary support through funding, the collaborations of initiatives, as well as, providing support within the initiatives themselves. Consistent with research, by Benton and Glennie (2016), was the finding that these innovations cater to newcomers where the government is unable to reach. Through the interviews, it has been observed that this is due to two aspects - funding within municipalities appeared to be a problem and, the existence of laws that the municipalities are subjected to. Due to this, it is thus observed that municipalities offer their support for initiatives especially so, for initiatives that are aimed at economic empowerment and language

learning of newcomers. This revealing that employment is considered to be a criterion of successful integration within the Dutch society. And as illustrated in the data amassed, newcomers' command of the Dutch language is a highly pertinent aspect in order for him or her to find employment. In these terms, the notion of support and power manifested themselves to be highly intriguing considering that, the participants noted that support from municipalities for their initiatives are politically charged.

The analysis showcased that, the most crucial element of this inquisition regarding newcomers' access to education and employment within the Netherlands was, on the fact, that these humanitarian innovations initiatives offer a means for the rethinking of how newcomers are perceived in wider society. In the consideration of the position that the Netherlands, as a whole, takes regarding the integration of newcomers, it is observed that newcomers are indeed active members within the Dutch society- these are consistent with the arguments that Betts et al. (2014) present. This notion has been elucidated, particularly, in Section 4.2 Newcomers are stakeholders, too. Newcomers themselves play a significant role in the proliferation of the humanitarian innovation initiatives. Accordingly, I contend that, what is most significant regarding the contributions towards employment and education is, the implied underlying message.

Regarding the second research question that this thesis sought to answer:

#2: To what extent, and how, do humanitarian innovations make use of digital media to foster refugee integration through education and employment?

Regarding the use of digital media to foster the integration of newcomers through education and employment, it was apparent that the use of digital media was used in conjunction with physical efforts. And together, they were observed in the means of engaging participants, newcomers and businesses alike, to partake in their programs, coordinating their programs, as well as, digitally collaborating by way of providing licensing to other initiatives.

In the data amassed, there seemed to be a general consensus that, despite the knowledge of how digital technologies can possibly contribute to the proliferation of humanitarian innovation efforts to cultivate the integration of newcomers, thus far, physical efforts are still preferred. In the cases where digital technologies are met with high optimism, with the exception of the Newbees partnership with TakeCareBNB, it was noted that these humanitarian innovations appear to be in the preliminary stages of trying out how and what digital media can offer to their current programs.

5.1 Implications

I think of these programs much like the story of the starfish on the beach. You have a beach full of starfishes and, starfishes they die if they are not in the water. You throw one back, it makes no difference, in general, but it makes a difference for the starfish. And that's the only thing that I can do [...] I've been doing it for 12 years now and, if you count them over the years, it's a lot of starfishes. So, it does give me hope. (Jillian)

In the understanding of how humanitarian innovations play a role in the proliferation of newcomers' access to education and employment within the Netherlands, Jillian's words above echo through.

Considering that there are inconsistencies between the laws that permit newcomers to work and the realities of the labor market (Kortese, 2017), it is of importance to place attention to how these initiatives can and continue to aid in the gainful employment for newcomers. As highlighted in the interviews, a lot of it stems from the fact that "media is problem-driven" (Nate). The warped stories told about newcomers, as well as, the stereotypes in the media generates cultural isolation that has consequences on labor market integration. For this, the very presence of these humanitarian innovations, as well as, their efforts are key to changing the narrative of the 'single story' told of newcomers. Accordingly, throughout this research, attention has been given to the notion of how 'newcomers are stakeholders' is a topic of migration. In these terms, it is noted that the implications of these initiatives are greater than merely access to education and employment as, they not only contribute to access but also, to change the narrative.

In line with the multi-actor perspective raised in earlier chapters of this research, it is clear that the strength of this research lies in ability to garner responses from experts in field from all walks of life – from different spectrums of humanitarian innovation initiatives and from different municipalities. And, from diverse backgrounds. By taking into account the various actors in the field of the migration issue, it provides opportunities for reflection, especially with regards to understanding the distortions and bridges to overcome these distortions from varied perspectives

In terms of the methodology employed in this research, it is noted that in-depth semi-structured expert interviews is in itself a dynamic means of research (Edwards & Holland, 2013b) which enables the researcher to cater to the nature of the interviews with participants. In these terms, it allowed for questions like "What is the day in a life of [participant's name] like?" to be asked which, shed light on the daily responsibilities of the participants within the organizations represented, that could not otherwise be attained by using other methods.

