



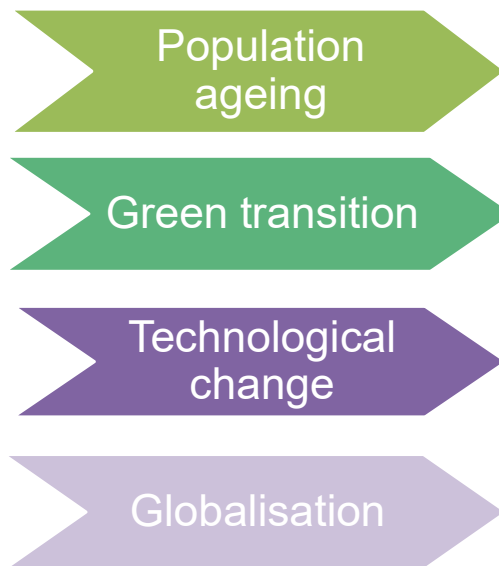
LOTUS policy dialogue workshop
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Continuous Learning – what role for the higher education sector

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The megatrends are changing the type and content of jobs



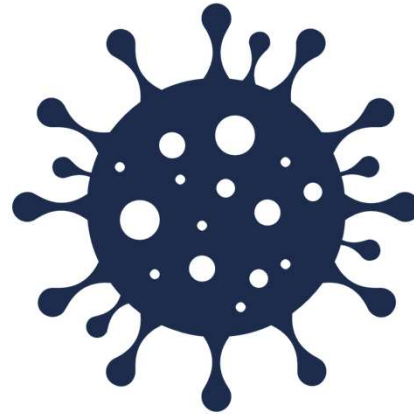
- Number of jobs
- Type of jobs
- Demand for skills
- Skills supply



The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the progression of the megatrends and contributed to further changes in skill demand

Technological change

- Accelerated technology adoption
- Increased risk of displacement for those already vulnerable



Globalisation

- Restructuring of global value chains
- Reshoring and shorter chains

Demographic developments

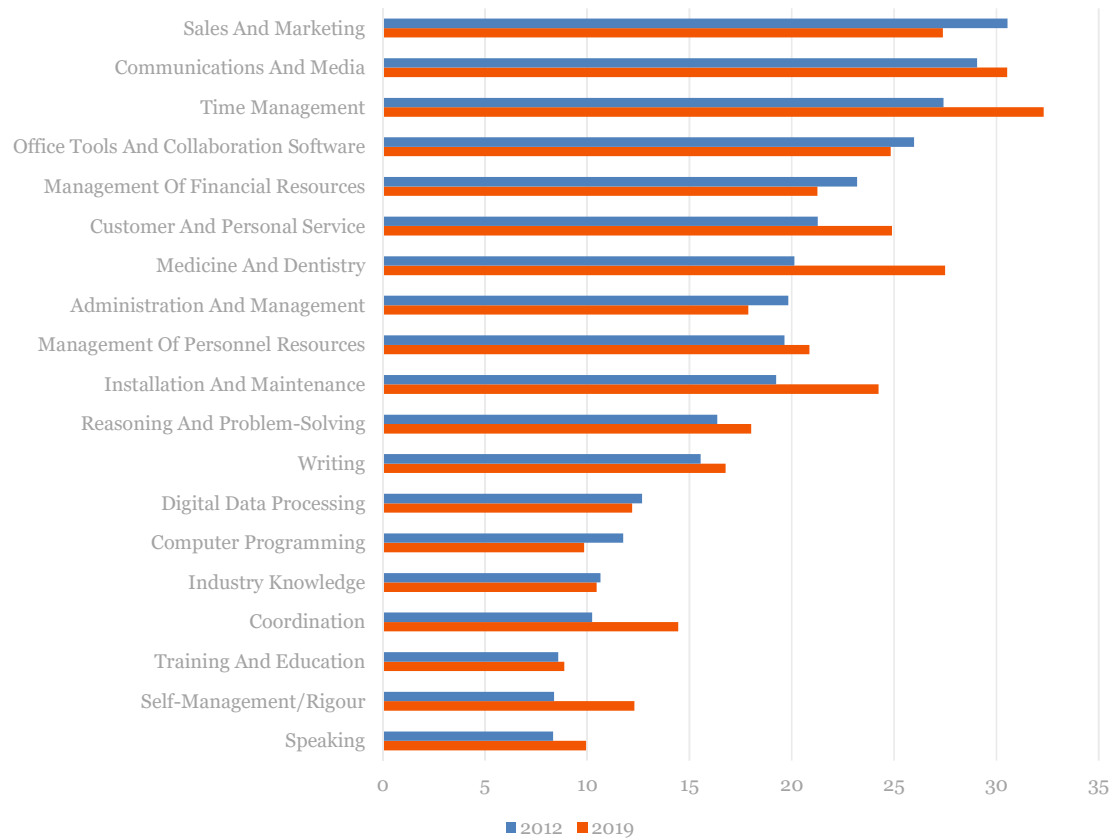
- Decline in migration
- (Temporarily) lower life expectancy
- Reduced brain drain
- New model of international mobility

Climate emergency

- “Green” recovery measures in crisis recovery packages
- Roll back of existing measures



