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Follow-up on the evaluation of *Know Your Rights*

Report 1-2024

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Preface

This report is made by Samfunnsøkonomisk analyse AS (SØA) for the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates. The report is a follow-up study of the evaluation of the communication campaign *Know your rights*. The campaign was developed in cooperation between the labour inspectorates in Norway, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania. This follow-up evaluation is funded by the Lithuanian EEA/Norway Grants.

The evaluation is based on a survey and interviews with individuals who have seen the campaign.

We want to thank our informants for taking the time to share useful information with us through interviews and surveys. Furthermore, we would like to thank our interpreters, making both the survey and interviews possible. In addition, we want to thank the Lithuanian and Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority for an interesting assignment, good cooperation, and useful feedback.

SØA is responsible for the reports' content.

Oslo, 12. March 2024

Fernanda Winger Eggen

Project Manager

SØA

Summary

Know your rights is a communication campaign targeted at foreign workers in Norway. The campaign is part of a multilateral agreement between the labour inspection authorities in Norway, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Romania. The target group includes workers from these countries, in addition to Poland and Latvia. The purpose of the campaign is to enable the target group to make better decisions when working in Norway, and in that way contribute to the authorities' effort to prevent and reduce work-related crime.

The objective of this report has been to conduct a follow-up analysis of the campaign's longer-term impact, two years after our original evaluation was published in 2021. This follow-up evaluation specifically analyses whether the campaign affected the target group's will and ability to change their working conditions. 85 respondents completed the follow-up survey and we have conducted 16 in-depth interviews with respondents from Lithuania and Poland.

Both the number of and how we reached the respondents for the 2023 survey and in-depth interviews limit our ability to make broad and generalisable conclusions about the impacts of communication campaigns on working conditions for foreign workers in Norway. However, recruiting informants in this way is generally regarded as less of an issue when we are conducting in-depth interviews. Hence, this follow-up analysis provides valuable insight from informants who are usually hard to reach.

The 2021 evaluation found that the campaign successfully informed the target group

Many foreign workers have difficulties accessing and understanding information about the Norwegian labour market, which is mostly available in Norwegian. *Know your rights* consisted mainly of two elements addressing this issue. A webpage with information targeted at foreign workers, designed to be understandable, relevant, and easy to use. Sec-

only, promotions on Facebook and relevant webpages to promote the campaign to the target group. Designing and promoting the campaign are independent activities, but the success of the campaign is reliant on both.

The promotions in social and traditional media attained a high reach compared to the size of the target group. The campaign performed significantly better, in terms of Click-through-rate (CTR), than relevant benchmarks. These results indicate that the promotional activities were successful.

Most of the respondents from the survey answered that the webpage was easy to use, that the content was presented in an understandable way and that the information presented was relevant for their situation. That the information is available in the workers' own languages is an important feature of the campaign. This indicates that the activities related to designing the campaign were also successful, including the use of plain language.

About one third of our 2021 survey respondents answered that they discovered violations of some of the rights and obligations they read about on the campaign's webpage in their current employment relationship. Furthermore, two thirds of those that discovered violations said they had made or were planning to make changes to their working conditions. These results indicate that the campaign successfully informed them about their rights and mobilised them to try to improve their situation, which supports the intended impact of reduced work-related crime.

Some, but not all, of the respondents who acted have improved their working conditions

The objective of this follow-up evaluation was to find out whether the respondents successfully changed their situation in the labour market. The main results from this follow-up evaluation are:

- The campaign seems to successfully mobilise those that discovered violations to act.
- The most common approach to improve working conditions was to talk to a manager. Many also contact a labour union to get help.
- Some, but far from all, who acted have successfully improved their working conditions.
- Many interviewees have experienced significant pushback, and even threats, from their employers when they try to confront them about working conditions.
- Finding a new job seems to provide the highest chance of improving working conditions.
- Our interviews suggest that many experiences helpful support from labour unions, while they are more frustrated with how the labour inspectorate can and will help them.
- The employer's nationality may impact conditions at the workplace.
- Make a new section about which actions workers can and should act to improve their working conditions.
- More information about what to expect from the Norwegian labour inspectorate and more information about the role of labour unions.
- Continue to back up information campaigns targeted at workers with other government compliance strategies, like inspections.

The follow-up analysis confirms that *Know Your Rights* contains relevant information for foreign workers in Norway. Several respondents have pointed out that the campaign successfully communicates rights and obligations in the labour market. However, they request more information about how they can and should handle the situation if they discover violations. Several of our respondents have requested step-by-step instructions about how they should go about handling their situation.

Recommendations for future information campaigns

Our overall assessment is that this follow-up analysis supports our conclusion from the 2021 evaluation. Overall, *Know Your Rights* has been a successful communication campaign. Information and knowledge regarding rights and obligations seem to enable workers to avoid employers who violate workers' rights. This implies that if everyone had information and knowledge, the access to vulnerable employees would be significantly reduced. Still, other factors do affect foreign workers' ability to successfully improve their conditions. Our analyses suggest that their employers' refusal to improve matters is a significant barrier.

Based on this evaluation, we have some recommendations for future information campaigns targeted at foreign workers in Norway:

Information from our interviewees specifically suggests that there is some confusion about what they can and cannot expect from the Labour Inspection Authority. This is related to the fact that the Labour Inspection Authority generally do not enter into conflicts under private law.

Our assessment is that a new section about different actions the user can take, would be a valuable addition to the *Know Your Rights* webpage. This section should include information about taking up matters with your employer, how to contact and what to expect from the Labour Inspection Authority and the possibility of contacting a labour union.

While better informed workers can act to improve their working conditions, far from all are able to successfully improve them. Some of our interviewees have also pointed out that some workers voluntarily participate in illegal activities, for example those that do not permanently reside in Norway. This implies a

risk of non-compliance from both employers and workers. Both of these factors imply that we cannot expect communication campaigns like *Know Your Rights* to handle all types of work-related crime.

Logically, communication campaigns like *Know Your Rights* are expected to have the largest impact when both workers and employers are interested in complying with rules and regulations. With relevant information and knowledge, these employees can act to improve their own conditions by informing their managers. Our survey and interviews show that some of those that confronted their managers have successfully improved their conditions, while others were not able to. Note also that more information could enable employees to avoid non-com-

pliant employers in the first place, effectively reducing the employers' income and recruitment.

Cases where the employer does not wish to comply, will require the use of other interventions. Perceived risk of discovery and sanctions seems to be important for how these employers will behave in the labour market (Skatteetaten, 2021).

