

## Coaching to support sustainable jobs



Flora: women working together to develop their capacities

### Project name

Jobcoaching

### Project duration

April 2001 - December 2003

### ESF Priority Area

Women's participation

### Country

Belgium

### ESF Funding

€304,561

### Total Funding

€619,682

### ESF Funding Type

Objective 3

### Target Group

Women

### Name of coordinating organisation

FLORA

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In Belgium, a network of organisations has been testing a new approach to employment support: 'jobcoaching'. Working primarily with women with little or no formal schooling, the organisations support training and recruitment and provide jobcoaching to help overcome problems in the first months of work.

Many people facing marginalisation or discrimination in the job market find it difficult not only to obtain a job, but also to retain it in the longer term. Traditional employment services accompany an individual to the point at which they are recruited, and then leave them and their employer on their own.

### Coping in a new environment

"Often the culture of a company is so difficult to cope with that a new recruit gives up after a few days," says Anne Snick director of Flora, the Belgian non-governmental organisation (NGO) responsible for the project. "A jobcoach is there to help the employee and employer address the problems that come up during those critical first months after recruitment."

Since the project was established in April 2001, jobcoaches in the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels regions of Belgium have worked with almost 200 people, most of them women with low levels of formal schooling or immigrants whose qualifications are not transferable to the Belgian labour market. Approximately half have found full-time employment, and one-third have been working for three months or more.

"By default, it's the women that have the hardest time in combining family commitments with work. As soon as a child is ill, it tends to be the woman that takes charge and who is more likely to take time off work," says Ms. Snick. "Very often a new employee turns to their jobcoach in such a situation. He or she can help to find a solution or can encourage an employer to offer more flexible employment conditions."

The results have shown that more women have persisted with a job due to the encouragement of a jobcoach, and absenteeism has been reduced. Furthermore, more employers have been willing to take risks in recruitment, knowing there is a jobcoach supporting new employees.

### Promoting a culture shift

The long-term objective of the Flora project is not to create a dependency on jobcoaches, but rather to create a culture shift in companies. This pilot project has revealed a strong need to work more closely with employers to break down stereotypes and to encourage a more supportive approach to new employees facing particular challenges integrating into the labour market. The objective of a follow-on project is therefore to increase recognition of jobcoaching as a structural approach to labour market integration, and to help employers take on this role with new employees.