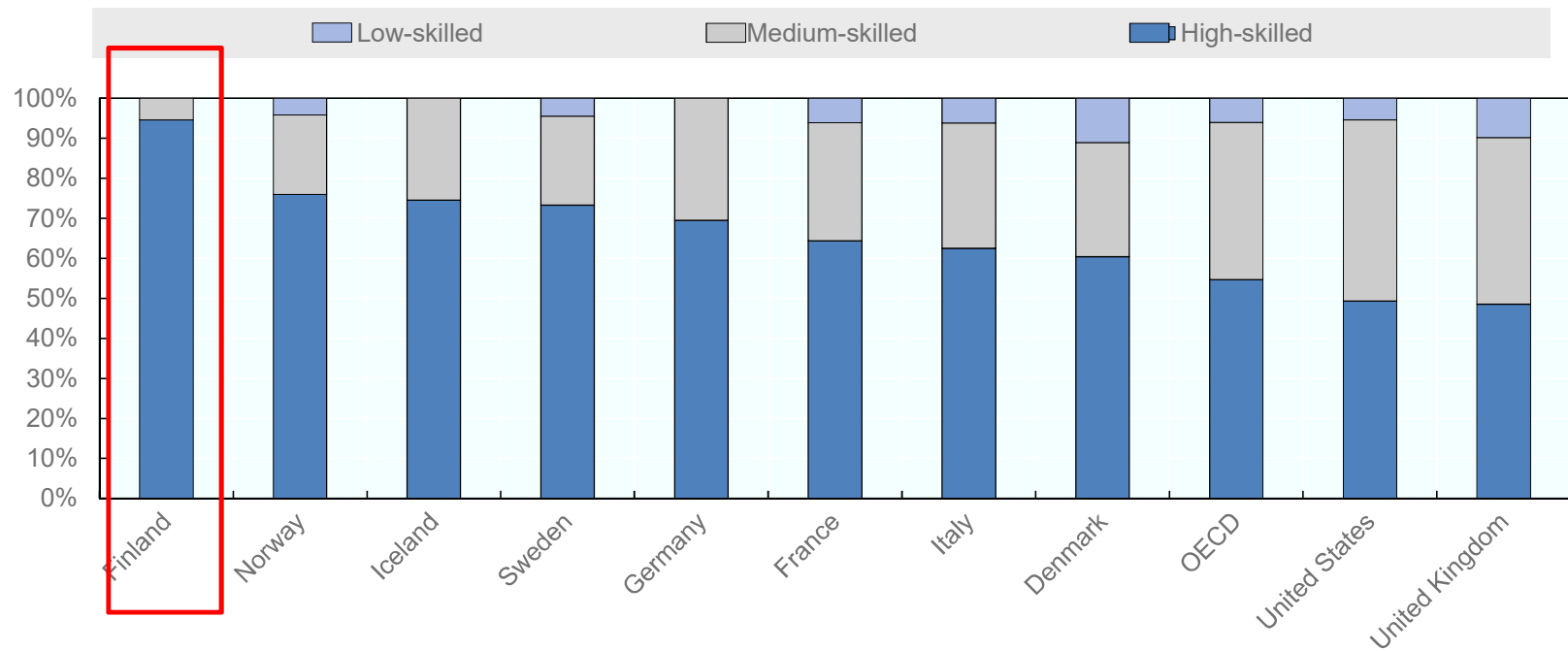
Translating into a growing and more generalised demand for transversal and digital skills





Most jobs in shortage occupations are high-skilled

Share of employment in shortage, by skill level



Source: www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org



Are countries ready?



Urgency	Coverage	Inclusiveness	Flexi-guidance	Alignment	Perceived impact	Financing
Population ageing Automation & structural change Adult skills Globalisation	Employers Individuals	Socio-demographic characteristics Employment and contract status	Flexibility of training provision Use of career guidance services	Labour market imbalances Assessment of skill needs Training for future skills	Usefulness and effectiveness	Government Employers Individuals

Sources: [*Priorities for adult learning dashboard*](#)

Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS), the European Adult Education Survey (AES), Eurostat and OECD data on Active Labour Market Policies, Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) data, UN world population prospects data, a number of country level surveys



Even the best systems have room for improvement

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
How urgent do skill challenges need to be addressed?	Less urgent	Less urgent	Less urgent	Less urgent
How good is the coverage of provision?	Average	Average	Very good	Very good
How inclusive is the system?	Very inclusive	Not very inclusive	Very inclusive	Very inclusive
How flexible is the system?	Very flexible	Average	Not very flexible	Not very flexible
How high is the perceived impact of training?	Average	Average	Not very high	Not very high
How aligned is the system with labour market needs?	Very aligned	Average	Very aligned	Not very aligned
How well is the system financed?	Very well	Very well	Average	Average

