



INTEGRATION COMPASS 2019

How do we ensure that each immigrant has access to the best individual education?

Education is the solution to integration

IN 2015, THE WAVE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS started a long-awaited debate on the promotion of immigrant integration. A search for a wider range of measures began to integrate people migrating to Finland into Finnish society. It was also clear that the native population needs information on other cultures and the increasing diversity and changes in society. Many misunderstandings can be prevented through mutual accommodation.

Finland is facing a new challenge in securing the welfare society. The share of the working age population of the total population has long been decreasing as the baby boom generation has retired. Birth rates are now also declining sharply.

In order to maintain the Finnish welfare society and its services also in the future, we must resolve how to increase the working age population in Finland. We must also open the doors of our welfare society to people arriving from other countries.

We must stop treating immigrants as a uniform group. This group is even more diversified than the native population. Most immigrants move to Finland for family reasons. A considerable number of people come here to study and work. Finland has also attracted and continues to attract people with higher education. The Finnish or Swedish language skills and knowledge of the diverse aspects of Finnish culture of all people moving to Finland must be developed further so that they can become part of workforce in Finland.

Education helps us ensure that culture is shared by all people living and arriving in Finland. We must offer education and training to people of all ages. Competent teachers at every step from early childhood education and care (ECEC) to adult education and training want to work towards promoting the studies and employment of everyone in Finland.

OAJ treats internationality as well as cultural and people diversity as an opportunity. Although considerable effort has been taken to promote integration, there is still work to be done. OAJ highlights that education is the best form of integration.

OAJ's Integration Compass 2019 provides solutions for the better integration of all children, adolescents and adults with an immigrant background. It is high time to pay attention to the undeniable importance of pedagogical ECEC in the promotion of integration. The foundation for immigrants to learn their native language and the Finnish language and culture must be laid down during ECEC. All pupils and students must have a subjective right to preparatory instruction. Labour immigration must be supported by providing adequate instruction in Finnish or Swedish and cultural instruction. Education and training offered by liberal adult education institutions must be available to all.

Finland is a civilised nation. Every citizen in Finland must have the opportunity to develop. This also benefits Finland. We must also lead the way in accepting the diversity of our population and in also giving those who may not necessarily stay in Finland the opportunity to learn and receive education and training. #koulutusratkaisee

Olli Luukkainen

President

Trade Union of Education in Finland, OAJ

Early childhood education and care helps to integrate

THE DEVELOPMENT of their Finnish or Swedish language skills determines the future of an immigrant in Finland. A child of an immigrant family learns the language of the new home country most effectively when he or she is under the language-aware instruction of a teacher together with other children. The learning of one's native language promotes all other learning.

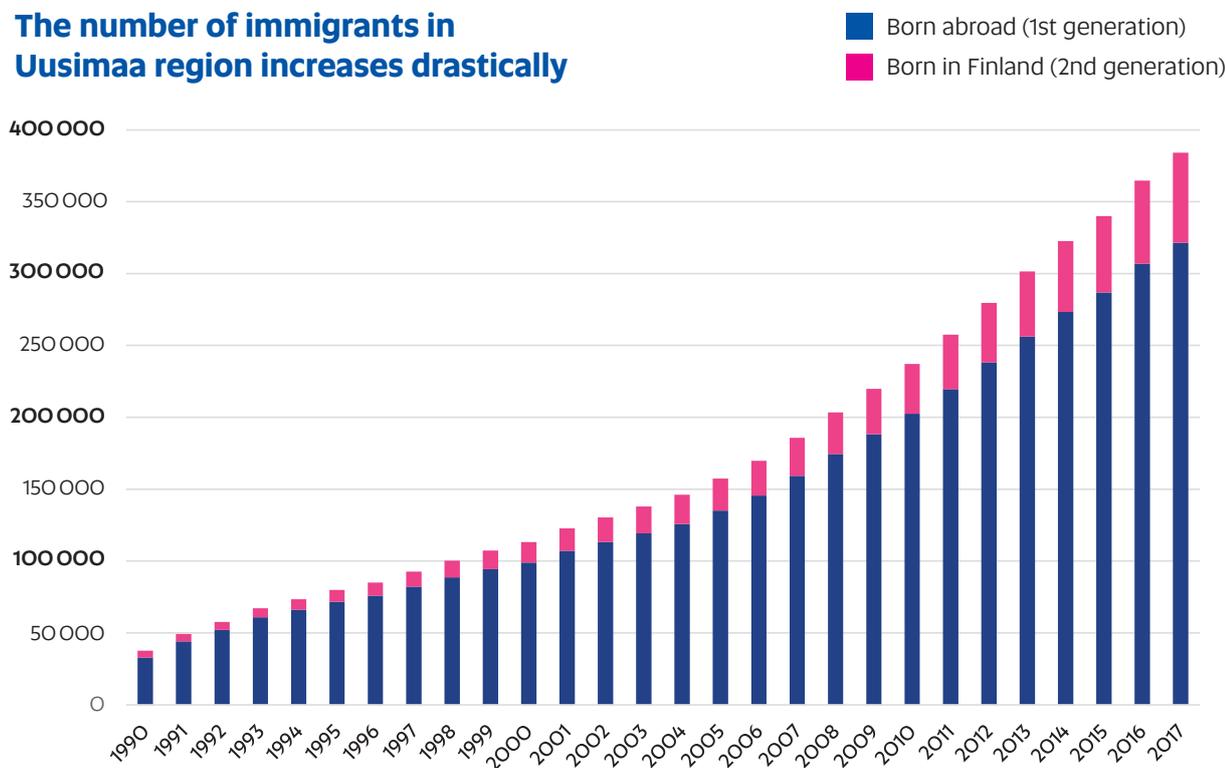
Immigrant parents need more information on the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC). Support granted to child home care must not compromise children's participation in ECEC. ECEC plays an important role in the prevention of exclusion and has a significant impact on later success at school and in studies.¹ Learning outcome assessments, such as TIMSS, which assesses achievements in mathematics at fourth-grade level, show that learning outcomes start to differentiate during the first school years. This is



