

# **Position of the au pair agency Smiling Faces**

***Analysis of the means used by Smiling Faces to achieve the best possible fulfillment of the duty to care***



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## Executive Summary

This final project assesses the supervision and guidance provided by Smiling Faces in order to achieve the best possible fulfillment of the duty to care. The main question that will be answered in this final project is: how could Smiling Faces improve its position in the au pair business by achieving the best possible fulfilment of the duty to care and the most satisfactory preparation of the cultural differences to be experienced by future au pairs?

The duty to care strives to inform the au pairs as well as possible about the cultural exchange and about the cultural differences future au pairs could experience. The duties of au pair agencies are created by the institution “the IND” of the Dutch government. “The IND” implements and controls the immigration policy in the Netherlands.

Two types of applied research have been conducted to analyze the view of the au pairs and view of the au pair agencies. To draw conclusions of the view of au pairs, a questionnaire has been filled out by twenty au pairs working for Smiling Faces. The views of the au pair agencies will be illustrated with interviews held with two au pair agencies.

The following main points can be drawn based upon the outcomes of the questionnaire. The au pairs were informed well enough about the Netherlands and about the purpose of their stay by reading the training manual provided by Smiling Faces. All of the au pairs experienced cultural differences. The au pairs from South-America experienced the most cultural differences. The experienced cultural differences have not influenced the au pairs’ judgment of the guidance given to them by Smiling Faces. All of the au pairs have experienced being an au pair in the Netherlands in a positive way. The support and guidance given by Smiling Faces was rated positively because of its good services, its support and care to au pairs.

Based upon the results of the questionnaire four elements can be improved in order to obtain the best possible supervision and guidance provided by Smiling Faces: more interaction of monthly meetings and the Dutch course, more explanation of the duties of au pairs during the meetings, conversations with the au pairs on a monthly basis to see how the au pairs are doing and a mandatory course about the Netherlands for the au pairs from Colombia (and Indonesia) to prepare these au pairs as well as possible.

The following main points can be drawn based upon the results of the interviews. Au pair agencies really have to care about the customers and provide the best possible services in order to have success. The care given to au pairs can be distinguished into three phases: before their arrival in the Netherlands, during their stay in the Netherlands and after their return to their country of origin.

Based upon these results, two elements can be changed in order to strive for the best possible satisfaction by the au pairs: at least one interview by Smiling Faces with the au pair, once the au pair has returned to her country of origin to see how the au pair is doing; and making a video with images of daily life to obtain a better understanding of the Netherlands.

With these six changes, Smiling Faces will surely improve its position in the au pair business. By doing this, Smiling Faces will strive for the best possible supervision and guidance fulfilling their duty to care. The au pairs and “the IND” will experience more satisfaction by these changes made by Smiling Faces.

## Preface

At the end of March I started the research of this final project. In the first place, Chapter one and Chapter two have been written entitled: the organisation Smiling Faces and the institution “the IND”. In May the questionnaire was filled out by twenty au pairs working for Smiling Faces and the interviews were held with two au pair agencies. Finally, Chapter three was written with the books from Hofstede and Triandis. During the months July and August the final project was being completed. By the end of August, the final project was sent to the supervisor. During the month September the supervisor’s notes were corrected and changed.

During the first three months of writing the final project I experienced many difficulties. During this period I had to combine doing an internship with writing the final project. The internship was five days a week from 09:00 till 17:00. Combining this with the work of writing a final project was difficult for me. That is why, I decided to continue working on the final project during the summer. By the end of June the internship had ended. During the months July, August and September there was more ease to work on the final project and complete it the best possible.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank some people for the realization of my work of the final project. In the first place, Mr. Veldman who supported me during the process of writing a final project and who gave me good advice to improve chapters or sections of the final project. Secondly, I would like to thank the au pair agency Smiling Faces for whom I have written the final project. Furthermore, I would like to thank Sandra Beukers for her support and for interviewing her. Thirdly, I would like to thank Agotha Szabo for the opportunity of interviewing her. I also would like thank the twenty au pairs who filled out my questionnaire. Chapter four is based upon the results of the questionnaire. I also would like to thank Mrs. van der Star and Mr. Kuipers who took the time to read my final project and gave me feedback based upon content and the English language to make a better piece of work of my final project.

Finally, I would like to thank Mrs. Bulnes Sánchez. She was my country tutor for my exchange to Salamanca. She helped me and supported me very well during these three years of the European Studies Programme. That is why, I would like to thank her.

## List of Abbreviations

The following list describes the significance of various abbreviations used throughout the thesis.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
IND	Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst
MOMI	Modern Migratiebeleid
BONAPA	Branche Organisatie Nederlandse Au Pair Agentschappen
IAPA	International Au Pair Association
NAPO	Nederlandse Au Pair Organisatie

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## Introduction

Currently, in a lot of Dutch families, both parents are working and have busy lives. Combining this with taking care of their children asks a lot. Having an au pair could be a perfect solution for this, because of the flexibility, more daily structure in family life and a contribution to an international environment. Receiving an au pair creates a lot of paper work and arrangements of flight tickets and insurances. That is why, there are au pair agencies in the Netherlands to help the families with receiving an au pair. These au pair agencies have to fulfil regulations set up by the Dutch government in order to continue their business.

By the first of June 2013 a new regulation has being introduced with regards to the Dutch immigration policy. The “IND” is an institution of the Dutch government that implements this regulation and should control it. The new regulation also has consequences for the au pair business. An important change is that the “IND” will keep close control of these duties carried out by the au pair agencies. That is why providing good services by the au pair agencies is important. Otherwise, it could lead to a termination of their business.

Particularly, three duties have to be fulfilled very well by the au pair agencies. These duties are: to inform, to administrate and to care. In this final project, the focus will be on the duty to care which consists of five elements. One of these elements will be highlighted in this final project; how the au pair agency should provide sufficient information to the future au pairs about life in the Netherlands. An important purpose of the au pair’s stay is a cultural exchange in which the objective is to explore and live in a new culture. Au pairs will certainly experience cultural differences. The duty to care strives to prepare the au pairs as well as possible for this.

This final project will assess the supervision and guidance provided by the au pair agency Smiling Faces to the au pairs. Regarding the duty to care with a special focus on providing good information about the aims of the cultural exchange and a way in dealing with cultural differences which au pairs will experience. It is important to analyse the services Smiling Faces uses to prepare the au pairs for their cultural exchange and the acquaintance to a new culture.

In the research of this final project, the following main question should be answered: How could Smiling Faces improve its position in the au pair business by achieving the best possible fulfilment of the duty to care and the most satisfactory preparation of the cultural differences to be experienced by future au pairs?



In order to answer the main question the final project exists of two sections: a theoretical framework and a practical framework. The theoretical framework of this final project exists of the first three chapters. In these chapters the organisation Smiling Faces, the institution “IND” and the approaches to nation-states’ cultures will be explained. The information of these chapters is based on books, internet websites and internal databases from the au pair agency Smiling Faces.

The practical framework of this final project is based upon research. In this final project, two types of applied research will be used. In the first place a questionnaire filled out twenty au pairs working for Smiling Faces to analyze the view of the au pairs about their stay in the Netherlands and about the supervision and guidance provided by Smiling Faces. In the second place interviews held with two au pair agencies to analyze the view of the au pair agencies about the au pair business. The outcomes of the applied research are processed in Chapter four and Chapter five. With these analyses, strengths and weaknesses can be drawn about the business of Smiling Faces to realize the best possible fulfillment of duty to care and in being the best possible au pair agency. In the long run these aspects will result in recommendations to Smiling Faces to improve its position in the au pair market which will lead to smiling faces for both au pairs and the “IND”.

On the next page an outline has been drawn in which the structure of the final project is explained by the use of a model.

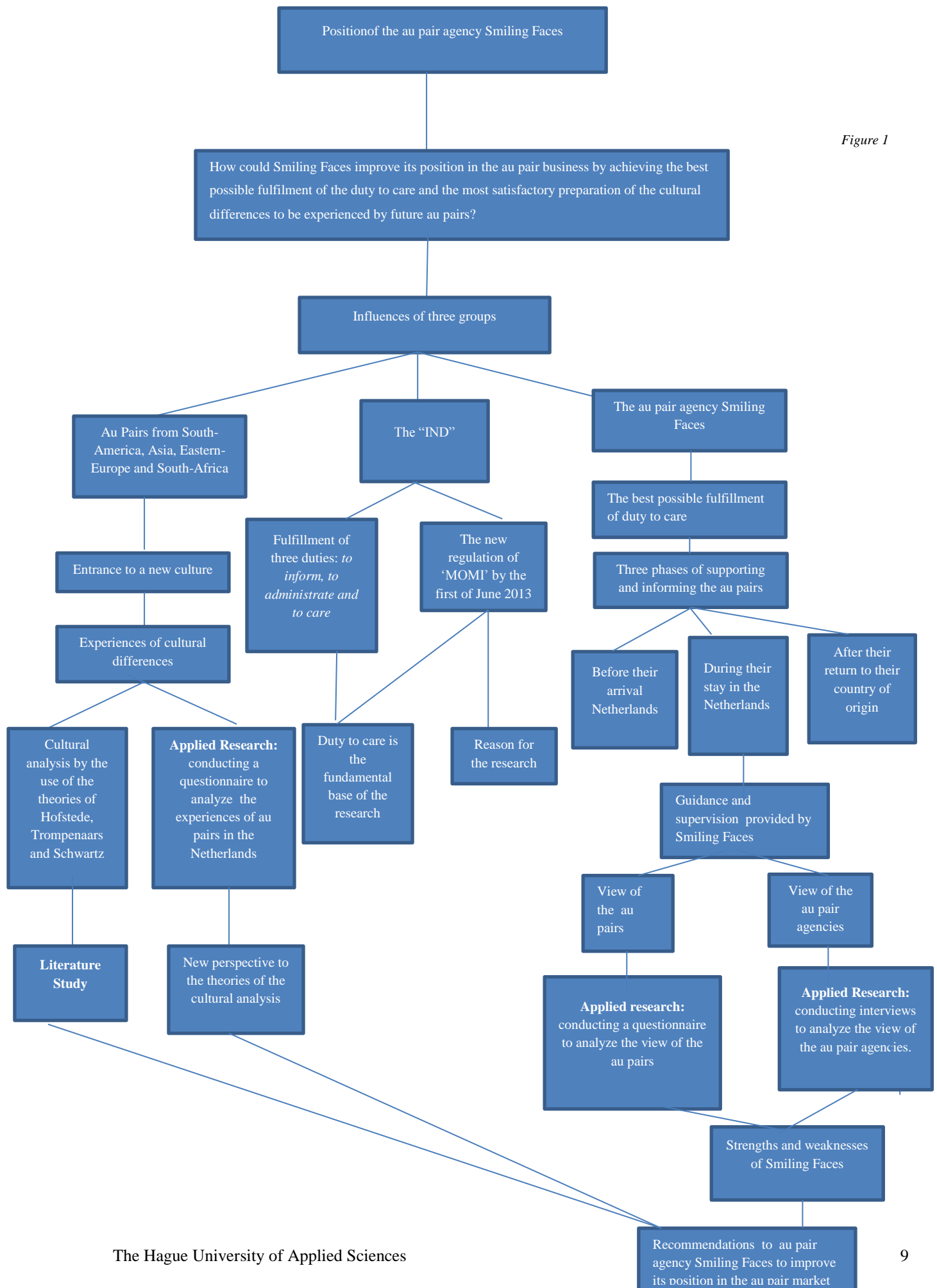


Figure 1

## Chapter 1: The Organization Smiling Faces

In the first chapter the topic of this final project will be Smiling Faces. In the first part the mission, the vision, the goals and the organizational structure of the company will be explained. In the second part of this chapter the (business) partners of Smiling Faces will be clarified and the importance of the (international) communication with these partners will be demonstrated. The au pair market and the au pair business are the topics of the last section.

### Paragraph 1 Introductory Information of Smiling Faces

Smiling Faces is an au pair agency located in Rotterdam. It was founded in 2007 by Sandra Beukers and Joland Oeij. Smiling Faces specializes in hiring and selecting au pairs from foreign countries and places these au pairs in host families in the Netherlands. It was Sandra Beuker's idea to establish Smiling Faces. Sandra Beukers has had au pairs and was interested in innovating and improving the au pair services for both the host families and au pairs. For this reason she founded Smiling Faces with Jolanda Oeij in 2007. Smiling Faces has grown to a company that places 120 au pairs in Dutch host families per year.

Smiling Faces has partners in foreign countries from which it hires and selects au pairs. The major business partners are located in South-Africa, Asia (Thailand and Indonesia), South-America (Colombia and Peru) and Eastern-Europe (Ukraine and Moldova) (Smiling Faces, 2013, "Candidates from all over the world" section, para. 2). The au pairs selected and hired by Smiling Faces will be matched to host families. When there is a match between a host family and an au pair Smiling Faces will arrange a visa for a twelve month stay in the Netherlands, a flight ticket and an insurance for the au pair. Smiling Faces specializes in the process from hiring and selecting an au pair until the arrival in the Netherlands. During the twelve month stay of the au pairs Smiling Faces keeps in touch with the au pairs and their host families to see how everything is going with both these parties. The communication with the au pairs, the host families and its partners is important for Smiling Faces to achieve complete customer satisfaction.

Smiling Faces is a sponsor of the “IND”. “The IND” institution decides on the distribution of visas or residence permits of foreign people wanting to stay in the Netherlands. The sponsor is a person or organization (for example a company or educational institution) with an interest in bringing a foreign national to the Netherlands. Sponsors may themselves submit applications for a residence permit for the foreign national. These sponsors can also lodge objections and appeals. Only organizations, institutions and companies can be recognized as sponsors. Individual persons cannot be recognized as sponsors ( “IND”, 2013, “Recognized Sponsors” section, para. 1). This means Smiling Faces is legally certified to request visas from the “IND” for the au pairs. Due to the fact that Smiling Faces is a sponsor of “the IND” the process of requesting a visa for an au pair will be executed rapidly.

As stated before the communication with the au pairs, the host families, the partners and the “IND” is essential for Smiling Faces. It refers to the mission of the company. The mission statement of Smiling Faces is making these four ‘partners’ content and satisfied with the services that Smiling Faces provides to them. Smiling Faces refers to the name of the agency which is making everybody happy and with a smile on their face. The motto of the company is *Understanding People and Great Connections* (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Welcome to Smiling Faces” section, header).

The vision of the company is innovation by use of social media such as: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Smiling Faces uses Google advertising to create brand awareness for the company and gather new customers. The use of marketing is another important vision point of the agency. The marketing tools of Smiling Faces are based especially upon creating brand awareness. This can be obtained by television and radio broadcasts, along with articles in journals and magazines.

There are several objectives of Smiling Faces. Two categories can be distinguished: the long-term and permanent objectives and the short-term and recent aims of Smiling Faces. Firstly, the long-term and permanent goals are the continuation of providing good services to the host families, business partners, au pairs and “the IND”; good matching between the au pairs and the host families; receiving new customers; obtaining customer satisfaction and a stable positive profit result each month.

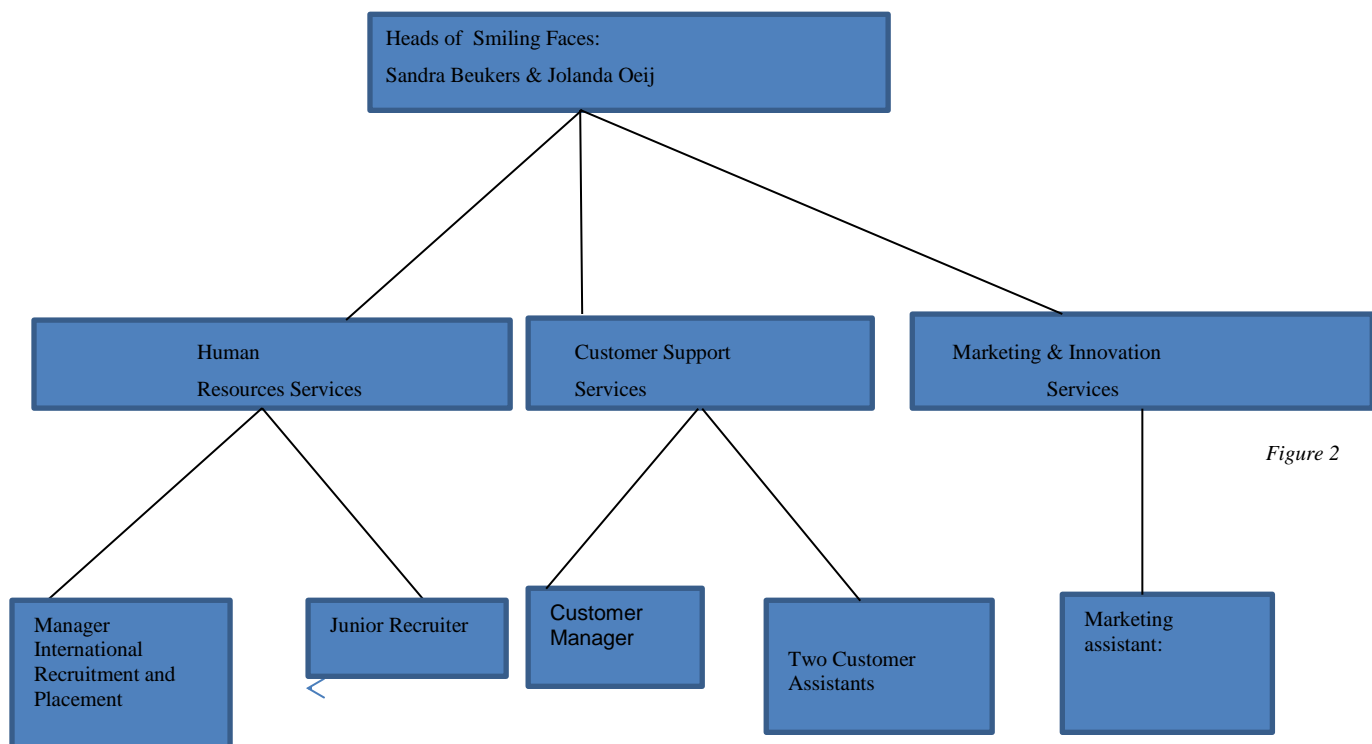
Short-term goals of Smiling Faces are achieving an improved computer system in which the process will be easily executed; the achievement of creating brand awareness for Smiling Faces in the Netherlands; the use of innovation methods such as social media and Google advertising and the use of good marketing strategies to realize new customers.

Smiling Faces is a small and private company. The agency has two owners, three employees and three interns. The owners of the agency Jolanda Oeij and Sandra Beukers can be seen as the Heads of the company and they carry the major responsibilities. The agency can be divided into two services. On one hand the customer support services focuses on the host family. The important aspect of the customer support services is customer satisfaction by providing appropriate services to the host families. This can be achieved by continually informing the host families about every new step in the process and by providing support to the host families during the twelve-month stay of their au pair.

On the other hand, the human resources services focuses on the au pair. The most important qualities of the human resources services are: the recruitment of the au pairs in hiring and selecting the au pairs on established requirements; matching the au pairs to host families and realizing good (international) communication between au pairs and Smiling Faces. The customer support team is responsible for keeping the host families satisfied and the human recruitment team should keep the au pairs content.