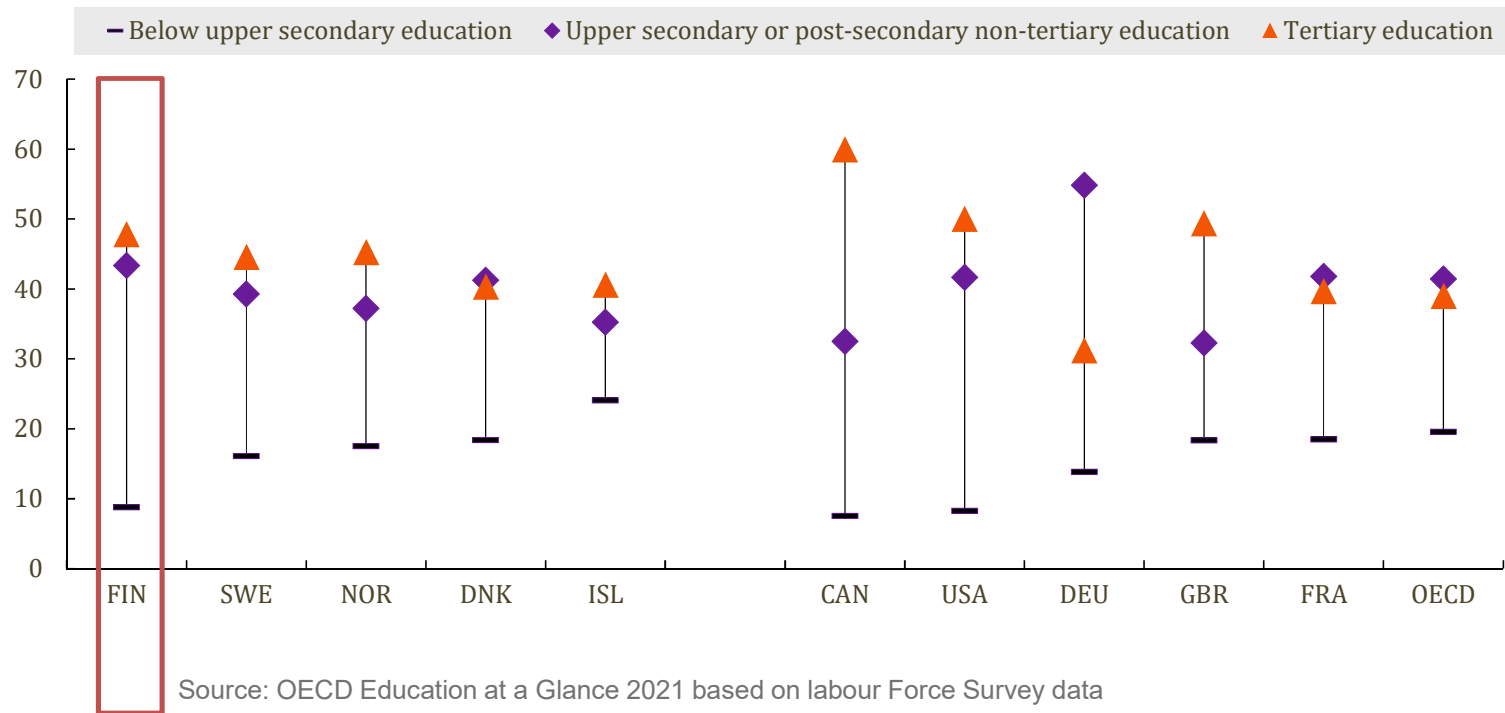
Note: all data refers to job-related adult learning only

Source: OECD Dashboard Priorities for Adult Learning, in: OECD (2019_[20]), Future-ready Adult Learning Systems, Getting Skills Right, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en>



Most Nordic countries only have small shares of adults with low education and low skill levels

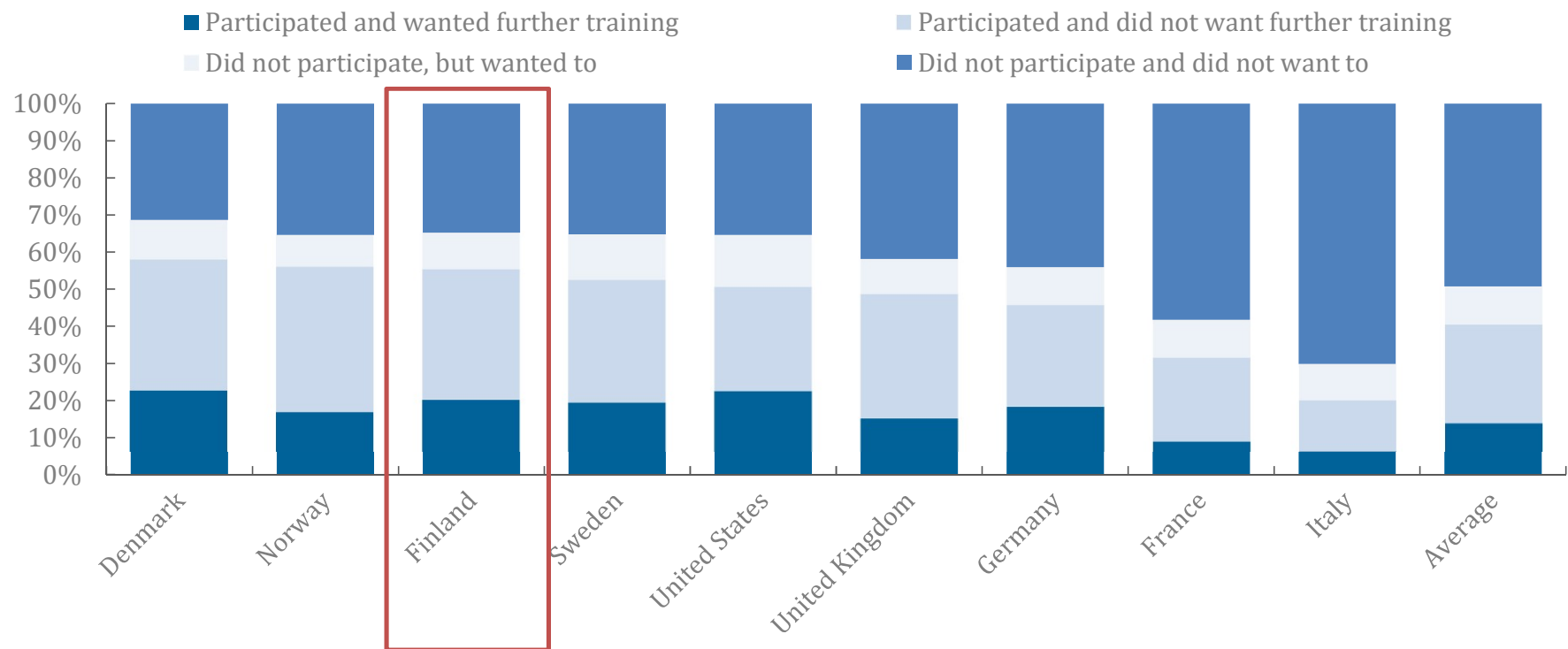
Share of population by educational attainment (2020), adults aged 25-64





Continuous learning is crucial to adapt to these changes but many adults do not train...

