

Empower: Country Report on „Situation of migrants & integration“

Partner: Kuopion Setlementti Puijola ry – Multicultural Center Kompassi

Country: Finland

1. Immigration of migrants to the country

1.1 Brief overview of the legal background for immigration

- Citizens of the Nordic countries do not need a visa or a residence permit to live or work in Finland. No passport or other identity document is required of Nordic citizens. However, they must be able to prove their identity and their Nordic citizenship if necessary. Nordic citizens must register their stay if residing in Finland for more than six months.
- *Citizens of EU, EEA, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland* and their family's (also for the same areas) can set up residency in Finland without any residence permit but they have to register their rights of residency to get social welfare benefits. For this they should:
 - Be employed or self-employed
 - Have sufficient health-insurance and financial means
 - Be a student at a university or school for two years or more. This does not include the exchange students
 - → Family members who are *not citizens of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland* must apply for a residence permit (five years).
- For *non EU and EEA citizens* (so-called third country nationals) there are different types of stay permits in Finland:
 - **Visa:** for entry in to the country or tourist visa
 - **Permits:** There are three types of residence permit- B, A and P type of residence permit.
 - **B type:** temporary residence permit granted up to one year, renewable every year. (More than 90 days of stay in Finland). They don't have any rights for the social benefits in Finland.
 - **A type:** Continuous residence permit. It is given for a time period of 1year in the beginning and 3-4 years after the completion of one year. It is given under certain circumstances: marriage to a Finnish citizen, work, and family union. They get unrestricted access to the labor market and social welfare system.
 - **P type:** Permanent residence: (people who already settled in Finland without a break for at least five years and if the Integration Agreement has been complied with, granting them the unlimited right to residence and unrestricted access to the labor market and social welfare system)
 - **The EU blue card:**

If you intend to work in Finland in a role that requires a high level of competence, you should apply for the EU Blue Card.

You can apply for an EU Blue Card if:

- Your work demands a high level of competence and requires high qualifications or special expertise and you have a higher education degree. You must present the necessary documentation to prove this.
- You meet the general requirements for the granting of a residence permit.

- You will be paid a gross minimum salary of EUR 4,832 per month. This is the national salary threshold applicable in Finland in 2012, and it is reviewed annually. Potential perks or daily allowance are not included in the salary.
- Your contract for the job requiring a high level of competence will last for a minimum of one year.

Note that you must apply for the EU Blue Card prior to your arrival in Finland.

- **Citizenship** - the process of gaining a Finnish citizenship (application, test, filling out forms) takes about 2-3 months and the decision making process takes about 6 months to one year. Getting the citizenship is possible if, the applicant
 - has lived in Finland for at least 5-6 years or has been married to a Finnish citizen for at least 4 years
 - Passes the Finnish language intermediary test (YKI testi) – middle level on the scale of 1-5
 - If the applicant's identity has been established beyond doubt
 - Has reached the age of 18
 - Meets the integrity requirement
 - Has not neglected your payment obligations
 - Has established your means of livelihood

1.2 Types of immigration

1. Mobility within the EU (EU- and EEA-citizens plus family)
2. Permanent immigration (P permit)
3. Temporary residence (**B permit**: rotation workers and hired out workers, self- employed persons, artists, pupils, sportsman, students, and researchers, **A permit**: spouses of Finnish citizens, people who have completed two years of residence in Finland, those who have a job in Finland for more than a year)
4. Fixed-term employment (individuals working in Finland for a fixed period of time)

All the above said permits have exceptions and some are case sensitive and are decided by the permit issuing official at the local police station.

Residence titles:

Residence permit is subjective and includes exceptional cases as it may be in many other countries. The below mentioned are the ones given to people without any legal or other hassles.

Residence titles in Finland:

- Temporary residence permit: (with limited access to labor market but no access to social welfare system at all)
- Continuous residence permit: (access to labor market and social welfare system)
- Permanent residence: " (settlement with access to the labor market and social welfare system)
- Permanent residence – family member" (settlement with full access to the labor market and social welfare system)
- Continuous residence permit – family members: (settlement with full access to the labor market and social welfare system)
- Temporary residence permit – family members" (limited access to the labor market and no social welfare benefits)

1.3 Development of migration

According to Migration Information Source, there are two types of migrations:

Forced (or involuntary) migration is a general term that includes a number of legal or political categories, all referring to people who are coerced or compelled to migrate due to conflict, violence, persecution, natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects. Included in this category are refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, smuggled people, and victims of trafficking.

