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Foreign talents in Finland: working life, everyday life, and inclusion

International Talent Finland Research Project
E2 Research

Ville Pitkänen, Matti Välimäki, & Mari K. Niemi

Graphic design: Roosa Veijola





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I. ABOUT THE STUDY





Background of the study: Foreign talents in Finland

Since 2017, every year 18,000 to 30,000 foreign citizens have received residence permits in Finland on the basis of work (incl. extended work permits and EU registrations on the basis of work).

In 2020, there were 65,700 Finnish persons whose spouses were of foreign background. Moreover, there were 59,900 married or cohabiting families where both spouses were of foreign background. (EMN; Statistics Finland)

This study examines foreigners with higher education degree already living in Finland and foreigners who moved to Finland due to reasons related to their spouse or partner.

We ask, what are the appealing factors of Finland, and what promotes and hinders adjusting to life in Finland? What kind of challenges do foreign talents face in the Finnish labor market?



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Survey data

Two surveys:

1. Foreign citizens who moved to Finland for work or are applying for work in Finland (N=487)
2. Foreign citizens who moved to Finland for reasons related to their spouse or partner (N=266)

The data were combined for analysis and, excluding group-specific questions, the total number of respondents is 753.

The surveys were conducted anonymously on Webropol and were open to responses between March 23 and May 31, 2022. The surveys were in English.

Most of the respondents have a higher education degree (94%) and three out of four have a job (75%).





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II. RESULTS



**1. Finland has its strengths
– room for improvement in
the attractiveness of the
labor market**

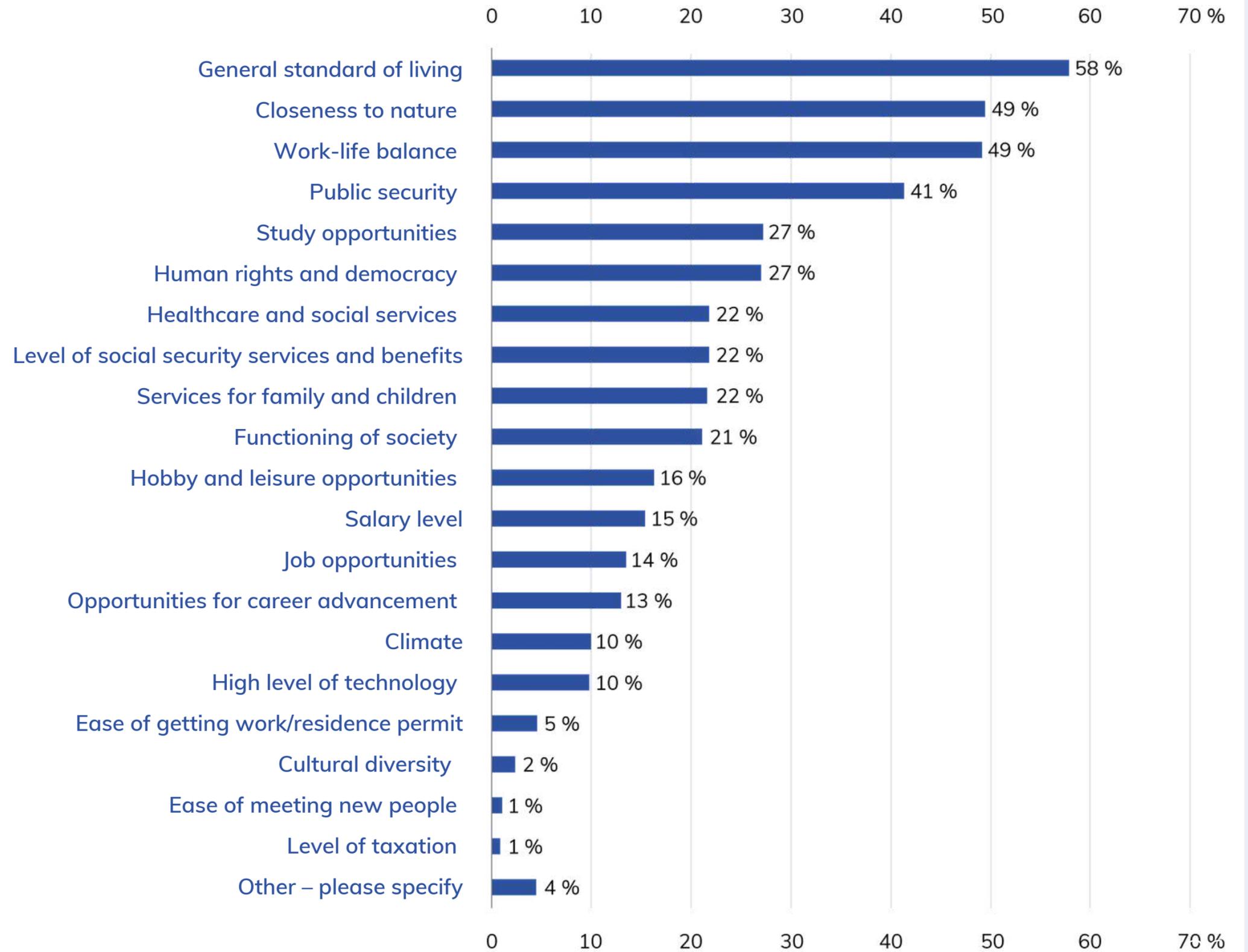


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Standard of living, nature, safety, and work-life balance are Finland's strengths

Which of the following factors you consider appealing in Finland? (Please choose 1–5 most important factors) (N=753)



For families with children, Finland's family services are a key attraction factor

- Among those who have minor children, as many as 45 percent value the services offered by Finland for children and families (the average for all respondents is 22%).
- Gender has no effect on the answers: Family services are valued equally by both men and women.
- Human rights and democracy are particularly important to the citizens of Middle Eastern countries (59%).
- Citizens of Middle Eastern countries (28%) and Russia (26%) consider job opportunities appealing more often than average.



