

KUOPIO CITY

Kuopio for All: Ideas from Internationals

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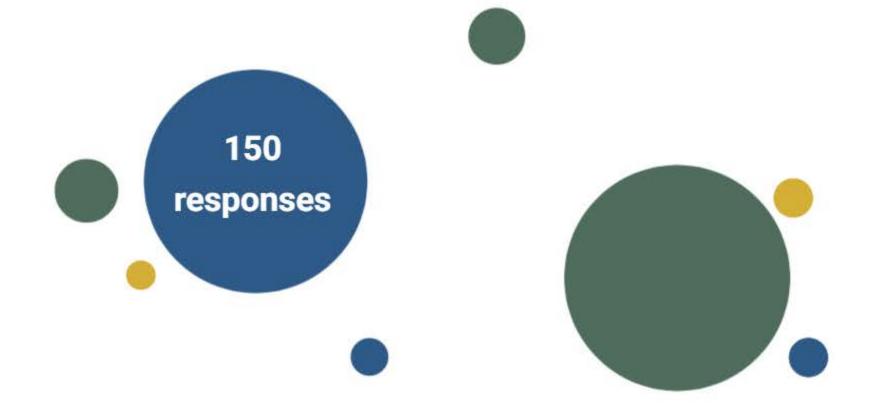


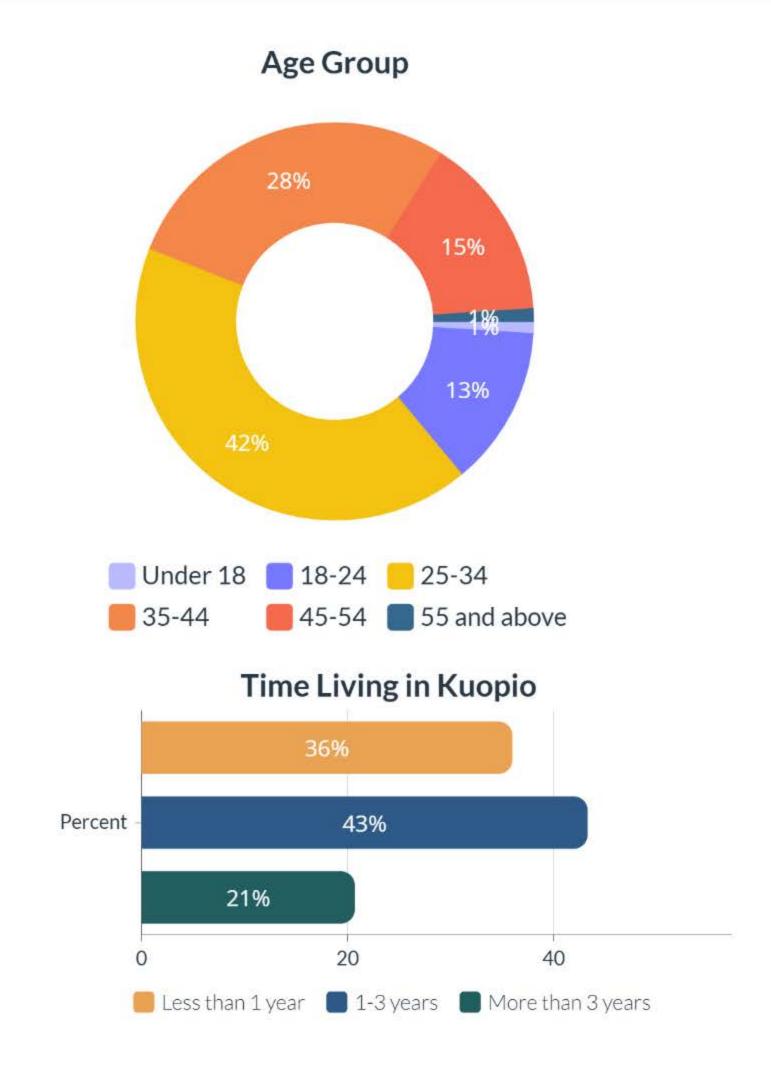
Overview

This survey was carried out to better understand the experiences, challenges, and ideas of international residents living in Kuopio.

