




Mentoring practices in Europe and North America

*Strategies for improving immigrants' employment
outcomes*



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COLOPHON

	<p>Mentoring practices in Europe and North America Strategies for improving immigrants' employment outcomes. <i>Deze publicatie bestaat ook in het Nederlands onder de titel:</i> Mentoring in Europa en Noord-Amerika. Strategieën voor het verbeteren van arbeidsmarktparticipatie van migranten. <i>Cette publication est également disponible en Français sous le titre:</i> Pratiques de mentorat en Europe et en Amérique du Nord. Stratégies visant à améliorer la participation des migrants au marché du travail.</p> <p>A publication of the King Baudouin Foundation, rue Brederode 21, 1000 Brussels</p>
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FOREWORD

Labour market participation is an essential driving force in the integration process of people with a migrant background into the host country. However, Belgium's performance in this area is well under par, with the weak labour market position of this group in Belgium often cited by various sources. The first Socio-economic monitoring report released by the Federal Employment Agency and the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities in 2013¹ stated that the level of unemployment in Belgium is highest among people from EU candidate Member States – Macedonia, Croatia, Turkey – (23.9%) and from the Maghreb region (25.9%) in contrast to the Belgian average of 8.9%. The low rate of employment among women of foreign origin is also highlighted with a figure of 41.7%, i.e. 13.2% lower than that for men of foreign origin². The OECD has also declared for a number of years that Belgium is one of the worst performers where the employment of people in this group is concerned.

The structural barriers to employment are well known: language proficiency, level of education, discrimination, rare recognition of foreign qualifications, as well as difficult access to social and professional networks. All of this has a severe impact on the people concerned: substandard academic performances of migrant youth, low employment rates, dependence on welfare, families living on the poverty line, and so on. As a result, Belgium risks losing out on a great deal of talent. The competitiveness of our economy is also challenged in terms of not being able to take advantage of all these abilities.

Given that this is a complex problem that greatly affects social cohesion today, and will continue to do so in the future, the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) felt it could not simply stand on the sidelines. It therefore decided to use its capacity to unlock the knowledge and expertise present among the various actors and get them around the table.

With its “**Integration at work**” project, KBF started looking for ways to boost the employment of people with foreign roots using its own specific approach. The Foundation chose to delve into a number of areas where

¹ *Socio-economic Monitoring. Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Federal Public Service Employment. 2013.*

² *Ibid.*

value added could be provided and where research or efficient action has not yet been produced in Belgium, or only to an inadequate extent.

Mentoring towards work is one of these topics. Mentoring offers newcomers and established immigrants a direct link to the world of work by pairing individual job-seekers with volunteers who may or may not be professionally active and are willing to act as a role model or guide. Mentoring can help such people to gain a better understanding of the functioning of the Belgian labour market, to acquire knowledge of the specific position being applied for and to develop a broader network. The informal nature of the mentoring pairs also enables job-seekers to build up their self-confidence in the process.

The Foundation believes that this approach has potential. The OECD also regularly mentions mentoring as a good practice of integration into the labour market, as well as in society in broader terms. However, because Belgium does not yet have many mentoring projects, KBF decided to explore this area while also looking at practice in other countries. Commissioned by the Foundation, the MPI Europe think-tank studied what mentoring towards work currently encompasses for this target group in Belgium, Europe and North America. As a result of this study, a number of essential elements were identified for mentoring projects.

The lessons learned from this survey have reinforced the Foundation's resolve to support mentoring projects in Belgium. We believe that, in our role of building bridges between the different labour market actors, we are able to play a proactive part in spreading the concept of mentoring further among these actors, as well as provide space for testing and evaluating what works.

King Baudouin Foundation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mentoring—an experienced individual coaching or advising a more junior partner or peer—is increasingly recognised in Europe as a tool for advancing the labour market integration of disadvantaged individuals. However, the scope, methods, and sustainability of mentoring efforts vary widely by national and local context, and depend on a variety of actors and conditions. This report identifies promising mentoring and job-coaching practices across Europe and North America, with a case study of Belgium.

The study centres on highly skilled newcomers and youth with immigrant background—two groups that are particularly vulnerable on the labour market. Highly skilled newcomers are first generation immigrants who have obtained their higher education skills and credentials abroad. Youth with immigrant background include these newcomers as well as the descendants of first generation immigrants. While many of the mentoring programmes illustrated in this paper do not specifically target jobseekers with an immigration background, many participants in the broader programmes—particularly in densely populated and superdiverse urban areas in Western Europe and North America—have immigrant roots.

The report highlights a number of relevant “classic” one-on-one mentoring practices in Europe and North America, focusing on the role of different initiators and stakeholders, forms of collaboration, methods, and target groups. Many programmes are driven through a combination of government funding and civil society initiative, and sometimes private sector involvement. Active private sector engagement is less common in Europe, as opposed to North America, but can be found in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Overall, the comparative overview of mentoring projects highlights the strength and long-term opportunities of such multi-actor strategic collaboration.

In the particular case of Belgium, classic one-on-one mentoring initiatives are relatively new and small-scale. The employment policy landscape in Belgium is highly scattered—both in terms of political governance and the actors involved. Correspondingly, mentoring and job coaching projects across the country utilise different approaches

and methods, have varying objectives and target groups, and involve a diversity of actors, with limited active involvement of the private sector.

Overall, sustainable funding and harmonised multistakeholder collaboration are two main challenges to the effective use of mentoring initiatives to advance the labour market integration of immigrants. Having a generally shared political priority and goal can facilitate the creation and sustainability of such partnerships for mentoring. Youth unemployment is currently high on the political agenda in many countries – as opposed to a more uneven policy attention for highly skilled immigrants across countries – which may increase policy focus on these types of schemes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mentoring programmes have increasingly complemented educational and workforce development efforts designed to support disadvantaged individuals. Mentoring is a coaching process in which an experienced individual (the mentor) advises a junior partner (mentee)—someone who is lagging behind in particular set of social, cognitive, or technical skills and experience. This type of pairing is often called ‘classic’ or one-on-one mentoring. Mentoring initiatives aim to help those who are facing barriers in accessing and benefiting from general employment and education services.

Mentoring can be interpreted differently depending on the context. While some types of mentoring have been identified and practiced in community, school, or university settings, this study focuses exclusively on apprenticeship and business or employment-related mentoring efforts that aim to generate sustained employment. Such programmes often match an experienced professional (selected based on his or her company, sector, or business network) with an inexperienced or unemployed candidate. This report maps and compares such programmes in Europe and North America, and zooms in on the case study of Belgium, with an overall distinct interest in how governments can engage the private sector.

Not all initiatives discussed in this report are classic one-on-one mentoring initiatives involving mentors who are successful in the business world. Sometimes one-on-one mentoring is part of a bigger labour market insertion scheme, and sometimes the mentors are not currently in business but people generally “active” in society, or retirees. Overall, there are many job-activation programmes that share similar goals to mentoring projects—helping disadvantaged people access the labour market—but pursue these goals through different methods (as is the case in the Belgian context). Employment-oriented mentoring programmes have the end goal of employment for the mentee, but also aim to achieve important interim objectives that can help promote employment success, including:

- Developing of social and cognitive skills (those required for a specific sector or job, but also for general recruitment purposes);
- Expanding socioprofessional networks; and
- Boosting self-confidence and self-reliance.

While specific methods may vary, the programmes listed and discussed in this report often entail regular meetings and an approach that can be one-on-one or can combine both individual and group elements.

A. Focus on newcomers and immigrant-origin young adults

This study centres on two groups particularly vulnerable to negative outcomes on the labour market: highly skilled newcomers and youth with immigrant background. Highly skilled newcomers are first generation immigrants who have obtained their higher education, skills, and credentials abroad. Youth with immigrant background include newcomers as well as second and third generations – i.e. those born to at least one immigrant parent or grandparent. Particularly in urban superdiverse environments in Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, but also in the United States, many of the young adults who participate in mainstream job activation programmes have immigrant roots—though the programmes do not necessarily target them because of that background.

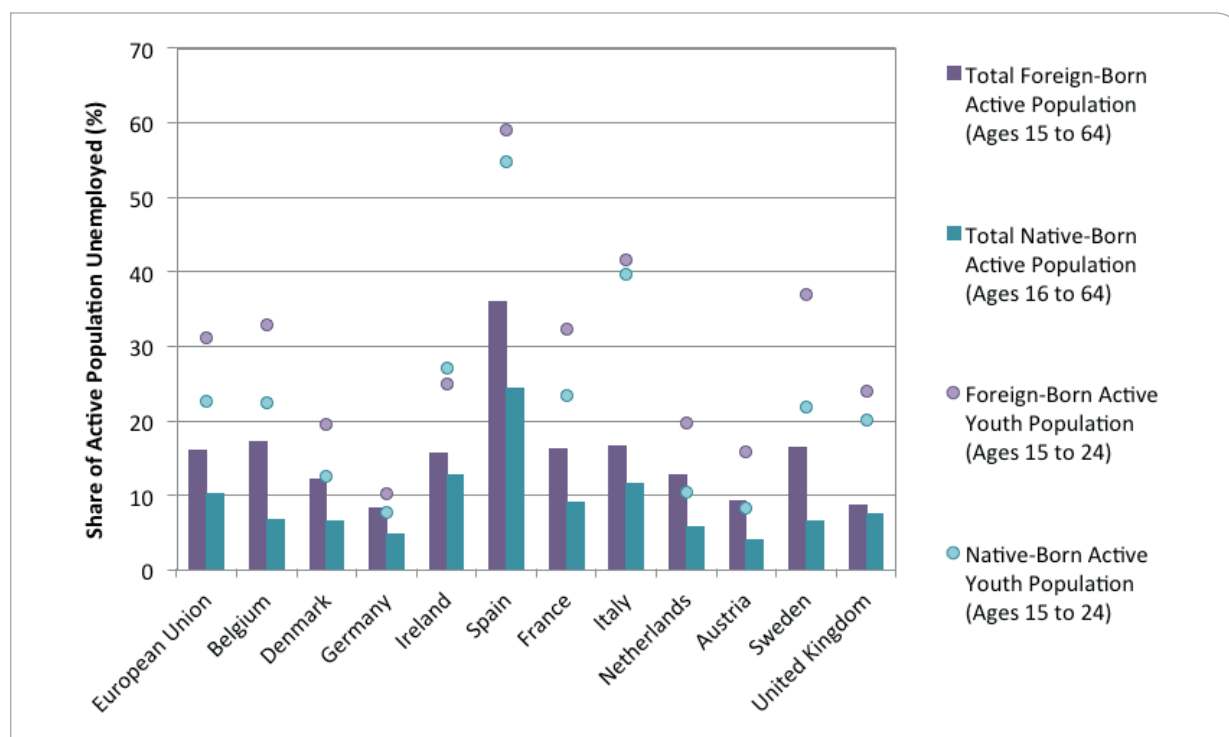
The labour market outcomes of immigrant populations are worse than those of the native population in many countries of Europe and North America, and the recent economic crisis has exacerbated these negative outcomes. The unemployment rate of the foreign-born population of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries rose faster (at 5 per cent) than that of the native-born population (3 per cent) between 2008 and 2012.³

In addition, young adults and the low-skilled have been hit hardest by the economic crisis. Among OECD countries, 26 per cent of foreign-born youth are not in employment, education, or training (so-called NEETs), compared to 20 per cent of native-born youth.⁴ In the 28 EU countries, just under one-third of foreign-born youth were unemployed in 2013 (see Figure 1). In Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden (among other countries), the difference in unemployment rates between foreign-born and native youth was approximately 10 per cent or more in 2013.

³ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *International Migration Outlook 2013* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Figure 1. Unemployment rates in selected EU Member States as a share of active population, by age and nativity, 2013



Source: European Union Labour Force Survey, 2013. See Eurostat, "European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS)", accessed 20 May 2014, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/lfs>.

While many OECD countries facilitate highly skilled labour migration to some extent, not all highly skilled immigrants enter OECD countries through actual labour migration schemes (which can be restrictive, as is the case in France or Germany for example).⁵ Highly skilled immigrants can also enter a country through family or humanitarian migration, or as students. In the latter cases, their pathway to suitable employment may be less straightforward. While recognition of qualifications can be a first technical hurdle, depending on the profession and country of origin of the highly skilled immigrant, the lack of social and professional networks is a challenge shared by many new immigrants seeking employment. Countries such as Canada and the United States, but also increasingly Germany and the Netherlands, are showcasing mentoring initiatives for highly skilled immigrants in order to facilitate their labour market insertion at the appropriate skill level.

⁵ Jonathan Chaloff and Georges Lemaitre, "Managing Highly-Skilled Labour Migration: A Comparative Analysis of Migration Policies and Challenges in OECD Countries", (OECD: Paris, 2009), <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/46656535.pdf>

B. Studying mentoring programmes: An overview of the field

The type and size of mentoring initiatives varies widely not only across countries, but also within them. There is no standardized format of what mentoring programmes should look like. In most cases, a civil society or non-profit organization figures as a facilitator between the mentor and mentee, not only to match as adequately as possible, but also to support them in outlining and meeting their foreseen objectives. This type of support can be limited to the beginning of the mentoring process, but can also formally continue throughout the entire process.

While mentoring initiatives are more established and documented across the Atlantic and in some European countries (Germany, France), efforts are more dispersed and scattered elsewhere in Europe (Belgium). Overall, however, there has been little comparative research in this field, especially across Europe and North America. This paper offers an overview of different types of mentoring and job activation programmes in Europe (with a case study of Belgium) and across the Atlantic, including a catalogue of the variety of actors involved and an assessment of promising elements and shared challenges.

Since comprehensive and comparable evaluations are either limited or lacking, this study does not categorise 'best practices', nor does it offer an exhaustive accounting of *all* mentoring and job coaching initiatives. Instead, the report aims to analyse useful and relevant approaches that can potentially be transferred, expanded, and sustained in the long term.

Box 1. Methodology

This report is based on 49 semistructured face-to-face or telephone interviews, email correspondences, and a literature review. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire in order to obtain comparable information on the context and functioning of mentoring or related initiatives. Questions ascertained the target group and purpose of projects, their initiators and funders, how participants (both jobseekers/mentees and mentors) are reached and selected, the main activities, impact assessment (if applicable), and main challenges.

This report first gives an overview of several promising mentoring initiatives in Europe and North America. It then zooms in to the Belgian context where mentoring is a relatively new and underdeveloped phenomenon, and which showcases some initiatives with potential. Drawing from all these examples, the report closes with a non-exhaustive list of promising elements for mentoring programmes.

II. MENTORING PRACTICES IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Classic one-on-one mentoring initiatives have increasingly developed in several European countries and in North America over the last few decades. Although this report features several mentoring examples that affect the target groups of interest here, it is worth adding that not all mentoring initiatives target people with an immigrant background explicitly, but may affect them indirectly.

While migration and integration governance contexts differ across countries, there is a strong pattern of civil society engagement and government funding supporting mentoring programmes in many cases. Overall, private sector engagement is stronger in Sweden, Austria, Germany, and Canada; while government initiatives dominate in France and the Netherlands.

In many cases, the interplay of government, private sector and civil society determines the number, size and type of mentoring programmes. At the same time, the migration and integration context plays an important role in the extent to which these programmes target or incorporate people with immigrant background. In the United Kingdom, where there is no formal immigrant integration policy, few programmes will target “immigrants” as such. They will either focus on refugees as a very specific target group, or unemployed youth more generally. In Germany, formalised immigrant integration policy is relatively new, and many investments are being made in improving the educational and labour market outcomes of people with an immigrant background.⁶ As a result, several mentoring programmes effectively target immigrant youth or highly skilled immigrants.

