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NEWCOMERS@WORK: STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG REFUGEE AND MIGRANT NEETS

**Work Package 2: Development of the
Newcomers@Work Curriculum**

Needs Analysis - National Report

Luxembourg

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More information about the **Newcomers@Work** project can be found at:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2022-1-PL01-KA220-YOU-000089667>

Table of contents

- REPORT SUMMARY 2
- PART 1: DESKTOP RESEARCH ON NEWCOMERS’ CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES 3
 - Section 1: National context 3
 - General labour market characteristics..... 3
 - Labour market of Youth / Migrants / NEETs 4
 - Key labour market programmes and policies aimed at these target groups to tackle youth unemployment and inactivity..... 8
 - Section 2: Key challenges of NEETs / Youth / Migrants in the Country 12
 - Key causes of Youth / Migrants / NEETs problems on the labour market integration .. 12
 - Key identified barriers of Youth / Migrants / NEETs for successful labour market integration. 13
 - Section 3: Skills required from NEETs / Youth / Migrants to enter the labour market 15
 - Section 4: Good practices 16
- PART 2: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS 24
 - Section 1: Analysis of semi-structured individual interviews (IDIs) 24
 - Introduction 24
 - Respondent background information 24
 - Determinants and Risk Factors 25
 - Barriers of education and employment: 25
 - Supports to finding employment and education 28
 - The Future 29
 - Additional comments by respondents 29
 - Section 2: Analysis of focus group interview (FGI) 31
 - Introduction 31
 - Respondent background information 31
 - Target groups of migrant youths..... 31
 - Barriers for different groups of youth migrant NEETs 31
 - Youth workers approach towards different groups of young migrants 32
 - Good practices in youth work with migrants 34
 - Conclusions and recommendations..... 35
- CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 36
 - Conclusions..... 36
 - Recommendations..... 37
 - General recommendations 37
 - Specific recommendations..... 38
- APPENDICES 40
 - List of Figures..... 40
 - References 41



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REPORT SUMMARY

The situation of labour market is found favourable for migrant workers in Luxembourg, however, not all fare equally well in the country. A minority from the non-EU countries suffers from high level of unemployment, significant gender disparities in the workforce participation and income below the national average. The country faces increasing rates of NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training). There are various policies and program interventions by government of Luxembourg and other organizations to address the diverse needs of migrant NEETs and facilitate their transition to employment and education. However, the country continues to face increasing rates of NEETs, reaching 8.8% in 2021 for individuals aged 15 to 29.

This study made a comprehensive desk research and conducted in-depth interviews with young migrants and focus group discussion with youth professionals to get insights from the perspective of the migrants themselves as well as from the youth professionals. The findings indicate that young migrants face various challenges. The research consistently identified language as a major barrier for labour market and community integration. Other challenges include difficulties to get qualifications recognized; housing problems and living in unfavourable conditions of reception centres; getting apprenticeship after trainings; lack of experience for both skilled and unskilled jobs; discrimination and bias; lack of knowledge about the system; and lack of networking.

The study makes recommendation that include tailored language courses aligned with industry needs, support for language practice within reception centres, and collaboration between language schools and employers. Initiatives to transition refugees to community-based housing, streamline qualification recognition processes, increase childcare accessibility and promoting integration and inclusivity in the labour market are also proposed. Additionally, recommendations for an input for the curriculum development of the Newcomers@Work project are also given. The proposed curriculum should be designed to provide targeted and practical learning experiences that align the specific requirements of the labour market.



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PART 1: DESKTOP RESEARCH ON NEWCOMERS' CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Section 1: National context

General labour market characteristics

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, despite its small size, has experienced significant economic and demographic growth driven by immigration, dating back to the 19th century but particularly notable since the 1970s (Boesen et al., 2023). The immigrant population, initially dominated by Italians and later by Portuguese, has diversified over time, with a substantial influx of international professionals, especially in the finance sector (Boesen et al., 2023). The country's demographic profile is composed of high rate of foreign residents. It is characterised by a very heterogeneous, superdiverse and dynamic population.

Luxembourg still remains a country of immigration. According to the recent statistical report of STATEC 2023, on the 1st of January 2023, Luxembourg had 660,809 inhabitants; out of which, 47.7% were foreign nationals. Majority of the foreign population i.e., 78.4% consisted of EU citizens while the rest 21.6% were third country nationals. The top five foreign nationalities were from EU countries which were Portuguese, France, Italians, Belgians and Germans. From third country nationals, Ukrainians are on top followed by Indians, Chinese, UK and Syrians (EMN Luxembourg, 2023).

The capital, Luxembourg City, has become highly multicultural, with 70% of its population being non-Luxembourg nationals from over 160 countries. Moreover, the country's labour market has attracted a large number of daily commuters from neighbouring countries since the late 1980s. Despite its diverse demographic composition, Luxembourg exhibits a strong national identity alongside its rural socio-spatial structures. Linguistic diversity, with Luxembourgish, French, and German as official languages, adds complexity to the adaptation efforts of foreign and migrant residents. (Boesen et al., 2023).

In Luxembourg, a notably high standard of living is evident, with average incomes surpassing those of neighbouring regions. The country's economy benefits significantly from cross-border commuters and foreign nationals originating from both European Union member states and non-EU countries (Hartmann-Hirsch, 2002). As a result, Luxembourg has established a hybrid model of economic and social coordination marked by transnational mobility in the labour market, facilitated by supranational agreements at the European Union level (Hartmann-Hirsch, 2008). Typically, foreign workers in Luxembourg tend to be younger than their Luxembourgish counterparts and are often positioned either at the upper or lower ends of the socio-professional spectrum. Some foreign nationalities are notably prevalent in higher-tier positions, while others are more common in lower-tier jobs. In contrast, Luxembourgers are primarily found in middle-tier positions, often employed in the public sector, which offers substantial incomes and job stability (Hartmann-Hirsch, 2002). In this context, Luxembourg can be characterized as a dual system where the native population predominantly occupies positions within the public sector, while foreign workers, including cross-border commuters, are primarily employed in the private sector. Foreign educated workers of the neighbouring countries such as France, Germany, and Belgium, typically possess higher skill levels compared to their Luxembourgish counterparts. On the other hand, migrants occupying lower-level service and industrial positions tend to have lower skill levels (Graf and Gardin, 2018).



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The following summary presents the recent Luxembourgish labour market at a glance

- In January 2024, more than 515,000 people are employed in Luxembourg.
- From 2000 to 2023, employment has increased by over 90%.
- Approximately 75% of the country's workforce consists of immigrant workers or cross-border commuters.
- The share of cross-border workers has increased from 3% in 1961 to 47% in 2023; nearly one in two cross-border workers comes from France.
- About one in ten employees works in the banking and insurance sector.

Source: ADEM 2024, <https://adem.public.lu/en/marche-emploi-luxembourg/panorama-marche-emploi.html>

Generally, Luxembourg's labour market has shown great resilience after the epidemic with an employment rate of 74.1% in 2021 and 74.8% in 2022 (0.2% above the EU average). The unemployment rate stood at 5.3% in 2021 and declined to 4.6% in 2022, well below the EU average (6.2%). However, the employment rate of low skilled people was still modest in 2021 (59.6%) although above the EU average (54.9%). Moreover, the employment rate of older workers aged 55-64 remains much lower than the EU average despite a steady increase in recent years from 39.6% in 2016 to 46.6% in 2021 (European Commission, 2023).

Labour market of Youth / Migrants / NEETs

Even though the situation of labour market is found favourable for immigrant workers in Luxembourg, not all immigrants fare equally well in the country. A minority from the non-EU countries suffers from high level of unemployment, significant gender disparities in the workforce participation and income below the national average. Refugees in particular face heightened vulnerability. These groups face challenges in labour market integration as well as integrations into the community. Integration challenges extend beyond marginalized minority groups, evident in the widespread labour market segmentation exemplified by the stark underrepresentation of foreign-born individuals in public sector positions (Pina, 2017).

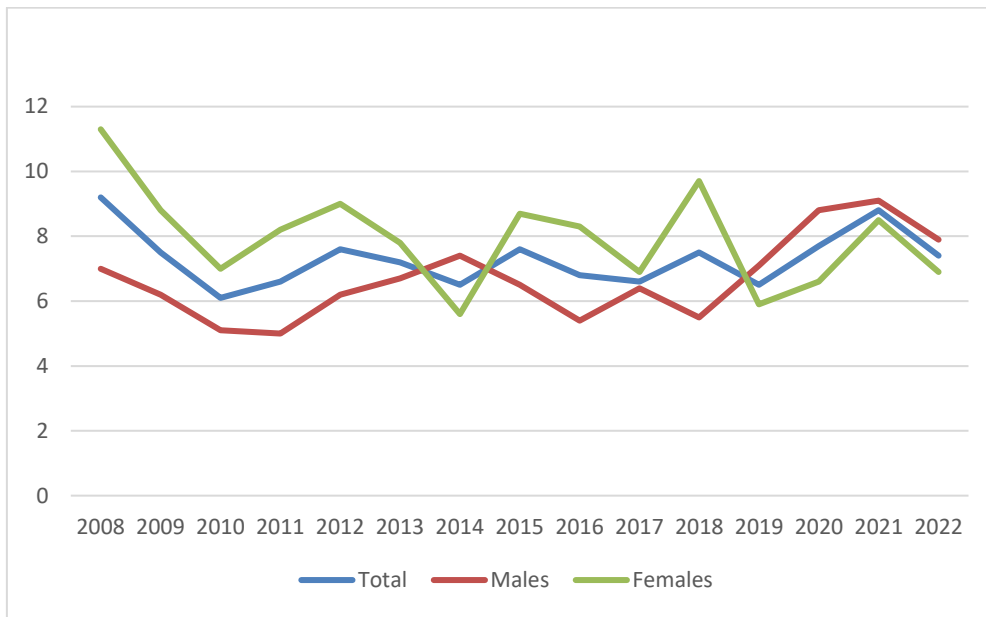
It is indicated that Luxembourg is among the countries with the highest short-term youth mobility member states of the EU. The term 'young' in Luxembourg include people aged from 15 to 29 years of old, and in some cases, in certain legal documents or organizations supporting young adults this category exceptionally can be extended to represent people up to 35 years old (Vysotskaya et. al, 2021).