If they are not able to improve conditions on their own, *Know Your Rights* gives them more information about how to get in touch with the Labour Inspection Authority. However, our interviews suggest that a real and effective response from the contacted authorities, is important to maintain their trust in authorities and conditions in the Norwegian labour market in general.

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1 Introduction

Know your rights is a communication campaign targeted at foreign workers in Norway. The campaign is part of a multilateral agreement between the labour inspection authorities in Norway, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania. The campaign's target group include workers from these countries, in addition to Poland and Latvia. By providing information about rights and obligations related to the Norwegian labour market, the purpose of the campaign is to enable the target group to make better decisions when working in Norway. The overall objective is to prevent and reduce work-related crime.

The objective of this report has been to conduct a follow-up analysis of the campaign's impact, two years after the evaluation was published. This chapter includes a description of the background for this follow-up evaluation, the methods used and this report's disposition.

1.1 The evaluation's objective

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has bilateral agreements with the authorities in Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania in order to reduce the extent of work-related crime. The campaign *Know your rights* is part of these agreements and the objective is to enable employees from these countries to know about their rights and obligations related to their employment in Norway.

This follow-up evaluation is funded by the Lithuanian EEA/Norway Grants and is therefore somewhat targeting Lithuanian workers specifically.

Know your rights consisted of two elements. Firstly, a webpage with information targeted at foreign workers, designed to be understandable, relevant and easy to use. Secondly, promotions on Facebook and webpages relevant for the target group. Designing and promoting the campaign are inde-

pendent activities, but the success of the campaign is reliant on both.

The objective of this report has been to conduct a follow-up analysis of the campaign's impact, two years after the evaluation was published. In particular, this analysis is seeking to find information about what happened to the individuals that saw the campaign in 2021, afterwards. Specifically, whether the campaign affected the target group's will and ability to change their working conditions. The evaluation forms a basis for how the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority can further develop the campaign, and how to develop their efforts to provide targeted information to foreign employees more generally.

1.2 Methodological approach to the evaluation

To evaluate the campaign's long-term impact, we use a follow-up survey and in-depth interviews with the target group. The combination provided an opportunity to gain deeper insight into the campaign's impact on individuals, meanwhile comparing this insight with more general findings for a larger number of respondents in the survey.

The 2023 follow-up survey was sent by email to a total of 430 respondents who, in the 2021-survey, had consented to be interviewed.

A total of 85 respondents completed the full 2023-survey, while an additional 10 respondents have answered parts of the survey. Table 1.1 shows the nationality of the survey respondents.

In total, we conducted interviews with 5 Lithuanian and 11 Polish respondents. The interviews have been conducted with interpreters to ensure full understanding for the interviewees.

Table 1.1 The respondents answer to the question: What is your nationality? N = 95

Nationality	Number of respondents
Lithuanian	31
Polish	33
Bulgarian	6
Romanian	7
Latvian	1
Estonian	5
Russian	1
Other	11
Total	95

Source: 2023-survey, SØA.

Note: Other consist of respondents selecting other countries and respondents who did not answer the question about nationality (which was the final question)

Although our respondents can provide valuable insight from their experienced impacts of *Know Your Rights*, several properties related to the survey design limit our ability to make broader and generalisable conclusions on the long-term impact of the campaign.

The main limiting properties are that we have a total of 95 respondents in our 2023-survey, our sample is relatively limited. Especially when we factor in different characteristics related to age, gender, educational attainment, industry and so on. Furthermore, none of our respondents for the 2023-survey are randomly selected. All respondents have gone through several layers of self-selection. Only re-

spondents who completed and agreed to be contacted for an interview in the 2021-survey received the follow-up survey.

The main consequence of a relatively small sample and self-selection is that there is significant uncertainty related to whether our results are representative for the total population of foreign workers in Norway. Nevertheless, the follow-up survey and in-depth interviews do provide insight from respondents that are otherwise usually hard to reach. The purpose has been to gather in-depth information, which means that the selection process is less a concern for the insight we gain from our interviews.

1.3 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 briefly present what the campaign *Know your rights* is and the main results from our 2021 evaluation of the campaign.

In chapter 3, we present the results from our 2023 follow-up evaluation of the long-term impacts of *Know Your Rights*.

Chapter 4 summarises the main results from our 2023 evaluation.

2 *Know Your Rights* enable and mobilise workers to improve their working conditions

The analysis in this report follows-up our original evaluation of *Know Your Rights*. In this chapter we briefly present what the campaign is and the main results from our original evaluation, which is relevant for the reader to understand the motivation for this follow-up project.

For more detailed descriptions and results from the original evaluation, please see SØA (2021) *Evaluation of the campaign Know Your Rights*.

2.1 Foreign workers are central for combating work-related crime

The Norwegian labour market is characterized by good working conditions and terms of employment. Still, different surveys show a significant level of work-related crime. This especially accounts for sectors that have higher shares of foreign workers.

One of the three objectives formulated for the interdepartmental collaboration against work-related crime is to inform foreign workers about their rights and enable them to fulfil their obligations (Arbeidstilsynet, NAV, Politiet, Skatteetaten, 2022).¹

In 2022 there were more than 510 000 immigrants were living and working in Norway, which amounted to about 18 per cent of total employment. More than 100 000 workers originate from Poland and Lithuania, which are the individual countries that supply most foreign workers to Norway. In total, workers from the target group of *Know Your Rights* amount to more than one in four foreign workers in Norway.²

Workers in the target group most commonly work in construction. Many also work in cleaning services, manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade, in-

cluding repair of motor vehicles. Available information from surveys and national authorities indicates that industries with a high share of foreign workers coincide with industries where we observe a relatively high exposure to work-related crime and violations of work-related legislation (SØA, 2020).

2.2 *Know Your Rights* addresses foreign workers' need for information

Overall, foreign workers can be separated into three main groups when it comes to the risk of being involved in work-related crime:³

1. Employees who want to, but are not able to comply by Norwegian rules and regulations
2. Employees who are exploited by their employer
3. Employees who voluntarily participate in work-related crime

Most workers are assumed to arrive in Norway with the intent to live by Norwegian laws, both for themselves and society. However, circumstances related to their background, motivations and mobility in the labour market may increase the risk of being involved in work-related crime in Norway.

Know your rights is a communication campaign targeted at immigrants from Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Bulgaria and Estonia who are working in Norway. The campaign's purpose is to inform workers about their rights and enable them to fulfil their obligations in the Norwegian labour market. Ultimately, this will hopefully contribute to the efforts against work-related crime in Norway.

The main element of the campaign is a webpage with information about rights and obligations in the

¹ The interdepartmental collaboration against work-related crime involves the Labour Inspectorate, Tax Administration, the Labour and Welfare Administration and the police.