In other words, the existence of a formal immigrant integration policy, and the general government approach to integration and diversity, influences the nature of mentoring programmes in this field as well. This is also the case in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Canada, where civil society organisations play an important role in facilitating the integration process of immigrants, because of a lack of a formal

⁶ See also Elizabeth Collett and Milica Petrovic, *The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2014)

government policy. Consequently, across the Atlantic, mentoring programmes can target refugees, highly skilled immigrants, as well as poor or minority youth.

A. The role of foundations and civil society actors

Across the board, civil society actors—from non-profit organisations to foundations to charities—play a vital role in the development and implementation of mentoring or employment-facilitating programmes. Their outreach and sustainability depends on the type and size of partnerships and collaborators they are able to engage, as well as the type of funding they have at their disposal.

In 2008, the German Senior Experten Service (SES) created the **VerA** initiative to support youth enrolled in vocational education who were at-risk for dropping out by matching them with retired mentors.⁷ SES developed this programme in collaboration with German craft and industry associations, with financial support from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. SES carefully matches senior expert mentors to mentees, and prepares the mentors for a two-day course.⁸ VerA is a nationwide programme with approximately 70 local coordinators and 1,700 specially trained senior experts.

FACE (Fondation Agir Contre L'Exclusion) In France, the FACE foundation has a nationwide mentoring scheme. The foundation has a network of socially responsible businesses involved in the mentoring programme, which lasts four to six months and entails one to two monthly encounters between the mentor and mentee.⁹ The programme is open to anyone, but prioritises mentees living in priority neighbourhoods or receiving social benefits.¹⁰

Local mentoring programmes such as **Tous Parrains**¹¹ and **Un parrain un emploi**¹² are also managed by non-profit associations. While Tous Parrains offers mentoring schemes for different target groups (for example, youth, adults, and the disabled), Un parrain un emploi targets young graduates looking for their first job. The French approach rarely targets people with an immigrant background specifically, but rather focuses on specific needs and barriers.

7 The Senior Experten Service (SES) is a non-profit organisation which offers interested retirees the opportunity to pass on their skills and knowledge to others, both within Germany and abroad. Author's email exchange with VerA coordinator, April 2014. See also VerA brochure, on file with author.

8 Ibid.

9 FaceGard, 'Parrainage', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://facegard.org/emploi/parrainage/>.

10 Face Paris, 'Pour l'emploi', accessed 20 May 2014, www.face-paris.org/nos-actions/pour-lemploi/parrainage1.html.

11 Tous Parrains, 'Accueil', accessed 20 May 2014, www.tousparrains.com/.

12 Un parrain 1 emploi, 'Historique et valeurs', accessed 20 May 2014, www.parrainemploi.com/1parrain_1emploi/1parrain_1emploi.html.

In the Netherlands, many mentoring programmes focus on the school environment and peer-to-peer mentoring. This is the case with several projects developed and funded by the largest Dutch foundation, *Oranje Fonds*, many of which focus on mentoring within school as a way to combat early school leaving and improve self-confidence and social skills.¹³ The German **Rock your life** initiative has a similar objective, and matches disadvantaged pupils with university students.¹⁴ The project does not target youth with immigrant background, but in reality 70 per cent of the pupils have at least one parent born abroad.¹⁵ In the United States, the **Year Up** programme aims to support low-income youth ages 18 to 24 in their professional development process.¹⁶ While the programme does not target immigrant youth specifically, many participants have an ethnic minority background—predominantly African American and Latino.¹⁷ The programme lasts for one year, the first half of which offers in-house technical and professional skills development training,¹⁸ and the second half provides placement in an internship with one of more than 250 business and government partners. Each participating student is matched with a volunteer mentor, who regularly meets with them and helps them review applications and build professional networks. The programme helps its participants access higher-quality jobs with better salaries. Since it was established in 2000 in Boston, it has spread over various locations on both U.S. coasts and in Chicago,¹⁹ and has coached over 8,000 young adults.²⁰

In both Canada and the United States, multistakeholder partnerships are key to the functioning of labour market insertion programmes for immigrants. In the United States, the federal government does not play a formalised role in immigrant integration generally, or in labour market insertion programmes for immigrants specifically. The mentoring initiatives that do exist are usually developed by civil society at the local level, and occasionally expanded to include programmes in multiple cities. In some cases, these programmes rely on local or state funding streams for workforce development.

In the United States, two noteworthy programmes facilitate the labour market integration of highly skilled immigrants: **Upwardly Global**²¹ and the **Welcome Back Initiative**.²² (Both projects offer more comprehensive support for highly skilled immigrants than only mentoring). Each received the E Pluribus

13 *Oranje Fonds*, 'Over het Oranje Fonds', accessed 20 May 2014, www.oranjefonds.nl/oranjefonds/106386/; Menno Vos, Hanneke Pot, and Aafje Dotinga, *Met mentoring naar de TOP! Toekomst, Ontwikkeling en Perspectief. Evaluatieonderzoek Stimuleringsprogramma Mentorprojecten* (Groningen, Netherlands: Instituut voor integratie en sociale weerbaarheid, 2012), www.oranjefonds.nl/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Evaluatieonderzoek%20ISW%20en%20RuG.pdf.

14 Author's email exchange with Rock your life personnel, April 2014.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Year Up*, 'How it Works', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://yearup.org/about/main.php?page=program>.

17 Ann Roder and Mark Elliott, *A Promising Start: Year Up's Initial Impacts on Low-Income Young Adults' Careers*, (New York: Economic Mobility Corporation, 2011), <http://economicmobilitycorp.org/uploads/A%20Promising%20Start.pdf>.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Year Up*, 'History', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://yearup.org/about/main.php?page=history>.

20 *Year Up*, 'How it Works'.

21 Migration Policy Institute, '2010 E Pluribus Unum Winner—Upwardly Global: Exceptional Immigrant Integration Initiative', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://integrationawards.migrationpolicy.org/winners-upwardlyglobal.cfm>.

22 Migration Policy Institute, '2011 E Pluribus Unum Winner—Welcome Back Initiative: Exceptional Immigrant Integration Initiative', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://integrationawards.migrationpolicy.org/winners-WelcomeBack.cfm>.

Unum Integration Prize, coordinated by the Migration Policy Institute, in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Upwardly Global offers job counseling, mentoring, and placement services for skilled immigrants and refugees.²³ Initiated in San Francisco, the non-profit programme has expanded to Chicago and New York over the last decade, and has trained more than 2,000 jobseekers.²⁴ Upwardly Global has strong local community partnerships, and is funded through a range of private and corporate sponsors and donations.²⁵ The Welcome Back Initiative (WBI) was also initiated in San Francisco over a decade ago and has expanded through nine centres across the United States. Its operational focus is foreign-trained immigrant health professionals, and supporting their transition into the U.S. healthcare workforce at the appropriate skill level.²⁶ WBI services assist these professionals in their credential recognition and licensing process as well as with improving language and other social and cognitive skills.²⁷ WBI centres have supported more than 11,000 internationally trained health professionals, out of which more than 3,000 people had their credentials validated and more than 2,000 obtained their licenses.²⁸ WBI centres work in close partnership with local community colleges and organisations as well as with local governments.²⁹ In all of these examples, mentoring is part of a more comprehensive approach to labour market insertion.

Box 2. The Mentoring Partnership in Canada

*In Canada, the Regional Immigrant Employment Councils are involved in various labour market insertion programmes for immigrants. In 2004, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) launched **The Mentoring Partnership** (TMP) to facilitate the labour market entry of skilled immigrant professionals by matching them with Canadian professionals.³⁰ TMP is a true multistakeholder partnership, where civil society and community service providers and the public and private sectors collaborate closely.³¹ TRIEC and TMP are funded by the central and regional governments, but have also received support from the Maytree Foundation. Over a decade, TMP has effectuated more than 9,000 mentoring matches, and more than 70 per cent of their mentees are employed in their occupational field, with higher salaries than when they began the program.³² Mentees are reached through one of the thirteen service delivery partners in the Greater Toronto Area, which have over 50 coaches.³³*

23 Upwardly Global, 'Our Work', accessed 20 May 2014, www.upwardlyglobal.org/about-upglo/immigrants-and-employers.

24 Migration Policy Institute, '2010 E Pluribus Unum Winner—Upwardly Global: Exceptional Immigrant Integration Initiative.'

25 Upwardly Global, 'Our Partners', accessed 20 May 2014, www.upwardlyglobal.org/about-upglo/partners.

26 Migration Policy Institute, '2011 E Pluribus Unum Winner—Welcome Back Initiative'

27 Welcome Back Initiative, 'Background', accessed 20 May 2014, www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/about/background.html.

28 Welcome Back Initiative, 'Welcome Back Initiative Outcomes', accessed 20 May 2014, www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/outcomes/participant_outcomes/WBI-Outcomes.pdf.

29 Migration Policy Institute, '2011 E Pluribus Unum Winner—Welcome Back Initiative'.

30 Author's interview with Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) personnel, 27 March 2014.

31 The Mentoring Partnership, 'How the program works', accessed 20 May 2014, www.thementoringpartnership.com/about-us/howtheprogramworks/.

32 Author's interview with TRIEC personnel, 27 March 2014; TRIEC materials sent through email correspondence in March 2014, on file with author.

33 For more information on service delivery partners, see The Mentoring Partnership, 'Service Delivery Partners', accessed 20 May 2014, www.thementoringpartnership.com/partners/service-delivery-partners/.

One of the crucial elements in TRIEC's approach to mentoring has been effective outreach to the business community. The key to successful private sector engagement has been to aim high: involving a 'champion' or CEO within a company who can promote TMP internally and within the business community more broadly. Because companies promote the programme actively to their own employees, 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the mentors come from companies directly or by word of mouth.³⁴ In addition to a 'champion', TRIEC makes sure that every company also has an internal coordinator who follows up on participating mentors from within the company. TRIEC has a circle of these business champions who regularly come together to discuss strategies and to promote TMP. At the same time, TRIEC devotes considerable time to making this business case publically. That is how the public campaign hireimmigrants.ca was launched.³⁵ The driving story is the economic input and gain of hiring skilled immigrants, and the benefits to the business community. While on an annual basis around 28,000 hours of volunteering during company or private time are invested by participating businesses, higher returns are realised through the eventual recruitment of highly skilled immigrants.³⁶ TRIEC's mentoring method has been picked up by ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies), and is now being expanded across urban areas in Canada.³⁷

B. Government initiatives

Sometimes governments go beyond just financing, and actively initiate labour market insertion and mentoring programmes. This is particularly the case when governments try to address a high-priority issue such as youth unemployment or barriers in accessing the labour market. Several programmes in France and the Netherlands focus on disadvantaged youth and their needs, rather than specifically on young adults of an immigration background.

In France the 'local missions' are decentralised government offices aimed at supporting youngsters between ages 16 and 25 in accessing the labour market.³⁸ These bodies implement several relevant programmes, including the **Contract for social insertion** (*Contrat d'insertion dans la vie sociale*; CIVIS), which is aimed at unemployed and low-skilled youth in the same age range.³⁹ The contracts are a framework for a year-long, individual, employment-oriented counseling relationship, which is extendable for follow-up once employed. The contracts aim to restore young adults' independence and self-reliance, and to secure sustainable employment eventually, or at least training or further assistance

34 For more information on the involved employers, see *The Mentoring Partnership, 'Current Partners'*, accessed 20 May 2014, www.thementoringpartnership.com/partners/employerpartners/partners/.

35 *Hire immigrants, 'Hire immigrants'*, accessed 20 May 2014, www.hireimmigrants.ca/.

36 Author's interview with TRIEC personnel, 27 March 2014.

37 ALLIES, 'National Mentoring Initiative', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://alliescanada.ca/how-we-can-help/mentoring/>.

38 *Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la formation professionnelle et du dialogue social, 'Les missions locales'*, accessed 20 May 2014, www.emploi.gouv.fr/acteurs/missions-locales.

39 *Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la formation professionnelle et du dialogue social, 'Contrat d'insertion dans la vie sociale (CIVIS)'*, accessed 20 May 2014, www.emploi.gouv.fr/dispositif/contrat-dinsertion-dans-vie-sociale-civis.

in looking for employment. In 2012, almost 1.4 million youngsters received general counseling across 451 local missions in France; the majority were between ages 18 and 21, and low skilled (early school leavers or those with only a secondary-level education without having obtained the *baccalauréat*).⁴⁰ In 2012, 170,000 youngsters signed a CIVIS contract, out of which 49 per cent found employment or enrolled in further training.

The local missions in France also implement a mentoring or **Parrainage** programme.⁴¹ This mentoring programme has been expanded across France since 1997 as a way to guide youth towards employment.⁴² The programme is completely government funded—by the central and regional levels as well as the National Agency for Social Cohesion (Acsé).

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, along with other social and professional partners, initiated a mentoring programme, **Link2Work**, in Spring 2014. The programme aims to tackle youth unemployment, and is piloting in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.⁴³ The specific target groups in both cities are subject to change, but at the time of writing, Amsterdam's focus is on (highly) skilled youth via universities and youth organisations, and Rotterdam's is vocationally trained youth via schools. Both programmes aim to link young people to employers to smoothen the school/university-to-work transition. The project is entirely funded by the Ministry, with hopes to embed it in existing educational and professional structures in the long term. At the central level, the Ministry's main partner is the Socio-economic Council (SER), which consists of many professional and business members. Small- and medium-sized enterprises as well as bigger companies are interested in participating.

C. Private-sector initiatives

Getting the private sector on board has proven a challenge in many mentoring and labour market insertion programmes. In some cases, however, businesses do initiate projects in partnership with non-profit or government organisations. Many such initiatives remain at least partly funded by the government.

In Austria, the Federal Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Austrian Integration Fund and the Public Employment Service, initiated the **Mentoring for Migrants** programme in 2008.⁴⁴ The goal is to match highly qualified immigrants with well-connected members of the business community, and

40 Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la formation professionnelle et du dialogue social, 'Mission locales, chiffres d'activité 2012', accessed 20 May 2014, www.emploi.gouv.fr/files/files/Acteurs/CNML/publications/Chiffres%202012%20activit%C3%A9%20ML%20vf.pdf.

41 Parrainage, 'Les porteurs du parrainage', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://parrainage.masteredit.com/parrainage/site/Porteurs-236.html>.

42 Parrainage, 'Organisation', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://parrainage.masteredit.com/parrainage/site/le-parrainage-en-lorraine-234.html>.