Data compiled from European statistics agency, Eurostat 2023, showed that the proportion of young people in Luxembourg aged 15 to 29 who were neither employed nor involved in any education or training, has been increasing since 2019. The indicator, also known as NEET (neither in employment nor in education and training), measures the share of the young population who are neither employed nor enrolled in any formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the Labour Force Survey (LFS) undertaken by Eurostat, people who were NEET in Luxembourg was 8.8% - the highest figure since 2008 (9.2%), as indicated on figure 1 below. However, this was less than the



European Union (EU) average of 13.2% in 2021. In absolute numbers, about 10,500 (rounded) young people in Luxembourg of aged 15 to 29 were NEETs in 2021. Historically, young women in Luxembourg have had higher NEET rates than young men, but the situation has improved over the years. Since 2019, according to the same data source, young women reported less inactivity compared to young men.

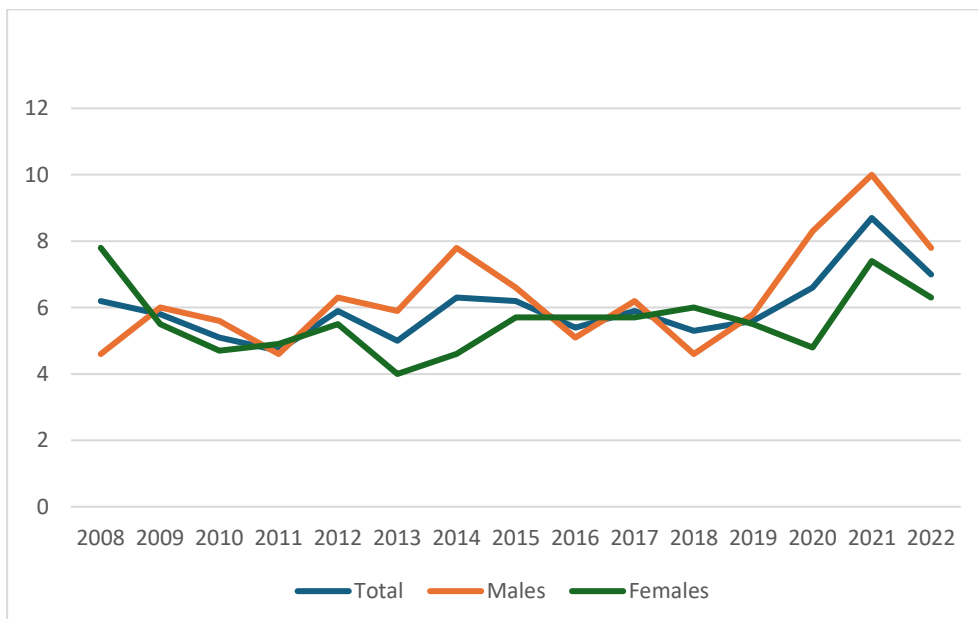
Figure 1: Evolution of NEETs (14 to 29 years) in Luxembourg



Source: Eurostat 2023

Figure 2 below, shows the evolution of NEETs aged 15 to 24 years exhibiting a similar trend as the age group 15 to 29 years. The pick for the NEETs reaching 8.7%, with the highest share for males at 10%. The rate of NEETs for both age groups shows a decline in 2022.

Figure 2: Evolution of NEETs (15 to 24 years old) in Luxembourg



Source: Eurostat 2023



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A study as part of a collaboration project between the National Youth Service, the General Inspectorate of Social Security and Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research of NEETs in Luxembourg was conducted with the aim to improve the knowledge available in Luxembourg regarding NEETs. The study utilized data from the situation of young people on the labour market survey carried out between October 2014 and June 2015. Based on the data from this survey, a young person is defined as NEET who declares that they are, at the time of the survey, neither in education, employment nor training and who was neither a pupil, apprentice nor student during the four weeks preceding the investigation. The study found out the heterogeneity of NEETs in Luxembourg particularly in terms of their distance from the labour market and society. Based on the examination of the characteristics of these groups, the report further proposes and opens avenues for reflection on the policies to be implemented in order to help the NEETs escape from this status. The following summarizes the proposed policies along with the characteristics of the eight identified groups of NEETs in Luxembourg based on the study of (Hauret, 2017):

Group 1: NEETs with health problems

This group represents 7% of NEETs in the study that suffer from health problems limiting their activities. They are found to have low level of education in spite of their privileged social origin; their high cognitive abilities; and their good command of the country's official languages (in particular German and Luxembourgish). They reported having been victims of attacks, violence or harassment during their schooling. Hence, at some point they dropped out of school. Despite their health problems, these young people are looking for jobs responding to numerous job offers. In addition, they report, being registered with ADEM (53% of them) and looking for jobs however, only half of them have ever had a job interview. This status of NEETs could have been avoided by implementing public policies aimed at better school environment to disability and illness. In this regards, it could be useful to seek to identify students who are sick or have a disability in order to offer them programs aimed at promoting their integration into the school environment.

Group 2: NEETs who are young mothers with low human capital

This group comprises young mothers, constituting 5% of NEETs, who aspire to return to education or training and express a desire for employment. Despite actively seeking jobs through various channels, they struggle due to family responsibilities and lack of mobility, with 65% not possessing a driving license. Their low educational attainment, cognitive abilities, and language proficiency hinder their employability, impacting their willingness to accept lower salaries. Their parents and themselves were born abroad. While most live with partners, they receive minimal support and often dwell in precarious housing. Addressing their needs requires more than just caregiving policies; they require professional training and language education to enhance their integration into the labor market and society.

Group 3: NEETs by choice

This group, constituting 6% of NEETs, comprises young people who voluntarily choose this status, declaring they are not actively seeking employment and would decline job offers. Despite nearly half having previous work experience, they remain optimistic about NEETs' job prospects. They do not suffer from material deprivation and enjoy indulging in personal expenses. Mainly young women, often with dependent children, they exhibit trust in



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institutions, have strong social networks, and live with partners. These characteristics suggest a preference for domestic roles and a focus on family responsibilities.

Group 4: Demotivated NEETs with integration difficulties

This group, constituting 9% of NEETs, actively seeks employment but shows low motivation due to difficulties accessing jobs and low employability, notably with language and education challenges. They face material deprivation and lack social integration, exhibiting distrust towards institutions and higher interactions with law enforcement. Primarily aged 18-19 and from disadvantaged backgrounds (particularly have parents with low education), they require social support and incentives to engage in training and employment. Preparatory phases with tailored training and social support are recommended to enhance their employability and confidence in re-entering the workforce.

Group 5: NEETs with deviant behaviour

This group, comprising mainly young men born in Luxembourg from privileged backgrounds (parents with higher education qualifications), exhibits deviant behavior, including drug use, and has strained relationships with their parents. Despite their high employability and active job search (67% of them registered with ADEM), they face difficulties securing employment, often rejecting offers due to low salary or lack of prospects. While not experiencing material deprivation, their substance abuse may hinder their integration into the workforce. Preventive public health policies targeting adolescents and addiction interventions could aid their transition out of NEET status, with tailored support addressing their addiction issues downstream.

Group 6: NEETs leading an intense job search but having difficulty finding employment

This group, comprising 5% of NEETs, faces both low employability and social integration issues, notably struggling with language proficiency. They express a desire to return to education or training, with language assistance being crucial for many to move beyond their status. Despite their efforts in job seeking, they endure material deprivation and receive inadequate support, with some engaging in substance abuse. Mainly young men aged 20-23 who live with stepfamily or a single parent; with low-educated families, they have lower life satisfaction compared to other groups. Social action and training policies, including second chance school programs and apprenticeship preparation systems, are suggested to address their needs and facilitate their integration into the workforce.

Group 7: NEETs in transition

This group, representing 15% of NEETs, requires the least public support as their situation appears transitional rather than chronic. They possess higher employability due to high education levels and engage in selective job searches, often refusing offers and favouring spontaneous applications. They are well-integrated into society, participating in social activities and receiving strong support from their social networks. These are mainly young men born in Luxembourg whose parents were also born there. They have confidence in institutions and are not known to law enforcement. Living mainly with their parents and possessing driving licenses, they emphasize the importance of boosting self-confidence to escape NEET status, suggesting training measures focusing on job interview skills and CV writing are suitable for them.



