Immigrant Families, Well-Being and Social Justice: a Finnish Perspective

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Conference on Adapting to Changes in Family Migration: the Experiences of OECD Countries

Washington 18 November 2013
Outline of the presentation

- General look at Immigration to Finland
- Act of the Integration of Immigrants
- Government Integration Program
Foreign Citizens in Finland
1992–2012

Source: Population Information System

205 538
2013

Source: Population Information System
Influx. Immigration has jumped in Europe, leading some countries to push for tighter borders

Source: Time-Magazine 5.3.2012
Foreign Citizens in Finland

Source: Population Information System
Age Distribution of Immigrants in Finland

Foreign Nationals 2010 age pyramid

Finnish Citizens 2010 age pyramid

Male    Female

MAAHANMUUTTOVIRasto
MIGRATIONSVERKET
FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE
Residence permits per year: appr. 20 000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number (approxim.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family ties</td>
<td>5 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>5 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment or self-employment</td>
<td>5 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International protection (asylum+quota)</td>
<td>2 000</td>
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</table>
- Vast majority of immigrant population lives in the Helsinki Metropolitan area; 62 % of all immigrants in Finland.
- Only approximately 25 municipalities (out of some 300) have more than 1000 foreign nationals registered.
Rate of Unemployment in Finland
Outline of the presentation

- Introduction
- General look at Immigration to Finland
- Act of the Integration of Immigrants
- Government Integration Program
Viewpoints:

How can effective integration programmes be designed for new family migrants?
In Finland the Main Instrument is the Integration Act (1386/2010)

• **To provide** foreign nationals access to **full participation** in all sectors of Finnish society:
  – access to education
  – access to work
  – access to basic services
  – democratic rights, participation

• **To promote**:
  – integration as a two-way process between the immigrant and Finnish society
  – a positive dialogue between all groups in society
  – equality and non-discrimination
Act on Integration of Immigrants (1386/2010)

• **Scope**: all foreign nationals residing in Finland (also e.g. EU nationals, labour related immigrants, spouses of Finnish nationals).

• **Emphasis** is on needs-based services in the early stages of integration:
  – Basic information about Finnish society (section 7)
  – Counselling responsibility of all authorities (section 8)
  – Initial assessment (sections 9-10)
  – Integration plan (11-18)
  – Integration training (20-24)

• Integration of families, parents taking care of children at home, young immigrants in focus in the new Act.
The Process of Integration according to the Act on Integration

1. Basic information on Finnish society
2. Guidance and counseling
3. Initial assessment
4. Integration plan
5. Integration training
How can effective integration programmes be designed for new family migrants?

Initial Assessment

• A basic assessment is done for foreigners of his/her situation and need of integration services.

• A person registered as a job seeker in the Office of Employment and Entrepreneurship (OEE) has the right to ask for the assessment there.

• The **municipality** can provide an initial assessment for a person who is not a client in the OEE.

• Assessment includes interviewing client about previous education and employment, family situation, needs and wishes for education, career hopes, etc., and can also include e.g. language testing.
How can effective integration programmes be designed for new family migrants?

Integration Plan

- The integration plan is a **detailed agreement** between a foreigner and the OEE or the **municipality** about which integration services will be provided.
- The integration plan is made for 1 year but can be extended up to a total of 3 years and in some cases be up to 5 years.
- If the foreigner is **in need of social benefits**, the integration plan is the basis for benefits, and there is a possibility that social benefits will be **reduced** if the integration plan is not followed.
- The goal of the new law is that plans are made for **whole families** and for young persons.
How can effective integration programmes be designed for new family migrants?

Integration Training

- **The core** of the integration plan is integration training, which is usually managed by the local employment authorities as an employment enhancing measure.
- **Main contents**: Finnish (or Swedish) language training and training on knowledge of society and working life.
- **Duration** is usually 1-2 years.
- The goal is that the students will reach functioning of everyday language skills.
What specific programmes work well for accompanying family members of refugees?