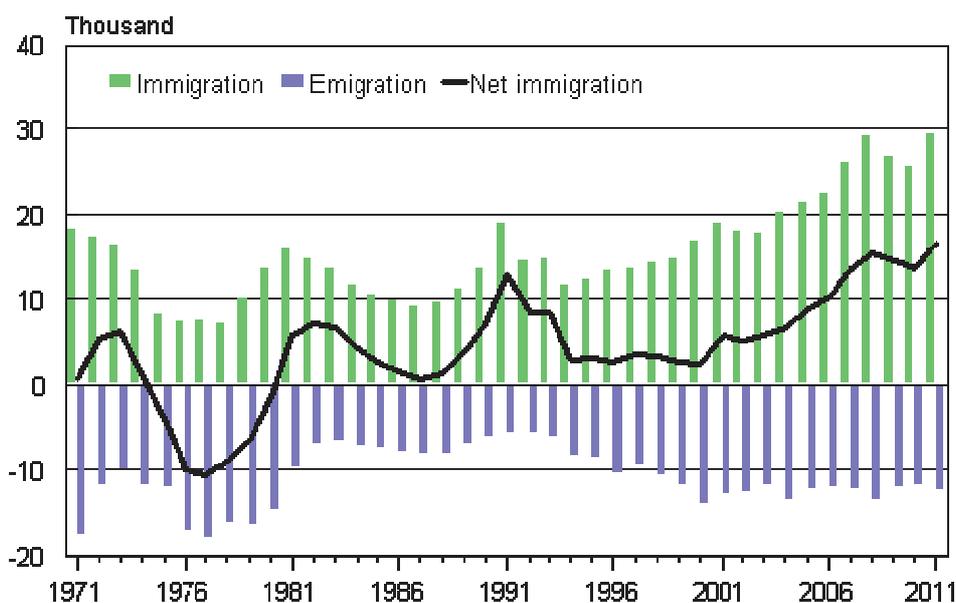
Voluntary migration (sometimes also called economic migration) refers to all other migrants who are motivated to migrate for personal reasons or financial gain.

Finland was an autonomous part of Russian Empire's Grand Duchy from 1809-1917. Thousands of Russians, like soldiers, merchants, civil servants and tourists, moved to and lived in Finland either as permanent or temporary residents.

There were about 6000 Russians living in Finland at the time it's Independence. The World War I caused a number of refugees from Eastern European countries to move Finland and at the end of the World war one Russian revolution forced many Russians to take refuge in Finland. There were about 33,000 refugees after the WW I and more than half of them were from Russia. When the intermittent peace settled, the Russians moved back and the number of refugees reduced.

From World War II up to the early 1970s Finland was a rather closed society and immigration was at its lowest point since it was not considered as a major immigration destination. Whatever small number of immigrants came to Finland stayed only for a short period. This trend continued until early 90's and the majority of immigrants coming to Finland were from Sweden, (return migrants). There were several reasons for the increase in immigration during the 90's. Domestic developments in the Asian and African countries that lead to legal and illegal migration to Europe and other western countries, disintegration of the former USSR and the civil wars in the Balkan nations may also be taken as the reasons for immigration in to Scandinavia and Finland.

Immigration, emigration and net immigration- Finland 1971–2011



2. Migrants living in the country

2.1 Foreigners in the country

In 1980 about 13,000 foreign citizens lived in Finland and that number increased to 87,500 in 1999. Respectively, the number of foreign-born persons increased from 39,000 to about 130,000. These numbers include refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants as well as return migrants and their children with foreign citizenship.

According to Statistics Finland's statistics on the population structure, there were 257,248 persons of foreign origin (including the permanent residents and citizenship holders) living in Finland at the end of 2011, which represents 4.8 % of Finland's population. There were 219,702 persons that have been born abroad, so-called first generation Finns with foreign origin, and 37,546 persons born in Finland with foreign origin, so-called second generation Finns with foreign origin.

During 2011, 29,500 persons immigrated to Finland from foreign countries. The number is 3,100 higher than the highest during Finland's independence. During 2011, net immigration totaled 16,800 persons.