According to the PISA results, the skill level of children from immigrant families lags almost two school years behind compared to that of children of Finnish-born parents. We know that day care improves the language skills and school performance of children from disadvantaged immigrant families, in particular.

Source: How to prevent marginalisation, mastercourse, Part 1¹⁴

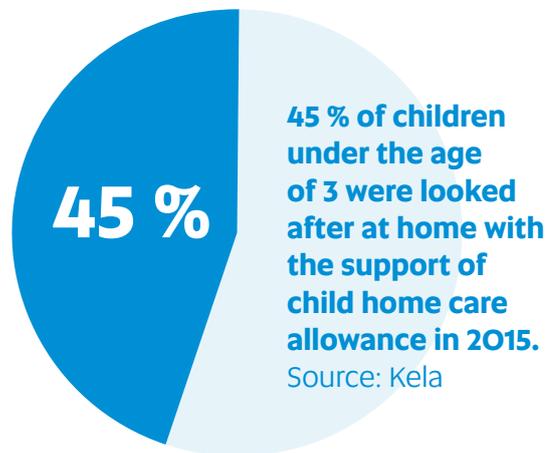
The number of immigrants in Uusimaa region increases drastically



Over half of the immigrants lived in Uusimaa region 2017. Source: Statistics Finland

why learning problems should be identified and solved as early as possible. This accentuates the importance of ECEC in the prevention of exclusion and in later performance at school and in studies.

Compared to other OECD countries, children in Finland start attending ECEC later. In Finland, the rate of participation in ECEC is lower than in the other Nordic countries. Participation in ECEC has positive impacts: a higher level of qualifications completed and increased equality in children's later lives. In its report, the OECD proposed that early childhood education centres and schools monitor the development of language skills and that problems be addressed more systematically.