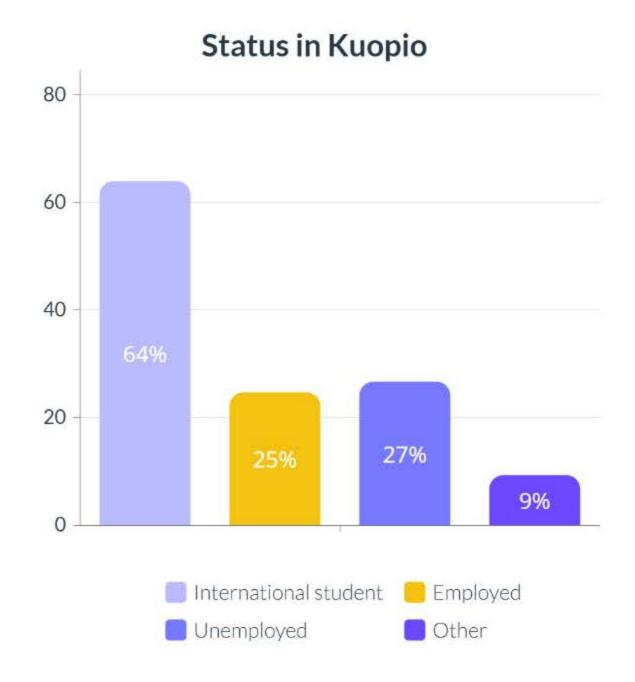
Our goal was to gather honest feedback that can help the city improve services, boost integration, and make Kuopio a more welcoming place for everyone.

A total of **150 people** took part in the survey, sharing both their everyday experiences and thoughts on what could make life here even better.





Who Are the Respondents?



Thinking of the current time, how satisfied are you with...



Overall **Satisfaction**

Most respondents reported generally positive experiences living in Kuopio, with higher satisfaction scores in areas like safety, nature, and transportation. However, lower ratings were seen in opportunities for employment and integration, pointing to areas where improvement is still needed.

Housing Feedback

Respondents raised three main concerns about housing in Kuopio: affordability, limited availability, and issues with quality or maintenance. Many noted that rent prices are high for students and that finding an apartment is particularly challenging during peak seasons. These responses point to a likely need for more affordable and accessible housing options, as well as clearer support services for navigating the rental process.



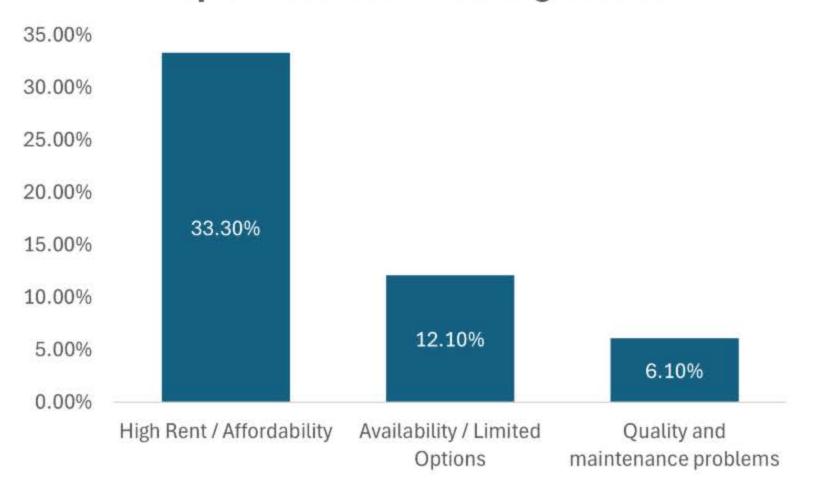
The rent is too high compared to the quality and size of the apartments, the condition of some buildings is poor."



"There should be more housing options available, especially for students and families"



