



Testipiste

**Initial skill identification  
implemented in reception centres**

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## **Abstract: Asylum-seekers possess many types of skills**

From January to March 2016, the language assessment centre for adult migrants Testipiste was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture to conduct a survey in reception centres. The survey covered 1,004 asylum-seekers from 32 countries. The asylum-seekers were interviewed individually to assess their educational background and work history, as well as their reading and writing skills, for example. The objective of the survey was to anticipate the future educational needs as the number of asylum-seekers grows.

The survey's educational background assessment focused on the migrants' basic education, upper secondary school education and vocational education and training (VET), as well as higher education. The majority (69%) have received 7–9 years of basic education. Around half of the respondents have studied on the upper secondary school level. Around 14 per cent have participated in vocational education and training. While the number of migrants with VET studies may seem low, the most likely explanation for this is that those included in the survey come from countries where work that is done by hand is learned through practice, making vocational education and training less common. The majority of VET studies have been completed in the fields of construction and industry. 27 per cent had completed some higher education studies: 16 per cent stated that they had completed a degree, most often a Bachelor's degree. 7 per cent do not have any sort of educational background.

Asylum-seekers possess many types of skills. 90 per cent had previous work experience, many in multiple fields. Most of this work experience has been acquired in the construction and transport industries. 27 per cent have worked as construction workers, painters, engineers and in other positions in the construction industry. 21 per cent have worked as a taxi, bus and truck driver and in other transport industry positions. Other major fields include the commercial sector, the restaurant, hotel and food production industry, as well as the cultural, communications, art and handicraft sector. 19 per cent have worked as entrepreneurs.

The survey also included an assessment on the migrants' reading and writing skills in both their native and study language. Most of the respondents can read and write in either language or both. Only 7 per cent are completely unable to read and write. To support the planning of education channels, the migrants' technical reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet were also assessed. The majority (73%) requires various degrees of practice in reading and/or writing in the Latin alphabet. The majority of these most likely require only a shorter training period to support their reading and writing skills. These figures are indicative: the situation may change when the migrants have been in the country longer and are used to hearing and seeing Finnish.

Based on the survey, we can note that, in the future, reception centres could arrange training in reading and writing skills as well as other training that strengthens the study abilities of those who are waiting for their asylum decision. Integration training should, in turn, be arranged with a more work-oriented approach: in addition to class learning, it should also include regular on-the-job learning periods and/or vocational education and training. An adequate amount of resources should be ensured for guidance. Interaction between migrants and the mainstream population should be promoted. The amount of vocational integration training should be increased and the language skill requirements should be reassessed. The amount of preparatory studies for higher education should be increased. Orientation training for higher education could also be one possibility. Younger asylum-seekers who lack basic education should be provided with the opportunity for completing their basic education. The

integration of those in a reception centre who are provided with a workplace should be ensured and the work community should be provided with support for interacting with an employee who comes from a different working culture. Skill identification should be ensured. In the future, the skill survey could be conducted for example in connection with the orientation period that has been planned for the reception centre. The information should be collected centrally by the authorities while respecting confidentiality and personal data protection.

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## 1. Introduction

This report is an assessment on the initial asylum-seeker skill survey that was conducted in reception centres. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture and it was implemented by Testipiste, the language assessment centre for adult migrants, from 14 December 2015 to 15 March 2016. The objective of the survey was to help anticipate the future educational needs of those who will receive a residence permit. The results of the survey may also be useful for municipalities who will receive those who have received a residence permit, labour force authorities, business life and other networks that are for example interested in employing asylum-seekers for tasks that are suitable for them. The report presents the practical implementation of the project, its results, as well as those recommendations that, based on the survey and its sample, can be seen as possible educational needs or measures.

During the survey, 1,004 asylum-seekers were interviewed in reception centres located in Uusimaa. Most of the people who were included in the survey come from Iraq and Afghanistan, which are also the countries that have the most people coming to Finland overall according to the Finnish Immigration Service. Therefore, the survey results can be seen as applying nationwide for those nationalities who are most represented by the sample.

The survey assessed the following information on the asylum-seekers:

- a. gender, age, country of origin and length of time spent in Finland,
- b. native language, other language skills and especially English language skills,
- c. educational background,
- d. native and study language reading and writing skills, Finnish language technical reading and writing skills, and
- e. work history and possible entrepreneurial background.

This information can be used as a basis when planning possible new educational models and tracks that will accelerate the entry of asylum-seekers into the workforce and provide the skills required by Finnish working life, while also keeping integration in mind. The recommendations are compared to the current model and contain suggestions for new methods for effectively implementing education that is meant for those who have been granted asylum.

This report has been prepared by Tanja Sandberg and Elina Stordell on behalf of the working group. The working group members were Kristel Kivisik, Jutta Kosola, Virva Muotka and Eveliina Sirkeinen.

## 2. Current implementation of integration training and reading & writing training

Adult migrant integration training is based on the Finnish National Board of Education's National Core Curriculum for Integration Training for Adult Migrants and the National Core Curriculum for Literacy Training for Adult Migrants, both dated 1 February 2012.

Integration training comes in two varieties. Both contain training in Finnish or Swedish, and the second also contains training in reading and writing. In this report, the integration training that contains training in reading and writing is referred to as reading and writing training, and the other is referred to as integration training.

For integration training, the central education modules are Finnish or Swedish and communications skills, working life and societal skills, as well as the guidance that is arranged regularly from the beginning of the training. Every educational track includes an on-the-job learning period with a minimum recommended duration of six weeks that can be completed in one or two periods. The duration of the on-the-job learning period can also be adjusted individually depending on the student's needs. The student's educational module can also include optional studies as well as training and work try-outs that support the student's personal employment and integration plan.

The integration training offers three different tracks: the track for slow learners, the track for regular learners and the track for fast learners. In the capital region, all three tracks are offered regularly, but the situation can vary in the other regions of the country. Every track consists of modules, the amount of which varies from three to five modules depending on the region of the country. For example, in the capital region, every track contains four modules. The scope of the training is 48–54 credits (1–1.5 years) depending on the educational track. One credit is equivalent to about 35 hours of a student's work. In practice, the track for slow learners in the capital region lasts 270 days (13.5 months) and the track for regular and fast learners lasts 240 days (12 months).

The scope of the training is individual and depends on the student's initial level, study capabilities, educational success and goals. The training does not always start from the beginning, as the initial level varies depending on the student's language skill, and sometimes the educational modules can be repeated if the student does not attain their training goals.

Since 2015, the capital region has featured new vocational integration training where the vocational education and training begins during the integration training. In addition to learning the other contents of the integration training, the vocational integration training aims to assist the student in learning the vocabulary of their own field and complete parts of their degree during their integration training, for example. These kinds of training programmes have been offered in connection with the construction, care, hotel, restaurant & catering, and transport sector.

The central education modules for the reading and writing training are Finnish or Swedish and communications skills as well as reading and writing skills. The training consists of modules, the amount of which varies in the different parts of the country. The training lasts 160–200 days on average. The scope of the training also varies greatly according to individual needs from one module to four. After the reading and writing training, the students continue on the regular integration

training track, most often on the track for slow learners, and many of them on the slow track meant for students who have completed the reading training.

Currently, a change is being planned for the reading and writing training for the beginning of 2018 to integrate the training into the basic education for adults and therefore under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Before the training, the migrant participates in an initial level evaluation that is part of the initial survey conducted by the labour administration. A majority of the persons who participate in the initial level evaluation have registered as unemployed jobseekers at the Employment and Economic Development Office, where an integration plan is made for them. The plan typically contains studies in Finnish or Swedish, for example. The implementation of the initial level evaluation varies depending on the region of the country. The implementers are selected on the basis of competitive tendering that is arranged by the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment every couple of years. The largest initial level evaluation organisation is Testipiste, the language assessment centre for adult migrants, which has operated in Uusimaa since 2010. The initial level evaluation model that has been developed by Testipiste is used by various other organisations across the country that do similar work.

The goal of the integration training is to reach the skill level B1.1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in Finnish or Swedish, which is also the skill level required for attaining citizenship. A person who has reached this target skill level has the functional basic language skills for e.g. language-supported vocational education and training and for carrying out work tasks. Four areas are used to evaluate the migrant's skill level: speech, speech comprehension, writing and understanding text. From January to October 2015, of the 4,833 students in the national Koulutusportti<sup>1</sup> system who completed the integration training organised as labour market training, the language skill level of 3,680 students (76%) was below the target level B1.1. In practice, the general skill level of for example those on the slow learner track often falls below the target level, even though the target level may be reached in individual areas like speech comprehension.

Integration training is organised both as labour market training for adults and as self-motivated training. The education has been provided by private and public educational organisations. The education is put for competitive tender by the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment usually every 2–3 years (sometimes even by module), which is why the educational providers change often. The wide variety of organisers and the different educational implementations weaken the education's effectiveness and treat migrants in the different parts of the country unequally.

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<sup>1</sup>The data was received from the labour administration's Koulutusportti system. Koulutusportti is a data



system that helps the Employment and Economic Development Offices to direct migrants who have registered as jobseekers towards language or vocational skill surveys and training that promotes integration.

### 3. The implementation of the survey

Where applicable, the survey utilised Testipiste's initial level evaluation model for integration training placement as well as Axxell Multicultural Centre's picture-based vocational skill identification model. Testipiste is the most experienced initial level evaluator and integration training placement provider on the national level. Since 2010, Testipiste has provided unemployed adult migrants mainly in the capital region with integration training placement, and it has helped around 18,000 clients altogether.