Out of the total population of 248,130 people in the North-Savo region, people of foreign origin consisted of about 4,697 making it about 1.89% of the total population in 2011. And about 4,195 were first generation and about 502 were 2nd generation were people of foreign origin.

2.2 People with an immigration background

Definitions by the OECD:

'A long-term migrant is a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure, the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival, the person will be a long-term immigrant.'

'A short-term migrant is a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least three months but less than a year (12 months) except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage.'

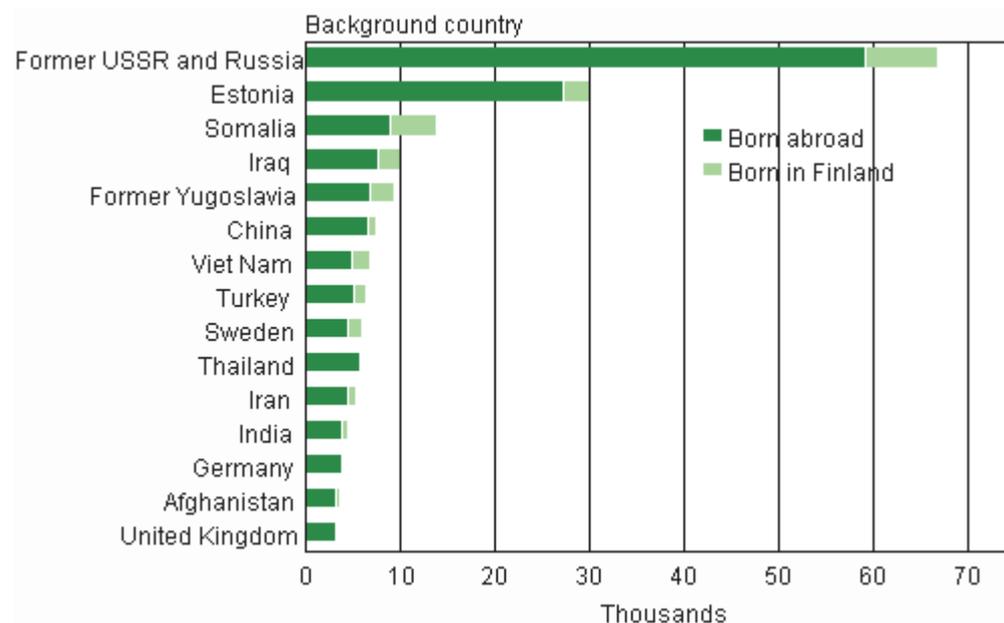
2.3 Countries of origin

Foreigners in Finland: The majority groups come from the following countries:

Estonia – 34,006
Russia – 29,585
Sweden - 8 481
Somalia - 7 421
China - 6 159
Iraq - 5 742
Thailand - 5 545
Turkey - 4 159
Germany - 3 806
India - 3 793

Others - 74 436 **Total - 183 133**

Largest groups of foreign origin among the Finnish population on 31 December 2011



2.4 Attributes of the different groups of immigrants

Could not find the data! I will try for it before the actual publication of this resource guide.

3. Integration of immigrants in the country

3.1 Integration of immigrants

Integration measures:

Finland is ranked in fourth position on the list of countries with the best integration policies towards immigrants, according to an international study comparing immigrant integration policies published in 2011 (*Migration Integration Policy Index, MIPEX*).

Best practice found in 31 countries.

- Labor market mobility 71 %
- Anti-discrimination 78 %
- Access to nationality 57%
- Long-term residence 58 %
- Political participation 87%
- Education 63 %
- Family reunification 70%

In Finland, the Ministry of the Interior guides integration activities. Methods to promote integration are also taken by educational and employment services which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Centers for economic development, transport and the environment are the regional

authorities acting under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior in association with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Municipalities and employment and economic development offices carry out actions at local level.

The Finnish Integration Act came into force in May 1st, 1999. The aims of the Act are to promote integration, equality and freedom of choice by providing measures that help to achieve information and skills needed in the Finnish society. In practice, the Act introduced two reforms.

- The first reform set new rules for the responsibilities between the central and local administrations.
- The second reform introduced individualized integration plans for immigrants.

