

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO RESPOND TO NEW MIGRANT FLOWS

Key information

- Location: **Vantaa (Finland)**
- Population: **223 000**
- Involved in URBACT network: **ARRIVAL CITIES**
- More information: <http://urbact.eu/arrival-cities>



Participation in the URBACT ARRIVAL CITIES network has supported strengthened partnerships between local organisations and authorities working on migrant integration in Vantaa. It delivered a migrant-focused Integrated Action Plan that has been officially incorporated into the city's Multicultural Plan (2018-2022).



Migrant-led NGOs joined local officials in the URBACT Local Group

Responding to new migration flows

Vantaa is one of the four municipalities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. With a population of over 200 000, it is the fourth most populated city of Finland. The city's 30 000+ migrants now represent over 17% of the total population – the highest proportion of any municipality in Finland.

Since 2002, Vantaa has had a City Integration Programme – within a broader Multicultural Programme - to integrate migrants into Vantaa's education system, workforce and society. However, in more recent years the city had been

receiving new profiles of highly educated migrants and students, as well as a new wave of asylum seekers - accommodating over 1 000 in four reception centres.

Vantaa was immediately interested when Amadora (PT) pitched ARRIVAL CITIES network to respond to new flows of migration alongside the ongoing challenge of integration of settled migrant groups. Both cities had already worked together in the 2007-2009 URBACT network 'Managing Migration and Integration at Local Level' (MILE).

Applying URBACT methods

A comprehensive stakeholder mapping was undertaken to identify appropriate members to form an URBACT Local Group whose task was to develop an Integrated Action Plan on migrant integration in Vantaa. Priority was given to local migrant-led NGOs, along with local officials.

Margarita Sakilayan-Latvala, Training Coordinator at the Nicehearts NGO, was made Group Coordinator and sent on to the URBACT Summer University in 2016 to learn how to develop participatory action plans. She returned enthused with ideas and methods for developing the Plan through a real co-creation process. Together with the rest of the URBACT Local Group they identified that one of the local challenges was the lack of collaboration between

stakeholders working on migration. This was a clear indication that the Plan should focus on 'facilitating and strengthening partnerships between different stakeholders'.

In addition to its own meetings, the group held four wider consultation events to develop the Plan. For example, 50 local association representatives discussed how to involve volunteers in migrant reception and integration processes. Another meeting explored improved cooperation between NGOs, authorities, universities and entrepreneurs.

Inspiration from a German integration project

Vantaa benefitted from presentations and visits on a range of inspiring practices among the ARRIVAL CITIES partner cities. However, they developed a particularly deep cooperation with the German partner Oldenburg after it presented its 'Integration through Qualification' (IQ) network at the ARRIVAL CITIES transnational meeting on labour market integration.

The IQ network supports migrants to have their qualifications recognised and to access job training. In addition to vocational training and business start-up support services, it has developed specific skills-auditing procedures and 'German at the workplace' language-class modules. The network is promoted by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Employment Agency.

Vantaa invited IQ to present their project and results to more than 100 local stakeholders. Hannele Lautiola, Head of Multicultural Affairs in Vantaa, explains that "The German IQ program is developing a lot of the things we need in Finland on a large scale. We also want to build that, but first we have to create the legal basis."

Towards implementing the plan

The Integrated Action Plan developed by the local group outlines actions aiming to:

1. Develop partnerships through formal and non-formal networks
2. Facilitate collaboration between NGOs and the city
3. Strengthen neighbourhood relations

Key actions include: making vocational training programmes more accessible to migrants; developing a network of volunteers on integration; creating an exchange programme for NGOs and local authority professionals; and piloting community-led local projects.

The Plan was officially incorporated into the city's Multicultural Plan in April 2018. The city's Multicultural Advisory Board, which will monitor implementation has also committed to holding an annual assessment meeting with the URBACT Local Group, which itself is maintained under the Plan.

Vantaa secured EUR 500 000 from the European Social Fund to implement a coaching programme for unemployed migrants developed by migrant-led NGOs and the city authority.

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Hannele Lautiola



Margarita Sakilayan-Latvala
interview

ARRIVAL CITIES' Local Coordinator, Vantaa

Can you explain the main advantages of participating in URBACT?

The URBACT methodology gave us a framework to ensure that strategic planning is cooperative, based on co-creation and participatory approaches to make sure that all the voices are heard, including those of grassroots, NGOs and residents.

The methodology has improved our way of working (inclusion, co-creation) and built trust between operators. Cooperation with organisations has opened up new networks and funding opportunities. We have managed to combine different programmes in Vantaa, including the European Social Fund, URBACT and Erasmus+.

We really have very limited resources compared to Helsinki or Espoo. [But], when we had our final seminar to present the Plan, a colleague from another city and a representative from the Ministry said that Vantaa is a laboratory for integration in Finland. We took risks in trying different things.



URBACT has created new and lasting working relationships at local level