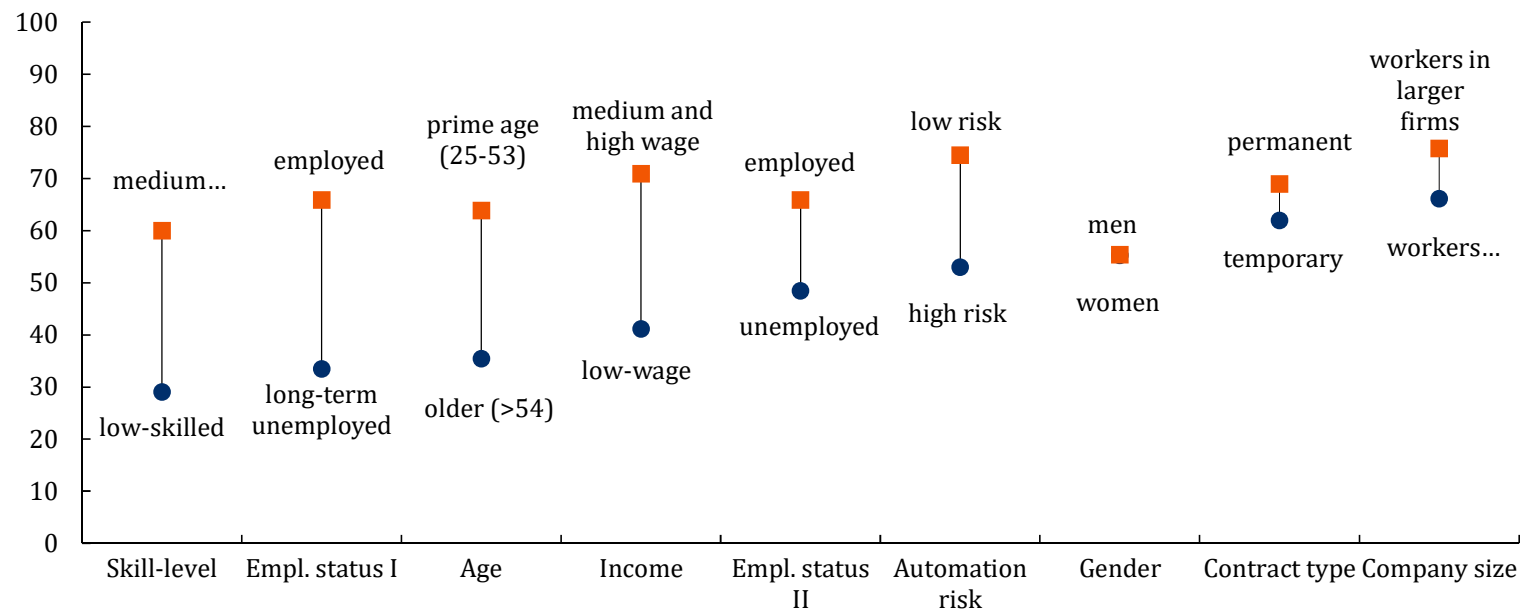
Participation and willingness to train across countries, % of adults





... and the disadvantaged train even less

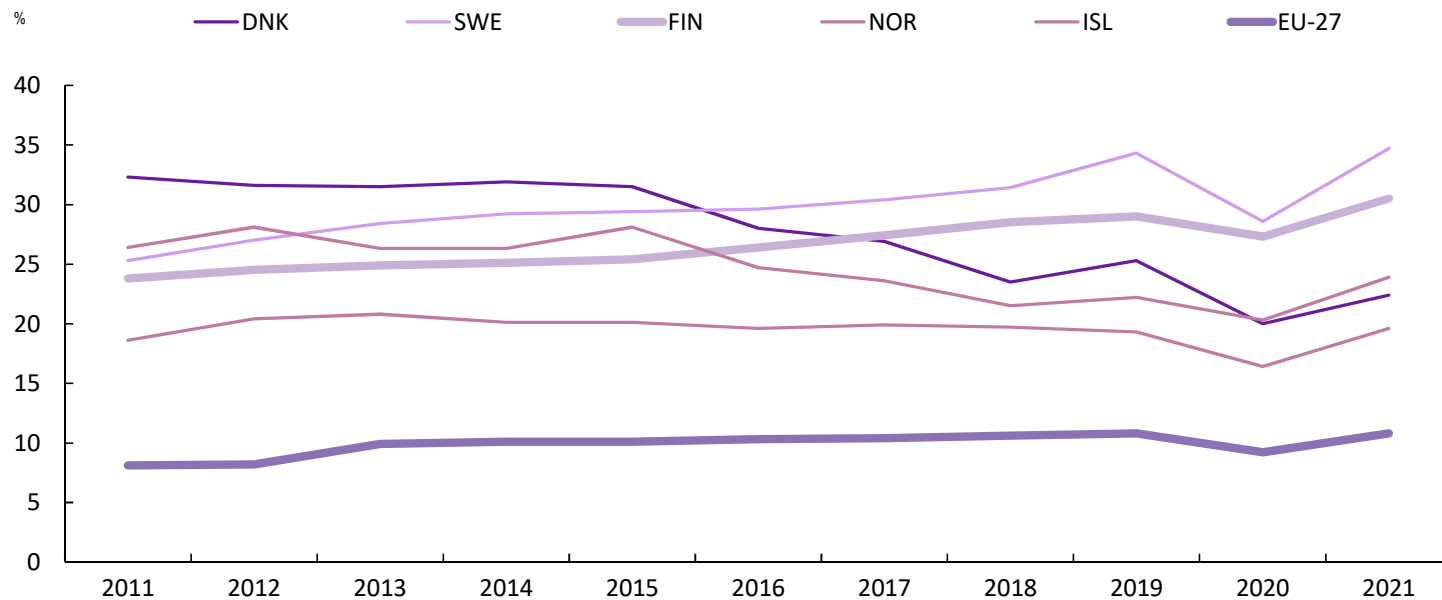
Participation gaps of disadvantaged groups, % of adult participating in training