Several statistical analyses have found that Testipiste's testing models and tests are reliable. In addition, the connections between initial level evaluation tests and the Finnish language competency that has been achieved by the end of the integration training have been researched. Reaching the goals by the end of the training is most predicted by the number of studied languages and the person's educational background. The educational background especially affects the development of writing skills. In addition, the study capability tests used in Testipiste's initial level evaluation (e.g. technical reading and writing) and the Finnish language skill level evaluation that is given in the final evaluation are linked to one another.<sup>2</sup>

The survey included answering a background information form, writing one or several short writing samples, technical reading and writing tests in Finnish as well as a short interview for assessing the person's work history. The survey lasted around 15—30 minutes per person.

The survey was implemented in 13 reception centres in Uusimaa, with around 17 visits in total. The survey visits were implemented with the following schedule:

21 December 2015	Vantaa Auramo
21 January 2016	Helsinki Metsälä/open side
26 January 2016	Helsinki Metsälä/Koskela emergency accommodation
27 January 2016	Nurmijärvi Röykkä
28 January 2016	Helsinki Sturenkatu
29 January 2016	Helsinki Sturenkatu
2 February 2016	Helsinki Pitäjänmäki/Kutomotie
3 February 2016	Helsinki Sturenkatu
4 February 2016	Helsinki Sturenkatu
9 February 2016	Helsinki Pitäjänmäki/Kutomotie
10 February 2016	Espoo Otaniemi Emergency Services College
11 February 2016	Kirkkonummi Aavaranta
11 February 2016	Kirkkonummi Evitskog

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<sup>2</sup> Testipiste and the Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä 2016.

25 February 2016	Kirkkonummi Aavaranta
26 February 2016	Vantaa Auramo
2 March 2016	Vihti Hopeaniemi
2 March 2016	Vihti Riuttaranta

Before the actual skill survey was initiated, the skill survey model was piloted (21 December 2015 Vantaa Auramo) and modified with the necessary changes. The changes in both the implementation and contents were so major that only a part of the pilot results were included in the final results of the project.

The visits to the reception centres were agreed upon in advance and the reception centres were supplied with notices in different languages on the purpose and contents of the survey. In the reception centres, the purpose of the survey was also explained with the help of interpreters to the participating asylum-seekers, and each participant was also provided with a personal interview time. In general, all those who were present were eager to participate in the survey, and the reception was positive. The number of participants varied depending on the number of residents in the reception centres. All those who wanted to participate in the survey could do so either during the first or second visit.

Each survey visit included 3–9 Testipiste interviewers representing experienced language skill evaluators, Finnish language teachers for integration training, reading and writing skill teachers, and working life teachers for integration training. They were assisted by 1–4 interpreters either on-site or via telephone. To ensure the reliability of the evaluation from the perspective of repeatability, before the survey, every evaluator participated in one or several orientation sessions where they were informed about e.g. the survey's implementation and practical matters related to it, their obligation to confidentiality and Testipiste's evaluation criteria. The new survey evaluators monitored the proceedings of the interviews on-site before beginning their survey evaluations. This ensured the general quality of the survey results.

In one reception centre, a centre employee participated in the survey on an experimental basis. The reception centre employee could, after participating in a brief orientation session and monitoring a few interviews, assist asylum-seekers in filling out the survey form. However, evaluating reading and writing skills proved difficult for a person who had no previous experience. In the future, it is essential that the persons who implement the survey are orientated carefully with the tests and evaluation criteria used. The centre employee also highlighted the lack of resources: at least in this experiment, the reception centre employees found it difficult to let even one person participate in the survey. This means that if the goal is to transfer the initial skill evaluation implementation to the centre employees, enough personnel and time must be allocated for it.

When necessary, interpreters were used to help, but since the forms were translated into different languages and the interviewers were provided with key words and phrases in different languages, there was a marked decrease in the need for interpreters.

Validity is also part of the evaluation's reliability: i.e. that the evaluation tools measure exactly the skills that they are supposed to measure. The survey form questions were chosen according to this principle as appropriately as possible. The asylum-seekers are asked about their most central

background information as well as the information that is necessary for anticipating their educational needs. This means that there are no questions about their family or reasons for immigrating, as these are unnecessary in this context and their inclusion could cause unnecessary stress in an already-tense survey situation. The tests that were used were also chosen according to their appropriateness. The participants did not have to participate in any extra tests whose results could not have been utilised in the survey.

The settings that the reception centres could offer for implementing the survey varied greatly. During the survey, the reception centres could contain other simultaneous activities. However, every centre contained a suitable room or rooms for the survey, where the personal interviews could be held as peacefully and confidentially as possible. In some places, the reception centre employees, guards or volunteers guided the participants to the interviews, and in others the survey evaluators or interpreters retrieved them. Generally, the transitions went smoothly, although it required one or more extra persons.

### **3.1. The survey form**

A paper evaluation form was developed in Testipiste as a tool for the survey, and it was translated into seven languages: Arabic, Dari, Persian/Farsi, Kurdish Sorani, Somalian, English, and French. An example of the survey is provided as an appendix. In addition to collecting the information, the project wanted to assess whether the asylum-seekers could fill out the form independently. However, even when provided in their native language, filling out the form proved challenging for the asylum-seekers. Just the idea of filling out the form was difficult for some, some had difficulty interpreting the answer option classes, and a small part could not read the text in their native language. Only 25 per cent of the interviewed asylum-seekers could fill out the form independently. 64 per cent needed the interviewer's help, and with 9 per cent the interviewer had to fill out the whole form. If there is a need for providing a similar kind of survey for asylum-seekers in the future, a tailor-made computer program could prove more efficient than a form, as a program could also provide visual and audio support. It is still likely, however, that not everyone will be able to answer the questions independently. During the survey, an electronic form was developed on the basis of the survey form with the Webropol tool. However, the electronic form was not implemented as it was not seen as being suitable due to the previous observations, technical challenges and tight schedule.

The form asks for the asylum-seeker's reception centre and municipality, identity card customer number, gender, age, country of origin, length of time spent in Finland, native language and other language skills. The answers are chosen from a list and written in the open field.

For their native and study language, the asylum-seeker is asked whether they can read and write them. They are also asked to briefly write in this language/these languages about where they are from and what they would like to do in Finland. Based on the survey, the asylum-seekers answer the questions on their native and/or study language writing skills in a reliable manner: if the asylum-seeker has marked on their form that they can read and write, they were generally able to provide a writing sample. Most of the samples were written in Arabic, and they were processed together with an interpreter and evaluated as understandable. Therefore, based on this survey, there might not be a need to ask for writing samples in the future, as the asylum-seeker's own evaluation can be seen as sufficient.

There are separate questions for English on whether the asylum-seeker can speak or write in English.

They are also asked to briefly write in English about where they are from and what they would like to do in Finland. Based on the survey, asking about the asylum-seekers' English skills with the form is not reliable enough. Many answer in the form that they know English, even though they cannot speak or write more than a few words or phrases. In this report, this sort of language skill is not considered to represent an adequate level of English.

The form also asks whether the asylum-seeker thinks that they could study in English. As just ticking a box does not provide reliable information, the answer was always compared to the interviewer's evaluation on the asylum-seeker's English language speaking and writing skills. Even after this, the result is an indicative evaluation of the asylum-seeker's language skills, which means that it cannot be used to determine whether an asylum-seeker could truly study in an English language training or education programme in for example a university of applied sciences or a university. In this survey, the interviewer's evaluation of the asylum-seeker's English skills was also added to the form.

The form also asks about any other languages the asylum-seeker knows. However, these languages are not listed in this report, as the information is based solely on the information provided by the asylum-seeker and since in Finland there is no vocational education and training or higher education available in any other foreign language than English. The results are as expected: the asylum-seekers often know several languages that are spoken in their countries or origin or in their neighbouring countries. In addition, they know the languages that they have been exposed to on their journey to Finland, such as Turkish, Greek and Russian. Some have studied European languages at school, such as French.

The form also asks whether the asylum-seeker can read and write in the Latin alphabet. The form refers to this as the "English alphabet", since during the pilot many of those answering the question understood the Latin alphabet as referring to their knowledge of Latin. Even during the survey, many interviewers had to specify that this did not refer to their knowledge of English, but their understanding of the letters. Even with this, the asylum-seekers did not always answer reliably. Those who are used to another alphabet (such as the Arabic alphabet) can find it difficult to evaluate their knowledge of the Latin alphabet. Part of the asylum-seekers answered in the form that they knew the Latin alphabet but could not demonstrate any sort of reading or writing skills during the tests or even write their own name on the form with the Latin alphabet without a model. On the other hand, some of the asylum-seekers were able to read and write some Finnish text and Finnish words, even though they had marked that they could not understand the Latin alphabet. In the future, it is not necessary to ask for the asylum-seeker's Latin alphabet skills, as this can be ascertained more reliably with technical reading and writing tests.

In addition to the questions on their language skills, the asylum-seekers are asked about their educational background. The asylum-seeker is asked to mark how many years of basic education they have completed. In addition, they are also asked about their upper secondary education, vocational education and training and higher education. For vocational education and training and higher education, the asylum-seeker is asked to provide the field of study according to classification provided by the authorities. For higher education studies, the asylum-seeker is also asked to provide the duration of their studies, their possible degrees, and the name of the higher education institution.

The question about vocational education and training was difficult for the asylum-seekers, even though it was asked with a form in their native language and with an interpreter present, if necessary. Vocational education and training was seen as referring to their work history. The form was adjusted during the survey so that the new version asks how the asylum-seeker has learned their profession:

during work, in a vocational institution or in a higher education institution.

