

# JOB MARKET INTEGRATION

## OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MIGRATION BACKGROUND



Co-funded by  
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Principles & Best Cases  
A Practical Guide For Youth Workers

EmpowerInclusive Project

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# INTRODUCTION

27 Member states, 27 different systems, one common EU framework adapted and implemented at state, regional and municipal level, uncountable local job markets.

This Toolkit aims at providing a general and comprehensive approach to identifying successful approaches, ideas and concepts for the job market integration of young people with migration background and draws on experience and best practices from different member states.

Considering the diversity of local job market requirements, legal frameworks and integration policies it does not claim to provide that one solution. It rather reflects on context of practice and general guidelines to successfully support young people with migration background on their journey into accessing the job market, vocational training or further professional education.

It is divided into 4 sections: Educational Principles and Philosophies provide a basis for Youth Work practice. Contextualizing the process of job market integration stimulates a broad perspective putting the individual at the centre of all action. Followed by practical guidelines that cover most areas touching upon the integration process, 4 successful practices from different EU member states provide best practice cases to learn from and be inspired.

# Educational Principles & Philosophies



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## PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

In order to create these opportunities for participation and involvement, the CLEAR method provides a useful approach. People can have a say, participate and co-decide if a few basic requirements are met.

**C – Can do:** Do participants have the resources and knowledge to actively participate? How must measures be adapted to ensure this?

**L – Like to:** Is there a connection to the project and motivation to participate? Is there a concrete benefit, a prospect of a positive outcome?

**E – Enabled to:** Are opportunities and resources made available and considered for participation?

**A – Asked to:** Were people involved in the design of the offerings? Were they consulted when deciding on content and form? Are suggestions for changes taken into account?

**R – Responded to:** Were there realistic chances of realising goals? How can these be measured? Is the programme accepted because it promises success?

For the target group of young refugees & migrants, some of these conditions present themselves as barriers that are often ignored or cannot be overcome, thus limiting opportunities for participation and reinforcing structural hierarchies. Therefore, endeavour throughout to anticipate, reflect on and overcome potential (invisible) barriers.

1

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

Place people at the centre of your work. Through active listening, you can identify needs, wishes, goals and methods to support a positive development process and involve the people seeking counselling in decision-making processes from the outset and design your activities based on the needs of the clients. This creates a high level of identification with your work and puts young people in an active, formative role. Concerns and needs are taken seriously. Future prospects are developed together.

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### RESOURCE ORIENTATION

Young refugees and migrants often have a wealth of skills and strengths that they are sometimes unaware of themselves. Therefore, focus on the potential and positive resources of the people themselves, in their family environment and in the social environment!

Within the framework of the Appreciative Inquiry approach, you can focus on everything that works already, what is good and already in place and develop wishes and dreams on that basis. This will lead to individualised and self-determined concrete measures and actions with a high level of identification from your clients.

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### MULTIPERSPECTIVITY AND MULTIPROFESSIONALISM

In each individual case, assume that specific concerns can be viewed from different perspectives and that different people with different motives for one and the same cause require different organisational options and methods in order to realise their goals.

Try to collaborate with professionals from various different professional backgrounds and consider each and every person as a unique case that needs a unique set of measures.

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### NON-DIRECTIVENESS

See those seeking advice as experts in their own right and for themselves. Non-directive counselling is characterised by the fact that those seeking advice/learners have a high share of the conversation and are supported in developing their own solutions. Counsellors listen actively, ask genuine questions to make it easier for those being counselled to talk, do not give dictate what people are supposed to do, do not create authority, but recognise the client's attitudes and responsibility for themselves. They steer conversations towards relevant topics, but do not dictate the course of events. They are characterised by empathy, acceptance, congruence and transparency. Talking about solutions creates solutions.



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**ACTION-ORIENTATION**

In all settings in which those seeking advice become learners, be guided by the principle of action-orientation, which methodically applies the previously described focus on the development of personal target perspectives to knowledge transfer as well.

Action-orientated knowledge transfer is interest-driven and is based on concrete, real and authentic occasions and situations. As a large part of your work will be embedded in a language acquisition context and the development of communicative competences, pay particular attention to ensuring that learners and those seeking advice take on relevant communicative roles that are not limited solely to listening and reception of content, but offer the opportunity to take their own knowledge and interests into account and interactively shape the learning process. Learning generally works when content is designed with the involvement of learners in such a way that its processing or solution has real relevance and a real benefit in everyday life.