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Group 8: NEETs socially integrated and with a level of employability relatively high

The last group, comprising 43% of NEETs, exhibits slightly lower employability and social integration compared to the previous group. However, their situation is not dire, especially with the financial support they receive from their parents. They frequently seek employment through temporary work agencies and are mainly born in Luxembourg without deviant behaviour. One-fifth of them believe advice on job applications or training would help them enter the job market or return to studies. These groups highlight the challenges young people face in transitioning from school to work, suggesting the need for school training combining theory and practical experience. Work-study programs could better align their skills with job market demands, while measures securing their initial jobs could provide stability amid economic fluctuations.

In general, the study by Hauret, 2017 based on NEETs in Luxembourg suggests that public action must not be uniform but targeted to the different existing groups. Thus, if some young people need training policies, others need to benefit from family policies (childcare), social policies or even personalized support towards employment.

Key labour market programmes and policies aimed at these target groups to tackle youth unemployment and inactivity.

State Programs and policies

The National Agency for Employment (ADEM) is the public employment service in Luxembourg. According to the agency, as of January 31, 2024, the number of resident job seekers registered in the agency was 18,317 which exhibited a rise by 15.9% compared to the previous year, January 2023. The most qualified jobseekers those with higher education degree as well as young people under 30 years old experienced the largest increase for all the durations of unemployment (ADEM, 2024).

State, through ADEM has adopted a number of measures to promote the professional integration of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection¹, NEETs and young people in general. These measures, will be presented briefly in this section. The information is publicly available on the website of the agency².

Contrat d'Initiation à l'Emploi – CIE

The aim of this employment initiation contract (known as Contrat d'Initiation à l'Emploi CIE) is to provide the young jobseeker with practical training, during working hours and in the workplace, to facilitate his or her integration into the labour market. Employers who hire young jobseekers who are unemployed and registered with ADEM under a CIE contract may be reimbursed for part of the salary allowances, as well as the full employer's share

¹ When being granted his or her refugee status, every beneficiary of international protection receives a residence permit on which is marked 'Protection Internationale' ('International protection')

² <https://adem.public.lu/en.html>



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of social security contributions. The employment initiation contract is concluded for a period of 12 months. An extension of up to 6 months is possible, but must be requested before the end of the initial period. Part-time work is not eligible under this measure. In terms of income, a young jobseeker on an employment initiation contract (CIE) receives an allowance equal to 80% of the non-qualified minimum social wage for young people aged under 18; 100% of the non-qualified minimum social wage for young people without qualifications and young people with a technical and vocational aptitude certificate or a technical secondary or secondary school leaving certificate; 130% of the non-qualified minimum social wage for young people holding a higher technician's certificate, a bachelor's or master's degree. ADEM can propose the conclusion of an employment initiation contract to a jobseeker and a private employer, provided that the latter can offer a real prospect of employment at the end of the CIE.

The young beneficiary of a CIE has a tutor chosen by the employer within the company. The tutor's role is to assist and supervise the CIE beneficiary throughout the duration of the contract. The tutor must communicate to ADEM, by mutual agreement with the CIE beneficiary, the skills and deficiencies noted, as well as the progress to be made by the young person during the performance of the contract (at 6 months and 8 weeks before the end of the contract). The promoter must, within one month of the start of the working relationship, draw up a training plan with the tutor and the CIE beneficiary.

Contrat d'Appui Emploi – CAE

Under certain conditions, the young jobseeker or the unemployed youth, whether a graduate or not, gives the employer/sponsor who hires him/her the right to be reimbursed for a part of his/her salary and for the entire employer's contributions. The latter has the duty to give an initiation and/or practical training to the young jobseeker (who will also have theoretical training) in order to increase his or her skills and facilitate his or her reintegration into the labour market. The employer using this contract scheme, CAE, must be able to offer the young person either a real job perspective at the end of the contract or improved employability, thereby increasing his or her employment prospects on the labour market.

An employer who hires a jobseeker under the age of 30, who is unemployed and has been registered with ADEM for at least 3 months, may be reimbursed for a portion of the salary paid to the jobseeker and for the entire employer's contribution.

The contract will be concluded between ADEM and the job seeker. The promoter will appoint a tutor who will supervise the young person during the contract period. Together they will draw up a training plan. Evaluations will be carried out by the promoter and ADEM during the period of the commitment. At the end of the contract, the promoter draws up a certificate of completion of the measure, the elements of which are defined by ADEM. The contract is going to be for 12 months with a maximum extension of 6 months; with a full time term – 40 hours per week. The allowances are calculated on the basis of the non-qualified social minimum wage and are subject to the social security and tax charges laid down for wages:

- 80% of the non-qualified social minimum wage for young people under 18 years of age;
- 100% of the unqualified social minimum wage for young people without a diploma and young people with a technical and vocational aptitude certificate or a diploma for the completion of technical, secondary or secondary studies;



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- 130% of the unqualified MSS for young people holding a higher technician's certificate or a bachelor's or master's degree.

Autorisaion d'Occupation Temporaire – AOT

This program targets asylum seekers and refugees to facilitate their employment. An applicant for international protection may apply for a temporary work permit (Autorisaion d'Occupation Temporaire - AOT) from the Employment Agency ADEM at the earliest 6 months after filing his/her application for international protection, if a decision on his/her application for international protection has not been taken by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and provided that the delay in taking a decision cannot be imputed to the applicant for international protection. The person has to take the necessary steps to find an employer willing to employ him/her through a AOT. The application for an AOT must be made jointly by the employee and the employer. Before considering hiring a refugee with a legal status, the employer must declare the vacancy to ADEM. ADEM conducts a labour market test and notifies the Directorate of Immigration. If ADEM has not proposed a candidate matching the requested profile, the IPR can apply for a AOT. This AOT is valid for one occupation and one employer only and will be for a maximum of 6 months, renewable. It does not give the right to a residence permit, nor to any unemployment benefits. The AOT is granted or refused by the minister responsible for immigration.

On the other hand, only beneficiaries of international protection who meet the minimum language proficiency criteria can be transferred from the National Office for Social Inclusion (ONIS) to ADEM or directly registered with ADEM.

A beneficiary of international protection or subsidiary protection who meets the minimum language proficiency requirements can register at ADEM and benefit from, among other things, language courses, vocational training and the JobBoard, the interactive platform offered by ADEM, which allows jobseekers to consult the job offers available at ADEM, to put their CVs online and to apply for the offers that match their profile in order to play an active role in their job search and to increase their chances of finding a job.

Registering with ADEM implies that BPI's (Beneficiaries of Internal Protection) actively seek employment and follow language courses or training to increase their employability in Luxembourg. Once registered at ADEM, BPI's, like any other jobseeker registered at ADEM, can benefit from measures to increase their employability with interested employers:

- Professionalisation course (SP) or Employment Reintegration Contract (CRE) for those over 30 years old;
- Contrat d'Initiation à l'Emploi (CIE) or Contrat d'Appui Emploi (CAE) for those under 30; or
- Special measures for social initiatives.

Hiring a young person allows a company, under certain conditions, to benefit from financial aids; which is an incentive provided by the state for companies to hire young people.

Current Legislative Developments

In 2022, Luxembourg saw significant legislative changes and discussions regarding migration and asylum. Several laws, including those enacted on April 1st 2022, May 10th 2022, and October 26th 2022, addressed various aspects of accommodating temporary protection beneficiaries from Ukraine. Another law passed on December 23rd 2022



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extended the deadline for recovering Luxembourgish nationality due to Covid-19 travel restrictions hindering applicants from signing their declaration. Additionally, the July 22nd 2022 amendment to the Electoral Law of 2003 granted voting rights to foreigners living in Luxembourg for less than five years, impacting the foreign population significantly (EMN Luxembourg, 2023).

Before the major change introduced by Bill 8227, family members of non-EU work permit holders must obtain their individual work permits before commencing employment or establishing their own businesses—a procedure that often spans several months in reality. To uphold Luxembourg's economic competitiveness and foster talent retention and attraction, this new legislation streamlines labour market entry for third-country nationals, encompassing accompanying spouses and individuals applying for international and temporary protection³

Other Initiatives to address unemployment

Apart from these state programmes, several programs and projects are implemented by organizations that are actively working with young people, migrants and unemployed. The Department of Integration collaborates closely with various associations and NGOs dedicated to promoting the integration of foreigners in Luxembourg. This collaboration includes formal agreements with four key associations: Association for the Support of Immigrant Workers (ASTI – Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés), Centre for Intercultural and Social Studies and Training (CEFIS), the Liaison and Action Committee for Foreigners (CLAE), and Caritas. These agreements, renewed annually, allow for the adaptation of integration activities to evolving needs on the ground. In addition to these larger organizations, smaller NGOs and community associations also play a significant role in providing integration services locally and, at times, nationally. Moreover, the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration, and the Greater Region may provide financial subsidies to associations and federations engaged in integration measures or initiatives combating discrimination (EMN Luxembourg, 2021).

Despite its complexity, Luxembourg has been successful in integrating immigrants, with progressive immigration policies and minimal anti-immigration sentiment compared to neighbouring countries (Boesen et al., 2023). However, there is still more to be done especially concerning integration of migrants from third country nationals as they are faced with various challenges.

