

DEVCOBA

Developing Collective Bargaining in the Care Sector

WP3 Country Report

DENMARK

Mikkel Krogh and Mikkel Mailand

(FAOS – Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen)

September 23, 2025



Co-funded by the
European Union

DEVCOBA is co-funded by the European Commission – DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Grant Agreement no. 101126385)

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Case 1: Tripartite agreement on a special ‘wage-lift’ for some public sector occupations.....	4
Goals	4
The actors involved.....	5
Description of the case and actor strategies	5
Results	7
Limitations.....	8
Case 2: A Future with Fulltime – increasing working time in care and other sectors	10
Goals	10
Actors and their interests and resources	11
Case description and actors’ strategies	11
Results	12
Barriers and limitations.....	14
Case 3: Organizing staff in private childcare institutions in Eastern Jutland.....	16
Goals	16
Actors involved.....	16
Strategy and content of the initiative.....	16
Results	17
Limitations and barriers.....	18
Case 4: Youth workers in inspiration positions in Danish elder care – Horsens municipality and beyond	19
Goals	19
Actors involved.....	19
Strategy and content of the initiative.....	20
Results	21
Limitations and barriers.....	22
Conclusion	24
References	25
Appendix A: List of Interviews	27

Introduction

This is the Danish WP3 case-study report in the project ‘Developing Collective Bargaining in the Care Sector’ (DEVCOBA), which is co-funded by the European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The report is written by communication officer Mikkel Krogh and associate professor Mikkel Mailand from the Employment Relations Research Centre (FAOS), at Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen¹. The report includes four initiatives in which the social partners - alone or in cooperation with other actors - have taken actions with potential positive consequences for job quality in relation to collective bargaining coverage, organisational densities (primarily trade union densities), and/or labour and skill shortages, which are the three focus-areas in the Devcoba-project. All initiatives are related to Long Term Care (LTC) and/or Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

The first two cases are big, national-level cross-sectoral cases, but they cover and focus a lot on LTC and ECEC. These cases are primarily related to labour/skill shortages. The third case focuses on ECEC (and other areas for childcare). Contrary to the two first mentioned cases, this case focuses on improving trade union organization and is limited to a specific part of the country, the region of Eastern Jutland. The fourth case focuses on LTC and labour/skills shortages but has also a dimension of extension of collective agreement coverage to new groups and improving the image of LTC among youth workers. It was originally limited to a town in Eastern Jutland but is now a nation-wide case with its own collective agreement.

¹ The comparative project this report is part of, was funded by the European Commission. FAOS adheres to the University of Copenhagen’s guidelines for good research practice, including academic freedom and the principle of arm’s length. The analyses and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not reflect the views of the European Commission or any other external actors.

Case 1: Tripartite agreement on a special ‘wage-lift’ for some public sector occupations

By all means, this case—number of actors, budget, and length of history—is by far the biggest of the four cases. The 2024 dedicated wage lift for some public sector occupations, including employees in LTC and ECEC in municipalities, came about after political intervention into the bilateral collective bargaining system. Direct wage setting has always been an arena for social partner self-governance in Denmark, and a no-go zone for the government, unless a collective bargaining round is stalemated.

To understand how this came to be, a step back in time is useful. The prologue to the initiative started with increasing dissatisfaction with the unequal (gender) pay, which in 2008 resulted in the commission set up. However, the Wage Commission’s report from 2010 pointed to sector segmentation as the main explanation for unequal pay. The report did not lead to any real initiatives or changes, but it was accompanied by the forming of the Equal Pay Alliance between a number of trade unions, including care trade unions Danish Nurse Organisation, FOA and Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators (BUPL), which pushed for changes until the end of the decade with limited success. However, in 2021, the members of the Danish Nurse Organization voted no to the result of the public sector collective bargaining round and the organization went – as the only trade union – on strike in order to increase their wages. They did not manage to get extra wage increases, but an outcome of the conflict was a proposal from the national conciliator to set up a Wage Committee to analyse equal pay and the wage hierarchy and structures in the public sector, which became part of the political intervention that ended the strike in August 2021. The Wage Committee completed its report in May 2023, but political attention had already during 2022 moved away from equal pay to labour shortages in 2022. As part of this development, the government invited the unusual tripartite negotiations to improve wages and working conditions for some groups of public employees, including some, but not all, of those who had been most vocal about gender unequal pay. As something very controversial, the government—in fact, the prime minister herself—had well in advance aired the areas where she found that the employees could need a special wage-lift, namely, the health care sector, eldercare, daycare institutions and the prisons. The invitation to tripartite negotiations showed that large parts of Parliament finally had come to the conclusion that the wage flexibility in the collective bargaining model was insufficient.

Goals

The tripartite negotiations were not only unusual with regard to the content—wages and working conditions—but also in several other regards, including the goals. Normally, tripartite negotiations in Denmark are guided by a document containing ‘terms of reference’, issued by the relevant ministry after some degree of consultation with the social partner organizations involved. This time, however, the Government had unilaterally developed seven ‘goals for the extraordinary economic resources for

wages and working conditions. They were: 1. Increase the number of qualified LTC workers²; 2. Support safe environments for the youngest children and vulnerable citizens; 3. Encourage healthcare workers' incentives to work in hospitals and in (night and weekend) shifts. 4. Increase working hours for welfare. 5. Improve the working environment in welfare. 6. Support dynamic and flexible wage structures. 7. Take into account the economic development in society (including the impact on the private sector).

These official goals were those of the Government and to some extent, also those of the social partners. However, for the social partners, the real goals were partly something else and differed internally. For the trade unions who had a chance to receive a wage lift, the important additional goals were to maximize the wage lift and influence the conditions for the lifts. For the trade unions that were not among the planned receivers, the goals were more defensive and included that the tripartite agreement should not damage their conditions. For the public employer organizations, the wage lift was only partly in their interest, and the tripartite negotiations could therefore be used to obtain concessions.

The actors involved

The government was contrary to most other tripartite negotiations represented with as much as six ministers: state, finance (the coordinator), employment, interior and health, and culture. The participation of the Ministry of state, and the involvement of no less than six ministries were signals that the three-party coalition Government gave high priority to the negotiations and each wanted to have a minister participate. Apart from participating as a public authority unit, the Ministry of Finance represented the employers in the state sectors, whereas Danish Regions represented the regional employers and Local Government Denmark represented the municipal employers. On the trade unions side, it was the confederations – and not as usual in the collective bargaining rounds the bargaining cartels – that represented the trade unions. The larger Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (FH) represented the vast majority of the trade unions in focus, whereas the smaller Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) represented a small minority. The largest private employers' confederation, the Confederation of Danish employers (DA), had been invited but refused to take part, as they found that the whole initiative was not in accordance with the principle of the Danish industrial relations model and was potentially very damaging. The strongest of FH's private sector member organisations, the Danish Metalworkers Union, was forced to participate by its confederation, FH, although they shared the view of DA.

