



# The City of Vaasa

## **INTEGRATION PROGRAMME**

### 2023-2026







# Energy, involvement, and **INTEGRATION**

## GREETINGS FROM THE MULTICULTURALISM BOARD

We in the Vaasa Multiculturalism Board want Vaasa to be a good home for everyone. One of the key objectives of Vaasa's strategy is to be the happiest and safest city in Finland. We want to grow and reach a population of 100 000. Successful integration, equal opportunities, and good demographic relations will contribute to the wellbeing of everyone in Vaasa and build a city with room for everyone. At the same time, our status as a growing, competitive, and attractive city will be strengthened.

The integration programme is a development programme that does not describe existing services or structures. We in the Multiculturalism Board wanted to create a programme based on research and studied knowledge. Therefore, we adopted as our starting point the conceptual framework for integration formulated by Ager and Strang (2008) and used that to create a common understanding of the broader dimensions of integration. At least equally important for us was that the programme would be a joint effort. The goals of the integration programme are concrete actions, chosen and formulated in cooperation with different lines of business and representatives of organizations and associations whose work promotes and develops good integration.

The integration programme contains seven configurations: work, living, education, health and wellbeing, social relations and contacts, services for the children and young people, and safety. The programme has been coordinated by the Multiculturalism Board, together with the Head of Integration Services Hanna Kakko and the Coordinator Ritva Mertaniemi.

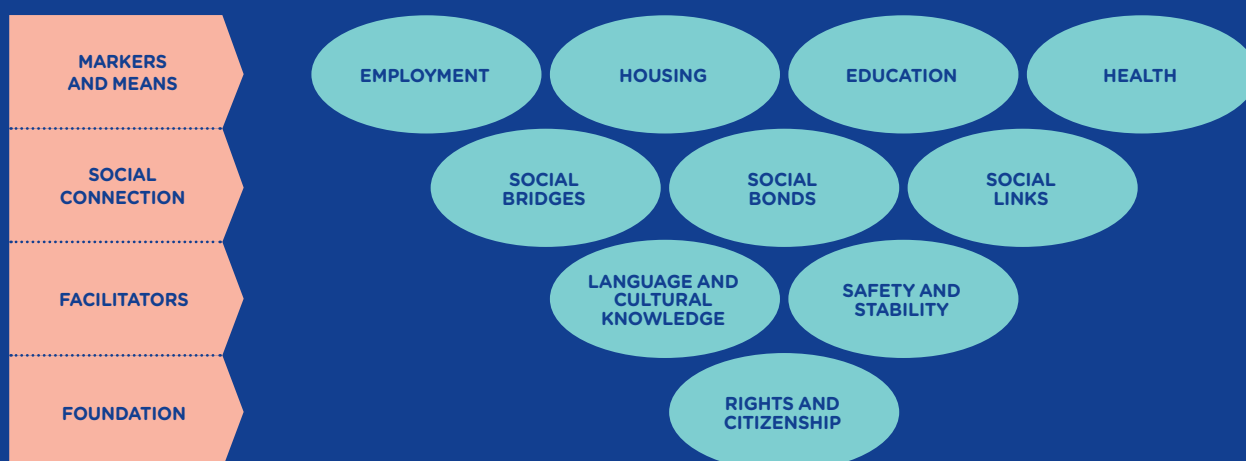
Even the most brilliant programme does not happen by itself. The current integration programme has been drawn up for the period 2023—2026 and defines not only goals and actions, but also a schedule, responsibilities, partners, and indicators for assessing its implementation. The Multiculturalism Board has an important role to play in following up the progress towards the goals set in the programme. The structures, legislation, and responsibilities concerning the promotion of integration are under great changes. We have taken this into consideration, for example, by making the cooperation between the responsibilities of the municipality and those of the welfare region as robust as possible. The multiculturalism board follows the development towards meeting the programme's goals, and makes additions and updates the programme when necessary.