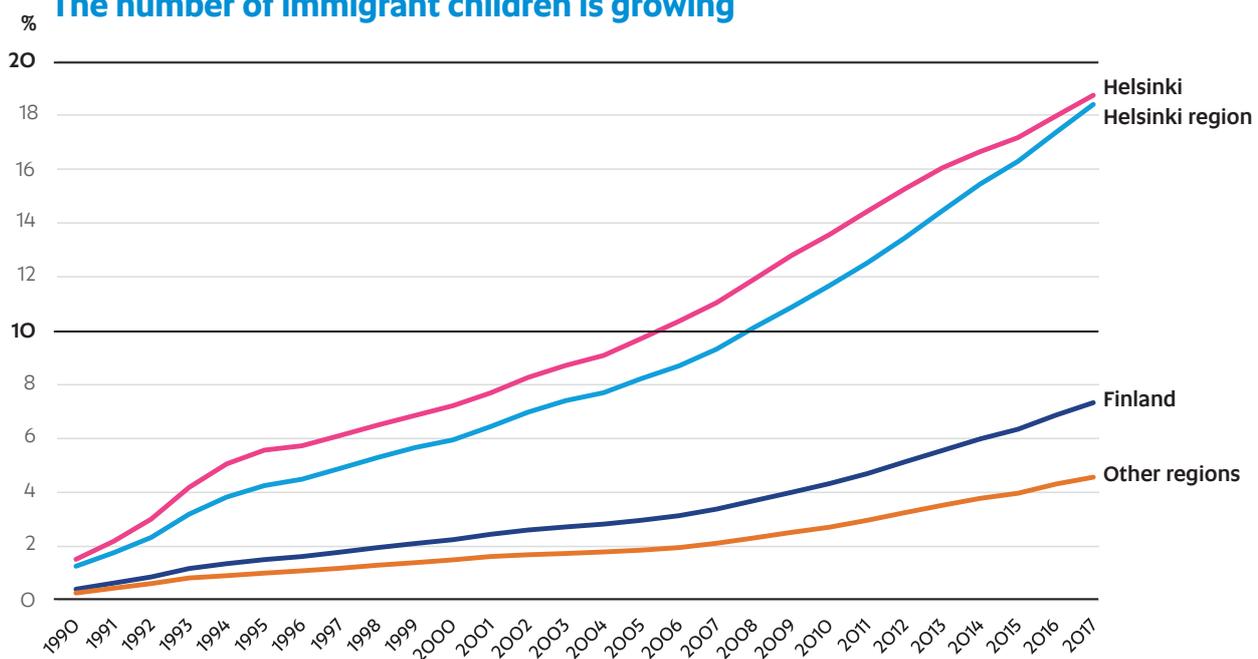


Pedagogical ECEC for all children waiting for a residence permit and registration

IN FINLAND, newly arrived school-aged children and adolescents have the opportunity to participate in basic education. However, children under school age

waiting for a residence permit and registration are not necessarily provided with an opportunity to participate in pedagogical ECEC. Children are often offered only open ECEC, which means services such as clubs or play activities. The problem with these services is their price and quality. ²

The number of immigrant children is growing



Share of foreign-language speakers of all 4–16-year-olds in Finland 1990–2017. Source: Statistics Finland

Improving language skills must be supported already at ECEC stage

MUNICIPALITIES HAVE no obligation to provide instruction in Finnish or Swedish as a second language (S2 instruction) as part of ECEC. It is not a subjective right of a child. The situation with respect to the provision of S2 instruction varies greatly across municipalities. Almost half of all children with an immigrant background who attend ECEC do not have access to S2 instruction.³ S2 instruction is vitally important for the future of the child. Starting language instruction by pedagogical means as early as possible supports integration. This builds a solid basis for future learning. A good basis can be provided by pedagogical ECEC to a high standard.⁴

However, the problem is that no uniform national guidelines on S2 instruction have been issued for ECEC.

Nearly all six-year-olds participate in pre-primary education in Finland. S2 instruction also supports all learning and strengthens language skills during pre-primary education.



SOLUTIONS

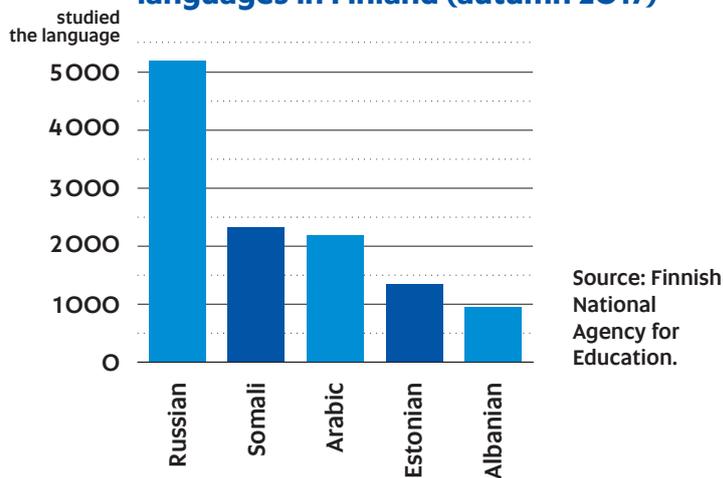
1. The participation of children from families with an immigrant background in pedagogical ECEC must be increased.
2. Access to pedagogical ECEC must be guaranteed for all children under school age waiting for a residence permit and registration.
3. When establishing groups in ECEC and pre-primary education, the number of children with an immigrant background must be taken into account when determining the size of the group.
4. An item on a child's right to S2 instruction as part of ECEC must be included in the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care or the Government Decree on Early Childhood Education and Care.
5. The question of funding for S2 instruction provided as part of ECEC must be resolved.
6. The Finnish National Agency for Education must specify criteria that state on what grounds a child can participate in S2 instruction in ECEC.
7. The right to participate in S2 instruction as part of pre-primary education must be stipulated in legislation as a child's subjective right.

The role of one's own native language

THE RIGHT to one's own native language is everyone's fundamental right. All people living in Finland have the fundamental right to maintain and develop their own language. ⁵

The instruction of one's own native language secures the development of thinking. It forms the foundation for learning academic skills. Bilingual children and adolescents perform better at school and in their studies

The five most widely taught foreign native languages in Finland (autumn 2017)



if they are given instruction in their native language. The foundation for learning one's own language is laid at home, but language proficiency can be enhanced by pedagogical means during ECEC and at school. ⁶

Families with an immigrant background mainly live in large cities. However, there are also small municipalities and schools in Finland that have pupils with an immigrant background. In such cases, teachers that can provide instruction in one's own language or religion may not always be available. Therefore, the opportunities offered by distance education must be more fully exploited.

