

SURVEY ON SWEDISH LANGUAGE AMONG FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- *Helsinki Times* newspaper and *SixDegrees* monthly conducted a survey among the foreign-language community in Finland about their perception, knowledge, skills and attitude towards the Swedish language.
- The survey form was published in *SixDegrees* issue 3/2009, *Helsinki Times* issue 13/2009 and on the *Helsinki Times* website.
- Only those whose mother tongue is other than Finnish or Swedish qualified for the study.

RESPONDENTS

- **A total of 510 people answered the survey.**
- **61% of the respondents are men and 39% women.**
- **The respondents represent 79 nationalities and 71 languages as their mother tongue.**
- **90% of the respondents speak at least one language fluently in addition to their own mother tongue.**

BIGGEST GROUPS

- **The biggest nationality groups: Germany 7.8%, the UK 6.7%, the US 6.1%, China 6.1%, India 5.7%, Nepal 4.5% and Russia 4.5%.**
- **The biggest mother-tongue language groups: English 22.4%, German 8.8%, Chinese 5.9%, Spanish 5.1%, Russian 4.9%, Nepali 4.3% and French 4.1%.**

RESPONDENTS' NATIONALITIES

- Australia, Austria
- Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria
- Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia
- Finland, France,
- Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Gambia
- Hong Kong, Hungary
- India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy
- Japan, Jordan
- Kenya, Kuwait
- Latvia, Lithuania
- Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco
- Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria,
- Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico
- Romania, Russia, Rwanda
- Serbia, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland
- Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey
- UK, Ukraine, USA
- Venezuela, Vietnam
- Zambia

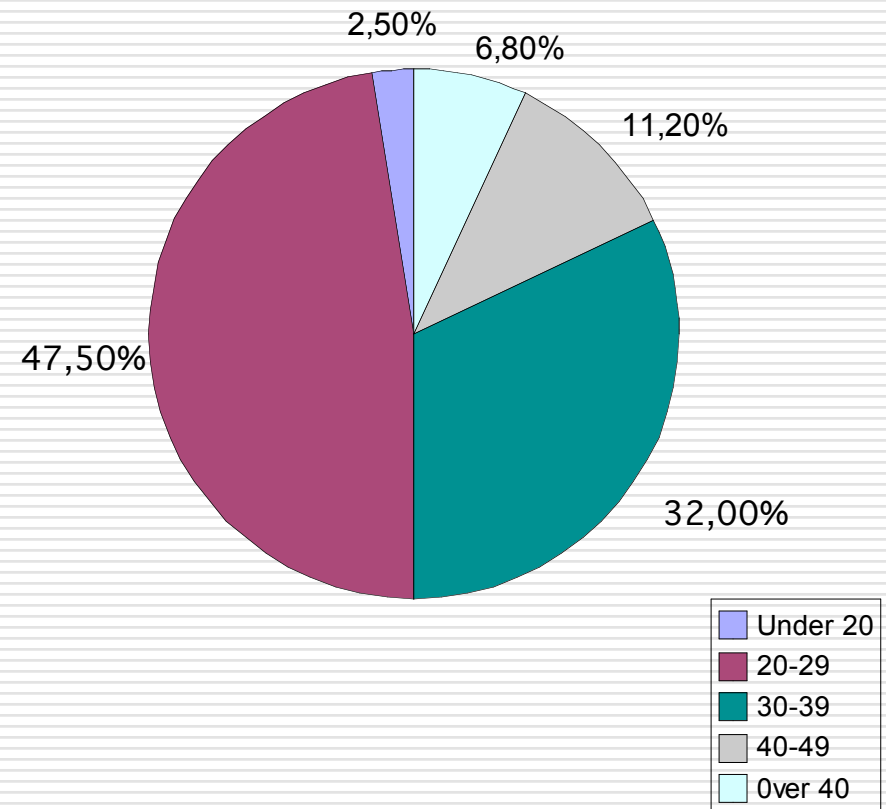
RESPONDENTS' MOTHER TONGUES

- Afrikaans, Amaharic, Arabic
- Bakwerie, Bangla, Basque, Bayangi, Belarussian, Bemba, Bengali, Bulgarian
- Cantonese, Catalan, Chinese, Czech
- Danish, Dutch
- English, Estonian, Ewe
- Filipino, Flemish, French
- German, Gikuyu, Greek, Gujarati
- Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian
- Igbo, Ilonggo, Indonesian, Italian, Itangikom
- Japanese
- Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Kurdish
- Labo, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luo
- Malayalam, Mandinka, Mari, Mongolian
- Nepali, Norwegian
- Oriya
- Persian, Polish, Portuguese
- Romanian, Russian
- Serbian, Sinhala, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Swahili
- Tagalog, Tajik, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish
- Uighur, Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Yoruba

