

Erasmus+ - project  
„Qualification and Professionalization at Support of  
Asylum Seekers, Migrants and War Refugees”



Guideline for implementation  
of the European qualification profile  
in Finland  
(Ekokaarina Oy)

Developed by the Finish partner

Ekokaarina Oy

Contact data

Name: Jukka Niskala

Tel.: +358504525420

Mail: [jukka.niskala@ekokaarina.net](mailto:jukka.niskala@ekokaarina.net)



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## 1. Proposals for implementation of the European qualification profile in Finland

Finland has been “a bird home” for the Finnish people what comes to issue of getting immigrants and asylum seekers into Finland until year 2015. Since then a large amount of asylum seekers came also to Finland and it put into a test a whole Finnish immigration system. Especially a first phase integration system has shown to be inadequate.

Finnish vocational system divides into two basic elements: 1) youth degree vocational schools and education starts after elementary school; 2) adult degree vocational institutes, which are specialized to give vocational degrees for adults, who are lacking a professional degree, they have to re-educate or update their knowledge or young adults (very often they have had difficult youth period). Last system is most cases more actual for immigrants and asylum seekers and these institutions are usually involved with integration education. Therefore **teachers and lecturers in these institutions could be on target group in qualification implementation.**

**Other essential target groups of implementation of qualification are project personnel and volunteers working in 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations.** 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and a lot of volunteer people within these organizations have a lot of significance in supplementary integration progress. As a matter of fact their role can be more important for immigrants in second phase integration process; in worst case after first phase integration process an immigrant can be without reasonable activation from officials' behalf 3-5 years.

A lot of activation occurs through different kind of associations and foundations. Many volunteers also give their contribution and know-how through working collaboration with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations. A good example is retired fully professionalized Finnish language teachers, who give supplementary Finnish language lessons to immigrants; Finnish language is quite hard to learn and 3 months lasting first phase integration period is inadequate especially for asylum seekers, who barely can read and write their mother tongue. This voluntary work is essential for immigrants in order to integrate into Finnish society: according to many researches and studies made about positive integration, to learn to speak at least below average level Finnish is crucial to find a job or start professional studies.

According to research and analyses made by Ekokaarina Oy in 2017 as one step in QualiProAIR project within both professionals and volunteers, who operate with immigrants and asylum seekers, a one result came up clearly: **multi-cultural understanding and operations should be emphasized in possible qualification training among professionals and especially volunteers.** This has also been a red line for Ekokaarina Oy in QualiProAIR project.

Finland, like many other EU countries, has experienced a deep recession during years 2008-2017. A lot of resources have been cut by Finnish government as a part of other financial cut-offs. This has a direct negative consequence for operative ability of associations and foundations to educate their professionals and volunteers to work more efficiently with immigrants and especially difficult target group: uneducated asylum seekers coming from Africa and Middle-East countries.

Another problem is diffused responsibilities, tasks, financial resources, goals etc. between different ministries in Finland: Ministry of Labour and Economics, Ministry of Social and Health and Ministry of Education and Culture have all linkages to immigrant issues. Even though these ministries may have horizontally administration borders crossing development projects linking with immigration issues in HELSINKI, but problems arise when they should be implemented vertically to their own officials in different provinces in Finland; this grievance causes inefficiency both operative and financial point-of-view.

Administrative problem mentioned above causes also difficulties to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector actors, which operate with immigrants. They don't have a clear picture about essential officials to seek knowledge or financial based help to e.g. educate their own personnel or volunteers.

**From the angle of proposals for implementation of the European qualification profile in Finland** and considering problems mentioned earlier, Ekokaarina propose following implementation steps:

1. A qualification of professionals and volunteers should be taken under one representative administration segment of ministry in local level; e.g. AVI (=aluehallintoviranomainen / regional administration official).
2. Adequate resources should be reserved in national budget in qualification process.
3. Qualification programs must be promoted effectively to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations and/or a regional project manager should be nominated into this task.
4. Network linkages between 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations should be strengthened and encouraged by regional officials in order to promote qualification projects and programs.
5. Qualification materials created by QualiProAIR project should be promoted in broader sense than only Ekokaarina Oy's dissemination activities.
6. Qualification profiles created by QualiProAIR project must be "certificated" in a way, in which education institutes can expect them and adapt them in their own professional education entireties. Main responsibility is for the Ministry of Education and Culture plus Education Administration.

**A qualification of professionals and volunteers under one representative administration segment of ministry** in local level is crucial according to Ekokaarina Oy's own many years of experience in this specific field. Local officials representing different ministries don't have cultural and practical history of efficient collaborative network operations. Due that a good qualification projects would be in danger of falling in administrative dissonances.

**A clear budgeting system** should be reserved under specific ministry's annual administration, which takes main responsibility of qualification programs. This would prevent regional problems between different officials, whose responsible on financing qualification education project and whose not. This would also help 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations' finance application processes.

As mentioned before 3<sup>rd</sup> sector has a remarkable role in volunteer based integration operations within immigrations and asylum seekers. They don't in most cases have, however, regular personnel but 2-3 persons, who have skills and time to seek outside financed projects. Therefore **regional officials should have enough resources to create and manage regional promotion (internet, social media, seminars) through which information about possible qualification projects, their goals, finance abilities and applying practises are well disseminated.**

Regional 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations have relatively few network linkages between each other. These linkages would be extremely essential in order to create resource efficient and optimal qualification sessions. E.g. work-orientated intermediate labour market organizations and purely immigration associations would have fruitful combined qualification sessions; both have knowledge about immigrants and asylum seekers but different angles. **Regional official or qualification consultant should be given a major role to be key-actor in creation, managing and teaching of qualification network.**

**Qualification materials created by QualiProAIR project should be promoted in broader sense than only Ekokaarina Oy's dissemination activities.**

Dissemination materials, which are actively promoted during May-August, are not adequate. Dissemination must have continuance. **Regional officials must be indented to dissemination;** most proper officials would be the same, who organize project funding. Otherwise dissemination will remain uncompleted.

## 2. Proposals for financing the European qualification profile in Finland

As already mentioned in previous chapter a **basic finance structure should be centralized under one specific ministry**, which allocate resources to regions and provinces. Municipalities and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector don't have economic resources of their own to finance qualification education projects. These organizations and municipalities are, however in key role to implement qualification education and they also give a physical platform / premises for qualification project. 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organizations also have more active connection relationships to immigrants / asylum seekers than e.g. municipal social officials; often they meet weekly with this target group.

### Example: Case - AVI

AVI is a Finnish regional actor, which represent Finnish state in provinces. AVI already manage and finance projects concerning immigrants / asylum seekers. These projects are, however, very often fragmented and they lay under many budget elements. Unless qualification consultant, project managers e.g. are very familiar with AVI's project funding, qualification funding may be left out to be applied.

**Qualification funding could be divided into 3 or 4 application periods in a year;** not only 1 or 2 like they usually are at the moment. Budget elements should also be divided in a way that qualification could be adapted into smaller / shorter qualification segments or more comprehensive qualification projects. Budget elements could be e.g.:

- Smaller qualification teaching period (1-2 days):
  - budget: 1500,00 €;
  - a light pre-test;
  - webinar based qualification.
- Qualification project (5-6 days):
  - budget: between 10.000,00 – 15.000,00 €;
  - comprehensive pre-test (half a day);
  - physical teaching environment;
  - comprehensive teaching materials;
  - final test after qualification project.

A formal own-based finance could be obliged from participants; e.g. 100,00 € / participant especially in Qualification project cases.