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Just an activity or is it more?

A qualitative study on how informal activities contribute to the well-being of refugees – A case study of Welkom in Utrecht

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

In response to the large flow of refugees, multiple organisations were established to address the refugee problem in the Netherlands. Welkom in Utrecht [WiU] is such an organisation. By providing activities, WiU has the purpose to give refugees a feeling of being welcome in Utrecht. In the scientific field and society is usually focused on integration as aspect of the refugee problem. Current research has as purpose to get a deeper understanding about how WiU contributes to the well-being of refugees and as result to fill the gap of well-being as aspect of the refugee problem. Well-being is defined as psychological well-being [PWB]: the psychological state of balance that can be challenged by events of one's life. The six dimensions of PWB plus the resource-based model of migration adaptation form the theoretical basis of the research. The research question has been answered by conducting interviews among refugees and initiators. Results show that Positive Feelings, Social Contacts, Language and Participation & Sense of Belonging were the most important resources that refugees (want to) obtain from the activities of WiU. In that way, WiU contributes to the PWB of refugees. The research forms a possible basis for further research in the area of well-being as aspect of the refugee crisis. Moreover, it shows the importance of the existence of organisations such as WiU to assure the well-being of refugees.

Introduction

In 2015, almost 57000 refugees came to the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS], 2016). This number symbolises the large refugee flow that the Netherlands, like many other European countries, faced as result of the Syrian war. As a response, many refugee organisations were established to address the refugees' related issues. These organisations differ in how they help refugees and what kind of issue they want to address. For example, there are organisations that want to improve refugees' participation in the labour market with the ultimate goal to improve their integration in the Dutch society. Other organisations aim for the refugees' education by teaching them the Dutch language and getting them involved in the Dutch regular education systems. At last, there are organisations that connect demand and supply of informal activities. Welkom in Utrecht [WiU] is an example of such an organisation (Kennisplatform, integratie en samenleving, 2016). Dutch citizens are often suppliers - the initiators - of activities, while refugees are demanders - users - of activities.

During the large flow of refugees of 2015 a lot of Utrechters felt the urge to help the refugees who came to Utrecht (WelkomInUtrecht, 2018). In order to give these people a meeting place and a platform for sharing their ideas with each other, a group of people started a Facebook page. Nowadays, the group of people behind that Facebook page form an actual organisation called WiU, with the aim of connecting supply and demand of activities. When there is no supply of activities that refugees need, the organisation actively seeks for it by reaching out to promoters or organisations. In this way all types of activities are organised for refugees and in cooperation with refugees (WelkomInUtrecht, 2018). The organisation estimates that WiU has been in contact with 2000 refugees since its establishment in 2015.

Refugee organisations, such as Welkom in Utrecht, often have expectations about what impact their activities have on refugees. One of the expectations of WiU is that their activities have positive effects on the well-being of refugees. Well-being is often overlooked as an aspect of the refugee problem. In society there is usually more focus on the aspect of integration. The election programmes of last national political election reflect this. Both the political parties VVD and GroenLinks stressed the importance of good integration of newcomers in the Netherlands - "The integration of refugees is the responsibility of both the Dutch society and the refugees themselves" (GroenLinks, 2016); "Integration of newcomers is important so that they will be contributors to society instead of profiteers of society" (VVD, 2016). But well-being must not be overlooked, as it is indispensable for successful

integration. A lack of it could stand in the way of refugees' motivation or ability to learn new things that are necessary for successful integration, such as the Dutch language and –culture (Pharos, 2018; COA, 2015). Moreover, integration is of relevance for refugees that already received a residence permit, but not for refugees who are still awaiting the decision. Well-being on the other hand is of relevance for both of these groups.

In scientific literature there seems to be a strong focus on integration as well. Examples are: the comparison of integration processes of migrants between countries (Korac, 2003; Olwig, 2013); or studying what certain aspects, such as social capital, mean for the integration process of immigrants (Ives, 2007; Morrice, 2007).

While society and scientific research barely focus on the well-being of refugees, current research does. With a qualitative case focused nature, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how WiU contributes to the well-being of refugees. A qualitative research method suits this aim because it provides the opportunity to elaborate on the answers that respondents give, which makes it possible to discover the 'why's' and 'how's' that exist behind the answers. Also, the research will provide insight into the experiences and thoughts from a group in the society that normally is not easy to reach. Furthermore, by learning how WiU contributes to the well-being of refugees, recommendations can be provided to WiU or similar organisations, about how their activities can contribute to the well-being of refugees. Recommendations can also be made to policy makers who are concerned with the development of interventions and policies regarding refugees.

Theoretical Background

WiU offers activities to refugees. According to the organisation, those activities can be divided into seven categories. First, there is the category sport to which activities such as playing soccer with Utrechters belong. Second, there is the category creativity to which activities such as sewing- and painting workshops belong. Third, meeting people is a category to which activities such as cooking together belong. Fourth, the category language of which the activity *Taalcafé* is an example. This activity has language acquisition in an informal way as purpose. Fifth, the category culture to which activities such as attending theatre performances belong. Sixth, the category family trips such as visitations of theme parks such as the Efteling. Lastly, the category volunteer work. WiU provides refugees with the opportunity of volunteer work such as being a janitor at schools in Utrecht. With these activities WiU hopes to contribute to the well-being of refugees.

In scientific literature a broad range of definitions of well-being is provided (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Keyes, 1998). In the current research, the focus is on psychological well-being [PWB], because this concept suits best for social scientific research. PWB can be defined as a psychological state of balance which can be affected by challenging and awarding life events (Ryff & Singer, 2008). In other words, feeling comfortable in one's own skin. Ryff and Singer (2008) used multiple studies about PWB to define the six core dimensions of PWB. Dimension one is Self-Acceptance. This form of self-esteem means accepting one's own strengths and weaknesses. The second dimension concerns Positive Relationships and is about the importance of love, affection and empathy for someone's PWB. Personal Growth is the third dimension and refers to the importance of staying challenged as a person with a continuous development of one's talents as goal. The fourth dimension concerns Purpose in Life which means having directedness in life and being actively engaged with events in life. Next, there is Environmental Mastery, one's power to create or find an environment that feels comfortable to live in. The last dimension concerns Autonomy, which is about being able to live a life independently of others (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Together these dimensions form someone's PWB.

People need to have certain resources in their life to meet these six dimensions of PWB. By way of illustration, education can be a resource for people to meet the dimension of Personal Growth because it helps people to develop their talents. This applies for people in general (Ryff & Singer, 2008). However, the current research concerns refugees and they are special in the sense that they have fled to the Netherlands and therefore have left their resources or the value of these resources behind. That is what the resource-based model of migration adaptation by Ryan, Dooley and Benson (2008) implies and it is therefore introduced as an addition to the six dimensions of PWB. To illustrate, a refugee might have completed a study program in the home country. This resource, however, is not of value in the Netherlands as long the refugee does not speak the Dutch language and so cannot meet the dimension of Personal Growth. So, the resource-based model forms an important addition to the six dimensions of PWB in terms of that refugees other than ordinary people need to replenish the resources they normally need to meet the six dimensions of their PWB (Ryan et al., 2008).

The activities of WiU probably aim to replenish the resources that refugees need to meet the six dimensions of PWB. Resources that WiU replenish can be based on what WiU aims to achieve with the activities. Broadly speaking, WiU has proposed three aims to be met with their activities. The first one is to get the refugees' minds off of daily struggles such as

the uncertainty of receiving residence permit. Furthermore, the activities should help them to connect with others, especially with Dutch citizens. Finally, the activities should help refugees with participating in the Dutch environment. This can occur, among other things, by means of the social contacts they establish through the activities (WelkomInUtrecht, 2018). These goals can be captured in the resources – Distraction & Relaxation; Social Contacts; Participation & Sense of Belonging.

