

The Trends of Legal Migration: Reasons of Indonesian Legal Migrants Settling in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia has been one of the contributing countries in sending migrants to the Netherlands. The historical relations along with the large economic opportunities in the Netherlands play a part in the promotion of cross-border movement for Indonesians to the Netherlands. However, those are only one of many underlying reasons why Indonesians are willing to leave their home country to a more developed country. This article questions the reasons behind Indonesian legal migration in the Netherlands and looks into the trend of Indonesian migrants as the result of the fulfilment of human development embedded in education and employment policies and management in the Netherlands. The relationship between the two aspects and the Indonesian migration in the Netherlands is examined through the Theory of Human Development by Amartya Sen, specifically in regard to the improvement of human capabilities and freedom of choice. The authors found that a country that promotes human development is more favourable to live in. Thus, in this case, the education and employment policies and mechanisms of the Netherlands that are focusing on the fulfilment of freedom of choice and the improvement of human capabilities attract international migrants, particularly the Indonesians.

Keywords: the Netherlands; Indonesia; Legal Migrants; Migration

ABSTRAK

Indonesia merupakan salah satu negara pengirim migran ke Belanda. Hubungan sejarah dan adanya peluang ekonomi yang besar di Belanda berperan dalam mendorong perpindahan lintas batas masyarakat Indonesia ke Belanda. Namun, kedua hal tersebut hanya menjadi salah satu dari banyak alasan mengapa masyarakat Indonesia bersedia meninggalkan negara asalnya ke negara yang lebih maju. Artikel ini mempertanyakan alasan-alasan di balik migrasi legal Indonesia ke Belanda dan melihat tren migrasi Indonesia sebagai hasil dari pemenuhan pembangunan manusia yang tertanam dalam kebijakan dan manajemen dalam dunia pendidikan dan pekerjaan di Belanda. Relasi diantara kedua aspek dengan migrasi Indonesia di Belanda dikaji melalui Teori Pembangunan Manusia oleh Amartya Sen, khususnya dalam hal peningkatan kemampuan manusia dan kebebasan memilih. Penulis menemukan bahwa negara yang mengedepankan pembangunan manusia lebih menarik untuk ditinggali. Dalam hal ini, kebijakan dan mekanisme dunia pendidikan dan pekerjaan Belanda yang berfokus pada pemenuhan kebebasan memilih dan peningkatan kemampuan manusia menjadi daya tarik bagi para migran internasional, khususnya Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Belanda; Indonesia; Migran Legal; Migrasi

Introduction

In 2020, approximately 281 million people migrate to countries outside their country of birth.¹ The occurrence of residing in another country has become a trend where the European Union (EU) defines legal migration as the movement of people from one country to another that benefits migrants, countries of origin, and countries of destination.² Migration is linked closely with remittances, proving that it often happens with the purpose of improving people's circumstances.³ Following this, the linkages between legal migrants and the development of the country, both for sending and receiving countries, tend to be seen as positive reciprocity. This is because the settlement of migrants contributes to the enhancement of individuals' quality and the fulfilment of labour market needs, which in the end impact an increased economy of the country of destination.⁴ Furthermore, this perspective leads to the usual patterns of migration from the least-developing countries to the more developed ones, especially from the Asian to the Europeans and North American countries.

Migration has been a common occurrence in the EU, with the Netherlands being one of the countries hosting large numbers of legal migrants, namely the Indonesian migrants. In 2022, there were approximately 349,300 Indonesians in the Netherlands.⁵ This number does not include the Indonesians who already gained Dutch citizenship due to migration as well as due to Indo-Dutch (Indonesian and Dutch) mixed marriage.⁶ Being Indonesia's past coloniser country, the historical ties between the Netherlands and Indonesia takes part in the Indonesian human mobility to the Netherlands. However, the increased number of Indonesians choosing to reside in the Netherlands is not entirely due to historical relations. The Dutch government aims to promote educational and working opportunities in the country through the national higher educational institutions and labour market.⁷ With the past relations, they see Indonesians as potential human resources in the country, leading to an enhancement of cooperation in educational and working opportunities between the two governments over the years. The increasing number of Indonesians going to the Netherlands each year has made the Netherlands the first EU country with the largest Indonesian population.⁸

One of the main reasons for Indonesians to go to the Netherlands is education. Annually, there are approximately 1,500 Indonesians who study in the Netherlands.⁹ Some of them decided to stay in the country after graduating to gain working experience, which added more human resources in the

¹ "International Migrants Day," *United Nations*, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/migrants-day#:~:text=In%202020%20over%20281%20million>.

² "Legal migration and integration," *European Commission*, accessed on March 30, 2023, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration_.

³ "International Migrants Day," *United Nations*.

⁴ Ahmad Naweed Walizada, "Highlight 25/2022 – the Positive Impact of Migration," MEIG Programme, April 29, 2022, <https://www.meig.ch/highlight-25-2022-the-positive-impact-of-migration/>.

⁵ "Number of Indonesian nationals resident in the Netherlands from 2010 to 2022," *Statista*, accessed on March 30, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1284963/indonesian-nationals-population-netherlands/>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Nuffic Neso, "Neso Indonesia," www.studyinnl.org, 2023, <https://www.studyinnl.org/neso-indonesia>.

⁸ Vittoria Malgioglio, "Indonesia to Holland: (un)forgotten stories of Indo-Europeans," *31 Mag.nl*, last modified August 19, 2019, <https://www.31mag.nl/indonesia-to-holland-stories-indo-europeans>.