RESPONDENTS

- **69% of the respondents live in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, 5% in Turku and 5% in Tampere**
- **The biggest age group is 20–29-year-olds by 47.8%. 20–39-year-olds make up almost 80% of the respondents.**

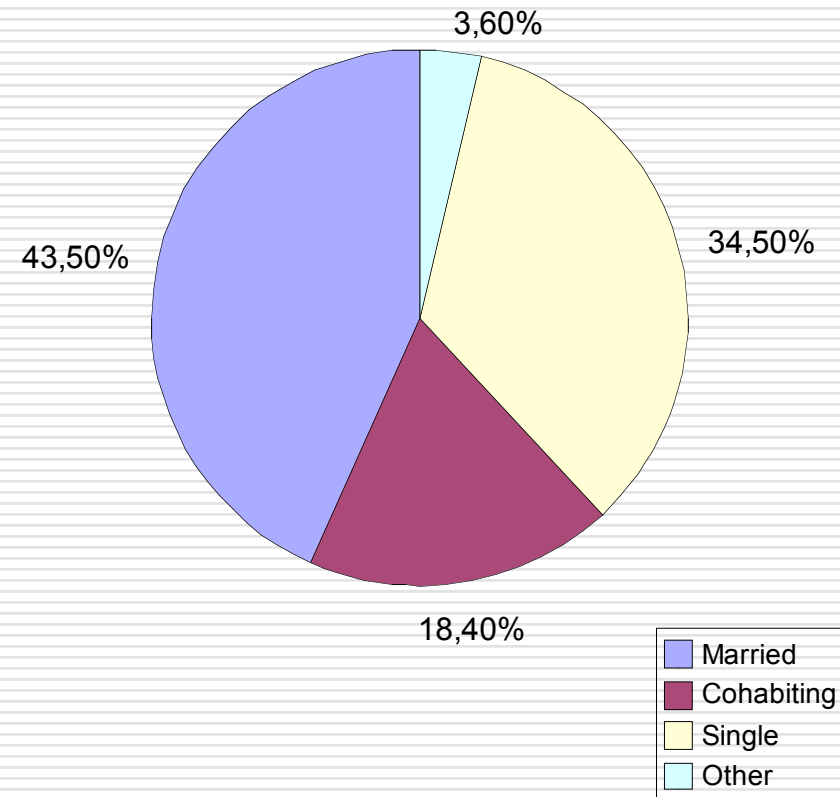
AGE GROUPS



RESPONDENTS

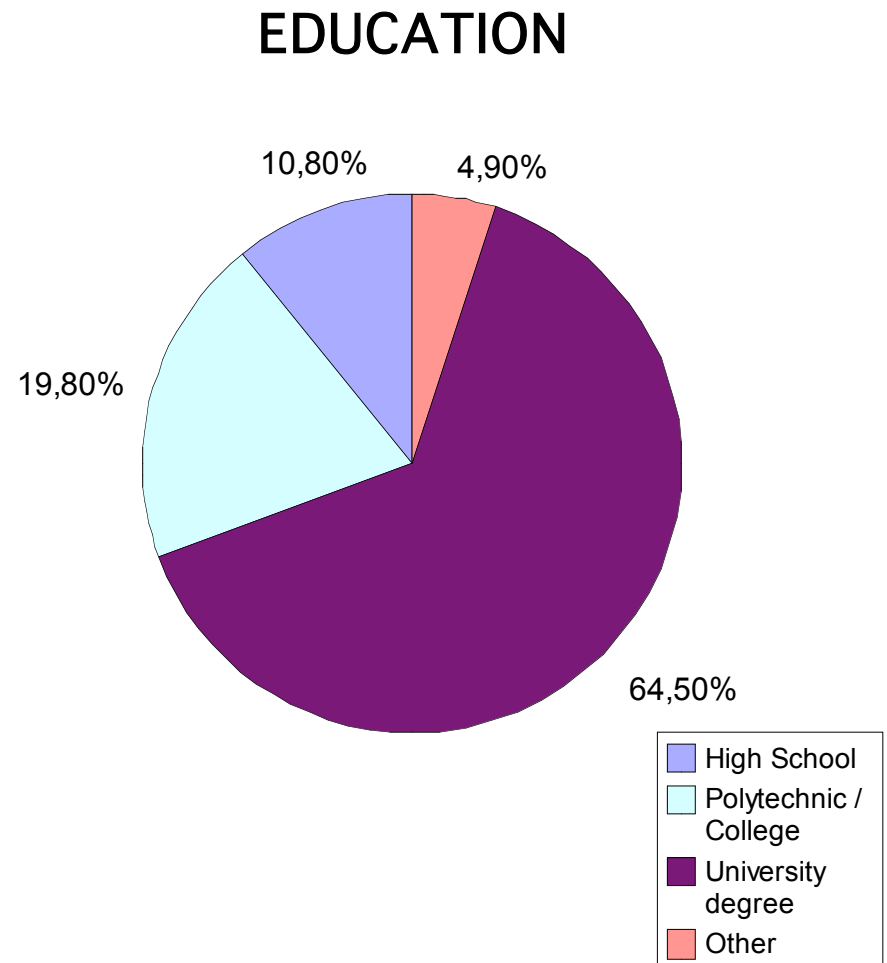
- Almost 62% of the respondents are either married or cohabiting.
- 18.4% are single.
- The 3.6% listed as other are in a relationship/engaged, but living apart, divorced or are widow/ers.

