

# Migrants and their children at risk of marginalisation in the Helsinki metropolitan area

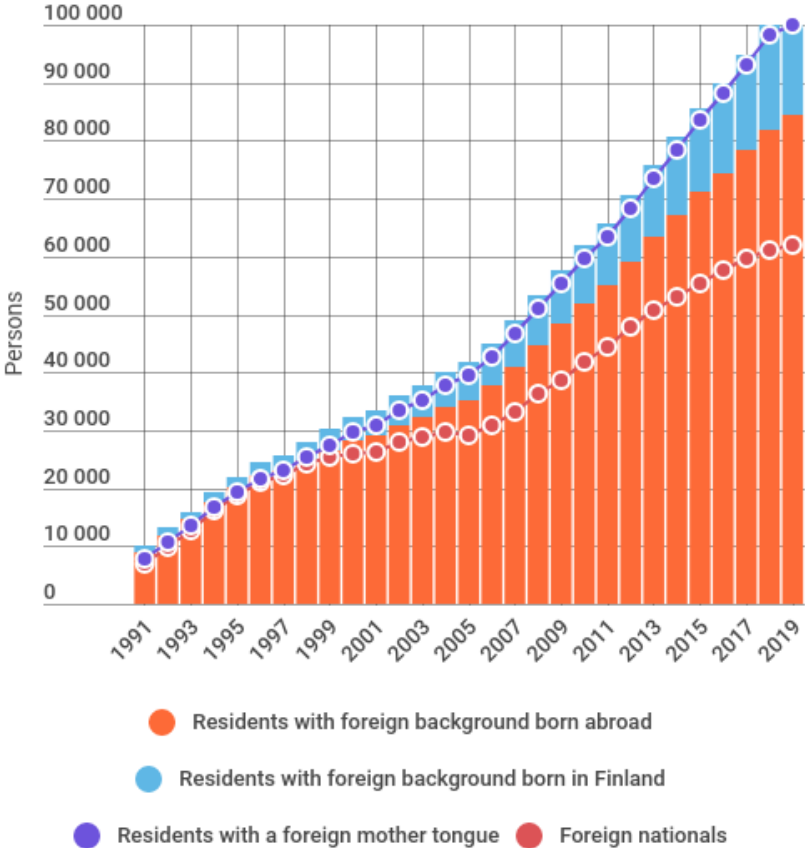
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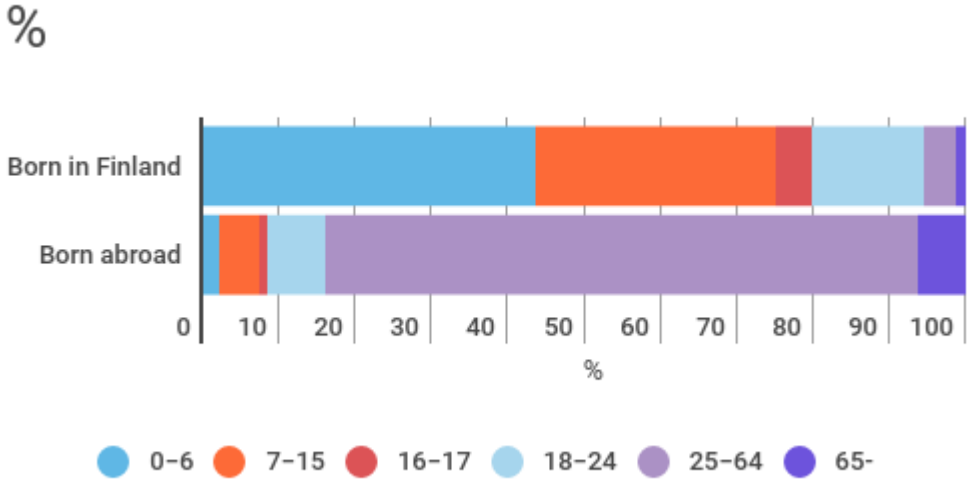


How well they integrate children with foreign-born parents can be considered a yardstick of host countries' success in integration. Because they were schooled in their parents' host country, the children of immigrants – both those who are native-born and those who arrived at a very young age – should not, in theory, encounter the same difficulties as adults who arrive from a foreign country. Ultimately, their outcomes should be much the same as those of young people with no migrant background. Yet that is not what happens in many host countries, particularly in Europe. (OECD: Settling In 2018, 179.)

