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From Arrival to Belonging: A Web- Based Information Platform for Filipino Nurses in Finland

A Collaborative Initiative with BIBAK Suomi ry

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the thesis was to develop a web platform to improve Finnish Social and Support service access for newly employed nurses from the Philippines. Although they play a major role in the Finnish healthcare sector, especially in elderly care, many newly recruited Filipino nurses face a lot of barriers, such as language difficulties, scattered information sources, and a lack of culturally adapted information that addresses their needs and experiences. As recruited workers, there is no systematic integration plan for them, which makes access for them to essential services and adaptation to life in Finland even more difficult.

This web platform was created with the collaboration of BIBAK Suomi, a non-profit organization who assists the Filipino and Igorot communities in Finland. This web platform serves as a comprehensive repository, providing sociocultural context and access to social services, including information on access to healthcare, housing assistance, monetary subsidies, language classes, and legal rights, prioritizing accessibility, cultural significance, and user friendliness.

Along with collaboration with BIBAK, the project author's knowledge in information technology and social services had been the background of the development process. As a sustainable choice of design and development, WordPress was selected as a CMS (content management system) because it is a better solution for noncoding users. Six Filipino nurses as well as two board members of BIBAK Suomi evaluated the platform to ensure efficiency and cultural relevance and to aid in informal integration. This project highlights the importance of digital solutions that are created with the communities they serve and showcases the power of technology to promote psychosocial well-being and access to services in labor migration contexts.

Keywords: Filipino nurses, social integration, web platform, support services, BIBAK Suomi

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1 INTRODUCTION

The migration of internationally recruited healthcare professionals has become a prominent trend in Finland, with Filipino nurses representing a substantial portion of the workforce in elderly care facilities (Calenda, 2016). While their skills are recognized and valued, the challenges they face in adjusting to Finnish society are frequently neglected in official policies. Unlike asylum seekers and other immigrant groups, these workers typically arrive through recruitment by employers or staffing agencies under employment contracts but do not benefit from a formal integration framework or coordinated assistance concerning available social and welfare services (Vartiainen, 2013; Alkula, 2018). As a result, the responsibility for integration primarily rests on the individuals and their informal support systems.

For many Filipino nurses, obtaining basic services such as healthcare, housing assistance, language education, and financial support is often complicated by language barriers, a lack of familiarity with Finnish systems, and the unavailability of culturally appropriate assistance. Though these services might have more details available, they are probably spread out across a number of different platforms and can be difficult to locate and follow. In collaboration with BIBAK Suomi, it was mentioned that many of the new nurses rely on social media or informal networks for information, which is not always accurate or timely. This can lead to misinformation, increased stress levels, and, in some cases, limited access to crucial services that are vital to psychosocial well-being and community engagement.

Integration, in this model, is not an institutionally led process, but rather a self-directed path of the individual. That kind of social integration takes place through daily life interactions, like dealing with the bureaucracy, finding housing, receiving medical care, and forming local social networks without organized help. It is within this ambiguous realm of uncoordinated adaptation that the necessity for community driven solutions becomes particularly clear. Local organizations, such as BIBAK Suomi, play an essential role in assisting immigrant groups from the

Philippines, particularly the Igorot and Cordilleran communities. However, their limited digital presence has hindered their ability to provide centralized support or information.

This development oriented thesis addresses that gap. In close collaboration with BIBAK Suomi, we created a web-based platform that serves both as the official website for the organization and as a culturally sensitive platform for Filipino nurses navigating Finnish social services. By integrating our knowledge in social services and information technology, the project aims to offer a solution that enhances community empowerment and facilitates the psychosocial adaptation and informal integration of users by providing access to trustworthy and comprehensible information.

2 TARGET GROUP, BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

This chapter gives a clear explanation of the target group and the work-life partner and presents the purpose and aims that direct the thesis project.

2.1 Background on the Recruitment of Filipino Healthcare Professionals

In recent years, Finland has actively recruited healthcare professionals from overseas to cover shortages in the healthcare industry. Among them, Filipino nurses constitute a considerable proportion, especially in elderly care. Despite these healthcare professionals bringing along much-needed competences and dedication added to the Finnish healthcare system, their migration is often fraught with issues of recognition of qualifications, language, and integration (Alkula, 2018; Calenda, 2016).

The pandemic of COVID-19 has also underlined the central role of internationally educated nurses, increasing global competition for skilled health professionals (Buchan & Catton, 2020). In such circumstances, the requirement for long-term integration measures and access to information has been more essential.

2.2 Worklife partner and Target group

The work-life partner for this thesis is BIBAK Suomi, a community-based organization in Finland that supports immigrants from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) of the Philippines. The acronym BIBAK stands for Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, and Kalinga, which are provinces that make up CAR. Most BIBAK Suomi members have strong ancestral and cultural connections to these regions and identify as part of the Igorot and Cordilleran communities.

BIBAK Suomi's mission is to preserve and promote Igorot cultural heritage while supporting the social and cultural integration of its members in Finnish society.

The organization achieves its goals by organizing cultural events, offering educational activities, and facilitating mutual support among community members. Additionally, BIBAK Suomi advocates against stereotyping and works to safeguard its members' ethnic identity, traditions, and beliefs. Although operating informally for years, the organization lacked an official digital platform, which created a need for structured communication and centralized access to services, this became the foundation of our thesis project collaboration.

The primary target group of this thesis is the Filipino nurses affiliated with BIBAK Suomi, particularly those newly recruited to work in Finland's healthcare sector. BIBAK Suomi Ry currently has 198 members (as of 2025) of whom about 70% are employed in the healthcare sector as nursing assistants, Practical Nurses and registered nurses. The primary aim of the organization is to preserve and promote Igorot and Cordilleran culture through internal education of members and to perform in cultural events at a local and national level. Another highlight in 2024 was working with Kansalaisfoorumi to create structured learning opportunities centered on Igorot traditional dance. In addition to cultural activities, BIBAK Suomi Ry serves as a center for socio-cultural activities to improve the well-being of the community by hosting gatherings for networking, peer support and sharing information on employment, education and life as an immigrant in Finland.

The organization has hosted targeted seminars, workshops, and information sessions focused on the psychosocial needs of its members, largely immigrant Filipino nurses. In 2024, it partnered with DIAK and Moniheli to host an event focused on mental health and adaptation challenges in the healthcare field. In 2025, ongoing support from Moniheli continues to back further initiatives aimed at improving the psychosocial well-being of its members. In the future, BIBAK Suomi will continue to develop and extend its activities and cooperation, aiming at more inclusive involvement in Finnish society and within immigrant communities, and at furthering its contribution to cultural exchange and integration of communities.

2.3 Purpose

The purpose of this development-based thesis is to support BIBAK Suomi in promoting the informal social integration and psychosocial well-being of their members, particularly newly recruited Filipino nurses, by improving the accessibility of information related to Social and support services in Finland. To address barriers such as language challenges, scattered resources, and lack of cultural relevance, this project resulted in a user-friendly web platform. The platform serves both as BIBAK Suomi's official website and as a centralized, culturally sensitive guide to key services such as healthcare, housing, financial support, language education, and legal rights. By combining our academic backgrounds in social services and information technology, we aimed to develop a sustainable digital solution that empowers the community, reduces access-related challenges, and promotes smoother adaptation for Filipino nurses within Finnish society.

2.4 Objective

The objective of this thesis is to create a web platform that improves the accessibility of information related to Social and support services for newly recruited Filipino nurses in Finland. The web platform was developed in collaboration with BIBAK Suomi. The platform includes a dedicated section linking to verified external resources and provides organizational information and community updates. Usability, cultural relevance, and clarity of the platform will be evaluated by five Filipino nurses and two BIBAK Suomi board members. The objective follows the SMART criteria. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound which ensures focused and practical outcomes (Clear Review, 2020).

TABLE 1. *Smart Analysis*

Specific	Create a culturally relevant, user-friendly web platform in collaboration with BIBAK Suomi to support newly recruited Filipino nurses in Finland by improving access to accurate and centralized Social and support service information.
Measurable	The platform was evaluated by two BIBAK Suomi board members and five Filipino nurses to assess its usability, cultural relevance, and accessibility, with feedback collected through a structured Google Form.
Achievable	The project was completed using the combined expertise of the authors in social services and IT, and through strong collaboration with BIBAK Suomi and their target group.
Relevant	It directly addressed real challenges faced by newly recruited Filipino nurses, including fragmented access to Social and support service information and lack of culturally tailored guidance.
Time-bound	The development and testing of the platform were completed by March 2025, in alignment with the academic timeline of the thesis.

3 KEY CONCEPTS

This chapter presents the main concepts of the thesis and discusses their relevance. They are presented to illustrate why the development project was necessary and clarify the comprehension of the theoretical underpinnings which informed its execution.