Distraction & Relaxation

A creative activity such as a painting workshop is an example for an activity that provides the resource of distraction and relaxation. Such an activity is aimed at what refugees like to do to experience distraction and relaxation. A painting workshop is an example, but any other activity of WiU can provide distraction and relaxation just depending on what refugees choose to do to get distracted and relaxed. According to the study of Ramirez and Matthews (2008) refugees simply want to have fun sometimes. A component of this study is a meeting between the researchers and refugee youngsters in which the refugees rather liked the meeting to be a moment of forgetting about the difficulties in their lives and think about the fun ones (Ramirez & Matthews, 2008). The activities of WiU can offer these kind of moments to refugees. A study from Australia into the effect of sport- and recreational activities on refugees supports the idea that these kind of activities that involve fun, relaxation and challenge have psychological and social benefits as result (Olliff, 2008). Examples are higher self-esteem, making social contacts and building trust between people (Olliff, 2008). So, relaxation seems to be a resource for self-esteem. Self-esteem is an element of the dimension Self-acceptance. People with self-esteem are more likely to accept themselves (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Aside from that, being involved together in an activity that provides relaxation results in social contacts and trust between people, these are components of the dimension Positive Relationships (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Moreover, being distracted by an activity means being engaged with an activity. This engagement with activities in life makes someone actively engaged with their own life. Actively being engaged in life is a component of the dimension Purpose in Life. In that sense distraction can be a resource for refugees to this dimension of PWB. Finally, being able to fill one's own life with activities that provide relaxation and distraction is having power to create an environment that one likes to live in. This concerns the dimension Environmental Mastery (Ryff & Singer, 2008). In conclusion, relaxation and distraction can be used by refugees as resource to meet multiple dimensions of PWB.

Social Contacts

Activities that provide the resource social contacts can for example be meetings of Arabic women or an Eritrean food party. In those activities refugees connect with each other but also with Dutch citizens who are present during these activities as well. These two activities are not the only ones that provide the resource social contacts. In fact, all the activities of WiU provide refugees with this resource. According to the literature there exist two forms of social contacts, which are social bridges and social bonds (Ager & Strang, 2008; Putnam, 2001; Korac, 2003). Social bonds are the social connections that refugees have among the own community, while social bridges are social connections that refugees have outside the own community. Social contacts can be a direct resource to the dimensions of PWB in terms of meeting the dimension of Positive Relationships (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Indirectly social contacts contribute to the PWB of refugees by being a bridge to other resources. This probably mainly occurs through the social bridges that refugees have. Connections with the Dutch people can for example help them with education in terms of providing them with information about where to start to get involved in a study program. Education functions for people as a resource for Personal Growth by developing (already existing) talents. The possession of talents works positive for the self-esteem and therefore also meets the dimension of Self-Acceptance. Moreover, social contacts can be a resource for finding a job. A job provides people with an income. Having an income makes it easier to create an environment that feels comfortable to live in. In other words, Environment Mastery. Finally, education and work are both resources for Autonomy, because being able to rely on own strengths or an income means being independent of others (Ryff & Singer, 2008). To conclude, social contacts is both a direct and an indirect resource for refugees to meet several dimensions of PWB.

Participation & Sense of Belonging

Activities of WiU provide refugees directly with the resource of participation in the sense that participating in activities that are present in society, is a form of participation. Moreover, WiU gives refugees the opportunity to do volunteer work, which is a form of participation as well. Aside from directly, WiU also provides refugees indirectly with the resource of participation. To illustrate, social contacts that refugees establish through the activities is a form of connection with the Dutch society and helps them to understand the society. As result, it is easier for refugees to participate in the society. Participating in society is a form of actively engaging with life and it gives directedness to one's life. In that way participation can be a resource for refugees to meet the dimension Purpose in Life (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Furthermore, through social contacts and participation the activities of WiU provide refugees

with the resource sense of belonging. On micro level social connections make them feel belong to certain social groups in society, while on macro level social connections and participation give them a sense of belonging to the Dutch society. Sense of belonging means identification with the group to which one belongs. According to the Social Identity Theory, identification with a group is part of someone’s self-image (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). So, in that way sense of belonging creates self-esteem and in that way it is a resource for refugees to meet the dimension Self-Acceptance. Together, participation and sense of belonging form a resource for multiple dimension of PWB and contribute in that sense to the PWB of refugees.

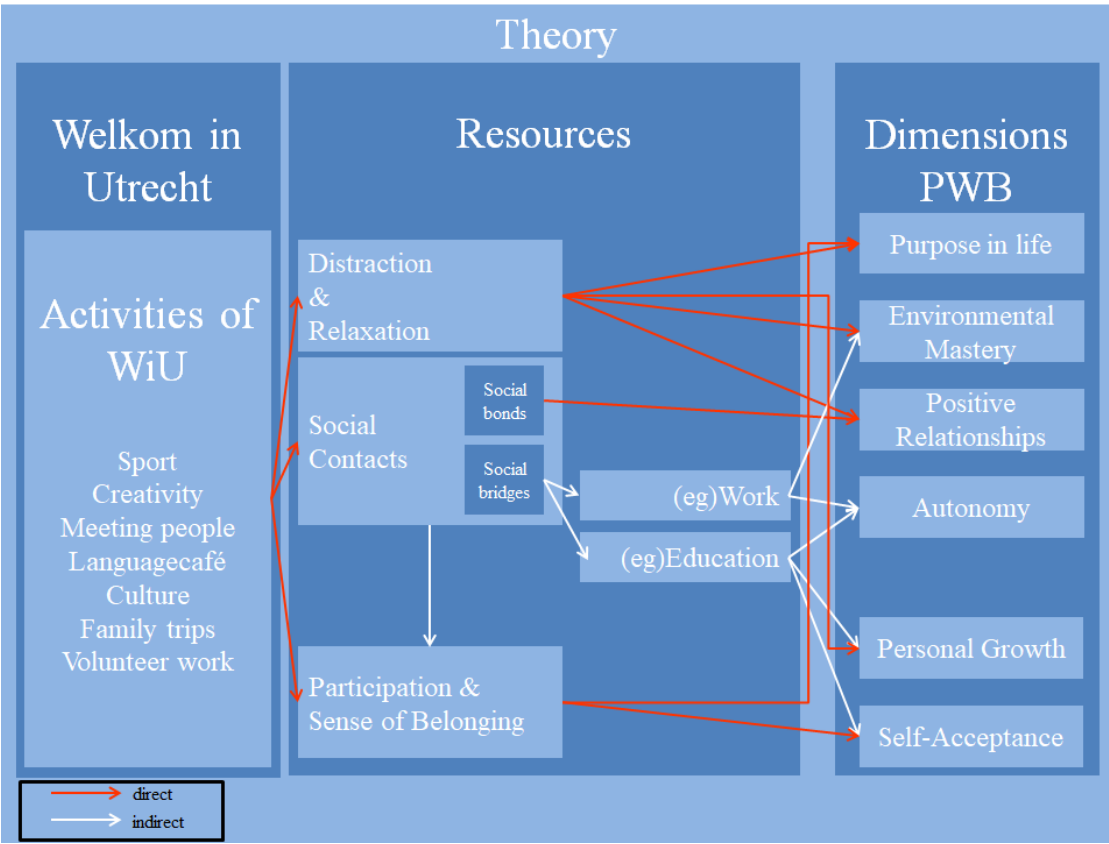


Figure 1. Model of Theory

Empirical Research Question

The current research attempts to answer the following research question:

“How do activities of WiU, through replenishment of resources, contribute to the Psychological well-being of refugees?”

The expectation is that activities contribute to the PWB of refugees through the replenishment of the resources Distraction & Relaxation, Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging. These resources can be used by refugees to meet the six dimensions of PWB (see figure 1). However, this list of resources is not exhaustive because it is based on what WiU thinks their activities offer to refugees. So, aside from these resources the research aims to leave the door open for any other resource that refugees obtain from activities to meet the dimensions of PWB.

