



# INTEGRATION POLICY

**KLAKSVÍKAR KOMMUNA – A CITY FOR EVERYONE**



## FOREWORD

Klaksvík is a city started by combining small towns in the region and as a result, there is a deep-rooted local spirit of cooperation and community. Klaksvík is best known for its innovative industry, trade, schools and various services sprung from their own enterprise available to citizens.

What sets Klaksvík apart from others is the local innovations in cooperation with the municipality, local trade unions, and businesses that have worked together to cope and to develop Klaksvík especially in economic crises. Sports and various leisure-time activities have also played as a driving force in the town's

development, and as an important factor in creating a close-knit community.

New times equal new challenges and new opportunities. Now, as we are well on our way into the twentieth first century, Klaksvík continues to be an insoluble part of a globalized world, wherein borders are made more faint and wherein people easily relocate between countries. This is also visible in the growing diversity of residents in Klaksvík -approximately 121 foreign residents from 35 different countries in 2014.

This diversity brings with it new and specialized knowledge, skills, as well as rich experiences, which will enrich and develop the Faroese

society. Simultaneously, the diversity brings with it a particular challenge. If we are to succeed as a society in utilizing these resources and take care of the challenges that come with it, it is of importance that we have a written plan where we outline how, as a society, we will welcome and accommodate all new citizens. This is the purpose of the new integration policy that Klaksvíkar Kommuna has completed.

I believe this policy will be a tool in contributing better integrated foreigners in society through respect, trust, compassion and sympathy in a culturally diverse town.

**Jógvan Skorheim,**  
**Mayor of Klaksvík Municipality**



## INTRODUCTION

Through this policy, Klaksvíkar Kommuna highlights the integration process that new-comers in our society undergo. The policy will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, wherein this policy is one step in the direction of making a national integration policy.

All citizens in our society have a right to equal conditions and possibilities - no matter their origin or their competence. Through this policy, Klaksvíkar Kommuna is working towards that goal.

In the policy, specific issues are identified and addressed after researching immigrants' circumstances, needs, and requests. These issues are in need of quick attention and development.

Klaksvík makes up about 10 percent of the population of the Faroe Islands and therefore this project is a fair representation possible national policy, which other municipalities can implement on the same level, should they be interested.

The policy establishes a framework individual municipalities can shape so that it meets those specific challenges municipality faces on the subject.

Rather than suggesting local and temporary solutions to individual issues, the purpose of the integration policy is to identify important values of the topics at hand and the goal is to bring lasting changes on all levels of the community.



## WHAT IS INTEGRATION?

Integration is a subject that can become easily confused or mixed with a host of different issues. For example, some may confuse integration with immigration that it's about opening up the borders to allow more people into the country. Others see integration as changing the host culture to something entirely different to accommodate immigrants. Lastly, there are those



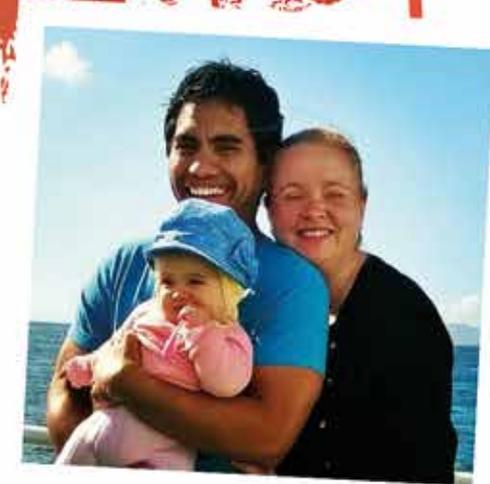
who see issues with immigrants as a threat to local employment, welfare benefits, and even security. While these concerns are legitimate and important to discuss, they are, in the case of Klaksvík, unrelated to integration.

The primary understanding of integration is the process of migrants who enter into the society and the way in which they participate in the community. For example, a newcomer may face challenges in finding the proper information on

services or employment. Others confront social and education barriers that limit their social network and job opportunities.

The municipality recognizes that there are different types of migration. The policy primarily focuses on foreigners (born overseas, both parents are born overseas, or have held a foreign citizenship at sometime) who are seeking or have

settled in the city long term. It is important to note that this policy welcomes other foreigners who are here for short term or under special circumstances. However, the main focus of the policy is for those who seek or have settled here long term.



David Im is married to Annika Kunoy Im and they live in Klaksvík.



## THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The city council's finance committee consented to start this project for the purpose to research the circumstances and to work on a development for foreigners living in Klaksvík in order to conclude what is to be done to increase the growth and integration for foreign residents.

David Im, from South Korea, holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in Intercultural Studies was hired as project manager in cooperation with Klaksvíkar Kommuna, Ministry of Trade and Industry and private industries.