Description of the case and actor strategies

Apart from the agenda-setting phase described above, the case includes the tripartite negotiations themselves, when most of the policy formulation took place, and the following collective bargaining

² The wording used for this group was "health and eldercare", signaling that not only social- and healthcare assistants (SOSU assistants) and social- and healthcare helpers (SOSU helpers) working in (municipal) eldercare but also those working in the (regional) hospitals would be covered. However, here the term 'LTC workers' will be used as they make up the clear majority of the target group.

round, when the remaining issues related to target groups and criteria for receiving bonuses were settled and the implementation was designed.

The invitation to the tripartite negotiation went out in September 2023, and the negotiation was initiated shortly thereafter. Tripartite negotiations so close to a collective bargaining round (with formal start normally in December) are unusual and complicated, thereby delaying the social partners' preparation for the bargaining round. To make things worse, the tripartite negotiation was planned to have a very short duration.

Overall, the negotiations were structured in a larger part covering the municipalities and regions in one set-up and a smaller part about the state area in another. The former negotiations focused on different thematic tracks, focusing on LTC (municipalities); children, youth, and vulnerable citizens (municipalities); and hospital nurses (regions); and the transversal issue about the Danish model of labour market regulation. The state negotiations only covered the prisons and their employees and did not have a similar clear thematic sub-division.

Perhaps the negotiation processes themselves were more important than the structure. The government separately negotiated bilaterally with the employers' associations and the trade unions. This is unusual, as all parties – most of the time - normally negotiate together during tripartite negotiations. This way of splitting-up the negotiations secured the government representatives an even larger degree of negotiation control than is usually the case in tripartite negotiations. Some interviewees found the lack of notice terms confusing, and others, who had previously participated in tripartite negotiations, found it unusual that the government defined not only the target groups but also the problem definitions and most of the solutions unilaterally prior to the start of the negotiation processes.

The concessions that the government and public employers wanted were not fully clear prior to the negotiations. Concessions were needed. Although the substantial tax-paid wage-increases, to some extent, also were in the interest of these two actors, the cost-benefit balance was loop-sided, with most of the benefits on the employee side and more of the costs on the employers and especially the government side.

During the negotiations, the government and/or employers aimed for decentralization of wage-setting (mostly government), working time flexibility, changes in the special conditions for senior employees, and changes in the voting procedures for trade unions ballots on collective agreements (most employers). The latter aim should be seen in the context of the relatively conflictual collective bargaining rounds in the public sector in this century. A large share of these industrial conflicts have been initiated by no-votes of single organizations in the regional and municipal areas, where the votes are counted per organization and not for the total bargaining area, as is the norm in the state area. Hence, it has been possible to have single-organization strikes, which is normally not the case in the state sector. Therefore, the employers wanted a similar 'concatenation' mechanism introduced in the municipal and regional areas, the areas mostly in focus during the tripartite negotiation (Mailand 2023).

For the trade unions, the strategies indicated above were different for receivers and non-reviewers. Hence, the confederation FH played an important role in sustaining the solidarity among their member-organizations and keeping every organization at the bargaining table during the whole process.

That aim was challenged as some trade unions, even though they were excluded from benefiting from the wage lift, were bound to participate in some of the concessions, such as the voting procedures and the decentralization of wage-setting, although the latter was a concession to come. In addition, one of the non-receiving trade unions was challenged by a simultaneous administrative reform, which likely would lead to redundancies of this trade union's members.

The negotiations were difficult because of the described uneven distribution of costs and benefits and the controversial nature of some concessions. Especially, the changes in the voting rules were difficult for some trade unions to accept, as it de facto removed their opportunity to go on strike for occupation-specific issues. Finally, many technical issues were encountered. One of them was to find a way to exclude the large sum of the bonuses (860 million euros) from the regulation mechanism. Another was to ensure that employees with similar tasks and qualification levels working together were not split into receivers and non-receivers.

However, both for the government, who had invested much prestige in a successful outcome of the negotiations, and the trade unions, who had at least part of their unequal wage problems solved, the tripartite negotiations were too big to fail.

Results

The negotiation parties signed the tripartite agreement in December 2023 (Regeringen et al. 2023). The tripartite agreement included as expected substantial extra wage increases for LTC workers and pedagogues (most of them employed in the municipalities), employed nurses (in the regions) and prison employees (in the state area). The composition of the wage-lifts varied among the groups. Regarding the two groups of special interests for the Devcoba-project, the wage-lift (25 million euro) for the LTC workers was used for a combination of increased basic wages, seniority bonuses, and bonuses for working in shifts (night and weekends). The wage increased as a result approx. 5 - 10 % for municipal LTC employees (own calculations based on FOA 2024). In the pedagogical area, in addition to bonuses for shift work, the negotiating parties prioritized increasing the basic wages and not seniority, resulting in a larger share of employees receiving a (smaller) wage increase. Furthermore, the agreement included, in the regional area, a confirmation of previous agreements stipulating that all positions should be advertised as full-time positions as a rule of thumb and of the right for employees to work full-time. A more limited right to full-time employment was also included for the municipal areas in focus, providing a right only for the years 2024, 2027, and 2030, only for employees on open-ended contracts, and without a guarantee for not working in more than one location.

For practical reasons – and in order to show some of respect for the collective bargaining model— not all issues regarding the wage lifts were concluded in the tripartite agreements. Some details were to be further negotiated during the 2024 collective bargaining round 2024, which started at the same time the tripartite agreement was signed.

The concessions were found to a large extent within the four themes mentioned above: Voting procedures, working time flexibility, senior conditions and decentralization/flexibilization of wage-setting. First, the agreement specified that (only) at the collective bargaining round 2024 a 'concatena-

tion’ mechanism would be applied in the municipal and regional sectors’ ballots. Second, several working time flexibility measures were agreed upon. These included the introduction of 12-hour shifts (eldercare and parts of pedagogical area), increased use of reduced resting-time to 8 hours (eldercare and parts of pedagogical area), a larger share of employees in shiftwork (LTC and hospitals), minimum norm-periods of 6 months (pedagogical area), the possibility of deviating from the rule of maximum 48 h/w (prisons), and no overtime pay for employees with de facto working time lower than 37 h/w (eldercare and hospitals). Third, the introduction of an age indexation of days-off for senior employees (‘senior-days’) as well as a binding agreement of 10 senior days a year (eldercare, pedagogical area and prisons) is required. Fourth, a process in the public sector towards more ‘sustainable and flexible wages’, including a set-up of social partner committees for the state, regional and municipal areas to develop wage-setting in a less centralized and uniform direction, and 130 million euros for local wage-negotiation in the 2026 collective bargaining round 2026.