² The target group includes workers from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Estonia, and Bulgaria.

³ These three are based on the groups presented in a common report made by the Labour Inspectorate, Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the police and the Tax Administration in 2019 (Arbeidstilsynet, NAV, politiet og Skatteetaten, 2020).

Norwegian labour market. The page is located at the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority’s website. One of the main features of the webpage is that it is available in 13 languages. In addition to the webpage there has been made a film, pictures, postcards, posters with motives and messages from the campaign. Targeted promotions through Facebook were used to reach the target group.

We have evaluated *Know Your Rights* using an approach called intervention logic, see Figure 2.1. The intervention logic systemises the logic and assumes causal relationships between activities carried out, immediate results and longer-term impacts of the campaign for the target group and society.

The main activity related to *Know Your Rights* was to design and promote the webpage. Good design and relevant promotion are necessary actions for the information to reach the target group. The intended immediate result is that the information has reached the target group, and that the users have attained the information.

User impact is achieved if and when individuals in the target group use the knowledge, they have attained to ensure their rights are not violated and that they fulfil their own obligations in the labour market. At this point, individuals in the target group can contribute to reduced work-related crime, which is the campaign’s intended social impact.

tribute to reduced work-related crime, which is the campaign’s intended social impact.

2.3 The original evaluation found broad reach and indicated mobilisation

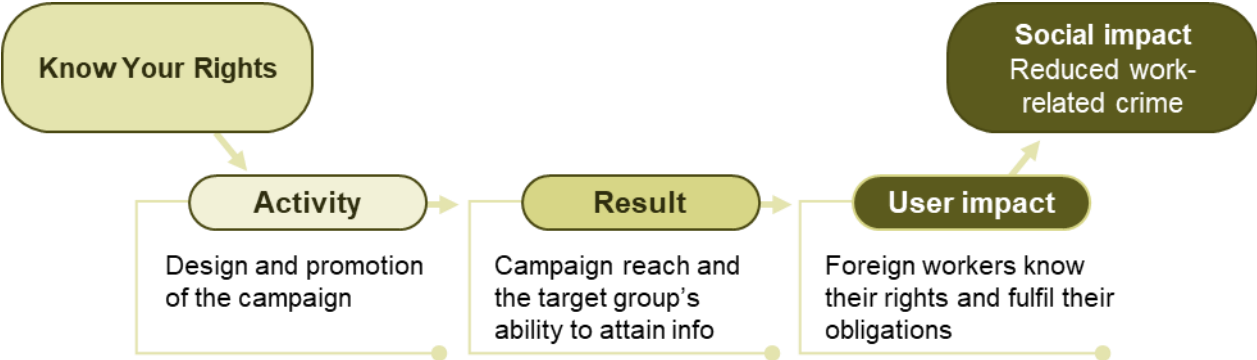
In our original evaluation of *Know Your Rights* we evaluated the reach, design and short-term impacts of the campaign. The evaluation was based on available data and statistics related to the campaign, a digital survey to users that visited the webpage, as well as in-depth interviews with 24 survey respondents conducted in 2021.

2.3.1 The campaign has enabled knowledge about rights and obligations

We found that the promotions in social and traditional media attained a broad reach compared to the size of the target group. Furthermore, the campaign performed significantly better, in terms of Click-through-rate (CTR), than relevant benchmarks. The characteristics of people reached through Facebook, the webpage and the survey are similar to the target population in terms of nationality and industry of employment. These results indicate that the promotional activities were successful.

Most of the respondents from the survey agree that the webpage was easy to use, the content was pre-

Figure 2.1 The intervention logic for *Know Your Rights*



Source: SØA (2021).

sented in an understandable way and that the information was relevant for their situation. Many respondents pointed out that the *Know Your Rights*-webpage is perceived as significantly easier to use and the information more understandable than other official webpages. This indicates that the activities related to designing the campaign were also successful, including the use of plain language.

Both the survey and interviews indicate that the information is significantly more accessible when it is available in their own language. Interviewees say that language was the most important reason they clicked on the campaign. In addition, the attractive design was important.

A large proportion of interviewees, and some who have used the free text function in the survey, describe a great need for information among foreign workers in Norway. Several explain that they have experienced it as challenging to know where to find information, and to understand the information they find. Especially those that have been in Norway for a shorter time period, lack information about their rights and obligations and how to handle the situation. The *Know your rights*-campaign has contributed to address both challenges.

2.3.2 Users discovered violations through the campaign

About one third of the 2023 survey respondents answered that they discovered violations of some of the rights and obligations they read about on the campaign's webpage in their current employment relationship. This indicates that the campaign successfully enabled them to know about their rights and fulfil their obligations in the labour market.

The survey indicates that a relatively high share of respondents with lower levels of formal education discovered violations. 35 and 33 per cent of respondents with below upper or upper secondary education discovered violations, compared to 26 per cent among those with higher education. The results are in line with the assumed risk of being exploited in the labour market. The risk is assumed to be higher because those with less formal education are less likely to know about their rights and obligations, and because they have fewer alternative opportunities in the labour market. These hypotheses are supported by several of the interviewees.

Interviewees were asked what kind of violation they had discovered. Most pointed out violations related to pay (below the minimum wage), overtime pay, time sheets and working environment conditions.⁴

2.3.3 One third wanted change after seeing the campaign

The campaign's potential societal effect on work-related crime is achieved if and when foreign workers' conditions are changed for the better.

About one third of the respondents in our 2021 survey said they planned to or already acted to improve their working conditions after seeing the campaign. The share was even higher among those that had discovered violations.

However, we do not know if they acted. And if they did, how did they go about it and what the results were. Therefore, we have conducted a new survey and more in-depth interviews with some of the respondents we contacted in the original evaluation.

⁴ Note that discovered violations is defined by the respondent, thus we cannot know to what extent the assumed violations correspond to actual violations.

3 The long-term impact of *Know Your Rights*

Our evaluation of the Know Your Rights in 2021 showed that the campaign reached the target group with relevant information. Furthermore, our survey indicated that a substantial share of respondents wanted to take action to change their working conditions after seeing the campaign.

Two years later, we wanted to investigate if and how Know Your Rights have impacted the respondents' actual working conditions. In this chapter we present the results from a 2023 follow-up survey and the in-depth interviews about the long-term impact of Know Your Rights.

The 2023 survey was sent to the subset of respondents that agreed to be contacted in the previous survey. 95 respondents started the 2023 survey. In addition, we have conducted 16 in-depth interviews to gain additional information from the respondents.