43 Author's email exchange with Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment personnel, April 2014.

44 Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WKÖ; Austrian Chamber of Commerce), 'Mentoring for Migrants', accessed 20 May 2014, www.wko.at/Content.Node/Mentoring/MigrantInnen/en/English_Version_Mentoring_Migrants.html.

to increase their social network and capital. Both the Public Employment Service and the Austrian Integration Fund helped reach interested migrants, while mentors from the business community were found through the Chamber's network.⁴⁵ The mentoring partnerships last for six months, and the mentor-mentee pairs meet for roughly five hours per month. In 2013, more than 700 pairs had already been established.⁴⁶ The programme has been evaluated as positive for both parties, with 39 per cent of the mentees finding employment after the programme. The project initially started in Vienna, but was soon extended to three more federal states.⁴⁷

In 2007, the management consultancy Boston Consulting Group and the Eberhard von Kuenheim Foundation of BMW AG developed the programme **Joblinge**. The project was aimed at low-skilled youth ages 15 to 25, and would last six months, including a six to eight week internship as well as mentoring.⁴⁸ The majority of Joblinge participants are over 20, have only a lower secondary education degree, and are male and with immigrant background.⁴⁹ The programme was initially launched in Munich but has expanded to ten locations in Germany, and approximately 1,600 youngsters have participated so far since 2007. The organisers aim to expand it further. The project is financially supported by a variety of private and public partners. A common commitment from the private sector, government, and civil society actors ensures the functioning, outreach, and sustainability of the project.⁵⁰ The programme received lots of positive reviews, including the German Fairness Prize in 2013, and was identified as a good practice by the World Economic Forum.⁵¹

In the United Kingdom, the professional association for human resources professionals—the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)—piloted a similar youth-focused mentoring programme in 2011 called **Steps Ahead Mentoring** for youth ages 18 to 24.⁵² The initiative came from the member organisations and CIPD itself, and aimed to increase employer engagement for work and make organisations more youth friendly.⁵³ The mentoring programme is very job focused but sets no restrictions or conditions as to schooling level, though the majority of mentees are graduates, referred by Jobcentre Plus, with whom CIPD collaborates exclusively. In reality, CIPD seeks to reach those graduates who have the credentials but lack social networks and skills. This middle group tends to fall

45 WKÖ, *Mentoring für MigrantInnen. Das Projekt. Die Ergebnisse. Die Chancen* (Vienna: WKÖ, 2008), http://wko.at/wknoe/verkehr/newsletter_v5/mentoring.pdf.

46 WKÖ, 'Mentoring for Migrants'.

47 Karolin Krause and Thomas Liebig 'The labour market integration of immigrants and their children in Austria', in *Jobs for Immigrants* (Vol. 3): *Labour Market Integration in Austria, Norway and Switzerland* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2011), www.oecd.org/els/mig/50498928.pdf.

48 Joblinge, 'Programm – JOBLINGE: Erfolg aus eigener Kraft', accessed 20 May 2014, www.joblinge.de/was_ist_joblinge/programm.html.

49 Author's email exchange with Joblinge, April 2014.

50 Joblinge, 'Daten und Fakten', accessed 20 May 2014, www.joblinge.de/was_ist_joblinge/daten_und_fakten.html.

51 World Economic Forum, 'Repository of Talent Mobility Good Practices – Joblinge', accessed 20 May 2014, www.weforum.org/best-practices/talent-mobility/joblinge.

52 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 'Steps Ahead Mentoring', accessed 20 May 2014, www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/mentoring-steps-ahead-initiative.aspx.

53 Author's interview with CIPD personnel, 29 April 2014.

through the cracks, since the really disadvantaged young jobseekers do receive targeted support, and many of those who graduate from universities do not really need it.⁵⁴ Comprehensive evaluation is still ongoing as the pilot scheme has been extended after the creation and implementation of an online information technology portal. The programme is currently running across England but aims to expand to the whole of the United Kingdom. At the end of April 2014, there were 497 mentees and 1,160 mentors enrolled, with 357 matched relationships.⁵⁵ There is a long-term commitment to this programme, and both the funding and drive come from CIPD and its member organisations and companies.

In 2006, the Dutch Dream Foundation was founded by Atilla Aytekin, the CEO of Triodor Software, a software development company with branches in the Netherlands, the United States, and Turkey, which is devoted to entrepreneurship and diversity. The foundation was established to support starting entrepreneurs of an ethnic minority background to thrive and succeed in their businesses, and piloted the coaching programme '**Dare to have a dream**'.⁵⁶ The coaching programme has been running since 2010 nationally, and has recently been expanded at the regional level in the Netherlands.⁵⁷ Every year 20 entrepreneurs are selected and paired with 20 coaching 'managers' or leading figures coming from both the private and public sector.⁵⁸ The partnership lasts for one year, and involves at least one monthly meeting in addition to workshops and master classes.⁵⁹ The programme receives no structural or government funding but is supported by financial sponsoring from participating entrepreneurs and coaching companies.

In Sweden the professional associations are also active in this field. For example, the Swedish Engineers Association has developed a **mentoring programme for newly arrived engineers**, to match them with practicing engineers and ease their entry into the Swedish labour market. During the pilot 20 pairs were formed for a partnership lasting 9 months.⁶⁰ Thanks to positive feedback from the participants, they plan to expand to 40 pairs in the next phase. At the same time, the Swedish Medical Association is implementing the programme of **introduction guides**⁶¹—funded by the Public Employment Office and part of a general introduction plan for immigrants which can last up to two years⁶²—to help immigrant

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Dutch Dream Foundation, 'Historie', accessed 20 May 2014, www.dutchdreamfoundation.nl/over-ons/historie.

57 Dare to have a Dream, 'Dare to have a dreamcoachingprogramma', <http://daretohaveadream.nl/index.php/dthead-programma-programma-alg>.

58 Dare to have a Dream, 'Deelnemers Nationaal', <http://daretohaveadream.nl/index.php/deelnemers/nationaal>; conversation with two coaches on 22 April 2014.

59 Dare to have a Dream, 'Nationaal Dare to have a Dream coachingprogramma', <http://daretohaveadream.nl/index.php/nationaal-programma2>.

60 Author's email exchange with Swedish Engineers Association, April 2014.

61 Arbetsförmedlingen, 'Introduction guide for new arrivals', accessed 20 May 2014, www.arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.7cab701e12c9dc4a47c800036/om-lots-for-as-eng.pdf.

62 Arbetsförmedlingen, 'When you have received your residence permit – visit us at Arbetsförmedlingen!', accessed 20 May 2014, www.arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.7cab701e12c9dc4a47c800044/uppehallstillstand-eng.pdf.

doctors enter the Swedish healthcare system.⁶³ They help the foreign-trained doctors obtain a licence to practice and an internship as an initial step into the system.

D. Specialised interventions for particular groups

1. Gender

While foreign-born women were less affected by the economic crisis in most OECD countries than other foreign-born groups (for example, men or youth), their overall employment rates have remained lower than those of native-born women in many countries over the last decade, and consistently lower than both native and foreign-born men.⁶⁴ Few mentoring programmes in Europe are gender-specific, but there are two noteworthy examples in Denmark and Germany.

The Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender's (**KVINFO**) **Mentor Network** was founded in 2002 to link immigrant and refugee women with women 'active' in Danish society. The goal is to empower migrant women and help them participate in the Danish labour market and society, by building their social and professional network.⁶⁵ The network brings women together who would otherwise not meet, and both the mentors and mentees have wide-ranging professional and personal profiles. The pairs work together for a year, meeting on average every other week, while keeping in touch via email, social media, or phone.⁶⁶ KVINFO coordinates the intake interviews with registered participants and directs the matching process. Since 2002 over 6,000 women have participated in more than 3,000 mentoring partnerships.⁶⁷ A quarter of the participating mentees have found work, while many others have completed an education with the support of their mentor. The overall mentoring experience is reported to be positive for both mentors and mentees. Recently, a younger version of the mentoring network was piloted, focusing on young men and women between 16 and 24 with an immigrant background, and currently involves 76 pairs.⁶⁸ KVINFO's Mentor network is funded by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration.

In Frankfurt, Germany, the **Berami** non-profit organisation dealing with professional integration, recognition of qualifications, and adult education has been organising a mentoring network for migrant women since 2005, entitled '**Einsteigen, Umsteigen, Aufsteigen**' or 'Get in, change path, and rise'.⁶⁹ The programme targets highly qualified migrant women from all professional backgrounds. It was initiated by the Women's Department of Frankfurt am Main's city council, which also funds the project. The local approach of the project lends itself to be transferred to other municipalities, but local funding

63 Author's email exchange with Swedish Medical Association, April 2014

64 OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2013*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en.

65 KVINFO, 'KVINFO's Mentor network - open doors', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://kvinfo.dk/sites/default/files/mentorinformationsfolderuk.pdf>.

66 Author's email exchange with KVINFO, March 2014.

67 KVINFO, 'KVINFO's Mentor network - open doors', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://kvinfo.dk/sites/default/files/mentorinformationsfolderuk.pdf>.

68 Author's email exchange with KVINFO, March 2014.

69 Author's email exchange with Berami, April 2014.

remains a challenge. The project currently runs in annual cycles, with one mentoring group per year, and the NGO must re-apply for funding with the City of Frankfurt each year. Nine mentoring groups have taken part so far, with approximately 18 pairs each year or 150 pairs since 2005.

Mentors are recruited from Beramí's professional network, cooperating companies, or through word of mouth, though it is challenging to find mentors with enough wide-ranging profiles to fit the professional profiles of the mentees.⁷⁰ The mentees are selected among the participants of courses or advice-seekers at Beramí, and must demonstrate formal qualification certificates and a good level of German language proficiency as well as motivation. The pairs meet approximately once a month for two to three hours throughout that year. In terms of outcomes, almost half of participating mentees obtain a qualified professional activity during or shortly after the mentoring project, and almost one-third enroll in further studies or training.⁷¹ While the process of recognition of qualifications is often a formal obstacle, the mentoring network supplements the lack of a social and professional network.

2. Refugees

Refugees often have very specific labour market integration needs.⁷² Their needs are sometimes grouped with those of other immigrants through general integration-oriented programmes, but can be addressed specifically as well.

In the United Kingdom there is no formalised integration policy for general immigrants, but refugees do receive targeted support, both from government and civil society. Refugee-oriented initiatives are therefore sometimes more comprehensive and not solely employment focused. The Timebank charity, for instance, ran a mentoring programme for refugees from 2002 until 2005, called **Time Together**, as a response to a government call for more mentoring initiatives to support refugees' integration in society.⁷³ In 2005, the project received government funding to expand nationwide.⁷⁴ Since the start in 2002, Time Together has managed to recruit and match 2,500 refugees. The project was evaluated in 2007 as having had a positive impact on refugees' overall integration in British daily life, from improved language skills, self-confidence, and more robust social networks.⁷⁵ **Refugees into Teaching** is another charity-led initiative by the UK Refugee Council (and formerly in collaboration with Timebank) which aims to help refugees with a teaching background get back into their profession.⁷⁶ While funding for this

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Author's email exchange with Beramí, April 2014.

⁷² See also UNHCR, "A New Beginning - Refugee Integration in Europe", September 2013, <http://www.unhcr.org/52403d389.html>

⁷³ Timebank, 'Time Together', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://timebank.org.uk/timetgether>.

⁷⁴ Cities of Migration, 'Time Together: Mentoring for Daily Life', accessed 20 May 2014, http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/time-together-mentoring-for-daily-life/.

⁷⁵ Lea Esterhuizen and Tanya Murphy, *Changing Lives: A Longitudinal Study into the Impact of Time Together Mentoring on Refugee Integration*, (Glasgow: Scottish Mentoring Network, 2007), <http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/assets/downloads/resources/Study-on-impact-of-mentoring-on-refugee-integration.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Refugee Council, 'Refugees into Teaching', accessed 20 May 2014, www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees_into_teaching.

project formally ended in 2011, the charity still offers online information about training, workshops, and events, a peer network online, as well as limited voluntary school placements. It also offers information for established teachers and schools who want to voluntarily engage.

Scandinavian countries have experienced relatively high humanitarian inflows over the last two decades. In Sweden, labour market integration of refugees (at all skills) has been a particular challenge. The non-profit organisation MINE in Sweden works towards increasing diversity in the workplace, and was created by representatives of the private sector in 2003, together with the City, University and professional association football club of Malmö.⁷⁷ **MINE** had a **mentoring programme** for newly arrived highly skilled refugees from 2010 to 2013, funded by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society.⁷⁸ In close cooperation with the Swedish Employment Agency, these organisations reached out to refugee mentees, while the member companies and wider business network delivered the mentors. A key factor for success was to engage the management level support to the companies which made overall involvement for their mentors easier and more sustainable. In total the project delivered approximately 55 pairs, or 110 participants. The pairs were matched on the basis of educational and professional background, and both mentors and mentees received preparatory information as well as specific training for the mentors. The mentoring process lasted for nine months, where the pairs met at least once a month for one to two hours. A formal evaluation of the outcomes by the Swedish Employment Agency is still underway. The project coordinator highlighted that sustainable funding was one of the challenges to continuing this work, but also, more broadly, engaging the private sector to open up to diversity.

These examples show the important role of charities and non-profit organisations in developing and implementing effective initiatives, but also their strong dependence on government funding and the permanent battle for sustainability and structural change.

In the United States, refugee resettlement agencies in major cities across the country have a strong focus on preparation for employment, in response to the need for a very fast transition once refugees are recognised and stop receiving public welfare benefits. Mentoring can be part of that preparation, particularly if mentoring activities are preceded by a career exploration stage. The International Rescue Committee annually organises the **Leaders in Training Career Week** for talented and motivated youth in its New York Refugee Youth Program.⁷⁹ It aims to expose these young adults to possible careers by bringing them in direct contact with a variety of companies and types of careers to stimulate their professional pathways. The Career Week organises group visits to a number of big and renowned employers in New York.

77 MINE, 'Om Mine', 20 May 2014, <http://mine.se/omoss/om-oss/>.

78 Author's email exchange with MINE, April 2014.

79 International Rescue Committee, 'Career Week at the Leaders in Training Program', accessed 20 May 2014, www.rescue.org/us-program/us-new-york-ny/career-week-leaders-training-program.

III. CASE STUDY: MENTORING AND OTHER LABOUR MARKET INSERTION INITIATIVES IN BELGIUM

This chapter zooms in on mentoring, job coaching and other relevant labour market insertion initiatives for people with immigrant background in Belgium. In Belgium, there are stark differences between the unemployment rate of natives and people with immigrant background. In 2013, the average unemployment rate of natives was almost six per cent, and was eight per cent among people from the EU-12 countries (the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004). By contrast, people from EU candidate⁸⁰ and North African⁸¹ countries had unemployment rates of almost 24 per cent and 26 per cent respectively in the same year.⁸² The gap is even more remarkable among young adults ages 18 to 29: Belgian youth had an average unemployment rate of almost 16 per cent in 2013, while youth from candidate EU countries and North Africa were unemployed at rates of 41 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.⁸³

Within Belgium, the highest unemployment rates of people with an immigrant background are in the Walloon Region (33 per cent among those from candidate EU countries and 27 per cent among those from North African countries) and the Brussels Capital Region (31 per cent for both). In Brussels, 66 per cent of the population between the ages of 18 and 60 is of foreign origin.⁸⁴ The Brussels Region also has the lowest employment rate in Belgium, at 58 per cent.⁸⁵ And more than two-thirds of the unemployed in Brussels are low skilled.⁸⁶

80 Macedonia, Turkey, and at the time of measurement, Croatia, which since joined the European Union on 1 July 2013.

81 Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania.

82 Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg; and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding, *Socio-Economische Monitoring (Brussels: 2013)*, www.diversiteit.be/sites/default/files/documents/publication/socio-economische_monitoring_nl_final.pdf.

83 Ibid.

84 Actiris and Brussels Observatorium voor de Werkgelegenheid, *De arbeidsmarkt in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest (Brussels: Actiris, 2012)*, www.actiris.be/Portals/36/Documents/NL/Arbeidsmarkt%20BHG%20-%20situatie%202012.pdf

85 Hoge Raad voor de Werkgelegenheid, *Verslag 2013 Laaggeschoolden op de arbeidsmarkt, (Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg, 2013)*, www.werk.belgie.be/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=39095.