3.1 Social integration

Social integration refers to the process of becoming an active, accepted, and contributing member of a society. It is more than residing in a new country; it involves participation in social, economic, cultural, and civic life while maintaining one's distinctive identity (Kotoutuminen.fi, 2023). For immigrant groups, and especially those who come through recruitment programs, social integration is less formal and is highly dependent on peer support, availability of services, and

culturally responsive structures, rather than on formal government integration programs. In contrast to refugees or asylum seekers who benefit from a systematic integration program as stipulated in Finland's Integration Act (Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010), internationally recruited healthcare professionals like Filipino nurses do not generally have a state-funded integration program. They thus have less access to language learning, civic orientation, or labour services than other migrant groups (Kotoutuminen.fi, 2023). This situation makes their integration more and more dependent on personal networks, community relations, and access to information about social services. Social integration involves several aspects: - Structural integration involves access to housing, health, education, and employment. - Cultural integration emphasizes the learning of the language and familiarization with social norms. - Social connection emphasizes making friends, being involved in local activities, and feeling a sense of belonging. The online platform created in this thesis promotes informal integration by offering centralized and culturally appropriate information to aid Filipino nurses in their integration into Finnish society. Through the

inclusion of links to language courses, healthcare services, home care services, and community networking activities, the website aims to reduce isolation and allow for equal participation in society. Additionally, it fosters cultural integration by featuring a section on Igorot and Cordilleran traditions, enabling nurses to preserve their cultural identity while adjusting to life in Finland. This strategy aligns with Finland's policy objective of fostering mutual integration, where both immigrants and the host community participate in reciprocal learning and adaptation (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2022). Essentially, this thesis conceptualizes social integration not as a static result but as a fluid, continuous process supported by culturally attuned digital resources, peer assistance, and access to dependable services.

3.2 Accessibility of Support Services for Recruited Professionals

Support services are various public and private services designed to enhance both individual and community well-being by facilitating access to such basic needs as healthcare, housing, income support, education, and employment assistance (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024; Unofficial Translation, 2023; InfoFinland, 2024). The objective is to achieve a balanced society in which all persons living therein, irrespective of origin, are able to access welfare services that help achieve inclusion, independence, and equality.

However, for internationally recruited professionals, like Filipino nurses employed within Finland's elderly care sector, the process of accessing these services tends to get complicated. Despite arriving with employment contracts and legal residence, they are not eligible for the advantages of official integration programs, which are typically provided to asylum seekers or refugees (Vaittinen, 2017; Calenda, 2016). Rather, they are supposed to fend for themselves in Finland's vast but decentralized welfare system without proper language skills or familiarity with bureaucratic processes (InfoFinland, 2024; Expat-Finland, 2024).

There is evidence that internationally recruited nurses are confronted with information gaps, restricted access to guidance, and obstacles related to

linguistic and digital literacy (Sakilayan-Latvala, 2023; Buchan & Catton, 2020). These issues intensify the deskilling and occupational exposure normally borne by migrant nurses upon arrival (Sakilayan-Latvala, 2023). Consequently, essential services, such as KELA benefits, housing allowances, mental health services, and labour rights, may remain underused, thereby undermining the professional and psychosocial security of these nurses.

Granting access to support services to employed healthcare workers thus becomes an ethical recruitment and integration matter as well as a welfare provision matter. Making available centralized, culturally translated, and multilingual web-based resources, like the web platform in this thesis, is a tangible solution to enable them to have access to information, alleviate stress, and enhance long-term settlement outcomes.

3.3 Web Platform as a Tool for Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments in a way that allows all users, including those facing barriers related to language, culture, or physical and cognitive limitations to interact with them effectively without the need for special adaptations (Chanchiewvichai, Rianmora, & Patmayothin, 2024). In the context of this thesis, accessibility also encompasses cultural and linguistic relevance, user-friendly design, and the capacity to deliver accurate information in a centralized and easily understandable format.

A web platform serves as a digital interface through which users can access and interact with various online content and services. When built with inclusive and accessible design principles, such platforms become powerful tools for promoting social inclusion and equal access to public services, especially among immigrant groups such as Filipino nurses in Finland.

The BIBAK Suomi created web-based platform serves as the official website of BIBAK and an official repository of resources specially designed for Filipino nurses. The web tool provides centralized, easy to understand and culture-

specific information on how to get services in Finnish Social and support services in areas such as healthcare, housing, language education, mental health care and employment rights. The platform addresses obstacles, including fragmented service information, bureaucratic complexity and language use, becoming a source of content that is navigable and credible.

A set of basic functionalities facilitates the approach to provide ease of use and cultural adaptability for the target users. The content on this site is easily understandable. The structure and navigation are predictable, making it easy to get around. The site is responsive, allowing it to display content on any device, whether mobile or desktop. It has also provided direct links to official and authenticated sites, such as Kela, InfoFinland, and Kotoutuminen.fi or TE Services to ensure users are redirected to the correct site to receive updated information. Finally, by incorporating cultural materials, like the status of Igorot and Cordilleran traditions and community events, the platform is better able to reach its target audience and maintain community involvement.

Additionally, the web platform offers an affordable and adaptable approach for Filipino Nurses. It doesn't need constant and costly updates to print brochures. Digital solutions can be kept up to date in real time. This flexibility is very useful for fast-paced domains (e.g. immigration policy, services availability, community events).

4 CREATION PROCESS OF THE WEB PLATFORM

This section presents an overview of each stage and describes the methods and ethical practices used throughout the project. The entire development was guided by the principles of clarity, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity.

Table 2: Project Phases Overview

Phase	Description	Key Activities
Planning	Initial conceptualization and collaboration with BIBAK Suomi	Meetings, email communication, defining goals and structure, content research
Website Creation	Technical design and implementation	WordPress setup, theme customization, content upload
Community Presentation	Review and evaluation	Sharing the draft site with users, collecting feedback

The creation of the BIBAK Suomi web platform was carried out in three phases: planning, technical development, and community presentation.

4.1 Planning Phase

The development process was started in January 2025, when the authors of the thesis initially contacted representatives of BIBAK Suomi. At this early phase, the concept of producing a printed brochure was initially viewed as a realistic product. However, it soon identified that BIBAK Suomi lacked a platform for publishing or maintaining such a document for a long time. Acknowledging this shortcoming

and drawing on our knowledge in IT and social services, we suggested the creation of a web platform that would be dynamic, accessible, and sustainable.

Following the formal approval from our thesis supervisor and the board of BIBAK Suomi, we proceeded to outline the website's concept. The primary objectives had two main aspects like first, to enhance BIBAK Suomi's online visibility by sharing information about the organization's mission, values, and community initiatives; and second, to facilitate the informal integration of Filipino nurses by providing centralized access to essential information on healthcare, housing, legal rights, financial assistance, and language learning, educational opportunities in Finland.

The detailed planning process was based on the structural principles of project management, including goal setting, stakeholder engagement, content scoping and analysis of feasibility of the project, according to the guidelines described in Project Management Handbook (Hyttinen, 2017).

4.2 Technical Development Phase

Once the concept was decided, the next phase involved outlining the structure and content of the website. We identified four key sections based on user needs and organizational goals.

TABLE 3: Website Content Structure and Goals

Section	Purpose
Home and About Us	Introduces BIBAK Suomi's mission, vision, history, leadership, and cultural background.
Support Services Guide	Provides links and short descriptions of essential Finnish Social and support services relevant to Filipino nurses, such as healthcare, housing, and financial aid.
Community & Events	Highlights BIBAK Suomi's ongoing cultural projects, upcoming events, and community-building activities.
Contact Page	Offers contact information and instructions on how users can get involved or request support from the organization

In designing the content, we consider three fundamental principles like clarity, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility. We utilized straightforward and professional language, incorporating external references such as THL, InfoFinland, and Kotoutuminen.fi to guarantee both accuracy and relevance. The support services section was highly organized, with direct links to social and support services in an effort to eliminate misinformation and facilitate user navigation of the Finnish system. We addressed cultural sensitivity by placing terms and tone as a priority, making a conscious decision to avoid from hard bureaucratic language and instead employ a friendlier and more comprehensible approach more suitable for the target group.

The website's technical development was executed with a focus on practicality and sustainability, emphasizing ease of maintenance and user-friendliness for BIBAK Suomi and its users. Leveraging the thesis authors' expertise in information technology, we successfully integrated digital proficiency with the principles of social services.

To guarantee that BIBAK Suomi can easily update and maintain the platform in the future, we selected WordPress as the Content Management System (CMS). The key considerations in this choice were the ease of use, flexibility, and long-term viability of the platform. Further, WordPress allows for customization without high level coding expertise, which is critical to the organization's capacity building programs.

In order to continue developing the design and usability of the platform, other tools were also utilized in the development process. Canva was utilized in designing visually coherent banners and infographics, thereby ensuring a consistent and culturally sensitive visual identity. Google Forms was also utilized in stimulating community engagement and obtaining feedback from users, which facilitated the development of the platform based on the real needs and experiences of Filipino nurses in Finland.

4.2.1 Support Services Content Structure

The section contains concise guidelines on basic services, including public and occupational healthcare, Kela benefits, TE Office work and language services, trade unions, mental well-being support, and assistance to cultural integration.

The platform is presented in English and contains are direct web links to authorized official sites like Kela, InfoFinland, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), facilitating easier navigation of the social service system in Finland for newly arrived nurses.