⁹ "Student Mobility Plays a Key Role in Linking Indonesia and the Netherlands," *The Jakarta Post*, last modified February 24, 2017, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/adv/2017/02/24/student-mobility-plays-a-key-role-in-linking-indonesia-and-the-netherlands.html>.

Netherlands.¹⁰ Even though it is reasonable to assume that the purpose of Indonesian migrating to the Netherlands is to pursue education and gain a job, this article intends to examine that there are social aspects that complemented this reason or further contribute to the justification, which is human development.

Human development theory argues that migration is not only revolving around monetary and economic issues, but also on individual capabilities and opportunities.¹¹ The issue of migration should not only be seen on one level of national but rather individual. Therefore, when people decide to migrate, they are not only considering the material aspects, but more on the social aspects which revolve around their individual well-being. Touching upon the topic, not only does the Dutch government provide educational and working opportunities, but they also provide them with the fulfilment of needs and chances to elevate people's wellbeing. The sense of individual welfare, such as access to opportunities and freedom of choice, introduced by the human development theory is what this article argues are the main reasons for Indonesian migration to the Netherlands.

The Dutch government provides various accessible opportunities, especially to Indonesians who want to study or work in the Netherlands. Access to specifications of education or the broader labour market are examples of actualisation in allowing people to utilise and maximise their skills.¹² In the future, these are invested to enhance the migrants' well-being.¹³ With many of the opportunities being provided with the aim of improving the capabilities of the migrants along with the provision of freedom of choice, many Indonesians see that the human development aspect in the Netherlands is more promising than in their home country. Thus, a considerable number of people choose the Netherlands as their preferred destination for settlement among the other EU countries.

The research question for this article is how is the Netherlands becoming the targeted country for Indonesian legal migrants, either temporarily or permanently, in terms of the human development theory by Amartya Sen? The subject of this research would be Indonesians who migrate to the Netherlands for education and/or finding a job. The trend of Indonesian legal migration in the Netherlands was examined from 2018 to 2023, whereas 2018 indicates the establishment of the Dutch national migration policy which regulates legal migration, named "Comprehensive Agenda on Migration". 2023 marks the latest data update of Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands.

The authors assess this topic using the Theory of Human Development by Amartya Sen. Education and employment are the focus areas of this migration issue due to the fact that these areas show tangible human development realisations from Dutch migration policies and mechanisms. This article's focus on human development is specifically in regards to the individual freedom and social opportunities, based on the distinct types of freedom mentioned by Amartya Sen.¹⁴ The authors argue that the issue of human migration should not only be examined in the field of economic development or individual material aspects. Rather, it should also be seen from the field of human development, where improving welfare through expanding the migrants' freedom of choice and social opportunities are reasonably strong bases of people choosing to reside outside their country of birth.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kathleen Newland, "Circular Migration and Human Development," mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de, September 1, 2009, <https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/19225/>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Amartya Sen, 2000, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Anchor Books, 24.

In this context, the article addresses the research questions, asserting that Indonesians opt to migrate to the Netherlands because of the opportunities to attain and enhance a higher quality of life, particularly in terms of education and employment. That being the case, this article aims to assess how migration can happen due to the consideration of fulfilling human development. Furthermore, the article aims to give the readers new insights that the migration issue is not only revolving around material aspects, but also social aspects that are related to human development.

Literature Review

In the context of Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands, the authors explore other reasons and perspectives of migration trends among Indonesian people to the Netherlands. Various literatures have been found and collected which can be divided into two groups of discussion based on the reasons of Indonesian migration in the Netherlands; (1) historical and culturalist approach and (2) political economy development and opportunities in the Netherlands.

In regards to the first perspective, historical ties between Indonesia and the Netherlands plays a significant role in migration patterns. Eurostat's document "Migrants in Europe" stated that the first thing which promotes a lot of Indonesian "assurance" to move permanently or temporarily to the Netherlands is because of the historical relations. The Netherlands colonising Indonesia for several centuries has led to cultural and linguistic ties between the two nations.¹⁵ The Indonesian migration is often driven by existing family connections, post-colonial influences, and nostalgia of the Dutch colonial era.

Cultural connections affect the integration process of the Indonesian and the Dutch due to the presence of Indonesian communities and support networks in the Netherlands. Gusnelly argues that Indonesians in the Netherlands cannot be categorised as postcolonial immigrants, nor guest immigrant workers (migrants that move to another country purely because they seek higher paying jobs or better economic opportunities).¹⁶ Even though Indonesia is a Muslim country, they are also not on par with immigrants from Turkey and Morocco. Moreover, Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands are rarely creating problems in the society, thus they often do not receive negative stigma or prejudice from the Dutch.¹⁷ Because Indonesia and the Netherlands have been involved in a long colonial relationship in the past, the issues of Indonesian migrants are sometimes tinged with emotional nuance.¹⁸ Therefore, Indonesian migrants have special relations with the Dutch and place a specific position in the migration issue in the Netherlands.

The second point of view, however, explains how economic opportunity drives the increased number of Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands. Albertinelli underlined that the Netherlands plays a pivotal role due to its robust higher education system and numerous job opportunities, making it an attractive choice for Indonesian legal migrant workers seeking a host country.¹⁹ The past migration policy in the context of employment is indeed not as accommodating as in the present times. The labour market participation of first and second generation migrants compares unfavourably to that of

¹⁵European Union. Eurostat, *Migrants in Europe : A Statistical Portrait of the First and Second Generation*, 11th ed. (Luxembourg: Eur-Op, 2011).

