INSTITUT DE L'ENTREPRISE – STUDY NOTES

TRAINING THE WORKFORCE OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

## SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SIX PROGRAMS THAT HELP YOUNG

PEOPLE ENTER THE JOB MARKET

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J.P.Morgan





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TRAINING THE WORKFORCE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

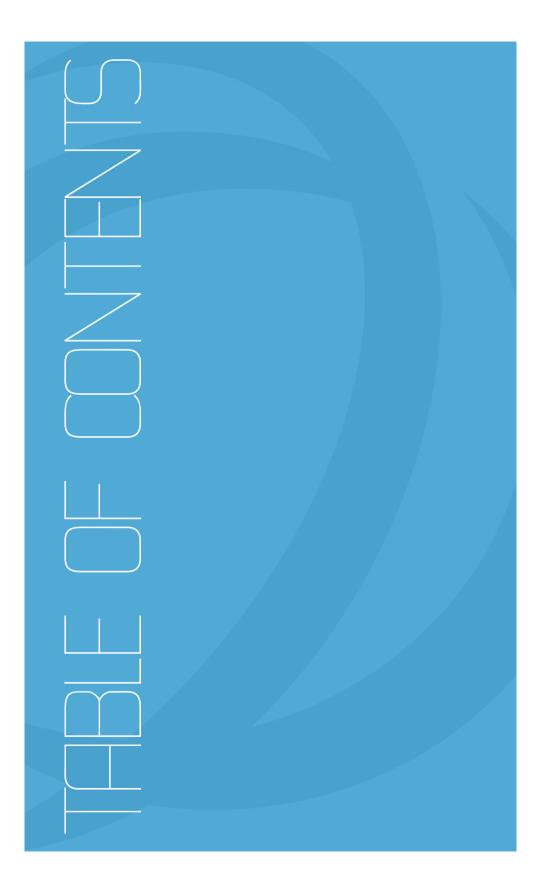
## SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

SIX PROGRAMS THAT HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ENTER THE JOB MARKET

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# FORELLORD

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We cannot accept that some of our youths are being left behind. The purpose of this report is to contribute to putting an end to this situation, which absolutely isn't inevitable. In order to achieve this, we decided to raise the awareness of decision-makers, training providers, teachers, education professionals and young people themselves on a series of initiatives that help youths enter the labor market. Our purpose was to highlight these initiatives and unveil their success factors.

Six short videos were also produced in order to show what we discovered. These videos are copyright-free and available on the website of Institut de l'entreprise. We hope that they too will make you want to get involved!

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# INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

With the necessary means and willpower, it is possible to put back on track many young people who struggle to fit into the job market<sup>1</sup>. That is the first lesson that can be learnt from this study highlighting six successful initiatives across France that help youths enter the labor market. Though using different methods and targeting different audiences, all of them lead to high employment rates. Prima facie, they don't seem to have much in common: Gorge de Loup, near Lyon, one of the 20 existing schools of production in France; P.A.R.I Jeunes, a small group of coaches working within a charity organization that promotes social integration through work; 100 Chances 100 Emplois, a small organization that gathers volunteers from the corporate world and public players in the field of employment across 29 job catchment areas in France; Ecole 42, a unique training facility in Paris, idolized by some and strongly criticized by others, that provides training in computer programming and has just opened its first branches in Lyon, France, and in California; **OpenClassrooms**, an online professional training platform riding the wave of the digital revolution in the corporate world, followed by 3.5m people across the globe; NQT (Nos Quartiers ont des Talents), an organization that links youths from underprivileged neighborhoods with mentors from the business community.

Some of these initiatives focus on lifting barriers to employment. **100 Chances 100 Emplois**, for instance, brings together public players and volunteers from partner companies to help young people of all levels get back on track. 80% of these youths find lasting employment after completing the program. **PA.R.I. Jeunes**, in the area of Lille, is another recent initiative that focuses on NEETs (young people who are not in employment, education or training): it targets those most disconnected from the job market, who hang around in underprivileged neighborhoods and shopping malls, as well as young graduates with a Master's degree who've simply lost track. 225 such youths have found a job over the last year. **NQT (Nos Quartiers ont des Talents)** mainly targets youths from underprivileged neighborhoods who hold a Bachelor's degree, through a mentorship program with company executives. The program leads to a 70% employment rate. The main goal of those three initiatives is to make employers say "yes" after job interviews.

The other three embody the hopes that derive from the emergence of new teaching methods, which are another essential lever to help young people get back into employment through training–especially for those who have dropped out of the system or haven't found their way in higher education. All three strive to adjust to the pace of each youngster they support, whether they are bent over a workbench at a school of production like **Gorge de Loup** or over a screen at **Ecole 42** or with **OpenClassrooms**. Every student that leaves Gorge de Loup gets at least three offers for permanent positions. So it's unquestionably successful. At Ecole 42, in Paris, 2,000 of the 3,500 students

<sup>1</sup> See the appendices for facts and figures about the labor market and youth unemployment in France.

presently in training already hold a permanent job, and one fourth of former students have started their own business. As for OpenClassrooms, which now offers training in 44 different trades linked to the digital revolution, its rate of inclusion is 100%: management has therefore decided to pay back the cost of the training to any student, young or adult, who doesn't manage to get a job within six months after completing the program.

This field study was carried out from July 2016 to April 2017. A series of reports and video interviews were also produced and are available on the website of Institut de l'entreprise. The two major questions at the core of our research were: what are the keys to your method's success? And: how could it inspire larger-scale solutions for vulnerable youths?

That direct contact with field organizations led us to qualify some preconceived ideas:

- some young people excluded from the job market do have certifications and diplomas,
- dropouts don't necessarily come from underprivileged backgrounds, and

- young people are also affected by the digital divide. Chatting with friends on Snapchat has nothing to do with knowing the importance of having a professional social media profile.

That contact with the field also led us to confirm the perennial conception that to put a youngster back on track, the most important lever is a tailor-made approach and the watchful eye of professionals on the youth's personal story. Whatever their social background might be, what the young people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need in order to bloom is attention from one or more professional mentors they will come across along their way–mentors who will listen to them and trust them in spite of the mistakes they might have made in the past, and who will provide them with lasting, tangible support. All the people we met are highly committed to what they do because they have a genuine affection for these youths.

Their methods could inspire larger-scale initiatives to help put back on track the 900,000 or so young French<sup>2</sup> who are not in employment, education or training-and therefore are alienated from society-and the thousands of others who simply don't have a job, regardless to whether they are graduates or not. According to the latest study of the DARES, published at the end of 2016 based on data from 2015, the youth

**<sup>2</sup>** Figures vary according to sources. Each year, around 140,000 young people drop out of the school system without any qualification, being one in five youths (17% of the roughly 820,000 young people in France), according to the DEPP (Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance). They are referred to as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). In total, they account for 11.8% of 18 to 24 year-olds, being nearly one million individuals, many of whom are completely alienated from society. According to Eurostat, 15% of 15 to 29 year-olds are NEETs, being 1.8m people, 60% of which have been out of employment for over a year.

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unemployment rate in France amounts to 23.3%. According to the OECD's latest report released in October 2016 (Society at a Glance 2016), that share amounts up to 45% in underprivileged neighborhoods, which is incredibly worrying given the exposure of youth to the extremist trends of our time. *"The Great Recession caused sweeping job losses across the OECD, and young people were hit particularly hard. So far, the recovery has been too weak to bring young people – and notably the low-skilled–back into employment. Eight years after the beginning of the crisis, still about 40 million young people are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET). But the roots of the problem go deeper: many lack the qualifications to find a job, while others struggle with personal or social problems. In the long term, joblessness and inactivity can generate isolation and withdrawal from society and endanger social cohesion. The great challenge for governments in the years to come is therefore to devise policies which equip young people with the professional skills they need and help disengaged youth overcome obstacles to education and employment," states the report. Those who haven't got the basic skills are therefore four times more likely to be* 

unemployed. 14.7% of young people in France are not in employment or training, according to a report by the DARES, Emploi et Chômage des jeunes de 15-29 ans en 2015 (Employment and Unemployment among young people aged 15 to 29 in 2015). And although youth unemployment is going down, the share of NEETs is increasing: it is quite low among youths aged 14 to 19 (6%), but very high among 20 to 24 year-olds (18%) and 25 to 29 year olds (20%).

"Young people are vulnerable not because they are young; they are vulnerable because they are under construction," quite rightly says Laurence Serrano, the head of the youth department at the town hall of Saint-Ouen, in Seine-Saint-Denis, a partner of 100 Chances 100 Emplois. All the organizations that we met play an active part in that construction process: they help youths regain confidence by showing them that they trust them; they widen their scope of skills based on what they've *done* in their past rather than on what they've learnt; and they use all possible means to put youths in direct contact with the corporate world. In fact, any young person, even if they attended the best higher education institutions, could benefit from what these organizations currently do for a few thousands of young people, with any level of education, because getting different perspectives and advice about one's skills and career plan is always a good way to come up with new options.

At this point, it is important to highlight that in France there are also many other initiatives, schools and organizations that are recognized for their substantial work for youth: Simplon, Webforce3 and many others in the digital industry; the Compagnons du Devoir, which are currently undergoing a thorough transition; the MIJEC (private Catholic schools); the remarkable job done by the Epides military camp; organizations like Frateli, Passeport Avenir, FACE, Mozaïk RH, Sport dans la Ville, AFMae (on air transport occupations), GEIQs (groups of employers for integration and qualification),

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more specific initiatives like the GNIAC (national group of initiatives and active citizens) in Seine-Saint-Denis, Cravates Solidaires, Jeunes d'avenir and many others. France has a great number of such initiatives, based on bottom-up rather than top-down approaches. This report certainly includes some of the integration methods that they use. But they probably have other ones that ought to be studied as well.

Last but not least, it must be noted that these successful players all note the structural lack of cooperation between the school system and the corporate world, and highlight the fact that the French teaching approach remains overly focused on bright students and tends to leave behind those who struggle. Although there are nearly 11,000 different professions<sup>3</sup>, youths only know about 25. The variety of talents is insufficiently valued, in spite of the fact that companies are now increasingly looking for applicants that have interpersonal skills, which are skills that are not–yet–recognized through certifications.

This study is therefore set in a context marked by many wrong perceptions of the professional world and of the actual needs and aspirations of youth. It is intended to be read only for the hope that it represents, hope awakened by the efforts of a handful of initiatives here and there that do their best to compensate for–albeit sometimes on a very small scale–the fundamental misjudgments made by the system as a whole.

Nonetheless, however useful they may be, their actions are but a sticking plaster on the wound of youth unemployment. In the short term, it may certainly be useful to scale up these successful methods to help put back on track the hundreds of thousands of young people who have drifted out of the system. But in order to really curb the number of youths alienated from society, more efforts should be made far earlier, within the system and on a large scale, especially to put an end to the pointless opposition between school and the corporate world because, in a certain way, they both share common features. There is also an urgent need to bring together public and private stakeholders affected by youth employment. Giving life to a collective intelligence of that sort is what will help every young person find their pathway to success.

<sup>3</sup> According to Canal des métiers.

"Doctor, we're losing him." Who hasn't heard this expression on TV at a critical moment in an operating room? In the next scene, you see the medical team in panic, rushing to save the patient's heart. In a way, we are also losing young people. It is a profound phenomenon. Patrick Dugard, a CSR advisor of the General Secretary of ADP and Vice-President of Planet Airports, offers a unique system that allows the young (and less young) to find a job in the airport industry. "Young people seem lost. When we have 10 vacancies we only get 5 applications. The problem of people not applying or showing up did not exist before the 2008 financial crisis. Since then, young people have learned to live with very little, and often this is made possible with the illegal economy." The loss is spectacular: "You sometimes receive 100 people hoping to keep 10. Sometimes we work in places that provide training with a guarantee that they will find employment upon on leaving and we still find no candidates. It is essential to include young graduates from low-income neighborhoods. Their exemplarity is fundamental." As we set out to explore France's different integration models for the youth, everyone we met repeated the same. The hardest thing for these organizations is actually to find them. It's not like they receive more applications than they can handle. "Young people don't make the effort of showing up for interviews. They come once, not twice." They no longer have trust, which means that we should be careful not to miss on any opportunity.

### 1. SEARCHING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME WORKLESS

Frédéric Coste, who runs the 100 Chances 100 Emplois program in Seine-Saint-Denis, tells us that "young people are queuing up to meet recruiters who say: send me your C.V. They respond to offers but get no response. After a while, they wonder why they studied in the first place." Anyone who has succeeded in helping young people to find a job says it: the most difficult things are not money or teaching skills, but the ability to convince young people to come. "You have to go after them where they are. They are suspicious, hurt, demotivated. It is up to us to get back in touch with them," confirms Daniel Chambodut, the director of the Gorge de Loup production school in Vaise, located in the suburbs of Lyon. But what exactly is a dropout? "A young person who has experienced a series of failures and who has not been properly listened to," sums up Brigitte Lucas, a social worker at P.A.R.I Jeunes. At Gorge de Loup, most of the professional tutors were themselves once dropouts. Even today, Denis Brude, a 2nd-grade tutor, enjoys his revenge on his English teacher who had predicted a miserable future for him. Xavier Despont, a 4<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher, also arrived at Gorge de Loup at the age of 14. He was considered "a lost case." Many people have their story of humiliation to tell. They have turned it into a source of motivation. But when

family difficulties accumulate in school failure, the motivation engine runs empty. "Young people quickly feel abandoned and give up". In this context, young French immigrants pay the high price. The unemployment rate for the youth is 23% nationally, and 45% for disadvantaged neighborhoods<sup>4</sup>. According to the latest OECD study entitled 'Society at a Glance 2016', they are three times more likely to have graduated from school than any other, compared to 1.5 times in all OECD countries. If he or she is born abroad, a young person is 1.5 times more likely to be what is referred to as a Neet – a person neither in employment, education or training. In school, we know what are the critical moments when they can drop out. "The shift," observes Marie-Christine Tremblay, director of the P.A.R.I Jeunes program, "is either at 14-16 or when they have to get their high school diploma. At that critical moment, they often get disappointed because they failed or had it but still get disappointed once they go to university."

Opportunities to meet with the youth are therefore narrow. When they created their program in 2015, the P.A.R.I Jeunes team in the suburbs of Lille went out to distribute leaflets in staircases, shopping centers, railway stations, and bars. *"It was very unusual for us,"* remembers Marie-Christine Tremblay. *"But it's something we had to go through."* Who is their target audience? The organization's audience is anyone who falls in the Neet category. *"They are often idle and without qualifications, are not registered either in local missions or at the National Employment Agency,"* describes Marie-Christine Tremblay. *"They live in low-income neighborhoods, but not only. As a matter of principle, everyone is welcomed."* 

### 2. MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE CONFIDENT AGAIN

Confidence is an essential component of all of these approaches. Frédéric Coste from100 Chances 100 Emplois in Seine-Saint-Denis sums it up well: "It is the interest that young people have that will help them restore their self-confidence." And it works. "We make them work with machines," says Patrick Saunier, 49, a 3rd-year tutor at the Gorge de Loup production school. "A student arriving to make his first pieces is a major step on the path to restoring their self-confidence." Valentin Prost smiles. He is 17, a student at Gorge de Loup, and after a difficult childhood, says he has changed. "When I first arrived, I no longer had any confidence in me. I'm a manual person. And I saw that I had abilities. It made me want to go beyond myself." It was enough to set aside the memory of his 4thgrade teacher who had made him stay a whole day in the schoolyard at the "losers table."

<sup>4</sup> See figures in the annex.

We can see Valentin's pride in his eyes. "At Gorge de Loup, you get a rush of adrenaline the moment you start a machine, hoping everything will go well," he explains with a sparkle in his eyes, he who just happened to finish the miniaturization of an engine. In the school of production, being co-responsible for the pieces they make with their professional tutors, all former dropouts, makes it possible for them to regain the confidence they had lost and that is crucial for their future success.

## 3. VALUING PAST ACHIEVEMENTS

Young people who are *"in the learning process,"* including many young graduates who are looking for work, generally have little knowledge of their real potential apart from traditional schools assessment systems. They often do not have a clue what their value is, which makes sense since they evaluate themselves through the narrow prism of a diploma (which they may or may not have), or of the job that they haven't got yet. This approach also explains why early experiences with finding a job discourage them so quickly. According to Frédéric Coste, *"These young people have sent dozens of resumes. They feel invisible. They must be made visible in the eyes of others and above all in their own eyes."* The idea of making them visible egain is the heart of both the P.A.R.I Jeunes program and 100 Chances 100 Emplois. It covers both the development of skills that young people don't think they possess, and extracurricular activities that are acquired and that could be used in professions but which they do not even suspect that they could be useful. In its curriculum, OpenClassrooms takes into account the demonstrated skills of students to make it easier, if need be, to obtain a professional diploma. They offer a type of Internal Experience Validation (VAE).

In this important process, psychology is essential because it becomes a question of changing perceptions, and the way other adults look at you as well. At P.A.R.I Jeunes, young people take part in a session where they present themselves, their qualities, and personal histories with the goal of preparing for the prospect of an interview. When Pelagie says of Alicia that she is punctual, precise and loves work that is done well, positive energy flows around the room. Revisiting past disappointments using a more neutral terminology helps them heal. Maïté had left a job suddenly, which is something that she always had difficulty explaining during job interviews. With the assistance of a professional coach, Dahbia Hamdi understood that she had left because of her ethics, which turns out is something positive. It was by making the same move that Mélanie, 31, who was supported in 2012 by NQT, ended up being recruited. Holding a Master's degree in strategy and public and political decisions, when she arrived at the association she had lost all confidence. "During the recruitment interviews, I was short-listed, but I never made it past that."

Mélanie was guided by a Diversity Director of a CAC 40 company, which enabled her to make the professional world a reality by telling her about her own experience. A few appointments later, Mélanie got a job in an association for a position in communications...

### 4. A TAILOR-MADE APPROACH

Each young person is a unique combination of potential and obstacles that call for answers that are particular to each. As Frédéric Coste of 100 Chances 100 Emplois explains, *"It's like we're in the high-fashion industry"* even if the difficulties occur regularly: lack of self - esteem, the absence of a professional network, lack of an efficient method for finding employment ... Frédéric Coste calls this the *"value chain"*: *"We have to look at a young person and his value chain. From the orientation phase where he or she drops out of school until he or she returns to work it's all part of a process. They must overcome obstacles. Each phase is a building block. Driver's license, residence permits, English tests, the Voltaire program for spelling, etc."* 

In this reconstruction phase, paying attention is fundamental. "Listen especially without prejudice," insists Dahbia Hamdi, a professional coach at P.A.R.I Jeunes. Prejudices can shatter their potential. In this, the son of a manager who dreams of being a plumber has as much difficulty in making his voice heard as the son of a worker who dreams of becoming a dancer at the Opera. It is to avoid this loss of potential that P.A.R.I Jeunes has decided to keep social support separate from professional support when it welcomes young people. The two never only work together when there is a need to find a small job or accommodation, but one need never absorbs another. At the Gorge de Loup School, there is no social worker, but a shared humanist vision. "To help a student, we signed an agreement with a bakery for a year," says Sylvie Da Silva, an administrative and accounting officer who has been working for 24 years at the school, and the sister of a former student who was also deemed unfit for school. "Or to deliver three wagons full of food to a mother who could not make ends meet." Daniel Chambodut, the Director, regularly goes to court to support those who are waiting for papers. That is their reality. And they live with it.

To be able to pay attention to individual stories, these initiatives usually work in the setting of small groups of young people. 100 Chances 100 Emplois never takes more than ten young people at the same time. "If we were to industrialize this program, we would no longer be able to provide personalized services," confirms Frédéric Coste. "The company does this because they need to listen to individual stories. If there were too many stories to follow, we would lose the thread." "Even if the selection is tough, we want to stay

on this scale to do a good job," confirms Olivier Guillouet, the "company pilot," Urban planner and Director of Large Development Projects at Icade, a subsidiary of the Fund deposits and Consignment center. P.A.R.I Jeunes observes, *"The structure's small size allows for personalized assistance. We don't have to follow up on 100 people each,*" says Dahbia Hamdi, *"otherwise we could not do what we do. We don't take more than 8 to 12 students in production schools." "The program's strength,*" says Corentin Rémond, a General Delegate at the National Federation of Production Schools, is that *"Everything happens in the same place.*" The NQT methodology is also based on the help of sponsors who come from the corporate world. Even OpenClassrooms, which reaches a larger audience because everything is done online and remotely, focuses on individual mentoring. *"Building interpersonal relationships is a key success factor,*" insists Matthew Nebra, OpenClassrooms' Founder.

#### 5. QUICKLY PROVE THE ABILITY OF YOUNG JOB SEEKERS TO BE EFFECTIVE

The trust that young people give is not unlimited. One thing is clear. Organizations that help the young quickly have to prove their ability to make a difference. Frédéric Coste hit the mark when he said, *"the more concrete the proof we provide is, the more convinced they are."* In the 100 Chances 100 Emplois system, what influences young people, is the time that companies spend for them, as trained volunteers who come to offer them immediate solutions as soon as they meet. Around the table, these professionals know as much as they can about the local community, whether they are company representatives or recruitment managers, chambers of commerce and industry representatives, Apec or business leaders. They don't bother discussing the potential that the future holds, but the very present. They search, network, swap contacts, and think collectively. Sometimes they even create a sense of urgency, by making two companies compete over one candidate. When they need to make appointments, they do so immediately. Both sides have no time to lose. *"I'm waiting for you tomorrow."* 

The same goes for P.A.R.I Jeunes. There, innovation is not so much a matter of tools but an issue of responsiveness. That way they can replicate the sense of speed that exists within companies. Alicia, who experienced difficulties for five years to find a job in sales, was stunned to get a first job interview on the first day that she entered the program. "A *job offer does not last. We have to react very quickly. And it's better to take a risk and fail than to do nothing. Each time, young people get called back fast: 'What do you think?' The young person chooses,* " explains Marie-Christine Tremblay. "P.A.R.I Jeunes and ourselves do the *research,*" testifies Yann, who is looking for a company where he can do his apprenticeship for his BTS degree. "If a young person calls in the morning for an interview in the afternoon,

one of us will be free to do a mock-up interview and talk with him," says Pascale. And when business partners call, we will make sure that they don't miss out on the opportunity. "One day, one Friday afternoon, one of them told us that they needed four candidates to clean up a fan zone in Lille. We had four young people on the field on Monday morning. Speed is also part of NQT's DNA. The sooner the graduates enroll, the more efficient the process is," says Sophie Pinto, a National Sponsorship and Service Manager.

When things start moving in the right direction, young people react very quickly. According to the 100 Chances 100 Emplois method, it is enough to attend the week of the "SAS" to grasp the transformation that occurs. Perceptions have changed, appearances as well; their sense of drive especially becomes palpable, which is essential. And when it works, word of mouth also works wonderfully. Young people pass the word to their friends and cousins.

## 6. CREATE A COLLECTIVE DYNAMIC

"Alone we go faster. Together we go further. Nelson Mandela's saying applies well to the methods used to help young people find a job. P.A.R.I Jeunes's success is based on this philosophy. For every young person, the action plan is created collectively from the first day. It's how we build our strength. It creates a strong bond between all of us and it enables us to move forward," explains Dahbia Hamdi. Every Tuesday afternoon, the four coaches meet to discuss and share information. "Thanks to this diversity of experience," explains Marie-Christine Tremblay, "the field of possibilities regarding employment and qualifications opens up for young people who sometimes have up to five years of unsuccessful research. No single referent. Everyone knows their situation, and what they seek. Anyone who comes will be listened to and we will provide them with an answer and give them information." All of them have professional experiences in various fields and discuss every Tuesday their ideas on how best to help the young people who come to see them. Everyone knows the world of business. "It was a condition. Nicolas was in the industry, Pascale in the catering industry. Even our social worker worked in a company."

At 100 Chances 100 Emplois, it is by working with others, collectively, that personal transformation occurs. The SAS, a week of coaching supervised by a specialized structure during which they do interview training, video resumes, theater classes to work on their non-verbal communication skills and oral expression, and sessions to learn more about professional social networks... Everything they do takes place in the context of a group of ten young people who choose their nicknames; Red Star, Young Wolves, etc... At the very beginning, they also make a diagnosis and evaluate progress made until the final

session of presentation around a meal tray and in front of a group of potential recruiters. Volunteers come from companies or local public actors. *"There are more ideas in twenty heads of entrepreneurs than in one. Our ability to restore their confidence depends on our ability to put them at the center of this whole process and on the path to success,"* explains Samira Djouadi, a General Delegate at the TF1 Foundation. He was also a former Sports Teacher in Courneuve and now a big supporter of the method.