The form also asks the asylum-seekers about their work history. This too was first assessed with the form, but it was given up, as the form and the list of professions was too long and slow to read, the asylum-seekers had trouble understanding the meaning of a profession, and, in the end, the multi-page form might only receive one little mark. Instead of the form, the asylum-seekers were asked directly about their work history with the help of pictures, and the interviewer recorded their profession and number of years they had worked. In addition, the asylum-seekers were asked whether they had operated as independent entrepreneurs. Even during the translation phase of the survey form, it became clear that the question on acting as an entrepreneur was problematic. Small-scale businesses, such as family-owned shops or laundries, are not always seen as entrepreneurial activities, and they do not include the kind of bureaucratic requirements, knowledge of processes and risk-taking that are required for acting as an entrepreneur in Finland. Several asylum-seekers reported that they had worked in a family-owned business, which is not seen in the results of the survey.

### **3.2. Identifying professional expertise with the help of pictures**

Axxell Multicultural Centre participated in the OSAMA project funded by the Finnish National Board of Education to develop picture-based learning assessment. A skill identification model that does not require any language skills and where an individual's skills and previous vocational background can be identified through pictures without using any language is excellently suited for conducting skill surveys in reception centres.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy's recommended vocational list was utilised for the survey. With a few adjustments, the list is part of the survey's vocational skill identification section. The vocational skill identification package contains pictures from which the interviewee selects their professional field. Based on their professional field, the interviewee then selects their job title(s) from a list of job titles depending on their professional background. If necessary, these same pictures are utilised when assessing the interviewee's educational background.

The skill surveys assess the asylum-seeker's previous work experience along with their job titles and the years that they have worked. However, this only reveals what sort of job title the person has had in their country of origin or somewhere else. The person could have experience that they have gained elsewhere that is not revealed during this survey. They could have learned skills through their hobbies or free time, for example, that could prove essential in their working life as well. Therefore, it is possible that there is more or a wider variety of (vocational) expertise than what was revealed via the survey. It is also worth noting that while their job title may be the same in Finland, the work itself may have been different and the person may not possess the professional expertise that is required for the job title in question in Finland. It is also not self-evident that everyone would want to work in a similar field in Finland as they did their country of origin, due to for example job description differences or their willingness to switch to a new career and participate in training or further training. One might also want to change their profession for health reasons.

Every job title could not be assigned with a picture, and occasionally the interviewees were unable to identify the profession from the picture either due to job description differences or for other reasons. In some cases, the job description was so different from the Finnish one that an interpreter was needed to assess the interviewee's professional background. Based on the survey, picture-based skill identification is a functional way of assessing initial vocational skills, especially when the interviewer and interviewee do not speak the same language.

### **3.3. Evaluating technical reading and writing skills**

In addition to the background information and the form, the survey assessed the asylum-seeker's skill with the Latin alphabet and their technical reading and writing skills in Finnish. The assessment utilised Testipiste's normal initial evaluation tests, the effectiveness and reliability of which has been shown by Testipiste's long experience in using them.

The technical reading test includes reading aloud an easy 150-word text in Finnish which then becomes a bit more difficult towards the end. The test evaluation takes into account the reading speed, accuracy and durability, and how well the coding can be heard. The evaluation scale contains four possible ratings. A rating of 0 means that the asylum-seeker cannot read the text at all even if they might recognise some letters. In other words, they require reading skill training that starts from the basics. A rating of 1 means that the asylum-seeker needs reading skill training before beginning their language training. However, the training can be shorter than for those persons who received a rating of 0. A person who achieves a rating of 1 can be seen as being semi-literate. A rating of 2 or 3 means that the asylum-seeker does not need special reading support and could attend the current kind of integration training: those who received a rating of 2 on the track for slow learners and those who received a rating of 3 on the track for normal or fast learners.

In the technical writing test, i.e. the dictation test, the interviewee hears 12 Finnish words that they must write by hand. The evaluation of the result takes into account how many times the words had to be repeated to the asylum-seeker as well as the speed and accuracy of the writing. The evaluation scale and its interpretation correspond to the technical reading evaluation. The evaluation scale contains four possible ratings. A rating of 0 means that the asylum-seeker cannot write more than a few letters. In other words, they require writing skill training that starts from the basics. A rating of 1 means that the asylum-seeker needs writing skill training before beginning their language training. However, the training can be shorter than for those persons who received a rating of 0. A person who achieves a rating of 1 can be seen as being semi-literate. A rating of 2 or 3 means that the asylum-seeker does not need special writing support and could attend the current kind of integration training: those who received a rating of 2 on the track for slow learners and those who received a rating of 3 on the track for normal or fast learners.

## 4. The results of the survey

This section presents the summary of the survey that covered 1,004 asylum-seekers. Most of the information has been provided by the asylum-seekers themselves. The results are presented by topic and to the extent necessary with regard to the objectives of the project.

### 4.1. Background information

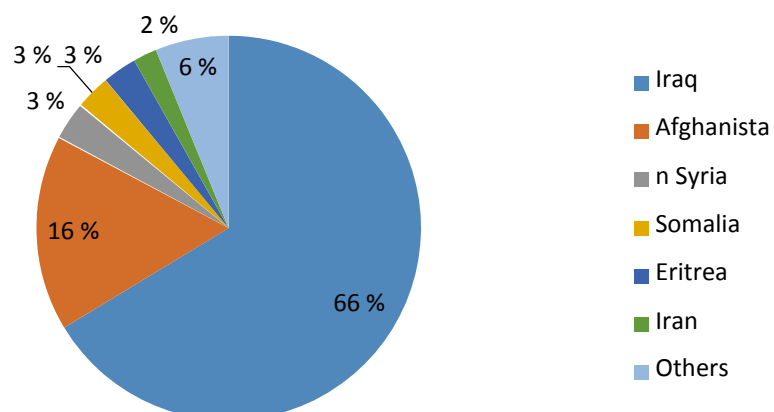
The tables below present the interviewees' gender distribution, country of origin, native language and age group. The majority (90%) of the interviewees are men, which can be seen in the later tables on for example the interviewees' professions. The interviewees come from 32 countries altogether. 66 per cent of the interviewees were from Iraq and 16 per cent from Afghanistan, which corresponds to the Finnish Immigration Service's information on the distribution of migrants in Finland. The largest language groups are Arabic and Dari. 62 percent spoke Arabic and 15 per cent spoke Dari. Most of the interviewees (62 %) are young, 19–29-year-olds. This is reflected in for example how many years of work experience a person has.

Reception centre	Male	Female	Total
Metsälä	19	4	23
Ruskeasuo	24	9	33
Hopeaniemi	76	12	88
Röykkä	49	14	63
Riuttaranta	20	17	37
Aavaranta	185	20	205
Vuoranta	21	21	42
Auramo	36		36
Evitskog	33		33
Koskela	80		80
Otaniemi	59		59
Pitäjänmäki	188		188
Sturenkatu	117		117
<b>Total</b>	<b>907 (90%)</b>	<b>97 (10%)</b>	<b>1004</b>



Country of origin	Male	Female	Total
Iraq	614	52	666 (66%)
Afghanistan	141	24	165 (16%)
Syria	26	6	32 (3%)
Somalia	22	8	30
Eritrea	29		29
Iran	20		20
Yemen	4	4	8
Nepal	6	1	7
Pakistan	6		6
Sudan	4		4
Egypt	3		3
Nigeria	2	1	3
Serbia	3		3
Albania	2		2
Bangladesh	2		2
Guinea	2		2
Cameroon	2		2
Lebanon	2		2
Turkey	1		1
Algeria	1		1
Azerbaijan	1		1
Ethiopia	1		1
Ghana	1		1
Kosovo	1		1
Mali	1		1
Morocco	1		1
Namibia	1		1
Ivory Coast	1		1
Palestine and Iraq		1	1
Togo	1		1
No information	6		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>907 (90%)</b>	<b>97 (10%)</b>	<b>1,004</b>

Most common countries of origin



Native language	Number
Arabic	624 (62%)
Dari	146 (15%)
Kurdish-Sorani	72 (7%)
Somali	30
Kurdish-Kurmanji	20
Tigrinya	19
Persian-Farsi	15
Afghan-Pashto	13
Turkmen	11
Nepali	7
French	6
Saho	5
Albanian	3
Kurdish-Badini	3
Tigre	3
Urdu	3
Bengali	2
Bosnian	2
Igbo	2
Turkish	2
Uzbek	2
Kurdish-Gurani	2
Amharic	1
Azeri	1
Bambara	1
English	1
Serbian	1
Afrikaans	1
Benin	1
Afar	1
Arabic sign language	1
Hausa	1
Kurdish-Hawrami	1
No information	1
<b>Total</b>	1,004

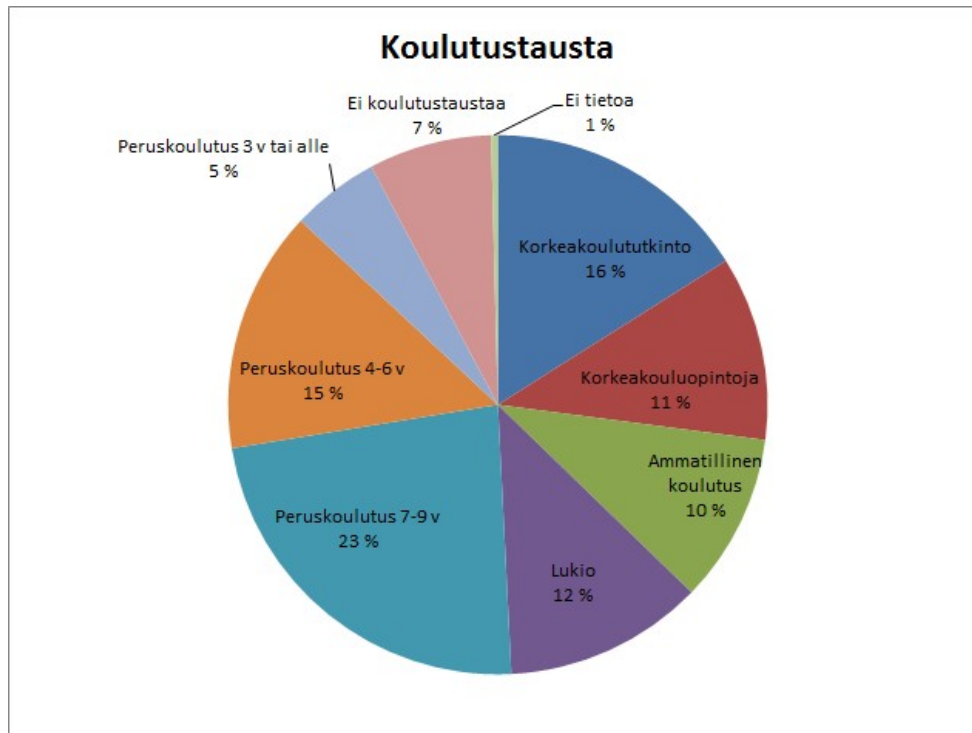
Age groups	Number	
16-18	25	2%
19-24	325	32%
25-29	305	30%
30-39	212	21%
40-49	103	10%
50-59	21	2%
Over 60	5	0%
No information	8	1%
<b>Total</b>	1,004	100%