5.2 Limitations

Although the design of this thesis allowed for a holistic view on the multi-variate perspective of actors in the field of the issues of refugee migration, there were some limitations of this study that could be noted.

Firstly, although this research was based on the Randstad, it is noted that a large number of the participants interviewed are from the city of Amsterdam. As noted in the data, the context as to where each initiative is found plays a large role in the ways and means that it can garner support to proliferate. For such reasons, considering that the city of Amsterdam is notorious for its international climates, this could have played a part in the underlying positive consensus that these humanitarian innovation initiatives seem to have. Accordingly, the quality of this research could be vastly improved by taking into view humanitarian innovation initiatives from other regions of the Netherlands.

Secondly, considering the nature of qualitative methods, replicability of the research is impossible. This is but one of the limitations that come along with qualitative interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013b).

Thirdly, considering the subjective nature of qualitative methods, despite trying to maintain a neutral stance for the analysis of the data, the researcher's viewpoints might have altered the interpretations of the results.

Lastly, at this point, it is not possible to make wholesome statements regarding the ways in which these initiatives use digital media technologies. Through the data amassed, it was observed that the participants were able to comment upon, seemingly modest features regarding the use of digital technologies like, the ways in which social media is used to attract participants. Perhaps, future researches that want to explore on this very notion could focus on the interviewing of the developers who are in charge of the digital platforms of these initiatives.

5.3 Future considerations

Much research remains to be done on the notions of *refugee economies* and *humanitarian innovations*. And where possible, further research on these notions are needed.

The time frame in which this research took place posed as a sizable hurdle to gather participants, particularly with regards to the policy advisors and/or makers grouping. This can be attributed to the change of government within the municipalities that took place in May 2018. Consequently, for my research, it was difficult to reach out to participants of this grouping. Fortunately, for me, through personal connections and a sheer stroke of luck, I was able to get Mia and Nate as participants that constituted this grouping. In these terms, it is recommended for further research on a similar topic to note of the time in which these features may take place. In this sense, features that may affect the gathering of participants.

As noted in the earlier chapters of this thesis, the Netherlands has always been a nation that constantly changes its stance towards the integration of non-Dutch citizens. This point was also highlighted during the course of research – in that, the trends in which the Netherlands is taking towards the integration of newcomers is, once again changing. Considering that, the integration of newcomers is dealt with on a local level, differing from municipality to municipality, it would be interesting for future researches to follow the course of this research. In order to observe the trends that occur, especially so with regards to the support from municipalities for humanitarian innovation indicatives. These, as revealed earlier, are politically- charged.

Another means of research that could be highly interesting is to conduct a cross-study examination between different countries on the prevalence of humanitarian innovation initiatives and the ways in which digital media is used.

6 Bibliography

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7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A

Noting that the integration policies of asylum seekers and refugees fall under the subset of other immigration and integration policies within the Netherlands, some of the other notable immigration and integration policies were detailed and can be observed (See Table 3 below).

Decade	Policy
1970s	1976: Formation of the Advisory Committee on Research on Minorities (ACOM) 1979: The Labour of Foreign Workers Act
1980s	1983: Ethnic Minorities Policy 1985: Legalization of votes "... non-citizens at the local government level" (Scholten, 2011, p.717) 1987: Regulation on the Reception of Asylum Seekers (ROA)
1990s	Integration Policy 1992: New Admission and Reception Model for Asylum Seekers (NTOM) 1994: Conditional Residence Permit (VVTV) introduced 1994: Contourennota 1995: Labor of Aliens Act 1998: Newcomers' Integration Law/ <i>Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers</i>
2000s	2000: The Aliens Act 2002: General elections in the Netherlands 2002: Integration Policy New Style 2005: The Integration Abroad Act/ <i>Wet inburgering in het buitenland</i> 2007: Interaction Act/ <i>Wet inburgering</i>
2010s	2015: Knowledge Platform on Integration Society 2015: Language Agreement 'Zet in Op Taal' ['Focus on language!'] 2015: 'Tel Mee met Taal' ['Be included with Language'] project 2015: Formation of the Task force for the Employment and Integration of Refugees (TWIV) 2015: Formation of the temporary Ministerial Committee on Migration 2016: Dutch Language Requirement Act 2016: Multi-track policy

Table 3: Some key policies surrounding immigration and integration within the Netherlands. The information from this table was gathered from Bruquetas- Callejo et al., 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2008; Ministry of Justice, 2004; Scholten, 2011; Seiffert & Wörmann, 2015; Vasta, 2007; University College London, n.d.