The customer support services team consists of a 'Customer Manager' and two 'Customer Assistants'. The human resources services exists of a 'Manager International Recruitment and Placement' and a 'Recruiter Junior'. Finally, there is an employee responsible for the company marketing.

In the diagram below: the organizational structure of Smiling faces in the form of an organogram is illustrated.



## Paragraph 2 (Business) Partners of Smiling Faces

In the first paragraph, introductory information of the au pair agency Smiling Faces is provided. In this paragraph, the (business) partners of Smiling Faces will be explained. The partners form an important framework for Smiling Faces. These are the partners of Smiling Faces: the host families, the au pairs, the agents and the “IND”.

In the first place, the host families will be explained. The host families are the customers of Smiling Faces. These partners are interested in having an au pair in supporting their family for a maximum of twelve months. There are some requirements covered in Dutch regulation to receive an au pair as a family. The host family has to reside in the Netherlands. The family members must have valid Dutch passports to indicate the Dutch nationality. In case, one or both of the family members do not have a Dutch nationality, a valid residence permit is required. The family should compose of at least two family members (“IND”, 2013, “Au Pair” section, para. 3).

Most customers of Smiling Faces reside in the area of Rotterdam and The Hague. Approximately forty per cent of the customers of Smiling Faces resides in this area. A lot of host families of Smiling Faces live in the area of Utrecht, Breda and Amsterdam (Hilversum). This also makes up for forty per cent of the customers. The remaining customers reside in the rest of the Netherlands. (Smiling Faces, 2013, Internal Database).

There are several reasons why host families would like to have an au pair: flexibility of an au pair, the support by an au pair in the organization of the family and the creation of an international environment of the family with English as the spoken language (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Less activities, more peace with an au pair” section, para. 1 - 4).

“The BONAPA” has set up concrete guidelines for host families and au pairs that should be fulfilled in order to have an au pair. “The BONAPA” is the branch organisation of the au pair agencies in the Netherlands. These guidelines function as a code of conduct in protection of au pairs and prevention of abuse of au pairs. The guidelines of the “BONAPA” can be found on their website.

The main guidelines will be described, because it functions as an important base for Smiling Faces in relation to host families, au pairs and “the IND”.

These are the guidelines in relation to the au pair:

- The au pair is a member of the host family.
- The au pair program is a cultural exchange for a maximum of twelve months.
- The responsibilities of the au pair are taking care of the children and providing light domestic work.

- The working schedule of the au pair is a maximum of thirty hours per week and a maximum of eight hours per day.
- The allowance of the au pair is a minimum of 300 euro and a maximum of 340 euro per month.
- The au pair must have a two-week holiday once a year paid for by the host family.
- The au pair has three evenings per week to confess her religion.
- The au pair lives in with the host family.
- The au pair cannot be a relative of the host family (Smiling Faces , 2013, “Rights and Obligations: au pair and host family” section, para. 2 - 6).

These are the guidelines in relation to the host family:

- The family must provide an appropriate room for the au pair of at least nine meter square with a window and central heating.
- The family provides the au pair a mobile phone, a bicycle, a laptop or computer and radio or TV.
- The family has the duty in the arrangement of the correct visa documents, the registration of the au pair in other institutions such as the municipality and the payment of these costs (Smiling Faces , 2013, “Rights and Obligations: au pair and host family” section para. 7 - 10).

The host families are important partners of Smiling Faces, because they are the customers of the agency. It is fundamental that Smiling Faces supports the host families during the stay of their au pair. For this creates customer satisfaction which is beneficial to the future of Smiling Faces.

In the second place, the au pairs are important partners of Smiling Faces. Au pairs also have to meet some requirements before receiving permission to stay in the Netherlands for a maximum of twelve months. These guidelines are being set up by the “IND” and its immigration policy. “The IND” has introduced a regulation which is called the “MOMI” to assess the visa procedure of foreigners. In the case of au pairs, some duties are important. In the first place, the residence of au pairs is aimed as a cultural exchange. The au pair is in the Netherlands to experience a new culture. Besides these experiences, the au pair will be living in the house of the Dutch host family. The au pair will take care of the children belonging to the host family and will provide light domestic work. An au pair has to be between 18 years old and 30 years old, the au pair is allowed to have children and the au pair is allowed to be married (“IND”, 2013, “Au Pair” section, para. 3).

Furthermore, Smiling Faces will screen au pairs on certain aspects before an au pair can travel to the Netherlands and is found suitable to be an au pair. The au pair will be screened on his or her English skills which need to be sufficient or good; on medical status ruling out that the au pair has a disease or virus, such as HIV and on a criminal record that the au pair has not taken part in criminal activities. Candidates are also selected on their experiences in taking care of children and doing light domestic work.

If the au pair has a good knowledge of English; has no specific diseases; has no criminal past and has experiences in taking care of children and doing light domestic work, the au pair fulfills the requirements set up by Smiling Faces. Then the au pair can be presented to host families (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Cultureel Uitwisselingsprogramma”, p. 62).

Smiling Faces offers several services to the au pairs. Firstly, the au pair receives a training manual before arrival in the Netherlands. The training manual is set up by Smiling Faces and it contains necessary and practical information about the Netherlands to ‘survive’ the twelve months of being au pair here. Examples of aspects that are included in the manual are: prepared information about the activities that the au pair should provide, information about the Netherlands and information about the Dutch personality and mentality. The training manual exists of approximately 120 pages. The host family also receives the training manual (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Cultureel Uitwisselingsprogramma”, p. 60).

Secondly, the au pair receives an ‘Enjoy and Explore Card’. The card gives the au pair permission to participate in the ‘Enjoy and Explore Programme’ that Smiling Faces offers. The programme consists of six monthly meetings and four annual events. The four annual events are also organized for au pairs of other au pair agencies that are members of “the BONAPA”. The meetings and annual events are organized for the au pairs to meet other au pairs, to explore the Dutch culture and to evaluate the experiences within the host family with Smiling Faces. During these meetings Smiling Faces also explains the guidelines of “the BONAPA” and “the IND” (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Cultureel Uitwisselingsprogramma”, p. 59 - 61).

Thirdly, the au pair receives a welcome gift. The welcome gift contains ‘the Enjoy and Explore card’ which gives access to participate in the meetings and events, a list of contact details of the other au pairs and an event calendar. Fourthly, there is an Facebook Page of Smiling Faces that au pairs are required to join. The aim of the Smiling Facebook page is to chat with the au pairs to see how the au pairs are doing within the host family and in the Netherlands. There is a phone number which is available 24 hours per day seven days a week. The phone number is meant for emergency cases. Finally, Smiling Faces offers a Dutch course. The grammar and vocabulary of the Dutch course specialize in activities of the au pairs and their living environment in the host family. The au pair services of Smiling Faces can be distinguished in four phases: screening, matching, placing and supporting (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Cultureel Uitwisselingsprogramma”, p. 59 – 61).

In the third place, the au pair agents are partners of Smiling Faces. Au pairs working for Smiling Faces have to be registered at an au pair agent. The au pair agents possess portfolios with girls (and boys) interested in becoming an au pair. The agents present these au pairs to Smiling Faces and Smiling Faces in turn selects and hires au pairs and presents these au pairs to host families in the



Netherlands. The au pair agents are the contacts for future au pairs as well as being the contact for the au pair agency Smiling Faces.

Smiling Faces has a lot of au pair agents all over the world, for example in Australia, Bolivia, China, The United States of America and France. The main partners of Smiling Face are from South-Africa, South-America (Colombia and Peru), Asia (Indonesia and Thailand) and Eastern Europe (Ukraine and Moldova) (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Candidates from all over the world” section, para. 2).

In the last place, the “IND” is an important partner of Smiling Faces. In the next chapter, “the IND” and the importance for Smiling Faces to fulfill the duties of “the IND” will be further explained. “The IND” is responsible for the issuance of the visas for au pairs. A new regulation was introduced by June 2013. It also contains changes regarding the visa procedure for au pairs. An important change of the regulation is that host families cannot independently request a visa, but host families must receive help from an au pair agency in doing so. Since the new regulation Smiling Faces is a sponsor of “the IND”. It means that Smiling Faces is legally recognized in independently requesting visas from the “IND” and the visa procedure of au pairs with the “IND” elapses faster.

### **Paragraph 3 The au pair market in the Netherlands**

In this paragraph, the au pair branch in the Netherlands, the main competitors of Smiling Faces and the branch organizations “IAPA” and “BONAPA” will be examined. The au pair market in the Netherlands is relatively small. There are approximately thirty au pair agencies registered in the Netherlands. Defining the au pair market in terms of supply and demand, the market is relatively large. There is a relatively small target group interested in having an au pair and there are approximately thirty au pair agencies. The au pair market can be described as diverse: in terms of magnitude of customers, magnitude of organizational structure, geographic location and method systems.

The attractiveness of starting an au pair agency and the participation in the au pair branch is low. Firstly, knowledge in the au pair services and the visa request procedure are necessary to be successful as an au pair agency. This specialized knowledge is limited. Moreover, it is essential to fulfill the rights and duties set up by “the IND” and inform the host families and au pairs about these guidelines. If these duties are not followed up by an au pair agency, by a host family or an au pair, it could mean, in the worst case, a termination of the agency. That is why starting an au pair agency involves risks.

On the other hand, to customers, the au pair branch is also not very attractive. The costs of receiving an au pair are quite high. The host family have to pay a mediation fee to the au pair agency. The mediation fee is the amount of money that the au pair agency will use for the arrangements from the selection of the au pair until the departure of the au pair to his or her country of origin. Other costs are the visa costs, the travel expenses, the costs of the insurance and the allowance. The host family also has to provide a mobile phone, a computer or laptop and radio or television to the au pair. Furthermore, a host family is required to fulfill the guidelines set up by “the IND” and “the BONAPA”. It involves some risks for a host family. If a host family does not fulfill the duties, it could lead to a termination of having an au pair. These are the reasons why the au pair branch is not very attractive to Dutch customers.

Now, a marketing analysis of the au pair market will be given. Three models will be used for this: the model of ABELL, a short SWOT-analysis and a short competitor’s analysis by using the marketing mix of the au pair business.

The ABELL model will be used to create a better understanding of the marketing of the au pair market. Three categories are used to illustrate this: the customers, the customer’s needs and the used technologies to receive new customers. In the diagram below, the ABELL Model of the au pair market is illustrated.

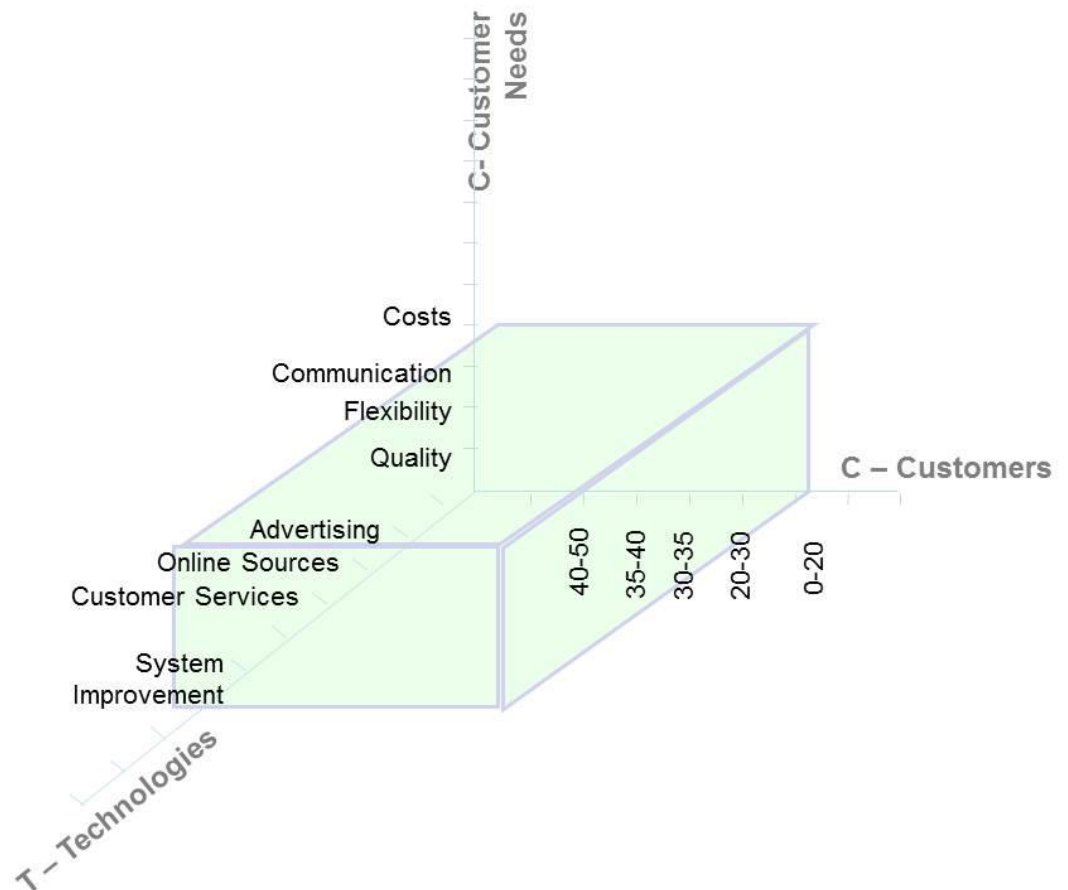


Figure 3

A short clarification of the ABELL model will be given. The average age of the customers is approximately forty years old. The needs of the customers are au pairs having skills in taking care of children and doing light domestic work and having good knowledge of the English language. Other requirements of the host family for an au pair are flexibility and good communication skills. Finally, the costs in receiving an au pair are also important to customers. Technologies that are important to au pair agencies in receiving new customers are: advertising, the use of good online sources such as a good website and social media, offering the best possible customer services and the use of good and modern systems.

Another tool of measuring the au pair market is a SWOT-analysis. The strengths of the au pair branch are the specialized knowledge about the visa procedure and its professionalism in this area of business. A weaknesses are the high costs for the customers and the involved risks for customers and au pair agencies. A good opportunity for the au pair market is an increase of the prices of child care. It could mean that the child care will be more expensive than having an au pair. It will be a good solution for families with children to receive help from an au pair in supporting the family. A threat of the au pair market is the competition of other au pair agencies .

A competitor's analysis can be made based upon the marketing mix. To get a better understanding of the main competitors of Smiling Faces there are four aspects important: the place of the au pair agency, the nationalities of the au pairs (product), the price of the au pair services (mediation fee) and the promotion (especially the website) of the au pair agency. There are approximately thirty au pair agencies registered in the Netherlands. However, ten au pair agencies can be seen as 'real' competitors of Smiling Faces. These ten au pair agencies are also members of the "BONAPA" and sponsors of the "IND". In the chart below the competitors of Smiling Faces are being analyzed by the use of the marketing mix.

Company	Place of the Company	Product of the Company	Price of the Product	Promotion of the Company
1. Au Pair 4 All	Hoogvliet	Au Pairs from the Philippines	1190,- mediation fee costs	Good, clear and formal website.
2. Happy Au Pair	Soesterberg	Au Pairs from the Philippines	1395,- mediation fee costs	Good and clear website. The use of colours on the website is a little bit childish. Use of social media: Facebook and Flickr.
3. Au Pair Amsterdam	Amsterdam	The nationality of the au pairs is not mentioned on the website.	1495 mediation fee costs	Simple and clear website. Missing information about the au pairs. Articles in magazines are shown on the website.
4. Mission Hollandaise	Maastricht	Au Pairs from European Union, Eastern Europe, Latin-America, America, South-Africa and Asia.	1650,- mediation fee costs.	It is a very good and professional website. The URL-link is also with .eu which is beneficial for a larger target group. The target group of this au pair agency are also the countries Belgium and Germany.
5. Super Nanny Au Pair Services	Den Haag	Au Pairs from Eastern Europe, South-Africa, South-America and Asia.	900,- euro mediation fee costs.	It is a very good website, because of the interaction. The amount of information is too detailed. Use of social media: Facebook and LinkedIn.
6. NEDSA Au Pair	Overveen	Au Pairs from South-Africa.	The price is unknown. The website is under construction.	The website is under construction.
7. Au Pair Interactive	Doorn	Au Pairs from North and South-America,	The prices are not mentioned on the	Good and clear website. The information is

		Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Asia.	website.	inadequate. The information about the au pairs and the costs are not mentioned on the website.
8. House o Orange	Den Haag	Au Pairs that are native English speakers: South-Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. Other au pairs are from South-America and Eastern Europe. Fifty per cent of the au pairs are from South-Africa. House o Orange has its own office in South-Africa.	1100,- mediation fee costs.	Good and clear website. The website is all in English. Use of social media: Facebook.
9. Au Pair Worldwide	Groningen	Au Pairs from European Union countries, outside Europe, such as Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South-America.	Website is under construction. Price is unknown.	Website is under construction.
10. Au Pair Nederland	Venray	Au Pairs from South-America, the United States of America, Canada, South-Africa and Eastern-Europe.	850,- mediation fee	Good and clear website. The files of the au pairs are missing on the website.
11. Smiling Faces	Rotterdam	Au pairs from South-Africa, South-America, Asia and Eastern Europe.	1150,- mediation fee.	Good, clear and formal website. All the information necessary is mentioned on the website. It also includes files of the au pairs.

<sup>1</sup> Figure 4

Based upon the competitor's analysis Smiling Faces has two main competitors: 'House-o-Orange' and 'Super Nanny Au Pair Services'. These companies are based in the Hague which is in the same region Smiling Faces operates in. The au pairs from House-o-Orange and Super Nanny Au Pair Services are from South-Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South-America. The au pairs working for Smiling Faces have similar nationalities. Both companies have a good website and use social media to create brand awareness. Finally, the price of Super Nanny Au Pair services is nine hundred euros which is 250 euros cheaper than the mediation fee required by Smiling Faces. The mediation fee for House-o-Orange is comparable to Smiling Faces, namely eleven hundred euros.

<sup>1</sup> Websites of AuPair4All, Happy Au Pair, Au Pair Amsterdam, Mission Hollandaise, Super Nanny Au Pair Services, NEDSA Au Pair, Au Pair Interactive, House o Orange, Au Pair Worldwide, Au Pair Nederland

Now, the two branch organizations of the au pair market will be explained: “the BONAPA” and the “IAPA”. “BONAPA” is the branch organization of the au pair agencies in the Netherlands. Seventy per cent of the au pair market in the Netherlands is a member of “the BONAPA”. In 2012, “the BONAPA” was founded as a successor of “the NAPO” in request of the au pair agencies, host families and the government. “BONAPA” sets up a code conduct and guidelines for host families to protect au pairs and prevent abuse of au pairs. “BONAPA” collaborates with its members to ensure a safe and pleasant stay for au pairs and host families.

There are some requirements to become a member of the “BONAPA”. These will now be described:

- Fulfillment of the general conditions of “BONAPA” and informing and ensuring the host families to fulfill these conditions.
- Proven expertise, motivation and knowledge in providing au pair services by the au pair agency.
- The agency must be a sponsor of the “IND”.
- Knowledge in requesting visas for au pairs and knowledge in the visa regulations of the Netherlands.
- The existence of the au pair agency of at least a minimum of one year and a placement of at least five au pairs per calendar year.
- Containing a clear and transparent website with the prices, services and uniform general conditions.
- Presence of two “BONAPA”-meetings per year (“BONAPA”, 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, “Presentation BONAPA” section).

