



PHILADELPHIA 2018

CLEAR's Annual Educational Conference
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Credential Recognition for Regulated Professions Without Official Documents



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Refugee Crisis



What could WES do to help?

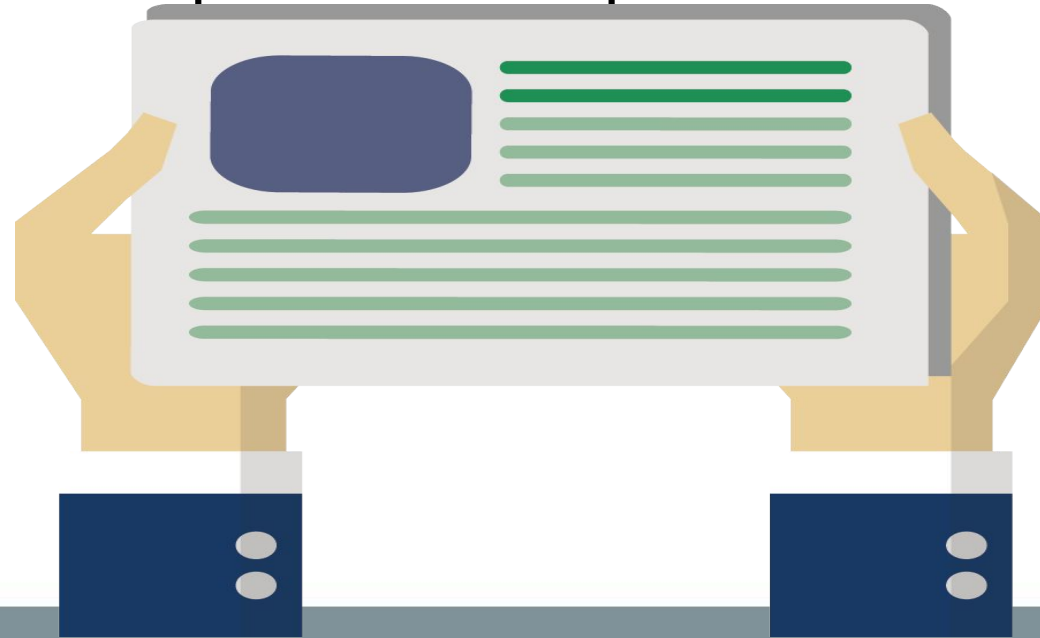


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The Challenge



How can individuals who only have partial or non-verifiable academic documents prove their qualifications?



How WES Responded to the Syrian Refugee Crisis?



We asked ourselves – are we willing to change our strict policy that requires official documents be received from institutions?

- How could WES facilitate credential recognition in view of the inability to verify documents in refugees' possession?
- Could WES's expertise and experience mitigate the risks for institutions?
- How could we reach those needing this service?
- Could we "reconstruct" credentials with confidence despite partial or missing evidence?
- Would such an assessment be valid for end-users?



WES Refugee Pilot Project Aims



Develop a method of assessing non-verifiable and partial documentation.

Test a new service delivery model using community partners.

Determine both the validity and potential utility of the report by providing an assessment to a select number of refugees.

Establish the case for expanding these services based on evidence and experience.



WES Alternative Assessment Process



Four steps for assessing credentials of refugees:

1. Determine eligibility for alternative process:

- Refugee or in refugee-like situation
- Unable to meet usual document requirements
- Educated in Syria, completed at least grade 10
- In possession of at least one piece of credible evidence of academic study in Syria

2. Ask applicant to submit credentials/documents.

3. Assess credential using standard procedures.

4. Produce an Assessment report to support credential recognition.





WES Alternative Credential Assessment

A WES Alternative Credential Assessment is for individuals who studied in Syria and are unable to obtain verifiable academic documentation.

To be eligible for this assessment individuals are required to submit at least one form of credible evidence, e.g. an academic transcript or professional license, which signifies they have attended or completed a recognized program of study. The documents submitted to WES, attached, cannot be verified due to circumstances in Syria.

WES Alternative Credential Assessments are based upon the best information and resources available. This assessment is offered as a non-binding advisory opinion.