Methods

Participants

The research population consisted of two groups. First, the refugees who (did) participate in the activities. In order to get a deeper insight into how activities contribute to the PWB of refugees it was important that the sample consisted of refugees who knew WiU. Therefore WiU was used as gatekeeper to approach the refugees for the sample. To avoid a selection bias as much as possible, initiators were also used as gatekeepers to the refugees. Plus, some refugees were approached by random choice by the researcher herself during activities. Finally, a heterogeneous sample as possible was composed by letting the sample- and data collection processes cross each other. The gathered data and characteristics of the first respondents determined the subsequent respondents. Eventually 15 refugees have been interviewed with an average age of 31,1. 11 of them were male. Nine came from Syria, one from Burundi, one from Afghanistan, one from Kenya, one from South Sudan, one from Iraq and one from Egypt. The majority of the respondents was Syrian, because this is the biggest subgroup of the refugee population that lives in Utrecht. Ten interviews were in English, four in Dutch and one in Arabic by means of an interpreter. In the sample both status holders and non-status holders were included, because both form the target group of WiU¹.

¹ Exact ratio not available, because has not been asked because of sensitive subject. But sometimes respondents spoke about it, during or outside the interviews.

The second group consisted of initiators. Initiators are on the supply side of the activities. They not only initiate the activities, but also participate in them. So, they were able to provide an objective perception of the topic which is still relevant because they are also in contact with the refugees. Their objective perception plus the self-reflective perception of refugees formed together a dynamic image of the research topic. Before the sampling, conversations were held with some initiators. These initiators were set by a contact list from the database of WiU. As result, initiators who would be relevant for the research in terms of complementary were indicated. Also, a most heterogeneous group of age, gender and, most important, activities they initiate could be sampled. The sample consisted of 3 women and 2 men with an average age of 35. Four of them were initiators of the activities paint workshop, sewing- and handcraft workshop, soccer and Taalcafé. The fifth respondent worked as volunteer for WiU and co-initiated multiple activities.

Procedure

The aim of the research was to get a deeper understanding of how WiU contributes to the PWB of refugees. Based on theory the expectation was that WiU contributes to the PWB of refugees through replenishment of the resources Distraction & Relaxation, Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging. However, this list is not exhaustive and there can also be other resources that refugees replenish with the activities of WiU. A qualitative research method and the use of semi-structured interviews as data collection method made it possible to achieve both a deeper understanding of the research topic and to discover other possible resources than the ones on the list. This would not be possible with a quantitative research method because then respondents have to frame their answers to the answer options of predetermined questions.

The interviews took about 40 to 70 minutes. During the interview with the only Arabic speaking respondent, an interpreter attended. This interpreter was a contact of WiU. The use of an interpreter was a risk to the internal validity, because there was a chance that the interpreter did not interpret properly. Plus, the interpreter was someone of the same cultural group as the respondent that could have caused social desirable answers from the respondent's side, because the presence of someone from the same culture stimulates to give answers that are considered as culturally right. However, the involvement of non-English/Dutch speaking respondents also contributed to the collection of rich data. During some interviews it became clear that the respondents spoke English or Dutch worse than previously thought. This problem was solved by explaining questions in a different way and with the help of Google Translate. The interview locations differed from the asylum seeker centres [ASC] of

Einsteindreef and Joseph Haydnlaan to someone's house or workplace. The interviews have been recorded by means of audio equipment, which made it possible to transcribe the interviews later on. For the protection of the respondents, an informed consent letter, available both in Dutch and English, was provided to the respondents at the start of the interview. After the respondents had read the letter, the content was repeated to them to make sure they understood everything and were able to make a grounded choice about their participation in the research. The conduction of the interview and the recording of the audio started only after the respondent gave his/her permission by signing the informed consent letter (see appendix 1).

Instrument

The interviews were conducted by means of a topic list (see appendix 2). The topics were determined by the three resources Distraction & Relaxation, Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging. But, to make sure that new data about the research subject was collected as well, another topic involved an open question about what refugees think the activities provide them with. Plus, the answers of the respondents determined the topics that were discussed. This means that Distraction & Relaxation, Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging were not always discussed. They only functioned as suggestions of resources when respondents were short on answers or insecure about their answer on the question what refugees think the activities provide them. In addition, there were questions about how they know WiU and which activities they have visited. The topic list of the initiators was similar to the one of the refugees, except for some questions about their reasons for and expectations about the activities they initiate. Plus, of course the questions concern their observations about the refugees and not about themselves.

Analysis strategy

The previously transcribed interviews were analysed by means of the software Nvivo. This software makes it possible to code the different interviews. Coding is a process in which relevant parts of the interviews will be subdivided into different (sub)categories. The established categories before starting the analysis were the from the on theory based resources Distraction & Relaxation; Social Contacts; Participation & Sense of belonging and the activities of WiU. During the analysis language was added as a category and it became clear that Distraction and Relaxation could be transformed in a subcategory of the category Positive Feelings. Also, Participation and Sense of Belonging could be turned into subcategories of the categories Language and Social Contacts. The subcategories existed of reasons for or consequences of the resources. The subcategories of the category Activities of WiU were

formed by the different kinds of activities. All (sub)categories are displayed in a code book (see appendix 3).

Results

The resources that refugees (want to) obtain from the activities of WiU were captured by two main questions: *'What do you need?'* / *'what do refugees need?'* and *'what are for you reasons to go to these activities?'* / *'what are reasons for refugees to go to these activities?'* Answers of respondents on both questions were usually *'that is different for everyone'* or *'depends on the person'* followed by *'but personally for me the following is important...'*. Despite the fact that according to them the resources personally differ, similarities between the respondents' answers have been observed. These similarities can be captured in the original resources Distraction & Relaxation; Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging with some adjustments. One adjustment is the extension of Distraction & Relaxation to Positive Feelings. The other is the addition of education, work, connection with the Dutch society and language as other resources (see figure 2). The decision for doing so will be argued during the remaining part of this results section.

The results also show that the observations from initiators and refugees about the resources that activities provide refugees with, correspond with each other. Plus, the resources that initiators intended to provide refugees with, correspond with the resources that refugees say they (want to) obtain from the activities.