These are the members of the BONAPA: Au Pair 4 All, Happy Au Pair, Au Pair Amsterdam, Au Pairs Worldwide, Hoom Au Pairs, House-o-Orange, Mission Hollandaise, NedSA Au Pair, Super Nanny Au Pair Services (SNAPS), Au Pair Interactive, Au Pair Nederland and Smiling Faces. Being a member of the “BONAPA” has advantages for au pair agencies to create brand awareness. “The BONAPA” distinguishes its members, because of good knowledge in the au pair services, professionalism and fulfillment of its duties. (“BONAPA”, 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, “Presentation BONAPA” section).

Another organization that supports au pair agencies is “IAPA”. Basically “IAPA” has the same aims as “the BONAPA”, but it operates on an international level. “IAPA” has also set up a code of conduct and guidelines for au pair agencies. The members of “IAPA” come from all over the world. Smiling Faces is also a member of the IAPA (“IAPA”, 2013, “About” section, para 1 – 6).

## Chapter 2 “The IND” and its importance to au pair agencies

In this chapter the institution “the IND” and the specialized department of “the IND” with a focus on the au pair market will be examined. Furthermore, the importance of “the IND” for au pair agencies is a topic in which the duties of “the IND” will be explained. Finally, the new regulation of “MOMI” by “the IND” with regard to the changes for the au pair market will be clarified.

### Paragraph 1 Introductory Information about “the IND”

In the first place, “the IND” is an institution from the Dutch government with the tasks of the implementation of the immigration policy in the Netherlands. It means that “the IND” assesses the requests of foreign nationals that would like to stay in the Netherlands or would like to receive a Dutch nationality. Examples are refugees that are not safe in their country of origin, people that would like to work in the Netherlands or au pairs that would like to stay for a maximum of 12 months in the Netherlands as a basis of a cultural exchange.

A good implementation of “the IND” is important to ensure a good immigration policy in the Netherlands in which the “IND” works accurately. To secure this policy “the IND” has clearly set out rules that it applies to foreign nationals in the Netherlands. “The IND” applies those rules as objectively and consistently as possible (“IND”, 2013, “Organisation” section, para. 1).

“The IND” examines each case independently and separately. It gives the foreign nationals the opportunity to present their story. By this “the IND” finds a balance between the rules and the people. “The IND” has to work carefully. The decisions taken by “the IND” may have a serious impact on the lives of the foreign nationals to would like to enter the Netherlands (“IND”, 2013, “Organisation” section, para. 2).

The Dutch government and ministries have introduced a migration policy which makes it important to ensure a good flow of foreign nationals in the Netherlands. Of course, not every foreign citizen can live here or can have the Dutch nationality. That is why, conditions are set out by the government that “the IND” has to fulfill. The main guidelines are as followed: the country of origin of the particular person who would like to live or work in the Netherlands, the length of committed stay, the reason(s) for residency and income or age. To realize this “the IND” works carefully and efficiently by having clear rules and examine each request independently and objectively Netherlands (“IND”, 2013, “Organisation” section, para. 3).

“The IND” is an executive body of the Ministry of Security and Justice. The secretariat of this ministry is responsible for a good implementation of the immigration policy and the immigration regulations. “The IND” does not carry any responsibilities in this. The immigration policy and its regulations are defined by the Parliament and Senate of the Dutch government. “The IND” has an important governmental role in the realization of the best possible immigration policy to satisfy the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Dutch government. “The IND” could realize this by having good knowledge of the regulations of the immigration policy in the Netherlands and applies these rules to the foreign nationals. “The IND” applies these regulations with objectivity and with consistency (“IND”, 2013, “Organisatie” section, para. 3).

“The IND” collaborates with different partners. Every partner forms a link in the immigration policy and it has each own responsibilities in the policy. Examples of partners of “the IND” are: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and the Managing Board of the Police.

## **Paragraph 2: The specialized Department of “the IND” and its guidelines and duties**

“The IND” has divided its work into different departments. The departments have its own regulations and employees of “the IND” with specialized knowledge of these regulations and conditions. There is also a department (“De Proeftuinen”) that deals with the visa requests of the au pairs. The request for the stay of an au pair in the Netherlands has to be executed by a legally recognized au pair agency. These au pair agencies are sponsors of “the IND” and have the permission to request visas for au pairs to “the IND” independently.

An au pair comes to the Netherlands for a maximum of twelve months to explore the Dutch culture and society. The stay of an au pair is meant as a cultural exchange. An au pair stays with a host family and performs light domestic duties in exchange for room and board with the host family. An au pair cannot not be younger than eighteen years old and not older than 30 years old. An au pair has to possess a valid travel document, for example a passport. An au pair has not previously held a Dutch residence permit for exchange purposes Netherlands (“IND”, 2013, “Au Pair” section, para. 1).

The aim of this specialized department of “the IND” is to realize a good and safe stay of the au pairs. That is why the IND has set up concrete guidelines for the host family and the au pair to be fulfilled in order to obtain the aim of “the IND”.

These are the main concrete guidelines for au pairs and host families:

- An au pair is staying in a host family consisting of two or more persons for whom the au pair has not previously worked (abroad).
- An au pair will only carry out light domestic duties and taking care of children for a maximum of



eight hours per day and a maximum of thirty hours per week. The au pair will have at least 2 days off per week. The au pair is not allowed to perform activities for persons who require more specialized care which requires specific skills. These duties are not light domestic duties.

- The au pair and the host family must draw up and sign a daily schedule on which both agree Netherlands (“IND”, 2013, “Au Pair” section, para. 3).

These guidelines are set up by “the IND” as a protection of the au pair and prevention of abuse of the au pair. The department of “the IND” focuses on the well beings of au pairs and ensures a good stay of au pairs in the Netherlands.

Au pair agencies also need to fulfill three duties set up by “the IND”. The three duties are: to inform, to administrate and to care. These three duties will now be clarified In the first place, the *duty to inform* in which au pair agencies are obliged to inform “the IND” about relevant changes with regards to the host family, the au pair or the own position of the au pair agency. These changes could have consequences for the stay of the au pair or the visa request of the au pair. Examples of these changes are: the host family has moved to a new house, the au pair is getting married or one member of the host family has a new job. The certified sponsor has to inform “the IND” about these changes within four weeks. (“IND”, 2013, “Rights and Obligations of the Sponsor” section, para. 2).

In the second place, the *administration duty* in which au pair agencies must keep all of the administration with regards to a visa request of an au pair. The certified sponsor is obliged to store relevant data and documents of the au pair for at least five years. “The IND” may ask the au pair agency to show their data to see if these duties of the au pair agency are being realized Netherlands (“IND”, 2013, “Rights and Obligations of the Sponsor” section, para. 3).

In the third place, *the duty to care* refers to the obligation of au pair agencies to provide care to the au pairs. First of all, the certified sponsor should realize good recruitment and selection of au pairs. Secondly, the au pair agency is responsible for monitoring the well-being of au pairs. Thirdly, the au pair agency is obliged to ascertain abuse or misuse caused by a host family. The certified sponsor should inform “the IND” about this. Fourthly, the au pair agency has to provide sufficient information about the aims of the stay, about the cultural exchange, about the procedure and about the rights and duties of an au pair and a host family. Finally, the au pair agency is obliged to ensure a good repatriation of the au pair to his or her country of origin. If the au pair stays illegally in the Netherlands, the au pair agency carries the responsibilities for this. It means that the au pair agency must recover certain repatriation costs, such as the costs of the travel documents, the transport costs in the Netherlands and the travel expenses of the return flight to the country of origin (“IND”, 2013, “Rights and Obligations of the Sponsor” section, para. 4).

It is very important for au pair agencies to have “the IND” as a good partner. “The IND” assesses and decides on the visa requests of the au pairs and controls au pair agencies with regards to the fulfillment of the three duties.

### Paragraph 3 The new regulation of “the IND”

Since June 2013, there is a new regulation introduced by “MOMI”, the migration policy of “the IND”. The new regulation has consequences for the immigration policy in the Netherlands and also for au pair immigration policy. It contains changes for au pair agencies and for host families. The changes of the immigration policy “MOMI” regarding the au pair business will now be explained. Six phases can be distinguished: guidelines that will not change the migration policy of au pairs, guidelines that will change the migration policy of au pairs, the ‘new’ duties of the sponsors, the changes for au pair agencies, the changes for host families and the changes for au pairs.

In the first place, it is important to consider that au pair agencies are legally recognized by “the IND” as sponsors of “the IND” with the new regulation of June 2013. It means that only these sponsors can apply for visas for the stay of an au pair. Host families are not able to apply for these visas anymore.

These are the guidelines that have not been changed due to the new regulation of June 2013:

- \* An au pair comes to the Netherlands to explore the Dutch culture and society.
- \* An au pair cannot not be younger than eighteen years old.
- \* An au pair cannot work more than thirty hours per week.
- \* An au pair cannot work more than eight hours per day.
- \* An au pair is responsible for taking care of children and doing light domestic work
- \* An au pair only stays twelve months , or more specifically not longer than 365 days.
- \* The sponsor has *the duty to inform, administration duty and the duty to care* (as mentioned before in this chapter). These three duties are more important than before, because of the ‘new’ functions of “the IND” which will be later on explained (“IND”, 2013, “Au Pair” section, para. 3).

These are the guidelines that have changed due to the new regulation of June 2013:

- \* An au pair cannot be older than thirty years old.
- \* An au pair can have children.
- \* An au pair can be married.
- \* The visa of travelling to the Netherlands and the other visa necessary to stay in the Netherlands will be processed as one visa.
- \* Au pair agencies will be the sponsor of the au pairs (and not the host families anymore).
- \* Only sponsors(an au pair agency legally recognized by “the IND”) can request visas for au pairs

to “the IND”.

- \* The sponsors have to fulfill legal obligations set up by the IND. The “IND” has more possibilities in taking action against au pair agencies that do not fulfill these legal duties.
- \* The host family has to have a minimum income of 150 per cent of the minimum wage of the Dutch regulation.
- \* The daily schedule will be the stepping stone of the new regulation. The daily schedule needs to be signed by the au pair and by the host family. The daily schedule will show if au pairs do not work more than thirty hours per week and not more than eight hours per day. The au pair has to have two days off per week and at least one weekend off per month. “The IND” will use the daily schedule as a guide to control the host families in the fulfilment of the guidelines set up by “the IND” (“IND”, March 2013, “Brochure: Informatiebericht over wijziging van het migratiebeleid voor au pair en culturele uitwisseling” section, p.1-2)

A daily schedule should exist of the following aspects:

- \*The working hours of the au pair per week
- \* The working hours of the au pair per day
- \* The working hours of the host parents
- \* The school hours of the children and who will bring and take the children to and home from school (Smiling Faces, 2013, “Cultureel Uitwisselingsprogramma” section, p. 64).

These are the duties for the sponsors due to the new regulation of June 2013:

- \* The sponsor has an independent position in the immigration policy and it can request visas. “The IND” will assess the visa request within fourteen days.
- \* The sponsor is responsible for the return of the au pair. If “the IND” finds an au pair after the twelve month stay, the au pair is living illegally in the Netherlands. The costs, such as the return flight ticket, travel costs within the Netherlands and the costs of the travel documents need to be paid by the sponsor.
- \* A sponsor has the responsibility of informing “the IND” about every change regarding the au pair, host family or its own position which refers to the information duty. (“IND”, March 2013, “Brochure: Informatiebericht over wijziging van het migratiebeleid voor au pair en culturele uitwisseling”section, p.1-2).

These are the changes for the au pair agencies due to the new regulation of June 2013:

- \* Au pair agencies will be the juridical sponsor of the au pair. It is an important change before the first of June host families could also be the juridical sponsor of the au pair.
- \* Au pair agencies need to be recognized by “the IND” as a sponsor before the start of the new regulation of “the IND”. Otherwise, these au pair agencies cannot be sponsors of au pairs and cannot request visas anymore.

\* Au pair agencies that were already covenant holders of “the IND” are automatically recognized as sponsors . This privilege expires when the au pair agency has not requested a visa before June 2012.

\* For the au pair agencies that are already a covenant holder of the IND, the new regulation needs to be applied to all au pairs that reside in the Netherlands before the first of June 2013. (“IND”, March 2013, “Brochure: Informatiebericht over wijziging van het migratiebeleid voor au pair en culturele uitwisseling” section, p.1-2)

These are the changes for the host family due to the new regulation of June 2013:

\* Host families cannot request a visa independently for an au pair. Host families have to receive help from an au pair agency in order to fulfil this (“IND”, March 2013, “Brochure: Informatiebericht over wijziging van het migratiebeleid voor au pair en culturele uitwisseling” section, p.1-2).

Finally, for the au pairs that are no concrete changes (“IND”, March 2013, “Brochure: Informatiebericht over wijziging van het migratiebeleid voor au pair en culturele uitwisseling” section , p.1-2).

## Chapter 3 Approaches to nation-states' cultures

In this chapter, an impression of the five cultures (the Dutch culture, the Colombian culture, the Ukrainian culture, the South-African culture and the Indonesian culture) will be illustrated. It is necessary to analyze the five cultures to see which au pairs from which country will experience a greater amount of differences in culture between their culture and Dutch culture. Theories of three scholars will be used to describe these five cultures. These scholars are Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Shalom Schwartz. The aspects used to analyze the five cultures are: norms, values, beliefs, habits and mentality based upon the average population of a particular nation-states' culture. At the end of this chapter, a diagram will be drawn which shows the important cultural differences between these cultures. The outcomes of these analyses should be compared to the outcomes of the questionnaire in which the views of au pairs are being examined. This comparison could lead to new perspectives of the three theories. It could also result in a better understanding about which au pairs will have the most difficulty in adjusting to Dutch culture.

### Paragraph 1: The Theory of Geert Hofstede

In the first place, the theory of Geert Hofstede will be explained. Geert Hofstede is a professor in intercultural communication and the founder of intercultural research (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "Geert Hofstede" section, para. 1). Moreover, he has developed the model of the five dimensions to analyze national cultures. By this a better understanding can be drawn of a nation-states' culture. The five dimensions are power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation versus short-term orientation. In 2010, a sixth dimension is added by the researcher Michael Minkov (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "National Cultural Dimensions" section, para 4). Now, the six dimensions of culture by Hofstede will be examined.

First of all, power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This dimension shows how a society handles with inequality amongst people (Hofstede, 1994, p. 28). In a nation with a high degree of power distance, an hierarchical structure is accepted by the citizens in which everyone has his own position. In a society with low power distance, the aim is striving for equality in the distribution of power amongst the members of a society. In large power distance cultures, the emphasis of power is positional power. It means that the distribution of power is based on formal authority. Small power distance cultures recognize the earned power. Earned power is based on individuals' accomplishments and effort of the individuals (Neuliep, J.W., 2009, p. 69).

Secondly, the aspects of individualism and collectivism are important to analyze cultures. In individualistic cultures, the emphasis is on personal independence, freedom of choice, personal autonomy and achievement of self-fulfillment (Neuliep, J.W, 2009, p. 40). The scholar Harry Triandis is well-known for his research on the differences between individualism and collectivism. He explains individualism as follows. In individualistic cultures, the emphasis is on individuals' goals over group goals. The social behavior of an individualistic culture is guided by personal goals. An individualistic culture points out the values that benefits the individual person. In an individualistic culture, each person is viewed uniquely (Triandis, H.,2001, p. )

In collectivistic cultures, the emphasis on interdependence, the sense of duty to a group, harmony, loyalty and working within the group. In collective societies, group goals have precedence over the individual goals. Collectivistic cultures stress the values that serve the in-group by subordinating personal goals for the sake of preserving the in-group. In collectivistic societies, people are not viewed as isolated individuals. People see themselves as interdependent of others, where responsibility is shared and accountability is collective (Triandis, H., 2001, p. ).

Thirdly, there is a distinction between masculine societies and feminine societies. With masculinity, the aim of a society is to achieve assertiveness, heroism and material reward for success. Competition is another important element of masculine societies. In contrast, in feminine cultures, cooperation, taking care of the weak, quality of life and modesty are important elements to strive for (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "Dimensions" section, para. 3).

Fourthly, the principle of uncertainty avoidance is necessary to analyze a nation-states' culture. The uncertainty avoidance is about how members of a society deal with ambiguity and uncertainty of an uncertain or unknown situation. In societies with a high uncertainty avoidance, members view the uncertainty in life as a continuous threat that must be fought. In these societies, orientation principles and codes of behavior and beliefs are important. In societies with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance, members see the uncertainty as a normal part of life where each day is accepted as it comes. Members of these societies strive for a relaxed position in which practice is more important than beliefs and principle (Neuliep, J.W., 2009, p. 74-75; The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "Dimensions" section, para. 4).

In 1991 a fifth dimension was added to the four dimensions of Hofstede based on research by Michael Bond. It is the dimension of long-term orientation versus short-term orientation. In societies with a short-term orientation, traditions and traditional thinking are necessary terms in this culture. The aim of a short-term oriented culture is to establish the absolute truth. In long-term oriented societies, people believe that the truth depends on the context, situation and time. Members of these societies show an ability in adapting traditions to a concrete context or situation (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "Dimensions" section, para. 5).

Finally, in 2010 the sixth dimension was introduced. The dimension is about indulgence and restraint. In cultures with indulgence, members of society have the allowance of relatively free gratification of the basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. In societies with restraint, members have suppressed gratification of needs. The society with restraint is being regulated by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, 2010, p. ).

Now, the five dimensions of Hofstede will be used to describe the five different cultures. In the first place, the culture of South-Africa will be analysed. In South-Africa, power distance is relatively high. This means that the South-African culture accepts hierarchical order and there is inequality amongst people. Furthermore, centralization is popular. South-Africa is an individualistic society. Its members maintain a high degree of interdependence. The South-African country has a masculine society which means that it strives for competition, achievement and success. South-Africa has a preference for the uncertainty. Its citizens pay attention to principles and codes of beliefs and behaviour. There is no score analysed for the long-term orientation or short-term orientation (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, “What about South-Africa” section).

Secondly, the culture of Colombia has a high degree of power distance. It even means that inequalities amongst people are simply a fact of life in Colombia. The score of individualism is very low. In other words, Colombia is one of the most collectivistic cultures of the world. The combination of a high degree of power distance and a very low degree of individualism lead to class distinctions and the importance of loyalty and relationships. Colombia is a masculine society that strives for success, competition and achievements. There is high degree of uncertainty avoidance (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, “What about Colombia” section).

Thirdly, the Ukrainian culture is not mentioned on the scale of Hofstede. The culture of Ukraine will be analysed by the two other scholars. A small indication can be given by the scores of the neighbour countries (Romania, Russia, Bulgaria and Poland) which is mostly comparable. According to scores of the neighbour countries, Ukraine would have a high degree of power distance, a collectivistic culture, a masculine society and a high preference for avoiding uncertainty (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, “What about Romania/Russia/Bulgaria/Poland” section).