See specific occasions and needs as an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills and provide a sufficient framework of content and methodological support, while giving those seeking advice the chance to actively address their concerns themselves. This results in recognition and promotion of self-esteem, self-confidence and autonomy and motivates young people to take future situations into their own hands and to seek appropriate support if necessary.

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**MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE AWARENESS**

Multilingualism. Welcome and live multilingualism anywhere possible. Try to engage people who speak your clients' first language. This creates an atmosphere in which the importance of language with regard to the acceptance of identity and culture is taken seriously and respected. First languages are an important resource. Take interest in your client's first language and try to learn a few words.

Language Awareness. Many clients might not speak the language of your country fluently yet. They might still be in a learning process. Accept and support this process. When communicating with clients or when drafting info-material, try to be aware of the complexity and variability of your language, for example by avoiding highly complex grammatical structures or the deliberate use of pauses and repetitions, so that those seeking advice can understand. At the same time: Speak and write without producing non-authentic or artificial utterances.

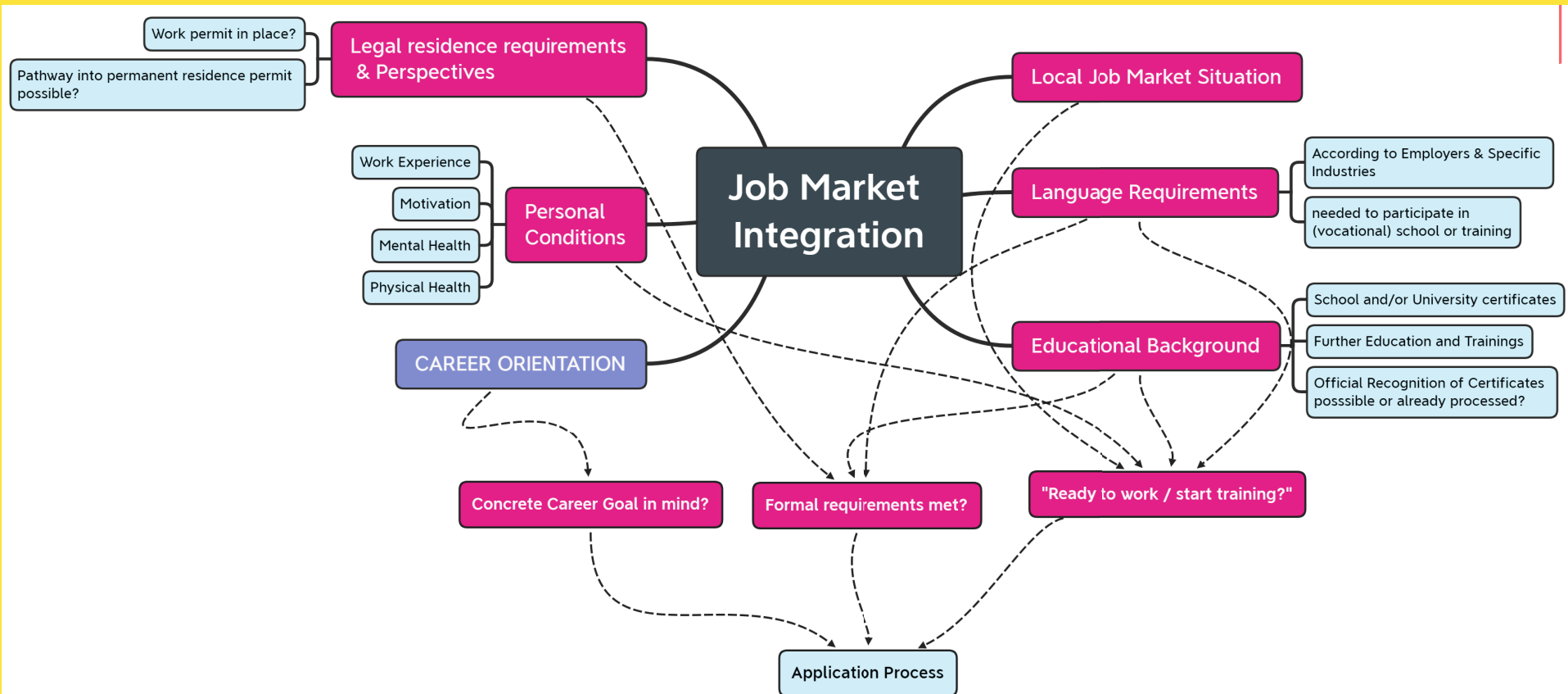
7

**NEUTRALITY AND NON-BIAS**

Try to act politically, ethnically and religiously neutral. As a professional supporting the job market integration of your target group, that is your field of work and that is it. Make sure you are equally supportive to anyone seeking support irrespective of their backgrounds, behaviour or views.

# Contextualizing the process

The graphic below tries to show all potential factors that might influence an individual's success in accessing the job market. The process of job market integration can not stand alone, it is always connected to the very specific living conditions of the individual. For example: Someone who does not have a safe place to stay, might not be able to make it to work everyday. Someone who has to support family members back home might need and want to get into any job very quickly, although being highly qualified and eligible for further training matching a previous career...





# Practical Guidelines

On the basis of the educational principles and philosophies as well as the contextualization of the process of job market integration the following section intends to list practical guidelines to successfully support young migrants and refugees in accessing the job market, vocational trainings or relevant further professional education. These aspects do not follow any specific order, but will be grouped into meaningful sections. The listed activities and strategies were drawn from successful practices around Europe.

## Pre-Requirements

1

### LEGAL CONDITIONS AND RIGHT TO WORK

Depending on the legal framework of your respective country, clients might have different and legally complicated access to the job market. Cases should be treated individually.

- Make sure you know about the legal conditions of the right to work in your country
- Check clients' legal documents for work permits
- If you are unsure, contact local advice centres
- In difficult cases, collaborate with lawyers specialized in migrational law

2

