



# From Asylum seeker to Interpreter: The Success Story of Basel

Nancy Hähnel

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Malmö, Sweden. The image shows a mix of modern and older buildings, green trees, and a central pedestrian area. The word "Agenda" is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the image.

# Agenda

a.

- 01 Introductions
- 02 The Problem
- 03 The Context
- 04 The Solution
- 05 The Results
- 06 Questions

#LocWorld49 Malmö, Sweden



a.



# Nancy Hähnel

**General Manager, The Netherlands**

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Nancy Hähnel, General Manager for Acolad group in the Netherlands, has 20+ years of experience and excels in digital marketing, international B2B sales, and creating effective teams. Nancy is passionate about driving growth and solving complex issues with her practical and constructive approach.



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# The problem

a.

Interpreting



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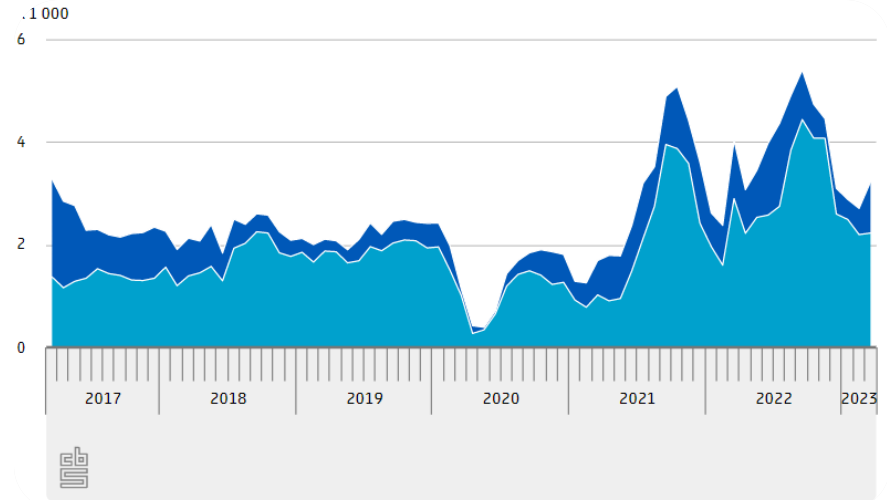


a.

In peak years there are not enough interpreters (sworn, Dutch register) to fulfill the Government demand.

Highly regulated market (rigid Dutch register of sworn translators and sworn interpreters).

Per asylum seeker min. 12 months of interpreting services.



# Context

a.

Interpreting



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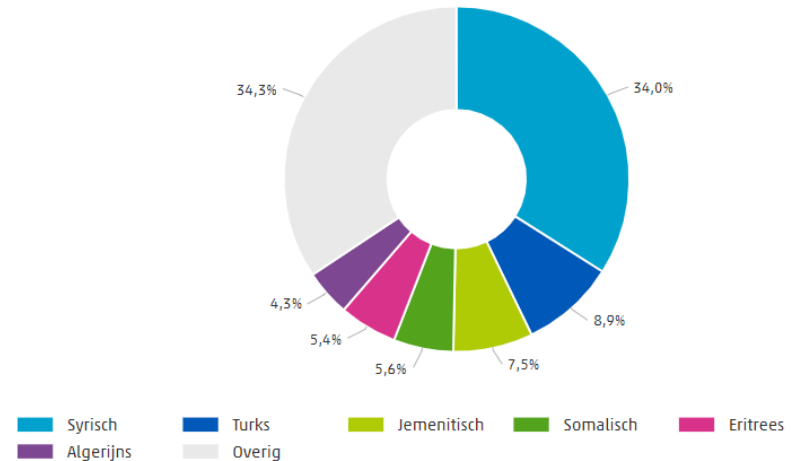


# The Netherlands is heading for a record influx in the **asylum chain**.

We are expected to reckon with towards 77,000 asylum seekers in reception by the end of the year.

This means we will surpass the peak refugee influx of 2015 (53.000) and face major challenges in terms of interpreter availability.

Nationaliteit asielzoekers en nareizigers, maart 2023\*



Bron: CBS, IND

© CBS/IND



# The solution

a.

Interpreting



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The solution

**An innovative program that solves the problem at its root cause, with sustainable social impact.**

# Interpreter program

From asylum seeker to professional interpreter



a.

## Recruitment

- Selection of candidates for interpreter program
- Background Police or legal education
- Motivation to make career move

01

## Training program

- Interpreting techniques, code of conduct, cultural sensitivity, terminology, etc.
- Learning on the job
- Entry Dutch register

02

## Matched with client/s

- Once training is completed, added to a client-specific supplier pool
- Ongoing QA program with clear KPIs

03

## Cycle completed

- After an interpreter has been with us for 3 years, we encourage him to enter the market as a freelancer.
- Release the bird/ambassador

04

# The success story of Basel Someh

From asylum seeker (Syria, 1996) to  
professional interpreter

01 1996 to 2008 in Asylum seeker centrum

02 2016 Onboarding program as interpreter

03 20.000 delivered projects for  
Acolad/Livewords

04 2023 starts own business as freelancer





Why didn't you shake my hand, why don't you look into my eyes, are questions that arise among Dutch people. From the Muslim culture, you don't just look into someone's eyes to show respect.

You often see conflicts between two parties over small things. Often, I am an interpreter and a mediator.

I hope more people choose the interpreting profession; you can make a difference and it gives you back a lot of appreciation.

**Basel Someh**

Professional Arabic <> Dutch interpreter

# The Results

a.

Interpreting



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# Key Achievements

a.

1

Solve capacity issues, increase delivery percentage

Contribution to solve a client issue

2

Increase no. of interpreters in the market

Contribution to solve a market issues

3

A mission for dozens of asylum seekers

Project with massive social impact

4

Guidance to self-employment

Impact on community loyalty

# Key facts



**35**

Inhouse interpreters onboarded, 2015-2023



**120**

Interpreters trained per year (Acolad Academy)



**1,200**

More jobs delivered per month



**100%**

Social return on investment

**a.**

# Q&A

a.

Interpreting



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**Your  
World.  
Every  
Language.**

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### **Links**

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**Thank You**

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