

Refugee Contribution to Europe

A feasibility study on the establishment of a
Fund for Refugee Employment and Education (FREE)
in the European Union

Finland

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a feasibility study about FREE - Fund for Refugee Employment and Education. The FREE feasibility study has been carried out in 14 European Union countries. FREE would provide refugees with start-up loans for businesses and scholarships and grants to access or re-qualify for higher or further education.

The need for FREE has come from the fact that often refugees do not get a chance to use their full capacities. They might face problems when trying to attend vocational training or higher education due to language barriers. In many countries there are restrictions to what qualifications and degrees are recognised. Refugees also face problems because they lack sufficient resources to start up their own business or attend higher or further education.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON FINLAND

1.1. Population

At the end of the year 2001, the population of Finland was 5,194,901. Of religious groups, 84.9% were Lutheran, 1.1% Orthodox and 1.1% belonged to other religious groups (e.g. Jews and Muslims). 12.9% of the population did not belong to any religious group (Tilastokeskus 2002a). There are four national minorities, Roma-people (10,000), Tatars (700), Jews (1,500) and Old-Russians (5000) and one indigenous group, Sami, with approximately 7000 people. These figures are estimations and are based on the figures announced by the national minorities. There are no official statistics based on ethnicity in Finland. This is to respect the privacy of and protect individuals.

Finnish and Swedish are the official languages of Finland. The Swedish speakers are a lingual minority; their mother tongue is Swedish, but they are not considered as a separate ethnic group. In 2001, there were 290,771 (5.7%) Swedish-speaking people, and a little over 1700 Sami-speaking Finnish citizens. The number of native speakers of other languages (i.e. other than Finnish, Swedish and Sami) was 109,197 at the end of the year 2001. (Tilastokeskus 2002b.)

The number of foreigners living in Finland at the end of the year 2001 was 98,577 (Amounting to 1.89% of the population) (ibid.). The foreign population of Finland in 2001 included citizens of 156 countries. The largest groups in 2001 were Russians (22,724), Estonians (11,662), Swedish, (7999), Somalis, (4355), Yugoslavians, (4240) and Iraqis (3222). The largest refugee nationalities were Somalis, Yugoslavians, Iraqis, Iranians, Vietnamese and Afghans.

In 2000, a total of 2977 foreigners was granted Finnish citizenship. Since 1971 almost 30,000 foreigners have obtained Finnish citizenship.

During the year 2001, there were 1651 asylum seekers; only four were granted asylum. 809 of the asylum seekers obtained a residence permit. In addition, there were 750 refugees who were accepted through a quota system. Between the years 1973 and 2000, about 20,000 immigrants had a refugee background (Statistics Finland 2002a).

According to the statistics, at the end of the year 2001, a total of 145,135 members of the population had been born in a foreign country (2.8% of the population) (Tilastokeskus 2002b).

1.2. General information on integration and reception of asylum seekers

Before informing on entitlement to education, training and work for refugees and asylum seekers, the Finnish League for Human Rights, FLHR, feels it is important to clarify first a few crucial features about the situation of refugees and asylum seekers and the differences between their statuses.

In 1999 an Act on Integration and Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanottamisesta*) came into force. According to the act every immigrant resident in some Finnish municipality is entitled to an individual integration plan for 3 years after he or she has received a domicile within some community in Finland, i.e. has been registered in the population register. Every municipality should also make an integration program, which would set the objectives and means to put the Act on Integration into practice within the municipality (Laki 493/1999).

However, an immigrant has to have a residence within some municipality before he or she is entitled to an integration plan. This means that asylum seekers residing in the reception centres are not entitled to integrative measures before they receive a positive decision on their application. This usually takes at least 1 year or even more. The integration can thus be difficult when it takes place months or, usually, years after the asylum seeker arrives in Finland. (Valtioneuvoston... 2002, 8–9) The asylum seekers are obliged to participate in work and training activities in the reception centres. The training activities may include some language training and acquaintance with values and principles of Finnish society and working life. Of course the asylum seekers' children are entitled and obliged to attend Finnish compulsory education system immediately after arriving in Finland. (Työministeriö 2000.)

Finland is one of the countries that also has a quota system for refugees, which means that every year Finland receives a certain number of refugees through this quota system (750 in the year 2001). Quota refugees have been declared a refugee by UNHCR (Tilastokeskus 2002c). The Finnish officials travel to interview and select the quota refugees at the refugee camps (see also Mero 1998). Those refugees that Finland receives through the quota system are transported straight to municipalities that receive them within Finland. They receive a domicile within some Finnish municipality and are registered in the population register after their arrival. They are therefore entitled to an individual integration plan as soon as they fill other preconditions to the integration plan.

An individual integration plan is planned together with the immigrant, the municipality and the Labour Administration authorities. An integration plan can include a wide range of integrative measures such as language training (Finnish or Swedish), labour market training (*työvoimapolitiittinen aikuiskoulutus*), independent training, guidance for choosing an occupation, rehabilitation, training in the work place, preparatory teaching, support for integration of children and adolescents and other measures to support the integration (measures related to labour oriented activities). (Valtioneuvoston... 2002, 16–19.) The integration plan can also include higher education, but one cannot be a full-time student. This means, for example, doing courses in the open university.

An integration plan is planned on a family basis, but it still takes into consideration the individual needs of people in the immigrant family. An immigrant who registers himself or herself as an unemployed job seeker or applies for a living allowance is entitled to an integration plan, which has to be planned at least when the unemployment or being on a living allowance has lasted 5 months. (Laki 493/1999.)

Asylum seekers have also a formal right to work after they have resided in Finland as an asylum seeker for 3 months. They do not need a work permit to be able to work but they do need an acceptance from the local employment office before they can start working. The employment office checks the conditions for employment, the employee and the employer, before it accepts that the asylum seeker can start to work. There is also one more condition concerning asylum seekers' entitlement to work: an asylum seeker cannot be hired to a position if it is obvious that he is taking the place of a Finnish person who would otherwise have received the position. (Työministeriö 2002a.)

2. OVERVIEW OF KEY PLAYERS

There are several key players in Finland doing work concerning refugees' position and their socioeconomic situation. Presented here are the most important and relevant of them.

2.1. Governmental organisations

In Finland, affairs dealing with refugees and integration measures are the responsibility of the Labour Administration, municipalities and Education Administration as stated in the Act on Integration and Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta*). In practice, however, the areas of responsibility are to a certain extent unclear, and in part this is the root of several problems in refugees' employment and education presented in this report.

The most important key players in governmental organisations concerning immigrant issues are the Ministry of Labour, the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres, the National Board of Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior and the Directorate of Immigration.

The Ministry of Labour

'In Migration Affairs the Ministry of Labour is primarily involved in the integration of immigrants, the reception of asylum seekers and refugees, the placement of refugees in the municipalities, work permit issues, the promotion of employment for immigrants, return migration, issues concerning expatriate Finns, as well as related information and publishing activities. The activities of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations are co-ordinated by the Political Division', (Ministry of Labour 2002).

The Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres

'The Employment and Economic Development Centre helps to sustain Business Activities in Finland. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Labour have jointly combined their regional forces in the Employment and Economic Development Centres (T&E Centre). Fifteen centres countrywide provide a comprehensive range of advisory and development services for businesses, entrepreneurs, and private individuals.' The tasks of T&E Centres concerning immigrant issues are to place refugees in municipalities, to give guidance for reception centres for asylum seekers, to give guidance for integration work made by employment offices and municipalities, to arrange regional translation services and to compensate the expenses to municipalities that occur when they receive asylum seekers, refugees and remigrants. (TE-keskus 2002.)

The National Board of Education

The 'National Board of Education supplies development, evaluation and information services regarding education to owners and managers of schools, teachers, policy makers and working life. Three main areas of operation are development of education, evaluation of education and support services.' (National Board of Education 2002.) The main tasks of the National Board of Education concerning immigrant issues are to develop education for immigrants and give guidelines to regional and local authorities on how to organise immigrant education on different levels. (ibid.)

The Ministry of Education

‘The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for education, science and cultural policies. The Ministry promotes education, science, culture, sports and youth work in the country and emphasises their significance for the citizens and society.’ (Ministry of Education 2002.)

The Ministry of the Interior

‘The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the overall development of regional administration, state local administration and population registers, provides the basic legal and financial preconditions for the country’s self-governing municipalities, promotes the equitable and independent development of different parts of the country, maintains public order and security, supervises rescue services, deals with matters concerning Finnish citizenship, immigration and asylum and is responsible for guarding the country’s borders and carrying out checks on people.’ (Ministry of the Interior 2002.)

The Directorate of Immigration

‘The Directorate of Immigration (UVI) is an agency of the Ministry of the Interior and began operations on March 1, 1995. The functions of the Directorate of Immigration are as follows: to process and resolve immigration and refugee matters, to process and resolve matters concerning Finnish citizenship, to provide information services for the authorities and international organisations and to maintain a register of aliens.’ (Directorate of Immigration 2002.)

The reception centres

There are 14 reception centres in different parts of Finland. The asylum seekers that arrive in Finland are accommodated in reception centres. It is their responsibility to provide all necessary facilities during the time the asylum seekers spend there. The time spent in reception centres depends on how long it takes the authorities to handle the asylum seeker’s application. (Työministeriö 2002b.) Asylum seekers live in the centres, where they attend to working and training activities and help in the daily duties of the reception centres (ibid.).

In practice, integrating measures for refugees and asylum seekers are carried out in cooperation between public employment service agencies and municipalities. The funding of the employment service agencies is decided in the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres. They set the conditions for the agencies to buy adult education services from private adult education institutes, as well as to carry out different kinds of work training and employment support measures. Lately, the Labour Administration has sought to improve cooperation by networking with the private education institutes, as well as with employers.

In sum, public employment service agencies act as a kind of a link between immigrants’ and refugees’ educational needs and the competence demands in the labour market. The challenge to the agencies is to provide flexible services both to all immigrants and the employers, and at the same time, to be a predictive customer for the adult training institutes, which produce the actual services.

2.2. Non-Governmental Organisations

The Refugee Advice Centre (Pakolaisneuvonta) is an association established by NGOs in 1988. It gives legal assistance and advice to asylum seekers, refugees and other foreigners. The staff consists of lawyers, law advisors, a press secretary and office workers. The Refugee Advice Centre has the main responsibility in organising the first phase legal assistance for refugees and asylum seekers. Besides legal assistance, the association acts to improve the general situation of foreigners, especially asylum seekers and refugees, in Finland. The association is asked to give its opinion as an expert on issues concerning the preparation of acts concerning foreigners. (Pakolaisneuvonta 2002a.)