### LOCAL JOB MARKET SITUATION

Try to develop an understanding of your local job market. Depending on your country, region and municipality, certain industries might offer a lot of vacancies while others face high competition.

Check the statistical releases of your local employment agencies or local governments, chambers of commerce and online job portals.

Information on potential fields of work or industries is very valuable information for clients and their orientation process.



3

### CLIENTS' PERSONAL CONDITIONS

In order to guide your clients in finding the right job and industry it is vital to consider all potential prior experience, knowledge and influencing factors on the personal and individual side from many perspectives.

These include, amongst others, prior work experience and professional education, mental and physical health, motivational aspects and general living conditions such as housing, family status, ongoing trainings or courses.

Try to get a broad understanding of the most important factors influencing your clients life and availability for entering the job market.

### Examples:

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Assume that anyone comes with work experience. Especially with people with migration backgrounds they might have worked in the family business in their home countries, but do not regard this work as valuable experience!

When talking about prior experience, try to identify exactly WHAT people did, that is: which exact activities were part of that job? People often have a broad range of skills as work in their home countries might not be as specialized as it is in Europe.

#### MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS

Each individual clients has their own motivation for working. Not only financial independence and self-efficacy come into play.

Some people might be under pressure to make money immediately to support their families back home. They might have to enter an unqualified manual job quickly although they are highly qualified, specialized academics.

Understanding and respecting your client's motivation helps to make good decisions together.

## 4

### LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

In most European societies, speaking the official language is the most dominant pre-requirement for integration and participation, also in the job market.

Different employers and industries, vocational institutes or schools might ask for different levels of language skills.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) defines 6 different levels of language competence from A1 to C2 commonly used all over Europe.

Keeping in mind individual exceptions for your respective country and local job market, In most cases, a level of B1 is required to access the job market. B2 is required as soon as there is official communication with clients, e.g. office jobs. C1 will be required in the academic field.

Check for available language courses in your local area, they might offer evening courses so clients can start work while studying the language simultaneously.

## 5

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: CERTIFICATES

Many jobs require a certain level of formal education and qualifications.

Did your clients finish school? University? Vocational trainings? Further Education?

Did they bring their certificates?

If yes, check if there is a formal recognition process within your municipality, region or state.

Your government might be able to officially recognize these certificates as being equivalent to local certificates. This process might take time and require official translation of documents.

