

Randstad: Marginalized groups vital for future labour market

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Image: Marieke de Mink
Johan Söderström

Bridging the Gap - that is the challenge of the current and future labour markets according to a new study by the staffing company Randstad. The study was presented by Johan Söderström and Johannes Pettersson from Randstad at a Dutch Chamber of Commerce event onboard the Swedish Ship Göteborg on Thursday night.

In order to live up to the demands of the future labour market, companies and countries have to become better at including marginalized groups in the workforce.

On average, it takes seven years for immigrants from arrival to work in Sweden. That can be compared to about one year in the multicultural city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

According to the Randstad study, there is a 15 percent gap between the projected workforce and future needs in Sweden. The labour market is increasingly moving towards the service and the knowledge industry. Jobs are becoming more knowledge intense and the skill sets are changing. The question is; can Sweden produce enough people with the right competency in a market with a shortage of labour?

The portion of the population that is capable of working is not active enough. A "quick fix" is to increase the retirement age. Another alternative is to implement subsidized job programs, but these rarely have positive effects on employment probabilities for regular jobs.

However, the sustainable answer, according to the study, is to increase participation by "bridging the gap". That is, the employees of tomorrow should be found in the marginalized groups of today; the young and the old, women, immigrants and the disabled. This requires flexibility, from both employees and employers.

During Thursday's event, Frederike van Urk left her post as Regional Director of Dutch Chamber West and was replaced by Chimène van Oosterhout.

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