86 Albert Martens, Nouria Ouali, Marjan Van de maele, Sara Vertommen, Philippe Dryon, and Hans Verhoeven, *Etnische discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest (Brussels and Leuven: Université Libre De Bruxelles and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2005)*, www.actiris.be/Portals/36/Documents/NL/Ethnische_discriminatie.pdf.

Over the last decade, an increasing number of labour market insertion and job coaching programmes have emerged at the regional and local levels. Many of these efforts are dispersed, with a variety of actors involved (see below), and little harmonisation or long-term effort. Classic one-on-one mentoring initiatives for people with an immigrant background are relatively rare in Belgium and are, in fact, a new phenomenon. For this reason, this chapter also maps broader approaches that are relevant to labour market insertion and incorporate mentoring methods and goals. These approaches range from broad to specific approaches, both in their scope of activities and objectives, and in terms of their target groups (such as the low skilled, unemployed, unemployed youth, or highly skilled immigrants).

Belgium is a federal state, where the federal (or central), regional, and local governments divide policy competences. Belgium is also officially a trilingual country, adding to the complexity of sharing policy jurisdiction, not only between administrative regions but also between the three linguistic communities: Flemish, Francophone, and German-speaking. While the federal government handles areas such as justice, the bulk of internal affairs (including asylum and immigration), and foreign affairs,⁸⁷ the three regions (Flanders, Brussels Capital Region, and Wallonia) are responsible for economy, agriculture, housing, and employment and mobility.⁸⁸ The linguistic communities carry competences primarily for education policy and other language-related matters, including integration and cultural policies.⁸⁹ In Flanders, the regional and community competences have been merged, resulting in a Flemish government that has authority over both regional and linguistic matters.

The federal government has historically governed areas of social protection such as unemployment benefits, pensions, and income; while employment policies and activation or participation initiatives have been matters for the regional governments. The conclusion of the sixth constitutional reform in December 2013, however, transfers virtually all decision-making and implementation power regarding the active and non-active population to the regions⁹⁰. It is unclear how some of these changes will be implemented: for instance, issuance of residence permits remains a competence of the federal government, while authority over work permits will be shifted to the regions.

Since activation and employment policies are decentralised, there is no overarching federal public employment body in Belgium. Instead, there are four public employment agencies: VDAB (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* or Flemish Department for Employment and

87 Portaal Belgium.be, 'De bevoegdheden van de federale overheid', accessed 20 May 2014, www.belgium.be/nl/over_belgie/overheid/federale_overheid/bevoegdheden_federale_overheid/.

88 Portaal Belgium.be, 'De bevoegdheden van de gewesten', accessed 20 May 2014, www.belgium.be/nl/over_belgie/overheid/gewesten/bevoegdheden/.

89 Portaal Belgium.be, 'De bevoegdheden van de gemeenschappen', accessed 20 May 2014, www.belgium.be/nl/over_belgie/overheid/gemeenschappen/bevoegdheden/.

90 Belgische Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers, *Algemene Beleidsnota Staatshervorming*, 22 December 2011, www.dekamer.be/FLWB/PDF/53/1964/53K1964016.pdf

Vocational Training)⁹¹ in Flanders; Forem (*l'Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi* or Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Employment)⁹² in Wallonia, Actiris⁹³ in the Brussels Capital Region and Arbeitsamt in the German speaking Community. VDAB and Forem not only offer job placement and employment services but also training and pathways to employment. In Brussels, however, these tasks are divided: Actiris only offers job placement and employment counselling, while trainings are available through VDAB (for Dutch speakers) or Bruxelles Formation (for French speakers).

Similarly, immigrant integration policy has historically been a competence of the linguistic communities.⁹⁴ Flanders mandates obligatory participation in integration programmes for newcomers, and the latest Integration Decree has merged integration and reception policy.⁹⁵ In Wallonia, regional integration centres tend to approach integration policy through the holistic, non-obligatory lens of socioeconomic inclusion, although obligatory elements regarding language acquisition are likely to be introduced in the future.⁹⁶ In Brussels, a variety of Flemish and Francophone organisations offer linguistic courses, socioprofessional training, and insertion workshops for newcomers on an optional basis. The diversified approach to integration policy and the decentralised operation of employment issues leads to a highly scattered landscape of actors and organisations involved in mentoring and job activation activities.

A. Initiatives that promote diversity

Many projects that address the challenges of diversity on the labour market do not necessarily offer specific job counselling or mentoring-related activities, but nonetheless lay the foundation for an improved connection between vulnerable jobseekers and employers and businesses. Such programmes focus on building awareness about the benefits of diversity within the private sector, by developing trust among employers, connecting them efficiently with public employment offices, or assisting them in reforming their recruitment practices.

Jobkanaal (Job Canal) was created in 2003 by the Flanders Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Vlaams netwerk van ondernemingen; VOKA) as a response to the government's intention to introduce

91 Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB), 'More on the VDAB', accessed 20 May 2014, www.vdab.be/english/vdab.shtml.

92 Le Forem, 'Missions', accessed 20 May 2014, www.leforem.be/a-propos/leforemendetail/missions/missions.html.

93 Actiris, 'Onze opdrachten', accessed 20 May 2014, www.actiris.be/apropos/tabid/255/language/nl-BE/Onze-opdrachten.aspx.

94 Milica Petrovic, 'Belgium: A Country of Permanent Immigration', Migration Information Source, November 2012, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/belgium-country-permanent-immigration.

95 Vlaams Parlement and the Vlaamse Regering, *Decreet betreffende het Vlaamse integratie- en inburgeringsbeleid*, (Brussels: Vlaams Parlement and the Vlaamse Regering, 2013), www.inburgering.be/sites/default/files/inburgering/inburgeringenintegratedecreet_07062013.pdf.

96 Portail Action Sociale et Santé en Wallonie, 'Centre Régional d'Intégration', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://socialsante.wallonie.be/?q=action-sociale/integration-personne-origine-etrangere/dispositifs/centre-regional-integration>.

a diversity quota—a move that businesses were reluctant to accept.⁹⁷ They preferred to promote and engage with diversity in a non-obligatory way. 'Diversity' here refers to the government's policy guidelines regarding career and diversity policy,⁹⁸ and includes a broader range of disadvantaged groups (such as seniors, disabled people, or employees of foreign origin). Jobkanaal aimed to raise awareness about diversity among companies, while improving labour market insertion rates for disadvantaged jobseekers. Thus, Jobkanaal's advisors build bridges between the private sector and employment services. They visited more than 1,400 companies in 2013, where they assessed employers' needs and recruitment processes. They also offer advice on starting recruitment services that balance diversity goals and business needs. Rather than 'ticking the box' regarding diversity, they help businesses focus primarily on skills and competences while rethinking *how* to reach those competences, and move beyond traditional recruitment procedures.

Jobkanaal's advisors also connect job coaches and counsellors (from VDAB, local nonprofit organisations, temporary job agencies, etc.) with companies directly, because many job counsellors have a social work or education rather than a human resources (HR) background and often lack understanding of the commercial reality and business needs of employers.⁹⁹ Indeed, one of the organisation's biggest challenges is facilitating mutual understanding and aligned approaches between businesses and job counselors.

In addition, Jobkanaal maintains a database of vacancies at companies that the organisation's advisors have visited—meaning the companies are open to diversity-related efforts in human resources. The database is only accessible to employers and job counselors, and not to jobseekers directly. While Jobkanaal used to have target numbers for vacancies reached and filled, this has become more flexible now. In fact, as the organisation's impact has become visible over the past decade, their services in a way become superfluous: when the matching between companies and counselors has succeeded, they do not need Jobkanaal's database any longer. Colruyt and IKEA are examples of large companies that have a diversity plan as part of their HR services, and where the collaboration with job counselors has been successful (through, for example, targeted company visits organised by Jobkanaal).

Jobkanaal's operations are funded by the Flemish government, and is no longer led only by VOKA but in partnership with Unizo (Flemish union of independent entrepreneurs), Verso (Flemish employers representative of the social profit sector) and VKW (platform for entrepreneurs).

97 Author's meeting with Vlaams netwerk van ondernemingen (VOKA) personnel, 17 March 2014.

98 Werk.be, 'Diversiteit op het werk', accessed 20 May 2014, www.werk.be/beleidsthemas/diversiteit-op-het-werk.

99 Author's meeting with VOKA personnel, 17 March 2014.

Diversity labels and plans, created in 2007, are another example of government support for workplace diversity goals in the Brussels region.¹⁰⁰ Companies receive diversity labels if their recruitment services have a diversity plan—a practice evident in France as well.¹⁰¹ Again, the definition of diversity is understood broadly, and is not just limited to origins. Diversity counselors from the Brussels public employment agency Actiris coach companies and their HR services in adapting their recruitment techniques for a diverse workforce. The diversity counselors actively reach out to prospective companies to include in the label scheme, though businesses also come to them spontaneously or sometimes because of a discrimination complaint.¹⁰² From 2007 to 2013, 103 companies in Brussels have developed diversity plans and 54 have received diversity labels, eight of which are extensions.¹⁰³ The diversity label is reviewed every two years. Today, the label is becoming increasingly important for a company's reputation. The participating companies in Brussels tend to be small- to medium-sized enterprises, and also include several non-profit and cultural organisations.¹⁰⁴

Yet despite government's engagements on diversity, the reality within the private sector can be quite different. Job counselors, who are trained to match according to skills and promote candidates based on their competences, continue to receive discriminatory requests from some employers.¹⁰⁵ There is still little internal expertise among public employment offices about how to address discriminatory requests from employers, who are also their clients and partners. Actiris is currently developing a specific training for job counselors regarding discrimination, which may launch in 2015.

B. Job activation programmes for low-skilled jobseekers

Flanders, Wallonia, and the Brussels Region have each developed projects to facilitate the labour market integration of low-skilled jobseekers. Some of these projects target unemployed youth specifically. These projects do not have actual mentoring components, but consist of a combination of individual and group-based regular coaching.

The Work Immersion Youth project (*WerkInleving Jongeren*; WIJ) in Flanders, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), is coordinated by the Flemish Government and public employment office (VDAB), and implemented in 13 cities in Flanders. It will soon be extended to a 14th city.¹⁰⁶ In January

100 *Diversiteit op de Brusselse arbeidsmarkt, 'Klaar voor ondernemende diversiteit!', accessed 20 March 2014, www.diversiteit.irisnet.be/-Klaar-voor-ondernemende-.html.*

101 *Author's visit to Actiris Diversity Unit, 12 March 2014. For more information on the Diversity Labels in France, see Elizabeth Collett and Milica Petrovic, The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2014), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/future-immigrant-integration-europe-mainstreaming-approaches-inclusion.*

102 *Author's visit to Actiris Diversity Unit, 12 March 2014.*

103 *Actiris internal documentation provided to author.*

104 *Author's visit to Actiris Diversity Unit, 12 March 2014.*

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Author's meeting with VDAB personnel, 10 March 2014.*

2014, WIJ was implementing 1,141 projects at the local level. The project started in 2013, will run for two years, and targets low-skilled unemployed youth ages 18 to 25. The aim is to offer these young jobseekers very specific skill and training supplements to close the gap between their qualifications and labour market needs. In practice, the programme is implemented by a variety of local non-profit organisations, and their content can vary depending on the organisation. In every case, the programme offers an intensive six-months to year-long schedule of regular weekly meetings between the jobseeker and his or her counsellor. The focus varies, from trainings and workshops for job-specific and technical skills; to interview, presentation, and résumé-building techniques; to developing more general socioprofessional competences and attitudes.

There are 3,710 placements foreseen by the local implementing organisations for young low-skilled jobseekers during 2013-15 in Flanders. However, these jobseekers have to be enrolled at the public employment office (VDAB) to be referred to one of the local partners and participate in the programme. There are more young jobseekers than VDAB actually forwards to the local partners, and not all places get filled as some of these jobseekers are difficult to reach.¹⁰⁷ Some youngsters drop out of the programme, or are simply not willing to enroll due to a lack of motivation and trust. At the end of this trajectory local partners reach out to potential employers and businesses to offer an internship or apprenticeship placement for these young people. Unfortunately, this final stage of the programme proves to be a considerable hurdle as employers are not always very keen on taking on applicants who are young and unskilled¹⁰⁸ due to a lack of trust and familiarity with diversity on the employers' part combined with the fact that many of these candidates have very little to no work experience. Difficult economic times exacerbate the situation, since competition is fierce and employers are even less likely to take a risk.

Active Search for Work. In Brussels there is a similar focus on low-skilled jobseekers, not limited to youth but reaching them disproportionately. Many of these young adults have an immigration background. The project Active Search for Work (*Ateliers actief zoeken naar werk* or AZW in Dutch, and *Recherche active à l'emploi* or RAE in French) is entirely funded by ESF, distributed and managed by the Brussels public employment office Actiris, and implemented by local non-profit organisations.¹⁰⁹ The programme applies to low-skilled (having a secondary education degree at most) jobseekers over age 18 who are unemployed, registered with Actiris, and living in one of Brussels' 19 municipalities. There are four Dutch-speaking and 17 French-speaking non-profit organisations implementing more or less the same programme: offering jobseekers individual sessions with job coaches as well as group workshops and training sessions throughout the year.

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¹⁰⁷ Author's telephone interview with local coordinator in Gent from youth organisation JES, 6 February 2014.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Author's interview with InBrussel on 18 February 2014 and email correspondence with Mission Locale Molenbeek in April 2014.

All of these activities focus on making the jobseekers more independent, and teaching them how to apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, use career fairs, and understand how the labour market works. The group sessions comprise eight to twelve participants, and can last either one week or five weeks (both types meeting twice a year). As part of these sessions, job coaches organise company visits, go to job fairs, and cooperate with temporary work agencies.

While AZW/RAE is open to older adults as well, often one-quarter to one-third of participants are younger than 25 years,¹¹⁰ and one of the week-long group sessions is specifically organised for youth. The local organisations are spread throughout Brussels and embedded in neighbourhoods where they reach their participants primarily through word of mouth.¹¹¹ With a limited supply of job counselors, each of these organisations manage to coach roughly 100 jobseekers annually (with approximately 40 to 50 in group sessions, and the rest individually).¹¹² While there is much cooperation and information exchange between local organisations, the sustainability of their activities depends on Actiris' extension of project calls (with ESF funds) every three years.¹¹³ At the same time, given the specified terms of reference of the programme, the services of job coaches are limited to low-skilled jobseekers. More generally, the activities of many local non-profit organisations are tied to the particular project goals of their funders, which restrains the remit and sustainability of their activities.

Box 3. Case study: Regional missions in Wallonia, Integrating young people in priority neighbourhoods

The regional missions (mission régionales; MIRE) for employment in Wallonia were established 25 years ago to address high levels of unemployment and help connect jobseekers—particularly the disadvantaged and low skilled—and employers. Today there are 11 MIRE offices throughout the Walloon region, which act as a three-way bridge between employers, jobseekers, and training services. They have strong ties with the private sector, particularly in sales, logistics, cleaning, catering and hospitality, transport, and construction.

