5.4:

The Alliance - regional co-operation between the authorities, the municipalities, the industry and the university

1. The county of Stockholm is an attractive region to asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived immigrants, despite an increasing segregation. Our region is the hub of the Swedish telecom and high-tech industry as well as of communication and administration. Regional authorities and the industry are determinedly promoting economic expansion, intending to offer good business opportunities, a high standard of living for the inhabitants, and environmental care.

But the difficulty for immigrants to find well matched occupations is a great waste of valuable human resources. Over 30 thousand persons with a foreign background have no employment at all, and 60% of the foreign-born academicians earn their living as taxi drivers or pizza bakers.

2.
steps towards a job...
(figur A, 2 st)

3. We have founded the Alliance to facilitate and accelerate the immigrants’ way to the labour market. The Alliance is a regional co-operative network in which partners from governmental and municipal authorities share their needs and resources with the universities and the industry. Best practices from the joint fields of education and labour market are to be spread and put to use.

(figure B)
the vision of the Alliance:
Every newly arrived immigrant participates in an introduction adapted to her/his individual needs, independent of municipality borders, within a framework of economic growth

the aim:
National, regional and local agents contribute to the growth of the region by cooperating in offering housing and work for the newly arrived

the goals:
To ensure the possibility of individual introduction by pooling the regional supply of activities

fields to be developed:
- learning Swedish at work
- validation of work experience
- entrepreneurship
4. The most successful project hitherto is SFA, Swedish for Academicians. Usually it takes six or seven years for a doctor or a nurse with a foreign exam until she or he becomes employed by a hospital or a centre for medical care. At the same time there is a shortage of professionals in the medical services!

If the process can be shortened to two-three years, the benefits are great for the society and the individual. The SFA solution is that people with the same professional background study Swedish together, fulltime instead of part-time, with a better co-ordination between the responsible authorities.

5. With SFA...
(figure C: new model)

6. In a college campus environment, 250 immigrants from 30 different countries study medically adapted Swedish. The education also consists of study visits, computers and ordinary Swedish. It is performed in co-operation with the Municipality of Södertälje, the Employment Agency, the County council, Södertörn university college and the Equal programme.

We now consider similar educations for pedagogues or technicians. The cooperation between municipalities is a necessary condition. One small town seldom has the basis of population to start a course.

7. Rekryteringsbazaren, the Recruitment bazaar, is another example of an effort to facilitate the immigrants' chances to get a job. Our goal is to change the individual from object to subject, or from a piece of paper to a person.

The Recruitment bazaar is a giant job fair with a growing numbers of exhibitors and visitors. Here job-seekers and employers from the private and public sectors meet face to face.

(figure D, bazaar…)

Free consultation is offered those who consider starting a free enterprise. You can also test you abilities at a faked interview to learn how to improve your self-representation. There is also information and evaluation of university studies.

(figure E)
some figures:
30 exhibitors
9000 visitors, speaking 3.2 languages
total sum of languages = 30
54% immigrants
average residence in Sweden: 9 years
70% looking for a job to match their skills

Independent evaluation:
“most people were satisfied with their visit or participation”
“most people had good hopes for fruitful contacts”
“the project has reached the right target group”

8. Today, the agents involved in the Alliance have reached a shared vision. We all agree that the individual immigrant’s needs correspond well with the demands of the labour market. We regard the pooling of resources in a network as essential if the quality of immigrant reception is to be improved. What remains to be achieved is that the local organizations take the initiative for further action.

(figure F, municipalities)
26 independent municipalities
differing in size from 8000 to 800 000 inhabitants
governed by conservatives (14) or social democrats (10)
great differences of
- income
- education
- employment
- number of children
- number of elderly
- health standard

What the municipalities have in common is a lack of housing. This housing problem cannot be solved in a short time. But there are other areas that the Alliance is able to influence. For example, the Swedish for immigrants training programmes.

By finding out what is possible to do, we will continue the process. A more effective, better co-ordinated introduction is necessary to promote a high standard of living, good education, gender equality and economic growth in the Stockholm region.