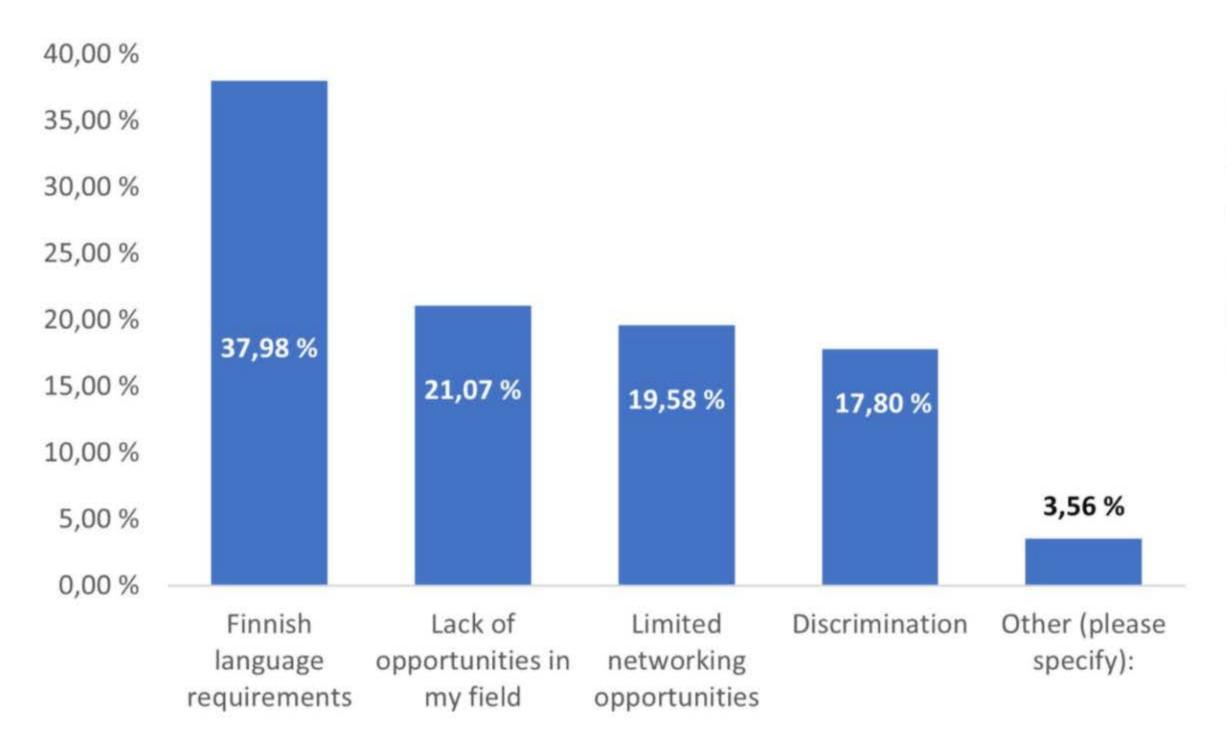
Top 3 Recurrent Housing Issues





What do you think are the biggest challenges in finding a job in Kuopio?

Job-Related Findings



Respondents mentioned language barriers, limited opportunities in their field, and weak local networks as key challenges in the job search. These factors appear to make it more difficult for international residents to access employment, even when they are motivated and qualified to contribute.

Job Feedback

What could be done to make it easier for internationals to find jobs?

- Language Support and Reduced Language Barriers
 Overemphasis on Finnish proficiency blocks access to non-customer-facing roles.
- Addressing Discrimination and Bias in Hiring
 Numerous comments addressed the need to confront racism and discriminatory hiring practices.
- 3. Expanding Job and Internship Opportunities
 Many respondents said more internships, apprenticeships, and targeted jobs would help them gain experience and find long-term work.

The results suggest a need to lower language barriers, improve inclusivity, and expand opportunities like internships and entry-level roles. With better support, international talent could contribute more effectively

"More internship opportunities and job fairs targeting English speakers would help bridge the gap between students and local companies."





"Employers reject applications based on foreign names...talk about discrimination, deal with discrimination decisively."

"Asking employers to relax Finnish language requirements for jobs where instructions could be provided in English."



Internship opportunities

Finnish language courses (evenings, weekends, summer)

Part-time job opportunities

Apprenticeship Basic Finnish skills

Public Services & Community Connection

What would help internationals feel more connected?

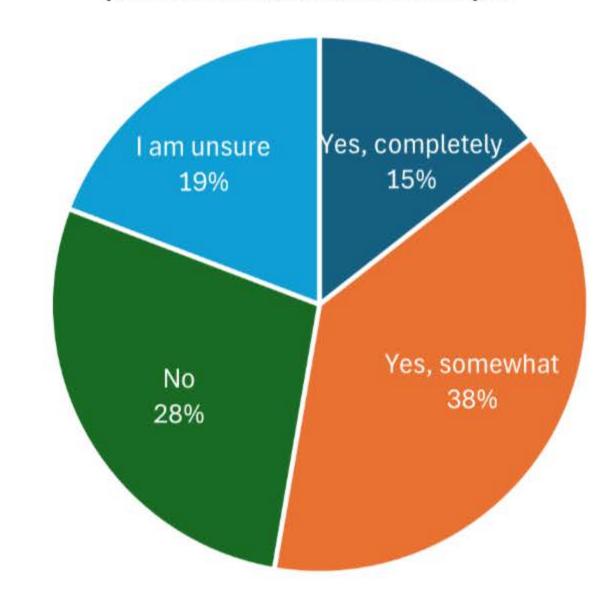
- 1. Cultural exchange events and food festivals
- 2. Language cafés and informal Finnish practice groups
- 3. Career-focused events like job fairs and mentoring
- 4. Inclusive social/hobby activities (e.g., art, music, outdoor sports)
- 5. Better visibility and advertising of events in English

"Events that bring together Finnish citizens with immigrant citizens.."