MARITAL STATUS



RESPONDENTS

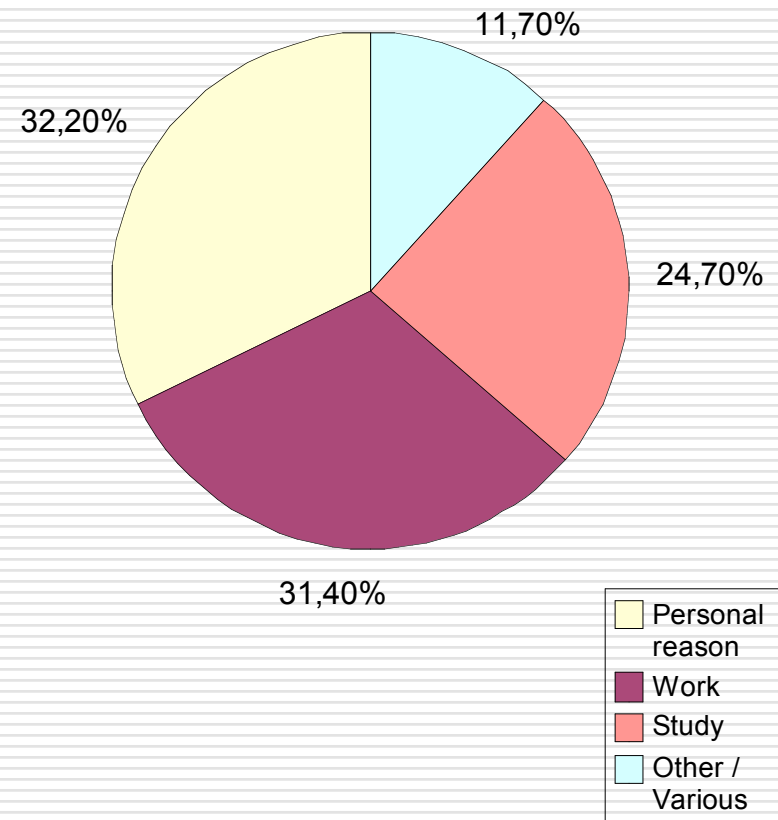
- **64.5% of the respondents have an university degree.**
- **84.3% have completed higher education in either a university, college or polytechnic.**



REASON TO BE HERE

- **32.2%** of the respondents say that they are in Finland for personal reasons.
- **31.4%** came to work and **24.7%** to study.
- **1.8%** came for refuge (listed in other reasons).
- The other reasons that respondents listed were also personal e.g. spouses work, to be with family.