¹⁶Gusnelly, "Mapping Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands," *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 9, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 155, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jissh.v9i2.150>.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹European Union. Eurostat, *Migrants in Europe : A Statistical Portrait of the First and Second Generation*, 11th ed. (Luxembourg: Eur-Op, 2011).

the native born and nationals due to the high levels of stigma, causing miss opportunities or even unemployment.²⁰ However, the stigmas and missed opportunities experienced by legal migrants eventually become lesser due to their enhanced skills and knowledge supported by the government.

The broad labour market can be seen that the Netherlands has a strong economy with diverse employment opportunities in low skilled occupation or high skilled. Zorlu and Hartog highlighted that since the early 1960, the Netherlands has switched from emigration to immigration country.²¹ This is because of the increase in the country's prosperity and the coming of new immigrants (from former colonies, especially those who were recruited for unskilled jobs) and more recently, refugees. Migrants may face difficulties related to language barriers, cultural adjustment, and discrimination. However, they are benefitted from the opportunities for personal and professional growth due to the employment opportunities, allowing them to access better healthcare and education.²² From this article, the economic opportunities serve as the reason for Indonesian migration in the Netherlands rather than historical ties or emotional nuance. Thus, the first group's point of view, challenging the categorisation of Indonesian as immigrant workers, is attempted to be proven.

Indonesian students often migrate to the Netherlands to pursue higher education or engage in academic research. Schools or education abroad, especially in a more developed country, is seen and proven as a more advanced education system. Gusnelly stated that when Indonesian continue their studies abroad, it is more likely that they will become skilled migrants, hence they are able to work outside Indonesia with higher wages.²³ And knowing that the Netherlands' economy is more stable compared to Indonesia, Indonesian migrants are attracted to the Netherlands due to the potential for higher wages.²⁴ Characteristics of Indonesian skilled workers in the Netherlands vary from nurse, data analysts, junior engineer, and civil engineer. The majority of Indonesian women usually work in the hospitality and service industry, whereas there are only a few men who are highly skilled labour workers and would work in corporations.²⁵

The pursuit of economic stability abroad is more attractive than working with a low income in Indonesia. However, it is true that usually Indonesians would receive education and work in a high paying job in the Netherlands to build up a capital stake in order to make a new career. In the end, they will elevate their personal economy back home by sending money to their family in Indonesia. In other occurrences, there are many Indonesian migrants who go to the Netherlands but eventually return home and start a small business in Indonesia.²⁶

From these articles that have been found, historical ties and economic opportunities surely play a big role in encouraging Indonesian migrants to move to the Netherlands. However, the authors will see the trends of migration of Indonesian people through an often overlooked aspect, the social aspect which is human development. Individual well-being is what the migrants' trying to seek and gain in other countries. They pursue this by participating in the labour market and education which in the end will give them material resources. However, if by gaining capital the migrant still experiences

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Aslan Zorlu and Joop Hartog, "Migration and Immigrants: The Case of the Netherlands," *Tinbergen Institute Discussion Papers* 01-042, no. 3 (2001), <https://econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:tin:wpaper:20010042>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Gusnelly, "Trend Issues on Indonesian Labor Migration in the Netherlands."

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, 48

limits and barriers in assessing social resources, they end up not able to pursue their first aim, individual well-being. Thus, it adds up to their consideration in choosing the host country to migrate.

From the previous explanation, the author argues that the Dutch government eliminates the social barriers through their national migration policy, allowing the Indonesian to expand their capabilities and to access social opportunities in the aspect of education and employment. That being said, this article will elaborate how the Netherlands becomes the targeted country for Indonesian legal migrants due the extensive support from the Dutch government towards the Indonesian migrants' individual capabilities enhancement and the availability of personal freedom.

We conduct a more indepth research on the national policy that is rarely mentioned, which is focusing on human development in terms of personal social welfare. This can be seen from the provision of personal freedom and enhancement of capabilities through social opportunities. We will also take into account the "good government" side which is a pulling factor for the diaspora in Indonesia to get a more comprehensive quality of life. The authors will see how the policy in the Netherlands helps legal migrants in accordance with the theory of Human Development, and give the understanding as to how policy can contribute greatly to a country's "openness" towards migrants.

Methodology

This research is conducted in qualitative and descriptive methods. Creswell defines qualitative observations as one of the data collecting methods, which is when researchers examine documents, do interviews, or observe behaviour or activities of objects of the survey.²⁷ In this article, the data were gathered from a wide range of secondary sources, such as but not limited to books, journals, articles, policy documents, and online newspapers. This article uses interpretive research method type of writing with the basis of domestic policy analysis. The authors use a digital approach in gathering the sources.

The existence of these policies will then be correlated and linked towards the movement of Indonesians to the Netherlands which will be analysed through the Theory of Human Development by Amartya Sen. Therefore, previous research journals, reports, official documents, articles and official websites of both countries' data on migrants are used to support and strengthen the author's arguments, which in the end will demonstrate how this information could lead to the attraction of Indonesian migration.

