Next Speaker

Mr. Ahti Avikainen
Senior Adviser
Ministry of Employment and the Economy (MEE)
Finland
Labour market integration of refugees – the role of PES, WAPES conference, Malmö, 9-10 June, 2016

What does integration mean from clients perspective? Experiences from Finland

Ahti Avikainen,
Senior Adviser,
Ministry of Employment and the Economy,
Finland
10.6.2016
Starting points for the government policy

Immigration to Finland is increasing and becoming more varied:

Now
- 220,000 foreign citizens (31.12.2014)
- Finland’s population:
  - 5,472,000

In 2020
- As many as
  - 330,000 foreign citizens

In 2030
- Half a million foreign citizens

More than half of all immigrants live in the capital region.
### Residents: 5 471 753

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>5 252 078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>219 675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Largest groups:
- Estonia: 48 354
- Russia: 30 619
- Sweden: 8 288
- China: 7 559
- Somalia: 7 381
- Thailand: 6 864
- Iraq: 6 795
- India: 4 728
- Turkey: 4 508
- Great-Britain: 4 280

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>5 149 776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>321 977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Largest groups:
- Former Soviet Union: 54 742
- Estonia: 42 652
- Sweden: 31 894
- Russia: 12 005
- Somalia: 10 054
- Iraq: 10 001
- China: 9 433
- Thailand: 9 240
- Ex-Yugoslavia: 6 941
- Germany: 6 473

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTHER TONGUE</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>4 868 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>290 747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saame</td>
<td>1 949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>310 306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Largest groups:
- Russian: 69 614
- Estonian: 46 195
- English: 16 732
- Somali: 16 721
- Arabic: 14 825
- Kurdish: 10 731
- Chinese: 10 110
- Albanian: 8 754
- Farsi: 8 103
- Thai: 8 038

Lähde: Tilastokeskus
Residence permits 2015; total 20 709

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions according to the grounds for the application – most common reasons</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family ties</td>
<td>6 036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>5 869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment or self-employment</td>
<td>5 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International protection (asylum+quota)</td>
<td>2 762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PM Sipilä’s Government Program – Integration of immigrants

Four focus areas:

The Government will encourage open debate about migration policy, but will not tolerate racism.

Immigrants enhance our innovation capacity and increase our know-how by bringing their cultural strengths to Finnish society.

Measures should be taken to enhance integration, activities should be cross-sectoral.

To participate in the international sharing of burdens, the number of quota refugees (resettlement programs) will be maintained at least at the same level (750). The central government will increase cooperation with municipalities and provide sufficient resources for that.
1. Rapid move from reception centres to municipalities – paired with
2. Rapid start of integration process: registration with Employment Office (Employment and Entrepreneurship Office), skills mapping including language and professional skills
3. Ensuring access to integration training, ia. securing resources, and developing the contents and way to deliver the training: half-day language training, half-day voluntary work, workplace training, self-guided homework etc.
4. Speeding up the paths to the labour market, including a Social Investment Bond project, piloting combination of language and vocational training
5. Ensuring educational paths, safe environment for unaccompanied minors

32 438 asylum applications in 2015
Local services promoting integration

Individual services promoting integration

- **Basic information for everyone**
  - Local register office
  - The police
  - Finnish missions abroad

- Efficient guidance and counselling

- The initial assessment

- Integration plan, monitoring and guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open job market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The impact of increasing numbers of asylum seekers in 2015; Weekly amounts up to wk 45; total 32,648
Asylum application 1.1–31.12.2015 – 32 438
Brakedown of statistics, 5.1.2016
Source: Finnish Migration Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP-5 nationalities</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irak</td>
<td>20 495</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afganistan</td>
<td>5 241</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1 981</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>32 547</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Good practices or points to consider

• **One size does not fit for all** - better recognition of wide scope of different needs

• **Need for resources** – to combine better the various stakeholders’ resources and wide network of actors: public, private, NGO’s and individual volunteers

• Recognizing immigrants’ **earlier formal and informal skills and competencies**

• New perspectives to learning and teaching: learning at work, while working & e-learning
  
  ➢ **E-learning solutions have to be up to date and usable in mobile phones.**
Examples of integration

Sharmake Abukar Amin, 26 years; asylum seeker from Somalia;
now working in Helsinki, learning programming and coding at an ICT company

Used to be a journalist and University student in Somalia. He is dreaming to return his homeland and make a change in the country. Only couple of months ago he was miserably and inactive at the reception center. His story in short:

I left Somalia, because some of my journalist colleagues were killed by terrorist organization and also my life was threatened. I arrived to Finland as an asylum seeker in January 2016. I came through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Italy, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. I left Mogadishu in November 2015.

Now I am programming and writing code from 9 to 5 at an ICT company. I share an apartment with my fellow workers near my work place in Helsinki. It is amazing, because less than two months ago I had nothing to but sit at the reception center.

One morning at the reception Center I saw an announcement on the wall: "Do you see your future with computers?" It was an add and chance to learn coding and programming. All of us were surprised, we were thinking that our future in our new homeland will be as cleaners, restaurant workers etc.
I did not understand at all what writing code is about. Two young men explained what coding means. There is lack of programmers and coders. We could learn within 6 months e.g. html and Java languages, if we go and practise at their company. "This is a fast lane to working life and to Finnish society", they explained.

We we excited. They chose 5 of us and brought us to Helsinki. We are all from different countries: from Irak, Kurdistan, Iran, Syria and Somalia.

It was Thursday 31 March, 2016. On Monday 4 April we started to work. Javascript, jquery, php, html, and css. After 8 hour working day, I continue practising at home.

All is well. Nevertheless, I have decided to apply to Somalian Parliament in order to stop terrorism.

If everything goes as planned, I can get Finnish citizenship before next elections in Somalia in 2020. Then I could go back and try to make a change there.
Sharmake Abukar Amin, 26
"Celebration of work" at Kauhava – bureaucracy is beaten.

Workers’ cooperatives were founded at Kauhava reception centre. Cooperative is a solution for many problems which deal with asylum seekers’ employment.

- The idea of workers’ cooperative was seen as a model to offer asylum seekers a chance to employment.

- Many asylum seekers think that, if I could get a job, then I can be integrated to this society.

- At workers’ cooperative it is possible to pay salary in cash. Normally employers do not want to pay in cash and on the hand, asylum seekers cannot open a bank account, because they do not have a social security number / ID.

- It is also easy to order work performances from workers’ cooperative. Employer only pays bill with VAT. According to cooperative’s rules, part of the income will be paid to workers and part goes to cooperative, to be used for the common good. All the work is considered to be of same value, so the hourly wage is same.
• The cooperative will introduce net pages, where companies and private households can make work orders.

• There are many kinds of skills and know-how available, e.g.:
  • builders, metal workers, tractor drivers, gardeners, farmers

• In addition to selling work performances, the cooperative can sell goods, for example mats and rugs.

• Through work, the asylum seekers learn Finnish way of living and functions of the society.

• The earnings are relatively low, but in this situation it seems more important to have chance to do something. Also pretty soon the earnings start to reduce asylum seekers reception subsidies.
Workers’ cooperative ”Bazaar”
In May 2016 Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and Confederation of Finnish Industries, launched roadshow:

➢"From immigrant to entrepreneur"

Focus is to encourage immigrants with residence permit to become entrepreneurs. During the roadshow across the country, the experts from Employment Offices will offer guidance and information on enterprise services.

Thank You!