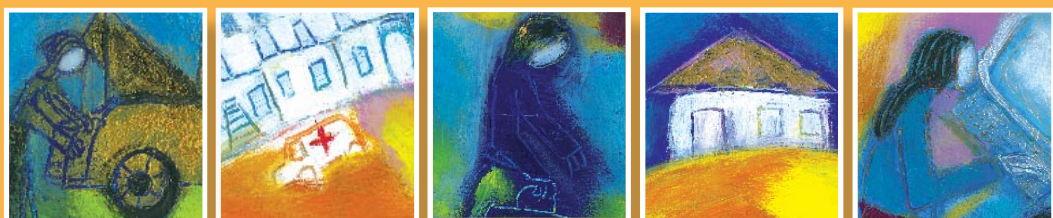




For you who are starting an  
**INTRODUCTORY PROGRAMME**

# THE INTRODUCTORY PROGRAMME

gives you new opportunities  
in Norway



The local authorities in your municipality are responsible for implementing an introductory programme which consists of an introductory programme and an introductory programme allowance. Aetat (the Labour Exchange Office) is an important partner in this work and the Directorate of Immigration monitors the programs in each municipality.



My name is Sayed Salih Nasir. I'm a Kurd from Mosel in Iraq. I'm 33 years old, married and have two children. I have six years of primary school and have worked as a formwork carpenter in Iraq. I also ran a small shop in Mosel selling vegetables. I came to Norway in 1999 and settled in the municipality of Levanger in November 2000. I attended the introductory programme for nine months with language training practice at a Rema 1000 grocery store. It was good for me to have language practice three times a week and instruction in the Norwegian language twice a week for four months. My aim was to find a steady job as quickly as possible. Because I attained my goal and got a permanent job with Sundet Garden Centre and Nursery in the municipality of Frosta, I was able to leave the introductory programme as early as August 2001. I really like my job and feel comfortable living in a small community. I feel that people are nice and treat us well here. My wife and children came to Norway in June this year. The introductory programme has been important for me in getting permanent employment. I'm young and in good health, so why shouldn't I work? Now it's my wife's turn to start the introductory programme in the autumn.



My name is Hoda Safayan. I'm 21 years old and come from Iran, where I attended upper secondary school and studied mathematics for a year at the University of Teheran. I attended the introductory programme at the Introduction Centre for Foreign Nationals in Drammen for eight months. This was very good for me because I learned to speak Norwegian quite fast. Now I've been admitted to the preparatory course for the college of engineering starting this autumn. I was very pleased with the introductory programme because it provided me with a flying start in Norway. It gave me a plan for my future. Having a plan makes me work harder to reach my goal. I think it's really important to have a plan when you're starting life in a new country. I was particularly happy with the various courses offered at the centre. I attended a computer course and a class in "active Norwegian", which is a programme that helps you to get to know your local community. I really liked that because I met so many people and became more familiar with Drammen.



My name is Zakariya Ahmed Abdi and I come from Mogadishu in Somalia. I'm 28 and married, but my wife is living in Somalia. I came to Norway in July of 2000 and started the introductory programme at Mosaikk in the Helsefyr-Sinsen district in Oslo at the end of March 2003. Initially I was given instruction in the Norwegian language five days a week from nine to three. In June, I was offered six months of on-the-job training at Ullevål hospital. The agreement was two days of training in combination with three days of Norwegian language instruction at Mosaikk. I also go to evening school three days a week to take primary school education in Norwegian, English and mathematics at the Smedstua Adult Education Centre. I completed primary school and courses in English and mathematics in Somalia, but I need a formal diploma for this in Norway. I'm getting a driver's licence and I'm planning to get a licence so I can drive a truck, too. Now I've gradually been getting more work experience because I've been taken on for extra shifts in addition to my work training. I really like the programme at Mosaikk. There is good supervision and I learn a lot about how Norwegian society works. My plan for the future is to get vocational training so I can become an electrician, a mechanic or a carpenter. I'm still young and there are many opportunities for my future. I understand you have to work hard to succeed, and I'm willing to do that. I believe the introductory programme is a real opportunity for new arrivals, and I think it's essential to get work training as soon as possible and speak Norwegian with Norwegians. Having good Norwegian is essential to getting employment in the future.