Eligibility for an integration plan depends on the date of entering the population register, labor market status and the type of residence permit. The right for a plan lasts for three years after the first registration to the population register. This requires a Finnish social security number, which effectively rules out immigrants with short-term residence permits, i.e., people with A and P permit that have full access to the labor market gain monetary benefit during the integration plan through language education. People with B type permit with limited access to the labor market do not gain such benefits during the language courses but are also not on the preference list during the student selection process. Finally, regardless of the date of entry, only those registered as unemployed job-seekers or living in a household that receives social assistance are eligible.

On 7.6.2012, adopting the first ever Government Integration Program for 2012–2015, the Government decided to support precisely these integration routes for integrating immigrants

“For immigrants, work is one of the keys to sound integration. If the doors to working life do not open, integration often halts half-way. The Government has set the ambitious goal of halving unemployment among immigrants within the current Government term. We must give immigrants every possible support in finding that first job. Employer and employee organizations are needed, to construct a working life in which immigrants can genuinely feel useful in Finnish society”, comments Lauri Ihalainen, Minister of Labor.

The Finnish government has also updated the Future of Immigration 2020 strategy in 2012.

The topics covered by the strategy are:

1. The current state of immigration and an assessment of changes in the operating environment between now and 2020.
2. Immigration policy values and vision for 2020.
3. Work-based immigration, immigrant employment and entrepreneurship
4. Students
5. International protection
6. Family members and other relatives
7. Preventing irregular migration and trafficking in human beings
8. Integration
9. Influencing EU policy
10. International influence, co-operation with countries of departure and transit
11. Impacts on the organization of immigrant administration, financial effects

3.2 In the educational system

Education in Finland is an egalitarian system, with no tuition fees and with free meals served to full-time students. In 2009, nearly 17,500 pupils in basic education were foreign language speakers. Immigrant pupils in basic education may study their own native language as their first language within the school's normal curriculum. However, this form of instruction is only available in a few schools at the moment. The Basic Education Act also allows education to be carried out, wholly or in part, in the native language of the immigrant pupil. Some local authorities have offered either bilingual or own-language education in Arabic, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese and Estonian. Native language instruction for immigrants is given every year to more than 11,000 pupils in approximately 50 different languages.

Age 9 months to 5 years: nurseries and day cares and family care who look after very small groups of children.

Age 6 - 7: pre-school

Schooling from age 7 (7 – 16): nine years compulsory comprehensive school (Those born on or before December 31st start the schooling year in the autumn even if they haven't completed 7 years of age. Those who are born after the date will wait until the next autumn to join the school).

Age 7 to 12: primary school

Age 12 to 16: secondary school

From age 16 -18 & 18 -20: Post-compulsory upper secondary school and vocational education. The upper secondary education after 18 years can be equated to the American community or junior college system.

Vocational school can be completed at a school emphasizing vocational orientation and preparation for an apprenticeship. At the end of the secondary school (9th grade) you have to pass with good grades in all the subjects to get in to (lukio) academic track (matriculation) or vocational school. If you do not get good grades you can choose to study one more year in the 10th grade, to improve your grades and go to the high school or vocational school. At the age of 18 pass the "Lukio" or matriculation if you choose to go to the high school.

You can choose to study both High school and the vocational school at the same time. The "lukio" is needed if you want to further education at a university or academy, etc.

Special education

During the first nine years of school disabled children or children with special educational needs (e.g. severe learning difficulties, etc.) have the possibility to attend a special needs school or be educated in special pedagogical centers. There are also so-called 'integration classes' where disabled and non-disabled children are schooled together with a few different classes or programs due to the kid's needs. Their study year can be extended by one year after the secondary school.

Apprenticeship

After the last compulsory year of school at the age of 16, pupils can decide to participate in a vocational training – an apprenticeship which combines on the job learning and education at the vocational school. Teenagers can be trained in three or four-year programs for about many different professions.