The total number of and how respondents were recruited implies that there is a significant amount of uncertainty whether our results are representative for the total population of foreign workers in Norway. Although we present the survey results in graphs, the answers should be interpreted qualitatively rather than quantitatively. Therefore, the distribution of answers should be interpreted as indications rather than exact results. Nonetheless, we present our results because they provide insight from a group of workers who are usually hard to reach. In addition, we can gain more insight on actual longer-term impacts some time after the campaign.

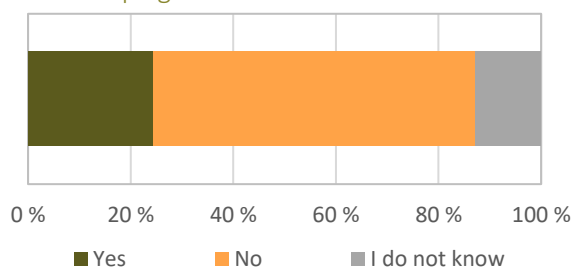
3.1 About a quarter discovered violations

In total, about a quarter of the respondents in the follow-up survey answered that their employment conditions violated rights and obligations they learned about through Know Your Rights, see figure 3.1. The share of respondents that report violations is a bit lower than in the original survey.

The survey suggests that it is more common to discover violations among respondents that have not completed higher education. A higher share of men than women also report discovering violations.

We observe that some respondents did not discover violations in the follow-up survey, who reported violations in the original survey. The discrepancy may, in part, be caused by respondents answering about their current situation in 2023, which may be different than during the original survey.

Figure 3.1 The respondents answer to the question: Did you find that your employment conditions violated any of the rights and obligations that you learned about through the *Know Your Rights* information campaign? N=95.



Source: 2023 survey, SØA.

3.1.1 Many respondents report violations on more than one topic

The respondents most commonly discover violations related to their physical working environment, related to health, safety and environment, see figure 3.2. Closely following are violations related to wages and working hours. Many of the respondents discovered violations on more than one topic, which suggests that once there is a violation, there are often several violations.

Violations related to wages were most common among male respondents, while violations related to the physical working environment were most common among women.

Several interviewees had experienced similar violations at different employers, and in different industries. Hence, many of them experienced violations to be rather common in their industries.

Several interviewees are under the impression that violations related to contracts and payment is common in industries with a high share of foreign workers. Several have experienced being refused to be on sick leave, wages below minimum and no overtime. Long hours, without compensation, are experienced by many. Most pointed to the fact that most written contracts are in Norwegian, which is difficult for the employees to really understand.

For example, 14 hours a day, with no days off a week. One of the interviewees, working in construction, have experienced violations at all his employers, varying in severity. His experience is that there are more severe violations at smaller construction sites, because they are rarely controlled by the authorities.

There are also several examples of workers employed at a place for several years without getting a permanent job offer. Several employers only hire labour from staffing enterprises.⁵

One interviewee, who work as an engineer in the construction industry, notices multiple violations every day. These are mostly related to the working environment (HESC), for example workers having to enter an unsecured scaffolding. The violations are also found related to payment, such as no payment for overtime or travel time. His impression is that some employers often “forget” the payment and hope they will not get caught.

Another interviewee explained that she has experienced violations related to all the mentioned categories in figure 3.2., in addition to discrimination based on sex and nationality.

Figure 3.2 The respondents answer to the question: Related to which topic did you discover violations after seeing the “Know Your Rights”-campaign? (multiple responses possible). N=22.



Note: Question only given to respondents that discovered violations. Source: SØA

⁵ Note that from 1 April 2023 hiring from staffing enterprises is only legal if certain terms are met. [Click here](#) for more information at The Labour Inspection Authority's website.

3.1.2 The employer's nationality may impact working conditions

We asked interviewees about their employer's nationality, and their impression of how nationality can impact working conditions. Although not all interviewees have the same experiences, our impression is that Norwegian employers are believed to provide relatively better working conditions than foreign employers in Norway.

Several interviewees are under the impression that Norwegian employers are more inclined to obey the law. This impression stems from their own experience with employers with different nationalities, their friends' experiences, and a general impression based on news. One Polish interviewee perceives that Polish employers are more often in the news due to violations against the workers, than Norwegian employers.

Several interviewees are under the impression that foreign employers exploit employees' lack of knowledge about their rights in the labour market and their Norwegian and English language skills. Several pointed out that employees working in Norway for short periods of time are particularly vulnerable because they often wish to support their families back home and have not had the time to learn about rights. The high turnover of foreign workers is an argument for continually launching campaigns such as *Know your rights*.

One interviewee has experienced violations being resolved after talking to her manager. She was under the impression that violations, especially at foreign employers, might be due to the employer's lack of knowledge. Note that she was among the respondents in the survey who answered that she had not found any violations after seeing the campaign, and already had knowledge about rights and obligations. Note also that even if she herself did not need the information, she was certain that the campaign

was very useful for many. Especially for those that had not been in the country for long.

Some interviewees have had bad experiences with Norwegian employers. One points out that it may be easier for Norwegian employers to exploit foreign employees, because they know the Norwegian laws and society. This can make it easier for example to cover-up important information and talk their way out of consequences. Furthermore, the interviewee is under the impression that the Norwegian employers are viewed as less suspicious by the authorities, which can be exploited.

3.2 More than a third of respondents acted to improve their working conditions

In the 2023 survey, 36 per cent of the respondents answer that they have taken action to improve their work situation after seeing the campaign Know Your Rights. This is on par with the 34 per cent of respondents that wanted to make a change after seeing the campaign in the 2021 survey.

Among respondents who discovered violations, 86 per cent answered in the 2023 survey that they have taken some kind of action to change their employment conditions. We observed the same pattern in the 2021 survey, where about two thirds of these respondents reported that they wanted to make changes to their conditions. Overall, there seems to be more male than female respondents that acted after seeing the campaign.

The most common approach was to try to change working conditions after seeing the campaign, see figure 3.3. In addition, about two out of ten respondents searched for a new job after seeing the campaign. About half of these have quit their jobs, while the other half have not successfully changed their employer as of now.

The survey results suggest that it is more common among respondents who have completed higher education to quit their job after they saw the campaign. The results may reflect that workers with longer formal education in general have higher mobility in the labour market.

Of those who have quit their job, most say that they tried to improve the conditions at their old workplace before quitting. Of those who did discover violations through the campaign, *all* respondents answer that they tried to improve the working conditions at their old job before quitting.