However, employers might as well accept certificates from other countries, check and stay up-to-date.

If a local qualification is needed, there might be evening classes to graduate for local certificates.

# Career Orientation

Guiding a client in making an informed decision on which career to pursue, which industry to enter and matching interests and experience can be a very challenging endeavour. Based on whether clients have prior work experience and want to stay in their field or whether they have to change or have just started orientation there is two possible pathways:

## CLEAR IDEA OF CAREER OR INDUSTRY

Based on the analysis of the pre-requirements mentioned above, clients might have a quite clear idea of where in the job market they see themselves.

The following questions are subsequently guiding the preparation of the application process:

1. Are all formal requirements for the specific career goal in place? Is their need for formal recognition or further training?
2. Does your client have sufficient language skills to enter the aspired industry?
3. Are prior experiences and competences transferable to the local job market requirements in that specific area?
4. Is there enough local vacancies in this market?

## NEW ORIENTATION NEEDED

If new orientation is needed, it is important to draw on different perspectives and methods to guide clients in identifying a potential career area.

1. Use a variety of different media and sources of information such as:
  - formal, written job descriptions
  - videos of job profiles (to be found on YouTube and relevant job portals)
  - educational material for career orientation
  - online assessment tools for job orientation
  - job orientation programs and events of local companies and employment agencies, chambers of commerce
2. Guide the client in activating their personal and private environment:
  - friends and family might be working in a specific industry
  - Spark conversations about influencing factors of work environment such as outside/indoors, manual / academic, small / big company, etc. and their respective advantages and disadvantages

# Job Search

Depending on their countries of origin and the local job market culture, clients might have very different approaches to finding work than usually adopted in Europe, e.g. walking in to companies and inquiring about vacancies, which might work also locally in your country, but is mostly not the „standard way of applying“. It is thus important to inform clients about job search methods as well as actively supporting and being creative.

## ONLINE RESEARCH

In the digital age, most companies advertise their positions online.

### 1. Online Job Portals

In your respective country, there might be a wide range of different websites that list vacancies. Try to identify 3 to 5 most efficient websites and focus here.

### 2. Using Google Maps

Sometimes it might make sense to start with the surrounding area of your client's place of living, check for companies nearby, visit their website or call.

### 3. Chambers of Commerce & Employment Agencies

These local agencies might offer their own very specific job portals.

## PRIVATE AND LOCAL NETWORKS

### Private Networks:

Activating your local community has proven to be very successful. Guide your client in reaching out to peers and members of community to check for open positions in their work places.

### Local Networks:

Try to identify and join local networks of government agencies, NGO's or private initiatives who regularly meet to discuss matters of job market integration on the local level. You will find valuable contacts and information here.

## JOB FAIRS AND EVENTS

Employment Agencies, Chambers of Commerce or Private Business Associations regularly organize Job Fairs & Exhibitions.

1. Check for dates & availability
2. If possible, check the list of employers present prior to your visit
3. Draft application documents for your clients specifically for those companies
4. Train and prepare the short job interviews
5. Accompany your clients and be present in case of questions by potential employers

# Application Process

Yes! Nice! Your client is ready to go. They have or have developed a clear idea of career and potential field of industry, you have found open vacant positions suitable to the needs and expectations of your client, let's apply!

But wait. You might be facing competition from other applicants, now how do we deal with that? How do you make sure you gain some bit of advantage here? Your clients are often already structurally disadvantaged, what can we do?

## QUALITY OF DOCUMENTS

Formal Applications usually include the following documents:

- CV
- Application / Motivational Letter
- Certificates & Qualifications
- Photograph (depending on your local job market culture!)

Try to make sure these documents are high quality: Written in the official language, neatly layouted, high quality color scans, put together in one PDF file.

Make use of Online Tools and AI Language models where applicable. On the next page you can find a prompt designed for applications with Microsoft BING, ChatGPT or others.

## BE PART OF THE PROCESS

Actively support your clients in the application process. Often it is helpful to call the employer before applying.

You might call and talk first, but:  
Prepare your client for the phone call, make sure they are part of the conversation so the potential employer can have get an idea of motivation, language skills and interest directly from your client.

Offer support for the employer with beaurocratic issues such as putting together documents, applying for work permits or arranging transport.



