

Recognition of qualifications held by refugees in Norway: are we following-up on our good intentions?

Case Study



Magdalena Brekke, UiS

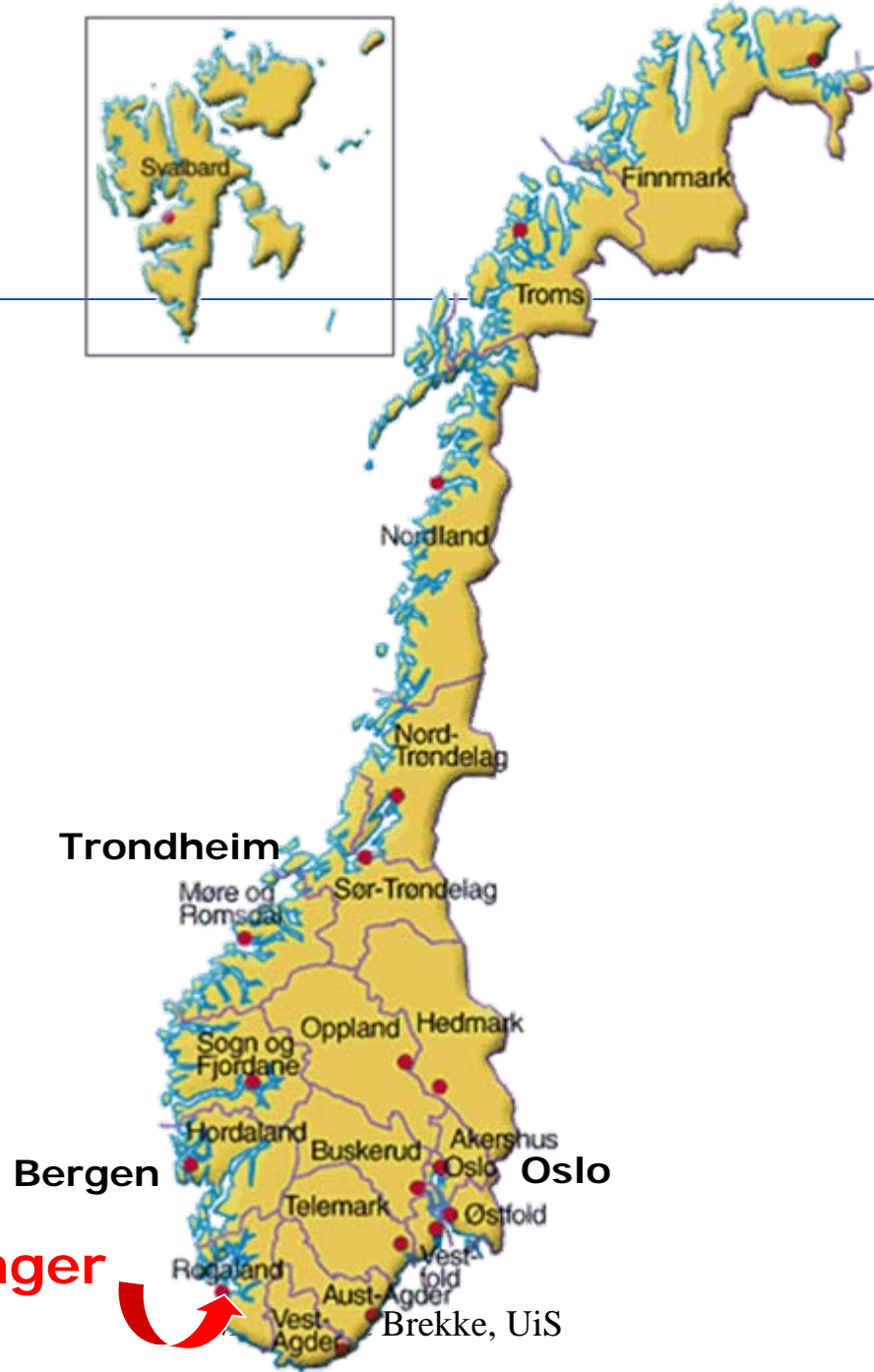
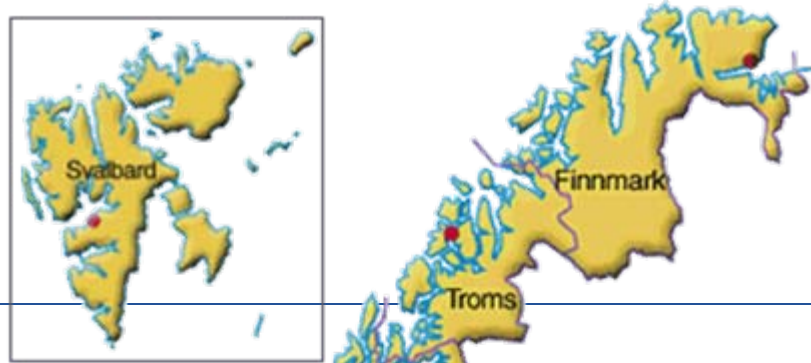
EUR OPE



