



**GEEF
DE WERELD
EEN
THUIS.**

**FOSTER CARE FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINOR
REFUGEES IN FLANDERS
EACH CHILD IS SPECIAL – 19 APRIL 2017**

KARL BRABANTS

- 1 Unaccompanied minor refugees
- 2 2002 - 2015
- 3 Project 'Geef de Wereld een thuis'
- 4 Progress - figures
- 5 Practice

1 Unaccompanied Minor Refugees

Definition EU

- An unaccompanied minor is:
 - a non-EU national or stateless person below the age of 18
 - who arrives on the territory of the EU States
 - unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him/her, and for as long as s/he is not effectively taken into the care of such a person,
 - including a minor who is left unaccompanied after s/he has entered the territory of the EU States.

WHY DO UNACCOMPANIED MINORS COME TO THE EU?

- to escape from wars and conflicts, poverty or natural catastrophes, discrimination or persecution or serious harm, i.e. international protection (asylum);
- in the expectation of a better life, following economic and aspirational reasons;
- to join family members;
- as victims of trafficking in human beings destined for exploitation, such as sexual exploitation and forced labour or services.

Group of UM arriving in Belgium

Asylum requests UM

2014	2015	2016
486	3099	1076

Top 5 origin

1	Afghanistan
2	Guinea
3	Eritrea
4	Albania
5	Syria

Sex

	% 2016
Male	86,5%
Female	13,5%

Age

Age	% 2016
<12y	2,1%
12-14y	29,3%
15-16y	31,3%
17y	37,3%

2 2002 - 2015

2002 - 2015

- 2002: Law on Guardianship UM in Belgium
- Foster care important form of help for UM
- Realisations in foster care:
 - Placements: mostly kinship– also foster care
 - Projects: Op Stap / Niemand weet dat ik een mens ben / ...
 - Training and intervision of foster care workers
 - Cooperations in youth care
 - Dunya: culture sensitive foster care

2002-2015

- Building experience
- Building network
- Building knowledge

- No broad and structural base
- Not yet a choice or mission by government

Erwin Mortier & Lieve Blancquaert

Niemand
weet dat ik
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Minderjarige
vluchtelingen
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3 Project 'Geef de Wereld een Thuis'

Project “Geef de wereld een thuis”

“Giving a home to the world”

november 2015 - ...

- Occasion
- Cooperation



Occasion

Changes ...

- Refugee crisis
- Elevation inflow UM
- Also the group -15 year olds
 - Need for qualitative and appropriate ways of shelter and support
- Solidarity and action by citizens and families



Cooperation

Assistance organisations

- Foster care organisations
- Organisations working with UM and refugees

Government

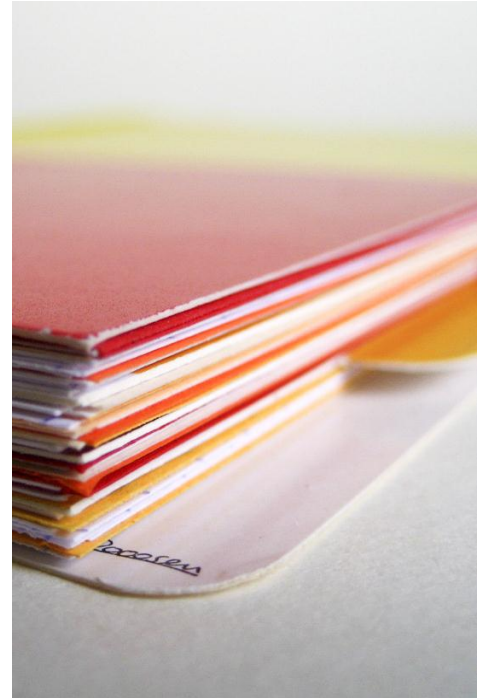
- Jongerenwelzijn (youth care)
- Dienst Voogdij(guardianship)
- Fedasil (asylum)



4 Progress - figures

Figures Flanders: november 2015 - 2016

	Dec 2015	New 2016
Kinship FC	82	154
Foster care	48	29
Totaal	130	183



Figures East Flanders: november 2015 – 2016 – april 2017

	Dec 2015	New 2016	New 2017 (3 months)	Now active placements
Kinship FC	23	30	11	51
Foster care	3	7	4	14
Totaal	26	37	15	65

5 Practice

Practice

- Information sessions en screening
- Matching
- Acquaintance and first contacts
- Foster care situations and guidance
- Recruitment
- ALFACA

Practice: infosessions and screening

- A lot of families didn't continue after getting correct information
- Unrealistic expectations from candidate foster carers
 - Profile UM: age, sex, ...
 - Expectations youngsters
 - Perspectives
- Now: less candidates, more realistic

Experiences: infosessions and screening

- Adapted procedures for screening Foster care families
 - Importance of training
 - Themes: classical foster care +
 - Intercultural communication
 - Effects of forced migration
 - Uprooting
 - Trauma
 - Me/we-culture
 - Acculturation
 - ...

Practice: infosessions and screening

- Adapted procedures for screening:
Culture families and kinship foster care
 - Individual screening
 - Candidates share experience of migration and culture
 - Adapted semi-structured interview
 - Themes:
 - educational themes: general themes +
 - Violence & Sexuality
 - Religion
 - Honor issues
 - Motivation
 - Safety and risk factors
 - **Reference persons**

Practice: matching

- Lack of information on the UM
- Information lists about UM: info we need for indication and matching
- Cooperation with guardians and social assistants in residences

Practice: matching

- Fast starts for -13y old UM
 - After 3-4 days in Belgium
 - No matching / no info / no acquaintance
 - Well trained foster carers
 - Foster trainers can be at home first week(s)
 - Intensive guidance
 - Reachable 24h/7d during first weeks
 - Evaluations!
 - Emergency bed in residential group

Practice: acquaintance and first contacts

- Resistance of UM against foster care
 - Don't know concept FC
 - Loyal to parents
 - Confrontation with warmth of family is overwhelming
 - Fear of being forced to take over culture of foster family/loss own culture
 - At rest in residential group
 - Peers resisting against going to FC
- Tempo: fast enough ><tempo of UM
- Balance: motivation and participation of UM >< directive
- **Important: informing UM: movie/ testifying / ambassadors**

Practice: foster care situations and guidance

- Importance: contacts with parents
- Motivation and resilience of UM: school, language
- Help for integration
- Low expectations are key to succes
- Training and intervision of foster care workers
- Networking and cooperation stakeholders
- Culture sensitive capabilities and experiences of foster carers

Practice: foster care situations and guidance

Importance of:

- Expliciting expectations
- Asking and explaining about cultural differences
- Food!
- Humor!
- Supporting network!
- Need for psychological help (trauma & ptss, uncertainty)

Practice: Recruitent = networking

- 'culture' foster care families
 - Cultural communities / key figures / cf Dunya
 - Kinship Families
- Flemish foster care families
 - Press
 - School communities , communities around asylum centres, residential groups, ...
- Activating broad network for kinship foster care

Practice: ALFACA

- Alternative Family Care
- European project: best practices UM in families 6 countries:
 - Czech Republic, Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Belgium
- Result: training program on recruitment, screening, intake, matching and guidance
- Now training foster care workers in Flanders
- Preparing Alfaca 2: research on indicators, support needs, ...

Questions?

Thanks for your attention!