Success Story:
Fast integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market

Challenges

Between 2014 and 2017, asylum applications increased from 385 applicants to 1,475. The Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) needed to develop measures to speed up and increase the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market. The aim was to include the services for this target group in the overall portfolio at national and regional levels.

Actions

- Developing two programmes aimed at refugees: ‘Labour market integration programme’ (combining intensive individual and group counselling) & ‘On the job training for refugees’.
- Cooperating closely with employers, providing detailed information about cultural backgrounds.
- Integrating language courses into job training programmes, rather than conducting these separately.
- Creating new social networks and employment opportunities.
- Implementing an annual internal benchmarking procedure for the ESS regional offices.
- Tailoring counselling for those who needed more intensive support.
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- Evaluating new services for refugees through monitoring and other evaluation approaches.

Results

The ‘Labour market integration programme’ took place four times in 2018, covering 48 people.

The ‘On the job training for refugees’ reached 32 people in 2018 (for a duration of 6 months, twice as long as a similar ALMP).

Effective design of tailored programmes and successful implementation = 55 refugees employed in 2018.

Higher transition rates into regular jobs are expected in 2019 given positive developments on the labour market.

The ESS was recognised as a key organisation in the labour market integration of refugees.

The ESS adopted a more systematic approach to piloting and evaluating innovation, before rolling out new services at a national level.

Success Factors

Internally:

- Priorities aligned with the change agenda and the strategic direction of the ESS.
- Support from ESS top management.
- ESS staff motivation and openness to change.
- When designing tailored services for refugees, taking into account communication difficulties, cultural and educational differences.

Through engaging in Benchlearning and Mutual Learning:

- Inspiration prompted the development of additional services for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Good practice from other PES helped to shape new services for refugees and employers.
- Internal benchmarking enabled performance managers to identify and address causes that hindered better performance of regional offices.