7.2 Appendix B: Interview guide for representatives from humanitarian innovations

The consent request form that this group was presented with is as follows:

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH STUDY
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

Title of Study: **Minding the Gaps: An inquiry of humanitarian innovations within the Netherlands**

Investigator: Anastasia Goana Go Ying Ying

Department: Media and Business

Contact Details: 480686ag@student.eur.nl or, +31628637427

Supervisor: Dr. Amanda Paz Alencar

DESCRIPTION

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research regarding (digital) platforms that deal with refugee integration. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The purpose of the study is to understand how humanitarian innovation startups contribute to refugees' access of education, housing and employment in the Netherlands. Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. Ultimately, this research will be part of a Master's thesis project and will be presented as a paper.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use a tape recorder for the interview. You are free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point. There are no reasonable foreseeable (or expected) risks. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information (such as, the name of the organization that you are linked to) not in the study. I will only use pseudonyms to identify participants. I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

BENEFITS

Your participation and honest answers will be highly appreciated as they may add great value to the growing literature on (digital) humanitarianism innovations and refugee studies. Since 2015, it is noted that, the EU refugee crisis has since shed light on the niche topic of refugee migration in Europe and the importance of new technologies in improving the lives of displaced people in various ways. The framework as developed by Ager and Strang (2010) has been applied to consider that three of the markers and means of education- housing, education and employability. I hope to be able to better understand the link between integration strategies, digital domains of integration and, refugee economies.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take approximately 60 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation *at any time* without penalty. Your decision will not result to any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS AND REPORT CONCERNS

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish— Dr. Amanda Paz Alencar, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

CONSENT

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, your recorded oral consent would be sufficient for this study.

If you do give consent to be audiotaped during this study, please state the following:

“I, (name, title, organization), give consent to be audiotaped during this study on (date and time)”

Should you wish, a copy of this consent form will be sent to you via email. Please inform the researcher if you would like to have this option.

Thank you.

After which, the recording of the interview commenced and the following questions were asked:

Part 1: Questions about the individual interviewed

1. Name, Gender, Age of the individual interviewed
2. Title, Organization, City represented
3. Could you briefly describe your position?
4. *Probe* What is a day in a life of (participant name here)?
5. *Alternative Probe* Could you tell me a little more about what you do?

Part 2: Questions about the initiative/ company in question

1. When did this company/ initiative start?
2. What was going on in the Netherlands/ Europe during that time?
3. Could you tell me about how the idea for the company came about?
4. Can you tell me how your program differs from others?
5. What have been some of the challenges thus far?

Part 3: Perceptions of Integration

1. What are your views on the current situation/ initiatives for integration within the Netherlands?
2. Would you say that there are differences for refugee integration?
3. *Probe* If so, how does this differ?
4. Would you say that the stance of the Netherlands towards refugee integration has changed, since you started working here?
5. *Probe* If so, how/ what changes have you observed?

Part 4: Refugee economies, specifically

1. What type of work is being done by local officials (government), NGOs, local community groups to ensure refugee economic integration?

Part 5: Situating initiatives within the system

1. Who are the individuals or people who are seen to be making all the decisions in this area?
2. Do you come in contact with them directly?
3. What policies and strategies are being implemented in this city?
4. What do you believe are the driving forces behind such efforts?
5. What are the factors that contributed to action on this issue?
6. What are your views on them?
7. What policies do you deal with directly for the creation of (insert initiative/company name here)?
8. What policies do you deal with directly for the maintenance of (insert initiative/company name here)?
9. Are there some highly memorable efforts that you can recall on the top of your head, right now?
10. *Probe* If so, could you tell me more about them?

Part 6: Refugees and Initiatives

1. What measures are put in place for refugees to find out about such programs?
2. Do you believe that your efforts are reaching all refugee populations?
3. If so/not, which groups are you targeting?