Amartya Sen, an Indian philosopher and economist, perfected the Human Development Theory and coined the term "Development as Freedom" which he wrote the book about. He argues that development does not only revolve around the economy, but also on social aspects.²⁸ This Nobel Prize winner criticises the perspectives in which a country needs to be rich first in order to improve the quality of education and health care. When addressing a country's development, the aspect of human development needs to be the main element because guaranteeing human development will give an unavoidable spillover impact to the economic aspect. Following this, Sen emphasises that adequate social services can be vastly improved regardless of the country's economy and the improvement of social services will go hand in hand with the development of the country's development.

²⁷ John W Creswell, *Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).

²⁸ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

When it comes to increasing human quality of life, social aspects such as education, health, and social choices need to be prioritised.²⁹ Government effort and local policies play a crucial role in this case to ensure the raise of social services and facilities for the citizens which at the end will promote economic growth and higher quality of life. According to Sen, there are distinct types of freedom, which are in the aspect of human capabilities and personal freedom of choice.³⁰ Sen argues that these opportunities help in advancing the overall freedom of individuals, which can be achieved through the government's support or public policy in enhancing human capabilities and providing the rights to choose on available opportunities.³¹ Human capabilities can be explained as the government's effort in providing and improving all resources, social and economic, from services to facilities, in order to enhance the citizens capability.³² The national government acknowledges that people's needs are different thus their capabilities need different support from various resources. On the other hand, freedom of choice can be explained as the ability of people to shape their own destiny through the provision and promotion of social opportunities by the government.³³

In the context of migration, human development theory is a key factor in influencing individuals' decisions to move between countries, as well as shaping a nation's approach to managing sustained migration.³⁴ Although migration tends to show evidence of barriers in accessing choices, growing numbers of countries take actions to encourage and facilitate the range of choices available for migrants in order to maintain the circularity of migration. Especially to countries that see migration as advantageous due to market flexibility, these countries will put into effort in expanding the migrants choices and reduce the barriers in accessing opportunities.³⁵ Moreover, the country will seek to change the occurrence of temporary migration into permanent migration through the provision of social accessibility and inclusivity for the migrants. This is done due to the country's acknowledgement that the presence of these migrants will benefit the country in both aspects, social and economic.

The human development theory sees the occurrence of human migration is associated with development of the country in the context of social. The opportunities in enhancing the people's capabilities and freedom of choice provided by the country is being taken into account knowing that these aspects enable them to gain a higher quality of life. National policies which promote and ensure human development in the previous aspects are appealing since the policies represent the government efforts. On that account, the authors will use both aspects as the indicators for this topic acknowledging that the human development explained by Amartya Sen are revolving in both human capabilities and freedom of choice. The support of improving human capabilities and the provision of choices to people will be seen in public policy and its implementation.

Analysis

a. The Dutch Legal Migration Policy and Mechanism

The Netherlands was uneasily impacted during the past European Migrant crisis in the late 2015 and early 2016. The Dutch policy-makers have reacted to a constant migration surplus in the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 24.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 25.

³⁴Newland, "Circular Migration and Human Development."

³⁵Ibid.

country by establishing a restrictive immigration policy, with one of them being the Comprehensive Agenda on Migration. The 2018 Comprehensive Agenda on Migration under the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security is established to regulate legal and illegal migration in the Netherlands.³⁶ Irregular migration is defined as an individual/s without a legal status in a transit due to violation of entry conditions, or expiration of their legal basis for residence.³⁷ Following this, giving migrants legal protection has been a priority for the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. They aim that the migrants can contribute positively to the society in accordance with the legal policy.³⁸ Following this, a legal protection will turn the occurrence of irregular migration into regular migration, and make the position of all migrants in the Netherlands as a beneficial reciprocity instead of a burden for the Dutch welfare system.³⁹

The Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security formulated the policy on migrants and elaborated their comprehensive approach through the “six-pillar agenda”. Within this agenda, the government aims to make a humane and effective migration policy.

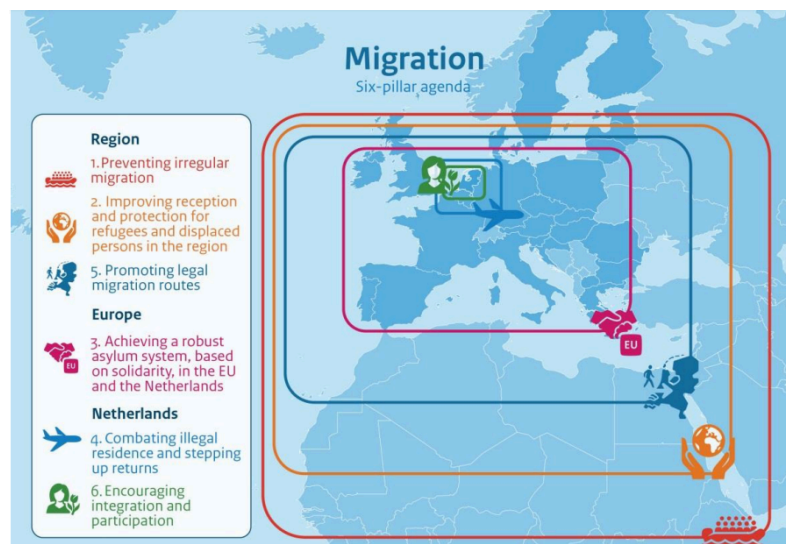


Figure 1. Migration Six-pillar agenda

Source: Netherland Directorate General for Migration, 2018

The Netherlands government combined some policies that are implemented in the EU, however the things that are proposed by the government itself are pillar number four and six. Pillar number six; Encouraging Integration and Participation; with the main principle of “Staying Means Participating”, migrants have the obligation to integrate and participate in Dutch society by preferably taking paid employment.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ European Commission, “Irregular Migrant,” Migration and Home Affairs (European Commission, 2023), https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/irregular-migrant_en.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Ministry of Justice and Security,” *Government of the Netherlands*, accessed March 23, 2023, <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-justice-and-security>.