For detailed descriptions and full text of the support services information provided on the website, please refer to Appendix 2 Website Screen Shots.

4.3 Community Presentation and Review

A draft version of the web platform was presented to the Bibak Suomi board, and the chairperson selected six Filipino nurses, along with two BIBAK Suomi board members, to evaluate the initial development phase. Their responses, gathered through an online survey, were integral to the shaping of the final product. Using these insights as a guideline, we revised the platform and focused on several key areas. These included the tone of the content, fixing broken external links, adding more information and improving the navigation structure to aid user orientation. Usability and accessibility remained key focus areas all throughout the technical implementation. Particular attention was given to aspects like user-friendly navigation menus, mobile responsiveness, and clearly marked contact and feedback forms. Reviews indicated that the platform was accessible, culturally sensitive, and addressed their informational needs.

In order to help ensure the sustainability of the website long term, several trainings programs will take place for BIBAK Suomi's board members. These training programs will focus on guiding them through the technical steps of updating and managing the site so that they can get behind the site and update it as needed, keeping it updated. Furthermore, the website is set to be presented to the public at BIBAK Suomi's annual cultural festival in Turku in April 2025. The purpose of the launch is to present the platform to the public and create awareness among its members. In general, the technical realization has been able to attain a well-balanced ratio between user accessibility, cultural coverage, and sustainable maintainability, leading to a platform that not only facilitates casual integration but also reinforces BIBAK Suomi's online visibility in Finland.

4.4 Risk Assessment

All development projects come with risks, and this thesis project had no exception. We analyzed these risks through a simple risk matrix and used the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) framework. We

were then able to identify what barriers were present and how we could navigate them within the web platform development (Posner & Applegarth, 2019).

TABLE 4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Strong partnership with BIBAK Suomi and shared vision for the project.	Limited time frame to complete all phases of the project (January–March 2025).	The website could serve as a model for other migrant communities.	Delays in receiving feedback from users and organizational members due to scheduling conflicts
Authors' combined backgrounds in social services and IT allowed a balanced approach to both content and technical development.	Lack of prior website infrastructure from BIBAK Suomi meant building from scratch	Possibility for long-term engagement and updates by BIBAK Suomi	Risk of low initial engagement if the platform is not actively promoted post-launch.
Culturally relevant insight gained through collaboration with the target group.	Limited resources and budget for advanced technical features or multilingual translation.	Growing awareness of the need for centralized, culturally relevant digital resources for immigrants.	Dependence on volunteers or staff to maintain and update the website.

The internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis during the development processes of the BIBAK Suomi web platform. The biggest asset of the project was the great partnership with BIBAK Suomi providing the insight on how to localize and deliver the content for that

specific audience. Furthermore, the authors were uniquely positioned with technical knowledge coupled with experience in the social services sector. However, the initiative faced numerous hurdles internally as well. The tight timeline from January to March 2025 required rapid planning and execution, allowing limited time for iterations or significant revisions. A major limitation was that digital presence was limited to social media in BIBAK Suomi which meant the entire web platform had to be built from the beginning.

Opportunities stemmed from larger societal trends, namely, the increased need for centralized, culturally relevant digital resources geared toward immigrant professionals. The platform has the potential to serve as a model for similar initiatives targeting other migrant communities. BIBAK Suomi also expressed willingness to maintain and update the website, indicating long-term sustainability. On the other hand, several external threats were identified. Delays in user feedback due to scheduling issues could potentially impact the evaluation timeline. Furthermore, since the platform's ongoing maintenance will rely on volunteers or part-time contributors, there is a risk that engagement may wane over time without consistent promotion. These considerations informed our approach to risk management and guided our implementation decisions throughout the development process.

4.5 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations played a crucial role in this development-focused thesis, particularly because the target group consists of migrant healthcare professionals who might be in vulnerable social or professional situations. Although this project did not use formal research methods like interviews or data collection that would need research permits, it adhered to the ethical guidelines established for thesis work at Finnish universities of applied sciences (Arene, 2025).

The details provided on the website, especially in the Social and support services area, were obtained from reliable and official sources like the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), InfoFinland, Kotoutuminen.fi, and the Ministry of

Social Affairs and Health. It was a key ethical duty to ensure that Filipino nurses receive only precise, verified, and pertinent information. Misinformation or ambiguity could lead to confusion, potentially resulting in distress or harm.

No personal data were gathered from any of the Filipino nurses. Overall BIBAK Suomi member response was gathered anonymously through a feedback form. Thus, there were no identifiable or sensitive information processed, and this is in accordance with good development based project ethics (Sanjari et al., 2014).

There was great consideration for the Filipino nurses' cultural origin and life background. The content was presented respectfully, inclusively, and clearly without making assumptions or stereotyping. This conforms to the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics, which calls for respect for people's cultural values and dignity (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017).

The site was developed in close cooperation with BIBAK Suomi, who provided written permission to the site and its mission. Content was determined collaboratively, in order that the organization's mission and values were well represented and ethically taken into account in the process. Her ethical obligation was to make it possible for the platform to be updated and sustained by BIBAK Suomi in the future.

Through keeping accuracy, consent, privacy, cultural appropriateness, and sustainability as priorities, the construction of this website followed ethical practice in social services and academic development practice.

In terms of ownership and moderation, the long-term responsibility for the website has been clearly handed over to BIBAK Suomi. As the content reflects the organization's mission and directly supports its community, it was essential to ensure that BIBAK Suomi has full autonomy over future updates and moderation practices. This approach not only fosters sustainability and relevance but also empowers the organization to manage community interactions, update service information as needed, and ensure cultural alignment in the long run. The

collaborative nature of the project ensured that BIBAK Suomi is not just a recipient of the final product but an active owner and moderator of a platform that will evolve alongside the community it serves.

5 EVALUATION METHOD

To determine the usability, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness of the web platform, specifically, the Support Services Guide section, a Google Form was developed and distributed to six Filipino nurses and two board members of BIBAK Suomi. The form aimed to collect quantitative and qualitative answers through multiple-choice, checkbox, and open-ended questions. This allowed for flexibility and anonymity, inviting open and contemplative feedback, particularly due to the small pool of possible participants. The evaluation aimed to identify how navigable the site was for users, if information was presented in an adequate manner and was useful, and if content was perceived to be culturally sensitive and respectful to Filipino people. Participants were also asked to comment and point out areas of content gap.

This was a flexible method that promoted anonymity, inviting honest response within the time allocated for participants, critical for outcome-based evaluation in social care interventions (Spolander & Martin, 2012).

5.1 Summary of Results

The usability and accessibility of the web platform was relatively high, as the majority described navigating the Support Services section as “very easy” or “somewhat easy.” There are no major issues of us running on the web platform, the web platform is well responsive for mobile and computer devices. The fonts, layout, and colour scheme were found to be clear and accessible, in alignment with our principle of simple and user friendly design. These replies validate the technical decisions made during development, such as using a mobile-responsive theme and clear, non-bureaucratic language (figure 1)

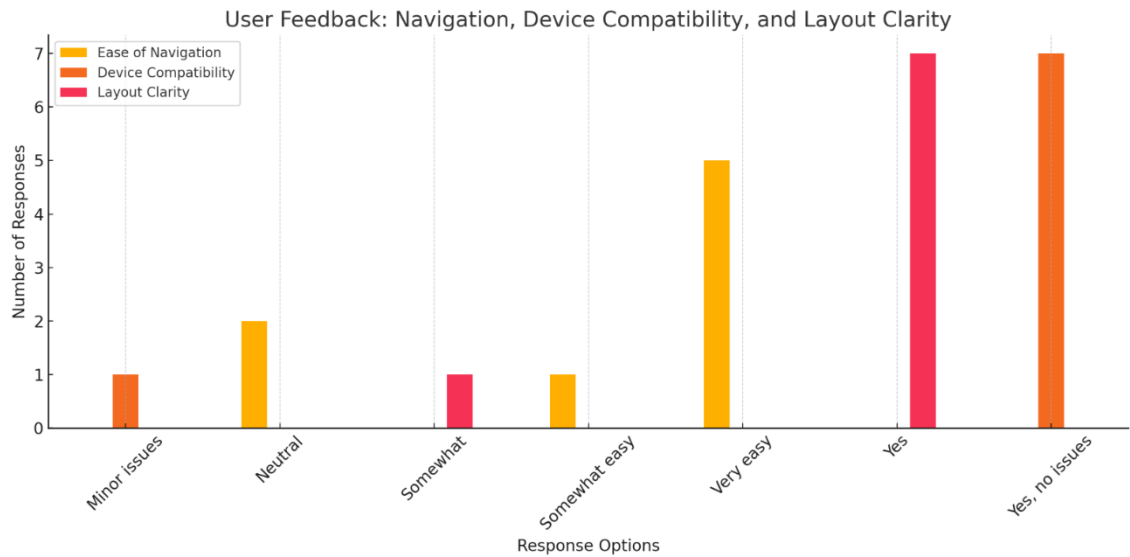


Figure 1 Respondent Navigation, Device Compatibility and Layout Clarity

In terms of content clarity and relevance, majority participants felt that the information provided in the Support Services Guide was easy to understand. Respondents stated the topics were at least somewhat relevant to their current needs, with the majority reporting that the site fully met their expectations.