## 4.2. Educational background

The following presents the educational background of the interviewed asylum-seekers. Half (49%) had some post-comprehensive school studies or a post-comprehensive school degree. They can supplement their studies in Finland, but in addition to this they require Finnish language training in for example their integration training and possible support with using the Latin alphabet. Part could be employed directly after learning Finnish. Almost a fourth (23%) had only completed their basic education. They also require Finnish lessons in for example their integration training as well as possible support with using the Latin alphabet. After this, they can continue towards vocational training or alternatively towards working life. A fourth (27%) had not completed their basic education. With the youngest interviewees, completing their basic education is a good solution, and for some the best track is to learn Finnish during their integration training and then receive a vocational education. Even a part of this group needs additional support with using the Latin alphabet.

Each group will be presented in more detail in the following chapters. The situation of those with a higher education is presented from page 21 onwards.

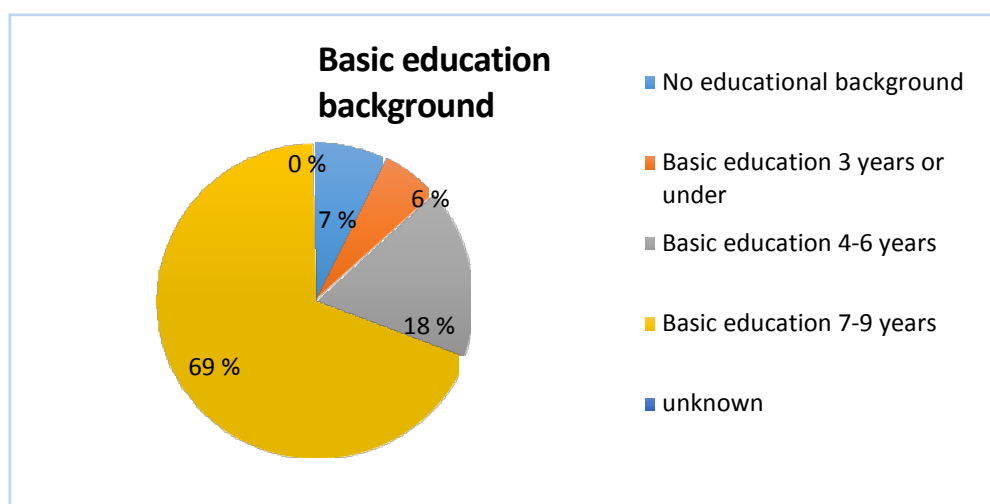
Educational background	Number	
Higher education degree	161	16%
Higher education	111	11%
Vocational education and training	102	10%
Upper secondary school	120	12%
Basic education 7-9 years	233	23%
Basic education 4-6 years	146	15%
Basic education 3 years or under	53	5%
No educational background	74	7%
No information	4	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,004</b>	



#### 4.2.1. Basic education

The table presents the basic education background of those who were included in the survey. This table does not contain any information on their upper secondary education, vocational education and training or higher education. The person can therefore have participated in post-comprehensive school education. Most of the interviewees have received 7–9 years of basic education. 7 per cent of the interviewees do not have any sort of educational background or so little of it that the interviewee did not mention it during their interview.

Basic education	Number	
No educational background	74	7%
Basic education 3 years or under	60	6%
Basic education 4-6 years	175	17%
Basic education 7-9 years	691	69%
No information	4	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>100%</b>



Basic education is a good option for those young and fairly young asylum-seekers who do not have any sort of educational background or have only received a small amount of education. Participating in basic education requires a good command of the Latin alphabet and Finnish language skills. Of the interviewees who were under 30 years old, 31 per cent either did not have any sort of basic education (7%) or had not completed it (24%). Almost as many (27%) also require support with reading and writing in the Latin alphabet.

Age group	Basic education inadequate (share of the age group)	Inadequate basic education and weak technical reading/writing skills (share of the age group)
16-18	40%	36%
19-24	32%	27%
25-29	30%	26%
<b>Total</b>	31%	27%

The following classifies the different age groups in relation to their basic education and reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet. These results help anticipate for example the need for any possible general basic education for younger migrants. For those who are over 30, completing a basic education is no longer the best option. Their track proceeds towards integration training and any possible necessary amount of training in their reading and writing skills.

The results of the youngest age group can only be seen as indicative, since the survey only included a remarkably small number of asylum-seekers who were this young. Of those in the 16–18 age group, 40 per cent (10 persons) could be directed towards basic education due to their missing or incomplete basic education. Almost all of them also require various types and different amounts of support for strengthening their reading and writing skills. Half require basic-level reading and writing skill training (rating 0), and half only need a shorter support duration (rating 1).<sup>3</sup> One person requires basic education but without any special reading and writing support.

16-18 age group					
Educational background	Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating				Total
	0	1	2	3	
No educational background	1	2			3
Basic education 6 years or under	4	2	1		7
Basic education 7-9 years	1	7	3	3	14
No information	1				1
<b>Total</b>	7	11	4	3	25

Of those in the 19-24 age group, 32 per cent (104 persons) could be directed towards basic education due to their missing or incomplete basic education. Almost all of them also require various types and different amounts of support for strengthening their reading and writing skills. Half require basic-level reading and writing skill training, and a third only need a shorter support duration. 16 per cent of those without a basic education certificate require basic education but no special reading and writing support.

<b>19-24 age group</b>					
<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating</b>				<b>Total</b>
	0	1	2	3	
No educational background	19	9	2		30
Basic education 6 years or under	37	22	14	1	74
Basic education 7-9 years	29	112	66	14	221
<b>Total</b>	85	143	82	15	325

Of those in the 25-29 age group, 30 per cent (91 persons) could be directed towards basic education studies due to their missing or incomplete basic education. Almost all of them also require various types and different amounts of support for strengthening their reading and writing skills. A third requires basic-level reading and writing skill training while half only need support for a shorter duration. 14 per cent of those without a basic education certificate require basic education but no special reading and writing support.

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<sup>3</sup> The evaluation criteria for the reading and writing tests are presented on page 13.

25-29 age group					
Educational background	Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating				Total
	0	1	2	3	
No educational background	7	4	1	1	13
Basic education 6 years or under	29	38	11		78
Basic education 7-9 years	22	115	59	16	212
No information	1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	59	158	71	17	305

#### 4.2.2. Upper secondary school education

In the survey, upper secondary school education is divided into three groups: 1, 2 or 3 years of upper secondary school education. By far the most common form of upper secondary school education is 3 years of upper secondary school education. Those with shorter upper secondary school education may have studied in a different kind of school system or their studies may have been interrupted. All in all, 46 per cent of those in the survey had completed some upper secondary school education. This table does not contain information on any possible vocational education and training or higher education. The person may therefore have a post-upper secondary school education.

Upper secondary school education	Number	
1 year of upper secondary school	19	2%
2 years of upper secondary school	25	2%
3 years of upper secondary school	418	42%
No upper secondary school	542	54%
<b>Total</b>	1,004	100%

#### 4.2.3. Vocational education and training

14 per cent of those in the survey stated that they had participated in vocational education and training (VET). While the number of migrants with VET studies may seem low, the most likely explanation for this is that those included in the survey come from countries where work that is done by hand is learned through practice, making vocational education and training less common. The majority of VET studies have been completed in the fields of construction and industry. The third largest group is the cultural, communications, art, handicraft and IT sector. The table presents the vocational education and training by sector.



