

The current crisis is a “testing time” for the integration of immigrants in Norway

The OECD published today (on the web only) its report on
The Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Norway

Before the crisis, immigrants were doing rather well on the labour market in Norway compared with other OECD countries. However, immigrants are now disproportionately affected by the ongoing economic downturn. This is especially the case for the many recent arrivals from the new EU member states. There is a risk that this can have a lasting effect on their future labour market outcomes. The current downturn is thus a “testing time” for the integration of immigrants in Norway, the report says. The OECD urges that the integration of immigrants and their native-born children - who are now entering the labour market in greater numbers - remains a priority for policy.

The report praises Norway for the significant efforts taken to improve the labour market integration of immigrants and their children over the past decade. It highlights, in particular, the two-year introduction programme for humanitarian migrants and their families, and the strong efforts to integrate migrants into Norway’s large public sector. According to the report, there are signs that this has paid off. Over the past five years, the public sector has contributed disproportionately to higher employment among migrants from non-OECD countries.

The OECD stresses five areas that merit more attention. It calls for enhancements in the effectiveness of language training and of the introduction programme run by municipalities; improvements in the use of migrants’ skills; more targeted measures to establish footholds into the labour market; more attention to the outcomes of the children of migrants; and a stepping up of the efforts to combating discrimination against migrants.

The OECD report on Norway is part of a series of country reports on the labour market integration of immigrants. The OECD has already published reviews on the integration of immigrants in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden (*Jobs for immigrants*, Vol. 1&2).

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