



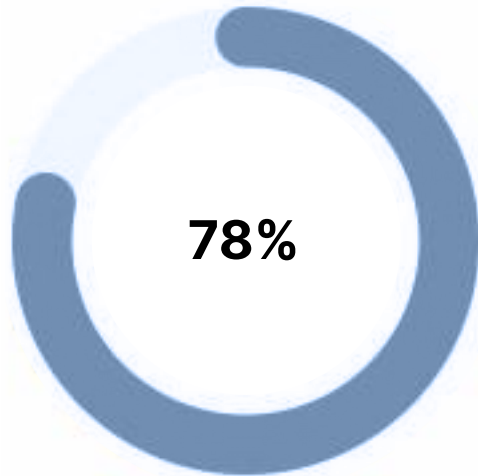
HORIZONTAL MOBILITY WITHOUT PROGRESSION

Structural Barriers to Career
Progression for Young
Migrant Workers in Denmark,
Finland and Lithuania



LANGUAGE AS A STRUCTURAL BARRIER

to accessing employment and vocational pathways



Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania face language-related barriers

CHALLENGES:

Language proficiency level exceeds jobs' requirements

Few accessible language courses available during employment or studying

Limited access to vocational training without language fluency requirements

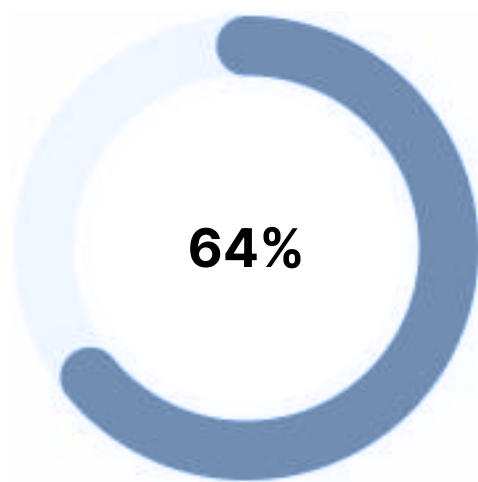
“Even when you improve your language, it still feels like it is never enough to move forward.”

What can we do

Combine language learning with work and vocational training, so migrants learn the language while working or training instead of before entry. Focus on high-demand sectors and include mentoring and apprenticeships to support faster access to skilled jobs.



TIME POVERTY WORK-LEARNING INCOMPATIBILITY



Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania struggle to combine work and learning

CHALLENGES:



Inflexible daytime schedules



Financial pressures force migrants to prioritize work



Rotating shifts make it hard to attend fixed-time training

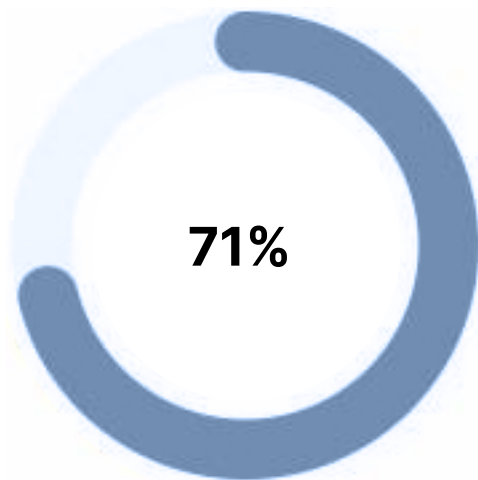
”You take the first job to survive, and then it becomes very hard to move out of it.“

What can we do

Introduce flexible, work-compatible Vocational Education pathways by expanding modular and stackable programmes, strengthening paid work-based learning and providing targeted participation support (such as wage supplements, travel subsidies, and childcare) to enable access for working learners.




FRAGMENTED ACCESS NAVIGATIONAL BARRIERS




Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania experience difficulties accessing clear information and guidance

CHALLENGES:

 Information is hard to navigate. Sometimes not available in national languages

 Lack of clear guidance from public and private institutions

 Information overload and no public or private institutions provide comprehensive support, resulting in migrants relying on informal networks

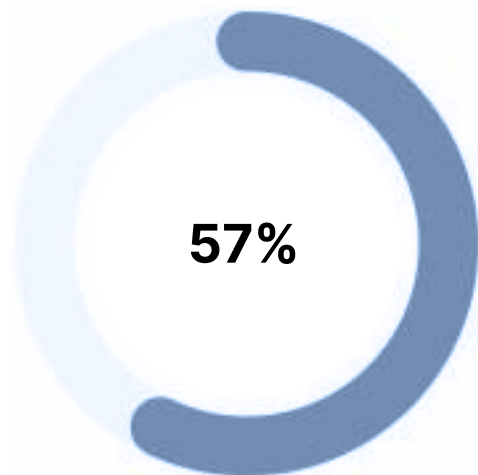
“ I didn't know where to look. You only find things if someone tells you. ”

What can we do

Consolidate and expand support service organisations by establishing them in major cities. This arrangement allows migrants to access essential resources, including registration procedures, employment assistance, and public services, within a single location. In addition, these services are typically provided in multiple languages to accommodate diverse populations.