³ <https://www.luxtimes.lu/luxembourg/non-eu-spouses-get-easy-access-to-job-market/2169167.html>



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Section 2: Key challenges of NEETs / Youth / Migrants in the Country

Young migrants undergo a significant life-course transition from youth to adulthood, facing expectations to qualify, commit, find employment, become responsible consumers, and engage socially, culturally, and economically. These transitions require decision-making amidst growing risks and uncertainties. For young migrants, especially those in vulnerable conditions, navigating these transitions is even more challenging due to their different socialization experiences. Their adaptation to a new place, coupled with the transition to adulthood, presents unique integration challenges, necessitating a deeper understanding of their perspectives and experiences (Biaback Anong et. al., 2023). The case study by Biaback Anong et. al., 2023 specifically analysed migrants' (aged 18-29) own understanding of integration in Luxembourg, Norway and Germany. Throughout the analysis, speaking the language; economic contribution; becoming alike; and relationship between migrants and society were identified as the perception of integration understood by the migrants.

Key causes of Youth / Migrants / NEETs problems on the labour market integration

Language

Luxembourg with its three official languages French (as legal language), German (as the administrative language), and Luxembourgish (as the national language), presents a unique challenge for integration, as language proficiency is crucial for accessing different aspects of society. Unlike in other countries where languages may be regionally specific, in Luxembourg, they correspond to different spheres of daily life and fields of work. Additionally, depending on the sector, knowledge of English and/or Portuguese may also be important. Thus, for both immigrants and native-born residents, language proficiency plays a central role in navigating various aspects of society and integration (Biaback Anong et. al., 2023).

Challenges in transitioning from school to work

Access to the labour market is crucial for the socio-economic integration of migrants in Luxembourg. Third-country nationals are predominantly employed in sectors like accommodation, food services, administrative support, retail trade, and vehicle repair. However, national data reveals that young third-country nationals face higher unemployment rates compared to young Luxembourgers, indicating challenges in transitioning from school to work. This difficulty may hinder their ability to achieve financial autonomy and independence from their families (Vysotskaya et. al, 2021).

Situation of poverty and social exclusion

Using data from Eurostat the study by Vysotskaya and colleagues (2021) highlights challenges faced by young people in Luxembourg regarding professional integration, which can lead to situations of poverty or social exclusion, particularly for those from third countries. Even when actively working, young migrants may still face poverty due to low income or precarious employment conditions, placing them at a disadvantage compared to young Luxembourgers. The study using figures indicate systematically higher rates of poverty and social exclusion among non-EU young migrants, emphasizing the need for targeted support to address these disparities.



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Key identified barriers of Youth / Migrants / NEETs for successful labour market integration.

Language barrier

The multilingualism of Luxembourg is frequently cited in political discussions as a symbol of multiculturalism and openness of the country. However, in reality, this system poses considerable challenges for newly arrived migrants and influences the range of opportunities accessible to them within the country. Migrants' access to the labour market in Luxembourg is largely hampered by their language skills. In a country with a language regime based on official trilingual (Luxembourgish, French, German), few newcomers have a command of at least one of the country's three official languages, and some of them even have little knowledge of the Latin alphabet (Gilodi et. al., 2023).

Recognition of diplomas and qualifications

Another factor that hinders migrant and refugee's access to employment is the difficulty of having their diplomas and qualifications recognised. Original documents and diplomas are requested and asylum seekers are not always in a position to provide them. In cases when migrants are able to provide original documents, the process is difficult and time taking. Qualification levels pose a common obstacle for all candidates, regardless of their nationality. Since third-country nationals don't originate from countries that have signed the Paris or Lisbon Convention, the Ministry of Education, Childhood, and Youth in Luxembourg must approve their qualifications in comparison to the local education system. Unlike most EU countries, Luxembourg relies on its Ministry rather than universities for diploma recognition. The Ministry's Department for Diploma Recognition handles the recognition of various diplomas, including secondary school diplomas, vocational certificates, and vocational qualifications in healthcare and socio-educational professions. (IMS Luxembourg, 2017). Due to the long process, it is quite common for refugees to be forced to accept jobs outside their field of expertise or field of competence, often leading to professional de-skilling.

Access to affordable childcare facilities (barriers for migrant mothers)

Migrant mothers who are not working have limited access to child care services (EMN Luxembourg, 2021). The public childcare services provide priorities to children who have working families. Migrant mothers are faced with the problem and burden of taking care of small children and this limits their availability to language schools and professional trainings which in general reduces their efforts to labour market integration.

Housing problems

The Luxembourgish reception system faces criticism for the perceived temporary nature of housing facilities, leading to overcrowding and limited capacity for new arrivals. Many residents are migrants with valid permits unable to secure alternative housing due to shortages and difficult housing conditions in the country. Refugees, despite obtaining status, remain in reception centres, paying rent based on income. However, this rent, often derived from state benefits, is high, especially considering the living conditions offered by the centres. This situation not only isolates refugees from the local population but also hinders their integration process, limiting language practice and social interaction. Psychologically, the inability to move out of the centres exacerbates feelings of isolation and hopelessness, preventing a sense of connection with Luxembourgish society.



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Discrimination

Discrimination is one barrier for the integration of migrants. Access to affordable housing is a significant challenge for young third-country nationals, primarily due to high market prices and discrimination based on economic status, contractual conditions, or racial background. Racial discrimination is prevalent across EU countries, as highlighted by the "Being Black in the EU" survey, Luxembourg is reported to have the highest rates of racial discrimination next to Finland. Discrimination manifests in various forms, including housing access hurdles, such as landlords refusing accommodation to black individuals, leading to overcrowding. Luxembourg, despite its integration and intercultural aspirations, has a significant proportion of black citizens experiencing racial insults and discrimination, highlighting the need for concerted efforts to address these issues (Vysotskaya et.al., 2021).

Other barriers

Some other barriers related to the professional integration of the different group of NEETs (on section 1 above) identified by Hauret (2017) are summarized as follows:

- Their low cognitive abilities and level of education,
- The distance of young people from the labour market and from any training system,
- The level of support from family and friends,
- The existence of deviant behaviour such as drug abuse,
- The level of financial and material insecurity,
- The state of health, and
- The existence of family responsibilities.



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Section 3: Skills required from NEETs / Youth / Migrants to enter the labour market

Language skills

The primary language of communication in Luxembourg is French, followed by Luxembourgish, German, English, and Portuguese. French is the dominant language in the economy, sought after by employers across all sectors. Luxembourgish is essential for roles in public administration or transportation and communications. English is necessary for international finance and scientific fields, while Portuguese is commonly required in construction. In the hospitality industry, French is prevalent, but English proficiency is increasingly valued, with Luxembourgish being an added advantage. However, in the healthcare sector, proficiency in Luxembourgish is essential. Career seekers in the civil service must meet language requirements in the country's three administrative languages (German, Luxembourgish, French), varying based on the specific role. These linguistic demands significantly impact the speed of accessing the job market, irrespective of the sector (Biaback Anong et.al., 2023).

Education and training needs to develop skills

Being a migrant during the transition to adulthood presents unique challenges, requiring the development of personal resources and extensive social support to integrate into a new society while navigating the exploration of adult identities. A crucial aspect of this transition involves obtaining education or training and transitioning from school to work, which may require both independent skill development and institutional support. Given the diverse challenges young migrants in Luxembourg face, tailored support is necessary. Understanding the role of social capital in integration processes, particularly affective and relational social capital, is essential to grasp the interplay between emotional connections and social relationships in integration trajectories. This investigation seeks to explore how social capital influences the integration of young migrants transitioning to adulthood. In addition, young migrants will need to develop the skills necessary to explore and use the opportunity structures that the host society has to offer, often without immediate family support (Vysotskaya et.al., 2021)

Soft skills and digital skills

Luxembourg, like other OECD countries, is facing significant changes due to global megatrends such as digitalization, globalization, demographic shifts, and climate change. To thrive in the future, individuals will require a diverse set of skills including foundational, cognitive, social, emotional, and professional knowledge. There is a growing need for people to continuously upgrade their skills to adapt to evolving job demands. Key skills like critical thinking, communication, and adaptability will be crucial for resilience and success in both work and life (OECD 2023). Accordingly, based on the skill needs of the country, migrants and NEETs in Luxembourg need their soft skills and digital skills enhanced.



Section 4: Good practices

This section looks at good practices of four projects that have been implemented by different organizations, public and NGOs in the country focusing on the integration of refugees and migrants.