Professional fields in vocational education and training	Number	Share of those who have participated in vocational education and training
Construction	26	19%
Industry	17	13%
Cultural, communications, art, handicraft	14	10%
IT sector	13	10%
Restaurant, hotel and food production	10	7%
Transport sector	9	7%
Security	9	7%
Care, healthcare and pharmaceutical sector	8	6%
Commercial sector	6	4%
Administration, office and law	4	3%
Personal services	4	3%
Education sector	4	3%
Physical training, sports	2	1%
Agriculture, greenhouses, berries	2	1%
Social services	1	1%
Other	7	5%
<b>Vocational education and training total</b>	136	14% of all
No vocational education and training	868	86% of all
<b>Total</b>	1,004	100%

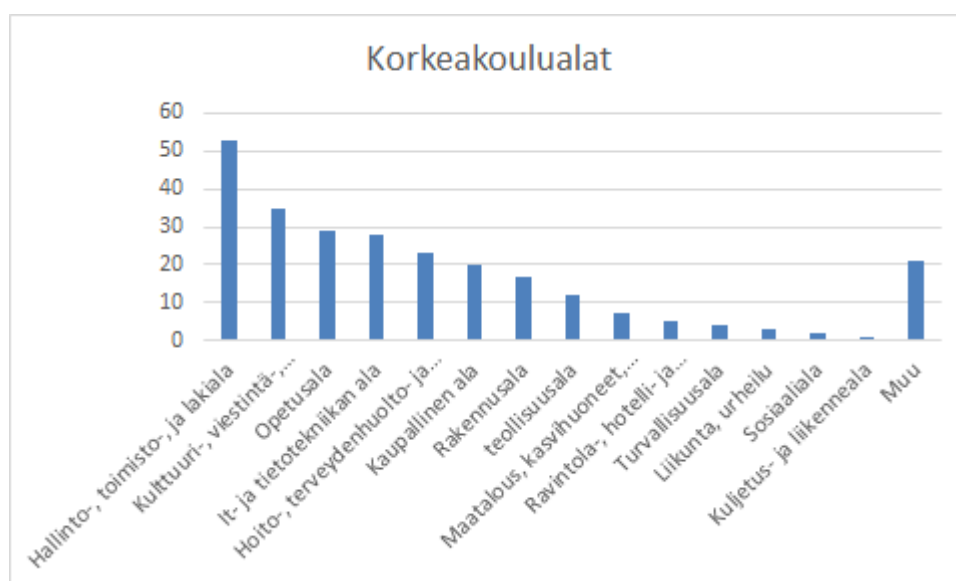
#### 4.2.4. Higher education

27 per cent of those in the survey stated that they had studied in a university or in a higher education institution. 16 per cent stated that they had completed a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree or a doctorate. However, the field-specific table and the number of those with a degree contradict each other. There are a number of factors that can explain this. Part of those in the survey state that they have studied in a university but did not finish their degree. Part may have marked a profession, but when they pondered their degree level they may have come to the conclusion that their degree level is lower. Some have majored in two fields. Therefore, the results can only be seen as indicative.

The largest fields are the administrative, office and legal sector, the cultural, communications, art and handicraft sector, the educational sector and the IT sector. The most usual degree is a Bachelor's degree with 4–6 years of study. Two of those with a doctorate are in the care, healthcare and pharmaceutical sector. A few of those in the survey had two Bachelor's degrees. The "other" professional field contains for example the technical and technology sectors which were not present in the professional fields separately.

The following presents the professional fields, completed degrees and study duration in years.

Professional fields in higher education institutions	Number	Share of those who have studied in a higher education institution
Administration, office and law	53	19%
Cultural, communications, art, handicraft	35	13%
Education sector	29	11%
IT sector	28	10%
Care, healthcare and pharmaceutical	23	8%
Commercial sector	20	7%
Construction	17	6%
Industry	12	4%
Agriculture, greenhouses, berries	7	3%
Restaurant, hotel and food production	5	2%
Security	4	1%
Physical training, sports	3	1%
Social services	2	1%
Transport sector	1	0%
Other	21	8%
No information on field	14	6%
<b>Higher education studies total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>27% of all</b>
No higher education	732	73% of all
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>100%</b>



Degree level	Number	Share of those who have studied in a higher education institution
Bachelor's degree	149	55%
Master's degree	10	4%
Doctorate	2	1%
No degree or no information on degree	111	41%

<b>Total</b>	272	100%
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Study duration	Number	Share of those who have studied in a higher education institution
under 3 years	95	35%
3 years	31	11%
4-6 years	132	49%
7-9 years	10	4%
No information	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100%</b>

Even though a fourth of the asylum-seekers in the survey state that they have studied in a higher education institution, this does not mean that they could all continue their higher education studies in Finland. If their studies were interrupted or the asylum-seeker wants to supplement their Bachelor's degree with a Master's degree, they must either possess the readiness for studying in an English language study programme or they must be skilled enough in Finnish or Swedish. In addition, an advanced education and a good command of the Latin alphabet are not always connected to one another, since many come from countries where the study language is Arabic and where English (and the Latin alphabet) are not present in the way that they are in the Finnish educational system and in Finnish society. For many of those with an advanced education, the most suitable track is integration training coupled with any necessary short training for strengthening their reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet, after which they can continue towards supplementing their education.

The following tables present the Finnish reading and writing skills of those who have studied in a higher education institution as well as their own assessment on their possibility of studying in English.

Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating	Number	Share of those who have studied in a higher education institution
0	9	3%
1	131	48%
2	104	38%
3	28	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100%</b>

Degree level	Can study in English (own answer)	Share of those who have studied in a higher education institution
Doctorate	2	
Master's degree	8	
Bachelor's degree	46	
Incomplete higher education studies	32	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>32%</b>

### 4.3. Work experience

Those in the survey were asked about their work experience and based on their answer one or several professional fields or job titles were recorded. Only 10 per cent of those surveyed stated that they have no or very little work experience. Many have work experience in several fields, which can be seen in the results of the table below with some even having experience in four fields. The work experience information is based on the interviewee's own statements, as only a few could provide any work certificates.

27 per cent of those in the survey have worked in construction. 21 per cent have worked in the transportation industry. Other major fields include the commercial sector, the restaurant, hotel and food production industry, as well as the cultural, communications, art and handicraft sector. The cultural, communications, art and handicraft sector represents the widest and most diverse professional group. Those who have worked in this sector have worked as for example dressmakers, tailors, clothing and interior designers, shoemakers, carpenters, reporters, graphic designers as well as in artistic fields (musicians, singers, artists).

Professional fields work experience	Number	Share of all those in the survey
Construction	273	27%
Transport sector	209	21%
Commercial sector	133	13%
Restaurant, hotel and food production	131	13%
Cultural, communications, art, handicraft	106	11%
Security	70	7%
Administration, office and law	62	6%
Agriculture, greenhouses, berries	57	6%
Industry	53	5%
Personal services	50	5%
Education sector	47	5%
IT sector	32	3%
Care, healthcare and pharmaceutical sector	28	3%
Physical training, sports	17	2%
Sanitation sector	15	1%
Social services	5	0%
Other	21	2%
No work experience	96	10%

#### 4.3.1. Work experience and education

The following tables present the two largest professional fields, i.e. the construction and transport industry, in proportion to the education that a person has. The other professional fields are so small that the samples are not representative.

273 persons stated the construction industry as their professional field. Only 6 per cent of them had participated in vocational education and training in the construction industry, and 87 per cent had not participated in any vocational education and training or higher education at all. 209 persons stated the transport industry as their professional field. Only 3 per cent of them have participated in any training in the field. The numbers for those who have no training in the field are similar to those in the construction industry: 87 per cent have not participated in any vocational education and training or

higher education at all.

As noted in the section dealing with vocational education and training, only 14 per cent of those in the survey state that they have participated in any vocational education and training. While the number of migrants with VET studies may seem low, the most likely explanation for this is that those included in the survey come from countries where work that is done by hand is learned through practice, making vocational education and training less common. The majority of the VET studies have been completed in the construction industry.

The educational background of those who have worked in the construction industry	Number	Share of those who have worked in the construction industry
Construction	16	6%
IT sector	5	2%
Industry	4	1%
Transport sector	2	1%
Cultural, communications, art, handicraft	2	1%
Restaurant, hotel and food production industry	2	1%
Security sector	2	1%
Other	2	1%
No vocational education and training/higher education	238	87%
<b>Total</b>	273	100%

The educational background of those who have worked in the transportation industry	Number	Share of those who have worked in the transportation industry
Transport sector	6	3%
Construction	7	3%
Industry	4	2%
Personal services	2	1%
Cultural, communications, art, handicraft	2	1%
Education sector	2	1%
Administration, office and law	1	0%
Care, healthcare and pharmaceutical sector	1	0%
Agriculture, greenhouses, berries	1	0%
Security sector	1	0%
Other	4	2%
No vocational education and training/higher education	178	85%
<b>Total</b>	209	100%

#### 4.3.2. Asylum-seeker professions

The results of the survey show that many of the asylum-seekers may have experience in more than one professional field. The person could have been working in several fields simultaneously, including any part-time or occasional work. The number of years that those in the survey have worked can vary from months to decades.

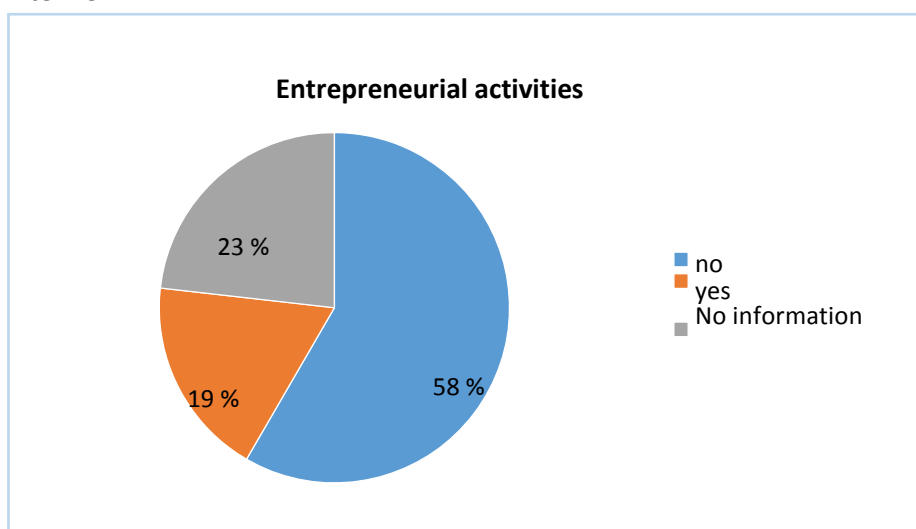
The largest professional fields are the construction industry, the transportation industry, the commercial sector, the restaurant, hotel and food production industry, the cultural,

communications, art and handicraft sector as well as the security sector. Those who have worked in the construction industry have worked as construction workers, painters, construction helpers and construction engineers. Those who have worked in the transportation industry have worked as taxi drivers, bus drivers, truck drivers and as other car drivers. This group also includes vehicle painters and mechanics. Those who have worked in the commercial sector have worked as salespersons, clothing sellers, currency exchange employees and as shopkeepers. Those who have worked in the restaurant, hotel and food production industry have worked as chefs, waiters, bakers and kitchen assistants. Those who have worked in the cultural, communications, art and handicraft sector have worked as dressmakers, carpenters, reporters and as representatives of the art sector. Those who have worked in the security sector have worked as security guards and police officers.