## A goal for you



Hoda Safayan has been a participant in the introductory programme in Drammen, Sayed Salih Nasir has participated in the introductory programme in Levanger, and Zakariya Ahmed Abdi is attending the qualification centre at Mosaikk in the Oslo district of Helsefyr-Sinsen. They come from different countries and have different backgrounds, but the introductory programme has given each of them the opportunity to attain their goals.



The aim of the introductory programme is to help you find employment more quickly or to get the education you need so that you can become financially self-reliant. The first thing required of you is a good command of the Norwegian language. How good your Norwegian language skills need to be will depend on the kind of job you would like to have in the future.



## A place to make plans for your life

The introductory programme helps you make plans for your future life in Norway. You will be assigned a contact person or programme advisor, as they are sometimes called. This contact person will have a number of conversations with you so that together you can draw up an individual plan for your future. It is mainly your responsibility to ensure that this is a good plan, and you must take active part in the planning. This plan will form the basis for what will become your introductory programme.

Because this introductory programme is based on individual plans you will find that there are many different options within the framework of the programme and that many of the participants have plans of actions that differ from yours. This is the way it must be when the programme is adapted to each individual's goals and objectives. A person planning to work in a restaurant does not need the same programme as somebody who wishes to study at a university. The first of these requires on-the-job training, while the latter goal requires very good Norwegian language skills to attain the points required by the Bergen test, which needs to be passed to study at universities or colleges in Norway.




## A place to learn




The introductory programme will familiarize you with how working life functions in Norway and you will learn about Norwegian society. You will also become familiar with your local community and be informed about the educational and work options in your municipality. You might not be able to get the same type of work as you had before. Perhaps you have never had a job in your country of origin and are unsure of what a job requires of you. Or you might be thinking of pursuing an education because you had already started studies or you see education openings in Norway that were impossible for you to take in your country of origin.




## A place to learn and develop skills



We do not know what you are planning to do in the future, and perhaps you are not even sure yourself yet, but you do need to learn more about the opportunities that are to be found in Norway. This is what you will be doing in the introductory programme. The introductory programme has been passed by the Norwegian parliament, and gives you the right and the obligation to attend the programme on a full-time basis, all the while keeping to the standard rules and regulations in working life, which include, for example, five weeks of holidays and paying taxes (!).