The school of production is a laboratory, a school, and a company at the same time. There, collective life is essential. Eager to attract more young people, Denis Brude, a 2nd-year tutor, is also passionate about rallying. He had the idea of organizing a student contest to create a racing car. *"47 students from five production schools participated. They got a scrapped car and got it to work again. They worked on weekends, evenings and holidays."* Today, a professional driver drives their vehicle, and this gives them a sense of pride.

## II - RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL

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Young people without basic skills are four times more likely to be unemployed. But these methods prove one thing. When we create bridges between disciplines, provide personalized services, empower young people in a classroom or on a screen, and value the skills that they already have and mobilized in their *"real life,"* their potential is transformed. They become larger, bigger, freer. And more responsible. For many dropouts, digital technology has given them an opportunity to re-invent themselves remotely and even when they have a job. This new model benefits businesses as well. *"We modeled traditional training models after the military,"* says Mathieu Nebra, co-founder of OpenClassrooms, *"to produce workers who were going to do repetitive tasks. Today, companies need individuals who are different, creative and adaptable. We have to change mindsets to navigate the enormous amount of uncertainty that exists, and that is key to ensure people with a professional future. Education has been conceived so far for a world that changes little. Now the world is changing at great speed."* 

OpenClassrooms' youngest student is 12 years old. He was bored at school, and so he decided to learn a profession online when he returned home. That gave him the possibility of getting a job that required a Bac +4 level before he even obtained his Bachelor's degree. Situations like this make it necessary to look at the paths and potential of young people in a different light. The world we live in changes fast and this has an impact on the way businesses view life skills and experiences. Such changes are also related to developments in Ed-tech - new technologies dedicated to education pioneering methods that could change everything. This new wave of innovation has the potential of altering the predominance of initial training in France. We already see that in the very near future, thanks to adaptive learning or self-learning technologies developed by innovative young French players such as Domoscio or Selflearning, it will be possible to know with some level of certainty, the paths of understanding and selflearning required to succeed.

In a highly flexible labor market, contracts multiply, without necessarily generating the consolidation of skills necessary for the construction of this base, while the level of technicality required in various professions is steadily growing. Today, more than one in two young people between the ages of 14 and 25 have a temporary job. One in four 25 to 29-year-olds. In this changing world, we need to train 'sailors,' ready to sail all types of seas, with a solid base of field knowledge, experiences, values and soft skills. People prepared for the OECD's new production revolution: *"The unbridled pace of technological change may challenge the adequacy of skills and training systems. (...) It will, therefore, be important in this context to ensure that the entire population has good numerical and generic skills - language proficiency, numeracy, and problem-solving."* 

## 1. TURNING SKILLS INTO JOBS

Helping a young person transition to a job, from an academic degree to a job, and then to a particular job offer, is the fundamental form of support that P.A.R.I Jeunes or 100 Chances 100 Emplois offer. Both require sixteen weeks of support. Likewise, 8,000 NQT professional mentors, also have the mission of guiding their mentees. Whether it lasts a few days or months, coaching is useful in a variety of ways. Their job is to make sure that the reality of the desired profession truly corresponds to the projection that a young person makes. Also, they also set out to discover from the candidate's personality the jobs that he/she are likely to succeed in. Finally, they need to allow them to rely on their other skills - the ones that are often absent from a resume - and to reinforce them. Take Emmanuelle as an example. She is a young national handball champion who has a Bac +5 diploma. During interviews, she is usually shy. While studying in Birmingham, she set up a team there. Before meeting with her coach at 100 Chances 100 Emplois, she never had made the link between her future career in communications and the skills she brings to the table as a high-level sportswoman. "Past experiences are never meaningless," says Pascale, a coach at P.A.R.I Jeunes. But young people do not spontaneously start thinking about the meaning of their past experiences. Yann, who arrived in Lesquin last October to find an apprenticeship agrees with this. "We come to talk about our skills, our experience, our diplomas and they look for the job that could be a match for us." Many tools can be used to find new opportunities. For instance, the Canal des Métiers or myCommunIT do this online. They both look for what young graduates like to find a job in IT. The up-and-coming French start-up Impala relies on artificial intelligence to guide candidates in their search for a job. Hector Balas, the startup's co-founder, made Einstein's famous quote his motto: "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on his abilities to climb a tree, he will spend his life believing that he is stupid."

#### 2. OPENING DOORS WITHOUT ANY AGE PREREQUISITE OR DIPLOMA

For most, a professional experience is a gateway to a career. Ecole 42 has the same philosophy, just a more radical version of it: a month of code, every day, from 8:42am to 11:42pm. *"We see the young person as a human being full of potential and qualities,"* says Marc Teyton, President of the National Federation of Production Schools. Our job is to allow them to express their inner qualities. We have new arrivals who do not speak French and get their degree in just two years. At 100 Chances 100 Emplois, the only things that count are a person's motivation and home address within the local job

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catchment area. There is no pre-requisite to have a diploma. "They have, one, motivation, two, motivation, three, motivation, four, a professional project, five, knowledge of how to behave in a company," says Olivier Guillouet. Most young people in one of the thirty employment areas covered in France by 100 Chances 100 Emplois have often found closed doors, including in difficult jobs such as hotels. The opening of Beweb, a new digital factory, since April 2016, provides free web development training, free and open to young people between the ages of 18 and 25, without a diploma and from lowincome neighborhoods. The first promotion of 18 students started in Lunel in April. Students are trained in web development for six months. During this period, the 18 young people selected will meet local professionals and actors. They will also exchange with companies, respond to requests. At the end of this training supported by the city of Lunel, the prefecture of Hérault, the National Employment Agency, and the local integration mission, young people will be able to create websites and mobile applications. Motivation is also Simplon's first gateway, with an incentive to try to code, which allows him to understand what programming is or to present his past projects. This French socially certified social enterprise labeled French Tech, "La France S'Engage" and "Grande Ecole du Digital," offers - via a network of schools - free face-to-face qualifications or certified training courses for technical professions that are in high demand. Their target: job seekers, welfare beneficiaries, young people from working-class and low-income areas, and girls, who are under-represented in technical professions. Ecole 42 has the same vision. 30% of students have never learned or practiced computer programming. 40% of students do not have a high school diploma. There are no entry requirements to get a degree. It is not necessary either to know any computer languages or to have experience as a developer: only 30% of the participants have already done programming. There is only one condition: to be between the age of 18 and 30 years old. "More than skills, we are looking for a state of mind," says CEO Nicolas Sadirac. Moreover, in the "Piscine," the dreaded school selection process that lasts a month, it is not necessarily those that know best how to code that will prevail, but those who will share the most information and understand the dynamics of the group.

There is another detail that is critical: all courses are free, apart from OpenClassrooms which is a company - but which has financed free vocational training for nearly 35,000 unemployed. The National Employment Agency can also cover the fees.

### 3. ALLOW THE YOUNG TO HAVE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Why are companies interested in graduates of production schools? "Because they are immediately operational and very rigorous," says one client. Because production schools are business schools, which reduce the divide between the two. Despite its small size, the reputation of the school has even crossed borders. Canadian companies have offered free accommodation to students who would like to come to work at home. The Danes, who are very much at the forefront of the production schools phenomena, have come to admire the rigor that prevails in the workshop. "Learning by doing." These three words are the cornerstone of the system. In a production school - there are 17 in France, but 70 in Denmark, 80 in Austria and 200 in Germany - the parts manufactured by pupils under the supervision of professional tutors go to real customers who have real requirements regarding quality, price, and deadline. "Customers grade students," says Daniel Chambodut, smiling. "You cannot get a grade like 13 out of 20 when dealing with a client; the piece is either good or not."

Nothing is abstract, and everything makes sense. The school applies knowledge by making its students manufacture real objects. This approach does miracles explains Valentin Prost. He is 17 and says that she understood the Pythagorean theorem by making a coin. "In college, I learned to have a good grade; here I'm taught to work well. And the teachers never let go." The proportion of practice and theory was changed during the four year learning period to provide students with the attention they need: two-thirds of practice at the beginning, one-third at the end. "We never get bored," says Mathias Righi, who is 17 and in grade 4. He was made fun of at school. You have to think and do it at the same time. As for the clients, they commented on the quality of the pieces received in front of the pupils and the teachers. "There is a constant process of co-creation. It's unique," says a company leader who has come to test his ideas of custom made aluminum objects. Students learn the joy of "beautiful work," and that is how the love for professions is passed on to them. "We are here to have a job, not to get a diploma, and that makes all of the difference," says Thibaut Vaughn, 21, who has just left the Gorge de Loup School to enter an engineering school. He also created Elements; a company specialized in 3D printing. Besides, exams that students have to pass to get their CAP and BAC Pro are in general a formality for them.

Here, as elsewhere, connecting young people to the professional world is a key aspect to success. By discovering that what they do is useful, since a real customer will buy the machining piece he or she has made, they find out that their work has value, which a

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feeling they tend to have lost for a long time or never even had in the first place. "As they become aware of the value of their work, they gradually start feeling proud of their accomplishments. Most companies succeed thanks to their talent. It's the same here," said Marc Teyton, President of the National Federation of Schools of Production, who evokes a "unique relationship between the teacher and the student when they work together." Rules and sanctions are all related to the trade. "We tell them not to distract their peers to avoid putting them in danger while they work on a machine," explains Denis Brude, a 2nd-grade teacher.

In the same way, OpenClassrooms and École 42 base their teaching method in real-life situations. At OpenClassrooms, Mathieu Nebra deconstructs professional knowledge like an engine to better re-articulate each piece, which can be taught remotely. The teaching methods are based on projects and real life scenarios in a company. "Our goal is neither the diploma nor the certification, it's the job," recalls Pierre Dubuc. A jury of professionals validates the projects carried out by the student accompanied by his mentor, which is always done online. A project can be submitted to a jury as many times as necessary. The exam is filmed, which allows the student to what he or she has done wrong and improve for the next session. "Our application never stigmatizes failure," explains Mathieu Nebra, the co-founder of the platform. "We just say 'you didn't get it this time around."

### 4. FOSTER PEER-LEARNING

Ecole 42's "piscine" as they call it, is known for its difficulty but collaboration is vital to its success. "We were sitting on our chair from 8:42am to 11:42pm!" Paul Amice, 25, who arrived in September 2016 after a Bachelor's degree in Engineering says smiling "It's like a training camp. I learned by doing, searching on Google what I did not know and by asking other candidates. There is no real competition between us and we quickly learn to rely on others. "Sullivan Vitiello, 20, is also one of the "survivors." "I loved the piscine as it creates a spirit of solidarity and true friendships. If the spirit of resourcefulness is essential, I also realized that one could not move forward without relying on others, "says a Bac S graduate who, after spending a year in math school where he was bored, chose, in July 2015 to try his luck at Ecole 42 with success. "More than results, we test the ability of candidates to work with others to innovate in an unstable environment. This is what they will be asked for throughout the duration of their studies and later in their professional life," defends Nicolas Sadirac, the School's Director. The transition from one level to another depends on the realization of projects in small groups around five themes: programming, innovation, infrastructure, personal development, and entrepreneurship. To acquire the 17 essential skills identified (artificial intelligence, web universe, network management, video games, etc.), students

have the opportunity to forge their path. But the curriculum is not tailor-made. They need to validate all exams to receive their degree. Upon graduation, participants are slated to become versatile.

At OpenClassrooms, work groups created by students and mentors on *"Workplace"* are also a foundation for learning. And to face the solitude in front of a screen, the company is testing the use of coworking spaces in five cities of France.

### 5. RESPECT THE DIFFERENT PACES OF LEARNING

Before straying away from the world of employment, young people usually have experience being strayed away from school. The teaching method's flexibility gives them a taste for learning. From the Gorge de Loup to P.A.R.I Jeunes, from OpenClassrooms to Ecole 42, all studying environments are adapted to the pace of students, which is fundamentally different from the norm. Mathieu Nebra and Pierre Dubuc were inspired by the work of the American psychologist and pedagogy expert Benjamin Bloom. "This great researcher demonstrated in the 1960s that individual mentoring associated with apprenticeship learning had superior results for 98% of students compared to a more traditional teaching method," explains Pierre Dubuc. We call it mastery learning. According to Bloom's method, students must reach a certain level before they can move on to the next level, doing so at their own pace. And if they fail, it is as much their responsibility as that of their mentor. This approach has nothing to do with the logic of a traditional teaching environment, as Pierre Dubuc points out: "In a school, the teacher has thirty pupils in front of him. This is 'one size fits all.' The ones who learn fast are bored, and those who are slower become lost." There, "students take the time they need, but they must gain expertise in the end. The mentor validates the progress they have made. Either they pass, or start over. They are provided support until they succeed."

This flexibility empowers students. At OpenClassrooms, they set their pace. If they want to take breaks or, on the contrary, go fast, their mentor supports them. They are in charge. Like Kevin, a 21-year-old student on the platform who did not obtain his Bac S and is training to become a multimedia project manager, Bac +5. His schedule is similar to what he would have in a traditional learning environment. Or Lucie who prefers to go at a faster pace to put pressure on herself.

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At Gorge du Loup, "the English teacher sometimes has bilinguals in the same class, students who do not know a word of French, and others who do not know a word of English," says Daniel Chambodut. If a student is not able to do his or her CAP in two years, he or she will do it in three or four, regardless. Everyone goes at their own pace. At each level. "All students have 20 out of 20," says Timothée Talon, a first-grade professional tutor, this is because they are obliged to succeed, even if they have to remake their piece, like artists who repeat. The school recently welcomed a young person who had difficulty in mastering the language, and who was sent to a school for the disabled. His father insisted. The school took him in. The young boy got his CAP degree in four years. Today he has a permanent contract working for a mechanical company.

Far from being considered a handicap, this diversity of levels and stories is perceived as an opportunity. *"We accept and embrace diversity. We're not here to turn people into clones. This is why the flexibility is indispensable,"* explains Mathieu Nebra. Perhaps this is why, among the young people who pursue a degree, many dropouts regularly come out. *"Our method is aimed at young people who do not feel comfortable in the education system,"* confirms Pierre Dubuc, the other co-founder of the company, 28, who joined Mathieu Nebra in 2001 to develop Company in France and abroad. The majority of those who come to us have an unconventional history: they are at least in contradiction with their school or authority. They are looking for new models. That's how they find us. And they fall back on their feet, like Terry, 32, a Bac +3/4 graduate and developer. *"He stopped school at the age of 12,"* says Pierre Dubuc. *"He does not even have the college certificate. He started his business."* 

The same goes for Ecole 42, where the fastest can finish the course in 18 months when others will do it in five years. Since there is no schedule, it is possible to work at the same time. Presence is the highest at 10 pm - or on weekends. Ecole 42 is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is hard not to blame the young for their lack of enthusiasm when they are told about unemployment, how robots will take over, how 95% of jobs are doomed to disappear and how universal income will soon become a reality. The risk is that we create a durable divide between schools and companies. To bring young people back into the reality of corporate life, various actors have multiplied meetings. Companies are also interested young employees with strong soft skills. With professions changing quickly, the ability to work in teams that are sometimes multicultural, and creativity become essential qualities. For the young unemployed, this represents both a good and bad news. It's good news diplomas are no longer perceived as a difficult obstacle to overcome. The start-up spirit, the call for disruption and the new recruitment wave are changing the way people get hired. But it's also bad news because, among the soft skills in high demand, one is, according to all the actors interviewed, and a recurring obstacle during the job interview. "Companies are mainly looking for strong interpersonal skills," says Olivier Guillouet. Whether someone possesses interpersonal skills can immediately be seen, and they are difficult to acquire. Young people do not know that during an interview, recruiters evaluate them within the first three minutes. All these actors explore with young people this keys moment, throughout the entire process.

## 1. ITTERSIVE EXPERIENCES AND GATHERINGS

A professional experience is essential in helping a person to know where a person's strength lies. Professional experiences are all the more relevant when it comes to finding a job as social reproduction remains high. A study showed that young people in Seine-Saint-Denis dream of finding a job in commerce, health, social work or construction. From Gorge de Loup to P.A.R.I Jeunes and 100 Chances 100 Emplois, immersion, internship or short-term missions serve as a point of entry. What is important is that the young person is in touch with the reality of the professions he or she chooses. When Aurélie receives four job offers to become a youth counselor, Frédéric Coste of 100 Chances 100 Emplois advises her to try them all out to find out what she wants. At P.A.R.I Jeunes, professional reorientation is frequent. The coaches leave the young person and verify with them the relevance of their choice as they get to immerse themselves in a corporate environment, do internships or an interim job. All of the organizations working to help the young are all about the idea of opening up possibilities. For instance, they pushed Kushtu to become an accountant and not only an accounting assistant; they also explained to Sofiane that he does not necessarily need to start a career in sales because he has excellent interpersonal skills. At P.A.R.I Jeunes, coaches create a dynamic that makes it possible for young graduates to have a successful experience. At NQT, apart from sponsorships - the training's milestone -, nearly 800 events were organized last year by the association's partner companies to help young people. They also set up workshops, business presentations, and networking sessions, etc.

### 2. LET EMPLOYEES MAKE A POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The involvement of NQT's sponsors is essential, as is the availability of companies participating in the actions organized by 100 Chances 100 Emplois. This approach also reflects a broader vision of corporate social responsibility, that goes well beyond the walls of their companies. Apart from any form of philanthropy, and given the current increase in recruitment, employees are the best ambassadors of their businesses. For each session, 100 Chances 100 Emplois contacts hundreds of representatives of large or small companies. And as one of them says, a business executive at a large bank: "for nothing in the world I would miss these meetings with young people, but also all other actors present, public or private. "Since October 2015, Frédérique Sénèque, a diversity project manager at the Française des Jeux, has been leading the partnership between her company and NQT. She is mentoring two young graduates that she intends to support until they get a permanent contract! "I do a lot of coaching to support them and to give them what they do not have, given their social background: they lack confidence in their abilities, knowledge of how to present themselves during interviews, or a network," she says. "One of the two works in the cultural field and goes from one fixed-term contracts to another. I recently contacted a former colleague from Aix-en-Provence who knows the world of festivals to see how she could open doors for her." At NQT, since the creation of the association in 2006, 34,400 young people under the age of 30, with a diploma in higher education with a minimum of a bachelor degree have been accompanied as they make a start on the market. 9,290 sponsors and mentors are involved in total. The mentors, some of whom sit on the NQT Board of Directors, play a pivotal role in giving their time and sharing their professional knowledge. During her first meeting with her sponsor, BNP Paribas Controller, 26-yearold Edip, who holds a Master's degree in auditing, is looking for a position identical to that of her mentor. She asked her how to change her resume to have more change to achieve that goal. "I came out with specific advice. For example, she encouraged me to develop a little more the missions that I could carry out during my internships because there was a discrepancy between what I explained during an interview and what one could read from my resume."

#### 3. PREPARE FOR THE CRUCIAL MOMENT OF JOB INTERVIEWS

As Pascale Esnault, a coach specialized in employment at P.A.R.I Jeunes emphasizes: "We had quite a few young graduates who had a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. But for many of them, then still need to learn more about how to behave in a corporate environment, including the most basic expectations: arriving on time, the dress code." What to wear, how to express oneself, how not to be overly friendly. There are so many details that can prevent the young from holding a successful interview. "On these subjects, there is a fundamental inequality between the young person who has grown up with all these codes and the others," confirms Samira Djouadi, general delegate of the TF1 Foundation. A diploma doesn't make a difference. Fortunately, these tacit and invisible codes can be learned, and even quickly, as evidenced by the method used by 100 Chances 100 Emplois. Theater classes, video resumes and interview simulations for one week with representatives of companies supported by experts and coaches will help young people to transform themselves during the what they refer to as the "SAS" period. Fifteen days later, around a lunch tray, they will present themselves to the partner companies of 100 Chances 100 Emplois. There, they will prove to have successfully transformed themselves. There is another requirement: Prepare them for tricky questions; make them aware of their strengths. They have resumes and cover letters. But having a resume and a cover letter that crafted precisely to an offer makes a significant difference. At that moment, everything is still uncertain. The more they are ready for it, the more chances they put on their side. Support must not stop after the recruitment phase is over. "A young person has spent fifteen days at a company to discover a profession. He signed his apprenticeship contract," says Marie-Christine Tremblay from P.A.R.I Jeunes. "The company and ourselves knew that if we did not do anything about his home address, he would not hold it because the company is a one and a half hour drive from his home. We immediately set up housing support with his educator and a shelter so that he can move as quickly as possible." "Done."

#### 4. CREATE PARTNERSHIPS TO INCREASE THE PROSPECT OF FINDING EMPLOYMENT

"We did a life-sized experiment with a construction group looking for drivers to work and when we couldn't get anyone from the National Employment Agency. We brought together all the different actors around a table: job seekers, local missions, and the National Employment Agency to analyze why it did not work. The problem was understood and solved. We operate without any premise and benevolently." Denis Sabardine is a National Coordinator for the Gniac network. 500 people from all walks of life, both public and private, voluntarily participate. They often work in the so-called social and solidarity economy and are willing to help transform public employment policies. "The network's strength is that everyone works together and not in silos," he explains. "Education and jobs cannot be separated. You need a 360° approach."

The collective sees itself as "a trusted third party" when it comes to the partnerships it has forged with different local actors. In addition to the action of the public employment service, and by working with local elected representatives, and other civil society members (associations, entrepreneurs, companies, networks, etc.) involved in the field of employment. It is not a matter of "doing for others," but of doing "more" and especially differently working with actors that are already involved, aggregating other initiatives experimented elsewhere. On their website, it says: "our current employment policy is made up of disconnected initiatives, structures, and programs that are difficult to understand by researchers and job-seekers. Moreover, institutions involved in employment need to be more connected to the economic world, companies, and employers. This situation causes a lot of waste online, and the effectiveness of programs is limited, particularly concerning the resources involved."

Bringing employment offers and young people closer to the field, that's what - the Geiq - does. The organization brings together a dozen of employer groups in France, and particularly in Alsace, where their activities are growing. As an NGO, the group includes companies that operate in industries currently experiencing difficulties such as construction, industry or public works. The first Geiq was created in 1994. *"It is the only non-profit tool that allows several companies to share an employee in a secure legal framework,"* reads their presentation. *"We add up the recurring needs for seasonal or part-time skills of the member companies, and we create a full-time job shared among several companies."* By assuring the administrative back office: payroll, billing, contracts, accounting and legal support. The Geiq is supported by a variety of regional professional organizations: MEDEF, FFB, FRTP, UIMM, but also by its member companies and collaborating employees. The organization has built partnerships with all public and private organizations in Strasbourg, where the Gieq is financed by the government,

the Region, the General Councils, cities (Strasbourg and Mulhouse), the National Employment Agency, local missions, and construction sites... In 2013, four Geiq specialized in construction, public work, and Interprofessional grouped themselves behind the banner and the Alemploi.fr website.

In Montpellier, the first promotion of Up To students was also born of a shared effort by Simplon, the computer group Dell and the association, FACE. The organization links trainees with no diplomas or professional experience with companies in the digital sector. Each training session will last seven months. The creation of this school has met an ambition: to get out of the ambiguity of the local situation, where Montpellier enjoys a strong dynamism of the digital ecosystem and a high rate of business creation. We have an unemployment rate twice as high as the national average, explained Stéphane Reboud, director of the site of Dell Montpellier, on the website L'usinedigitale. There are 50 different digital training courses, and yet 170 jobs already opened have not been filled since last summer.

From 400 applications, including 300 resumes given by the National Employment Agency, a first promotion has just been set up. They will receive 90 hours of training at Dell Montpellier, before each trainee receives mentoring from companies and partner organizations, including Orange, EDF, Montpellier Business School. The Up To initiative is co-financed by Dell, FACE Hérault and, on by other public institutions such as Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, the Ministry of Labor and the European Social Fund. Many actors are involved, which makes it possible to circulate the right information and to rely on the strengths of each. *"We are at the beginning of a new era in the integration of young people, which requires a new form of public/private cooperation,"* said Clare Hart, president of FACE Hérault, in La Tribune. *"We must ask local companies to come and get involved. Moreover, this school will be a testing site: progress made here will be transferred to other sites, and applied elsewhere at the national level."* 

### 5. COORDINATE AND OPEN UP PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT ACTORS

Patrick Dugard has a beautiful saying to describe what needs to be done: "synchronous action." And a solid argument to explain the necessity. "When your professional life stops from one day to another, it's hard to deal with multiple organizations, that each has their specialty from training, to employment or housing. What you need is a one-stop-shop that that adapts programs efficiently." Twenty years ago, we could look at things from a sectoral point of view. Today, about ten societal problems are driving young people away from employment. They must be dealt with comprehensively, and in particular four of them: mobility, housing, qualification and occupational status. At Planèt'Airport, the "Papa Charlie" system, which provides young people with cars to go to work with a deposit of 300 euros, works hand in hand with Comité Habitat. Comité Habitat is an association that helps newly recruited employees find a place to live for one of the fourteen training sessions linked to the airport's activities led by the organization. They also have a structure dedicated to helping people integrate. Each year, 2,000 people stay in one of these centers.

