



Job integration of refugees and third country nationals in Luxembourg: the “InSitu Jobs” project

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“InSitu Jobs” is a project of the Luxembourg federation of migrant organisations. It aims at supporting recognised refugees and legally residing third country nationals in finding their way onto the labour market. The flexibility of the approach overcomes procedural and competence problems related to official institutions and agencies.

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Description

Luxembourg has a very large foreign-born community: out of a total population of 576,200 on 01/01/2016, 46.7% are non-Luxembourg nationals (39.8% are EU mobile citizens and 6.9% are third country nationals). The largest part of this community has a Portuguese language background, i.e. they come from Portugal (93,100) or from Portuguese speaking countries outside Europe, such as Brazil and Cape Verde.

There was a significant arrival of more than 2,000 asylum seekers per year in the years 2011-2012, a slowdown to some 1,000 per year in 2013-2014, but a new increase to more than 2,400 in 2015. In 2015, the largest group came from Syria (27.3%), followed by the Western Balkan countries (Kosovo, Albania, etc.; 25%) and Iraq (22%). Relatively few asylum seekers obtained refugee (or equivalent) status: 228 in 2015 (out of 1245 decisions), 179 in 2014 and 164 in 2013).

Although there are no precise statistics yet, according to the federation of migrant organisations CLAE (Comité de liaison des associations d'étrangers), many third country nationals are low-skilled, while there are many highly skilled people among refugees. Also, once asylum seekers obtain refugee status, and once other third country nationals get a residence permit, they have the same right to provisions and

services as Luxembourg nationals and other EU citizens. However, access to these rights and provisions is not self-evident. The limited outreach capacity of the public employment agencies and social offices, combined with some procedural and bureaucratic rules, in a country with three national languages (French, German and Luxembourgish) makes it not easy for newcomers to find their way onto the labour market.

Therefore, building on previous experiences with socio-economic integration projects, CLAE started the “InSitu Jobs” project in May 2015 with financial support from the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Luxembourg Office for Reception and Integration (OLAI). The target group consists of recognised refugees and third country nationals with a residence permit. The project’s approach is threefold:

1. Individual support through interviews aiming to develop a personal professional plan:

- Skills’ assessment,
- Help in writing CV, accompanying letters, etc. including translation,
- Validation of professional experience,
- Support to get diplomas recognised,
- Administrative information,

- Orientation towards existing structures and institutions (including language courses within CLAE).

2. Professionalization workshops to transmit and develop tools for occupational integration and active job search.

3. Active mediation through CLAE's professional and institutional networks.

The project staff consist of a social worker and a psychologist, who followed special training in skills' assessment. In its first year of functioning (ending 30 April 2016) they reached some 100 people, and performed some 200 interviews. They also organised two workshops of 10 hours each with 10 and 12 participants. In the meantime, five participants of the workshops got a temporary job and two started a vocational training course; the others continue to invest in a French language course and/or are actively looking for a job. An important characteristic of the project is that it works on different aspects of the job integration issue simultaneously, while public instances often demand sufficient knowledge of one of the national languages before starting job mediation. Also, the project staff use non-official interpreters (often from the Red Cross), and assist actively in filling out such as the first questionnaire for the validation of skills acquired by experience, in preparation for the more detailed second questionnaire from the Ministry of Education.

Outlook & Commentary

The InSitu Jobs project is very important for several reasons. It fills certain gaps in public service provision and is thus complementary to this. It is also complementary to and works actively with initiatives by other NGOs such as ASTI, an organisation of foreign workers providing integration support to asylum seekers. It reveals the weaknesses of integration policies for refugees and third country nationals. For example, sufficient knowledge of French is key for social and economic integration in Luxembourg but most occupational training courses are in German. Finally, the InSitu jobs project shows that for certain target groups it is more productive to work on several issues at the same time, such as language training and labour market integration services.

Although this is a small scale project, it is our opinion that the Luxembourg public services could learn from it that outreach, personalised approaches and procedural flexibility are key to the effective economic and social integration of newcomers. In this respect, the ongoing reform of the public employment agency, helping it to provide an individual service to each jobseeker, should be further supported by sufficient human resources in terms of numbers and qualifications for its implementation. The same goes for the local social offices in their role as (potential) one-stop shop for all the social needs of citizens.

Further reading

Further information on the project: www.clae.lu.

For details on (integration of) migration, asylum seekers and refugees in Luxembourg:

- Annual report 2014 of the Luxembourg office for reception and integration OLAI, available at: http://www.olai.public.lu/fr/publications/rapports/rapports_activite_olai/rapport-activite-olai-14.pdf

- Annual report 2015 of the Ministry of Foreign and European affairs, available at: <https://www.gouvernement.lu/5921759/2015-rapport-affaires-etrangeres-europeennes.pdf>

The reform of the public employment agency is discussed in: Swinnen H. (2015), ESPN Thematic Report on integrated support for the long-term unemployed [Luxembourg], European Social Policy Network, Brussels: European Commission. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?advSearchKey=ESPNTU&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en&policyArea=&type=0&country=29&year=0>

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