**Lotta Alhonnoro**  
President of the Multiculturalism Board

## A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEFINING CORE DOMAINS OF INTEGRATION

Ager & Strang (2008)



# OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2023–2026

## Work

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Making skills visible	• CV clinic: informational events for groups + individual support if needed	2023	Employment Ecosystem in collaboration with EHJÄ association's Encouraging Experiences programme	Pilot on the clinic activities in 2023 and in active use in 2024
	• Job coaching support opportunities	Continuous	Employment services	Number of people who received coaching, number of those directed to working life or training (as applicable)
	• Project preparation and use of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) work coaching model	2023	Welfare services	Project funding granted and activities launched
Strengthening digital skills	• Improving physical condition and vitality through involvement (TEO) project's digital courses	2023	Training operators and on-going projects	Number of digital courses and immigrants who have participated in the courses
	• Embedding good practices from the city's projects	Continuous	Employment ecosystem in collaboration with project organisations	Good practices adopted
	• Welcome Steps customer segmentation model	2023–2024	Welcome Steps	Welcome Office visitor numbers and cost-effectiveness of service delivery
	• "Digihyvä juttu" (i.e., digigood thing) project	2023–2024	Vamia, and after the project, Employment Ecosystem	Digital competence rate, number of visitors to self-service channels
	• Mapping, utilising, and developing the existing open digital points	2024	Welfare unit in cooperation with the operators of the Joint Service Point	Information on digital points and support services collected and published, monitoring process of the use of the service created
Promoting diversity in working life	• Mini recruitment fairs with organisations and associations in the area 4–5 times a year, annual calendar to support labour division, marketing at major recruitment events	2023–2026	Employment ecosystem in cooperation with the Welfare Unit and associations	Number of mini recruitment fairs carried out
	• Anonymous recruitment	Continuous	HR unit	Number of anonymous recruitments
From outside of labour force into the working life — multi-disciplinary services for unemployed people	• Coordination of the Spouse Programme within the city organisation	Continuous	HR Unit in cooperation with the Welfare Unit	Making the Spouse Programme an established practice within the programme period and the number of participants
	• Extension of Working Life Orientation for people outside the labour force, piloting of activities	2024–2025	Employment Ecosystem and Integration Services in cooperation with Alma	Working Life Orientation groups piloted, model created and ready for implementation 2025

## Living

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Strengthening the supply of affordable and diversified housing in key areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate production new ARA and non-subsidised rental housing and ensuring the diversity of new apartment blocks through housing policy, land policy, and land use planning</li> <li>• Ensuring that the necessary infrastructure for housing construction is in place</li> <li>• State support for the maintenance and development of the housing stock</li> </ul>	Continuous	Urban Environment Sector, housing constructors, ARA communities, housing investors	Following up with housing development
Raising awareness of the possibilities for right-of-occupancy options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing on the opportunities for right-of-occupancy</li> <li>• Business cooperation with those recruiting international specialists</li> <li>• Further development of guidance and marketing material in English</li> </ul>	Continuous	Vaasan asumisoikeus Oy in cooperation with Welcome Office	Share of right-of-occupancy living

Promotion of residency skills	• Regularisation of residency adviser activities	2023	Real Estate Department	Residency adviser client numbers
	• Resident's Guide • Compilation of links to multilingual resident's guides on resident's advice website	2023	Housing advisers in co-operation with the Welfare Unit	Guide launched Links compiled
Identifying the impact of diversified demographics	• Following, analysing, and reporting on developments in the demographic data • Raising awareness of demographic trends and their impact among stakeholders	Continuous	Real Estate Department in cooperation with city departments	Demographic trends, identifying and analysing their impacts
	• Informing new councillors about demographic trends	2025	Real Estate Department in collaboration with the Welfare Unit	Trends and analyses discussed in decision making
Tackling segregation through diverse and effective measures	• Guidelines for the further development of Ristinummi • Ristinummi's neighbourhood development as a model for action in other neighbourhoods • Keeping an out on the development of segregation and securing resources to implement intervening actions	Continuous	Real Estate Department in cooperation with the city departments	Monitoring the socio-economic situation and development of neighbourhoods