In France, more and more initiatives are bringing private and public actors together to make information flow better and faster. Cap Parrainage has thus created a methodology related to professions that are changing. The association brings together several companies in the department, the region or a city, for example in the building, catering or hotel industry. The idea: to create a partnership with a typical National Employment Agency and tell them: we will make the link between you and the companies. The association organizes meetings and company visits. The companies then help young people integrate. And it works pretty well.

In the same way, NQT or 100 Chances 100 Emplois make the link between private and public actors. For 100 Chances 100 Emplois, the animations of the weeks of coaching, the SAS, are carried out under the aegis of two pilots: one that represents the public actors of the employment, the other the companies. At 100 Chances 100 Emplois, having many mentors is important. *"Each time, there needs to be a political will to initiate the scheme and a company that agrees to create a dynamic company,"* explains Didier Coulomb, in charge of its development. Le Havre has just begun. There were 200 people on the first evening. The effectiveness of the method is based on the solid and sustainable network made up of public and private actors at the national level (through framework agreements with the relevant ministries). But also at the local level - companies, public employment actors (local missions, Apec, prefecture, equal opportunities Mission) - which work to empower everyone in the search for solutions.

There is another successful initiative: Thierry Dubieties, the founder of Gniac, has just created the Reset network in April. Under the umbrella of the charter *"Enterprises and neighborhoods,"* some 60 public and private sector partners from 20 departments created a network designed to share best practices and experiment of bringing together all of the different actors acting in neighborhoods experience difficulties: local municipalities, low-income rural areas, and peri-urban territories.

## 6. INITIATE THE YOUNG TO JOB SEARCH 2.0

One can be young and be unaware of new job searching practices on the Internet. "We should not confuse the personal use of social networks and the professional use of social networks. There is usually a lot of work to be done on the latter," testifies Olivier Guillouet of 100 Chances 100 Emplois. The job search process is both more fluid thanks to digital technology, and at the same time, it has become enormously technical, both for executives as people who are less qualified: LinkedIn, video resumes, research on job boards and social networks, etc. Young people must become proactive, which results in opening up possibilities. "They assume that sending an email is job hunting. They do not follow up, notes Olivier Guillouet. They do not know how to look for information, stay up to date, monitor for new job posts. No one has taught them." However, entering the professional world has become increasingly complex. Everything has changed with digital technology. Jobhunting has become a skill of its own.

## 7 . ESTABLISHING A SOLID NETWORK

*"The heart of the problem is the network,"* explains Frédéric Coste of 100 Chances 100 Emplois, who seeks to act as a multiplier of meetings, especially by leveraging the alumni network. *"Tomorrow, the young job seeker will be active on this network,"* which will continue well beyond the fifteen days spent together, including the after work drinks organized every three months and the WhatsApp groups created by each class.

Similarly, entering the Ecole 42 means programming day and night but also entering an active and growing network. The school has signed about forty partnerships with schools and universities (HEC, Sciences Po) to encourage the development of multidisciplinary projects. In most cases, it is a matter of enabling students of these institutions to learn how to code when students at "42" can pick classes from the programs of schools and universities to develop their creativity and open-mindedness. One of the most successful

#### III - MULTIPLYING MEETINGS WITH COMPANIES

partnerships was signed with HEC. It provides, in particular for the students of the two schools a common specialized called the Digital Entrepreneur major. During a semester, students are followed by a coach and participate in projects that face one challenge: traffic generation, digital communication, e-commerce, new business models. Those wishing to go further in the creation of companies have the opportunity to present their project to a jury composed of professionals (business angels, venture capitalists, accelerators). Pierre-Edouard Lieb graduated from Ecole 42 in April 2016. He is now 27 and followed the *"Leadership"* module offered by HEC. After spending several years traveling the world and an unfinished Bachelor's degree in computer science at the Pierre and Marie Curie Institute, he sought to combine his knowledge of coding with his attractiveness to the business world: *"Also, there was the possibility of being part of the HEC alumni network!"* He insists.

At Gorge du Loup, a former student sponsors each young person. If there is a problem communicating with the school, the sponsor can help. During the training, beginners are regularly invited to visit the older ones to see their work or ask for advice. The passage of former pupils makes them dream. One of them, a businessman, arrived one day with his Ferrari in the courtyard of the school. Inevitably students were full of interest and admiration. Moreover, former recruits never actually left the school's network. It feels like they never left the production school Gorge de Loup. *"Here it is like a family,"* confirms Hassan El Agouti, 17, a third-year student. *"We are confident."* 

#### 8. LET YOUNG PEOPLE FIND JOBS ON THEIR OWN

On the other hand, the question here is not of doing the job for them or finding a job for them. From 100 Chances 100 Emplois to OpenClassrooms, from NQT to P.A.R.I Jeunes, in all the methods observed, it is the young people who make phone calls to find a job. *"It's up to them to be proactive,"* says Olivier Guillouet of 100 Chances 100 Emplois. *"They can recommend themselves to us, and we take advantage of our network of companies. But they are the ones who find it."* Do we provide them with support, yes. Do we do the work for them, no. The P.A.R.I Jeunes stops supporting young people as soon as they no longer come. 100 Chances 100 Emplois give them the freedom to find job interviews on their own. At Ecole 42, students make all of the decisions. Giving them a sense of autonomy is crucial. A team helps young people, but they are considered responsible for their own lives and for finding their path toward employment.

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#### CONCLUSION

In a world where the OECD forecasts that trades will continue to change at an unprecedented pace, it will become more than ever necessary to "stick" closely to the field in order to help young people enter the job market. That is exactly what all the players we met already do: their approach is to get to know the individual story of each youngster, then to check that their abilities and skills match an existing trade, and finally to complement their experience with a made-to-measure training program which they can complete at their own pace. The final goal is that one day, when they apply for a job, the job interview ends up with a "yes".

In the years to come, it will probably be more critical than ever to continuously check what trades are most in demand, and to be able to train or retrain quickly in order to keep pace with the constant evolution of trades.

Novel multidisciplinary initiatives like the ones featured in this report, bringing together a variety of stakeholders at a local and national level, will therefore become increasingly necessary. We believe that increased information exchange will help youths find the quickest and most effective pathway towards employment.

Sharing information is also the most effective way to get prepared for the upcoming "production revolution", deriving from the convergence between the digital world (3D printing, the Internet of Things, advanced robotics), new materials (organic and nano- in particular) and novel processes based on data science, artificial intelligence and synthetic biology. This means we will have to simultaneously take into account how young people live, how companies operate and how trades are evolving, in order to break down all the barriers to that three-party encounter.

Reaching that goal is more about having an action theory than using ready-made solutions. But if we were to suggest a successful pathway that may work for any young person, however far from the job market they may be, based on what we have learnt from our research, it would probably be this:

- Putting youths in direct contact with the corporate world, regardless of their qualifications, through immersion in training facilities or companies, for them to get to know what it is really like to do certain job and for employers to get to see how they get by in that job.
- Offering customized support, individual coaching or coaching in small groups in order to value the skills of each person and give back confidence; helping each young person build a career and training plan based on what they want to do,

#### CONCLUSION

on their actual skills learnt from their experience and on the way they envision different occupations; and complementing that with internships and immersion in the corporate world.

- Dealing-in a multidimensional way-with the specific barriers to employment that one may have, such as finding the money to get a driver's license or to find accommodation.
- Providing flexible distance or in-class ongoing training, in the form of a shared accountability between students and professionals and based on mastery learning: students are supported through an individual approach and can learn and acquire knowledge at their own pace.
- Developing peer-based learning by setting up learner and peer-support communities, forming the basis of a lasting, scalable professional network.
- Fostering strong and unprompted engagement from companies and their employees to mentor or hire young people in their job catchment areas.
- Training youths to 2.0 recruitment in order to help them widen their scope of possibilities, so that they start extending their job search beyond their hometown, regardless of their social background.

## PROPOSED AVENUES FOR ACTION

#### DURING BASIC EDUCATION

- Teaching "soft skills" at school.
- Teaching children and teenagers to reflect upon their aspirations, their calling and their vision of success.
- At the course choice before entering secondary school, giving students the opportunity to meet a coach and a company representative to help them choose what career they want to do, which is a choice to be made by the students themselves with their families.
- Creating a specific course to increase children's knowledge about different occupations<sup>5</sup>, given that on average, youngsters only know about 25 of the 11,000 trades that currently exist, and that trades are rapidly changing due to the digital revolution.

**<sup>5</sup>** The JP Morgan Chase Foundation has initiated, in partnership with Passeport Avenir, a program called "School's challenge", which aims to raise young people's awareness about scientific occupations through a contest of inventions to make their cities more sustainable. Half of the youths who took part in the contest wanted to become engineers after that.

- Building the self-confidence and identifying the skills of children at school, based not on grades but on their actual achievements in real life.
- Making it clear that whether a student is struggling or whether they are successful, it is due to a shared accountability with their teachers.
- Expanding and testing the potential of "adaptative learning", in order to create alternative pathways to success for youngsters who don't manage adapt to the French educational system.
- Promoting flexibility and customization within the French educational system in order to adjust to the pace of students, allowing them to go faster or slower so as to ensure that they succeed whatever happens.
- Creating, in the framework of IT classes at secondary school, a specific course dedicated to job searching online, especially through social media. If it is considered that having a job is a constitutional right, it is logical that job-searching methods should be taught at school, even if only to give the same chances to youths coming from different backgrounds.

#### AFTER BASIC EDUCATION

- Creating a compulsory gateway for all, like a sort of skills assessment, that would allow all youths, whatever their level or social background, to get individual advice from a coach on their personal development in order to check the relevance of their training choices according to the job they want to do later. This could help avoid their being disillusioned upon their entry into higher education, which is a key moment where dropout rates are high. It is also around 14 to 16 years old that there is a first major risk to drop out. Working to abate that risk in that other age group could also prevent many youths from dropping out.
- Giving youths the opportunity to have their skills assessed without the condition of having worked five years. This is a suggestion from Yann, who wanted to change his career plan but wasn't given a chance to do so.
- Putting young dropouts back on track through apprenticeships or project-based training in small groups of 10 to maximum 15 students. Restoring their taste for work through novel game-based, flexible and tailor-made learning methods.
- Creating a database that would provide real-time information on training options and occupations, training durations and contacts. Making it a user-friendly database, easy to access for the general public.
- Recognizing and valuing employees-mostly young employees and graduateswho are involved in the inclusion of young people into the job market as part of their companies' CSR commitment, and who are in demand of meaningful social commitment opportunities.
- Turning every young "NEET" (not in employment, education or training) into a

#### CONCLUSION

potential trainee and protecting them by letting companies in their job catchment area hire them with an internship agreement, until the youngster finds their calling, so that they get a chance to try different occupations. This can be put in place in the same way as GEIQs (groups of employers for integration and qualification).

• Setting up multi-stakeholder taskforces in order to identify all the job opportunities and young jobseekers in every job catchment area, and sharing that information at a national level so as to send youths to other areas in France if a job fits their profile outside of their own area. In a nutshell: breaking down barriers and sharing information more widely.

# APPENDICES

# GORGE DE LOUP: A SCHOOL THAT BUILDS CONFIDENCE

<sup>#1</sup> BY ANNE TÉZENAS DU MONTCEL Connection with real professional life is the key to the success of the Gorge de Loup school of production. By realizing that what they do is useful, since real clients buy the workpieces that they manufacture, students discover that their work has value, which is a feeling that most of them haven't had for a long time or have never had at all. This crucial epiphany gradually helps them to regain pride in their achievements and accomplishments.

Gorge de Loup provides a family-like environment in which students undergo four years of training (2 years of CAP certification followed by 2 years of Bac Pro certification), ranging from the basics of technical trades to social skills, before stepping into the job market. These four years help them build confidence in themselves, guided by their teachers ("technical masters") and the school's headmaster, all of whom are former students of Gorge de Loup.

Passion, discipline, excellence & 100% anchored in the working world. Upon completion of their training, Gorge de Loup students usually get three offers of permanent contracts. Some decide to continue studying; others set up their own business.

### WHY DID WE CHOOSE THE SCHOOL OF PRODUCTION "GORGE DE LOUP"?

Many leading figures in business–and especially in the industry sector–strongly admire the way schools of production support young people and adapt to companies' needs. The fact that 100% of students find jobs upon completion of their studies and that several regions in France have recently decided to open more of these schools (nearly 40 projects are currently under way) convinced us of the vibrancy and topicality of this model. Among the existing schools of production in France, our attention was drawn to Gorge de Loup, a school of production in Lyon, where the commitment of teachers and the unusual relationship between students, teachers and customers helps to reveal the skills and restore the confidence of students. Many centuries ago, wolves<sup>6</sup> used to reach the city of Lyon through a narrow track in the Vaise suburbs. Nowadays, there are no wolves anymore. But in this ancient track beneath the viaduct of the famous Fourvière tunnel, hidden among office buildings and businesses, there is now a unique vocational training facility: the Gorge de Loup apprenticeship center, one of the less known but most innovative places in France in terms of youth training and integration into the job market.

Gorge de Loup was founded in 1951, with the support of local businesses that lacked qualified mechanical workers. It is a "school of production" ("école de production"). This term was coined in 1881 by Louis Boisard, a Lyon clergyman, graduate of Ecole Centrale, who was shocked by the great number of orphans in the streets of Lyon and had decided to train them as cobblers. "A school of production is a school where youths dedicate 60% of their time to practice and 40% to theory", explains Daniel Chambodut, the headmaster of Gorge de Loup, whose office overlooks the workshop. A little less than a century later, another priest, Pierre André (who died in 2010), founded Gorge de Loup.

"Learning by doing": those three words are central at Gorge de Loup. As in every "school of production" (there are 17 in France, but 70 in Denmark, 80 in Austria and 200 in Germany), Gorge de Loup's 42 students are supervised by skilled craftsmen in 4 different mechanical specialties and they craft parts for real clients, with real requirements in terms of quality, price and deadlines. "We don't give grades—our clients do", says Daniel Chambodut. "An average grade like 13/20 doesn't exist for a customer: the part is either good or bad." And in this school, "all our students get top grades, because they simply have no other choice than to succeed, even if that means starting again from scratch when a part isn't right, just like artists who rehearse their act over and over."

This distinctive pressure is what makes this school of production so uncommon. The headmaster strives to increase turnover, teachers and students do all they can to reach it, teachers manage suppliers, students and customer service. "We never get bored," says Mathias Righi, a 4<sup>th</sup>-year 17-year-old, who used to mope around at school. "You have to think and do at the same time." Clients comment on the quality of the parts they are delivered in front of the students, with the teachers. "We're in a constant co-creation process. This is unique", says an enthusiastic business owner who came here to test her idea of custom-made aluminium items. In return for their efforts, students have no tuition fees to pay. And once they are trained, they earn an average net salary of €1,600 to €2,000 per month.

<sup>6 &</sup>quot;Gorge de Loup" literally means "wolf's throat" in French (T.N.).

The school, set in a curve of the road, is filled with the whirring noises of workshop machines from 7:30am to 5pm. A dozen students wearing grey "Gorge de Loup" T-shirts and blue overalls are concentrated on their work. Concentrated, but not stressed. Three words – Courage, Conscientiousness, Competence–, written in capital letters above the machines, give a slight retro feel to the scene. In the courtyard, lined up like soldiers, new students are discovering the contents of their toolboxes, under the management of their teacher, Timothée Talon. These are the treasures they'll be learning to master all year long. And it's the only investment they'll have to make throughout their four years of training: €150 for the T-shirt, the overalls and this toolbox that they'll keep with them when they leave.

"Learning by doing" is the mantra here, and a cascade of other rules derives from it. In the workshops, everyone is in charge of a specific area, tool or task. *"Everyone here starts with a file and a broom,"* says Thibaut Vaugon, who has just completed his training. Rules and penalties all stem from craftsmanship requirements. For instance: *"Not to distract others is key to avoid putting them in danger while they are using a machine,"* explains Denis Brude, a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year teacher.

Making students put their knowledge into practice by crafting actual parts does wonders. Valentin Prost, a 17-year-old 2<sup>nd</sup>-year student, explains that this is how he understood the Pythagorean Theorem without difficulty: "At school, I used to learn to get good grades. Here, I learn because I want to improve my work. Our teachers never let us go. At school, when you get a low grade, it's just too bad for you. Here, you start again. What I like most is when a client receives a perfect part and I think to myself: "I crafted it."

How is that possible? It all comes from the perfect alchemy between a series of key ingredients, which makes this place so unique.

The first crucial ingredient is the **commitment of the teachers, in a human-size, nearly family-like environment**. Only 42 students in total–and maximum 8 to 12 students per teacher. "*Most companies succeed thanks to their human workforce. Here, it's the same,*" says Marc Teyton, chair of the National federation of schools of production in France, "*there is a unique relationship of joint accountability between a teacher and a student working together*". "*To motivate these kids, we need to be a cohesive team,*" adds Daniel Chambodut. And that's definitely the case, especially as the headmaster and the four teachers are all former students of Gorge de Loup. "*That gives us great legitimacy*", they say.

Splitting students into small groups is the secret to tailored production in the workshop and tailored learning in class. *"The power of this methodology is that everything is done in the same place,"* says Corentin Rémond, general delegate of the National federation of schools of production. Teachers spend 26 hours a week with the students. *"That's more time than they spend with their parents,"* says one of them, smiling. Teachers can sense students' mood variations, discouragement and even the personal issues they might be having outside school.

#### GORGE DE LOUP: A SCHOOL THAT BUILDS CONFIDENCE

"We can talk about anything, we're a bit like guides for them," says Daniel Chambodut. Things aren't always easy though. "Managing a school of production is extremely difficult," says Marc Teyton. "You have to both master the educational aspects and find jobs for the students". Most teachers also used to have difficult relationships with their own teachers when they were younger. Even now, Denis Brude, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-year teacher, remembers the English teacher who once told him he would have miserable future. Xavier Despont, the 4<sup>th</sup>-year teacher, was considered "beyond help" when he arrived at Gorge de Loup at 14.

Dropouts, marginalized young people, asylum seekers... most students here are in a difficult situation or at least in a complex relationship with school. "They've often been let *down by adults,* "says the headmaster. In a small office, an applicant is taking the admission test. He comes from the Roma community, has been separated from his family, has no documents and has lost the use of one of his eyes. He is very motivated and is going to spend a few days here to see whether this school fits his needs. "We welcome any student who wants to build a career," says Daniel Chambodut. This open-minded approach is a trademark of schools of production. "We view each student as a human being with lots of potential and many qualities, "says Marc Teyton. "Our job is to create the right conditions so that these qualities can flourish. We've had newcomers who didn't speak French and graduated within two years. "This isn't achieved through social work, but through a shared humanist streak. "We once signed a one-year contract with a bakery to make sure one of our students could get a least one full meal a day," says Sylvie Da Silva, who has been working at Gorge de Loup for 24 years as an accounting and administration manager and whose brother, considered "unfit" for school, is also a former student. "One day, we also delivered three shopping carts full of groceries to a student's mother who was having trouble making ends meet." One student, a young asylum seeker, will have no more accommodation at the end of this week. Daniel Chambodut is doing all he can to find a solution. Likewise, he is often at the courthouse to escort students who are waiting for documents.

The **love of workmanship** is what unites students and teachers, as they admire the latest creation of Denis and his students (a collapsible aluminum sack truck) or the hubs of the first buses without drivers that are being tested in Lyon, proudly presented by Xavier Despont, the 4th year teacher.

"Students here start by learning to operate traditional lathes, before moving to digital techniques," explains Thibaut Vaugon. They are proud of what they create. "At Gorge de Loup, you feel excited when you launch the program on the machine and everything is supposed to run smoothly," says Valentin Prost with a sparkle in his eyes—he has just finished crafting a difficult part for a miniature engine. Valentin has changed a lot since he was admitted at Gorge de Loup. "When I arrived here, I had totally lost confidence. I'm a practical person. Here, I found out that I actually had skills. It made me want to surpass myself." Gorge de Loup specializes in mechanical machining, but in a cutting-edge and adventurous perspective, and will soon be incorporating 3D printing. It's a lab, a school and a business: these three dimensions are intricately linked and they captivate students. In an attempt to attract more young people towards highly-sought-after occupations, Denis Brude, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-year teacher, who has a passion for car rallies, came up with the idea to make students work on a racing car. *"47 students from 5 schools of production took part in this project. They salvaged a car from a junkyard and spruced it up, working through weekends, evenings and holidays."* Now, a professional car racer regularly drives their car. They feel extra proud at every competition. Gorge de Loup also won the Reb Bull Soapbox Race in Paris.

But the school's major achievement is that in this old-style atmosphere, wearing overalls and bent over machines, students gradually regain confidence. All the innovative teaching practices Millennials can dream of can be found here: collective intelligence, cooperation rather than competition, mutual respect in relationships, a reflection on the utility of what is produced, etc. Nothing is abstract and everything has a meaning. This is what makes students click and understand.

**Each student can go at their own pace:** while strict rules apply within the workshop, the general teaching approach is friendly and flexible. *"It is very difficult to bring them all to the same level. To help them restore their confidence, we make them use the machines. When they manage to make their first parts, it's a big step towards rebuilding confidence," says Patrick Saunier, 49, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year teacher. To help restore their attention and focus, the emphasis gradually switches from practice to theory: two thirds of practice in 1<sup>st</sup> year, one third in 4<sup>th</sup> year.* 

This flexible approach also helps handle the fact that students have very different levels of competence upon their arrival at Gorge de Loup. *"The English teacher sometimes has to manage a class with bilingual students, students who don't speak a word of French and others who don't know a word of English,"* says the headmaster. So the teaching methodology has to be highly flexible. Indeed, if a student can't get their "CAP" (Certificate of Professional Competence) in two years, they can take three or four years to get it, that doesn't matter. *"Here, everyone has their own capabilities and their own rules. And rules must be followed to the letter,"* says Patrick Saunier. *"Each student has different capabilities and everyone goes at their own pace. When I feel I'm losing the attention of students during a lesson, I let them to go to the workshop or do something else outside,"* explains Timothée Talon. A few years ago, the school admitted a young student who had great difficulty to read and write and had been streamed towards schools for the disabled. His father insisted that they gave him a chance at Gorge de Loup. They did. The young boy got his CAP after four years. He now holds a permanent contract in a mechanics company and earns a monthly net salary of €1,400.

Building strong bonds is another key objective at Gorge de Loup: bonds between students, between older students and newcomers, between teachers and clients. "We sometimes make students work in pairs in order to stimulate one of them. Teamwork is essential." This emphasis on relationships clearly has an effect on the way students build their personality. That is also one of the school's strengths, highly appreciated by future employers: all the basic social skills (greeting clients, listening to their demands, arriving on time, etc.) are perfectly understood and naturally put into practice by Gorge de Loup students. There is a sense of mutual respect. "Like in judo," points out Patrick Saunier, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year teacher, a black-belt himself, who holds five CAPs (lathe operator, milling machine operator, engine reconditioner, fitter, digital operator). "Doing something wrong doesn't lead to a punishment, but to a realization." This state of mind is what gradually makes students change and recreates confidence. Valentin Prost says his attitude and values have totally changed during the year and half he has been here. "You know you have to be polite, to pay attention, to be accurate. Mechanics' worst enemy is dirt. When a part is worth 100 Euros, you're careful with it." This school doesn't only teach them a job: it actually teaches these kids to become responsible adults. "I've felt scared loads of times and I surpassed myself." This positive environment has helped Valentin forget about one of his primary school teachers, who had once punished him and a few other kids, leaving them outside at "the table of the useless" for an entire day.

Gorge de Loup organizes many coaching activities to surround students with a human safety net that will help them grow. Each student is mentored by a former student, who can help if they have a communication issue with the school, for instance. New students are frequently prompted to visit older students to get to see how they work or ask them for advice. Meeting former students often makes them dream. One former student now has his own business and arrived one day at the school in a Ferrari. Of course, it arouses admiration and interest. Incidentally, Gorge de Loup is the favorite recruiting ground of former students, which gives the impression that no one ever really leaves that school for good. "*We're like a family, we trust each other,*" says Hassan El Aouati, a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year student of 17.

Some of his friends from the Martin Luther King vocational school he used to attend sometimes come here for internships. *"They said they'd learnt more here in a week than in a whole year,*" says Hassan. This incredible feat also comes with **top-quality requirements**, giving students a unique value on the job market. And there's a good reason to that, too: in vocational schools in France, students have 8 hours of practical classes a week, mostly on computers, while students in schools of production spend 22 hours a week using the machines. And that makes a huge difference. This connection to reality is what makes Gorge de Loup so different from other schools. *"We're here to learn a job, not to get a diploma, that's the whole difference,*" says Thibaut Vaugon, 21, who has just left Gorge de Loup. He has been admitted to an engineering school in Saint-Etienne and has already launched his own business, *Eléments*, specialized in 3D printing. Incidentally, Gorge de Loup students usually get their CAP and BAC Pro certificates hands down.