University, College

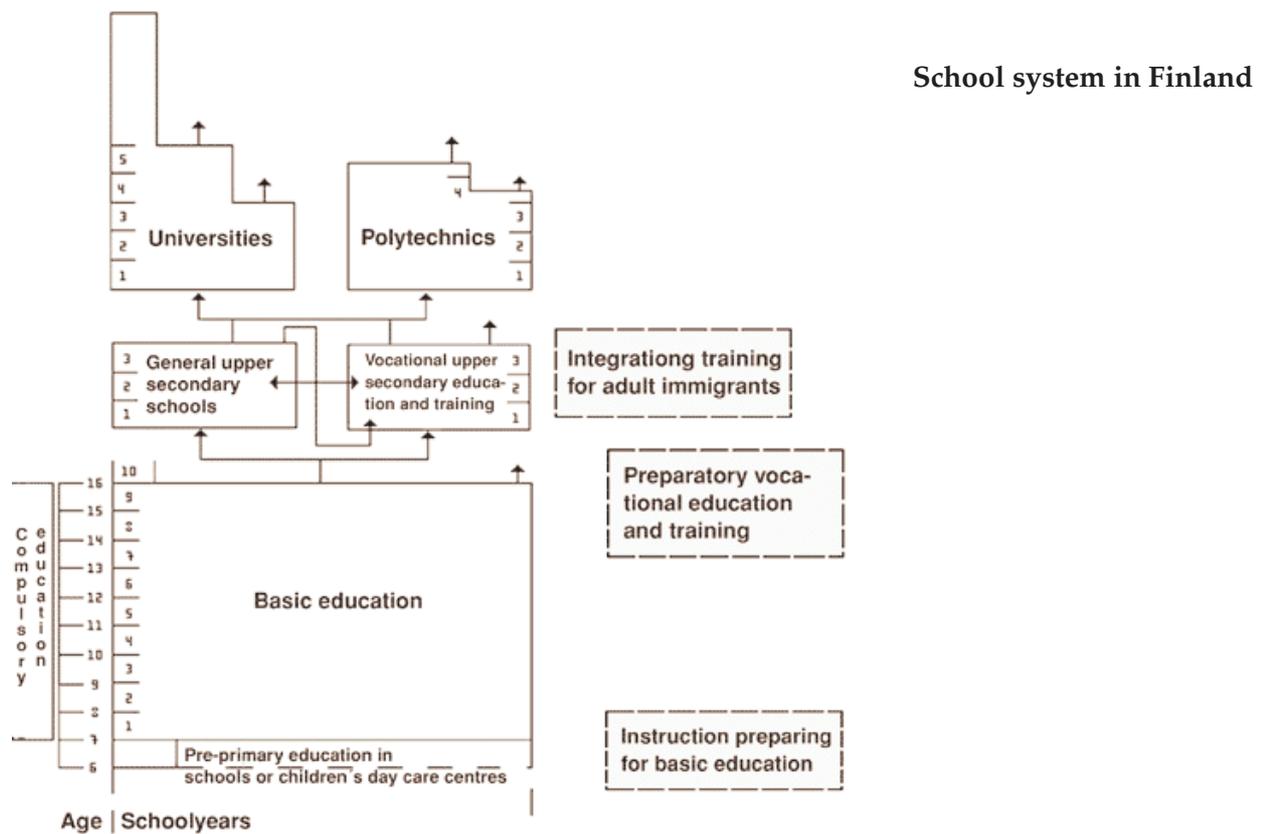
Tertiary education is divided into university and polytechnic (ammattikorkeakoulu, often translated into English as "university of applied sciences") systems. Only universities award licentiate- and doctoral-level degrees. Formerly, only university graduates could obtain higher (postgraduate) degrees, however, since the implementation of the Bologna process, polytechnic degree holders can now qualify for further academic study by doing additional courses. There are 17 universities and 27 polytechnics in the country.

Adult education ((lifelong, continuing)

For people who already follow an occupation there is the possibility of further education in evening classes. There are adult integration courses for the immigrant adults.

Private schools

Finland has no private schools. There are a handful of privately run religious schools and Steiner schools, which are legally private, but these are state-funded, too.



3.3 In the labor market

In Finland there are two types of work permits: (the work permits depend upon the contract between the employees and the employer. But the first work permit is always for one year irrespective of the contracts between the employer and the employee).

- Restricted work permit (for one year)
- Unrestricted work permit (permanent work permit)

The citizens of EU and EEA member states, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland are not

