

France: Refugeeks Program, Simplon

Type of provider

Simplon puts IT knowledge at the service of social inclusion. In order to contribute to the integration process of refugees in France, Simplon created the Pilot Program Refugeeks in March 2016. This is an intensive training programme in Web Development which may lead to a certificate. It offers free and intensive trainings in the field of IT, destined for vulnerable refugees who have been excluded from training or work opportunities, in order to validate prior experience in IT and coding.

Simplon aims to:

- develop specific programmes to reach and support the most excluded and vulnerable groups
- train candidates with varying profiles, who are also autonomous and motivated to learn and to use IT professionally
- create jobs, respond to the needs of having/developing and recognising specific workplace competences

Objective

To help refugees gain access to professional opportunities and the current job market by offering them training adapted to their needs. Refugeeks collaborates with other organisations that also assist refugees.

This pilot programme was carried out in 3 phases:

Phase 1: An initial training for refugees

Phase 2: Subsequent trainings that integrated new participants

Phase 3: Trainings were set up across the Paris Region (in 5 different sites)

Assessment approaches

Assessment steps are as follows:

- a) Individual interviews with the candidate to ensure motivation and understanding of the requirements and exigencies of the training programme, and group sessions to introduce and explain the programme.
- b) Verification and validation of prior digital competences
 - using the « Codecademy » method (to check prior experience with online coding)
 - use of “serious team games”. Five to six people are asked to play an XP Game following an explanatory game user kit. This is to determine the profiles and capacities of candidates to work in groups; to discern synergies among students, and filter candidates with problematic behaviour.
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- c) Courses in the French language (a total of 200 hours), comprised of:
 - language/grammar/communication (4h/week)
 - modules focused on types of professions using digital competences (18h)
- d) An intensive digital course that takes 3 to 7 months. It includes individual coaching between the learner and trainer, and a 1-month internship. This is the last step, and if successful, allows

Assessment approaches (rest)

the student to graduate and apply for work or undertake further studies.

Ensuring quality language training

- working with Alliance Française, by organising classes according to the French National repository of competences (“référentiel de compétences”)

Supporting the training teams

- providing assistance with problems/challenges
- follow-up of learners
- establishing partnerships with accommodation facilities and local organisations

Target group

The program is targeted to vulnerable refugees who wish to enter the labour market and have experienced social exclusion.

In 2017 Refugeeks trained 55 students representing 21 different nationalities, and on average, 31 years of age. Sixty per cent of students had previously earned a certificate lower or equal to the French high school diploma.

The programme also included early school leavers (not in employment or actively seeking work) and people with disabilities (visually impaired and hard of hearing).

Potential transferability/ scalability

Between 2017 and 2020, Simplon intends to disseminate the Refugeeks programme to 30 sites across France and in other countries. Simplon has a strong territorial presence through its existing partnerships and projects. This plan is based on the following goals:

- 1) Help establish the territorial network:
 - Set up the network (identifying refugees)
 - Identify partners (programmes inhousing, social assistance, etc.)
- 2) Form teams:
 - identifying trainers, site leader, project managers, etc
 - raising awareness on the training and support required

Summaries or Basic elements of analysis

Seventy-five per cent of students successfully graduated from the programme in 2017, most pursuing further studies or working as entrepreneurs. Others received permanent (CDI) or temporary(CDD) work contracts. Some were professional contracts; for example eight graduates were hired at the French Bank BNP Paribas.