Other notable groups include agricultural workers and farmers, electricians, welders, barbers and hairdressers as well as football players and coaches. The sample also includes teachers, IT sector experts and engineers from various fields. The list of the rarest job titles includes for example astrologists, wedding planners, calligraphers, ceramic tile installers, satellite installers, decorative plaster manufacturers and shepherds. All of the asylum-seekers' professions are presented in the appendix.

#### 4.3.3. Entrepreneurial activities

The survey participants were asked whether they had any previous experience in entrepreneurial activities. In this survey, entrepreneurial activities mean small-scale businesses that a person could have operated, such as a grocery store, cafe, market stall, copy services or purchasing and selling activities. 19 per cent of the survey participants state that they have acted as entrepreneurs, while 58 per cent state that they have not. The final 23 per cent either have not acted as entrepreneurs, could not answer the question or were not asked about it specifically since, during the initial stages of the survey, any entrepreneurial activities were recorded only if the interviewee brought it up during the interview.





#### 4.4. Native and study language reading and writing skills

The majority (87%) of those in the survey state that they can read and write in their native language. 12 per cent state that they are illiterate in their native language. This chapter includes those persons who can read but cannot write in their native language. The asylum-seekers' statements can be seen as reliable: They had to provide a small sample of their writing skill. Most of the samples were in Arabic, and when they were reviewed with the help of an interpreter they were proven to be intelligible.

Native language reading and writing skills	Number	
No	118	12%
Yes	876	87%
No information	10	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>100%</b>

Some of those who were illiterate in their own native language had studied in another language that they could also read and write. In most cases, both the native and study languages are written in another alphabet than the Latin alphabet, such as the Arabic alphabet (e.g. Arabic, Dari, Persian-Farsi, Kurdish-Sorani, Afghan-Pashto, Urdu). Some have gained a helpful amount of reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet. The following table presents the number of persons who cannot read and write in different ways. Only 7 per cent are unable to read and write in any language. They most likely require more time to learn the Latin alphabet and more training in reading and writing skills.

Illiteracy	Number	
Cannot read/write in their native language	118	12%
Cannot read/write in their study language	119	12%
Cannot read/write in their native and study language	90	9%
Cannot read/write in their native language, study language and with the Latin Alphabet	75	7%

#### 4.5. Finnish language technical reading and writing skills

The survey assessed the asylum-seekers' Finnish language technical reading and writing skills. An individual's technical reading skill is not the same as their reading comprehension. Therefore, there is no need for understanding the Finnish text that is read and the Finnish words that are written. Testipiste has 6 years and almost 18,000 clients' worth of experience in evaluating reading and writing skills.

Most (73%) of the participants in the survey require various degrees of practice in reading and/or writing in the Latin alphabet. The majority most likely only require a shorter training period to support their reading and writing skills (rating 1). Based on their reading and writing skills, 27 per cent could be directly placed in the integration training: 23 per cent on the track for slow learners and 4 per cent on the track for normal learners.

Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating	Number	
0	232	23%
1	501	50%
2	227	23%
3	44	4%
<b>Total</b>	1004	100%

Assessment	Technical reading		Technical writing	
0	217	22%	186	19%
1	444	44%	434	43%
2	246	25%	297	30%
3	93	9%	82	8%
No information	4	0%	5	0%
<b>Total</b>	1,004	100%	1,004	100%

A fifth could not read Finnish or could only name a few letters (rating 0). They require reading and writing skill training that starts from the basics. Almost half could read Finnish, but since their reading is slow and/or inaccurate, it is not enough for studying Finnish without strengthening their skills (rating 1). They also need various amounts and types of practice with utilising the Latin alphabet. A fourth (25%) of the participants were skilled enough in reading that they could be directed towards the track for slow learners in the current integration training (rating 2). 9 per cent could possibly be placed in the integration training track for normal learners or even fast learners (rating 3). – The results for technical writing were very similar.

These numbers are only indicative for many reasons. At the time of the survey, the asylum-seekers had been in the country for under 6 months, a third for under 3 months. The result for those that received a rating of 1 may change when they have been in the country for a longer time and are used to hearing and seeing Finnish. The asylum-seeker may also participate in Finnish reading and writing skill training in their reception centre. When the time comes for the Employment and Economic Development Office to direct the persons who have received a residence permit to the initial level evaluation before the integration training, the required training can be specified in more detail. The training recommendation is affected by the person's test results as well as e.g. their educational background and the results of the other tests on their study capability. During the survey, the evaluation could not be implemented in as much detail as in Testipiste's normal initial level evaluation when guiding people towards integration training.

Based on this survey, in the future, there will be a far greater need for reading and writing skill training for adult migrants than what has been available so far in labour market training. However, based on the survey results, not all of the training courses need to be equal in length, since it is likely that many asylum-seekers only require a smaller amount of reading and writing skill training. An example of this is the so-called reading semi course for strengthening passable reading and writing skills, currently available in the capital region. This training could also be integrated in new ways into for example vocational integration training.

#### 4.5.1. Technical reading and writing skills and age

Based on the survey, an individual's technical reading and writing skills and their age are not clearly linked. The share of those who read and/or write poorly (rating 0 or 1) in each age group is almost identical. However, the age group with the most need for reading and writing skill training that starts from the basics (rating 0) is the youngest age group (28%), and the age group that requires this sort of training the least is the 25–29 age group (19%).

Age group	Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating				Total	Share of those who read/write poorly in the age group
	0	1	2	3		
16-18	7	11	4	3	25	72%
19-24	85	143	82	15	325	70%
25-29	59	158	71	17	305	71%
30-	78	185	69	9	341	77%
No information	3	4	1		8	
<b>Total</b>	232	501	227	44	1,004	73%

Age group	Reading and writing skill training starting from the basics	Shorter-term reading and writing skill training	Integration training	Total
16-18	28%	44%	28%	100%
19-24	26%	44%	30%	100%
25-29	19%	52%	29%	100%
30-	23%	54%	23%	100%

The following presents the technical reading and writing skills of those asylum-seekers who are under 30.

Technical reading	16-18		19-24		25-29		Total	
0	6	24%	80	25%	57	19%	143	22%
1	8	32%	127	39%	137	45%	272	42%
2	7	28%	84	26%	79	26%	170	26%
3	3	12%	34	10%	32	10%	69	11%
No information	1	4%	0	0	0	0%	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	25	100%	325	100%	305	100%	655	100%

Technical writing	16-18		19-24		25-29		Total	
0	6	24%	71	22%	51	17%	128	20%
1	8	32%	128	39%	128	42%	264	40%
2	7	28%	94	29%	101	33%	202	31%
3	3	12%	31	10%	25	8%	59	9%
No information	1	4%	1	0%	0	0%	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	25	100%	325	100%	305	100%	655	100%

#### 4.5.2. Technical reading and writing skills and education

The technical reading and writing skills of the participants were also compared to their basic education studies. Missing or incomplete studies seem to be somewhat connected to weak reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet. The group that contains those who have participated in basic education the longest has the least number of persons with poor reading and/or writing skills. This group also clearly contains the smallest proportionate number of those who require reading and writing skill training that starts from the basics (rating 0).

Basic education	Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating				Total	Share of those who read/write poorly in a group
	0	1	2	3		
No educational background	48	22	3	1	74	95%
Basic education 3 years or under	28	20	11	1	60	80%
Basic education 4-6 years	67	83	25		175	86%
Basic education 7-9 years	87	375	187	42	691	67%
No information	2	1	1		4	
<b>Total</b>	232	501	227	44	1,004	73%

On page 19, the technical reading and writing skills of those under 30 were presented in more detail in relation to their basic educational background, since the most suitable option for them may be to participate in basic education that is combined with reading and writing skill training when necessary.

For older asylum-seekers who have poor reading skills, the best recommendation is to continue the current method of providing reading and writing skill training for them and then integration training or vocational integration training if the person does not possess enough vocational expertise.

On the other hand, the survey also shows that the need for reading and writing skill training is not caused by an inadequate basic education alone. The table below describes the technical reading and writing skills of those asylum-seekers who have studied in a higher education institution. Even among those who have studied in a higher education institution, the most usual result (46%) is that an individual requires some training for their reading and writing skills (rating 1). However, their training neither needs to start from the basics nor be as long-term as with those who do not possess any basic education. On the other hand, the group with the more educated individuals contains equally as many persons who could possibly be directed towards normal integration training either on the track for slow learners (36%) or the track for normal or fast learners (10%).

Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating	Those who have studied in a higher education institution	
0	9	3%
1	126	46%
2	98	36%
3	27	10%
No information	12	4%
<b>Total</b>	272	100%

The results also assessed the relationship between reading and writing skills and the asylum-seekers' most usual professions that are in the construction and transport industry. This information can be utilised when planning future vocationally-oriented integration training programmes. Of those who have worked in the construction industry, almost a third (29%) require reading and writing skill training that starts from the basics. In addition, half (52%) require at least some supportive training for their reading and writing skills. Only 19 per cent could directly begin the current integration training on the track for slow learners. The results of those who have worked in the transportation industry are very similar, as indicated by the tables below.

