



## Recommendation Report

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Active Refugees in the Community project

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### Introduction

The main purpose of the ARC project was to find new cost efficient methods to activate immigrants with refugee backgrounds to meaningful activities. One of the target goals of the project was to compile recommendations for public authorities, NGOs and other organizations to increase the information on immigrants and their stories to prevent the marginalization of immigrants.

In the recommendation report, tested activating methods are introduced and recommendations are made based on those methods and experiences.

### Methods

- Concept "Seed 2 Pot 2 People". Immigrants grow pot plants to be sold in the unemployed job center next door.
- City cultivation activities organized in urban environment. The cultivation activities proved to be very integrating, especially mixing the locals in the group.
- Introducing new places to immigrants. Having the immigrants move outside their living areas to new places have expanded their living environment and vision how the locals live.
- Using multicultural teamwork. Inclusive design and builder team has lead to an employment of an immigrant architect and part time employment of a Swedish-Arabic translator.
- Use of service design methods in the beginning of the design project to ensure that the participants views, wishes and hopes are noticed as a vital part of the final design.

- Using variable technology for cultivation. Mini-aquaponics system was built with the immigrants to learn about aquaponic food growing.
- Pop-up restaurants organized by the farmers themselves. It was proved that bringing the immigrants to plan and produce events make them feel appreciated.
- Participating in the documentary film production. It was noticed that being part of a visible, long term production improves peoples' self esteem and dignity.
- Spreading the farming activities to different types of spaces. Besides greenhouse gardening, other types of farming were tried during the project. Field farming and raised bed farming proved to be an easy way to start gardening. They both can be done in local common areas where immigrants have possibilities to meet more local people.
- Creating local language program to re-skill and re-integrate the migrant participants in to the work place. It was noticed that immigrants need also individual language training, depending on their profession and future plans for employment. Learning specific vocabulary of the specific field supports towards employment or work experience practical training.
- Using WhatsApp as a method of sharing information. It was proved that Whatsapp group is a really good way to give peer support, to share posts (text, images, emojis) and to share general information about gardening, to ask questions and give virtual counseling.
- Founding an Internet based radio station. Radio programme making is an efficient way to activate immigrants to take part in the social discussion.
- Creating a Certificate to acknowledge skills. An Urban Farmer Certificate was created to motivate immigrants to join the activities.
- Creating E-learning materials. After attending the project activities, the immigrants could repeat the subject learned by watching gardening video tutorials made specific in plain language. Also, creating gardening vocabulary test is a good way to test the learned vocabulary.
- Offering possibilities to get study credits for immigrants. The students in construction team have been able to earn study credits by taking part of the project activities.

## Recommendations

- It is recommended that local authorities increase the awareness of work experience and salary supported opportunities for immigrants to help speed up the re-integration in to the work place for migrants.
- There should be a lower rate of personal taxation for immigrants including a reduced rate of social security payments for employers of immigrants to provide greater incentive for employers to employ people whose language skills are of a medium level, although having high motivation to work and integrate in to the local community.
- Currently there is very little data collected on immigrants by the local authorities. Therefore, collecting a significant amount of information could benefit local enterprise and help assist local authorities in sign-posting immigrants to employment.
- There should be a database for listing those NGO's and other associations offering spare time activities. The database could be used by local authorities and associations to look for suitable activities for their clients.
- All the immigrant families should have a voluntary god family to help integration in early stage of immigration. It is recommended that multicultural cooperation is started with the local associations, public sector and the immigrant families. Project funding for the project management and education of the volunteers could be applied in association with multiple organizations.
- Organizations should use immigrants' knowledge in early stage of design processes, like urban planning and architecture projects. Multicultural teamwork is needed in multicultural societies. Also, immigrants should have a chance to share their own skills and culture. Cultural exchange increases well-being in communities.
- It is recommended that WhatsApp is used to contact with immigrants concerning non confidential matters. It has been noticed that WhatsApp is an easy way to share information, since most of the people have cellular phones with WhatsApp application.
- It is recommended that written/printed certificate is used to acknowledge skills. The certificate motivates immigrants for long term participation and learning. In addition, achieving a certificate brings successful affection.

- Most of the immigrants want to cultivate their own food. Therefore more community gardens and places to cultivate vegetables should be founded in urban environments. For example, there are empty field space in City of Tampere zoned for urban cultivation but never taken into use. Also, City of Tampere should invest on renewing some of the old cultivation areas to make them more productive, with irrigation possibilities.
- Immigrants find it really hard to get information on cultivation possibilities in City of Tampere. Therefore there should be an advertising campaign in springtime to inform about the cultivation plots. The campaign could work in cooperation with the associations, projects and city social offices, those who encounter immigrants.
- It is recommended that gardening as a healthy hobby should be more acknowledged and financially supported by the authorities. According to Thesis "*The Influence of a Green Environment and Horticultural Activities on the Subjective Well-being of the Elderly Living in Long-term Care*" by Erja Rappe, Ph.D. of Agriculture and Forestry, it is researched that gardening not only have multiple beneficial physical effects but is also mentally very therapeutical. Therefore, increased funding for gardening might have a positive impact on for example health care costs and wellbeing of families.  
(<http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/julkaisut/maa/sbiol/vk/rappe/theinflu.pdf>)



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