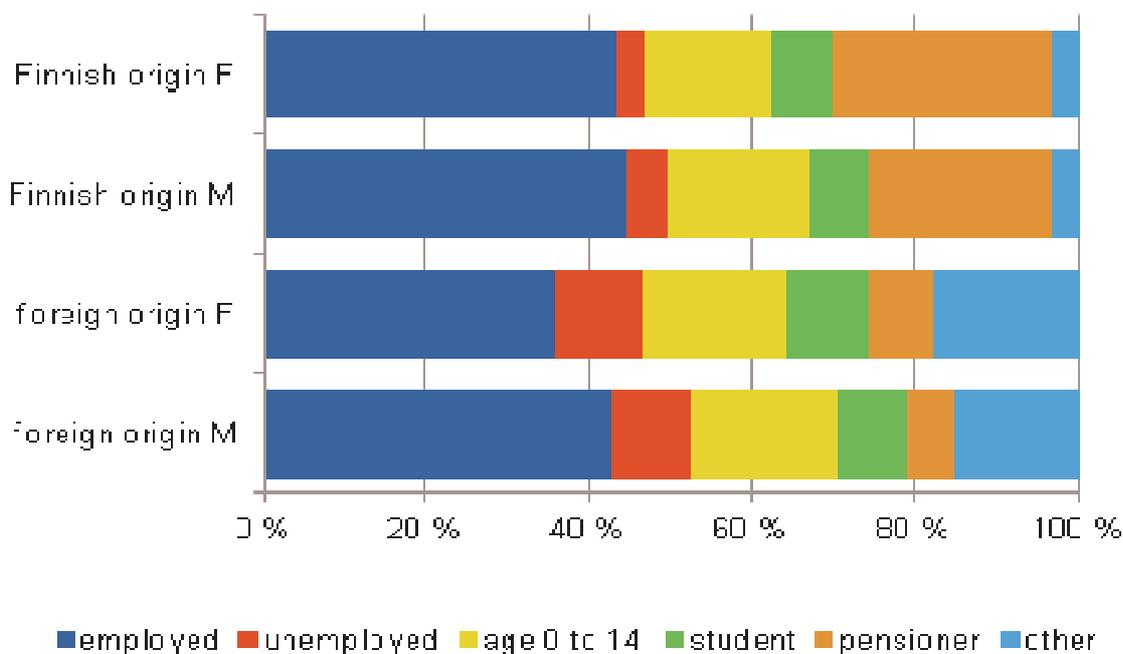
required to obtain employment permit in order to take up work in Finland, although the citizens of those countries that joined the EU in May 2004 are still required to register with an employment office. The nationals of other Nordic countries are not required to obtain an employment permit.

Migrant communities are more affected by any change in the labor market or the economical ups and downs. Even after being highly qualified, many of the foreigners tend to take low level jobs, sometimes even as a cleaner, because of lack of employment offers, non-recognition of their qualifications, difficulties in converting their certificates to Finnish standards, language skills hindering the advancement of further studies or training in Finland.

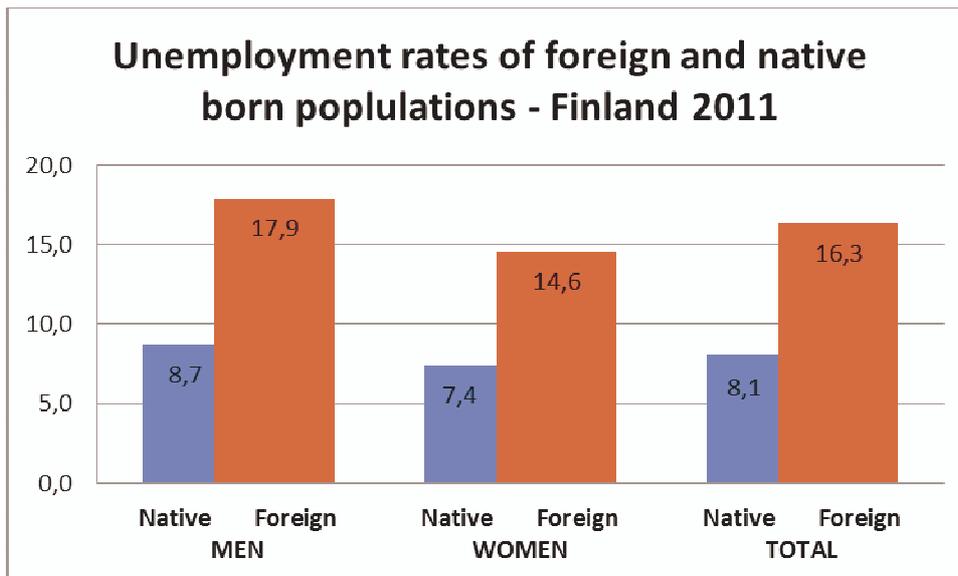
A total of 59,642 foreigners registered as job seekers in 2011. Of these foreign unemployed job seekers, EU/EEA citizens accounted for 4,000. At the end of 2011, there were 183, 133 foreigners in Finland. At the end of February 2012 the unemployment rate of the immigrants was 22, 7%.