Furthermore, meetings have been held with Jóhan Dahl Minister of

Foreigner Affairs as well as with private industries, who have shown great interest and favor in the project. When working with new initiatives, it is important to proceed with diligence. Through this project Klaksvíkar Kommuna aimed to conduct an in-depth research of foreigners in the kommuna. Through this research, the purpose is to understand who the foreigners are, how they find their role in society,

and to understand day-to-day challenges they face.

The project started with basic communication and registration work wherein the project manager interviewed and met with foreign residents in the city. The residents filled out questionnaires the project manager conducted. As a foreigner himself, it was natural and easily relatable to meet with other



residents, which was a positive contribution in measuring people's opinions and assessing the situation.

The purpose of this procedure was to gain necessary insight and knowledge to build the policy that suits foreigners living in the municipality. With this foundation, the recommendation was presented to the finance committee and the city council for approval. Through this work, an integration policy is now available for Klaksvíkar Kommuna with recommendations for concrete programs to be implemented as part of this policy.



## VISION

**To see immigrants better integrated by fostering respect, trust, understanding, and harmony within an intercultural community.**

To begin breaking down the invisible barriers immigrants face, Klaksvíkar Kommuna provides space, opportunities, and a place of dialogue to encourage both local and immigrant groups understand better of each other and as a result, it fosters a mutual respect and trust.

Founded in this, the municipality encourages openness between both local citizens and foreigners, which in return leads to respect and trust from both parties.

## LEARNING

Learning is a fundamental value crucial for integration especially in learning one's new surroundings, the culture, the people, and the language. However, when there is limited opportunity or no access to



learn, then this hinders us from taking any actions forward.

Most importantly, when foreigners continue to face obstacles in learning, they lose motivation, the will, and even the courage to move forward. This hindrance blocks immigrants from fully participating in the Faroese society. Klaksvíkar Kommuna ensures that learning is accessible and open to all immigrants.

### FAROESE LANGUAGE

Speaking the host country's language is the foundation for a foreigner to be able to integrate into society. A



proper curriculum is needed to be able to provide a standard for both teachers and students. This entails a standardization of different levels of Faroese proficiency to suit the students' levels. The curriculum will focus on utilizing existing resources and materials appropriately to meet the levels and goals of the students.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna will, in cooperation with relevant authorities, systematically work towards implementing a curriculum for Faroese language learning for foreigners. It is important to utilize available resources, competence, and materials. This will be done so that the learning can be adjusted to each students' level and their goals as much as possible.



Furthermore, learning is a two-way process. Dialogues between the students and teachers should be on a regular basis to evaluate the overall learning process for both.

### **EDUCATION**

Access to education opportunities is equal and accessible to anyone here in the Faroese society. This access must also be clearly stated for immigrants. There is ambiguity and little guidance for foreigners when it comes to education advancement such as earning a university degree.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna should encourage educational institutions to be more open and foreigner-friendly for them to have an easier entry point.

### **INFORMATION**

Klaksvíkar Kommuna provides an information package to foreign residents when they register at the municipality detailing the services provided to its residents along with basic civic guide on their rights and duties as residents here in the city.

A cultural orientation of the city is offered multiple times throughout the year to benefit the residents as they begin their settlement and learn about their surroundings.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Immigrants who cannot read and cannot understand Faroese fluently are at a disadvantage in reading and hearing the necessary information and events occurring in the community.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna should have both important and relevant information translated into English on the municipality's website. Furthermore, the website highlights the immigrants' community by updating news and events.



## COMMUNITY

In 2014, Klaksvík had approximately 121 foreigners from 35 countries. This diversity brings new knowledge, specialized skills, and enriching experiences that progress and strengthen the community.

Diversity is not a threat to the Faroese community or the culture, but a key strength in building the Faroese identity by deepening self-awareness and understanding of its own culture in relation with other cultures. Because of the diversity found in Klaksvík, the city can celebrate the different cultures found within the community and encourage all groups to connect and interact with each other.

### INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY

Klaksvíkar Kommuna aims to implement an intercultural lens in all areas ranging from neighborhoods to the council.

Instead of understanding intergration as a problem to be solved, we must ask the question how an intercultural view can be intertwined in all areas of the city. An intercultural point-of-view is not only about respect and acknowledgement of foreign residents but also about providing social cohesion, which in return prevents seperation, prejudice and dispute.

### EVENTS

Events are natural and friendly approach in creating a space for both cultures to interact with each other. A cultural dialogue begins in these events through both experience and interaction. By encouraging and sponsoring cultural events such as food, cultural exhibition, and arts for the immigrants, it is the beginning to understanding who and where the immigrants are from.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna encourages and will participate in financing cultural events for foreigners, such as food festivals and exhibits of art and culture in order to gain greater

tolerance and sympathy within the kommuna for foreigners and their origin and culture.