That's why companies fight over them. "These students are immediately ready to work and very scrupulous," says a client. All the 892 students who were trained at Gorge de Loup now have a job. Studying mechanical production automation or digitalization gives access to a wide variety of jobs in many specialized fields such as leading-edge medical implants, rare vehicle parts or parts for high-precision machine tools. In spite of its small size, Gorge de Loup is renowned even outside France. Representatives of Canadian companies even came here to offer free accommodation to students who would agree to go work for them. Danish visitors were also highly impressed by the rigor in the workshop, in spite of the fact that Denmark is a global leader in terms of schools of production. Anne Lauvergeon, a major French businesswoman, was also won over and has successfully moved heaven and earth to help these schools expand across France.

In fact, the main question that comes to mind when you visit Gorge de Loup is: why aren't there more schools of production in France and why do they enjoy such little recognition, in spite of their successful results? There are several answers to that. The first one has to do with legislation. Indeed, schools of production in France are private and non-accredited technical schools, which means they aren't eligible to benefit from "grants or other public subsidies related to teaching". And even though everyone seems to love what they do (Gorge de Loup was recently awarded the "La France s'engage" label by the French president himself), the Ministry of Education always gives the same answer when the school asks to be integrated into the formal school system: "What you do is great but you just don't fit into any of our categories." But in fact, the specific features of schools of production are exactly what makes them so successful: a flexible curriculum, 22 hours a week of practical work (which isn't in line with the Ministry's recommendations), independent teachers and the ability to negotiate with clients. "All we want is to keep them," says Marc Teyton.

However, things could change for the better. In 2006, the French Ministry of Education officially recognized schools of production as private technical schools, which means they can now receive regional subsidies. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem herself, the former French Minister of Education, even visited one of the schools. In 2012, a Senate bill also tried to introduce a more flexible legal framework for schools of production. And, most importantly, these schools are gaining support from the private sector–from trade associations like the UIMM (Union of Metal Industries) for instance. The result of all this is that in just a few years, the number of schools of production in France has jumped from 8 to 18. Three new schools are opening this year in Briacé, Lens and Nantes.

Several regions have also decided to support them: Rhône-Alpes, the historic birthplace of schools of production (with 9 schools), but also, more recently, Pays de la Loire, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Hauts-de-France. In total, nearly 40 projects of opening new schools are planned, including one in 2017 (in Besançon).

However, schools of production must be careful **not to encroach on companies' traditional markets**. *"We must grow in harmony with the companies in our industries,"* emphasizes Marc Teyton. *"If you decide to open five schools of production specializing in carpentry, you'll set the whole woodworking sector against you. You have to make sure your sales don't threaten existing businesses*." This means staying in line with market prices, favoring subcontract work and having no aggressive marketing approach to win clients from others.

But the last-critical-problem is this: schools of production are centered on jobs **that have a negative image in France**, which is why these schools are **so little known from the general public**. Prejudices are hard to uproot, says Xavier Despont: "*It's difficult for young people to value jobs that were disapproved of throughout their school years and have always been associated with low achievement.*" That's one of the reasons why Denis Brude has been putting so much energy to enroll the school in the Red Bull Soapbox Race and create a Facebook group, in an effort to change these negative perceptions. Working in mechanics is viewed as an occupation where you get dirty. Indeed, there are only three girl students at Gorge de Loup. "*It's quite simple,*" says the headmaster, "*before knowing about the school, students have a very bad image of these jobs. But once they start training here, they never want to go back.*" But even here, the most difficult part is to attract motivated young people. "*We receive lots of job offers and we haven't got enough students for them,*" says Sylvie Da Silva. In spite of that, schools of production still lack reputation: when Thibaut Vaugon was admitted to an engineering school in Saint-Etienne, nobody there understood the value of his six years of training at Gorge de Loup.

Because of all this and in spite of their effectiveness (the employment rate of former students is 100%), schools of production remain vulnerable. Two of them were recently closed down (Mecamode in Paris and Offprod in the events industry). Schools of production are like other small businesses: their situation is unstable and they need a "safety net" to be able to maintain their action for youth empowerment. At Gorge de Loup, the budget is funded by clients (50%), the training tax (30%) and regional subsidies (20%), and the school generates €300,000 in sales revenue. "We are lucky to have financial support from the region", says Daniel Chambodut. That is what helps them to continue operating when sales are low. It's what helps them to maintain that special balance between students, clients and teachers, which is Gorge de Loup's trademark and key to success. And it is also what helps them continue innovating–their next project underway is to create a new course focusing on 3D printing.

# GORGE DE LOUP: A SCALABLE SUCCESS STORY?

#### GORGE DE LOUP: A SCALABLE SUCCESS STORY?

### WHO ARE THE STUDENTS IN "SCHOOLS OF PRODUCTION"?

Most students in schools of production **dropped out of the traditional school system**. Their common feature is that they didn't manage to adapt to the mainstream educational system –or rather, the educational system didn't manage to value their potential and boost their confidence, which is totally different.

These difficulties in school often add to other hardships: **tragic life stories, family problems, financial struggles as well as legal problems for those whose parents are living in France illegally**. In that regard, the school's educational ambition and its family-like structure are key to reintegrate students into the working world and into life in general.

In most cases, students arrive at Gorge de Loup **quite by chance**, either through someone who told them about it or through a careers advisor. As the region of Lyon is the birthplace of schools of production, careers advisors in that region are more likely to know about these schools and to tell their students about them than advisors in other parts of France. "Target" students are hard to reach. They're the type of young people who never go to trade fairs or other careers events for instance, though the National Federation of schools of production makes great efforts to participate more in these events. Communication through social media (Facebook), especially on the occasion of motor sport events, is also a way to attract other types of students. In short, here's the paradox: very few applicants want to study at Gorge de Loup at first... but once they're admitted, virtually none of them wants to leave.

What is striking in students' stories is the fact that most of them have never had the opportunity to **build their self-confidence** before. They start building it here, by learning to craft increasingly sophisticated items.

### THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

**The "learning-by-doing" approach**, with 2/3 of practical work and only 1/3 of classroom lessons in  $1^{st}$  year. In  $4^{th}$  year, that balance is reversed: 2/3 in class and 1/3 in the workshop. The focus is set on practice before theory –contrary to what usually prevails.

**Making students craft real parts for real customers**, as part of a co-creation process with the clients. This balance is central to the whole method.

A passion for fine workmanship and a strong taste for innovation. Students train in an eclectic environment that combines the features of a laboratory, a business and a school, which quickly makes them become **skilled professionals who are immediately ready to start working** in a company.

A very strong commitment of teachers to increase both student's crafting and interpersonal skills. The results are clearly visible: students are perfectly polite, courteous and able to handle successfully any type of relationship with a client or a supplier. They all seem very balanced and happy to be there.

**The dedication and exemplariness of teachers**: at Gorge de Loup for instance, all the teachers are former students. They dedicate 26 hours a week to their students.

Multiple coaching programs of younger students by older and former students, which help to create very strong bonds with the school and to spur a positive sense of belonging.

A teaching approach based on encouragement and empowerment. Accordingly, the school's disciplinary framework is built on the concept of "useful penalties".

**The attention given to students' skills and level of focus**, especially in the first years of training. If a teacher feels they're losing their students' attention during a class, they'll feel totally free to stop the lesson and send them to the workshop for hands-on practice, for instance.

### WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

**The hybrid nature of these schools.** They don't fit into any category of the French Ministry of Education or apprenticeship regulations. The Senate bill that aimed to integrate schools of production into the national vocational training system was rejected in 2012 for that very reason, due to *"the inconsistencies of their hybrid status, which only applies to a very small number of private technical schools"*.

The low attractiveness of the mechanical and industry sector, which suffers from a general lack of interest in France. This is one of the reasons why these schools struggle to find motivated students.

**Lack of awareness** about schools of production, even within the education and training system. Accordingly, these schools lack recognition from national bodies, in spite of their proven results and the positive feedback of client companies.

The **cost** to set up and launch such schools (€300,000).

The need to generate sales. This makes schools of production very vulnerable, because just like any business, they are sensitive to **economic trends**. They have to find and bring satisfaction to clients in a difficult economic environment. That is a critical issue, because business is one of the founding principles of these schools. It could be useful for them to set up safety nets based on external support, in order to avert the risk of having to close down, while preserving their specific business nature.

The need to **preserve a family-like nature** (a small number of students and a high student-teacher ratio: 1 teacher for every 8 to 12 students), which is also one of the reasons why there are few such schools.

### SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

In order for schools of production to expand, the French Ministry of Education would have to recognize them with their specific features: students would then be entitled to receive scholarships and the schools would get more subsidies. But that recognition shouldn't go as far as integrating these schools into the mainstream schooling model, because that would mean they would lose some of their independence, which is the key element of their success.

The launching of new schools of production should be negotiated with and **supported by trade associations**. A better cooperation with trade organizations would help to reduce the schools' vulnerability to the ebb and flow of the economy, and would also help to make them better known by the businesses (competitors or clients) and vocational training providers in their industries. Trade associations could also be more active in creating new such schools for highly sought-after trades.

Schools of production are also affected by the fact that the general public in France has a negative perception of the manual trades. Ambitious advertising campaigns aimed at teenagers and their parents at a national level ought to be scaled up, in order to show all the opportunities to which the manual trades give access (this has already been done before to improve the standing of craft trades in France). Craft industries and trades deserve to be totally reinstated and their quality and standing ought to be restored.

### KEY FIGURES

- There are **20** schools of production in France.
- **40 new schools** are planned to open shortly.
- **Start-up budget**: €300,000.
- **827 students** have undergone training at Gorge de Loup.
- 700 students are currently in training in schools of production throughout France.
- **Trades:** most schools focus on trades in the industrial sector (sheet metalwork, mechanics, industrial automation, etc.). However, they increasingly tend to specialize in different sub-sectors (medical implants, tires, landscape gardening, 3D printing, the fashion and events industry) like in Denmark, where schools of production even train architects and musicians. In France, some schools are hosted within engineering schools like ICAM in Lille and Toulouse.
- **Student/teacher ratio:** 1 teacher for 8 to 12 students. Teachers aren't necessarily former students.
- **Over 10%** of former students **start their own business** and therefore create jobs for others.
- **45%** of students continue their education after completing their training in a school of production.
- **93% pass rate** in CAP and Bac Pro examinations.

## QUOTES

#### Corentin Rémond, managing director of the National Federation of Schools of production:

"Schools of production can't train in everything. They mostly apply to trades that involve teamwork."

#### Marc Teyton, chairman of the National Federation of Schools of production:

"We'd like to have a public subsidy to support our teaching staff and to make us less vulnerable to the ebb and flow of business."

#### Corentin Rémond, managing director of the National Federation of Schools of production:

"There are a thousand technical schools in France: new schools of production could be set up jointly to them."

#### Amandine Rousset, 15, a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year student (one of the 3 girls at Gorge de Loup):

"At first we think we'll never be able to do what former students can do, but little by little we gain confidence in ourselves."

# NOS QUARTIERS ONT DES TALENTS: THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP

#2 BY LAURENCE ESTIVAL

#### NOS QUARTIERS ONT DES TALENTS: THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP

NQT was founded in 2006 following the implementation of an initiative called Nos Quartiers ont des Talents. Sponsored by the MEDEF in Seine-Saint-Denis, this operation had been a great success, allowing the hiring of 200 graduates in companies neighboring the Stade de France. Since its creation, NQT has helped 35,000 graduates living in priority neighborhoods or from modest backgrounds. NQT achieves a 70% employment rate for the graduates who take part in the program. The organization assigns each graduate a mentor to follow them in their job search–an executive or manager from a big corporation or a small or medium enterprise. A mentor's aim is to help their mentee understand the business world, in order to speed up their integration into the professional world. Laurence Estival tells us about the success of NQT's methodology.

### WHY DID WE CHOOSE "NOS QUARTIERS ONT DES TALENTS"?

NQT is a French organization that came to life in 2006, after an operation called "Nos Quartiers ont des Talents" (Our Neighborhoods have Talent) was successfully led a year before by the MEDEF<sup>7</sup> in Seine-Saint-Denis. The initiative had resulted in hiring 200 graduates from neighborhoods adjacent to the Stade de France in newly-settled companies who had regrettably noticed a shortage of young talents.

Since its creation, Nos Quartiers ont des Talents or NQT has been greatly successful (helping more than 35,000 graduates from deprived neighborhoods, with a 70% employment rate). Its success shows a true need for a transition program between graduation and the first day in a company, a sort of launching pad for young adults who are unfamiliar with the workplace environment or its codes, and who miss opportunities, delaying their integration into the business world as a result. NQT's supporting approach focuses on the sponsorship of young graduates by company executives. We wanted to raise awareness on this visibly efficient system.

<sup>7</sup> The Mouvement des entreprises de France (MEDEF) is the largest employer federation in France. (T.N.)

*"To have talent, you must be convinced that you possess it"* Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondence.* 

In a small room, about twenty chairs form a circle. They are for the graduates, who, today, February 22nd, are attending an orientation seminar. NQT organizes them every two weeks in its Saint-Denis (93) facility. They now have three hours to learn about the tools to help them in their job search. The rain is pouring outside the office, but inside, the atmosphere is warm: before the trainers arrived, some participants have already started chatting to get to know each other. At 2pm sharp, a first roll call allows those who haven't had the chance to introduce themselves to break the ice, and grasp the diversity of their profiles. Communications graduates, legal, geophysics, international economy or audit experts, each of them is invited to share the way they picture their future a year from today.

A tennis ball passes from hand to hand, granting the opportunity to speak. Emilie, 25, dives in. She graduated from the Paris Urban Planning School in October 2016, after studying in Canada and in the UK. Now, she dreams of a research job in a leading company or an urban planning firm. *"I heard of the organization through Pole Emploi. I was immediately interested in the opportunity to be sponsored by a company executive. It completes the process I had started with an APEC consultant"*, she explains.

Like her, most of the graduates come from a lower social background, are just out of college, and are impatient to meet their future sponsors or mentors: company executives who will guide them on their path and help them avoid the loopholes of company codes. They have high hopes about the operation's efficiency: **70% of graduates sponsored by NQT find a job (either a permanent contract or a fixed-term contract of at least six months) six months after joining the program<sup>8</sup>.** 

Graduates who are hired with a fixed-term contract can go back to the program when their contract ends. However, in practice, they rarely come back, because NQT gives them an efficient boost. For the remaining 30%, the process lasts longer: some undergo training in order to shift their career path or further their knowledge in a certain field, and others seek a day job, giving them some time to mature and carry out their project.

**<sup>8</sup>** The organization does not have data on the long-term insertion of graduates. A network of alumni is currently being developed in order to obtain more information on the graduates' path after they undergo training. Recruiters are, in equal proportions, big corporations, middle market companies and small and medium enterprises. Most of the candidates find a position through the companies that participate in the program, either directly, by being hired by their sponsor's company, or indirectly (as the companies that support the organization share all their job offers to NQT).

The key element of the program is the sponsoring of graduates by business world professionals. Since the creation of NQT in 2006, 35,145 under-thirty graduates (Licence or Bac+3 level<sup>9</sup>) have been sponsored during their first steps in the job market by 9,430 sponsors and mentors, mostly from companies. These mentors, some of whom are part of the board of directors of NQT, play a critical part by giving time and sharing their knowledge of the professional world to their mentees.

This is a chance of a lifetime for **a rising number of applicants**: "*They are between 6,000 and 7,000 in 2017, compared to 5,500 in 2016 and 4,500 in 2015*", highlights Sophie Pinto, national manager for sponsorships and services. NQT targets graduates at the Bac+3 level and up. "We chose to help those who made the choice to study and get a degree - which was supposed to open them the doors on the job market - but who, despite their efforts, fail to reach their goals, because they lack knowledge about job searching means, social codes and networking. NQT wanted to lead them to employment through an equal opportunity program", she adds.

In 2009, NQT decided to settle in Rhône-Alpes, in the south of France, and then started to expand in all the regions of France (only Brittany and Bourgogne-Franche Comté are yet to be covered). As part of this **national deployment**, NQT set itself the goal to sponsor 100,000 graduates by 2025. This step up led Sophie Pinto's team to grow from 4 to 16 people in two years, in order to increase the number of sponsors and the quality of follow-up.

The adventure started in 2005, through a largely publicized operation. At the time, two inspired directors from the Seine-Saint-Denis MEDEF, Yazir Chir and Raynald Rimbault, decided to create a link between job-seeking graduates in the district and companies arriving to the business pole created around the Stade de France, which were complaining about the lack of qualified labor. It was called "Nos Quartiers ont des Talents". 200 graduates were taken on, and the operation convinced companies to strengthen the bridges between graduates and them. A year later, the NQT organization was born, aiming at becoming a lasting program. Beyond graduates of priority neighborhoods within urban policies, the program focuses on lower social backgrounds.

Applicants are more than willing to join the program. "The faster they join the program after graduating, the more efficient is the program. Some join us after experiencing failure because of a lack of knowledge of how to fit into a company. They have lost confidence and self-esteem, despite being talented. We want to show them that they are stars, just waiting

<sup>9</sup> Equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree in the United States. Obtaining a *Licence* takes three years.

*to shine!*" adds Sophie Pinto. Communication campaigns in universities, community centers and train stations, as well as a partnership with Pôle Emploi, which systematically directed applicants checking the requirements towards NQT, and word of mouth have helped to get the message through. New synergies should emerge from the signing of agreements with the APEC and community centers.

Once they have filled in their profile on NQT's website, each applicant's file is reviewed. If they are accepted, they are assigned an advisor from the organization, who will accompany them throughout the program. Each of them is then assigned a sponsor, working in a matching or similar field if possible. *"Unfortunately, that isn't always possible because some graduates have very specific specializations. In these cases, we redirect them to an HR professional while we try to find a sponsor who would fit their expectations"*, points out Johanna Hattabi, an advisor at NQT's Ile-de-France office. Graduates then have two weeks to contact their sponsor and discuss the follow-up process. Nothing is imposed and everything is built to fit each case. Every month, NQT sends out a questionnaire to participants to check how things are going.

Believing in yourself so that a future recruiter will believe in you is the first goal of this relationship. Emilie, who hasn't met her sponsor yet, expects them to review her resume, give her tips on searching a job and help her build her network. "I am the one who has to establish trust", she says. Johanna Hattabi is definitive: "Don't ask your sponsor to open their address book! If they do, it will be a bonus, but it is not the point of the program: the goal is for you to build your self-esteem and for them to advise you in your job search", she warns the audience. Siham, 26, understands the message perfectly. She has a marketing Master's Degree and has just met her sponsor, a digital manager at Europcar. "I was interested in the digital aspect of her work, so I asked my sponsor about it at our first meeting", she remembers. Siham also showed her her resume and asked her how she could improve it. "My internships have given me various experiences, but I didn't have a very precise idea of what I could do. Marketing is a wide-ranging field."

When he first met his sponsor, a financial controller at BNP Paribas, Edip, 26, with a Master's Degree in audit, was looking for the same position, so he asked her how to edit his resume and raise the odds of reaching his goal. *"She gave me precise advice. For instance, she told me to give more detail about my tasks as an intern, because my resume wasn't in line with what I would explain during job interviews. It's extremely useful, because after graduating, you are often left on your own in the middle of the jungle"*, sighs Edip.

This first contact with the sponsor is essential, but sometimes the connection doesn't establish... Melanie, 31, joined the program in 2012 and experienced it first-hand. She

had a Master's Degree in Policies and Public Strategy, and she came to NQT because she was losing confidence. "I had job interviews, I was always on the shortlist but I never got hired." During six months, she had a sponsor working in communications, a field she wanted to shift to. But she eventually asked for another sponsor because she felt like she was not making progress, something just didn't match. "After that, I was assigned a diversity director from a CAC 40 company, who allowed me to downplay the business world by talking about his own experience." A few meetings later, Melanie was hired as a communications manager in an organization.

Sponsors are selectively picked. They all work for companies who support NQT, through contributions that account for two thirds of NQT's revenues. The remaining third comes from public funding granted within urban policy and the ESF (European Social Fund). Big groups like Carrefour, LVMH, Axa and Thalès have all answered the call, and small and medium companies are starting to show interest as well. "Each participant is different and has his own expectations. We have to adapt constantly", explains Frédérique Sénèque, project manager at the Française des Jeux and in charge of the partnership between her company and NQT since October 2015. In 18 months, 35 executives have accepted to participate, 69 graduates have been sponsored and 25 have found a job. Frédérique knows what she is talking about: she sponsors two graduates herself and firmly intends to advise them until they land a permanent contract in a company. "I coach them and I bring them what they are lacking because of their social background: confidence in their own skills, knowledge on how to behave during an interview, and a network. One of them works in the cultural field and she only finds temporary jobs. I recently contacted a former colleague who works in the culture industry, to see if she could offer her more stable opportunities."

Founder of recruiting, coaching and strategy firm ALSpective, Albert Hiribarrondo even hired his mentee Lina: "She had a Master's Degree in HR, was looking for a job in that field and was working temporary jobs in the meantime. I helped her rewrite her resume and apply to job offers. When I left the recruiting firm where I was working as a consultant to create my own company in March 2015, I offered her a one-month contract to help me build the structure. That contract was then turned into a permanent one." Inspired by this first experience, Albert Haribarrondo now has a second mentee, a PhD holder specialized in carnivorous plants, who wants to work as an adviser in the sustainable development field. "It's a rewarding experience because I am learning about other worlds through him and I can see that PhD holders are undervalued within companies. I've become their ambassador."

Beyond individual follow-up, and like many NQT partners, the Française des Jeux also wants to co-organize collective workshops for the graduates in the program. "It's a way

*to go deeper in the follow-up*", explains Frédérique Sénèque, who is putting the finishing touches to a workshop dedicated to prepare for job interviews. From writing a resume to dealing with stress or using professional social networks, the offer is wide and diverse. After being informed of the workshops, participants must sign up on NQT's website. The number of seats is limited and the class is on a first come, first serve basis.

Some **events**, like "after work" drinks organized by some companies in their offices, allow participants to grow their network. Thanks to NQT's partners, Siham was able to participate in the launching of the Viva Technology fair, live from the Élysée Palace, on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Besides meeting the President of the Republic of France, François Hollande, and LVMH's CEO, Bernard Arnault, she also got the opportunity to meet startup owners and give out business cards. A world she never dreamed of entering one day...

**NQT's offer is more and more refined,** as proven by the launching of an application to ease up the process for participants, who will now be able to access the website content from their smartphones. Graduates taking part in the program also have various free tools at their disposal: they can improve their English online thanks to an agreement between NQT and Gymglish, understand how personality tests work and find useful advice on job hunting provided by NQT and Crossknowledge on the NQT's online training platform. *"We also recommend graduates to keep us regularly informed of their projects, and to update their resumes because we work with jobboards and also receive job offers*", she adds.

In addition, NQT is looking to accompany the current ambitions of graduates. A growing number of graduates are interested in creating their own company, so NQT signed a partnership with HEC business school. Each year, a few graduates taking part in NQT's program get the opportunity to follow classes from HEC's business creation Master's Degree, with NQT covering 75% of their tuition fees. Others are invited to attend a few conferences and seminars within that Master's curriculum.

NQT can also hear that the sea is calling and dreams of becoming global. *"Expatriate sponsors can also provide their help*", says Sophie Pinto, who wants to go further. Supported by many multinationals, **NQT would like to help foreign partners create projects inspired by its model in France**. Watch out, world.

# NQT, A SUCCESS WORTH SPREADING?

### WHO ARE THE GRADUATES HELPED BY NQT?

The program is offered to graduates who have studied for at least three years in a given field. NQT reaches out to young adults from neighborhoods as defined by urban social policies and to graduates from modest backgrounds, in urban or rural environments. The organization bases its standards on a few indicators to appraise the job-seeking graduates' social background: what is their parents' socio-professional category? Has the student ever been granted a financial help? Do they receive RSA welfare subsidies? Do they have disabilities? Note: graduates from French overseas territories can join a specific program called "Nos Outre-mer ont des talents" (Our Overseas Territories have talent). Among the 5,457 graduates in the program in 2015, 1,120 were from deprived neighborhoods and 4,337 were from modest backgrounds. 26% benefited from welfare subsidies. With 2,675 graduates signed up, Ile-de-France is the region helping most graduates, with Rhône-Alpes coming in close second.

The typical profile is a young woman of 26 –women account for 64% of participants– with a Master's Degree in business or marketing. Graduates in this field generally account for 15% of participants, same as communications graduates. Then come HR graduates (9%), law graduates (9%) and engineers (8%). 47% of participants have studied in one of these five fields. On the other end of the scale, telecommunications, audit, broadcasting and production/maintenance graduates account for 1% of the participants.