Apart from wage lifts and concessions, the tripartite agreement included some other features. These included a number of targeted actions to improve the working environment in the municipal and regional sectors in general, funding to continue the ‘More on Full Time’ (see case 2) and a partial right to full-time employment in the municipalities, and finally the set-up of a statistical committee covering the whole public sector, similar to an existing committee on the private labour market – with the task of following the wage-setting and other development in the public sector labour market, including recruitment challenges.

At the time of writing—nearly 1 ½ year after the tripartite agreement was signed—the effect of the agreement has to our knowledge not yet been analysed. However, as the Devcoba WP2-report describes, labour and skill shortages, measured as unsuccessful recruitments, have declined for some groups recently (Mailand 2025). However, this development started prior to the tripartite agreement, and the contribution of the agreement is unknown. The effect on the discourse on wage gaps and unequal wages is less uncertain. Although no actors have argued that these problems disappeared after the tripartite agreement, arguments related to the issues are less often heard after the agreement, both from the trade unions and in the general media debates. Another potential effect of the wage-lift could be an increase in the number of students applying for vocational education in the occupations receiving the wage lift, but such an increase has not (yet) been seen.

Limitations

Although the tripartite agreement might have contributed to reducing labour shortages in LTC and ECEC by improving wages and thereby improving the quality of work, it has some limitations and even negative side-effects. The governments prioritized some large, relatively coherent welfare-producing groups with recruitment problems, while other smaller and less coherent groups with the same problems were excluded. Apart from the tensions this created in the trade union movement, a problem with targeted actions in the time of more widespread recruitment problems both in the public and private sectors is that these actions might contribute to solving the recruitment problems in one area, but at the same time exporting them to other areas.

Moreover, although all three actors emphasized that the tripartite was a one-off agreement, it could easily disturb future bipartite collective bargaining rounds by directing attention and energy away from these and towards the government in order to obtain similar special wage-lifts. At the time of writing, actions of this type can be seen from military personnel. The military has benefited from recent increases in the military defence budget and plans to build a stronger Danish military as part of a stronger European defence.

Case 2: A Future with Fulltime – increasing working time in care and other sectors

In the regions and the municipalities, a number of initiatives have been taken since the turn of the century to increase the relatively low share of full-time employees, mainly with the aim of increasing the labour supply (see e.g. Hansen and Mailand 2022). The share has remained low. One of the latest initiatives is the right to full-time employment from the Tripartite Agreement 2023, as described above. A right that is more extensive in regions than in municipalities.

A Full-time Future is remarkable as it is the largest and longest-running social partner-initiated project aimed at increasing public sector working time. It was agreed upon during the collective bargaining round in early 2018 and formally started in September 2020. The initiative consists of two similar projects, one for regions with Danish Regions as the employer part and one for municipalities with Local Government Denmark (LGDK) as the employer part. Below, the focus will be on the latter, as this is where the vast majority of the LTC and ECEC employees are found.

Goals

The goal (aim) of the project is simply to increase the share of employees working full-time. At the time the project's aims were formulated (in February 2020), 40% of all employees in the municipalities were working full-time, but the share of part-time employees in eldercare were approximately 80 % and in childcare approx. 50 %. In other female-dominated occupations, such as cleaning, the share was above average. The expected effects emphasized in the description of the goals are an increase in labour supply and gender equality, the latter linked to the increase in life-income and occupational pensions when part-time employment in the female-dominated occupations is replaced with full-time employment (KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet 2020a). The project was limited to four areas with a high share of part-time employment: eldercare, childcare, cleaning, and the so-called 'social area' (care and assistance for children and adults with special needs)³.

Although the wording of the project's official goal—to increase the share of employees working fulltime – has not changed since the project was initiated, it has gradually been changed to include an increase in working time, according to the interviewees. This development has taken place because employees who resist working full-time might still be open to increasing their working time, as long as it remains below full-time. Moreover, among the part-time employees who resist working full-time, some define themselves as full-time employees because they add overtime work to their part-time employment positions. These part-time employees are normally interested in increasing their basic working-time, as it might reduce their control of their own working time and lower their pay⁴.

³ At the bargaining round in 2024, the social partners agreed to extend the target group to all municipal areas. However, according to an interviewee, there are only a few workplaces beyond the four that have participated.

⁴ To avoid the economic incentive to work part-time and top-up with extra hours, reaching a total salary above full-time employees, the tripartite agreement 2023 implies that the overtime pay will not be paid before the employee has worked 35 h/w.

Actors and their interests and resources

The project involves a large number of actors, which can be grouped into three: A steering committee with representation of LGDK and Forhandlingsfællesskabet; two project-leaders, one from LGDK and one from Forhandlingsfællesskabet, and four consultants supported by student assistants; and the participating municipalities themselves, including the Main Cooperation Council ('Hoved-MED', including trade union representatives and the HR-management), Occupation Cooperation Councils ('Fag-MED'), and recently also a local steering committee. It was not possible for the interviewees to point to specific organizations or individuals as initiators of the project.

With regard to funding, this was for the period 2020-23 provided by the collective bargaining rounds 2018 and 2021, whereas the funding from 2024 was funded by the government as part of the tripartite agreement from 2023 (see case 1 above). The annual budget for the project is 0.8 million euro. Funding beyond 2025—and the future of the project—is back on the collective bargaining arena, where it is up for decision at the 2026 collective bargaining round 2026.

When the project was planned, 10-15 (out of the total of 98) municipalities were expected to participate, but when the project's implementation started in September 2020, no less than 26 municipalities had signed up (KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet 2020b). At the time the interviews were conducted (May 2025), more than half (50-55) of the municipalities and more than 300 workplaces had participated in the project.