Finnish Refugee Council (Pakolaisapu) is an association whose objective it is to help refugees in Finland and abroad. The main tasks in Finland are awareness training, education, publicity and influencing the Finnish refugee policy. (Pakolaisapu 2002.)

The Finnish Red Cross Organization (FRC) (Suomen Punainen Risti) works with immigrants in the field of integration and promotes tolerance with different projects. The FRC receives the quota refugees coming to Finland and works to reunite refugee families, and also campaigns for the improvement of immigrant and refugee policy. It currently maintains two reception centres in Finland, and is the representative of UNHCR in Finland in issues relating to protection of law for the refugees. (Suomen Punainen Risti 2002.)

The Centre for Victims of Torture (Kidutettujen kuntoutuskeskus) operates under the Helsinki Deaconess Institute (Helsingin Diakonissalaitos). The main task is mental health work for immigrants. The Centre for Victims of Torture is a clinic which evaluates, treats and rehabilitates refugees and their relatives who have been traumatised due to torture in their home countries. Officially, the activities take place at a national level, but clinic work is carried out in southern Finland. (Helsingin Diakonissalaitos 2002.)

The Crisis Prevention Centre (Ulkomaalaisten kriisikeskus) operates under the Finnish Mental Health society (Suomen mielenterveysseura). Its objectives are to promote the mental well-being of immigrants and help their integration into Finnish society. The basic task is to support the public mental health services and also to supplement them. Other main tasks of the centre are education, consultation, work counselling, client work and professional work. (Mielenterveysseura 2002.)

Immigrants Support in Finland (Maahanmuuttajien tuki ry) is an independent support and course centre for immigrants and immigrant organisations. The objective is to empower immigrant organisations and associations. The means for achieving this goal are counselling, guiding and training immigrants and their organisations. (Maahanmuuttajien tuki 2002.)

In Finland, we have had an Ombudsman for Foreigners/Aliens (Ulkomaalaisvaltuutettu) since 1991. In September 2001, the **Ombudsman for Ethnic Minorities** (Vähemmistövaltuutettu) replaced this institution. The tasks of the new Ombudsman have been broadened. A victim of discrimination can, for example, proceed his/her case through the Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman has no decision-making authority and its main tasks are to negotiate, advise, raise public discussions and produce surveys. As previously, the Ombudsman is independent, but in organisational terms the position is within the Ministry of Labour. (Streng 2002.)

Finnvera Oyj is a financial company owned by the Finnish state. Finnvera grants loans, securities and export securities to business companies. There are some conditions the entrepreneur has to fulfill before the loan can be granted: the business has to be profitable, and the personal economy of the entrepreneur has to be in good shape. The entrepreneur also needs their own capital for the business. Immigrant businesses get loans and securities with the same conditions as Finnish companies. (Finnvera 2002.)

‘The Regional Office of IOM in Helsinki supports the governments of the Baltic and Nordic States in meeting the operational challenges of migration management through: assistance to migrants on their way to new homes and lives, assisted voluntary return for irregular migrants, including counselling to individual asylum seekers and refugees, training of officials and administrative capacity building for national institutions, aid to migrants in distress and research related to migration management and other services for migrants.’ (IOM Regional Office... 2002.)

There are several **cultural and friendship associations** (for example, Finland-Bosnia association, Finland-Chile association, etc). These associations work to inform about the country and its culture to Finnish people and make closer the relationship between Finnish people and immigrant people. There

are also immigrant units within municipalities. In many areas there are multicultural associations and meeting points for immigrants. In the capital, Helsinki, there is an International Cultural Centre Caisa.

3. ASYLUM PROCEDURE

ASYLUM PROCEDURE, FOLLOWING THE ALIEN'S ACT, in force from 10TH JULY 2000.				
After an asylum hearing, the asylum application can be processed in five different processes, of which four are accelerated:				
Accelerated procedures (4)				Normal procedure
Re-application	Dublin decision	Safe country of origin	Manifestly unfounded application	
<i>No time limit</i>	<i>No time limit</i>	<i>Within 7 days</i>	<i>No time limit</i>	<i>No time limit</i>
Decision from the Directorate of Immigration		Decision from the Directorate of Immigration		Decision from the Directorate of Immigration
Deportation can be executed immediately after a negative verdict from the Directorate of Immigration, although it is possible to appeal to the Administrative Court of Helsinki within 30 days from the decision, unless the Court interrupts the execution of deportation before deportation takes place.		Right to appeal to the Administrative Court of Helsinki within 30 days of the verdict. Deportation can be executed in 8 days, unless the Administrative Court of Helsinki interrupts the process.		Right to appeal to Administrative Court of Helsinki within 30 days of the verdict. The appeal postpones the execution of deportation.
Source: Pakolaisneuvonta (Refugee Advice Centre) 7.8.2000.				

Figure 1. Summary of the asylum procedure in Finland.

When an asylum seeker arrives at the Finnish border he or she leaves an asylum application with the police or Frontier Guard. The asylum application is sent to the Directorate of Immigration to be dealt with. After the asylum seeker has left the application with the authorities, they are usually transported to a reception centre. There are 14 reception centres in different parts of Finland. (Työministeriö 2002c.) Three of them are state-owned, nine are owned by municipalities, and the Finnish Red Cross owns two.

If the identity of the asylum seeker or the travel route is unclear, the asylum seeker is taken into detention. The detention time can last from a couple of days to several months. Every 2 weeks the district court decides on the continuation of detention. In early March of the year 2002, an amendment

to the Aliens Act concerning the section on detention was implemented. All asylum seekers who are kept in detention should be kept in detention units separate from criminals. Before the amendment took effect it was common that asylum seekers were kept in detention on the same premises as criminals, in police cells and prisons. Now there is a temporary detention centre on the premises of an old prison in Helsinki. There will later be a separate new detention centre. (Aliens Act; 537/1999, section 47.) The new amendment to the Aliens Act concerning the section on detention is an improvement compared to the former situation. While the asylum seeker is kept in detention, the police try to find out the identity and route of the asylum seeker.

The asylum seeker is asked to an asylum interview. Ideally this should happen within a few days of arrival in the country and applying but unfortunately this is not generally the case in practice. Sometimes it takes months before the asylum seeker is asked for an interview. At the moment there are two authorities carrying out these interviews: the police and the Directorate of Immigration. The Directorate of Immigration has been carrying out interviews of asylum seekers since 2001. Before this only police carried out the asylum interviews. Probably in the future the Directorate of Immigration will be the sole authority carrying out asylum interviews. The Directorate of Immigration makes the decision on the asylum application, based on the interview minutes.

If the decision is positive, the asylum seeker receives refugee status or a residence permit according to the need for protection. After a favourable decision, the authorities provide a home within some municipality, and the integration into Finnish society begins. A negative decision on the asylum application can be made using either an accelerated procedure or the normal procedure in seeking asylum (Pakolaisneuvonta 2002b).

The normal procedure

The normal procedure for asylum applications usually takes around 1 year or even more to reach a decision on an application. The Directorate of Immigration makes the decision based on an asylum hearing. If the decision on the asylum application is negative the applicant has the right to appeal to Helsinki Administrative Court within 30 days. The appeal postpones execution of the decision. (Pakolaisneuvonta 2000.)

The accelerated procedure

The amendment of the Aliens' Act of July 2000 introduced the accelerated procedure on asylum applications. There are four different kinds of ways to handle the application under the accelerated procedure. If an asylum seeker fills out a completely new asylum application after receiving a negative decision on his or her first application, the accelerated procedure is followed. After the asylum hearing there is no specific time within which the Directorate of Immigration has to make a decision concerning the application. If the decision which Directorate of Immigration makes is negative, it means that the asylum seeker can be turned back immediately after he or she has received the decision. The asylum seeker has, however, the right to appeal to the Helsinki Administrative Court within 30 days after they have been informed about the decision, although the decision can be enforced immediately if the court does not stop the execution of the decision.

The accelerated procedure also is for applications under the Dublin agreement. This means cases where the asylum seeker has already left an asylum application in some other Schengen-country or has entered Finland via Schengen-country. After the asylum hearing, the Directorate of Immigration makes the decision, which, if negative, is executable immediately after the asylum seeker has been informed about the decision. The right to appeal to the Helsinki Administrative Court is the same as in the case of reapplication. (Pakolaisneuvonta 2000.)

The accelerated procedure is also used if the applicant comes from a 'safe country of origin' or if the asylum application can be assumed to be made on a 'manifestly unfounded' basis. If the asylum seeker comes from a safe country of origin the Directorate of Immigration must make the decision on his or

her application within 7 days after the asylum hearing. If the decision is negative, the asylum seeker has the right to appeal to Helsinki Administrative Court within 30 days from the moment they have been informed about the decision. The negative decision on an application is executable within 8 days after the applicant has received the decision, if the court does not stop the execution. (ibid.)

When an asylum application can be assumed to be 'manifestly unfounded' the Directorate of Immigration has no time limit within which to make the decision about the application after the asylum hearing. If the decision on an application is negative, the right to appeal to Helsinki Administrative Court is the same as in the case where applicant comes from so called safe country of origin. The appeal has to be made within 30 days after receiving the negative decision and it can be enforced within 8 days. (ibid.)

Problems and violations of human rights

One problem with this accelerated process is that the concept of 'manifestly unfounded application' can be questioned. The definition is so loose, that basically every application could be defined as 'manifestly unfounded'. An application could also be seen as 'manifestly unfounded' on grounds of credibility - against the recommendations of the UNHCR. A second point of concern is a new application after a negative decision. Which authority evaluates whether there is new substantial evidence to allow re-application is not specified; nor is how such an evaluation can be completed without an asylum hearing. Thirdly, one of the aims of the amendment of the Alien Law is to speed up the asylum procedure. This amendment of the Aliens Act (which came into force July 10th 2000) should have been evaluated from a perspective of efficient means of justice. While it is true that one group, such as the 'manifestly unfounded applications', is handled very quickly, there are also significant numbers of asylum seekers who have been waiting for a decision to be made on their application for over 2 years. (Finnish League for Human Rights 2002.)

Another problem is that asylum seekers can be turned back, even though an appeal process has been set into motion. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that those who seek asylum without proper grounds can be turned back quickly. The right to appeal remains, but it does not affect the enforcement. In the year 2000, of all applications turned down, 80% were handled under the accelerated procedure. The same figure for 2001 was 60%. This shows that the accelerated procedure has become more of a rule than an exception. (ibid.)