Applicant Information

Name: ISHAIA, Ninos
Date of Birth:
Country of Education: SYRIA

Date: October 05, 2016
Reference Number: 677018

Canadian Comparability Summary

Bachelor's Degree (four years) and Postgraduate diploma (one year)

1. Credential Name: Bachelor of Arts, 2002

Document(s) reviewed for this credential: Photocopy of academic transcript(s) in the applicant's possession

Institution: University of Aleppo

Institution Status: Recognized

Admission Requirements: General Secondary Education Certificate

Length of Program: Four years

Major or Field of Study: English Language and Literature

Level of Study: Undergraduate

Language of Instruction: Arabic

In Syria, this credential can be used for:

Further Education
Employment

Canadian Comparability: Bachelor's Degree (four years)

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WES Alternative Credential Assessment

COURSE-BY-COURSE ANALYSIS

Courses	Semester Credit	Grade
1997-1998		
Language I	3.0	B
Composition and Comprehension I	3.0	B
.		
.		
Translation IV	3.0	A
Comparative Literature II	3.0	C
Arabic IV	3.0	B

Total Undergraduate Semester Credits **147 Credits** **2.49 GPA**

2. Credential Name: Qualifying Diploma in Education, 2004

Document(s) reviewed for this credential: Photocopy of the diploma in the applicant's possession. No transcript was made available; we have listed below courses taken from a curriculum similar to the one that was likely completed by the applicant to obtain the diploma.

Institution: University of Aleppo

Institution Status: Recognized

Admission Requirements: Bachelor's degree

Length of Program: One year

Major or Field of Study: Education

Level of Study: Graduate

Language of Instruction: Arabic

In Syria, this credential can be used for:

Further Education
To qualify as a Teacher

Remarks: The Qualifying Diploma in Education qualifies the holder to teach in Syria.

Canadian Comparability: Postgraduate diploma (one year)



Referral Partners



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Best Practice: Assessing Competencies



Institutions have additional methods and means of assessing whether the applicant has the necessary skills to succeed in education or employment.

Types of competency assessment:

- Examinations
- Interviews
- Sample work, thesis review
- Special projects
- Skills assessments/audits



Best Practice: Determining Recognition



Institutions have options when deciding whether to recognize refugee credentials.

- **Full recognition:** Recognize the applicant's full claimed background.
- **Alternative recognition:** Recognize the applicant as eligible for a different credential than the one of application.
- **Conditional recognition:** Recognize the individual's claimed background on the condition that he/she meet certain future requirements.
- **Partial recognition:** Recognize part of the individual's claimed background.



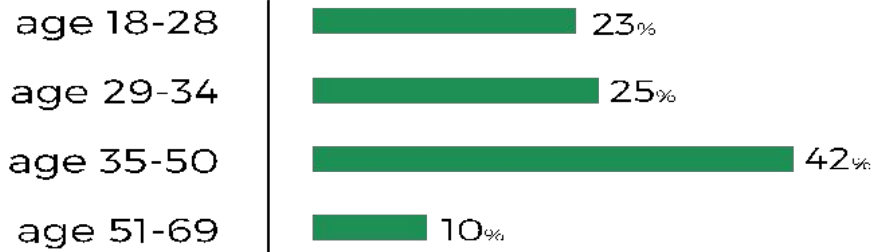
WES Refugee Applicant Profile – 337 Cases



