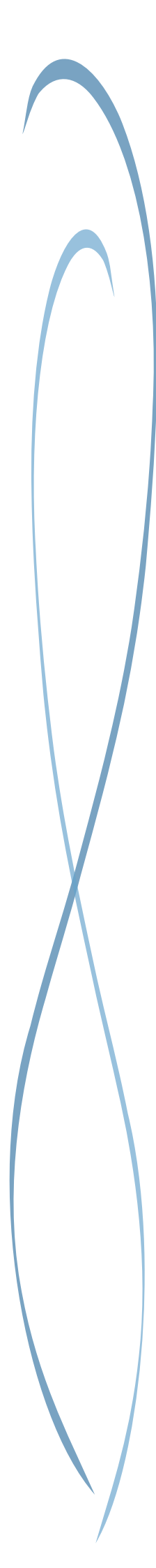


On the path to *successful* integration

Regional cooperation for newly arrived
immigrants' establishment in Swedish society

— a part of regional development in
Östergötland, Sweden





Introduction

Integration concerns the future and is an issue of sustainable development in the region. Immigration is an asset for the region. Achieving successful integration requires cooperation among many actors and a carefully prepared strategy.

Sweden's integration process is based on the United Nations declaration of human rights, which entails that all people are born free and equal in value and rights.

The aim of the national goals for the integration policy is that all people, regardless of ethnic and cultural background, should have equal obligations and opportunities in the various areas of life.

Policies

In Östergötland the work with integration is governed by the regional development programme "Östergötland 2020", with the over-arching vision that Östergötland should be an attractive region with a well-functioning labour market, dynamic business community, good opportunities for housing and education, good transportation and a rich cultural life. The public's health goals at the national and regional level also guide our work.

Platform

The regional agreement for newly arrived immigrants' establishment in society is the common platform for the work with integration. It was adopted in 2008, and signed by the County Council of Östergötland, all of the thirteen municipalities, the County Administrative Board of Östergötland, the Swedish Migration Board, Östsam Regional Development Council and the Public Employment Service. Using this platform as a basis for our cooperation, we move towards a successful introduction and integration process for newly arrived immigrants in the region of Östergötland.

Östergötland January 2010



Regional agreement on cooperation

In Östergötland the groundwork for regional cooperation was set in 2003 in the area of introduction for newly arrived refugees and other immigrants. Over the years there have been several regional development projects and a number of networks and work groups have acted together to implement qualitative improvements in the introduction programme.

The purpose of the regional agreement for newly arrived immigrants' establishment in society is to develop the introduction programmes as well as strengthen cooperation among responsible organizations.

The goal of the regional work is that immigrants will be offered equal opportunities for an individually adapted introduction, regardless of municipality of residence, so that settlement in the community and establishment on the labour market are facilitated and accelerated.

Of the 3 400 people who immigrated to the region of Östergötland, approximately 2 000 were refugees received by the Refugee Reception in Östergötland.

*In 2008, 14% of the Swedish population was born outside Sweden.
The share of foreign-born persons living in Östergötland was 11%.*

Target areas

To develop the introduction, seven target areas have been decided on by the organizations:

Equivalent guidelines for introduction and introduction income support

Equivalent surveying

Equivalent community information

Equivalent accessibility to training, educational offerings, recognition of prior learning and skill competence and validation

Equivalent Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and other language education

Equivalent accessibility and treatment in health and medical care

Equivalent introduction for children and youth into school and leisure time.

The majority of foreign-born residents, almost 60%, are from Europe with Finland being the most common country of birth.

The most common non-Nordic country of birth is Iraq followed by former Yugoslavia.

Health as a basis for cooperation

Health is a gateway to issues about the future, development and sustainability. Basically it is a matter of solidarity between people and between present and future generations.

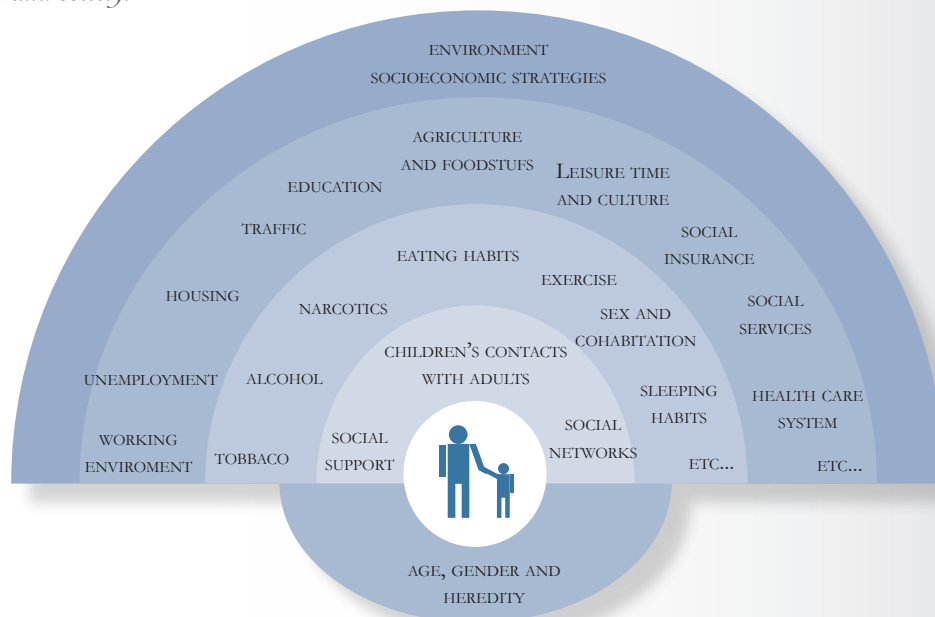
Health problems are clearly connected to a person's social class. The higher your income and education, the greater the likelihood is that you are in good health. How much control a person has over his or her life and the opportunities for adequate social involvement and participation are of decisive significance for a person's health.