- Municipalities have a central role in relation with family members of refugees.
- A municipality who wishes to get special state funding for the reception of refugees should have local integration programme.
- Program should be approved by the municipal council and renewed in every 4-year period, and tied to strategic and budget planning.
- Programme should include:
  - the responsibilities of different municipal actors (schools, health care, social services)
  - coordination between and tasks of local actors, e.g. municipality, police, non-governmental organisations
  - plan for measures to promote good ethnic relations, etc.
What specific programmes work well for accompanying family members of refugees?

**State funding** for the reception of refugees (Chapter 5):

- Is provided **to a municipality** from state funds for assigning refugees the basic income and guidance and advice provided to them and for the arranging of other activities supporting integration.
- The reimbursement is paid for three (3) years.
  - However, the reimbursement shall be paid for four (4) years for persons accepted into Finland as part of the refugee quota.
- Costs from the interpretation and .
- Reimbursement for costs (10 years) related to:
  - Unaccompanied minors
  - Costs related to special social and health care
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

There are many community-based service providers and NGOs in Finland supporting family migrants:

- **Family Federation** of Finland has an important role in integration of family migrants.
- **Monika-Women** (Monika-naiset) is an umbrella organization for multicultural women's associations supporting the well-being of migrant women in different forms.
- **Finnish Red Cross** is one of the NGO's actively involved with integration of family migrants and refugees.
- Many immigrant and other community-based organizations in Finland also contribute outcomes for family migrants.
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

Family Federation of Finland

• The Family Federation’s Centre for Multicultural Expertise functions as a centre for expertise and resources on psychosocial issues concerning immigrants, particularly relating to family life, childrearing and parenthood.

• However, rapid cultural change and different language can also be challenges that the family faces in its daily life.

• Multiculturalism sets new demands on the services provided by society, which should be client-based, flexible and respond to the different needs.

• The Centre for Multicultural Expertise provides support to immigrant families.
Monika – Multicultural Women's Association

- Monika – Multicultural Women’s Association operates as an umbrella organization for several associations for women of ethnic minorities.
- Monika supports efforts to enhance cultural tolerance and promote a safe everyday life for everyone.
- Association has an expert role in addressing issues around multiculturalism, ethnic relations, empowerment, social integration as well as violence towards migrant women.
- Association has approximately 30 staff members. Most of them are immigrants or have multicultural backgrounds. Moreover, there are about 200 trained volunteers.
- Main supporters of Monika are the Slot Machine Association, City of Helsinki, European Union, different ministries and foundations and the municipalities.
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

Finnish Red Cross

- It is an essential part of the domestic aid provided by the Finnish Red Cross to prevent immigrants from being driven into a vulnerable position or becoming **socially excluded**.
- The **local branches** develop different kinds of ways to support immigrants who are in danger of social exclusion.
- The aim is to improve the possibilities of surviving everyday life independently for people in need of support.
- **Volunteers** help the immigrant families and support the authorities in their work.
- The Finnish Red Cross has also an important role in Finland at the **reception of asylum seekers** and refugees.
- The Red Cross has established several reception centres at the request of the Finnish Government, who is also financing these operations.
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

Mannerheim League for Child Welfare

• The Mannerheim League is an NGO, which promotes the wellbeing of children and of families with children, increases respect for childhood and seeks to make it more visible, and sees that children's views are taken into account in public decision-making.

• The Mannerheim League is the largest child welfare organization in Finland. It has 93,000 members and 565 local associations throughout the country. The work of these local associations is supported by the League's 10 district organizations.

• The Mannerheim League relies on partnerships. It works with numerous organizations, businesses and networks in Finland and abroad.

• The district organizations and local associations operate on the regional level.
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

Save the Children Finland

- Save the Children Finland is a national organization founded in 1922, which fights for children’s rights in order to immediately and permanently improve children’s lives.

- Support families with children to cope with their everyday life when the parents' own resources have run short. This is one of our various support services aimed at helping children and their families together, allowing them to renew energies.

- The SC Mothers’ Index 2013 is a unique ranking of 176 countries around the globe, showing those that are succeeding in their support to mothers.
  – The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the toughest place in the world to be a mother – and according to this index Finland the best.

Matti Heinonen
How are community-based service providers and other non-governmental stakeholders contributing to improve outcomes for family migrants?