Trajectories of adult learning participation show a dip during the pandemic

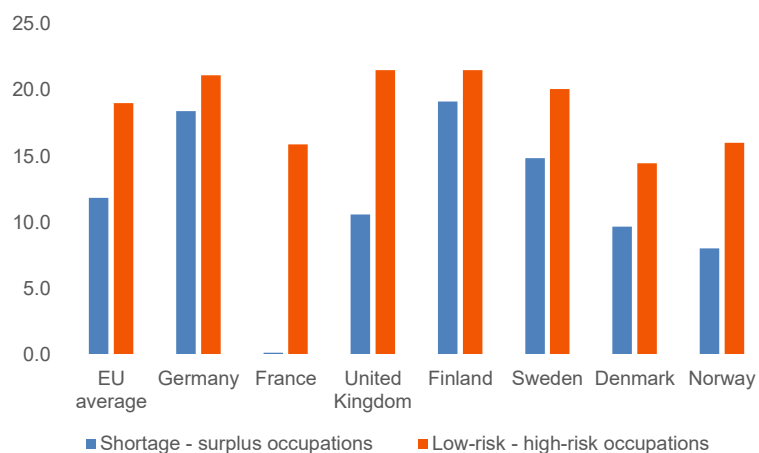
Participation rate in education and training in the last 4-weeks (2011-2020), adults aged 25-64





Alignment to skill needs is a major issue in adult learning

Workers in jobs at high risk of automation or in shortage jobs train less than their counterparts



Other indicators of training alignment

	EU average	Germany	France	UK	Finland	Sweden	Denmark	Norway
% of training hours outside compulsory training	79.6	79.6	74.3	72.3	80.0	75.6	90.2	82.3
% of enterprises (10+) that assess their future skill needs	68.3	62.8	68.4	92.3	78.6	72.9	85.0	70.9
Overlap between firms' development priorities and their training activities (0-3)	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.3		1.5	1.6



Key policy directions

Coverage and Inclusiveness

- Help adults make informed training choices
- Reduce barriers to training participation
- Encourage employers to offer training

Alignment

- Collect and use skills assessment and anticipation information
- Support adults with a high risk of seeing their skills become obsolete

Impact

- Assess the quality of training providers and make the information on quality widely available
- Encourage the use of work organisation practices that raise returns to training

Put in place adequate and sustainable financing, including through public funding and incentives for employers and individuals to contribute

Strengthen governance mechanisms to improve vertical and horizontal coordination between different actors involved in the adult learning system



Addressing inclusion and alignment: what role for higher education institutions?

1. What is the size of formal learning in adult learning?
2. What are the key barriers that need to be addressed in providing training for adults?
3. How can higher education institutions ensure their offer is aligned with labour market needs?
4. How can higher education institutions foster continuous learning, starting from the young?