Fourthly, the Indonesian culture knows a very high degree of power distance. This means that there are unequal rights, dependency and hierarchy. The culture of the Indonesian country is collectivistic. Family loyalty and the belonging to a family is significant for the Indonesian collectivism. Indonesia has a masculine society. However, it can be considered as low masculine. Indonesia is less masculine than other Asian countries. In Indonesia, status and visible symbols of success are important, but it is not always material gain that brings motivation (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, “What about Indonesia” section).

Fifthly, the Dutch culture has a low degree of power distance. Being independent, having equal rights and hierarchy for convenience are significant for the Dutch culture in the distribution of power. The Netherlands has an individualistic culture. The society of the Dutch culture is feminine. In the Netherlands, factors such as solidarity, equality and quality of life are important. The Netherlands has a preference in avoiding uncertainty which means that codes of behaviour and beliefs are fundamental in the Dutch culture. Finally, the Dutch culture is short-term oriented. It is significant for having great respect for traditions. Western societies are well-known for their short-term orientation cultures (The Hofstede Centre, 2013, "What about the Netherlands" section).

### Paragraph 2 The Theory of Fons Trompenaars

In the second place, there is another scholar named Fons Trompenaars who has created a model of dimensions to draw a better understanding of nation-states' cultures. These seven dimensions are described in his book published in 1997: *"The Riding Waves of Culture"*. The aim of this book is to gather knowledge of other cultures to create a better globalized working environment in business. That is why some of these dimensions are especially focused on business' culture. Only the relevant dimensions in creating a better understanding of the five cultures will be clarified. These dimensions of culture by Fons Trompenaars will now shortly be explained.

First of all, cultures that stresses universalism and cultures that stresses particularism will be the topic. In countries with universalism, there is a high importance of laws, rules and obligations. These have preferences over relationships. In cultures with particularism, rules are dedicated by each rule and each relationship. Apply this to the five cultures: the Netherlands is an universalist country and Colombia and Indonesia are countries with a high degree of particularism (Trompenaars, F., Hampden-Turner, C., 2011, p. ).

Secondly, Trompenaars points out the differences between collectivism and individualism. However, he clarifies collectivism with the term communitarianism. The explanations of these two cultures by Hofstede and Trompenaars are the same. Apply this to the five cultures: the Netherlands and South-Africa have an individualistic culture and Colombia, Indonesia and Ukraine have a collectivistic culture.

Thirdly, a distinction can be drawn between cultures based upon emotionality. There are cultures that show their emotion which are called emotional cultures by Trompenaars. In contrary, cultures that control their emotions are known as neutral cultures. Applying these two factors to the five cultures: Colombia is an emotional country and the Netherlands is a neutral country.



Fourthly, there are differences in time management by cultures. Two groups can be distinguished: sequential time management cultures and synchronous time management cultures. Cultures with sequential time management found punctuality and planning important. In cultures with synchronous time management, flexibility is the key. Apply this to the five cultures: the Netherlands and the Ukraine have a high degree of preference for sequential time management and Colombia and South-Africa are synchronous timing cultures (Trompenaars, F., Hampden-Turner, C., 2011, p. )

### Paragraph 3 The Theory of Shalom Schwartz

In the third place, the cultural value's theory of the sociologist Shalom Schwartz will be explained. Schwartz has created six values to express the cultural needs of societies in the world. These values are: conservatism, intellectual and affective autonomy, hierarchy, mastery, egalitarianism and harmony. The value's theory of Shalom Schwartz shortly will be explained and applied to the five cultures.

In the first place, cultures with conservatism have a high importance of status quo and the maintenance of tradition of the nation-states' culture. Intellectual autonomy stands for independence and having individual rights. Affective autonomy is about independence with positive outcomes such as pleasure and enjoyment of life. These two types of autonomy play a significant role in individualistic cultures. Hierarchy is about the distribution of power in a society and the importance of hierarchical order. Mastery involves independence, success, accomplishment, competition and effectiveness. Egalitarianism stresses the equality amongst people in societies' cultures. Finally, harmony refers to the enhancement with the environment and the exploitation of human and environmental resources (Papazova, E., et al., 2008, p. 3-4) .

Applying the cultural values' theory of Schwartz to the five cultures, the following conclusions can be drawn. In western European countries, there is a high degree of intellectual autonomy and egalitarianism. Dutch culture strives for independence, individual rights and equality amongst people of the Dutch society. In the countries of East-Europe, equality is also highly valued. Conservatism is a significant aspect of the Eastern European countries. Tradition and the status quo form an essential basis for the Eastern European countries. Ukraine is an example of this. In Asia, conservatism and hierarchy are the most important cultural values. Indonesia is an exemplary case of the Asian culture's society. In Latin-American cultures highly appreciated aspects are conservatism, hierarchy and harmony. In the South-African culture, affective and intellectual autonomy play a significant role in having individual rights and interdependence.

Five aspects are important to describe the cultural differences between nation-states' cultures.

These will now be shown in a diagram with regards to the five countries.

Country	Norms	Values	Habits	Beliefs	Mentality
South-Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No discrimination based upon sexual orientation.</li> <li>- No discrimination based upon color skin.</li> <li>- Principles of Nelson Mandela are important.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Freedom of individual rights.</li> <li>- Liberty is an important element.</li> <li>- Independence of individuals .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A combination of different cultures. It is difficult to specify typical habits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A combination of religious beliefs.</li> <li>- Majority of the South-African population is Christian.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hospitality</li> <li>- Relaxed way of working and behaving.</li> <li>- Paying less attention to time.</li> </ul>
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Norms are based upon the norms in the Bible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The man has a dominant role in the Colombian culture. It is called ' a macho society'.</li> <li>- Group harmony</li> <li>- The family is very important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habits have influences from Spain and the United States of America.</li> <li>- Examples: bull fights and Sweet Sixteen Parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The majority of the Colombians are Roman Catholics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warm and friendly</li> <li>- Relaxed way of working and behaving.</li> <li>- Paying less attention to time.</li> <li>- Showing of emotions.</li> </ul>
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Norms are based upon the religious beliefs of the Islam.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group harmony.</li> <li>- Respect for cultural traditions.</li> <li>- Family is very important.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habits are based upon religious beliefs of the Islam</li> <li>- Indonesian tribes have their own habits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The majority of the Indonesian population is Muslim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hospitality</li> <li>- (Too) Friendly</li> <li>- Easy attitude of suppression.</li> </ul>
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Norms of the Ukrainian culture are based upon politeness.</li> <li>- Norms of the Ukrainian are based upon European norms.</li> <li>- Examples are: bringing gifts to a dinner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family oriented people</li> <li>- Sharing is common in the Ukrainian culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habits were inherited from the Orthodox Church and the Pagan tradition.</li> <li>- Drinking alcoholic drinks (especially wodka) during business meetings or other occasions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A majority of the Ukrainians is not religious.</li> <li>- A third of the population have the religion Eastern Orthodox.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hospitality</li> <li>- Friendly</li> <li>- Paying attention to time.</li> </ul>
The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Freedom of speech</li> <li>- Freedom of religion</li> <li>- Freedom of liberty</li> <li>-Freedom of labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberty</li> <li>- Freedom of the individual rights</li> <li>- Independence</li> <li>- Equality</li> <li>- Solidarity</li> <li>- Tolerance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habits are based upon the Western way of living.</li> <li>- Formality</li> <li>- Respect for all kind of people and traditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A majority of the Dutch people is not religious.</li> <li>- The dominant religion is Christianity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct attitude</li> <li>- Cold attitude / Neutral</li> <li>- Formal acting</li> <li>- Paying attention to time</li> <li>- Working fast and efficiently</li> </ul>

Figure 5

In conclusion, the differences in culture between the Dutch culture and the Indonesian and Colombian culture are the largest. The cultural differences between the South-African culture and the Dutch culture are relatively smaller, because both these countries have an individualistic culture. It means that aspects as independence and freedom of individual rights are being highly appreciated. The distinctions in culture between the Dutch culture and the Ukrainian culture are considerably high. However, both these countries are European countries. That is why, important similarities between these two cultures can be drawn. Au pairs from South-America and Indonesia will experience the most cultural differences during their stay in the Netherlands. Au pairs from Ukraine and South-Africa will certainly experience cultural differences. These experienced cultural differences will be smaller in comparison with the experiences from au pairs from South-America and Indonesia. The au pairs that will experience the most cultural differences will probably need more attention in preparing themselves for their acquaintance to a new culture. Taking this into consideration, Smiling Faces could improve its position in the au pair market.

## Chapter 4 Perspective of the Au Pairs

In this chapter, the view of the au pairs about their stay in the Netherlands will be analyzed. The view of the au pairs is based upon a questionnaire filled out by twenty au pairs working for Smiling Faces. Currently, sixty au pairs working for Smiling Faces reside in the Netherlands. These au pairs are from South-Africa, South-America and Ukraine. The questionnaire exists of thirty-five questions. In the annex the questionnaire can be found. The first purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain a good perception of the views held by the au pairs regarding their stay in the Netherlands. Secondly, it was of importance to know how they felt about the (duty to care i.e.) supervision and guidance they received from the au pair agency Smiling Faces. The results given in the questionnaire could lead to concrete recommendations to the au pair agency Smiling Faces thereby improving its position in the au pair market.

### Paragraph 1 Analysis of the demographic data of the au pairs

In the first place, the demographic data of the au pairs will be analyzed. First of all, the twenty au pairs are all female. Since 2007, Smiling Faces had two male au pairs. It can be concluded that most au pairs working for Smiling Faces are women. The average age of au pairs is 23 years old. Twenty five per cent of the au pairs are 23 years old. Eleven of the twenty au pairs have a University Degree which is more than half of the au pairs. Twenty five per cent of the au pairs are university students and the other twenty five percent of the au pairs have graduated from High School.

Secondly, ten out of twenty au pairs are from South-Africa. It gives a good perception of the country of origin of the approximately sixty au pairs that reside in the Netherlands. The main business partners Smiling Faces has are from South-Africa. These partners place the most au pairs in the Netherlands. There are two reasons for this. First of all, South-African girls speak very well English. Secondly, the language 'Afrikaans' is quite similar to the Dutch language. That is why these girls learn Dutch relatively fast. The other ten au pairs are from South-America (Colombia and Peru) and Ukraine. None of the twenty au pairs are from Indonesia. Even though Smiling Faces also places girls from Indonesia in Dutch host families. That is why nineteen of the au pairs are Christians. The dominant religion in Indonesia is the Islam. In Ukraine, South-Africa and Colombia Christianity is the most predominant religion.

Taking religion into consideration, not much cultural differences will be experienced by these twenty au pairs. In the Netherlands, the most dominant religion is Christianity. The au pairs from Indonesia will experience the most cultural differences based upon religion and religious beliefs (Au Pairs working for Smiling Faces, personal questionnaires, May 2013).

## Paragraph 2 View of the au pairs regarding cultural differences

In the second place, the cultural differences that the au pairs experience in the Netherlands will be examined. Furthermore, taken from the perspective of the au pair the guidance and supervision provided by Smiling Faces will be clarified.

First of all, the twenty au pairs were informed about the Netherlands (culture, values, habits, mentality of the people). Fourteen of these au pairs were informed by Smiling Faces, nine au pairs by the agent in their country of origin and four au pairs by friends. Some au pairs looked for information about the Netherlands on internet and in books.

The twenty au pairs received the training manual published by Smiling Faces via their agent in their country of origin. The training manual is a manual which exists of 120 pages containing relevant information about Dutch culture and society.

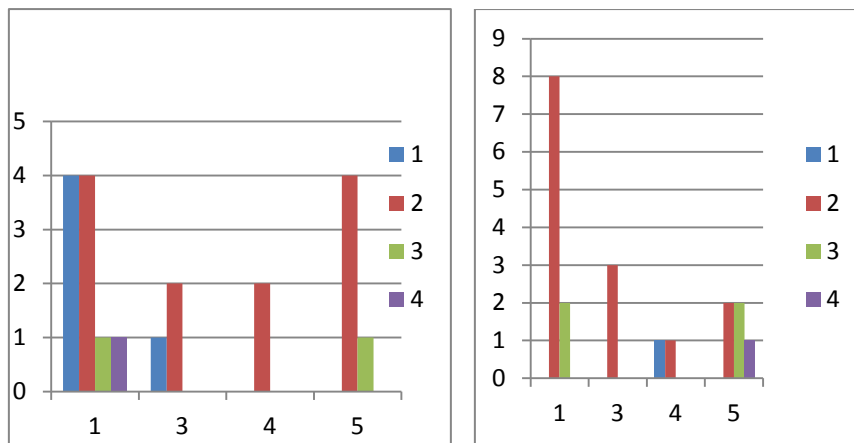
Nineteen of the au pairs read the training manual. Eleven of the au pairs found the training manual very useful and nine au pairs useful. The reviews of the training manual by au pairs were positive. Smiling Faces should continue providing the training manual to au pairs to inform them about the Netherlands and Dutch culture and society. The training manual can be considered as long. However, all of the information in the training manual is necessary and essential for the au pairs to 'survive' their stay in the Netherlands. Fifteen of the au pairs still use the training manual during their stay in the Netherlands.

A relatively small percentage of the au pairs have already been an au pair in another country. The percentage is too small to make comparisons with being an au pair in the Netherlands. That is why, this will not be analysed.

Secondly, the first impression of the Netherlands by the majority of the au pairs was positive. The au pairs viewed the Netherlands as a small, flat and very well organized country in which everything is accessible by public transport. Furthermore, the au pairs see the Netherlands as a multicultural society. Finally, according to the au pairs, every Dutch citizen is biking or possesses a bike.

Most au pairs viewed the personality of the Dutch people in a positive way. These are the characteristics used by the majority of the au pairs to describe the Dutch people: nice, open, friendly, punctual, down to earth and direct. The directness of Dutch people is something that au pairs can experience as being rude and view as a negative characteristic. Ten out of twenty au pairs share this opinion.

In the figures below, you can see the marks of the first impression of the Netherlands and Dutch people given by which country.



Horizontal Axis:

Figure 6

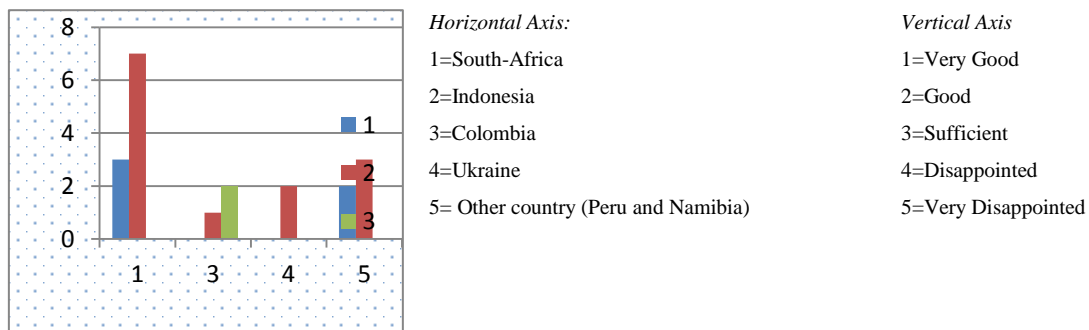
Vertical Axis:

Figure 7

1=South-Africa  
2=Indonesia  
3=Colombia  
4=Ukraine  
5=Other country  
\*Two from Peru, two from Namibia and one from France.

1=Very Good  
2=Good  
3=Sufficient  
4=Disappointed  
5=Very Disappointed

The experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands will be illustrated in figure 3. In the figure, two aspects are being showed: the marks of the au pairs regarding their experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands and their country of origin. In this figure, it is clearly stated that the au pairs from Colombia valued being an au pair in the Netherlands less than the au pairs from South-Africa and Ukraine.



Thirdly, the twenty au pairs have experienced cultural differences. Fifteen of the au pairs could adapt to the experienced cultural differences and five au pairs experienced difficulties in adapting to Dutch culture. Two of these au pairs are from South-America, two au pairs are from South-Africa and one au pair is from Ukraine. The au pairs from South-Africa argued that the South-Africans are more laidback. In contrary, Dutch people are punctual and work fast and efficiently. The statement can also be considered as true by the two Colombian au pairs.

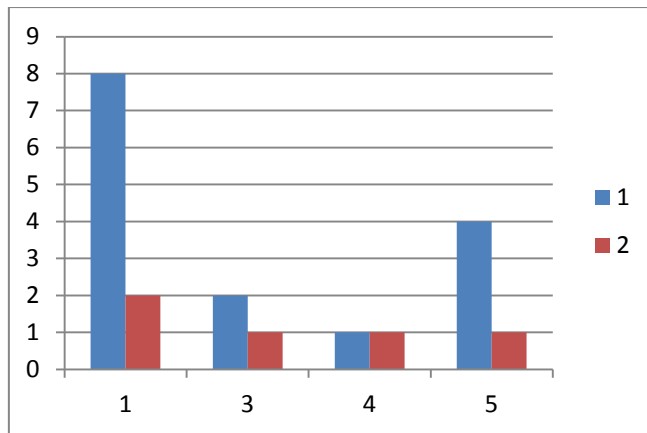


Figure 9

Horizontal Axis:

1=South-Africa

2=Indonesia

3=Colombia

4=Ukraine

5=Other country (Peru and Namibia).

Vertical Axis:

1=I have experienced cultural differences, but I could adapt to it.

2=I have experienced cultural differences and I experience difficulties

3=I have experienced no cultural differences.

No unexpected cultural differences were being monitored by the au pairs. Only one South-African au pair described a real unexpected cultural difference between the South-African culture and the Dutch culture. In the Netherlands, most of the Dutch people throw away food. In South-Africa, it is something that would rarely occur, because there is a lot of poverty in South-Africa.

Au pairs from Ukraine and South-Africa experienced similarities between their culture and the Dutch culture. It is the European style of living that shows similarities in culture between Ukraine and the Netherlands. The South-Africans experienced the language “Afrikaans” as similar to the Dutch language.

For a majority of au pairs, the experienced cultural differences between their culture and the Dutch culture influenced their stay in the Netherlands in a positive manner. Only four au pairs experienced the cultural differences as a negative influence of their stay in the Netherlands. Three au pairs are from South-America and one au pair is from Ukraine.

The twenty au pairs had good expectations of being an au pair in the Netherlands. For the majority the expectations are being realized and these au pairs enjoyed their stay in the Netherlands. For six au pairs the expectations were not realized. Three of these au pairs are from South-Africa and three of these au pairs are from Colombia.

In the figure below, there is a connection between the cultural differences and the realization of the expectations of the au pairs. From the five au pairs who experienced difficulties in adapting to a new culture, two of these au pairs valued their stay less than expected. It could be suggested that

the cultural differences have influences on the stay of the au pair and the realization of the good expectations (Au Pairs working for Smiling Faces, personal questionnaires, May 2013).

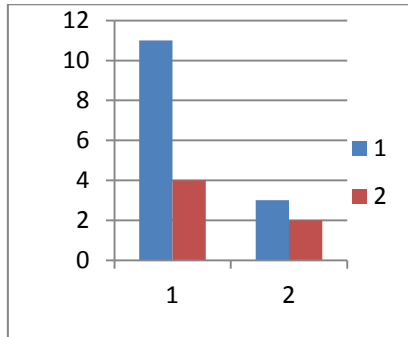


Figure 10

Horizontal Axis:

1=I have experienced cultural differences, but I could adapt to it.  
 2=I have experienced cultural differences and I have difficulties with it  
 3=I have experienced no cultural differences.

