

# Finland Good Practices: 'Welcome to Finland' courses

## Main Goals

- Introduction to Finnish language and society
- Enough language and social skills to operate independently in different everyday life situations by the end of the course

## Objectives

- Peer support: through new friends & sharing your experiences with others
- Understanding the new culture and societal habits, help to cope with cultural shock
- Good social network and opportunities

## Resources needed

- Space
- Pedagogically competent teacher
- Study materials
- Computer
- Collaborator network

## Challenges

- Continuation of funding
- Competition
- Students with continuous residence permit during summer
- students with different levels of learning capacity in one group

In Kuopio, the mainstream Finnish language & integration courses are not offered frequently enough and only few places are available in the ones that are offered. Demand doesn't meet supply and most newcomers are left out for the ones who have been in the queue for a long time. This can cause unrest and unwelcome feeling in the newcomers. To keep them engaged & active 'Welcome to Finland' kick start course was very much needed. Through basic Finnish language teaching, introduction to Finnish culture and society and visits to govt offices, leisure places etc. this crash course helps the students to operate independently in a new place.

The welcome to Finland courses are intensive Finnish teaching for a select group of 12-14 students who have very recently moved Finland and have continuous residence permit. The course duration is 6 weeks and the teaching is held for 5 days a week from Monday to Friday for four hours a day.

Before the course starts, Kompassi, city refugee unit, and employment office advertise this courses through their website, Facebook, newsletter, flyers and other local institutes. The application form is available in electronic and paper version. Kompassi receives applications, selects students, fills up the place if there is any cancellation, plans teaching, visit to different official and other places of importance. Selected students are informed through postal letter about their selection.

The teacher improvises teaching methods according to the levels of the students during the course. Kompassi guides the students to other extracurricular activities and provides counselling if and when needed. Participation in Kompassi's other activities helps widen student's social network along with providing them an opportunity to show their personal skills and talents. The students are communicated through post, by email or phone during the course.

The teacher draws conclusion to the course by handing out certificates and doing report to the funders. The feedback from students and course experience helps the teacher to improve and develop the future courses. The student's feedback about the course and teacher is also used as statistics to measure the impact.

The students receive certificates upon the completion of the course, which mentions their present Finnish levels skills and their development during the course. Kompassi also recommends the students to higher level courses available in Kuopio.



Graduated group in May 2017

## Facts and points:

- ✓ The courses target the immigrants who have just come to Finland
- ✓ It is an initiative by the Finnish govt and funded by the city of Kuopio
- ✓ Kompassi has held these courses for around 7 years with an average of 4-6 courses and about 80 students per year.
- ✓ At least one course for the reading and writing under skilled is organized per year
- ✓ Refugees are given priority during admission



*Welcome to Finland course helped me to learn the language in a relaxed but efficient manner. I was happy to have been a part of the course at Kompassi.*

- Layla from Kazakhstan