

<p><i>Theme: Asylum and migration; Young people User group: Migrants; Young people; Language: English; Country: Belgium; Year: 2017; Event: ESN Seminar 2017</i></p>	
<p><b>Programme's name:</b></p> <p><i>Original title:</i></p>	<p><b>CURANT (Cohousing and case management for Unaccompanied young adult Refugees in ANTwerp)</b></p>
<p><u>Organisation / Country:</u></p>	<p>OCMW Antwerpen (Social Welfare Department, City of Antwerp), Belgium</p>
<p><u>Website:</u></p>	<p><a href="http://www.cohousing-curant.be">www.cohousing-curant.be</a></p>
<p><u>Contact:</u></p>	<p>Jolien De Crom, Project Manager  <a href="mailto:jolien.decrom@ocmw.antwerpen.be">jolien.decrom@ocmw.antwerpen.be</a>            +32499419661</p>
<p><u>Summary:</u></p>	<p>CURANT is a cohousing project for unaccompanied young refugees who live together with Flemish young people, 'buddies' for at least one year. In order to help young adult refugees, CURANT proposes different types of support such as cohousing, independence training and psychological help. The project is targeted at unaccompanied young adults, aged 17 up to 22, with refugee status or subsidiary protection.</p> <p>Once unaccompanied children reach adulthood they are no longer able to benefit from subsidized shelter, enrolment in reception classes, customized trainings and the support from a legal guardian. This group of young adults is very often unqualified, not in education, employment or training and has higher chances of developing protracted dependence on social welfare. CURANT aims to provide further support to unaccompanied children when they reach the age of legal adulthood, increasing their chances to fully integrate into society.</p> <p>Different forms of cohabitation schemes are provided in the framework of the project: cohabitation in two-bedroom apartments, cohabitation of several refugee-buddy pairs sharing one community house and cohabitation in 16 to 20 modular (two bedroom) units on one site. CURANT provides affordable housing (rent being €250 a month per person). Moreover, CURANT offers individually tailored guidance and counselling focused on activation, education, independent living, language, leisure, and social integration. This integrated approach aims to empower young refugee adults by developing their resilience, independence and general</p>

	<p>life skills. In total, at least 75 refugees and up to 135 refugees should benefit from CURANT in the programming period 2016-2019.</p> <p>One of the most innovative aspects of CURANT is the buddy system. Buddies are Flemish young people aged between 20 and 30 years old who volunteer as flatmates. One of CURANT's partners is in charge of selecting the buddies and matching them with the young adult refugees. Buddies help their refugee flatmates, but are also given significant guidance during the whole project. Through the buddying system, CURANT aims to create more relatable social interactions between newcomers and buddies that are more on a peer to peer level than the interactions between a caregiver and a caretaker.</p> <p>OCMW Antwerpen coordinates the project, and it is executed by a consortium of five partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>OCMW Antwerpen</b>, public institution in charge of case management and the provision of social housing;</li> <li>- <b>Jes vzw</b>: NGO, youth-oriented outreach and urban lab;</li> <li>- <b>Atlas Inburgering en Integratie</b>, public institution which offers training and counselling to newcomers;</li> <li>- <b>Vormingplus Antwerpen</b>, NGO dealing with adult education and volunteer support;</li> <li>- <b>Solentra</b>, NGO offering diagnostic and therapeutic support for migrant and refugee children and families.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Resources:</u></p>	<p>CURANT receives European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) under the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) programme. The approved ERDF grant is €4,894,303.32 whilst the total cost of the project is €6,117,879.15. The city of Antwerp (OCMW) and the partners together pay €1,096,193.48.</p>
<p><u>Objectives:</u></p>	<p>CURANT aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve the chances of integration and independent living in Belgian society for at least 75 young refugees through case management,</li> <li>- Provide affordable cohousing facilities to at least 75 refugees and Flemish buddies,</li> <li>- Improve coordination and cooperation between partners to deliver improved outcomes,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide social workers with more expertise about the target group,</li> <li>- Inspire other public authorities,</li> <li>- Provide Flemish buddies a better understanding of refugees and greater international awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Issues encountered:</u></p>	<p>The project encountered several issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the juridical framework for cohousing is complicated and administrative procedures are long and difficult.</li> <li>- Young refugees are not always keen on psychological training and extra Dutch classes. Sometimes they do not recognise the benefits of these activities in the long term.</li> <li>- The differences between young refugees and buddies in terms of culture, age, and level of independent living are larger than initially foreseen. For example, some of the refugees have never lived alone before and have no skills in cooking or cleaning.</li> <li>- Many different actors and social workers work together on one case, therefore there is an issue of effective case management. This is an issue that must be tackled in the short term.</li> <li>- Many refugees have a low educational background and struggle to adapt to the new living situation, often showing signs of frustration.</li> <li>- Finding appropriate housing, and matching buddies and refugees is still a challenge. Communication campaigns need to be enhanced in order to make the project more well-known and to attract decent landlords, enthusiastic buddies and suitable refugees who voluntarily go ahead with the project.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Outcomes:</u></p>	<p>The project aims to help the target group with education, training and employment, creating a network of supportive contacts and dealing with (war) trauma. One of the expected outcomes is that young refugee adults will become less dependent on social welfare and follow their own paths in life. Successfully integrating young</p>

	<p>refugees into society contributes also to a more harmonious urban community.</p>
<p><u>Evaluation of practice:</u></p>	<p>The Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies (Cemis) of the University of Antwerp is responsible for evaluating the project. In May 2017, a first evaluation was published. During the three-year implementation of the project, three reports will be produced: after the first year, after the second year and a final evaluation report.</p>
<p><u>Sources of further information:</u></p>	<p>CURANT on <a href="#">Urban Innovative Actions website</a></p> <p>Cemis (2017) <a href="#">Cohousing and Case management for Unaccompanied young Refugee adults in Antwerp - Groundwork for evaluation and literature study</a></p> <p><a href="#">Video presentation</a> of CURANT on Youtube.</p>