Family support is really good here compared to the US. My wife and I plan to start a family here.

- Open-ended question



A top-down view of a group of people sitting around a wooden table in a meeting. They are looking at various devices like laptops and tablets. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text.

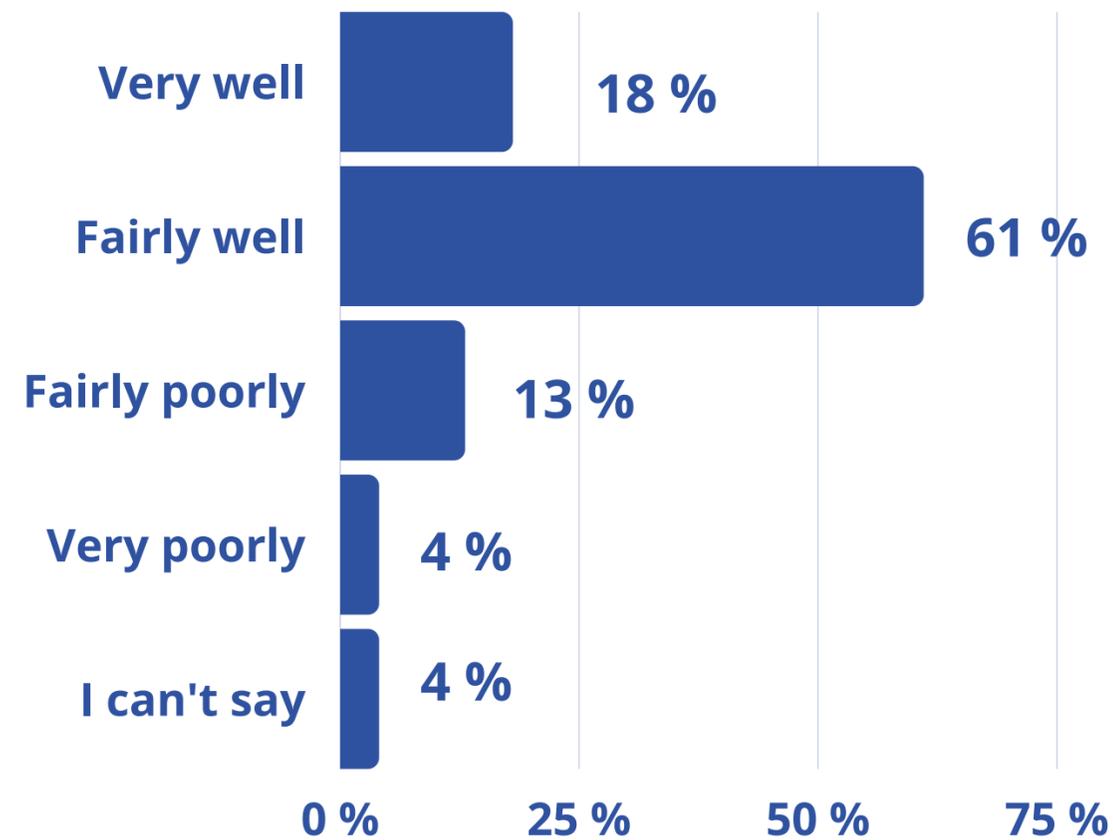
2. The majority of foreign talents are doing well in Finland



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Most have adjusted well to living in Finland

