

France: THOT

Type of provider

THOT is a certification school aiming at developing ownership of the French language and thereby the possibility of achieving a certain level of autonomy. THOT offers access to a professionally structured, stable and intensive training programme for refugees and asylum seekers who have not received certification in their country. The school welcomed its first students in June 2016. For the students, this is some cases the first type of certification they've ever received.

Objective

After undergoing training and attending courses, THOT students are enrolled in the DILF (Initial French Language Diploma) or DELF (French Language Studies Diploma) exams. These are state diplomas, valid for life and internationally recognised. Classes cover the ALPHA, A1 and A2 levels.

Thanks to the support of the Rectorate of Paris, the graduation is hosted free of charge by CASNAV (Academy of Paris), which works as a partner with THOT.

Assessment approaches

A full session lasts 16 weeks. With 10 hours of French lessons per week, 160 hours of French are offered throughout the whole session. The creative workshops take 2 hours a week, and career guidance workshops represent 16 hours in all. In total, THOT students attend at least 208 hours of classes and workshops. Schedules are adapted to constraints. THOT training is adapted as best as possible to the reality of its audience; courses and workshops are held at times outside of daily administrative procedures, therefore on weeknights and weekends.

Relationship therapy also helps to build new connections that are essential to reconstruct an individual that has undergone any trauma. The team of psychotherapists intervene with students, more generally with those who have been displaced. Psychological support is suggested if teachers sense the need for it. Intervention is done in groups, where people exchange about difficulties encountered upon arrival, or thematic groups according to demand. THOT offers individual follow-up, at the student's request. These follow-ups quickly take a classic therapeutic form.

A pedagogical framework, which is recent and very adapted to the field, has 8 job workshops which make it possible to know and understand trades, sectors of activity, information on the French labour market, job search strategies, French support institutions for employment and training. These workshops are supported by individual interviews to validate the action plans built. Actions are reinforced by partnerships with associations and organisations (including Job'; Grant, Refugee Employment Action, La Fabrique Nomade, Kodiko, etc...).

The pedagogical framework consists of workshops on job search, hiring and training, the professional world, competences and identifying one's professional path and project. Much of the success in workshops has come from the use of role-play, and the role of the arts and theatre. The programme is constantly adapted to the feedback of teachers and students.

Assessment approaches (rest)

Media partners such as Radio France Internationale Savoirs and TV5MONDE, use innovative radio and audiovisual teaching materials to enrich the courses. An approach around French and more generally of language overall (outside class-time) is essential - whether through words, music, body or drawing. This is done in order to anchor and better understand the language, and to achieve personal success.

The educational programme has been developed so that it is as close as possible to the needs of all and meets the THOT requirement of a good rhythm and excellence.

The work produced during the workshops is coherent and coordinated between stakeholders and the pedagogical team. If necessary translators are used.

Objectives are to:

- Understand that there is a specific vocabulary related to the professional world and job search
- Understand the functioning of the “dictionary of professional words” so that they use it independently over the next 7 sessions
- Understand the notion of “families of trades”
- Recognise in which sector of activity belong the trades of interest
- Discover the different regions of France: possibility of mobility for work!
- Know where to look for work, and who to contact?
- Understand what a job offer is

Objectives:

- To communicate by writing about my experience
- Understand writing/words related to the world of work

Objectives:

- Now that I know my skills, what can I do with them?
- Define more precisely my interests and the areas where I can search
- Know how I can respond to a job offer

Objectives:

- Know where I can be trained
- Understand the importance of knowing a precise skill, a business sector in a new language

Objectives:

- Learn to introduce myself: my personality and my experiences
- Understand the issues, difficulties and codes of a job interview in France

Objectives:

- Make a summary of the workshops
- Share a friendly moment to say goodbye
- Have fun around words learned so far

The students are assisted to create a CV, in which are listed:

- spoken languages, French level, status, housing, follow-up with other associations, network, training, former profession, previous work, experience in the workshops jobs, skills, know-how, computer knowledge/level, desires, recommendations.

Target group

Students are refugees and asylum seekers living in Paris and Île-de- France. Many of them have dropped out of school, and can neither read nor write. This training allows them to become literate and then have access to certification.

The demand is high: about 80% of asylum seekers in Paris have not completed their high school (internal source of OFPRA), and many of them have never been to school. These people worked in commerce, agriculture, crafts and service.

The only recruitment criteria asked of students is that they not already have the Baccaalaureate (or equivalent) level, since other structures have been set up for such students.

Potential transferability/ scalability

The goal is to open more classes to meet the increasing demand, and into 2018-2019, to spread out into other cities of France.

Summaries or Basic elements of analysis

The work has been recognised by the prestigious competition “France commits itself”. Announced by the French President in January 2017, this success made THOT the newest initiative rewarded by this contest.

As a laureate of the French Presidential initiative, THOT is supported by the Youth Experimentation Fund, implemented by the Ministry of Youth.

THOT has attracted much interest; this year 400 applications came in for 50-80 available spaces.

The overall success rate is 88%

DILF 85%
A1 92.5%
A2 73.5%
B1 100%