# Residents with foreign background, residents with a foreign mother tongue and foreign nationals in Helsinki in 2019



# Age structure of the population with foreign background by country of birth in Helsinki on 1 Jan 2019



Pasi Saukkonen / City of Helsinki, Executive Office,  
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Lähde: Ulkomaalaistaustaiset Helsingissä –verkkosivu; tietolähde Tilastokeskus



# European Union Integration Indicators

Employment	Education	Social Inclusion	Active Citizenship	Welcoming Society
Employment rate	Highest educational attainment	At risk of poverty / social exclusion	Naturalisation rate	Perceived experience of discrimination
Unemployment rate	Tertiary attainment	Income	Share of long-term residence	Trust in public institutions
Activity rate	Early school leaving	Self-reported health status	Share of elected representatives	Sense of belonging
Self-employment	Low-achievers	Property ownership	Voter turnout	
Over-qualification	Language skills of non-native speakers			

- Research publication on the wellbeing of children and young people of foreign origin in Helsinki.
- The main material of the publication is the data from Helsinki in the **2019 School Health Promotion Study** by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL. The report also uses register data from public authorities.
- Focus on family background, education and employment, school experiences, health and habits, social relations and mental welfare & safety, harassment and violence.
- Children and young people of a foreign background are compared with those with a Finnish background;
- Among those with a foreign background, those who have moved to Finland themselves are compared with those who have been born in Finland;
- The situation and experiences of boys and girls are also compared.



- Research report on the lives of the children born in Finland in 1997 who had at least one parent who was born abroad.
- The data is from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare's (THL) **1997 Finnish Birth Cohort research data**. Data has been collected from different registers, covering the whole period from gestation to adulthood.
- Examination of the socio-economic status, health and family relationships of the children's parents, and of multiple aspects of the children's well-being (e.g. education, physical and psychological health, child welfare issues and involvement in crime).
- Attention is also given to the geographical distribution of the children's places of residence both by region and along the urban/rural spectrum, and to the features of the children's residential areas.
- Comparison with children born in 1997 who have both parents born in Finland.



# General findings 1

- The majority of children with a foreign background are doing well. Some of them are, however, facing a wide range of challenges.
- Child poverty is still alarmingly common – although the proportion of children and young people with a foreign background living in low-income families has decreased.
- There is more often poor school performance as well as discontinuation of educational pathways after basic education – although those belonging to the second generation, in particular, continue to upper secondary education more often and achieve some kind of degree.
- The majority of children and young people with a foreign background enjoy going to school and feel that their possibilities to exert influence in school are good. Many of them experience more difficulties and challenges in school than do others, though.

# General findings 2

- Children and young people with a foreign background face more challenges in social relations than those with a Finnish background. Many of them have only few friends and/or face difficulties in communication with their parents. Those with a foreign background less frequently have a weekly hobby.
- Bullying is also more common, and children and young people with a foreign background are less aware of the possibility of talking to a reliable adult at school.
- However, children and young people with a foreign background are as satisfied with their lives as are those with a Finnish background.
- Factors which put a strain on parenthood, such as parents' income difficulties, are linked to harmful developmental paths.



# Interpretation, conclusions

- Findings from Finland are, generally speaking, similar to those from countries with a longer history of immigration and larger volumes of migration.
- There is a need to continue monitoring by gathering harmonized or at least comparable data and by analysing data systematically and regularly.
- At the same time, there is a need to deepen the analysis by breaking down the group of children and the youth with a foreign background to meaningful sub-groups.
  - Can we find background factors that tend to produce multi-dimensional marginalisation and exclusion? Is there any way to help those at risk?
  - What are the factors that produce individual resilience (thriving despite of difficulties)? Can authorities strengthen these components?
- Generally speaking, we should proceed from describing the situation to understanding causal mechanisms and the effectiveness of public action.

# Thank you!

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- [Ulkomaalaistaustaiset Helsingissä -kotisivu](#)
  
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- [Ollako vai eikö olla – Tutkimus viiden kieliryhmän kiinnittymisestä Suomeen](#) (yhdessä Ville Pitkäsen ja Jussi Westisen kanssa).