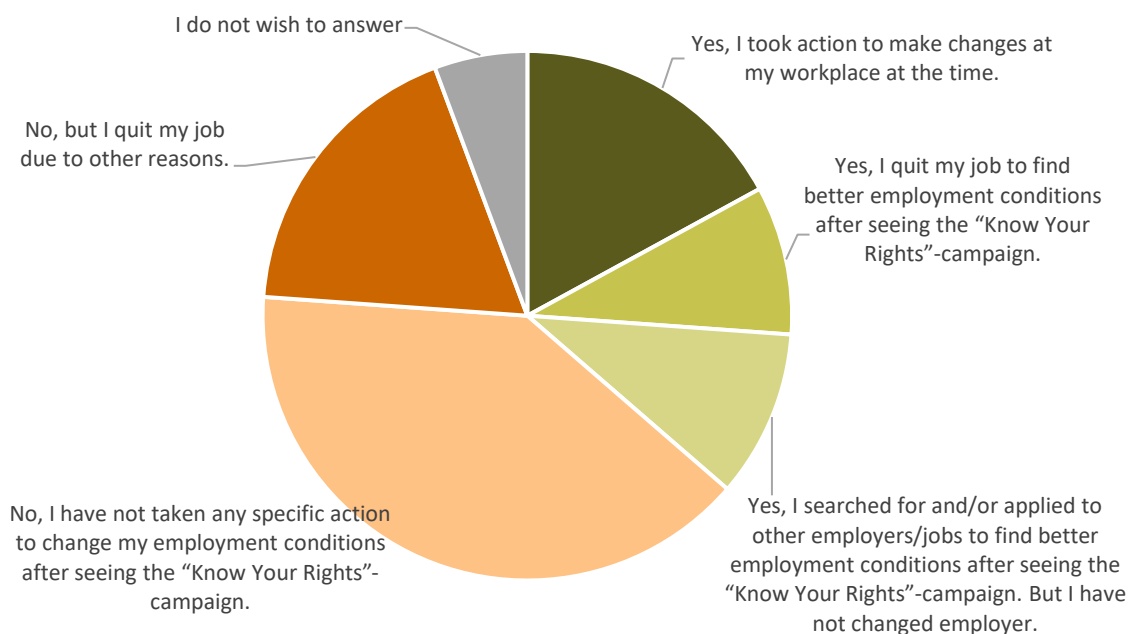
About 40 per cent of the respondents answer that they have not taken action to change their working conditions after seeing the campaign. However, al-

most none of them report that they discovered violations because of the campaign. This indicates that they do not have specific reasons to act based on the campaign's information.

Only two respondents who discovered violations did not take any action. Both responded that they did not know how to go about it. At the same time, one of them also said that the violations were not severe enough for them to act upon.

Our results from the 2021 and 2023 surveys, as well as our in-depth interviews indicate that the campaign has not only provided the target group with knowledge, but also motivated and enabled them to take action to improve their own working conditions.

Figure 3.3 The respondents answer to the question: Have you taken specific actions to change your employment conditions after answering the last survey about "Know Your Rights" in 2021? N=88.



Source: 2023 survey, SØA.

3.3 Talking to a manager or contacting a labour union are the most common actions

The respondents were asked how they approached changing their working conditions. More than half of the respondents talked to their manager, to remind him or her of their rights as an employee, see figure 3.4. The second most common approach was to contact a labour union about their case.

Only a handful of respondents say that they contacted the Labour Inspection Authority or the police. Of those contacting the Labour Inspection Authority, the most common violation was working hours or working environment. None of the respondents contacted the service centre for foreign workers (SUA) about their case.

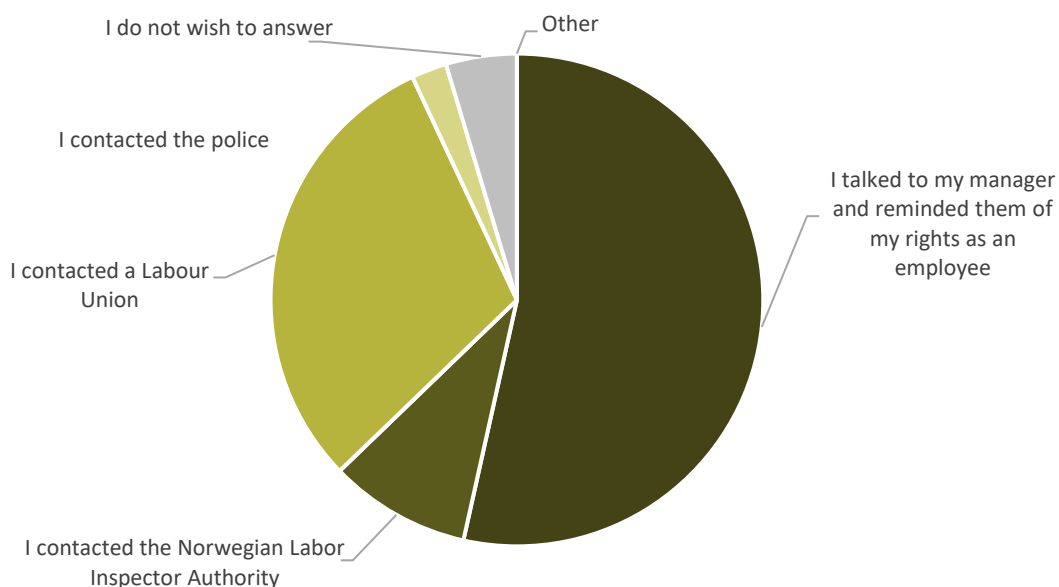
Talking to their manager or employer is a logical first step to initiate a change in the workplace, as they have direct control over what conditions employees have at their workplace. This result indicates that it

is possible for employees to confront their employers about conditions that do not comply with current legislation. This may especially be true for violations that employees perceive as 'minor'.

For more serious or extensive violations, it may be necessary to involve other parties who can support the worker's case. Results from the survey suggest that there is a relatively low bar for workers to contact a relevant labour union about their case. While relatively few choose to contact the labour inspectorate or the police directly. This may also be because the labour unions will involve relevant authorities if there is a need.

In interviews, several explain that talking to their manager has been unsuccessful. Several have experienced getting worse conditions after talking to their manager about violations. Several are afraid of talking to their managers due to the consequences this may lead to, such as being fired.

Figure 3.4 The respondents answer to the question: How did you go about making changes to your working conditions? (multiple responses possible). N=31.



Source: SØA

3.4 A third of respondents successfully improved their working conditions

When workers discover violations of legislation concerning their current working conditions, it is likely necessary for them to take some kind of action to improve their conditions. However, that action may not be sufficient to bring actual change.

Around a third of those that acted, report that they successfully improved their conditions. This includes those that acted at their current workplace, those that quit their job, and those who searched for a new job but have not changed employer. It is a bit more common to report real changes among male respondents, as well as among those that have not completed higher education.

