



Empowering Immigrant Women – The Success Story of Auroras Mentoring Network

Graduate Women's Baltic Sea Conference 12.10.2019



Auroras

Auroras network

- Administered by the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women
- Organizes **working life mentoring** in both individual and group settings
- Two target groups with immigrant background: **educated women** and **housemothers**
- Mentors: women and **volunteers** who are currently working or recently retired
- Mentoring is **held in Finnish**
- Now: **Auroras project 2018-2021**, funded by the Finnish Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) and Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus, until 06/2020)

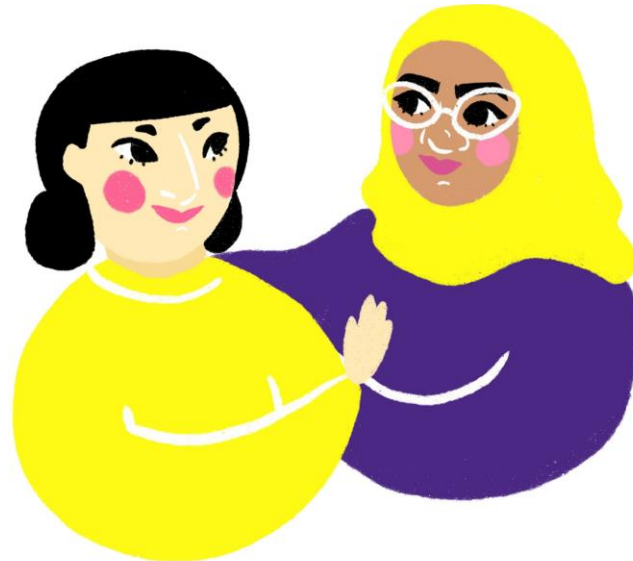


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The main goal and how to get there

GOAL: support immigrant women's integration into Finnish society

HOW: the volunteers (mentors) help the women to identify their own skills, to network, to learn more about Finnish working life and to improve Finnish language, especially in working life



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Some statistics and facts

- Over one-half (54%) of Finland's population with foreign background moved to the country for family reasons, women more than men. *(Statistics Finland 2014)*
- Employment rate of men with foreign background nearly on level with men with Finnish background, women have more difficulties in finding work. Employment rate of women: with Finnish background 73% and foreign background 56%. *(Statistics Finland 2014)*
- Duration of living in the country is significant factor: 40% of women with foreign background having lived in Finland for under five years were employed in 2014, but as many 67% of those having lived here for over ten years. *(Statistics Finland 2014)*



Some statistics and facts

- Men with foreign background having completed at most basic level education find employment even slightly *better* than men with Finnish background. Women´s education does not even out the differences, that is the fact in all levels of education. *(Statistics Finland 2014)*
- Unemployed persons with foreign background had searched for work more actively, on average, than those with Finnish background, and they have utilised various ways of looking for work. *(Statistics Finland 2014)*
- Factors that impact the possibilities for women to find work: parenting and care responsibilities and challenges that exist in the encounters between official employment services and immigrant women. *(Steel & Jyrkinen 2017: Searching for employment: highly educated immigrant women and combined capabilities)*



Some statistics and facts

- Challenges with employment services: lack of common language and understanding but the services also seem unable or unwilling to hear the voices of highly educated women, keen on gaining on access to working life in Finland. *(Steel & Jyrkinen 2017: Searching for employment: highly educated immigrant women and combined capabilities)*
- There is a lack of time for personal advice and there has been deficiencies at evaluating the degrees from countries other than Finland. *(Steel & Jyrkinen 2017: Searching for employment: highly educated immigrant women and combined capabilities)*
- In the activities organised by the NGO the women felt they were accepted, seen and heard. Improving the self-knowledge and heightening the self-awareness has led to a significant change in their capabilities in relation to working life. *(Steel & Jyrkinen 2017: Searching for employment: highly educated immigrant women and combined capabilities)*



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- The mentoring takes place in groups, participants also have the opportunity to seek for individual mentoring.
- The group mentoring process lasts approximately six months and is held in Finnish.
- Participants are expected to commit to the group.
- 2019 (first year of the project): 11 groups + 10 individual mentoring pairs = about 45 actors and about 40 volunteers
- Project goals (total 2018-2021): 126 actors from which about 42 housemothers & 42 volunteers

Workshop



P.S. Let's keep in touch and share ideas!

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- Dividing into three groups
- Get to know each other in the group and think together:
 - What are the networks actually and how to help somebody to get them in a new home country?
 - Answer [the question on the screen](#) with your phone and discuss about it
 - If you want, you can share your own experiences on what has helped YOU to go forward on your career?
- Working time: 30 minutes

References

- Statistics Finland (2014). Work and well-being among persons of foreign origin in Finland in 2014 (executive summary in English)
https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/uth-tutkimus/yhteenveto_en.html
- Steel, Tytti & Marjut Jyrkinen (2017) Searching for Employment: Highly Educated Immigrant Women and Combined Capabilities, Research on Finnish society, Nro 10(1):2017, pages 35-42.
<https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/232726>