



## CASE STUDY



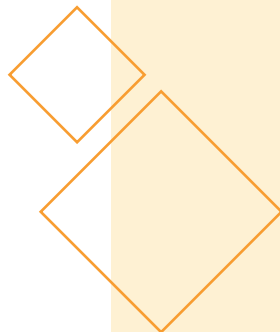
# Humanitas Multicultural: Language assistance for refugees

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Societal support and language assistance in Groningen, Netherlands, to help (former) refugees to integrate into Dutch society.

Humanitas was founded in 1945. Its goal is to help people, with the support of a volunteer, to change their situation by themselves. Humanitas operates within six themes: loneliness, loss, youth, parenthood, detention and financial/administrative aid. Divided over five districts in the Netherlands, some 22,000 trained volunteers support approximately 60,000 people every year. Humanitas' core values are:

- Respect for people's lifestyles;
- Equality;
- People taking responsibility for themselves and for others;
- Right to self-development.







## SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Societal support and language assistance in Groningen, Netherlands, to help (former) refugees to integrate into Dutch society.

## DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ORGANISATION

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## PROJECT

### What are the local social realities?

Thousands of people seek asylum in the Netherlands, fleeing the ongoing war in Syria and Iraq and the suppressive regime in, for example, Eritrea. These newly arrived immigrants do not

speak the language and have no idea of the culture and the norms and values of the Netherlands. In addition to the cultural aspect, the refugees do not know how bureaucracy in the Netherlands works.

### What are the specific innovative elements in your project/service?

Humanitas supports newly arrived immigrants for approximately three years. During this time, the volunteers do not "take over", instead, they cooperate with the refugees. The goal is that these people will become completely independent. In addition, Humanitas takes an interest in every individual. Everyone is different and everyone needs help in a different way. Humanitas provides help that meets each individual need.

### What are the key characteristics of the project/service?

#### Target groups

Newly arrived refugees.

#### Principles

Integration, Increasing independence, Participation in society.

#### Drivers

The support provided by (local) governments and professional social workers is insufficient. Furthermore, the period in which the support is provided is too short. Personal attention and the time invested by our volunteers are indispensable factors in the process of successful integration.

#### Outcome

The feeling of being welcome in the Netherlands that the refugees experience is perhaps the most important result of this project. Another impor-





tant result is that their contact with a Humanitas volunteer helps a refugee to build up his/her own, new, social network.

Can this project be transferred to a larger context (a bigger region, the whole country, EU-wide)? If so, what is necessary to transfer it (special structures, finances, common definition of standards...)? If not, why not?

Humanitas has already started a similar project in another municipality in the north of the country and the language support is already widespread. The essential factor for the success of a similar project is involvement by an NGO that works with volunteers and provides the necessary support, based on individual needs.

## CONTACT

### Website

[www.humanitas.nl/afdeling/Groningen\\_Stad/onze-activiteiten-2/multicultureel/](http://www.humanitas.nl/afdeling/Groningen_Stad/onze-activiteiten-2/multicultureel/)

### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/Groningenmulticultureel/](https://www.facebook.com/Groningenmulticultureel/)

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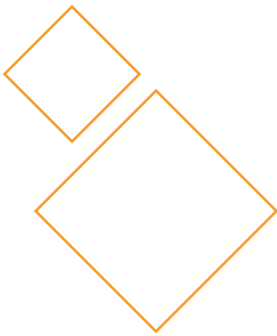




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SOLIDAR, together with our national members and partners, has developed 17 case studies in 2016, presenting innovative, effective, sustainable and tailor made models to promote social inclusion, the social economy and quality job creation by adapting a social investment approach. In their daily work, SOLIDAR members and partners anticipate new or unmet needs of socio-economically vulnerable people and empower them to actively participate in society and to access the labour market.

These case studies gather strong evidence of the social impact of the activities undertaken by our members and partners to help Member States making progress towards the achievement of the social and employment objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Social Investment Package.

SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.



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