Part 7: Funding of initiatives

1. Does (insert initiative/company name here) have any partners?
2. What are the processes involved for a coding school to get funding from the Dutch government?

Part 8: Opinions and Looking into the future

1. Based on your experience, how do you evaluate the current systems put in place for individuals with such (digital) businesses to flourish?
2. *Probe* What changes would you make?
3. What kind of platforms do you think are needed? Or rather, what are the areas that are not yet addressed?
4. What are the expectations for the rest of 2018?
5. What are the expectations for the next few years?

Part 9: Asking for recommendations

1. Do you know about organizations that are using Internet applications aimed at improving the participation of refugees in their host society (e.g., participate in politics, access to welfare resources)?
2. If so, can you name them and briefly tell state your opinion about their contributions?

7.3 Appendix C: Interview guide for policy advisors

The consent request form that this group was presented with is as follows:

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH STUDY
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

Title of Study: **Minding the Gaps: An inquiry of humanitarian innovations within the Netherlands**

Investigator: Anastasia Goana Go Ying Ying

Department: Media and Business

Contact Details: 480686ag@student.eur.nl or, +31628637427

Supervisor: Dr. Amanda Paz Alencar

DESCRIPTION

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research regarding (digital) platforms that deal with refugee integration. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The purpose of the study is to understand how humanitarian innovation startups contribute to refugees' access of education, housing and employment in the Netherlands. Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. Ultimately, this research will be part of a Master's thesis project and will be presented as a paper.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use a tape recorder for the interview. You are free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point. There are no reasonable foreseeable (or expected) risks. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information (such as, the name of the organization that you are linked to) not in the study. I will only use pseudonyms to identify participants. I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

BENEFITS

Your participation and honest answers will be highly appreciated as they may add great value to the growing literature on (digital) humanitarianism innovations and refugee studies. Since 2015, it is noted that, the EU refugee crisis has since shed light on the niche topic of refugee migration in Europe and the importance of new technologies in improving the lives of displaced people in various ways. The framework as developed by Ager and Strang (2010) has been applied to consider that three of the markers and means of education- housing, education and employability. I hope to be able to better understand the link between integration strategies, digital domains of integration and, refugee economies.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take approximately 60 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation *at any time* without penalty. Your decision will not result to any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS AND REPORT CONCERNS

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish— Dr. Amanda Paz Alencar, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

CONSENT

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, your recorded oral consent would be sufficient for this study.

If you do give consent to be audiotaped during this study, please state the following:

“I, (name, title, organization), give consent to be audiotaped during this study on (date and time)”

Should you wish, a copy of this consent form will be sent to you via email. Please inform the researcher if you would like to have this option.

Thank you.

After which, the recording of the interview commenced and the following questions were asked:

Part 1: Questions about the individual interviewed

1. Name, Gender, Age of the individual interviewed
2. Title, Organization, Area/ District/ City represented
3. Could you briefly describe your position?
4. *Probe* What is a day in a life of (participant name here)?
5. *Alternative Probe* Could you tell me a little more about what you do?
6. How long have you been working as a Policy Advisor/maker for refugee integration?

Part 2: Perceptions of Integration

1. Which aspect of integration do you advise for?
2. What are the differences for refugee integration regarding policies within the Netherlands on a local, national and/or European policies?
3. Would you say that the stance of the Netherlands (both at the local and national levels) towards refugee integration has changed, since you started working here?
4. *Probe* If so, how/ what changes have you observed?
5. What are your views on the current situation/ initiatives for integration, in general, within the Netherlands?
6. Would you say that there are differences regarding initiatives/programs in the area of refugee integration?
7. *Probe* If so, how does this differ?

Part 3: Specificities of policy making/ advising

1. Have you been involved in the making/ shifting of policies since working here?
2. *Probe* Could you tell me a little more about them? If so, how/ what changes have you observed?
3. Who are the individuals/ what are the departments involved to be seen making all the decisions in this area?
4. What policies do you deal with directly?
5. Does your department have any funding specifically to address economic integration of refugees?
6. *Probe* Could you tell me more about them?
7. How is funding distributed and prioritized?
8. What have been some of the challenges in translating policy to practice?
9. I understand that there are different variations in the rules when it comes to policies, what policies and strategies implemented in this city are different than that of Rotterdam/Amsterdam/Den Haag/Utrecht?
10. What do you believe are the driving forces behind such differences?
11. *Probe* Why are there such (vast, if so) differences?
12. *Probe* What are your views on them?