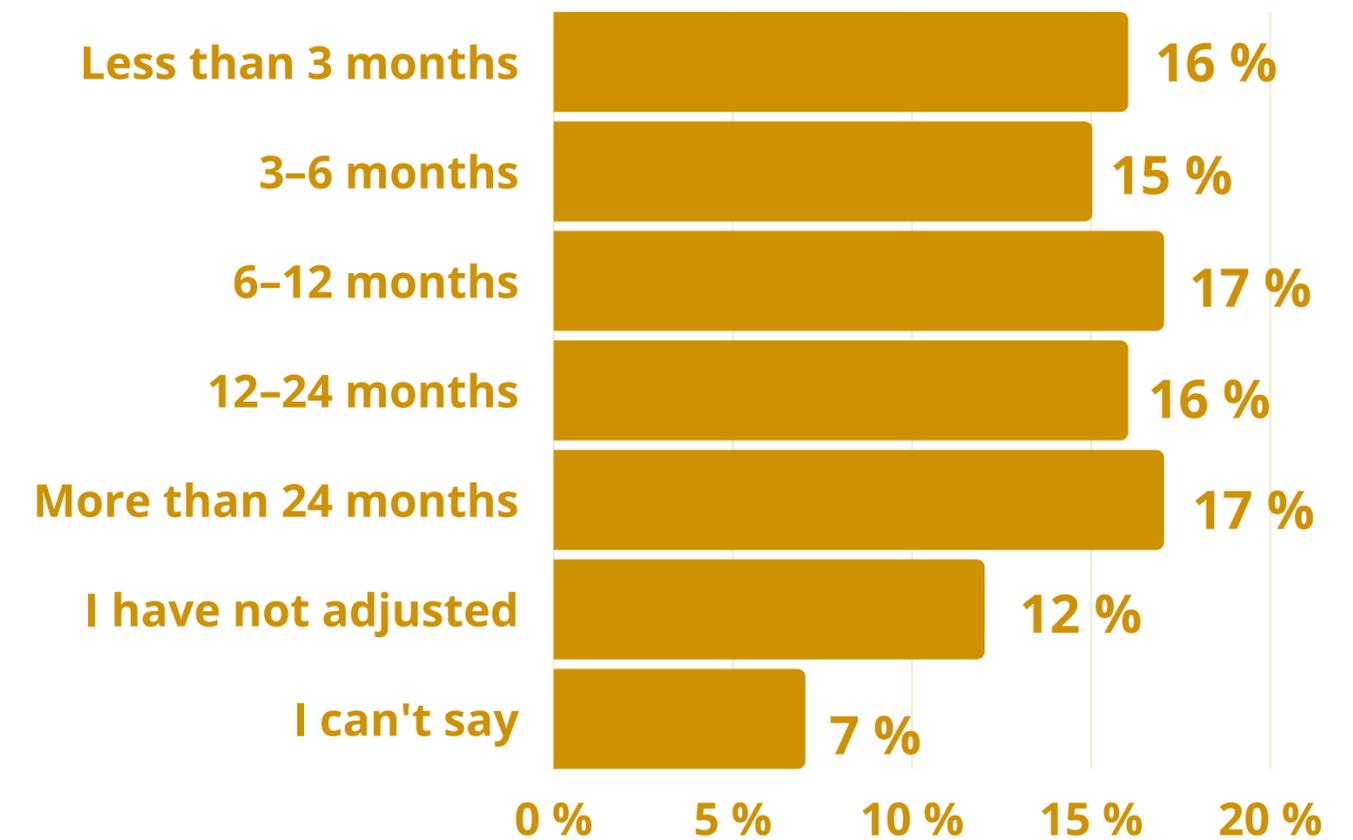
How well do you think you have adjusted to living in Finland? (N=753)



Only 4 percent feel that they have adjusted very poorly.

A little less than half think they have adjusted in less than a year

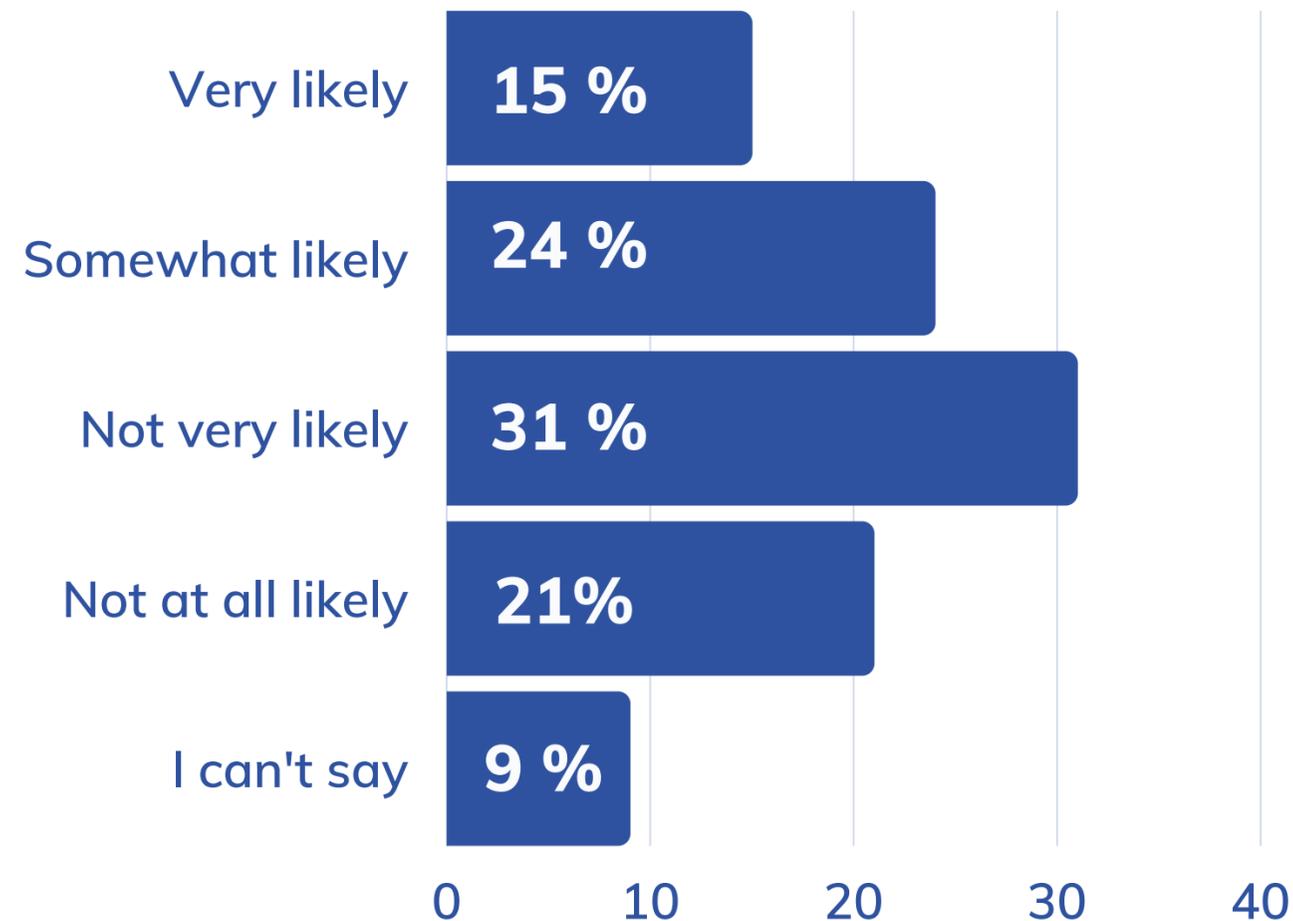
How long did it take for you to adjust to life in Finland? (N=753)