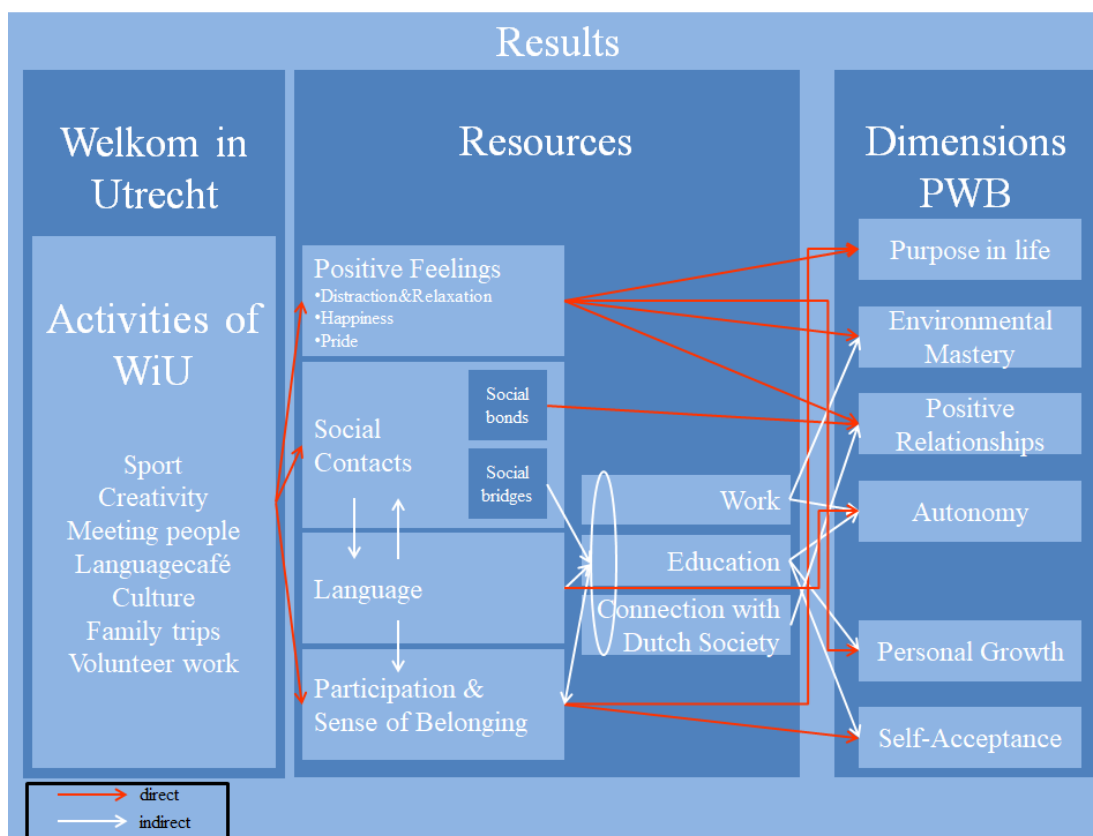


Figure 2. Model of Results

Distraction & Relaxation

According to the respondents all activities provide refugees with Distraction & Relaxation. In fact, this resource is for them one of the reasons to attend the activities of WiU in general. Still, when talking about distraction and relaxation some activities were mentioned in specific such as playing soccer and trips to theme parks as Slagharen. Another example, every month REF06¹ attends a cook evening where she meets women from all sorts of nationalities, including Dutch. The Syrian woman says the following about it,

“I yeah. Like uhh, yeah we can go and enjoy like three hours we stay sometimes. And I forget what I have here, the stress, everything... I don't think about it, we just think about sitting, cooking, praten². I don't know we forget it for 100% but we have beautiful time.” (REF06)

¹ REF refers to a refugee

² Talking

Similar to REF06 many respondents¹ indicate that refugees have a hard life when living in the ASC. Ingredients of such a hard life are living with many people, having lack of privacy, being bored because of having much free time and experiencing stress from, among others, awaiting the asylum procedure. That is why getting out of the ASC, filling free time and forgetting about the difficulties of life are frequently indicated as reasons to attend the activities of WiU. Relaxation and distraction are what they need to experience something else than stress and to forget about it for a moment. Filling free time with activities that provide relaxation is a weapon against getting bored. In other words, for refugees these activities are a way to give purpose to their lives again. That refugees need purpose in their life is mainly indicated by initiators. IN02² gives an example of a Syrian man who had lost everything and for whom the painting workshop was something to hold on to, to get through the weeks. The weekly moments offered him some hours of peace through which he could focus on the painting and forget about the difficulties of his life for a moment. Also, IN01 tells about a female refugee who really needed this activity of sewing to get structure back in her life again. REF06 says that having a variety of fun activities during the month makes her life more complete. When looking in her agenda she sees it filled with activities that are different from the standard activities of work and bringing her daughter to school. So like the previous two examples, the activities make her weeks interesting again because of a variety of activities that generate relaxation and make her forget about stress. So as a result of these activities, refugees regain purpose in their lives again.

Activities have a certain atmosphere that make refugees relax. According to the refugees, getting away from the context of the ASC is one of the activities' components that stimulates relaxation and distraction. During their activities, IN01 and IN02 both have the intention to create a safe and comfortable environment in which refugees can be themselves and feel relaxed. In addition, the people who organise the activities and their attitude are determining for whether an activity works relaxing or distracting. REF12, an African man, compares the people of COA and WiU on these terms. The perception that refugees have of COA is already negative because of COA's role in the asylum procedure. Moreover, people of COA are under contract, so refugees suspect them of organising activities to benefit from it themselves. In contradiction, the refugees' perception of the people from WiU is still unaffected, because they are new to them. Plus, WiU has a volunteer image, which makes refugees believe that WiU organises the activities purely to help them. REF01, a Syrian man,

¹ Refers to both initiators and refugees

² IN refers to an initiator

shares this opinion. He says that an activity works successfully when it is organised from the heart instead of gaining from it and that is what WiU does. Another good thing is that WiU offers refugees space to make up their own activities. As example, a soccer activity. WiU facilitates in the location and materials, but the rules and how long they play are up to the refugees themselves, implies REF12. IN03, a volunteer with WiU, provides the Eritrean dinner party as an example. WiU wanted to organise something for the Eritrean refugees and let them decide how the activity would be like. An Eritrean dinner party in which women cooked dinner and men talked and drunk together, was the result. WiU facilitated the room plus the food and drinks. In other words, refugees have the opportunity to choose or to create an activity that they like. Subsequently, this gives them the power to create an environment that consists of activities that provide them with relaxation and distraction, which concerns Environmental Mastery.

So, activities provide refugees with Distraction & Relaxation. Refugees need that because of the difficulties they experience in life and it contributes to their PWB by meeting the dimensions Purpose in Life and Environmental Mastery. But, the findings show that activities also provide refugees with other sorts of resources that correspond with distraction and relaxation in terms of that they are positive feelings as well. Examples of these positive feelings are happiness and pride. For example, REF09, a young Syrian woman, says that she gets a happy feeling from the activities of WiU, because she can do things that she likes such as drawing and because she meets new nice people. In addition, discovering their talents while doing something that they like such as makes them feel proud.

“Some of them didn’t want to come out of bed. A bit of adolescent behaviour. But when we went ice-skating with them, there was one or two of them. One could really good, yes he learned fast. ... First he said I cannot ice-skating nah, nah, nah (grumbling) and then he said ah but actually I am much better than I thought. I am going to do it again. So that someone discovers his own talent and gets more confidence was very nice to see.”¹ (IN03)

Such a feeling of pride contributes to someone’s self-esteem, so this feeling is a resource to the dimension Self-Acceptance. Plus, discovering and developing talents is a form of Personal Growth. All this results in the suggestion that the earlier established resource Distraction &

¹ Citation translated from Dutch as literally as possible, any grammatical errors have been removed

Relaxation can better be expanded with the feelings of happiness and pride, to a new, more overarching, resource Positive Feelings.

Social contacts

According to the findings, every activity is somehow related to the facilitation of social contacts. They only differ in whether it is the main aim or a side aim of the activity. The Arabic ladies night for example, a meeting between Dutch- and Arabic women while playing all kinds of games with each other, is clearly aimed at facilitating social contacts. In contradiction, Taalcafé has language acquisition as aim, but *'Meeting with people'*, *'talking with people'*, *'making fun with people'* are also mentioned as products of the activity. Be it the main aim or be it a side aim, refugees consider social contacts as one of the most important reasons for attending the activities of WiU, as they consider building up a social network as one of the first needs when starting a life in a new country.

As the data show, refugees have two kinds of social contacts. One is with people from outside their own community (social bridges), like Dutch citizens. The other one is with people from their own community (social bonds), to which both people within the ASC and people with the same culture/language are considered. In line with the theory, the two types differ in being practical- or emotional of nature.