<b>Work experience in the construction industry</b>	<b>Number</b>	
<b>Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating</b>		
0	78	29%
1	143	52%
2	48	18%
3	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Work experience in the transportation industry</b>	<b>Number</b>	
<b>Technical reading/writing skills according to the weakest rating</b>		
0	57	27%
1	128	61%
2	20	10%
3	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100%</b>

All those who have worked in the fields in question may not necessarily want to continue working in the same fields, but the groups are still so large that different vocationally-oriented integration training programmes can be provided in the future as well. Previously, these kinds of training programmes have been offered in connection with the construction, care, hotel, restaurant & catering, and transport sector. For example, in Testipiste's educational institutions Amiedu, Axxell and Edupoli, the training programmes in question have proven to be functional and motivating for the students. In the future, the training programmes must take into account the lack of literacy of their future students and think about increasing the duration of their training programmes so that the reading and writing skill training can be effectively integrated into the same training programmes. Instead of written evaluations, more opportunities should be provided for giving demonstrations orally or with a practical performance.

#### 4.6. English language skills

Many of those in the survey know some English, but their skills are inadequate and most often they can only speak it. Half of the asylum-seekers in the survey can speak some English. This evaluation is based on the asylum-seeker's own statement and the interviewer's experience in using English in a survey situation. During the survey, the language skills could not be evaluated with a separate and reliable test, and the evaluation is based on a short interview that assessed the asylum-seeker's background. Therefore, we can say that half of those in the survey can provide some of their personal

and background information in English, and in some cases with the help of the interviewer. A third can write in English. In practice, during the survey, these asylum-seekers could write a few simple sentences about themselves in English. The texts that they produced were often difficult to understand and contained errors.

The survey also asked the asylum-seeker's own opinion on whether their English skills were sufficient for studying in English. In addition, the interviewer evaluated the interviewee's oral and written English skills during the interview. Based on the survey, 11 per cent of those in the survey could possibly study in English. However, Testipiste emphasises that this evaluation is only indicative and is based on a very small amount of oral and written material and does not guarantee that the asylum-seeker could study in for example an English language programme in a university of applied sciences or a university.

English language skills	Oral		Written		Can study in English (own answer)	
No	498	50%	664	66%	864	86%
Yes	500	50%	333	33%	113	11%
No information	6	1%	7	1%	27	3%
<b>Total</b>	1,004	100%	1,004	100%	1004	100%

Since Finnish universities of applied sciences and universities only offer programmes in English, the asylum-seeker's study capability in English was compared to their educational background. According to their own assessments, those who can study in English are mostly (78%) those who have studied in a higher education institution. However, Testipiste notes that the English language skills that are demonstrated during a survey situation and the asylum-seeker's own assessment do not prove that the asylum-seeker possesses the English skills required for studying in a higher education institution.

	Can study in English (own answer)	Share of those who are capable of studying in English
Doctorate	2	2%
Master's degree	8	7%
Bachelor's degree	46	41%
Unfinished higher education studies or no information on degree	32	28%
Vocational education and training	4	4%
Upper secondary school education	15	13%
Incomplete upper secondary school education	2	2%
Basic education	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	113	100%

On the other hand, a third of those who have studied in a higher education institution thought that their English skills were sufficient for studying in English.

	Can study in English		Cannot study in English		No information		Total	
Incomplete studies or no information	32		79		0		111	
Bachelor's degree	46		99		4		149	
Master's degree	8		2		0		10	
Doctorate	2		0		0		2	
<b>Total</b>	88	32%	180	66%	4	1%	272	100%

Based on this survey, 78 persons who either had a Bachelor's degree or who had not completed their higher education studies could be directed towards studying in English. However, based on Testipiste's six years of experience in conducting initial level evaluations, many of them may later need to participate in integration training to improve their Finnish language skills, as the amount of Finnish education in universities of applied sciences or universities is rarely enough for a person to attain a level of fluency in Finnish so that they can be employed in a Finnish language workplace.

## 5. Four different asylum-seeker profiles

Four different profiles were selected from the asylum-seekers who participated in the survey. Based on their educational background, work experience and learning profile, they have been drafted suitable training and guidance tracks that can be used to help and as an example when planning educational tracks for larger groups.

### **Rahila, a 28-year-old woman from Afghanistan**

Rahila is from Afghanistan. Her native language is Dari, and she can also speak Persian. Rahila has only completed a few months of basic education and she cannot read or write in any language. Rahila has spent her time at home with her children and occasionally helped in the family's small grocery store.

#### **Guidance track**

To start, Rahila requires reading and writing skill training to be able to participate in the integration training. Already during her reading and writing skill training, Rahila also needs vocational guidance so that her career aspirations can be assessed. Based on her skills and wishes, Rahila can either move on to basic education or to another training programme that will increase her study and literacy skills. When she has improved her literacy and other capabilities, Rahila can move on to a vocational integration training programme that will support her career aspirations, strengthen any inadequate skills and familiarise her with the professions of the field.

### **Abdulkadir, a 25-year-old man from Somalia**

Abdulkadir is from Somalia. His native language is Somali, and he can also speak a little English but cannot write it. He has completed four years of basic education. He has not participated in any vocational education and training, but he has worked as a bus driver for some years and as an assistant in a delivery truck. He can read and write in his native language. His technical reading and writing skill evaluation also showed that he can read and write in Finnish.

#### **Guidance track**

In the current integration training system, Abdulkadir would be put on the track for slow learners. Taking Abdulkadir's work experience into account, he would also be well suited for participating in a vocational integration training programme in the transport industry that would strengthen any of his inadequate skills, provide him the skills for learning Finnish and integrating into Finnish society, as well as with field and work experience. During his training, Abdulkadir would gain both the required Finnish driving permits and professional qualifications, and after his on-the-job learning period, he could work in the transport industry.



**Said, a 23-year-old man from Iraq**

Said is from Iraq. Said's native language is Arabic, and he does not know any other languages. He has completed 6 years of basic education and has studied for 3 years in a vocational institution for the construction industry. He can read and write in Arabic, but does not know the Latin alphabet that well. During his studies, he worked as a construction helper, and after graduation as a painter and in other indoor renovation positions. In total, he has around 8 years of work experience. He has not acted as an entrepreneur. His technical reading and writing evaluation showed that he can read and write in the Latin alphabet passably, but still needs practice with his reading and writing skills.

**Guidance track**

To start, Said requires reading and writing skill training to be able to participate in any other studies and the integration training. His reading and writing skill training could be integrated into the initial stages of his vocational integration training, which would accelerate his employment and integration, as there would be no waiting period between his training programmes. He does not need to complete any basic education studies, as he has completed his basic education in his country of origin. During his vocational integration training, he would receive information about the field in Finland, see the relevant companies during his on-the-job learning periods, and become acquainted with the work and with Finnish working life. During his training, Said's expertise is recognised and acknowledged in both the educational institution and by his employer. During his on-the-job learning periods, he will complete any necessary skill demonstrations and certificates. During the training and the guidance that is provided along with it, Said would receive the necessary skills for being employed in the field.

**Ahmad, a 45-year-old man from Iraq**

Ahmad is from Iraq. Ahmad's native language is Arabic. In addition, he speaks fluent English since he has studied in English at a university. In addition to his basic and upper secondary school education, he has a degree in communications. Ahmad has worked as a newspaper and radio reporter for 10 years, as an interpreter for 15 years, and as a taxi driver for several years. His reading and writing skill evaluation showed that he can fluently read and write in the Latin alphabet and that he would be well suited for participating in the integration training for normal or fast learners.

**Guidance track**

Ahmad has worked as a reporter, interpreter and taxi driver. However, he needs to learn Finnish to become employable. He would also need information and guidance at the earliest possible stage for understanding the employment possibilities and outlooks of these fields, as well as their requirements. Ahmad could potentially participate in the integration training for fast learners. He could see how Finnish reporters work either during his on-the-job learning period or through preparatory training for working life. Ahmad presumably possesses good study skills, so after achieving a sufficient skill level in Finnish, he could be directed towards for example preparatory training for a degree in community interpreting. If necessary, his higher education degree could also be officially recognised.

## 6. Requests from asylum-seekers

The survey form asks: *Write in your native language and/or study language where you are from and what you would like to do in Finland.* The purpose of this task is to confirm that the participant can actually write in his native and/or study language. The answers were reviewed together with an interpreter, and the most frequently repeated or otherwise noteworthy aspects were highlighted.

As could be expected, many of the answers focus on the fact that Finland is peaceful while their country of origin is not. The answers mostly focused on the need for asylum, for living in peace and for providing a better future for one's family and children. In addition, many of the answers talk about a war in one's country of origin or an otherwise dangerous situation. Some of the answers express a wish for doing something for the benefit of Finland.

A majority of the respondents told about their work experience. Some only list their professions or professional fields, while those with more work experience are able to tell more about their expertise. Many also mention that they would like to do the same work in Finland. The professions that are mentioned the most are the same as those that were highlighted during the survey: driver, chef, barber. However, the construction industry is not a very desired field, even though many of the survey participants have experience in the construction industry. All in all, the survey participants name around 70 different professions or fields that they would like to work in, and many of these are mentioned multiple times. The respondents usually base their answers on the fact that they have experience and expertise in a specific line of work. Some were unable to determine what kind of work they could do and express a wish for doing any kind of work at all. Only four answers indicate plans for starting one's own business.

The answers also focused on the participants' educational backgrounds. Especially those with an advanced education mention their educational institution's name and any completed degrees. Many of these respondents are eager to continue their studies in the same field and to also become qualified for working in the field in Finland. However, it is not only those who are highly educated that want to study. Several answers link studying with receiving employment and being able to work: many want to study in the same field where they already have study and/or work experience in so that they can continue in the same field in Finland. Some of the respondents want to learn a completely new profession, and these wishes are quite ambitious: many wish to become teachers, doctors, dentists or engineers. – Quite a few also mention that they want to study Finnish.