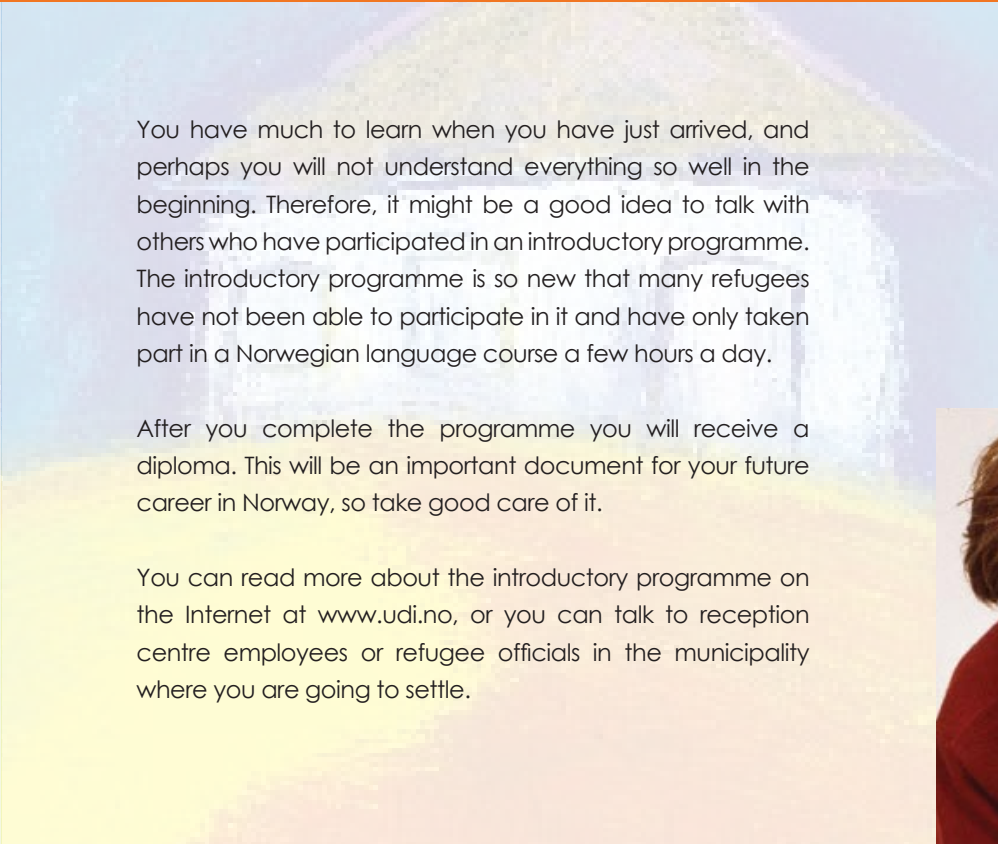
Everyone who takes part in an introductory programme is entitled to an introductory programme allowance. As in working life, money will be deducted from your introductory programme allowance if you are absent without an accepted reason. Your local authority will inform you in more detail about the rules governing this. The introductory programme allowance functions as a type of "wage" and is taxable, but does not earn you any pension points. You only obtain pension points when you have regular employment. Each family member over 18 years of age has an individual right and obligation to participate in the programme and to be paid the introductory programme allowance. The amount of the allowance is the same in all parts of Norway. As of 1 May 2003, the amount is NOK 113 722 per year, but if you are under 25 years of age your introductory programme allowance will be reduced. After 1 September 2004, it will also be possible to be granted housing allowance through the Norwegian Housing Bank's government financial support scheme.



If you take on some extra work on weekends or a few nights during the week, you are still entitled to the introductory allowance, and there will be no deductions even if you earn more money. However, there are strict attendance requirements for anyone participating in this programme.

If you have children, you will receive a child benefit in addition to the introductory programme allowance. If your child or children are younger than the compulsory school age, and you need day care for them, you must cover these expenses yourself. You are entitled to the same child care reimbursement for parents of very young children as other families.

## Some good advice



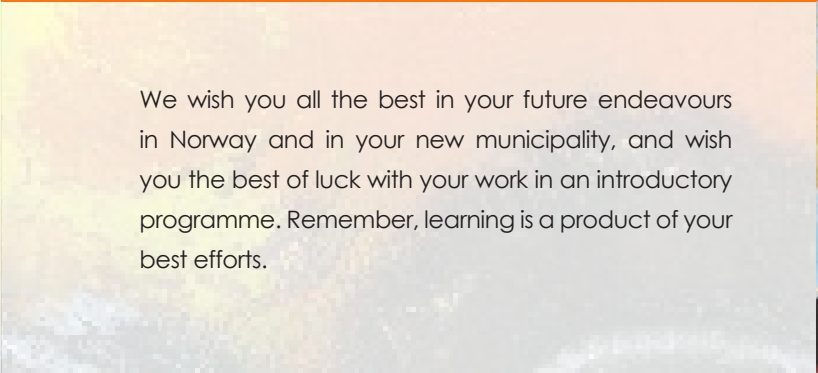
You have much to learn when you have just arrived, and perhaps you will not understand everything so well in the beginning. Therefore, it might be a good idea to talk with others who have participated in an introductory programme. The introductory programme is so new that many refugees have not been able to participate in it and have only taken part in a Norwegian language course a few hours a day.

After you complete the programme you will receive a diploma. This will be an important document for your future career in Norway, so take good care of it.

You can read more about the introductory programme on the Internet at [www.udi.no](http://www.udi.no), or you can talk to reception centre employees or refugee officials in the municipality where you are going to settle.