What could improve public services?

- 1. Provide more services and documents in English
- 2. Create centralized info hubs and multilingual help centers
- 3. Address bias in public service attitudes and hiring practices
- Improve transparency and support in areas like housing, and healthcare

"Public services in Kuopio could be more accessible with better English support, clearer information, and translation services." Do you feel there is enough information available in English about public services and facilities in Kuopio?



Life in Kuopio & Future Plans

What do you like most about living in Kuopio?

- Nature: Lakes, forests, and seamless urban-nature integration.
- Peace & Tranquility: Quiet, safe, and stress-free living environment.
- Community & People: Friendly, reserved-yet-helpful locals.

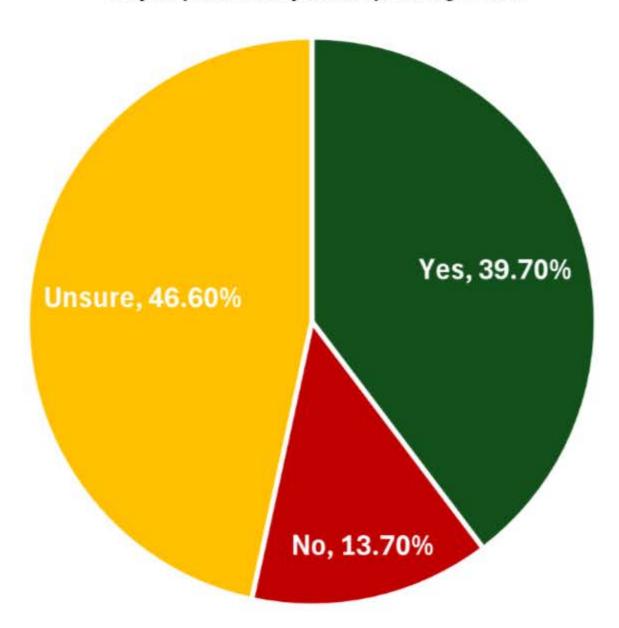
"Peaceful nature and excellent public transport service...I like the feeling of being safe and carefree

What do you find most challenging?

- Employment Challenges: Limited opportunities and reliance on networking.
- 2. Language Barriers: Finnish proficiency is required for even low-skill jobs, making integration harder.
- 3. Discrimination & Social Exclusion: Racism and bias in healthcare and job markets.

"The level of discrimination one faces in public healthcare at the basic level is astonishing."

Do you plan to stay in Kuopio long-term?



Top reasons for not staying long-term: lack of job opportunities, social isolation, and better options elsewhere.

What Would Encourage International Residents to Stay in Kuopio?

Better Job Opportunities

Respondents want jobs that match their education and experience, not just entry-level roles.

Inclusive Hiring Practices

Language is seen as a major barrier. Students want more access to Respondents want employers to be internships, job fairs, and events that more open to considering relevant help them get noticed. skills first.

More Ways to Connect with Employers



"I would like to stay here, but only if I can get a good job that fits my education... everything else is excellent."



" Employ us even with the little Finnish we can speak and let us learn while working."

" Create platforms of opportunity for international students."



While employment was the most frequently mentioned theme, several respondents also noted that smoother transitions from study to work could make a difference. Suggestions included practical support like TE Office-led job readiness sessions, short-term mentorship, or more visible guidance for navigating the Finnish work culture. These services may help bridge the gap and give both students and employers more confidence moving forward.



Key Findings &Recommendations

Key Pain Points

- Language support and reduced language barrier
- Addressing discrimination and bias in hiring
- Expand job and internship opportunities
- Limited cultural exchange opportunities
- Insufficient inclusive social or hobby activities
- Experiences of bias in public services

Key Findings &Recommendations

Our Suggestions

- Extend TE Office Services to Students. offer short trainings on Finnish work culture and job readiness, and connect qualified students with employers, helping boost employer confidence in international talent.
- The City of Kuopio can lead by example by embracing collaboration, creating opportunities for internationals, and actively sharing success stories to inspire other employers
- Promote hiring internationals for low-skill, noncustomer-facing jobs where language proficiency is not essential.

- Encourage cultural acceptance as part of strategy
- Create a safe space to connect across cultures, support diversity, and include the elderly, disabled, lonely, and multicultural communities
- Organize inclusive social events like friendly sports, speed dating, and gender-specific gatherings to connect locals and internationals

Thank You