Both the participating employers and trade unions (and their members) have interests in the project, partly for the same and partly for different reasons. The interviewees provided information about these interests. Employers' main interest in the project is improving the labour supply. Moreover, during the project implementation, the employers have been keen to ensure that time flexibility is not reduced and that the pay budgets are not exceeded. Moreover, just like the trade unions, the employers could be said to have an interest in the improved working environment and better service quality, which after the project's implementation have shown to be among the results (see below). The trade unions' main interest in the project is likely to be the improved life-income and occupational pensions resulting from an increase in working time and its related positive effect on gender equality. These possible results were already mentioned in the expected results' initial formulation from 2020. Moreover, trade unions are also interested in flexibility. For them, the focus on flexibility is the employees' work-life balance-related wishes. Just like employers, trade unions keep an eye open for possible negative effects on flexibility and salary budgets. Finally, they pay attention to the fact that the working time regulation, such as resting time, is respected when the working time is increased.

Case description and actors' strategies

The actors' strategies to obtain the common goals of the project are best described by illustrating the structure and processes of the project. The initial process involves the recruitment of municipalities for participation in the project. Although more municipalities than expected signed up from the beginning, the recruitment of municipalities was not easy prior to the initiation of the implementation, according to one of the interviewees. Since then, recruitment has run more smoothly, as illustrated by the fact that more than half of the municipalities have now participated in the project, although it still

requires hard work. Recruitment occurs either as municipalities contact the project leaders because they have heard about the project or because the project leaders contact the municipalities. Participation in the project is confirmed at a meeting with economy/HR directors and trade union representatives, and the participants are asked to collect data in order to establish a statistical baseline. According to the interviewees, it is already at this point important to have the backing from the economy/HR directors in the municipalities, the relevant trade unions (which trade unions depend on which of the four areas will be in focus locally) and the social partners' joint municipality-wide cooperation body, the Main Cooperation Council.

This initial process is followed by the core of the project, which comprises four workshops facilitated by the LGDK/Forhandlingsfællesskabets project leaders and consultants. Various tools are presented at the first workshop. At this stage, it is important to win over those who are not completely convinced about the project and to find the specific workplaces for participation. At the second workshop, the discussion started about the tools that could potentially be useful at the selected workplaces. At the third workshop, the tools are finally selected and implemented as pilots in the selected workplaces. The fourth and final workshop usually takes place four to five months later. At this workshop, with the participation of the municipality's economy director, each individual workplace presents the pilot results. The LGDK/Forhandlingsfællesskabet project team wrote detailed minutes about the experiences. Three months later, the municipalities were asked to send updated statistics, which were also used in the presentation of the project and its results, to be uploaded on the project webpage (on vpt.dk). According to the interviewees, providing useful and reliable statistics is challenging, partly because of the high labour turnover in the concerned occupations.

A steering committee with the local social partners represented has been added to the governance structure to sustain the local ownership of the project. These were not initially part of the structure. Moreover, the project has produced a workbook, a catalogue with experiences from the municipalities, hundreds of online articles, and various other hand-on tools.

As important as the governance structure is the pilot content. The number and variety of them make it difficult to generalize, but some common trends can be highlighted. In eldercare, where the share of full-time employees is at the lowest of the four selected areas, tasks and presence of employees have traditionally been concentrated at certain specific times of the day (mornings and around the meals). Pilots to spread tasks during the 24 hours and new types of shifts have therefore been important parts in the attempts to increase working time. In childcare, a core issue has traditionally been to distribute the early (morning) and late (afternoon) shifts evenly among the employees. In the pilots to increase working time, more flexible approaches have been used to obtain plans meeting the work-life balance wishes of the individual employee as well as goals of the employer in the form of 'dream-schemes'. The pilots also included the possibility of working from home related to tasks that do not require face-to-face contact with the children (KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet no year).

Results

In May 2023, a so-called ‘midterm evaluation’ of A Future with Full-time was published, followed by updated statistics for 2023 and 2024 (KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet 2023). One part of the midterm-evaluation is statistical analysis. Using 2017 as a baseline, the statistics focus both on the labour market in municipalities in general and the selected areas for the projects (of which we in table 1 only show the two areas of special interest for the Devcoba project).

The statistics for the overall municipal labour market do not show any notable change, apart from a small increase in hourly waged employees (which one of the interviewees explained with the increasing labour shortages) and a small decrease in part-time employees. However, there has been a notable increase in ‘long part-time’ employment has taken place. This could be an effect of the project, but the statistical part of the midterm-evaluation did not analyse mechanisms/drivers. According to one of the interviewees, an increase in part-time positions with a few hours per week might have happened due to certain mechanisms (see below) if the project had not existed, but the midterm-evaluation does not allow for a test of this hypothesis.

The statistics focusing on the LTC and ECEC areas also show increases in long part-time, but in addition to this, increases in the share of full-time employees (especially in LTC) and a decrease in the share of part-time employees. The fact that more changes are seen in the direction intended by the project in these areas than in the total municipality statistics could indicate that the project has made a difference. However, the increase in hourly waged employees is also found in the LTC and ECEC areas, although some pilots aimed to reduce the budget for these and transfer economic resources to part-time and full-time so-called ‘monthly waged’ employees.

Table 1 Development in employment types in municipalities as percentages of all employees

	2017	2020	2024
Municipalities in general			
- hourly waged	13	13	15
- part-time / (share working 32-36 h/w of all part-time)	40 (43)	41 (46)	38 (48)
- full-time	46	46	47
Eldercare and health (incl. LTC)			
- hourly waged	15		18
- part-time / (share working 32-36 h/w of all part-time)	71 (41)		63 (44)
- full-time	14		19
Childcare (incl. ECEC)			
- hourly waged	17		20
- part-time / (share working 32-36 h/w of all part-time)	53 (55)		47 (65)
- full-time	30		33

Source: KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet 2023;2024;2025. Note: ‘Hourly waged’ employees are in the municipal area nearly all temporary employees, many of which are ‘on call temps’.

The other part of the midterm evaluation is qualitative. As in the description of the pilots above, the variation in the content of the pilots might have made the synthesis difficult. Among the conclusions are: Increasing working hours have led to a decrease in workload/improvement of the work environment and improved service quality, as users more often meet the same employees; the pilots (including ‘dream schemes’ and better structure of the work tasks) are among the reasons for the increase in long part-time; most employees want to sustain their working hours when they have tried this in a pilot (KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet 2023). Another source summarizes the most important experiences as follows: Longer shifts - by making use of longer shifts, employees have been able to increase their working time without more (weekend) shifts, which is often a barrier. Influence on the shift schedule: The employees are given the opportunity to hand in their own desired shift plan, after which the planners try to match their wishes. This has led to a situation where more employees want to work more hours or even full-time. Tasks and staffing: mapping which tasks are carried out during the 24 hours and then trying to obtain a more even workload distribution. This has resulted in more employees wanting to increase their working hours (KL 2023).