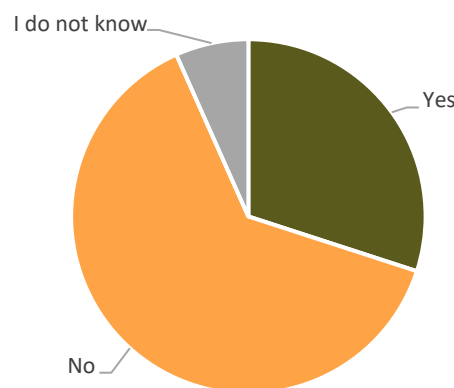
About half of those that took action to improve conditions at their current workplace successfully improved their conditions. For those that searched for a new job, but have yet to change their employer, almost none report real changes in their working conditions. Better conditions are likely an important reason for searching for a new job.

The most common reason respondents did not experience real changes to their working conditions was that their boss refused to improve matters. Some also report that they expected to lose their job if they pursued the matters further. Three of the respondents that have searched for new jobs, but have not changed employer, report that their current employer has hindered their job hunting. However, the same share of respondents say that they did not find any relevant jobs with better conditions.

Interviews indicate that whether the conditions were improved, to some degree depend on how the employees acted. The overall impression is that labour unions were helpful for many, while those that con-

tact national authorities directly are more often disappointed with the results.

Figure 3.5 The respondents answer to: Did your actions lead to real changes in your working conditions? N = 30.



Source: SØA.

3.4.1 Interviews indicate positive experiences with the labour unions

About 30 per cent of the survey respondents who tried to change their working conditions contacted a labour union. Of them, 15 per cent answered that their conditions improved. Of those that decided to quit their job after being in contact with a labour union, everyone experienced having improved conditions at their new job.

In interviews, those that had been in contact with their labour union regarding violations experienced being listened to and being helped. The help the different interviewees got depended on their situation, the violations they had discovered and which industry they worked in. The most common help was related to negotiation, knowledge of what to do, and legal assistance.

One interviewee told us that with help from a labour union, it was possible to get several of the colleagues together to make a stronger case. This in-

interviewee claim that they did succeed in improving their conditions, but that their employer filed for bankruptcy soon after.

3.4.2 Contacting authorities is not necessarily the solution for workers

In total, five survey respondents contacted the labour inspectorate or the police to improve their working conditions. From our interviewees it became clear that even more of the respondents have been in contact with the Labour Inspectorate, but in earlier employment relationships.

The interviewees communicate a lack of belief in the Labour Inspectorate's ability to improve actual working conditions. Several question the Labour Inspectorate's interest in improving working conditions and are under the impression that the inspectorate does not care about their conditions.

Several interviewees also experienced that it was difficult getting help from the Norwegian authorities. This has a negative impact on the interviewees' trust in the authorities and their willingness to try to improve their working conditions. Several claim that they do not trust that the Norwegian authorities would or could help them if needed.

One interviewee experienced immediate firing without grounds or warning. When contacting both the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate and Konfliktrådet, he was dismissed because they claimed to not be the right authorities. He felt like he did not get any information about what he could and should do next.

Several other interviewees who tried to get help from the Labour Inspectorate, were told that they could not help them and that the only solution was to change jobs. This includes interviewees experiencing for example breach of contracts, missing payments, discrimination and threats, asking for assistance in improving the working conditions. The

assistance asked includes mainly legal assistance and that the inspectorate inspects their employer.

Some of the interviewees are under the impression that the Labour Inspectorate in their home country would have taken their case more seriously and are more highly respected by employers. However, most interviewees have no experience with the Labour Inspectorate in their home country and do not know how the case would have been handled there.

One interviewee was threatened by the employer when trying to improve working conditions. The interviewee believes that this would not have happened in their home country, because the authorities would have acted when being contacted.

Note that the Labour Inspection Authority's role is to supervise whether enterprises meet the requirements of the working environment regulations. The Labour Inspection Authority can also look into cases at the individual level to check whether the provisions of the Working Environment Act have been complied with in the case. It is not the role of the Labour Inspection Authority to mediate or handle conflicts between the parties. Nor shall the Authority negotiate solutions or enter into a case as a representative of one of the parties.

Matters relating to private law, such as employment, dismissal and the right to leave of absence, must be handled by the parties themselves. The Labour Inspection Authority can provide guidance on the provisions of the Working Environment Act but does not supervise private law provisions in the Working Environment Act. This might be the reason why several of the interviewees experience receiving better assistance from unions, than from the inspectorate.

3.4.3 Language is important

The interviewees agree that being able to speak a language they are comfortable with, is of high im-

portance when discussing working conditions. This is applicable regardless of who is contacted for assistance.

Several express issues with being understood by the authorities they contacted. Several also pointed out that it is difficult to know how the Labour Inspectorate should be contacted. None of our respondents have been in contact with the service centre for foreign workers (SUA).⁶ Going to SUA would likely have reduced language barriers, and the probability of being dismissed should be lower, since several authorities are physically present at the centre.

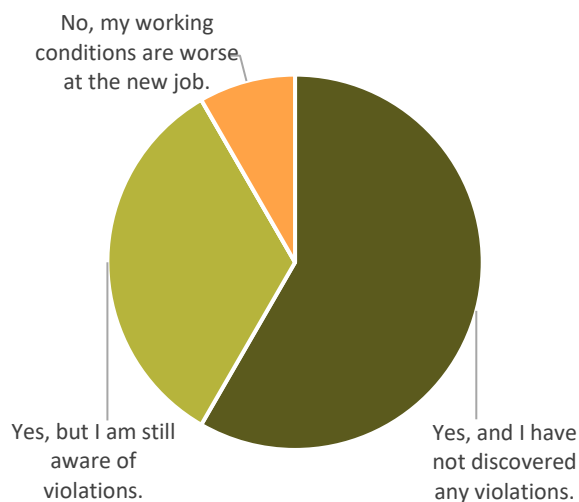
In our original survey (2021), three times as many respondents preferred getting information from Norwegian authorities' websites, rather than SUA. This indicates that there should be made an effort to make SUA more known to foreign workers. Note that geography is a barrier to contacting SUA, as the centre is only operative in five cities.

3.5 Finding a new job seems to lead to better working conditions

Quitting your job is a drastic action and may be associated with more risk than trying to change the working conditions at your current workplace. There can be several reasons why an employee fails to change their situation, even after learning about rights and obligations.

In total, 24 of the respondents in our survey have changed jobs since our original survey in 2021. More than 90 per cent of them say they have better working conditions at their new job, see figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6 The respondents answer to: Are working conditions better at your new job? N = 24.