More than a tenth (12%) do not feel that they have adjusted yet.

About half (52%) think that they are not likely to move out of Finland in the near future

How likely are you to move out of Finland in the near future? (N=753)



41 percent of men and 36 percent of women consider moving out of Finland in the near future very or somewhat likely.

People under the age of 30 (46%) and people over the age of 50 (47%) consider moving out more likely than people between the ages of 30 and 49 (35%).

The time spent in Finland does not affect the willingness to leave: Those who have lived in Finland for only a short period of time and those who have lived in Finland for several years are almost just as likely to stay or leave.

Those living in a single-person household (52%) consider moving out of Finland more likely than those living with a partner (35%) or in a household with children (31%).

“

Finland has a perfect cobble-pot of public security, social services, human rights and democracy, salary level, technology.

- Open-ended question



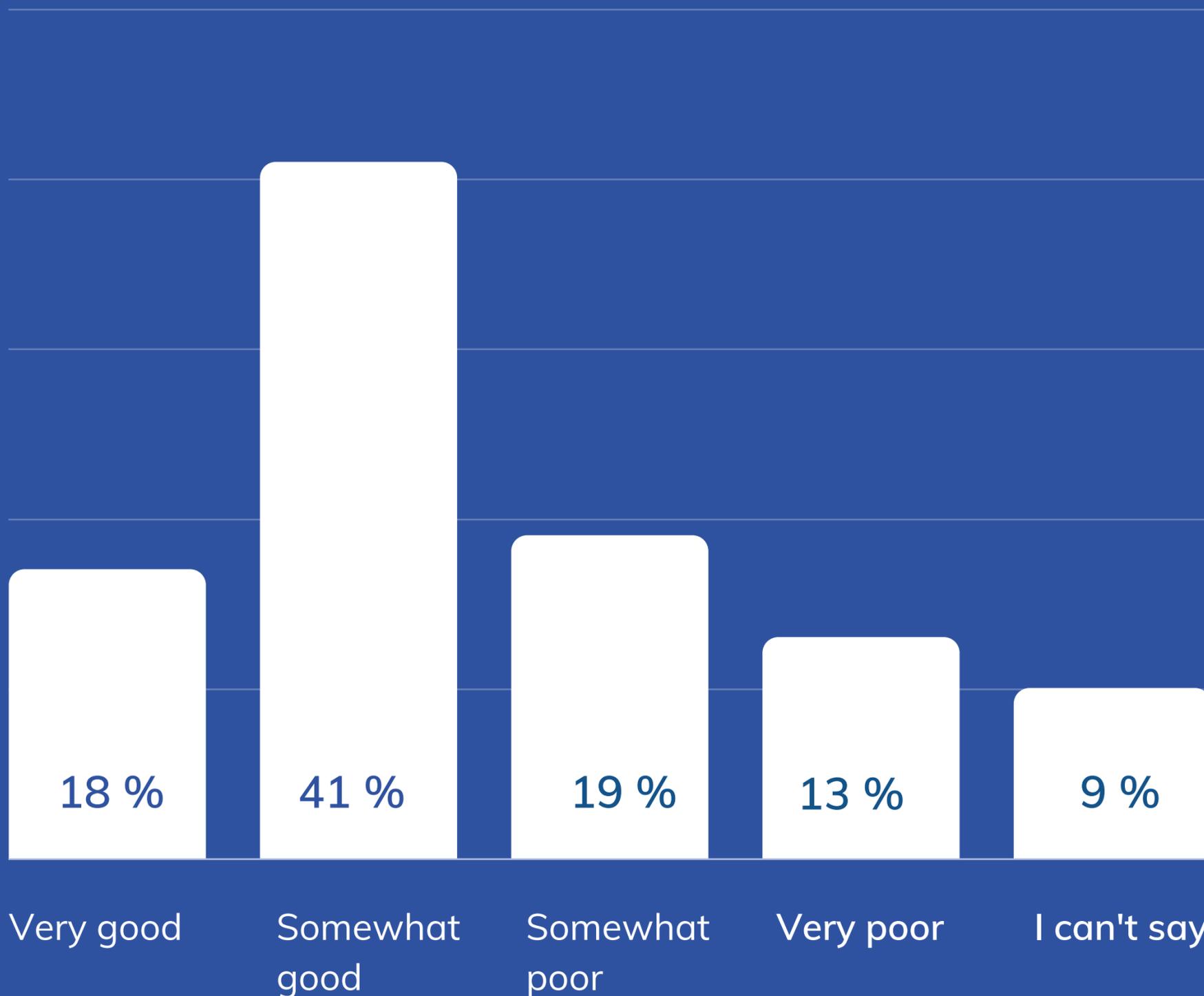
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More than half* (59%) see their career advancement opportunities in Finland positively



How would you rate your opportunities to advance your career in Finland?
(N=487)

* The question was only asked in a survey for those who moved for work or are applying for work in Finland.