From the point of view of a fair trial, the provision for 'safe country of origin' is perhaps the most problematic of those under the accelerated procedure. An asylum seeker from such a country has almost no capacity to prove that a country is not safe for all. Applying this concept of safe country of origin to asylum seekers from countries such as Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic has led to an almost automatic rejection of their applications. Also, it is worth noting that Belorussia in 2000 was considered a 'safe country of origin'. There is no list of which countries are considered safe. The presumption is that all stable and democratic countries are safe for all and by leaning towards this assumption, all European countries, for example, are considered safe. (ibid.)

The time limit for the Directorate of Immigration to make the decision on an asylum application when the applicant comes from a safe country of origin is 7 days. This is a very short time, and seriously limits the possibilities of the applicant getting legal counsel. Many private lawyers refuse to take cases in the accelerated procedure when the applicant comes from a safe country of origin because of the short time limit. (ibid.)

The Administrative Court of Helsinki decides on the numerous requests to stop the speedy executions of decisions. Unfortunately, very few requests are successful. With very few exceptions, in the cases in which the decision is made under the accelerated procedure when the applicant comes from a safe country of origin or the application is found to be 'manifestly unfounded', the execution of the decision takes place soon after the time limit of 8 days. (ibid.)

The procedure times for decisions on asylum, residence permits, family reunification and naturalisation take a very long time. It takes usually about 1 year for an asylum seeker to receive a decision on his or her application. The naturalisation process can take up to 3 years with the Directorate of Immigration before decisions are made. (ibid.)

Legal statuses

The residence permits are usually granted on a 1-year basis and then one has to reapply for the residence permit. Legal statuses for foreigners are as follows: refugees and asylum seekers, along with migrants, belong to Group A. Group A consists of people who have been granted a residence permit for permanent purposes in Finland. In group A.1 the permit is granted on the basis of Finnish origin or another tie to Finland. In group A.2 the residence permit is granted because of the long-term need for a skilled labor force. Group A.3 consists of people who have been granted asylum or a residence permit due to a need for protection or the residence permit is granted within the quota refugee system or for some other grave humanitarian reason. Group A.4 is people who reside in Finland permanently, but do not belong to groups A.1, 2 or 3. Group A.4 consists of people who have been granted a residence permit because not granting the permit would be obviously unjust. Group A.5 consists of people whose family members have A-group status. Those people who have resided in Finland with A-status for 2 years without a break can be granted a permanent residence permit. (Decree 538/1999).

Group B status is for people who have been granted a temporary residence permit, for example students and employees.

Group D status is for people who cannot for some reason yet be returned to their home country. A residence permit in this group is granted for a temporary stay in Finland, because the person cannot be expelled or turned back because of the situation in his or her home country or because the authorities in the country of origin feel negatively about receiving the person concerned. If there is still a basis for granting the residence permit after 2 years' stay in Finland then the new residence permit can be granted as group A.4 status.

Group F status is for people who have arrived in Finland for a short stay and who have been granted a visa (e.g. tourists) (ibid.).

The residence permits in status group A have to be renewed usually every year but after a person has resided in Finland 2 years continuously he or she can apply for a permanent residence permit. No status is entered on a permanent residence permit (Ulkomaalaisvirasto 2002).

4. ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Asylum seekers	3 634	2 023	839	854	711	973	1 272	3 106	3 170	1 651
Asylum decisions ¹⁾										
- Asylum granted	12	9	15	4	11	4	7	29	9	4
- Residence permit granted	564	2 073	301	219	334	277	372	467	458	809
- Negative decision	1 344	1 435	492	276	248	278	240	1 330	2 121	1 045
Family reunification)										
- Positive decisions ²⁾	-	1 208	323	250	226	509	240	185	214	495
- Negative decisions ²⁾	-	838	765	880	513	299	769	362	392	785
Quota	500+	500+	500	500+	500+	500	600	650	700	750
- Extra quota	200	200	-	500	500	-	-	-	-	-
Refugees received by municipalities ³⁾	2 349	3 689	1 412	1 415	1 193	1 406	958	1 189	1 212	1 857
People who have moved to Finland as refugees, since year 1973	6 361	10 050	11 462	12 877	14 070	15 476	16 434	17 623	18 835	20 692
1) The decisions of Directorate of Immigration 2) The decisions since 1.5.1999 3) Quota refugees, asylum seekers with positive decision, people received through family reunification										

Table 1. Asylum decisions 1992–2001 (Ministry of Labour (Työministeriö), Directorate of Immigration (Ulkomaalaisvirasto)).

5. EDUCATION OVERVIEW

5.1. Educational system in Finland

We will briefly present the Finnish school system for both basic education and adult education. We feel that it is important to explain about basic education because the skills and education obtained as a child, will affect the future. The government provided education system in Finland is free.

In Finland there is a compulsory education system, which means that in the autumn of the year that a child becomes 7 years old, he or she goes to primary school. The compulsory school usually lasts 9 years and it ends when a child has completed the requirements for basic education, or when a child becomes 17 years old. So every child, regardless of their citizenship, has a right and a duty to go to comprehensive school. (National Board of Education.) According to the Finnish constitution, section 16, everyone is entitled to a free basic education.

It is the duty of Finnish municipalities to ensure that every child has the possibility to attend school within their own municipality, or if this is not possible then the municipality has to arrange the basic education another way (for example, in cooperation with another municipality). The municipalities in

Finland have self-governance. They receive state subsidies and with the help of these subsidies can organise basic education within the municipality. (Municipality Act (365/95))

After comprehensive school, most the students continue to upper secondary school, or vocational school. Vocational training takes 3 years. It aims more at the needs of working life. Students learn practical skills in the field they are studying. In the vocational training there is a 6-month training period included when the students go to work within their field of study. To get an occupation and build practical skills, one option is apprenticeship training. It takes 1–4 years to complete the training. The apprenticeship training gives a person the possibility to acquire professional skills through practical work. The upper secondary school takes 2–4 years. The education is a general one. Students do not acquire the skills of an occupation, but open up the possibility to continue educating themselves, for example, in polytechnics and universities. At the end of upper secondary school, students take a matriculation examination, which is needed when applying to universities and polytechnics. (National Board of Education.)

In Finland there are two possibilities to acquire higher education: in universities and in polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulu*). In polytechnics, the education is more practical than in universities and the skills acquired are more vocational. In the polytechnics, the studies are organised into degree programmes. The basic requirement for being able to apply to university is either a completed matriculation examination or a minimum of 3 years of studies in vocational school. To get into a university or polytechnic, in most cases there is an entrance exam in addition to the basic requirements.

When studying in university as an undergraduate student, one can complete a Master's degree or Bachelor's degree. Usually in Finland most students take their Master's degree over 5 to 6 years without taking the Bachelor's degree first. This is, however, about to change now due to the standardisation of European higher education degrees. Probably in Finland there will also be a higher education system where undergraduate students first complete a Bachelor's degree and then a separate Master's degree.

It is quite hard to pass the entrance exams to universities, but there is a possibility for anyone, regardless of educational background, to follow university studies in the 'Open University'. Studies in the Open University cost students a fee. One cannot graduate in this way, but if accepted into university, these studies are recognised immediately to count towards the university studies. (National Board of Education.)

In addition to this, there is a separate system for adult education. Adults can complete comprehensive school and upper secondary school as adults in adult upper secondary schools and folk high schools. Depending on the student this usually takes 1 to 3 years. There is also vocational adult training, which is divided into initial training and continuing training. After this training, one can take a skills demonstration test, in which professional competence is proved and a certificate awarded. When a person has completed the vocational adult programme, he or she acquires the same qualification as young people acquire through the basic vocational training. Besides these opportunities, there is one additional option for adults: labour market training (*työvoimapolitiittinen koulutus*). The objective of labour market training is to provide students with skills they need in working life. The scale of labour market training depends on an individual's personal needs and capacities. (Opetushallitus 2001a.)

The general aims of the Finnish education policy are: the regional achievement of education, equal education possibilities for both language groups (Finnish and Swedish), the non-segregation of sexes, free education and the student grant system provided by the state. Besides this general education policy, there are objectives for immigrant education: the equality of immigrant children and adults, functioning bilingualism and multiculturalism. (Opetushallitus 2002a.)

5.2. Refugees' and asylum seekers' entitlements to education and training

In Finland, when speaking about refugees' and asylum seekers' entitlements to education and training, authorities use the concept of education for immigrants. Immigrants are people who have moved to Finland from abroad due to marriage, work or studies, asylum seekers, quota refugees, remigrants and the relatives of refugees and remigrants (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2002). In some of the studies, these different groups are not separated from each other clearly enough but are described as a homogenous group despite the fact that the starting points for, for instance, migrant children and refugee children vary greatly.

First we describe the educational entitlements for refugee and asylum seeker children, because the facilities the young acquire through education affect their future life and possibilities. All children between the ages of 7 and 16 are entitled to go to comprehensive school regardless of their nationality. Sometimes refugee children need preparatory teaching before they can attend normal classes. The objective of these preparatory classes is to give refugee children a basic knowledge about Finnish society and the school system. A large effort is also put into teaching Finnish or Swedish to children, because they must learn basic skills in Finnish or Swedish, before they can begin to learn other subjects in school. The preparatory teaching takes into consideration a pupil's culture and background. As soon as the pupils at the preparatory teaching level have gained satisfactory results they enter the normal classes in the comprehensive school. (National Board of Education.)

Preparatory teaching is also given to adolescents. The objective of this teaching is the same as in other preparatory teaching: to give adolescents the means to succeed in comprehensive school. Preparatory teaching is also offered in the field of vocational training. The aim is to provide students with better language and other skills to be better able to follow vocational training. A different kind of preparatory teaching is provided for immigrants (including refugees) with the aim being to provide immigrants with basic skills in language and other matters to be able to study in a comprehensive school, vocational training or upper secondary school. (National Board of Education.)

Refugees have different educational backgrounds and this results in certain requirements for education provided for refugees. The Finnish state declared in the Act on Integration and Reception of Asylum Seekers, that Finnish society must provide a means for immigrants to become full and equal members of our society. One way to bring this statement into practice is integration education. The objectives of integration education are to give adult immigrants linguistic, social and cultural facilities, and empower them to be equal partners in everyday life in a new cultural environment. (Opetushallitus 2001b.) The integration education consists of language courses and other courses where immigrants learn skills about life, social and cultural knowledge and education together with knowledge of working life. The focus is on language courses in Finnish or Swedish.

The National Board of Education presented a recommendation on integration education for immigrant adults in 2001. It states that it is important that immigrants receive integration education soon after they move to the country, so that they are not marginalised or excluded from Finnish society. (ibid.) Immigrants are provided both labour market training (including vocational training, training in work place, employment measures, measures equated with labour oriented measures) and integration education, which is mostly language training and general training about Finnish society.