Part 4: Specificities of (digital) humanitarian innovations X refugee economies

1. What are your views of policy makers/ advisors on the role of digital media in the management of migration and integration issues?
2. Let's say I am an individual with a digital platform/ digital solution that for refugee integration, what are some of the processes (registration, political, bureaucratic) that I would have to go through?
3. What are the stances of Dutch national government and municipalities regarding the implementation and funding of digital solutions/initiatives for supporting refugee integration?
4. How does the process of funding work?
5. Who can get funding?
6. What measures are put in place for businesses/ individuals with an idea to find out about such programs?
7. What measures are put in place for refugees to find out about such funding programs?
8. What type of work is being done by local officials (government), NGOs, local community groups to ensure refugee economic integration?
9. Do you believe that these efforts are reaching all refugee populations?
10. If so/not, which groups do you believe they are targeting?
11. Are these in line with the refugee groupings that the Netherlands, as a whole, tries to target in general?
12. Do you think different approaches are necessary?
13. Have you ever undertaken any special programs to try to reach refugees?
14. *Probe* How was this done?

Part 5: Opinions and Looking into the future

1. Based on your experience, how do you evaluate the current systems put in place for individuals with such (digital) businesses to flourish?
2. *Probe* What changes would you make?
3. What kind of platforms do you think are needed? Or rather, what are the areas that are not yet addressed?
4. What are the expectations for the rest of 2018?
5. What are the expectations for the next few years?

Part 6: Asking for recommendations

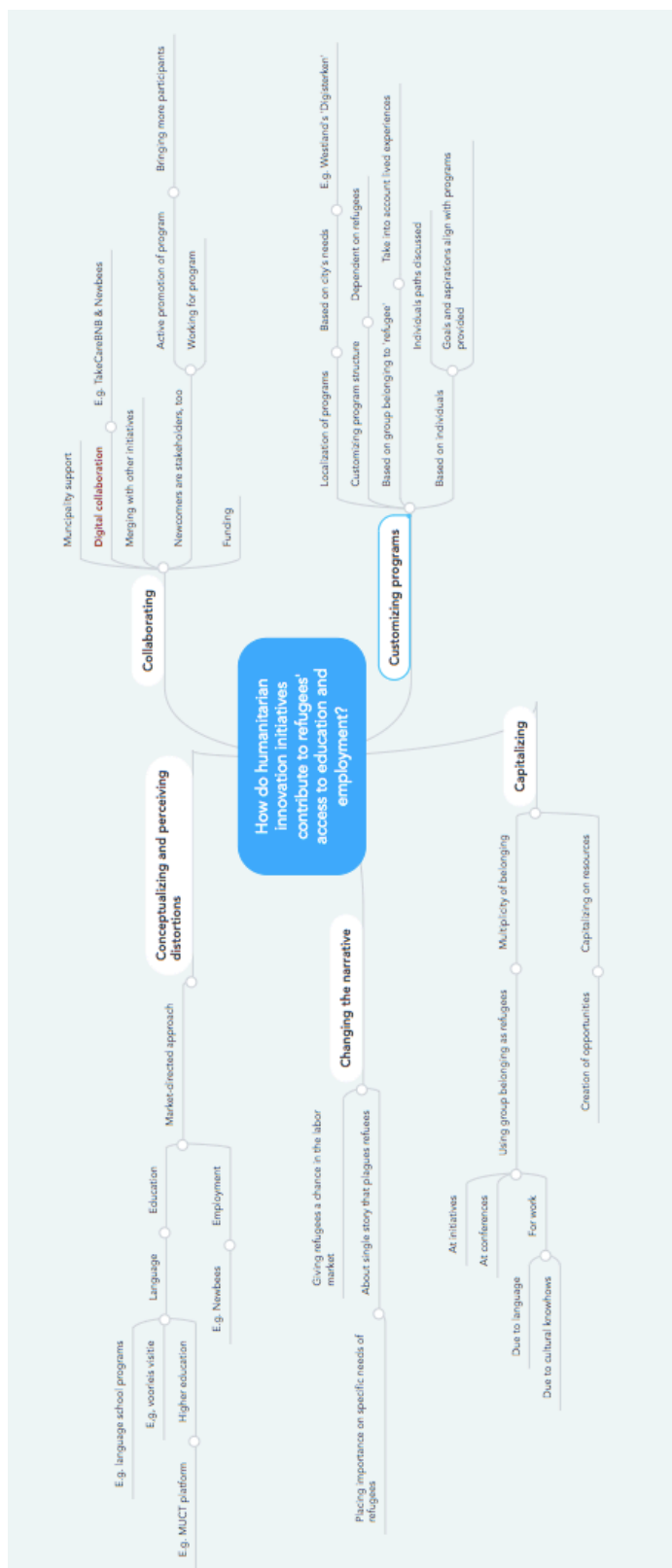
1. Do you know about organizations that are using Internet applications aimed at improving the participation of refugees in their host society (e.g., participate in politics, access to welfare resources)?
2. If so, can you name them and briefly tell state your opinion about their contributions?