Migrants from western countries and countries like India and Nepal are doing much better in job market than others. They come to the country with a work permit and stay here. For example, as of June 2012, unemployment among Indians and Nepalese is 7%, according to the statistics published in YLE news online. The rate of unemployment among native, ethnic Finns is 8.7%. Unemployment among Finland's largest foreign community, Russians, is around 28%. 19% of Estonians are unemployed. Immigrants from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan have an unemployment rate over 60 per cent each, whereas among Germans, Estonians and Chinese the unemployment rate is below 13 %. But the highest number of unemployment rate was amongst the Somali's – 58%.

There are about 6, 300 self-employed immigrants in Finland. (2012) Turkish people were the highest self-employed people or people with business among immigrants. Nearly 40% of all immigrant businesses are owned entirely by women, or under joint control of women and men.



Employment data 2011 (preliminary data)



3.4 Political participation

Finnish nationals, from the age of 18 are allowed to vote and stand for office in local elections. Foreign nationals who have lived in Finland for two or more years get the right to vote or participate as candidate (if they are on A or P type visa) in the local municipal elections. Voting and candidacy in parliamentary elections requires citizenship.

In the 2011 parliamentary elections, about 3% of the candidates had a foreign background. Of those entitled to vote, 1.3% had a foreign background. People whose native language is not Finnish, Swedish or Sámi are considered to be foreign.

Finland scores second best to Norway on political participation policies, according to MIPEx. Immigrants can vote and stand in local elections. In Finland, everybody has the same political liberties: they are free to join political parties, form their own associations and create new media. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO), consisting of representatives of many immigrant organizations, plays an important role in the consultation process organized by the central government. The Advisory Board promotes interaction between different ethnic and religious groups and assists ministries in issues relating to immigration policy and ethnic equality.

3.5 Social participation

During the last years, the interest towards the civic participation of immigrants has also grown at the governmental and nongovernmental level. The active participation can be broadly categorized into to: 1. Associational activities, 2. Religious organizations, 3. Official modes of participation and 4. Political participation. Cooperation between immigrant associations and local authorities has proved to be important in the process of settling into the Finnish society. Cooperative arenas exist both within official sites (organized by the authorities) and within unofficial sites (organized by the immigrant- and other associations).

According to the information received from the authorities the main activities include Multicultural advisory councils, projects, social services, educational resources and the use of 'Economic and Employment Development Centers'.

Sources:

Wikipedia

The Finnish immigration services:

http://www.migri.fi/finnish_citizenship/applying_for_citizenship/requirements

The Police

<http://www.poliisi.fi/poliisi/home.nsf/0/0573FD228E925D83C22578010042FF4C?opendocument>

The Migration Information Source:

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=825>

OECD factbook:

[-http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/factbook-2011-en/02/02/04/index.html;jsessionid=51qqwa1v0mk0k.epsilon?contentType=/ns/StatisticalPublication,/ns/Chapter&itemId=/content/chapter/factbook-2011-16-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/18147364&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/factbook-2011-en/02/02/04/index.html;jsessionid=51qqwa1v0mk0k.epsilon?contentType=/ns/StatisticalPublication,/ns/Chapter&itemId=/content/chapter/factbook-2011-16-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/18147364&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html)

Immigrant education in Finland -

http://www.oph.fi/download/47557_OPH_maahanmuu.ajaesite_ensvalmis.pdf

Ministry of Employment and The Economy -

http://www.tem.fi/?89509_m=106918&l=en&s=2467

Annual Policy Report

http://www.emn.fi/files/681/221112_EMN-rajo-eng.pdf

Annual report on immigration -

http://www.intermin.fi/download/35733_maahanmuutto_eng3107lr.pdf

Jouni Korkiasaari & Ismo Söderling – Finnish Emigration and Immigration after World War II
Siirtolaisuusinstituutti.

Statistics Finland: Demographic statistics and Population and Cause of Death Statistics.

http://www.stat.fi/til/vrm_en.html

https://publications.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/39514/Obeng_Godfred.pdf?sequence=1

The Annual Report on Immigrants Finland - 2011