

Sogn, Sogn region, Norway



Sogn for all

Keyword(s):

Migration and Integration

Labour Market and VET



Introduction

Sogn Regional Council is a cooperative organisation for seven municipalities. Our main focus is related to develop four selected areas: business development, competence, quality of living and infrastructure.

The purpose of the project "Sogn for alle (Sogn for all)" is to get more immigrants to stay in Sogn through employment, community, inclusion, integration and good living conditions.

Main challenge

Some of the main challenges are a lack of language skills and the right competence. Immigrants in Sogn have higher education than the average for the inhabitants of the municipalities in Sogn, while at the same time we know that immigrants are generally overrepresented in professions with no requirement for education.

In the Government's integration strategy 2019-2020, working practices and jobs are highlighted as one of the most important measures for successful integration where immigrants become part of Norwegian working life and society. Through work, immigrants become able to provide for their own families and contribute to the development of a sustainable welfare society.

Timing

On average, Sogn has more refugees per capita than in the rest of the country, while the share of resident immigrants is lower than the rest of the country.

The region needs access to qualified labor. The initiative came as a consequence of these challenges.

Objective

The main goal of the "Sogn for all"-project is to ensure value creation and growth in Sogn. We try to achieve this through targeted investment and mobilisation to activate the true potential that immigrants represent in the working and social life of the municipalities.

Target group

The target group for the project will be the municipalities and how they interact with other public sector, the private sector, the voluntary sector, immigrants and residents in general.

Geographical range

The geographical range is the region Sogn with the seven municipalities Aurland, Høyanger, Luster, Lærdal, Sogndal, Vik and Årdal. The population is 32000 people. Sogndal is a regional center with 12000 inhabitants. The region is located in western part of Norway.

Stakeholders and partners

The stakeholders and partners are the public, private and voluntary sector. The boards members are a mayor, higher education institution, regional business department in the county, councilors, operational refugee service, NAV (Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration), voluntary organization (Red Cross), business sector, project manager and project owner Sogn regional council.

The project manager has the ongoing management, coordination and follow-up of the project, and will report to the board. The project manager will have interdisciplinary responsibility, and be responsible for extensive contact with all the involved parties; the municipalities, the businesses and the voluntary sector.

We have managed to engage companies that are in need of labor.

We have established four working groups that contribute with activities and will also present input to the onward planning work. The working groups reports to the board.

Each municipality has a personal resource for the project.

Strategy / materials

Sogn Regional Council represent 7 municipalities. The council is an arena whose main task is to facilitate the growth of the number of citizens and create more sustainable businesses in the region. The council acts as a base for public initiated projects like "Sogn for alle". Through forums and professional networks, the council contributes to the exchange of competence, knowledge and experience between municipal employees.

Sogn has integration and inclusion as a commitment in the "Regional plan 2021-2024" with the aim of strengthening employment among immigrants and refugees in order to improve inclusion into our society. The regional plan and the project plan Sogn for alle are

The project plan defines the goals, major products, activities, stakeholders and resources required on the project. The annual action plan defines the activities, resources, responsibilities.

Important target groups in communication are the partners in the business sector, municipalities and government agencies and society in general.

We have promote our strategy through forums and professional networks, informed on the regional council and the municipalities' websites and Facebook pages and local newspapers.

As communication materials, we have developed posters to inform immigrant about Sognalooop (a job chance and language training for women), establishing training for immigrants and Norwegian courses at B2 level (The Norwegian test level B2 provides a basis for admission to higher education). We have published the posters digitally on the municipalities' websites and Facebook pages, and in the local newspapers.

Resources

The project is funded by the municipalities, the county council and the regional council. In addition, we will seek external funding for specific measures and activities and projects.

A project manager has the ongoing management, coordination and follow-up of the project.

The responsible contact person in the municipalities contribute personal resources of at least 10% of their total working time.

Compliance with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

The project complies with SDG 4: Quality Education.

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Innovation(s)

We are working holistically and collaborate across public, private and civil society and through inter-municipal cooperation with inclusion of immigrants.

This is an important innovation, because better co-ordination and co-operation between sectors are fundamental for inclusion of immigrants. It's an area of continuous potential for improvement.

Evaluation

The desired result from the project should be:

- new working methods and new forms of cooperation for the purpose of integration of immigrants that include municipalities, companies, enthusiasts and voluntary teams and organizations
- new and improved Norwegian language schooling for immigrants and more immigrants taking Norwegian trade certificates
- increased employment in the public and private sectors of immigrants in jobs for which they are qualified
- new insight and attitude regarding immigrants among the population, including politicians and in different businesses.

The stakeholders are involved through commitment programs and activities: the mentor program (mentor training to companies to developing inclusion competence) and Sognalooop (qualification and work experience for immigrant women).

The stakeholders are involved through commitment in the board and the four working groups.

Success parameters

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Impact

Effects that should result from the project include:

- Increase the action of living in Sogn
- Increased well-being, openness, involvement and quality of life among immigrants and residents in general.
- Increased knowledge, involvement and engagement among residents, immigrants and the voluntary sector
- Increased diversity

The project focuses on social development and inclusion competence; developing the workplaces, organizations' ability to create participation.

The project started a year ago and will last three more years. We will gather experience and evaluate the effect further out in the project.

In the project, we will continue building development capacity and collaborative capacity.

Impediments

In our further work, we will focus on developing:

- Increase business contact
- More contact with the individual municipality
- Stronger involvement and commitment from different municipal departments

Replicability

The Centre of Competence on Rural Development (Distriktssenteret) has been involved from the early stages of the work. They will be able to share our experience and results once we have progressed further in the project.

Actions producing great results in one region, may not have much of an effect elsewhere. Learning from others' experiences is however still possible.

Concluding remarks

We are working through inter-municipal cooperation and interacting with the public, private and voluntary sector.

Website/Social Media profile(s) of the initiative

<https://www.sogn.regionraad.no>

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