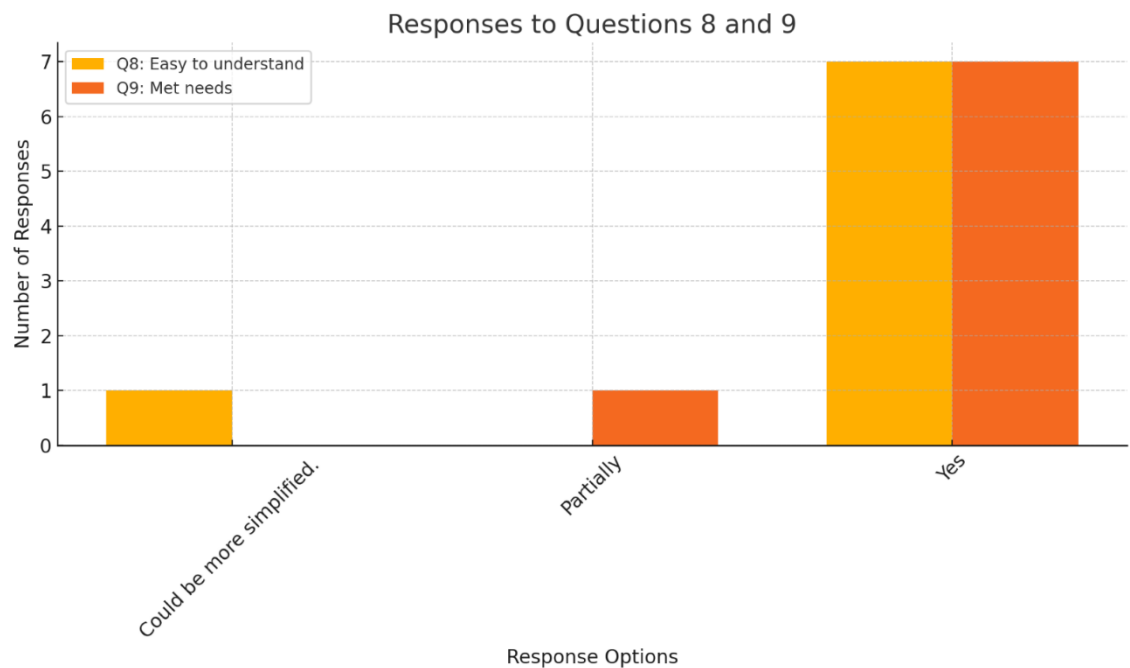


Figure 2 content clarity and relevance

The most useful information were found to be related to public healthcare access, mental health services, Kela benefits, housing services, language courses, and workers' rights. Instead, the external links directed to official information sources were also still active, for example, InfoFinland and Kela being helpful, and it seems that adding links to existing solutions worked, too.

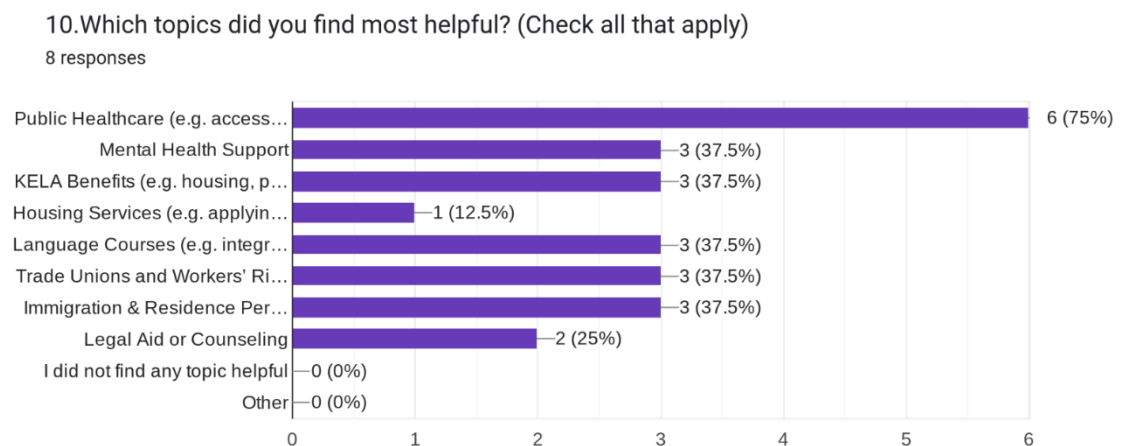


Figure 3 recommendation the website to other Filipino nurses

Responses offered a fair amount of praise and feedback on what could be improved, one of them being “nothing to improve.” One however did recommend that the scenarios in the Support Services section be made more user-friendly by grouping subtopics under wider headline categories in the likes of “Coming to Finland,” “Studies,” “Language Support,” and “Community.” Also noted were spell checks and punctuation that will be polished up in the final splicing. Other suggestions for future content included studies for further advancement, support from the community beyond the Filipino network and inclusion of information from other services such as International House Helsinki or Turku which aid immigrant integration.

Overall, the assessment proves that the platform effectively fulfills its key goals. The feedback offered informative guidance that will be applied to improve the site before its full public rollout. The results also demonstrate substantial community engagement and confirm the platform's usability, accessibility, and cultural relevance to its audiences.

6 CONCLUSION

This last chapter recapitulates the findings of this thesis. Additionally, professional development skills of implementing the thesis are discovered as well as recommendations for the future.

6.1 Summary and Reflection

This development-based thesis aimed at filling the gap in the integration process of internationally recruited healthcare workers, specifically Filipino nurses arriving in Finland. Despite their growing contribution to the Finnish elderly care sector, such professionals are not given much information on how to access basic services. This thesis addressed that gap by developing a centralised, user friendly, and culturally adapted web platform in collaboration with BIBAK Suomi, a community based organisation for Igorot and Cordilleran communities in Finland.

The thesis was well tied to its initial purpose, which was to make service support information more accessible and informally integrate people through a culturally adapted digital tool. The transition from a printed brochure to an online medium was not simply a technology change. This was a move we made that was a bit of a chess move to keep this thing around and have it available immediately. In systematising information on access to healthcare, housing, financial support, employment rights, language learning opportunities, and mental health services, the platform mirrors the practical concerns and queries raised by Filipino nurses. It also promotes social integration.

Key project management principles were utilized during the process to support clarity, feasibility, and ethical responsibility. Comments from two BIBAK board members and six Filipino nurses were particularly important for the formative assessment of the usability and cultural appropriateness of the platform. Their responses revealed both the merits and shortcomings. Ultimately, serving as a

mark to remind us that inclusivity must be a collective, ongoing process, one that is shaped by the community it seeks to support.

Considering the findings and core issues of accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and social inclusion, the platform goes beyond being an information site. This is a community based response bridging the gap between formal service systems and migrant experiences. This version meets the intended objectives, but its sustainability will rely in the longer term on its being updated, on the engagement of the end users and on the organization's ability to keep it running.

This thesis highlights how digital technologies, when combined with culturally based and strong community collaboration, can offer practical, ethical, and accessible tools for integration. It also indicates the broader need for policy-level involvement that recognizes the unique situations of recruited healthcare professionals and supports their adaptation through structured, equitable access to services.

6.2 Professional Development

In the journey of developing this thesis, the authors had the chance to consolidate and demonstrate a number of those core competencies Diak has established at the level of social services professionals with extensive qualifications as outlined in Diak's Bachelor of Social Services degree programme (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, 2023). These are social responsibility, client orientation, multiculturalism interaction, community engagement, digital competencies, and the implementation of projects.

First, working in partnership with BIBAK Suomi and engaging directly with the target group enhanced the authors' ability to operate in multicultural environments. The collaboration required culturally sensitive communication and active listening, supporting the competence area of "acting in diverse and multicultural environments." The experience strengthened the value of cultural humility and grassroots participation when addressing the needs of communities, such as internationally recruited nurses.

Second, the thesis deepened the authors' understanding of community empowerment and informal integration approaches, directly contributing to their competence in promoting inclusion, social justice, and human rights. These values are essential in social work, and the thesis offered a real-life application of these values through participatory methods.

Third, the authors practised project planning, content design, and digital implementation by developing a WordPress based web platform. This collaboration boosted their skills in managing digital tools and combining them with socially oriented goals. The competence to “develop and apply client oriented digital tools and services” was met through careful adaptation of language, accessibility, and cultural relevance for the target users.

Finally, we demonstrated the ethical aspects, user anonymity, and credible and easy access to content, which contribute to selective professionalism and responsibility, in line with the demands of socially sustainable development and ethical work practices. The authors also improved their ability to work independently and as part of a team, navigate timelines, and handle stakeholder feedback, critical capabilities for future employment in the social services field.

The thesis process enabled the authors to integrate theory and practice, expand their professional networks, and become more competent, reflective practitioners capable of creating inclusive solutions in diverse working environments.