The social bridges that refugees form are rather practical of nature. First, for refugees it is important to have social contact with Dutch people so that they can practice and learn the Dutch language. Second, Dutch contacts help with education. REF02, a Syrian young woman, tells that WiU introduced her and her sister to a Dutch- Moroccan student who explained them about the Dutch education system, which helps them to continue their education. REF10 tells that a Dutch contact helps him with his Master application. Third, Dutch contacts help with work. REF12 got a job through Dutch people he met during Taalcafé, REF13 got help from Dutch people for a right set-up of his curriculum vitae. Last, Dutch people help refugees to connect with and learn about the Dutch society. To illustrate, Dutch people bring refugees to places where they otherwise would never come such as the Central Museum. Theme parks such as Slagharen would be too expensive and they would not know how to get there and about King's Day they do not know what the event entails. Moreover, refugees want to connect with Dutch people to show them who they really are, so that Dutch realise that the stereotypes they have about refugees are not accurate. According to REF08 and REF11 to participate and feel comfortable and at home in a country a person needs to be accepted by the country's original citizens. So, social bridges are important for language, education, work and connection with the Dutch society. Education is a form of Personal Growth. Moreover,

developing one's talents increases self-esteem, which contributes to Self-Acceptance. Both work and education can be resources for Autonomy and Environmental Mastery, because of being able to rely on an income and knowledge, which help to create an environment that one feels comfortable in. Acceptance by Dutch people, which is a component of connection with the Dutch society, stimulates Positive Relationships.

The social bonds that refugees have are rather emotional of nature. Many respondents mention that having an emotional bond with someone of the own community is easier than with a Dutch person. Both REF03 and REF04, two young Syrian men, do not have Dutch friends yet, because according to them not sharing a same language and culture stands in the way of it. REF13, a young Syrian man, compares connecting with fellow Arabic people and connecting with Dutch citizens with each other.

“When they speak Arabic, when refugees speak Arabic and they are Arabic, they are able to understand me faster than a Dutchman, in two sentences they are able to understand everything about me, about my mind”¹ (REF13)

So, a refugee will sooner reach a deeper level of understanding with someone of his own community than with a Dutch citizen and that makes their social bonds seem to be rather emotional of nature than their social bridges are. Social bonds, in that sense, contribute to the dimension Positive Relationships.

However, the two kinds of contacts do not differ from each other like black and white in terms of the practical- or emotional nature, since the connections with Dutch citizens are not practical only. As example, REF02 tells that her Dutch connections showed even more compassionate emotions than the contacts from her own community did when she told about receiving the permission to stay in Utrecht. Like connections with Dutch people can also be emotional of nature, connections within one's own community can also be practical of nature. REF01 tells, for example, that he stays in contact with people from the ASC to help them to acclimatize to Dutch society. Plus, multiple refugees work as volunteer for WiU and help other refugees through this. To conclude, practical- and emotional relationships can exist both with people from outside- and from the own community. They only differ in gradation of occurrence.

¹ Citation translated from Dutch as literally as possible, any grammatical errors have been removed

Another characteristic of a social contact is whether it is reciprocal or not. This especially applies to the relationships between refugees and the Dutch. In a reciprocal relationship the Dutch person and refugee benefit equally from the relationship. The thoughts about this are divided. Some refugees say that relationships with Dutch people often start with the Dutch person offering help to the refugee but later grow into a friendship. REF11, an African man with a family, says as long as people have a starting point together, a relationship can grow into a friendship. Still, REF02 recognises the fact that they as refugees need the Dutch people sometimes more than the Dutch people need them. Dutch people come to an activity because they think refugees are interesting and then go back home to their already established network, while the refugees need these Dutch people to build up a social network in a strange country. Similar, REF07 tells about a Dutch man who misused the connection they had together.

“I was, I was introduced with someone. I told that we became friends...but later I noticed that he is doing that friendship to gain something for the organization that he is working.” (REF07)

However, practical or emotional, reciprocal or not, having social contacts is important according to an African man who works at a Dutch government agency.

“Connect with people, this is source for happiness. Believe me, this is source for happiness. Connection with people.” (REF05)

The activities make it easier for them to get in contact with other people than when they meet people just on the streets, according to the respondents. That is because of that people in certain activities share a common goal of talking together, such as in the Central Museum. This especially applies for refugees who live in the ASC who do not meet Dutch people that often, but through the activities can. This is also the case for connecting with other refugees. REF12 tells that about four months he and his neighbours barely said ‘Hi’ to each other. But through a soccer activity, organised by WiU, they end up talking and this seemed to be needed as starting point for getting in more in touch with each other. This is in line with the intention of IN04 to make people connect with each other by means of playing soccer. In addition, another initiator thinks that an activity in which there is no pressure for conversation works very stimulating for people to talk. For example, people who are busy with a piece of handcraft experience less pressure to talk, which gives a conversation the

opportunity to grow naturally. Moreover, an occupation can form a simple subject to talk about.

The finding that refugees have both social contacts with Dutch citizens and with other refugees make that social contacts contribute to the PWB of refugees through the dimension Positive Relationships. Moreover, Ref10, an African young man, and Ref13 both consider connections with Dutch people as something that is needed to develop themselves. When having no social contacts or having only social contacts within one's own community, they do not learn about new things. As result, people do not develop their talents. So in that way, social contacts can also be a resource to meet the dimension Personal Growth. This is the direct way of how Social Contacts can be a resource for refugees' PWB. But, there is also an indirect way in terms of that social contacts are for refugees a resource that can bring them other resources. Through the resources education, work and acceptance by Dutch the dimensions Personal Growth, Self-Acceptance, Environment Mastery, Autonomy and Positive Relationship are met. Learning the language has also been discussed as resource that social contacts generate. Other than education, work and acceptance by Dutch, language has also been mentioned as direct resource that refugees (want to) obtain from the activities. That is why Language is introduced as another paragraph.

Language

Learning the language was an important reason for refugees to have social contacts. But, learning the Dutch language also turned out to be one of the most important resources itself that refugees (wanted to) obtain from the activities of WiU. The importance of language became especially clear as Taalcafé was mentioned most as activity of WiU and was also considered as the most popular activity of WiU.

“This is I think the most successful program since I came here. It is now almost 8 months and it didn't stop and it is also every time a bigger number of people that came to the Taalcafé and it is very successful.” (REF02).

Taalcafé is an activity in which WiU facilitates the location and drinks. WelNu is the initiating organisation and arranges for teaching material and teachers (volunteers). The strength of Taalcafé is that it gives people space to practice the language in their own way and tempo. There is the opportunity to follow a lesson, but there is also simply the chance to talk while enjoying a drink like in a café. The nice and comfortable atmosphere of the Taalcafé invites to this end.

*“Taalcafé is very nice actually, it feels like I am with my family.”*¹ (REF03).

In short, Taalcafé is an activity in which learning a language and having fun come together, which possibly explain why it provides refugees good help with learning the language.

According to the respondents, learning the language is one of the first steps when starting a life in a new country. As support, IN05 considers language as fundamental to start a life in a strange country successfully. All these findings taken together form the reason to add Language as another resource. Similar to Social Contacts, Language forms directly and indirectly a resource to refugees' PWB. Directly, language contributes to the Autonomy of refugees because mastering the Dutch language makes them independent of interpreters. Indirectly, Language forms through other resources a resource to the dimensions of PWB. One of these resources are Social Contacts. REF05 says that sharing the same language is needed to understand each other. He even says that it would be good if Dutch people would learn Arabic, because when they do they are more able to understand the Arabic people and - culture. Also, language is needed to create social contacts that are at least of higher quality such as friendship. According to REF03 and REF13 not sharing the same language forms an obstacle for becoming real friends with someone. REF15, a man who only speaks Arabic, confirms this by saying that he can make some contact with Dutch people through gestures but more than that is difficult. During Taalcafé IN05 realised as well how important being able to communicate actually is for creating a connection with someone that goes further than just saying 'hello' and 'how are you'. So, in that way language is an important resource to meet the dimension Positive Relationships. However, not speaking the language does not always have to be an obstacle for social contacts. According to REF01 Dutch people are more interested in helping people who do not speak Dutch yet, because they are more in need of help to learn the language. Also, he provides an example of an Arabic family and a Dutch person who do not share a common language, but are still friends. Other resources concern education and work. For many respondents mastering the Dutch language is a first requirement for attending a study program or finding a job. To illustrate, enrolling in a study program at Utrecht University requires a B2 level of Dutch at all times, even though a person's level of English is sufficient. Another resource that language generates is connecting with the Dutch society. Sharing the language makes it much easier to participate in daily activities such as conversations, argues IN05. Plus, the language of the

¹ Citation translated from Dutch as literally as possible, any grammatical errors have been removed

Netherlands is Dutch, so one should speak Dutch just out of respect for the Dutch and their culture, even though they understand English too.

