



## ICELAND

AN INITIATIVE AIMING TO MOTIVATE AND SUPPORT EMPLOYERS TO HIRE JOBSEEKERS WITH LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE ICELANDIC LANGUAGE.

# PROMISING PES PRACTICE<sup>1</sup> On-the-job language training for foreigners and migrants

Publication date: September 2018

Language courses for foreigners and migrants failed to produce those language competences which are needed for the successful integration of foreigners and migrants into the Icelandic labour market. Even reaching the expected language level on a formal basis, language training participants were not able to use the learned contents in practical working life and/or their language skills were not sufficient for being fully integrated in a working environment. In order to overcome this situation, individual language training was organised on-the-job via mentors coming from the employer. The mentor is financially compensated and has access to support material through cooperation with the Lifelong Learning Centre. The advantage of the individualised training is that the learning is directly linked to the needs of the workplace and of the company.

Name of the PES	Icelandic PES (VMST – Vinnumálastofnun (Directorate of Labour))
Scope of measure	The project started in 2017 in the capital region
When was the practice implemented?	2017 - ongoing
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The motivation for the introduction of on-the-job language training for foreigners and migrants stemmed from the fact that classical language training courses did not produce the level of language proficiency needed in the workplace.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	Icelandic PES headquarters, Icelandic PES regional offices, employers and the Lifelong Learning Centre.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	Employers, foreigners/migrants, language training providers, regional Icelandic PES offices.
What were the practice's main objectives?	The main objective is the sustainable integration of the foreign labour force into the Icelandic labour market via language training that is directly linked to a concrete workplace.
What activities were carried out?	Guidance of mentors (from employers) by the Lifelong Learning Centre through learning material, on-the-job language training of foreigners/migrants by mentors and financial compensation to employers which appoint their workers as mentors.
What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	The project was organised by the Icelandic PES in cooperation with the Lifelong Learning Centre and employers willing to integrate foreigners and migrants into their companies.
What were the source(s) of funding?	Costs are covered by the Icelandic PES budget.

<sup>1</sup> Practices referring to promising changes/reforms/approaches.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	<p>Several programmes have been developed up until July 2018, combining classes (usually between 120 and 240 lessons) with practical training (usually 40 hours) in a company. The occupational training is usually about 40 hours, from which the applicant is hired on a six month job-training contract, which leads to permanent employment at the company. Apart from general training programmes (so-called 'Springboard' courses), the training programmes refer to specific sectors, for example to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ food handling,</li> <li>▶ tourism service,</li> <li>▶ basic services (e.g. cleaning, hospital cafeteria, restaurants and laundries), or</li> <li>▶ childcare.</li> </ul> <p>At the end of 2017, 40 % of training participants were no longer registered as jobseekers at the Icelandic PES.</p>
What outcomes have been identified?	On a qualitative basis, on-the-job language training produced far better results than regular classroom-based language courses.
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	An important lesson learnt is that language competences are acquired best when strongly linked to the practical context in which they are needed. In addition, the employer-based mentoring models also helps with the quick and effective integration of foreigners and migrants into the labour market.



#### Contact details for further information

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