6.3 Recommendations and Future Development

While the existing platform is successfully performing its main purpose of enhancing newly employed Filipino nurses' access to Social and support service information, several avenues of further development are apparent. One of these enhancements would involve the incorporation of multilingual functionality, especially Tagalog and Finnish, to make the platform more accessible to a broader and more diverse user base. The provision of such language support

would also continue to break down comprehension barriers and enhance participation by diverse user groups.

Interactive features, including FAQs, live chat support, or message boards, may be included in future editions to enhance user engagement and facilitate peer-to-peer transfer. These features not only contribute to the dynamism of the platform but also provide real-world community support and enable responsive communication.

The continued popularity of the site is also in great part dependent on its consistent upkeep and contemporaneity. Therefore, it is recommended that BIBAK Suomi create a periodic loop of content maintenance, preferably one that occurs every 6 to 12 months, to ensure that links, services, and community information remain up to date and correct.

Moreover, while the site is now envisioned for Filipino nurses, it can eventually be a greater community resource. Opening it up to serve more immigrant health care workers or an even larger subset of BIBAK members would optimize its impact and reach.

In terms of sustainability, user training is key. Members of the BIBAK board have already been lined up for a one day workshop to be trained with skills to manage the site on their own. This may be supplemented by subsequent workshops down the line to train volunteer moderators within the community to enhance the organization's ability to maintain the platform and ensure it remains community-led.

In general, this site is both a sustainable and culturally appropriate information portal and attests to the degree to which information technology solutions, through collective design with communities, can contribute significantly to integration, empowerment, and psychosocial well-being.

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- In this report, the AI application ChatGPT 4.0 was used to edit the language of the text and to make the text more fluent (used May 13, 2025).

APPENDIX 1. Google form

Section 1: Background (Optional)
Description (optional)

1. Are you a member of BIBAK Suomi? *

Yes

No

2. Are you a Filipino nurse working in Finland? *

Yes

No

Other

3. How long have you been living in Finland?

Less than 6 months

6 months – 1 year

1–3 years

More than 3 years

4. What region in Finland do you currently live in?

Short answer text

.....

Section 2: Usability and Accessibility

Description (optional)

5. How easy was it to navigate the Social Services section of the website? *

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neutral
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

6. Did the section load properly on your device (mobile or computer)?

- Yes, no issues
- Minor issues
- Major issues
- I didn't try on a mobile/computer

7. Were the fonts, layout, and colors clear and accessible?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
- Comments (optional):

Section 3: Content and Relevance

Description (optional)

8. Was the information in the Social Services section easy to understand? *

- Yes
- No
- Other...

9. Did the topics included meet your current needs or questions about Finnish social service? *

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- Not sure
- Other...

10. Which topics did you find most helpful? (Check all that apply) *

- Public Healthcare (e.g. access to health centers)
- Mental Health Support
- KELA Benefits (e.g. housing, parental leave)
- Housing Services (e.g. applying for rental support)
- Language Courses (e.g. integration, Finnish A1/A2)
- Trade Unions and Workers' Rights
- Immigration & Residence Permits
- Legal Aid or Counseling
- I did not find any topic helpful
- Other

11. Were the external links to services (e.g. KELA, InfoFinland, THL) working and useful? *

- Yes, all worked
- Some links didn't work
- The links worked but were confusing
- I didn't use the links
- Other...

Section 4: Cultural and Community Relevance

Description (optional)

12. Did the content feel culturally relevant and respectful to the Filipino community?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
- Not sure

13. Would you recommend this website to another Filipino nurse arriving in Finland?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Section 5: Improvements and Feedback

Description (optional)

14. What could be improved in the Social Services section?

Short answer text
.....


15. What other topics or services would you like us to include in the future?

Short answer text
.....





16. Any additional comments or suggestions?

Short answer text
.....

APPENDIX 2. Screenshots of Web Site



ABRA PROVINCE, APAYAO PROVINCE, BAGUIO PROVINCE, BENGUET PROVINCE, IFUGAO PROVINCE, KALINGA PROVINCE, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

Welcome to BIBAK Suomi

BIBAK Suomi is an NGO dedicated to promoting and promoting Igorot and Cordillera culture in Finland. We support the organized cultural events and foster unity within the I Igorot community especially among those working in Finland.

What is BIBAK Suomi?


It is an organization in Finland BIBAK Suomi by the abbreviation BIBAK represents the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra, and Mountain Province. The name was chosen because those provinces are the main I Igorot provinces, both in the Philippines and abroad. (Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra, and Mountain Province).

Today, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) of the Philippines comprises Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, and Mountain Province. Each province of BIBAK Suomi has a social, spiritual and cultural connection to those provinces.

Our mission is to **preserve and promote the Igorot culture** while supporting the integration of I Igorot immigrants into Finnish society.

Objectives

- ✓ Develop the cultural events.
- ✓ Educate the host population about Igorot heritage.
- ✓ Support I Igorot immigrants in their social and cultural integration.
- ✓ Develop an I Igorot-friendly and business.



Developing an I Igorot-friendly and business is one of our objectives. It involves social integration, education, and cultural exchange. We aim to create a supportive environment where I Igorot immigrants can thrive and contribute to the Finnish society while maintaining their cultural identity. We also provide a platform for I Igorot immigrants to share their stories and experiences with the host population.

Programs & Services

CULTURAL & EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- Promote, music, and traditional Igorot dance performances.
- Workshops to educate Finnish and I Igorot about culture.



SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR I IGIROT IMMIGRANTS

- Community events for welcoming and bonding.
- Guidance for newly arrived I Igorot immigrants.
- Support for I Igorot professionals.

ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

- Stand against discrimination and promote equality.
- Collaborate with various organizations to support I Igorot workers.

Partnerships & Collaborations

Events

25
May
2023

SAB - ATAN 2023

• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm



• Venue: Helsinki Government Center (Helsinki, Finland)

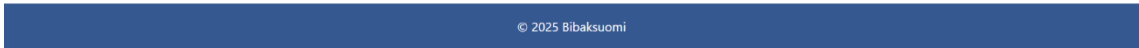
• [Event Page](#)

© 2023 BIBAK Suomi



Join Us Today


 BIBAK Suomi Ry
 Turku

 info (@)bibaksuomi.fi



Team & Leadership

BOARD MEMBERS (2025-2027)

Jam Espada
CHAIRPERSON

Joseph Taguibos III
VICE CHAIR

Rowena Batnag-Harri
SECRETARY

Rose Kiblasen-Jattu
TREASURER

BOARD MEMBERS

Annie Kiley

Clark Salingbay

Liza Jane Dumaguin

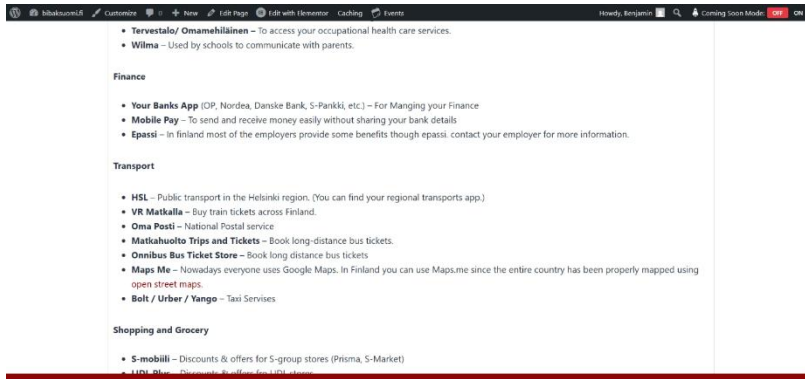
Arthur Codod

Grelle Epie

Roxanne Gomuad

Lieve Taguibos





FAQ

+ I Just moved to Finland for work, What should I do Next ?
+ I moved to Finland with my Family and kids, How Can I get Education Services for my Children?
+ What is KEELA Child benefit ?
+ I have a kid with special needs, What services are available ?
+ How can I get Vaccinations & Medical Services for my Kids ?
+ What social insurance and benefits does Kela provide?
+ What is Valvira ?
+ What is YKI Test ?
+ What healthcare services am I entitled to as a Filipino nurse in Finland?
+ What employment services are available through TE Offices?
+ What social insurance and benefits does Kela provide?
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+ What healthcare services am I entitled to as a Filipino nurse in Finland?
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+ What professional associations are available to Filipino nurses in Finland?
+ What are the Finnish language courses available for Filipino nurses?
+ What cultural integration programs are available for Filipino nurses?
+ What mental health services are available in Finland?
+ What maternity benefits am I entitled to in Finland if I am working and pregnant?
+ What are the other organizations in Finland might be useful for Filipino Community?
+ How can I Continue my Studies ?
- What are the most useful mobile apps for living in Finland?
Here are some must-have apps to make life easier in Finland, whether for healthcare, banking, transportation, or everyday services. Most of the apps can be downloaded in Google Play store and App store.
Official
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suomi.fi – Official government services. 112 Suomi – Mobile app for calling the emergency number and locating callers location and public alert.
Health & Educatin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maisa – For Health related (used in Helsinki and Uusimaa region). Tervestalo/ Omamehilaäinen – To access your occupational health care services. Wilma – Used by schools to communicate with parents.
Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your Banks App (OP, Nordea, Danske Bank, S-Pankki, etc.) – For Manging your Finance Mobile Pay – To send and receive money easily without sharing your bank details Epassi – In Finland most of the employers provide some benefits though epassi. contact your employer for more information.
Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSL – Public transport in the Helsinki region. (You can find your regional transports app.) VR Matkalla – Buy train tickets across Finland. Oma Posti – National Postal service Matkahuolto Trips and Tickets – Book long-distance bus tickets. Onnibus Bus Ticket Store – Book long distance bus tickets Maps Me – Nowadays everyone uses Google Maps. In Finland you can use Maps.me since the entire country has been properly mapped using open street maps. Bolt / Urber / Yango – Taxi Services
Shopping and Grocery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S-mobilii – Discounts & offers for S-group stores (Prisma, S-Market) LIDL Plus – Discounts & offers for LIDL stores R-Ruoka – R-Market offers & online grocery shopping Wolt / Foodora – Food delivery from restaurants.
Parking Apps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy Park Aimo ParkMan Moovy AutoPay