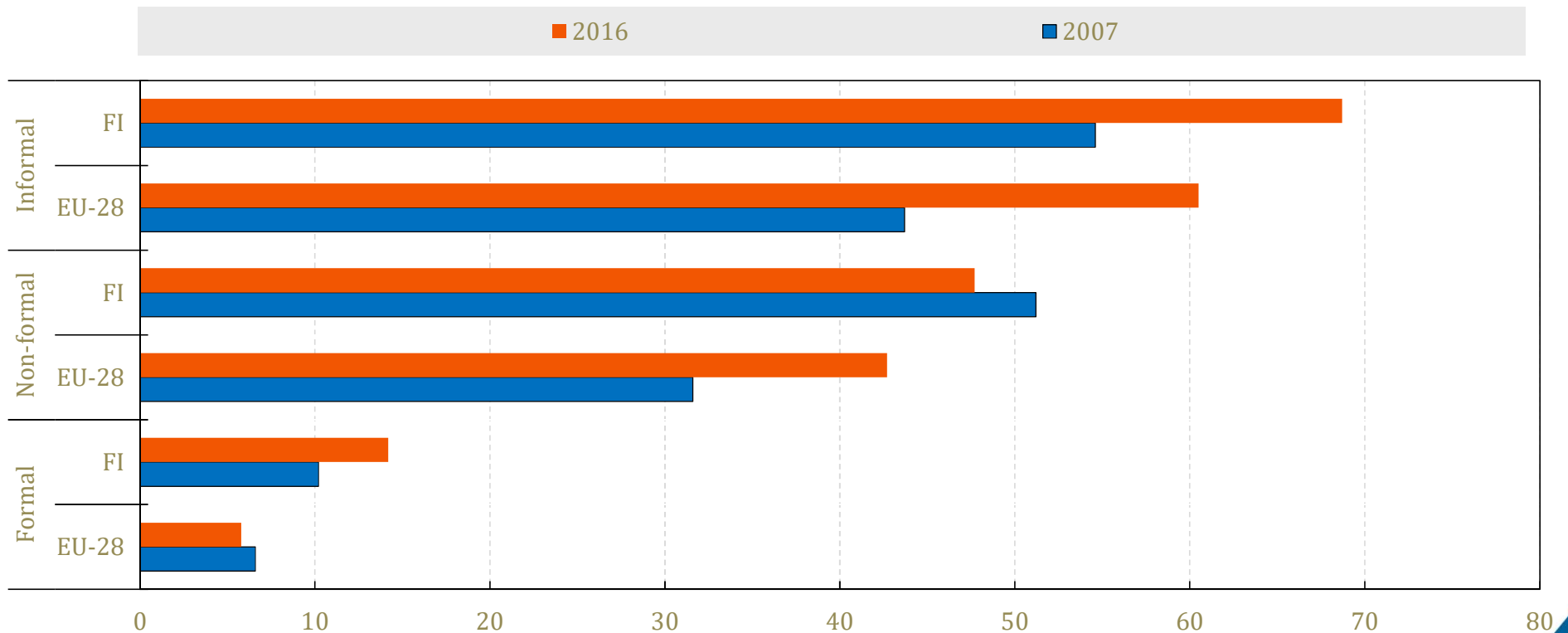
Some food for thought





1. Formal learning is not the most common form of continuous learning

Participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning, 25-64, %





Training markets vary and so does the involvement of higher education institutions in continuous learning

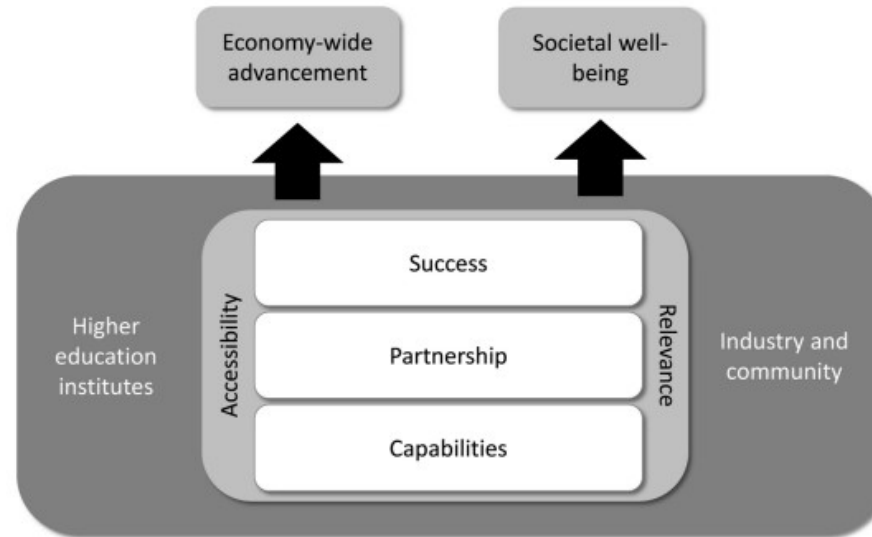
Dimension	Key considerations
Type of education and training providers	Public vs. private providers; Profit vs. non-profit providers; Specialised adult learning providers vs. general education providers
Number and geographical concentration of providers	Large number of smaller providers vs. markets dominated by large providers; geographic distribution of providers
Funding sources of providers	Main funding sources: public vs. enterprise vs. individual funding; grant funding vs. performance-based funding
Regulation of providers	Existence of regulation for some or all providers; existence of certification or other quality assurance mechanisms for providers



The role of universities within SkillsFuture Singapore

Prerequisites:

- Few institutions;
- Adult learning under the responsibility of Ministry of Education
- Shrinking cohorts of students
- Strong political will



