

# Getting Ready - A higher Education Preparatory Program for Immigrants; Study and Language Skills for Immigrants to Get Admitted in Higher Education in Finland

Outi Lemettinen,<sup>1</sup> Heidi Stenberg<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Finland needs migrants to address the labour shortage in different sectors, to improve the weakening of the dependency ratio caused by ageing of the population, and to attract more international talent and entrepreneurs to Finland. According to the Business Tendency Survey published by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Employment Outlook by Occupation published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment there is a shortage of construction and real estate service professionals as well as social and healthcare sector experts. There were 6,407 immigrants aged 25 to 29 in 2016, which was 18 per cent of all immigrants in Finland. The above-mentioned age group included somewhat more men than women, 56 per cent of the age group. The share of women is slightly bigger than that of men only among immigrants aged 75 and older. The trend towards polarisation that characterises the entire society emerged as the theme that is of the greatest concern for Finnish people regarding the asylum situation. The view that Finland should invest more in both development aid and better utilisation of the quota refugee system was additionally highlighted. The respondents would like to see the asylum system developed so that those in the greatest need for help would be the ones most likely to receive it. Finnish people were also concerned about questions related to safety and security. In particular, their attitudes towards persons who have been denied asylum and who are staying in the country illegally were critical. Many foreigners regard Finland as a remote, cold, taciturn country displaying passive reluctance toward immigrants. This is the case despite the recent effort on the part of the Finnish Foreign Ministry to reinvent Finland's image as a thriving, advanced, and superior nation worthy of tourism and investment.

Getting ready - A higher education preparatory program for immigrants The universities of applied sciences (UAS) are responsible for organizing training courses for immigrants in higher education. The supply of training courses, application processes, content and scope varies from one UAS to another. There

<sup>1</sup> Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, [outi.lemettinen@metropolia.fi](mailto:outi.lemettinen@metropolia.fi)

<sup>2</sup> Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

is a need for clarity and definition of common approaches in order to increase the ability of immigrant people to enter higher education and to take into account the development needs of Finnish as a Second Language (S2) teaching in a higher education community. The aim of the project is to develop advanced training in higher education through the harmonization of the training process and principles of training and by preparing national recommendations for preparatory education. In addition, the aim is to create an operational culture which furthers engaging integration in higher education institutions. The project will develop both the regional implementation of education and the joint implementation of higher education institutions by using digital methods. The target group of the project is persons with an immigrant background who benefit from the development of learning abilities and language skills when applying for higher education. As a result of the project, the availability, flexibility, choice and effectiveness of advanced training for immigrants will increase. As a result of preparatory program, more and more immigrants have the skills to get in and study in higher education. Thanks to common practices and recommendations, guidance will be uniform in the future, and higher education institutions will have common ways of organizing training courses.

### **Aim of the paper and urban challenge it addresses:**

This proposal presents one solution how immigrants and refugees are included in higher education in Finland. Immigrants have difficulties to access higher education because of limited Finnish language skills. Getting ready - A higher education preparatory program for immigrants The universities of applied sciences (UAS) are responsible for organizing training courses for immigrants in higher education. The supply of training courses, application processes, content and scope varies from one UAS to another. There is a need for clarify and definition of common approaches in order to increase the ability of immigrant people to enter higher education and to take into account the development needs of Finnish as a Second Language (S2) teaching in a higher education community. Finland needs migrants to address the labour shortage in different sectors, to improve the weakening of the dependency ratio caused by ageing of the population, and to attract more international talent and entrepreneurs to Finland. According to the Business Tendency Survey published by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Employment Outlook by Occupation published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment there is a shortage of construction and real estate service professionals as well as social and healthcare sector experts.

## KEYWORDS

Keyword 1	preparatory program for immigrants
Keyword 2	higher education
Keyword 3	learning abilities and language skills
Keyword 4	common practices and recommendations social inclusion polarisation

## WORKSHOP

Workshop I: Migration and Urban Displacement