A guide for the regional work

Reports and studies show that the health of foreign-born individuals is worse than those born in Sweden. This entails reduced opportunities for work and participation in Swedish society.

The overarching aim of Sweden's national public health policy is to create social conditions that will ensure good health, on equal terms, for the entire population. This goal, together with the regional public health goals and Östergötland's regional development programme, serve as a guide for the integration work.

Our approach is illustrated by the model. It shows that health issues are the concern of both the individual and society.



Adapted from the original of Göran Dahlgren and Margret Whitehead 1991

Health-promoting integration

The purpose of health-promoting initiatives is to contribute to good health by capturing needs for health and medical care, health-promoting and disease-preventative efforts at an early stage. We want to prevent and minimize the risk that newly arrived immigrants interrupt their introduction programme for health reasons.

Multicultural health counsellors

The work of multicultural healthcare counsellors is an important part of the health-promoting introduction. The counsellors are foreign-born and educated in medical care, with professional experience both in their home country and in Sweden. In their work the counsellors use their cultural competence and their native languages to create understanding of Swedish conditions and provide knowledge about health-promoting activities. At the present time the counsellors use the following languages: Somali, Arabic, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian.

The multicultural healthcare counsellors have all of Östergötland as a working area and their organizational address is the Medical Centre for Refugees in the County Council of Östergötland. The operation is financed jointly by the County Council and the municipalities in the region.

In 2009, approximately 24 000 people sought asylum in Sweden.

About a quarter of these was granted asylum.

It is often the younger generation who immigrate to Sweden.

In 2008, 80% of newly arrived immigrants persons were under 40 years old.

In 2008, a total of 101 200 people immigrated to Sweden.

18 000 of these were returning Swedish citizens.

74 100 were non-Nordic citizens.

Cooperation to facilitate the path to education and work

Östergötland offers various introduction programmes to meet the needs of newly arrived immigrants.

Community information

In the municipalities, community information is given in the form of a regionally produced community information packet. Course material is in Swedish, easy Swedish, and six other languages. The community information is also found on the common website www.nyiostergotland.se.

Swedish for Immigrants, SFI

The municipalities are responsible for arranging SFI, Swedish language courses. It should be possible to combine the SFI courses with studies in adult education or training, employment or other occupations.

Development of regional Swedish courses combined with skill courses

In the region the ambition is to bring about a regional education structure that combines industry and profession-oriented learning with language instruction. The aim is to create three to five regional courses for various target groups.

Organized relocation

To increase the possibilities for newly arrived immigrants who live in segregated metropolitan areas to move to another municipality, some of the smaller municipalities in Östergötland are working with what is called “relocation”. This means that the municipalities offer the smaller municipality’s opportunities with respect to living in the larger cities, and at the same time get newly arrived immigrants to their municipalities.

Capacity building for employees

Within the framework of regional cooperation, continual capacity building and efforts are being conducted for employees who come into contact with newly arrived immigrants in their job.

Cooperation to facilitate the path to education and work

Qualification Portfolio and Recognition of prior learning and skill competencies

The 'Qualification Portfolio' and 'Recognition of prior learning and skill competencies' are important tools for establishment on the labour market. The 'Qualification Portfolio' means that a survey is made of the individual's work skills. In a follow-up stage an occupational assessment is made, in order to investigate how saleable the skill is on the labour market. Methods of 'Recognition of prior learning and skilled competencies' are being developed at the same time.

The aim is to create a group of companies in the region which will issue certificates documenting the individual's skills and their knowledge within the profession. In this way the skills of newly arrived immigrants is highlighted for the region's employers. The 'Qualification Portfolio' also exists as a web tool: www.minframtid.se

Introduction for children and youth

Approximately one-third of newly arrived immigrants in the region are children and youth. The ambition is to have common regional guidelines for the introduction for children and youth.

Both education and study guidance in a child's mother tongue are important tools in the region to improve results for immigrant pupils in school.

During the introduction children and youth will receive basic orientation in community life, including opportunities for recreation and associations.

In Östergötland we take common responsibility for unaccompanied children. In 2009 a Declaration of Intent about Unaccompanied Children was signed by all the municipalities and by Östsam Regional Development Council. The aim is to increase the number of places for these children and that the municipalities will support one another in the process.

"The goal is that it should be possible to take part in these programmes regardless of which municipality you live in."

The following organizations are behind the regional cooperation for newly arrived immigrants' establishment in society

The municipalities in Östergötland:
Boxholm, Finspång, Kinda, Linköping,
Mjölby, Motala, Norrköping,
Söderköping, Vadstena, Valdemarsvik,
Ydre, Åtvidaberg, Ödeshög

Östsam Regional Development Council

The County Council of Östergötland

The County Administrative Board of
Östergötland

The Public Employment Service in
Linköping, Motala and Norrköping

The Swedish Migration Board

You will find more information about the regional work at the Östsam Regional Development Council's website:
www.ostsam.se/proj_nyanlanda.asp

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