Introduction programme for newly arrived immigrants (refugees) in Norway

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The Introduction Act

- Implemented 01.09.2004
- Added provisions for right and obligation to tuition in Norwegian language and society instruction 01.09.2005

The aim:

- To strengthen newcomers participation in work life, education and in society

- To become financially self-reliant through a qualification-programme consisting of Norwegian language training, practice in a work-place and alternative income provision (from the Norwegian government when participating in the program)
Main principles:

- An individually tailored 2-years programme with an individual career plan, closely follow-up and monitored by the municipality
- Full time participation (5 days per week - 5 weeks holiday per year)
- Follows standard rules and regulations from work life
- A fixed introduction programme allowance and deducted payment for irregular absence from the programme
- Extended inter-sectoral collaboration
Main contents of the individual Introduction programme

• Norwegian language tuition and training

• 50 hours of society instruction course held in a language the participant understands

• Qualification for work life or education
Who can participate?

- Refugees with political asylum
- UNHCR Resettled refugees
- Persons with residency on humanitarian grounds
- Persons with collective protection
- Family members of the above groups who are granted family reunion within 5 years

- Newly arrived between 18-55 years of age
- Need for basic qualification
- Settled after 01.09.03 and in accordance with an agreement between IMDi and the local authorities
Implementation

- Local municipal authorities are responsible for implementing the act
- The Public Employment Service (NAV) is an important local partner
- The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity monitors progress and quality in the municipalities and provides training programs to local staff and advice on best practices
- The National Introduction Committee
Results

• Preliminary result: Municipalities reports after one year that 52% of those that have ended their programme are in regular work or education

• 94% of the municipalities can offer practical language training in a place of work

• Increased inter-municipal cooperation

• A fixed introduction programme allowance for the participants results in more women participating in qualification

• Work-training, “refugee-guide” and close follow-up increases the probability of finding a job, improves language skills and participation in social networks
Challenges

• Variation in the quality of implementation
  ▶ Programme intensity
  ▶ Degree of individualization

• Work-training/language training

• The involvement of NGOs

• Local leadership involvement

• The competence and attitudes of the local staff

• Continued follow-up of those that do not enter ordinary work or education after the programme