Two different institutional bodies provide the integration education. The Labour Administration is responsible for providing integration education to those immigrants who are unemployed and have an integration plan. The municipalities provide the integration education to housewives, elderly people and other immigrants who do not belong to the work force. (Valtioneuvoston... 2002, 29.)

All kinds of preparatory teaching are organised for immigrants in the field of completing basic education and upper secondary school and vocational training. Adult immigrants have the possibility to achieve professional skills through vocational education (vocational training, apprenticeship

training, skills demonstration tests, labour market training). There are also separate vocational courses organised for immigrants. (National Board of Education.)

5.3. Information on language training provisions

Due to recommendations made by the authorities, a lot of effort is put into language education. It is believed the only way for immigrants to really adjust to Finnish society is by learning the language. In Finland there are two official languages: Finnish and Swedish, and the aim is that all immigrants in Finland learn either Finnish or Swedish besides their mother tongue.

The aim of the Finnish state is to make refugee pupils bilingual. The pupils can study Finnish or Swedish according to a syllabus for Finnish or Swedish as a second language. The teaching and the objectives are different for those who study Finnish or Swedish as second language than for those who study it as a first language. The authorities believe that it is important that a child has good skills in his or her mother tongue. This makes it easier for children to learn another language in addition to their own mother tongue. The refugee pupils have the possibility to receive teaching in their mother tongue. Usually the mother tongue of refugee pupils is taught 2 hours a week if there are at least four refugee pupils that want to have teaching in the same language. (Opetushallitus 2002b).

According to Finnish law there are no obligations for schools to arrange teaching in a refugee pupil's mother tongue but still many municipalities do arrange it. The Finnish Act on Basic Education makes it possible to provide teaching in separate teaching groups or schools mostly or all in immigrant children's own language. Own language or bilingual teaching has at least been arranged in Espoo, Helsinki, Vantaa and Kuopio. The teaching languages have been Arabic, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese and Estonian. (ibid.)

There are different kinds of ways in which the education of Finnish or Swedish can be organised. Of course, after the preparatory teaching all other lessons also support the learning of Finnish or Swedish. Pupils can have remedial teaching in Finnish or Swedish. Languages can also be taught as a voluntary subject or schools can use special resources' hours for language education. (National Board of Education)

In the recommendations on integration education, the National Board of Education emphasises the importance of language training. The integration education should consist of 40 credits, which is 1 year's full-time studying. The academic degrees in Finland consist of 120 to 180 credits at least. Due to insufficient resources of the Labour Administration the integration education has been arranged on a smaller scale. In 1998–2001 the integration education arranged by the Labour Administration only consisted of approximately 18 credits. The small resources have been divided to buy shorter training periods for larger numbers of immigrants. (Valtioneuvoston... 2002, 31.) This means that immigrants have not learned the language well enough to be able to work in the labour market or to continue other training.

The scale of immigrant adult education is not specified anywhere, and this has caused confusion between different officials. The Labour Administration emphasises vocational training and employment training for immigrants more than integration education. Allowances for immigrant education have declined in the last few years (Monitori 3/2001). The difficulty is that if immigrants do not receive enough integration education (including language education) they cannot develop the skills needed to succeed in attending vocational or employment training for immigrants.

In 1997–2001, around 7000 immigrants carried out the integration education arranged as labour oriented training. There was a separate appropriation of funds for integration education directed at refugees until 1999 but this is no longer the case, (Valtioneuvoston... 2002) due to general cuts in administration. The Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres have bought

integration education most for refugees, but have spent less money on education acquisitions for other immigrants (ibid.).

In language training provisions, policy is not equivalent to practice. Immigrants face problems due their inadequate language skills when seeking work or trying to continue training or education. The authorities admit that good skills in Finnish or Swedish is the key, but still there are sometimes enormous difficulties when putting the Act on Integration into practice. One quite bizarre feature is that some immigrants complain that they are only offered language training and nothing else, which leads to frustration on their behalf. (ibid. 31.) Still many immigrants say that a big obstacle in getting a job or attending future training is inadequate language skills.

Both the immigrants and authorities sometimes get frustrated when trying to find a language course at the right level (ibid.). More specified language courses are needed. The immigrants should also learn enough vocational vocabulary to manage in the labour market. There should be more training in which immigrant learns both vocational skills and language skills together.

5.4. Possibilities for refugees to follow vocational training

Immigrants have, at least officially, the same opportunities to take up vocational training as Finnish people. They can study in vocational schools either in the Finnish language or in courses in which the teaching language is English. Those immigrants who do not have a Finnish school-leaving certificate apply to vocational training through the so-called 'flexible' system. The 'flexible' system means that the arranger of vocational training can depart from the normal application system and take into consideration individual reasons of students. Examples of flexible application reasons are physical factors, difficulties in comparison of school certificates, other significant individual reasons, or lack of supply for vocational training for adults. So when it comes to a student of foreign origin, the most usual reason is that the applicant does not have a Finnish school-leaving certificate. (Opetushallitus 2001c.)

Before a student applies to vocational training, he or she can have 1 year's preparatory training for vocational education, if the student thinks that he or she does not have the qualifications required to complete the vocational training. In preparatory training, students learn Finnish or Swedish, mathematics, social sciences and become familiar with different occupations. One possible option to acquire the professional skills needed in working life is through apprenticeship training. There is also separate vocational training for immigrant adults. New working methods are workshops for young people, and workshops that operate in vocational schools. There people learn practical skills but do not gain an occupation. There are not separate workshops for immigrants but they can attend the same workshops as everyone else. (Opetushallitus 2001a.)

The National Board of Education arranges preparatory teaching for vocational training. It has also granted special permission to some educational institutes to arrange preparatory teaching for vocational training. (Opetushallitus 2002c.)

5.5. Government funded training schemes

Basically, the Finnish state pays for education, although not always directly. It subsidises municipalities which have a duty to organise basic education, and can also organise other education. All the universities in Finland are state-owned. Basic education (comprehensive schools) in Finland is free. In vocational schools and upper secondary schools you have to pay for your books and sometimes for your meals. Adult training (vocational and employment training) and education is usually organised by vocational institutions, folk high schools, adult education centres, universities and other educational institutions. Labour Administration provides labour market training and the training is free for the participants.

The Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres buy immigrant training for their clientele from suppliers that are usually private educational institutes. Municipalities can themselves decide how to organise the integration education that is their responsibility. They can also buy the integration education from private suppliers. (Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotouttamislain toteutumisesta). The labour market training is funded by the Labour Administration. The municipalities provide integrative measures along with the Labour Administration (Laki 493/1999).

The Education Administration grants government subsidies to the municipalities, which can buy immigrant education from educational institutes. The dilemma is that the municipalities may feel betrayed because from their point of view the Act on Integration only brought new responsibilities but no extra subsidies to arrange these responsibilities. The municipalities would be willing to arrange integration education for immigrants as long as the financial details are discussed within different administrative bodies. (Monitori 3/2001.)

5.6. Access to higher education

In Finland, higher education is divided into university degrees and polytechnic degrees. Presently, neither of these possibilities costs anything to students; only materials and meals have to be paid for. People can apply to polytechnics through the national joint application system. To be able to apply one needs to have a matriculation exam, upper secondary school leaving certificate or vocational qualification. Foreigners who do not have a Finnish school-leaving certificate can apply through the 'flexible' application system. (National Board of Education.) 'Flexible' system means that polytechnics have agreed on common principles that can be applied in cases where the applicant does not fulfill all the requirements needed to be able to apply. This usually means cases in which an applicant does not have a Finnish school certificate or does not have all the grades in his or her certificate. For example, a student of foreign origin can apply through the 'flexible' system if he or she does not have a Finnish school certificate but has otherwise shown sufficient capabilities to study in polytechnics. (Opetushallitus 2002d).

To be able to study in university in Finland, immigrants must have basic education (a matriculation exam, or 3-year vocational qualification). Besides this, it is usually required that the immigrant has had a right to start university studies in another country. One possibility is also to study in the Open University, although in this way one cannot obtain a university degree.

5.7. Recognition of qualifications for education

In Finland there is no general recognition system for degrees from foreign universities. The National Board of Education gives decisions on an individual basis on the recognition of foreign degrees. The degrees can only be recognised by application and the decision the National Board of Education makes concerns only the particular application.

A precondition for a foreign degree to be recognised in Finland, is that the degree is completed in a university or other institute of higher education that belongs to the official higher education system in the country where the degree was granted. The degree given by the higher education institute must also be recognised in the country of origin. There are different rules concerning the recognition of foreign degrees from the EU and EEA, and the countries outside of the EU and EEA. The starting point is that the degrees recognised in one EU country are recognised in another EU country, but this does not, however, apply to all cases. Outside of EU and EEA countries, only higher education degrees are recognised. In addition to this, a person can get an advisory statement from the National Board of Education on his or her vocational qualifications. It is to be noted that these advisory statements are not official recognitions, but are meant to make it easier for immigrants to enter the labour market. (Opetushallitus 2002e.)

5.8. Tuition / college fees

As mentioned in the previous chapters the basic education system is has no fees in Finland (ibid.), as is the case for most other education. The education in comprehensive schools is free; there are only a few exceptions (foreign language schools). For shorter studies (in folk high schools and adult education institutes, for example) one may have to pay a fee. Also studies in Open University are subject to a fee.

5.9. Student maintenance (scholarships, grants, loans)

There is a residence-based general social security system for students. The student maintenance system is quite good. Full-time students are entitled to a student grant, a government guarantee for a student loan and housing supplements. Mature students can have a study grant until the end of 2002, and from the beginning of 2003, the study grant for mature students will change into an adult education allowance. The Education and Redundancy Payments Fund grants the adult education allowances. Also mature students can get a government guaranteed loan from KELA. (Kela 2002a.)

Student financial aid is given to students who study full time for at least 8 weeks at an upper secondary school, folk high school, vocational school, or institution of higher education. Mature students who study in upper secondary schools cannot receive financial aid. If one studies in an institution of higher education, he or she is to for financial aid for 55 months. When studying at the vocational level, the financial aid depends on the extent of the studies.

There are separate regulations for foreign students. They can get financial aid for their studies, if they have lived in Finland for at least for 2 years and the purpose of their stay has been something other than studying. It must also be considered that residence in Finland is permanent. But there is an exception. If you have lived In Finland less than 2 years, but your status is refugee or remigrant, you may qualify for financial aid for students. There are also rules for citizens of the EU or EEA. (Kela 2002b.)