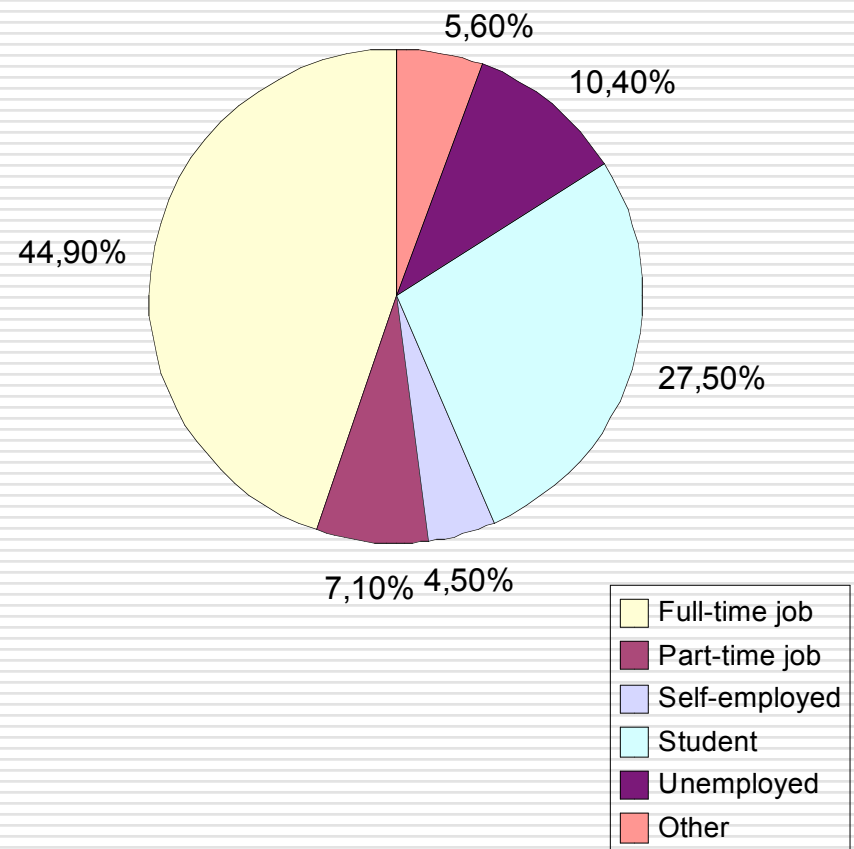
WHY IN FINLAND?



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

- Almost 45% of the respondents are working full time.
- 27.5% are students.
- The 5.6% listed as other are e.g. on maternity leave, stay-at-home mothers or retired pensioners.

