



*Let's Be the Change!*

## Soyons le Changement - Citizschool

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### Find out more

[www.citizschool.com/soyons-le-changement/](http://www.citizschool.com/soyons-le-changement/)

## My Motivation

Above all, it was the challenge that motivated me. I am particularly sensitive to the issue of access for young people from modest backgrounds to a fulfilling future. It is a reality: these young people are more affected by dropping out of school and work, and face problems of social reproduction linked to a limited professional network.

In addition, transversal skills and interpersonal skills develop differently depending on the environment. My goal was therefore to promote greater equality of opportunity and facilitate access for these young people to a promising future. This challenge was really close to my heart.

It is interesting to note that my initial background was very different: I did in-depth studies in mathematics. However, it was this social issue that ultimately oriented my career towards entrepreneurship, with the aim of providing concrete solutions to these issues of equal opportunities.



## My Approach

**How I began:** My journey towards entrepreneurship began during my studies. I had this idea, this challenge that was close to my heart and that I wanted to get involved in. As a student, I joined clubs and associations that introduced me to social entrepreneurship, which opened up new perspectives for me.

### Sought Guidance and Support:

Gradually, I got closer to actors offering support and project development. Especially after I arrived in France from Morocco, I was able to work more on the challenge which later would become "Let's Be the Change".

**Building on Experience:** It was by combining these different experiences and learnings, mainly from actors in the social and solidarity economy, that the building blocks of my project were put in place. I drew on this energy to move towards the entrepreneurship sector.

**Stay Curious!** I would guess curiosity kept guiding me in social entrepreneurship towards the right experiences to build blocks.



## Challenges

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**A New Sector:** Coming from an academic background in mathematics, the world of social entrepreneurship was completely foreign to me. The first challenge was to surround myself with experienced actors and to get support.

**Defining My Value Proposition:** Another challenge was defining my value proposition, managing complex administrative procedures in France, identifying potential partners, clients and beneficiaries. Communication and recruiting the initial team from employees, interns and volunteers were major issues as well.

**Racism:** I haven't really been marked by challenges related to my origin. However, I have experienced some direct confrontations, such as during a presentation at the Rotary Club where a member suggested that I go and do my work "at home". Faced with these situations, I remain calm and objective, favouring concrete answers. What struck me most is the perception of other entrepreneurs who often emphasize my success despite my origin. Personally, I don't attach much importance to it on a daily basis.



## Accomplishment

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I have surrounded myself in my team with colleagues who are diverse. The diversity within the team reflects that of our target audience, mainly from immigrant backgrounds and living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Multiculturalism allows us to anticipate certain cultural specificities and integrate them into our support process. Young people can project themselves more easily thanks to facilitators who share their origins. Our management and our strategic orientations are enriched. Better financial performance is achieved as well..



## What interventions/ support did you receive?

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Early on, I had a circle of people to brainstorm with regularly. We received support from Alexandra Siarri, the first Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux, who accompanied us in our early days. Some corporate foundations gave us small funding which was essential for us then.



## Were interventions specifically for underrepresented entrepreneurs?

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Initiatives like French Tech Tremplin or Les Audacieux came into play after 2016. I find these positive programmes interesting, but I have some reservations. We often bring together people from diverse backgrounds, but where is the diversity? The interest lies in the crossing of perspectives. We sometimes end up with structures where people from diverse backgrounds are supervised by 50-year-old white mentors, which raises questions about the representation in French society.



## Describe the impact of these interventions?

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I cannot testify to this since I have not received any specific support dedicated to my background as an immigrant.





## What interventions or supports would help you achieve those plans and visions?

We have developed a five-year plan. We need external support in several key areas. Scaling so we are looking for expert advice, particularly from organizations that have successfully expanded into the social and solidarity economy. Human resources. We expect growth of our team from 16 to 30 people, we need support in

### Future Plans



Our association has undergone remarkable growth in eight years. We are committed to expanding to reach more young people, not only in Nouvelle-Aquitaine but also in other French regions. We are also launching a sociological study of ecosystem impact. Our action involves various stakeholders - parents, businesses, national education, higher education structures - and we want to measure our impact on their behaviour.

Follow Mohammed's progress and visit [Soyons le Changement](#)



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