

VPL in working life – Specialized office clerk in the public sector

Starfsmennt participated in a pilot project initiated by the Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC) called Validation in working life. The main objective was to develop a comprehensive validation system in collaboration with stakeholders, where specific job standards were at the core. Starfsmennt, representing the public labour market, validated employees' competences against standards for the job of a specialized office clerk. Two organisations participated, the Directorate of Labour's office in Skagaströnd and the Housing and Construction Authority's office in Sauðárkrókur. Both are experiencing the polarisation of jobs, meaning the simpler tasks are being automated and the more complex tasks are left for the employees to deal with.

The project came at the right time as it provided standards to validate the competences against. Employees' tacit knowledge and skills were made visible, shortcomings identified, and proper training provided. At the end all participants had received training and were skilled to take on more complex tasks. The Directorate of Labour and the Housing and Construction Authority are public entities with approx. 100 employees each.

The offices in Skagaströnd and Sauðárkrókur employ around 25 persons each and are located in the northwest of Iceland. Skagaströnd is a small and isolated municipality with only 470 inhabitants so the Directorate of Labour's office is a very important employer for the local community. As well are the employers important for the organisation as the number of potential employees in the area is limited. The same applies for the Housing and Construction Authority's office in Sauðárkrókur, even though the local community is larger than in Skagaströnd. The project was therefore a win-win for the employers, the employees as well as the local communities.