As stated in the policy, education and job opportunities are the main reasons why many migrants go to the Netherlands.⁴⁰ Providing student grants and simplification of a working permit process are examples of ways to curb irregular migration.⁴¹ In that regard, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment collaborates with municipal authorities in providing education and job opportunities for migrants. Not only that, people who access education and take part in employment need to be protected legally, which is marked by granting resident permits.⁴²

A residence permit is required for non EU/EEA and Switzerland people, either for a short stay or migration (not applicable when it comes to the reason for travelling), or for a long stay or immigration. Legal staying is managed under the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst or known as IND), and for many cases, receiving a residence permit for legal migrants are helped, either from their sponsors (when it comes to legal workers), or scholarship programs (when it comes to education). The “first step” of implementing the aspect of human development by the Dutch government is by giving a residence permit to legal migrants. The residence permit is perceived as the key to providing basic human rights because owning a residence permit enables people to access protection, opportunities, rights, and other basic human needs. To be guaranteed a permit needs a certain process and requirements, however once migrants have a Dutch residence permit, they are protected by the government and treated the same as the other Dutch or EU citizens.

b. The Dutch Higher Education System for Legal Migrants

Indonesians ranked at the 3rd place of the highest population of foreign students in the Netherlands, with the first place being Germans and followed by Chinese.⁴³ Dutch education is no surprise for its excellent quality which has made the country known as the student country. Besides the excellent education quality, the Netherlands has adopted internationalised streams or bilingual education since the 1990s to attract expats which has been strongly rising over the years.⁴⁴ Due to the highly integrated society with immigrants, especially the Indonesians, the Netherlands prioritise “diversity and internationalisation”.⁴⁵ The Dutch education system is committed to achieving greater inclusion and diversity, aiming to provide equal educational opportunities for students from all backgrounds, including the lower-middle class, both within the country and abroad. This commitment is part of the National Plan in 2020, reflecting efforts to support human development and freedom of choice by reaching larger target groups, irrespective of their social class or background.⁴⁶ In this case, human development in both the context of human capability and freedom of choice are being

⁴⁰ “Comprehensive Agenda on Migration,” *Government of the Netherlands*, last modified October 7, 2018, <https://www.government.nl/documents/parliamentary-documents/2018/07/10/comprehensive-agenda-on-migration>.

⁴¹ “Comprehensive Agenda on Migration,” *Government of the Netherlands*.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ “Student Mobility Plays a Key Role in Linking Indonesia and the Netherlands,” *The Jakarta Post*.

⁴⁴ Berkeley Cshe, et al, 2010, “EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY: The Emergence of Selective Admission Policies in Dutch Higher Education-A Case Study on Amsterdam University College,” *Center for Studies in Higher Education* 15 (10). 10.13140/RG.2.2.18118.37449.

⁴⁵ “Diversity and Inclusion,” *Universities of the Netherlands*, accessed September 8, 2023, https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/en_GB/diversiteit-en-inclusie.html.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Justice and Security,” *Government of the Netherlands*.

supported because the national education system is trying to reach larger target groups regardless of their background or social class.

The great quality of specialisation and education overall with an addition of internationalisation of higher education have become one of the main reasons why the Dutch education system is very favourable among Indonesian students.⁴⁷ The internationalised Dutch education, especially among Indonesian students is proven by the signing of the “Horizon 2022” roadmap by the President of Saxion University of Applied Sciences and Board Member of the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, Wim Boomkamp, and Director General of EP-Nuffic, Freddy Weima.⁴⁸ The roadmap aims to strengthen the educational and research cooperation, and improve the student mobility between Indonesia and the Netherlands. As Weima said,

By providing better information, we hope to generate more interest among Dutch students to study in Indonesia. Graduates are considered more interesting candidates by employers if they have been abroad during their studies. The international experience will help in seeing things from a different perspective and creates a flexible attitude that is highly valued in the labour market.⁴⁹

There is also an Indonesian student association in the Netherlands, named Perhimpunan Pelajar Indonesia (PPI) Belanda (translated as the Netherlands’ Indonesian Student Association), which was found in 1922 in the city of Leiden. Among other PPI in other countries, PPI Belanda is one of the largest in the world.⁵⁰ The Director of Nuffic Neso Indonesia, Peter van Ruijl, stated that there is an ongoing growth of Indonesians studying in the Netherlands. The number increases from approximately 3 to 5 percent every year making Indonesia the largest sending student migrants to the Netherlands compared to the other Southeast Asian countries, like Thailand and Vietnam.⁵¹ In addition, the Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands allow Indonesians to feel welcomed, thus helping them with adjusting in a new environment.⁵²

Following the educational cooperation between Indonesia and the Netherlands, there are a high amount of scholarships, giving an incentive for Indonesians to study in the past-coloniser country. The numerous bilateral programs between Indonesian and the Dutch government offering Indonesians to study in the Netherlands allow the middle to higher social class Indonesians to go abroad. Moreover, the accessibility and availability of the Dutch scholarships serves as eliminating barriers for people outside the Netherlands to study in the country.

