

<i>- 'PROJECT UNACCOMPANIED MINORS (UAM) IN ANTWERP' -</i>	
<u>Organisation / Country:</u>	Public Social Services Antwerpen/ Belgium
<u>Website:</u>	Here
<u>Contact this email for further information:</u>	policy@esn-eu.org
<u>Summary:</u>	<p>The Project Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) is a project developed by the public social services of Antwerp, which aim to support unaccompanied minors aged between 16 to 18 years. In the asylum process, these minors become recognised refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. The programme gives the minors individualised support and guidance. This individualised service includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial guidance (how to live with a limited budget) • administrative guidance (social security, bills, bank account, etc.), • support to integrate them into the society, • psychosocial support (how to deal with traumatic experiences, self-harm, etc.), • education (registering in special classes, parents meetings, etc.), and • home visits. <p>Apart from the individualised support, the programme also offers group services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leisure (sports activities), • peer education, • thematic sessions (health, administration, etc.), • holidays and cultural activities, • open house system, and • educational support (language classes, help with homework). <p>After the young people turn 18, the social workers offer them guidance towards the regular social welfare system. These young people are as well being trained to become group workers for the programme if they decide to do so.</p>

	<p>In 2012, a total of 103 children were part of the project. In 2013, the number was 79 at the time the project was presented, with 8 new applicants each month and the overall goal of reaching 150 participants for that year. 95 percent of the minors in the project came from Afghanistan.</p>
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<p><u>Issues:</u></p>	<p>The project was launched due to the inability of welfare systems to handle the large number of unaccompanied minors, the lack of public or private initiatives, and the lack of experience in this area.</p> <p>Some of the problems for the programme were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High concentration of unaccompanied minors in Antwerp, • Lack of affordable and adequate housing, • Not enough children welfare programmes for young people with problems, • Long waiting list to get permission of residence, • The UAM project developed by the OCMW is the only programme of its kind in Flanders, • Legal guardians have a diverging suitability, • Language obstacles, • Language support: Long waiting lists for illiterates, • The unaccompanied minors only have a year to adapt to the Belgian education system and they usually have a low level of education • Only the best students are able to access the full-time education system, so most unaccompanied minors end up in the part-time education system. This means that the part-time education centres are overstrained and the young people face a lack of occupational activities.
<p><u>Resources:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff: 9 social workers and 2 group workers. • In the future they plan to have 15 full-time social workers.
<p><u>Objectives:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the integration of the unaccompanied minors into society • Offering them guidance and assistance in the process of integration
<p><u>Outcomes:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More experience in regard to complex needs of unaccompanied • More personalized services for unaccompanied minors • More efficient admission processes • Implemented cooperation protocols to improve services around legal guardianship
<p><u>Evaluation:</u></p>	<p>n. a.</p>