Good practice 1	
Title of the practice	Connections
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	<p>Promotor: ASTI(Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés)</p> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>ADEM, Barclays, Chambre des Salariés, Chamber of Trades, Chamber of Commerce, Digital Inclusion, Formation des adultes - MENEJ, INFPC (lifelong-learning.lu), Just Arrived, MicroLux, NYUKO, OLAI, Sacred Heart University, Sleeves-Up, Tiime, University of Luxembourg</p>
Short description of the practice	<p>The "Connections" project aims to integrate applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market. It is funded by the Grand Duchess Charlotte charity (mateneen appeal) and is recognised as adult training by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth.</p>
Groups targeted by the practice	<p>The main targets of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants and beneficiaries of international protection who wish to enter the labour market in Luxembourg • People who want to support, guide or advise these people • Companies wishing to offer unpaid traineeships to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection
Main objectives of the practice	<p>The main objectives of the project are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create links between refugees and companies, • To mobilise the economic players in the professional integration of refugees and to give them the opportunity to commit to diversity in Luxembourg



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to ADEM's work on professional integration for this target population <p>There are 4 main stages in carrying out the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills screening based on an individual interview to determine the candidate's professional and educational background Fourteen information sessions on the history and make-up of Luxembourg society, family reunification, the reception and integration contract, Luxembourg social security and diploma equivalence. Some sessions are organised and presented by our partners. Six more specialised workshops on various subjects such as how to write a CV, how to present yourself at a job interview, preparing for a work placement, starting your own business, etc. Some workshops are organised and presented by our partners. An unpaid work placement of up to 240 hours. Trainees are monitored by an employment mentor appointed by the company. A skills assessment based on the ROME (répertoire opérationnel des métiers de l'emploi) used by ADEM.
<p>Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)</p>	<p>This project is an initiative of the ASTI organisation and supported by government departments. Target groups living in Luxembourg can take part in the project although it is not a national measure.</p>
<p>Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)</p>	<p>Starting 2017</p>
<p>Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice</p>	<p>In 2018,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 200 participants were beneficiaries of the project 80 companies were involved in the project More than 65 applicants and beneficiaries of international protection were able to take part in an unpaid internship, and around 15 people were able to obtain a work contract after their internship.
<p>Lessons learned / success factors</p>	<p>ASTI is convinced that its efforts to help refugees make the most of their skills and foster links between them</p>



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	and companies to give them a real chance of finding a job as quickly as possible.
Sources used (including website / links)	https://www.asti.lu/connections/ https://www.asti.lu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Connections-Flyer-s-copie.pdf

Good practice 2

Title of the practice	Connections4Work
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	Promoter: ASTI (Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés) Stakeholders/ Funding The European Social Fund, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and the Social Solidarity Economy and the Ministry for the Family, Integration and the Greater Region
Short description of the practice	The "Connections4Work" project is a follow-up of the "Connections" project. ASTI realised that a number of the beneficiaries of project "connections" have training or professional experience in a job, but cannot find work because they speak only English or very little French, which does not meet the requirements of employers. ASTI is in contact with many companies that are looking for candidates who can express themselves minimally in a language customary in the company, so that they can understand at least the basic instructions. In addition to this reason, recognised migrants and refugees looking for work have very little chance of finding a job in Luxembourg because of their lack of knowledge of the mechanisms of our labour market. This project has been designed to remedy the problems identified during the implementation of "Connections" project.
Groups targeted by the practice	Migrants and refugees
Main objectives of the practice	Its aim is to promote the integration into the labour market of recognised migrants and refugees with a basic level of language skills who, for these reasons, have difficulty finding a job. The objectives are to



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train jobseekers in the minimum language requirements for certain occupations where there is a high demand for labour, • Create links between project participants and companies in Luxembourg, • Promote the work culture in Luxembourg. <p>All participants will go through the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A screening of professional and linguistic skills, the expectations of each participant in relation to the project, the job market, etc. • Intensive language courses targeted at an occupation with a labour shortage, with practical workshops focusing on learning the minimum vocabulary required. • Information sessions linked to the targeted occupation (safety, training opportunities, etc.). • 240 hours of unpaid work experience in companies, with in-house training by a job mentor and skills assessment. • Support from volunteers to help participants find a job. <p>The targeted language courses, information sessions and work placements are recognised as adult training by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (MENJE). At the end of the project, under the condition that the participants have attended all the project modules at 80%, a portfolio with certifications is given to the participants.</p>
<p>Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)</p>	<p>This project is an initiative of the ASTI organisation and supported by government departments. Target groups living in Luxembourg can take part in the project although it is not a national measure.</p>
<p>Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)</p>	<p>Starting 2021 - ongoing</p>
<p>Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 people took part • 80 of whom attended at least 70% of the targeted language courses • 79 people attended at least 70% of the information sessions



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 people took part in work placements -5 dropped out midway through, as the health crisis had a major impact on this aspect of the project • 16 people received a contract during or after their work placement - a clear sign of the project's success • 1 person started studying at the Diekirch hotel school.
Lessons learned / success factors	Faced with a labour shortage in certain sectors, the government must react urgently and put in place measures and projects to promote the professional integration of motivated migrants and refugees. What is at stake is the empowerment of this population and their access to a more dignified life so that we can live better together in Luxembourg.
Sources used (including website / links)	https://www.asti.lu/approcher-les-refugies-et-migrants-au-marche-de-lemploi/

Good practice 3	
Title of the practice	Antenne locale pour jeunes (Local branch for young people)
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	National Youth Service
Short description of the practice	This service is the Transitions Department of the National Youth Service - SNJ, a public administration under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. Its main role is to support young people in their transition to working life. It was given the mandate to provide support for NEETs following the Luxembourg Youth Guarantee in 2014. Since then, this service has been working in partnership with other national players to help young people and NEETs return to school or find work. They are responsible for contacting young people in transition, when they have just left school and before they leave school and before they find work, and more specifically young people who are NEET.
Groups targeted by the practice	NEETs, Early school- leavers(dropout), Youth
Main objectives of the practice	The mission of this service can be described as follow:



	<p>Assessment of personal circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of educational and professional achievements; • consideration of life situation; • cooperate with parents or guardians if necessary; • Putting young people in touch with other support services; • providing information on the various options available to young people for changing their situation for the better. <p>Support for your return to school or work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of your personal project for your return to school or the job market; • a solution to prevent you becoming inactive if your return to school or employment is not immediately possible; <p>setting up an individual action plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer support in dealing with the authorities, secondary schools and any other services likely to be able to help young people; • Providing advice on what to do at the new workplace or school; • Provide young people with a reference person to support them throughout the transition to the new system.
<p>Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)</p>	<p>National measure. 11 local branches exist nationwide and provide the same services</p>
<p>Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)</p>	<p>Started in since 2014 and is uninterrupted service/project</p>
<p>Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice</p>	<p>Thousands of young people benefit from their services annually.</p>
<p>Lessons learned / success factors</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Sources used (including website / links)</p>	<p>https://hey.snj.lu/fr/contacts-fr/</p> <p>https://bettembourg.lu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Broschure-No-beim-Jonken02_2019.pdf</p>



Good practice 4

Title of the practice	Talentcheck
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	Designed by the Chamber of Commerce
Short description of the practice	<p>The TalentCheck has been specially designed for secondary students in the 3rd grade who want to do an apprenticeship with a training company. However, it is open to anyone who wishes to know his/her level of competence in specific areas. The results from this test is a real asset for the conclusion of an apprenticeship contract. Access to the TalentCheck is free of charge and is limited to two tests per person per school year. The TalentCheck can be taken either in French or German.</p>
Groups targeted by the practice	<p>TalentCheck is specially designed for young people who are still under education. It helps them to know their level of skills in specific subjects and the areas of improvement before starting an apprenticeship. However, due to the fact that the results of the assessment are not a prerequisite for apprenticeship, the tool is also available to people outside the school system. These include, early school leavers, recent migrants and the unemployed with training ambitions.</p>
Main objectives of the practice	<p>The objective of this test is to help the candidates to know their level of skills in specific subjects and the areas of improvement before starting an apprenticeship. The TalentCheck covers the following skill areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentration and observation• Practical calculation• German• French• English• Logic• Technical skills• Organisational skills• Retention skills



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude to learning, work and colleagues
Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc.)	National measure
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	Continuing programme
Effects / Outcomes / outputs of the practice	The test helps young people to know their skills in specific subjects and the areas of improvement before starting an apprenticeship. The test leads to a certificate that is recognised by the training companies. This generally facilitates the apprenticeship contract process.
Lessons learned / success factors	Positive feed-back in most cases
Sources used (including website / links)	https://www.winwin.lu/fr/apprentice/talentcheck.html



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PART 2: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

The national report, in addition to the desk review, involved field study conducting interviews to get primary data of the situation of migrant and refugee NEETs from the perspectives of NEETs themselves as well as professionals working with them. Section one and section two of this part makes analysis of the reports from the individual interview with the NEETS and the focus group interview with the youth professionals respectively.

Section 1: Analysis of semi-structured individual interviews (IDIs)

Introduction

The study intends to contribute to the overall objective of the Newcomers@Work project which in general aims to the social inclusion and empowerment of newly arrived NEETs and migrants by improving their employability skills.

The objective of this field study is to get an understanding and insight from the perspective of migrants/NEETs themselves and learn their current situation; the determinants and risk factors; the barriers of education and employment; as well as existing supports to education and employment. Hence, five migrants/refugee NEETs were purposely selected to participate on the in-depth interview. The five in-depth interviews were conducted from 10th to 27th October 2023. A semi-structured interview guide was used to direct the discussion and consent from all interviewees has been granted. Respondents have freely discussed the issues giving their own experience as examples.

Respondent background information

Among the five informants who are between 21 to 30 years, two are female and three are male. One of the participants is migrant NEET who came following her husband; while the rest four are refugee NEETs who came to seek international protection and have been granted asylum. Four of them left their country in search of a better life, good education opportunity and better future while one of them left for the purpose of family reunification. Fleeing from war was also mentioned as a reason for migration. One of the respondents narrates his dangerous migration journey as:

"In Eritrea if you do not get the point to join the university, your are forced to join the army (for both boys and girls) and it was not my choice. Therefore, I left my country in 2019 and had to pass through many countries including Ethiopia, Sudan, Turkey, Greece and others to finally get to Luxembourg in 2021. Even though I love my country, since it was not my choice to join the military, I had to leave for Europe, looking for a better life and future." MB, 25 years old Refugee NEET

The two female migrants are married and one is living with her husband and her son while the other is under process to bring her husband to Luxembourg. The three male NEETs are single. One of the migrant NEETs has her master's degree in nursing while another one has not completed her secondary education and all the rest three have a high school



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diploma. All the respondents had their last paid job in their country of origin, however, they had not been working during all their stays in Luxembourg.

