

Migration and TVET

Training with integrated language learning

Submitted by CFL Söderhamn, Sweden



In the surge of migrants and refugees that arrived in Europe starting in 2015 many of them came to Sweden to seek asylum and start a new life. One challenge that arose was frustration from the immigrants and the local labour markets regarding the amount of time it took to first learn Swedish and then pursue an education or validate previous schooling before many could enter the workforce. For people choosing vocational training there are now programmes where language and trade are taught simultaneously. These programmes shorten the time when immigrants are dependent on welfare. Upon completion of the courses, students receive a diploma for the vocational training as well as a grade for their language course, to make them employable in the local job market.

- Start date: 2015
- Type of implementing institution:
Not for profit/NGO
- Target group:
Immigrant students learning a trade

CFL Söderhamn, Sweden

Centre for Flexible Learning (CFL) Söderhamn, is a public adult learning centre for VET, academic campus courses and distance education in the region of Hälsingland, in the rural northern part of Sweden. CFL is one of five adult learning centres that has been selected as "best practices" in Europe by a study initiated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture. The school organization with six schools offers both vocational and academic programmes.



Description of activities

Aimed at migrant students, this initiative provides vocational training with an integrated language learning component that enables students to enter more swiftly into the Swedish workforce and society. This provides motivation for participants and an educated workforce responding to specific local sectoral demands including hospitality, childcare and nursing assistants. The model utilizes both vocational teachers and language instructors jointly delivering classes in a multi-modal system.

Added value

What current challenges does your initiative address?

To successfully enter the Swedish job market, many immigrants need to learn new skills as well as a new language. Sweden has an ageing population so there are big demands for workers in the welfare system. The supply of jobs that may be available to migrants increases or decreases depending on different factors. Region of birth and level of education are two of them. Immigrants who come with a low level of education to a country like Sweden, where upper-secondary school is the minimum requirement, have traditionally faced many years of language learning before reaching an adequate level of language skills and beginning professional training. This is costly in both time and money and may cause feelings of hopelessness and alienation for people who would like to be self-sufficient, but instead stay dependent on welfare funds while slowly moving through language learning classes.

In the region of Hälsingland, there are demands for nurses, childcare workers, restaurant workers, amongst other occupations, and schools work closely with the surrounding societies to offer vocational training to meet the demands of the labour market.

Why is this initiative a success?

The initiative had varied results, but is still ongoing. Restaurant and childcare assistants trainings were very successful and lead to many students getting employment after finishing the programme. Nursing assistants training is still ongoing, but many of the students already work part time in the field, while still at school.

What is the added value of this example?

A fast track to the work force increases the chances for migrants to be integrated efficiently and become part of the local society. Integration is a major issue to solve for many countries, and learning a trade and finding employment is an important part of successful integration.

Impact on curricula

What implications does this example have for current or future curricula?

More vocational training programmes for adults will include language learning, since the previous and ongoing programmes have proven to be successful. In more academic fields, there is a push for additional training for all teachers to focus both on language and the different subjects, such as history or social sciences. This has proven to benefit both second language learners and first language learners.

How does this example impact TVET systems?

The direct impact of this initiative is local to the three municipalities where the schools are located. However, the push for integrated language and vocational training is going on nationwide. The success of the initiative at the local level is promising for the implications it could have at a higher system level, if language training for migrants is incorporated into other core subjects such as history or social sciences.

How does this example respond to industry and social demands?

The schools work closely with the surrounding communities to respond to demands of the local job market and work to offer education in these areas. The students are trainees in local industries, nursing homes and preschools during their education to ensure quality and relevance of the training, as well as networking with potential employers.

Transferability

Which components of this practice may have practical value to other UNEVOC Centres/TVET institutions?

This is a successful example of how an integrated language model can shorten the time for migrants between arriving in the country and joining the local work force. The institutions need to work closely together with the local society and industry to ensure that the vocational training offered meets the hiring needs of the municipalities, and also that students, during their education, can network and connect with employers in the field. There needs to be flexibility and ability to design programmes and hire vocational trainers on short notice in order to meet new needs that arise in communities.

What challenges do you see if transferred to another context?

The following challenges can be foreseen:

- Funding in order to employ the necessary vocational teachers,
- Meeting the current and future demands on the labour market,
- Challenges in the collaborations between different teachers.

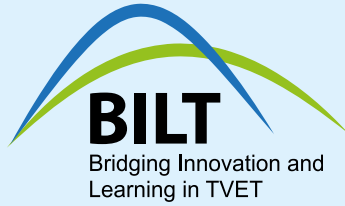
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 - For more information about this practice:
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Part of the BILT project involves collecting Innovation and Learning Practices* that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project, with the purpose to understand what elements lead to their success and can be transferrable to other contexts.

Access more BILT Innovation and Learning practices in the thematic areas of:



*UNESCO-UNEVOC does not endorse any of the practices included in this database and is not responsible for their management or implementation.



The Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project provides TVET stakeholders with a platform for exchange and supports them to address current challenges in TVET systems, which arise due to technological, social, environmental, and workplace changes.

Within BILT, the overarching thematic area is New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET, which is supported by four work streams:

- Digitalization and TVET,
- Greening TVET,
- Entrepreneurship in TVET, and
- Migration and TVET.

Through regular knowledge exchange, thematic project activities, and expert working groups, BILT offers opportunities for collaboration between UNEVOC Centres and TVET stakeholders in Europe, and a platform for bridging of innovation and learning between European UNEVOC Centers and TVET stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions.

The results of ongoing activities are accessible on BILT's web page and will be disseminated during a BILT Learning Forum.

The BILT project is carried out in collaboration with UNEVOC Network members, coordinated by UNESCO-UNEVOC with support of the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

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