Note: Three additional responses were possible, but were not chosen by any respondents; No, my working conditions are about the same, I do not know, I do not wish to answer.

Source: SØA

While conditions are overall better for those that changed their job, some of them say that they are aware of some violations at their new job. We observe the same pattern if we only look at the responses from those that specifically chose to quit their job after seeing the campaign and independent of educational attainment.

On the other hand, there are two respondents in our survey who report worse working conditions in their new jobs. Note that we do not have additional information that can explain how they ended up in that situation.

Most of the interviewees, among those that wanted to change their working conditions, explain that they failed to change the conditions at their workplace. However, they point out that the campaign made

⁶ SUA is a cooperation between the Labour Inspection Authority, the police, the Tax Administration and UDI. At SUA, workers can sort out every-

thing needed to work in Norway. At the center applications are processed quickly and guidance is provided in several languages.

them aware of their rights, and therefore enabled them to find a job with better working conditions.

One of the interviewees explain that, even if some of the working conditions were improved, there were still violations at her previous workplace. She had for example been able to get contracts for all workers, but there were no real changes to the actual working conditions. Another interviewee told us that his manager forged documents to improve the formal appearance of the firm, without changing actual working conditions.

One of our interviewees was forced to quit her job after talking to the management about violations. Furthermore, she was led to believe that her Norwegian language skills were too weak for anyone to believe her, if she were to tell the authorities about the violations she had discovered. This interviewee did get a lawyer, won in court, and started her own recruitment firm afterwards. Part of her motivation for starting the firm, was to make sure employees in her industry had decent working conditions.

An interviewee that quit his job before changes were made, have been told by former colleagues that the conditions did not change after he decided to quit.

Another interviewee explained that she tried to improve the working conditions by going to court after seeing the campaign. This was after she did not get help from the Labour Inspectorate. During the court process, she was still employed by the employer where she had discovered violations and was treated very poorly. Her mental health was significantly affected by this process, and she said that she would not have gone through it again. If she were to experience violations at another employer, she would rather quit and find another job. Several of the other interviewees have similar experiences, with mental health issues as a consequence of trying to improve working conditions.

Several interviewees have similar experiences, as the above-mentioned. One describes worse and more unpredictable work schedules and more physically demanding tasks as a punishment for trying to improve working conditions. This caused him a lot of stress, and he believe the stroke he got, was a result of the poor working conditions.

The interviews reveal several examples of situations where employees know that they are being exploited but feel that they are forced to stay in the situation. Typically, because of a risk of becoming unemployed, but in more extreme cases because they are afraid that they or individuals close to them can be hurt if they leave or report their employer. Some also describe that they know several other workers in the same situation.

Overall, the results from the survey indicate that changing jobs is associated with improving working conditions. Logically it makes sense that most workers would not accept job offers that lead to worse conditions. Note, that we cannot conclude, based on our data, whether there is a causal relationship between changing jobs and better conditions. Other factors can affect these measures. For example, high demand for labour in Norway during the last couple of years can have increased workers' bargaining power. Whereas stricter regulations of for example skill requirements, can make it more difficult for foreign workers.

On the other hand, several of our interviewees describe significant challenges when trying to improve conditions at their workplaces. Many of them say that these difficulties have reduced their willingness to take similar action in the future. These results confirm that society needs other tools than information to reach the intended social impact of reduced work-related crime. Still, *Know Your Rights* has played a role in informing and mobilising workers to act.

4 Concluding remarks and recommendations

Our original evaluation of *Know Your Rights* found that the campaign had a broad reach within the intended target group. Furthermore, the campaign distributed relevant and understandable information to the users, many of whom also intended to improve their working conditions after seeing the campaign. The main objective of this follow-up project was to analyse the longer-term impact of *Know Your Rights* on those that saw the campaign.

Our 2023 survey reached 95 respondents, who also saw the campaign in 2021. About one third of the respondents have taken some type of action to change their working conditions after seeing the campaign. Among the survey respondents we have conducted 16 in-depth interviews, to gain additional insights. While the respondents can give us a significant amount of information, our ability to make broad and generalisable conclusions about the impacts of communication campaigns on foreign workers in Norway is limited.

The main results from the 2023 survey and our in-depth interviews are:

- The campaign seems to successfully mobilise those that discovered violations to act.
- The most common approach to improve working conditions was to talk to a manager. Many also contact a labour union to get help.
- Some, but far from all, who acted, have successfully improved their working conditions.
- Many interviewees have experienced significant pushback, and even threats, from their employers when they try to confront them about working conditions.
- Finding a new job seems to provide the highest chance of improving working conditions.
- Our interviews suggest that many experiences helpful support from labour unions, while they are more frustrated with how the labour inspectorate can and will help them.

- The employer's nationality may impact conditions at the workplace.

Our assessment is that this follow-up analysis supports our conclusion from the original evaluation. Overall, *Know Your Rights* has been a successful communication campaign. Information and knowledge regarding rights and obligations seem to enable workers to avoid employers who violate workers' rights. This implies that if everyone had information and knowledge, the access to vulnerable employees would be significantly reduced. Still, other factors do affect foreign workers' ability to successfully improve their conditions. Our analyses suggest that their employers' refusal to improve matters is a significant barrier.

Below, we discuss some possible learning points from our two analyses of the impacts of *Know Your Rights*, which we think are relevant for communication campaigns generally as well.

4.1 Recommendations for future information campaigns based on this evaluation

Overall, our assessment is that the *Know Your Rights* campaign has been successful, and to a large degree has reached the overall goals of the campaign. However, based on learnings from this evaluation, we have some recommendations for future information campaigns targeted at foreign workers' rights in the labour market. These are:

- Make a new section on the *Know Your Rights* webpage about which actions workers can and should take to improve their working conditions.
- More information about what to expect from the Norwegian labour inspectorate and more information about the role of labour unions.
- Continue to back up information campaigns with other government compliance strategies.

4.1.1 Users need more information on how they can and should act if they discover violations

Our analyses suggest that *Know Your Rights* succeeds at communicating relevant and understandable information about rights and obligations in the Norwegian labour market. Some of the best features of the campaign is that the information is available in the foreign workers' own language and that the use of plain language makes it more accessible.

The follow-up analysis confirms that *Know Your Rights* contains relevant information for foreign workers in Norway. Several respondents have pointed out that the campaign successfully communicates rights and obligations in the labour market. However, they request more information about how they can and should handle the situation if they discover violations.

Information from our interviewees specifically suggests that there is some confusion about what they can and cannot expect from the Labour Inspection Authority. Several of our respondents have requested step-by-step instructions about how they should go about handling their situation.

