

Martins` s Story

When I was 17 I enrolled in the Mavo of the Amsterdam VAVO school. At the time I had completed only two LBO courses including one for the hotel and catering industry. Unfortunately I was rejected for the same training at a higher level, because there were too many applicants. A man who worked as a consultant at this school, told my parents that there was only one remaining possibility, a practical training which I started in the kitchen of a large hotel as a parsley chopper. That was not really what I wanted. After some research, I discovered, however, that there was an alternative, Secondary General Adult Education in Amsterdam. Although I had to start all over because my previous training barely related to general education, I was given a second chance. And so I started Mavo.

My fellow students were almost all women. Although this was new to me, from day one I had as many female friends as there were classmates. In short, I was accepted. Moreover, the training was an eye opener for me, as a large degree of independence was required which, probably because I was highly motivated, I experienced as pleasant. Striking was the fact that the teachers could focus on teaching, instead of maintaining order, which I was previously accustomed to.

I appeared to have dyslexia. Taking this into account, the VAVO provided assistance in numerous ways so that I was even able to get my VWO-diploma within a shorter period of time than most people. In conclusion I can say that VAVO has been exceptionally important to me. Not only did I get my degrees there, but more importantly my confidence and self-esteem grew. After I finished my studies at VAVO I studied economics at the University of Amsterdam and things worked out for me very well.

Martin