Integration of Refugees in Norway

Ida Hjelde – The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity
New White Paper: From reception center to the labour market – an effective integration policy

Meld. St. 30 (2015 –2016)
16% of the population are immigrants or Norwegian-born to immigrant parents

- 700,000 immigrants
- 150,000 Norwegian-born to immigrant parents
- Less than 20% of the population with immigrant background are refugees (188,000).

Population: 5.2 million

Per January 1st 2016
Norway has one of the highest rates of net migration per capita in Europe.
Immigrants in Norway

Figure 1. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country background

Source: Statistics Norway.
Norway: Asylum seekers 2010 - 2015
The aim of Norway’s integration policy

- Enable newly-arrived immigrants to participate in the labour market and society as quickly as possible
Employment rates

Source: Statistics Norway.
Employment by country of origin and gender

Figure 4. Employed immigrants by country¹ and sex. In per cent of persons in each group. 4th quarter 2015

1 With min. 5 000 employees. Source: Statistics Norway.
Governmental grants

- The municipalities receive government grants to cover the expenses for the first 5 years:
  - the settlement and integration of refugees, 767,400 NOK (80,000 Euros) per person (total amount over 5 years)
  - Extra grants for unaccompanied minors
  - integration and language courses, 129,600 NOK (13,500 Euros) per person (total amount over 3 years)
The Introduction Program for Refugees

The main objective: Refugees enter the labour market or begin education as quickly as possible

• Refugees and family members, between 18 and 55 years, have the right and obligation to participate in the Introduction Program.

• Full-time program, for up to 2 years

• Participants receive economic support (Annually: 180 136 NOK before tax (18 800 euros)

• The content of the program is adapted to the individual participant's needs
The Main Components of the Introduction Program

- Norwegian language training
- Social studies
- Measures to attain skills for labour market participation/continue education
Results: Transition to work and/or education for participants completing the Introduction Program (in %)
(«Education» refers to secondary school, university and college – not primary school)

Government target: 70 % transition to work and or/education one year after completion

Source: SSB Statistics Norway
Some challenges

- full-time
- work orientation
- including ordinary education as a part of the program
- adaption to individual needs
- Varying competence between municipalities
- Absence from program during maternity leaves
New efforts to improve earlier integration of refugees (New White Paper)

Starting Integration earlier:

• Integration reception centers – starting with full time qualifying programs shortly after arrival
• Map individual skills and qualifications in the reception phase
• Provide career counselling whilst in reception centers
• Further develop and increase the use of free online training learning resources (in Norwegian)
Thank you for your attention!

For further questions, contact:

The Norwegian Directorate for Integration and Diversity
Ida Hjelde: ihj@imdi.no
Anders Fyhn: afy@imdi.no