## 7. Conclusions

The initial stage skill survey that was conducted in the reception centres by Testipiste has provided fairly reliable indications on what sorts of tracks for integration and educational paths need to be developed for those who have been granted asylum. These newcomers naturally require language training, but they also require basic skills such as reading and writing in the Latin alphabet. Their professional expertise also needs to be developed to better meet the requirements of Finnish society and working life.

### *Strengthening reading and writing skills in reception centres*

Finnish society requires good literacy. Succeeding in working life and in one's studies also require good reading and writing skills. The skill survey shows that many of the migrants have inadequate reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet to be able to integrate into Finnish society. This could be effectively remedied during the asylum application process. **The reception centres could arrange training in reading and writing skills in the Latin alphabet as well as other training that strengthens the study abilities of those who are waiting for their asylum decision.** This would save both time and integration training costs, since, after the person is more capable of studying and has received their residence permit and municipal placement, they can be placed on a training and employment path that will accelerate their integration.

### *Basic education and reading and writing skill training for adults*

Basic education for adults is meant for those persons who are over 17 and who have not completed their basic education in their country of origin. Based on Testipiste's experiences, currently mostly 25-year-olds who are literate in the Latin alphabet are directed towards adult basic education.

Reading and writing skill training is currently organised as labour market training. Beginning in 2018, the teaching of reading and writing skills will become a part of adult basic education. Based on this survey, around 2/3 of the 17–60-year-old asylum-seekers who have arrived in Finland require some training in the Latin alphabet so that they can begin studying Finnish during their integration training. However, most of them have completed their basic education in their country of origin, and thus are not suited for literacy training that is arranged in connection with any basic education, but instead **they would proceed faster by participating in a brief labour market training programme.** Around a fourth of those who require literacy training are young people who do not have much of an educational background. **In their case, completing their basic education studies would be an appropriate choice.**

Based on this survey, in the future, there will be a far greater need for reading and writing skill training for adult migrants than what has been available so far in labour market training. However, based on the survey results, not all of the training courses need to be equal in length, since it is likely that many asylum-seekers only require a smaller amount of reading and writing skill training. An example of this is the so-called reading semi course for strengthening passable reading and writing skills, currently available in the capital region.

### *Integration training*

Those persons who possess at least a satisfactory reading and writing skill level in the Latin alphabet can directly move towards the current integration training. It should be noted that many of the migrants are fairly young, they have mostly learned their skills with practical methods and are not used to theoretical studies. **Therefore, the integration training should, in turn, be arranged with a more work-oriented approach: in addition to class learning, it should also include regular on-the-job learning periods and/or vocational education and training.** Depending on the situation, the on-the-job learning periods can be arranged as weekly sessions that last for a few days at a time, or as regularly occurring periods during the training that last for a few weeks at a time. This will require a more flexible funding model for implementing integration training.

The asylum-seekers have arrived in Finland from different societies. To help them adapt to living in Finnish society and discover their own possibilities, they require strong guidance that begins during the initial phase of their orientation. Working life guidance, professional career guidance and recognising professional expertise should be included in the integration training from an early stage, so that the adult migrant's professional expertise can be better aligned with the requirements of the Finnish labour market. **The adequate resourcing of this part of the integration training should also be ensured.**

It is easier to integrate into a new society if one can interact with the locals. For a migrant, a successful on-the-job learning period either in working life or in voluntary activities in the third sector is always an important experience for learning the language, getting to know the local culture, and identifying their own professional skills. **These interactions should be implemented much more frequently than they are now, and their implementation requires the whole society's support.** A person cannot become a member of society if they are not accepted by society, and in Finland this happens through working life.

If a migrant's first contact with working life happens only after 1–2 years after they have arrived in Finland and just before their integration training ends, they are often left with nothing. Concretising learning, study and career plans already during the initial stages of the learning path will become more important in the future as the number of migrants grows, so that the number of working-age adults who fall in between the cracks is as small as possible.

### *Vocational integration training*

Vocational integration training has proven to be an effective method for making integration training more oriented towards working life and helping migrants enter the labour market. Currently, vocational integration training programmes are mostly held for those with a language skill level of A2.2. or B1. To reach this level, one has to study Finnish for about a year. As is previously stated in this report (page 7), 76 per cent of those who participate in the integration training do not achieve the B1 level during their integration training. Therefore, when we take the results of this survey into account, **the vocationally-oriented integration training should already begin on level A2.1.**

In February 2015, a legislative amendment concerning studies to improve study abilities came into effect. According to this act, as part of the preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, studies can be arranged with the purpose of enabling the completion of a competence-based qualification or its part and participating in preparatory training for the competence-based qualification in such cases where the student does not possess the necessary study abilities. **With this legislative amendment, vocational institutions can now open new study paths for those persons who are not very skilled in Finnish during the application period.** Vocational education and training that is goal-oriented, aims towards a profession, and is built into part of a degree greatly accelerates the entry of even those adults who are not quick language learners into the labour market. However, a person's language learning skill is just one attribute for measuring their expertise, and it should not be too greatly emphasised when comprehensively evaluating a person's previous work expertise in connection with their complete work history.

### *Higher education*

Just under a third of the survey participants had studied in a higher education institution (11%) or had a degree (16%). The survey attempted to assess how many of them could supplement their degrees in the English language programmes in Finnish universities. According to the results of their English skills, around 5 per cent of the participants could move on from the reception centre and directly begin studying at a university of applied sciences or a university. However, this only focused on their English skills, and did not take their study abilities into account, nor identifying or recognising their general professional expertise. Reading and writing in the Latin alphabet is difficult for a surprisingly high number of persons with a higher education degree (since they studied in Arabic), and based on this survey, it can be said that **at least a portion of the asylum-seekers with a higher education background would benefit from literacy or integration training before moving on to integration and/or higher education.** One possible training programme for those who are not very literate in the Latin alphabet could be the capital region's so-called reading semi training that lasts for 50 days. It is a shorter reading and writing skill training programme for those persons who are still not firmly literate in the Latin alphabet. After the programme, there are a multitude of continuation paths that cater to the student's different skills and goals. A student can be placed on the path towards for example the integration training track for normal or fast learners, or even towards higher education.

During the integration training, the degree that the student received in their country of origin can be officially recognised, so that the person applying for the recognition of their degree can receive detailed instructions from the National Board of Education for any possible supplementary studies and apply for supplementary studies in the region's higher education institutions after their integration training. **Finnish higher education institutions could increase the amount of preparatory training** for those migrants who have studied in a higher education institution in their country of origin. The language skill level could be B1, as the objective is to then move on to study in a higher education institution, where the language requirement is currently B2. Even those with an advanced education still need language skills that go beyond the requirements of level B1.1 to be able to work as specialists. A suitable training programme could for example be the preparatory training for the intermediate level language proficiency test, or optionally **Finnish higher education institutions could develop a similar sort of education module as the vocational integration training module, to provide a supportive educational module for orienting migrants towards studying in a higher education institution.** After this, the migrant could be directed along the higher education network towards access routes that are aligned with their own skills. There is already great demand for guidance for

supplementing studies that have been done abroad even after the National Board of Education's degree acknowledgement process. The education module for orienting migrants towards studying in a higher education institution could be one solution to this.

Testipiste has plenty of experience in guiding for example those who have graduated from an English language degree programme in a Finnish university of applied sciences to the initial level evaluation at the Employment and Economic Development Office, and from there towards integration training, as without the necessary Finnish language skills, it is hard to find employment in a field that requires a higher education degree. This also supports the idea that, in the future, highly educated migrants should be guided towards their career paths via integration training and not vice versa.

### *Being employed directly from a reception centre*

Asylum-seekers are very highly motivated to work. Many actors have seized this opportunity and have begun searching for employment avenues for the migrants so that they can be employed in various assistive tasks. If an asylum-seeker is employed directly from their reception centre, they should also be provided with integration training alongside the work, either by distance or contact learning, depending on the situation.

When an asylum-seeker is provided with job opportunities, they should also be able to complete their working life certificates, such as the hygiene pass or the occupational safety card, in their own language whenever possible.

When an asylum-seeker is employed from a reception centre, it is important that **the work community is also prepared to meet and integrate this new employee who comes from a different kind of working culture**. Professionals who already live in Finland and already know Finnish should be utilised in recruitments and during the newcomer's work orientation process.

### *Future skill assessments*

There have been talks about placing asylum-seekers in municipalities according to their skills and the jobs available. This necessitates collecting the information related to the skills of the asylum-seekers in the future as well. If we want to ensure that we can match those with a residence permit with the jobs that are available, **the skill survey/identification must be implemented more thoroughly, for example in connection with the orientation period that is being planned for the reception centres**. Multiple proven models and tools for identifying skills already exist. Many functional professional expertise identification methods have been utilised in connection with e.g. integration training, from picture-based skill assessment to week-long skill identification modules in vocational institutions and adult education centres.

However, employers are still the best in identifying professional skills, as they can recognise a skilled employee even after a brief work period. **This resource should be utilised more in the future, which would also realise the most important factor for promoting employment: finding a suitable expert for the right work community.**

In this survey, the background information was collected with a survey form. Based on this experience, most of the survey participants needed assistance with filling out the form. The terms, job titles and compartmentalisation of expertise into different fields caused confusion. In the future, when **collecting skill information** from the asylum-seekers, a tailor-made computer program should be utilised instead of paper forms, as a computer program can utilise pictures and different translation, as well as speech for those who are illiterate.

We also recommend that this background information be collected **centrally by the authorities**. Confidentiality and personal data protection must be ensured due to the possible sensitive information that may come up during the survey. We must always carefully assess for whom and for what sort of purposes the information collected can be provided.