



The integration of migrants in Finland from the municipality perspective

Integration Issues in Latvia, Riga 8.12.2017

Jenni Lemercier, Senior Social Worker

Immigrant Services of Espoo, Finland



ESPOO
ESBO

Finland



FINLAND IN FACTS

5.4 million



1.4 million
inhabitants in
metropolitan
area



Life expectancy:
year



Official languages
are **FINNISH**...
(spoken by 88.9%)

...and **SWEDISH**
(spoken by 5.3%)

SÁMI is the mother
tongue of about 1,900 people.

GDP per capita (2014)

37,559 €



REPUBLIC, parliamentary democracy,
200 members in one chamber



Christianity;
73.8% **LUTHERAN**
and about
1.1% **ORTHODOX**

Independence Day
DECEMBER 6

1917



1995



1955





ESPOO
ESBO

Immigration to Finland in 2016

New residence permits submitted in year 2016, total 39 317

- European Union citizens 9 852
- Family ties 8 177
- Studies 6 348
- Work 5 770
- International protection 6 375 (asylum or refugee status)
- Quota refugees 749
- Others 1 569 (for. ex. human trafficking and compassionate grounds)
- Remigration 477 (finnish ancestry or other close connection to Finland)

(source: Finnish Immigration Service and National Police)



ESPOO
ESBO

Foreigners in Finland 2016

1. Estonia 51 584
2. Russia 30 965
3. Iraq 9 532
4. China 8 533
5. Sweden 8 160
6. Thailand 7 610
7. Somalia 7 162
8. Afganistan 5 131
9. Vietnam 5 202
10. India 4 959

(source: Statistics Finland,
http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/index_en.html)



ESPOO
ESBO

Asylum Seekers in year 2016

- 5 651 persons seeking for asylum in year 2016
-> 32 476 persons seeking for asylum in year 2015

1. Iraq 1 247
2. Afganistan 757
3. Syria 602
4. Somalia 432
5. Eritrea 279



ESPOO
ESBO

City of Espoo

- 2nd biggest city in Finland
- Part of the Helsinki metropolitan area (total population 1,4 million)
- Population of Espoo 274 600 (1.1.2017)
- Fastest growing population in Finland
- Population growth is mainly based on immigration
- Amount of non-finnish speaking population is 41 650, which is 15,2% of total population



ESPOO
ESBO

Immigration Services in Espoo

- The immigration services organises social services to support the integration of refugees permanently settled in Espoo. Our aim is to facilitate the processes of transition and integration of the new arrivals.
- Immigration services also provides integration guidance and acts as an expert in questions concerning the integration of immigrants.
- Our unit provides services to refugees for maximum three years.
- Year 2016 we had 668 new comers with refugee status in Espoo and at the moment the total amount of clients in our service is almost 1 400.
- In the municipality, our services are part of family and social services.
- Our staff:
 - 2 senior social workers, 8 social workers, 9 social counselors, 5 instructors, 3 service assistants, 2 allowance coordinators, 2 nurses, 1 psychiatric nurse and 2 office secretaries

http://www.espoo.fi/en-US/Social_and_health_services/Immigrant_Services



ESPOO
ESBO

Social work in the Immigration services

- Case management
- Service assesment and coordination of services needed
- Individual integration plan; family integration plan
- Family social work
- Economical support
- Housing
- Family re-unification
- Psychosocial counselling, crisis work
- Coordination of NGO's or other actors to support the integration



ESPOO
ESBO

Services in the Municipality

- In Finland, under the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, municipalities are responsible for developing, planning and monitoring integration at local level. Municipalities shall also ensure that the municipal services are suitable for the needs of residents with immigrant background, including refugees.

<http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2010/en20101386.pdf>

- Migrants and refugees with residence permit have equal right to all the services in the city
- Health care services, public day care, public schools, social services, child welfare and family services
- Equal right to social assistance
- Integration of new comers should be considered in all the services and all the levels in the municipality



ESPOO
ESBO

How to overcome the language barrier?

- Use professional interpreter if possible
- It is also your right to assure your professional obligations
- Be careful to use family members as interpreters, especially do not use children
- Speak slowly and clearly – give the possibility to understand
- Use signs, show
- If possible, key persons from the community
- Language education is essential to integrate people and open the job market

QUESTIONS

Is there enough of interpreters? Can we find workers with different language skills?

Municipality or state, who has the responsibility to organize language training?



How to meet a migrant or refugee?

- **Cultural sensitivity**
- You cannot know all the cultural backgrounds – but be aware of different ways of life
- Be aware that people can come from totally different kind of cultural environments; they might have different values and opinions than yours, but you need to respect the individual and his/her identity
- Be aware of your own cultural surroundings and how it affects on your way of thinking; be aware on your own values
- Migrants and refugees are not homogenous – even if they come from the same country, don't make assumptions that everyone are alike

- **Listen and create dialogs** – be interested about the other
- Ask when you don't know
- Don't make generalizations, don't let the stereotypes guide you
- Explain over and over again; question everything which is obvious for you – because it is not obvious for them
- Try to solve the individual's problem, not the culture's problem



**ESPOO
ESBO**

- Work with **empathic and flexible approach**
- Many refugees find it difficult to trust on the authorities

- **Non-verbal communication** is very important
- When you don't share the same language, people will pay attention to non-verbal communication and they try to read the signs
- Keep calm and kind, look in the eyes and smile

- **Don't be afraid of point out the worries and problems.** We cannot accept all the actions which are explained by the culture or religion, but we need to understand the mechanism behind the actions (for.ex forced marriages, honour based violence, female genital mutilation).