Studying in institutions of higher education is difficult for refugees and especially for adult refugee students because student allowances are insufficient, and refugees face difficulties when trying to find a job to cover the living expenses. There is a need for FREE to provide refugees scholarships and grants so that they would really be able to study full time in institutions of higher education. Insufficient economic resources are a major obstacle for refugees who are planning to attend higher education.

5.10. Private sponsorships

There are possibilities to get grants from different funds and foundations. These grants are usually reserved for postgraduate students for writing a dissertation or licentiate dissertation. Some of the grants are, however, used for undergraduate studies in universities. Foreigners can apply for some of the grants, but not all of them. There are usually specific requirements for different grants. (Suomen kulttuurirahasto 2002a.)

5.11. Studying on benefit

Our financial aid system is quite well covered. There is at least one problem, however. The student allowances are too small to be able to just concentrate on studying. The average rent in the metropolitan area is very high, and there are not enough cheap student houses compared to meet the demand. This means many students have to work at the same time as studying. Because of this,

Finnish undergraduate students graduate from universities much older than in other countries. It takes longer for the students to graduate because they have to work while studying. Most of the students do not want to take student loans but prefer working instead.

6. LABOUR MARKET

6.1. Judicial and administrative position of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market

Asylum seekers have the opportunity to gain permission to work after 3 months' residence in Finland. The decision about granting asylum takes up to 1 or 2 years, and only then has the asylum seeker access to integrative training and education. Finding employment without these constraints is difficult, and therefore the formal right to work does not in practice mean that asylum seekers in general would have the actual chance of finding employment after 3 months' residence. In addition, asylum seekers have to live in reception centres, and in many cases these are far from potential workplaces. (Pakolaisneuvonta 2002b; laki 493/1999.)

The Act on Integration and Reception of Asylum Seekers that entered into force in 1999, aims to integrate foreigners via employment. According to the act, an immigrant who is seeking a job and receiving unemployment benefit, has the right and the duty to take part in the designing of his or her individual integration plan, (*Kotoutumissuunnitelma*), and the right and the duty to participate in the training and employment programme which is presented in this plan, in cooperation with the municipality and the local public employment service agency.

The immigrant has the right to an individual integration plan over 3 years starting from the first day of official residence in Finland. In the case of asylum seekers, this is after the asylum application decision. (Laki 493/1999, 10§.) This means that asylum seekers have usually lived in Finland from 1 to 2 years before integrative measures start to take place. Before this, it is unlikely for them to find employment. Therefore, asylum seekers have a formal right to work, but in practice this right is hollow, since finding employment has proven to be very difficult without help from the public sector. In other words, the new life of refugees and asylum seekers in Finland often starts with a long period of unemployment.

Taking part in the individual integration programme is economically sanctioned for the foreigner. The foreigner receives an integration benefit, which is somewhat comparable with the lowest level of unemployment benefit. The integration benefit consists of a labour market subsidy and living allowance. If he or she fails to participate in the programme, and the integration process is seen as interrupted, the benefit is reduced. The grounds for granting the benefit is checked once a year and when the individual circumstances of the foreigner or his / her family members changes. (ibid. 11§.) It should be pointed out that the authorities face no sanctions whatsoever, if they should fail, for example, to provide proper education or other agreed measures to the foreigner (ibid.).

6.2. Integration education as an updating system for human capital

When the integration education system is seen as a system that advances the employment situation of refugees and other immigrants, the case is one of updating the labour market resources and human capital of immigrants to meet the demands of the Finnish labour market. The integration measures are the responsibility of the Labour Administration and the municipalities. These measures include mostly preparatory training for working life. (Laki 493/1999, 11§.) The education can roughly be divided into two parts: integration education (*kotoutumiskoulutus*) and labour market training. In practice, the number of vocational courses has been increasing in the individual integration plans, at the expense of

integration education and language training. This has led to special problems for refugees for several reasons.

1. Their migration is forced, not chosen; they have not moved to Finland because they wanted to move to Finland, but because they could not live in their country of origin, and had to move - to anywhere (Mero 1998). Consequently, they have less networks and opportunities here than the average immigrant.
2. The cultural and educational background of refugees and asylum seekers can be quite different from Finnish culture and education. This is why they need information about the institutional structures that surround them in Finland, and how to live and operate successfully in this new context. This information would be provided by integration education, which is now decreasing.
3. The labour market resources, such as work experience and education level, are often weak in comparison with the average immigrant or the average population. (Forsander 2002.)

Some details about the educational profile of refugees in Finland

In Finland, the educational profile of refugees is different in comparison with refugees in some other countries. According to a study based on statistics from the Ministry of Labour (n = 11,285), conducted by Forsander (2002), the average education level is highest for immigrants from China, Former Soviet Union, Europeans, and people from North America.

However, the levels vary a lot inside nationality groups; the most variation can be found among the Somalis, and the Chinese. Among Somalis, who form the biggest refugee group in Finland, there are both people from the countryside of Somalia, with almost no education at all, and highly educated people from the urban areas. (Forsander 2002, 124–125.)

Among Somalis and Iranians, there are many young people and people from the urban middle class. However, the sudden civil war in Somalia forced people to flee, when their education was still in process. One important factor that makes the education level for refugees low overall, is the low educational levels for refugee women. (Forsander 2002, 132–133.)

The refugee process according to Kunz

In the case of some refugee nationalities, the level of education has varied also in time, so that the people who arrived earlier had a higher level of education, than those arriving later. For example, the Somalis who arrived in the early 1990s, were better-educated urban young men. In the next few years, the amount of women and other family members with a lower level of education rose, which pulled the average level of education for Somalis down. (Forsander 2002, 134.)

Forsander (ibid.) has explained this phenomena by referring to Egon F. Kunz (1973). According to Kunz, the first refugees tend to be well-off people who *anticipate persecution*. The actual *acute refugees* follow, when the situation is such that fleeing is unavoidable. By then, they can use the resources and networks of the ones who left earlier. In the case of Finland, this might have happened,;however, the ones in the worst position fled to Kenia and Ethiopia, not to the Western countries. (ibid; Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001.)

In the case of Iranians, the first group of refugees fled in late 1979, and headed, for example, to the US and France (Forsander 2002, 134–135; Lewin 2001). The Iranians who came to Finland in the 1990s were for the most part ‘acute’ refugees (Forsander 2002, 134–135), which explains, for example, the difference in educational background of refugees in Finland and France. In other words, in comparison to the West, Finland is an exceptional case when it comes to the overall low education level of refugees.

The first Vietnamese refugees in Finland were well educated, but after coming to Finland in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of them emigrated to other Western countries.

Refugees in the integration education system

In this situation, educational levels are measured by years of education per capita. However, there is also another important factor, namely that Finnish employers do not generally appreciate foreign educational degrees as much as Finnish degrees, and moreover, that non-Western degrees are appreciated least. According to Paananen (1999), this may also be a tool for hidden discrimination in recruitment and salaries.

Because there is not enough integration training, some immigrants have inadequate language skills. They are still sometimes guided to take part in vocational courses, which would require more developed skills in the Finnish language. This slows down both advancement in their studies, as well as making it difficult to find employment. There is also some research that suggests that in the employment service agencies, the most efficient measures are pointed at those who are most likely to find employment anyway. (Vähätalo 1998; Lehto 1991, Maikkola 1990.)

Therefore, refugees and asylum seekers often find themselves at the bottom of the scale in integration education, vocational training and other supportive employment measures. We have repeatedly received statements from the Labour Administration, which claim that the situation of refugees in the integration education has improved during this year, but no actual data about this has been presented.

6.3. Situation of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market

Employment and unemployment

Since there is no separate information available on the employment information of refugees and asylum seekers, their statistical features are presented by referring to the nationalities in which the proportion of refugees and asylum seekers is the highest. In Finland this is the case with Somali, Iraqi, Iranian, Vietnamese and former Yugoslavian citizens. These nationalities, except the Vietnamese, migrated to Finland mostly during the 1990s. Appendix 1 shows that the unemployment rates for these nationalities are many times higher than the overall unemployment rate, which in itself is high (9.1% in 2001). On the other hand, for those nationalities in Finland which are least likely to be refugees or asylum seekers, such as French, Swedish, German and American, the unemployment rate is even lower than it is for the average population. The unemployment situation for refugees and asylum seekers is therefore difficult to compare with both the native population, and other foreign citizens.

The labour force participation (LFP) rate, meaning the proportion of those who participate in the labour market (employed and unemployed in the working-aged population), is low overall for the so-called refugee nationalities. Whereas the LFP rate for the average population in 1997 was 80% (79% for women), for Somalis it was 52% (29%), and for Iraqis 56% (49%). (Forsander 2002.) This means that very few people in these nationalities were in the labour force (either as employed or unemployed), and of those who are in the labour force, many or most are unemployed. These figures suggest that the employment situation for refugees and asylum seekers overall is difficult. Especially the women in these groups are excluded from employment and the labour market.

Employed immigrants are over-represented in the marginal segments of the labour force, meaning part-time and short employment periods (basically, work tasks not up to one's previous work experience or education). This kind of employment is stigmatised by fast changing periods of employment and unemployment, dependence on public support and rapidly changing income level. (Forsander 2002.) It is also difficult to make progress in working life from this kind of position (Reitz 1998).

Only 5% of immigrants are working in 'typical' employment, meaning full-time and long-term jobs (Forsander 2002). Additionally, immigrants receive lower pay for equal jobs than the native population. (Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Paananen 1999.)

Transferring of skills and change of careers

Among immigrants, it is rare to find employment that suits personal previous work experience and education. Employment that meets these factors seems to be available only to those who have been recruited directly from abroad. According to Forsander (2002), the typical educational background of immigrants is either the kind that meets the lowest demand in the labour market – low education – or, on the other hand, high academic education. The problem with the latter is that the jobs that require academic degrees often also require a good command of abstract Finnish language.

The obstacle for refugees and asylum seekers is their overall low education level, which is in contrast with the overall high educational level in Finland, and therefore pushes them into a labour market position which is lower than in their country of emigration. Another point is that the Finnish employers find it hard to rely on non-Western educational degrees, and one has to update foreign degrees in order to meet the demands of the employers. The training arranged by the Labour Administration is a crucial tool in this process. Without measures from the Labour Administration – mainly language training and vocational training – immigrants and especially refugees do not, in general, have a realistic chance to advance from the low-status entry jobs, to positions that meet their previous work experience and educational competences. (Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000.) The bigger the (Finland-specific) human capital deficit of the immigrants, the bigger are these obstacles. In the case of refugees, the deficit of human capital that suits the Finnish context is bigger than for other immigrants, since refugees and asylum seekers have not immigrated by choice.