In 2009, the Walloon government piloted a project targeting low-skilled and unemployed youth living in disadvantaged areas and isolated from the labour market. The youth integration project placed a job coach and a social worker in each deprived area, making programmes more accessible, cultivating a permanent local presence, and forging relationships of trust and confidence with youngsters and their parents—many of whom are of migrant origin. This less bureaucratic and more flexible approach lowered the barriers to accessing coaching services. In the priority neighbourhoods Tubize and Ottignies in Brabant-Wallon province, the job coach and social worker have very close ties to the neighbourhoods where they operate, and have immigrant roots themselves.

MIREs also have strong ties with local employers, who the job coaches survey to understand the functioning and needs of businesses before preparing candidates. The individualised job coaching

110 Author's interview with Groep Intro personnel, 26 March 2014.

111 Author's meeting with InBrussel personnel, 18 February 2014; and interview with Groep Intro personnel 26 March 2014.

112 Author's meeting InBrussel personnel, 18 February 2014.

113 Author's interview with Groep Intro personnel, 26 March 2014; and email exchange with Mission Locale Molenbeek in April 2014.

process (which lasts up to a year, and also into the job) has a long-term vision: to develop a candidate's professional aspirations, prepare him/her for getting the job, as well as to remain and succeed in the job. Through short-term placements and internships—thanks to the MIREs' solid relationships with a variety of employers—combined with job-preparatory training to acquire basic skills, jobseekers are more likely to enter the labour market.

The success of the pilot projects led the Walloon government to expand and fully fund the programme in all 11 MIREs in Wallonia, ensuring the presence of a job coach for disadvantaged, unemployed youth in more than twenty priority neighbourhoods. Evaluations showed that the dedicated presence of job coaches gradually contributed to a reorientation or mental shift among youngsters. Once their activities and impact were known and visible in the priority neighbourhoods, where an increasing number of youngsters gradually receive counselling, training, and job placements, the active outreach becomes less necessary. In fact, while the MIRE in Brabant-Wallon had three job coaches at one point, the programme scaled back to two, as young jobseekers became more familiar with their activities and their potential benefits. The 2013 annual report confirmed that 532 beneficiaries received job counselling across 10 MIREs in 2012, out of which 203 found sustainable employment.

Source: Author's interview with InterMIRE, 10 March 2014; and meeting with MIRE Brabant-Wallon, 24 March 2014.

C. Labour market insertion initiatives focusing on specific groups

Several labour market initiatives focus on a particular target group, including people of an immigration background in general, highly skilled newcomers, or unemployed youth. Few initiatives target immigrant youth exclusively.

1. Initiatives focusing on people with immigrant background

Minderhedenforum. Civil society organisations initiate many of the programmes for immigrant labour market integration. One important player in this field is the Minorities' Forum (*Minderhedenforum*), which represents over 1,600 ethnic-minority civil society organisations in Flanders, and lobbies for equal treatment and minority participation.¹¹⁴ The forum has been managing the **Work-Up** project of 'activation counsellors', which operate like the job coaches in the regional missions in Wallonia. The project has been running since 2007 and is funded by the regional government. The goal is to close the large distance between jobseekers with immigrant background and the labour market by improving access to employment-facilitating services. There are eight Work-Up counsellors in Flanders, operating at the local level in six urban regions, which are funded by the Flemish Minister of Work, and there is one equivalent job counsellor in Brussels, funded by the Brussels Minister for Employment and Professional Training.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Author's email exchange with Minorities' Forum personnel in March 2014.

¹¹⁵ Minderhedenforum, *Meer en beter werk voor etnisch-culturele minderheden. Tweede editie Work-up, (February 2010). On file with author.*

These activation counsellors—many of whom themselves have an immigration background—are familiar with the localities in which they operate and build strong relationships of trust by going to jobseekers' home turf: places of worship, youth centres, associations and clubs, and even people's homes. As such, they provide a bridge between jobseekers and state services like VDAB, and also pass on their context knowledge and policy recommendations. Work-Up counsellors manage to reach and refer around 750 jobseekers annually, the bulk of which are of Turkish and Moroccan origin, though they also work with people of African and Eastern European origin.¹¹⁶ Initially the programme predominantly reached young jobseekers, but this has become more balanced in recent years with just under 50 per cent of beneficiaries under age 35 in 2013. The programme reaches slightly more men than women,¹¹⁷ and until 2012, more than 70 per cent of beneficiaries obtained their qualifications abroad (the majority being low skilled)—but in 2013, this figure dropped to 41 per cent.

Mentor vzw is a local non-profit organisation in Kortrijk in West-Flanders which is invested in the sustainable employment of vulnerable groups in society. One current project is offering specific job counselling for Francophone jobseekers in the region, as the Flemish public employment office VDAB is not allowed to assist people in French.¹¹⁸ The project is funded by VDAB, which refers candidates to them, and will run as long as needed since it is annually extendable. The bulk of the participants come from North Africa, most are men and low skilled, and live in the area of Menen. The job coaching process happens on an individual basis, although the organisation also offers group workshops for résumé building, drafting motivation letters, practicing interviews, and more. Since the start of the project in mid-2013, 540 Francophone jobseekers have received job counselling. The biggest challenge remains to achieve a shift in mindset within the private sector, as the job counsellors within Mentor vzw spend much time lobbying employers about suitable candidates with a diverse background.¹¹⁹

2. Initiatives targeting highly skilled immigrants

A focus on highly skilled immigrants is on the rise, particularly in Flanders. Their main barriers for accessing the labour market are a lack of social networks, insufficient knowledge of the socioprofessional codes needed to apply for a job, and limited or insufficient language skills.

The Flemish public employment office VDAB offers 'Dutch as a second language' packages for highly skilled newcomers. They are also involved in two relatively recent programmes that target this group in Gent and Antwerp, both of which are predominantly financed by the European Social Fund.

Eminentea is a programme that tailored employment coaching services for highly skilled immigrants from 2011 to 2012. It was managed and implemented by the city of Gent in collaboration with local

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Author's email exchange with Minorities' Forum in March 2014.

¹¹⁸ Author's interview with Mentor vzw, 17 March 2014.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

partners, and funded by ESF. As of early 2014, it was receiving additional funds to disseminate and implement its methodology across VDAB's mainstream operations (particularly in East and West Flanders, and in Brabant Flamand).¹²⁰ During first year, two part-time job coaches worked with 49 highly skilled immigrants, through an individualised preparatory programme and group sessions. They focused on particularly vulnerable qualities (such as lack of Dutch language skills, long-term unemployment, and isolation from the labour market). Most participants enrolled in the programme through the VDAB, but many came through the local public welfare office, temporary work agencies, migrant organisations, or word of mouth. Eminentia organised speed meets with employers, and arranged 'diversity-proof' recruiting workshops for employers to expand their recruiting horizon and techniques. Out of the 49 participants, 32 jobseekers were employed at their level at the end of the programme (though five of them became unemployed again). A notable feature of this programme was the one-stop-shop nature of its services. Eminentia became a centre of expertise for highly skilled immigrant jobseekers, and for employers and intermediary partners. In addition to coaching on job-related matters, it developed a network with employers and a peer network among the jobseekers.

Forum for Highly Skilled Newcomers. In Antwerp, Integration Centre de8 runs the Forum for Highly Skilled Newcomers (*Forum voor Hoogopgeleide Anderstaligen; HOA*), a platform where several initiatives for highly skilled immigrants are being developed. Their database, Protalent, helps match highly skilled newcomers with employers.¹²¹ The project, started in 2012, is increasingly pooling profiles and information from highly skilled immigrants for potential employers, but is used by job counsellors.¹²² New applicants need to register their profile and add the right keywords to their profile through which employers can find them.

HOA Loket. De8 also has a reception desk for highly skilled newcomers called HOA Loket, which is available every Tuesday morning within the mainstream employment counseling services of the VDAB.¹²³ This service, funded by VDAB, was developed in 2014 to offer targeted support to this group within the larger public employment services.

Werkmetzin. De8 is also involved in a job coaching project for two groups of approximately 15 highly skilled newcomers on a both individual and group basis. The project *Werkmetzin* (roughly translated as work with meaning and gusto) is also funded by ESF, and is focused not only on developing jobseeking skills and expanding professional networks.¹²⁴ The project offers meet-and-greet sessions with businesses from various sectors, site visits, and is even developing group training and evaluation sessions with some of the larger participating companies, such as IBM and KBC.¹²⁵ The project shows

¹²⁰ Author's interview with the coordinator for Eminentia in the city of Gent, 6 February 2014.

¹²¹ Protalent, 'Protalent', accessed 20 May 2014, www.protalent.be/.

¹²² Author's interview with de8 personnel, 6 February 2014.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Werkmetzin, 'Project HOA', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://werkmetzin.be/projecten-n/hooggeschoolde-anderstaligen.html>.

¹²⁵ Author's interview with de8 personnel, 6 February 2014.

that larger companies are interested in participating in these activities and meeting potential candidates from diverse backgrounds, but obtaining a proper employment contract often remains a challenge.

As many of these initiatives are still very new, evaluations and impact assessments have not taken place yet. At the same time, the bulk of the above activities are formally limited in time. For the HOA reception desk, De8 has an agreement with VDAB until the end of 2014, both the mentoring project and Werkmetzin are funded by ESF also until the end of 2014, and Eminentia has already ended.¹²⁶ The main challenges, then, are to evaluate the success of the initiatives, and embed them in mainstream services if they prove successful. The Eminentia project will be embedded in the regular VDAB services in a number of places in Flanders. However, the fact that a parallel system is being developed in Antwerp (with the hope of structurally integrating that method as well) shows VDAB's lack of a long-term plan for harmonizing the local projects into a more centralised approach.

3. Initiatives targeting unemployed youth

Similarly to the French and Dutch context, several broader labour market insertion projects (such as the work immersion for youth in Flanders) focus on youth unemployment, and there are a few specific local initiatives as well in Brussels and Antwerp.

Discover Your Talent. In 2011, the first edition of the 'Discover Your Talent' youth day was organised in Brussels. The initiative originally came from the Business & Society (B&S) network, whose members—such as Citibank and Microsoft—already had in-house activities focused on disadvantaged youth and corporate social responsibility, and wanted to merge their activities with other member companies.¹²⁷ This initiative stemmed from an overall growing interest in corporate social responsibility (particularly amongst Anglo-American companies) and volunteerism. Other B&S members such as Freshfield, Infrabel, Elia, and Accenture joined the initiative, and participated in a one-day event with five hour long workshops for approximately 100 jobseekers in Brussels.¹²⁸ Each company organised one workshop, and jobseekers rotated between them. Topics included résumé writing, interview techniques, social media, and presentation skills. Sixty volunteers with various professional profiles from the different companies were present. A local Brussels non-profit organisation, Maks vzw, helped organise the first such event.

Actiris has funded Discover Your Talent since 2012 and has introduced specific participation criteria for the candidates: they have to be unemployed, living in Brussels, and 18 to 25 years old. In practice, more than 90 per cent of participants are low-skilled and the majority are of migrant origin, from the Brussels municipalities of Anderlecht and Molenbeek.¹²⁹ In 2013, 72 participants registered but only 41

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¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Author's interview with Business&Society personnel, 12 March 2014.

¹²⁸ Author's interview with Maks vzw personnel, 21 February 2014.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

met all the criteria. The others were excluded from follow-up activities (including mentoring) organised by Maks vzw.¹³⁰ The project was deemed successful: of the 41 participants, 61 per cent had a positive outcome seven months after the event. They were either employed or enrolled in a vocational training.¹³¹

Initially, the follow-up mentoring activities after Discover Your Talent were quite haphazard and not very successful as expectations were unclear and the process was not formalised. In 2014, Maks vzw plans to formalise the selection and matching process for both mentors and mentees, with a contract of engagement, and a timeline of four to five months with at least one hour-long meeting per month. Since Discover Your Talent will be funded by Actiris until the end of 2014, the future of the programme is unclear, though funding may well be continued for 2016-17 through the neighbourhood contracts. The contracts aim to revitalise certain deprived areas in Brussels by focusing on houses and public spaces, and also social activities.¹³² While the interest from companies in the Business&Society network continues, Maks vzw needs additional funding to continue tailored services and follow-up meetings after the one-day event.

Engage. The Discover Your Talent initiative is now being transferred to the city of Antwerp.¹³³ The Engage project organises business and company visits for groups of approximately 10 to 15 youngsters, either below or above age 18, jointly organised by the Youth Competence Centres and other local organisations.¹³⁴ Like Discover Your Talent, mostly larger businesses are involved in Engage. Experience shows that larger companies are willing to receive these youngsters, but are less keen to go to their communities by, for example, visiting youth centres. Like Brussels, Antwerp also aims to close the gap between young jobseekers and the labour market, and broadening their networks is one of the strategies for doing so. The city invests in various projects carried out by the youth competence centres, primarily targeting disadvantaged youth (many of whom have an immigrant background).

Box 4. Defining youth with immigrant background in Belgium

The target group of immigrant youth has been defined loosely in this chapter, as well as in the overall study. It includes youth with immigrant background, ranging from newcomers to those in the second and third generations, with no limitations in terms of skill or schooling level. This research focuses on youth age 18 (though some projects may start earlier) to ages 25 to 30, in order to capture as many relevant initiatives as possible. The research focuses on young unemployed people's search for their first professional experience.

130 *Ibid.*

131 *Ibid.*

132 Stad Brussel, 'Wijkcontracten: wie doet wat?', accessed 20 May 2014, www.brussel.be/artdet.cfm?id=4099&.

133 Business & Society Belgium, 'ENGAGE: Na Brussel nu ook in Antwerpen!', accessed 20 May 2014, www.businessandsociety.be/nl/ENGAGE-Na-Brussel-nu-ook-in-Antwerpen/.

134 Author's interview with City of Antwerp, Department for Work and Economy personnel, 14 March 2014.

While approximately 20 per cent of the Belgian youth ages 15 to 24 were unemployed in 2012, the share rises to 27 per cent in Wallonia and 36 per cent in the Brussels Capital Region.¹³⁵ In Brussels, there are stark differences in unemployment rates between the various municipalities. Over one-third of youth under age 25 are unemployed in poorer and more ethnically diverse municipalities such as Anderlecht, St-Jans-Molenbeek, St-Gillis, Schaarbeek, Vorst, and also Brussels, as opposed to the more affluent areas of St-Pieters and St-Lambrechts-Woluwe, Watermaal-Bosvoorde, and Ukkel, where unemployment rates are between 20 per cent and 25 per cent.¹³⁶ Local non-profit organisations providing job activation projects such as Groep Intro, Maks vzw, InBrussel and the missions locales are therefore purposely stationed in the municipalities that need them the most.

Overall, these unemployment numbers have triggered increased attention to improving youth participation on the labour market among government actors as well as the non-profit and private sectors, through various initiatives across Belgium. However, the majority of programmes and initiatives are not especially for young adults with an immigrant background. The programmes instead target qualities such as level of schooling, overall isolation from the labour market (defining potential beneficiaries rather as 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' youth). Nevertheless, in practice many young adults with immigrant background effectively take part in several labour market insertion or mentoring activities, particularly because these are implemented at the local level in densely populated urban areas.

4. Classic mentoring initiatives

Traditional one-on-one mentoring initiatives involving someone from the private sector are rare, relatively new, and scattered in Belgium. Comprehensive evaluation is lacking and 'success' or impact has not yet been proven. The below examples show that the will is present—particularly at the local level—to organise such mentoring initiatives and to involve partners, but the remit is often small-scale and sustainability is uncertain.