- **Don't judge, but give alternatives**

QUESTIONS: What are your values? How do you react when someone doesn't share the same values? What is real dialog?



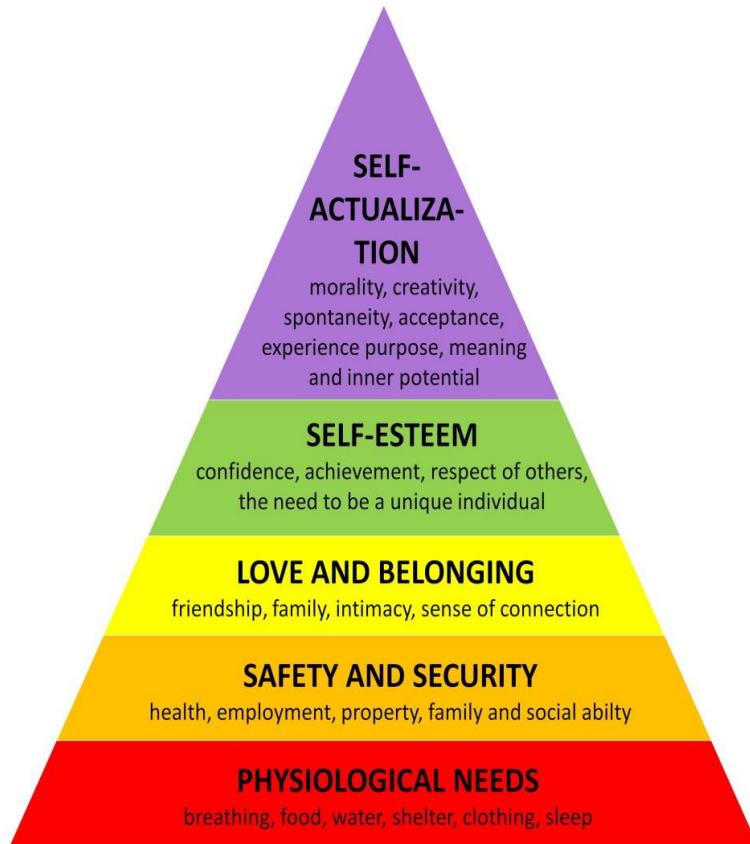
ESPOO
ESBO

Challenges in the family

- **The roles between genders and the roles in the family can be different in other cultures**
 - We should not forget the women and children – we need to support each family member
 - Family members don't integrate in the same way and in the same speed. Usually the integration process of children is faster and this can challenge the authority of the parents.
- **The loss of social and economical status**
 - No work, no status, no economical independence
- **Different ideas about future**
 - Parents missing home, living between two realities, and at the same time children are settling in the new society
- <https://www.lastensuojelu.info/en/>



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – the key to successful integration?



- Feeling that my life has meaning; values; moral
- Respect, unique individual; I am part of the society



ESPOO
ESBO

Good practices

- **Multi-professional teamwork**
 - Social worker, social counselor, instructor
 - > Right person for the need
 - If possible, staff with different language skills
- **Work at home and close surroundings** – where the family lives and every day life is happening
 - shops, bank, post; find school, day care, hobbies, activity centers; public transport
- **Advisory services without appointment time**
 - Easy to access every day, small and quick questions
- **Give the information in groups**
 - Each week a group for new comers – basic information about the city and services
 - Saves time and connects people



ESPOO
ESBO

Good practices

- **Work with the network** – try to find the right services and partners
 - The role of migrants and refugees in the minority – sometimes you need to stand for their rights
- **NGOs, host community and immigrant communities** –
 - peer groups (for. ex for women and men separately, but also together); orientation to the new society
 - theme groups (for. ex the nutrition and welfare of children; young adults photography/video workshop; preventing domestic violence/ men's group)
 - Voluntary friends, insights to Finnish way of life
 - Immigrant communities – support the right to maintain own language and culture



ESPOO
ESBO

Some links

- <http://kotouttaminen.fi/en/frontpage>

General information about integration in Finland

- <http://www.infopankki.fi/en/frontpage>

Information about Finland for foreigners in 12 languages

- <http://epaper.edita.fi/tem/perustietoasuomesta/en/swf/>

Basic information about Finland

- <http://www.migri.fi/frontpage>

Finnish Immigration Service - the agency that processes and decides on matters related to immigration, residence, refugee issues, and Finnish nationality

- <https://www.thl.fi/en/web/immigrants-and-multiculturalism>

Promoting the health and wellbeing in multicultural Finland.

- https://www.ttl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/englanti_toissa_suomessa.pdf

Working in Finland - information for immigrants



ESPOO
ESBO

NGOs supporting integration

- <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/>
Multicultural Women's Association
- <http://www.moniheli.fi/>
Network of Multicultural Associations
- http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/in_english/multicultural_activities/services/
Consulting in psychosocial issues, especially on the family life
- <http://pakolaisapu.fi/en/>
Finnish Refugee Council
- http://www.pakolaisneuvonta.fi/index_html?lang=eng
The Finnish Refugee Advice Center
- <https://www.lyomatonlinja.fi/en/>
Preventing counselling for men; working against domestic violence
- <http://www.tukikeskushilma.fi/tiedosto/Englanti16.pdf>
Guide for Immigrants with Disabilities and long-term illnesses
- <http://www.caixa.fi/en/frontpage>
International Cultural Centre Caixa in Helsinki
- <http://kattohanke.fi/about-us/>
Project to combat housing problems and immigrant homelessness



Thank You !

Jenni Lemercier, senior social worker
jenni.lemercier@espoo.fi