Looking at the local context, Indonesia has a very lack of accessible scholarship, student grants, and financial assistance. Additionally, the Indonesian government does not offer student loans.

⁴⁷ Nuffic Neso, “Reasons to Study in the Netherlands,” *Indonesia Water Portal*, last modified March 13, 2020, <https://www.indonesiawaterportal.com/news/reasons-to-study-in-the-netherlands.html>.

⁴⁸ “Student Mobility Plays a Key Role in Linking Indonesia and the Netherlands,” *The Jakarta Post*.

⁴⁹ Jakarta Post, “Student Mobility Plays a Key Role in Linking Indonesia and the Netherlands,” *The Jakarta Post*, 2017, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/adv/2017/02/24/student-mobility-plays-a-key-role-in-linking-indonesia-and-the-netherlands.html>.

⁵⁰ “About Us,” *PPI Belanda*, accessed September 26, 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ppi-belanda>.

⁵¹ “Interest to Study in the Netherlands High among Indonesians,” *Antara News*, last modified January 19, 2019, <https://en.antaraneews.com/news/121920/interest-to-study-in-the-netherlands-high-among-indonesians>.

⁵² “International Student Experiences – from Indonesia to the Netherlands,” *Indonesia Expat*, last modified January 17, 2018, <https://indonesiaexpat.id/education/international-student-experiences-indonesia-netherlands/>.

With the total population of 275,3 million, only 57 million Indonesian finished high school and more than 45% of graduates did not pursue higher education.⁵³ Scholarship abroad is favourable towards Indonesians, especially the middle and higher class, thus most Indonesians who migrate to the Netherlands are in these particular social classes because of the need for financial stability in order to live in the Netherlands.⁵⁴ For that reason, Indonesians in the Netherlands who migrated to pursue education, find a job, or marry, are categorised as legal with a valid residence permit.⁵⁵ Therefore, pursuing higher education in the Netherlands is a common practice among Indonesian, with access to the European labour market, particularly skilled labour opportunities, largely limited to the middle class.⁵⁶

Special social assistance is provided in complementing the easy settlement of migrants in the Netherlands. The scholarship opportunities targeted for the Indonesians along with the additional social assistance such as for visa and housing complement human development, adding to the reason for Indonesian migration in the Netherlands. Permanent students and “temporary” students need a residence permit in order to stay legally in the country, and to gain more or less the same “privilege” as other EU citizens. The bilateral Indo-Dutch student grants and scholarship provide assistance when it comes to receiving residence permit and health insurance, thus Indonesian students who need a visa for their residence permit do not need to have certain grants in their bank account, rather just to show the paper given by the universities or the institutions providing the scholarships.

There are also barriers in settling in the Netherlands for Indonesian migrants. The difficulty in finding housing with an addition to the expensive living cost in the Netherlands are challenges for Indonesian, particularly considering the lower value of Rupiah (Indonesian currency) than Euro. The Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security acknowledges the difficulties and provides assistance in finding housing. Assistance often is available from the university the moment when the students are admitted to the university. Various options with different prices are also provided. This has created a more easy settlement in the Netherlands for international students.

Numerous specialisation of study programmes are provided by Dutch higher education institutions with the aim to utilise students' potential based on their capabilities. One of Indonesian students, Ratih Nawangwulan, who studied in Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands, stated that one of her reasons to migrate to the Netherlands is due to the far superior education system and the availability of specialisation.⁵⁷ Another 23 years old Indonesian student, Laksmi Dwi, shared her story when pursuing a master degree in one of the Dutch Universities. She argues that there is a specialisation of her field in Urban Planning which contributes to the reason why she chose the Netherlands as a host country.⁵⁸ This is not very common in Indonesia knowing that the programmes provided by Indonesian educational institutions tend to be more general with lack of specialisation.

In many cases, Indonesians who have their higher degree abroad fail to find a job once they go back to Indonesia due to the lack of specialisation opportunity in the workplace. As a result, most of

⁵³ “Salinan Permendikbudristek Nomor 13 Tahun 2022,” *Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia*, 2022, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/files/download/2021343872258a2>.

⁵⁴ Gusnelly, “Mapping Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands.”

⁵⁵ Yasmine Soraya, “The Heterogeneous of State and State Governance: Case of Indonesian Irregular Migrants in the Netherlands,” *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3 (April 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol17.3.793.471>

⁵⁶ Gusnelly, “Mapping Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands.”

⁵⁷ “International Student Experiences – from Indonesia to the Netherlands,” *Indonesia Expat*.

⁵⁸ “Interest to Study in the Netherlands High among Indonesians,” *Antara News*.

the Indonesians who are able to study in the Netherlands decide to settle in the country to find a job there which then eventually get their permanent residence permit after the required year. Therefore, Indonesians value the aspect of human development and take it as a consideration when migrating, because they are not supported nor able to experience it in their home country.

