



Extract from the report to the
Public Accounts Committee on
the effort directed towards
newly arrived immigrants

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Introduction and Results

1. This report concerns the effort directed towards newly arrived immigrants and the fulfilment of the objectives of the Integration Act.

The report includes also follow-up on the Public Accounts Committee's report no. 2/03 on the Ministry of Integration's performance of its tasks in relation to the immigration activities.

2. The special initiatives directed at newly arrived immigrants originate in the Integration Act.

The Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration (the Ministry of Integration) has the overall responsibility for the immigration initiatives directed at refugees and immigrants reunified with their families. The ministry prepares the legislation governing immigration and conducts analyses of how immigrants manage in the Danish society. The Ministry of Integration monitors the effect of the legislation, including whether the objectives of the Integration Act are being fulfilled, and whether the instruments made available to the local councils for their immigration activities function as intended.

The local councils have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Integration Act. The local councils are responsible for the content of the introduction programme which is being prepared for each individual immigrant.

3. The Integration Act stipulates three key objectives for the immigration process, cf. box 1.

BOX 1. THE THREE KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE IMMIGRATION PROCESS

Objectives of the act:

Participation:

- Assist in ensuring that newly arrived immigrants can participate in the life of society in terms of politics, economy, employment, social activities, religion, and culture on an equal footing with other citizens.

Self-support:

- Assist in making newly arrived immigrants self-supporting through employment as quickly as possible.

Values and norms:

- Impart to the individual immigrant an understanding of the fundamental values and norms of Danish society.

4. The effort directed at newly arrived immigrants consists of a three-year introduction programme which includes tuition in Danish and various labour market oriented activities.

5. The overall purpose of this examination is to evaluate the activities directed at newly arrived immigrants, including the extent to which the objectives of the Integration Act are being fulfilled.

The examination will answer three questions:

- Does the Ministry of Integration follow-up on the fulfilment of the objectives of the Integration Act?
- Are newly arrived immigrants employed or participating in education after completion of the introductory programme?
- Does the Ministry of Integration contribute to ensure that the local councils have the tools at hand to launch targeted activities directed at newly arrived immigrants?

RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION

Slightly less than half the newly arrived immigrants, who have completed the introduction programme in the period 2003-2006, are employed in ordinary jobs.

The Ministry of Integration has not set specific targets for the number of immigrants that should be employed which makes it difficult to assess the result. Compared to the employment rate of the total Danish population, the employment rate of newly arrived immigrants is considerably lower. Rigsrevisionen is therefore of the opinion that the ministry should set targets and on the basis hereof endeavour to ensure that a larger number of the newly arrived immigrants finds ordinary employment.

The Ministry of Integration has taken several appropriate initiatives, but the effort may be further strengthened with respect to the local councils' use of labour market directed activities, and the local councils whose efforts towards immigrants is less successful.

The Ministry of Integration should also increase the follow-up activities related to the objectives of participation and values and norms in the Integration Act. The Ministry of Integration has stated that during this term in office, it will increase its focus on the objectives of participation and values and norms, as stipulated in the Integration Act.

This overall assessment is based on:

The Ministry of Integration systematically follows up on the fulfilment of the objective of self-support. In 2003, the ministry launched activities which are designed to enable the ministry to follow-up on the fulfilment of the objectives of participation and values and norms. The ministry has not yet concluded the activities.

Rigsrevisionen is aware that turning the two objectives into concrete targets will require thorough groundwork. Still, Rigsrevisionen is of the opinion that the ministry's effort relating to the objectives of participation and values and norms has not progressed sufficiently.

- Since 2004, the Ministry of Integration has authorised annual measurements relating to the objective of self-support. However, the Ministry has not supplemented the objective with concrete targets which would enable the ministry to assess whether the results intended are achieved by the effort.

- The Ministry of Integration has conducted ad hoc reviews of the objectives of participation and values and norms. However, the ministry has not specified the objectives of participation and values and norms prior to conducting these reviews.
- The ministry has launched activities with the aim of having the participation and values and norms objectives in the act specified. These activities were launched late in 2003 as follow-up on Rigsrevisionen's report from October 2003, but the activities have not yet been concluded.
- The ministry has initiated a pilot survey of the users' perception of the introduction programme. According to the ministry, this survey is also intended to contribute to disclose the effect of the introduction programme with respect to the objectives of values and norms and participation. Yet, Rigsrevisionen's examination has shown that the pilot examination does not include the value and norms objectives and only includes parts of the objective of participation.
- The Ministry of Integration has access to a broad range of databases which may be applied to analyse whether the objectives of the Integration Act are being fulfilled. The data describe primarily the objective of self-support, whereas data concerning the other objectives are mainly generated as part of various ad hoc examinations. Since 2003, updating of the data contained in the ministry's databases has improved and data are now coherent and may be applied for comparisons made by the ministry.

Slightly less than half of the immigrants selected for the introduction programme in 2003 were employed in late 2007. The examination indicates that the share of employed immigrants has increased over the past years. Compared with figures for the total Danish population, indications are that more newly arrived immigrants can be employed.

The activities directed towards the labour market play an important part in the introduction programme. According to Rigsrevisionen's examination, significant numbers of newly arrived immigrants have not been offered these activities.

- The ministry's effect examinations have shown a minor increase in the self-support ability and the employment and education rate of immigrants in recent years.
- Rigsrevisionen's effect examinations have shown that slightly less than half of the selected immigrants were employed in late 2007. To this figure should be added that around 7% was participating in education late in 2007. In comparison, around 75% of the total Danish population is employed.
- Among immigrants, men, young persons and immigrants who have been reunited with families that are not refugees are most frequently employed.
- Only a limited number of the immigrants who are not employed have completed labour market directed activities during the introduction programme period.

The Ministry of Integration has developed various instruments which may contribute to target the immigration activities launched by the local councils. The ministry attaches importance to the dissemination of good practice, for instance by utilizing the results of the benchmarking of the effort made by the local councils. In Rigsrevisionen's opinion, this is an efficient approach.

But the ministry can still strengthen its effort in some areas; in particular with respect to the local councils whose effort directed towards immigrants is only moderately successful, but also with respect to the local councils' development of targeted introduction programmes for each individual immigrant.

- The Ministry of Integration has developed a series of instruments, supporting the effort made by the local councils. Rigsrevisionen's examination showed that the local councils apply most of these instruments, and the local councils are not interested in having more instruments at their disposal.
- Only to a limited extent, do the local councils prepare targeted immigration programmes which take into consideration the competencies of the immigrant, set specific objectives for the immigrant, and offer the immigrant participation in relevant labour market directed activities.
- The Ministry of Integration uses benchmarking analyses to follow up on the effort made by the local councils. According to these analyses, the same local councils are repeatedly ranked at the bottom in the comparisons.

Against this background, Rigsrevisionen recommends:

- The Ministry of Integration should encourage the local councils to uncover and evaluate the immigrants' competencies.
- The Ministry of Integration should encourage the local councils to set concrete objectives for all immigrants, and adjust the objectives in the course of the process.
- The Ministry of Integration should map the local councils' use of the labour market directed activities.
- The Ministry of Integration should exert its influence on the local councils to make them prepare targeted programmes which link together the immigrant's competencies, the objectives set, and the activities offered to the immigrant.
- The Ministry of Integration should turn to account the results of the benchmarking analyses, for instance through dialogue and a more active approach to the local councils whose effort directed towards immigrants is only moderately successful.