Most participants were directed to NQT through Pôle Emploi when they signed up as jobseekers. Some join the program after a few months of unsuccessful searching, but most of the graduates we met during the orientation meeting organized by NQT had graduated on average less than three months before. **Their objective was to have as many tools as possible to quickly find a position matching their expectations.** Their priorities are to hear a professional's opinion on their careers and their approach, to see if their profiles fit available positions and to benefit from a long-term follow-up in order to correct potential mistakes they might make as they meet recruiters. Whether they say it openly or not, most of them also hope their sponsor will help them expand their network.

### THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Business professionals **sponsoring** graduates are the key element of the program. They are **working executives with at least 8 years of professional experience**. Among the 3,614 active sponsors in 2015, 38% held directing positions, 37% held management positions, 6% were project managers, 3% were engineers and 2% were consultants in auditing. The remaining 14% were executives or held similar positions. All belong to sponsor companies who make contributions to NQT and internally promote it to encourage their employees to become sponsors. They were 246 in 2014. In 2015, NQT counted 360 sponsor companies, from big corporations to small and medium businesses.

Sponsors volunteer to coach a participant –sometimes two– by sharing their experience, and even their network, but there are no obligations. The sponsor is assigned to each participant according to their field of work, although that isn't always possible, or according to the wishes expressed by the participant. **The relationship between the sponsor and the graduate is based on a common agreement**. Although the time they stay in contact isn't fixed in advance, NQT checks in with each graduate every month and can introduce them to another sponsor if necessary.

Other than that individual follow-up through sponsors, partner companies regularly hold **group workshops on topics related to job seeking** (writing a resume, using professional social networks, preparing for job interviews) or after-work events in their offices to help participants better understand their different jobs and widen their network.

Networking, however, is not the main ingredient to NQT's success. According to the organization, the key to success lies in the **self-esteem graduates gain thanks to their sponsors, and in the opportunity to better understand what behaviors recruiters expect from them**, especially in terms of soft skills (how to introduce themselves, how to speak during an interview, dress code issues, etc.).

The other ingredient for success: **multiple partnerships** with public stakeholders (local communities, the labor department, the urban affairs department, the youth and sports department, or the overseas territories department) which finance and support NQT, while bringing it great publicity and guaranteeing their reliability.

### WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

Though NQT has strengthened its presence in the higher education system, it had only signed partnerships with 24 universities at the end of 2015. The board wishes to **strengthen its links** with APEC and community centers, consular chambers and trade federations in order to recruit more sponsors and students and to reach the goal of 100,000 graduates in the program in 2025. This ambitious target makes it absolutely necessary that they find **more funding**, as the average cost per graduate amounts up to  $\notin$ 597, according to NQT's 2015 annual report.

Meanwhile, the organization keeps expanding to new regions, even though they haven't reached Brittany yet.

### SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

In its White Book to boost the social ladder published in 2015, NQT highlighted the lack of a general plan that would allow the scaling up of the program and made a number of propositions in that direction. Among them: granting financial help to companies implementing sponsorships to encourage recruiters to commit to this approach.

In order to shorten the time between graduation and a first job, putting graduates in contact with organizations helping them find a job while they are still in college would be particularly useful. It would also prevent some student from losing hope because they were unable to find the right levers.

In addition, **promoting cooperation between universities and companies would allow a better knowledge of each world, long before graduates have to look for a job**. Though great efforts have been made over the last few years, particularly through multiplying internship programs and valuing apprenticeship, we have to recognize that not all universities are that far ahead.

Having a follow-up of graduates would also allow those who are struggling to receive advice as quickly as possible. Though high-reputation schools do follow up on their graduates and help them enter the working world, most public college students aren't given that opportunity, according to participants to the orientation meeting organized by NQT.

### KEY FIGURES

- 35,145 graduates sponsored between 2005 and 2016.
- A surge from 4,500 graduates in 2015, to 5,500 in 2016 and between 6,000 and 7,000 expected for 2017.
- 70% of students are hired after six months in the program.
- 9,430 sponsors mentored graduates between 2005 and 2016.
- 4,000 active sponsors in 2016.
- The number of sponsor companies rose by 46% between 2014 and 2015.
- About 800 events held by companies in 2016 to help graduates outside sponsorships (group workshops, networking events, etc.).
- A €4,011 million budget in 2015 (€3,511,000 in 2014).
- An average cost of €597 per graduate sponsored.
- 45 employees in the organization, including 20 at the headquarters.

### QUOTES

#### Sophie Pinto, national director for sponsorships and services at NQT

"These young graduates are talented. We are going to show them how to shine!"

#### Frédérique Sénèque, Diversity project manager at la Française des jeux

"Sponsors are there to bring their mentees what they are lacking because of their social background: confidence in their own skills, knowledge on how to behave during an interview, and a network."

#### Edip, 26, holder of a Master's Degree in Auditing, sponsored by NQT

"A program like NQT's is extremely useful, because after graduating, you are often on your own in the middle of the jungle."

### Mélanie, 31, holder of a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Political Strategy, sponsored by NQT in 2012

"My sponsor, a diversity director from a CAC 40 company, helped me to downplay the business world by talking about his own experience. It made me feel confident again."

## 42: A TUITON-FREE SCHOOL, OPEN TO ALL, TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL ERA

#3 BY LAURENCE ESTIVAL

#### 42: A TUITION-FREE SCHOOL, OPEN TO ALL, TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES of the digital era

42 is a complete oddity in the field of vocational training. Founded in 2013 by Xavier Niel, vice president and strategy assistant director at Iliad (Free), and managed by Nicolas Sadirac, the founder of Epitech School and creator of its educational model, 42 is a French computer training provider. Since it opened its doors, it has already trained a few hundred graduates. The school's radical choices are what makes it both so fascinating and so unsettling: a month-long admission process called "Piscine" ("swimming pool"), where 3,000 brave aspiring programmers have to face the harsh reality of natural selection; no diploma requirements; no tuition fees; no trainers; no schedules; 24/7 opening hours. All that is aimed at one single goal: passing the 21 levels of coding that lead to the degree, which enables students to freely navigate the digital world. In 42's totally unique approach, self-motivation and mutual help between peers are essential to succeed. It's definitely not for the faint of heart.

### WHY DID WE CHOOSE "42"?

We chose to study 42 for four main reasons.

The first one is that 42's radical teaching approach—or rather the fact that it doesn't actually "teach"—has revealed new leads that might help to bring back into education lots of young people who have no chance of blooming in the current school system in France. At 42, students have to make their way on their own and with their peers, in a training institution that has a totally novel approach to knowledge. That is nearly critical to their "survival" at 42. In order to get through, students have no choice but to work with others and think of new solutions with their peers. Some give up; others hold up. Some students manage to complete in a year and half the 21 levels of coding that lead to the degree—which there actually is, though it's the only thing 42 has in common with traditional training providers—; other students may take five years to graduate.

The second reason is that 42 addresses a very pressing need in the labor market, as France urgently needs 200,000 new web developers.

The third reason is that 42 is just a leading example among the countless new digital schools that are emerging across France.

And last but not least: we chose to focus on 42 because its novel approach is definitely unsettling.

#### 42: A TUITION-FREE SCHOOL, OPEN TO ALL, TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES of the digital era

The big, grey building on the edge of the Paris ring in the 17<sup>th</sup> arrondissement doesn't give the impression that an educational revolution is taking place in there. But as soon as you step inside, you get the feeling that you have entered a totally different world. "42" was created in 2013 by Xavier Niel, the vice-president of Free, as a response to the lack of skilled workforce in the digital industry. Its aim is to train young students in coding, and it indeed has little to do with traditional training institutions. In fact, the school looks more like a hybrid between a co-working and a living space, like a startup.

With a cap on their head or a skateboard under their arm, students get in with their pass and choose where they want to sit in one of the three "clusters"–huge rooms spread over three stories–at one of the 300 computers available in this endless forest of screens. There are no assigned seats: each student is free to sit wherever they want, depending on their mood, on when they arrive or when their project partners arrive. If they need a calm space, groups of four to five people can also book the meeting room on the first floor, or use a part of the big common room on the second floor.

When their focus dwindles, they can go to the videogame room located just a few steps away, or evacuate their stress with a game of ping-pong or pool, on the first floor. The lucky ones who've performed exceptionally well or undertaken general interest tasks, such as mentoring newcomers in their discovery of this atypical place, earn a certain amount of "Wallets"—the high-tech version of "gold stars". Those who've garnered enough Wallets get the privilege to use the Jacuzzi on the top floor, accessed through the staff office and opening onto a terrace. The others have to settle for the showers: the banister of the stairs is actually covered with towels left to dry...

The building was wisely designed, and perfectly sums up the scope of the project: to train the future leaders of the digital industry, the geeks that big companies will fight over, by focusing on autonomy, individual liability and collaborative work, while encouraging students to confront their points of view in an effort to foster a culture based on creativity and innovation. 42's teaching method is based on a "peer to peer" approach. Here, students learn from and with each other, and are in charge of assessing each other's progress. There are no schedules to structure the day, or teachers hovering about to supervise the learning process. "We're not a typical school; our purpose isn't about providing knowledge. IT is not a science and in our industry, knowledge quickly becomes obsolete anyway. Everything is available online. In the digital world, the added value of a person comes from their ability to create, innovate, and share with others", explains the director, Nicolas Sadirac, poached by Xavier Niel, who was fascinated by his educational vision at Epitech School. According to him, if France is lagging compared to the United States, Northern Europe or Israel in this new economy, it is due to the fact that it hasn't been

able to adapt to this new paradigm. The team running this unique training provider has decided to address that issue through their educational approach, and enable France to hop on the digital train.

Betting on the innovative abilities of its students, regardless of their educational background or their social and occupational category, 42 is a **tuition-free school, open to all**. There are no diploma requirements for admission, and according to the school's management teams, 40% of students do not have a high school diploma. Students are not required to know about computer programming or have any previous experience as web developers: only 30% of students do. The only requirement is to be aged between 18 and 30. "We're looking for individuals with a certain mindset rather than specific skills", explains the director. Students are on the same page: "I studied medicine for two years but failed to pass the higher admission test to Medical school, so I decided to switch to another career path. I didn't know anything about IT or "geek culture", but what made me want to try was that you're given an opportunity to discover a new learning method: I liked the idea of having no lectures or fast-speaking, unavailable teachers in front of me", says Maud Delaunay, 24, who joined the school in 2013 and is one of the few girls enrolled at 42. They only account for 15% of the headcount.

In order to join the school, Maud, like the **60,000 other applicants** who apply at 42 each year, had to start with an online logical reasoning test, before hoping to advance to the second step along with 3,000 other successful applicants. "That test isn't about measuring intelligence, it only serves to evaluate cognitive skills", says Nicolas Sadirac. Only a third of applicants are admitted after passing the second step: the "Piscine" (French for "swimming pool"). That name was chosen very carefully: in the course of four weeks, admissible applicants have to show stamina and learn to "swim". Every day, they have to work on coding exercises. "We were stuck on our chairs from 8:42am to 11:42pm! It was very hard to carry out the projects within the allotted time. At first, everyone was panicking. After two weeks, half of the applicants had given up. There's a sort of natural selection. Only those who are extremely motivated and who've understood the rules of the game manage to "survive"", smiles Paul Amice, 25, who joined the school in September last year after obtaining a bachelor's degree in engineering science. "It's like a boot camp. Actually I learned by doing, Googling what I didn't know and asking the other applicants for advice. There wasn't really much competition between us and helping each other quickly became the operating mode". Sullivan Vitiello, 20, is also a "survivor": "I loved the "Piscine", because it generated a strong team spirit and true friendships between us. Though being resourceful is important, I realized that you can't get very far without the help of others". With a Bac S (high school diploma in Science), Sullivan decided to try out for 42 in July 2015 after spending a boring year majoring in math. "Rather than focusing on the results, our aim is

#### 42: A TUITION-FREE SCHOOL, OPEN TO ALL, TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES of the digital era

to test the ability of applicants to work with others in an unstable environment, because that is what they will be asked to do throughout their training in this school and later in their professional lives", explains Nicolas Sadirac, responding to the critics of this extremely harsh selection process.

For the lucky ones who pass the selection process, the "school" year begins every year in the fall. They all know when they start, but none can tell when they will finish. In fact, they're students for life. They are free to learn at their own pace, take breaks, come back, leave again... "Still, we try to make sure that students do not use 42 as an Internet café?", laughs David Giron, the director of studies, who is always available to help students organize if needed. "The fastest students can complte the program in 18 months; others may stay for five years. Our students spend an average of three years at the school", he adds. Since there are no schedules, there are no attending requirements either, which allows students to have a job on the side. "I was hired as a part-time developer at a shop in Paris. I go to school on Mondays and Tuesdays, because I don't want to spend my whole life doing what I do today. The curriculum at 42 will gradually open up new opportunities for me, including in a field I find fascinating: artificial intelligence", shares Sullivan. According to the school's management teams, 2,000 students out of the 3,500 enrolled have a fulltime job and come to school when their schedule allows them to. They can come at night-a peak of attendance is recorded every day at 10pm-or at weekends, since 42 is open 24/7. Students are even free to take vacation days when they want to. "In first year, I allowed myself to take three weeks off, but since then, nothing! The training is too intensive", highlights Maud, who is relieved to be done soon...

In order to graduate, students need to reach the 21<sup>st</sup> level. To advance from one level to the next, students have to **carry out small group projects, organized around five general topics**: programming, innovation, infrastructure, personal development and entrepreneurship. Students are free **to choose their own path to acquire the 17 key skills required** (artificial intelligence, the online world, network management, videogames, etc.) but the training is not customizable, since students have to do all the exercises in order to graduate. Indeed, **42 trains to all types of occupations. Its graduates are versatile and multi-skilled when they leave the school. Like during the "Piscine", the students learn by doing and by helping each other in the different programming languages, and the exercises become more difficult as they advance in their training. To pass a level, each student has to get the approval of other students, who are invited to assess the work of their peers.** 

In addition to projects that are part of the curriculum, students can also use an in-house forum to invite their peers to work with them on projects they initiate themselves, such

as videogame or app development. "*We also work on real projects, commissioned by actual companies*", adds David Giron. Most of them are startups, but bigger companies like Engie, PSA or Airbus have also been convinced by the idea. Employers also contribute by offering **internships**, as students have to do at least **two: one halfway through the training, and one six months before graduation.** 

About 40 partnerships have been signed with other schools and universities to foster the development of multidisciplinary projects. A team of students from 42 and Icare design school is currently developing an app to inform people about places where spectators can co-create live shows with artists. "*We all think together, everyone has something to bring to the table*", explains Antony Civita, 28, a student at 42 since 2014, who is in charge of coding the team's ideas into a program.

The irony of the story is that some prestigious higher education institutions (HEC, Sciences Po) whose educational approach is criticized by 42 did not hesitate to sign partnerships as well. In most cases, these partnerships allow students of these schools to learn about coding, while "42ers" can benefit from the courses offered by these institutions to boost their creativity and open-mindedness. One of the most accomplished partnerships is the one signed with HEC, which allows students from both schools to follow a common major: Digital Entrepreneurship. Over the course of one term, and under the supervision of a coach, they take part in common projects that address new challenges, such as traffic generation, digital communication, e-business, and new economic models. Students who wish to go further in starting a business also get the opportunity to present their project to a panel of professionals (business angels, venture capital executives, incubator representatives).

Pierre-Edouard Lieb, 27, who graduated in April 2016, had chosen the "Leadership" course offered by HEC. After having spent a few years traveling the world, studied IT at Pierre and Marie Curie University, and interned in sales and market analysis, he wanted to combine his coding skills with his interest in business. "And it also gave me the opportunity to be a part of the HEC alumni network!" he adds. After graduating from 42, this double background allowed him to become partner manager in the startup Recast-AI, where 11 of the 20 employees studied at 42. "I met the founder of this startup while I was studying at 42, at a lecture he came to give us on artificial intelligence. I was interested in his project so I applied for an internship in his startup, and I was hired straight afterwards."

**Startups are particularly fond of 42 graduates,** even though it is still too early to draw any conclusions, since the first 500 graduates only finished their studies last spring. 42

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does not comment much on where the graduates end up. "About 25% of the graduates have started or are starting their own company", notes Nicolas Sadirac. And though big companies such as Société Générale or Capgemini state that they hire interns every year and organize hackathons to identify these off-the-beaten-path talents, they declined to comment on how many they actually hire.

But that doesn't worry the team at the head of 42. With a dropout rate as low as 4%, 42 is expanding its model. In France, a "sister" school is expected to open its doors next fall in Lyon, through a project initiated by the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Regional Council. "*Though the project did not originate at 42, we collaborated on it. The new school will use our educational model and we will make our servers available*," says Nicolas Sadirac, pointing out that other French regions are interested as well. "*Given the needs and the number of applicants who aspire to study at 42, there is room for other players.*"

42's totally unique model is also expanding internationally: upon the request of local partners, 42's management team has helped to open similar schools in Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, South Africa, Sweden and London. Unstirred by the idea of competing against American universities, which Nicolas Sadirac deems "*overly academic*", 42 has also opened its own branch in Fremont, in the Silicon Valley, copying its Paris facility. The first students began last November, and 1,000 students are expected to be trained there each year. The end goal is to promote transnational teamwork between students from all over the world taking part in common projects. Before thinking about physical mobility, multicultural work is indeed an additional tool to help students develop their creativity skills.

# 5425 TFACHING FIPLOYTENT

### WHO ARE THE STUDENTS AT 42?

42 targets 18- to 30-year-olds that are passionate about the digital world and particularly interested in computer programming. The school's aim is to address the needs of companies that are looking for skilled workforce as they digitalize their activity and to support young adults who want to launch their own startups, in an effort to help France catch up with its American and Nordic competitors in the digital economy.

There are no prerequisites or academic requirements. 42's management team reports that students range from young people who didn't pass the baccalauréat (40% of the headcount) to PhD holders, and that the school doesn't only admit "geeks": 30% of students have never learned or practiced computer programming before. The management team does not wish to give further information about applicants' backgrounds, and simply explains that those who went to college before arriving at 42 come from a wide range of fields, from human and social sciences to hard sciences. However, the interviews we had with a few students tend to show that most of those who went to college dropped out before getting a degree—but that ought to be put into perspective due to the limited number of students we interviewed. It is to be noted as well that girls only make up 15% of the headcount.

As **training at 42 is tuition-free**, the social background of applicants isn't a barrier. However, students coming from other parts of France than Paris (who make up 40% of the headcount) do have to plan a certain budget, especially for accommodation. Within three years though, 42 will have a residence hall for students (with 1,000 rooms), when the NOC42 building ("Not Only a Campus") will be ready. That new facility is funded by 42 and planned to be built right behind the school premises, as part of a renewal project of the Epinettes-Bessières neighborhood. In the meantime, 42 has already signed an agreement with the Société Générale bank to facilitate students' access to loans, with 42 standing surety for them. Société Générale has also agreed to provide a "guarantee" to deprived students in order to help them find a place to rent. Other banks are expected to follow suit. Lastly, management explains that it is also possible for students to work while pursuing their studies if they wish to, as they can take as many years as they want to pass the 21 levels needed to get the degree.

### THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

The first key to success has to do with 42's pedagogical approach: **no lectures, no teachers, no timetables, and the fact that students have to learn by doing and by helping each other** among peers. All these aspects appeal to young adults who dropped out of school or college because they couldn't stand sitting in class to be fed with academic knowledge.

The initial bootcamp experience called the "Piscine" ("swimming pool") in which applicants spend an entire month doing coding exercises from 8:42 am to 11:42 pm serves as an admission test to **select the most motivated students** (half of applicants are totally discouraged and give up after two weeks) and those who have understood 42's implicit rules based on personal resourcefulness and cooperation with other participants. This selection method has proven to be highly effective. **Dropout rates–in the order of 4%–are extremely low.** 

**42 has also signed around 40 partnership agreements with other higher education institutions**, including HEC and Sciences Po, allowing it to establish its reputation and therefore reassure recruiters. Many companies work with students of 42 on projects they are interested in. Several teams of students are currently working on urban mobility projects with PSA for instance, and others on projects related to the energy industry with Engie. Recruiters also take on students for internships. 42's teaching staff reports that they currently have around 5,000 internship offers for students.

Though it is **too early to measure what impact it will have**, the school's alumni network is also expected to actively contribute to the success of 42. The importance of teamwork at 42 has led to the birth of a community whose members are always ready to help each other, both during the training and later when they enter the job market. In some startups, this trend has already borne fruit: 11 of the 20 employees of Recast-AI for instance (a startup specialized in robot construction) graduated from 42.

### WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

The 1,000 students admitted every year at 42 are minute in relation to the needs of the digital industry, estimated at 200,000 jobs. 42 isn't the only training provider addressing that challenge, of course, but it is one of the only schools with no formal entry requirements, which means it is open to the 140,000 young adults who drop out

of the French school system every year without any qualification.

The paradox is that 42's teaching method is both a strength and a weakness, because its "rough" methodology based on self-motivation isn't **suited to all kinds of students**; some students need more supervision and support (which doesn't necessarily mean a totally rigid learning environment).

Lastly, 42 is suited to students that are self-reliant and responsible, because there is no obligation of attendance and it is possible to access the premises 24/7 to study–which is both one of the distinctive and appealing features of 42 and one of its limitations.

### SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

42's **expansion is under way**. On the initiative of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes regional council and with the backing of 42, a new school based on the same teaching model is to be opened in Lyon in September 2017 and to admit 300 new students every year. According to 42's management team, other similar projects are expected to materialize soon.

42's teaching model is also being **tested with new audiences**: in November 2015, 42 and Pôle Emploi (the French government agency for employment) launched a pilot project that aims to use 42's model to train jobseekers above 50 and IT professionals that have been looking for a job for more than two years, jointly selected by the school and Pôle Emploi. The training lasts 12 months. **50%** of the first 30 beneficiaries, who completed the training in the fall of 2016, **have already found a new job**. A second group is now in training. In total, after two years, around a hundred people will have benefited from this project.

42's teaching method is also **developing internationally**. Over the last two years, 42 has been contacted by many other training providers willing to copy its method and to build partnerships. The first new school based on 42's method opened in Romania two years ago; other ones then opened in Ukraine a year ago, as well as in South Africa, Sweden and London. Milan is expected to become the next city on the list of 42's partner schools outside France.

42 itself is also playing an active part and investing some of its own capital in that international conquest. In July 2016, it opened a branch in Fermont, near San Francisco. The first students, admitted after passing the 4-week immersion test, started the training in November. Within five years, 42's Californian branch is expected to train 10,000 students every year.

### KEY FIGURES

- 60,000 applicants in 2016.
- 1,000 new students admitted every year.
- 40% of students haven't passed the baccalauréat (French high school diploma).
- 30% have never coded or done computer programming before.
- 60% come from the Paris area.
- 3,500 are presently in training.
- Students take an average of three years to pass the 21 levels required to be given the degree (average duration observed after three years of operation).
- 5,000 internship offers for the students.
- 500 students have successfully completed the training.
- 25% of students having completed the program have started or are starting a business.
- 42 remains discreet about the jobs held (or not) by former students.
- The dropout rate is estimated at 4%.

#### QUOTES

#### Nicolas Sadirac, CEO of 42

"We're not a typical school; our purpose isn't about providing knowledge. In the digital world, the added value of a person comes from their ability to create, innovate, and share with others."

#### Maud Delaunay, 24, student at 42 since September 2013

"What made me want to try was that you're given an opportunity to discover a new learning method: I liked the idea of having no lectures or fast-speaking, unavailable teachers in front of me."

#### Sullivan Vitiello, 20, student at 42 since September 2015

"At 42, we learn to be thorough and to help each other. Though being resourceful is important, I realized that you can't get very far without the help of others."

### Pierre-Edouard Lieb, 27, a graduate from 42 since April 2016, now working as a partnerships manager in the startup Recast-AI

"I met the founder of this startup while I was studying at 42, at a lecture he came to give us on artificial intelligence. I was interested in his project so I applied for an internship in his startup and I was hired staright afterwards."

## 100 CHANCES 100 ETTPLOIS MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE VISIBLE

#4 BY ANNE TÉZENAS DU MONTCEL 100 CHANCES 100 EMPLOIS: MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE VISIBLE

The 100 Chances 100 Emplois initiative started in 2004 when a business leader met a minister confronted with an unemployment rate in neighborhoods that was twice as high as the national average. To meet this challenge, 100 Chances 100 Emplois relies on local employment players, both public and private, who have field experience and the needs of companies. The association mobilizes these players to accompany and guide young people of all levels who are motivated to find a job. This direct contact with companies and their strong involvement in the process underpin the legitimacy of the process in the eyes of young people, who are increasingly numerous to integrate it, and and are the reason of its success: 80% of young people who are accompanied find a sustainable job a few months after they finish the program.