Determinants and Risk Factors

All the five in-depth interview participant NEETs find it difficult to find a job in Luxembourg. Even though some of them had been working in their country of origin and have acquired some kind of experience, it has been very hard for all of them to join the labour market.

The migrant/refugee NEETs explain their efforts to finding jobs and put their frustrations of not succeeding as follows:

"I have never done any paid work since I came to Luxembourg. Currently, I am taking an intensive French language class. It is not easy for Arabic speakers to learn French in Luxembourg, especially living in a reception centre for refugees. I have done several work placements in Luxembourg and none of the employers have called me back for a paid job/permanent job, despite having tried to contact them several times." RT a 22 years old refugee NEET

"I started looking for a job online as well as applying in person; I even have done some job interviews. I was told they will get back to me, but the only reply I received so far is regrets that I did not make it. I have been turned down a lot of times. I think the reason I have been rejected so far might be because I don't have working experience. If we, young migrants are not given the opportunity to work, where would we get the work experience from?"

The refugee/migrant NEETs know that it is not easy to find jobs especially in some particular fields in Luxembourg, some of them like SM still persist, even if she has not succeeded so far.

"To find a job in my own field of area, nursing, needs a license. Getting the license is very procedural and takes a lot of time. I have started the process even though I know it is almost impossible to get." SM, a 30 years old migrant NEET

The respondents have been applying for jobs, however, they had not been successful in spite of the 2 to 4 years duration of time they stayed in the country. The only paid job they had done was in their country of origin.

Barriers of education and employment:

Respondents were asked what challenges they faced in finding employment or training opportunities in the host country. Language proficiency is one of the major barriers pointed out by all in-depth interview participants. Other barriers identified include: residing in refugee centres; education and skill recognition; limited social networks and connections; as well as discrimination and bias.



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- **Language Proficiency**

Participants indicated that Luxembourg is multilingual country where many languages are spoken in addition to the three official languages – Luxembourgish, French and German. This has created difficulty for migrants and refugees as different professions require different languages. One of the respondents stated that he has been contacted several times by companies to which he had applied for jobs with different language requirements. Most of the employers ask him if he speaks Portuguese, Italian or French. In the catering sectors, for example he is often asked if he speaks Italian while in cleaning companies, he is asked if he speaks Portuguese. However, he only speaks Arabic, Tigrigna and a little bit of French (as he is learning French after he came to Luxembourg). Another respondent, expresses the issue as follows:

"The very many spoken languages in the country are barriers to employment for migrants. Some languages are even specific to the field of professions. For example, one needs to speak Luxembourgish to be hired in government jobs, Italian in restaurants and Portuguese in constructions" FA a 21 years old refugee NEET

Language barrier is reported as a major obstacle to finding a job in Luxembourg. This is especially critical for some professions like medical sectors. This is emphasized by one of the respondents.

"It is not only one language that is required for my profession, nursing. One needs to be multilingual at least speaking French and Luxembourgish or French and German depending on which region of the country the person lives in" SM, a 30 year old migrant NEET

Even though participants have been taking some kind of language lessons since they come, for those that are living in reception centres, it had not been easy to practice what they learnt in their day to day activities as they live in reception centres. Hence living in reception centres was reported to be another obstacle to employment as well as community integration in the host country.

- **Living in Reception Centres**

The participants immigrated to Luxembourg in search of a better life and opportunities. They believe the importance of learning the language to finding jobs. However, for those that are living in the refugee centres, the living situation there is not favourable at all to facilitate language learning.

Four out of the five participants of the individual interview reside in refugee reception centres. They found this to be a barrier to practicing the language they learn at language schools. As refugees are living with other refugees who do not speak the language, they are constrained to speak in English or other languages they know to communicate with each other.

"I started studying German language because I wanted to work in day cares. I live in the refugee reception centre and there, I communicate with others in Arabic, English, and Tigrigna (Eritrean language). So it is hard for me to practice my German. So I see living in the centre as a determinant not to practice the language and an obstacle for the integration process." MB, a 25 years old refugee NEET



All the four respondents who are still living in the reception centre could not leave the centre because they are not able to find employment. If they are not employed that means they don't have a job contract. In Luxembourg, apartment/house owners will not rent their place unless the person provide some kind of working contract that will give them guarantee that he/she has a steady income to pay the rent for the specified time on the contract. Therefore this puts them in a viscous cycle where the integration process is constrained to learn the language and find jobs.

Hence, living in the reception centre is identified by participants as a barrier since it is not a good environment to learn the language as refugees come from different countries and they try to communicate in English and/or their native languages. In addition, lack of privacy is identified as a problem that resulted from living in the centres. Participants are looking for any opportunity that could get them live outside of the centres and integrated into the community.

- **Difficult to get qualifications recognized**

The other barrier reported by respondents is getting qualifications recognition. Formal qualifications in the area of nursing and medicine are very difficult to get acceptance and recognition. Even when diplomas are recognized, there is a requirement to pass additional examination that demands good knowledge of French language as it is administered in French. If one is lucky to pass the additional examination administered in French, then will come the issue of doing apprenticeship which requires looking for one on their own. It is only after passing through a long and impossible procedure that one might get the license to work as a nurse or physician.

- **Getting apprenticeship after trainings**

All the respondents stated that getting apprenticeship after trainings is another challenge they face. Finding employers for apprenticeships is left on the hands of migrants who do not have connections and networks.

"After finishing school/training, we are expected to do apprenticeships but there is no supervisor(patron) to take us in. In Germany they connect you to companies themselves. But here in Luxembourg, you are expected to find a patron by yourself and if there is no connection nobody will take you. So after doing the training and school, finding a patron on our own is a big barrier to find employment for young migrants." FA 21 years old refugee
NEET

Respondents think one of the reason for lack of getting apprenticeships after trainings is lack of connections and networks.

- **Lack of Networks/ connections**

Migrants and refugees who came to Luxembourg fleeing from war or looking for better education and employment do not know people who can help them access the labour market. Most of the respondents moved to Luxembourg as they heard that the country has many opportunities to provide for migrants. However, the reality they found on the ground was different.

"I have a friend in Germany who didn't have formal education but they arranged for him to learn the language in six months then he was given a job. The system there makes the connection for migrants and it is very fast. Even if I heard Luxembourg had many opportunities, if Germany had



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this system in place while I was still in there, I wouldn't have come to Luxembourg at all" FA 21 year old refugee NEET

Respondents based on their experience, reported lack of networking and connections as one of the major barriers to finding employment for migrants and refugees.

- **Discrimination and bias**

Some of the migrants think that discrimination and stereotypes cannot be avoided. They stated that fact that migrants qualifications and experiences are not good enough to get employed erodes their confidence. SM states this as:

"The idea that our qualifications and experiences are not good enough to get employed puts the seed in our minds that we are not qualified enough to undertake the professions that we had been trained for and doing for some years in our country perfectly" SM, a 30 year old migrant NEET

Respondents think that young migrant NEETs need to be given a chance to work and to acquire experience in the host countries; that they should not be left idle which will result in their involvement in drugs and crimes.

In general, for migrants and refugees job acquisition becomes incredibly challenging and almost appears impossible for specific fields. Learning and practicing Luxembourg's official languages becomes problematic, especially for refugees residing in refugee and migrant reception centres, where communication predominantly happens in other languages. This circumstance severely slow down integration into the job market as well as the community. The barriers and challenges faced and expressed above by the study respondents are very much interconnected.

Supports to finding employment and education

Interview participants were asked if they have any previous experiences or interactions with local youth professionals or organizations that assist young NEETs. Accordingly, four of the five respondents have heard of the national employment agency, ADEM and one is recently registered at the agency and another one had a short experience with the agency. However, what they have heard about the agency is that it only facilitates language classes but it does not help migrants that much in finding jobs.

In this regards, interview participants were also asked as to their perception of what actions, programs, or policies could help them in securing employments and education. Short-term trainings; easing language requirements for jobs that do not require high level languages; on the job language training; having employers trust on young people; as well as connections/intermediaries between refugee/migrants and hiring companies are some of their suggestions.

- **Short-term trainings**

Respondents recommend that short term training that could bring migrants and refugees back to the labour market would be essential. They strongly believe that first, these short term trainings can give them skills to integrate into the labour market and second, they will provide them the opportunity to learn the language while working. As learning only the language without applying it will not help them really acquire the language.



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- ***Easing language requirements for jobs that do not require high level languages***

Respondents think that employers especially jobs that do not require high level language, should not put high language requirements and expectations as they could ease job opportunities for immigrants. Especially for jobs that migrants and refugees are already experienced with. For those jobs that require high level languages, respondents understand the necessity of high language expectations.

- ***On the job language training***

According to the migrant respondents, some professional jobs can be started as training jobs and assistant level jobs. These professions are technical jobs so getting migrants start working with this, with basic language and then after they acquired the high level languages and passed the exams they can grow to the professional level. This could give easier integration to professional refugees and migrants.