One of the interviewees added that if one result of the project should be emphasized it would be the project’s illustration of the possibility to increase working time/reach fulltime and improve flexibility and the work environment simultaneously, which has reduced the reservations of especially the employers towards the project. The interviewee pointed in connection to this to the ‘dream plans’ as an important tool. The other interviewee emphasizes, firstly, the prove of the possibility to structure the working day in new ways that are economically more efficient and have benefitted the work environment /reduced absence due to illness. Second, the participating workplaces stick to the longer working times from the pilots.

A new more advanced evaluation, to be initiated in 2026, is currently in its very early stage of preparation. This evaluation will be conducted by an external research unit yet to be appointed and should attempt to isolate the effects of the project from other drivers.

Barriers and limitations

The project’s results indicate that it has its limitations. Although the project seems to have contributed to a development towards part-time employment with a higher number of weekly hours and a larger share of full-time positions, the development is relatively slow.

The barriers for obtaining the main goal of the project—to increase working time and the share working full-time – includes according to the interviewees well-described drivers for part-time employment in the public sector. One—or rather a sample of these—is often described as ‘the part-time culture’. This part-time culture has been described and analyzed in several other research projects. Employee-side contributing factors such are work intensification, gender roles, attempts to control one’s own working time (by working part-time and adding overtime hours), economic incentives (by adding overtime hours with higher pay to parttime positions), and the perception that working full-time will lead to fewer colleagues. On the employers’ side, contributing factors include that time flexibility is often best met by having a large share of part-time employees. Another contributing factor is the economy/budget considerations, including that not all municipalities and workplaces believe they

can afford increasing part-time to full-time employment. Adding to this barrier is the gradual decentralization of economic responsibility, which in some situations creates a cautious recruitment policy (e.g. Hansen and Mailand 2022; Mailand 2024). The economy was emphasized by the interviewees as one of the main barriers.

A new barrier has been added in recent years. This is a trend—also found in many other 1st world countries than Denmark—to value other dimensions of life more than work, even though it might lead to lower income. The interviewees found this trend reflected in an increasing number of employees who aimed to decrease rather than increase their working time, at least before they became involved in A Future with Fulltime.

Case 3: Organizing staff in private childcare institutions in Eastern Jutland

Most childcare institutions in Denmark are public, and the trade union density is very high. Collective bargaining agreements cover all public institutions and all workplaces with at least five employees can elect a shop-steward. However, this is not the case within private childcare, where many small institutions have no bargaining coverage and the organizational degree is low. The number of private daycare institutions in East Jutland is growing mainly due to closures of small public schools in the local communities – and daycare institutions are often closely linked to schools in local communities. Municipalities try to gather pupils in bigger schools, partly due to the dwindling number of pupils locally and partly due to budget pressure. However, parents and local communities sometimes choose to take over or start private schools and the connected daycare institutions. A regional branch of the Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators (BUPL) has implemented a pilot project in order to organize staff in small private daycare institutions. The goal is to organize more employees and expand collective bargaining coverage in small private childcare institutions. According to interviewees, the initiative was initially kickstarted due to impressions from members working in small private institutions who expressed that the trade union (BUPL) mainly focused on public institutions and did not prioritize members in private childcare institutions adequately.

Goals

The purpose of the pilot project is to increase trade union coverage and membership within private childcare institutions through recruitment and relationship-strengthening efforts. In addition to recruiting more members, the goals included the election of more shop stewards and building relationships with local union members to ensure demands for collective agreement coverage.

Specifically, the pilot project aimed at increasing membership, increasing the number of union representatives (shop stewards), strengthening the position and role of shop stewards in the workplace, and tightening the overall connection between the trade union and members in private institutions. (BUPL Østjylland 2023).

Actors involved

The primary actors involved in the project are BUPL East Jutland (A regional branch of Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators) and small private daycare institutions in the region represented by shop stewards or employees who are members of BUPL. Specifically, a hired part-time project consultant with vast experience as a shop steward drives the project and collaborates with local shop stewards or organized staff members in private daycare institutions.

Strategy and content of the initiative

A dedicated consultant (a publicly employed senior union representative) with available hours was hired specifically for the project part-time. This project was funded by the BUPLs executive board

who donated app. 6,700 Euro to the project. The project consultant first contacted all private workplaces (with and without collective agreements) in the East Jutland region. The largest workplaces were contacted first. BUPL East Jutland (BUPL Østjylland) prepared and provided lists of institutions to be contacted in the project.

The project consultant contacted union representatives (shop-stewards) where they were already present. At workplaces without shop-stewards and/or collective agreement, she reached out to staff who were members of BUPL, if any. The purpose of these conversations was to explore possible entry points into the workplace, such as member meetings, wage reviews and discussions about the upcoming collective bargaining round in 2024.

The project consultant worked with a local task force in the regional branch of BUPL to determine the next steps after the initial conversations. This ensured strong integration of the initiative within BUPL East Jutland, making it an integral part of the union's overall work. As a result, the private sector now occupies a more significant place in the mindset of BUPL East Jutland.

The project consultant also organized shop-steward network meetings across workplaces and effectively acted as a sort of "senior union representative" for shop stewards in the private daycare institutions in the region. During the shop-steward meetings, the politically responsible person for the area in the trade union was also present. Currently, the project consultant is facilitating the establishment of smaller network groups within childcare, allowing shop stewards to engage in ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration and support.

Results

Today BUPL East Jutland has a much better overview of the number of small private daycare institutions as well as knowledge about the amount of private pedagogical staff in their region (organized and not organized).

Before the project commenced in August 2023, there were 295 members in the private sector within BUPL East Jutland. A year later, the membership increased to 335, representing a growth of 40 members or 14%. This is significantly higher than the general membership growth of 2 % in East Jutland during the same period (BUPL Østjylland 2024).

Before the project there were 17 elected shop-stewards in private institutions in the region. By August 2024, this number had increased to 22, a total growth of 5 shop-stewards. Furthermore, the interviewees claimed that more private institutions today have collective bargaining coverage.

Currently, BUPL East Jutland is aware of only three private workplaces with collective agreements and more than five eligible employees where they do not have an elected shop-steward.

The community of shop-stewards has been strengthened through regular network meetings and contact with the project consultant and other union representatives. As part of the project, shop stewards were equipped to manage the process surrounding the collective bargaining round in 2024.