#### WHY DID WE CHOOSE "100 CHANCES 100 EMPLOIS"?

The *100 Chances 100 Emplois* (100 Chances 100 Jobs) initiative was born in 2004 after a meeting between a business leader: Henri Lachmann, then Head of Schneider Electric, and Jean-Louis Borloo, a Social Affairs Minister who was dealing with a youth unemployment rate in certain neighborhoods that were twice as high as the national average. 100 Chances 100 Jobs focuses on local players in public and private employment areas, on their knowledge of the field, on the real needs of companies, which it mobilizes to increase the employment rate of young people who are genuinely motivated and at all levels. This direct contact with companies makes the entire process legitimate in the eyes of the increasing number of young people who want to take part in it. But also its efficiency: 80% find a sustainable job after a few months.

Frédéric Coste goes from one table to another. He has a slim silhouette, a short beard and speaks fast, as a Project Manager at the Employment Agency of the Territory of Plaine Commune (Seine-Saint-Denis) he runs, every two months, the campaign 100 Chances 100 Jobs. Plaine Commune is made up of 9 cities and 36,000 companies deployed around the *Stade de France*, 410,000 inhabitants, but also 38,000 unemployed, out of which one third of them are young people under 26. The target audience of 100 Chances 100 Jobs, a tool for the integration of young people that relies on their close ties with companies and national employment institutions to help them find a job.

This morning in March, Frédéric Coste officiates in Saint-Ouen, one of the nine cities that take turns in welcoming the young individuals they help. On the first floor of the

Maison des Associations, a large orange room has been made available. The tables were distributed in such a way as to accommodate ten one-to-one discussions simultaneously. On the one hand, professionals from partner companies; On the other, ten young men, boys and girls, still shy and not fully awake. They make up the future "Red Star" class, the name they will choose after they complete the "SAS," a week of coaching they are about to experience together. They all got to know about it by word of mouth, social networks or on 100 Chances 100 Jobs' official website. "They were 30 last week to take part in the oral exam. We only keep 10, those who have the least chance of finding a job. Even if the selection is difficult, we want to limit the amount of people so that we can do a good job," Olivier Guillouet, who runs the operations, highlights. He is an Urban Planner and Development Director for major Icade-led Projects, a subsidiary of the Deposits and Consignments Fund. "We take those who need us most," Frédéric Coste explained, "regardless of the level, regardless of the trade." Khusbu P., a discreet girl, wants to become an Accounting Assistant. Didier V., 25, a young man with glasses, is looking for a company to do his M.A. in strategic intelligence alternating school and work experience. Emma A., 25, a high-level handball player with a bright smile, wants to work in Internal Communications. Lahcen D., a 20-year-old jack of all trades who is brilliant when it comes to Audiovisual Media and Computer Science, is looking for a company interested in his Advanced Technician's Certificate in Computer Services. Aurélie C., who has a gentle and casual smile, dreams of becoming a Counselor specialized in youth integration. All meet the pre-requirements of the program: "They know how to work and want to work," Olivier Guillouet says, "they first have, motivation, second, motivation, third, motivation, fourth, a professional project, and fifth, knowledge of how companies operate." Yet, like most young people who are part of one of 30 employment areas in France covered by 100 Chances 100 Jobs, they sent dozens of resumes for a job or an internship for programs alternating school and work experience without obtaining any answer. Not even in sectors for which there is high demand such as Hotel Management where Anthony K., the English-speaker of the group has applied, or Industrial Maintenance where Mustapha L hopes to find a job.

It is precisely at this critical moment, when they are first looking for a job, that the risk of a profound rupture with the world of work is at stake, and it is precisely here, in this moment of discouragement and misunderstanding, that 100 Chances 100 Jobs plays a role. Today, 45% of the unemployed are young people who come from sensitive neighborhoods, compared to 23% elsewhere. "During job fairs," Frédéric Coste says, they stand in line and see recruiters who tell them: send your resume. They respond to offers and get no response. After a while, they wonder why they studied. Are they being discriminated against based on their address, name? "For me, it is unimportant. What really matters is the network. Basically, these young people feel invisible, Frédéric Coste explains. "Our job will be to make them visible."

Recognized as being of general interest, the 100 Chances 100 Jobs method was initiated in 2004 by Henri Lachmann, then President of Schneider Electric, following a meeting with Jean-Louis Borloo, then Minister of Social Affairs. The unemployment rate for young people in vulnerable neighborhoods was twice as high as the national average. "We created it so that citizens could play a positive role in places where we have an industrial presence"... Didier Coulomb explains, who is Managing Director. Quickly, the program was first experimented in Chalon-sur-Saône. Thirteen years later, 100 Chances 100 Jobs built a presence in 30 employment areas, from Grenoble to Dijon, from Havre in Longwy, from Lyon to Marseille. Today Schneider Electric is one of the many companies involved. They often run campaigns on their territory. Since its creation, 4,588 young people have been welcomed. At least 200 young people per year have found sustainable employment when it began. Since, the association has increased to 600 on average and aims to attain 1,000 in the near future. Their work is result-oriented: young people are accompanied until they find lasting employment. And their work has paid off:... "80% of young people have found sustainable jobs or a training after six months, and often after only three months."

To achieve this result, there needs to be a great number of people who are willing to step in to make a difference. *"There needs to be a strong political willingness to make a difference at the local level. It often takes the shape of a company that agrees to create the dynamic and employment representatives that coordinate local actions," Didier Coulomb explains. Le Havre has just begun. There were 200 people on the first evening. <i>"The effectiveness of the method depends on this close coordination between public and private players in the employment area. Everything depends on the goodwill of the people who are part of this community," Olivier Guillouet confirms. In Seine-Saint-Denis, the Employment Agency of the Territory of Plaine Commune and the companies Icade and Klepierre co-pilot the campaign. This work at the local level is crucial for the success of the entire campaign.* 

Taking turns. Each of the ten youngsters take part in three or four one-to-one exchanges intended to test their interviewing skills. *"Young people do not know that during a recruitment interview their evaluation is made within the first three seconds. Companies are essentially looking for individuals with good interpersonal skills,"* Olivier Guillouet says. *"However, interpersonal skills are what is immediately seen and it is one of the most difficult things to acquire."* These first contacts give us a sense of how needs to be accomplished during the week of coaching that they will experience together during the "SAS."

Two hours later, young people are asked to withdraw. "This time, the debriefing happens without you so that we can make an assessment," Frédéric Coste explains. "You will be with us on Friday." Around the table, personalities from a wide variety of backgrounds are present: two HEC students as observers, Salima Merazga from the recruitment firm Potentia Academy, Christian Celini, the representative of the Commissioner for Equality, Anne Gillet, a network of construction companies, Debhia Hammouchene, representative of the Randstad interim group school, two young leaders: Yann Poincloux, leader of Oribiky, a consulting firm specialized in new ecological mobility solutions, and Daniel Cherifi, a Manager of mobile projects in charge of recruitment at the Coemy Group. Everyone knows local businesses from the inside out. A newcomer presents himself. She is the HR Manager of the Zodiac group.

Each presentation is assessed to identify what needs to be improved: whether the professional project lacks clarity, family issues that are over-emphasized, or if the resume fails to highlight the applicant's quality... Cédric C. sent 100 applications and landed only one interview in six months. He was greatly disappointed. Around the table, everyone shares their interpretation. "*He spends too much time on his personal experience,*" "*he does a good job at explaining his preference for public procurement*", "*he needs to improve his research methodology and he seems too cold.*" Although their backgrounds are diverse, a few observations are often heard: a lack of self-esteem, a weak professional network, a methodology that needs to be improved. These are all of the deficiencies that the public and private partners of 100 Chances 100 Jobs, who are all volunteers, will attempt to change so that they will be able to hold successful interviews in the future.

**Self-confidence first.** "By coaching them, we will helped them reveal their full and use group dynamics to our advantage," Didier Coulomb emphasizes. Aided by coaches and social networking experts, these young people will often discover the real skills they possess beyond their diplomas and learn to showcase them on their LinkedIn profile and a video resume of 45 seconds, which will serve them later on social networks. "Funding from the European Social Fund has allowed us to enrich SAS with new expertise," Frédéric Coste says. They will learn how to present themselves, find out what image they convey to others, from non-verbal language to stress management. On a regular basis, they will meet professionals to present themselves again. "This week allows us to work on the way they present themselves in view of restoring their confidence," Laurence Serrano notes with satisfaction. He is the Head of the youth department at Saint-Ouen's town hall. "This is the program's first added value."

**Research methods.** "It's up to them to be proactive," Olivier Guillouet says. "They can recommend us and benefit from our network of companies. But they are responsible for doing the research." However, the gateways to work have become increasingly complex. "The problem of employment is that everyone is confined to their specific role." The Youth Guarantee, the National Unemployment Agency, the Local Missions, the Supplementary

Welfare Allowances, the National Training Organizations and the Joint Registered Collection Agencies," Frédéric Coste explains. "They all perform their own role." What is needed is an organization that knows how to how navigate through all of them, like 100 Chances 100 Jobs." And prepare young people for recruitment 2.0: "They believe that sending an e-mail on a website is job hunting," Olivier Guillouet notes. "They do not know how to search for information, keep themselves abreast, and monitor for relevant information. No one has taught them how to do this. They are all on social networks, but not for the same purpose."...

**Professional network.** 100 Chances 100 Jobs allows for these young job seekers to multiply meetings with potential employers. "*They will visit companies among the 100 partners in the employment area and beyond, during the open days,*" Frédéric Coste confirms. Group dynamics are essential. "*There are more ideas in the heads of twenty entrepreneurs than in one,*" Samira Djouadi explains, the Managing Director of the TF1 Foundation, who used to be a sports teacher in the Courneuve area and a fan of the method. "*By putting them at the center of this successful process we are able to restore their confidence.*"

Alumni network. "*Tomorrow, young job seekers will be active in this alumni network, on top of companies.*" And that will last beyond the fifteen days spent with the experts, between after work events, which bring everyone together every three months on top of the WhatsApp groups created by each class.

Four days later, the "*Red Star*" group and the partners are again gathered around the same table, this time at the Persepolis media library in Saint-Ouen. Two out of ten young people are absent: they are already conducting interviews. Frédéric Coste warned: "*We will be critical as if we were going to hire you.*" Yann, Salima and Daniel have returned, but there are also new individuals such as Mouloud Bezzouh, Habilitec leader, or volunteers representing BNP Paribas, Danone, Veolia, QVC, or Apec among others.

Cédric, a Lawyer specializing in public contracts (M.A.), introduces himself. Linda Maxivel, Recruitment Coordinator at Showroomprive, advises her: "Your resume is well done. But you lack a presence on social networks. You have to go to more job fairs because you are in a niche market. Attend all job fairs and contact these recruitment agencies. They have a large network in public procurement." Sick, Lahcen was practically pulled out of bed by Frédéric Coste but for a good reason: Mouloud Bezzouh has a three-month contract to offer him. Asked about his enthusiasm, Mustapha remains careful. Mouloud Bezzouh gives him a clue: "We have a session of six months in fiber optics. Take note, young man, you are expected on May 11 at 175 Boulevard Anatole France at 10am". Didier? "I'm very happy that I offered him to send his application to our department Studies as a plan B or C," Sylvie announces. Beside her, Christine is surprised: "I had the same presentation of

the same Didier? No. I found him unclear. "According to everyone, Emma, the handball champion has "a great profile, an M.A., fluent in English and very interesting experience," but she seems pessimistic during interviews. "She does not believe herself although she has an incredible career and she spent a year in Birmingham where she set up a handball team." Samira Djouadi, Managing Director of the TF1 Foundation, said: "We have two positions in marketing and partnerships. Entries are until May 5th. Send your video resume. If you are taken, you will sign for 2 years."

Everyone receives recommendations. "*Remember*," Olivier Guillouet recalls. There is not a single resume, but a resume for each position." "*Beware*," Salima Merazga, who works for Potentia Academy, a recruitment firm, warns, "*it's not up to the recruiter to run after you. Give news and send a thank you email. This will help you stand out from other applicants*." Frédéric Coste gives a last advice: "*Next step, we introduce you to corporate lunch.*"

This is the grand oral, the moment of truth for 100 Chances 100 Jobs. "As soon as young people have the prerequisites, they are presented in front of about fifteen companies during a luncheon," Didier Coulomb says: the Young Talent Club Lunch. This time, the "Red Star" group will speak at a small gathering in a meeting room at the Le Millénaire shopping center in Aubervilliers. First observation on arrival: it is difficult to distinguish young people from representatives of companies. They are completely transformed. At the end of a week, the result is visible to the eye and the ear: the timid have become solid, the uncertain have become confident, the hesitant go straight to the point, the silent ones are talkative, T-shirts and jeans have been replaced by suits. The metamorphosis is not only visual but can also be perceived in terms of their "energy". The Red Star group looks more energetic, and more concerned. Together, they form a collective.

Frédéric Coste warms the room. Some companies compete for the same person, making different offers. Saint-Gobain, IFM Electronic, Lapeyre, Showroomprivé, one of the big employers of the department, but also Vinci, Apec, Prefecture and others arrive in the room. And the method is highly effective **-80% find a job within three months, 100% within 6 months**. The previous class has a few good news to share with the current group: *"Prakash will most probably continue to work for Accenture, Moda, a young electro-technician, was hired as a Manager in Courneuve at Cartondul"* ...No pretenses. *"Every participant from the first 6 classes has found a job; the results are not exactly as good for the last two."* 

It is up to young people to start. Dressed in an elegant black suit, Mustapha begins. He is still a little shy. *"You are mobile, in the Ile-de-France area,"* one of the professionals reacts, *"all over France? I have a lot of missions in the north."* Frédéric Coste noted the results of the exchanges at full speed. Around the table, everyone is looking for concrete answers.

Simon Chan manages big data at Randstad. He quickly looks at each offer. For Anthony, it will be an agency specializing in luxury hotels at Randstad. The representative of the Prefecture keeps an eye on her procurement software and provides contacts to Cedric.

It twirls. It's tonic. Elisabeth starts. Her presentation was very professional and hit the mark. "If you come to us, this is not a job in the meantime," warns Francoise Farag, President of Salvia Development, "we will really invest in you." Linda Maxivel, of Private Showroom, is also interested. Elisabeth is radiant. She gives one one last advice regarding her resume: "Don't mention your work with the association for orphans in the Ivory Coast. It's relevant, but don't put it at the top of your resume." Its Aurélie's turn. An Advisor from the Local Mission can offer her an internship. Laurence Dessauge, director of IMC3 Randstad offers him a job: to welcome young people who wonder about their career orientation. Marion Gauthier of Vinci Insertion Emploi: "We have Insertion Coordinators to set up professional paths. A kind of support structure for those who have a hard time finding employment." Sylvia Agostini of Apec also had her idea: "We opened an agency at the Gare de Lyon and we will recruit consultants. You can contact us." Frédéric Coste keeps his course - Aurélie, he says, must specify his project: "You are going to immerse yourself in each of the 4 organizations". For Lahcen, it's a success: Laurence Dessauger of IMC Randstad will take people who wish to alternate between work and school for their Advanced Technician's Certificate. Prior to this, he worked for three months at Mouloud Bezzouh and was part of school 42. "They're pulling out the Red Carpet," exclaimed Frédéric Coste. 3 Institute of Skills and Trades. In this case, it is that of the Randstad group.

Emma gets up. More assured. Fanny Dumont is a General Delegate for a company that organizes teambuilding events that take place every two years in Plaine Commune. She offers him a temporary contract. Another advises him to emphasize his digital skills further. Khusbu goes on. Clearer, more assured: you can now aspire to be more than an Accounting Assistant, but a "Junior Accountant." Linda Maxivel is thinking about a temporary contract at ShowroomPrivé. Simon Chan thinks about another possibility "If you want to work in the office, we have many offers. This can give you many specialties."

On Friday, Sofiane came back. He was part of one of the last classes in January. He possesses a natural tendency for sales and seeks to start working in the banking sector. Yet, while he passes all the pre-recruitment tests successfully, the job interview almost always prevents him from getting the job. And he never gets any feedback. Around the table, everyone wonders. "We are going to receive you at the IMC to do a series of tests," Laurence proposes. "There is a very good school at La Banque Postale to learn about financial products," advises another. Pascal Hervault, CFO at IFM Electronic says, "I want to understand why it does not match. Come spend an hour

with me." Frédéric Coste is happy. It was he who had wished Sofiane to come back, feeling that he was going to be discouraged. "Until one understands where his problem lies, we will continue to find out why."

The Young Talent Club's lunch is over. The room empties little by little. They take a last picture. They look relieved. Two hours later Frédéric Coste sent the Red Star group a summary of all they had to do to get their job and the date of the next after work meeting where they would meet in less than fifteen days all of the other alumni.



#### THE INVOLVEMENT OF BUSINESSES IS AT THE HEART OF THE APPROACH

### WHO ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY 100 CHANCES 100 JOBS?

These young people all come from the labor pool covered by the program. They are less than 30 years old and can have all levels and all types of training. They decided to register and successfully passed the first oral exam, which determined that they had a professional competence, a professional project and a lot of motivation. They want either a job or a training program. The association's goal is to promote equality of opportunity through a personalized path of integration into the workforce and obtain a fixed-term contract, temporary contract of more than 6 months, or a certified training.

### THE KEYS TO SUCCESS A ROUNDED METHODOLOGY

A three-step process, the most complex of which is, undoubtedly, the identification of profiles, those on which the association will have the greatest impact and that have the most difficulty in finding employment. This involves a "multi-localization of candidates" through the local Missions, the National Employment Agency and the work of local associations. The second step begins with the selection of candidates, both at the individual level and on the ability of young people to form a collective that will continue to interact in the future, particularly on social networks. The decisive moment in the transformation of young people is the SAS: a week of work supervised by a specialized structure, during which they conduct interviews, numerous meetings with company executives and create a professional project and work on their soft skills so that they can successfully pass the recruitment process. Third step: professional integration. When they are better prepared, young people take action: interviews, immersive courses, sponsorship, workplace assessments, temporary jobs, internships. During this phase, they stay accompanied by the company representatives they regularly see and who provide advice. This support allows candidates to build and expand their network to increase the number of meetings with recruiters.

#### A COLLECTIVE DYNAMIC

This dimension is very important on both sides: young people are partly chosen according to their capacity to form a collective; the same goes for the companies. As Samira Djouadi, General Delegate of the TF1 Foundation, a former sports teacher at the Courneuve, said that this collective dimension is crucial. "*There are more ideas in twenty heads of entrepreneurs than in one. Whether during interviews and debriefs or at lunch business leaders where young people will come one last time to present their professional projects.*"

#### TWO KEY PLAYERS: THE COACH AND THE PILOT

They act as local facilitators. The coach leads the work with young people full-time. The Company-pilot, like Olivier Guillouet in Seine-Saint-Denis, is responsible for the local entrepreneurial dynamics. In this respect, he must have strong legitimacy when it comes to the employment area and an important network of clients or providers. Tony David, an HEC student participating in the program as an observer says "*This pilot position is very important, especially at the beginning. The pilot and coach constantly measure progress and efforts of young people and companies until the young person has a sustainable job.*"

## A LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

After works gatherings, birthday parties, class meetings, company visits represent opportunities to bring together the local players of 100 Chances 100 Jobs. Between buzz and networking, these youngs people will continue to benefit from this professional network later on. They also benefit from Schneider Electric's influence, the company that is behind the initiative. They all meet on a regular basis to exchange best practices.

#### LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION INVOLVING MULTIPLE PARTIES

100 Chances 100 Jobs seeks to provide employment in areas where young people live. It is based on a close network of companies, temporary employment agencies, public actors involved in employment integration (local missions, Apec, prefecture, the Equal Opportunities Mission). To develop itself, 100 Chances 100 Jobs has signed a framework agreement with the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue and the Ministry of Town, Youth and Sports. The goal: "to respond to local economic needs by identifying individuals with high-potential in disadvantaged neighborhoods" and "to rely on a sustainable partnership between economic players, government departments, local authorities, employment players, associations, all coordinated by a Company-pilot."

#### DIRECT ACCESS TO COMPANIES

This dimension guarantees the credibility of the method in the eyes of young people. The players of 100 Chances 100 Jobs gain their credibility by being really operational and by bringing real company representatives who bring concrete solutions, which are either durable or temporary. They get involved. This access to an active and caring network of business partners is certainly one of the great contributions of the method. In addition, this allows young people to discover crafts they hardly know about, especially in the industry.

#### A RELATIVE LIGHTNESS

It is efficient, takes little time and is very "*results-oriented*", and companies really get involved. The method's cost:  $\notin$ 1,850 per individual, for example, in Plaine Commune in 2016. To finance new initiatives, Schneider Electric and ten other companies pay an annual contribution to the program, which is supported annually by the Agir Foundation for the *UIMM* Insertion. On the public sector side, there are many sources of funding: city policy, *DIRECCTE*, regions, local authorities, *CGET*, but also the European Social Fund.

#### A CHOICE TO MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT

Young people receive help. But it is up to them to get their job or their internship. The association is there to change the way they look at themselves and provide them with the tools required to navigate the labor market effectively. But they do the rest.

#### RESULT-ORIENTED

The program provides help until they find a sustainable job that is in line with their professional project. In concrete terms, the first three months are decisive. Beyond this point, the young person runs the risk of losing faith and momentum.

#### A SENSE OF GRATIFICATION

Employees, consultants or public servants who participate in the program feel useful. It is very rewarding.

### WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

#### THE LIMITED SIZE OF GROUPS

The whole method relies on small classes made up of 12 individuals. Beyond that, according to representatives, it becomes difficult for participants to feel truly involved and this has impact on the relationship with the representatives and participants. Also, it would be hard for companies to get involved as much.

#### REQUIRED COMPANY INVOLVEMENT TIME

"The difficulty? There are not enough companies. We must always have the right resources. When one is missing, I look for one. In general, companies agree," Frédéric Coste testifies. This availability of small and medium business leaders or senior executives is essential and not always easy to come by. You have to be available for five sessions a year on average and for luncheons. Rotating pilots can make things easier. "What works well is when company pilots run every two years. In Cognac, Hennessy was a pilot. Now Martel will take over at the end of 2017," Didier Coulomb notes.

### SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

Rotating pilots is a good way to ensure that the spirits of volunteers stay high. The network of local partners is expanding. This allows us to make sure that each participant receives the help they need and the program continues to exist well into the future. The level of candidates is high given the program's selection criteria. A more flexible selection system could have a negative impact on other young individuals.

### KEY FIGURES

- 10 students every 2 months per employment pool.
- The method exists in 30 employment areas in France.
- 5 year goal: 1,000 young people integrated each year with the same requirement (With 60% to 65% finding a sustainable job). Currently, the average is 600 young people per year.
- Each participant is accompanied until he / she finds work, which is usually 3-4 months after the end of the coaching session.
- Cost: €1,850 on average per person.
- 4,588 young people since 2004.
- 2,940 have found sustainable job.
- 80% have found job after 6 months.
- Average dropout rate: 19%.
- 29 cities are associated with the program.
- 849 partner companies.

### QUOTES

#### Mustapha L., Advanced Technician's Certificate in Electro-technical Studies, 25 years, participant in the last class

"I did not know how to look for a job. Now I have a method."

#### Elisabeth B., B.A. in Accounting and M.A. in International Financial Analysis, 25 years, participant in the last class

"We are not used to being coached in such a personal and attentive way."

#### Julie Séry, HR and CSR Officer at the Saint-Gobain group

"100 Chances always leads to something positive: young people create a network, and gain confidence in themselves. We must promote the system in other cities."

#### Olivier Guillouet, "Company-Pilot" of the operation in Seine Saint-Denis, Urban Planner and Development Director for major Icade Projects, a subsidiary of the Deposits and Consignments Fund

"Participants are really excited at first. On average, young people stay between 3 and 4 months. Beyond that, their motivation wanes down."

#### Lahcen D., Advanced Technician's Certificate in Electronics, 20 years, participant in the last class

"The hardest part of looking for a job is knowing where to look. The job market is hard to penetrate. I changed the way I present myself"

#### Cédric A., 25, Public Procurement Lawyer (M.A.), participant in the last class

"During the coaching session, I stopped speaking the language of universities and started speaking the language of companies."

#### Frédéric Coste, 100 Chances 100 jobs Class Coach and Project Manager at the Employment Agency of the Territory of Plaine Commune

"It is the interest that is given them that will restore their confidence. If we were to reach a wider audience, it would harder for them to get the attention that they currently receive. Companies agree to play a role because they agree with the story. If there were too many stories, we would lose the thread."

## OPENCLASSROOMS: A JOB OR NOTHING

#5 BY ANNE TÉZENAS DU MONTCEL "Get your career off the ground" is OpenClassrooms' promise. In just a few years, the platform has become a reference for learning code, digital technology, and digital culture. OpenClassrooms offers unique curricula that teach students new skills, based on the needs of both businesses and professional branches. This method is particularly fitting for individuals who struggle in a traditional teaching environment. For young people, OpenClasrooms represents a new pathway to employment. As a result of a partnership with Pôle Emploi (France's national employment agency), 40,000 voluntary job seekers have been able to access the platform's many training courses, free of charge. Hired or reimbursed? Anne Tézenas du Montcel explores the benefits of distance-training platforms...