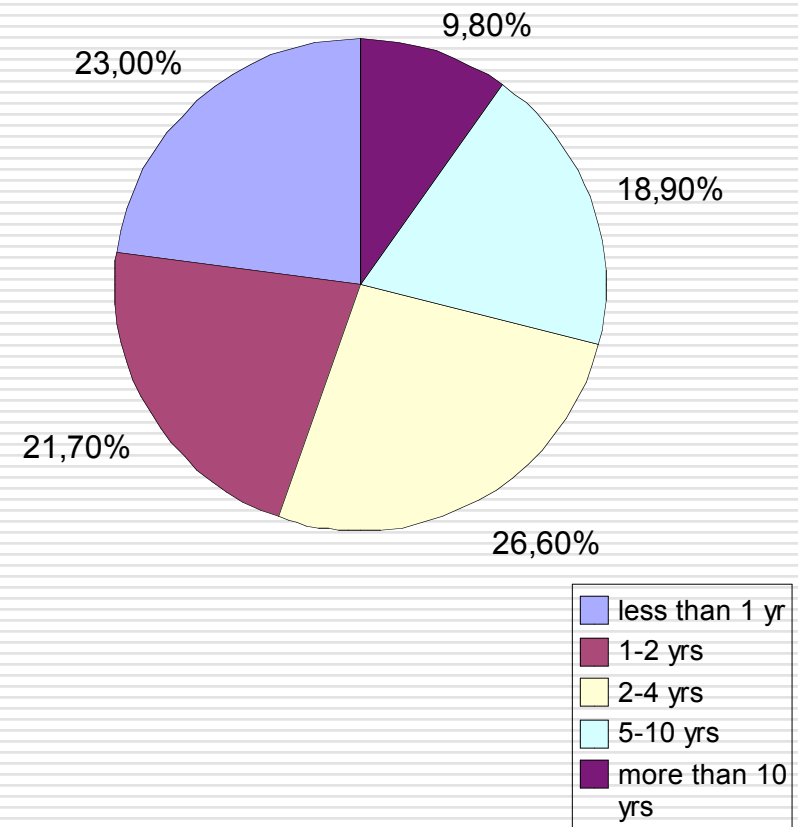
CURRENTLY



HOW LONG?

- **Over 71% of the respondents have stayed in Finland less than five years.**
- **The amount of those who have lived in Finland over five years is a bit under 29%.**

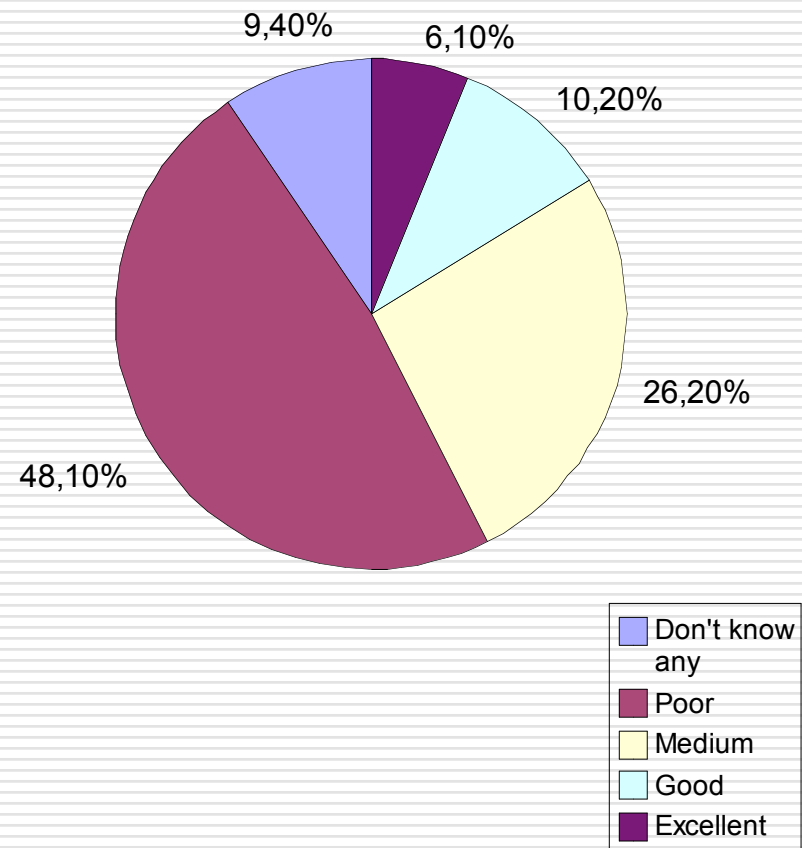
HOW LONG IN FINLAND?



PUHUTKO SUOMEA?

- **57.5%** of the respondents say that their level of Finnish language is poor or that they don't know any Finnish.
- **Only 16.3%** estimate their level of Finnish to be good or excellent.

LEVEL OF FINNISH



WHAT DOES THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY KNOW ABOUT SWEDISH IN FINLAND?

- The majority of respondents answered correctly to questions related to the history and status of the Swedish language in Finnish society.
 - ◆ 81% knew that there was more than one official language before they moved to Finland.
 - ◆ 79.5% knew or guessed that the amount of Swedish-speaking population is 6% (multiple choice: 2%, 6%, 15% or 40%).
 - ◆ 74% knew or guessed that Finland was a part of Sweden until 1809 (multiple choice: 1500, 1809, 1880 or 1917).