Our assessment is that a new section about different actions the user can take, would be a valuable addition to the *Know Your Rights* webpage. This section should include information about taking up matters with your employer, how to contact and what to expect from the Labour Inspection Authority and the possibility of contacting a labour union.

The information we have from our interviews, is that some respondents are frustrated with the results they get from contacting the Labour Inspection Authority. We interpret this partly as a misunderstanding of what the Labour Inspectorate's role is. In gen-

eral, many of the violations foreign workers experience are private law matters, in which the Labour Inspection Authority does not enter as a representative of one of the parties. Labour unions, on the other hand, can take a more active role as a representative of workers. This emphasises why we believe more information about labour unions are relevant for the *Know Your Rights* webpage.

4.1.2 Communication campaigns must be backed by other government compliance strategies

While better informed workers can act to improve their working conditions, far from all are able to successfully improve them. At the same time, some of our interviewees have pointed out that some workers voluntarily participate in illegal activities, for example those that do not permanently reside in Norway. Both factors mean that we cannot expect communication campaigns like *Know Your Rights* to handle all types of work-related crime.

OECD and the Norwegian Tax Administration has systemised economic actors' attitude towards compliance in a triangle, see figure 4.1. We assume, and have *some* empirical support, that most economic actors in Norway are in the white and green segment of the compliance triangle.⁷

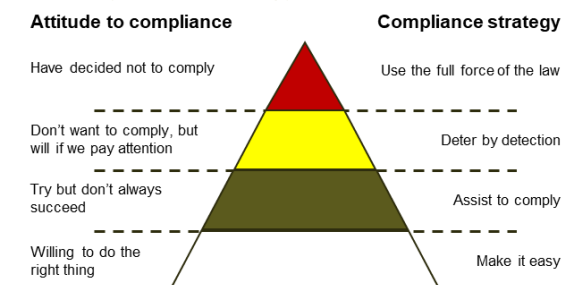
As mentioned above, it is important to remember that there is a risk of non-compliance from both employers and workers, depending on their characteristics. The impact of *Know Your Rights* and other communication campaigns heavily depends on the characteristics of both groups.

Logically, information campaigns like *Know Your Rights* are expected to have the largest impact when both workers and employers are in the white and green segment. More information will enable

⁷ Arntsen, Berset, Næringsrud, Reiersen and Hedemark (2016) estimated, based on a survey, that the white and green segment make up for about

92 per cent of Norwegian firms. However, they do recognise that the share may be lower, because it is difficult to measure these groups exactly.

Figure 4.2 Spectrum of attitudes to compliance and compliance strategy



Source: SØA, based on OECD (2004) and Arntsen, Berset, Næringsrud, Reiersen and Hedemark (2016).

them to help each other comply with relevant rules and regulations in the labour market.

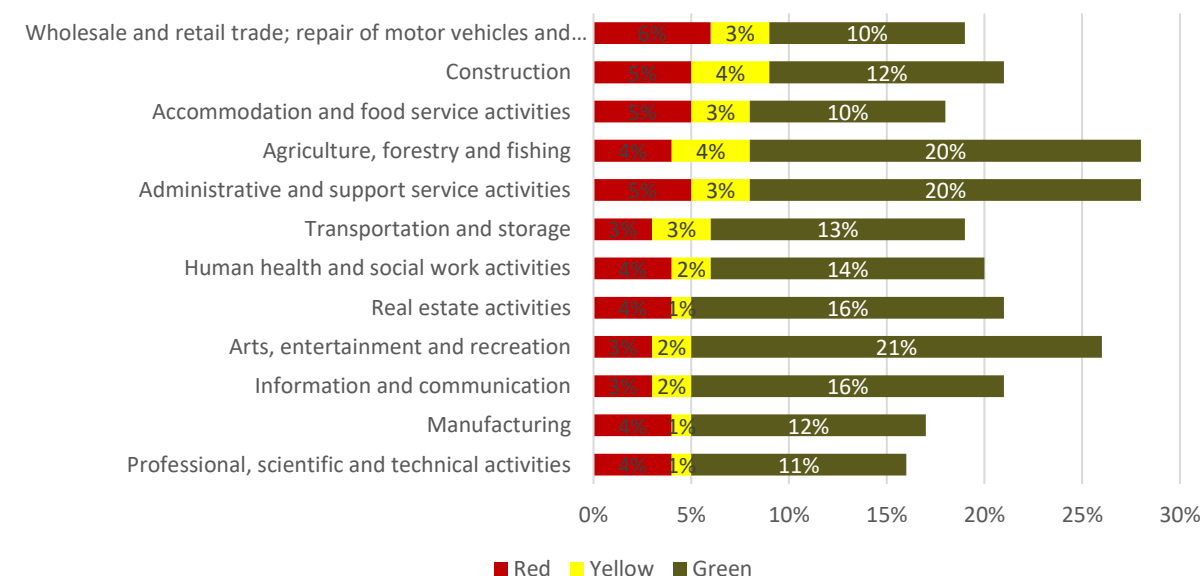
If employers or workers perceive targeted information campaigns as specific attention, they could also influence the yellow segment. However, it is likely that these cases, along with the red segment, will require the use of other interventions. Perceived risk of discovery seems to be important for how workers and employers in these segments will behave in the labour market.

One of the strengths associated with *Know Your Rights*, may be when workers in the white and green segment are employed by firms in the yellow or green segment. With relevant information and knowledge, these workers can act to improve their own conditions by informing their managers.

As we have seen in our survey, many respondents have confronted their managers with violations. Some have successfully improved their conditions, while others were not able to. More information could also enable these workers to avoid non-compliant employers in the first place, effectively reducing the employers' income opportunities.

If they are not able to improve conditions on their own, *Know Your Rights* gives them more information about how to get in touch with the Labour Inspection Authority. However, our interviews suggest that a real and effective response from the contacted authorities, is important to maintain their trust in authorities and conditions in the Norwegian labour market in general.

Figure 4.1 The distribution of each segment in different industries. Sorted by descending share of red and yellow segment in each industry.



Source: Berset, Næringsrud, Reiersen, and Arntsen (2013).

Based on a survey among Norwegian firms, Berset, Næringsrud, Reiersen, and Arntsen (2013) estimated that the red and yellow segments amounted to about 8 per cent of firms. The red and yellow segments are largest in wholesale and retail trade (incl. repair of motor vehicles), construction and accommodation and food services. These are incidentally among the industries with a relatively large share of foreign workers.

While they likely make up a small proportion of all employers and workers, the existence of the red and yellow segments necessitates the use of other types of interventions from both the Labour Inspection Authority and other relevant authorities. It is essential that these employers and workers perceive that illegal activities are likely to be discovered, and that they are effectively sanctioned.

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