### WHY DID WE CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON OPENCLASSROOMS?

OpenClassrooms, a distance-training platform, prepares students for jobs related to digital technology and the digital transformation of business: two fields in high demand. For young job seekers, OpenClassrooms represents a new pathway to employment characterized by a teaching method that takes into account the needs of both companies and professional branches.

OpenClassrooms also offers a series of educational innovations that allow young individuals outside of the traditional school system to build their career path all the while learning from real life business scenarios.

As a result of a partnership with Pôle Emploi, OpenClassrooms' managing team has also made the platform accessible to job seekers, free of charge. Also, distance-learning technology can quickly be deployed in France and abroad, without sacrificing the importance of human relationships.

"When I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I had friends who visited Zero's website. That's how I was able to learn to code in HTML and CSS. I knew it was my calling." Kevin Si is 21 years old. He lives with his parents in Chelles in the Seine-et-Marne area in France. In 2014, he failed the exam to receive his high school diploma. "I did not want to go back to school. I first worked at McDonald's for eighteen months. In the meantime, I heard about OpenClassrooms' certified course. I also saw Mathieu Nebra on Facebook Live." Since May 2016, his parents have accepted to finance his training in multimedia project management. "In one year, I managed to get back on track to obtain my Bac+ 3/4 degree." OPENCLASSROOMS: A JOB OR NOTHING

Nothing beats personal experience when it comes to shaping your worldview. In 1999, one particular experience had a major impact on Mathieu Nebra, who is 31, but also the founder of Zero's website, the site that preceded OpenClassrooms. The young leader of the European Distance Education and Training Platform tells his story as if it were yesterday. "*I was thirteen and wanted to create a website. I went to a library with my parents. I found a book written in a very complicated manner. After I had finished reading it, I rewrote the book the way I wanted to. I put it online, and word of mouth did the rest.*" The book was so successful that the young boy created Zero's website, a learning community popular among Internet lovers. The website became OpenClassrooms fourteen years later.

Mathieu Nebra's vision of knowledge has largely influenced the organization's working philosophy: he deconstructs professional training as if it were an engine. He does so only so that he can put the pieces back together in a way that will allow him to train young people and adults more efficiently and remotely. Today, Mathieu's experience along with his four diplomas in digital technology (developer, designer, multimedia project manager, and computer engineering) has allowed his company to include all of the roles impacted by the digital revolution: recruitment, marketing, human resources, payroll management, etc. In total, the training covers fifty fields of work. "Our goal is not to provide a diploma or a certification, but a job," reminds Pierre Dubuc, 28, who joined Mathieu Nebra in 2001 to develop the company in France and abroad. "Whether the goal is to find a job or to create one, we train students, but also edit their CVs, and ultimately, help them succeed."

Last spring, the two leaders' confidence in their teaching method was so strong that they decided to take a risk: to start reimbursing training fees to anyone who failed to find a job six months after they graduate. "Our goal is to reach a 100% success rate when it comes to finding employment," says Pierre Dubuc. Today, the company is already training three million people a month. 60% are young individuals.

In 2015, after an agreement with France's National Employment Agency that was supported by the government, OpenClassrooms also made its certified training courses accessible to all job seekers, free of charge. The company financed the public initiative, and 40,000 people have already benefited from it.

Cite Paradis, Paris. It's April, and there is a light drizzle outside. Members of OpenClassrooms' teams are shuffling in and out of offices of what used to be an old working-class building, now transformed into a center made up mostly of start-ups. You first see the head office, then, the studio, where team members record the platform's online training classes. On the fourth floor is the head office. Everyone seems busy. The Californian-style kitchen is large. Mathieu Nebra and Pierre Dubuc share their vast open OPENCLASSROOMS: A JOB OR NOTHING

space with sixty other employees. The place is full of nooks where people can focus, transparent meeting rooms and austere wooden benches. They want everyone to be close to one another as sharing information is crucial for OpenClassrooms to operate. There is a lot to share: new fields to know about, but also skills, etc. They also have to manage the expectations of thousands of students and personal mentors who interact with them remotely on the platform, etc. Everyone's objective is to stay up to date on the latest skills businesses so desperately need.

The company combines qualitative and quantitative research and monitoring to find out about recruiters' needs to live up to its commitment that all students find a job after they graduate. "Employment is at the heart of what we do," explains Pierre Dubuc. "Before creating a course, we interview companies, professional branches, recruiters on the types of roles and skills they need. Then, we extract the skills sought by companies from all the job offers spotted on the Internet." Twenty-five people are permanently involved in the task of designing the platform's curriculum. The list of required skills evolves continuously according to the information gathered from these two sources.

Another company priority is pedagogy. The work of the American psychologist and education expert Benjamin Bloom highly influenced Mathieu Nebra and Pierre Dubuc's perspective. "In the 1960s, this great researcher demonstrated that combining individual mentoring with apprenticeships led to superior results when compared to 98% of students engaged in a classical teaching environment," explains Pierre Dubuc. We call it mastery learning."

According to Bloom's method, students must reach a certain level before they move on to the next step, but they must do so at their own pace. Traditional classrooms do not work this way. Pierre Dubuc: "In a school, the teacher has thirty pupils in front of him. They have no choice but to adopt a "One-size-fits-all approach." Those who learn fast are bored, and those who are slow drop out." If students don't succeed, they must be given extra help and tested again and again until they succeed. "Students take the time they need, but at the end, they must gain expertise. The mentor follows their progress. Either the student passes, or starts again. Above all, students are given support until they succeed."

In this context, a profound revolution is changing the responsibilities of teachers and students alike: teaching methods and not the student's lack of competence is seen as the source of failure. Giving people the ability to study at their own pace also makes it possible for some to learn faster. "Our youngest student is twelve. He is bored at school. He signed up for Bac+ 3 course to become a developer. His parents asked me if he could get his diploma before obtaining his high school diploma. Why not?" says Pierre Dubuc, laughing. And it is also possible to learn at a slower pace. At first, Kevin Si had over-estimated his abilities. "I thought it would take me nine months to complete the course. Now I know that I'll need at least fifteen." It takes the pressure off. Until now, given its cost-one teacher per student-it was hard to deploy mastery learning on a large scale. The OpenClassrooms' bet is to succeed in creating an interpersonal link between students and the learning community, all done remotely. And combining individual mentoring, online courses and the support of a learning community makes this possible. The company has 200 mentors paid about €35 per hour and recruits other professionals when needed. At OpenClassrooms, mentors organize one-hour online video sessions on a weekly basis. The rest of the time, they are available by email or on OpenClassrooms forums, workgroups, and chat rooms. One of the mentors available is Stéphane Torchy, 47, who lives in Tourcoing and has been a Project Manager for fifteen years in IT services. He also started his own business, which he has sold to regain his freedom. Last summer, he heard about the online platform by another friend who is a mentor. Today, he follows thirty students remotely. "I wanted to share my knowledge but also to learn from students. I feel like a big brother, a guardian, sometimes a confidant." Mentors help students find the motivation they need, and to succeed at every stage of their journey. "The relationship between the mentor and the student is fundamental, especially psychologically," confirms Mathieu Nebra.

Lucie Crussé, who has medium-length brown hair and a smiling face, is concentrating in front of her computer screen for her one-hour weekly meeting. "Philippe, my usual mentor, sets the bar very high. He is straightforward, which is something that I appreciate. For me, this weekly meeting is important in my work schedule." At the age of 29, this young mother of a 7-year-old girl benefited from the agreement signed between the online training platform and the National Employment Agency. She is studying to become a multimedia project manager. She takes all of her class from home. On the right side of her screen, she sees the face of Stéphane Torchy who is making sure the connection is working properly. Lucie introduces herself: "I come from the world of theater. I wanted to go back to school. I want to join a company and later work as a freelancer." Stéphane asks him the first question:

– What is a project manager for you?

– A project manager is like a conductor, someone who checks that everything gets completed in due time.

– My vision: someone who needs to know how to coordinate teams and interact with different people. Coordination and communication are vital, especially for the customer."

Their conversation is candid and cordial. Stéphane explains to Lucie her work schedule on one of the six projects she will have to complete to obtain her diploma: "You will have to submit three documents in six weeks, including the project's mission statement and description. Then, there will be a training exam - an evaluation by another mentor - and finally, after eight weeks you will have to defend your project." His instructions are precise. "For next

week, you're going to investigate the client and his business: who he is, his background, etc. Once you've done all that, you'll do a SWOT analysis. You have a SWOT course available if you wish. Once you have finished, you will list the features related to the customer's request. Are you okay will all of this? We meet again next week at the same hour. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at any time."

Students learn by taking part in practical projects inspired by real-life business scenarios. "This method is advantageous, explains Pierre Dubuc, it makes students want to participate. It's quite different from school. We do not have to take courses, which are simply there to help you with the six projects. I like to learn via video conference," confirms Kevin Si who works on the creation of a new web interface for a fake client. Depending on the project, the mentor will play different roles. "Our goal is not only to teach them theory." "Students also learn how to behave in a professional setting," confirms Stéphane Torchy. "This is something that you don't learn at school." Likewise, the platform takes into account the student's past achievements. "If the student lacks a particular skill, he can sign up to one of our courses," continues Pierre Dubuc. "If the student already knows how to do something, they can start working on the project right away. If they can prove that they have already done these kinds of projects and can show us their achievements, this will be validated, then, students will only have to focus on the skills that they lack."

The last step **involves a professional jury who validates the knowledge of students online.** The jury is here to carefully examine the student's projects via video conference on Skype or Google Hangout. "Once our mentor validates a project, he or she asks us to defend our project via video conference with another mentor who does not know us so they can make an objective assessment," explains Kevin Si. "At the end of the course, a jury also assesses the six projects via video conference." All sessions are recorded. "I don't necessarily like to see myself again," the young boy concedes, "but when you don't defend your project successfully, you can understand what you did wrong. And we can fail as many times as we want."

**'Failure.' Strangely enough, the word failure is often heard at OpenClassrooms.** *"Failure,"* says Mathieu Nebra, *"is just delayed success. We believe in empathy and kindness. A person experiencing difficulty must first regain confidence."* Stéphane Torchy confirms. *"What our students lack most is self-confidence, which they tend to lose at school. What we are trying to do is to bring out their potential. We're more about coaching."* 

Recently, he helped a twenty-year-old boy in a complicated situation. "I pushed him very hard, and I forced him to do much more than he used to, to go beyond his abilities. Once he passed this course, he realized that yes, it was difficult, but he was very proud to have achieved something." The language used on the platform is designed to encourage students.

OPENCLASSROOMS: A JOB OR NOTHING

"Our application never puts failure in negative terms," confirms Mathieu Nebra. "We just say: you didn't get it this time." Perhaps this is why, among the hundreds of thousands of young students on the platform, we see a lot of dropouts. "Our method speaks to young individuals who do not feel like they belong in the traditional education system," explains Pierre Dubuc. "The majority of those who come to us have an unusual personal history: they are at the very least at odds with their school or authority and do not want to go to school. They are looking for an alternative and new teaching models. That's how they find us." And they land on their feet like Terry, 32, a Bac+3/4 graduate and a developer. "He stopped school when he was twelve," says Pierre Dubuc. He does not even have a middle school diploma. He started his own business."

Flexibility is essential when it comes to bringing young people back on the path of training and employment. "The program's strength is the freedom it gives people to start training whenever they want and to organize their time as they see fit," confirms Lucie Crussé. "The program does not start in September or April as it does in business schools or universities." Kevin Si's work schedule is very similar to what you would find at a traditional school: "I go to bed at 10pm and get up at 7am and work immediately. At noon, I take a one-hour break, and then I work until 6pm. That's what my schedule looks like almost every day." But as he said quite forcefully, "I choose my own schedule." Students can also change their work schedule at any time: "You can take a break during the school holidays or ask for more flexible or tight deadlines," says Lucie. "When I lack motivation, I ask my mentor for a different exam date. The last time, he told me: it's two weeks away. It was almost impossible. In fact, it boosted me."

Bloom again. Bloom always. "Some will learn in three months what others will learn in six. We are interested in this diversity. We're not here to turn people into clones. That's why flexibility is indispensable. Apart from basic guidelines, there are also different types of sessions," explains Mathieu Nebra.

Far from being considered a handicap, this diversity of levels and stories is perceived as desirable and fits adapted into what companies expect. "The initial training schedule is based on the army's model," says Mathieu Nebra, "the idea was to produce workers doing repetitive tasks. Today, however, companies needs individuals who are different, creative and adaptable. The ability to change your mindset to navigate uncertainty is critical. So far, education was conceived for a world that changes little. Now the world is changing at a great speed."

**Students identify only one difficulty when learning: loneliness**. Lucie Crusse and Kevin Si emphasize **the importance of personal motivation**. It is always possible to

interact with your mentor or with other students in OpenClassrooms forums, chats, and workgroups. Nevertheless, according to Kevin, *"you have to be quite self-driven and passionate."* Lucie, for her part, worked with other freelancer friends: *"We found ourselves a co-working space. Otherwise, life is a bit static."* She looks forward to Project 5 to work with others.

**OpenClassrooms' community and network put this physical isolation into perspective.** "We have a community on Workplace. Every day people publish what they find." According to Mathieu Nebra, blaming computers is too easy. "Loneliness? You can also find yourself alone in front of a teacher in class. What helps is also peer learning, and this is why we have multiplied the use of emails, workplaces, forums, and online chats for students." Nevertheless: nothing can replace a physical encounter. In five cities across France, OpenClassrooms is testing the use of co-working spaces for its students. They are now accessible one day every two weeks as demand is high.

# OPENCLASSROOMS: EVERYTHING BUT A CLASSROOM

# THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

### MASTERY LEARNING

Individual assistance by a mentor, flexible teaching schedules and curriculums, and the support of a community of peers: in mastery learning the important thing is the time required to teach different students and to reach the same level. In contrast, a traditional learning environment provides the same time and the same learning tools to various students. Nevertheless, the challenge remains to give enough time and to offer diverse learning strategies so that all students receive the same level of education at the end of the course.

### INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Using technology makes it possible to teach in Timbuktu or the Lozère region in France. All you need is a computer and an Internet connection. OpenClassrooms is present in all francophone countries, notably in Africa. OpenClassrooms offers classes in English and Spanish.

# FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH ON NEW SKILLS AND JOB FIELDS

Before creating a career path for a job in high market demand, companies, OpenClassrooms interviews occupational branches, recruiters to learn more about needed skills and business areas in high demand. Then, they study job offers on the Internet. The list of skills and job fields are always evolving. "We continuously improve ourselves," says Pierre Dubuc, "a kind of feedback loop that allows us to regularly update our list based on contacts with recruiters, students, and graduates, to ensure that the skills we teach are relevant so that students can successfully find a job."

### THE LOW COST OF ONLINE TEACHING TECHNOLOGY

Online learning reduces costs and divides by ten the costs of obtaining a degree. Pierre Dubuc: "Technology allows fairness because it reduces costs. You can receive your Bac+ 5 for  $\in 2,000$  to  $\in 4,000$ . Going to a university or business school can cost up to  $\in 10,000$ . The reduction in costs goes from 1 to 10. It is ten times cheaper. Fifty years ago, this was inconceivable."

## WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

#### Not all young people are cut out for online education.

They must also have a computer and an Internet connection.

#### The loneliness created by online education.

Regardless of the active community that exists on the platform, the company is experimenting with the idea of opening physical co-working spaces.

### Using the platform for manual jobs is difficult.

However, Pierre Dubuc believes that it would be possible to create curricula for them with a combination of face-to-face and e-learning sessions.

The time required for finding out what skills need to be taught and for developing curriculums. And the investment needed.

The number of mentors available.

# SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

The number of fields impacted by the digital revolution and the new needs of businesses "Our partner companies are asking us to train X people in specific jobs with specific skills and offer a job for students starting a day after they graduate. Capgemini will thus take twenty students in Java EE, will pay for the training, and will pay them a salary as soon as they start. For the student: there will be no expenses, a salary and an employment contract after they graduate, as well as a Bac+ 5 diploma at the end of the course. OpenClassrooms allows students to alternate between school and work all the while doing everything 'online'" Pierre Dubuc, co-founder of OpenClassrooms, says.

### TECHNOLOGY MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO MULTIPLY THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TO DIVIDE COSTS BY TEN

Anyone in a rural area, overseas or a remote location can learn as long as they have a working Internet connection. The company has also made the platform accessible to people with disabilities. All videos have subtitles.

### FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT

The platform makes it easy to recruit mentors who receive a complementary income and a rewarding experience. OpenClassrooms also co-creates new diplomas with prestigious schools/universities that integrate OpenClassrooms courses into their curricula (e.g., CentraleSupélec).

The long-term support of governmental institutions, such as France's National Employment Agency, which finances OpenClassrooms' certified classes.

At the moment, France's National Employment Agency pays each jobseeker registered in an OpenClassrooms course an average of €1,500, which amounts to five months of classes, on courses designed to last one year on average.

## KEY FIGURES

- Course length: 5 to 20 hours of work. A course contains video, text, and classes.
- Class length: 20 to 25 sessions each comprising 5 to 20 hours of work.
- Number of mentors: 200.
- Graduating courses: 50.
- Certified courses: 200.
- Graduates: 500 in 2017.
- Certified course cost: from 300 to 500 euros per month.
- Can be financed by the National Employment Agency in whole or in part.
- The number of returns to employment: Guaranteed insertion rate of 100%. Otherwise, OpenClassrooms pays back students.
- Online students: 3.5 million per month.
- Number of job seekers who have received training through the partnership with France's National Employment Agency: 40,000.

# QUOTES

### Mathieu Nebra, Co-founder of OpenClassrooms

"The entire team has access to the messages of mentors and students. We always provide feedback. And we voluntarily give our teams tons of information so that they can improve our training on a continuous basis."

### Pierre Dubuc, Co-founder of OpenClassrooms

"The majority of those who come to us have an atypical history: they are at odds with school or authority and do not want to go to school. They are looking for new models. That's how they find us."

### Kevin Si, 21, student, OpenClassrooms

"I knew it was reliable and they would not let me go, that I would have a Bac+ 3/4 degree and that I could then do a master without having my high school diploma."

### Stéphane Torchy, 47, mentor in project management

"I wanted to share knowledge with others but also to learn from them. I feel like a big brother, a guardian, and sometimes, a confidant."

#### Lucie Crussé, 29, student in multimedia project management

"When my motivation is gone, I ask my mentor for an exam. The last time, he told me: it's in two weeks. It was almost unfeasible. In fact, it boosted me."

#6 BY ANNE TÉZENAS DU MONTCEL P.A.R.I. Jeunes (a program for youth employment through confidence rebuilding) was created two years ago on the initiative of Vitamine T, an organization in Lille, in the north of France. Its aim is to bring back confidence to young people who are far removed from the labor market and to help them find a job quickly. The program mostly focuses on "Neets"–young people aged 18 to 26 who are not in employment, education or training.

P.A.R.I. Jeunes has proven very successful: from the beginning, half of the 650 young people who had been contacted showed up. The main reason for such success is the program's small but solid and responsive team of coaches, who hunt down job opportunities and seek out young people in the places where they are most likely to be found. They give them leads, make them reflect upon their perspectives and give them tangible advice. The goal is to help them get a job, as quickly as possible–and it works. Anne Tézenas du Montcel gives us an insight into this novel and effective program.

# WHY DID WE CHOOSE P.A.R.I. JEUNES?

So far, our investigation had mostly focused on operators working closely with the business sector. We found it was important to also include in our study an organization more related to the social field, particularly to social integration through work. P.A.R.I. Jeunes is a two-year program that shows that by working closely with and seeking out job opportunities for young people who are furthest from employment, it is possible to achieve excellent results—as long as the program is kept on a human scale.

The coaches met Adrian and Alexandra a year ago in the Euralille shopping mall: they were giving out leaflets about P.A.R.I. Jeunes and handed one to the young Romanian couple. Three weeks later, Adrian and Alexandra came to their office. He wanted to become a builder and she a sales assistant. *"There aren't many job opportunities in the building sector, so we told Adrian about another trade for which there is more demand: roofing. We made him discover that job through an internship. Then we found a sales training course for Alexandra."* But Alexandra's Romanian documents had expired and the young couple had no money. *"We had to find her a job to put food on the table, so that she could have her ID card renewed in Romania. The training provider played the game, and so did the company she was working for."* Adrian has now signed an apprenticeship contract with a small roofing business through the "Compagnons du Devoir", a national organization of craftsmanship. He works in tandem with his boss. Alexandra is training as a sales assistant. Both have a job, a home and are expecting a happy event.

Cases like Adrian and Alexandra's are at the center of P.A.R.I. Jeunes' action. P.A.R.I.

stands for Programme d'Accompagnement à la Remobilisation pour l'Insertion des jeunes in French (Program for youth employment through confidence rebuilding). The association was created two years ago by Vitamine T, a well-known association in Lille (in the north of France) in the field of social inclusion though work. P.A.R.I. Jeunes was initially created based on an observation concerning adults: "We noted that an increasing number of jobseekers that were very far from the job market didn't manage to pass the trial period once they were hired, and we felt they needed a sort of airlock before stepping back into the job market, to give them back confidence and motivation", says Marie-Christine Tremblay, the director of the program. That airlock was initially created for them, in 2014. One year later, an answer to a call for tenders of the European Social Fund enabled the creation of P.A.R.I. Jeunes. Its assigned aim, in a period of two years, is to help 430 young people enter the job market, within an area of 40 square kilometers around Lille, Lesquin, Commines, Roubaix and Tourcoing. The program targets NEETs, young people aged between 18 and 26 who are "Not in Employment, Education or Training". "Most of them are idle and do not have any qualification. They aren't registered at Pôle Emploi (the French national employment agency) or local job centers. Most of them live in deprived neighborhoods, but some don't. Our principle is to welcome everyone", explains Marie-Christine Tremblay.

In order to initiate contact, P.A.R.I. Jeunes' team started by handing out leaflets to all the teenagers and young adults they met in shopping malls, train stations, near bars and in the entrance halls of apartment blocks. They then waited for the first applicants to follow the path along the railway behind Lesquin's small red-brick train station to come knock at the door to their office, in a small building with a discreet sign reading "P.A.R.I. Jeunes", within the vast industrial wasteland where Vitamine T's premises are located. Half of the 663 youths they'd made contact with showed up. Some came to find their calling, others to finally land a lasting job after a succession of odd jobs, and others because they urgently needed a job to get by. Yann, 23, arrived two weeks ago. He holds a BTS (Advanced Technician's Certificate) as a quantity surveyor in green construction. He's looking for a company to hire him with a work-study contract. "After I got my diploma I started doing temporary work as a quantity surveyor in the woodworking industry and later in facade restoration. Then I picked up odds jobs here and there; I worked for a year in a warehouse filling sacks of 20 to 25kg with food powder." Yann heard about P.A.R.I. Jeunes through his girlfriend, who'd heard about it at the city hall. They decided to come together, along with another friend and a cousin. "Once they get here, we believe that they're already halfway to success." 225 of them have now enhanced their professional experience or even found a job.

Beneficiairies are provided with **tailored support** throughout the program, which lasts on average 16 weeks. "Our method is highly flexible. Some youths get back on track in two weeks, while others may need a year and a half. But the coaches will never let them go until they haven't reached their goal", explains Marie-Christine Tremblay. First, applicants must come to a group meeting (organized every Tuesday morning) where they must bring their resume and no less than 7 official documents. That meeting is almost immediately followed by an individual interview to get to know them and start giving them some leads straightaway. Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out: beneficiaries are in charge of calling potential employers to land job interviews or to get in touch with training providers, which helps them gain confidence to reach their goals. P.A.R.I. Jeunes does all the rest: providing initial coaching to help beneficiaries confirm their career plans and restore their confidence, preparing them for job interviews, sorting out anything that might be a barrier to their success (whether it be the lack of skills or other personal issues) and seeking out all the job vacancies in the area that might match their profile.

