



DUO for a JOB

Enhancing opportunities for both young people with migrant background and experienced people over the age of fifty



iQ | GOOD PRACTICE to the point

Target groups for Transfer:

labour market institutions,
educational institutions

DUO for a JOB in a nutshell:

DUO for a JOB matches young immigrant jobseekers with people over 50 years, ideally stemming from the same sector, who can accompany and support them in their social and professional inclusion.

Creator of the model:

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Belgium

Population (2019): 11.49 million

Population with a migration
background (first and second
generation): 2.8 million

Unemployment rate for population
with non western migration
background (2019): 13.8%

Source: Statbel – Statistics Belgium; Eurostat

Starting position/challenge

DUO for a JOB was born from a double observation:

- there is a proven inequality of access to the labour market for young people with a migrant background in Belgium.
- people over 50 years of age in Belgium have one of the lowest employment rates in Europe and face a lack of appreciation of their skills.

DUO for a JOB organises intergenerational and intercultural mentoring to facilitate access to employment of the youngest jobseekers through revalorising the experience of seniors. In concrete terms, it is a relationship through which an experienced person, “the mentor”, shares her/his knowledge and experience with a young person, “the mentee”, in order to promote the development of their skills and autonomy, and to enable them to identify and achieve professional objectives. This relationship (“the duo”) is based on exchange, learning and permanent and reciprocal trust. The young person and her/his mentor meet once a week for two hours during a period of maximum six months.

DUO for a JOB seeks to eliminate inequalities that young job-seekers with a migration background experience in the access to the labour market. The Belgian mentoring programme recognises the knowledge of elderlies and combats discrimination by recreating social cohesion, understanding and local solidarity.

Implementation

The buddy-model created by DUO for a JOB is innovative for three main reasons. Firstly, mentors have an in-depth knowledge of a particular sector and can therefore transfer their experience and the codes of this sector to their mentees. Secondly, the duos meet on a weekly basis, thanks to the free time that mentors can devote to their mentees, which makes the programme quite intense. Finally, mentors work with only one mentee at a time which makes the experience really



individual and unique. It allows building a relationship of trust and to work intensively on the mentees’ job search and sometimes on their social difficulties. Since the start in 2013, DUO for a JOB has created more than 2600 duos in five cities in Belgium: Brussels, Liège, Antwerp, Ghent and Mechelen. The association is about 1000 mentors strong and has helped more than 1800 young people to find a job, an internship or a training programme (71% of positive outcomes). More than one mentee out of two (53%) finds a job within the 12 months that follow the mentoring period. As shown by the evaluation carried out at the end of the programme, mentees also end the mentoring period with more self-confidence as well as the ability to create a career plan and to use job-seeking tools. They improve their language skills, their capacity to develop a professional and social network, etc. As for the mentors, they also report positive outcomes, as mentoring makes them feel useful while keeping them active. They enjoy sharing their knowledge and skills, and they have the opportunity to learn from young people as well as to discover their cultures. All these reasons explain why 9 out of 10 mentors decide to start a new duo after their first experience.

Joined forces to identify talents

Joelle and Samsam: Laughters and determination

Three years ago, Samsam and her family decided to leave their home country Somalia, and move to Belgium. Samsam was still a teenager. Life in Somalia was riddled with uncertainty and it was no longer safe for them to stay there. Samsam did not get a chance to finish her secondary school studies in her home country. When she arrived in Belgium, she wanted a second chance to get her diploma. She was motivated and driven, and also wanted to find a student job.

Joëlle spent her entire career working as an educator. She had wanted to become a volunteer for a long time and was eager to dedicate her time to a project that truly makes a difference, but she had no idea where to go or who to turn to. Then she discovered DUO. Joëlle's first mentorship brought her together with Samsam. Joëlle remembers their first meeting very well. "We immediately hit it off! Throughout our mentoring programme, we worked hard, but

we also laughed and talked a lot!"

For six months, Joëlle and Samsam worked their way through countless vacancies. During the programme, Joëlle discovered that "DUO is an experience that goes beyond just helping someone find work. We joined forces to identify Samsam's talents and to find out what she wanted to do with her life. Samsam comes from a very different culture. In Somalia you can't look people in the eye, because that is seen as a sign of disrespect. In Belgium, it would be unthinkable not to look a



person in the eye. These are very important things to know when looking for work".

At the start of the programme, Samsam had little confidence. She learnt how CVs and cover letters are usually drafted in Belgium. Samsam says that Joëlle "was of invaluable help. She is so important to me. I know I can trust her. At home, I talk about her to my parents a lot, and they know how much she means to me. My parents have only just arrived in Belgium, so they can't answer my questions the way Joëlle can".

Today, Samsam is working at an integration centre, where she helps young Somalians who have just arrived in Belgium and do not speak Dutch yet. Their duo has come to an end, but Joëlle and Samsam still keep in touch. When talking about her duo, Samsam says, "It is thanks to people like Joëlle that I am starting to feel at home in Belgium. Here I can live my life in a safe environment and look to the future with a smile".

Three questions for Julie Bodson, deputy director at DUO for a JOB

"Creating bonds between generations and cultures"



What is the innovative part of your format?

Mentoring has existed for centuries. But what makes DUO for a JOB's programme unique is its target populations, as well as its structured methodology. Moreover, by putting these two groups in contact, it achieves several objectives in one go: reinforcing equal employment opportunities, promoting active ageing, creating bonds between generations and cultures.

Is it possible to introduce the format in other countries?

A few years ago, DUO for a JOB helped other organisations, which were inspired by its model, to start projects in their respective countries. Thanks to the sharing of our methodology, processes and tools, "Sammen om en jobb" (Norway) and SINGA-Germany have been able to launch their own mentoring project, which are still ongoing today. The replicability of its model has also been demonstrated by DUO for a JOB itself thanks to the successful start-up of its first branch outside of

the Belgian borders. Our Paris office opened in summer 2019. Continuing on the first encouraging outputs from this new branch, DUO for a JOB intends to open two new branches by the end of 2020 in Lille (France) and Rotterdam (Netherlands). Subsequently, DUO for a JOB intends to open a first branch every two years in a new European country.

What can the format achieve in the long term?

All beneficiaries experience a positive impact on their professional and social skills. As a result of their interaction, taking place in an intercultural and intergenerational context, they question their prejudices and experience a change in mindset. It leads them to acquire a realistic vision of the other person while discovering new cultures. By fostering contacts between people with very diverse social, educational and cultural backgrounds, the organisation also aims at developing longterm outcomes for our society as a whole. Through its activities and the development of advocacy, DUO for a JOB seeks to have an impact on the general public as well as on decision-makers and regulations to favour inclusion, reinforce social cohesion, counter xenophobia and encourage the creation of a more fair and supportive society.

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Network IQ

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