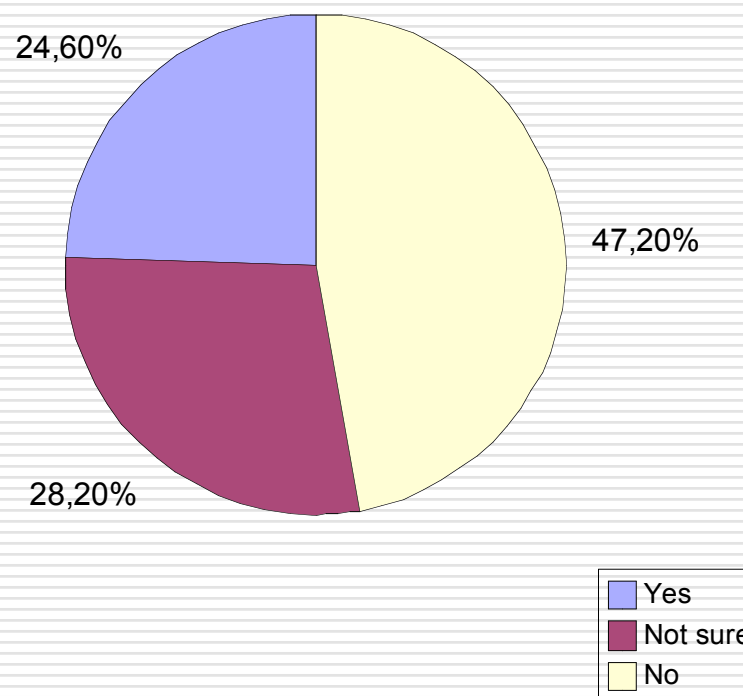
WHAT DOES THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY KNOW ABOUT SWEDISH IN FINLAND?

- The majority of respondents answered correctly to questions related to the history and status of the Swedish language in Finnish society.
 - ◆ 82% knew that one can complete comprehensive school and study in Swedish.
 - ◆ 87% knew that there are Swedish-language newspapers and broadcasting in Finland.

WHAT DOES THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY KNOW ABOUT SWEDISH IN FINLAND?

- **47% of the respondents don't think that they have sufficient knowledge about the Swedish-language culture in Finland.**
- **47% agree or strongly agree with the claim that the Swedish language is an essential part of Finnish society. 29% weren't sure.**

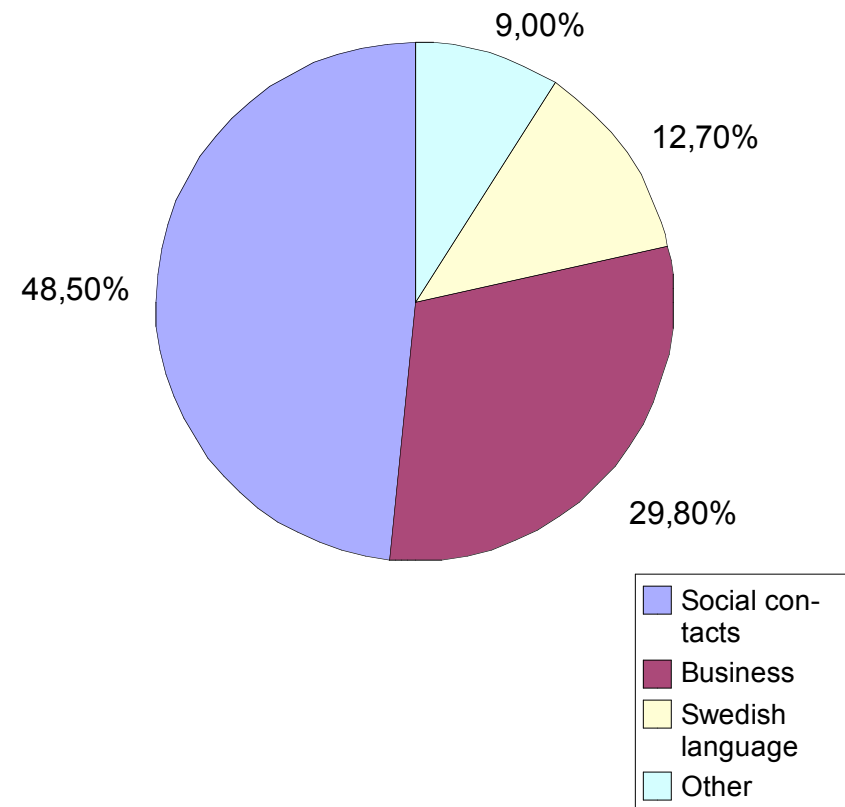
HAVE YOU SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SWEDISH LANGUAGE?



FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY AND SWEDISH-LANGUAGE CULTURE IN FINLAND

- **76.5% of the respondents have some familiarity with the Swedish-speaking community through their studies, family and friends or through general information.**
- **The main reasons to get involved with the Swedish-speaking community are social contacts and business.**

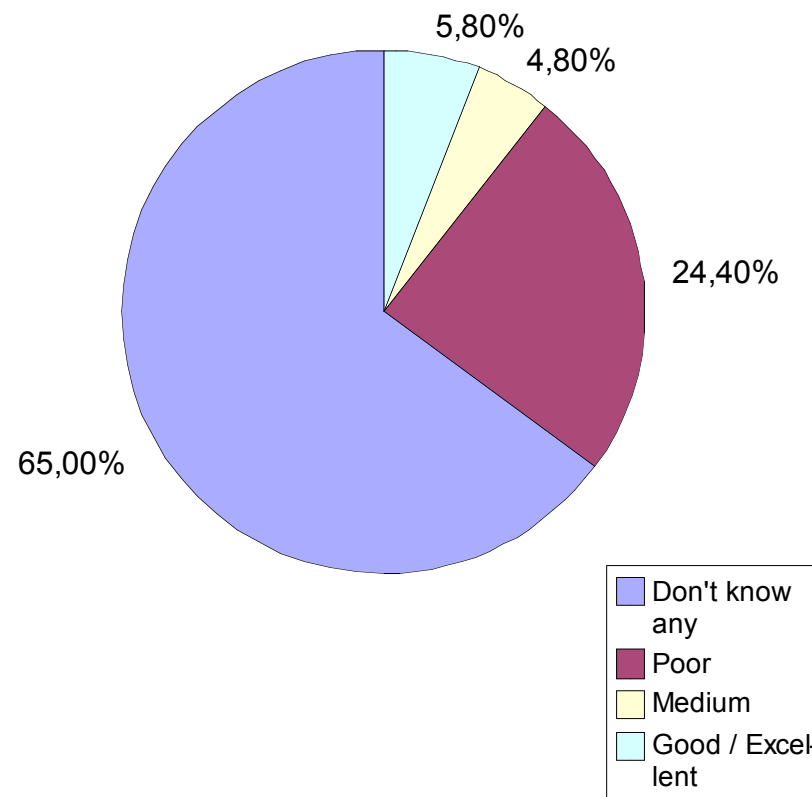
WHY GET INVOLVED?



THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- **89.4% of the respondents estimate that their level of Swedish to be poor or they don't know any Swedish.**
- **4.3% say their level of Swedish is good and only 1.5% estimate their level of Swedish to be excellent.**