### NETWORK

Connecting with family, friends, and work is an integral part of the community. However, immigrants find that establishing this network is often challenging, if not impossible, to do so.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna can coordinate and cooperate with both private and public organizations that volunteer to connect with immigrants through classes: language conversation, culture/ history, café-style hangout, etc. to provide this networking opportunity.

## LEISURE

Participation in leisurely sports is a way to help build and strengthen social relationships that can work against social isolation from the community. The municipality can encourage sports associations to provide both physical space and access for immigrants to take part in leisurely activities.



## EMPOWERMENT

Immigrants in a new country are generally the minority and can often face challenges and barriers in many aspects of life. As a result, there is a danger of immigrants retreating and isolating themselves from full participation.

Empowerment is to instill confidence and courage for them to be active in society. It is creating an opportunity for immigrants that strengthen their well-being by allowing them to contribute to the community.

Klaksvíkar Kommuna wants to provide immigrants with better

opportunities and conditions to partake in society, through their own enterprise and work, by systematically empowering the immigrants, which in return increases satisfaction.

## DAYCARE/ SCHOOL VOLUNTEERISM

As a special option, in order to help immigrants access the work force, Klaksvíkar kommuna encourages in any way possible that daycares and schools create temporary positions for immigrants to actively volunteer in contributing their skills to the existing program.

By having work-related purposes, this gives immigrants an opportunity to learn both the culture and language. Importantly, this position allows for



the children to be exposed and learn from the immigrants at an early stage of life that allow an enriching understanding of the different cultures in the world.

## LESSONS

Immigrants bring unique sets of skills, experiences, and languages that the local residents can greatly benefit from.

The municipality shall play an active role in encouraging and guiding immigrants who are interested and who have necessary skills in teaching these classes under systemized conditions, such as evening school classes.

### **INTEGRATION COMMITTEE**

The municipality shall - in cooperation with immigrants in the area - allow a committee composed of active leaders in the immigrants' community.

The committee's duty is to meet with appropriate city administrators to provide feedback and voice any challenges and concerns on a quarterly basis.

The purpose of the committee is to provide the opportunity for immigrants in the local area to be represented and to have a formal way to communicate safely with the municipality and keep the municipality informed on a regular basis on integration.

### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The opportunities for entrepreneurship are many in the Faroes - also for immigrants, who through diversity can see and utilize new ways to do things, and through this insight enrich work activities in the community.

Klaksvíkar kommuna wants to create the best framework possible for business development within the immigrant community. This will be done so that immigrants, as all other citizens, can proceed with possible plans of own businesses, if they are interested and capable.



The municipality shall use appropriate tools and measures to connect immigrants to entrepreneur opportunities. This shall be done by courses in business entrepreneurship for immigrants

### **CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE**

The municipality shall provide a contact person for immigrants, who will serve as a contact for any questions or services immigrants may need as well as a representative for the municipality.

Immigrants shall have access to the contact representative if they have any questions, need for services or need help from the municipality. The contact person will also guide immigrants in areas in which they are having a difficult time finding out or getting a hold of the appropriate person.





## DEAR PEOPLE OF KLAKSVÍK

The world has become much smaller than it has ever been. Because of globalization, we are now a close knitted part of the globalized world in our day-to-day lives. Technology has shortened the distance there is between people and nations and travelling is easier and more common.

The Faroe Islands have, in the past years, experienced an increase in foreign immigrants wanting to settle here. Although we have experiences dealing with immigration issues we should - on a much larger scale - keep in mind how we can make things easier for foreigners to become a part of the Faroese society.

Integrating foreigners should speed up the process where immigrants become a part of society. We should not force our own ideas and values on people, who move here but instead give them space and opportunities to function in our society. Immigrants come to the Faroes with abilities, values and cultures we should hold in respect and

from which we can greatly benefit. Simultaneously immigrants can adopt our values and share them with others.

Traditionally, people understood integration as a one-way trajectory or also known as assimilation. This is the process in which a foreigner becomes similar to the rest of the population: learn the language, take the host culture's values as your own, and act or be similar like that of the local people. This is not entirely negative yet unforeseen consequences can arise. One circumstance could be that assimilation can suppress the newcomers' ethnic identity that it will drive them away from society and become more secluded from the rest of the population.

I'm pleased that Klaksvíkar kommuna now has created an integration policy and my hope is that this policy can function in a way that foreigners gain a better and easier way into the Faroese society, which will benefit all of us that live and work in the community.

***Jóhan Dahl, minister of Trade and Industry***