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# Introduction

## **The Lab: a proactive approach to employment challenges**

In 2024, the Degroof Petercam Foundation launched its second program, The Lab, to identify and address key employment-related challenges in Belgium. The goal is to support innovative solutions through research, experimentation, collaboration, and funding of civil society actors.

The Lab is designed to tackle complex societal issues that demand innovative and practical solutions. Instead of waiting for problems to surface, the Foundation takes the initiative by identifying pressing employment-related challenges. Acting as an initiator and facilitator of a test-and-trial approach, the Foundation uses a step-by-step process to support Belgium-focused solutions that can sustain themselves beyond its involvement.

The first challenge selected by The Lab is reconciling parenthood and employment in Belgium.

## Overview of the laureates

**After a nationwide popular consultation and nine collective intelligence workshops, three projects were selected:**

### BB Welcome by Impactoo

Today, thousands of families struggle to secure nursery placements, often forcing one parent – typically the mother – to reduce working hours or pause their career to care for their child. The situation has become increasingly critical as many childcare facilities have closed in recent years. Additionally, 10,000 places in non-subsidized childcare centers are at risk of closure due to financial instability.

To address this issue, Impactoo advocates for an innovative and financially viable funding solution in collaboration with the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and local municipalities. This approach aims to prevent the loss of childcare places and create a framework for new facilities to emerge, by combining efforts from the private and public sector.

*"Impactoo is deeply honored that our project addressing the childcare shortage has been selected by the Degroof Petercam Foundation. This recognition is particularly meaningful as it builds on the contributions of thousands of citizens who have identified key priorities for improving work-life balance." – Daniel Verougstraete and Philippe Van Ophem, co-founders*



Impactoo 

## Le Petit Vélo Jaune

Le Petit Vélo Jaune supports single-parent families facing financial insecurity and social isolation by fostering human connections and solidarity, helping them regain confidence and energy. Each week, a volunteer spends a few hours with a family at home over the course of a year. This consistent presence breaks isolation and enables parents to regain control over their lives.

Too often, the mothers supported by Le Petit Vélo Jaune give up on employment or education due to a lack of childcare solutions or self-confidence. By intervening early, the initiative reopens possibilities in employment, training, access to rights, and social networks. While professional reintegration is key to family autonomy, their impact goes far beyond – it helps parents rebuild confidence and a sense of direction at their own pace.

*“Le Petit Vélo Jaune is thrilled to have been selected by the Degroof Petercam Foundation. This invaluable support enhances our capacity to assist single-parent families facing hardship. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Esther Duflo reminds us, restoring agency and empowerment opens new opportunities. With this support, we help single mothers build a more stable and fulfilling future.” – Vinciane Gautier, General coordinator*



le petit vélo jaune

Accompagnement **solidaire**  
de familles



## Label by Be Family and La Ligue des Familles

Recognizing that 50% of parents in Belgium struggle to work full-time and that 82% of employed parents would consider changing jobs for better parental support, we aim to provide concrete solutions for both companies and working families.

Our approach involves a certification process that assesses corporate family policies, evaluates the effectiveness of existing measures, and measures their impact. We support companies in their progress by offering our combined expertise – understanding CSR and D&I challenges while having in-depth knowledge of families' specific needs.

By leveraging field insights, we will also advocate for legislative improvements to create a more supportive environment for working parents in Belgium.

*“We are thrilled to launch this label together. Be Family and La Ligue des Familles bring complementary expertise and skills, enabling us to promote a better work-life balance for employees through a win-win strategy that enhances both company performance and employee well-being.” –* Françoise Cardoso, President Be Family, and Madeleine Guyot, General Director la Ligue des Familles