P.A.R.I. Jeunes' staff is a solid team of four employment coaches and a social worker. Their names are Nicolas, Dahbia, Emmanuelle, Pascale and Brigitte. **They all have previous work experience in the private sector, but in different fields**. "*Multidisciplinarity is essential*", says Marie-Christine Tremblay. They all work together and know about each young person supported by the program. **If a youth shows up or drops a line to ask a question, any of them is able to answer, and they know exactly what type of job opportunities that youth is looking for.** "*For each young person, an action plan is set up collectively from the very first day. It makes our work all the more efficient. There's a powerful symbiosis between us and that's why it works*", explains Dahbia Hamdi. Every Tuesday afternoon, the team meets up to share information and perspectives. "*The diversity of experience allows us to open up the scope of possibilities in terms of employment and training for the young people we support, some of whom have been looking for a job for up to five years, to no avail."* 

The youths expect coaches to provide quick evidence of their efficiency. "They've been let down so many times before. They need real action to give us their trust and regain confidence in themselves. And they can't wait." Alicia Leroy, 23 and a mother of two, is one of them. Over the last five years, she has interned in a few companies, done a short training and been to a Second-Chance School, hoping to eventually find a job. But she didn't. "I was beginning to lose hope", she recalls. She was surprised by P.A.R.I. Jeunes' responsiveness. "I arrived on a morning and I already had a job interview scheduled in the afternoon of the same day. They take a close look at our resumes and help us to update them. They keep calling us to tell us: 'check out this new lead we found, get prepared for the job interview'." In the two weeks since she arrived, she has already applied for three jobs. "I feel confident again and I've also told my little sister about the program."

**Coaches also need to be responsive because they have to keep up with the pace of the business world**. "A vacancy never lasts long, so we have to be extra responsive. It's better to try and fail than to do nothing. So when we find a vacancy that might suit one of our youths, we always call them immediately and ask them what they think. Then, they decide", explains Marie-Christine Tremblay. "They don't leave us on our own. They do a lot to help us find work. They help us and we search together", says Yann. "If a youth calls us in the morning because they have a job interview in the afternoon, one of us will make themselves available to do a mock interview and help them get prepared", says Pascale Esnault. And when a partner company calls, the coaches always jump at the chance. "One day, on a Friday afternoon, a company asked us if we could send them four people to clean up the fan zone in Lille. On Monday morning, four youths were there, ready to work." To help their protégés grow, coaches also like to point out the fact that some of them come to Lesquin from very far, to show how motivated they are. And that's important, because motivation is a valuable quality in the eyes of employers. "Companies nowadays want youths that are driven and motivated first. Skills only come next."

To find vacancies, they use all the tools they can: they monitor economic trends, hunt down job openings on jobboards like Indeed and Leboncoin, identify highlysought-after trades, read the local press, are active on social media, etc. "Our goal is to be the first ones on the case when an interesting opportunity shows up", says Pascale Esnault. "So we monitor what's going on, we receive alerts on the Internet, we check up what's new every day, we go on chat forums, we make phone calls, and we also have an extensive professional network in the Lille area", says Dahbia Hamdi. And the youths also get caught up in the game. Not so long ago, for instance, Alex landed a contract after chatting with a young woman, Amélie, during a company visit. "Amélie applied and they hired her. She was estranged from her family. She later came back to thank us and she said to us: 'I finally feel happy'. It was very rewarding to hear her say that."

Another rare feature of P.A.R.I. Jeunes is that the **youths' career plans and social** situations are addressed independently. That's because "if we started making a list of all the difficulties some youths have to face in their personal lives, we'd end up believing they're not fit for some of the jobs we might have found. And that's not the case", explains Dahbia Hamdi. The whole team agrees upon that. "We don't want to feel held up by feelings like that. We know that Brigitte helps them too, and our part is to focus on connecting them with companies and employment". Brigitte, the social worker, also uses a different approach. "Usually, I do a holistic diagnosis of the person I'm working with. I broach all the aspects of their situation. But here, it's totally different. When a young person comes here, they have a specific question and they expect an answer to that very question." It's often a specific issue, such as paying for their driver's licence, which is essential to mobility, as jobs are increasingly located in remote areas. "I have a meeting with a young woman this afternoon. She passed her written (driving) exam three years ago. So now she's only got a year and half left to pass her driver's license. She just graduated from college and has a Master's degree, but she's got no more money to pay for her driving lessons. She'd like to find a temporary contract or a replacement job to pay for them. Otherwise she'll have to start all over again." Other widespread issues include accommodation and food aid. "Some youths live in hostels; others live in the streets or in social care institutions. Others still live with their families but their parents often have financial difficulties. So their child is a burden for them. These situations are difficult. I often go to all the grocery stores around and the local branches of the Secours Populaire to help them make ends meet."

Employment and social issues sometimes happen to meet when a youth urgently needs a job to pay their bills. In those cases it has nothing to do with the real career plan they want to follow, which is temporarily left for later. When an employment coach feels that a youth has an issue, they send them to Brigitte Lucas. "With them, I have a positive approach. I encourage them. I always try to go find that little flame of hope that needs to be reignited. I try to make them want to keep hope. You might find it funny, but I like Johnny Halliday's song 'l'envie d'avoir envie' (wanting to hope). That song has helped me a lot in my career as a social worker." She's impressed by their courage. Most of the youths who dropped out of school have family problems. They were often placed in foster families during their childhood. Many of them have a feeling of abandonment and they've given up hope. "Sometimes they come a very long way to get here, from Lens, Saint-Amand. I really admire them", adds Brigitte Lucas.

**Thanks to that multifaceted strategy**, barriers to employment can be identified, solved or minimized. After spending years out of the system, most youths find it very difficult to adapt to a new working environment. "*I have a recent example of a young man who was having trouble waking up in the morning. We had to find a trick. We told him to set one alarm on his mobile and another alarm a little further in the room, on a shelf, to help him get up and be on time. It was simple, it was nothing, but it was very important. It was the major issue he had to deal with in order to keep his job, because he always arrived late*". Anthony's situation is different: he has a disability. It takes him 1h15 to get from his home to the MacDonalds where he now works. He can stay in the canteen during the lunch break so that he doesn't get tired.

Parallel to that, a long-term strategy is put in place to help youths confirm their career plans. Employment coaches start by assessing the individual situation of each youth and help them check whether they are making the right choice–through immersion in companies, internships and temporary job experiences. Coaches also use the resources offered by Vitamine T: since its creation in 1978, it has trained nearly 40,000 people in a

variety of fields, ranging from the recycling of electrical goods to organic market-farming and homecare services to the elderly. "They all have valuable experiences. But they never reflect upon the value of what they've done before", notes Pascale, a former coach at P.A.R.I. Jeunes. According to Yann, the method works: "They make us talk about our skills, our experience, our qualifications and they try to find what jobs might suit us." In that reconstruction process, job interviews are a critical milestone. "Our work is tailored to each youth. We have a lot of young graduates with a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. But they all need to be reminded about company codes and what is expected of them at work: arriving on time, knowing the dress code, etc. We prepare them for tricky job interview questions and we help them to become aware of their talents and skills. They all have a resume and cover letter, but they've never learnt to customize them to match specific job offers", says Pascale Esnault.

Whether the coaches are talking about employment or about a youth's personal story, **truth** is a word that they use often. "We don't lie to them. One youth wanted to become a bus driver. He took tests and had several interviews with training providers. But it never worked. So we thought: 'maybe that's not the right job for him.' And we said it to him. Then we made him discover several other trades. Now he's a qualified window cleaner and he's been standing on his own two feet for 9 months now. We're still bringing him support so that he finds a permanent contract after his apprenticeship contract. The fact that we didn't lie to him allowed him to move on to other options. It's no magic bullet but we're always honest."

In a meeting room, four girls and one boy ago seated around a long oval table are talking about their experience. They started the program two weeks ago. "The purpose of collective sessions is to help youths regain confidence and build up a network of contacts", explains Marie-Christine Tremblay. The atmosphere is relaxed, though we can feel that talking about themselves in a group setting isn't so easy for these youths-Alicia, Maïté, Yann and Pélagie. In front of them stands Dahbia Hamdi, with her glasses resting in her long brown hair and a bright smile on her face. She has hung up four big sheets on the wall-one for each of the youths present. Her idea is to highlight what they've done before-which they often aren't aware of-and coach them on how to speak about themselves in their future job interviews. "You'll have to learn to know how to demonstrate your worth", she says to a young woman in a black jacket and with short bleached hair who is looking for a job as a façade painter. "Instead of saying that you don't like working alone, say: 'I am self-reliant in my work, though I appreciate working in a team'." The youths around the table listen attentively. Maïté takes the floor: "I'm a very slow person, I'm very meticulous. Another thing is that I like finishing what I've started."-"Ah, very well. And what could you tell us about your hobbies?"-"I make furniture items with wood pallets."-"That's a very good thing to put forward for the job you're interested in. It shows your deftness." "And by the way", she adds, "Maïté also worked in a mail sorting center in the south and then in

the north of France. Why am I mentioning this? What qualities does a person working in a mail sorting center have to have?"-"They have to be quick?" answers the group. And there's another quality Maïté can add to her list. The young woman is beaming.

Then Pélagie comes forward to introduce Alicia: "She's 23, she wants to become a checkout operator. She's a mother of two young kids. She trained for one year to become a florist's assistant. She doesn't smoke. She's efficient, always on time, and a hard-worker." The coach responds: "That was a perfect introduction. It flowed well, it was perfect. There, that's how you must present yourselves at a job interview. We'll practice trick questions later." That includes explaining holes in resumes. Maïté will have to explain why she decided to quit her latest job selling photos door to door. Her boss blamed her for not having sold photos to a man with terminal cancer. She didn't accept being told that the purpose of her job was precisely to bother people. Dahbia Hamdi asks her about her ethics; she shows her that that is also a quality of hers. As for Alicia, she has two issues: having stopped her training as a florist's assistant and having two young kids. "You should put forward your internships as a retail shelf-stocker. As for your kids, the typical trick question will be: do you have someone to look after them?"—"I do", replies Alicia calmly.

As soon as a youth is hired in a company, **the coaches still play an active part to make sure they don't give up in the very first days**. "We had a youth who did a two-week immersion in a roofing business. He then signed an apprenticeship contract. But the company and we both knew that if we didn't help him with accommodation, he wouldn't manage because he had a 1.5-hour commute to get to work. We immediately made contact with his caseworker and an accommodation center so that he could move closer to his work as soon as possible. This has now been settled."

In the main room full of open-access computers and printers, the "wall of solutions" attests to the efficiency of the program. Each youth has pinned up a paper with their name, career plan and solutions found to date: "Priscilla, working as a cleaner, solution: a temporary contract at Ibis Hotel", "Yanis, finding work quickly & working in fishkeeping, solution: a 3-month contract as a general assistant. Finding a sandwich course to become a vet assistant, solution: immersion in a vet's clinic, temporary contract as an order picker". Kevin, Valentin, Aissatou, Walid, Angélique... Rather than employment rates, Marie-Christine Tremblay prefers to speak about "a broad vision of success": "An immersion experience that didn't work out isn't a setback. One youth wanted to become a cabinet-maker. We wanted him to be sure about that choice so we made him do a two-week immersion period, and he realized that it wasn't what he wanted to do. Without that immersion experience, he might have started a sandwich course, and given up three months later. Now he's doing a civic service mission and working on redefining his career



*plan. That's a great achievement.*" One just needs to look at Yann, beaming and optimistic although he hasn't even landed his apprenticeship contract yet, to understand why it works: P.A.R.I. Jeunes has a respectful approach to young jobseekers and their personal stories. "There should be loads of programs like this", says Yann. "All the young people who're having trouble entering the job market ought to know about them."

# P.A.R.I. JEUNES AT A GLANCE

## WHO ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE TARGETED BY P.A.R.I. JEUNES?

P.A.R.I. Jeunes' main target are "Neets". They are young people between 18 and 26 who are not in employment, education or training. They can have any type of background and work history.

# THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Along with the local job centers and Pôle emploi, P.A.R.I. Jeunes creates a supportive environment to foster access to employment in a highly tangible manner: tracking job offers in the area, helping youths define their career plans and paths, preparing them for job interviews, assisting them in writing their resumes and cover letters, etc.

The coaches start by assessing the individual situation of each youth and help them check whether they are making the right choice, through immersion in companies, internships and temporary job experiences. The innovation here isn't so much in the tools that are used, but in the linkage of different know-hows to support the youths and in the responsiveness of the team. All the coaches know the story, career plan and needs of each youth.

The four coaches make up a multidisciplinary team that provides holistic support to each young jobseeker. All the coaches previously worked in a variety of fields. They have a meeting every Tuesday to brainstorm and share ideas on how they can best help the youths who seek their assistance. "At P.A.R.I. Jeunes, a youth won't be assigned to one unique coach. Each of us knows the story of each youth and what they're searching for. When a youth calls, they will always receive careful attention, whether they need an answer to a question or information on a specific issue", says Marie-Christine Tremblay.

P.A.R.I. Jeunes addresses two different aspects: "Employment & training" and "Lifting barriers to success", with a social worker. They believe that these two aspects must not overlap. They deliberately deal with them separately, to make sure the youths' social difficulties do not hinder their return to employment. "In some cases, knowing too much about the personal difficulties of a person can make it harder for a coach to bring them back to employment", explains Brigitte Lucas, the social worker.

P.A.R.I. JEUNES AT A GLANCE

The multidisciplinarity of coaches and the fact that they all previously worked in the business world before moving to the field of counseling is also a key aspect: "It was an essential requirement. If you want to be able to explain what it's like to work in a company, you have to have worked in a company yourself. Nicolas used to work in industry; Pascale worked in food service. Even our social worker started her career in the business world."

The small numbers of youths supported is another success factor: *"That small scale allows us to offer close follow-up and support. We haven't got a hundred youths each in our portfolios, otherwise we could never do what we do*", says Dahbia Hamdi, one of the coaches.

The program is co-funded by the European Social Fund as part of a national Operational Program for 2014-2020 called "Initiative pour l'Emploi des Jeunes". But P.A.R.I. Jeunes' main source of support is provided through Vitamine T, a very dynamic organization in the field of social integration through work. Vitamine T operates in a variety of fields, ranging from the management of green spaces to the recycling of electrical goods and homecare services. It provides critical support to P.A.R.I. Jeunes, both in terms of funding and business contacts.

## WHAT PREVENTS THE PROGRAM FOR BEING SCALED-UP

The **structural limitation to Neets**, which might be a bit restrictive.

The **need to work in small groups and on a very little scale** in order to succeed. The **fact that most of the funding comes from the European Social Fund (ESF)**, which means that if it isn't extended, the program stops. An organization has to be quite robust (and have enough cash available...) if its programs are nearly entirely funded through the ESF (because funds are often received late, there is a lot of reporting involved, etc.).

# SCALING-UP OPPORTUNITIES

More centers like P.A.R.I. Jeunes could be set up in other areas, with support from economic and social integration schemes.

# KEY FIGURES

- The objective of P.A.R.I. Jeunes is to support 430 youths in the course of two years.
- 663 youths were invited and 367 showed up.
- 225 have been successfully reintegrated in the job market.
- Average cost per youth with P.A.R.I. Jeunes' method: €2,200.
- Funding of P.A.R.I. Jeunes:
- €900,000 (ESF).
- €60,000 (Vitamine T Group).
- €20,000 (Fondation Crédit Mutuel Nord Europe).

# QUOTES

## Yann, 23, is looking for a work-study contract as a quantity surveyor in a green building company

"Coaches build a close relationship with us. They help us a lot. I've been here for just two weeks and they've got a lot of work options to offer to us. That's the biggest asset of P.A.R.I. Jeunes: it's quick and tangible."

### Alicia Leroy, 23, a mother of two, has been unemployed for five years

"I couldn't find a job because I always had negative feedback: 'you haven't got the diploma, you have no experience, etc.' I was also told that I could never work as a sales assistant. At P.A.R.I. Jeunes, they told me that I could, and they immediately put me in contact with companies."

#### Dahbia Hamdi, employment coach at P.A.R.I. Jeunes

"Four brains are better than one. We're four coaches. Each of us has their own history, their own approach. That opens up the scope of solutions."

#### Brigitte Lucas, social worker at P.A.R.I. Jeunes

"Usually, I do a holistic diagnosis of the person I'm working with. I broach all the aspects of their situation. But here, it's totally different. When a young person comes here, they have a specific question and they expect an answer to that very question."

#### Marie-Christine Tremblay, the director of the program

"A vacancy never lasts long, so we have to be extra responsive. It's better to try and fail, rather than do nothing."

#### APPENDICES

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE LABOR MARKET AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE

Youth unemployment in France and the reasons why it doesn't drop have long been discussed in academic literature and government reports. These reports generally point out that major structural changes ought to be made, especially in the education system and apprenticeship policies, in order to reduce the incompatibility that still exists between young jobseekers' skills and employers' needs.

Many solutions have been advanced and numerous reforms have been implemented in an attempt to tackle mass youth unemployment. Unfortunately, no measure has yet proven to be effective. Current debates therefore tend to focus on how to scale up reforms that enjoy general consensus among academic experts, government representatives and trade associations. Paradoxically, however, none of these reforms has ever succeeded, due to lack of support from the general public.

In this context, Institut de l'entreprise aims to highlight some existing initiatives that have proven their effectiveness. Raising awareness about these successful initiatives is a way to scale them up and to inspire new reforms.

To this end, readers will find below a short review of the main features of the labor market and youth employment in France, as well as academic and official references on the subject.

### THE FRENCH LABOR MARKET IS AFFECTED BY CHRONIC UNEMPLOYMENT.

The French labor market is marked by high unemployment rates (10%) and low employment rates (<65%), compared to similar OECD countries (>70% in Germany, the UK and Nordic countries). These features have essentially remained unchanged for the past three decades, with a steady unemployment rate in spite of the ebb and flow of the economy. Even when the economy flourished, unemployment rates in France have

never fallen below 7.5%, while employment rates remained unchanged in spite of the 2008-2009 and the 2011-2012 global recessions, contrary to what was observed in the United States and in Germany at that moment.

According to the International Labor Office, the unemployment rate in France for Q2 2016 settled at 9.9% (9.6% in mainland France), down slightly from Q3 2015 but with limited perspectives of improvement due to the current growth potential (1.1%-1.3%) and lack of structural labor market reforms. Mainland France has 2.8 million jobseekers, 1.2 million of which have been out of employment for over a year (-45%). The rising number of long-term jobseekers hints at an upcoming increase in structural unemployment. At the end of Q1 2016, long-term unemployment hit a new record in France.

According to the ILO, the employment rate was still below 65% for Q2 2016 (64.7%), while the full-time employment rate was 4.8 points lower, at 59.9%, leaving substantial leeway for improvement.

### FRENCH YOUTH ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY INEQUALITIES

According to Eurostat data, the employment rate among French youth (aged 15-24) hit 28.4% in 2014, far behind other similar European countries like Austria (52.1%), Germany (46.1%), the Netherlands (58.8%) and the UK (48.1%).

The unemployment rate among young workers in France is particularly high (25.9% at the end of Q4 2015) compared with unemployment rates in other European countries like Austria (11.3%), Germany (6.4%), the Netherlands (11.1%) and the UK (13.1%).

According to INSEE<sup>10</sup>, youth unemployment rates in France are 2.5 times higher than overall unemployment rates and 3.7 times higher than unemployment rates among older workers (>49). The double recession has led to a continued increase of 6.7 points in youth unemployment since Q1 2008, while the overall unemployment rate went up 2.7 points over the same period.

<sup>10</sup> The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (abbreviated INSEE in French) is the French national statistics bureau (*T.N.*).

APPENDICES

However, if we consider the unemployment ratio<sup>11</sup>, which is probably a better indicator as most young people aged 15 to 24 in France do not work because they are studying, the figures above can be slightly put into perspective. According to Eurostat, the unemployment ratio hit 8.9% in France in 2015, which is close to the average observed in the Euro zone but still slightly above the ratios observed in the UK (8.6%) and the Netherlands (7.7%), and much higher than in Germany (3.5%)–but Germany is a specific case given its demographic features. Employment inequalities are in close correlation with qualifications: unemployment among graduates is nearly frictional (6.2%), while the unemployment rate among unskilled workers hit 16.8% in 2015. As for first generation immigrants coming from States outside the European Union, they are twice more likely to be c

### THE MISMATCH BETWEEN SKILLS AND NEEDS IS A MAJOR ISSUE AND IT'S GETTING WORSE

In its latest report on France, the IMF stressed that the crisis in the Euro zone had probably had hysteresis effects. Because of its long duration, the double recession that affected the French economy has produced vicious circles for the unemployed: the longer a jobseeker stays out of employment, the more his chances to find a new job fade away, as his professional network and skills gradually wear away.

That is why the mismatch between skills and needs, which has long been a major problem in France, has probably become worse due to the crisis. The figures speak for themselves: unemployment rates rose while job vacancies remained stable. According to the think tank France Stratégie, workers' skills —in all age groups— tend to become obsolete faster in France than in other countries, due to the existing shortcomings in vocational training in France in comparison with similar OECD countries.

However, these matching issues probably reflect the growing gap between the skills taught in the French teaching system and the needs of the labor market. That gap is regularly highlighted by the weak performance of France compared to other similar countries in international ratings (PISA and the OECD's PIAAC reports). Consequently, the level of qualification of French adults is generally lower than in other similar countries, which has devastating consequences in terms of access to employment for those who have financial and social problems. It is estimated that 100,000 to 150,000 young people drop out of the secondary education system every year in France, without any qualification.

<sup>11</sup> Share of unemployed youth (aged 15 to 24) to total population in that age group.

### THE CURRENT ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES OUGHT TO BE REVIEWED

Public policies implemented over the past three decades in France have widely promoted apprenticeships and vocational training, inasmuch as they contribute to improving integration into the labor market and building bridges between the education system and employment. Yet the number of students in apprenticeships or in dual education has dropped since 2011 to roughly half a million, after rising from 0.4 to 0.6 million from 1991 to 2001.

A recent OECD report on apprenticeships and vocational training highlights that although France has allocated significant resources to youth vocational training, its system remains uselessly complex and poorly performing. French families still have a bad image of technical education, even though it has proven to be effective in helping students enter the job market. The number of students in apprenticeships has recently risen, but this is mainly due to an increase in the share of graduate students.

OECD experts conclude that the entry of low or unskilled youth into the labor market remains difficult and ought to be improved. In that regard, one of their suggestions is to attract better teachers, especially teachers who are able to link hands-on experience and academic concepts. The present report of Institut de l'entreprise aims at promoting the dissemination of good practices in that regard.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



# ANNE TÉZENAS DU MONTCEL

Anne Tézenas du Montcel is a journalist and an international expert on global warming and energy transition issues.

She works as an independent editor-in-chief for the press, especially Challenges magazine,

on management, recruitment, education, higher education, Ed tech and MOOCS. She has been working as a journalist and reporter since 1988. In 2000, she created a press agency called Editoile, serving the media and an international network of 300 independent journalists. She also took part in the design of the Parisien Magazine and the AEF Développement Durable press group. She teaches journalism at the Dauphine University (IPJ Paris-Dauphine) and she is part of the judging panel of the Lagardère Foundation, which awards a grant every year to the best international reporting in the print medium.

On climate issues, she co-directed with Elisabeth Nivert the book *"Journey into the anthropocene, this new era we are the heroes of"* written by Claude Lorius and Laurent Carpentier, published in 2011 by Actes Sud. It was in this capacity that she was invited to cover the preparation of the COP 21 with the French diplomatic teams under the direction of Laurent Fabius, and to write for the Parisien Magazine. In addition to being a journalist, she is now recognized as a international expert on climate issues after participating in the birth of the Action Agenda of the UN Convention on Climate Change, under the aegis of High Level Climate Champion Hakima El Haité.

She was also an auditor for the national cycle of the Institut des Hautes Etudes de l'Entreprise (Institute of Higher Studies in Business) in 2008 and the Institut des Hautes Études pour la Science et la Technologie (Institute of Higher Studies for Science and Technology) in 2015.



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*Training the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century* focuses on six successful initiatives fostering youth employment in France. Though using different methods and targeting different audiences, they all lead to high employment rates. What are the secrets of their success? What lessons can be learnt from them? These questions led us into the field to meet those who are actively taking part in the combat against youth unemployment. The challenge is two-fold: to help young people–living in very unstable conditions, or highly qualified but unable to find a job, and often discouraged by successive setbacks–enter the job market quickly and lastingly, in a global work environment that is changing rapidly. This means adapting training methods both to the needs and expectations of very different audiences, and to the new trades that are emerging with new technologies and multidisciplinarity.

These methods share three common features: they give back confidence to young jobseekers by empowering them and showing them the value of their skills; they help them expand and market their skills; and they boost direct contact between the young jobseekers and companies through events, meetings, immersion and internships. Age and qualifications don't matter; only motivation and success are important. Pragmatism, responsiveness, an individualized approach and the commitment of all stakeholders–especially companies–are the keys to the success of these initiatives and an invitation to action.

*Training the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century* is an overview of a series of six case studies:

- #1 Gorge de Loup: a school that builds confidence
- #2 Nos Quartiers ont des Talents: the power of mentorship
- #3 42: a tuition-free school, open to all, to address the challenges of the digital era
- #4 100 Chances 100 Emplois: making young people visible
- #5 Openclassrooms: a job or nothing
- #6 P.A.R.I. Jeunes: fostering motivation



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