SOLUTIONS

8. Instruction in one's own native language must be started as part of ECEC, and it should be continued until the end of upper secondary education and training.

9. The selection of native languages and religions taught by qualified teachers must be broadened by making use of distance education. In addition, the group of pupils instructed always needs a teacher who is present in the classroom.

Making better use of the possibility to provide S2 instruction

POOR FINNISH OR SWEDISH LANGUAGE SKILLS are the most significant factor contributing to the exclusion of immigrants. Poor language skills in the language of instruction impede studying and the completion of basic education.

S2 instruction is not compulsory in basic education or ECEC. Therefore, the practices vary between municipalities. Many municipalities do not offer it at all. In basic education and general upper secondary schools, the increase in central government transfers for S2 instruction is too low compared to the actual costs. In ECEC and vocational education and training, S2 instruction is not supported by central government transfers.

In basic education, a child or adolescent is often transferred to a teaching group of native speakers of Finnish or Swedish too soon and without the necessary support. S2 instruction in comprehensive schools is funded by the State for a maximum of six school years after the pupil has started attending the school. Not all municipalities make full use of S2 instruction.

SOLUTION

10. S2 instruction must be funded by the State for eight instead of six of the pupil's school years so that it can also be provided at the upper secondary level.

Including in legislation a child's or adolescent's right to preparatory instruction

INSTRUCTION PREPARING for basic education is intended for pupils whose Finnish or Swedish language skills or other skills are not adequate for learning within a group of pre-primary or basic education pupils. The extent of preparatory instruction corresponds to the syllabus of one school year.

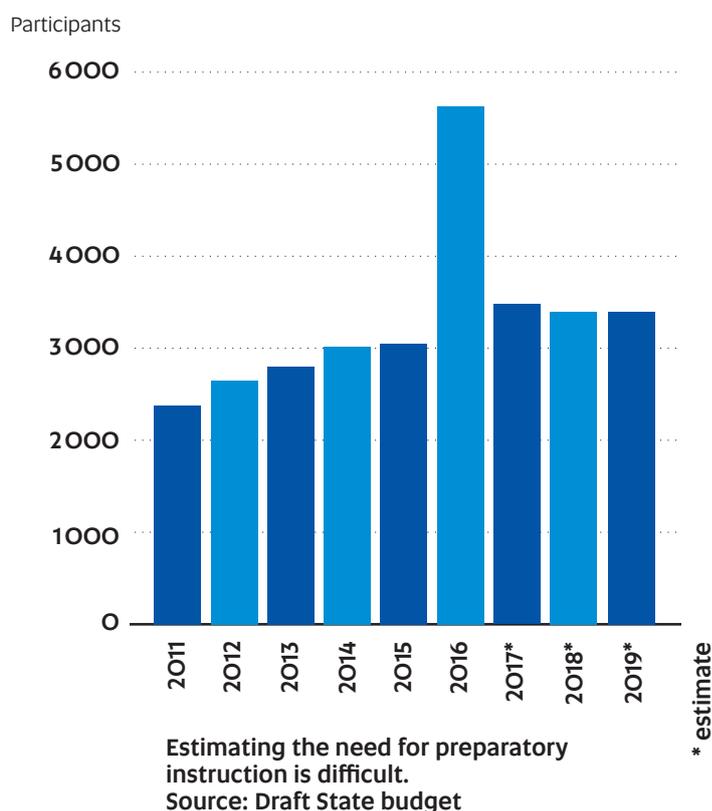
In recent years, the need for and amount of instruction preparing for basic education have increased considerably. The funding for preparatory instruction has been developed since 2015. However, municipalities have no obligation to provide preparatory instruction. There is a strong need for preparatory instruction. It is reflected, for example, in the fact that the learning outcomes of second-generation immigrants are hardly any better than those of first-generation immigrants.⁷

The increase in asylum seekers in 2015 was unexpected. Finland must prepare for similar situations in the future. We need to improve our education system by amending legislation and developing structures for the future.

SOLUTIONS

- 11. All pupils must have a subjective right to instruction preparing for basic education. It must be enshrined in legislation.**
- 12. The aims and contents of preparatory instruction as well as the qualification requirements for teachers must be defined.**
- 13. The maximum group size in preparatory instruction provided as classroom teaching, ten pupils, must be established in legislation.**
- 14. If preparatory instruction is integrated into basic education, the maximum group size must be set at 20 pupils in legislation, and sufficient support in learning must be ensured.**

Number of participants in preparatory instruction for basic education



Increased funding brings good results

THE POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION FUNDING (PD funding) provided by the City of Helsinki since 2008 has benefited pupils and students with an immigrant background and Finnish-speaking boys, in particular. The aim of PD funding is to prevent exclusion among young people. A VATT research report ⁹ shows that the model has noticeably increased pupils' transition from basic education to upper secondary education and training.