## AI PROMPT FOR COVER LETTERS

1. open the website with the job advert in Microsoft Edge
2. open MS Copilot (top right of the window)
3. read the „requirements“ of the job carefully
4. work out the client's experience and specific skills in bullet points
5. send the following command to Copilot:

„I need help formulating a cover letter for the job advert as [job title] on the website open here. The requirements of the job are: [insert requirements from job advert]. The applicant has the following experience and competences: [insert experience and specific competences]

Please formulate a complete cover letter for the open position and establish a clear link between the requirements from the job advert and the applicant's existing skills and experience.  
Use the following structure for the cover letter:

[Company address]

[„Dear Sir or Madam," ]

[Reasons why the vacancy is of interest to the applicant]

[Reasons why the applicant is suitable for the position and clear reference to the requirements in the job advert, at least 4 sentences]

[Description of the applicant's high level of motivation and willingness to perform, at least 2 sentences]

[„Have I aroused your interest? Then I am very much looking forward to a personal interview"]

[„Yours sincerely"]



## PREPARE AND TRAIN THE JOB INTERVIEW

Once your client has managed to be invited to a job interview it is crunch time. They will need to make a good first impression, speak well and be prepared for many questions.

Train and simulate the interview:

1. Your client should do their own research about key facts about the company and position, they might want to know what they know already!
2. Introducing themselves: Employers will ask your clients to introduce themselves. Train them to be ready to talk about their CV and end with already giving the reasons for why they are applying with the current company. That can avoid tricky questions!
3. Try to anticipate potential questions, make notes and prepare possible answers.
4. Have your own questions! Prepare 2 to 3 questions your client wants to ask the staffers. Having questions shows interest!
5. Role Play: Simulate the interview by taking up the staffers role and asking the questions. Do it again, train and prepare also chunks of language, train pronunciation if needed



## Post-Support

Congratulations! Your client has got a concrete job offer and a contract, job done, right? Not really. Employment contracts are complicated documents that are hard to understand, even for native speakers and many people drop out of their jobs early. If possible, guide your client in the initial phase of employment.

### WORKERS' RIGHTS AND CONTRACTS

Ideally, your clients take their work contracts home before signing them and have time to sit down and go through in detail. Sometimes employers try to circumvent workers' rights because they expect clients to not know.

When going through contracts, focus especially on:

1. Fixed-term or permanent employment contract
2. Hourly or monthly pay: minimum wage respected?
3. Working hours
4. Holidays and Leave
5. Regulations for sick leave
6. Cancellation policy
7. Probation Periods

### INITIAL EMPLOYMENT PHASE

A new environment, new colleagues, new tasks and challenges. Starting a new job can be very demanding. Try to be still available to your clients and the employer, also in case of miscommunication.

Keep in mind the following areas:

1. Work Schedule and Transport Planning
2. Communication with Supervisors and Colleagues
3. Potential Discrimination in the Work Place
4. Keeping track of worked hours

# Best Case Projects

1

## PROMPT! IM BERUFSEINTIEG (COLOGNE, GERMANY)

„PROMPT! im Berufseintieg“ is a cooperational project between local Migrant Organisation MIGRAFRICA and the Educational Department of the University of Cologne.

Every semester, 10 to 15 University Students enrolled in Teacher Programs serve their mandatory internship in the department of Job Market Integration at MIGRAFRICA.

They are trained to work with young Migrants and Refugees who are in the process of accessing the job market. The students guide the clients in the following areas:

1. Work-related language learning and communication skills
2. Drafting application documents
3. Job Search
4. Preparing and Training for Job Interviews
5. Additional Vocational Learning Support

The students are trained in a support seminar at the university where they learn basics of language teaching, 'language awareness, critical discrimination theory and information on living conditions of migrants and Refugees.

Further information under:

<https://zfl.uni-koeln.de/praxisphasen/projekte/prompt-bildungsteilhabe-staerken>

2

## REFUGEE2WORK (JOBROAD, BELGIUM)

JobRoad has been steering people from disadvantaged groups towards suitable employers to obtain the right job since 2016. The highly personal approach breaks through the barriers of language, mobility and competency that hamper easy access to the labour market.