“When I talk Dutch, a person shows happiness. The reaction of her or him is good. But when I talk English, when I talk English they respond, but in Dutch they are happier and their reaction is better”¹ (REF04)

So, speaking the Dutch language achieves respect and acceptance from the Dutch. The resources education, work and connection with the Dutch society correspond with the resources that refugees obtain from the resource Social Contacts and so form in the same way resources for the dimensions Positive Relationships, Personal Growth, Environment Mastery, Autonomy and Self-Acceptance. So, Social Contacts and Language virtually connect with each other as they both generate the resources education, work and connection with the Dutch society. Plus, they generate each other.

Participation & Sense of Belonging

Visiting a Dutch theatre or theme park, celebrating Kings Day or (Dutch) Liberty Day provide refugees with the feeling that they participate in something typical Dutch and that gives them a sense of belonging. IN03 and REF01 both observed these things.

“People were very happy to participate in it, kind of proud, like we walk here, along in the parade.... That was really a kind of we are together, we stand here and we participate in something that is really Utrechts or something.... such a St. Maarten Parade is also something typical Dutch, I think”² (IN03)

“Yeah because when you want to go to some activities here in the city, and you can see in the park or these kind of events in the city many people are coming by themselves. But if you also want to bring some people from the AZC to bring to these kind of events with a group, it also will make them like feeling home. Because when they see they are doing the same what the Dutch people are doing” (REF01)

So letting refugees participate in typical Dutch activities is a direct way of the activities to provide them with Participation & Sense of Belonging. Other direct ways are activities as

¹ Citation translated from Dutch as literally as possible, any grammatical errors have been removed

² Citation translated from Dutch as literally as possible, any grammatical errors have been removed

Inclusion, which makes it possible for refugees with an academic background and a sufficient level of English to attend some academic courses within certain study areas, such as political- or social sciences. Regarding work, WiU gives refugees the opportunity to do volunteer work. REF03 is for example a graduated doctor who volunteers as ‘Healthy Lifestyle Coach’ with the organisation *Hart voor Sport* (Heart for Sport).

The following experiences are other examples for how activities of WiU provide refugees directly with Participation & Sense of Belonging. IN04 tells that when they are playing soccer at a field near to a local soccer club, trainers watch the refugees play and sometimes refugees end up playing with that soccer club. Similar, REF10 attended for a couple of times, some basketball activities organised by a local basketball club and now plays in one of the regular teams of the club.

Findings show that Social Contacts and Language stand not only in service of the refugees’ PWB, but also of Participation & Sense of Belonging. The reasons that respondents provide for the importance of having social contacts and sharing a same language indicate that eventually, the refugees eventually want to build up a new life in the Netherlands and make the country their new home. In other words, they want to participate in- and have sense of belonging to the Dutch society. Especially the resources that are generated by Social Contacts and Language reflect this. As education and work can be considered as forms of participation and connecting with the Dutch society as resource for having a sense of belonging.

So, by providing refugees with social contacts and language, activities of WiU also provide refugees indirectly with the resource Participation & Sense of Belonging. This can be linked to PWB in terms of that participating in- or contributing to -the society is a core component of the dimension Purpose in Life. Plus, sense of belonging is good for someone’s self-esteem and so a resource to the dimension Self-Acceptance.

Discussion

In the theoretical background the six dimensions of psychological well-being by Ryff et al. (2008) and the resource-based model of migrant adaptation by Ryan et al. (2008) have been introduced. The conclusion of those two models was that refugees other than ordinary people need to replenish the resources that they need to meet the dimensions of PWB. The activities of WiU replenish these resources and in that way contribute to the PWB of refugees.

Distraction & Relaxation; Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging were determined as the resources that the activities of WiU replenish. When applying the results to

this original list of resources, some adjustments can be observed. One adjustment concerns the resource Distraction & Relaxation. It appeared that this resource better could be considered as part of the umbrella resource Positive Feelings, since WiU not only provides refugees with distraction and relaxation, but also with other positive feelings such as pride and happiness. The other adjustment is the addition of education, work, connection to the Dutch society and language as other resources. Especially language turned out to be an important resource, since language has been mentioned most as one of the reasons for getting in contact with Dutch people. Plus, language has also been mentioned many times directly as resource that refugees (wanted to) obtain from activities of WiU. So, after integrating the results with the theory, the list of resources that refugees replenish through activities of WiU is as follows, Positive Feelings; Social Contacts; Language; and Participation & Sense of Belonging.

Each of these resources can be linked to the PWB of refugees through the different dimensions of Ryan et al. (2008). Positive Feelings is a resource to meet the dimensions Purpose in Life, Environment Mastery and Self-Acceptance. Social Contacts functions both as direct resource and indirect resource to meet the dimensions of PWB. Directly it forms a resource for the dimensions Positive Relationships and Personal Growth. Indirectly it forms, through the resources Language, education, work, connection with the Dutch society and Participation & Sense of Belonging, a resource for the dimensions Personal Growth, Autonomy, Purpose in Life, Self-Acceptance and Environmental Mastery. The resource Language relates to Social Contacts, because language is important for having social contacts and social contacts are important for learning the language. Same as Social Contacts, the resource Language functions as a direct and indirect resource for the dimensions of PWB. Directly it forms a recourse for Personal Growth and Autonomy. Indirectly, through Social Contacts, education, work, connection with the Dutch society plus Participation and Sense of Belonging, it forms a resource for Positive Relationships, Purpose in Life and Self-Acceptance. The last resource Participation and Sense of Belonging functions as direct resource to the dimensions Purpose in Life and Self-Acceptance.

By having determined the new created list of resources plus the findings on how these resources contribute to the PWB of refugees, the research question can be answered. *“How do activities of WiU, through replenishment of resources, contribute to the Psychological Well-being of refugees?”* WiU contributes to the Psychological Well-being of refugees through the replenishment of the resources Positive Feelings; Social Contacts; Language; and Participation & Sense of Belonging. These results partly correspond with the expectation of that Distraction & Relaxation, Social Contacts and Participation & Sense of Belonging are the

resources that activities of WiU replenish and that in that way WiU contributes to the PWB of refugees. The difference, however, is that Distraction & Relaxation had been transformed into the resource Positive Feelings and Language had been added as new important resource. Moreover, the results provide more extensive information about how resources, directly and indirectly, contribute to the PWB of refugees and why they are important to them. Plus, results show how the resources Social Contacts, Language and Participation & Sense of Belonging seem to relate to each other. Finally, it becomes clear that the open attitude of WiU towards refugees and its volunteer image create activities in such a way that all refugees feel welcome to participate in the activities and can obtain the resources they need.

A limitation of the research concerns a not totally representative sample. This because of a possible selection bias caused by the use of WiU as gatekeeper to the research population. However, by using initiators also as gatekeepers and by approaching random refugees directly during the activities the risk for selection bias has been minimised as much as possible. Using WiU as gatekeeper had two reasons. The first was that WiU as gatekeeper formed the key to the refugee population that normally is hard to reach. The second reason is that WiU knows the refugees who have been involved with the organisation and interviewing refugees who already know WiU made it possible to get a deeper understanding about how the activities of WiU contribute to the PWB of refugees.