In the model, additional funding is distributed to disadvantaged comprehensive schools in Helsinki on the basis of characteristics such as parental education, family income level and immigrant share.

SOLUTION

15. The positive discrimination model must be adopted nationwide, and it must cover all levels from ECEC to the end of upper secondary education and training.



If we want to improve the educational performance of young people, this is a really effective way to do so.”

Mikko Silliman

Researcher, VATT Institute for Economic Research ¹²

Support is also needed at the upper secondary level

YOUNG PEOPLE with an immigrant background are clearly less likely to continue to general upper secondary schools than students with a Finnish background, and they have a weaker educational background than the native population. Guidance counselling is very important for young immigrants who are thinking about how to continue their studies. Studying at general upper secondary schools is demanding, which not all students who choose this option are aware of. However, it is important that young people are encouraged to find the options that interest them most and correspond to their talents. The teaching groups of Finnish or Swedish as a second language are often large in those general upper secondary schools which have many students with an immigrant background. Only a few courses of Finnish or Swedish as a second language are offered.

Most pupils with an immigrant background continue to vocational education and training (VET) after completing basic education. Vocational institutions often find that many of these students lack adequate language skills. In Finland, the VET drop-out rate is approximately 10 %. However, there are considerable differences between regions and educational institutions. At its worst, the drop-out rate is 50 %.

SOLUTIONS

16. Students with an immigrant background must be encouraged to continue to general upper secondary education and higher education. In addition, students in upper secondary education must be provided with guidance and support during their studies.

17. The amount of S2 instruction must be increased at the upper secondary level.

18. In upper secondary education and training, S2 instruction must be organised so that the maximum number of students per teacher is 20.

19. A model must be developed for transitions from basic education to upper secondary education and training to ensure that the guidance counsellor and the special needs teacher or tutor in both institutions co-operate and look after students who are at risk of exclusion and monitor the progress of their studies. This model must also be applied to transitions to general upper secondary education.

20. Language-aware instruction must be developed in upper secondary education and training.

More skills for teachers

EVERY TEACHER, regardless of the subject taught or the level of education, is also an instructor in the language of his or her subject or field. Teachers need more and more information on and skills in language-aware instruction.

Teaching Finnish or Swedish as a second language requires a pedagogical approach that differs from that used in teaching Finnish or Swedish as a mother tongue.⁹ It is important that all teachers of Finnish or Swedish as a second language at every step from ECEC to adult education and training are familiar with different methods and are able to see the Finnish or Swedish language from the point of view of a learner who speaks a different language. The offering of studies in the teaching of Finnish or Swedish as a second language varies from university to university.

No qualification requirements are laid down in legislation for teachers providing instruction preparing for basic instruction. Some teachers have completed no studies in the teaching of Finnish or Swedish as a second language.

A teacher providing preparatory instruction must have knowledge and understanding of the instruction of children and adolescents who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Schools and other educational institutions also need teachers with an immigrant background who act as links between pupils and teachers as well as between two or more cultures in the co-operation between the school and the home. Many immigrants are not accepted to teacher training as admission requires excellent Finnish or Swedish skills. It is also difficult to find competent teachers for the instruction of immigrants' own native languages and religions.

SOLUTIONS

21. More teachers with an immigrant background must be trained for all levels of education.

22. It is essential that every teacher and supervisor is provided with sufficient knowledge of language-aware instruction during their basic and supplementary teacher training.

23. A separate specialist option must be offered at universities to teachers of Finnish or Swedish as a second language.

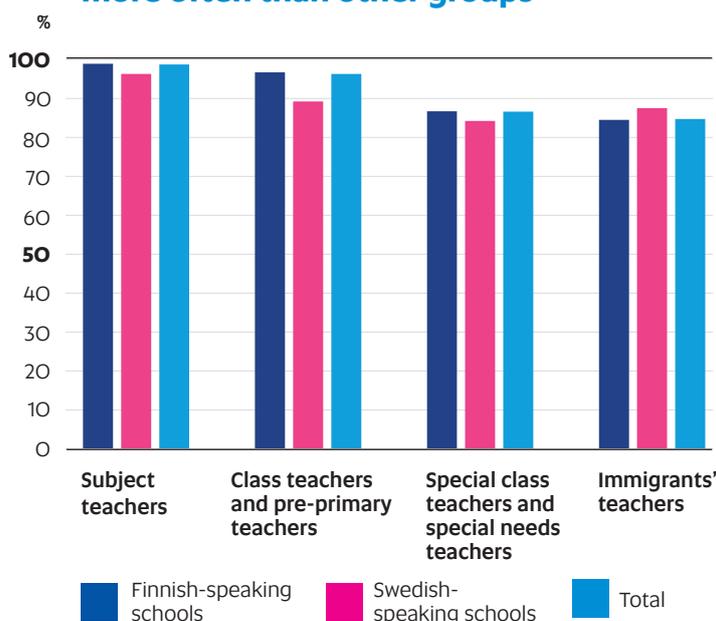
24. A separate study programme must be offered at universities to teachers providing instruction preparing for basic education.