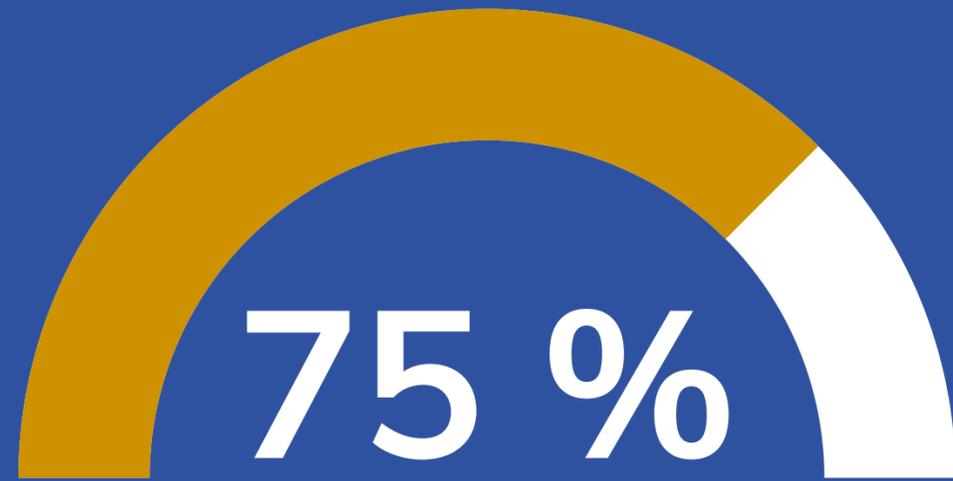




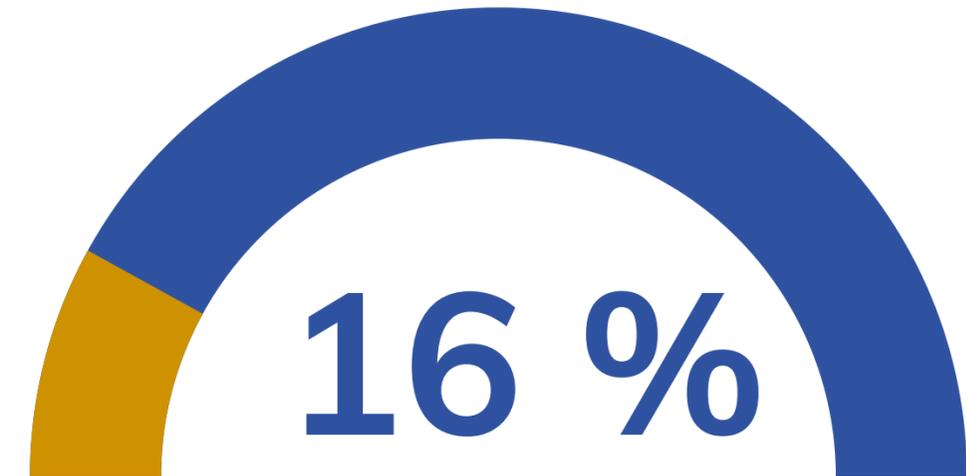
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Majority of those employed are in a job that matches their skills

Does your current job match your skills (e.g., education, work experience)? (N=565)