The social opportunities such as the Dutch institutions providing numerous programs can be seen as a way to give Indonesians choices and facility to maximise their skills aligning with their interest. The uncomplicated settling process has given not only a guarantee of legal protection but also adds more reason for Indonesians to go to the Netherlands. Many social aspects are being considered by the Dutch government in order to give adequate needs for legal migrants settling in the country which this case is infrequent in Indonesia. This has created an increase of the Netherlands residency application over the years reaching approximately 20,000 applicants towards the IND with most of the nationalities coming from India, China, the United States, Turkey, and certainly Indonesia.⁵⁹ With that number, the Dutch government sees migrants as a potential in running the country's economy and contributing positively to Dutch society since they have a strong knowledge and highly-skilled capability.⁶⁰

The authors argue that the more social assistance is being provided the more attractive it is for Indonesians. This is due to the fact that social assistance is less available and accessible in Indonesia. This is also another point mentioned by Sen knowing that more opportunities for the people means more fulfilment of their welfare. Indonesians become more interested in pursuing their education in the Netherlands knowing that there will be a place for them to improve and enhance their quality of life through the support of improving their capability and the provision of choices. They are able to shape their own future due to the opportunities given by the Dutch government. Furthermore, the education process also provides inclusiveness for the Indonesian students to escape the threat of discrimination against foreigners. This is also a focal point of the Sen's perspectives towards development as freedom especially for the equality values.

c. The Dutch Regulations in Workplace

Legal migrants' economic contribution is crucial for the Netherlands knowing that since the mid-2021 representing the ease of COVID-19 restrictions, the Netherlands has been experiencing a shortage of labour knowing that there has been an increase in job vacancies while there are less job seekers.⁶¹ The shortage of job seekers also happened due to demographic ageing and structural developments. In the context of low-skilled, the Netherlands for the past 20 years has been experiencing a decrease in low-skilled workers due to the high intensity of technological development and innovation of information.⁶² This does not only occur due to the steadily shifting of low-skilled

⁵⁹“Economy,” *Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst*, accessed March 30, 2023. <https://ind.nl/en/about-us/our-work-areas/economy>.

⁶⁰ Yasmine Soraya, “The Heterogeneous of State and State Governance.” <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol17.3.793>.

⁶¹ Egbert Jongen, Jos Ebregt, and Loes Verstegen, “COVID-19 and the Labor Market,” IZA – Institute of Labor Economics, 2021, <https://covid-19.iza.org/crisis-monitor/netherlands/>.

⁶² Andries de Grip and Thomas Zwick, “The Employability of Low-Skilled Workers in the Knowledge Economy,” 2004, <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=784deba61b35bd65fdb94344aa37d27bdfd87e18>.

workers to high skilled workers which then squeezed the amount of low-skilled employment, rather the supply of this particular type of workers is decreasing while the demand is steady or even increased. To close this gap, legal migrants are seen as a positive contribution to the country's economic development and stability, either to adding the amount of high- or low-skilled labour.

Specifically to Indonesia, it is believed that Indonesians are favourable when it comes to the job market in the Netherlands, especially nurses.⁶³ Patience, politeness, and friendliness are what Indonesians are famous for, with an addition that Indonesian migrants tend to be seen as accountable and competitive.⁶⁴ Even though Indonesians are not seen as very active when it comes to giving opinions or asking questions, they have a very high ambition in finding jobs and getting high positions.⁶⁵

Indonesian graduates in the Netherlands are contributing to the, if not high, then adequate quality of human resources which in the future play important roles in maintaining a good economic and social stability in the country. For instance, in 2021 there are more than 160 nurses from Indonesia that departed to the Netherlands to participate in education and training programs. The Dutch language and culture training phase has been carried out since early 2020 to prepare Indonesian nurses who will be sent to the Netherlands. This program of four year internship is fully funded by the Dutch government, so that at the end of the programme, the nurses will gain the title Bachelor of Nursing.⁶⁶

When it comes to high-skilled labour, the Netherlands facilitates migrant workers training and procedures in order to support them in the digitised world. This process is known as the recognition of prior learning (RPL), which is a program that would facilitate and recognize the skills and competencies of migrant workers as well as refugees.⁶⁷ Noticeably, the Netherlands put attention solemnly on human development by providing training, internships, and other capacity building programmes to ensure the improvement of human capabilities and freedom of choice in the job market. On the other hand, persuading non-EU high-skilled migrant workers to the Netherlands is done by simplifying their legal stay in the country. In regards to the residence permit, recognized non-EU high-skilled migrant workers are helped by their employers for the documents and other requirements towards the IND.⁶⁸ This has been another tick in a box for Indonesians to consider the Netherlands as a place to seek for a job either migrating directly from Indonesia or by firstly graduating from the Dutch higher institutions.

The increasing (but not sufficiently mean in an adequate amount) of high skilled labour caused by higher degree has created the decline of low skilled workers in the country. However, another strategy is demonstrably designed by the Dutch government to welcome the non-EU low-skilled

⁶³ Gusnelly, "Trend Issues on Indonesian Labor Migration in the Netherlands."

⁶⁴ Elly Malihah, "An Ideal Indonesian in an Increasingly Competitive World: Personal Character and Values Required to Realise a Projected 2045 'Golden Indonesia,'" *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education* 14, no. 2 (August 2015): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173415597143>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Rokom, "Tenaga Kesehatan Indonesia Banyak Diminati Negara Lain," *Sehat Negeriku*, last modified April 20, 2022, <https://sehatnegeriku.kemkes.go.id/baca/rilis-media/20220420/0639686/tenaga-kesehatan-indonesia-banyak-diminati-negara-lain/>.

⁶⁷ "Training Employment Services Providers on How to Facilitate the Recognition of Skills of Migrant Workers Facilitator's Notes Second Edition," International Labour Organisation, 2020. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_748722.pdf.