25. Tailored training must be offered to teachers of Finnish or Swedish as a second language who work at early childhood education units as well as to consulting teachers of Finnish or Swedish as a second language.

26. Teachers of immigrants' native languages must be provided with training in teaching at the basic education and ECEC levels.

27. Municipalities must be required to organise further education and training for teachers with an immigrant background whose Finnish or Swedish language skills require strengthening.

Immigrants' teachers lack qualifications more often than other groups



The formal competence of basic education teachers in Finland 2016. Source: Statistics Finland – Vipunen – Education Statistics Finland ¹¹

Educated immigrants must be integrated into the labour market

FINLAND IS facing a new challenge. The share of the working age population of the total population has long been decreasing as the baby boom generation has retired. Birth rates are now also declining sharply. In order to maintain the Finnish welfare society and its services also in the future, we must resolve how to increase the working age population in Finland. This means that we must also open the doors of our welfare society to people arriving from other countries. The increase in our population is based on immigration.

A report published by the OECD in autumn 2018 on the performance of the Finnish integration policy is concerned about the considerable disparities between the employment rates of Finland's native-born population and foreign-born population.⁷ It is difficult to attract talent to Finland's labour market from abroad. At the same time, immigrants who have received their education and training in Finland have difficulties in finding work. The employment rate of immigrants is around ten percent lower than that of the native population. Even in cases where the immigrant holds

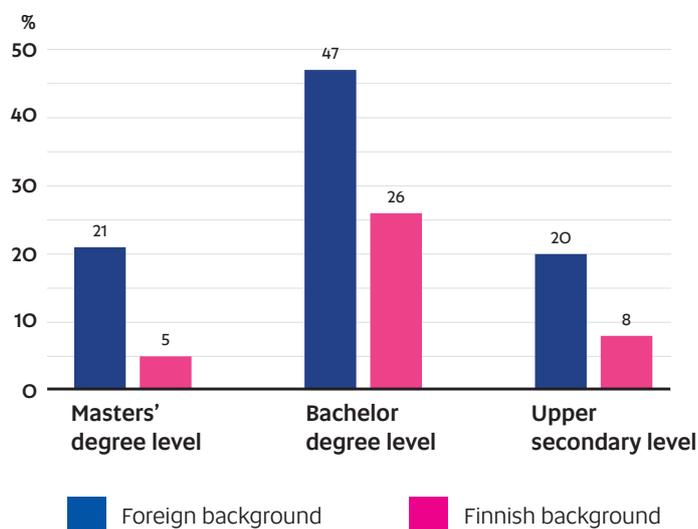


It might be a good idea to further increase the intensity of language studies and studies in Finnish society at the early stages of integration especially in the case of immigrants with good learning preparedness who would thus be able to advance rapidly on their educational path. However, this conflicts with the aim of the current policy to encourage immigrants to enter working life as soon as possible and learn the language while working.”

