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Promoting the Inclusion of Migrants in Adult Education

Gaps and Best Practices

National Research Report Summary: Sweden, 2018

Erasmus + Project - Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia, Sweden - 2017-1-MT01-KA204-026966

The SMILE Project

SMILE is a 2-year Erasmus+ project, started in October 2017, and led by the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) in Malta, together with Integration for All (IFALL) in Sweden, the Centre for the Advancement of Research and Development in Education Technology (CARDET) in Cyprus, and the Institute for African Studies (IAS) in Slovenia.

The SMILE project is developing information and training resources to support policymakers, teachers, migrant communities, learning support staff and adult education institutes in promoting migrant inclusion in adult education. This Country Report Summary is developed from a Transnational Report compiling research carried out in the four countries. All the project resources and information can be found on the project website:

<http://www.project-smile.eu/en/>.





Context of education in Sweden

Sweden has been one of the main destination countries of asylum seekers from war-torn countries in 2015/2016. Funding for integration has significantly increased with the bulk going to language courses and targeted as well as general active labour market policy (ALMP) measures (Sweden 1.35% of GDP for reception and integration, 2015).

Although the available data on educational levels is still patchy it shows a similar mixed picture: there are wide variations across origin countries. The majority of refugees from Syria, Iran and Iraq have at least upper secondary education, whereas the majority of those from Afghanistan, Eritrea or Somalia have at most, lower secondary education. Refugee women tend to have higher educational levels than men, but they are particularly struggling to enter employment.

Government allocated considerable resources to enhance integration: Participation in integration measures has been made mandatory in Sweden; More attention has been given to skills assessment and qualification recognition including the development of new tools for skills assessment; Fast tracks in the Swedish context are a strategy to speed up labour market integration of refugees with professional skills in shortage occupations.

Uncertainty about different degrees of permanence, greatly affect refugees' incentives to integrate socially and contribute economically and hiring decisions of employers. Issuing mainly temporary residence permits instead of permanent ones has a clear discouraging effect to invest in language and training, in particular for the group of rejected, but tolerated asylum seekers.

Integration policy is a cross-cutting issue that involves many different areas and levels of government which makes coordination often difficult. Coordination gaps exist in Sweden. Organizational policy reforms should take into account implications for service delivery from a clients' journey point of view.

In order to reduce the risk of over-qualified employment of refugees more education and training should be considered as part of the discount of migrants' qualifications is due to lower skills at the same qualification level. More support is also needed for refugee women.

Good Practices

Digital Help: The new technology is also used for web-based training, language courses and for a first skills assessment in Sweden where language training and other integration measures start with delays only after a protections status is granted. Hence, online tools in Sweden are a possible way for early intervention. The digital tool "Jobskills.se" developed by Arbetsförmedlingen aims to identify asylum seekers' skills (before a decision is taken) in first language (available in Arabic, English, Persian, Somali, Tigrinya), which is then directly translated

into Swedish. The tool works as an open internet platform with registered users who create a profile based on information about education, work experience, competences, career interests and language skills. Related services are multilingual videos describing the Swedish labour market, how to write a CV, or how to prepare for a job interview. In the near future the tool will be launched for employers who can also create an account and search for people with the required skills or qualifications. The tool is widely used. Since it has been launched in April 2017 15,500 accounts have been registered till



end of September. Approximately 50% of the registered users are asylum seekers, and the goal is to have 25,000 registered users at the end of 2017 with a 33 % share of women.

Integration Plan for 2 years: Once asylum-seekers are granted a residence permit, they will have an appointment at the Public Employment Service, which is responsible for finding a municipality for permanent settlement and for developing an individual integration plan. This plan normally foresees integration activities of 40 hours per week, for two years. At the centre of the integration plan is a language course ("Swedish for immigrants"), which is arranged by the respective municipality and accompanied by civic integration courses, internships or job training.

Learning language at working place with work related language is good for those who are not used to be in the classroom. In Örkelljunga there are a project related this to involve those who are not good at in formal education can be taken to different process at work.

- Sensitization training for those in a power/decision making position.
- Mentorship or buddy system for individuals
- Local activities who is not formal language course but more informal or non-formal education.
- More activity during the asylum process to get rid of passive status.
- Study visit for teachers to another region, schools to share the best practices.
- Conclusion and recommendations:
- Remove all legal barriers that prevent or impede access to education for refugees, irrespective of their migration status. This is particularly important for unaccompanied asylum-seekers aged 18 and older.
- Provide appropriate diagnostic tests, based on scientifically produced and tested material, on students' previous school background, knowledge and experiences, as well as the adoption of an individual development strategy for each student. Such tests are implemented in Sweden, but according to the latest inspection report, the testing process lacks individualization, their results are not always communicated to all concerned teachers, and they are sparsely used at upper-secondary schools.
- Provide bilingual support (in Swedish and in student's mother tongue) of learning throughout the introductory period. This kind of support represents one of the strongest pedagogical instruments for learning.
- Make sure that long-term educational investment is made in mother tongue education.
- Provide more teachers with training and qualifications in Swedish as a second language. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to organise at least shorter courses for all teaching staff on the structure and pedagogical content of learning Swedish as a second language.
- Avoid educational segregation (for example, no separated classes for an extended period of time, nor schools only for newcomers).
- When applicable, ensure that there is a well-planned transfer from introductory to regular classes, and continuous bilingual and social scaffolding in regular classes, to promote optimal learning.



- Provide ongoing evaluation of students' learning and social inclusion progress.
- Provide awareness education for non-immigrant parents to disarm stigmatization and fears of integration measures influencing their children negatively.
- Provide information and offer close cooperation to newly arrived parents on all aspects of schooling.
- Provide sensitive inquiry into possible traumatic experiences of all asylum-seeking children and ensure that this can be professionally dealt with.
- Ensure that schools work together with local community and civic society in order to integrate both adults and children in local social networks.
- Refugee teachers need more support in Swedish. For many, English training is also needed. They also need to find an academic mentor who will guide them through their university education. This is particularly important for migrant teachers that attend the Fast-track.

Recommendations

- Remove all legal barriers that prevent or impede access to education for refugees, irrespective of their migration status. This is particularly important for unaccompanied asylum-seekers aged 18 and older.
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