

# Employment gender gap for migrant population

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## Abstract

In Finland, the employment rate of the population with foreign origin aged 20 to 64 years was about 10 per cent lower in comparison to the population with Finnish origin in 2014. The difference mainly stems from the different employment situations of women: while the employment rate of men with foreign origin was about at the same level as that of the men with Finnish origin, the gap in employment rates of women was almost 20 percentage points. Consequently, the gender employment gap among the population with foreign origin widened up to 14 percentage points, while among those with Finnish origin, the gender employment gap was practically non-existent in 2014. In fact, it is the exceptionally high female employment rate in Finland which makes the employment gap between Finnish and migrant women so striking.

Among women of foreign origin, low employment is associated with parenthood, low education, weak language skills in Finnish/Swedish (the main languages of the country), lack of previous work experience as well as short residence in the country. Interestingly, these factors seem to impact the employment of women in particular, contrary to the situation among men.

The employment situation of women of foreign origin gradually improves the longer they have lived in the country. For instance, the employment rate of childless women who have lived in Finland for more than 10 years was nearly as high as their counterparts of Finnish origin in 2014.

The findings help to identify the groups of immigrant women who are at the most urgent need of language training and vocational – or even basic – education in order to be able to make their way in to the Finnish labour market. Efforts put in the promotion of the educational opportunities of these women make an input in their children's future too: the educational background of the parents strongly associates with the NEET-rate or the rate of early school leavers no matter whether the youngsters are with foreign or with Finnish origin.

The findings are based on the Survey of Work and Well-being among the population of foreign origin in Finland in 2014, conducted by Statistics Finland. Some 4,000 persons residing permanently in Finland in 2014 were interviewed in face-to-face interviews using 12 different languages and material translated to nearly 30 different languages.