Vertical Axis:

1=Yes, my experiences fulfill my expectations of an au pair  
 2=My experiences are different my expectations

### Paragraph 3 View of the au pairs towards the stay and the overall rating

In the last place, marks given by the au pairs with regards to their stay in the Netherlands and to the supervision and guidance given to them by Smiling Faces will be shown. The majority of the overall marks of the au pairs was positive. There were no negative marks given by the twenty au pairs. Mainly three aspects influenced their stay in the Netherlands: the host family, the Dutch culture and Smiling Faces. The au pair spend most of her time with the host family. Half of the au pairs considered that the Dutch culture influenced their stay in the Netherlands. Living and working for twelve months in a completely different culture is something that will influence their stay. Finally, Smiling Faces organizes ten monthly meetings and four annual events for the au pairs and provides support, in case of any problems. This also played an important role during the stay of the au pair. The au pairs who experienced difficulties with adapting to Dutch culture still valued their stay with a good mark. This will be shown in the figure below.



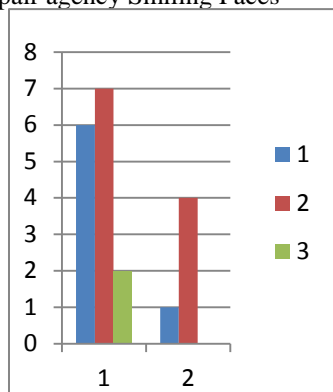


Figure 11

Horizontal Axis:

1=I have experienced cultural differences, but I could adapt to it.  
 2=I have experienced cultural differences and I have difficulties with it  
 3=I have experienced no cultural differences.

Vertical Axis:

1=Very Good      4=Disappointed  
 2=Good          5=Very Disappointed  
 3=Sufficient

The supervision and guidance given by Smiling Faces was rated positively by the au pairs. More than the half of the au pairs used the terms helpful, nice and friendly to describe this. Some au pairs mentioned the monthly meetings and the four events organized by Smiling Faces. There were some recommendations by the au pairs to Smiling Faces to improve its services. One au pair suggested that Smiling Faces should have more individual contact with the host family and with the au pair in the form of check-ups to see how everything is going between the host family and their au pair. Furthermore, other au pairs considered that Smiling Faces should explain more about the duties and guidelines of “the IND” that need to be followed by both the au pair and the host family. Finally, other au pairs recommended improving the Dutch course and the monthly meetings by making these aspects more interactive.

As an overall rating, the majority of the au pairs experienced being au pair in the Netherlands in a positive way. The aspects that had positive influence on their stay are: the host family, the job as an au pair, the children belonging to the host family, the possibility of travelling around Europe, making new friends and experiencing a new culture and new language (Au Pairs working for Smiling Faces, personal questionnaires, May 2013).

In conclusion, the views of the au pairs with regards to their stay in the Netherlands and the support given by Smiling Faces were rated positively. All of the au pairs experienced cultural differences. Most au pairs knew how to adjust to Dutch culture. A minority of au pairs had difficulties with adapting to a new culture. These au pairs are mainly from South-America. Smiling Faces informs the au pairs as well as possible about Dutch culture and society. The au pairs made a few suggestions for improvements to the au pair agency Smiling Faces. Hopefully, these will improve the position of Smiling Faces in the au pair market in achieving more satisfaction for future au pairs.

## Chapter 5 Perspective of the Au Pair Agencies

In the previous chapter, the perspective of the au pairs with regards to their stay in the Netherlands was examined. In this chapter, the views of the au pair agencies towards the experiences of the au pairs and their experiences to a new culture will be clarified. Furthermore, the importance of “the IND” and the new regulation for au pair agencies will be a topic in this chapter. The chapter is based upon two interviews held with the director of the au pair agency AuPairAktion and with the director of the au pair agency Smiling Faces. From the results of the interviews conclusions can be drawn to specify the views of the au pair agencies in relation to the experiences of the au pairs and the duty to care. With this analysis, recommendations can be made to Smiling Faces to improve its position in the au pair market.

### Paragraph 1 The au pair agencies: Smiling Faces and AuPairAktion

In the first place, Smiling Faces is an au pair agency located in Rotterdam. The au pairs working for Smiling Faces come from South-Africa, Asia (Indonesia and Thailand), South-America (Colombia and Peru ) and Eastern-Europe (Ukraine and Moldova). Every year, Smiling Faces places 120 au pairs in the Netherlands. AuPairAktion is an au pair agency that existed from 2009 until 2011. AuPairAktion operated its business in Budapest and in the Hague. The au pairs from AuPairAktion were from Hungary. AuPairAktion placed sixty au pairs in the Netherlands, England and Spain.

Both au pair companies are founded, because of poor services provided by existing au pair agencies. The director of Smiling Faces, Sandra Beukers, has had seven au pairs herself from three different au pair agencies. She was not satisfied with the selection and recruitment of au pairs, the support for au pairs and the support for the host families. That is why, in 2007, she founded Smiling Faces with her business partner Jolanda Oeij to improve these three services.

The director of AuPairAktion started her own company with her business partner Adriana Michel. Adriana Michel had been an au pair herself in the Netherlands for a year. She had experienced insufficient services from the au pair agency. Therefore the idea arose to establish an au pair agency together with Agatha Szabo who has a lot of expertise in business and consultancy (A. Szabo, personal interview, May 7, 2013; S. Beukers, personal interview, May 13, 2013).

## Paragraph 2 View of the au pair agencies regarding cultural differences

The au pairs from both au pair agencies experience cultural differences. There is an important distinction between the au pairs working for Smiling Faces and those working for AuPairAtion. The au pairs registered with Smiling Faces are mostly from outside Europe (except Ukraine and Moldova). The au pairs working for AuPairAtion are from Hungary which is an European country and also a member of the European Union. It means that the experienced cultural differences by the au pairs registered with AuPairAtion are smaller. However, these au pairs surely experience major differences in culture between the Dutch and the Hungarian culture.

In the first place, the cultural differences between the Netherlands and Hungary will be described. First of all, food habits are different. In Hungary, people are used to eating a warm lunch. For Hungarian citizens food is very important and cooking can take hours. This rarely occurs in the Netherlands. Secondly, the au pairs from Hungary are used to turning the heat on a high level during winter season which is unusual for Dutch host families. That is why the Hungarian au pairs always felt cold in the homes of Dutch host families. These two main experienced cultural differences by the Hungarian au pairs has affected their stay in a negative way. However, the Hungarian au pairs experienced the Dutch personality and mentality in a positive way. The directness of the Dutch people was experienced positively, because the au pairs knew what the host family was expecting from them. The au pairs from Hungary describe the Dutch people as very well planned which was also a benefit of Dutch mentality. The similarity that these au pairs experience between the Hungarian culture and the Dutch culture is the European lifestyle.

To define the cultural differences experienced by the au pairs working for Smiling Faces, it is more complex. These au pairs come from different continents: South-America, Africa, Asia and Europe. For au pairs from continents outside of Europe, basically 'everything' is different: the food habits, the culture, the climate, the environment, the language and so on. However, according to the director of Smiling Faces, there is one main cultural difference that the au pairs share, namely the Dutch personality in which Sandra Beukers refers to the directness of Dutch people. Every day, the au pairs are communicating with the host family and their children. That is why the directness of Dutch people has a major influence in the experienced cultural differences of the au pairs. Some au pairs get used to the direct attitude of Dutch citizens and other au pairs experience it as being rude and can hardly live with it. As mentioned before, basically everything in the Netherlands is different for these au pairs. There is one similarity that these au pairs could share between their culture and the Dutch culture which is the word family; being part of a family and having a family.

Both au pair agencies have created ways in which the au pairs will be informed about Dutch culture and society. AuPairAtion set up a program which consisted of First Aid for Children Program, a Physiological Training and a Workshop about Dutch life. In designing the program,

AuPairAktion received support from three specialists: a nurse, a doctor and a psychologist. The director of AuPairAktion, Agatha Szabo, would not add anything to the program. A main problem of the au pairs is being home sick or not having a click with the host family. However, you cannot prepare the au pairs for these two elements. Even though, Agatha Szabo thought about solving this, but it is impossible.

Smiling Faces has created a training manual existing of 120 pages in which Dutch culture and society are being described in detail. The director of Smiling Faces would not add or change anything to the training manual. Being homesick or not having a click with the host family is something that you cannot prepare au pairs for. Sandra Beukers thinks that it is a good idea to make a video with images of the Netherlands and Dutch culture in which the au pairs also get a visualized perception. (A. Szabo, personal interview, May 7, 2013; S. Beukers, personal interview, May 13, 2013).

### **Paragraph 3 The au pair agencies and “the IND”**

Au pair agencies are obliged to fulfill three duties by “the IND: to inform, to administrate and to care. In the cases of Smiling Faces and AuPairAktion, the three duties are being fulfilled as well as possible. The duty to care is about good recruiting and selecting of au pairs in which good matching is of importance. Furthermore, the au pair agency is responsible for the well-being of the au pair. Finally, the au pair should be informed about the purpose of the stay, about the cultural exchange and about the rights and duties of an au pair. Both au pair agencies match au pairs to host families based upon preferences. AuPairAktion and Smiling Faces review the well-beings of au pairs by constant contact and by offering support. The two au pair agencies inform the au pairs about Dutch culture and society. Smiling Faces provides a training manual and AuPairAktion provided a training program that existed of three courses. The objectives and the rights of the program are also being explained by these two companies.

Besides the prepared courses, these au pair agencies offer more services to the au pairs. Smiling Faces organizes ten monthly meetings and four annual events for the au pairs. There is also the availability for au pairs to follow a Dutch course taught by an employee of Smiling Faces. AuPairAktion also organizes meetings on a monthly basis and trips, for example a trip to Paris. Both au pair agencies use an emergency phone number on which au pairs can always reach an employee of the agencies for support. Supporting of the au pairs during their stay is very important.

AuPairAktion checks up with the au pair after their return to Hungary. The au pair is invited to the office in Budapest to see how the au pair is doing after a year of being an au pair in the Netherlands and to start up with her 'normal' life in Hungary. Three phases can be distinguished in the policy of AuPairAktion: before the arrival of an au pair in the Netherlands, during the stay in the Netherlands and after a year of being au pair in the Netherlands.

The contact with "the IND" by the au pair agency AuPairAktion was very limited. The requirements of an au pair were obliged to fulfill by AuPairAktion. These conditions were as follows. The au pair could not be younger than eighteen years old, could not be older than 26 years old, could not be married and could not have children. These guidelines have been slightly changed by regulations as of June 2013. The purpose of the au pair is a cultural exchange.

The au pairs from AuPairAktion came from Hungary. Hungary is a European country and also a member of the European Union. For living and working within countries of the European Union a visa is not required. It means that the visa procedure was not applicable for the business policy of AuPairAktion.

In contrary, the au pairs working for Smiling Faces are from South-America (Colombia and Peru), South-Africa, Asia (Indonesia and Thailand) and Eastern-Europe (Ukraine and Moldova). The au pairs from these countries need to possess a visa before it is possible for them to stay in the Netherlands for twelve months. The visa procedure is applicable for the business policy of Smiling Faces. That is why Smiling Faces has a lot of contact with "the IND" during the visa procedures of its au pairs. It is of importance for Smiling Faces to have the "IND" as a good partner in fulfilling its duties.

Since June 2013 there is a new regulation which contains changes for au pair agencies and also for Smiling Faces. Smiling Faces will continue its business in providing good services to au pairs and host families. There will be three changes in the policy of Smiling Faces.

First of all, Smiling Faces will set up an information policy in which au pairs, host families and agents in the foreign countries will be informed about the new regulation. Another part of the information policy is that the host families and the au pairs are obliged to report every change to Smiling Faces. In turn, Smiling Faces will inform "the IND" about these changes. If the host family or the au pair has not informed Smiling Faces about a relevant change, it can lead to big consequences in the form of penalties or/and a termination of the au pair's visa.

Secondly, the daily schedule will be an important component. The daily schedule needs to be confirmed by the host family and the au pair. This is an advantage, because the au pair already knows what to expect based upon the hours for taking care of the children and doing light domestic

work for the host family. The daily schedule will be the guideline of “the IND” in which the au pair cannot be abused by the host family.

Finally, there will be a new protocol in which the recruitment team will review and control everything that the au pairs are doing. It is important to review this, because changes need to be passed on to “the IND” with the new regulation. Not fulfilling the duties of the new regulation can also have consequences for the au pair agency: a penalty, a declaration, a termination of the existence of the au pair agency or a termination of an au pair’s visa. (A. Szabo, personal interview, May 7, 2013; S. Beukers, personal interview, May 13, 2013).

#### **Paragraph 4 The future of the au pair agencies**

In the future, the directors of AuPairAktion and Smiling Faces are convinced that the au pair market will continue to exist, because there will be a constant demand by host families. There will be fluctuations in the au pair market, for example during a period of economic crisis. According to the director of AuPairAktion, there will be more demand from Dutch host families to receive au pairs from Asia and South-America. Most au pairs from European countries will probably go to the United States of America to be an au pair (A. Szabo, personal interview, May 7, 2013; S. Beukers, personal interview, May 13, 2013).

In conclusion, as an au pair agency, it is important to provide good services to the customers and care for host families and au pairs. Dealing with au pairs that experience cultural differences will be a constant factor in the au pair business. It is important to offer au pairs a program in preparing them for Dutch culture and society. Three phases need to be fulfilled by an au pair agency to obtain success: support the au pair before her arrival in the Netherlands, during her stay in the Netherlands and after her return to her country of origin. To be completely successful as an au pair agency, three partners have to be satisfied: the au pairs, the host families and “the IND”. In the long run, in the au pair business it is not only about achieving profit and good net results, it is care that really counts.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, approximately thirty au pair agencies are active in the au pair business. One of these au pair agencies is the private company Smiling Faces. Since 2009, it operates its business from an office in Rotterdam. It places approximately 120 au pairs per year in Dutch host families.

By the first of June 2013, a new regulation of the immigration policy of the Dutch government has brought important changes to the au pair business. In particular, two changes have main influences in the implementation of the services provided by the au pair agencies. First of all, host families cannot request visas of the “IND” themselves anymore, but these host families have to receive help from an au pair agency in doing so. It means more business for the au pair agencies.

Secondly, the “IND” keeps a close watch on the fulfillment of the three duties (to inform, to administrate and to care) by the au pair agencies. That is why, it is important for the au pair business to provide sufficient services to both au pairs and host families to satisfy their needs and the needs of “the IND”.

This final project emphasizes the guidance and supervision provided by Smiling Faces in relation to the duty to care. Especially with a focus on providing prepared information about the purpose of the cultural exchange and the cultural differences that future au pairs will experience. The following main question will be answered: how could Smiling Faces improve its position in the au pair business by achieving the best possible fulfilment of the duty to care and the most satisfactory preparation of the cultural differences to be experienced by future au pairs?

In the first place, it is necessary for Smiling Faces to get a better understanding of the nation-states’ cultures of the four countries (Ukraine, South-Africa, Indonesia and Colombia) before they can improve their policy regarding guidance and supervision to future au pairs. The cultures of Colombia and Indonesia differ the most from the Dutch culture. Au pairs from South-Africa and Ukraine will experience cultural differences, but there are similarities between these cultures. Both the South-African culture and the Dutch culture have an individualistic society which means that it strives for interdependence and freedom of individual rights. Ukraine and the Netherlands are both European countries and share European traditions and formalities.

Applied research is being conducted to analyze the view of the au pairs with regards to their stay in the Netherlands and the guidance and supervision given by Smiling Faces. Based upon the questionnaire filled out by twenty au pairs working for Smiling Faces, the following main points can be illustrated:

- All of the au pairs were informed sufficiently about the Netherlands before their arrival.

- All of the au pairs experienced cultural differences during their stay.
- The au pairs from South-America had the most difficulties adapting to a new culture.
- The experienced cultural differences have not influenced the overall opinion of being an au pair in the Netherlands. The experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands were rated positively by the au pairs.
- The guidance and supervision given by Smiling Faces was rated positively by the au pairs.

Another form of applied research is being conducted in this final project to show the view of the au pair agencies. Two au pair agencies have been interviewed. Based upon these two interviews, the following main points can be drawn:

- It is important as an au pair agency to really care about your customers and au pairs to obtain success as an au pair company.
- The au pair agencies have to provide sufficient services to the au pairs in three phases: before their arrival in the Netherlands, during their stay in the Netherlands and after their return to her country of origin.

In order to make recommendations to the company Smiling Faces to improve its position in the au pair business with regards the best possible fulfillment of the duty to care and the most satisfactory preparation of the cultural differences experienced by the au pairs, the strengths and weaknesses of the company will be summed up.

### **Strengths of the au pair agency Smiling Faces**

First of all, the au pair company provides a lot of services to the au pairs: a training manual, an "Enjoy and Explore Card" which gives access to the "Enjoy and Explore Program", a Dutch course, a Facebook page to chat with the employees of Smiling Faces and the emergency phone number. The "Enjoy and Explore Program" of Smiling Faces organizes ten monthly meetings and four annual events each year. The au pairs are also content with these services, according to the questionnaire. Smiling Faces should not change the format of these services.

Smiling Faces is always able to help and support the au pairs when problems occur in the host family or other issues during their stay in the Netherlands. The care to the au pairs is an aspect that Smiling Faces should continue providing during the implementation of its business.

### **Weaknesses of the au pair agency Smiling Faces**

There are also some weaknesses Smiling Faces should work on to improve its position in the au pair business. These weaknesses will lead to recommendations to become the best possible au pair agency in the Netherlands and therefore expand its business.



First of all, the services provided by Smiling Faces are rated sufficiently. However, the content of the Dutch course and the monthly meetings could be changed. According to some au pairs that filled out the questionnaire, these two events should have more interaction. Furthermore, during these meetings, it is necessary that Smiling Faces emphasizes the duties of au pairs and host families that need to be fulfilled in order to continue the business.

Secondly, the training manual is provided to all the au pairs before they arrive in the Netherlands. The au pairs are very satisfied with the training manual. No changes are necessary. However, a video could be added to the website to get a better visualized image of life in the Netherlands.

Thirdly, the au pairs from Colombia and Indonesia will experience major cultural differences. That is why it is a good to give these au pairs a mandatory course in their country of origin about the Netherlands to prepare them as well as possible for their stay. The au pairs from Ukraine and South-Africa could choose an optional course in their country of origin.

Fourthly, Smiling Faces should have contact with the au pairs on a monthly basis during their stay to see how the au pairs are doing in the host family. Furthermore, the au pair company should call or Skype at least once with the au pair when the au pair has returned to her country of origin to see how the au pair is doing after being an au pair in the Netherlands for one year.

Finally, on the website of Smiling Faces an extra header should be added. This header is only meant for the au pairs. On this page au pairs can find the information from the training manual online, the information about the monthly meetings and events, information about the Dutch course, the video of the Netherlands and the contact details: postal and home address of Smiling Faces, Facebook page address, e-mail addresses of the employees of Smiling Faces, the phone number of the office and the emergency phone number .