- ***Having connections and intermediaries between refugee/migrants and hiring companies***

Respondents strongly believe that a connection between social workers and companies would facilitate employment for refugees and migrants. Having an intermediary between refugees and migrants and hiring companies would facilitate employment after completing trainings.

- ***Having employers trust on young people***

Participants believe that employers should trust young people, give them the chance to work and set targets to achieve once they are recruited. One of the participants suggests, for example, that if a young person does not meet the conditions for progress in the language over a given period, a patron/supervisor might not renew their contract.

- ***Motivate young people***

Respondents suggest that programs that motivate young people are important. They say that mental strength of the young person is very important in dealing with the difficulties encountered. They need to be motivated, determined to make their dream come true and not give up at the first obstacle. It is important that young people are surrounded with positive people who can encourage them to realize their professional dreams.

The Future

All respondents would like to remain in Luxembourg and continue searching for a job. They understand that it is not an easy task but they will keep on doing it. Some of them suggested that they might need to change their profession and look for jobs that are demanded in the country. However, they mentioned that if they could not succeed in finding a job, they would be forced to move to another country.

Additional comments by respondents

One of the respondents advice to future newcomers is that they need to accept themselves, accept that they have changed their country and accept that they need to work to achieve their dreams. In addition, she says that it is also important not just to have a career choice



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in life, but also to see what the country has to offer and to take advantage of the opportunities around us.

Another respondent states that Luxembourg is a good country, but without support, it is not easy for young people who do not speak the official languages to integrate and find a good job. He stresses that the government needs to do a lot of work on supporting young foreigners, because young migrants are a bit different from the young people who were born in the country, even if they also have problems. Young people born in Luxembourg at least speak the languages of the country which gives them a higher chance of employment.

Stating Luxembourg as a good country, participants stress that it should provide more opportunity for labour integration and education for migrants.



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Section 2: Analysis of focus group interview (FGI)

Introduction

The study also involved conducting a Focus Group Interview (FGI) of youth professionals as part of the of the Newcomers@Work project. The FGI intends to get an understanding and insight from the perspective of youth workers on the current situation of migrant NEETS; the determinants and risk factors; the barriers of education and employment; as well as existing Youth workers approach towards different groups of young migrants. Accordingly, the FGI was conducted on 30th of January, 2024. This section summarizes the findings from the youth professionals points of view.

Respondent background information

The 5 focus group participants are youth professionals working for associations with 25 to 30 years of experience in the field of integration, training and professional integration in Luxembourg in general. These associations work in collaboration with the national employment agency (ADEM), secondary schools, training centres and sometimes the families of the young people they support in their professional integration. The discussion lasted around two hours and was held online.

Target groups of migrant youths

Focus group discussants discussed about NEETs of different groups:

- Newcomer migrant/refugee NEETs.
- Luxemburgish NEETs or foreigner NEETs who have been living in Luxembourg for a long time
- NEETs with mental health issues
- NEETs with disabilities

Barriers for different groups of youth migrant NEETs

Focus group participants explained that there are different types of barriers that are faced by NEETs who are Luxembourgers or foreigners who have been living in Luxembourg for a long time and by migrant NEETs.

For NEETs who are Luxembourgers or foreigners who have been living in the country for a long time: the problem is different, because they have the languages that are in demand on the market. In addition, this group has a higher level of education.

Lack of motivation- the problem of Luxembourgers or foreigners NEETs who have been living in the country for a long time is often lack of motivation. Increasingly, we see that these young people don't see why they have to work, they don't see any prospects. They are also more demanding in terms of flexibility, and bosses can't keep up with them.



One of the discussant added that she recently came across an article which said that the motivation of young Europeans has dropped considerably and that their perception of work is no longer the same. They are looking for more and more alternatives and are less and less willing to comply with the demands of work.

However, motivation is very high among first-time arrivals. These are people who just want to work. They don't ask what time they have to finish work and they are sometimes prepared to work even on weekends. And by dint of their persistence, they end up occupying the jobs that the nationals neglect.

For migrant NEETs:

Language barriers: Whether for skilled or unskilled jobs, in Luxembourg, the demand for languages always comes up in job offers.

Lack of experience for both skilled and unskilled jobs When aiming for a higher position, you first need experience. That's also another barrier that young people lack too. Professional experience is increasingly in demand in both skilled and unskilled jobs.

Lack of knowledge about the system: As far as applicants and beneficiaries of international protection are concerned, the problem is a lack of knowledge about the system. They don't know the professional culture, the approach to the market is different from what they know in their own country,

Lack of access to information resources and services: They don't know where to go, they don't know where to look for information. There is a need for information on the approach to the Luxembourg labour market.

Lack of networking: The lack of networking among migrant newcomers significantly impact their ability to integrate successfully into their new communities and access opportunities for education, employment and; personal and professional growth.

Mistrust and lack of confidence of employers: Sometimes one of the difficulties for newcomers is they face mistrust and lack of confidence of employers. It's true that young people with diplomas have received the equivalent of their diploma, but a boss who doesn't know the content of a university diploma obtained in Morocco or Syria, for example, is very sceptical about taking on a foreigner. In this case, unfortunately for a young person, it's difficult to immediately aim for high-level jobs. Sometimes you have to start at a lower level and prove yourself.

Youth workers approach towards different groups of young migrants

There is a need for tailor made approaches for different group of NEETs: to migrant/refugee NEETs; Luxembourgish NEETs; NEETs with mental health issues and NEETs with disabilities as well as newcomer migrant/refugee NEETs.

For young people who are new to the country, we need to explain how things work in Luxembourg.

For young Luxembourgers who are not motivated, coaching cannot work at first. You first have to find a motivating factor. It often brings a result to look with them at what they 'burn for', what hooks them in life. The key is not to find a job just to work, but to work at



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what you love. And it's becoming increasingly difficult to find what motivates young people. Sometimes they're not realistic enough. For these young people, the most important thing is not to get them working straight away, but to first understand what work means to them. Otherwise, if you start writing a CV and covering letter straight away, the risk is that they'll give up the job a month after they've started. Even though it takes time to work on motivation at the beginning and it may seem like we're wasting time, but it's vital to do this self-discovery work beforehand with young people who aren't motivated. You have to find the element that triggers motivation.

Supporting young people with no motivation can take a long time. It can sometimes take 6 months, sometimes a year for those who are looking for work, because some of them are not looking for work at the same time as they are being coached or supported. The professional integration of young people in this category is really on a case-by-case basis. There is no set duration. But we do have some success stories. We're always happy when a young person knocks on our window and tells us they've found a job.

Sometimes we also have to realise that there are other problems, especially mental health problems. Sometimes the problem isn't immediately identified and the more we get to know them, and the more we've established a relationship of trust between us, the more we dig into the reasons why they keep failing. In such situations, we refer them to other, more effective care services. For young people with disabilities, we take the necessary steps and integrate them into the labour market with disabled worker status, and that works a little better because employers are informed and aware of their health problems.

For the young people in general that we have in our projects, we always try to find out what they like. We avoid asking them about their skills straight away. We're interested in what can take them forward. If we focus on their skills straight away, it can scare them, because sometimes they have skills that they can't name or identify. It's only by working with them on their interests that we can bring out their skills. With this information, we already have a good basis for work and support. It's a more humane approach, because if you tell them straight away that they need to work as a cashier or a gardener, there's a high risk that they'll give up after a few months. So it's important to start from their interests and see what's feasible in the job market.

I've found that young people are not used to being asked to reflect on themselves, but to being asked straight away where they would like to work. So for many of the young people we meet, the reflective approach is sometimes new to them, but as they put it into practice, they see its value. As far as I'm concerned, the question "What do you want to do?" is the wrong question to ask. It immediately creates blocks within them.

We work with 'Explorama' – an online skills assessment tool that helps them in this regards. This tool allows young people to explore different types of careers and see if they are interested. It's a tool that we use quite often at the start of the vocational integration project with young people.

For all young people in general, we work in parallel. This means that at the same time we look at the training opportunities that interest the young person and at some point we also look at the job opportunities. We push as far as possible for a return to school, but we remain fairly flexible in our approach.

In terms of training, we need to be fairly realistic. And that's something that the employment agency (ADEM) doesn't understand. We need to offer young people training that serves a purpose. Training for the sake of training, with no prospects, is pretty frustrating for young people.



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Also, today's mentality has changed a lot. Thirty years ago, people understood that the boss was the boss, but today it's harder to understand, and we're here to help young people become aware of hierarchy in the workplace.

One of the specific features of the Luxembourg labour market is that we have everything, but it's still difficult to stimulate people's creativity, because the labour market is very much dominated by the financial sector and people are mainly focused on the banking sector.

There is also a strong concentration in the public sector. Young people are also attracted by this. They waste a lot of time hoping to get into the civil service, which is no longer easily accessible. It's especially young Luxembourgers who are in this position and sometimes it's very difficult to get the idea out of their heads.

We try to encourage people in the professions they like. We provide guidance, but we're not there to take young people out of the professions they like and steer them towards professions that we think are prestigious for them. We see this with new arrivals. When they first arrive, they need money to pay the rent, feed themselves and look after themselves. But after a while that can change, and we're there to encourage them in their careers. But sometimes you have to be realistic, because young people sometimes travel with professional dreams, but it's sometimes impossible to realize them in the Luxembourg context, because the laws and standards are not the same as in their own country.