Wage review meetings at workplaces have enhanced the shop-stewards position as a mediator between employees and management.

The project is perceived as a success by BUPL and is continued and is now financed by the normal annual budget in BUPL East Jutland. According to interviewees, BUPL continues to recruit new members and shop-stewards in the region.

Limitations and barriers

In some instances, it has been difficult to persuade employees to join the trade union since some of the workplaces are very small and family- or community-driven, which means that employees have a very close relationship with management. Before the project started, it was almost impossible for private employees to find any relevant information on the trade union website since most content and information targeted publicly employed members. This has been changed due to the project.

Public employed shop stewards have access to established networks where they can discuss issues and receive further information and education. It is a challenge for shop stewards employed in small private institutions to obtain the same. Before the project, there was no setup for networking between privately employed shop stewards. Despite the establishment of shop-steward networks, it can still be a challenge for shop-stewards to attend these meetings and maintain relationships with other shop-stewards due to distances between private institutions. Furthermore, it can be hard for individual shop-stewards to find time for network meetings because many small daycare institutions have very few employees and are dependent on all staff being present. There is simply no one else to take over their tasks if they need to attend meetings.

Case 4: Youth workers in inspiration positions in Danish elder care – Horsens municipality and beyond

In 2021, a new collective agreement was signed between the national association of municipalities in Denmark (KL) and the trade union for elder care workers (FOA), which introduced a pilot project in which unskilled youth workers aged 13-17 was hired at nursing homes for a few hours per week. (KL og FOA 2021) The initiative was named the “sprout programme”, or more formally “inspiration positions”, reflecting the idea that it should inspire local youth to a career within elder care. The inspiration for the pilot project came from a small successful project implemented in the mid-sized municipality of Horsens, Jutland. Youth workers do not perform tasks normally handled by professional staff but are regarded as a supplement. They can go for walks, play games, and engage in other social activities with the elderly. Beside introducing youth to the possibility of a career within eldercare, the goal is to create a more positive image of the work within eldercare in Denmark. This could help retain and attract new staff to a sector that generally struggles with labour/skill shortage. In 2024, the pilot project was evaluated very positively by the social partners, and the initiative was permanently implemented in the collective bargaining agreement from April 2024 (KL og FOA 2024).

Goals

In order to address the shortage of eldercare workers in Denmark, municipalities and other institutional actors have developed various initiatives to address this challenge. One of these is the above-mentioned “sprout programme” that aims to inspire youth to pursue a future career within elder care or related welfare sectors in Denmark.

When eldercare is getting publicity in Denmark’s mainstream media, the focus is often poor working conditions or examples of mistreatment of nursing home residents—elderly being neglected or even abused by staff or other residents, which often due to work pressure or lack of qualified staff. In the public eye, the occupation is often considered demeaning and looked down upon. Positive stories about eldercare are rare. The interviewees working within elder care expressed that some employees try to hide the fact that they work within eldercare when at family gatherings etc. to avoid being looked down upon or being criticized due to the negative media coverage. One interviewee stated that some eldercare workers claimed they worked with cleaning to avoid critique about mistreatment of elders. This indicates that staff often feel that their work is disrespected, which has consequences for retaining staff and attracting new employees.

Actors involved

Initially, the actors involved were Horsens municipality and the trade union for care workers (FOA), the management and shop stewards at nursing homes, and local youth. The municipality and the local branch of FOA quickly embraced the initiative. Some scepticism was present at first among the regular staff. According to the interviews with a shop steward and representative from the local trade union branch (FOA), there was a fear that youth workers could be used as cheap labour or would take over all the socially “fun” tasks with the elders.

Strategy and content of the initiative

The “sprout programme” was initially started in 2018 in Horsens, a municipality with app. 100.000 inhabitants. The municipality has been struggling to fill positions within eldercare with qualified staff. In 2018, it was estimated that there would be a lack of 40.000 elder care workers in the near future in Denmark. This increase is mainly caused by the rise in elders in Denmark and the fact that 28 percent of elder care workers are more than 55 years old. According to an assessment from 2018 by FOA Horsens (the local trade union branch for elder care workers), the municipality would lack 520 elder care workers in 2026.

A representative from Horsens municipality who worked with eldercare regularly held meetings with a representative from the trade union FOA to discuss issues concerning working relations within eldercare. During these meetings, they often discussed the issue of labour and skill shortage. The two representatives aired several ideas to address the labour shortage as well as the poor reputation eldercare had, which they considered one of the major obstacles to attracting new staff. One of these ideas was to introduce local youth to work in the sector. The idea was to establish youth worker positions at local nursing homes, where young students could work a few hours after school and gain positive work experiences in the eldercare sector. They presented their ideas to managers in Horsens municipality in charge of eldercare and to the trade union (FOA), and the project was approved with an initial project budget of app. 6,700 euro financed by the municipality. This led to a local agreement between Horsens municipality and the local FOA branch (Horsens Kommune og FOA Horsens 2018). Soon after, the first four youth workers were hired to work in two nursing homes within the municipality.

In the agreement between FOA and Horsens municipality, clear and strict protocols state which tasks the youth can carry out and which should only be carried out by regular staff. Wages are deliberately set at ‘retail-level’ not to create unfair competition with local companies. The youth workers are only supposed to supplement the regular staff and are not to engage in regular work. All youth workers should have an assigned mentor at the workplace that is always present during the youth workers working hours to assist, answer questions, etc. When the youth workers start, they get a thorough introduction to the work by the mentor and regular staff, and there are regular meetings between the youth workers and the mentors, shop stewards and management where issues can be raised.

Before implementing the project, staff meetings were held with all managers, relevant employees, and their shop stewards in order to alleviate concerns.

The parents of potential youth workers are contacted and informed about the work within elder care, so they get some knowledge and understanding about the character of the work. The youth worker needs approval from their parents before they can accept the job.

According to interviewees, the initial experiences with youth workers were very positive, so it was decided to expand the project and hire more youth workers. The programme attracted a lot of attention in both local and national media during the initial phase, and the word spread about the opportunity for youths to work in nursing homes. This led to an overwhelming number of applications for the new youth positions. The project received more than 200 applications from local youth aged 13-17 for the new positions, which is quite extraordinary when announcing youth work positions. The

project developed further in the following years, and Horsens municipality now has youth workers in all their nursing homes and eldercare centers. Today, the employment of youth workers within elder care has spread around municipalities in all of Denmark, and work in elder care has become very popular among youth aged between 13 and 17 years.

