

## Jobs in kindergartens and elder care for persons with intellectual disabilities

Belgium – Konekt vzw: LetsCo!

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The project organizes long-term traineeships for adults with intellectual disabilities in such areas as kindergarten supervision and elder care so these individuals can access the open labour market (with support).

*"Having a job is important to get into contact with people without disabilities. Otherwise, your world view becomes too narrow."*

—Jacinth, Project Trainee

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Number of trainees in 2014–2015: 96
- Number of toddlers and elderly people reached by the trainees in 2014–2015: 288
- Number of regular workplaces staffed by trainees in 2014–2015: 96

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

In Flanders, adults with a severe intellectual disability are excluded from paid employment. They receive a stipend from the government that is not comparable to a regular salary. Since many persons with intellectual disabilities do not succeed in finding employment in the open labour market, they spend their time in day-care facilities or stay at home. By offering them long-term traineeships, they can work as a supported employee. During this time they do not receive a salary, but they learn a skill that can then be applied in the labour market.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The project began in 2011, when eight adults with intellectual disabilities participated in the training to become (unpaid) assistants in a kindergarten. Together with the trainers, these first participants gave shape to the content and methods of the training. The internships last for 14 weeks, during which each trainee must work at least three hours a week. The trainees are supported by a LetsCo! trainer, who conveys them to their work places; and by a supervisor, who may be a special education teacher or a job coach. The supervisor is present during the first day of the internship and facilitates

its start. S/he also organizes intermediate and final evaluations and can monitor the training progress through the trainees' homework assignments. Further on, a mentor at the work place (kindergartens, nursing homes, etc.) assists the trainees. In addition, a network has been established whereby trainees as well as their relatives and friends can participate in the experience, look for ways to create new work places, and organize transport to and from the traineeships.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Since the launch of this project, there has been a growing number of requests for training programmes in business contexts as well. To meet this demand, a new project for adults who want to work in companies as assistant logistics workers will be started, thus broadening the work field. The first training is scheduled for January 2016. Another aim of the project is to gain formal recognition from the various governmental departments with which the project is currently cooperating. Yet another goal is to develop a model of the project that can be transferred abroad.

Photo: Yes

## CONTACT

Konekt vzw

Mr. Koen Deweer

Belgium

[www.konekt.be](http://www.konekt.be)

+32 9 261 57 50

Koen.deweer@konekt.be

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