



EntryPoint Mentoring Programme

Enhancing Opportunities for Both International Talents and Enterprises in Finland



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to the point

Target Groups for Transfer:

Professionals with an international mindset regardless of the industry in which they are active as well as international students holding a degree (Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.) at educational institutions

Organiser:

Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce: COME-project (Chamber of Multicultural Enterprises)

EntryPoint in a Nutshell:

EntryPoint is a mutually beneficial partnership and a two-way learning and integrating process over a six-month mentoring period. Time commitment: about 2-3 working days in total, depending on the needs of those involved)



Finland
for the year 2016

Total population of Finland in 2016:
5.5 million

Immigrant population in 2016:
6.2% of the overall population

Employment rate of immigrants in 2016:
48% (non-immigrants: 69.9%)

Starting position/challenge

International students are the third-largest group of new-comers to Finland. However, every second immigrant holding a Bachelor's degree (vs. 25% of Finns) and every fifth immigrant holding a master's degree or PhD (vs. 5% of Finns) is overqualified for a position. In order to tackle this situation, the EntryPoint programme was developed, which mainly targets international students holding degrees from Finnish higher education institutions. The six-month-long EntryPoint Mentoring Programme has developed a two-way learning and integration journey with the goal of integrating highly educated immigrants. Through this programme, both students and enterprises, i.e. Nokia and others (see below), profit from the dynamics of migration in very tangible ways.

Implementation

EntryPoint brings international talents (mentees) and Finnish professionals (mentors) together. The mentees are Bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D. students of any year in their respective studies. Students apply for EntryPoint through their Finnish institutes of higher education, which are close collaborators of the programme. Mentors are professionals and corporate partners from private, public and third-sector organisations. EntryPoint has a three-dimensional learning model, consisting of pair meetings (e.g. between mentor and mentee), subject-specific group meetings for up to 20 participants who share a common interest on a certain subject (e.g. company visits, interactive workshops), and collective meetings for about 100 participants (e.g. networking events, orientation). Once a mentor and a mentee are matched, they both sign a Mentoring Partnership Agreement. Mentors and mentees can decide themselves which topics will be covered and how often they will meet (once a month typically). All participants, however, are provided with a Mentoring Toolkit that includes guidelines and instructions to help plan the partnership. A Learning Diary for the mentees



records their progress, enhances their ability to reflect on their career, and encourages them to act on their reflections independently.

Summary

EntryPoint strengthens and lives by the idea of integration as a "two-way street": integration is thus less of a burden, but rather a mutually beneficial process and challenge – both migrants and corporations are dedicated to it and benefit from it. For the mentees, professionalisation opportunities and job chances adequate to their qualifications arise. Enterprises, on the other hand, can keep their finger on the pulse of international labour markets. Furthermore, the programme enables them to attract new talents and cultivate innovation through multidisciplinary networking. Diversity dynamics play a crucial role in shaping overall EntryPoint activities. All participants learn through the activities of the three-dimensional learning model to acknowledge and appreciate each other's different cultural, educational, professional background and perspective. Moreover, EntryPoint's toolkit includes a brief introduction on multicultural issues, thus supporting self-study to those involved.

There is Nothing Like Good Advice

Katri-Sofia Ruhlmann, Head of the Capability Management office for Digital Platforms and Capabilities at Nokia

What do companies that participate in Entry Point think of the mentoring programme? What hopes do they have, what goals do they pursue? And why do they get involved in the first place? Katri-Sofia Ruhlmann recalls her initial determination to engage with the programme: "During my professional journey I have personally had the privilege to meet great people with brilliant insights into multiple areas." The Nokia manager continues by underlining the importance of the mentoring process as a very fruitful instrument for successful labour market participation: "There is nothing like good advice from people who share their thoughts about their career paths." This, according to Ruhlmann, is not just a matter of abstract, metalevel advice, but can

be quite down to earth, too. "Sometimes you just need advice on office policy, for instance, or on how to present a problem to your boss. Or maybe you need to hear how someone else dealt with a similar work-related challenge, or solved a professional issue." What did she expect to learn from the mentees?



And what has she gained from the overall mentoring experience? Ms. Ruhlmann recalls that she "wanted to hear and see what young professionals are facing when they are entering the job market". Her hope had been "meeting new people, building my professional network and getting an insight into the aspirations of young professionals with an international background." In the end, participating in EntryPoint has been particularly useful in terms of better understanding the innovative, ever-changing world we are living in. According to the Nokia manager, "receiving insights into new topics and specific new areas that I have not been involved in is key to innovation – the world is changing. I have to change too!"

Shania Shin, Mentoring Programme Officer at COME-Chamber of Multicultural Enterprises

Cultivating Employability, Attracting International Talents



What is the innovative aspect of EntryPoint?

Mutuality, translatability, and multidimensionality are important and innovative traits of the programme. EntryPoint is, first of all, a reciprocal partnership between Finnish mentors and international talents. Also, the programme is carried out in English as a lingua franca in order to practice this global business language.

Furthermore, the programme is mutually beneficial. EntryPoint's various group activities – ranging from company visits to interactive workshops – allow the Finnish enterprises to attract international talents, improve cross-cultural communication and management skills, and enlarge their interdisciplinary professional networks by getting to know employees from other companies, industries, academic institutions, as well as other foreign students.

International talents, in turn, cultivate employability and can identify opportunities through the programme by means of gaining knowledge about the Finnish labour market, employers' expectations, and potential job opportunities.

Would it be possible to introduce the model in other countries?

EntryPoint's three-dimensional learning model (see above) is applicable to national or regional organizations who are striving for the integration of highly educated immigrants. EntryPoint is a transformable model in other countries due to its language (English) and methodology, including a practical guideline. The mentoring toolkit exists both as a PDF and as a paper version.

What can the model achieve in the long term?

The programme has a great future, both on the level of content and on the level of sustainability. Given the demographic evolution in Finland, attracting international talents will be an important future issue, too. Since all mentors of EntryPoint are seasoned experts in different fields, inviting them as main speakers or workshop leaders in various group activities – ranging from company visits at the mentor's working premise – make EntryPoint sustainable in the long term.

Authors: Alisha Molter, ebb; Dr. Johnny Van Hove, ebb

Editor: Dr. Johnny Van Hove, ebb

Photos and illustrations: Almut Elhardt/Förderprogramm IQ, Helsinki Chamber of Commerce, Julia Schlax (RockAByte GmbH)

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Network IQ

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