Bright Future and Peterschap/ Parrainage. Be.face is a non-profit network of businesses in Brussels—most of them larger companies—who are socially engaged and pool their resources for corporate social responsibility efforts.¹³⁷ Be.Face has launched two mentoring programmes, Bright Future and *Peterschap/Parrainage* (both words mean mentoring). Bright Future started in January 2014 and is aimed at talented graduates who have finished at least two years of higher education, but who face economic, social, cultural, or linguistic barriers on the labour market.¹³⁸ The programme is not focused on youth with an immigrant background specifically, but instead targets specific barriers to employment. *Peterschap* is for jobseekers ages 18 to 30 who are experiencing difficulties entering the labour market (because they are, for example, low skilled, refugees and immigrants, or long-term

135 Actiris, 'Statistics of the Brussels Labour Market' (Unemployment rates for the three regions, 2012), accessed 20 May 2014, www.actiris.be/marchemp/tabid/211/language/nl-BE/Statistieken-van-de-Brusselse-arbeidsmarkt.aspx.

136 Actiris, 'Statistics of the Brussels Labour Market' (2013), accessed 20 May 2014, www.actiris.be/marchemp/tabid/211/language/nl-BE/Statistieken-van-de-Brusselse-arbeidsmarkt.aspx.

137 Be.Face, 'Profiel', accessed 20 May 2014, www.beface.be/nl/profiel-2/profiel/.

138 Author's email exchange with Be.Face, March 2014.

unemployed). Both projects stem from the desire to bring two disparate worlds together. The talented graduates in Bright Future can expand their socioprofessional network, and receive support and guidance to shape their future careers. Disadvantaged jobseekers can more easily access the labour market, and connect directly to employers and businesses. The mentoring programme borrowed the idea and method from the FACE mentoring programme in France, but adapted it to the Brussels context.

Be.Face is currently working with three universities and their social services in Brussels to find their mentees for Bright Future, while for Peterschap they collaborate with local socioeconomic and integration partners such as the missions locales, Tracé Brussels, Service Emploi Koekelberg, Bruxelles Formation, InterS, and Convivium vzw.¹³⁹ The mentors for both initiatives come from Be.Face's own business network. The Bright Future programme consists of at least ten meetings of one to two hours each over the course of 12 to 18 months, while Peterschap lasts 4 to 6 months. The mentors and mentees may be matched on the basis of a diverse set of criteria, including professional interest and ambitions, language, leisure preferences, or certain personal characteristics. A first evaluation was planned for Bright Future in September 2014, while Peterschap is evaluated on a regular basis. However, the evaluation is rather flexible and broad, as a positive result can be long or short-term employment, internships, and training or education. Approximately 60 per cent of the participants have such positive results after completing their mentoring programmes.¹⁴⁰

Box 5. Case Study: Duo for a Job

Duo for a Job is a classic one-on-one mentoring initiative officially launched in September 2013 to match retirees (mentors) with newly arrived immigrants under age 30 (mentees) in Brussels – a comparable initiative to VerA in Germany. The initiative aimed to widen the socioprofessional network and career opportunities for mentees, to involve recent retirees in a social engagement, and to forge intercultural and intergenerational relationships which otherwise would not occur.¹⁴¹

Duo for a job is a non-profit organisation whose founders previously had prior careers in business, and therefore still have strong ties in the business community. They attract mentors by giving presentations in companies (with a first contact through human resources), and by word of mouth. Mentees are reached through a collaboration with local integration and social organisations (such as BON, Caritas, the Red Cross, and Convivial) or the public employment office Actiris. Mentees have to be unemployed; have an immigrant background; possess a work permit for Belgium; speak English, French or Dutch; and demonstrate motivation. Mentors must be above age 50, retired, with a valuable professional experience and fluency in one of the three languages.

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¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Author's interview Duo for a Job personnel, 10 February 2014.

Mentors receive a three-day training. The mentor-mentee pairs sign an agreement with set objectives, as well as regularly evaluated bimonthly action plans. The mentorship lasts for six months, after which Duo for a Job evaluates the relationship.

At the end of February 2014, the organisation had paired 50 mentors and mentees, with positive reactions among the participants, though a comprehensive evaluation is still pending.¹⁴² The organisation aims to match 70 pairs by the end of 2014 and 110 in 2015. One current challenge is securing sustainable operational funding.

Source: Author's interview with Duo for a Job personnel on 10 February 2014.

MentorU. In 2011, the European think tank *Pour la Solidarité* piloted the MentorU project in Brussels, aiming to match unemployed mentees with professionals (volunteer mentors) to offer support for drafting résumés and motivation letters, familiarising mentees with the social conduct and culture of the professional world, and expanding their socioprofessional network.¹⁴³

The couples were matched on the basis of criteria like professional sector, geographical location, personal preferences, and hobbies. The mentoring partnership lasted 6 months with regular meetings at least once a month on the professional premises of the mentor, complemented by additional telephone or email correspondence. *Pour la Solidarité* worked in partnership with Decider's, a corporate business consultancy also engaged in diversity and social responsibility, through which they attracted the participation of larger businesses (such as McKinsey, PwC, and RTL Belgium) and their mentors. To reach the mentees, *Pour la Solidarité* collaborated with local socioeconomic insertion partners (Actiris, the local missions in Brussels, and offices for social welfare). Motivation was the most important selection criterion (as well as being unemployed), but not skill level or background.

Pour la Solidarité did an extensive evaluation of the entire pilot project and the follow-up year, including the profiles of the participants, expectations, outcomes, and participants' levels of satisfaction. Most of the mentors in the first year were men in management, francophone, and between ages 20 and 35. The participating mentees on the other hand were mostly francophone women ages 30 to 45, long-term unemployed and of immigrant origin.¹⁴⁴

Overall both mentors and mentees gave positive reviews about the mentoring process. In the first year between September 2011 and August 2012, 52 people participated in the mentoring programme, out of which 50 per cent had a positive outcome (the bulk found fixed or long-term employment, but some were also enrolled in training or internships), and more than one-third were still enrolled in the mentoring programme in June 2012.

¹⁴² Marie D'Otreppe, 'Duo for a Job : voie royale vers l'intégration par l'emploi', *Trends Le Vif*, February 24, 2014, <http://m.trends.levif.be/economie/actualite/entreprises/duo-for-a-job-voie-royale-vers-l-integration-par-l-emploi/article-4000538623614.htm?layout=ThemisMobileArticle>.

¹⁴³ MentorU evaluation reports for 2012 and 2013, obtained by *Pour la Solidarité* through email correspondence in February 2014.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

The second phase of the project only picked up in January 2013. The interruption, along with the difficult economic times, led many of the previously participating businesses to withdraw from the programme. In addition, several mentors admitted that it was challenging to mentor someone considerably remote from the labour market, whose experiences differed considerably from theirs. In the end, after January 2013, McKinsey was the only company who wished to continue, and delivered even more mentors than the year before. The mentees remained predominantly unemployed women with immigrant background between ages 26 and 45, although this time (as opposed to the first phase), a slight majority was highly educated. Between January and June 2013, 44 people participated in the mentoring programme. Of the 68 per cent that had finished the programme by June, two-thirds had a positive outcome, but actual employment rates declined while participation in internships and training rose.¹⁴⁵

This mentoring project demonstrated the difficulty in engaging with the private sector in the long run. While small and medium enterprises were generally much harder to engage, bigger companies also responded to the economic climate by scaling back their participation. And certain segments of the population were more difficult to reach without a targeted approach: unemployed youth and low-skilled potential jobseekers. Even when they were not specifically targeted, mid- to high- skilled women—including those who were long-term unemployed—seemed more proactive and motivated to participate. Finally, when mentors' and mentees' social and professional environments differed, mentors required more guidance and preparation.

These examples show that the few classic mentoring initiatives that exist are either predominantly focused on youth, or else target a broader disadvantaged population, but no mentoring projects focus on highly skilled immigrants. However, the non-profit organisation De8 in Antwerp is collaborating with VDAB and the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA) at the University of Leuven to develop a mentoring model for highly skilled newcomers. This initiative is also funded by ESF, and intends to first explore successful mentoring models for highly skilled workers abroad, and then develop a programme tailored for the Antwerp and Belgian contexts.¹⁴⁶ The ultimate goal is to match 30 to 40 highly skilled newcomers with professionals in the Belgian labour market. Bigger private sector stakeholders such as IBM and KBC will be engaged with the project.

D. Characteristics of mentoring approaches in Belgium

1. Fragmentation of actors involved

The design and implementation of labour market insertion initiatives reflects the scattered political and governance landscape in Belgium. It comes as no surprise that the bulk of mentoring-related activities are carried out by non-profit organisations or social welfare offices, given that implementation happens

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Author's interview with de8 personnel, 6 February 2014.*

at the local level. While the regional public employment offices are very frequently involved, they do not harmonise or expand successful initiatives, and the overall approach remains very much project-based—and therefore small-scale and vulnerable to funding availability.

A telling example is the two programmes for highly skilled immigrants in Gent (Eminente) and Antwerp (through De8), both of which collaborate with the Flemish public employment office VDAB, but whose efforts are unlikely to be harmonised into one for the entire Flemish region. As another example, in Brussels, the local organisations implementing the Active Search for Work project collaborate well because they are spread throughout the capital and all operate according to the same criteria and objectives—instead of duplicating operations, one of the implementing partners suggested that a more specialised approach per organisation might offer a way to pool and develop more expertise, and offer more targeted services.¹⁴⁷ For instance, one local organisation might focus on unemployed youth, another on unemployed individuals over the age of 45, and yet another on unskilled or illiterate jobseekers.

At the same time, few organisations have cross-regional knowledge of the activities implemented in other parts of Belgium. While Actiris in Brussels comes in contact with both Forem and the VDAB, the Francophone and Flemish public employment offices hardly exchange practices or information—let alone coordination at a more local level. In fact, one recurrent response throughout interviews and exchanges was local practitioners' desire to learn about what is happening in other parts of Belgium.

While mentoring and other labour market insertion activities are dispersed, their number demonstrates a political and policy interest, particularly when it comes to youth unemployment. Unsurprisingly, this challenge is a priority across all regions in Belgium. In contrast, mentoring for highly skilled immigrants is more of a niche policy area, and labour market insertion initiatives going beyond credential recognition or language courses are limited to the projects in Gent and Antwerp at the time of writing.

2. Collaboration, outreach and engagement

A consistent research question throughout this study was how organisations reach the participants of mentoring or labour market insertion projects. Many jobseekers or mentees enroll in job activation activities through local employment offices, and word of mouth when organisations are locally rooted (as is particularly the case for the organisations implementing the Active Search for Work, Discover Your Talent, and similar local activities in Brussels; or the youth insertion project in Wallonia).

In the case of business mentors, outreach always depends on the type of relationship with employers and companies. If projects have an in-house business network, as in the case of Be.Face, VOKA with Jobkanaal or Business & Society, then relationships or partnerships with employers and business mentors seem stronger. If this business relationship is not institutionalised (as with the implementation

¹⁴⁷ Author's interview Groep Intro personnel, 26 March 2014.

of the youth work immersion project by local youth organisation JES in Gent¹⁴⁸) or at the very least external (as with MentorU and their collaboration with Decider's), then commitment from the private sector is more difficult, particularly in the current political and economic climate.

Often the distance between employers and vulnerable jobseekers is too large to be bridged spontaneously. Intermediary players such as the advisors with Jobkanaal therefore have an extremely important role to play in understanding the needs of both sides. The likelihood of success is higher when the intermediary player 'belongs' to one or both sides, or at least has strong ties. In the case of Jobkanaal, business representatives—those who understand how businesses work and what they need—fulfil this role. Another example is the partnership-based organisation *Talentenwerf*, where the construction sector in Antwerp, the city government of Antwerp, and the public employment office VDAB collaborate to fill vacancies in the regional construction sector while offering job-focused training to low-skilled jobseekers.¹⁴⁹ The job coaches in Work-up and the regional missions in Wallonia (as part of the youth insertion project) also often have immigrant origins and strong community ties in the localities where they operate. This allows them to more effectively reach those most isolated from the labour market.

3. Private sector involvement

Across the private sector, involvement in mentoring and job activation projects is limited, with a few noteworthy exceptions. Active private sector engagement and initiative in diversity recruitment is slowly rising in Belgium, though it is still dominated by larger companies. Most often, industry or business representative organisations are involved, such as Business & Society¹⁵⁰ and Be.Face¹⁵¹ in Brussels, or VOKA¹⁵², the Flemish network of enterprises as part of Jobkanaal.

Larger businesses are more likely to risk hiring someone with an immigrant background—with intermediary players often vouching for their skills or potential—as they have more human and financial resources to train candidates in-house.¹⁵³ For smaller and medium companies, in-house resources are limited for hiring candidates who need additional training.

This challenge can be overcome among highly skilled immigrants, for whom language and informal social skills tend to be greater barriers to employment than possessing job-specific skills. However, for low-skilled youth, companies' perceptions are a recurring barrier. Several counsellors confirmed that

148 Author's telephone interview with local coordinator in Gent from youth organisation JES, 6 February 2014.

149 Author's interview with *Talentenwerf* personnel, 11 April 2014.

150 Business&Society Belgium, 'List of our members', accessed 20 May 2014, www.businessandsociety.be/en/Our-members/List-of-our-members/.

151 Be.Face, 'Entreprises membres', accessed 20 May 2014, www.beface.be/entreprise/.

152 VOKA, 'Diversiteit', accessed 20 May 2014, www.voka.be/talent/diversiteit/.

153 Author's meetings with personnel from InBrussel on 18 February 2014; and VOKA on 17 March 2014. Colruyt Group is for instance known to have in-house training, as well as Kruidvat, and companies such as Aldi and Lidl.

even after completing job coaching sessions, basic skills trainings, and workshops, low-skilled youth still remain low-skilled in the eyes of many employers.

The most promising private sector involvement examples are those that combine corporate social responsibility with a long-term approach to competences. If projects bear in mind the economic needs of an employer, then long-term relationships and collaboration can be forged. This was clear in the example of Jobkanaal and the regional missions in Wallonia. In the end, employers want a certain set of competences and skills. The regional missions succeed in delivering requested job-specific competences by collaborating with partners. Larger companies, such as McDonalds and Colruyt, have the capacity to develop these skills in-house.

Box 6. In-house skills development at McDonald's

In March 2014, McDonald's held its first Job Discovery Day. The event's mission was to promote the positive work environment and satisfaction of McDonald's employees to their family and friends, in order to boost the company's image and tackle the negative perception of employees having a 'hamburger job'.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, McDonald's used this opportunity to present the results of a study commissioned from Trendwolves, a European research and marketing company focused on youth¹⁵⁵, to assess the job and employment aspirations of youth under age 25 with a technical or vocational training. Since the young adults featured in the study had learned a craft or trade, many had a positive and constructive outlook toward the future and prospects for finding a job.¹⁵⁶ McDonald's commissioned this specific study because more than 50 per cent of the company's employees are under age 25, 41 per cent are low-skilled, and one-third have a migrant background.¹⁵⁷ McDonald's already has a very diverse workforce, but also knows that future employees will continue to come from predominantly diverse and low-skilled backgrounds. As a result, McDonald's commissioned this study to understand the aspirations and expectations of young adults in lower and vocational training – those who are about to enter the labour market and becoming part of the workforce pool that McDonald's tends to recruit from.

It is quite exceptional that prior experience or a degree are not required to get a job—as is the case at McDonald's. Even though McDonald's restaurants are franchised, all new employees receive standard training, as do aspiring managers.¹⁵⁸ It is precisely these cognitive, practical, and social skills that allow employees to grow within the company, or that give them the necessary tools to move elsewhere within the labour market.