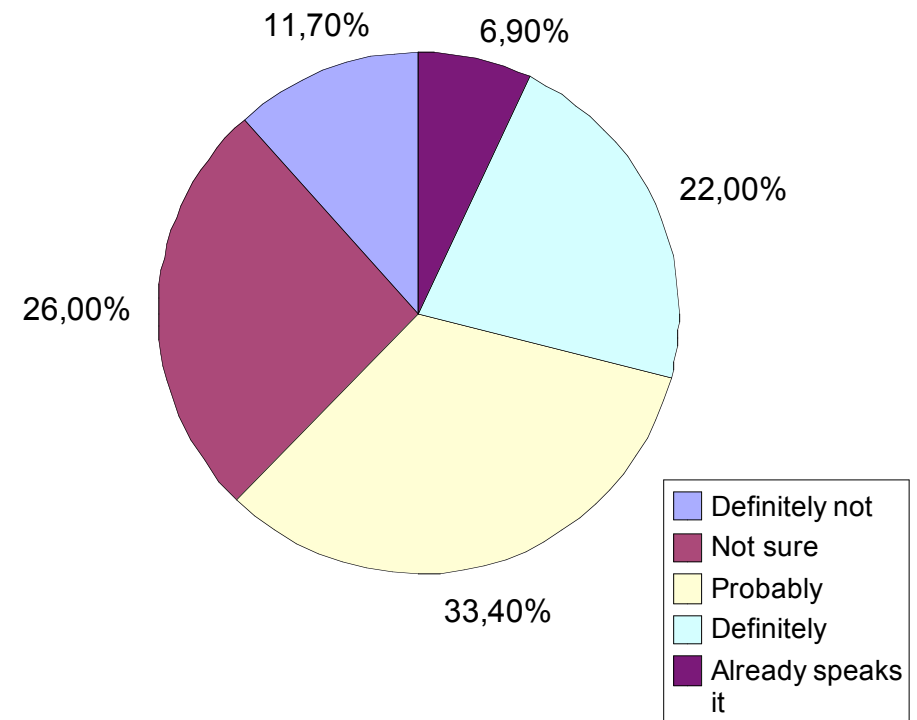
LEVEL OF SWEDISH



THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- 55.4% would definitely or probably like to learn Swedish.
- 67% would be ready to learn Swedish if it helped them with their career.
- 16.3% say that they have already learnt some Swedish in Finland.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN SWEDISH?



THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- A profile of the respondent who is most likely to be definitely or probably interested in learning Swedish:
 - ♦ Student (72%*) or self-employed (79%*)
 - ♦ Young adult of 20–29 years old or under (64%*)
 - ♦ Has lived in Finland 2–4 years (62%*)
 - ♦ Has mediocre Finnish skills (58,5%*)

(* percentage out of all belonging to the same respondent group)

THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- **Out of the seven biggest nationality groups, the Chinese (62.5%*), Indian (68.9%*), Russian (74%*) and Nepalese (82.5%*) were most interested in learning Swedish.**
- **There was no significant difference in the answers between men and women; over 55%* of both female and respondents would definitely or probably like to learn Swedish.**

(* percentage out of all belonging to the same respondent group)

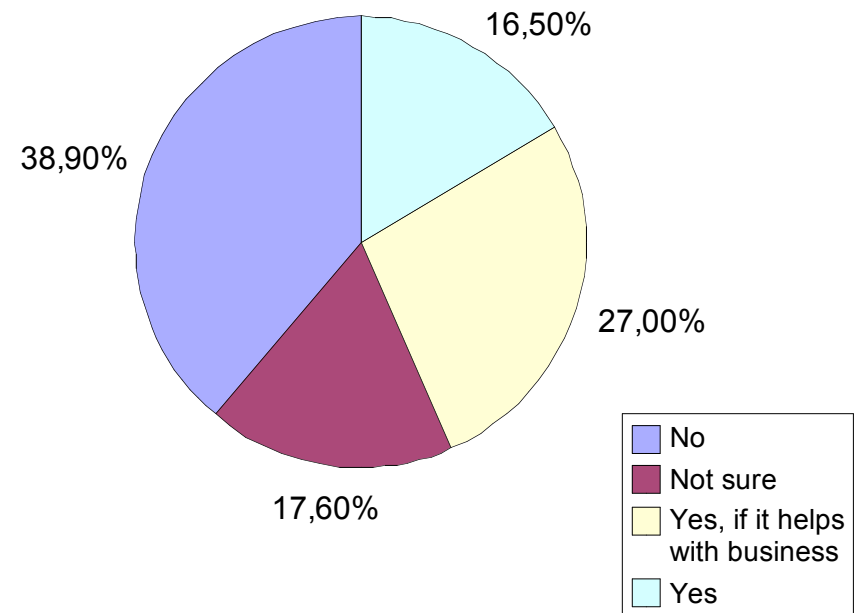
THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- Respondents' comments on why they would like to learn the Swedish language:
 - ◆ *“Because it is an essential part of society and Swedish is an official language here in Finland.”* (male from Netherlands)
 - ◆ *“In order to move to a Swedish-speaking area or to Sweden.”* (male from France)
 - ◆ *“Job opportunities.”* (female from Nigeria)
 - ◆ *“Official language that is definitely easier than Finnish.”* (female from Russia)
 - ◆ *“Part of good education.”* (female from Czech Republic)

THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- **70% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the claim that it would be easier for them to learn Swedish than Finnish**
- **43.5% would consider doing their studies in Swedish, at least if it helped them with their career.**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO STUDY IN SWEDISH?



THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN FINLAND

- The foreign-language community were hesitant at the thought of putting their children in a Swedish-language kindergarten, but still 66.5% would consider it.

OPTION OF SWEDISH LANGUAGE DAY CARE