7.4 Appendix D: Code list

Code	Sub-codes	Explanation
Capitalize	Capitalize - Refugees	Capitalize on the strengths of the refugees; Not passive actors in the field
	Capitalize – Gaps	
	Capitalize – Playing with words	Playing with words in terms of labeling things, classifying the initiative/organization to get the full benefit of the system in order to run program
Challenges		Challenges of the current program
Changing the narrative		How initiatives are changing the narrative about refugees, changing the ‘single story’ told
Context		Setting the context, the groundwork to understand why this is as such
Contribution		How initiatives contribute to refugees’ access of education and employment
	Contribution – Differ	How initiatives contribute: How they differ from others, in terms of their program offered
Customization	Customizing programs for refugees	Customizing programs for refugees
	Customize – Cultural	Extra attention for cultural aspects of refugees
	Customize – Individual	Extra attention for lived experiences
Digital	Digital – Participants	Use of digital technologies to attract participants
	Digital – Privacy	Privacy issues that come with digitization
	Digital – Program	Use of digital technologies- To run the program
	Digital – Social media	Attracting participants using social media; Social media use; Trust in social media
Focus	Focus – Initiatives	Focus on thriving aspect for initiatives
	Focus – Refugees	Focus on thriving aspect of refugees
Food for thought	Future implications	Features to reflect upon; Could be interesting for concluding remarks
Gaps	Perceived gaps in the system	Definition of the problem; Perceived gaps in the system
	Capitalize on gaps	Capitalizing on the gaps in the creation of their initiative
Government		Stance of government
Language	Command of language	Matters regarding language
Legally settled		Ensuring that the initiative discussed is for refugees who had settled legally
Localization	Local policies context	Reasons for differences in local policies, for instance. Setting the context to understand the differences in local policies
	Local – Efforts	Catering to local specificities. Infrastructure is dependent on the local situation of what each city demands
Market- directed approach		Market – directed approach of what is needed in the current system
	Approach: Education	Market- directed approach to education
	Approach: Employment	Market- directed approach to employment
Mass media representation		Representation of refugees in mass media

Money matters		Money matters
Perception of Integration		Importance of understanding how participants/ initiative perceives integration. Directly linked to how they come up with solutions
Rapport		Building rapport
Relevance of project		Why this project matters
Role		Participant's role/ duties
'Single story'		Taken directly from Adiche (2009) to refer to the discriminatory stories/ practices of refugees
	Changing the narrative – Single story	Refugees have a say too: Have a role in wanting/ not to partake in the initiative
	Multiplicity of roles	Multiple group belonging of individuals
	Multiplicity – Refugee population	More to the discriminatory story that is being told
Stakeholders	Stakeholders - Collaboration	Stakeholders coming together: Initiatives working and supporting each other
	Stakeholders – Funding	Monetary matters
	Stakeholders - Governmental	Support from municipality
	Stakeholders - Internal	Stakeholders coming together: Support also has to come from within the organization
	Newcomers are stakeholders too	Newcomers have the ability to decide if and whether they want to use a program/ initiative or not
Structure of program/ initiative		How programs are being run
	Structure- Customized for refugees	Structure of program is customized for refugees
Success		Measurement of success according to participants/ initiative
Target group		Target group of the initiative

7.5 Appendix E: Visualization of relations for RQ1



7.6 Appendix F: Visualization of relations for RQ2