52%
Males



48%
Females



High school diploma



Some post-secondary study



Bachelor's degree



Graduate degree

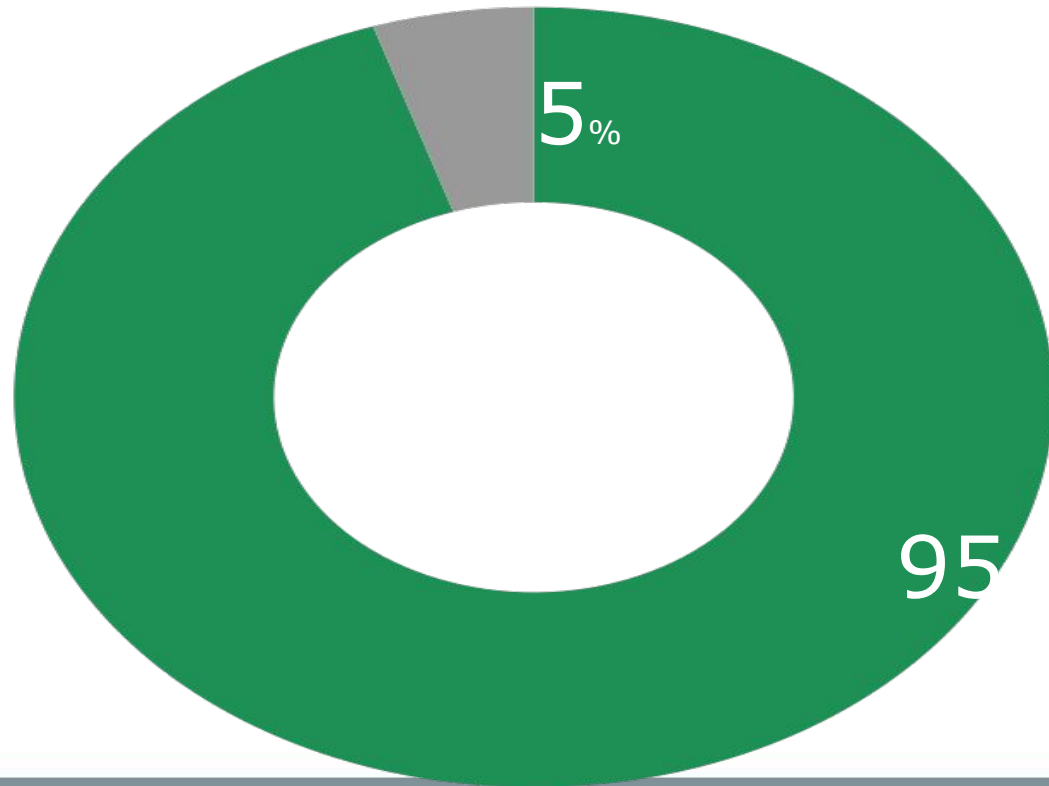


Documentation Eligibility of Applicants



Applicants Who Received Report

■ Received ■ Other



95% of applicants who submitted at least one piece of documentary evidence received a report.