Scale 1:19,500,000
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection,
standard parallels 40° N and 56° N
300 Kilometers
300 Miles
Boundary representation is
not necessarily official or authoritative.
803304A1 (001083) 5-07



Universitetet
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Stavanger



Brekke, UiS

University of Stavanger

- Merge of University Colleges in 1994, became University College of Stavanger
- University of Stavanger from 2005
- 3 faculties
- 1200 administration, faculty and service staff
- 8300 students
- 34 Bachelor programmes
- 28 Master programmes
- 8 PhD programmes



Refugees in Norway

- The number of refugees worldwide is now 12 million, up from 3 million in the early 1970s.
- In 2008, 238,400 people sought asylum in the EU's 27 member states.
- The Nordic countries receive large numbers of asylum-seekers.
- At the beginning of 2008, 132 400 persons or 2.8 % of the Norwegian population had refugee background.
- The two largest groups with refugee background come from Iraq and Somalia. At the beginning of 2009, there were 17 600 people with a refugee background from Iraq, and 15 500 with a refugee background from Somalia in Norway.

Recognition of Education in Norway

- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is an independent office located in Oslo. NOKUT works with individual applications concerning general academic recognition of foreign higher education.
- Refugees that cannot document their higher education or has been informed by NOKUT that their formal documentation does not fulfil the requirements to issue a general recognition, can follow a special recognition procedure established for refugees.

Target group/formal criteria

In order to participate in the project one have to:

- be a refugee or have a residence permit in Norway on humanitarian grounds, or have been granted reunification
- have a formal education from a university or university college
- have no documentation of his/her foreign higher education, or have been informed by NOKUT that the educational documents cannot be verified or that they are insufficient for granting general recognition
- be able to communicate in English or Norwegian
- be willing to fill out a comprehensive application form in order to map your educational background, and to take part in one or more detailed interviews, write an essay, etc

Recognition Process at UiS

1. Contact with the University of Stavanger
First Time Application (general information: study area, personal details) – qualification to the next round
2. Final Application Form - reconstructed course description
Cooperation with the municipality (refugee section)
3. Academic assessment
Interview(s), practical exercises/essays, etc.
4. Report from the assessment phase
Decision concerning recognition of education and formal approval/admission recorded in UiS electronic archive

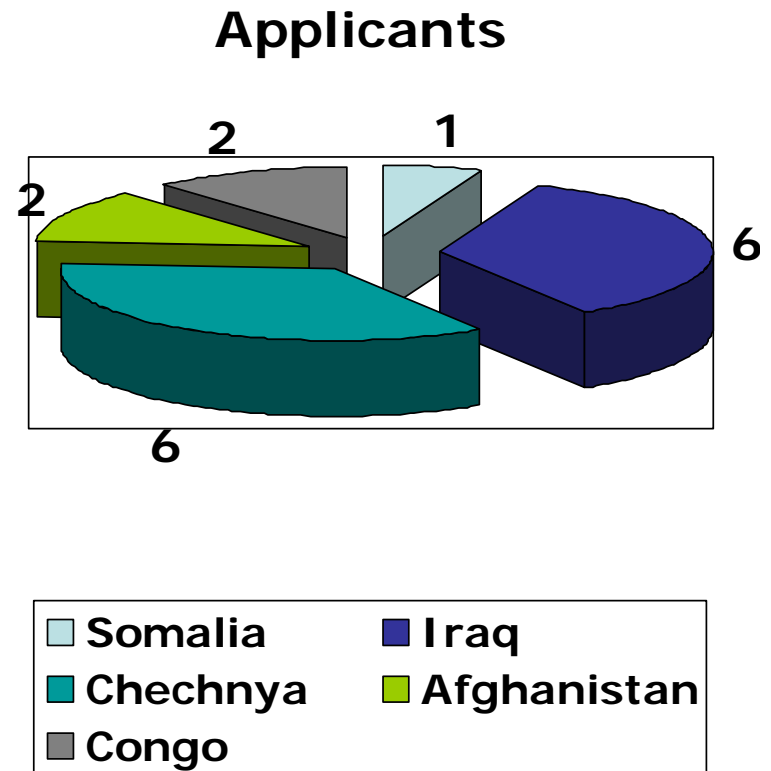
Challenges for refugees and UiS

- High expectations:
 - time
 - language skills
 - poor motivation
 - length and level of education
 - cultural differences - meeting with the foreign system/bureaucracy
- Poor academic and administrative capacity at UiS
- Recognition due to future job career – no plans concerning studies at UiS. Priority?
- Involvement of academic staff members into the process
- Interview
- Waste of time? Applications to many institutions – lack of information and central coordination?

Statistics

17 applications since November 2005 within the following study areas:

- 9 – engineering
- 1 – science (teacher)
- 3 – language and literature
- 1 - biology
- 2 – economics/ accountancy
- 1 - sport



Processing

- All 17 delivered First Time Application with general personal information
- Only 11 delivered Final Application Form with the detailed course description (reminders sent out)
- 7 cases completed at UiS
- 5 cases successful for applicants ...
- success rate 15/5 ~ 30 %

Are we following-up on our good intentions?



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Thank you for your attention!

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