produced by the Nursing Legalization in Finland project (SAILA). The project involves 20 universities of applied sciences from different parts of Finland. The main coordinator of the project is Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The training is targeted at people who have a nursing diploma or bachelor's degree from outside the EU or EEA countries. To be eligible, you should have a municipality in Finland and permission to work in Finland.

If you arrived in Finland with a diploma/degree or some recognized qualifications or if you have already earned some qualifications in Finland, you can apply for a nursing top-up degree program. Several universities of applied science offer nursing top-up degrees.

- Metropolia University Of Applied Sciences
- Aracada University Of Applied Sciences
- XAMK University Of Applied Sciences
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
- Savonia University Of Applied Sciences

If you do not have any of the above qualifications, but if you have completed upper secondary education in your country, you can register for a bachelor's degree in Finland in the English or Finnish language. There are two intakes per year, spring and autumn.

- Check the Studyinfo.fi Web site.

If you have already completed your bachelor's or you are working as a registered nurse in Finland, you can start your master's level education. Most of the above-mentioned universities have master programs in nursing, but to do a master's in a university of applied science in Finland, you must have two years of working experience after graduation. You can do the master's at a university like Helsinki University without work experience requirements, but you must have strong language skills. For example, to do a master's at Helsinki University in the Finnish language, you must have level 4 (B2) language proficiency in the YKI test. Check the above-mentioned study info

FAQ

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+ What maternity benefits am I entitled to in Finland if I am working and pregnant?
+ What are the other organizations in Finland might be useful for Filipino Community?
- How can I Continue my Studies ?
If you arrived to Finland as a practical nurse with a university bachelor's degree, You can participate in a bridging program to equalize your non-EU qualifications to become a registered nurse and get the Valvira registration.
• Nursing Legalization pathway – Sairaanhoidajan laillistamisväylä Suomessa (SAILA) – The studies for the nursing legalization pathway are produced by the Nursing Legalization in Finland project (SAILA). The project involves 20 universities of applied sciences from different parts of Finland. The main coordinator of the project is Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The training is targeted at people who have a nursing diploma or bachelor's degree from outside the EU or EEA countries. To be eligible, you should have a municipality in Finland and permission to work in Finland.
If you arrived in Finland with a diploma/degree or some recognized qualifications or if you have already earned some qualifications in Finland, you can apply for a nursing top-up degree program. Several universities of applied science offer nursing top-up degrees.
• Metropolia University Of Applied Sciences
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If you do not have any of the above qualifications, but if you have completed upper secondary education in your country, you can register for a bachelor's degree in Finland in the English or Finnish language. There are two intakes per year, spring and autumn.
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If you have already completed your bachelor's or you are working as a registered nurse in Finland, you can start your master's level education. Most of the above-mentioned universities have master programs in nursing, but to do a master's in a university of applied science in Finland, you must have two years of working experience after graduation. You can do the master's at a university like Helsinki University without work experience requirements, but you must have strong language skills. For example, to do a master's at Helsinki University in the Finnish language, you must have level 4 (B2) language proficiency in the YKI test. Check the above-mentioned study info website for more information.
+ What are the most useful mobile apps for living in Finland?

+ What maternity benefits am I entitled to in Finland if I am working and pregnant?

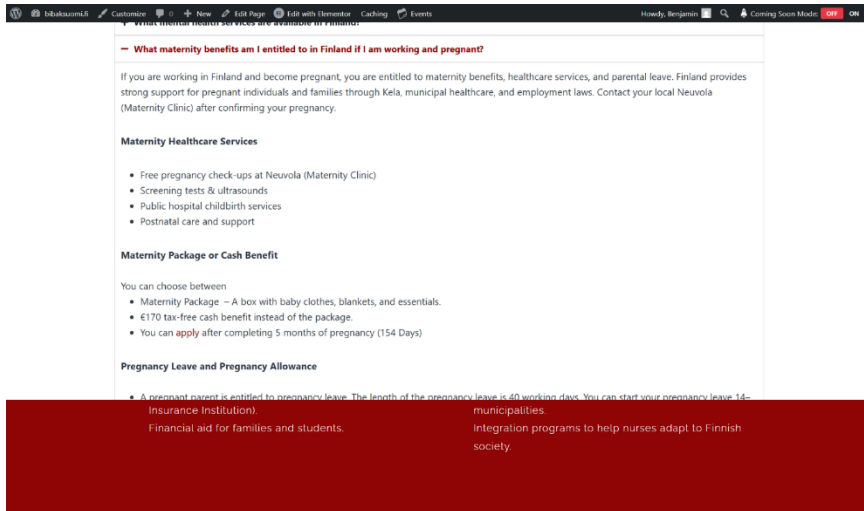
- What are the other organizations in Finland might be useful for Filipino Community?

- **BIBAK Suomi:** Focuses on preserving the Igorot and Cordilleran cultures. We also offer support for Filipino immigrants, including nurses, to help with social and cultural integration.
- **Finnish-Philippine Association ry (FPA)** – The aim of the association is to promote social interaction between the members, assist Filipinos in the Finnish way of life, and act as ambassadors of goodwill, showcasing Filipino traditions and cultures to the Finnish people.
- **Filipinos Community in Finland Ry (FILCOM)** –FILCOM serves as a community hub for Filipino expatriates, offering social, cultural, and community support.
- **Philippine Business Club Finland (PBC Finland):** Provide opportunities for Filipino entrepreneurs in Finland to connect, engage with a community, learn, and grow their businesses.
- **Filipino Association in Tampere ry (FilTre):** FilTre aims to promote Filipino culture and advocate for cultural diversity within the Finnish community. The association focuses on community building, cultural promotion, and the support and empowerment of Filipinos living in Finland.
- **Filipino LGBT Finland:** Filipino LGBT Finland, This networking and support group caters to the Filipino LGBT community residing in Finland. It facilitates connections, shares information, and provides a platform for experiences within the community, welcoming all individuals across the gender spectrum.
- **Finnish-Philippine Society (Filippiinit-seura ry):** The Finnish-Philippine Society promotes friendship and solidarity between the Finnish and Philippine peoples; it also supports the education of children of human rights abuse victims in the Philippines and helps Filipinos integrate into Finland through language courses and counselling. It is also an umbrella organization of Moneheli.
- **Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)** : OWWA is a government agency under the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). It is responsible for providing welfare and social services to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families.
- **EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, HELSINKI, FINLAND** – The Philippine Embassy in Helsinki provides a range of services to Filipino citizens and others, including consular services, visa services, immigration services, notarial services, and community services.

Financial aid for families and students.
Integration programs to help nurses adapt to Finnish society.

FAQ

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+ How can I Continue my Studies ?
+ What are the most useful mobile apps for living in Finland?



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+ What cultural integration programs are available for Filipino nurses?
+ What mental health services are available in Finland?
- What maternity benefits am I entitled to in Finland if I am working and pregnant?
<p>If you are working in Finland and become pregnant, you are entitled to maternity benefits, healthcare services, and parental leave. Finland provides strong support for pregnant individuals and families through Kela, municipal healthcare, and employment laws. Contact your local Neuvola (Maternity Clinic) after confirming your pregnancy.</p> <p>Maternity Healthcare Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free pregnancy check-ups at Neuvola (Maternity Clinic) Screening tests & ultrasounds Public hospital childbirth services Postnatal care and support <p>Maternity Package or Cash Benefit</p> <p>You can choose between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternity Package – A box with baby clothes, blankets, and essentials. €170 tax-free cash benefit instead of the package. You can apply after completing 5 months of pregnancy (154 Days) <p>Pregnancy Leave and Pregnancy Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pregnant parent is entitled to pregnancy leave. The length of the pregnancy leave is 40 working days. You can start your pregnancy leave 14-30 working days before the expected due date of the baby, but the leave must start no later than 14 working days before the estimated date. You will receive a pregnancy allowance for the duration of your pregnancy leave. The pregnancy allowance is only paid to the pregnant parent. You can apply for your pregnancy allowance from Kela after your pregnancy has lasted 154 days. You must apply for your pregnancy allowance within two months of the start of your pregnancy leave at the latest. <p>Parental Leave and Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental allowance for one child is paid for a total of 320 working days. If a child has two parents, each parent can get parental allowance for 160 working days. You can give up and turn over a maximum of 63 working days of your quota of 160 parental allowance days to another person who is caring for the child. Single parents can use both 320 days alone. Family structure does not affect your right to parental allowance. A parent may be the biological or adoptive parent of a child. <p>Employer Responsibilities & Your Job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must inform your employer about your pregnancy at least 2 months before maternity leave. Your job is protected by law – your employer cannot fire you due to pregnancy.
+ What are the other organizations in Finland might be useful for Filipino Community?
+ How can I Continue my Studies ?
+ What are the most useful mobile apps for living in Finland?

