

RENAN

34 years old

Graphic designer

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RENAN IS PURSUING A DEGREE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN AND WORKS freelance in the field. At the beginning of his career, he worked in companies both in Rio de Janeiro and in Belo Horizonte, his hometown. With great resilience and wisdom, Renan has adopted a number of strategies to face racism and homophobia in his quest for autonomy and professional satisfaction.

FIGHTING AGAINST PREJUDICE

As a black gay man, Renan realises that he is vulnerable to a complex intersection of prejudices. He has suffered homophobic insults in the workplace, and despite being cautious, he defended himself and made it clear that he would not back down. He has also supported other LGBT workmates, for instance, he interceded on behalf of a trans friend who was prohibited from using the women's restroom. Renan did not hesitate to defend her, despite the risk of being reprimanded.

In Renan's professional life, racial prejudice overlaps with homophobia. He has suffered several instances of racism when applying for internships. The graphic design labour market does not welcome black professionals. The best positions are allocated in the wealthiest regions of the city, which are predominantly white. On the other hand, neighbourhoods like Renan's have a high incidence of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Renan lives with his partner, and their neighbours have verbally harassed them. Renan cautiously and politely confronted the harassment, trying to avoid more serious problems. Nonetheless, they face the risk of violence from drug dealers who are friends of their homophobic neighbours.

Unfortunately, Renan's experience is common among black and low-income LGBT people in Brazil. Although

they are seen as equal to other residents of urban peripheries based on social markers of race and class, they still experience prejudice and discrimination due to homophobia. This lack of acceptance takes a big toll on Renan's self-esteem, but he remains strong and determined not to give up on his autonomy and freedom.

INCREASING INCOME THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For Renan, increasing his income is a key factor in improving his self-esteem. He continually seeks to improve his technical training. As well as attending university, Renan has taken several online courses to extend his skills. Hoping to increase his income as a freelancer, Renan decided to register for Micro Rainbow Brazil's third entrepreneurship course in September 2016.

With the knowledge he obtained from the course, Renan realised that incorrect pricing was one of the main obstacles to the growth of his business. He had been charging very low rates that did not reflect the value of his work. This is a recurring problem among our students, especially those who work in the service industry. Renan recalculated the cost of his services and began to earn greater profits, using cost and price estimates to justify the increase to his customers. He happily reports:



“With everything I learned from the course, I made spreadsheets and revised the pricing of my services and saw that I was charging much less than I should. So I started charging three times as much as before and the customers accepted it”.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP VERSUS FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Renan has future plans as an entrepreneur, but is currently seeking formal employment in his field. In order to establish his business, he needs more financial resources than he currently has access to. He believes that formal employment will bring greater economic security at present. Aside from sharing the domestic chores with his partner, his studies take up a lot of his daily life, leaving little time to devote to his business.

Renan's preference for the formal labour market reflects the reality of thousands of Brazilians and reveals

one of the stumbling blocks to entrepreneurship. Like Renan, many professionals who have the talent and aptitude to become entrepreneurs prefer stable employment as a way to gain experience and financial stability in their early careers.

Although there is a widely-held view that entrepreneurship is a way out of unemployment, it is important to stress that autonomy is not a cure-all. A large number of Brazil's new businesses close in the first two years and lack of financial planning has been identified as one of the main contributors to this.

Renan took the course to better plan his entrepreneurial activity, and in the process realised that he lacked the capital to implement his business plan in the short-term. Therefore, he made a conscious choice not to start a business at this time. He continues to work freelance, but hopes to find a job that will allow him to organise his finances and save enough money to invest in his business in the long term. Choosing formal employment was a deliberate and planned decision that respects his current needs and limitations. ■