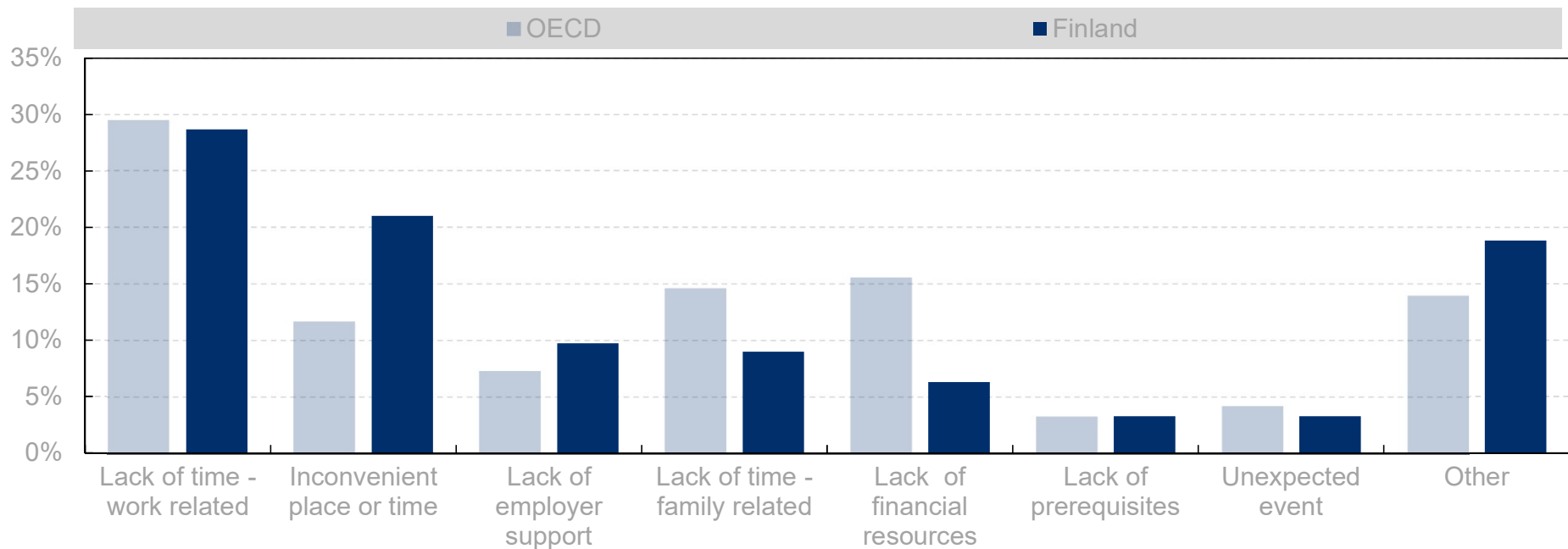
Source DOI: 10.1177/22125868211072931



2. Most adults say that they do not have time to train

Barriers to participation, Finland and OECD average

Percentage of adults replying that they would have liked to participate in training but did not, by reason





Higher education institutions are starting to provide micro-credentials

Small learning experiences, such as short courses leading to micro-credentials, allow for a targeted acquisition of skills and competences adapted to the needs of adults in a fast-changing society and labour market while not replacing traditional qualifications.

Micro-credentials could:

- help higher education institutions support lifelong learning
- improve the responsiveness of higher education institutions to the needs of employers and learners
- help higher education institutions to stay connected with their alumni



International models for the provision of micro-credentials by higher education institutions vary

	Ireland (Springboard)	New Zealand (NZQA)
Typical workload	10-60 ECTS	2.5-20 ECTS
National qualifications framework level of the award	ISCED 5-7	ISCED 3-6
Oriented to education advancement	Yes	No
Oriented to labour market	Yes	Yes
Employer role in design/approval	No	Yes
Learning outcomes assessed	Yes	Yes
Labour market outcomes tracked	Yes	?
Level indication	Yes (NQF)	Yes (NQF)
Workload indication	Yes (ECTS)	Yes (NZ credits)
External review of programmes/providers	Yes	Yes
Stackable (within institution)	In some cases	Possible but not common
Portable (applicable to study programmes in other institutions)	Yes	No

Source: [Quality and value of micro-credentials in higher education: Preparing for the future](#)



Should higher education institutions target less skilled adults and how?

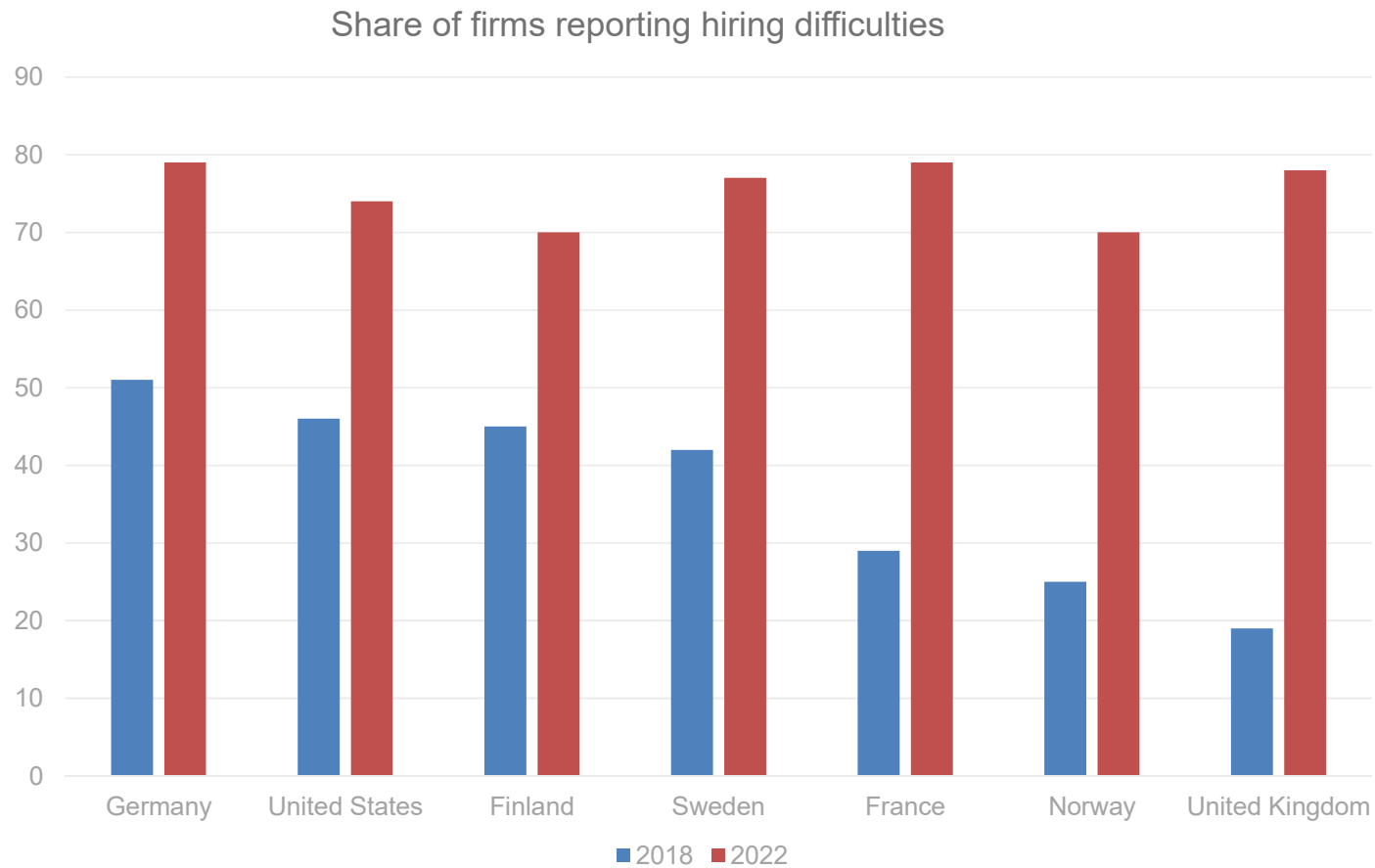
- Institutions target relatively well-educated adults
- Partly driven by capacity and mission of higher education institutions
- Partly driven by funding :
 - Cost borne by learners themselves, with employers sometimes paying on behalf of their employees.
 - Thus, access limited to those who can afford them, or who have them paid for on their behalf