Another cause for a not totally representative sample is the unequal ratio of refugees who do speak English/Dutch and refugees who do not. This was caused by the logistic difficulty of that the communication for an appointment had to go through the interpreter. This indirect way slowed down and hampered the making of an appointment. As result, there was only one non-English/Dutch speaking respondent – a Syrian man. However, this problem has been compensated by letting the refugees not only answer the questions about themselves but also about other refugees. According to them language does not always have to be a barrier to get in contact with Dutch people and to participate in activities.

To conclude, the sample is not totally representative which means that the results are not generalizable to the whole refugee population that WiU targets. But, generalising was not the aim. The aim was to get a deeper understanding about how WiU contributes to the well-being of refugees and this has been achieved for a part of the refugee population. Moreover, by using WiU as gatekeeper, a special, normally hard reachable group of the population has been reached. As result, this research forms an important addition to the scientific field and society because it is focused on the well-being as aspect of the refugee crisis, instead of integration on which normally is focused. With respect to the scientific field, the from the

research emerged model (see figure 2) can be used as a basis for expanded research to the concept well-being, by testing it among a larger population of refugees. This can be done in several ways. First, there is the possibility to test the whole model among a larger and more mutilated refugee population of WiU. Second, the model can be tested for other refugee populations, spread across the country, that are in touch with other but similar organisations as WiU. Finally, there can be the choice to test not the entire model, but only some parts of it. For example, it can be tested whether the in the model included resources are considered as what refugees need to feel comfortable in the Netherlands by the rest of the refugee population of the Netherlands as well. Otherwise, the relation between these resources and PWB can also be tested for another kind of well-being such as physical well-being. In that way new or customised models can be developed for the research field of well-being. With respect to society the research shows why and in what way organisations as WiU are important to exist surround the refugee crisis. Moreover, the research not only shows how WiU contributes to the well-being of refugees, but also shows, through the resources, what refugees consider as important when being in a new country. Especially the resources Social Contacts, education, work, connection with the Dutch society, Language and Participation & Sense of Belonging show that what refugees eventually want is to contribute to the society and to do something back for the society and to make the Netherlands their home. So, having organisations that contribute to the well-being of refugees is not only a cost for the Netherlands, but also a benefit. All institutions of the society should respond to this by adjust their laws, policies and arrangements regarding the refugee problem. To begin with, the municipality of Utrecht should invest more in having WiU or similar organisations next to COA and *Vluchtelingenwerk*, because that are the organisations that refugees provide with well-being. Moreover, refugees feel more relaxed about participating in activities of WiU, because of its volunteer image and its independent position regarding the asylum procedure in contradiction to COA. To end with, WiU self should continue their job, because the research makes clear that the organisation is considered as important for the refugees and it contributes to a nicer life in the Netherlands. Organisations like WiU are in a way resources in the meaning that they generate all the resources and make them work for both refugees and the Dutch society.

So, activities of WiU are not just activities. It are activities that are of importance in that they contribute to the well-being of refugees and so much more than that. The meaning of this and the closing end of this research can best be captured by the following statement of REF02,

“...it really affects and changes people’s life. Maybe you say like, maybe there is like limited numbers on the activities or stuff, but every activity means something different for each person’s life. Like you don’t know what this person is experience. Even if it is Dutch or Arab or like refugees. Like they both have stuff maybe they will forget about it or learn something from these kind of activities. So you affect people’s life without even know that.”

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Appendix 1

Informed consent-letter



Universiteit Utrecht

Name researcher: *Pleun Looijaard*

Research topic: *Activities of Welkom in Utrecht.*

Master program *Social Policies and Social interventions, University Utrecht*

Purpose of the research:

The purpose of this research is to explore what the experiences of both refugees and initiators are with activities coordinated or facilitated by Welkom in Utrecht plus the expected effects of these activities on the well-being of refugees.

Topics that will be discussed:

First, the activities in which the respondent did participate will serve as a topic. Second, there will be an expansion on the activities in order to discover what a refugee gets out of the activities. As last, some questions regarding well-being will follow. *What do you need to feel comfortable in your own skin* and *how do the activities contribute or hinder feeling comfortable* are examples of such questions.

Your cooperation:

Your privacy and safety are priority during the research.

Your participation to this research is voluntary which means that you are not obligated to answer all questions and you can quit the interview whenever you prefer.

The interview will be recorded by means of an audio recorder to enhance the reliability of the research. The audio recorder will be used solely for an audio recording (e.g. it is not a smartphone). As soon as the audio file is saved at a secure university server, it will be deleted from the audio recorder.

All files and data collected during the interview will be protected to secure your privacy and safety. This will be done in the following ways. First, all files and collected data will be stored within a protected server of University Utrecht. Second, in the written version of the interviews codes identity data such as your name will be replaced by codes so that you as respondent stays anonymous. Third, the audio file will be stored separately from the written version of the interview. This also applies to the file that includes the key of the used codes in the written version of the interview.

Important to know is that I conduct the research independently from Welkom in Utrecht. This means that only anonymized data will reported to them. As a result, Welkom in Utrecht will never be able to

identify which statement are made by which respondent. Only I (the researcher) and the research coordinator of my Master program will have access to all data .

In case you would like to receive the final research report or a summarized version (see the options beneath) , these can be sent to you.

By signing this letter you give permission for your participation in this research. After signature it is still possible to withdraw your participation at any point during the research. Nevertheless, your participation will seriously be appreciated because your contribution is of great value for this research.

I give permission for participation in the current research:

Name:

Signature:

Place:

Date:

Please, color the box that is applicable:

- I do not prefer to receive the research- report or summary.
- I do prefer to receive the complete research report (Available in English).
- I only prefer to receive the summary of the research (Available in both English and Dutch).

When you would prefer to receive a summary or report of the research, please submit your e-mail address:

E-mail address:

Appendix 2

The instrument - Topic list

Refugees

Introduction

I will introduce myself a bit to you: I am Pleun Looijaard, 24 years old and I am a Master student from Utrecht University. In my research I am very curious about how you experience the activities of Welkom in Utrecht.

I will explain you a little bit more about how the interview will look like so that you know with what you will be dealing.

In the interview I would like to ask you some question about activities of Welkom in Utrecht you attend and what your experiences are with it.

The interview will take about 45 a 60 minutes and the audio of the interview will be recorded. It is important to know that your privacy is been seen as something important. Therefore some measures are been or will be taken to protect it.

First, the audio recording will be done by means of a device only meant for this purpose (so not a phone). Second, right after the audio material has been saved, it will be removed from the device right away. Third, about the saving. The material will be saved on a protected server of Utrecht University and also will be saved separately from the unsubscribed interview. So that audio cannot be linked to the interview.

As last, your anonymity will be guaranteed by that all identity data will be replaced by codes (like your name). The key to these codes will be, same as the audio material, saved separated from the written version of the interview, so that linking your name to the interview is again not possible.

Since the data will only be shared with Welkom in Utrecht when it is anonymous, you are free to say anything you want. Also critics are very helpful to build op the research.

Then about your right during the interview. You may quit the interview at each moment when you prefer to, moreover you are not obligated to answer all the questions. For both actions you do not have to give up an argument.

- Do you have any questions on beforehand?
- Let the person sign the informed consent

WIU

- Do you know Welkom in Utrecht? *Has to be answered – If answer on this question is no, there will follow the question Did you attend any activities lately, if yes, can you*

describe them? *Probably someone do not know Welkom in Utrecht as in the name of the organization but do know the activities.*

- What do you know about it? *Depends on the answer of the first question*
- Did you attend any activities were linked to WIU. If so, which? *Depends on the answer of the first question*
- Can you describe what you were doing during these activities? *Depends on the answer of the first question*

First in general and then for each activity specific. Activity depends on the respondent's answer (or what he defines as important).

- Why do you attend this activity/activities
- What does the activity bring you? At the moment itself and afterwards.

As direction when respondent finds it difficult to answer

- For instance do they provide you with relaxation, distraction, meeting people, health learning, participating or something else?