Source: Author's interview with Deputy HR Director at McDonald's, 17 April 2014

154 Author's interview with a Deputy Human Resources (HR) Director at McDonald's, 17 April 2014.

155 Trendwolves, 'Hunting and feeding', accessed 20 May 2014, www.trendwolves.com/what.html.

156 McDonald's Belgium, 'Jongeren en de arbeidsmarkt: Optimistisch, op zoek naar sociale contacten en een juiste balans privé-werk!', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://mcdonalds-belgium.prezly.com/-jongeren-en-de-arbeidsmarkt-optimistisch-op-zoek-naar-sociale-contacten-en-een-juiste-balans-privé-werk> ; McDonald's Belgium, 'Trendwolves Besluit', accessed 20 May 2014, http://storage.prezly.com.s3-external-3.amazonaws.com/f1/1deaf0b69c11e3ad3c3fbab8672467/Trendwolves-Besluit-1_.pdf.

157 Author's interview with a Deputy HR Director at McDonald's, 17 April 2014; McDonald's Belgium, 'Jongeren en de arbeidsmarkt: Optimistisch, op zoek naar sociale contacten en een juiste balans privé-werk!'

158 Author's interview with a Deputy HR Director at McDonald's, 17 April 2014.

4. Funding and sustainability

Long-term vision and sustainability are two major challenges facing job activation and mentoring programmes in Belgium. Efforts to differentiate segments of the population and target labour market insertion approaches for them are new. To give an example: the Flemish public employment office VDAB did not differentiate between age and level of schooling in its general action plan before 2008.¹⁵⁹ In fact, dealing with diversity, and particularly immigrant origin, is a recent phenomenon. VDAB has only recently started developing expertise and engaging in projects for highly skilled immigrants. Job counsellors at its Francophone counterpart Forem in Wallonia address diversity only at the linguistic level, offering translation services for accessing job activation services.¹⁶⁰

While the three main public employment services are involved in various job activation projects implemented locally, many of these are funded by ESF. Improving access to jobs, particularly for more vulnerable groups, is a political priority for the European Union under the European Social Fund, which has allocated 80 billion euros for the period of 2014-2020 for the total of the EU, to be divided according to regional needs and in co-financing partnership.¹⁶¹

Overall, this dependency on European funds is a great barrier to long-term sustainability and the potential expansion of projects, since the criteria, conditions, and budgets are fixed beforehand—and always have an end date.

Regional funding can also be a limiting factor (as demonstrated in the Discover Your Talent example). However, it can also be an opportunity to fund a targeted initiative in response to a particular challenge, as is the case with Work-Up (funded by the Flemish Government) and the youth insertion project in Wallonia (funded by the Walloon Government). While regional funding also typically has formal end dates, revision and extension are much easier than with European funding. Overall, it is unclear whether ESF funding abounds in this field because federal and regional funds are systemically lacking, or whether federal and regional governments do not invest proactively and long-term precisely because European funds are already available.

Finally, the fragmentation and project-oriented nature of funding has also affected the scale and potential for expansion of many projects (with the exception of the work insertion initiative WIJ in Flanders, AZW/RAE in Brussels, and to some extent, the regional missions in Wallonia).

5. Measuring success: The challenge of evaluation

Assessing whether certain programmes are successful, or at least promising, is difficult. Few publically

159 Author's interview with VDAB personnel, 10 March 2014.

160 Author's interview with Forem personnel, 14 March 2014. Only linguistic diversity is recognised and addressed as an impediment through the 'modalité opératoires de demande d'accessibilité' (operating mode to request accessibility), or MODA approach.

161 European Commission, "European Social Fund - What is the ESF?", <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=35&langId=en>; European Commission, "ESF - European Social Fund", http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/social/index_en.cfm; European Commission, "European Social Fund - How the ESF works". <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=525&langId=en>.

available evaluations exist. If projects are funded by one of the regional public employment offices, then evaluation reports are often internal and difficult to access. ESF-funded programmes require annual activity reports and evaluations, but these are also often unavailable to the public. And many projects have only started recently, so assessments have not yet taken place.

It is not only the existence of evaluations that matters, but also *how* projects are measured, and which assessment criteria are used. For example, VDAB has a different outreach approach to low- and high-skilled unemployed youth. While low-skilled youth receive a letter by post inviting them to a meeting with a job counsellor and an information session within four weeks of their registration with the agency, high-skilled youth receive an email.¹⁶² For VDAB's records, low-skilled youth are considered to have been successfully 'reached' when they attend their first individual meeting. High-skilled youth, by contrast, are reached when they click on a link for more information.

The project active search for work (AZW/RAE) has four group sessions per year, which are evaluated on a running basis throughout the year as well as at the six-month mark.¹⁶³ However, the measurement point after six months is only a snapshot of the participants, and not a long-term or comprehensive picture. Evaluations show that on average, 45 per cent of participants are employed and 15 per cent are in training six months after enrolment. However, it is impossible to know whether the employment is temporary or long-term, and in the case of unemployment, whether candidates may have been employed recently or are long-term unemployed.

As a result, comprehensive evaluations are lacking for many of the projects across Belgium. It is important to understand both how outcomes are measured, and how projects affect the career paths of its participants. It is crucial not just to measure whether participants are employed, but also whether they have found employment suitable to their skills, and in what sector or type of company. Currently the only recurring major differentiation that is made in many evaluations is whether candidates are employed fixed-term (with at least a six month contract) or long-term, or whether they are in training.

6. The gender dimension

This study enquired about the gender dimension in all the interviews, meetings, and surveys; and found that no programmes targeted gender specifically in Belgium, instead endeavouring to keep a gender balance among participants. In the case of MentorU there was an unintended imbalance in favour of women. Among the regional missions and the youth insertion project in Wallonia, job coaches reached mostly young men. The organisations explained this by conjecturing that young women, particularly with immigrant background, were less likely to 'hang around' in community or youth centres where the job coaches would frequently stop by.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Author's meeting with VDAB personnel, 10 March 2014.

¹⁶³ Author's meeting with InBrussel personnel, 18 February 2014.

¹⁶⁴ Author's meeting MIRE Brabant-Wallon, 24 March 2014.

IV. RECIPE FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING PRACTICES

This study refrains from identifying best practices or normative guidelines regarding mentoring methodologies. Based on the extensive interviews and research regarding mentoring and job activation initiatives in European countries, particularly in Belgium, as well as in North America, this section summarises a number of key “ingredients” or elements that several promising initiatives share. In the end, the success of mentoring programmes does not only depend on the internal methodology of a programme, but also on a number of external factors, not least the type of actors involved.

A. Strategic collaboration: The multistakeholder approach

While in practice, many mentoring and employment-facilitating initiatives are developed and implemented by civil society organisations, getting the government and private sector on board are defining elements for their success and survival.

In Belgium, the project on labour market insertion of youth in priority neighbourhoods in Wallonia is one example in which strong government support has enabled the development and expansion of a successful approach. Mentoring for Migrants in Austria and Joblinge in Germany are useful examples of the initiative power of employers, and how a programme can be replicated and expanded with the strong support of the private sector.

However, the most effective and expansive mentoring programmes have been those where various partners collaborate on this multidimensional issue. The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council’s (TRIEC) Mentoring Partnership is a prime example of a ‘multistakeholder partnership’, where civil society, service delivery partners, educational institutions, employers, and governments at all levels are involved.

But involving the private sector *as such* does not suffice. As the MentorU project in Belgium showed, the changing economic landscape can have a quick impact on employers’ commitment to participate. That is why businesses need to be engaged at the highest levels, to secure

their long-term commitment. In Canada, TRIEC has 'employer champions' who are committed to their broader goals—the benefits of attracting and hiring people of diverse backgrounds and skill sets—even outside of the structure and process of the Mentoring Partnership.¹⁶⁵

B. Sustainability, funding, and long-term vision

Having sustainable core funding is crucial for operating effectively and in the long run. Mentoring practices are rarely inherent to structural mainstream policies. They are almost always remedial, add-on programmes, targeting those who fall through the net of generic service provisions. This places a significant burden on the very existence and survival of mentoring programmes.

In many cases, government funding plays a huge role in supporting mentoring programmes. However, these funds are often subject to changing national political priorities, which means that financial aid often comes in cycles and is rarely long-term. This is particularly the case when funding targets a very specific group, such as refugees in the United Kingdom and Sweden for instance. Immigration-related priorities can change, and have been affected increasingly in several European countries following the economic crisis. If policy efforts are targeting broader issues regarding social cohesion or youth unemployment, such as in France, then these priorities (and linked funding) are likely to be more long-term.

European funds can offer relief from national political agendas but also run in time-limited cycles with a maximum of seven years.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the use and implementation of European funds for specific local or regional initiatives is ad-hoc, and carries little possibility or commitment for expansion or harmonisation with other efforts, as has been demonstrated in many Belgian examples.

The key challenge—and the factor most needed for success—is prioritising immigrant employment as beneficial for everyone, and devoting enough funding to efforts that promote employment success.

C. Changing the mindset

The most challenging and least malleable or predictable element for effective labour market insertion programmes is to have all participating stakeholders pull in the same direction. Several local actors in Belgium confessed that approaching and convincing employers was the hardest part of the job coaching process, particularly when it concerned low-skilled people with immigrant background. On the one hand this can be mediated by experienced negotiators, such as the job coaches in the regional missions of

¹⁶⁵ *Hire Immigrants, 'Employer Champions', accessed 20 May 2014, www.hireimmigrants.ca/success-stories-home/employer-champions/.*

¹⁶⁶ *Multiannual financial frameworks are seven years long. See European Commission, 'Financial Programming and Budget: Multiannual Financial Framework', accessed 20 May 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index_en.cfm; and the new Horizon2020 financial framework: European Commission, 'Horizon 2020: What is Horizon 2020?', accessed 20 May 2014, <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020>.*

Wallonia or the advisors from Jobkanaal, who understand the needs of employers, and try to match them with the right jobseekers' profiles. On the other hand, diversity counsellors are needed not only to promote the economic benefits of diversity (and combat discrimination), but also to assist companies in transforming their recruiting practices—such as the Diversity labels in both Belgium and France. In the end, however, a broader shift in mindset is needed, not just with employers but with the wider public, and also at the political level.

Changing the mindset means that a previously undervalued issue becomes a public and political priority. In Canada, TRIEC's strategy has been an exemplary approach of how to bring the priority of employing skilled immigrants to public attention, and convince both government and the private sector of the benefits of the project. In addition to their Mentoring Partnership, TRIEC also invested considerably in raising awareness¹⁶⁷ and promoting this sense of urgency through its hireimmigrants.ca campaign.¹⁶⁸ At the end of 2006 a very successful campaign of television advertisements and posters aptly raised awareness about the underemployment of skill immigrants—and opportunities companies miss by not hiring them. Interestingly, that campaign was already partially funded by the central and regional government. TRIEC's effective television and poster campaigns are therefore tools that can be easily adapted and applied in a different country context.

D. Having clear benchmarks and ensuring comprehensive evaluation

Finally, having clear objectives is quintessential for an effective mentoring programme. This implies envisaging the ultimate goals of the programme itself (for example, expanding the mentee's socioprofessional network, building self-confidence, developing cognitive and social skills, or obtaining sustainable employment), as well as a clear definition of the target groups involved (such as low-skilled or immigrant youth, immigrant women, highly skilled immigrants, or refugees) and the type of mentors that fit them best (such as retired or active senior professionals, or peer professionals). Clear goals will also help to better prepare, support, and guide the mentors and mentees. Several mentoring initiatives use a mutually signed action plan or a memorandum of understanding which identifies both the short and long-term objectives.

Clear objectives and benchmarks allow programmes to measure their impact, readjust where needed, and convince and attract other partners when successful. Evaluating the outcomes and impact of a programme facilitates its expansion, as is shown in the examples of TRIEC's Mentoring Partnership, Joblinge and VerA in Germany, and Upwardly Global and the Welcome Back Initiative in the United States. Particularly when programmes are civil society-initiated—which is often the case—comprehensive tracking and assessments contribute to securing funding and attracting partners.

¹⁶⁷ TRIEC, "Raise Awareness", accessed 20 May 2014, <http://triec.ca/how-we-make-change/raise-awareness/>.

¹⁶⁸ See 2006 annual review: TRIEC, 2006 TRIEC Annual Review (Toronto: TRIEC, 2006), http://triec.ca/uploads/188/TRIEC_2006_AnnualReview.pdf.

Overall, the success and effectiveness of mentoring programmes will always depend on the context and target group for which they are designed. However, despite local, regional, and even national differences, certain internal and external factors are recurring foundational elements in most European and North American examples. While there is no blueprint for effective mentoring methods, it is clear that mentoring is never a one-man or organisation job, and that scope, sustainability, organisational methodology, and funding depend on the type and combination of partners involved.

APPENDIX:

MENTORING AND LABOUR MARKET INSERTION PROJECTS

This appendix provides an extensive list of mentoring and labour market insertion projects, including all of the projects discussed in the main report. The first section lists prominent projects in Europe, the second section lists such in North America.