Other challenges:

- Building trust is necessary for credential recognition and portability is difficult
- Achieve stackability and portability of micro-credentials
- Establish recognition systems that can systematically accommodate a large volume of credentials (RPL, regulation etc)
- What funding model? Learning from pandemic initiatives (funding providers, funding learners)



3. Firms regularly report hiring difficulties





How can higher education institutions align with labour market needs to serve the labour market?

Micro-credentials (again):

- Can be rapidly developed and deployed (compared to full university degrees)
- Can mitigate against the obsolescence of skills in many professions
- Are an incentive for universities to hire staff beyond those in academia to cater better to adult learners and build closer links with industry
- Private companies as collaborators or competitors?
 - Ability to articulate micro-credentials into credit towards degree programmes Comparative advantage of higher education institutions
 - Co-creation with industry is compulsory in New Zealand



4. Adapting the more traditional role of higher education institutions

Role of higher education institutions in continuous learning starts with youth, not just serving adults:

- Starting from youth to develop a lifelong learning attitudes
- Working with employers to teach up to date Skills and prepare for the labour market
- Adapt the focus on qualifications to emphasise skill acquisition



Transversal Skills should be integrated in programmes and are essential to facilitate transitions

- **Skills for the digital and green transitions** include complementary skills, ranging from good literacy and numeracy skills through to the right socio-emotional skills to work collaboratively and flexibly

Options for teaching transversal skills

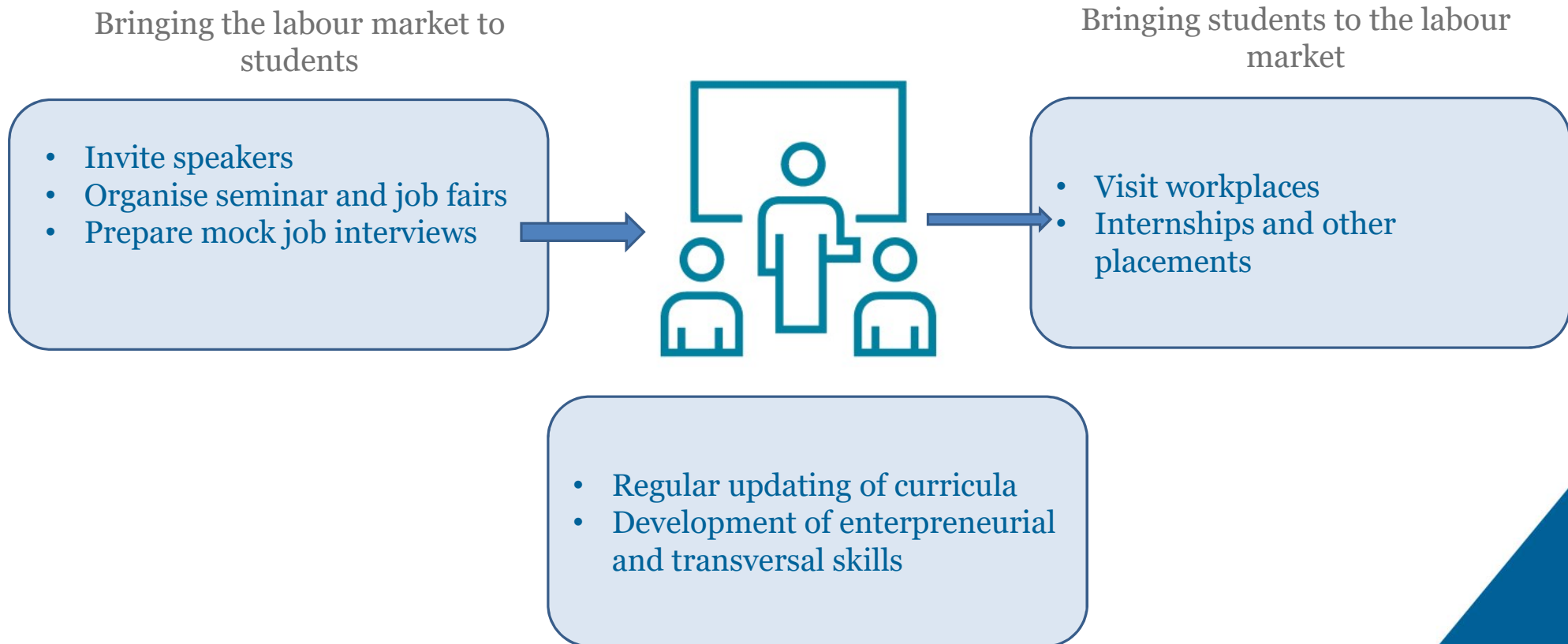
Adapt teaching methods to stimulate problem solving, creativity, teamwork and communication

Develop through extra curricular activities including volunteering, internships and sports

Develop dedicated courses, e.g. career management courses with a focus on self-awareness, social capital building, decision making



Higher education institutions must work with employers to align learning to labour market needs





Thank you

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