⁶⁸ "Highly Skilled Migrant," *Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst*, last modified December 8, 2022, <https://ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/highly-skilled-migrant>.

migrant to the country in order to fill the gap between the low-skilled job vacancies and the low-skilled jobseekers. One of them being to grant a 3-year work permit which then enables them to seek for low-skilled jobs which are suitable for them within the period of three years.⁶⁹

The higher wage gained in the Netherlands compared to Indonesia has also contributed to the Indonesian migration to the Netherlands. The higher the degree taken by each person, the more the increase of earning will be in the Netherlands. People with a master's degree will experience potentially 29% of an increased wage rather than people with bachelor's degree.⁷⁰ Which in this case, is completely different with Indonesia knowing that an educational degree is not a benchmark for Indonesian employers to accept employees nor a guarantee to get higher income than those with less educational experience. With an addition, employment opportunities in Indonesia are relatively small compared to the Netherlands, creating a high amount of human resources. This can be proven that approximately 50,000 nurses in Indonesia are graduating every year but do not have a job after their studies. Noting this, the Netherlands take this as an opportunity to invite high skilled migrants to their country.⁷¹

The increase of income is a strategy to give incentives for people to pursue higher education in the Netherlands. The higher the number of people with a higher degree, the higher quality is produced by the country. This has not only supported the improvement of human capability as what fulfilled the term of human development, but has also created an advantageous reciprocity for the Netherlands knowing that there are more "high societies" in the country contributing to the advancement of the increase of economy. This incentive takes part significantly to the migration trends of Indonesian to the Netherlands since people will seek to settle in a country that is seen as more profitable for them. In that regard, the number of residency applications to the IND reaches 43,000 when it is combined with the residency applications of students and employees with one of the largest number of applicants coming from Indonesia. Thus, in Indonesia, the only difference between pursuing a higher degree is the amount of years spent in the university. In that regard, the high potential of receiving higher income due to owning a higher educational degree in the Netherlands serves as an incentive for Indonesians to pursue higher education in the Netherlands and find a job afterwards, rather than going back to their home country with uncertain job opportunities and lower wages.

The training and internship offered by the Dutch government and various private companies have served as opportunities for people in the context of human development. These efforts are also seen as the support to improve human capability knowing that they attract global society to work in the Netherlands and enhance their capability through the global competitiveness. Therefore, for the Indonesians, the "openness" of the Netherlands in the labour market is a chance for them to improve their life, economically and socially. The existing opportunities of having jobs in various fields, high-skilled or low-skilled is the actualisation of human development fulfilment by the Dutch government which is what Indonesians look up to knowing that the job market in Indonesia is highly competitive with lack of opportunities in certain disciplines.

⁶⁹ "Comprehensive Agenda on Migration," *Government of the Netherlands*.

⁷⁰ "Masters degree in Netherlands: Is Netherland good for Masters?" Whizstorm. Last Modified April 23, 2022. <https://whizstorm.com/blog/masters-degree-in-netherlands>

⁷¹ Jstar, "Indonesian Nurses & Caregivers as Expats in Europe," *Expatriate Indo Forum - Information and Community for Expats in Indonesia*, last modified March 15, 2023, <https://www.expatriateindo.org/community/threads/indonesian-nurses-caregivers-as-expats-in-europe.7020/>.

Conclusion

The case of Indonesian legal migrants in the Netherlands can be seen from the human development, rather than only from the aspect of economy or historical ties. Pursuing higher education and job opportunities in the Netherlands are common for Indonesians since they are looking forward to achieving things that they have not been able to get from Indonesia; enhancement of human capability and freedom of choice. In the context of education, the support of enhancing human capability and provision of freedom of choice can be seen from the internalisation of education and provision of educational specialisation. The Dutch governmental and bilateral scholarships are the materialisation of attracting Indonesian migrants to the country. The residential assistance and other social support are complementing the effort in attracting migrants. For Indonesians, specifically to the middle- and higher-middle class, such social support are major openings to improve their life, gaining more social opportunities and enhancing their capabilities.

In the context of employment, opportunities such as training, internships, and capacity building in the Netherlands are accessible for Indonesians. These programs signify the Dutch government's effort of improving human capabilities and facilitating individual choice of the Indonesian migrants. The simplification of staying in the Netherlands complemented with assistance serves as a motivation for Indonesians in improving the quality of life through working in the Netherlands. Indonesian migrants are more likely to get a promising job in accordance with their capability and interest in the Netherlands than in Indonesia, thus they have been given the opportunity to choose their own path of life. Human development is being materialised in the aspect of employment which can be seen from the Dutch government's efforts, promoting more Indonesians to the country.

This journal has come to the conclusion that effort in enhancing human capabilities and providing freedom of choice embedded in the Dutch education and workplace through their migration policy has contributed to the movement of Indonesian people to the Netherlands. The connection between Dutch domestic policy and the case of Indonesian migration to the country reveals that historical ties alone play a limited role in explaining the large Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands. Moreover, economic opportunities, on their own, do not provide a compelling explanation either; they must be complemented by social factors. In this case, the human development aspects promoted by the Dutch government are seen as admirable and serve as the reasons behind Indonesian migration to the Netherlands. The main focal point of the Dutch policies affects the issues of equality of opportunity and freedom of choices that have been made by the Indonesian migrants that settled in the Netherlands

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