## Education

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Finnish/Swedish language learning and acquisition	• Intensified language teaching for grades 7—9	2023-2026	Basic education	Pupils' language proficiency level
School Leaving Certificate and transition to upper secondary education	• Intensive special education • Intensive student counselling	2023-2026	Basic education	School Leaving Certificate for completing the basic education syllabus Place in an upper secondary education institution
Pathway from studies to employment	• 1—2 days of on-the-job visits to city departments, at least 10 visits per year • Enabling traineeships for students with an immigrant background	2023-2026	Employment ecosystem	Number of realised visits
	• Positive communication, success stories, skills marketing	2023-2026	Entire city organisation	Traineeships (in Finnish, Swedish and English) completed in city departments
	• Information on training programmes for companies	2023	Vamia in cooperation with Communication Services	Realised communication actions and the visibility those actions received
	• Dialogue with working life using the Tiitus application	2023-2026	Novia (VIT) in cooperation with higher and secondary education institutions in the region	Training programme summary for enterprises created and launched
	• Dialogue with working life using the Tiitus application	2023-2026	Vamia, VAMK and possible other educational institutions	Extent of implementation of the Tiitus application in Vaasa
Strengthening Finnish and Swedish language skills	• Testing language skills in educational institutions • Diverse course options for language learning	Continuous	Institutions Alma, Efo	Number of tests carried out and competence level measured in them by using CEFR and other competence tests

## Health and wellbeing

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Promoting good community relations	• Identifying and tackling hate speech	Continuous	Entire city organisation in cooperation with ETNO Oso-robothnia	Zero tolerance for hate speech in the city organisation
	• Strengthening skills in identifying and tackling hate speech, marginalization, and exclusion through staff training	2024	Human resources	Number of staff training sessions and participants
	• Mapping out the comprehensive picture of marginalization and inequality	2023-2026	Welfare Services and Safety Network in cooperation with the welfare region	Comprehensive picture clarified and used as a basis for an action plan

Promoting good community relations	• Art and Culture Companion (“culture buddy”) activities	2022-2026	Alma, SPR, culture and library services	Trainings carried out twice a year, requested/completed cultural visits
	• Pop up events informing on different aspects of wellbeing at the public services joint service point	2024-2026	Welcome Office in co-operation with the Welfare Unit and visiting experts	Carried-out events and the number of people attending
Strengthening access to information	• Production and marketing of the newsletter	2023-2026	Welcome Office in co-operation with the welfare unit	Number of people signed up for the newsletter, newsletter used by stakeholders for communication
	• Using existing communication channels	Continuous	Entire city organisation	Immigrant population considered in the city’s communication
	• Welcomeoffice.fi and InfoFinland website updating, maintained, and marketed	Continuous	Welcome office in cooperation with Communication Services	Numbers of visitors to these websites
Effective interfaces between the municipality and the welfare region	• Harmonised practices established and communicating the shared practices between operators — training for operators	2023	Welfare services in cooperation with the welfare region	Realized training events and the number of people attended
	• Securing the reception of immigrants (Mava)	Continuous	Welfare services in cooperation with the welfare region	Mava-reception in operation
	• Regular and unbroken dialogue between the municipality and the welfare region	Continuous	Welfare services in cooperation with the welfare region	Contact persons identified and regular dialogue with them happening
Strengthening knowledge on wellbeing, health, and self-care skills	• Meeting families with children, informational events	2024	Family Centre activities	Share of people with an immigrant background in the number of visitors, informational events organised and attended
	• Wellbeing and mental health information shared to the existing groups and multilingual communication materials	Continuous	Integration services in co-operation with the Crisis Centre	Number of groups and the number of people attended
	• How to Manage the Dark Season Webinar	Continuous	Welfare Unit and Welcome Office	Webinar once per year

