

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

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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



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

The Role of Government and Private Stakeholders in Norwegian Migration Governance

Contrasting Case Studies: Oslo and Kongsberg



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

Forum 2011: Included government representation, but executed by private entities. 2012 Organizers included both:



Several participants stated that their goal was to influence national migration policy

Interviews with Forum participants revealed opinion that Norwegian government was unresponsive to calls for policy reform

Global Mobility Forum seems to represent a private effort to effect migration policy changes in the absence of government action.



Kongsberg and Systems Engineering Cluster



One of Norway's 21 'National Centres of Expertise,' which receive government funding to develop highly-specialized, knowledge-intensive business clusters

Kongsberg's business leaders work closely with Kongsberg's government to recruit skilled workers



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

Partnership allows both parties to benefit from town's status as 'Centre'

Kongsberg Cluster seems to represent a partnership between the public and private sectors to ensure mutual benefit.

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.

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.

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