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Insurance institutions: Financial aid for families and students.

Municipalities: Integration programs to help nurses adapt to Finnish society.

Howdy, Benjamin

Coming Soon Mode: OFF ON

— What mental health services are available in Finland?

Maintaining mental well-being is crucial for healthcare professionals. Finland provides various mental health services:

- **Public Mental Health Services:** Available through your local health center (*terveysasemat*). These services offer assessments, therapy, and referrals to specialized care.
- **MIELI – Finnish Association for Mental Health :** MIELI offers crisis support and mental health services. They provide a helpline and offer assistance in multiple languages, including English.If you experience a crisis, the MIELI Crisis Helpline (09 2525 0113) is available for immediate assistance.
- **Occupational Health Services:** You are entitled to occupational health care through your employer, which normally includes mental health counseling and stress management programs. Get information about your occupational health care service from your employer.
- **HelsinkiMissio's Youth Crisis Point:** HelsinkiMissio provides free counseling and crisis services for individuals, including in English.

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— What mental health services are available in Finland?

Maintaining mental well-being is crucial for healthcare professionals. Finland provides various mental health services:

- **Public Mental Health Services:** Available through your local health center (*terveysasemat*). These services offer assessments, therapy, and referrals to specialized care.
- **MIELI – Finnish Association for Mental Health :** MIELI offers crisis support and mental health services. They provide a helpline and offer assistance in multiple languages, including English.If you experience a crisis, the MIELI Crisis Helpline (09 2525 0113) is available for immediate assistance.
- **Occupational Health Services:** You are entitled to occupational health care through your employer, which normally includes mental health counseling and stress management programs. Get information about your occupational health care service from your employer.
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- **Local Community Support:** Community organizations like BIBAK Suomi provide cultural activities that help you stay connected with Filipino traditions and meet other immigrants, which can help you adjust socially.
- **Functionally Bilingual Nursing Education (TOKASA):** Developed by Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Tampere University of Applied Sciences, this model integrates Finnish language learning into nursing studies. International students can pursue a nursing degree while simultaneously acquiring Finnish language skills, facilitating smoother integration into Finnish society and the healthcare workforce.
- **CultureExpert Project:** Developed by the University of Oulu, this initiative created a model, digital network, and virtual reality learning environment to assist immigrant nurses and nursing students in integrating into Finnish working life. Although the project's active phase concluded in February 2023, its resources may still be accessible for ongoing support. [Read about the project.](#)
- **The Society of Filipino Nurses in Finland (SocFIN) :** This association provides peer support, mentoring, and collaborates on integration initiatives within the Finnish social and healthcare systems in collaboration with the Filipino Nurses Association in the Nordic Region (FINAN).

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 - **Private Language Schools:** In addition to municipal programs, there are private language schools that offer intensive Finnish language courses.
 - **Finnishcourses.fi :** Finnishcourses.fi website that publishes information about Finnish and Swedish courses in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. It also lists a wide range of online courses.
 - **Through Universities :** In Finland, most of the universities and universities of applied sciences provide Finnish courses for immigrants. You can visit university websites for more information; here are some links: Helsinki University , Metropolia University of Applied Science, Aalto University , University of Oulu, and Savonia University of Applied Science .
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What professional associations are available to Filipino nurses in Finland?

- Filipino Nurses Association in the Nordic Region (FINAN):** FINAN collaborates with Filipino nurses in Finland and other Nordic countries. They focus on advocacy, policy improvement, and community building among Filipino healthcare professionals.
- The Society of Filipino Nurses in Finland (SocFIN):** This operates under the umbrella of the Filipino Nurses Association in the Nordic Region (FINAN), a registered non-profit organization dedicated to empowering Filipino nurses across the Nordic countries. You can visit the official websites of FINAN to join as a member and participate in their activities and programs.
- Finnish Nurses Association:** Finnish Nurses Association is a professional community of nurses that provides professional support from study to work, develops nursing, influences education, and boldly promotes nurses' roles in the workplace and society.
- Sjuksköterskeföreningen i Finland rf (SFF):** This organization is available for Swedish-speaking nurses. If you are working in a Swedish hospital, you can refer to the SFF website for more information.
- Finnish Operating Room Nurses Association (FORNA):** This association provides valuable resources, networking opportunities, and professional development support for registered nurses with an interest in perioperative nursing.
- The Finnish Association of Public Health Nurses (Terveydenhoitajaliitto):** The Finnish Association of Public Health Nurses is the professional association and trade union for public health nurses and audiologists, as well as students of the field.
- Finnish Oncology Nursing Society (Suomen Syöpäsairaanhoitajat):** The Finnish Oncology Nurses Association promotes the professional competence of nurses caring for cancer patients.
- The Finnish Association of Occupational Health Nurses:** The Finnish Association of Occupational Health Nurses is the only trade union in Finland that has focused exclusively on advocacy for occupational health nurses.

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- Trade Unions for Nurses

Trade unions play a crucial role in advocating for nurses in Finland, ensuring fair wages, working conditions, and professional rights. They offer legal support, collective agreements, and professional training. Some of the main trade unions for nurses are:

- Tehy (Union of Health and Social Care Professionals)
- Superliitto (Finnish Union of Practical Nurses) (Suomen lähi- ja perushoitajaliitto SuPer)
- JHL (Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (Julkisten ja hyvinvointialojen liitto))

How to Join a Nurse's Union?

- Visit the union's website and apply online.
- Pay the membership fee (usually 1–1.5% of salary, tax-deductible).
- Choose if you want unemployment fund membership (optional but recommended).

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— **What employment services are available through TE Offices?**

The TE Offices (Employment and Economic Development Offices) provide services to help you integrate into the Finnish labor market, especially for immigrants and foreign workers. **If you are directly coming to Finland to work or study, you are not eligible for the integration program**, but in case you lose your job, you can register as a job seeker at the TE office, and also if you are coming with your family, your spouse can get some of their services. Some of their key services include:

- **Job Search Assistance:** TE Offices offer free career counseling, job-searching support, and advice on how to adapt your resume and cover letter for the Finnish job market.
- **Language Training:** They provide access to Finnish language courses that help to develop the language skills needed for both personal and professional life in Finland. These courses are offered through municipalities and other training providers.
- **Workplace Integration:** TE Offices offer integration programs that help newcomers adjust to the Finnish workplace, which can include guidance on understanding Finnish labor laws, workplace culture, and rights and responsibilities.
- **Unemployment Support:** If you are unemployed, TE Offices will assist you in applying for unemployment benefits and help you find a new job. They also provide information on social benefits available to those seeking employment.
- **Training and Courses:** TE offices often provide or refer individuals to vocational training programs, adult education opportunities, and career development courses to enhance job skills and marketability.
- **Start-up Support:** If you are thinking of starting a business, TE Offices offer guidance on creating a business plan, navigating legal regulations, and finding financial support.

How to Access: To access TE services, you need to register as a job seeker with your local TE Office. You can find more information on their [website](#) and book appointments for consultations and workshops.

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- **Occupational Healthcare System:** Occupational healthcare (työterveyshuolto) in Finland is a well-developed system that ensures employees receive preventive and primary health care services through their employers. Most of the time you can get these services through private healthcare providers (e.g. Terveystalo, Mehiläinen, Pihlajalinna). Contact your workplace to get information about your occupational health care provider.
- **Private Healthcare System:** The private healthcare system is easy to access with little to no waiting time, but it is expensive in Finland unless you have proper medical insurance.

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The YKI test is Finland's National Certificate of Language Proficiency, used to assess language skills in Finnish, Swedish, and other languages. To become a registered nurse and get the Valvira Registration, you must get level 3 (B1) language proficiency for all 4 modules (speaking, listening comprehension, writing, and reading comprehension) in one sitting. This is the same requirement you will need to apply for Finnish citizenship.

Register for the YKI test [here](#).