SOCCA | The Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area

- Develops **social welfare services** in the area while providing a meeting place for social welfare professionals.
- A **network** organization, working closely together with the municipalities in the metropolitan area, as well as with educational institutes.
- **The task** is to develop new methods of working, produce information pertaining to social welfare and conduct research for the benefit of practical application.
- Development themes are Child welfare, Services for the homeless, **Immigration work**, Adult social work, Practitioner research and Teaching practices.
Outline of the presentation

• Introduction

• General look at Immigration to Finland

• Act of the Integration ofImmigrants

• Government Integration Program
Starting Points

Immigration to Finland is increasing and becoming more varied:

Now
- 203,133 foreign citizens (2013)

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.
Studies

Work
Remigration
Humanitarian reasons
Engagement in trade or business

More varied reasons for immigration:

On average, immigrants are younger than the native population.

Challenges:

Unemployment rate of immigrants is three times higher than that of the native population.

Compared to the young native population, the risk of becoming socially excluded is five times higher among immigrants.

Low voter turnout: only 20% of foreign citizens voted in the municipal elections in 2008.
General Objectives of the Integration Programme

The key elements of the living conditions of immigrants (housing, income level, employment, education, participation) are approaching those of the Finnish population in general.

Support for participation by immigrants in all sectors of society (political, societal, social, economic and cultural life).

- Increases familiarity with social customs, values and culture and enhances interaction and good ethnic relations between the native population and immigrants.
- Promotes positive attitudes.
Focus Areas of the Integration Programme

Promoting integration through the community and support for families

- In everyday interaction and communities, integration can be promoted by means of housing, sport and cultural policy as well as provision of support for immigrant families.

Status of immigrants in the labour market

- The unemployment rate of immigrants halved in accordance with the Government Programme.
- Public employment and business services and integration training tailored into individual and, if necessary, long-term service packages to meet immigrants’ needs.
Focus Areas of the Integration Programme

Integration training

• Integration training is currently being developed under the Participative Integration in Finland project. The results of the project will be used as a basis for assessing the need for system and legislative reforms.
• The objective is to ensure that all immigrants have more effective access to studying languages and social rules in accordance with their own needs and to ensure that they gain more rapid entry to the labour market.

Immigrant women

• The unemployment rate of immigrant women is higher than that of men. In particular, mothers who have arrived in Finland as spouses and are taking care of children at home may be left totally outside integration programmes.
• This makes it more difficult to support the development of children into members of society in these families.
• The objective is to bring all immigrant women more effectively within the scope of integration measures.
Focus Areas of the Integration Programme

Integration of children and young people
- Young people with immigrant backgrounds are clearly less likely to move on to further studies after completion of basic education than the native population.
- Insufficient language skills and other learning competencies are among the key reasons for this.
- It is essential to ensure continuity, starting from early childhood education, and to pay special attention to smoothening the transition phases in education, while creating a safe, encouraging environment in which to grow up.

Placing people under international protection into municipalities
- A proactive and long-term cooperation model between the state and municipalities.
- Development of cooperation between authorities responsible for placement into municipalities.
Focus Areas of the Integration Programme

Monitoring of integration

- A comprehensive monitoring system of integration efforts, integration and promotion of good ethnic relations, examining the living conditions of immigrants, immigrants’ own experiences of integration, and the public service system relative to the need for services among immigrant population.

- Local-level competencies will be strengthened by means of a joint centre-of-expertise model, which will also implement the monitoring.

- The objective is to prepare an overall survey based on the monitoring system to serve as a basis for the section concerning integration in the immigration report to be submitted to Parliament in 2013.
### Promotion of Integration in the State Budget 2013

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Government transfers</strong></td>
<td>• Total €146 million (State Budget)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under MEE’s main heading for expenditure</strong></td>
<td>• Ca. €55 million (in addition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under Ministry of Education and Culture’s main heading</strong></td>
<td>• Ca. €100 million/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under Ministry of Social Affairs and Health’s main heading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional project funding</strong></td>
<td>• EU-funding appr. 10 milj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional funding in the decision on central government spending limits (2013-2016)</strong></td>
<td>• Integration training €39,5 million</td>
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Thank you!

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