## Social relations and contacts

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Supporting two-way integration	• <i>Talk to a stranger</i> campaign	2024	Communication in cooperation with city operators and associations	Visibility of the campaign
	• Cultural café activities once a month	2023	Welfare Unit and Alma in cooperation with ethnic associations	Activities launched and number of active associations involved
	• Establishing urban farming activities	2023-2026	Green Spaces Unit, Vaasan Setlementti, and Integration Services	Number of participants, number of areas for cultivation activities
	• Multidisciplinary networking and coordinating the cooperation	Continuous	Welfare unit	Number of partners involved
	• Welcome to Vaasa, information in English	2022-2026	Alma, Welcome Office, and Welfare Unit	2–4 Welcome to Vaasa events a year, number of participants
Promoting involvement	• Involvement fairs	2023-2026	Integration Services in cooperation with associations	One fair organised per year
	• Multilingual information on voting rights and democracy	2025	Welfare Unit in cooperation with Welcome Office	Informational events realised and the number of people attended
	• Increasing the role of English as the working language of the Multiculturalism Board and developing the process for nominating multicultural members	2023	Multiculturalism Board in cooperation with expert members	English introduced as one of the working languages. Modelling of the application process for multicultural membership
	• Linguistic safeguarding of opportunities for citizen participation	Continuous	Entire city organisation	Events and measures to ensure access for foreign language speakers

## Services for children and young people

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Enabling hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support from a hobby coordinator to find a hobby of choice</li> <li>School visits as a channel of communication</li> </ul>	Continuous	Youth Services	Excursions, events, school visits carried out
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advice for parents on hobby activities</li> <li>Piloting of good practices (e.g. Futisstartti)</li> </ul>	2024	Welfare Services and Youth services in cooperation with sports clubs	Operations model to support parents developed and implemented
Family school model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closer cooperation with caretakers</li> <li>Informing caretakers about the Finnish education system</li> <li>Weekly events for the whole family, multilingual tutors, and expert visits</li> <li>Getting to know Vaasa and its activities and services through the family school</li> </ul>	2023-2026	Basic education in cooperation with the Family Centre	Number of participants

## Safety

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Identification and prevention of parallel communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening societal skills and providing information on civil rights and obligations</li> </ul>	Continuous	Reception Centre, Integration Services, TNO services and training providers	Adequate amount of training on society-orienting skills available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening the skills of public authorities in identifying parallel communities</li> </ul>	Continuous	Entire city organisation	No parallel communities found in the city of Vaasa
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of parallel communities documented to ensure a shared understanding</li> </ul>	2023	Security work in cooperation with the Reception Centre and Integration Services	Definition of parallel communities recorded
Identification and prevention of labour exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening the skills of the authorities, launching the guidance card</li> </ul>	Continuous	Entire city organisation	Potential cases of labour exploitation are being identified
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing information on workers' rights</li> </ul>	Continuous	Entire city organisation	Channels of communication and visibility of communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening cooperation with the network of authorities</li> </ul>	Continuous	Reception Centre, Integration Services, TNO in cooperation with the IKU network	Number of meetings of the IKU network
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recording of ethical principles</li> </ul>	2023	City Council	Ethical principles recorded and implemented
Strengthening crisis awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a model for multilingual crisis communication</li> <li>Mapping the responsible communications persons of communities</li> </ul>	2023	Reception Centre, Integration Services, TNO in cooperation with communication services	A robust network of people responsible for communication in communities

## Following up

GOAL	ACTION	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND PARTNERS	INDICATOR
Meeting the goals set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual data collection</li> <li>Evaluating effectiveness of current actions and agreeing on further actions</li> </ul>	Continuous	Multiculturalism Board	Goals met Development of indicators

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## THE CITY OF VAASA INTEGRATION SERVICE



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[vaasa.fi/integrationprogramme](https://vaasa.fi/integrationprogramme)