75 percent feel that their current job matches their skills



16 percent feel that they are overqualified for their current job

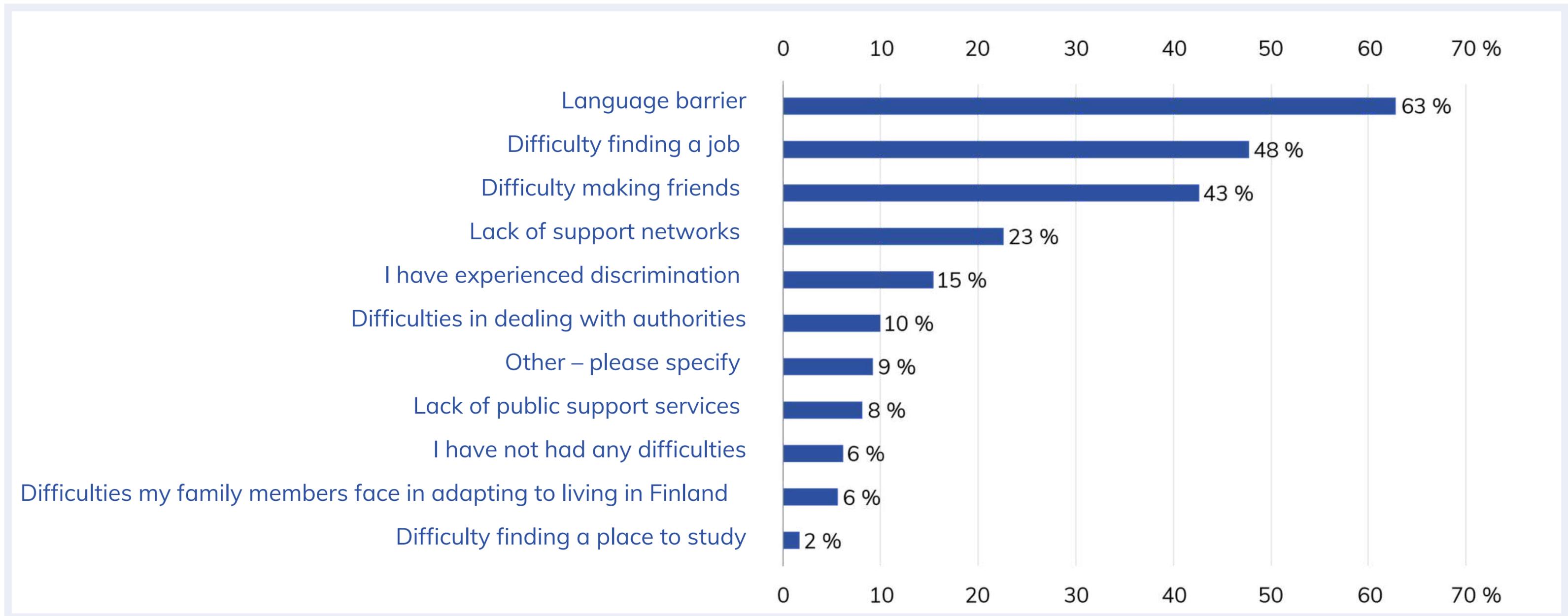


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3. Many feel that Finland has its downsides

Language barrier and difficulties in finding a job or friends make it difficult to adjust

Which of the following factors made it difficult for you to adjust to life in Finland? (Please choose 1–3 most important factors) (N=753)



Many have several native Finnish friends, others have none



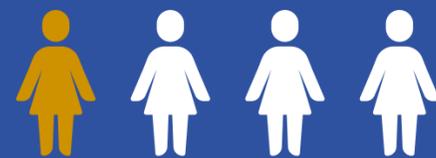
How many native Finnish friends do
you have? (N=753)



Three in four have native
Finnish friends.



Two thirds (64 %) have at
least two Finnish friends.

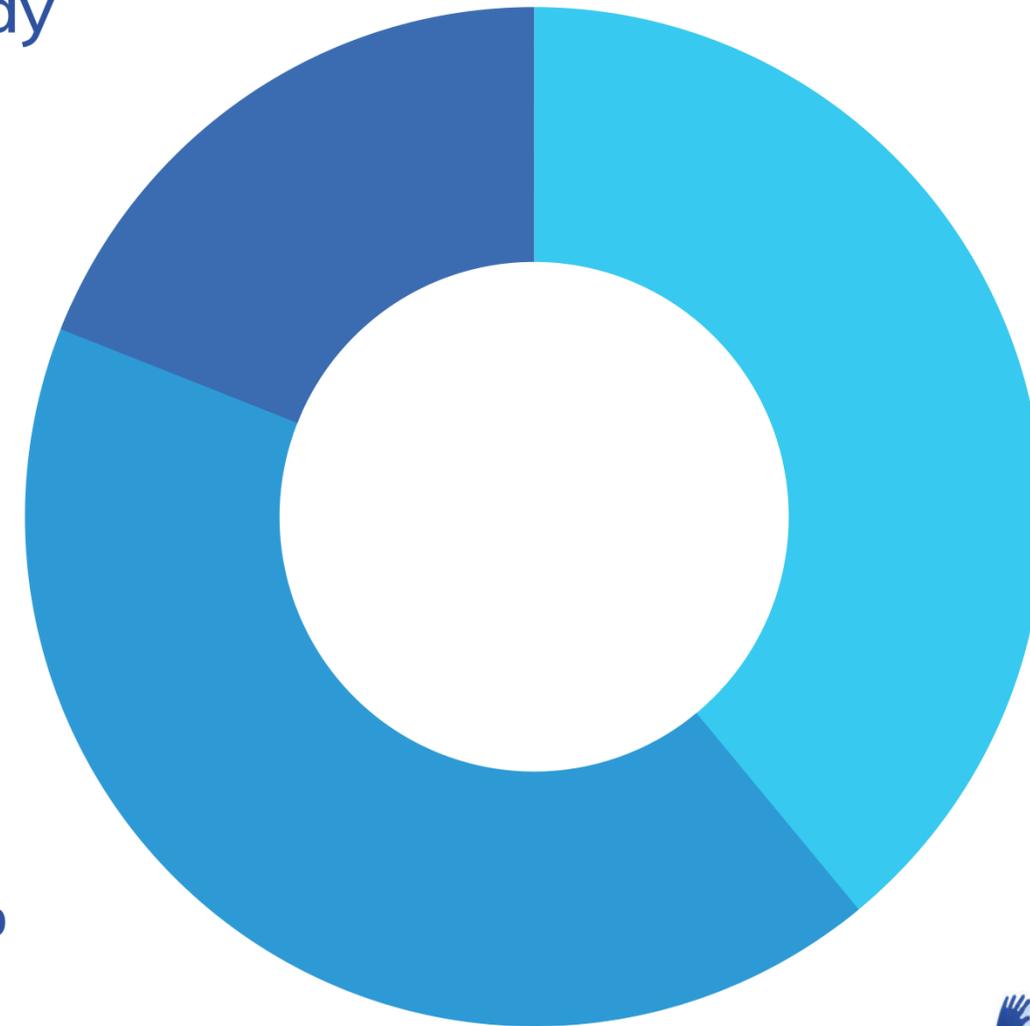


Every fourth person (24 %) has no Finnish friends.