As extension to the respondent's answer. (Order depends on the respondent's answer)

Relaxation – distraction This will only be discussed further if the respondent's answer is about this - Also the deepening of the different concepts depends on what the respondent seems to consider as important

- What is it (specifically) in the activity that brings you relaxation?
- Does it bring relaxation just at the moment of the activity or also for the moments aside from the activity. E.g. when you are back home?
- What about distraction? – What is it (specific) in the activity that brings you distraction?
- Are relaxation and distraction some things that you need to feel good?

Social contacts This will only be discussed further if the respondent's answer is about this - Also the deepening of the different concepts depends on what the respondent seems to consider as important

- What is it (specific) in the activity that contributes to meet new people?
- Who are these new people (Dutch, refugees (own country/culture – other countries)?
- What do the contacts with new people bring you?
- Do the contacts contribute to a good feeling?

Participation / Sense of belonging This will only be discussed further if the respondent's answer is about this – Also the deepening of the different concepts depends on what the respondent seems to consider as important

- Can you tell more about what the activity does to your participation during the activity specific?
- What about participation in other areas of the Dutch society... (voluntary) work – school – social life.
- Are you feeling home in the Netherlands/ Utrecht / ASC? Because of being able to participate in certain activities?
- Do you feel yourself comfortable when you are in the supermarket or walking on the streets? Why(not)

Wellbeing

- Do activities contribute to feeling happy / feeling comfortable in your own skin?
- Are there also negative consequences of the activities? Which one / why not?

Other

- Can you think about anything else that the activity brings you?

Conclusion

- Is there anything you want to add?
- Reminder of what will be done with the data
- Thanking the respondents for their participation

Initiators

Introduction

- Presentation of myself and the participant
- Explanation of the research and the procedure of the interview
- Make the participants attend of the rights they have during the interview
- Do you have any questions on beforehand?

WIU

- Do you know Welkom in Utrecht?
- What do you know about it? – How did you learn to know WIU?
- Can you describe the activities you organised/ in which you participated?

First in general and then for each activity specific

- What is your reason to organise/ participate in these activities?
- What were your expectations about what the activities would bring the refugees? – Did you have a specific goal in mind you wanted to achieve for the refugees?
- Do you see these expectations justified?

- What other things aside from your expectations did you observe?

Relaxation – distraction

- What about relaxation?
- What is it (specific) in the activity that contributes to the relaxation of refugees?
- What about distraction?
- What is it (specific) in the activity that contributes to the relaxation of refugees?

Social contacts

- Do they get social contacts out of the activities?
- With whom? (Dutch, other refugees or both)
- Do you have any social contacts with refugees?
- What do you think about having these contacts?
- What do the social contacts bring refugees? What do they do with these social contacts?
- What do they bring you?

Participation / Sense of belonging

- How is the participation of refugees in the activities?
- Do the activities help the refugees to participate in other areas as well e.g school – work – social life? Why (not)? How?

Wellbeing

- Do activities contribute to feeling happy / feeling comfortable in your own skin?
- Are there also negative consequences of the activities? Which one / why not?

Other

- Can you think about anything else that the activities deliver refugees and/or yourself?

Conclusion

- Is there anything you want to add?
- Reminder of what will be done with the data
- Thanking the respondents for their participation

Appendix 3

The codebook

Nodes

Name	Description	Sources	References
(Dutch) language		12	37
Reasons Importance		3	3
For study or work		4	15
Overcome obstacles		4	6
Participation Home		8	20
Respect Dutch society		3	5
Social contacts		9	16
Understanding each other		4	7
Understanding Dutch society		3	4
Reasons Unimportance		6	11
Versus speaking English		2	2
Activities of WIU		2	5
Children or family		6	10
Connection dutch society		5	7
Creative		2	3
Drawing		1	1
Sewing- and handcraft workshop		1	5

Name	Description	Sources	References
culture		2	2
Music		2	4
Theater		4	7
Food or Cooking		10	16
Gardening		3	4
Help with moving		2	2
InclUUsion		3	7
Language		2	3
Taalcafé		11	42
Have to be more regular		2	4
Higher rotation teachers		1	1
Initiator's perspective		1	5
Museum Taalcafé		1	1
Learning about other		2	2
Meeting people		3	3
Buddy project		2	2
Ladies' night		2	2
Relaxation		1	2
Sport		10	13
Basketball		1	2
Bike		1	1

Name	Description	Sources	References
reasons for sport		3	6
Soccer		1	3
U-pas		1	1
Voluntary work		4	9
Education and work		5	5
Autonomy		1	1
Continue already obtained educationlevel		3	3
Gives purpose		3	6
Nice to do		3	3
Not important		1	1
Personal growth		3	4
Rules system		5	5
Work		4	9
Info WIU next to act		7	28
Activities for every kind of people		5	9
Available for all languages		1	2
Depends of the person		3	5
Activity choice		4	8
Effect of activity		5	9
For purpose		1	1

Name	Description	Sources	References
Approaching with activities		5	9
for longer term		1	1
How know WIU		10	15
Opinion		9	12
Perspective on the people		5	9
Points of critique		3	5
Recommendations		2	2
Role they play		4	6
Welcoming people in Utrecht		2	2
WIU makes things easier to reach		2	7
Knowing Dutch culture		8	10
Able to live participation		8	18
Feeling home sense of belonging		4	6
Closing gap between cultures		4	6
Connection with people		2	2
Connection with the Dutch society		3	8
Experiences		6	6
Feeling comfortable how to behave		2	4
From respect		1	3
Positive Feelings		0	0

Name	Description	Sources	References
Distraction and Relaxation		0	0
Doing what you like		7	15
Forget Difficulties of life		13	27
Getting out of the AZC		12	22
Stress		1	1
Fun, feeling relaxed		18	42
Having or as purpose		11	27
Fill free time are bored		11	23
Having something to do		4	8
Nice atmosphere		9	23
Feeling comfortable or safe		7	28
Feeling of autonomy		4	6
Happy feeling		13	25
Self-esteem		4	16
Discover identity		2	3
Discover, develop talent		3	6
Reasons for initiators		5	17
Reasons for Dutch people Perspective ofDutch		3	10

Name	Description	Sources	References
Depends on the kind of people most are already interested		2	5
Helping refugees		2	4
Interest for refugees		2	3
Social contacts		7	14
Among themselves		6	14
Emotional bond		7	15
Easier with own culture		4	7
Practical Bond		0	0
Help		7	11
Continue		10	21
In general		9	21
Better than alone		2	2
Get isolated without		1	1
gives purpose or is a goal		3	4
Good or comfortable feeling		9	20
Learn new things		1	1
Nice fun		3	7
Other activities		3	4
Personal growth		3	3
Respecting each other		2	2

Name	Description	Sources	References
Self-esteem		6	9
Possibility for Participation		4	12
To participate live		6	9
Building up a network		2	3
Just at the moment		8	16
Why activity stimulates		5	16
Creating a atmosphere for talking		6	11
Working with WIU		1	1
With Dutch		11	22
Depends on person		2	3
Emotional bonds		11	32
Friendship		1	1
Need of acceptance		1	3
Need starting point		1	3
Nice fun		5	5
Non reciprocal		5	9
Other activities		7	11
Practical Bond		7	11
Building up a network		6	7
Dutch culture society connection		12	32

Name	Description	Sources	References
Help with anything		4	9
Language		10	26
Learning anything		7	18
Odd places connection		5	9
Participation living here		6	9
Personal development		1	1
Self esteem		4	5
Sense of belonging		5	8
Acceptance and considered as humans by Dutch		8	20
want to be seen as people and equal to Dutch		2	7
Study		6	8
Understanding and learning each other cultures		8	18
Work		5	7
Reciprocal		9	17

Name	Description	Sources	References
thought about connection		3	5