Good practices in youth work with migrants

The website: www.explorama.fr is a fun online skills assessment tool that young people like. It helps them to identify environments, and by confronting them with the various work environments, we have a basis for discussion. Young people can say what they like and what they don't like. We always use a tool to get into the discussion.

When young people do their skills assessment on Explorama, we then look at what qualifications they have and, if necessary, point them in the direction of training. We also help them prepare their applications, provide guidance and support them if they are unsuccessful. Because it's not always guaranteed that this approach will bear fruit. And if we're not there to support them in the event of multiple rejections, then the young people may give up on the whole process and the work we've done from the outset falls by the wayside. So we're there for them throughout the whole process. We have to be there for them, because the failure rate among young people is quite high. This can be due to their educational background or their family situation. These are young people who need us to be there for them. Sometimes that means being there for them in the first phase of employment, because a young person who has never worked is going to encounter certain difficulties when they start work.

The best professional practice is the monitoring and caring support that we provide every day. Training alone is not enough to integrate young people. Some training courses lead nowhere and if there's no support behind them, young people will give up.



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Conclusions and recommendations

- Set up groups of motivated and less motivated young people so that they can learn from each other.
- It is essential to form groups of young people and give them responsibility for working on their weaknesses. Mentoring/coaching projects for and by young people can be an excellent learning experience. The risk of asking too much of adults in youth projects can sometimes create generation gaps and mental blocks, because the realities are not the same for all generations.
- Some young people don't have the support of their parents, so they go it alone. You can always set up initiatives with young people and adults, but the adult's role has to be limited. Adults could provide the support that some young people don't have in their families, but on the whole young people remain the main players in their own motivational projects.
- For young people who are at school, we can already prepare the ground at educational level. And instead of criticising young people for not being good at school subjects, we need to work a lot on motivation and self-confidence. That's what's lacking at school. Young people sometimes leave school with no motivation and no desire to go further. They leave disillusioned, and we use our different approaches to try and get them back on track, but we mustn't let them fall so far before we can fish them out. So in addition to the academic subjects, we need to provide time for motivation in the school environment.
- Most employers are over fifty and sometimes they simply don't trust young people. Young people have a different vision of work-life balance. Bosses need to do a little work at their own level.
- We need to adapt the labour market and offer greater flexibility. We need to change the concept of employment. Many young people don't understand why they should work, they just want to live and enjoy life. We need to work on developing a new working model. Bosses need to get involved and understand that today it's not just the salary that attracts young people, but that they need to offer attractive packages to attract talent to their companies. In the Netherlands, for example, there are packages covering sport, voluntary work, teleworking - many aspects that Luxembourg has not yet incorporated into its employment policy. In the Netherlands, the work-life balance is very advanced and employees are more fulfilled. Here, the offer is based more on salary and less on well-being at work. We need to adopt a hybrid approach to promoting work.



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The labour market in Luxembourg presents challenges for migrants from non-EU countries in various ways like high unemployment rates, gender disparities, and difficulties in integration, particularly for refugees. The country faces increasing rates of NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training), with figures reaching 8.8% in 2021 for individuals aged 15 to 29. Despite a decline in 2022, the situation remains concerning, especially for young males. A study examining NEETs in Luxembourg (Hauret, 2017) reveals a heterogeneous population with varying levels of distance from the labour market and society. There are various policies introduced and program interventions by government of Luxembourg and other organizations to address the diverse needs of migrant NEETs and facilitate their transition to employment or education, highlighting the importance of targeted interventions to support these individuals.

Based on the desk research and the field study, it is indicated that young migrants in Luxembourg face multifaceted challenges integrating into society. The findings from the desk research as well as the interviews found language particularly concerning challenge for integration. Multilingualism, often celebrated as a symbol of multiculturalism, paradoxically complicates integration efforts, as newcomers struggle to attain fluency in one of the country's three official languages. Furthermore, difficulties in having diplomas and qualifications recognized hinder their access to suitable employment, leading to professional de-skilling and limited career opportunities. Migrant mothers, facing limited access to childcare services, encounter barriers to language learning and professional training, impeding their labour market integration. The reception system, criticized for its temporary housing facilities and overcrowding, exacerbates refugees' feelings of isolation and hampers their integration process. Discrimination based on racial background further compounds challenges, with black individuals experiencing housing access hurdles and racial insults, necessitating concerted efforts to address systemic biases. Additionally, various barriers such as low cognitive abilities, health issues, and family responsibilities, further impede the professional integration of different NEETs groups, highlighting the need for tailored support measures to facilitate their transition to employment. Despite the progresses made, further efforts are needed to address the specific obstacles faced by these individuals in order to enhance their integration into Luxembourgish society.



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Recommendations

Luxembourg has achieved notable success in its endeavour to migrant integration due to progressive immigration policies and programs. Nonetheless, challenges persist, particularly concerning the integration of migrants from third countries. To address these challenges and promote successful labour market integration, this study makes two groups of recommendations. The general recommendation is to strengthen the efforts that are already started by the government and other organizations. The second group of recommendations focuses on the Newcomers@Work project's curriculum development.

General recommendations

To address the challenges faced by migrants and refugees in Luxembourg in finding employment or training opportunities, the following recommendations are proposed:

Language Proficiency

- Provide language courses tailored to specific professions, focusing on the languages required for various sectors such as healthcare, catering, and construction.
- Offer language support programs within refugee reception centres, enabling residents to practice and improve their language skills in a conducive environment.
- Encourage collaboration between language schools and employers to develop language training programs that meet the linguistic needs of specific industries.

Living in Reception Centre

- Develop initiatives to facilitate the transition of refugees from reception centres to community-based housing, providing them with more conducive environments for language learning and integration.
- Expand support services within reception centres to include language practice sessions, cultural integration workshops, and job readiness training to enhance residents' employability.

Difficulty in Getting Qualifications Recognized

- Streamline the process of recognizing foreign qualifications by providing clearer guidelines and support for migrants navigating the recognition process.
- Establish pathways for accelerated qualification recognition, particularly in critical sectors such as healthcare, to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and accelerate entry into the job market.

Make childcare services accessible for migrant mothers

- Increase the availability of affordable childcare facilities specifically catering to the needs of migrant families, including flexible hours and culturally sensitive services.
- Ensure that migrant mothers who are not employed also have access to subsidized childcare services, recognizing the importance of childcare in facilitating their integration into language schools and professional training programs.



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Access to Apprenticeships

- Create mentorship programs or apprenticeship placement services to connect migrant trainees with potential employers, facilitating their transition from training programs to practical work experience.
- Collaborate with industry associations and chambers of commerce to promote awareness among employers about the benefits of hiring migrant apprentices and provide incentives for their participation.

Create Networks and Connections

- Establish networking events, job fairs, and mentorship programs specifically targeting migrants and refugees to help them build professional connections and expand their networks.
- Develop online platforms or mobile applications that connect migrants with local professionals and employers, facilitating information exchange and networking opportunities.

Discrimination and Bias

- Implement diversity and inclusion training programs for employers to raise awareness about unconscious biases and promote fair hiring practices.
- Enforce anti-discrimination policies and provide avenues for reporting discriminatory practices, ensuring that migrants and refugees have equal access to employment opportunities.

These recommendations will assist to address the multifaceted challenges faced by migrants and refugees in accessing the labour market, promoting their integration, and fostering a more inclusive society.

Specific recommendations

To address the needs of migrants and NEETs in language proficiency and soft and digital skills training, the Newcomers@Work project aims to develop a comprehensive curriculum. The curriculum should be designed to provide targeted and practical learning experiences that align with the specific requirements of the labour market. Here are some recommendations that could serve as an input for the curriculum development.

Needs of NEETs

- The curriculum should include workshops that could help young migrants to assess their skills and help them identify the skills they have and the skills they need for their career path so that they would be able to work on and improve the skill gap.
- Develop workshops that would strengthen their confidence to navigate their surroundings and to make use of available resources. The goal is to equip individuals with the tools and mindset needed to confidently engage with their surroundings and access the support and opportunities available to them.

Language Proficiency Programs

- Develop language workshops focusing on French, German, and Luxembourgish, tailored to the linguistic needs of migrants and NEETs.



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- Incorporate real-life scenarios and workplace contexts into language lessons to enhance practical language skills required for various sectors of the labour market.
- Incorporate real-life scenarios of day to day living to facilitate community integration.
- Offer flexible learning options and provide online materials and resources that could facilitate self-learning and practicing in addition to the workshops.

Soft Skills and Digital Skills Training

- Design training modules to develop soft skills such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, essential for success in the modern workforce.
- Integrate practical exercises, role-plays, case studies, and group projects into the curriculum to facilitate hands-on learning and skill application.
- Offer workshops and seminars on networking strategies, resume writing, interview preparation, and professional etiquette to enhance participants' job readiness and career prospects.
- Develop digital literacy programs covering basic computer skills, internet navigation, email etiquette, Microsoft Office proficiency, and other relevant digital tools and platforms.

Overall, the curriculum development should prioritize the acquisition of language proficiency and soft/digital skills tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of migrants and NEETs. By offering targeted and practical training programs, individuals can enhance their employability, gain confidence in their abilities, and successfully integrate into the labour market and society.



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APPENDICES

List of Figures

Figure 1: Evolution of NEETs (14 to 29 years) in Luxembourg	5
Figure 2: Evolution of NEETs (15 to 24 years old) in Luxembourg	5



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