Nearly 40 percent have experienced discrimination in Finnish working life

Have you experienced discrimination in Finnish working life? (N=736)

I can't say
19 %



Yes
39 %

No
42 %

Of those who have experienced discrimination in working life, majority think it is because of their language background

If you have experienced discrimination in working life, what do you think has been the reason? (You can choose more than one option) (N=286)



My language background



My nationality



My ethnic background



My gender



My age



My skin colour



Other



My religion



My sexual orientation

4. Those who have moved to Finland because of their partner face difficulties more often than others



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It takes a little longer to settle in for those who moved to Finland due to a relationship

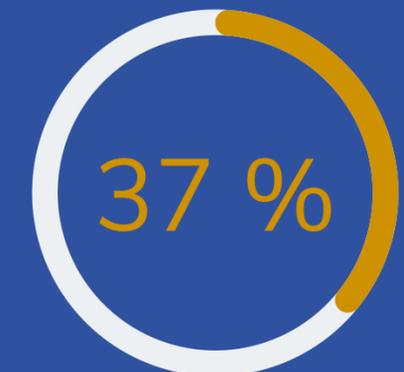
How long did it take for you to adjust to life in Finland? (N=753)



It took more than a year to adjust:

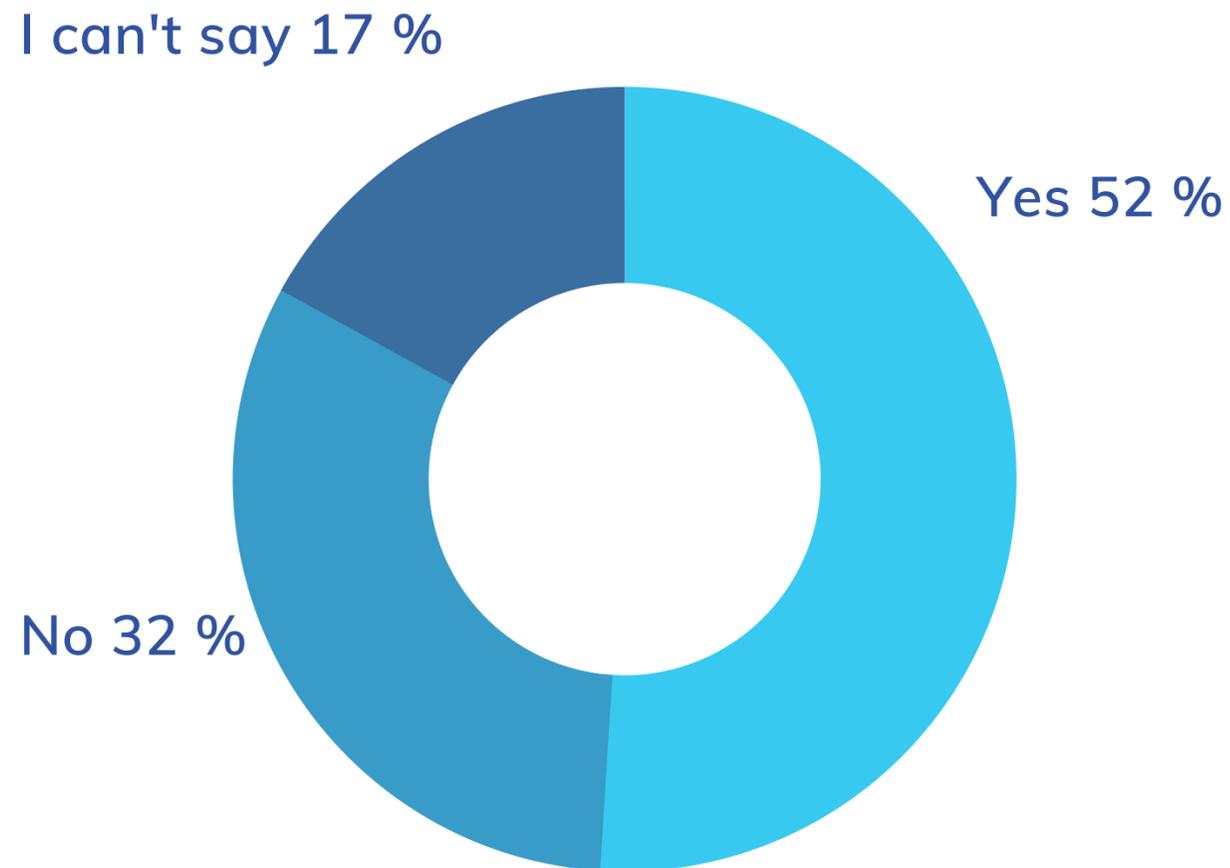
- For 39 percent of those who moved due to reasons related to their partner
- For 27 percent of those who moved for work

It took more than a year to adjust for 37 percent of women and 27 percent of men.

