



PHOTO: MINNA HALLIKAINEN

At times it is very busy at the Southern Savo regional guidance and information desk for immigrants.

Aiming towards work, education and active citizenship

Development programme of initial guidance and development of skills of newcomers enhances the integration of immigrants into Finnish society. The ALPO support structure brings together projects and best practices related to initial-phase guidance and orientation services.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR INITIAL GUIDANCE and counselling services for immigrants is administered by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Ministry of Education and Culture. This programme comprises multi-professional and cross-administrative projects, implemented nationwide. It also includes the Finnish National Board of Education's programme segment for producing online materials for language learning. The ALPO support structure of the Ministry of the Interior's Migration Department coordinates development. It brings together various projects related to initial phase guidance and orientation services for immigrants. In addition, it supports all activities and the exchange of experiences within the projects. The aim is to identify best practices and further develop them into a nationwide operating model for initial phase guidance and orientation services.

ALPO produces the content for the basic information package on Finnish society and its services, for people who have moved to Finland. A plain text version will be completed by the end of 2010. Regional projects develop low-threshold guidance services for immigrants. Information on the services provided by the authorities and local services is produced in several languages and is available in written form, face to face, over the phone or via email.

Systems for testing and competence mapping are instruments for the rapid employment of people, or for steering them quickly towards suitable education choices. Testing language skills and mapping candidates' existing competencies is required, in order to find suitable placements within employment and education. Language learning materials also promote the acquisition of the level of proficiency necessary within Finnish society and working life.

The e-learning material enables the independent study of Finnish and Swedish, for example, in the workplace, in small localities or even abroad, prior to moving to Finland. Multi-channel services increase equality and reduce discrimination related to education, working life and placement in the labour market.

VERSOT – Finnish for immigrants online

One of the development programme's projects is VERSOT – Finnish for immigrants online, implemented as part of the AIKIS project of the Finnish National Board of Education. The VERSOT project develops, produces and tests e-learning resources aimed at immigrants for the study of Finnish. These learning materials support vocational training and enhance the possibility of finding employment. E-learning can be independent or involve peer support; it can be done, for example, in the workplace, in rural areas or abroad.

Pointti – immigrants on the way to employment

The Pointti project of the Southern Savo joint municipal authority for education/Southern Savo Vocational College develops and provides guidance and counselling services for people moving to the region. It is based on a development partnership, which commits various networks of actors operating in the region, to cooperation and the development of operating models. The project has produced practical guide-books for the new inhabitants of towns Mikkeli and Savonlinna. The printed booklets as well as online-version are available in Finnish and in English. Pointti offers information and guidance to immigrants, authorities, service providers, employers and work communities, at designated service desks located in towns Mikkeli and Savonlinna.

Development programme for the initial guidance and counselling services for immigrants

Financing 2007–2013: € 23 million

Administration: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Education and Culture

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