

## SuomiKamu – Ystäväksi Maahanmuuttajalle ( Eng. Become a friend to an Immigrant)



### ORGANIZATION\*

The Finnish Red Cross

### COUNTRY AND CITY/IES

Finland, City of Espoo

### FIELD OF WORK

Social inclusion of immigrants.

### THE ACTION IS ADDRESSED TO (BENEFICIARIES)

Immigrants who have received a residence permit as asylum seekers or quota refugees, SuomiKamu volunteers and adults. The number varies from year to year, as does ethnic background, gender and age.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Volunteers are provided SuomiKamu training after which the volunteers and immigrant meet and friendship activities are implemented. For many immigrants, SuomiKamu is the first contact with Finnish friends and an important support in getting to know the Finnish way of life and society along with learning Finnish. The volunteers get to know new people and new cultures as well.

### MAIN GOALS

The aim is to support immigrants in integration and language learning, and to give them the opportunity to get to know Finns.

### IMPACTS OF THE ACTIVITY

For many immigrants, SuomiKamu is the first contact with Finnish friends and an important support in getting to know the Finnish way of life and society along with learning Finnish. The Finnish friends also get to know new people and a new culture. The activity increases understanding and tolerance for diversity and different cultures, and it also increases trust in Finnish society. During the time of the pandemic, and due to the lack of language skills of immigrants, communicating remotely has been difficult. Due to restrictions, it has not been possible to meet face to face.

### COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

City of Espoo Immigrant Services (caring for participants), SPR's (the Finnish Red Cross) Espoo Friend and Volunteer Services (caring for participants, supporting activities), SPR's Helsinki District (supporting activities, training) all contribute to the information about SuomiKamu operations. Activities (with the exception of Espoo Immigrant Services and SPR's district office) are voluntary.

### SUSTAINABILITY (ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY)

The initiative supports social sustainability by facilitating integration and social inclusion. It increases understanding and tolerance for diversity and different cultures as well as Finnish language skills and trust in Finnish society.

### TRANSFERABILITY

The programme or action is already organised in different parts of Finland and it can be transferred to other countries as long as the funding is provided and there are passionate volunteers who want to participate.