Results

As described, the “sprout programme” or “inspiration position initiative” quickly became a success in Horsens municipality. After hiring the first four youth workers in two local nursing homes in 2018, the project grew, and after a while, all nursing homes in Horsens hired youth workers. All interviewees from the municipality and trade union as well as managers and shop stewards at the nursing homes were very positive and stressed the positive outcomes. All interviewees also had the impression that the residents were happy to have youth workers around. Some do not receive visits from family very often and enjoy the company of young people.

The initiative got a lot of media attention, where regular staff, managers and youth workers were interviewed in newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. This coverage helped raise awareness about the initiative in other municipalities around the country and has made the youth aware of the possibility of working with elders in their spare time. Furthermore, the two initiators from the municipality and FOA has travelled around the country and presented their experiences to other municipalities, KL (Local Government Denmark), regional branches of FOA as well as FOA headquarters in Copenhagen.

On top of experiencing more and more local youth interested in working with elder care, the stakeholders in Horsens experienced that working with eldercare gave them a more positive image locally. It is difficult to quantitatively measure the overall impact of the project, but a local manager stated that in 2018, the municipality had to hire whoever applied for positions since they struggled to attract and retain sufficient staff. Today, they can afford to be way pickier and only choose the most qualified and motivated for the positions. Furthermore, they now receive a lot more male applicants for positions. Several of the interviewees could tell anecdotes about former “sprouts” who have now chosen a career within elder care or related welfare sectors and had furthermore stories about former “sprouts” who continued as temporary assistants after high school. This is a big asset for nursing homes, since they have experience working with elders. Likewise, several respondents experienced that youth workers had inspired friends and classmates to choose an education and career in the care sector. All the interviewees found the project a big success, and several of the involved actors in the initial project in Horsens have been contacted by staff in other municipalities who wanted to know more about the project and if it could be transferred to other welfare areas such as childcare.

Today, there are more than 800 youth workers or “inspiration positions” in nursing homes and centers around the country in Denmark. (Østerlund 2024) In 2021, the “sprout program” was incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement between KL (National Municipalities Organisation) and FOA (trade union for care workers) as a pilot project, and in 2024 the collective agreement for “sprouts” was made permanent. The “sprouts” were then named “inspiration positions” targeting youth aged 13-17. According to interviewees, the hired sprouts in Horsens reflected the general youth

in the local area, and there was no bias towards immigrants, descendants of immigrants, etc. This also seems to be the case in other municipalities where sprouts are hired, however there is no overall data on the sprouts' backgrounds.

The collective agreement gives each municipality the possibility to make local agreements with FOA concerning how to utilize the youth workers. Some regional branches of FOA have deemed that youth workers aged 13-14 are too young and have therefore chosen only to include youth workers aged 15-17 and so forth.

Today, most municipalities in Denmark have embraced the initiative and have employed youth workers in nursing homes. Some municipalities have not yet incorporated the initiative but are considering doing so. Copenhagen Municipality, for instance, does not currently prioritize hiring "sprouts" in care homes. Instead, they focus on training programs and encouraging unskilled workers to pursue education in elder care. However, the municipality is considering implementing the initiative in the future (Østerlund 2024).

Limitations and barriers

The project initially met considerable resistance from the headquarters at FOA in Copenhagen as well as some other regional branches who feared several elements in the initiative. Some expressed concern that the youth workers would undermine the regular and qualified staff as “cheap labour” or perform tasks that require knowledge about psychological or physical challenges among the elderly residents. There were also concerns about how youth workers would handle “difficult” elders and how they would react if elders violated their personal boundaries. Many eldercare residents suffer from dementia and other mental challenges that entails they can react aggressively etc. During the interviews, a chairman of another regional branch of FOA stated that they were also worried about the extra workload on regular staff who might not have time to help and take care of the youth workers due to work pressure.

However, Horsens' experiences showed that youth workers had a very positive impact on nursing homes. Regular staff enjoyed having youth workers present to help engage the elders socially, and according to respondents, there had not been any conflicts or bad experiences with youth workers – on the contrary. Over time, this meant that the concerns of both FOA headquarters and other FOA branches disappeared. Now the whole trade union embrace the idea of having youth workers in nursing homes.

When hiring youth workers, there are clear limitations on working hours, responsibilities, and specific tasks they can handle. Initially, youth workers were only allowed to work two hours per day twice a week. However, this rule has since become a bit more flexible, and the specific conditions for youth workers are now to be worked out between the employer (the municipality) and the local trade union branch for care workers (FOA). Some local trade union branches only allow youth workers aged 15-17 to work in eldercare since they believe youth workers aged 13-14 are simply too young to handle residents and/or not mature enough to handle residents who might act aggressively, etc.

Furthermore, Danish legislation limits the amount of hours youth workers can work. Youth workers still attending school are not allowed to work more than 12 hours a week. Youth workers aged 15-17 are not allowed to work more than regular staff at the workplace.

The initial project agreement in Horsens included strict regulations about which tasks the youth workers were allowed to handle, which is also reflected in the collective agreement on inspiration positions. They are not supposed to perform tasks that require qualified and competent staff who are training in elder care. They are only allowed to perform social tasks like conversation, walks, playing games, and helping elders set tables, etc. In some municipalities and nursing homes, questions and discussions have been held about which tasks youth workers are actually allowed to perform. Since youth workers are only meant to be a supplement to the ordinary staff, they are e.g. not meant to carry out tasks in the kitchen, cleaning, etc. These uncertainties and challenges are usually solved locally by shop stewards, regular staff and management.

Regular staff need time to train and take care of the youth workers. This can be a challenge if the work pressure is high. The regular staff and their shop stewards therefore need to be involved in the recruitment of youth workers, which demands good collaboration between the employer (municipalities) and the relevant local trade union branch.

Due to the success of youth workers in eldercare, the idea has now been copied into the childcare sector (KL og FOA 2024). Inspiration positions were introduced as a pilot project in the collective agreement within childcare in 2024, but at this point in time, there is still very little practical experience with youth workers in daycare institutions. Some trade union interviewees did express doubts about whether it would become the same kind of success story as in eldercare. One of the issues being that several different trades and trade unions are involved, and collaboration between them can be a challenge. Nevertheless, several municipalities are in the process of introducing youth workers within daycare institutions.

Conclusion

The four cases are of very different nature and sizes and are therefore difficult to synthesize. However, they all show the social partners' ability to address one or more of the three challenges focused on in the present project: collective bargaining coverage, organizational densities and labour and skill shortages.

