

## Abstract

The *Participative integration in Finland* project, implemented by a provisional law, was launched in order to holistically promote the integration of immigrants. The project partners are the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. The project term is 22.3.2010–30.6.2013, and project costs total approximately 10 million euro.

The *Participative integration in Finland* project aims at enhancing the prerequisites for the integration of immigrants. It develops and tests alternative ways of organising education, as well as developing the actual educational contents and initial stage guidance and counselling offered to different immigrant groups in compliance with three integration paths: path 1 – adult immigrants seeking employment; path 2 – adult immigrants who need special support; and path 3 – children and adolescents. Different immigrants have different integration needs.

The University of Jyväskylä Centre for Applied Language Studies is in charge of the project's development plan. The plan proposes solutions for developing integration and related education, both regarding pilot projects and long-term development. The development plan's four cornerstones are: continuous and goal-oriented *guidance*, cross-administrative and multiprofessional *cooperation*, the *continuity and flexibility* of education, and the *professional skills* of experts involved in the integration activities.

The development plan includes the proposal that, within the pilot projects implemented by municipalities, labour administration, and the third sector collaboratively create customer-oriented integration training models with low total costs. The development plan presents an integration training model for adult immigrants, based on pedagogical solutions that facilitate learning, and on guidance as an integral part of education. Education is organised and implemented taking into account both adults who need special support (e.g. stay-at-home mothers, the illiterate) and those who progress quickly along the educational path (e.g. academic immigrants). Educational contents can also be developed according to e.g. the regional emphasis of industry and commerce, or training can be brought into the workplace. When organising training for stay-at-home mothers, their children are also provided care and integration activities during the training. As the overall quality of integration training has not been evaluated so far, the development plan entails a proposal for its quality evaluation and follow-up (acquisition of training, resources, contents, and impact/effectiveness). Moreover, the development plan considers quality evaluation and follow-up separately in all of the pilot project integration paths.

With regard to children and adolescents' integration, it is essential to ensure the continuity of education from pre-school to basic education, upper

secondary education, and so on. In these younger learners, the pilot projects should primarily promote learning in Finnish or Swedish as a second language, as well as in the immigrant's mother tongue. Special attention should be paid to 13- to 25-year-old adolescents who have immigrated late and lack basic education: for them, finding a placement in education or working life is challenging. Another important group is constituted by children at the age of early childhood education.

Furthermore, the development plan proposes policies for developing different actors' professional competences. The point of departure is a holistic change in operating cultures, which calls for strong leadership and a broad understanding of the need for change.