An efficient lever to help these people into a job within a year, significantly speeding up their integration process. JobRoad's major value added? It is a network project in the purest sense, for 4 players. Employers and their partner temporary employment agencies, (supra)local authorities and intermediary organisations combine forces here to achieve the same declared objective: filling vacancies with untapped talent. We use our own JobRoad model, which is adapted to every specific type of target group. Personal support for the candidate in finding an employer is provided in three speedily completed phases. Further integration is encouraged by extra training and by awareness-raising activities in the working environment.

Jobroads unique and innovative approach is:

1. Contacting local companies first, mapping their needs
2. Agreeing on meeting a pre-scanned group of applicants without pre-requirements and getting rid of the standard recruiting process
3. Matching job seekers and companies effectively

Further information under:

<https://jobroad.be/en/about-jobroad/project-3-integration-through-work-o-o//>

## RE-INVENT YOURSELF (ESTONIA)

3

"Re-invent yourself" spouse programme is organised by Work in Estonia, in cooperation with the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and relocation company Move My Talent, to support the integration of international spouses newly resident in Estonia. The programme provides training and counseling on employment and business.

This programme was designed to help international spouses overcome the career challenges they face after moving to Estonia. Oftentimes these individuals do not have access to the information or professional network needed to continue their careers or meet their professional goals in their new host country. Many have questions as to what employment options are available to them if they do not yet have knowledge of the Estonian language, where they can find and develop professional contacts, or how they can set up their own company.

### How it works

The "Re-invent yourself" programme runs for 4 weeks and comprises training sessions, networking meetings, and individual career consultations:

The training sessions help with adjusting to life in Estonia, understanding the Estonian professional environment, and learning about local business culture.

The networking meetings connect participants with local professionals, HR managers, and recruiters who will share their knowledge and networks.

The individual career consultations are run by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and help participants review their CVs and motivation letters and practise for interviews. The aim of this is to ensure that their application documents better fit Estonian labour market requirements.

In addition to practical trainings and consultations, participants also benefit from being connected with other spouses in the same position with whom they can build community. Participation is free of charge; attendance at all sessions is expected.

### Results

More than 4 00 international spouses took part in the programme from 2019 – 2023. In 2022, more than 52% of the participants found a suitable job within a few months after graduating from the programme. Others began new studies or opened their own business.

Further information under: <https://workinestonia.com/spouse-programme/>

## 4

### COMMUNITY AND PROXIMITY IN THE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES, (OURÉM, PORTUGAL)

This practice addresses the reception and professional integration of refugees, with the support of the Municipality of Ourém, Portugal. The support team of the 'Proximity in Community' programme for the reception and integration of refugees in Ourém (EAAR) follows the principle of staying close to families and individuals in all aspects of their integration, focusing on labour market integration. The programme activities are carried out in partnership with several public and private institutions of the community.

#### Background and purpose:

The practice focuses on the elimination of barriers to employment due to linguistic difficulties, lack of familiarity with the labour market and the slow process of obtaining employment. The practice also aims for the recognition of the professional experiences, skills and abilities of beneficiaries of international protection and the development of contact with enterprises through exploring incentives for hiring and other factors that promote employability.

#### How does it work?

The process of labour market integration is based on two premises:

**Proximity** – Social action mentors and mediators from the municipality or its partners accompany each of the refugees individually throughout the process of their professional integration. The mentors and mediators guide the relationships between potential employers and refugees in order to eliminate barriers and promote professional autonomy.

**Community** – Five institutions that participate in the administration of the labour market and recruitment of human resources assist the interaction between EAAR and potential employers.

The labour market integration process begins with an informal conversation with each of the refugees. This process is conducted by a mediator / staff member of the Municipality of Ourém, who develops integration procedures and helps solve day-to-day problems.

Mediators from the municipality and staff members of CLDS 3G accompany refugees during job interviews. Over the course of the interview, they help to highlight favourable qualities of the job applicant, as well as cultural and religious dynamics and diversity. Thereafter, they help to establish cultural and religious accommodations in order to adapt the company's needs to the cultural and religious needs and habits of the refugees, thus eliminating major barriers in these respects.

Further information under:

[https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/index.php/integration-practice/community-and-proximity-reception-and-integration-refugees\\_en](https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/index.php/integration-practice/community-and-proximity-reception-and-integration-refugees_en)

# THANK YOU FOR READING!

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