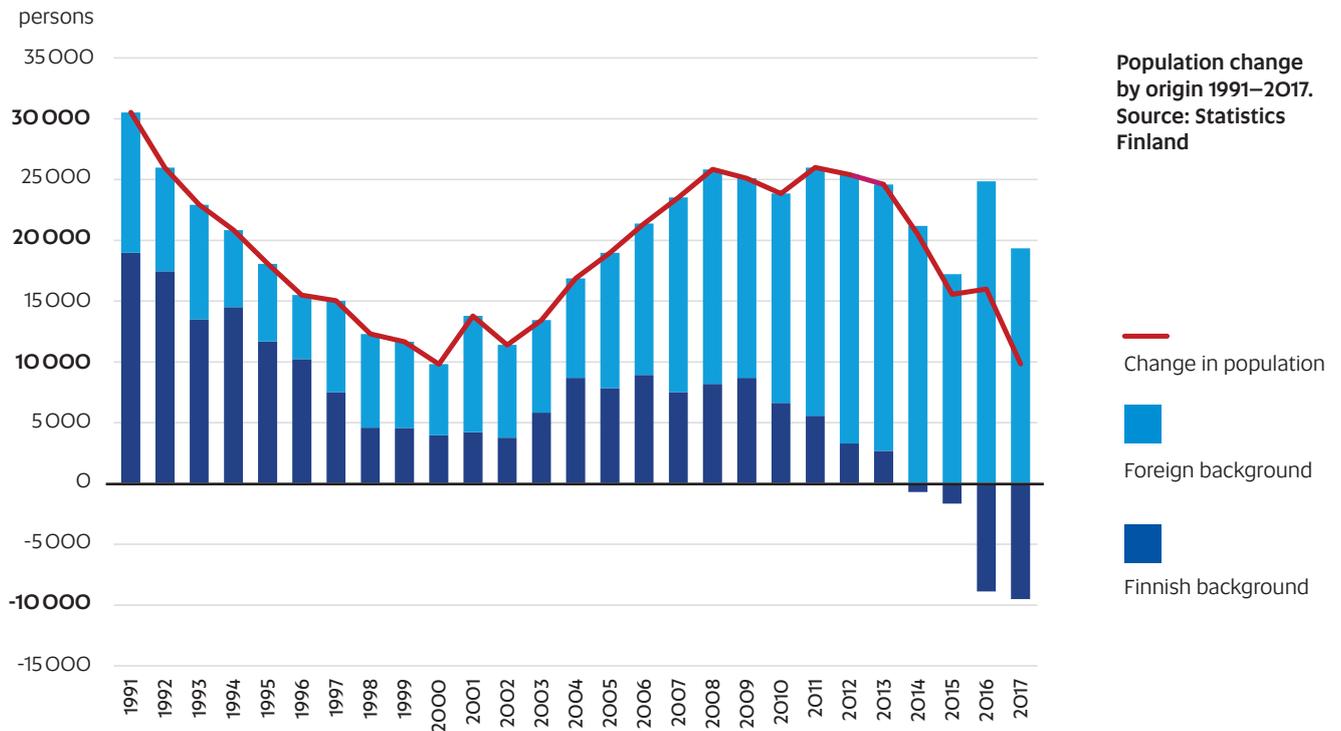
Pasi Saukkonen
D.Soc.Sc, docent¹³

Persons with a foreign background work often in lower positions than their education level

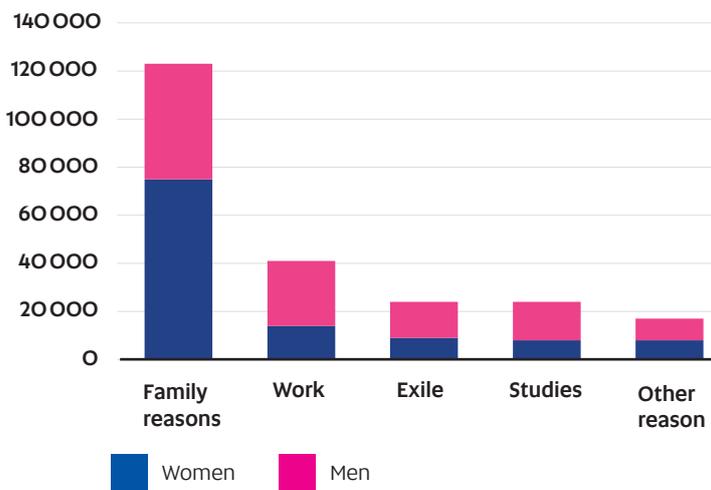
Statistical overqualification rate among persons aged 20 to 64 by origin and the highest completed qualification in 2014. Overqualified means that a person has more education, training and skills than is required for his or her current job or position. Source: UTH survey, Statistics Finland



Finland needs immigrants



Most immigrants have moved to Finland for family reasons



The main reason for immigrating to Finland, population born abroad with a foreign background aged 15 to 64 in 2014. Source: UTH survey 2014

a degree from a university in the country of origin, the qualification is not necessarily recognised on the Finnish labour market. Education and language skills promote employment.

Even educated immigrants have difficulties in finding a job in Finland that matches their qualifications, whether they hold a low or high level of education. The purpose of education and training is to provide everyone with the opportunities to build a good and diverse life. We must offer education and training to people of all ages in order to ensure that the potential of people's competence and interests is fully exploited in society.

Educated immigrants are an important investment for the national economy if they find employment in Finland. However, applying for a residence permit for studies or job seeking is complicated. Not enough instruction in the Finnish or Swedish language is offered to foreign students who study in Master's degree programmes,

which impedes entry and engagement in working life. Work placements and Finnish or Swedish language skills play a key role in finding employment.

The employment rate of female non-labour immigrants, in particular, is very low in Finland compared to other OECD countries. The employment rate of immigrant women is lower than that of immigrant men. In Finland, the status of women with an immigrant background is poor in the labour market. Motherhood reduces labour force participation among women with an immigrant background.

