

# The role of community life: receiving messages and giving voice to people

Lode Draelants  
Internationaal Comité vzw

THE COMMITMENT OF SOCIAL PARTNERS  
TO TACKLE SOCIAL EXCLUSION WITHIN THE LABOUR MARKET



# Internationaal Comité ?

- Not international !?
- NGO / umbrella –org.
- +300 local groups of immigrants in BE
- Superdiversity!
- 20 employees
- +1.000 volunteers



# Internationaal Comité ?



1. Leadership development in communities of ECM
2. Bridging & bonding
3. Giving voice to people  
> Advocacy



LEIDERSCHAP



WERK



ONDERWIJS



PARTICIPATIE

- Integration



# Employment is key to integration

A (good) job is important for

- Self esteem and identity
- Feeling of acceptance in society
- Lower poverty risk
- More social contacts
- Broader experiences (learning)
- Positive for educational level of next generation
- Higher quality of living
- Better health
- General feeling of well being
- ...



# Employment is key to integration



Employment  
=  
role for civil organization  
like IC



# Employment is key to integration

But

in BE/Flanders/BXL  
people with immigrant  
background

DO NOT (enough)  
find their way onto the  
labour market



# Employment in Flanders 2008 – 2014

(OECD - 2014)

	Goals Flemish gov. (Goals Pact 2020)	Degree of employment 2008	Degree of employment 2014
<b>Flanders (overall)</b>	76%	72,3%	71,9%
<b>Not EU -nationals</b>	58%	47,2%	44,6%
<b>Persons born outside EU</b>	64%	56,3%	53,3%



# Employment in Flanders 2008 – 2014



Maybe immigrants  
don't try  
hard enough?





# Employment Flanders vs international

OECD –statistics state that:

Belgium has the worst  
employment rate of  
“immigrants” ...

of all developed countries...

in the world.



# Employment in Flanders 2008 – 2014



So...

- or we had some bad luck with our immigrants,
- or there's something off in our system...

# What can WE do?



How can IC,  
as a civil society organization,

Contribute to improve  
the labour market situation

of people with a migration  
background?



# What CAN'T we do?



IC cannot

- actually give jobs to people
- individually assist people



# What CAN we do?



+ finding a job  
seems a very  
individual endeavour  
+ competitive!

So almost all (government) support  
focusses on individual trajectories...



# What CAN we do?



But there is also a very  
important  
collective/community  
element  
to (immigrant) employment



# What CAN we do?



IC started listening to  
people with migrant  
background, experts,  
employers, ...

# What CAN we do?



Improving  
“essential side –conditions”





# What CAN we do?



Helping people to  
Improve Dutch



# What CAN we do?



Building social networks

(1/3 jobs in BE are found via-via)



# What CAN we do?



Help to establish  
self –confidence !



# What CAN we do?



Improve mobility

(Physical & mental)



# What CAN we do?



Help capacity building  
via volunteering –work



# What CAN we do?



Explaining  
“hidden keys and codes”

(inform people about the labour  
market, the art of soliciting, ...)



# What CAN we do?

Giving voice.../advocate



- for good childcare
- for “openness” towards (super)diversity
- Not just for equal rights but for fairness in opportunity
- ...



# What CAN we do?



Government needs to do  
its part,  
but can not do it alone.

Civil society  
needs to step up!