Taking these recommendations into account, Smiling Faces will surely improve its position in the au pair market. By this the best possible fulfillment of the duty to care will be achieved. It will lead to outstanding satisfaction by the au pairs and “the IND”. In the long run it gives all of us a smiling face.

On the next page, a diagram has been drawn in which the outcomes of the applied research and the recommendations here to are structured.

<b>Types of Applied Research</b>	<b>Outcomes of Applied Research</b>	<b>Recommendations to Smiling Faces based upon the outcomes of the research.</b>
20 Questionnaires to analyze the view of the au pairs working for Smiling Faces.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing the best possible services to the au pairs.</li> <li>2. Providing the best possible support given by Smiling Faces to the au pairs during their stay.</li> <li>3. Experiences of cultural differences especially experienced by the au pairs from Colombia and Indonesia.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More interaction in the monthly meetings and the Dutch course + explanation of the duties during these meetings.</li> <li>2. Contacting the au pairs more for example on a monthly basis.</li> <li>3. Offering the au pairs from Colombia and Indonesia a mandatory course in their country of origin. The au pairs from Ukraine and South-Africa could choose an optional course.</li> </ol>
Interviews with two au pair agencies to analyze the view of the au pair agency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The most satisfactory preparation provided by Smiling Faces about the Netherlands.</li> <li>2. Supporting the au pairs before their arrival in the Netherlands, during their stay and after their return to their country of origin.</li> <li>3. Caring about the au pairs by achieving outstanding satisfaction: support and inform the au pairs as well as possible.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adding a video to create a better understanding of life in the Netherlands.</li> <li>2. Contacting the au pair, at least once, after return to her country of origin.</li> <li>3. Adding a header on the website especially for the au pairs with relevant information about the Netherlands, the program of Smiling Faces and all the contact details of Smiling Faces.</li> </ol>

*Figure 12*

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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Cultureel Uitwisselingprogramma Smiling Faces

# Uitwisselingsprogramma



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst

Modern Migratiebeleid



# Inhoudsopgave

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## 1. Contactgegevens

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Smiling Faces is een bemiddelingsbureau voor o.a. au pairs. Onze expertise, full service, persoonlijke aandacht en oprechte interesse in mensen zorgen voor de beste match en samenwerking tussen au pair en gastgezin. Daar wordt iedereen blij van! Smiling Faces is lid van Bonapa en IAPA en opgericht in 2006. Naast Jolanda Oeij zijn vier vaste medewerkers en drie stagiaires werkzaam bij Smiling Faces. De contactpersonen voor de IND zijn: Sandra Beukers, Jolanda Oeij, en Robin Wessels. Smiling Faces bemiddelt au pairs uit Zuid Afrika, Latijns Amerika, Azië en Oekraïne.

## 2. De wijze waarop de au pair kennis maakt met de Nederlandse cultuur en samenleving

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### 2.1 Doel van het cultureel uitwisselingsprogramma

Het doel van het culturele uitwisselingsprogramma is de mogelijkheid bieden aan jonge vreemdelingen tussen de 18-30 jaar oud om maximaal een jaar in Nederland in een gastgezin te verblijven en daarbij deel te nemen aan het gewone gezinsleven, kennis te maken met de Nederlandse taal en cultuur en het gastgezin kennis te laten maken met de taal en cultuur van de vreemdeling.

#### 2.1.2 Omschrijving van de Doelgroep

Een au pair is een jonge alleenstaande vrouw / man tussen de 18 en 30 jaar die bij een gezin inwoont in een ander land dan zijn of haar eigen, voor een maximum van 12 maanden. De au pair ondersteunt de familie met licht huishoudelijk werk en zorg dragen voor de kinderen, in ruil voor kosten, inwoning en zakgeld (max. 340 euro per maand). Het au pair programma is een culturele uitwisseling. Het is een geweldige kans om een ander land te bezoeken, om een vreemde taal te leren en te ervaren hoe gezinnen wonen in een ander deel van de wereld. De au pairs van Smiling Faces wonen in verschillende steden door heel Nederland. Ze maken kennis met de Nederlandse gewoonten en gebruiken door middel van het verblijven bij een Nederlands gastgezin.

Er wordt geen onderscheidt gemaakt bij de au pair wat betreft geslacht of nationaliteit. Au pairs mogen uit alle delen van de wereld komen. De taalkennis betreft minimaal goed Engels en de au pair is bereid om Nederlands te leren. De opleidingsachtergrond is minimaal een middelbaar school diploma.

### 2.2 Activiteiten

Een leuk jaar in Nederland voor onze au pairs is onze missie. Daarom hebben wij een speciaal Enjoy & Explore Holland programma ontwikkeld. Dit programma biedt diverse activiteiten voor au pairs om met elkaar in contact te komen, Nederland te ontdekken en support te krijgen bij vragen en problemen. De au pairs zijn reeds uitgebreid geïnformeerd over het programma in Nederland door onze buitenlandse vestigingen en partners. Zodra de au pair in Nederland arriveert wordt zij gebeld door een van onze medewerkers voor een informatiesprek. Bij binnenkomst ligt er een leuk en nuttig welkomstpakket met o.a. een contactlijst van al onze kandidaten. Niets leuker dan samen een nieuw land te ontdekken! Elke au pair ontvangt een Enjoy & Explore Card welke haar recht geeft op een aantal landelijke activiteiten en toegang tot onze maandelijkse MEET & GREET bijeenkomsten in Rotterdam. Voor meer informatie kunt u kijken op onze Event kalender en op Facebook. Smiling Faces organiseert een aantal Meet & Greet per jaar en een aantal landelijke uitjes die Smiling Faces tevens voor alle BONAPA leden organiseert. Zoals bijvoorbeeld de Efteling, een Zeiltrip op het IJsselmeer of het Sinterklaas event. Onze events zijn altijd terug te vinden op onze website en de au pairs krijgen de Event Calendar ook overhandigt in het

welkomstpakket. Tijdens onze meet & greets spreken we alle au pairs persoonlijk. Tevens bespreken wij tijdens onze meetings ook de regels van het au pair programma.

We begrijpen dat au pairs veel vragen hebben, zich soms eenzaam voelen en zelf problemen kunnen ondervinden in de samenwerking met het gastgezin. Natuurlijk willen wij het gastgezin en de au pair daar altijd bij ondersteunen en delen we graag onze ervaring en kennis op dit gebied.

Smiling Faces heeft een 24/7 noodlijn 06-23607197. Dit noodnummer kan gebruikt worden buiten kantooruren, wanneer er echt niet gewacht kan worden tot de eerst volgende werkdag. Minder urgente vragen kunnen gesteld worden per e-mail aan onze speciale support afdeling voor au pairs support@smilingfaces.nl of via onze Facebookpagina, voor gastgezinnen kan dit naar info@smilingfaces.nl. Daarnaast zijn onze medewerkers tijdens kantooruren altijd bereikbaar op 010 -4659797.

Na het intensive contact met het gastgezin voorafgaand aan de kost van de au pair houden wij evaluatiemomenten met ieder gastgezin. Minimaal 4 telefonische evaluatiemomenten per jaar. In Bijlage C treft u onze evaluatie formulieren.

## 2.3 Onderwijs/ Opleiding

Elke au pair en gastgezin ontvangt onze speciale 120 pagina's tellende au pair training manual. In deze au pair training komen onderwerpen als communicatie, (kinder)verzorging, voeding, veiligheid, spelen, opvoeding, huishouden en huisregels aan de orde. Een goede voorbereiding zorgt voor realistische verwachtingen en een prettige samenwerking tussen gastgezin en de au pair.

Smiling Faces heeft deze speciale au pair training zelf ontwikkeld. De au pairs worden in het land van herkomst voorbereid door onze Smiling Faces collega's of onze buitenlandse partners. Afhankelijk van de verantwoordelijkheden van de kandidaat en het land van herkomst bestaat de voorbereiding uit het zelf bestuderen van de training manual tot het volgen van klasjes. De kennis wordt getoetst voor vertrek naar Nederland.

Zodra de kandidaat in Nederland is, spreken wij in onze maandelijkse Meet & Greet bijeenkomsten de belangrijkste punten nogmaals door. Voor diegene die in de regio Rotterdam wonen geven wij een basis cursus Nederlands en au pair training. Voor gastgezinnen heeft Smiling Faces diverse tips en handleidingen opgesteld. De kandidaat neemt de au pair training manual ook altijd mee naar Nederland. Het is een heel praktisch naslagwerk om samen als leidraad te gebruiken.

De au pair bezoekt ons land in het kader van een culturele uitwisseling. Het volgen van een cursus Nederlands is een verplicht onderdeel van het au pair programma. Smiling Faces heeft in samenwerking met een zeer ervaren NT2 docent Nederlands een speciale taalcursus Nederlands voor au pairs ontwikkeld. Naast het leren van de Nederlandse taal worden de meest voorkomende onderwerpen, waar een au pair mee te maken krijgt in Nederland en het Nederlandse Gastgezin, besproken. De cursus bestaat uit een cursus Nederlands en een au pair training.

De au pairs worden getraind in spreek- en luistervaardigheden, gericht op verbale communicatie tussen au pairs, gastgezin en/of kinderen. De woordkennis is geheel aangepast aan het leven in een gezin met kinderen. De au pair is na zeven Nederlandse lessen in staat kleine gesprekken in het Nederlands te voeren. Zij zal in staat zijn om de kinderen redelijk te kunnen verstaan. Zij is in staat zelf korte vragen te stellen en op gebiedende wijs de kinderen toe te spreken.

Nederlands spreken en verstaan is belangrijk om goed met de kinderen te communiceren. Naast het leren van de Nederlandse taal, trainen wij de au pair ook in de meest voorkomende taken en verantwoordelijkheden als au pair. Daarnaast ontvangt de au pair allerlei tips voor een prettig verblijf in uw gezin en Nederland. De au pair training is een onderdeel van de cursus Nederlands voor au pairs. De cursus Nederlands voor au pairs bestaat uit 7 zeer intensieve bijeenkomsten van 3 uur. Elke week wordt een ander onderwerp besproken.

## **2.4 Huisvesting**

De au pair woont bij het gastgezin in. De au pair staat ingeschreven op het adres van het gastgezin. De au pair verblijft voor maximaal 12 maanden bij het gastgezin in huis. Het gastgezin biedt de au pair een zelfstandige kamer aan van minimaal 9m<sup>2</sup> met een raam dat open kan en voorzien is van centrale verwarming. De kamer is volledig gestoffeerd en voorzien van een bed, tafel met stoel, een computer met toegang tot internet, een tv of radio. De kosten voor inwoning (eten en drinken) komen volledig voor rekening van het gastgezin. Het gastgezin voorziet de au pair voor de duur van 1 jaar van een fiets en een mobiele telefoon.

De Kamer van de au pair wordt tijdens het intake gesprek bij de familie thuis geïnspecteerd door Smiling Faces.

### 3. De wijze waarop invulling wordt gegeven aan de zorgplicht

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De functie van het au pair bureau bestaat uit het bemiddelen tussen gastgezin en vreemdeling (de au pair) door middel van screening, matching, plaatsing en begeleiding. Daarnaast heeft het au pair bureau een informatie, zorg- en meldplicht met betrekking tot de au pair en het gastgezin.

#### 3.1 Zorgvuldige Werving & Selectie

##### 3.1.1 Werving & selectie van de au pair

De basis van een succesvol uitwisselingsprogramma begint bij een gedegen selectie/screening. Onze au pairs zijn zorgvuldig geworven, gescreend, geïnformeerd en getraind door onze partners in het buitenland over alle facetten van het Nederlandse Uitwisselingsprogramma.

Al onze partners zijn ervaren in het screenen en begeleiden van au pairs. De agent heeft meerdere gesprekken met de au pair en zijn/ haar ouders in het land van herkomst. Onze au pairs worden geselecteerd op basis van ervaring, vaardigheden, opleiding, motivatie en persoonlijkheid. Alle kandidaten spreken goed Engels, Duits of Afrikaans. Het gastgezin ontvangt een uitgebreid dossier over de au pair: een uitgebreid interview rapport en beoordeling van onze lokale interviewer, uitkomsten persoonlijkheidstest (psychometrische), medische verklaring, referentieonderzoek, VOG, motivatiebrief en foto's. Smiling Faces screent de au pairs volgens de richtlijnen van BONAPA (Branche Organisatie Nederlandse Au Pair Agentschappen) en IAPA (International Au Pair Association).

Tijdens de werving en selectie worden de au pairs geïnformeerd over de regelgeving van het au pair programma.

##### 3.1.2 Werving & selectie van het gastgezin

Het gastgezin komt met ons in contact via onze website: [www.smilingfaces.nl](http://www.smilingfaces.nl), waarin uitgebreide informatie staat over het cultureel programma. Vervolgens wordt het gastgezin nogmaals per telefoon geïnformeerd over het au pair programma. Hierin worden direct de eisen getoetst om deel te kunnen nemen aan het au pair programma. De klant wordt daarna gemaïld met extra informatie. Tijdens het intake gesprek bij het gastgezin thuis van ongeveer 2 uur wordt het gastgezin geïnformeerd over het au pair programma middels een presentatie. De familie wordt nogmaals op de hoogte gesteld van de regelgeving van het au pair programma. Tevens wordt het inschrijfformulier doorgesproken en de toekomstige kamer van de au pair gecontroleerd. Vervolgens worden de Algemene

voorwaarden doorgesproken. Het gastgezin dient een referent op te geven, welke wordt gecontroleerd door Smiling Faces.

Het dossier s van het gastgezin, bevat (bv.):

1. Foto's van het gezin, kamer, huis
2. Dear au pair letter
3. Profiel van het gastgezin
4. Overige

### **3.1.3 Contact gegevens samenwerkende partners**

Voor het volledige overzicht van onze samenwerkende partners verwijs ik graag naar **bijlage A**.

### **3.2 Toezicht op het welzijn en welbevinden van de au pair**

Er zijn vier telefonische evaluaties per jaar met het gastgezin en 14 momenten waarbij Smiling Faces de au pair spreekt. Hiervoor verwijzen wij naar punt 2.2 waarin toezicht wordt gehouden op de eisen van het cultureel uitwisselingsprogramma, de omstandigheden in het gastgezin, de naleving van de dagindeling en het voordoen van eventuele misstanden/problemen.

De au pair wordt in de au pair manual, het welkomspakket en onze eerste meet & greet geïnformeerd over het meldpunt Misbruik au pair. Smiling Faces heeft een Facebook pagina en een 24 uren noodlijn. Van elke melding wordt een probleem rapport aangemaakt.

### **3.3 Optreden bij misbruik & misstanden**

Smiling Faces heeft een 24 uren noodlijn voor calamiteiten. Mistanden komen zelden tot nooit voor, omdat zowel gastgezin als au pair zeer zorgvuldig en zeer uitvoerig gescreend en geïnformeerd zijn over het au pair programma. Zowel de au pair als het gastgezin houden zich aan de richtlijnen van het au pair programma. Mocht er zich een melding voordoen van een au pair waarin er mistanden of overtreding van het au pair programma zich voordoen wordt er direct met het gastgezin gesproken. Het gastgezin is zich vaak niet bewust van de misstand en is direct bereid zijn of haar gedrag aan te passen. Mocht dit niet zo zijn, wordt de au pair direct op non actief gezet. Indien mogelijk z.s.m. overgeplaatst naar een ander gastgezin. Tijdelijke opvang wordt geregeld bij de opvang van een bevriend au pair bureau of in een Stay OK hotel ( dit wordt door de ISIS au pair verzekering vergoed)

Vragen, problemen die niet urgent zijn worden besproken per telefoon, skype, op onze greet en meet of een gesprek op kantoor bij serieuze problemen. Hiervoor wordt een probleem report aangemaakt.

## 4. De aard en de omvang van de werkzaamheden

---

Een au pair (18—30 jaar) maakt onderdeel uit van een cultureel uitwisselingsprogramma voor een jaar. Een au pair helpt maximaal 30 uur per week (verspreid over 5 dagen, maximaal 8 uur per dag) bij de verzorging van het gezin meestal voor de kinderen en verricht licht huishoudelijk werk. Deze regels zijn opgesteld door de IND en zijn vastgelegd in een gedragscode door de BONAPA (Branche Organisatie Nederlandse Au Pair Agentschappen). Daarnaast is het gastgezin verplicht zich ook te houden aan de regels welke de IND heeft opgesteld met betrekking tot het verkrijgen van een visum. Smiling Faces heeft deze aangevuld met condities die alleen voor onze au pairs gelden.

De lijst van licht huishoudelijk werkzaamheden zoals vastgelegd in de gedragscode van de BONAPA zijn:

- \* Afwassen
- \* Laden en lossen van de vaatwasser
- \* Het voorbereiden van eenvoudige maaltijden
- \* Het in orde houden van de keuken en het algemeen opruimen
- \* Lichte boodschappen doen
- \* Laden wasgoed in de wasmachine
- \* Opbergen van kleding
- \* Strijken
- \* Opruimen en schoonmaken van de kinderkamer (s)
- \* Opruimen en schoonmaken van de eigen kamer (s)
- \* Opruimen en reinigen in het algemeen
- \* Stofzuigen
- \* Afstoffen
- \* Het schoon houden van vloeren
- \* Het opruimen van vuilnis, maar alleen op de begane grond
- \* Wandelen en het voeren van huisdieren
- \* planten verzorgen / water geven
- \* Het opmaken en afhalen van de bedden

Taken die niet deel uitmaken van de verwachte lichte huishoudelijke werkzaamheden:

- \* Alle taken waarvoor de au pair als enige verantwoordelijk is binnen het gastgezin
- \* Alle taken met betrekking tot tuinieren en de tuin
- \* Wassen van de ramen (binnen en buiten)
- \* schrobben
- \* Dweilen / schrobben elk gebied groter dan 30 m<sup>2</sup>
- \* Wassen / schoonmaken van een auto of auto's
- \* Reinigen van sanitaire voorzieningen, tenzij deze faciliteiten slechts dienen te worden gebruikt door de au pair



## 5. De au pair en het gastgezin stellen een dagindeling op

---

De familie maakt een weekschema met een dagindeling voor de au pair voordat de TEV-aanvraag wordt ingediend bij de IND. De au pairs van Smiling Faces worden niet meer dan 8 uur per dag en niet meer dan 30 uur in de week ingezet ter ondersteuning. Daarnaast zijn de au pairs minimaal 2 dagen per week vrij en minimaal eens in de maand een aan een gesloten weekend vrij. De au pair zal alleen licht huishoudelijk werk verrichten en helpen bij het ondersteunen van het gezin zoals de de zorg voor de kinderen. Deze dagindeling zal de familie gebruiken voor als de au pair hier is. Wij adviseren al onze families elke zondagavond de aankomende week te bespreken. Smiling Faces controleert tijdens evaluaties met de au pair en met de families of er aan de 30 uur per week en 8 uur per dag gehouden wordt.