Unemployed immigrants have reached better employment when they have been participating in special projects of the Labour Administration (see Honkanen 2000, Koistinen 1997, Pitkänen 1999). These projects have provided immigrant job seekers with individually structured education and long practical training periods on the job. The problem is that the regular functioning of the Labour Administration is inadequate when it comes to helping immigrants on long-term special projects. Another drawback is that the special projects have focused mostly on the immigrants with the best conditions to reach employment. There have not been special employment or training projects for refugees, who face the most difficult obstacles in finding employment. Help from the Labour Administration is crucial in gaining suitable employment.

Skills shortages per sector

Due to the ageing population, large age cohorts will exit the Finnish labour market in the next 15 years. This will be followed by labour shortages especially in the public service sector, construction and industrial work. In addition, there is shortage of high-skilled labour, especially in the information technology businesses.

The problems in recruitment have expanded continuously from the year 1993, during the period of high overall unemployment. The shortage of labour seems to be structural to a certain extent, caused by a fundamental and long-term mismatch between the supply and demand of labour in the labour market. In 2001, enterprises reported most problems in recruitment in construction, business life services and public services. (Tuomaala 2002, 11.)

To whom work permits have been granted provides another perspective on the situation. The work permit policy in Finland is based on the principle that a work permit is granted if a suitable employee for the job is not likely to be found from Finland in a suitable time. The two biggest groups that in 2001 were recruited straight from abroad, were low-skilled workers for gardening and harvesting jobs,

and high-skilled information technology experts. There is also a demand for technical experts in the metal industry, such as qualified welders.

In sum, at the moment the shortage of labour is present in low-skilled and high-skilled jobs, and in some positions (especially in the metal industry) that call for special technical competence. It is predicted that in the future, public services will meet the most acute shortage of labour. It would also be appropriate to employ immigrants in the public services, since the clientele is going to be more international than at present (see for example Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000).

Discrimination in recruitment

In recruitment, enterprises rely mostly on direct contacts with the job seekers, on public employment service agencies, and newspaper adverts (Tuomaala 2002, 6). The significance of straight contacts in recruitment is not very promising especially for newly arrived immigrants, since their social and professional networks are narrower than those of the native population or of those with a longer residence time in Finland. Due to strict immigration policy, ethnic communities are fairly scattered and small, which lowers their potential as employment and information networks.

Discrimination in recruitment is common in Finland. Discrimination is normally hidden and 'discreet'. Employers use incomplete skills in Finnish as an excuse not to hire foreigners (Paananen 1999, Jaakkola 2000, Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Koistinen 1997, Pitkänen 1999). In Finland, negative attitudes are targeted most often at Somalis, Arabs, Russians and Kurds; in 1998 more than 60% of Finns thought that immigration of these nationalities should not be encouraged (Jaakkola 1999). Somalis and Arabs meet much labour market discrimination as well; Jasinskaja-Lahti et. al. (2002, 86) found that of those Somalis who had applied for a job, 81% had met discrimination in recruitment, and for Arabs this figure was 64%.

Fifty percent of all immigrants have experienced racism in recruitment, but in 2000, for example, there were only three court cases dealing with the phenomenon. This shows that there is a severe judicial problem in coming to terms with ethnic recruitment and employment discrimination (Streng 2002.)

Regulations and funding (loans) for setting up businesses

Immigrants and the native population are in the same judicial position when it comes to entrepreneurship. An entrepreneur can get public support in two ways for starting up a business.

Employment service agencies can grant 'start money' (*starttiraha*) for new businesses that meet certain requirements. The entrepreneur has to be an unemployed job seeker, and the support can last for a maximum of 10 months, and is €420 – 760 per month. Employment service offices also offer training for entrepreneurs and those starting their first business. The basic guide leaflet for starting up a business is available in nine different languages. There is also a leaflet on cooperatives, which is targeted at immigrants especially and is available in several languages. The functioning of the state-owned financing company Finnvera Oyj has been presented earlier in this document. It treats immigrants and nationals equally.

Most of immigrants' companies function in the fields of foreign trade, business services and catering. Immigrant companies are concentrated in the capital area of Helsinki, following the overall immigrant population. Turkish immigrants have been most active in starting their own companies, and almost all of them function in catering.

Overall, immigrant companies are small in size. Successful immigrant entrepreneurs usually have a long employment period in Finland before starting up their own company. It is not common to start a successful company without a certain amount of Finnish work experience, and it is speculated that this is because immigrants lack proper social networks (Joronen 2000).

7. REFUGEE BARRIERS AND NEEDS

Language provisions

- **Barriers**

- The funding of integration education and especially Finnish language training is inadequate, the responsibilities between different authorities are unclear, and the waiting time for language training is too long.
- Immigrants are sometimes guided to vocational courses without sufficient skills in Finnish.
- The fast changing training policies of the Labour Administration makes it difficult for education institutes to hire professional staff.

- **Needs**

- More resources are needed for integration education and language training in general. It is important that immigrants and refugees learn Finnish or Swedish quickly after their arrival, since it improves their integration, studying and finding employment. One possibility would be to earmark certain governmental funds annually for integration education and language training. This would ease the situation of education institutes and create a more stable training policy.
- The areas of responsibilities regarding the first phase integration training should be made clear.

Access to higher education

- **Barriers**

- To be able to apply to a Finnish university, a student of foreign origin sometimes must have a right to study in a university in another country. This brings problems to those refugees who do not have a Finnish school-leaving certificate. They must apply through the same application system as foreigners.
- Entrance exams also cause problems for refugees because they emphasise the Finnish language skills.
- The application system for refugees is too complicated. There have been suggestions that foreign students should pay tuition fees for studying in universities. If this suggestion became practice, it could be more difficult for refugees in Finland to study in universities if they do not have Finnish citizenship

- **Needs**

- It should be made easier for immigrants to apply to universities and polytechnics. Ways to accomplish this are diversity in the application system, a simpler application system and more counselling about different possibilities when integration begins.
- One problematic issue is the requirement that those refugees who do not have a Finnish school-leaving certificate must apply to universities through the same application system as other foreigners. This causes real barriers to some refugees.

Access to vocational training

- **Barriers**

- Access to vocational training in general is good, but immigrants are guided to vocational training without proper basic knowledge about Finnish society, and proper skills in Finnish language.
- It may be difficult for immigrants to make proper training decisions for themselves. They can be guided into courses that do not match their interests, or their previous educational background.
- Special needs deriving from different cultural backgrounds, reflected in studying methods, are not taken seriously enough in adult training schemes.

- **Needs**

- Integration education should be arranged on the scale that the National Board of Education has recommended, and vocational training should come after enough integration education. With proper integration education immigrants would find it easier to see the social context in Finland, and what their own position in it is.
- There should be tutoring systems or more efficient support in planning one's studies.

Recognition of qualifications for education

- **Barriers**

- A functioning system of transferring foreign education degrees does not exist, and this limits the planning of integration education. Therefore, the starting level for each student is determined in arbitrary terms, and it is difficult to grasp individual educational needs. In practice, one course can have students with many different skill levels and interests.

- **Needs**

- There should be a standardised and functional system for recognising foreign education, and this system should be used in the planning and guidance of individual integration programmes.

Educational system

- **Barriers**

- The matriculation exam (ylioppilastutkintodistust) is one of the options for entrance in many universities.
- Teaching of some foreign languages is inadequate, and this makes it harder to learn Finnish as well.
- Different kinds of learning habits are not taken into consideration often enough.

- **Needs**

- The education system should have more teachers with immigrant background.
- Different cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration in teaching methods, and different educational needs should be taken into account in the substance of courses.
- Teaching of foreign native languages should be added.
- Education authorities should pay more attention to the need for remedial teaching.

Government funded training schemes

- **Barriers**

- The new Act on Integration and Reception of Asylum Seekers (1999) is a good one as such, but it is not carried out in practice effectively enough.
- Employment offices often guide immigrants to vocational training, which differs from their own interests. At the moment the integration education is arranged on a smaller scale than is recommended by the National Board of Education.
- The governmental focus has been moved from overall integration education to straightforward employment training, and the results are only satisfactory.
- Some immigrants feel that they are only guided to Finnish courses, while in contrast others feel that they do not receive enough Finnish teaching.
- In addition, the most efficient measures are targeted at those who already have the best odds of finding employment.

- **Needs**

- The amount of overall integration education and vocational training must be standardised with regard for individual needs.
- Earmarking funds for overall integration education could be one option.
- This must be accompanied by clearer administrative responsibilities, especially when it comes to arranging Finnish language education.

Recognition of Qualifications for Employment

- **Barriers**

- Foreign degrees are generally less valued by employers than Finnish ones.
- Non-western education is least valued.
- Foreign work experience is normally not counted at all by employers, which gives them the opportunity to treat the immigrant workforce as beginners, when it comes to salary and other working conditions.

- **Needs**

- Proper Finnish supplementary vocational education and Finnish work experience to improve the position of immigrants in the labour market.
- The Labour Administration can help in both cases. It should be investigated whether employers could legally be forced to take foreign work experience into account when setting the salary and other work conditions for immigrants.

Changing of Careers

- **Barriers**

- The unemployment rate for refugees is high, and the status of those who are employed, is lower than it was in the country of origin.
- There is a threat that refugees become trapped in unemployment and entry jobs not up to their skill level and previous work experience.

- **Needs**

- It is difficult for immigrants, and especially for refugees, to advance from the entry jobs in the labour market, without support from the Labour Administration.
- The Labour Administration should especially pay more attention to the situation of refugees, who are the clientele, who face most obstacles in employment.
- At present, the projects of the Labour Administration focus mostly on the well-off part of immigrant job seekers; this should be addressed.

Transferring of Skills

- **Barriers**

- There is a clear case of a mismatch of skills between the skill supply of refugees and skill demand of the labour market.
- The transferability of human capital varies for different lines of business.
- The Labour Administration has different kinds of adaptation problems, which have only been tackled in some special immigrant projects.

- **Needs**

- In order to ease the human capital mismatch, there should be a uniform system for charting the individual starting levels concerning the educational background of immigrants, adequate guidance in studies, and continuous observation of skills demand in the labour market.
- The growth of ethnic communities also creates a demand for ethnic resources in the labour market.

The Recruitment Process

- **Barriers**

- Ethnic discrimination is common in recruitment. Finnish job seekers are favored at the expense of foreigners.
- Discrimination is difficult to prove because of the current legislation and the burden of proof principle on which it relies.
- Employers usually use the Finnish language skills of the immigrant job seeker as an excuse not hire them.

