Oslo: How a modern city competes for talent in the global knowledge economy

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The Role of Government and Private Stakeholders in Norwegian Migration Governance

Contrasting Case Studies: Oslo and Kongsberg

Kongsberg and Systems Engineering Cluster

Conference created in 2011 to discuss talent recruitment strategies and to advocate migration policy reform.

Kongsberg Summit brings together local professionals, industry leaders, and the town government.

Oslo is a modern city competing for skilled talent, but its stakeholders are struggling to achieve a productive balance of action. These conflicts are preventing Oslo from effectively ‘selling itself’ in the global knowledge economy. Field research suggests that Oslo is falling behind other, more adaptive cities across Norway.

Factors Affecting Immigration to Norway

Strong, stable economy makes Norway an appealing destination for global talent.

Famous outdoor & recreation opportunities.

High quality of life: Social equality, health, education.

Sense of national cultural pride.

Perception of Norway as boring, cold culture - ‘nothing quieter than a Norwegian elevator’ - Oslo not considered a ‘global city’.

Workplace wage equality & little job advancement.

English-language barriers to entering workforce & employers’ preference for Norwegians.

Difficult immigration processes.

Labor shortages in STEM industries.

Norwegian labor force lacks necessary skills → need for education or migration reform.

Field Research

Field Research on Skilled Migration Governance in Oslo, Norway (June 2012)

Methods

Primary & Secondary Data Collection
- Census and Industry Statistics
- News articles on migration trends
- National migration laws
- Stakeholder websites
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- H.R. managers, business consultants, skilled immigrants

Identified & contacted key stakeholders in Kongsberg; maintained communication database.

Field Research Conclusions

Fieldwork suggests that the skilled-labor shortage in Norway persists, and the central Norwegian government is slow to enact change. However, other labor stakeholders have begun working to improve the immigration process for workers, and advocate policy reform.

These efforts take various forms: governmental law, public/private partnerships, network coalitions, and individual efforts.

Understanding the strategies of these interdependent stakeholders is vital to understanding the greater context of global migration.

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