A. Europe

Austria			
Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Mentoring für MigrantInnen (Mentoring for Migrants)	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WKO; Austrian Chamber of Commerce)	Mentoring programme for highly skilled people with an immigrant background, which matches them with successful business leaders.	www.wko.at/Content.Node/Mentoring/MigrantInnen/en/English_Version_Mentoring_Migrants.html
Belgium			
Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Actief Zoeken naar Werk (AZW; Active Search for Work)	Actiris (the Brussels public employment office). The project is implemented jointly by InBrussel, Kurasaw, Groep Intro, and Manpower.	Individual and group-based job coaching for low-skilled jobseekers in Brussels (Dutch-speaking).	www.actiris.be/tabid/117/language/nl-BE/Wie-zijn-onze-partners-.aspx?t=vtp&idType=3
Allochtone Zelfstandige Ondernemers (AZO; Immigrant independent entrepreneurs)	Stebo	Networking occasions and thematic evenings bringing together successful and experienced immigrant entrepreneurs to those who are just starting out.	www.agentschapondernemen.be/artikel/allochtone-zelfstandige-ondernemers-azo
Attitudes on the Workplace	InBrussel	Workshops on attitudes and social codes for young jobseekers in Brussels.	www.inbrussel.be/gedragcodes/home.aspx
Bright Future	Be.Face	Mentoring for talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds by business leaders.	www.beface.be/nl/krachtlijnen/bright-future/
Discover Your Talent	Kurasaw , with Business & Society	Annual youth day for young jobseekers in Brussels, with workshops organised by companies.	www.discoveryourtalent.be/discoveryourtalent/index.php/en/
Doorstroom sociale economie (Moving on from the social economy)	Mentor vzw	European Social Fund (ESF) project to guide and coach low-skilled employees in the social economy to the regular economy.	www.esf-agentschap.be/nl/projectenkaart/jobcoaching-de-sociale-economie
Duo for a Job	Duo for a Job	Cross-generational mentoring for young immigrant jobseekers and (early) retirees.	www.duoforajob.be/#!home-nl/cw38

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Eminente	Job&Co, Randstad Diversity, City of Gent, and VDAB (<i>Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding</i> or Flemish Department for Employment and Vocational Training)	Job coaching and counselling project for highly skilled jobseekers.	www.gsiw.be/eminenta
Engage	City of Antwerp with Business & Society	Organised company visits for pupils or job-seeking youth in Antwerp (through the youth competence centres and local partners).	www.businessandsociety.be/nl/ENGAGE-Na-Brussel-nu-ook-in-Antwerpen/
HOA Loket (Reception desk for highly skilled newcomers)	De8 and VDAB	Specialised job counsellors who provide targeted services for highly skilled immigrants at the VDAB.	None.
Insertion des jeunes dans les quartiers prioritaires (Youth Insertion in Priority Areas)	Mission Régionales (Regional missions) in Wallonia (MIRE)	Individual and group-based job coaching of youth from deprived neighbourhoods in Wallonia.	www.mirebw.be/index.php/2013-08-27-11-42-32/tu-as-entre-18-et-25-ans www.mirelux.be/demandeurs/Quartiers-prioritaires.php
Jobkanaal (Job Canal)	Flanders Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Vlaams netwerk van ondernemingen; VOKA) with UNIZO, Verso, and VKW, and supported by the Flemish Government.	Job Canal offers primary HR advice to companies on diversity, and brings employment agency officers in contact with companies to improve access of disadvantaged groups into the labour market.	www.jobkanaal.be/
Job coaching for Francophones on the Flemish labour market	Mentor vzw	On VDAB's request, Mentor vzw accompanies low-skilled Francophones to work in the area of Menen.	www.vzwmentor.be/
Job Discovery Days	McDonald's	Open day at McDonald's restaurants for current and future employees, with additional focus on lower-skilled youth.	http://mcdonalds-belgium.prezly.com/je-volgt-een-opleiding-vanaf-je-eerste-werkdag-voert-dagelijks-controles-uit-leidt-een-team-van-40-medewerkers-kom-ontdekken-hoe-het-eraan-toegaat-bij-mcdonalds-tijdens-de-job-discovery-day

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Jump naar werk	Tracé	Project that supports and coaches Brussels youth in the last year of secondary education in their transition to the labour market.	www.tracebrussel.be/node/10
Mentoring for Success	UCM Femmes Entrepreneures, network Diane, JUMP, and Markant	Mentoring programme bringing together starting and more experienced female entrepreneurs.	www.mentoringforsuccess.eu/web/project/
MentorU	Pour la Solidarité	Mentoring programme for jobseekers in Brussels (in practice many women with a migration background). The programme pairs them with business leaders.	www.pourlasolidarite.eu/MentorU-be?lang=fr
Move Your Talent	InBrussel	Intensive job coaching for low-skilled unemployed youth in Brussels, particularly from Maghreb or other immigrant origin.	www.tracebrussel.be/nieuws/nieuw-bij-inbrussel-move-your-talent
Pathways for Vulnerable Groups (Voortraject Kwestbare Groepen)	ESF project, implemented in Flanders by various local partners, and with VDAB.	Coaching and counseling programme which serves to prepare participants for the formal range of training courses, job coaching programmes, or work experience. The programme focuses on young people who are not in education, job counseling, or work.	www.esf-agentschap.be/nl/oproepen/voortrajecten-kwestbare-groepen See also Project sheet for more information .
Peterschap/ Parrainage	Be.Face	Mentoring for young, motivated jobseekers by professionals in companies.	www.beface.be/nl/krachtlijnen/peterschap/
Protalent	De8, with IBM and CeMIS	Platform that matches highly skilled immigrants with employers.	www.protalent.be/
Recherche Active à l'Emploi (RAE ; Active Search for Work)	Actiris; implemented by the local missions in Brussels.	Individual and group job counseling for low-skilled Francophone jobseekers in Brussels.	www.actiris.be/tabid/117/language/fr-BE/Qui-sont-nos-partenaires-.aspx?t=vtp&idType=3
Links to Work (Schakels naar werk)	Tracé	A platform that displays the entire range of vocational training pathways, job insertion, and professional experience trajectories for Dutch-speaking jobseekers in the Brussels Capital Region.	www.schakelsnaarwerk.be/nl/over-schakels-naar-werk

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Talentedwerf	Talentedwerf (City of Antwerp, VDAB, and the construction sector in Antwerp)	Multistakeholder partnership offering specific job training in construction to low-skilled workers, on demand and in collaboration with the construction industry.	www.talentedwerf.be/
T-impact	Foyer	A bridge project for youth in part-time education that offers a paid traineeship with a selected number of social businesses.	www.foyer.be/?page=article&id_article=8998&lang=nl
Werkvormm	Werkvormm vzw	Offers employment and vocational trainings for people isolated from the labour market in the maritime and port sector in Antwerp. Works in collaboration with the City Council, the public welfare offices in Antwerp and Lier, VDAB, the Museum for Contemporary Art in Antwerp, and the port authorities.	www.werkvormm.be/
Work Immersion Project for Youth (WIJ)	VDAB (the Flemish Public Employment Office), funded by ESF, and implemented by different organisations in 14 cities.	Job coaching projects for low-skilled youth.	www.werk.be/nieuws/werkinlevingsprojecten-overmorgen-van-start-11-centrumsteden
Workstyles	Foyer	Two-week workshops on employment for newcomers in Brussels that ran from Summer 2009 to Summer 2012.	www.foyer.be/?page=article&id_article=9273&lang=nl&id_rubrique=177
Work-Up	Minderhedenforum (Minorities Forum)	Activation job counsellors who bring ethnic minorities isolated from the labour market in touch with VDAB, the Flemish public employment office.	www.minderhedenforum.be/documents/werk_acties.pdf
Werkmetzin (Work with Meaning/Gusto)	De8, with VDAB and Werkmetzin.	Cooperative company of coaches and trainers that offers career counselling and coaching for highly skilled foreigners.	http://werkmetzin.be/projecten-nl/hooggeschoolde-anderstaligen.html

Denmark

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
KVINFO Mentoring Network	KVINFO	Mentoring programme that connects migrant women and women who are actively participating in Danish society.	http://kvinfo.dk/mentor/om-mentornetvaerket

France

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
CréaJeunes	ADIE	Project supporting youth from deprived areas in starting their own business.	www.adie.org/nos-actions/Creajeunes-et-les-programmes-jeunes
Contrat d'insertion dans la vie sociale (CIVIS; Social Insertion Contract)	Missions Locales	Job coaching (and training) for low-skilled unemployed youth.	www.emploi.gouv.fr/dispositif/contrat-dinsertion-dans-vie-sociale-civis
Parrainage	Missions Locales	Individual and group-based coaching programmes for young and adult jobseekers across France who are low skilled or socio-economically deprived.	http://parrainage.masteredit.com/parrainage/site/le-parrainage-en-lorraine-234.html
Mozaïk RH	Mozaïk RH	Individual and group-based job coaching for highly skilled youth from deprived areas in and around Paris. The organisation also offers human resources advice on diversity to larger companies.	www.mozaikrh.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11
Un parrain 1 emploi (One Mentor, One Job)	Un Parrain, 1 Emploi non-profit organisation	Initially started by the Chamber of Commerce in Nantes, Un parrain 1 emploi organises mentoring programmes for various jobseekers, including the young, highly skilled, women, senior workers, and others.	www.parrainemploi.com/1parrain_1emploi/1parrain_1emploi.html
FACE parrainage	Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (FACE)	Mentoring programme for young jobseekers who are coached by professionals from businesses.	www.fondationface.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/FaceRapAct2011_WebV2.pdf http://facegard.org/
Tous parrains	Association Tous Parrains	Mentoring programme initially established for young jobseekers initially, and now also for adults and pupils in school, matching them with private-sector mentors.	www.tousparrains.com/

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Proxité	Association Proxité	Mentoring for youth (both those in school, and young jobseekers) in deprived areas around Paris. Youngsters from schools participate in the mentoring programmes in Proxité's local offices, while jobseeking mentees are matched with mentors in companies.	www.proxite.com/ http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea_projet-proxite-professional-mentoring-for-youth/
Germany			
Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Rock Your life	Rock Your life Ltd.	Mentoring programme for disadvantaged secondary-school pupils who are matched with university students. The programme works in collaboration with the private sector, which offers internships after the mentoring programme.	http://rockyourlife.de/sonstiges/international
Koordinierungsstelle Ausbildung und Migration (Coordination Office for Training and Migration; KAUSA)	Jobstarter, a programme of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Training	KAUSA aims to improve the labour market participation of people with a migration background. Their service offices collaborate with independent entrepreneurs with an immigrant background to offer placements and internships. They also inform and advise young entrepreneurs, youth, and parents with an immigrant background about vocational training.	www.bmbf.de/de/2626.php www.bmbf.de/en/2313.php
Verhinderung von Ausbildungsabbrüchen (VERA; Prevention of Interruption or Loss of Expertise)	Federal Ministry for Education and Research	Mentoring programme that matches youth in vocational training who are at-risk for quitting with retirees who have a sector-specific expertise.	www.bmbf.de/de/14266.php http://vera.ses-bonn.de/service/ueber-vera/
Go for it—A mentoring programme for skilled migrant workers.	Initiative für Beschäftigung OWL e. V. (Initiative for Employment; OWL)	Mentoring program in which experienced professionals are matched with less experienced, highly skilled professionals with a migration background.	www.ifb-owl.de/integration/kompetenzwerkstatt-vielfalt-owl/go-for-it-mentoringprogramm.html

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Joblinge	Joblinge Stiftung, initiated by Boston Consulting Group and the Eberhard von Kuenheim Foundation of BMW AG	Mentoring programme for low-skilled youth who are matched with a mentor from the private sector.	www.joblinge.de/was_ist_joblinge/programm.html
Einsteigen, Umsteigen, Aufsteigen. Mentoring für Migrantinnen in Frankfurt am Main (Get In, Change Path, and Rise: Mentoring for Women with an Immigrant Background in Frankfurt am Main)	Berami, financed by the Department for Women's Affairs of the city of Frankfurt	Mentoring programme for highly skilled migrant women who are unemployed or employed below their skill level. The participants are matched with appropriate professionals from companies.	www.berami.de/index.php?p=29 www.berami.de/media/pdfs/Dokumentation%20FT%20Mentoring%20Juni%202010.pdf?PHPSESSID=d08bf3298dc46b65b0ff5ee77e973ba7

Netherlands

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Masters in Mentoring	Oranje Fonds	Foundation Oranje Fonds stimulates and supports various mentoring programmes, particularly within schools, and in collaboration with businesses.	www.oranjefonds.nl/deelnemers-masters-mentoring
Link2Work	Socio-Economic Council (SER) and Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment	Mentoring programme that pairs youth in Amsterdam and Rotterdam with business mentors. The project aims to assist young adults in finding employment through mentoring and coaching.	www.ser.nl/nl/themes/link2work.aspx

Sweden

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Mentor-Develop Business (Mentor business development)	Almi	Mentoring programme that matches starting entrepreneurs with more experienced ones.	www.almi.se/Varmland/Erbjudanden/Mentor-utveckla-foretag/
Introduction Guides	Public Employment Office (implemented by other organisations, for example, the Swedish Medical Association)	Every newcomer receives an "introduction guide" for a maximum of two years—a person who acts as a coach to help the newcomer find employment and settle in the Swedish labour market.	www.arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.7cab701e12c9dc4a47c800036/om-lots-for-as-eng.pdf www.arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.6a167f531341a04783880004071/Broschyr_lots_Engelska.pdf www.sif.se/Info-in-English/
MINE Mentoring	MINE (Association for employers working for ethnic diversity in the workplace)	Mentoring programme for highly skilled refugees who are matched with mentors from the private sector.	http://mine.se/english/about-us/

United Kingdom

Name	Organisation	Description	Link
Refugees Into Teaching	UK Refugee Council	Refugee teachers receive counseling in their access and pathway to requalify as teachers in Britain, and are matched with volunteer active teachers in Britain.	www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees_into_teaching
Time Together	Timebank	Refugees are matched with volunteer mentors to assist with their general integration in society.	http://timebank.org.uk/timetgether http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/time-together-mentoring-for-daily-life/
Mentoring scheme for refugee doctors	JCORE	Refugee doctors are matched with experienced doctors in the United Kingdom to assist them in requalifying and integrating in the UK labour market.	www.jcore.org.uk/#.lvstc4=page-3/vstc0=doctors

B. North America

Mentoring project	Migrant Forum	Mentoring programme for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants who are isolated or who need additional support. Participants are paired with volunteer mentors.	http://migrantforum.org.uk/projects/mentoring-project/
Steps Ahead Mentoring	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)	Mentoring programme for young jobseekers (ages 18 to 24) who are matched with human resources professionals all over England. The project will expand to the rest of the United Kingdom.	www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/mentoring-steps-ahead-initiative.aspx

Canada

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
The Mentoring Partnership	Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)	Mentoring programme for highly skilled migrants who are matched with business mentors in the Toronto Region.	www.thementoringpartnership.com/about-us/howtheprogramworks/
National Mentoring Initiative	Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES)	Mentoring programme for highly skilled migrants who are matched with business mentors all over Canada.	www.thementoringpartnership.com/about-us/howtheprogramworks/

United States

Project name	Organisation	Description	Link
Welcome Back Initiative	Welcome Back Initiative/ International Health Worker Assistance Center	Comprehensive job coaching programme for internationally trained health professionals.	www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/
Upwardly Global	Upwardly Global	Comprehensive job coaching programme for highly skilled immigrants.	www.upwardlyglobal.org/about-upglo/about-us
Year Up	Year Up	Job coaching programme and internships for low-skilled vulnerable youth (most of which have an ethnic minority background).	www.yearup.org/
Leaders in Training Career Week	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Annual event that brings talented and highly skilled refugee youth in contact with businesses and business leaders in New York.	www.rescue.org/us-program/us-new-york-ny/career-week-leaders-training-program

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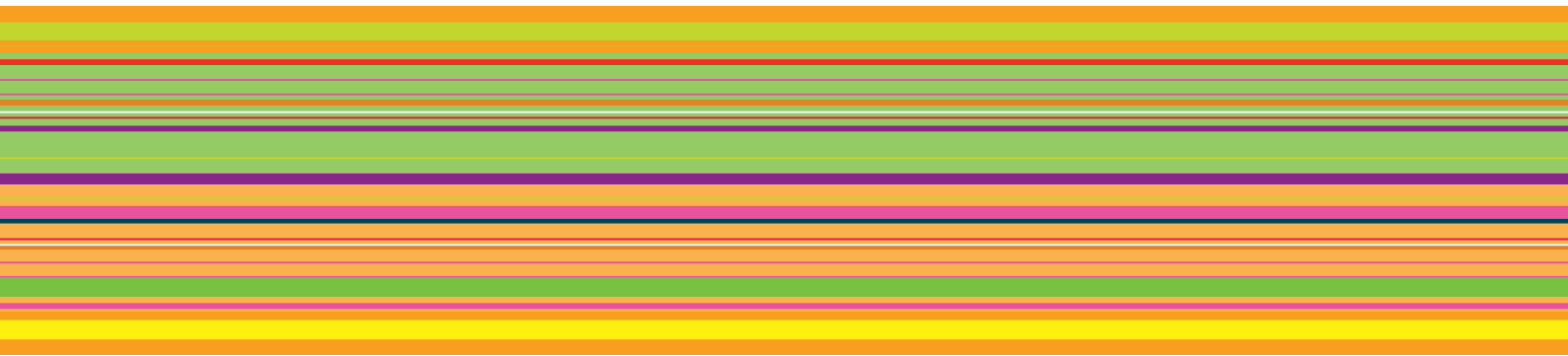
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