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING



Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania report challenge with recognition of prior qualifications

CHALLENGES:



Formal recognition does not guarantee employer acceptance, who apply their own assessment of qualifications' credibility



Complex and unfamiliar recognition procedures delay labour market integration

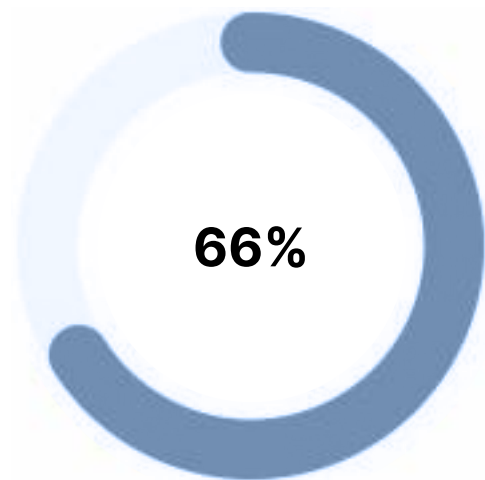
”Back home I worked as a technician, but here nobody recognises it, so I started again in basic work.”

What can we do

Simplify and standardise the procedures for recognising foreign qualifications and prior learning. This should be supported by the development of bridging programmes for regulated and high-demand professions, alongside greater use of alternative recognition tools such as portfolio-based assessment and the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR). In addition, improving communication and transparency around recognition processes is essential to ensure that migrants clearly understand the requirements, steps, and outcomes involved.



EMPLOYER PRACTICES AND GATEKEEPING



Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania encounter barriers in hiring and career progression

CHALLENGES:

✘ Employer prioritisation of workers' productivity instead of development

✘ Foreign qualifications and experiences are frequently undervalued by employers

✘ Lack of support programs on workplaces and lack of incentives for employers to implement those programs

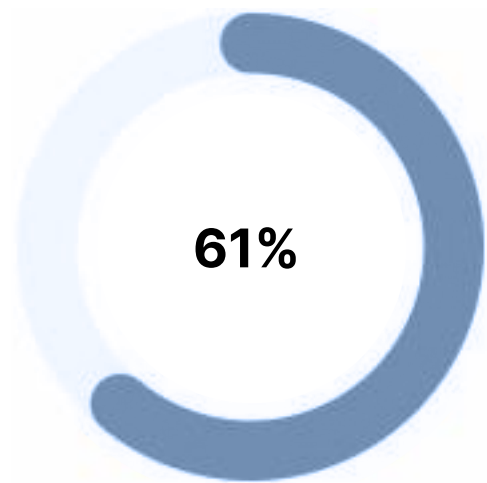
” *Even when job advertisements mention English as the working language, recruiters often expect candidates to speak fluent Danish* “

What can we do

Introducing targeted incentives, such as subsidies or tax measures, to encourage participation in training and mentoring activities which can strengthen employer engagement. They can support the development of structured workplace training programmes and mentoring schemes while promoting employer networks that facilitate the exchange of good practices in inclusive recruitment and workforce development.



PSYCHOSOCIAL STRAIN FROM PROLONGED INSECURITY



Of young migrant workers across the Denmark, Finland and Lithuania experience stress linked to prolonged insecurity

CHALLENGES:

🧠 Repeated barriers lead to stress, burnout, and declining motivation

🧠 Frustration and fear lead to stagnation

🧠 Accumulated negative experiences disengage workers, trapping them in low-skilled roles

“It has been very depressing and discouraging for me. I have been applying for jobs for two years, submitting around 1,000 applications in total. At the moment, I don’t think I will find a job.”



What can we do

Multi-year funds and projects should be directed to mental health of migrants workers, in coordinaiton on municipal, regional and national levels. . In addition, coordination between municipal, regional, and national levels should be strengthened to reduce duplication of efforts and improve efficiency. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks are also needed to assess the effectiveness and scalability of initiatives over time. Cooperation within the Nordic-Baltic region should promote exchange of knowledge, best practices and policy innovations.

