CALL FOR MaxiPAC SYMPOSIUM - OPEN UNTIL 15.09.2021

Best practices for language valorization in Finnish Higher Education

Wednesday 27 October 2021, 12:30-14:45 GMT +, Arctic Centre, Rovaniemi (Pohjoisranta 4)

According to the Bologna Declaration (1999), Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences have the autonomy to valorize the qualifications and competences acquired elsewhere according to their own standards. The Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) further calls for EU countries to develop procedures to assess whether refugees and displaced persons fulfil the relevant requirements to access Higher Education or employment activities, even when the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence. However, third country nationals (TCN) and those in refugee like situations who travel to Europe face challenges such as: when their certificates are not recognized in the EU making them unable to work or study; inadequate access to e-services and language support services, to name a few. In some cases, there are challenges dealing with University programme requirements, learning procedures, and employment needs.

To address the above problem, MaxiPAC (Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences) in collaboration with the SIMHE University of Helsinki, University of Oulu Graduate School, INTEGRA and SIMHE Jyväskylä University, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and the Attract Lappi Project, with speakers from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and EDUFI (Finnish National Agency for Education), will bring together policy-makers, entrepreneurs, students, teachers, and researchers, and persons of other professions in Higher Education, to participate physically in a Symposium. The aim is to contribute ideas towards "best practices for language valorization in Finnish Higher Education". We ask the question, how can TCNs and persons in refugee like situations gain better access to Higher Education and employment in Finland?

Registration:

You are invited to register (indicate your name and affiliation) via email (aayonghe@ulapland.fi) to the MaxiPAC Project Coordinator by the deadline 15 September 2021. Decisions will be communicated to participants by 30 September 2021. The symposium will be recorded based on prior informed consent.

Programme

11:30-12:30: Coffee & snacks
12:30-12:35: Welcome words by Nafisa Yeasmin (Coordinator, Arctic Migration Team - Arctic Centre)
12:35-12:50: Keynote by Kaisu-Maria Piironen (Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education & Culture)
13:05-13:15: Question/answer
14:00-14:40: Sharing/discussion of results from groups
14:40-14:45: Concluding words by the MaxiPAC Project Coordinator
14:45: Visit to the Arktikum Museum (those who are physically in Rovaniemi)

Contact person:
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About MaxiPAC: www.maxipac.eu
Working groups

NB: Working groups will be organized physically in the facilitator’s host institution.

The aim of the working groups is to have generalized discussions, gather data, and to report the outcomes of the discussions. Facilitators will share their results online when all the groups meet in the slot “14:00-14:40: Sharing/discussion of results from groups”. The final results from all groups will be used in developing best practices for language valorization. An online link for the symposium will be communicated to participants in October, a few days before the event.

- **Group 1: “how to deal with languages”, facilitator Mervi Kastari (Language instructor, Tampere University of Applied Sciences - TAMK)**
  
  Group 1 will focus on practicalities for learning guidance and Finnish language teaching. Participants are asked to share their experiences, challenges of learning. How can learning procedures and language support be made better for TCNs/Refugees? What kind of language-learning paths could or should there be?

- **Group 2: “University Modalities and organization aspects”, facilitator Prof. Jouko Miettunen (Vice-Dean, University of Oulu Graduate School)**
  
  Group 2 will discuss organization aspects in higher education, e.g. enrollment, student services, facilities services, education; general requirements for admitting TCNs/Refugees; guidance support and procedures in the admission process – with examples from the University of Oulu Graduate school and International master degree programmes. Participants are asked to share their opinions about University admission procedures. What kind of guidance support do applicants (TCNs/Refugees) receive when applying for a degree programme and when they have admission to University? What can be made better in the admission process?

- **Group 3: “e-Learning support”, facilitator Tuija Lehtonen (INTEGRA Project Coordinator, Jyväskylä University)**
  
  Group 3 will discuss the various means of e-Learning support for the integration of TCNs, with examples from the INTEGRA Project. Participants are asked to share their experiences and challenges about access to online information and the use of online learning procedures. How can the integration of TCNs/Refugees be made better through e-Learning support? What ideas can be made to work better?

- **Group 4: “Employment and internship support”, facilitators Mäki-Petäjä Tiina & Jenni Ervasti (Attract Lapland Project Coordinators, Arctic Centre)**
  
  Group 4 will discuss the possibilities for entrepreneurship and employment among immigrants in Finland. Participants are asked to share their experiences and challenges when finding a job or internship, creating a business, working as a freelancer/light entrepreneur or finding information related to job vacancies that suit their previous qualifications. Recommend ideas on how to help TCNs/Refugees get better access to places of work. What ideas can Universities consider in enhancing employment support for student immigrants? Participants in this group could be students and entrepreneurs/business owners, but also representatives from Entrepreneurship associations and TE-services (EURES).

- **Group 5: “How to implement the procedure in Universities?”, facilitator Marita Häkkinen (SIMHE Coordinator, Jyväskylä University)**
  
  Group 5 will discuss the various ways to help TCNs/Refugees with previous qualifications get better access to higher education, training, and employment – examples from SIMHE services. Participants are asked to share their experiences and challenges about finding a job, getting training, and admission in higher education. What procedures need to be improved? In what ways can Universities implement procedures for immigrants to have better access to higher education, training, and employment?

- **Group 6: “how to deal with languages”, facilitator Rebekka Nylund (Specialist, SIMHE | University of Helsinki)**
  
  Group 6 will focus on practicalities for learning guidance and Finnish language teaching. Participants are asked to share their experiences, challenges of learning. How can learning procedures and language support be made better for TCNs/Refugees?