In de dagindeling worden o.a. de volgende aspecten besproken:

- de begin- en eindtijden van de werkzaamheden van de au pair in een schema
- hoeveel uur de au pair per week zal worden ingezet
- hoeveel uur de au pair per dag zal worden ingezet
- de werktijden van de gastouders
- de schooltijden van de kinderen en wie de kinderen brengt en haalt

## Appendix II: Questionnaire

Dear Au pairs,

I would like to welcome you to this questionnaire. In the questionnaire I will ask you about your experiences about your stay in the Netherlands, especially with a focus on facing cultural differences in the Netherlands. The questionnaire exists of 35 questions and it will take you approximately ten minutes to answer the questions. Your answers and final results will be very important for my final project processed for the Hague University of Applied Sciences. Please fill out (if possible) all questions and answer them honestly. This questionnaire will be processed completely anonymous.

Thanks a lot for your cooperation!

### **Personal details:**

#### **1. What is your gender:**

- ☐ Female (1)
- ☐ Male (2)

#### **2. What is your age:**

- ☐ 18 (1)      ☐ 22 (5)      ☐ 26 (9)
- ☐ 19 (2)      ☐ 23 (6)
- ☐ 20 (3)      ☐ 24 (7)
- ☐ 21 (4)      ☐ 25 (8)

#### **3. What is your country of origin:**

- ☐ South-Africa (1)
- ☐ Indonesia (2)
- ☐ Colombia (3)
- ☐ Ukraine (4)
- ☐ Other country, namely..... (5)

#### **4. What is your religion:**

- ☐ Christianity (1)    ☐ Buddhism(4)
- ☐ Islam (2)          ☐ Other religion, namely.....(5)
- ☐ Judaism (3)

#### **5. What is your educational career:**

- ☐ I am an High School student (1)
- ☐ I have graduated from High School (2)
- ☐ I am a University student (3)
- ☐ I have a University degree (4)
- ☐ I have no educational career (5)

### **Previous experiences as an au pair**

#### **6. Is this your first time of being an au pair:**

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

If the answer is 'NO, you can continue with question 7 and if the answer is 'YES, you can continue with question 9.

**7. In which country (countries) have you been an au pair?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**8. What were your experiences(on scale from 1 till 5):**

- ☐ Very good (1) ☐ Disappointed (4)  
☐ Good (2) ☐ Very disappointed (5)  
☐ Sufficient (3)

**9. What were your experiences facing cultural differences:**

- ☐ I experienced cultural differences, but I could adapt to the different culture. (1)  
☐ I experienced cultural differences and I have experienced difficulties with it. (2)  
☐ I experienced no cultural differences. (3)

**Before the arrival in the Netherlands**

**10. Were you informed about the Netherlands (culture, values, norms, habits, mentality of the people) before your arrival in the Netherlands? And if yes, by which organisation or by whom (more options are possible) :**

- ☐ No (1)  
☐ Yes, by Smiling Faces (2)  
☐ Yes, by the agency in my country of origin (3)  
☐ Yes, by the host family (4)  
☐ Yes, by

.....  
 .....(5)

**11. Did you receive the training manual of Smiling Faces before your arrival in the Netherlands:**

- ☐ Yes (1)  
☐ No (2)

**12. Have you read the training manual of Smiling Faces:**

- ☐ Yes, before my arrival in the Netherlands (1)  
☐ Yes, during my stay in the Netherlands (2)  
☐ No (3)

**13. If you have read it, did you find the information of the training manual provided by Smiling Faces useful:**

- ☐ Yes, very useful (1)  
☐ Yes, useful (2)  
☐ No, not useful (3)

**14. Do you have any recommendations to Smiling Faces to improve the training manual?**

☐ Yes, specify (1).....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

☐ No (2)

**15. Do you still use the training manual during your stay in the Netherlands:**

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

**Experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands:****16. What was your first impression of the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

☐ Very good (1)                      ☐ Disappointed (4)

☐ Good (2)                      ☐ Very disappointed (5)

☐ Sufficient (3)

**17. Explain your answer to question 16**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**18. What was your first impression of Dutch people (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

☐ Very good (1)                      ☐ Disappointed (4)

☐ Good (2)                      ☐ Very disappointed (5)

☐ Sufficient (3)

**19. Explain your answer to question 18**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**20. What were your experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

- ☐ Very good (1)                      ☐ Disappointed (4)  
☐ Good (2)                      ☐ Very disappointed (5)  
☐ Sufficient (3)

**21. Explain your answer to question 20**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**22. What were your experiences facing cultural differences in the Netherlands :**

- ☐ I experienced cultural differences, but I could adapt to the different culture. (1)  
☐ I experienced cultural differences and I have experienced difficulties with it. (2)  
☐ I experienced no cultural differences. (3)

**23. Did you experience unexpected cultural differences in the Netherlands?**

- ☐ Yes,  
 specify.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

☐ No

**24. Did you experience similarities between your culture and the Dutch culture:**

- ☐ Yes, specify  
 (1).....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

☐ No (2)

**25. Were you informed about the cultural differences of the Netherlands:**

- ☐ No (1)  
☐ Yes, by Smiling Faces (2)  
☐ Yes, by the agency in my country of origin (3)  
☐ Yes, by the host family (4)  
☐ Yes, by other au pairs (5)  
☐ Yes,  
 by.....  
 ..... (6).

**26. Did the experienced cultural differences influence your stay in the Netherlands:**

- ☐ Yes, in a positive way (1)  
☐ No, in a negative way (2)

**27. Explain your answer to question 26**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**28. What were your expectations of being an au pair in the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5)?**

- ☐ Very good (1)      ☐ Disappointed (4)  
☐ Good (2)      ☐ Very disappointed (5)  
☐ Sufficient (3)

**29. Have your expectations of being an au pair in the Netherlands being realized?**

- ☐ Yes, my expectations fulfil my experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands. (1)  
☐ No, my expectations are different than my experiences. (2)

**30. What would be your overall rating of being an au pair in the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

- ☐ 1. Very Disappointed (1)  
☐ 2. Disappointed (2)  
☐ 3. Sufficient (3)  
☐ 4. Good (4)  
☐ 5. Very Good (5)

**31. What has influenced your overall rating:**

- ☐ The Dutch culture (1)  
☐ The host family (2)  
☐ The agency Smiling Faces (3)  
☐ Other, namely  
 (4).....  
 .....

**32. What would be your overall rating of Smiling Faces in supporting you (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

- ☐ 1. Very Disappointed (1)
- ☐ 2. Disappointed (2)
- ☐ 3. Sufficient (3)
- ☐ 4. Good (4)
- ☐ 5. Very Good (5)

**33. Explain your answer to question 32**

[illegible]

**34. Do you have any recommendations to Smiling Faces to improvements of the company?**

- ☐ Yes,  
specify.....  
.....

[illegible]

- ☐ No.

**35. Do you have any other remarks:**

- ☐ Yes,  
specify.....  
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ☐ No

*Florine Arkenbout*  
*Student of the Hague University*  
*Year 3*

## Appendix III: Analysis Results of Questionnaire

### VAR 1

#### What is your gender?

There are twenty respondents and twenty of these respondents are women. It means a percentage of hundred per cent. During the six years of business of Smiling Faces, there have been two male au pairs. The required activities fulfilled by au pairs are `female` activities: taking care of children and doing light domestic work. That is why basically every au pair from Smiling Faces is a woman except from those two male au pairs.

### VAR 2

#### What is your age?

Most of the respondents are 23 years old. It contains a percentage twenty five per cent of the au pairs. Four au pairs are 22 years old. There are three au pairs are 21 years old and three au pairs are 24 years old. Furthermore, two au pairs are 25 years old and two au pairs are 26 years old. Finally, there is one responded au pair with the age of 20 years old. Out of the twenty au pairs, there were no au pairs with the ages eighteen and nineteen. The average age of the respondents is 23 years old.

### VAR 3

#### What is your country of origin?

Out of the twenty respondents, ten au pairs are from South-Africa. This is percentage of fifty per cent which is a realistic percentage to get a better understanding of the au pairs working for Smiling Faces. The agencies in South-Africa are the main partners of Smiling Faces. The other au pairs are from South-America and Ukraine.

### VAR 4

#### What is your religion?

Out of the twenty respondents, nineteen au pairs have the religion Christianity. One au pair is an atheist. Most people in South-Africa, Ukraine and Colombia are Christians. Smiling Faces also has au pairs from Indonesia in which most people are Muslims. However, no au pairs from Indonesia have filled out the questionnaire.



**VAR 5****What is your educational career?**

Four au pairs have graduated from High school. Five au pairs are University students and eleven au pairs have a University Degree. Out of the twenty au pairs, there are no high school students.

**VAR 6 + 7 + 8 + 9****Is this is your first time of being an au pair:**

For seventeen au pairs it is the first time to an au pairs. Three au pairs have already been an au pair: two au pairs went to the United States of America and one au pair went to South-Africa. The experiences from these au pairs were different. One au pair in the United States as experienced her period of being an au pair in a very positive way and the other au pair in the United States of America experienced her period in a sufficient way.. The au pair in South-Africa experienced in a positive way. All three au pairs experienced cultural differences, but could adapt to the new culture.

**VAR 10****Were you informed about the Netherlands (culture, values, norms, habits, mentality of the people) before your arrival in the Netherlands? And if yes, by which organization or by whom (more options are possible):**

All the au pairs were informed about the Netheralnds before their arrival. Fourteen au pairs were about the Netherlands by Smiling Faces. Nine au pairs were informed by the agency in their country of origin. None of the au pairs were informed by their host family. Four au pairs were informed by their friends. Some au pairs looked for information about the Netherlands by themselves through internet or books.

**VAR 11****Did you receive the training manual of Smiling Faces before your arrival in the Netherlands?**

All of the au pairs working for Smiling Faces received the training manual published by Smiling Faces before their arrival. The training manual is a manual that exists of 120 page containing relevant information about Dutch culture and society.

**VAR 12****Did you read the training manual of Smiling Faces?**

Seventeen au pairs read the training manual before their arrival in the Netherlands. Two au pairs read the training manual during their stay. One au pair did not read the training manual even though she received it from Smiling Faces.

**VAR 13****If you have read it, did you find the information of the training manual of Smiling Faces useful?**

Eleven au pairs found the information very useful of the training manual, nine au pairs found the information useful and none au pairs have found the training manual not useful.

**VAR 14****Do you have any recommendations to Smiling faces to improve the training manual.**

One au pair suggested that the training manual is very long and sometimes boring to read. It is definitely a very extended manual. However, all the information of the training manual is necessary for the au pairs to 'survive' their stay.

**VAR 15****Do you still use the training manual during your stay in the Netherlands?**

Fifteen au pairs still use the training manual during your stay in the Netherlands and four au pairs do not use it anymore.

**VAR 16****What was your first impression of the Netherlands?**

Firstly, twelve au pairs experienced the first impression of the Netherlands positively and five au pairs even very positively. Furthermore, only three au pairs experienced the first impression of the Netherlands sufficiently, only one au pair disappointedly and no responded au pairs experienced the first impression of the Netherlands very disappointedly.

**VAR 17****Explain your answer to question 16**

There are many common answers to this question. Firstly, nine au pairs responded that the Netherlands is a well-organized and planned country. Three au pairs answered that the Netherlands is a small country and that basically everything is accessible by (public) transport. Three au pairs answered that the public transport in the Netherlands is well organized. Two au pairs viewed the Netherlands as a multi-cultural society and two au pairs mentioned that the weather is different than their country of origin. Finally, according to the au pairs, every Dutch citizen is biking.

**VAR 18****What was your first impression of Dutch people?**

Firstly, fourteen au pairs experienced the first impression of Dutch people in a positive way and one au pair in a very positive way. Furthermore, four au pairs experienced the first impression of Dutch people sufficiently, one au pair disappointedly and no au pair experienced the first impression of the Dutch people very disappointedly.

**VAR 19**

There are many common answers to this question. Firstly, twelve au pairs answered that Dutch people can be direct in their way of communication. Other twelve au pairs mentioned that the Dutch people are nice, friendly and open people. Furthermore, two au pairs viewed Dutch people as down to earth and two au pairs mentioned that Dutch people are punctual and are always on time. Two answers that stroke my attention are the following: Dutch people are always talking about the weather. “It is a topic, Dutch people love to talk about”.

**VAR 20****What were your experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

Five au pairs experienced being an au pair in the Netherlands in a very positive way. Thirteen au pairs experienced their period of being au pair in the Netherlands in a positive way and two au pairs sufficiently.

**VAR 21****Explain your answer to question 20.**

There are many common answers to this question. Points that have influenced the experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands are: the job as an au pair, the host family and the children belonging to the host family, the possibility to travel around Europe, experiences of a new culture and a new language and finally, making new friends. Points that have influenced the experiences of being an au pair in the Netherlands in a negative way are: the au pair is working and living at the same place and the difficulties in adjusting to Dutch culture.

**VAR 22****What were your experiences facing cultural differences in the Netherlands?**

Fifteen of the respondents experienced cultural differences, but could adapt to these. Five au pairs experienced cultural differences, but had difficulties with it. None of the au pairs experienced no cultural differences. It means that all au pairs experienced cultural differences during their stay in the Netherlands.

**VAR 23****Did you experience unexpected cultural differences in the Netherlands?**

Fourteen au pairs experienced no unexpected cultural differences in the Netherlands. Six au pairs experienced unexpected cultural differences in the Netherlands. Two au pairs experienced that Dutch people throw away food. Moreover, another au pair mentioned the mentality of Dutch people which is fast and sufficient. According to the au pair, it is sometimes hard to keep up with this. Especially, the cultures of South-Africa and Colombia are more laidback than Dutch culture.

**VAR 24****Did you experience similarities between your culture and the Dutch culture**

Three au pairs from South-Africa mentioned that the language, Afrikaans, is quite similar to the Dutch language. Three other au pairs viewed that the European style of living is similar. These au pairs are from Ukraine.

**VAR 25**

**Were you informed about the cultural differences of the Netherlands? And if yes, by which organisation or by whom (more options are possible):**

All the au pairs were informed about Dutch culture and society. The results of this questions are comparable to the answers of question ten. All the au pairs are informed by Smiling Faces throughout the training manual.

**VAR 26**

**Have the experienced cultural differences influenced your stay in the Netherlands:**

Sixteen of the au pairs answered that the cultural differences experienced during their stay in the Netherlands in a positive way. Four au pairs have answered with the question that the cultural differences has influenced their stay in the Netherlands in a negative way. Three au pairs are from South-America and one au pair is from Ukraine.

**VAR 27**

**Explain your answer to question 26**

The answers of the au pairs to this question are very different. The question is interpreted on different ways by the au pairs. That is why, no conclusion can be drawn about this question.

**VAR 28**

**What were your expectations of being an au pair in the Netherlands (on a scale from 1 till 5).**

Firstly, fourteen au pairs had good expectations of being an au pair in the Netherlands. Four au pairs had very good expectations of being au pair in the Netherlands and two au pairs as sufficient.

**VAR 29**

**Have the expectations of being an au pair have in the Netherlands been realized?**

From the twenty au pairs, by fourteen au pairs the expectations are being realized and by six pairs not.

**VAR 30**

Firstly, ten au pairs review being an au pair in the Netherlands with the mark "Good". Secondly, seven au pairs review being au pair in the Netherlands with the mark "Very Good" and two au

pairs review their stay in the Netherlands with the mark “Sufficient”. Finally, no au pairs review being au pair in the Netherlands with the marks “Disappointed” or “Very Disappointed”.

### **VAR 31**

#### **What has influenced your overall rating?**

Firstly, by fifteen au pairs the host family influenced their overall rating of being an au pair in the Netherlands. Furthermore, according to ten au pairs the Dutch culture have influenced their overall rating. By six au pairs the agency Smiling Faces has influenced their overall rating of being an au pair in the Netherlands.

### **VAR 32**

#### **What would be your overall rating of Smiling Faces in supporting (on a scale from 1 till 5):**

Firstly, nine au pairs will give Smiling Faces the overall rating very good, four au pairs good and seven au pairs sufficient. None of the au pairs answered with disappointedly or very disappointedly.

### **VAR 33**

#### **Explain your answer to question 32**

Six out of the twenty au pairs did not respond to this question. Ten au pairs viewed Smiling Faces as helpful. Furthermore, three au pairs mentioned the monthly meetings which has influenced the overall rating given to Smiling Faces.

### **VAR 34**

There were some recommendations provided by the au pairs to Smiling Faces to improve its services. Firstly, two au pairs suggested that Smiling Faces could have more individual contact with the au pairs and have check-ups with the host family and their au pair to review how everything is going. Furthermore, a better clarification can be given to the au pairs about the duties and guidelines provided by “the IND”. Finally, the monthly meetings and the Dutch course could be improved.

### **VAR 35**

There were no further remarks by the au pairs.

## **Appendix III: Data Matrix and Codebook of the results of the questionnaire**

\*See the last pages in excel of the annexes.

## Appendix V: Interview with Agotha Szabo – Au Pair Company AuPairAtion

Thank you for your time and the fact that I can interview you for my final project. The first part of my interview will be about your au pair company in general. In the second part I will ask questions with a focus on the au pairs at your au pair company and the experienced cultural differences by these au pairs. Thirdly, I will ask you questions about “the IND” and your point of view towards “the IND”. Finally, I will ask some questions about your experiences of having an au pair agency.

1. *Well, in 2009 you started your own au pair company. Why did you start your own au pair company?*
  2. *With whom did you start your au pair company?*
  3. *Where was your au pair company located?*
  4. *How many employees were working for your au pair company?*
  5. *How many au pairs did you place? Or how many customers (host families) did you have?*
- 
6. *The girls that your au pair company was doing business with were girls from Hungary who would like to be an au pair in the Netherlands. Why did you decided to work with girls from Hungary?*
  7. *How did you selected these girls? To be more concrete, were these girls from an agent(s) in Hungary or could these girls sign in by the website? Or did you find these girls by yourself?*
  8. *Did you screen the girls on certain aspects, such as expertise, education, motivation and personality before placing these girls in a Dutch host family?*
  9. *On your website is mentioned that the au pairs have to take part in a special training program to prepare themselves for the au pair life such as the First Aid for Children program, Physiological training and a Workshop about Dutch life. Were these trainings / programs provided by your au pair company?*
  10. *Was the program obliged for the Hungarian girls before coming to the Netherlands?*
  11. *Did the girls still experience unexpected cases during their stay in the Netherlands despite following the program before their arrival? If so, could you explain some concrete situations?*
  12. *Could you had add something to the program to prevent the unexpected cases experienced by the au pairs?*



13. *What were the biggest cultural differences that the Hungarian girls experienced in the Netherlands during their stay? And what were the main cultural differences regarding Dutch mentality / Dutch personality?*
  14. *What were the consequences for the au pairs in experiencing differences in culture during their stay in the Netherlands?*
  15. *Do you think that the experiences of cultural differences by the au pairs have affected their stay in the Netherlands in a negative or in a positive way? And why do you think this?*
  16. *Could you mention a link between the expectations of the Dutch culture by the au pairs and the cultural differences that these girls experienced during their stay? And why?*
  17. *How would you declare the cultural differences that the au pairs from Hungary experienced?*
  18. *Could you had prepared the girls better for the cultural differences that they experienced? If so, what would you change ?*
  19. *Did the Hungarian girls also experienced similarities between their culture and the Dutch culture? If so, how would you declare these similarities? And do you think that these similarities affected the stay of the au pairs in a positive or negative way? And why?*
  20. *Did your au pair company also matched the girls to a host family?*
  21. *Which other services did your au pair company provided to the au pairs?*
  22. *Which services did you provide to the host families?*
  23. *Did you also prepared the host family with information before the arrival of the au pair?*
- 
24. *For an au pair company, the immigration of the au pair to the Netherlands is an important part. "The IND" plays a significant role in this. The au pairs from your au pair company were from Hungary. The visa procedure is not necessary. However, the duties of "the IND" have to be fulfilled by your au pair agency. Did you fulfill these duties? And how?*
  25. *If yes, how did you fulfilled these?*
  26. *Did you had any contact with the IND? If so, what kind of contact?*
  27. *How did you experienced the contact with the IND? And why?*
- 
28. *In 2011, you decided to sell your au pair company to another company? Why did you decided to do this?*
  29. *How did you experience your two years of having an au pair company?*
  30. *What could you have done better during your two years of having an au pair company?*
  31. *And on which aspects of your own au pair company are you proud of?*

32. *What would be your overall rating of having an au pair company?*
33. *What has influenced your overall rating?*
34. *Would you recommend other people to start an au pair company? And why?*
35. *What would you recommend to other au pair agencies that are currently active in the au pair market?*
36. *What would you recommend to other au pair agencies that are currently active in the au pair market concerned the preparation of the cultural differences that these au pairs will experience?*
37. *In the future, would you be interested in starting an au pair company again? And why?*
38. *In the future, how do you think the au pair market will continue? Especially with the focus on the cultural differences that the au pairs experience and the globalized world. Do you think that the cultural differences will flood away in a globalized world? Or will keep existing? And why? And how should au pair agencies react to this in providing information?*
39. *Do you have any questions?*
40. *Do you have any other remarks?*

## Appendix VI: Interview Summary – Au Pair Agency AuPairAktion

### *Part I: General information about AuPairAktion*

In 2009, Agatha Szabo founded the au pair company AuPairAktion together with Adriana Michel, a woman from Hungary. Her partner, Adriana Michel, had been an au pair in the Netherlands for one year. According to her, the services provided by the au pair agencies to the au pairs were insufficient. Therefore the idea arose to establish an au pair agency together with Agatha Szabo who has a lot of expertise in business and consultancy.