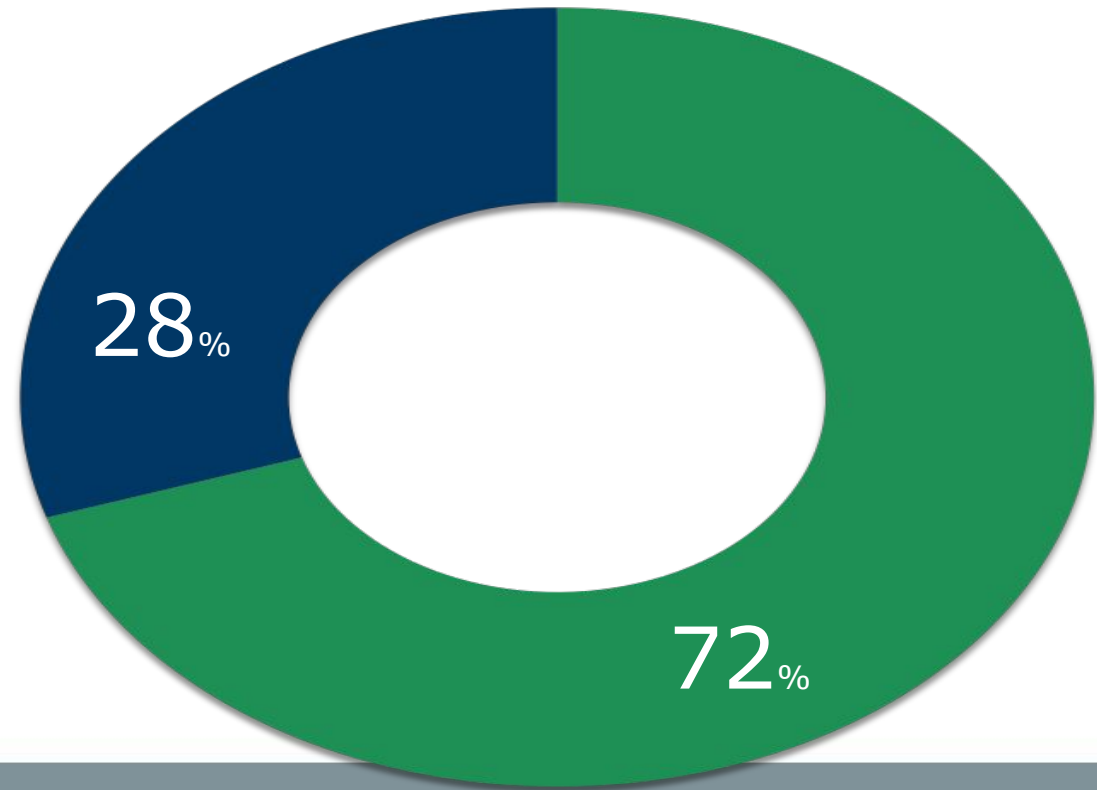
N = 337





Applicants with Transcripts

■ All ■ Some

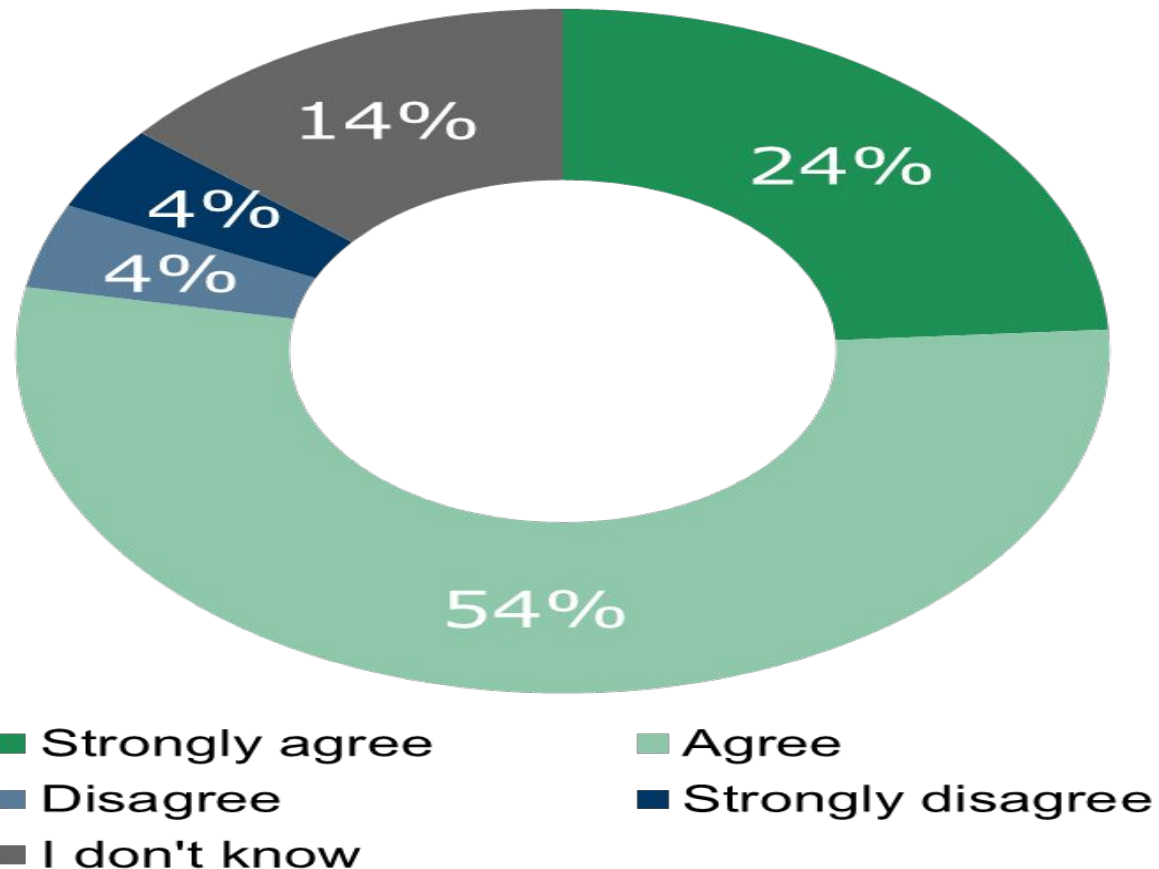


- 72% of applicants had transcripts.
- 28% required “reconstruction” of their program of studies due to missing or partial documentation.

N = 337



Next Steps for the Individual



The Alternative Credential Assessment will be useful in helping me take the next step in my educational and/or career journey in Canada.

n = 50



Next Steps for the Individual



Intended Next Steps for Applicants



What can Organizations/Institutions do?



- Consider more flexible policies that address the barriers facing refugees.
- Find ways to assess competencies or prior learning that complement or ratify the academic credential assessment.
- Award temporary, provisional or partial recognition to allow a refugee to demonstrate competency or prior knowledge.
- Offer alternatives, a path forward.





- Good number of end users do have policies and procedures in place to assist refugees and/or people in refugee like situations
- Goodwill and willingness to assist
- Utility of WES' "Alternative Credential Assessment"





Now I have something [the report] in my hand I can fight [for myself] with it.”

- WES client

This report gave my clients back their dignity. The sooner you can deliver hope, the better. ...an early sign that your foreign education has value is a priceless gift when everything else has been taken from you...”

- Referral partner





Dear WES,

Thank you for your perseverance in believing the best can be attained and offered to refugees to Canada, as it takes a creative and original will for all this to be achieved and done! I am beyond grateful that there are people somewhere out there that have taken my credentials into their consideration.

- Applicant



The WES Gateway Program



- Scaling up from our pilot project in Canada
 - We determined it is possible to produce a valid and reliable assessment of credentials even where we had unverifiable or incomplete documentation
- Opening up to displaced individuals from several countries in crisis, in addition to Syria
- Working with referral partners
- On-going program that will start in October 2018



Questions for today



- Can we innovate and be more flexible to address the barriers to recognition?
- Can alternative assessment processes be put in place for the displaced?
- How can different actors collaborate on behalf of the refugee?
- What additional research and resources are needed?





Thank You!
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