

Presentation September 12, 2017

Housing café: working with Volunteers

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1. The Housing café Project

1.1 Start and development of the project

Summer 2015: Big influx of asylum seekers in Belgium

- Expectation after recognition: big impact on the Belgian rental market (already under high pressure)
- Development of Housing café: Liège – October 2015
- Start of the project in Brussels in January 2016; in Antwerp in April 2016; in Ghent in October 2017



1.1 Start and development of the project

- GOAL: supporting recently recognised refugees in the search of housing
 - focus on empowerment
 - listening to their stories and frustrations
 - start integration process

- WHAT? Weekly sessions
- WHO? Volunteers work together with refugees
- HOW? Looking on internet together, calling house owners, accompaniment on visits, ...
- Follow up: understanding the contract, explaining how to get a contract for EGW, changing their address, ...

1.1 Start and development of the project

- 15-20 volunteers in Liège; 10 volunteers in Antwerp; 4 volunteers in Brussels
- Refugee-volunteers in every Housing café = big help



1.1 Start and development of the project

Difficulties in search for housing

- Language
- Discrimination
- Lack of knowledge of the law in Belgium
- Expectations
- No Income
- Only 2 months time
- Regional rules: eg certificate of conformity in Antwerp



1.2 Results

2016

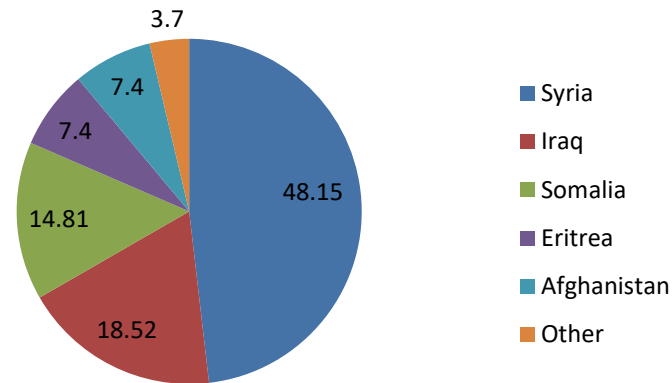
- 591 participants (787 people) in HC Liège, Brussels and Antwerp
- 308 houses found

Antwerp 2017 (January – June)

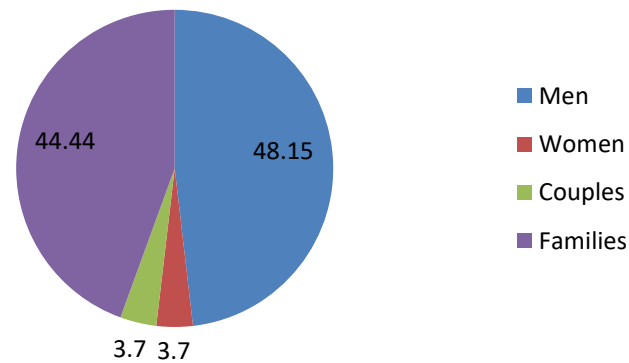
- 41 Individuals / Families have received support
- 31% found a house via Housing café

1.2 Results

Nationalities (%)



Family Composition (%)



2. Working with Volunteers

2.1 General overview

Organize high-quality voluntary work

Based on needs

Contribute to the well-being and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable people

Volunteers

Can deploy their talents

Through valuable and useful tasks

In sustainable projects

With enough support

2.2 Projects

- **Housing Café Antwerp, Brussels, Liège and Ghent**
- **Collective reception centres (Peeterskasteel & Louvrance)**
 - Children's entertainment, organising the 'cloakroom', homework support, 'language pub', sewing workshop,...
 - 40 volunteers in Peeterskasteel, 30 in Louvrance



2.2 Projects

➤ Project Tandem

- Individual support of families or (minor) persons
ex: help with homework, local embedding, daytrips, etc.
- Liège and Brussels



2.2 Projects

➤ Parishes

- Parishes supporting families in their neighbourhood
- Ranst, Woluwe, Assenede



2.2 Projects

- **International volunteering**
 - Support for local partners in developing countries (Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines)
 - 5 volunteers in 2017



2.2 Projects

- **Citoyens sans frontières**
 - Volunteering for and by refugees and asylum seekers
 - Pilot in Brussels (Repair Café)



2.2 Projects

- **Closed collective centres**
 - Visits in duo with social workers, monitoring and psychosocial support.



2.2 Projects

➤ Support tools

Database, recruitment, selection, administration

➤ Information sessions, Trainings and activities

- Initial trainings, specific intervisions and exchange moments, support and coaching, ‘thank you’ moments,



2.3 Diversity

- **Diverse team of volunteers:**
 - age
 - language
 - background
 - talents
 - interests
 - roots

- **Diversity = a strength**



2.4 Challenges

- **Language & Cultural differences**
- **Different backgrounds in the team**
- **Distance between you and volunteers**
- **Selection and matching**
- **Keeping engagement**

2.5 Importance of activities

- **Show appreciation**
- **Create connection**
- **Involvement**
- **Refreshing engagement**

Thank you

