

Belgium: Level@work



Introduction

Title: Level@work

Country: Belgium (Flanders); implemented by the Agency for Integration and Citizenship, the Flemish employment service VDAB, various educational partners and employers.

Type of tool: Holistic coaching method to screen, coach and assess newcomers.

Target group: Highly skilled or highly educated newcomers (mainly refugees).

Potential transferability: Unknown.

The ambition is to get highly skilled newcomers to **work at their level**.

Can highly skilled newcomers immediately start working at their level, or do they need additional training? Does the first job just seal their careers? And where are they actually?

The Agency for Integration and Citizenship, the Flemish employment service VDAB, various educational partners and employers have joined forces to create a **coaching methodology** leading to a job or an additional degree. They cooperate in screening, mediating, recruiting, training and coaching of highly-skilled newcomers. The assessment of competences is part of this holistic approach that encompasses the complete cycle of detecting the people, screening, coaching and employment/education process. The partnership joins forces to attract and further coach highly skilled newcomers. Experiments are logged, findings are processed in a career approach.

The aim is to lead approximately **80 newcomers** who already have a bachelor or master diploma to a job, the requirement is that they are maximum 5 years in Belgium. It is part of an ESF pilot project that runs from September 2016 until March 2018. It is an approach that combines integration into society and orientation towards a job.

Organisation and description of the tool

Implementation

A first step is to detect the people that are eligible. This is not as easy as it seems, because it appears that people who would have been eligible have already accepted low-skilled jobs or at other databases after numerous failed attempts to find a job.

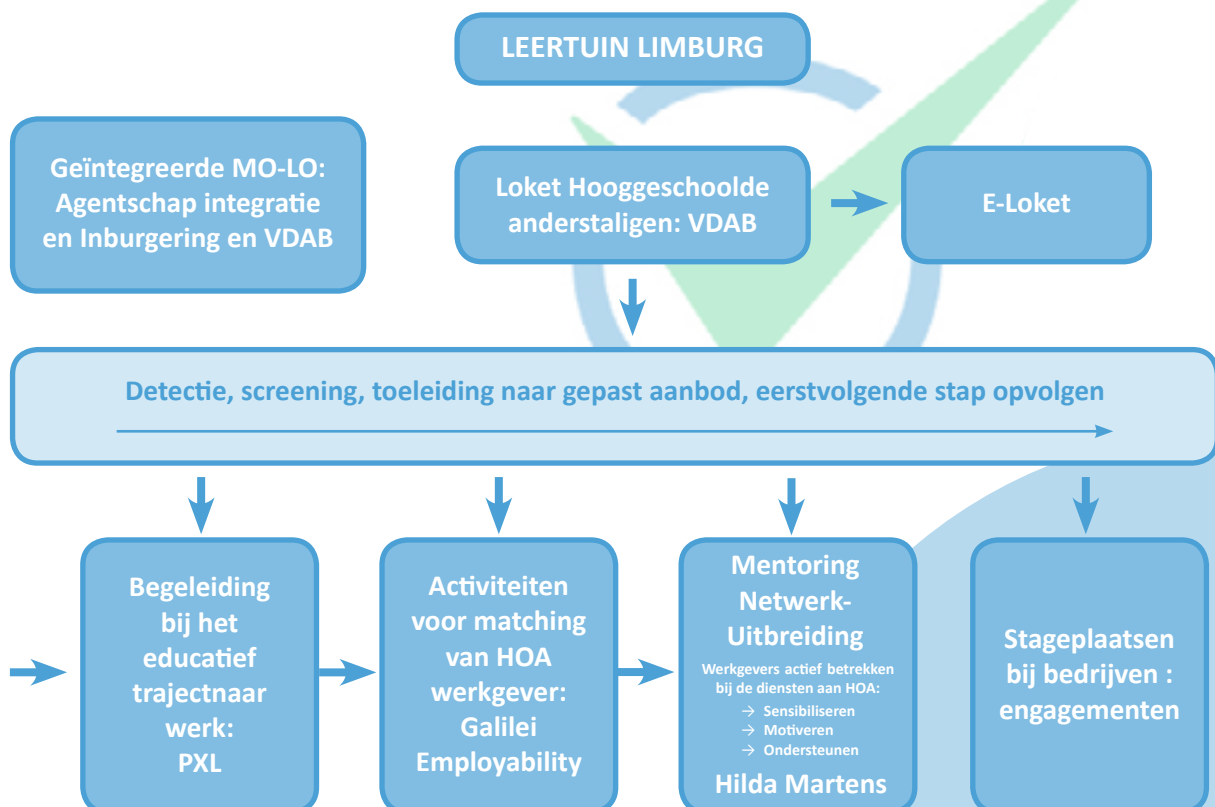
Implementation

The participants are offered **diverse traineeships** that validate their competences:

- *“Getting-to-know-each other” traineeship*: The duration ranges from 1-30 days. The participant familiarises him/herself with the company. Employer and trainee learn more about each other’s expectations and possible tasks for the trainee in the company. Purpose: getting to know the Belgian job market;
- *Paid traineeship (BIO)*: duration ranges from 4 to 26 weeks. Here the employer observes how the trainee works and what his/competences are. For the trainee it is very beneficial to have this kind of experience on his/her CV;
- *Individual work-based training*, followed by a compulsory recruitment of minimum 6 months.

Concretely, the following **steps** are included for the newcomer:

1. *Application* of a person to the E-service;
2. *Screening* of a person: does s/he fulfil the requirements to participate in this trajectory? The screening is done by the Flemish Employment Service (VDAB);
3. Definition of the *programme*: this can be a tailor-made learning path or a career path;
4. Orientation to *society*;
5. Orientation to a *career* or to a *diploma* (supplement). This is done with the help of a mentor for each person:
 - The learning path is oriented towards a vocational or professional degree
 - The career path is focussing on a job in a company. The company offers some sort of an internship. At the same time, the client receives job coaching in the form of individual coaching sessions and group sessions where the participants train competences like job interviews, presenting themselves, writing a job application...;
6. At the same time the *partners* invest time in job hunting, job matching, creation of new jobs; sensitisation of employers and providing advice to these employers. The purpose is to have a network of engaged employers where highly-skilled newcomers can have their first work experience in Belgium.



Graphic representation (in Dutch)

Description of the target group

Non-EU citizens, with a bachelor-or master diploma from their home country, who are looking for a job. They have to have been living in Belgium for a maximum of 5 years.

Policy context

This initiative was set up in the context of a project from the fund called AMIF, the **European Funds for Asylum, Migration and Integration**. It is unclear what happens to it after the end in March 2018.