- **Needs**

- Employers should face legal sanctions for recruitment discrimination; the burden of proof will probably be reversed when executing the EU racism directive nationally in 2003.
- Finnish language training for immigrants should be more versatile and should take into consideration individual background and needs.
- More combined language teaching (where student learns both vocational and language skills) is needed.

Job Search

- **Barriers**

- The employment networks of immigrants are limited when compared to the native population, and the information about vacancies and career opportunities is not passed on to them as efficiently as to others.
- The contacts with Finnish employers and networks are narrow.

- **Needs**

- Employment and work experience in Finland strengthens the contacts of immigrants with the Finnish labour market, and expands social networks.
- There is a need for stronger and larger ethnic communities and immigrant networks, and also for stronger contacts between immigrants and the mainstream working life and the job networks of native Finns.

Setting up Businesses

- **Barriers**

- Immigrants and refugees face the same obstacles as the native population.
- Especially for refugees, there are problems of limited social and professional networks, and the lack of economic capital.
- Employer payments are high, and it is claimed that the service sector is strained by high taxation of services.

- **Needs**

- Immigrants need stronger social and professional networks.
- One way to begin to establish such a network is by first finding paid employment in Finland.
- There should be special funding for refugees opening their own business, since they may lack economic capital. Taxation of services and obligatory employer costs should perhaps be checked; however this is a macro-level political issue.

Government Job Schemes for the Unemployed

- **Barriers**

- The overall unemployment rate remains high, and has the features of structural unemployment.
- The government may not be using all possibilities to reduce unemployment, and the Ministry of Finance has expressed that the desirable level of unemployment is as high as 7.5%.
- If the unemployment rate for foreigners continues at around three times the average, as it has been since 1993, we can assume that the unemployment rate for foreign citizens will not fall below 22% in the near future.

- **Needs**

- If structural unemployment is to be tackled, the equalising of labour supply and demand has to be studied.
- This requires a stable policy, which would allow the Labour Administration to develop and establish new methods that suit the changing conditions of the labour market.
- There should also be some macro-level structural renovations in taxation and obligatory employer costs.

8. COMPANY POLICIES AND CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

8.1. Company policies in Finland

Social commitment in business life has only recently become a serious topic in Finland. A quick look in some 20 of the biggest Finnish international companies' Internet sites reveals that large companies operating in the fields of industry and trade, and those companies with a large staff, take pride in informing the public and investors about their social responsibilities as a company. Especially the companies operating on an international level underline the need to operate in harmony with both their own personnel, and the surrounding communities.

The ethical principles of these companies focus, however, mostly on environmental issues. Partly this may be because many Finnish companies work in the fields of forest industry or mining, or in heavy industry such as paper production, which are all potentially very harmful to the environment. In addition, in the case of Finnish international companies, social responsibility seems mostly to consist of participation in development and education programmes in Third World countries. The Finance company Nordea has also recognised its social obligations in the Nordic countries.

In personnel policies, gender equality seems to be the most common theme. In a quick Internet search, only two large-sized companies, the energy company Fortum, and Metso, operating within the forest industry, mentioned in their ethical principles that their company policies include preventing ethnic and racial discrimination under all circumstances in which the company is involved.

Several other companies did stress the equality principle inside their own company, but do not mention ethnicity as a specified theme. The following large companies stated social commitments within their company policies most clearly: Nokia, Fortum, UPM-Kymmene, Kesko, Sonera, Stora Enso, Nordea Sampo, and Metso.

Managing diversity without a company policy

Overall, Finnish companies are rather silent when it comes to themes dealing with immigration, not to mention refugees. However, the lack of company policies that take a hard line against discrimination and racism does not mean that the current issues of multiculturalism and diversity inside the company are ignored. It is only that the overall company policies dealing with these issues are lacking; diversity is managed at floor-level, as Marja-Liisa Trux (2000) points out in her case studies on diversity management in Finnish cleaning and IT companies.

Often, when organisations work towards good ends, they have an acceptable policy, and media relations to help publicise the policy. They may lack any effective practice behind the policy, but nevertheless, it is the *image* of the policy that matters, and the idea that everything is under control. In the case of Finnish companies and diversity management, the companies do not have a policy to match the standards they practice – either the policy does not exist, or they are not publicising it. This can be a positive thing, as it gives room for individual or team-level solutions; but at the same time it can also be a strain, as we can see from the statistics and studies that prove ethnic discrimination to be common in Finnish working life. Fifty percent of immigrants have experienced ethnic discrimination during the recruitment process, and salaries for immigrants overall are lower than those of their native co-workers. (Jasinskaja-Lahti et. al. 2002, Paananen 1999, Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Pitkänen 1999, Koistinen 1997.)

8.2. Rules and conditions of charitable foundations

Three decades ago the representatives of some foundations and funds started to meet regularly. These meetings led to the establishment of a consultative committee of foundations and funds. The main task of the committee is to provide a possibility for foundations and funds to exchange information and opinions concerning common issues. The committee has established rules and conditions of good foundation custom. There are different laws, such as civil law and tax law, that define the grounds in which the foundation can operate. Different foundations are based on various principles.

The consultative committee has drawn up a guideline on the best practices to follow when operating the foundations and funds. However, the consultative committee respects privacy and independence of the foundations and funds. Because of the individual facts, good foundation custom is not always applicable to all.

Grants and rewards are distributed regularly. In addition to this, the share of grants and the rewards of returns is remarkably big. When deciding on grants explicit procedures are used. There is proper information on applying procedure (how to apply it, handling of applications, informing about decisions).

The members of the consultative committee try to act openly and keep people informed on their activities. Communication with media and authorities is open. Good foundation custom also means that administrative expenses are reasonable.

The boards of directors in foundations and funds are responsible for financial administration management being handled with consideration and persistency by investing the assets of funds or foundations in a secure and profitable way. This procedure aims at ensuring that the fund or foundation will act by its own regulations, now and in the future. Will and deed of gift regulations that concern donated property must be taken into consideration in financial administration management.

The consultative committee of foundations and funds aims at internal cooperation and information exchange between the members. The consultative committee maintains an office called Foundation Help (Säätiöpalvelu) where the applicants and foundations can request advice. (Suomen kulttuurirahasto 2002b.)

9. POTENTIAL DONORS

9.1. Current situation in the survey

The work with FREE began in Finland only in July 2002. Because of the late starting date, UAF in the Netherlands gave the Finnish League for Human Rights (referred here as FLHR) extra time until the end of August to deliver this final report. FLHR was also given some extra time for doing the surveying about potential donors and other FREE partners in Finland.

At the end of July, FLHR sent around 70 contact letters to companies, charitable foundations, educational institutes and administrative bodies. The contact letter was based on the formula provided by FREE, and the questionnaire, which was sent as an attachment, was a direct Finnish translation of the official FREE questionnaire. The target organisations were chosen so that in the case of administrative bodies and educational institutes, priority was given to those that already have experience in working with immigrants and/or refugees. In the case of private companies, we selected those who have a public image as socially or environmentally responsible companies, and those functioning in lines of businesses which face labour shortages.

We made two mistakes in this first phase of contacting potential partners. The first was unavoidable; in Finland, July is a vacation month and organisations are practically closed. Therefore, the letters we sent ended up in piles with all the other letters, which had arrived at our target organisations during July. Secondly, in many cases we failed to find the right contact people in the organisations.

Partly because of this, we received only few answers. We did a second round of contacting the companies, by picking up the most potential from our original target group, and adding some new contacts. This time several companies told us they had lost the questionnaire, and that they wanted a new one.

Despite our effort, publicity work has been quite minimal so far. The only public bulletin has been sent to the RASMUS e-mail list, which reaches some 400 organisations and experts working in the fields of immigration, anti-racism and multiculturalism, and is ran by the FLHR. The Regional Employment and Economic Development Centre of Uusimaa (including the capital area of Helsinki) suggested that they could publish information about FREE in their periodical which reaches private companies, but not before the actual functioning of a FREE foundation has begun in Finland. The fourth potential partner is The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), which represents approximately one million (1,068,000) wage earners.

During September and early October we sent a third reminder to potential donors and partners. Unfortunately, we did not get as many answers as we hoped for. We received one answer from an educational institute that thought the idea of FREE is good but the institute itself did not want to participate in the project other than acting as an education institute with market conditions. One company contacted us and wanted to know more about FREE and so we sent more information but we have not heard from them so far. The earlier mentioned potential partner SAK has not given an opinion about FREE yet but promised to handle the project and talk about in a multiculturalism-group meeting at the end of October. SAK has not been able to answer to us earlier due to forthcoming collective bargaining.

9.2. The results

As was mentioned earlier, in the first phase we sent FREE contact letters to 70 organisations, of which most were companies. After the first deadline had passed, we approached some 50 companies by e-mail and set another deadline. Some of the companies that did not reply received even three contacts from us. In both phases we received several replies, but the problem was that very few of them showed actual interest in participating in FREE.

It seems however, that some, or even many, companies are interested, but wanted more specific information about FREE. In a nutshell, maybe they were not interested in taking part in a survey at all, but would be more interested if they were contacted with a concrete project that was already running. So, even though there are only a few organisations in Finland that belong to the “yes” category, there are many more that are in the “probably” category.

So far we have received four positive answers and one answer will be sent to us at the beginning of November. Two organisations responded by filling in the questionnaire and one organisation answered via e-mail. We did an interview in the fourth organisation, and the fifth organisation will discuss the idea of FREE later this month (October).

We can draw only some guiding conclusions at this point, since we only have information from three potential partners. Firstly, taking part in FREE with economic donations seems to be quite unpopular so far. It would seem that in Finland, the potential need for FREE would be in building up a cooperation network, which would complement the existing public structures and adding education and employment services targeted at refugees.

We have received three negative answers from private companies and governmental institutions. One negative answer came from the IT company Nokia, which informed us that its social commitments are already full, and therefore Nokia is not interested in taking part in FREE. We see this as a big loss, since Nokia would have had a tremendous potential both in economic terms, and as a supplier of jobs that require higher education.

9.3. Evaluation of methods

In retrospect when we evaluate our work, a few points must be raised. First of all we overestimated the interest of employers to participate in FREE. Not one company showed real interest in participating in the project. Some representatives of companies replied that they had lost the information concerning FREE and asked for a new information package. However, we sent new questionnaires and information and still did not receive a single answer from private companies.