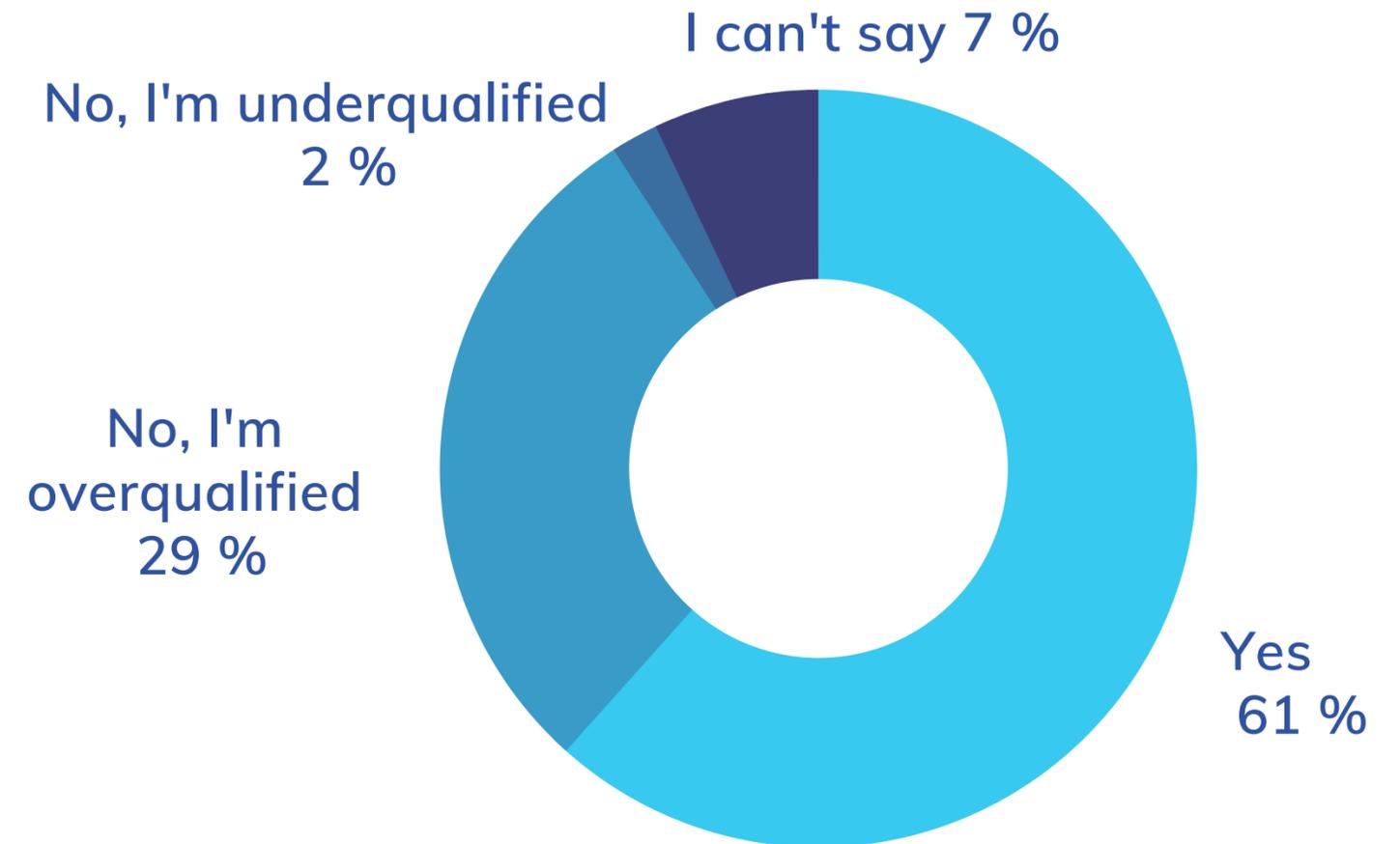


Those who moved to Finland due to their partner were more likely to feel overqualified for their current job when compared to those who moved to Finland for other reasons

Did you have to change your career path because of moving to Finland? (N=267)*



Does your current job match your skills (e.g., education, work experience)? (N=147, includes only those who are employed and moved to Finland because of their partner)



Challenges in finding a job make adjusting difficult especially for those who moved to Finland due to reasons related to their partner

Which of the following factors made it difficult for you to adjust to life in Finland? (Please choose 1–3 most important factors)
(N=753)



Difficulties in finding a job have made adjusting hard for 67 percent of those who moved due to reasons related to their partner, and only 37 percent of those who moved for work.

“ As I am an IT specialist I am able to find a job easily but for my wife it's very difficult to find out a job due to the language barrier. So if one of the family member feels like leaving Finland then others should also move.

- Open-ended question

55 percent of women have had difficulties to adjust because they have had challenges in finding a job. Only 38 percent of men have the same experience.

“ Despite of my ability to communicate in Finnish, limited job opportunities and discrimination in the job market towards international professionals especially in the Finnish art and culture sector.

- Open-ended question



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More information about the research:

- ville.pitkanen@e2.fi, 040 777 0869
- matti.valimaki@e2.fi, 050 543 0191

More information about the International
Talent Finland Research Project:

- mari.k.niemi@e2.fi, +44 7737 169 44

More information: kvosaajiensuomi.com/front-page and on Twitter [@kvosaajiensuomi](https://twitter.com/kvosaajiensuomi)
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