The au pair agency was doing business with girls from Hungary that were interested to be an au pair in the Netherlands. The reason why these women only choose to work with Hungarian girls was very simple: Adriana is from Hungary herself and Agatha is half Hungarian. Both women speak fluently Hungarian. That is the best way in communication with these girls.

The headquarter of the company was located in Budapest. It was the location where Adriana worked and met the Hungarian girls. The office of Agatha was located in the Hague, in her own house. Agatha was responsible for the host families and for the au pairs, once these girls were in the Netherlands. Adriana was responsible for taking care of the girls before their arrival in the Netherlands and after their return to Hungary. The owners received support in running the company from three specialists: a doctor, a nurse, and a psychologist. The company also had employees for the administration of the company. Agatha had an assistant to support her with her work.

The specialists prepared the Hungarian girls for their stay in the Netherlands. AuPairAktion provided a program to the au pairs to prepare them for their stay. It was required to participate to the program. Furthermore, the au pairs had to approve the course before their departure to the Netherlands.

In two years, the au pair company AuPairAktion, placed 120 to 140 au pairs in host families. The Hungarian girls were also placed in England or Spain. The reason for this was to improve or learn the English or Spanish language.

### *Part II: The Au Pairs and their Experiences of Cultural Differences in the Netherlands*

The au pairs from Hungary in the Netherlands have experienced two main cultural differences in the Netherlands. In the first place, the Dutch food habits are different than the food habits in Hungary. The Dutch people eat bread during lunch and the Hungarians are used having a warm lunch. Moreover, cooking is very important for Hungarian people and it sometimes takes hours for preparing a meal. In the Netherlands, this is quite different. Hungarians are also used to share their food.

In the second place, Hungarians are used turning the heating on a high temperature such as 23 or 24 degrees, during autumn and winter season. In the Netherlands, Dutch people turn the heating on around 19 degrees as an average per household. That is why the Hungarian girls felt all the time

cold in the house of the host family because the heating was around 19 degrees. When the au pairs wanted to turn the heating on an higher level, the family was not very content with this because of the extra costs.

The Hungarian au pairs experienced the Dutch personality and mentality in a positive way, because Dutch people are direct and very well planned. It was something that these girls saw as a positive experience during their stay.

Of course, the two main cultural differences that the Hungarian au pairs experienced had negative effects on their stay. However, most girls experienced a great time in the Netherlands. Agotha received Thank-You cards from the au pairs.

Agotha would not have changed the program in which she prepares the girls for their stay in the Netherlands. She thinks that she had informed the Hungarian girls sufficiently about the work of an au pair and Dutch culture and society. There were au pairs that were not content during their stay in the Netherlands. There were several reasons for this: homesickness and having no click with the host family. These factors cannot be trained. Even though, Agotha thought about it but it is simply impossible to realize this. That is why Agotha was glad with the program and no changes were necessary.

The expectations of the girls were different than the real experiences. In the first place, the girls expected that the life of an au pair would be more such as a holiday. Most girls did not think about that taking care of children and doing light domestic work was surely a job. Moreover, the au pairs were expected receiving more welfare from the host family. For example, families were required to provide a minimum package to the au pairs. Some of the au pairs did not receive more than the minimum package and they were expected to be so. Agotha declares the behavior of the Hungarian au pairs as follows. The Hungarian girls see the Netherlands as one of the most welfare states in Europe. The au pairs expected more welfare (especially from the host family) and less work.

The similarities that the au pairs experienced between the Dutch culture and the Hungarian culture is the European style of living. For example, there are three moments during the day when Europeans are eating: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### ***Part III: AuPairAktion and its services to the au pairs and the host families***

AuPairAktion provided a lot of services to the au pairs. In the first place, the specialized program to prepare the au pairs for their stay in the Netherlands. The information of the program was also available during their stay. All the information of the program was printed on paper and there were PowerPoint presentations available for the au pairs. In the second place, the company provided monthly meetings and also trips to London and Paris in which the au pairs could meet other au

pairs. Furthermore, AuPairAktion was 24/7 available in supporting and helping the au pairs with problems that occurred. Finally, AuPairAktion also provided services after the au pairs returned to Hungary. Adriana met, at least once, with the Hungarian girls to see how the girls are doing after their return. Agatha declares that there were three phases in supporting the au pairs: before their arrival in the Netherlands, during their stay in the Netherlands and after their return to Hungary.

The au pair company also screened the girls on expertise, education, personality and motivation. Matching was also a service provided by AuPairAktion. The company matched the girls to host families and vice versa based upon preferences.

The au pair agency also provided services to the host families: matching of the au pairs to host families; preparing the host family for the stay of the Hungarian girl by a guided published by AuPairAktion containing explanations of the Hungarian culture and the expectations for a family to have an au pair. The au pair regulations were explained to the host families. The host families were content with the services provided by AuPairAktion. Other benefits of AuPairAktion is that the girls were from Hungary. It means that a visa is not required, because Hungary is a country of the European Union. For host families this is an advantage, because it means less costs and the au pair could arrive, if the host family wishes, within a week. That is why a lot of host families were interested in having AuPairAktion as their au pair agency.

#### ***Part IV: AuPairAktion and its contact with “the IND”***

As mentioned before a visa is not required for the Hungarian au pairs. That is why Agatha did not had contact with “the IND”. The only contact with “the IND” was to fulfill the au pair duties and regulations. These conditions were as follows. The au pair cannot be older than 26 years old, cannot have children and cannot be married. The au pair comes to the Netherlands for a maximum of twelve months to explore Dutch culture and society (cultural exchange). AuPairAktion also had to fulfill the three duties provided by “the IND”: to inform, to administrate and to care. AuPairAktion fulfilled these three duties the best as possible.

#### ***Part V: AuPairAktion and its future career***

In 2011, Agatha sold her company. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, having an au pair company is very stressful. You are dealing with humans. That is why you deal with real human problems. Agatha was available 24 hours per day for the au pairs and the host families. She could not deal with this anymore. Moreover, there were relatively more issues between the au pairs and the host families that did not have a click and troubles occurred. Agatha declares it as follows: there were no quality people anymore. With this, she means there were no motivated au pairs.

Having an au pair company is definitely a quality job, but there were no quality people (au pairs) That is why, she decided to sell the company.

She has experienced her two years of having an au pair company as a positive experience, because it is always good to have your own company and improve your business skills. However, overall, she experienced it as a real stressful period of your life. As she mentioned before, you work with real humans and the related human problems, basically 24 hours per day. She is very content with the au pair company that she had. The only thing that she would have changed is stricter screening of the au pairs based upon expertise, motivation, personality and education. Agotha is especially proud on the communication that she provided to the host families and to the au pairs. The overall rating of the two years of having an au pair company by Agotha is a 7.5. Stricter screening of the au pairs and having more partners have influenced her mark of being a 7.5. You could say that she has experienced it as a nice period in which she have learnt a lot in having an own company. However, she would not be interested in starting again an au pair agency, because it brings a lot of stress to handle with.

She would not recommend to start an au pair company, if you cannot handle stress. If you can, you could start an au pair company. On the other hand, the au pair market is relatively big at the moment. That is why she would recommend to start a company in other services.

Agotha would recommend to following points to au pair agencies that are currently active in the au pair market: really care about the host families and the au pairs instead of only thinking about the money. To explain this more, it is important to meet the host family at least once by organizing a home visit. Meeting with the au pairs before their departure to the Netherlands is important to be successful as an au pair agency. Furthermore, Agotha recommends au pair agencies to work more with girls from European countries because a visa and the whole visa procedure is not required. It means less costs for the host families and the process elapses faster. For European girls being an au pair in their own continent still is an experience of a cultural exchange.

In the future, Agotha sees the au pair market as follows: the au pair market will keep existing, because of the constant demand of host families. There will be a change from which countries the au pairs are coming. Agotha declares that more au pairs will come from Asia and South-America. Most European girls are interested to be an au pair in the United States of America.

## Appendix VII: Interview with Sandra Beukers – Au Pair Company Smiling Faces

*Well, before you started your own au pair company, you had au pairs yourself. Firstly, I would like to ask you some questions about this, especially with the focus on the cultural differences that the au pairs experienced. Secondly, I would like to ask you some questions about the au pair agency Smiling Faces. Thirdly, I would like to ask you some questions about the services that you provide to the au pairs and the host families. Finally, I would like to ask you some questions about the future career of Smiling Faces.*

- 1. From which countries were the au pairs coming that you did choose to be your au pair?*
  - 2. Why did you decided to choose au pairs from these countries?*
  - 3. Did these girls experience cultural differences? If so, could you explain the main cultural differences that these girls experienced?*
  - 4. How would you declare these cultural differences?*
  - 5. What were the consequences of the experienced cultural differences for the au pairs during their stay in your family?*
  - 6. Do you think that the experienced cultural differences influenced their stay in a positive or in a negative way? And why?*
  - 7. Were your au pairs from au pair agencies? If so, do you think that these agencies could have prepared the au pairs better about the Dutch culture and society? And how?*
- 
- 8. In 2007, you founded the au pair company Smiling Faces together with Jolanda Oeij, The reason for the foundation of the company is that you were not content with the services provided by other au pair agencies. Could you please explain wivhich services were not satisfied to you? And finally, why you decided to start your own au pair agency?*
  - 9. Which services were you sure about to improve? And why?*
  - 10. Smiling Faces has grown to one of the largest au pair agencies in the Netherlands. Every year, around 120 au pairs are being placed by Smiling Faces in host families in the Netherlands. Do you think you that you have improved these services? And if so, could you explain this?*
  - 11. Are there still services that you would like to improve? If so, which services? And why would you like to improve these services?*
  - 12. What is the strongest feature of Smiling Faces?*
  - 13. What is the weakest feature of Smiling Faces? How could you improve this?*
  - 14. Most au pairs working for Smiling Faces are from Indonesia, South-Africa, Peru, Colombia and Ukraine. What are the main cultural differences that these au pairs experience? And what are main cultural differences experienced regarding Dutch mentality / Dutch personality?*

15. *How would you declare these cultural differences?*
16. *What are the main consequences of the experienced cultural differences for the au pairs during their stay in the Netherlands?*
17. *Do you think that the experienced cultural differences did influence their stay in a positive or negative way? And why?*
18. *Did the au pairs also experience similarities between their culture and the Dutch culture? If so, could you explain the main similarities?*
19. *Could you mention a link between the expectations of the au pairs and their experiences during their stay in the Netherlands?*
20. *You have published training manual to prepare the au pair for their stay in the Netherlands. Could you add something to the manual to prevent the cultural differences experienced by the au pairs? If so, what would you add to the program?*
21. *Smiling Faces also organizes a Dutch course, monthly meetings and trips in which the au pairs get more familiar with Dutch culture and society. Would you add providing other services to inform the au pairs about Dutch culture and society? And why? And what?*
22. *In June, a new regulation of “MOMI” is being introduced. The “IND” will keep a close watch on the fulfillment of the three duties. It means that the three duties need to be executed the best possible. At the moment, are you satisfied with implementation of these three duties? Or there is any change needed? If so, what would you like to change or improve?*
23. *In the future, how do you think the au pair market will continue? Especially with the focus on the cultural differences that the au pairs experience and the globalized world. Do you think that the cultural differences will flood away in a globalized world? Or will keep existing? And why? And how should au pair agencies react to this in providing information?*
24. *In the future, how do you think that Smiling Faces will continue its businesses and its services?*
25. *Do you have any other remarks?*



## Appendix VIII: Interview Summary – Au Pair Agency Smiling Faces

### *Part I: Own experiences of having an au pair*

Before Sandra Beukers started her own au pair agency, she had five au pairs herself. The au pairs were coming from different countries. She had au pairs from South-Africa, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania and Peru. Her preference are girls from South-Africa, because their English is sufficient and these girls learn Dutch relatively fast because Afrikaans is quite similar to the Dutch language. The au pairs from Sandra Beukers were also from au pair agencies.. During the five years of having au pairs, Sandra Beukers received help from three different au pair agencies.

In those five years, the owner of Smiling Faces mentioned that the au pairs experienced cultural differences in the Netherlands. In the first place, basically ‘everything’ is different than their own culture: the climate, the landscape, the food habits, the norms, the way of living, the language and so on. According to Sandra, most au pairs experienced one similar main cultural difference which is the Dutch directness in communication. The reason for this experience is that the au pairs are constantly together with the host family. The communication of Dutch people is characterized by its directness. It is something that is typical Dutch and people are not used to this kind of communication. The au pairs also experience this.

The main experienced cultural difference affects the stay of the au pair. However, some au pairs get used to the direct communication of Dutch people and experience it as something positive because you know what to expect. On the other hand, there are au pairs that will never get used to the Dutch mentality of directness. Several au pairs even mentioned that Dutch people are rude, because being direct is something that these au pairs associate with being rude. Moreover, another main cultural difference that au pairs experience in the Netherlands is the Dutch way of doing things which efficiency and fastness. There are a lot of au pairs who cannot deal with this work pressure. Finally, the Netherlands is a well-organized and well-planned country. It is something that most au pairs experience as a positive cultural difference where their countries could learn something from.

### *Part II: General information of the au pair agency Smiling Faces*

Sandra Beukers was not content with the services provided by the au pair agencies. The idea arose to establish her own au pair company to improve this. Sandra Beukers was not satisfied with three services provided by the au pair agencies: the phase of selection and recruitment of the au pairs; the phase of supporting the au pairs; and the phase of informing and supporting the host families. That is why in 2007 Sandra Beukers founded Smiling Faces together with her business partner

Jolanda Oeij to improve these three services. Six years later, Sandra Beukers surely thinks that she has achieved her goals in improving these three phases.

In the first place, there is a recruitment team with a lot of knowledge in selecting and recruiting au pairs. This team also matches the au pairs to host families. Secondly, the au pairs are supported very well. Before their arrival, the au pairs receive a training manual existing of 120 pages which contains information about Dutch culture and society. During the stay of the au pair, monthly meetings and annual events are being organized. Furthermore, there is a Facebook page which is the communication tool between the au pairs and Smiling Faces. Finally, there is a phone number that is available 24/7 for the au pairs in cases of emergencies.

Thirdly, there is a customer support team which informs and supports the host family during the whole process of receiving an au pair and having an au pair. Finally, the visa procedure is a difficult process and Smiling Faces knows how to implement this procedure. You could say that Sandra Beukers is content with the accomplishments of her own au pair company.

### ***Part III: The Au Pairs and their Experiences of Cultural Differences in the Netherlands***

Most au pairs working for Smiling Faces are from South-Africa, South-America (Colombia and Peru), Asia (Thailand and Indonesia) and Eastern-Europe (Ukraine and Moldova). As mentioned before, the main shared cultural difference is the directness of the Dutch people in communication. The Dutch efficiency and fastness of doing work are other main cultural differences experienced by the au pairs working for Smiling Faces. There are no similarities between the Dutch culture and the other cultures. Sandra Beukers declares one cultural similarity which is the word family: belonging to a family and having a family. There is no connection between the expectations and the experiences of the au pairs because the expectations are always different. You really have to experience how it is to be an au pair in the Netherlands.

To prepare the au pairs about the Dutch culture Smiling Faces provides a training manual which exists of 120 pages. The host family also receives the training manual. Sandra Beukers would not change anything of the training manual. A video could be added to Smiling Faces' program to prepare the au pairs the best as possible. With the publishing of the video a better understanding of daily life in the Netherlands will be realized.

### ***Part IV: AuPairAction and its contact with "the IND"***

With the new regulation of "MOMI" Smiling Faces will continue her services to the au pairs and the host families. "The IND" will keep close watch on the fulfillment of the duties provided by Smiling Faces. That is why, it is important to inform the host families and the au pairs about the new regulations and duties that need to be fulfilled by the host family and the au pairs. Smiling

Faces will set up an information policy in which host families and au pairs are obliged to report every change to Smiling Faces. In turn Smiling Faces will inform “the IND” about the changes. If these duties are not be fulfilled by the au pairs or by the host families, it could lead to big consequences for example by giving penalties or/and a termination of au pair’s visa.

The daily schedule need to be confirmed by both the au pair and the host family. It means that the au pair sees the daily schedule, before her arrival in the Netherlands. This is an advantage for the au pairs, because she will already know what to expect with regards to taking care of the children and doing light domestic work. The daily schedule is a fundamental element of the new regulation. Both the host family and the au pair should agree and sign it. The daily schedule should be fulfilled by both parties to occur no troubles and to satisfy Smiling Faces and “the IND”. Finally, there will be a new protocol in which the recruitment team will review and control everything what the au pairs are doing. It is important to review this, because it is necessary to pass on the changes to “the IND”.

#### ***Part V: Smiling Faces and its future career***

In the future, Sandra Beukers is confident about the prospects of the au pair market. She thinks that there will be a constant demand for it. There will be fluctuations in the au pair business for example during economic periods of crisis. The future career of Smiling Faces is simple. Smiling Faces will keep existing. Due to the new regulation, Smiling Faces will even grow. The reason for this is that host families have to register an au pair agency to receive an au pair from a foreign country. The total market of host families that arrange the visas of the au pairs themselves consists of five hundred people. Smiling Faces will receive approximately ten per cent of these host families. It means a growth of fifty customers each year.