At least a few reasons come to mind as to why private companies were not interested. They would have needed more specified information about FREE (figures, budget, specified activities). Actually all those who responded would have wanted more information on FREE. They said that they could not give an opinion on FREE before they know more concrete things about the project. For FREE to succeed in Finland the following procedures would be needed. The project should be turned into a specified product. After this there should be a separate organisation to market the idea of FREE to potential private companies. The marketing organisation should focus on what participation in the project would really give to private companies, i.e. something concrete they would get in return for participating.

9.4. Conclusions

It is not possible to present anything other than initial interpretations of the views of potential Finnish FREE partners, since the number of answers was so small. However, the respondents have given interesting and useful information, which should not be reduced only to a matrix examination. Bringing out the views calls for a qualitative approach, since two of the organisations that were interested in FREE felt that they could not fill out the questionnaire at all, but instead presented their views in an interview.

Two education institutes, the University of Joensuu and the Viittakivi Institute, informed us that they would be interested in taking part in FREE as providers of education and employers; therefore,

although we so far lack company partners, we do have employers that are interested in FREE. The education institutes mentioned here showed interest in arranging services that are quite close to the needs recognised by the Labour Administration; however, these organisations do not work in the same geographical, and therefore, administrative, areas.

We interviewed the Regional Employment and Economic Development Center of Uusimaa. There, the image of refugees as entrepreneurs seemed to be new. The interview was conducted in a group, where participants were representatives from several departments of the Centre. The centre organises entrepreneurship courses specifically for immigrants but immigrants can also attend normal entrepreneurship courses. There is also a separate information and help desk for immigrant entrepreneurs, where information and help is provided in five languages.

Some very good points came up in the debate. The representatives thought that one possibility for FREE would be some form of support to immigrants who will participate in an entrepreneur course. The support activities would take place before the actual entrepreneur course. The representatives hoped for some externalised services that FREE could provide for refugees, namely individual tutors for refugees in both studies and in working life. The representatives of the centre also saw that scholarships for higher education would be needed and that one should support new forms of entrepreneurship among immigrants.

In addition, one official thought the idea that Finnish companies would be interested in participating in FREE because of ethical principles or publicity work, to be a ‘beautiful idea’, saying this with a quite sceptical tone. However, this does not necessarily reflect the real situation, so much as the personal view of the interviewed official.

As a whole, however, the Centre showed interest towards FREE and provided their view on the preferable role of FREE from their point of view. It was interesting that the organisations generally associated the needs of refugees as needs of gaining *any* Finnish work experience, not so much supporting higher studies or starting up their own companies.

Based on our work, at the moment we believe that FREE could be most efficiently built up in Finland as a system that would support the existing public services. So far, we have found the following needs:

- Individual tutor services for refugees in education and companies.
- Scholarships for new refugee entrepreneurs. The economic resources and social networks of refugees are limited, and the normal public support measures for starting entrepreneurs are not sufficient in their case.
- Scholarships for higher education. For the same reason, namely lack of economic resources, refugees lack the possibility to focus solely on long-term (academic) studies.

In general, the organisations were hoping for more precise information about FREE. On the other hand, they have provided us with lots of useful information about themselves and their interests and views, which was the aim of the whole survey.

According to the view of the potential partners, governing of FREE in Finland should not be too administration-based, but nevertheless, there should be coordination in order not to create an overlapping system with public measures. The administrative bodies have multiple expertise and experience with refugee issues, but they are often tied by certain political, internal prioritising models, which do not favour refugees; this is especially the case with the Labour Administration.

All in all, the interviewed representatives of different organisations saw that the idea of FREE is generally a good one. However, only few were willing to participate in concrete ways. Others saw that they would need more information. In sum, there are good grounds for establishing FREE. However, more concrete information is required on FREE, which would be turned into a product and then someone, for example a consultant, could market the idea of FREE to private companies.

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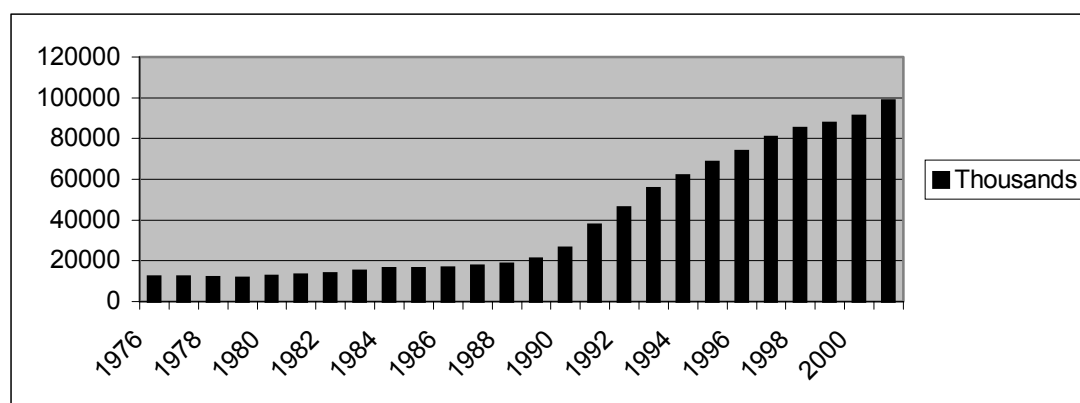
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APPENDIX: BACKGROUND STATISTICS

Citizenship	Unemployment rate (%)						<i>Estimation of Ministry of Labour 2000 (2001)</i>	
	In regional labour statistics							
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999		
Iraq	91	82	83	79	81	80	76	
Somalia	92	84	81	74	64	74	68	
Iran	78	70	70	69	66	75	63	
Vietnam	63	60	59	60	59	68	60	
Bosnia-Hertzevovina	..	88	88	80	67	64	50	
Morocco	70	63	63	57	58	65	55	
Yugoslavia	88	82	75	74	67	53	49	
Former USSR / Russia	..	..	..	56	53	53	47	
Russia	79	71	69	64	58	..	..
Former USSR	49	45	44	38	34	..	..
Turkey	54	48	45	42	37	38	36	
Thailand	58	51	55	43	39	36	32	
Estonia	63	55	47	40	32	31	29	
Italy	..	34	31	33	19	18	16	
Poland	28	27	27	24	18	14	15	
China	20	15	17	17	13	12	13	
Norway	24	26	24	23	14	14	12	
United Kingdom	25	21	22	17	15	13	11	
France	..	25	25	15	15	12	11	
Sweden	32	31	29	25	21	11	10	
Germany	19	17	19	17	12	10	10	
United States	24	17	18	14	11	10	10	
All Foreigners	53	49	48	44	39	37	33.5	31.6
Whole population	20	20	19	17	15	14	12	9.1

Unemployment rates for largest immigrant groups in 1994-2001. (N>500) (Statistics Finland, Ministry of Labour.)



Number of foreign citizens in Finland in 1976-2001 (Tilastokeskus, 2001, 2002).

Citizenship	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Russia	5828	7785	9720	11810	14316	16861	18575	20552	22724
Estonia	5893	7472	8446	9038	9689	10340	10652	10839	11662
Sweden	6528	6685	7014	7291	7507	7756	7809	7887	7999
Somalia	2883	3538	4044	4555	5238	5371	4410	4190	4355
Yugoslavia	2072	2255	2407	2624	2755	2935	3392	3575	4240
Iraq	846	1009	1341	1855	2435	2670	2960	3102	3222
Former USSR	7468	6804	6163	5187	4675	3628	2966	2447	2249
United Kingdom	1676	1747	1865	1803	1907	2058	2170	2207	2352
Germany	1576	1613	1748	1836	1961	2072	2162	2201	2327
United States	1754	1775	1844	1833	1905	2001	2063	2010	2110
Iran	919	1125	1275	1397	1681	1706	1868	1941	2166
All foreign nationals	55587	62012	68566	73754	80600	85060	87680	91074	98577

Ten largest nationality groups and number of all foreign nationals in 1993-2001 (Tilastokeskus 2001 & 2002).

	New applications	Positive decisions (incl. all residence permits)	Biggest applicant groups
1990	2743	157	Somalia
1991	2137	1719	USSR
1992	3634	576	Yugoslavia
1993	2023	2082	Yugoslavia
1994	839	316	Somalia
1995	854	223	Somalia
1996	711	345	Somalia
1997	973	281	Somalia, Yugoslavia
1998	1272	379	Yugoslavia
1999	3106	496	Slovakia
2000	3170	467	Poland
2001	1651	813	Russia
Total 1990-2001	23113	7854	

Asylum applications and decisions in 1990-2001 (Työministeriö 2002).

Year	Latin America	Asia	Near and Middle East	Africa	Eastern Europe	Total
1973-1977	182					182
1978			1			1
1979		100		1		101
1980		15				15
1981		19		3		22
1982	9	21				30
1983		151	5			156
1984	3	62		1		66
1985		24	1			25
1986	3	131	1	1		136
1987	4	144	12	7		167
1988	1	311	27	1		340
1989	4	466	59	13	5	547
1990	1	461	365	20	11	858
1991	1	276	351	606	132	1366
1992		138	642	1255	314	2349
1993	4	263	525	975	1922	3689
1994	24	163	365	582	278	1412
1995	14	66	440	304	591	1415
1996	5	28	594	160	406	1193
1997	7	27	778	491	103	1406
1998	2	41	482	349	84	958
1999	2	78	542	130	437	1189
2000		342	370	142	358	1212
2001	2	363	477	397	618	1857
1.1.-30.4.02	9	55	172	99	177	512
Total	277	3745	6209	5537	5436	21204

Refugees received in Finland in 1973-2002, by continent (Työministeriö 2002).

Country of origin	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1.1.-30.4.02	Total
Somalia	590	1168	889	476	223	130	412	256	83	123	250	84	4684
Bosnia and former Yugoslavia	37	219	1900	239	582	404	78	36	36	8	18	19	3576
Iraq	109	296	337	121	270	435	471	323	288	227	188	70	3135
Iran Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia	203	249	104	176	112	134	283	142	241	130	218	82	2074
Vietnam								19	380	244	502	111	1256
Afganistan	267	115	224	119	37	7	2	7	1				779
Turkey	1		13	3	19	7	5	11	68	222	331	45	725
Kongo	8	50	42	52	48	25	21	14	8	8	55	15	346
Croatia	3	8	39	63	34	18	45	30	7	6	9	12	274
All refugees								7	18	100	51		176
All refugees	1366	2349	3689	1412	1415	1193	1406	958	1189	1212	1857	512	18558

Refugees received in Finland between 1991-2002, by country of origin, from the ten largest nationality groups. Peak year for each nationality is emphasized. (Työministeriö 2002.)