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+ How can I get Vaccinations & Medical Services for my Kids ?
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- What is Valvira ?
Valvira (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden lupa- ja valvontavirasto) is the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health in Finland. It oversees healthcare, social services, and alcohol regulations to ensure safety and quality. In Finland, practical nurses (lähihoitaja) and registered nurses (sairaanhoitaja) and other health professionals must be registered to work in healthcare. The registration is handled by Valvira . After moving to Finland, you must get your Valvira registration to legally work in your position. But you can work as a student nurse under supervision until you get registration with limitations such as drug administration.
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<p>Guidance on rental housing through Kela (Social Insurance Institution).</p> <p>Financial aid for families and students.</p>	<p>Free Finnish language courses through local municipalities.</p> <p>Integration programs to help nurses adapt to Finnish society.</p>
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+ I have a kid with special needs, What services are available ?

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- What social insurance and benefits does Kela provide?

Kela (Social Insurance Institution of Finland) offers a wide range of services that contribute to your financial security and well-being. Here are some key benefits:

- **Healthcare Benefits:** Kela helps cover the cost of medical services, including doctor visits, hospital care, and some prescriptions. There are also reimbursements available for medical treatments abroad within the EU.
- **Sickness Benefits:** If you fall ill and cannot work, Kela provides sickness allowances to compensate for lost wages. This is available after a waiting period and requires a medical certificate. Generally, your workplace will support you in getting this benefit.
- **Parental Benefits:** If you have a child, Kela provides parental leave benefits, including maternity, paternity, and parental allowances.
- **Housing Allowances:** Kela offers housing benefits to help with rent costs, based on income, family size, and rent. Since you are working as a nurse, you might not be eligible, but if you are living with your family , your spouse might be eligible to apply. Contact KELA for more information.
- **Unemployment Benefits:** If you lose your job, you can apply for unemployment benefits through Kela. You will need to fulfill the criteria based on your work history and the type of benefits available.
- **Pension and Rehabilitation:** Kela provides pensions for workers who have paid into the Finnish social security system. There are also rehabilitation benefits for those who need help returning to work after an illness or injury.

How to Apply: To apply for Kela benefits, you need to register as a resident in Finland and get a Kela card. Applications for benefits are made online through Kela's website or at Kela offices.

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Finland provides free healthcare services for children under 18 years old, including vaccinations, regular check-ups, and specialized medical care. These services are primarily provided by municipal healthcare centers (terveysasema), child health clinics (neuvola), and hospitals.

- **Vaccinations for Children** – Finland’s National Vaccination Program offers free vaccines to all children. Vaccinations are given at Child Health Clinics (Neuvola) or at school health services. Contact your nearest child and maternity clinic (Neuvola).
- **Regular Health Checkups** – For babies and kids below age 6, they can get vaccinations and regular checkups like monitoring growth and development through Neuvola. For school-age children, check-ups are provided by school nurses & doctors.
- **Dental Care** – Municipal dental clinics (hammashoito) provide regular check-ups and are free for kids under 18. Contact your municipality. Example: Helsinki
- **Emergency & Urgent Care** – If your child is sick and needs urgent care, call 116 117 (Free Medical Helpline, 24/7).

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Go to your nearest emergency clinic for urgent medical needs. Call 112 in a life-threatening emergency.

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What is KELA Child benefit ?

- I have a kid with special needs, What services are available ?

Finland offers comprehensive support services for children with disabilities to ensure their well-being, education, healthcare, and social inclusion. The services are mainly provided by Kela, municipalities, and healthcare services.

Financial Support from Kela

- **Disability Allowance for Children (under 16 years)** –Financial support based on the child's care needs and disability severity.
- **Special Care Allowance** – If you work full-time, you can get special care allowance if you participate in the care or rehabilitation of the child for at least 4 hours (including travel). [Apply here.](#)

Health & Therapy Services

- **Public Healthcare** (Through Municipalities) – Regular doctor visits, therapy (speech, occupational, physiotherapy).
- **Specialized Medical Care** (HUS or Local Hospitals) – Neurology, developmental disorders, genetic conditions.
- **Rehabilitation Services** – Kela covers therapies if prescribed.
- **Assistive Devices** – Free mobility aids, hearing aids, or visual aids from municipal health services.

Education and Daycare

- **Inclusive Early Childhood Education** – Special support in daycare
- **Pre-primary Education & Special Needs Support** – Schools provide individualized learning plans.

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Education and Daycare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Early Childhood Education – Special support in daycare • Pre-primary Education & Special Needs Support – Schools provide individualized learning plans. • School Transportation Support – Free transport for children with mobility issues. • Interpreter Services/Sign Language Training – If the child has hearing or communication disabilities.
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- What is KELA Child benefit ?

Child Benefits

Kela pays child benefit for children under 17 years of age who live in Finland. Amount depends on the number of kids in the family. These benefits are tax-free and are paid monthly for each child under the age of 17.

- First child: €94.88
- Second child: €104.84
- Third child: €133.79
- Fourth child: €173.24
- Fifth and each additional child: €192.6

For children under 3 years old

- An extra €26 per month per child under age 3.

For single parents

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Day Care, Pre-Primary Education and Primary Education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have children below age 5, daycare facilities are available at municipal or private daycare centers (päiväkoti) or family daycare. You can select and apply for a day care facility. Private days are a bit expensive, but you can apply for a private day care allowance through KELA . If you select municipality day care, apply through your municipality. Example: Helsinki early childhood education. Municipality day cares are generally free, but it depends on your income, and you must submit an income declaration every year. Otherwise, you will receive a bill. • If you have a child at age 6, you have to apply for a pre-primary education. You can contact your municipality. Example: Helsinki City. • 7 Years +: Compulsory primary education begins. You can get more information at your municipality's web site. Example: Helsinki City.
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Support Services for Filipino Nurses in Finland

– HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Access to public healthcare, including hospital and outpatient care.
Health insurance coverage for employed individuals.

– EMPLOYMENT & LABOR RIGHTS

Finnish labor laws ensure fair wages and working conditions. You can get more information about Finnish Trade unions.

– HOUSING & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Guidance on rental housing through Kela (Social Insurance Institution).
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– LANGUAGE & INTEGRATION SUPPORT

Free Finnish language courses through local municipalities.
Integration programs to help nurses adapt to Finnish society.

FAQ

<p>– I Just moved to Finland for work, What should I do Next ?</p> <p>After arriving in Finland, these are the initial steps you must follow.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DVV Registration – In Finland, DVV (Digi- ja väestötietovirasto) stands for the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. DVV registration is the first and main step everyone must follow. You can make an appointment online and visit the DVV office as soon as you arrive in Finland. You should have a permanent address to live. In case you have a temporary address, you can still get the DVV registration, but once the address changes, you must inform DVV. 2. KELA Registration – Kela (Kansaneläkelaitos) is the social insurance institution of Finland. It provides various supports and social security benefits to residents of Finland. After registration, you will receive two different KELA cards by post. One is for Finland, and the other you can use while traveling in EU areas. In most of the places you can find a KELA office close to DVV offices. 3. Finnish ID Card – The Finnish Identity Card (Henkilökortti) is an official identification document issued by the Police of Finland. It is used for personal identification and electronic services. Once the DVV registration is done, you can book an appointment and visit the nearest police station to apply for an ID card. Some police stations provide services even without appointments. You can get information from the above link. You must bring a passport-size photo or photo code that you got from a Finnish photo studio. You have to pay 67 euros for an ID card, and its validity period expires as per your resident permit. You can collect the ID card usually within 1-2 weeks. 4. Opening a Bank Account – There are lot of commercial banks operate in Finland such as S- Bank, Nordea, OP. In some banks like Nordea, you must book appointments in advance to open a bank account. Some banks, like S- Bank, you can open an account without an appointment. Bank charges depend on the bank and the type of account you select. You will receive the ATM card and required codes for online transactions separately by post to your registered address. 5. Strong Identification – This is something you must have in Finland. It comes with the online credentials you get for your bank account. When you open the bank account, remember to request the strong identification facility. You can log in to most of the government/municipality services as well as other institutions online accounts using your online bank app by using strong identification, which means you do not need to create separate accounts for all the services. To get the strong identification, you must have your Finnish ID card. 6. Tax Card – A tax card (verokortti) is an official document issued by the Finnish Tax Administration (Vero) that shows the tax rate (percentage) deducted from your salary or other income. It is required for all employees and self-employed individuals in Finland. You can order your tax card online or by visiting. It is recommended to visit for the first time, and you can get a clear idea about how tax systems work. Before applying for a tax card, you should estimate your annual income, and the tax rate depends on the estimated amount. Always try to manage it without exceeding the limit. You can change the estimated amount anytime by applying for a new tax card. In case you paid extra for a particular year, you will get the tax return next year. Every year you will receive a document to fill out for tax returns. 7. Exchanging Driving Licence – Since Finland and the Philippines are signatories to the Geneva and Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic, you can use your Philippines driving license for up to two years in Finland. But it is strongly recommended to exchange it for a Finnish driving license. To exchange the driving license, you must get a medical certificate first and then visit the nearest Ajovarma office by making an appointment online. Don't forget to bring the Medical certificate, passport-size photos, your passport, and the Philippines driving license. You have to pay 37 for this service. After handing over the Philippines driving license with the application form and other documents, you will get a temporary license document, and your driving license card will be received by post. It can take up to 3 months.
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This website was created by Tiloka Edogage and Uditha Siriwardhanage, students at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, as part of their thesis project.