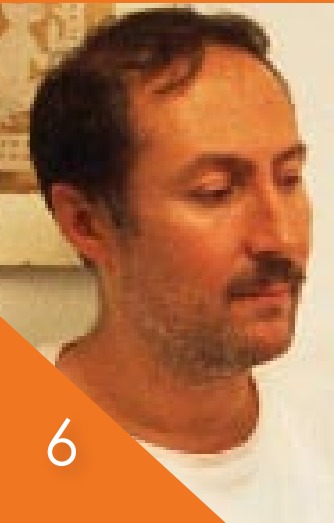
## Your future belongs to you



We wish you all the best in your future endeavours in Norway and in your new municipality, and wish you the best of luck with your work in an introductory programme. Remember, learning is a product of your best efforts.



## When can you start?



The act is in effect as of 1 September 2003, but you may find that the local authorities in your municipality have not established an introductory programme as of that date. The authorities in each municipality have been given one year in which to establish an introductory programme. However, as of 1 September 2004 all the local authorities settling refugees in agreement with the Directorate of Immigration will be obligated to have established an introductory programme. During this transition period, if you settle in a municipality without such an agreement being in place, you may lose the right to the introductory programme.

### Somali words of wisdom:



**"If you give me a fish, I can survive one day. If you teach me to fish, I can manage all my life."**

**An introductory programme will teach you to "fish".**



## An introductory programme includes

Introductory programmes are tailor-made for persons who need basic qualifications.

The programme must be full time for the whole year. The programme must as a minimum include:

- Instruction in the Norwegian language
- Social studies
- Measures preparing for further studies or for working life

## Duration of the programme

The programme may last up to two years, in addition to any approved leaves of absence. When special reasons so indicate, the programme may be extended to three years.

## Refugee guide – something for you?

In conjunction with the Red Cross or another NGO, some municipalities offer recent arrivals a refugee guide.

A refugee guide is a volunteer who would like to meet you and introduce you to the local community. He or she will be your personal guide and may be important for your social network when you first settle in Norway.

The refugees and the guides will be matched according to qualifications, wishes, needs and expectations.

This programme also allows you to practise your Norwegian language skills and to learn about the opportunities that exist in your municipality. You really should take the opportunity if you are offered a guide! Many people are very pleased to have been given the opportunity to have a guide.

## Who has the right and obligation to the introductory programme?

Definition of a newcomer is: Newly arrived foreign nationals between 18 and 55 years of age needing qualifications and who have been settled in a municipality for less than 2 years at the point in time when the municipal authorities make their decision about a potential applicant taking part in the programme. As soon as possible and within three months after settling in a municipality, or after it has been decided that a newcomer is required to participate in the programme, the local authority must provide an introductory programme adapted to each participant. The Norwegian Parliament has decided that those who come under this programme must have been settled in accordance with an agreement between the UDI and the local authorities.

### They must have status as:

- Resettlement refugees
- Refugees with asylum
- Asylum seekers who have been granted residence on humanitarian grounds
- Persons with collective protection
- Persons who have been granted family reunification with a person from group 1, 2 or 4. To be included in this provision, it is a requirement that the person living in Norway has not resided in a municipality for more than five years at the time the application is made. If a person is granted family reunification with someone with residence on humanitarian grounds, he or she has the right and obligation to an introductory programme if both permit is given and the person arrives in Norway before 7.1.2005.



The act is obligatory as of 1 september 2004

Though this act is in effect as of 1 September 2003, it will not be obligatory for the municipalities until 1 September 2004. During this transition period, the right and obligation regarding introductory programmes will not apply to all persons in the target group and it will be up to the local authorities to select whom they want to offer the programme to.



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Telefax: +47 23 31 10 50

### The Inland Region Office

Hedmark, Oppland and Buskerud counties  
P.O. Box 445, 2803 GJØVIK  
Tel.: + 47 61 14 65 00  
Telefax: +47 61 17 08 95

### The Southern Region Office

Telemark, Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder counties  
P.O. Box 647, 4666 KRISTIANSAND  
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### The Western Region Office

Rogaland, Hordaland and Sogn and Fjordane counties  
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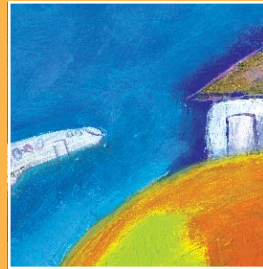
### The Central Region Office

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7005 TRONDHEIM  
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