The national cross-sector case on the special wage-lift (case 1) shows that it has been possible to improve the wages of LTC and ECEC workers substantially, with the aim of overcoming labour shortages, but only with the help of tripartite processes and government interactions. The more precise job-quality effects of this initiative are still unknown, and it is unclear whether the initiative will have negative side-effects. Even though all three parties in the tripartite initiative agreed not to repeat tripartite negotiations on wages like this one and the initiative remains controversial, the initiative might have a learning potentials.

Overcoming skill and labour shortages was also the overall focus in the other national-level cross-sector-case (case 2). This case had the specific aim of increasing working hours in a way that does not damage flexibility and the work environment. The case illustrates that fulfilling such an ambitious goal is possible, but it requires structured and resource-intensive bottom-up processes supported by local management as well as by the top of the social partner organizations. However, despite successful participating of numerous workplaces, the effects seen in national working-time statistics are still limited.

The regional-level case on organizing staff in private ECEC- institutions (case 3) illustrate that even with relatively small resources, local branches of trade unions can increase the organizational densities to some extent, even among 'difficult' providers such as the small private daycare institutions. However, several barriers for further success remains in place.

Finally, the local-level case 4 on youth workers in inspiration positions both relates to overcoming labour shortages and collective bargaining coverage in LTC. The initiative was in the beginning controversial within the trade union, but it has now been widely accepted and spread geographically as well as to other occupations. The 'sprout'-programme has created more knowledge about care work among local youth and improved the public picture of working in nursing homes.

References

- BUPL Østjylland (2024), Powerpoint: Bedre organisering på private arbejdspladser.
- BUPL Østjylland (2024), Prøvehandling: Bedre organisering på private arbejdspladser.
- BUPL Østjylland (2023), Projektbeskrivelse 'Organisering af nye medlemmer på privatområdet og optimering af 'TR-virke', 2023.
- Hansen, N. W. and M. Mailand (2002), Social dialogue in welfare services (Sowell) – Denmark. Work Package 1–2 report on Long Term Care and Early Childhood Education and Care. FAOS-report 196. FAOS, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen.
- Horsens Kommune og FOA Horsens (2018), Rekrutteringsprojekt – “Spireansættelser” af unge mellem 13-17 år i plejeboliger/hjem, Sundhed og Omsorg.
- Horsens Kommune (2019), Evaluering af spireansættelser.
- KL (2023), Det kommunale arbejdsmarked i tal 2022. København: KL
- KL og FOA (2021), Aftale for unge under 18 år i inspirationsansættelse inden for ældre- og sundhedsområdet i kommuner.
- KL og FOA (2024), Aftale for unge under 18 år i inspirationsansættelse i kommuner.
- KL og FOA (2024), OK24 protokol. Aftale for unge under 18 år i inspirationsansættelse i kommuner i dagtilbud.
- KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet (2023), Midtvejdsevaluering – 3 år med fokus på fuldtid. Hvad virker, og hvad virker ikke? København: KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet.
- KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet (2024), Ansættelsesformer på det kommunale arbejdsmarked. Opdateret april 2024. København: KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet.
- KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet (2025), Ansættelsesformer på det kommunale arbejdsmarked. Opdateret juni 2024. København: KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet.
- KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet (no year), Hvordan kommer flere på fuldtid? Erfaringer fra kommuner. København: KL og Forhandlingsfællesskabet.
- Mailand, M. (2023), Varme hænder mellem overenskomster og politik: Lønmidler udefra og den danske model. Administrativ Debat, December 2023.
- Mailand, M. (2025), Developing Collective Bargaining in the Care Sector. DEVCOBA Work package 2 report Denmark.
- Winther W. og Storm T. (2021), 'spire-ordning Horsens Kommune, fritidsjobs for unge – til glæde for ældre'. <https://www.kl.dk/media/4bujpjog/horsens-praesentation-af-spireordning.pdf>
- Østerlund, I. (2024), OK24: Så kom den nye overenskomst til unge, der har et fritidsjob i daginstitutioner, Fagbladet FOA.

<https://www.fagbladetfoa.dk/mine-penge/ok24-saa-kom-den-nye-overenskomst-til-unge-der-har-et-fritidsjob-i-daginstitutioner/>

Bille, M. (2024), Forskere dumper idé om fritidsjobbere i dagtilbud: Dybt problematisk og uforsvarligt, BUPL.dk. <https://bupl.dk/boern-unge/nyheder/forskere-dumper-ide-om-fritidsjobbere-i-dagtilbud-dybt-problematisk-og>

Thorbech, F. (2022), Flere plejehjem ansætter teenager, A4 Medier, 2022. <https://www.a4medier.dk/beskaeftigelse/artikel/ungeplejehjem?subscriberId=b4900524-2e9e-4150-bc41-abe98903345e>

Østerlund, I. (2024), Stor forskel: Så mange 'spirer' er der i din kommune, Fagbladet FOA, 2024. <https://www.fagbladetfoa.dk/politik/stor-forskel-saa-mange-spirer-er-der-i-din-kommune/>

Andersen, S. B. (2022), Fra spire til sosu-elev: 17-årige Kristian er faldet pladask for ældreplejen, Fagbladet FOA, 2022. <https://www.fagbladetfoa.dk/mit-fag/fra-spire-til-sosu-elev-17-aarige-kristian-er-faldet-pladask-for-aeldreplejen/>

Appendix A: List of Interviews

Conducted from February to May 2025

Case 1⁵

NN and NN, Agency for Employees and Competences, Ministry of Finance

NN, Danish Regions

NN, Local Government Denmark

NN, The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations

NN, FOA Denmark

NN and NN, Danish Nurses Organizations

Case 2

Kirstine Erreboe Hougaard Lieberkind, special consultant, Local Government Denmark

Nina Menoka Banerjee, project manager, FOA Denmark

Case 3

Ann Søndergaard Pedersen, Vice Chair, BUPL East Jutland

Helle Andersen, senior shop steward and project consultant, BUPL Randers Municipality

Case 4

Winne Winther, chairperson, FOA Horsens

Helle Ibsen, chief consultant, Horsens Municipality

Heidi Bie Mortensen, manager, Præstegården Nursing Home, Horsens

Sol Hesselberg Laursen, Shop Steward, Præstegården Nursing Home, Horsens

Jesper Heilman Hermansen, Chairman, FOA North Jutland

⁵ These interviews were conducted December 2023- May 2024 in relation to a FAOS project about the collective bargaining round in the Danish public sector 2024 and the tripartite agreement from 2023. All these interviewees have been anonymized.