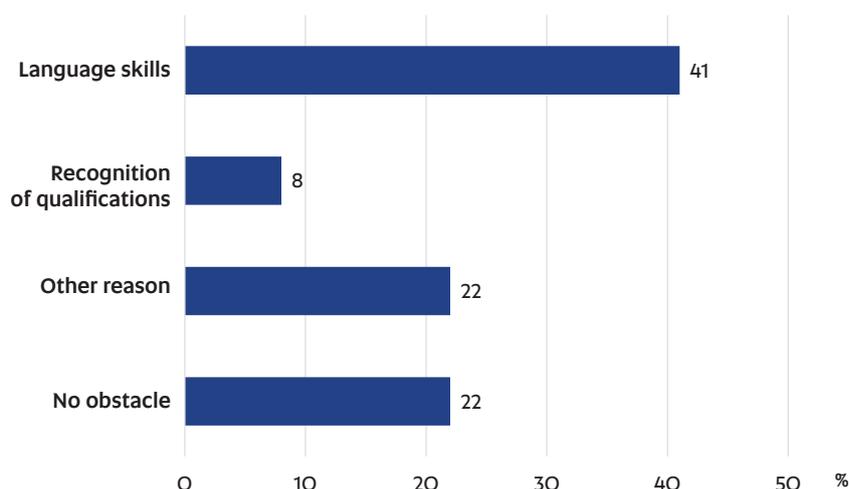
According to immigrants, the main obstacle to their employment is inadequate language skills.⁷



Motherhood reduces labour force participation among women with an immigrant background.

Inadequate Finnish language skills are an obstacle to finding employment matching one's qualifications

The main reason for not finding a job matching one's qualifications.
Source: Statistics Finland



SOLUTIONS

28. The recognition and validation of immigrants' prior skills and qualifications must be made more flexible by extending the services offered regionally and sectorally.

29. In addition to the studies included in their degree programmes, foreign higher education students must be provided with a one-year higher education course in the Finnish or Swedish language and culture (60 credit units) or language and cultural studies integrated in their studies to ensure their labour market competence. Similar language studies must also be offered to people with higher education who have completed a degree abroad.

30. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment or the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) must chart the obstacles to finding work placement opportunities during studies.

31. The residence permits and student financial aid granted to higher education students must be such that they promote labour immigration. A good way to support labour immigration is to offer Finnish or Swedish language studies.

32. Finland must replace the various fragmentary programmes with a comprehensive immigration policy programme to promote equality in the labour market.

Reception centres play a key role in integration

FOR MANY IMMIGRANTS, the reception centre serves as the first link to Finnish society and education and training. Regardless of the centre in which a person is placed, he or she should be immediately provided with language and cultural training.

Immigrants arrive and have arrived in Finland from a diverse range of cultures. Acquiring the language and adopting the culture of the country of arrival play an important role in immigrant integration. The native

population also needs information on other cultures and the increasing diversity and changes in society. Many misunderstandings can be prevented if immigrants are offered training in the language and culture immediately after arrival in Finland.

It takes a long time to receive an asylum decision. While waiting for the decision, the immigrant lives as a member of our society. It is of vital importance that integration into the new culture begins immediately at the reception centre.

Increasing career counselling and guidance services at educational institutions

THE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OFFICE (TE Office) or municipality carries out an initial assessment, and the educational institution assesses the starting level of the client who is then placed in a suitable teaching group. Currently, educational institutions often have to re-perform the assessment as TE Offices do not have the necessary resources or expertise.

Educational institutions offering education and training for adults, in particular, already also provide guidance. In addition, they assess immigrants' language skills. This expertise should be made better use of.

Many immigrants have participated in self-motivated language training. They are not offered guidance services related to studies or employment as systematically as TE Office clients are. They could be offered guidance and counselling related to studies and career at educational institutions.

SOLUTIONS

33. Reception centres must either hire teachers or co-operate closely with local adult education and training institutions to promote immigrants' language and cultural acquisition.

34. The provision of career counselling and other guidance services must be increased in educational institutions that offer training and education for adults, in particular. These operating models must be integrated into the system of upper secondary education and training and higher education.

35. Further education and training must be organised for teachers who are unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed so that they can act as teachers and guidance counsellors for immigrants.

Incorporating integration training into the whole of our education system

INTEGRATION TRAINING is a course intended for adult immigrants that lasts for approximately one year. During the training, they learn Finnish or Swedish and acquire capabilities for job seeking or their educational path. At the same time, they put roots down in Finnish society.

Integration training is provided as an outsourced service procured by the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) through an invitation to tender as part of the administrative branch of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The ELY Centres have no common national quality or price criteria for the competitive tendering of integration training. Carrying out this tendering process every few years hampers development work, and thus also weakens the quality of training, as the training providers cannot prepare any long-term plans for training. The system is rigid and under stress.

Literacy training was transferred under the mandate of the Ministry of Education and Culture from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Thanks to the transfer, it has been possible to develop literacy training and ensure its quality. Integration training must also be transferred to the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture to enable long-term development and quality enhancement.

SOLUTIONS

36. Integration training must be transferred under the Ministry of Education and Culture and made subject to authorisation to provide education.

37. Competitive tendering of integration training must be abandoned and the quality of training must be evaluated on a regular basis.



As funding has been inadequate, immigrants have had to wait for their residence and work permits and access to integration measures, services have been offered to a much smaller group than they should have been, and their quality has left much to be desired in some cases.”

Pasi Saukkonen
D.Soc.Sc, docent ¹³



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FIND OUT MORE

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