

HELSINKI



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CREATING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR MIGRANTS

A COMBINATION OF LANGUAGE COURSES, WORK TRIALS AND SUBSIDISED WORK FOR MIGRANTS.

At the beginning of 2014 12.8% of the inhabitants of Helsinki were non-native speakers and it is forecast that by 2030 that the number will exceed 20%. In the Helsinki area there are 136 registered spoken languages and over 170 nationalities.

The labour market has also been changing and faces increasing challenges. The development of technology, the growth of the global market as well as the increase in the ageing population has affected the structure of the labour market. At the end of 2014 the employment rate of migrants was 52.7% while the employment rate Finnish people was 73.1%. In the capital area the sector with the highest rate of employment of the migrant population is in one with low paying jobs. Among some of the main reasons identified for the high rate of migrant unemployment are the scarce knowledge of the Finnish language, a poor level of education and the challenge of integrating into Finnish society.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME

The city of Helsinki in cooperation with the national Employment and Economic Development Office established a support programme for the employment of migrants. The specific target group is made up of migrant people already registered at the Employment and Economic Development office.

- The programme is based on a combination of two services: employment through trial work service and a paid subsidies work service.
- The budget for the initiative was about €1.5m.
- Throughout the whole process, the beneficiaries can improve their Finnish language skills and access career guidance to improve their employability.
- Before the start of the programme the beneficiaries have to take a language test. Their needs are assessed and according to the result of the test they are advised on what type of training will be most useful for them.





OPPORTUNITY TO GET THE LEVEL OF **FINNISH LANGUAGE** NEEDED ON THE JOB MARKET



THE CITY WITNESSED AN **IMPROVEMENT IN EMPLOYABILITY**

- The trial work service is structured so that one or two days a week are fully reserved to language training (six hours a day). During this period the beneficiary is entitled to unemployment benefit and a daily allowance for study. It takes approximately four to six months.
- The subsidised work service, which comes after the trial work service, continues with two hours a week of language training. During the subsidised work service the beneficiaries have a temporary employment contract and get a salary. It usually takes from three to six months.
- After completing the programme, all the qualifications of the beneficiaries are recognised and acknowledged.
- The programme takes from eight to 12 months and the beneficiaries are fully committed for the duration.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND INNOVATION

- Beneficiaries have a unique opportunity to get the level of Finnish language needed on the job market and to acquire some specific professional vocabularies.
- The city witnessed an improvement in the employability of the target groups thanks to the practical experience in working environments, the development of practical and transversal skills and the opportunity to get acquainted with Finnish life and work style.
- Work experience makes the beneficiaries more confident when looking for a job and more motivated to pursue professional training for specific careers.
- The combination of Finnish language training, trial work experience and the subsidised work system have proven to be very effective in improving the employability of the beneficiaries and responding to the needs of the local labour market.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Dealing with a number of migrants job seekers requires a strong commitment as well as the right support mechanisms.

At the end of the current cycle of the programme, the city council does not have the necessary resources to offer public jobs directly to the beneficiaries therefore it is vital to reach out to the private sector and change employers' attitudes towards migrants.

The cooperation between the local employment office, the city council, several educational organisations and the employers is crucial for the success of the programme and should be intensified and strengthened.

The language training should be strongly geared towards a more vocational training – language orientation in order to boost employability.

Providing language learning and work trails in parallel resulted in the successful placement of migrants into the labour market.

